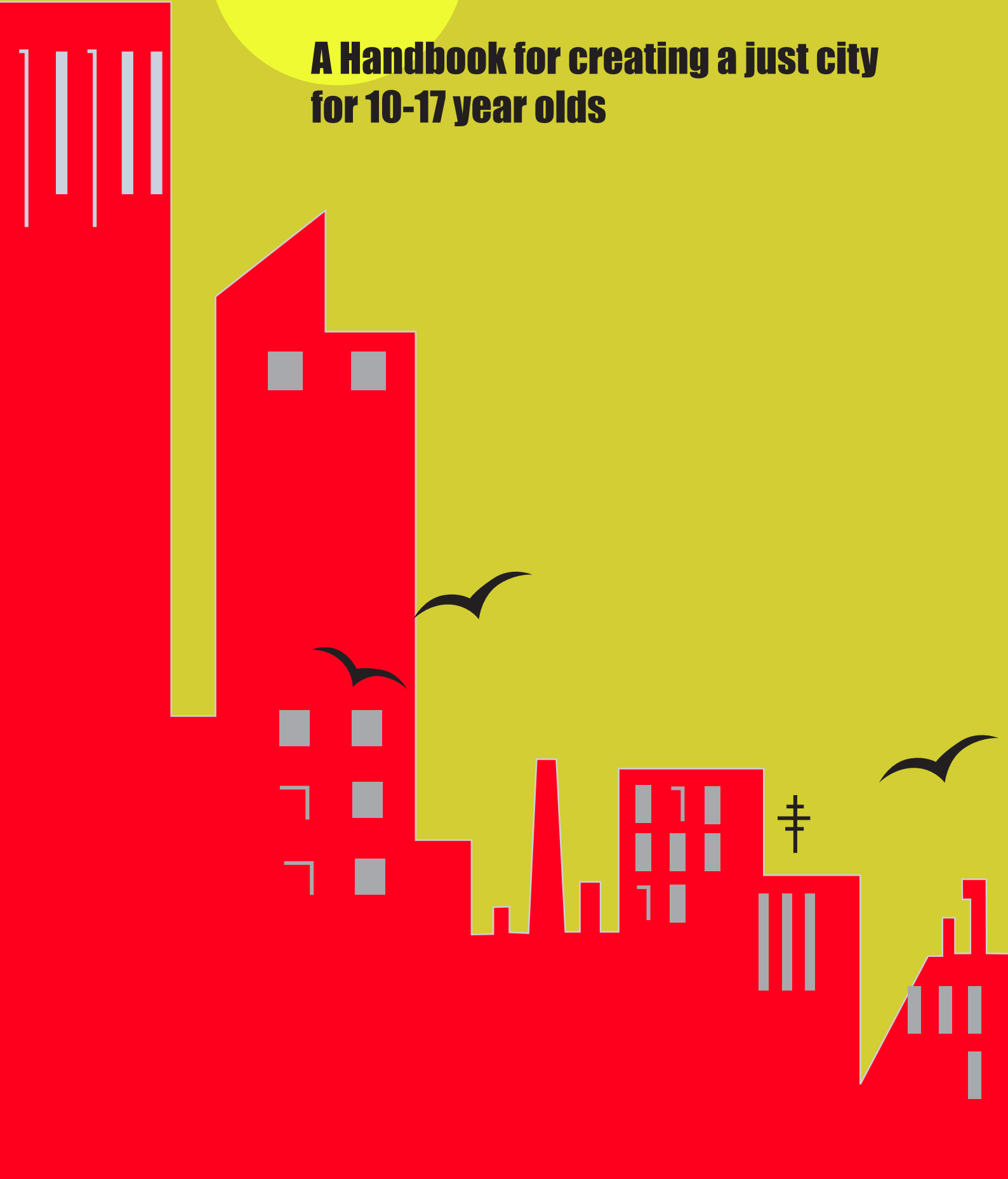




Just Cities

**A Handbook for creating a just city
for 10-17 year olds**



**A handbook for
creating a just city
10-17 year olds**

**Bela Hamid
Lisa Gobio-Lamin**

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Finally, a huge thank you to all the teachers, youth leaders and young people that took part in highlighting the importance of environmental justice by getting involved in the Just Cities project and making sure that their voices were heard! We were given lots and lots of stories, pictures and case-studies and tried to include as many as we could in this resource pack, but in the end we ran out of space!

