



OVERBURDEN CURRICULUM: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
THREE-HOUR WORKSHOP



**PARE LORENTZ
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THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL



Environmental Justice Workshop | 3-hour Workshop

80 Mins

I. Film and Filmmaker Introduction (5 minutes)

- a. Introduce film – Why I made this film
- b. Exercise Part 1 – Sanctuary
 1. I have a request of you before we play the film: Think of a natural space that is important to you. Hold in your mind that connection you have to that place. How would you feel if that place was destroyed?
 2. Okay, hold those thoughts in your mind. We'll dive in deeper on that after the film. Preface that this is a selection of excerpts from Overburden (RT: 32 minutes)

II. Play Overburden (excerpt RT: 32 minutes)

III. Popcorn Exercise: In one word... What thoughts come to mind? (5 minutes)

IV. Group Discussion Warm-Ups (15 minutes)

- a. Let's begin with the thought I had you hold in your mind before we watched the clips. We asked you to hold in your mind a natural space that is important to you and to consider you would feel if it was destroyed. Given what you just saw, what would you do if your community was targeted for mountaintop removal or fracking or a pipeline? How would you feel and what would you do?
- b. From what you've seen who are the people in the film you identify with the most? What is it about them that leads you to relate to them or their experience?
- c. How are the issues presented in Overburden relevant to people living outside of Appalachia?
In the film Bill Price says: "If the coal companies are so good for us, why are we so poor?" What do you think the answer is to that question?
- d. What do you think other communities can learn from the fight to save Coal River Mountain?

70 Mins

V. Small Group Work, Part 1 (20 minutes)

- a. Define Environmental Justice.
 1. Come to consensus on a definition of "environmental justice" in small group, then share definitions.
- b. Beginning on a national (outside of NC) level, list as many current environmental justice situations – where communities are faced with environmental disasters, toxic spills, etc – as you can. Discuss in small groups and then share lists.
- c. Now on a state/regional level, list current EJ issues – lead to Atlantic Coast Pipeline.

VI. Play Robeson Rises (20 minutes)

VII. Large Group Exercise: "I used to think... but now I think." (10 minutes)

Have people quickly respond to this prompt to generate participation and give context to what group members learned from the film. Participants can feel free to answer more than once. This prompt acknowledges what people learned and, in some cases, an individual's principles continually evolve.

VIII. Small Group Work, Part 2 (20 minutes)

Robeson Rises is set in the most diverse community in the state, with about 1/3 native american, 1/3 african american and 1/3 white.

- a. (Ask of entire group) Of all of the env justice scenarios we listed earlier, how many of those take place in white and/or affluent communities? What are the general answers here?
- b. (Ask of entire group) Probably mostly low-income and communities of color. Why is this?
- c. (Ask the following questions together and participants work in small group. Then share.) So why are low-income and minority populations at particularly high risk for environmental injustices? What are their strengths that unite them?
- d. What are their strengths that unite them?
- e. The companies know these communities are historically dispossessed and therefore vulnerable. How can allies with power and privilege support these communities?
- f. Who gets to decide what that support looks like?

Share answers and ideas in large group.

30 Mins

IX. MVP Southgate Expansion

New Pipeline Announcement in North Carolina. Overview of the Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate project, how it ties in with the Atlantic Coast Pipeline fight, and how it all affects state energy rates and the move to cleaner energy.

EXERCISE: “Yes, and...”

Using a “Yes, and...” protocol is a common tool used in design thinking sessions to generate positive, collaborative relationships as well as a list of ideas. After screenings of the film, facilitators are often asked: “What are we supposed to do now?”

To develop possible next steps to extend education about economic justice, have people identify one idea that they might act upon in their community. Then have them work in pairs and do the following:

The first partner pitches their action idea, and the second partner must respond with an idea about what they might do to support the pitched idea by saying “Yes, and _____ ...”

Then the first partner responds to that idea by saying “Yes, and _____ ...”

Let partners work through this round for one to two minutes before repeating the process with the second partner pitching their idea.

X. Actions. So what do we do now?

- a. Email Federal Government on Coal Ash Rules (Action live until April 30th, can do from phone right there)
- b. Send Letter/Postcard to Gov. Cooper asking him to place a moratorium on the ACP and MVP developments
- c. Sign up for email lists with local non-profits to stay involved

XI. Closing remarks

Learn more at www.milesfrommaybe.com/engagement