

# INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM AND THE BATTLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

## SUMMARY:

Students will analyze the story of the people of Sungai Utik battling to protect their natural resources and reflect on the ways indigenous knowledge, solutions, and voices can lead the fight against climate change. At the end of the 2-day lesson, students will design an activism campaign on a related issue they feel will have the greatest impact on environmental justice. This lesson addresses Sustainable Development Goals 12, Responsible Consumption and Production; 13, Climate Action; and 15, Life on Land.

## SUGGESTED AGE LEVELS:

Ages 16-19

## SUGGESTED SUBJECTS:

Social Studies, Humanities, Geography, Economics, General Science, Earth and Space Science, Life Science

## TIME:

120 minutes (2 class periods)

## APPLICABLE STANDARDS:

1. Environmental Justice:
  - a. Describe historical and contemporary EJ events
2. Social Justice Standards

# IF NOT US THEN WHO?



- a. Justice:
    - i. 14 - Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
  - b. Action:
    - i. 19 - Students will make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and will do so despite negative peer or group pressure.
    - ii. 20 - Students will plan and carry out collective action against bias and injustice in the world and will evaluate what strategies are most effective.
3. Social Studies Standards through US C3 Framework:
- a. Geography:
    - i. D4.6.9-12. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.
    - ii. D2.Geo.4.9-12. Analyze relationships and interactions within and between human and physical systems to explain reciprocal influences that occur among them.
    - iii. D2.Geo.5.9-12. Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.
  - b. Economics
    - i. D2.Eco.1.9-12. Analyze how incentives influence choices that may result in policies with a range of costs and benefits for different groups.
4. Common Core State Standards:
- a. English Language Arts:
    - i. Reading:
      - 1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as

# IF NOT US THEN WHO?

in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

b. Speaking and Listening:

- i. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B: Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- ii. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
- iii. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the effects of deforestation and agriculture in Indonesia on the rest of the world.
2. Identify contributions of Indigenous people in the fight for climate justice.
3. Analyze the voices represented in climate change policy and solutions.
4. Evaluate the most effective strategies for specific goals in making change.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Whose voices are typically included when designing climate change solutions, and whose are missing?
2. What ways can we amplify indigenous voices, knowledge, and solutions for climate change?

## MATERIALS AND SET-UP

1. Class copies of “Hope: Indonesia’s Dayak Iban: A Video Guide” - Have them ready on students’ desks (or available online)
2. Class copies of the Hope Educational Pack: Pages 8-21 (or have available to students online)
3. Access to computers, posters, and markers for Day 2
4. Optional: Pre-assign students to groups of 3 for Day 2

## SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES:

[Malai Umai: A Dayak Iban Ritual](#) [13 minutes]

["This is the heritage of our ancestors" - Apai \(Pak\) Janggut aka Bandi - Dayak Iban People](#) [1 minute]

[IPCC Recognises Role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Tackling Climate Change](#) [1 minute]

August 2019 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land reported that protecting land rights of indigenous peoples and local communities is a scalable climate solution. Read the indigenous response from more than 42 countries:

<https://ipccresponse.org/our-response>

## PROTOCOL

### Day 1

1. 5 min: Have students write silently, then have a short discussion (questions can also be found on the video guide)
  - a. When you hear people talk about climate change, what types of things do you normally hear people say?
  - b. Whose voices and proposed solutions are usually heard? Whose are left out? Why do you think that is?
2. 15 min: Screening the film

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- a. Before screening the film, make sure that students understand definitions for the following key terms:
  - i. Dayak Iban - an indigenous people concentrated in Malaysian Sarawak and Indonesian West Kalimantan ([If Not Us Then Who?](#))
  - ii. Sungai Utik - a Dayak Iban community in West Kalimantan, Indonesia ([If Not Us Then Who?](#))
  - iii. Concession - something that is granted in response to demands. In this case, they are allowances granted to a companies to harvest natural resources in a certain area.
- b. Watch the film
- c. After the film, ask students to share their initial reactions with a partner.
3. 15 minutes: Research in groups using the [Educational Pack](#):
  - a. Group 1: What effects does climate change have on Indonesia and its indigenous groups?
  - b. Group 2: How might people around the world also be affected by what happens to indigenous people and their land in Indonesia?
  - c. Group 3: How do efforts like those of the Dayak Iban people affect natural resources and climate change?
  - d. Group 4: What solutions do the Dayak Iban people offer for climate change?
  - e. Group 5: What gets in the way of the Dayak Iban's participation in the fight for climate justice?
4. 10 minutes: Present findings
5. 10 minutes - Discuss:
  - a. Based on our learning today, what are the top 3 problems that, if addressed, would make the biggest impact? *Note to teacher: this question is kept intentionally broad. Allow students to take it in as many directions as they choose: invasion of companies onto indigenous land, capitalist power, exclusion of indigenous people from climate justice discussions, respect for nature, etc.*
    - i. Make a list as a class
    - ii. Ask a couple students to share what they think the top 3 problems are from the list and why
    - iii. Vote to decide on the top 3 problems

# IF NOT US THEN WHO?

6. 5:00 min: Preview tomorrow's assignment.

## Day 2

1. 5 minutes: Have students choose action groups:
  - a. Write the top 3 problems you decided on as a class yesterday on separate pieces of poster paper and place them around the room.
  - b. Ask students to choose which problem they feel most passionate about solving and to move to that poster.
  - c. Ask students to break off into groups of no more than 3 people within their poster group.
2. 10 minutes: Within their 3-person group, ask students to brainstorm actions that they could take during the class period today to help address the problem or educate others about it. Examples include:
  - a. Host a screening of the film and discussion with local community members
  - b. Create a social media series of what we can learn from Sungai Utik people and post
  - c. Create and post an infographic on social media, tagging organizations and activists that might reshare
  - d. Write to government officials or organizations
  - e. Create a guide for including indigenous people in climate change conversations and decide how to share with others
  - f. Find indigenous people in or near your community to interview and create a plan to amplify their responses and voices
  - g. Any other ideas students have
3. 30 minutes: Ask students to decide on a project idea and work on it for the next 30 minutes
  - a. As students are working, circulate and coach students on keeping their plan impactful yet manageable
4. 10 minutes: Have students present their projects, along with any plans they have on their next steps to carry it through
5. 5 minutes: Have students reflect on their film guide:
  - a. What are 2 things you learned over the past two days, and 1 question you'd like to investigate in the future?

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# IF NOT US THEN WHO?

## CREDIT:

Special thanks to Jeanne Wolz from [Teacher Off Duty](#) for lesson design.

## SOURCES:

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