Aim

This toolkit aims to help young people design and carry out a campaign for environmental justice. The case-studies reveal to readers what other young people have achieved and the various sections are ordered to help work through the different stages of a project.

This kit is filled with examples of campaigns undertaken by young people to raise awareness of various issues. In addition, it provides information on fund-raising options, campaigning ideas and resources, as well as a list of inspirational films on Environmental Justice. There is a section advising adults such as teachers, mentors or parents on how to facilitate young people's projects.

This toolkit is fun and easy to use, with pictures and videos of young people participating in environmental justice that will stimulate and help develop creative ideas and projects.

ISBN: 978-0-9560360-2-5

Authors

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Capacity Global

Capacity Global is the only UK-based non-governmental organisation and social enterprise working solely on environmental justice. Capacity Global believes that living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right. It works specifically with individuals and communities in urban areas who suffer from social, environmental and economic deprivation to ensure their voices get heard. The organisation does this in collaboration with its partners and networks.

Capacity Global's five main areas of work are: advocacy, community outreach, policy, research and jobs and training.

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice is making sure that everyone can live in a clean and healthy environment no matter who they are, what job they do or how much money they have. There are laws all over the world which say that everyone has the right to breathe clean air, drink clean water and live in safe housing or on safe land . Anything that interferes with this right can be described as environmental injustice.

Everyone is responsible for looking after the environment for us now and for future generations. To carry out our responsibilities we need resources.

This means it needs to be easy for us to get information that will help us make good decisions about protecting our rights and the rights of others. We also need to be able to get involved in stopping acts that can cause environmental injustices, such as being made to live next to polluting factories. Damage to the environment always seems to affect poor people more than the rich, so ordinary people must be able to get involved in making decisions about the environment.

What does environmental justice look like?

“More attention has to be paid to the equal distribution of money in different quarters of the city of Amsterdam.” – Gina, 16

What does environmental injustice look like?



“In Amsterdam, the rich neighbourhood was cleaner whilst the poor neighbourhood was neglected and not clean.” – Gina, 16

There are many examples of environmental injustices taking place all across the world.

“everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.”

USA: Cancer Alley, in Louisiana, USA is the name given to a long stretch of the Mississippi River. It has been given this name by the people who live there (mainly African-Americans and poor people), and other concerned human beings. A high rate of illnesses related to cancer can be found in the area and the people who live here are exposed to higher levels of pollution than the average person – do you think this is fair?

South Africa: Under the apartheid government, black South Africans were forced to live in extreme poverty and in overcrowded homelands located very close to industrial plants and landfill sites. They continue to live in these unhealthy and dangerous living conditions as they have no money to move out. They breathe in heavy metals, gases such as sulphur, and other chemicals and deadly fumes that are very dangerous and greatly affect their health. Children play among landfills and swim in heavily contaminated waters. In the small Aloes community, about 1000 people were sick and suffered from tuberculosis, nasal and respiratory illnesses. This was a direct result of the air and land pollution caused by the medical waste incinerator and two waste hazardous sites situated very close to where they live.

Uzbekistan: Uzbekistan is the world’s second largest exporter of cotton. A large number of children (some as young as seven) are used to harvest cotton and are exposed to chemicals which damage their health. The children are forced to pick cotton for little or no pay, while the government makes millions from the export of cotton. A number of children fall ill because they are exposed to bad working and living conditions.

Is environmental justice a basic human right?

Environmental justice is about the fair distribution of environmental benefits to all.

Article 25 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says that *everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family* including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.

CONSIDER: What does your city look like and how could it be better? Does everyone in your city have a nice green park to play in? Do some parts of your city look more neglected than others? Why is this?

JUSTICE. Justice means treating people fairly!
E.g. making sure that poorer communities have the same access to clean land, water and air as wealthier communities.

The 'Just Cities' Project

The Just Cities project aimed to start a conversation with young people about their vision for the places in which they lived and encourage them to get involved! The project let young people learn about environmental justice by taking part in various activities and discussions about issues like climate change, poverty/child labour, bad housing/sense of identity, waste and young people in politics.

Throughout the Just Cities project, four groups of young people from four different European cities (London, Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin) explored what Environmental Justice meant in practice and thought about how to get those rights in their own cities as well as for other people around the world. They found ways of becoming active citizens!

What activities did they do?

- Took pictures of what environmental injustice looks like.
- Met London MEP, Jean Lambert and other MEPs at the European parliament.
- Got funding to go to the European Parliament.
- Created an environmental campaign.
- Convinced a local campaigner to help with their campaigns.
- Made a documentary about environmental injustice.
- Gave presentations of environmental injustices in London and around the world.
- Interviewed other young people to find out about environmental injustices they had experienced.
- Started a blog to exchange ideas and information about environmental justice.
- Created a Facebook page.

Case Studies

How have young people chosen to get involved in environmental justice?



The Berlin group carried out a

campaign called 'Travels of a T-shirt'. They showed the injustice involved in producing a T-shirt using cotton which is harvested using child labour in Uzbekistan, India and West Africa. During this project the youth did research by speaking to people on the streets, raised awareness of how t-shirts are made and how they travel to us from developing countries. Then they made a short film about it!

As a result of this project, the group learnt about identifying a problem, tackling it, talking to authorities, motivating people and using resources such as the media.

In **London**, the group expressed their views in a variety of ways. Here's some of the work that they did: they interviewed MEP Jean Lambert about her work with young people and Environmental Justice. They also spoke at the Green Party Annual Conference where they were invited to express their views about young people's involvement with politics.



They put together a Question Time event where they selected influential

people to sit on a panel and invited young people from other schools to join the discussion.

They went to see a play at a theatre about the Brixton riots. Afterwards, the group discussed racism and poor living conditions as some of the problems facing some young people in London. The group went on a Toxic Tour of a derelict ship yard in a deprived area of Middlesbrough and spoke to a local activist.

In this project, these London youth gained experience of politics and were able to influence their peers and friends at school, home and at youth centres. The group's confidence grew by taking part in this project. A participant from the London group (aged 16) said: "We learned there are poor young people in Europe who feel ashamed about their place and don't know how to better themselves ... We would like to help change this!"

The **Paris** group made a documentary about the unfairness experienced by immigrants in France such as very low living standards, poor quality housing, lack of green space and parks, and poor access to public transport. It highlighted the social and environmental injustices faced by immigrant youths, compared to the better living conditions and facilities available to the other neighbourhoods in France. The film was then shown at the Brighton Film Festival! The young people also worked with the Director of an organisation that ran local schemes to get young people busy and out of trouble.

The **Amsterdam** group was interested in exploring the differences between rich and poor areas of town. Many of the kids were shocked to see how different people's lives were dependent on the environments in which they lived. They carried out research to compare the living conditions of different neighbourhoods. The group noticed that the poor neighbourhoods were neglected and not as clean and well-maintained as wealthier neighbourhoods. They went on to create a PowerPoint presentation of their results.

Starting your campaign: IDEAS and RESOURCES

So, what's a campaign? Well, it's not just about making and giving out leaflets! A campaign is about having a message and then finding the right tools to communicate that message. For example, a message could be something like 'We believe in Environmental Justice for ALL!'. Making and giving out leaflets would be just one of any number of tools that you could use for *communicating* that message. You will need to think about why you would like to carry out a campaign – you might want something to change or you might just be trying to bring something to everyone's attention.

Ideas for projects you could do!

1. Start a blog; 2. Make a video; 3. Take photos; 4. Draw pictures; 5. Start a twitter account; 6. Write a story/poem/song/rap etc; 7. Write a letter to your local MP; 8. Ask your school if they want to do a play about it; 9. Start a petition; 10. Run a school competition (e.g. a picture competition for the younger ones).



There are lots of ways for you to promote environmental justice. If you decide to start a blog you could get ideas by asking people from your school or youth group to share their thoughts with you. If you choose to make a

video about it, you could upload it to You Tube or Facebook and then tell people (like your families, teachers, MPs) to go and look at your brilliant work!

Here are some examples of campaigns that youngsters across the globe have carried out so that others could hear their message.

- <http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/recycle>
Members of the UK Youth Parliament and Oxfam put together a campaign to help schools set up recycling collections for gadgets left lying around.
- <http://www.ejmedia.org/> Young people in Boston, USA made a film called 'Unity in the Community' <http://video.google.com/googleplayer.swf?docid=-83077457103366598&hl=en&fs=true&autoplay=1>. This short film talks about young people finding out about the environmental injustice facing their community and the action that they took to highlight and confront the injustice discovered.

Campaigning resources that are free!

Check out these websites to find information about how to plan and carry out a campaign for little or no money! Cool eh?

- http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/myp_handbook/Planning_a_Campaign.pdf This resource is for members of the youth parliament in the UK gives you information about what campaigning means and describes how a campaign can be carried out.
- <http://www.louder.org.uk/> This site is still in development but is a place to go for electronic campaigning. It aims to provide resources to help with e-campaigns and allows you to connect to others with similar interests via its social networking functions.
- <http://www.ncstormwater.org/pages/toolkitcampaign.html#planninglow> This site campaigns against storm water and run-off pollution. It is a very useful site as it explains how to plan and create a campaign. It also has campaigning materials such as leaflets, posters, press releases, feature stories, radio and television commercials and a whole lot more, which give you ideas on how to campaign and get your message across to your targeted audience.
- <http://www.adviceuk.org.uk/news-and-campaigns/campaigns/campaignresources> This is a good site providing online resources to help you plan and set up your campaign. It contains information and ideas on how to work with the media to generate interest and awareness of your campaign, influence policy makers, set up a campaign website and lots more ideas to make your campaign successful.

Useful contacts:

How can you find contact details for:

- Your local Councillor, MP or MEP? – check the internet or ask at your local library.
- Your local council? – type in the name of your local council into an internet search engine and you should be able to find their website and contact details.
- Community associations in your area? – check on the internet or ask at your local library.
- A mentor to support you? – ask your teacher or youth leader.
- Your school radio station, newspaper or website? – ask your school mates or your teacher.
- Your local radio station or newspaper? – check on the internet, ask your teacher or staff at your local library.
- Capacity Global? - check out our website at www.capacity.org.uk

Funding:

- Apply to local charitable foundations that fund youth projects that are educational or environmental or related to human rights.
- Ask your school if they have any budget to spare for your project.
- Raise money yourself: this can be any number of ways (but should be legal or ethical).
- Ask local businesses if they would be willing to help by donating staff time, equipment or even a little money!

Read 'Avoiding the Wastepaper Basket: A Practical Guide for Applying to Grant-Making Trusts' by Tim Cook, Steve Simpson & Alan Dingle – this is a useful book on applying successfully for grants and funding. You could borrow it from the library or perhaps buy a used copy for £3-£4 on Amazon.co.uk.

The following links will give you information about how to put your funding proposal together and apply for grants:

- http://www.africanhealth.org.uk/CGS_docs/Funding_Proposals.pdf
- http://nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfunding_grants/tp/grantproposalhub.htm
- http://www.nuigalway.ie/research/vp_research/documents/Research%20forms/Putting%20together%20a%20grant%20-%20tips.pdf

The following link provides information about other sources of funding:

http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/ypf_funding_guide.pdf

This document talks about organisations such as UnLtd (the foundation for social entrepreneurs), which provides grants to young people who start projects that provide social benefits.

ETHICAL: Being ethical means DOING THE RIGHT THING! For example, not using forced child labour to pick cotton so that people in rich countries can have cheap but trendy t-shirts to wear.

Template letters:

You can use the following templates to write letters to an influential person (such as an MP) to raise awareness of environmental justice or to other organisations that you might want to pair up with to ensure the survival of your project. All you have to do is fill in the gaps with your particular information.

Letter template 1:

Dear MP/MEP/Councillor (pick one and use their actual name),

I am a young person living in (enter your town name and country____). I am concerned about (state your issue here____) happening in my local area. This (state issue here____) is causing problems such as (state the problems____). I am writing to register my concern with you.

According to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, all concerned citizens will have the opportunity to participate in environmental decision-making at the relevant level, and will have information made available and accessible to them with regard to such decisions. Our government has made a commitment to Principle 10 and so I would like to exercise my right to information about, and participate in, decisions concerning my local environment.

I would like you to____ investigate my concerns / note my concerns / write back and tell me what you are going to do about it (pick one).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

(sign and print your name_____)

Letter template 2:

Dear Partner Organisation (use the actual person's name if you can find it),

My name is I am a young person living in (name your town____). I am involved in a project called (project name____) which is about (describe your project____). I am looking for a partner organisation to help us with (state your cause) and to improve the chances of the project's survival and growth over time. As you know, projects may lose their momentum and cease to exist as a result of any number of changes, but I believe it is important that this project continues to make positive changes to the local environment. It would be an honour and privilege to have you as a partner organisation. Your experience and knowledge in the environmental/ humanitarian sector would be extremely valuable and help push our project forward to continue achieving its goals. As a partner organisation we would keep you updated on the project's progress and list your organisation as a partner on print and web materials. Enclosed is a sample of some of our work.

If you have any questions on the project, please feel free to contact us: (enter contact information).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

(sign and print your name here_____)

Making a start!

Brainstorm with your friends to come up with an issue that concerns you about your local area and environment.

Then find out if others in your community care about the same issue (it will be easier for you to gain support if you pick a common issue).

Then brainstorm a little more using the suggestions in this toolkit to help you come up with cool ways to communicate your issue to the wider community.

By this point, you have started your project.

Congratulations! :)

Inspirational films and short videos to watch

These thought-provoking films might inspire you in your quest for environmental justice!

1. Erin Brockovich (2000)
2. An Inconvenient Truth (2006)
3. The Age of Stupid (2009)
4. March of the Penguins (2005)
5. Planet Earth (2006)
6. The Blue Planet (2006)
7. Happy Feet (2006)
8. Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price (2005): <http://www.walmartmovie.com/>
9. The Power of Community (2006): <http://greenplanet-films.org/>
10. ECO RAP: voices from the hood. http://greenplanet-films.org/product_info.php?cPath=121&products_id=190

For the ten best eco-based movies for kids, check out this website: <http://www.thedailygreen.com/living-green/blogs/celebrities/best-eco-movies-for-kids>

For more suggestions on films to watch that contain environmental justice information, you can check out [Capacity's website](#).

DURING THE PROJECT

Help, I'm stuck!

What to do if you get stuck.

Action: 1. Ask a mentor; 2. Ask your teacher; 3. Ask your youth group leader; 4. Speak to people in your team; 5. Ask friends/family; 6. Go online and check out the Just Cities blog/Capacity Global page (as an example); 7. Keep a diary: you might find it useful to keep a log of all the activities you have taken part in. This could be useful in showing you how hard you've worked and jog your memory when you are trying to tell others about your project. It will also remind you of how awesome you really are!

Now tell everyone what you've been up to!

Now it's time to show off your good work! This part is important because by showing off your talents to others you will also be educating them about environmental justice and perhaps inspiring them to start their own projects!

- Why not hold an exhibition at your school?
- Why not put up images or other samples of your work on noticeboards in your local library?
- Why not upload a video that you have made onto YouTube or some other online place? Social networking sites are great tools for spreading messages quickly.
- Why not open a Facebook page highlighting what you've done and then invite all your friends/families/contacts to become a fan of the page?
- Why not put together a show/play for your youth club?
-

These are just a few suggestions but there are all sorts of ways that you could show people how hard and cleverly you have worked towards environmental justice in your city! Be creative :)

Keeping Your Project Alive!

It is important to find other organisations or groups that would be willing to take part in or even support



your project. This is important so that when you can't be involved in the project anymore or

you run out of money, the project can still live on! Don't be afraid to let other people get involved with your project. It is only human to feel like it is yours but try to see the BIGGER PICTURE!

Examples of organisations that could become your partner are:

Youth groups

Community associations

Environmental organisations

Good luck :)

COMMUNITY: A community is a group of people who have something in common.

ASSOCIATION: An association is what you get when people with something in common form a group with a formal structure.

So what happened to the projects across Europe once the initial activities were over?

The London group of youths started to set up a Youth Group with the same aims as the Just Cities project, that is, to get young people involved in decisions that would improve their environment and quality of life. The Just Cities Youth Group delivers workshops and talks to other groups of young people.

The Berlin group's English teacher used the project as an extra curricular activity to improve the students' English.

Notes to Adults

Links to the National Curriculum: This resource can be used when discussing environmental justice in a variety of subjects such as Citizenship Studies, Geography, Human Rights, Environmental Studies, Science, and lots more. It can also be used to enable students to gain team working skills, creativity, writing, campaigning, communication and I.T skills.

This toolkit contains suggestions and ideas for approaching environmental justice projects but it is by no means prescriptive and definitive.

How can you help?

You can help by being a facilitator. This does not mean taking the lead and telling the group what to do but it does mean *being available and helping the young people overcome obstacles and arrive at their own answers.*

- Help the youth group contact organisations and influential people.
- Be available to answer questions or offer advice.
- Help them access resources e.g. internet.
- Encourage them to brainstorm ideas for promoting environmental justice and displaying their work.
- Help them to contact the local radio station or newspaper to promote their work or campaign.

- Help them contact a local campaigner to help them with their campaign.
- Help them with the template letters to write to MPs, councillors, organisations to partner with, etc.
- Organise and run workshops (e.g. communication or teamwork) at various stages of the project to help the group stay on track and continue to work well together. The following would be a useful resource: Chambers, R. (2002) *Participatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities* (Earthscan: UK)

Background to the Just Cities project

The Just Cities project was developed as a result of the issues of social exclusion and poor living conditions highlighted in connection with the French riots. The civil unrest and riots in France in 2005 were caused by the built up frustration of immigrants living for years in poverty and excluded from society, with failing hope of a better future. This resulted in a state of emergency declared in France. It caused the French government and other European nations to realise the serious problems that can arise from not having a fair and inclusive society.

References

This section provides suggestions of resources that you might find useful throughout your project.

- Aarhus Convention - <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/>
- ActionAid Schools and Youth - <http://www.actionaid.org.uk/100006/schools.html>
- Advice UK - <http://www.adviceuk.org.uk/news-and-campaigns/campaigns/campaignresources>
- Agenda 21 - http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_00.shtml
- BEN - <http://www.ben-network.org.uk/>

- BTCV - <http://www2.btcv.org.uk/>
- Cancer Alley, Louisiana, USA: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A760420>
- Capacity Global – <http://www.capacity.org.uk/>
- Capacity Global (2009). *So what is environmental justice?* http://www.capacity.org.uk/downloads/what_is_environmental_justice.pdf
- Capacity Global's Environmental Justice Library - <http://www.capacity.org.uk/resourcecentre/films.html>
- Chambers, R. (2002) *Participatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities* (Earthscan: UK)
- Child Labour and Cotton - <http://www.ejfoundation.org/page330.html>
- Climate Justice Now - <http://climatejusticenow.wordpress.com/>
- Commonwealth Youth Exchange - <http://www.cyec.org.uk/>
- Connect Youth - <http://www.britishcouncil.org/connectyouth.htm>
- Creating Communities of Youth Action - <http://youngpeoplesdecade.org/communities.htm>
- David, D. Cuadra, C. & Miel, R., (2002). *Troubled Waters*; European Parliament
- Eco-Congregation - <http://ew.ecocongregation.org/resources/module5#list-item-11>
- EJAM – www.ejmedia.org
- Environmental Data Services – <http://www.ends.co.uk>
- Environmental Justice – <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/>
- Environwise – <http://www.environwise.gov.uk>
- Friends of the Earth (FoE) - <http://www.foe.co.uk/>

- Fundraising Ideas for Kids - <http://www.better-fundraising-ideas.com/fundraising-ideas-for-kids.html>
 - Green Action - <http://www.greenaction.org/org/accomplishments/spring2009.shtml>
 - Global Action Plan – <http://www.globalactionplan.org.uk>
 - Green Net - <http://www.gn.apc.org/>
 - Greenpeace Environment Trust - <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/about/greenpeace-environmental-trust>
 - Groundwork UK - <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/>
 - How to write Grant Proposals - <http://nonprofit.about.com/od/foundationfunding/grants/tp/grantproposalhub.htm>
 - Louder - <http://www.louder.org.uk/>
 - Partnership for Principle 10 – <http://www.pp10.org/>
 - Putting together a Funding Proposal - http://www.africanhealth.org.uk/CGS_docs/Funding_Proposals.pdf,
 - Putting together a Grant Application - http://www.nuigalway.ie/research/vp_research/documents/Research%20forms/Putting%20together%20a%20grant%20-%20tips.pdf)
 - Raising Funding - <http://www.raisingfunding.co.uk/kidsandfundraisingcategory.html>
 - Regeneration: Young people shaping environmental justice - http://www.movementstrategy.org/media/docs/5548_ReGenReport.pdf
 - Schumacher College – <http://www.schumachercollege.org.uk>
 - Sources of Funding for young people (Big Lottery Fund) - http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/ypf_funding_guide.pdf
 - Sustainable Development International: Inform, Influence, Implement – <http://www.sustdev.org/>
 - The Deadly Fumes of Environmental Injustice in South Africa - <http://www.peaceworkmagazine.org/pwork/0599/0514.htm>
 - The Environmental Justice Foundation - <http://www.ejfoundation.org/page124.html>
 - UK Government's Sustainable Development Unit – <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk>
 - UK Youth - <http://www.ukyouth.org/>
 - UK Youth Parliament - <http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/204867/index.html>
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights - <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a25>
 - Urban Environmental Management – <http://www.qdrc.org/uem/insights.html>
 - WWF-UK Education - http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/changing_the_way_we_live/education/
 - Young Friends of the Earth - <http://www.foeeurope.org/youngfoee/index.htm>
- Watch these videos:
- Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price (2005) - <http://www.walmartmovie.com/>
 - Tale of urban renewal - http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/majora_carter_s_tale_of_urban_renewal.html
 - The Power of Community (2006) - <http://greenplanetfilms.org/>

- 'Unity in the Community' -
<http://video.google.com/googleplayer.swf?docid=-7683077457103366598&hl=en&fs=true&autoplay=1>.
- *Best Eco-Movies for kids* -
<http://www.thedailygreen.com/living-green/blogs/celebrities/best-eco-movies-for-kids>



capacity global

living in a clean and healthy environment is everyone's right

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