

Panasonic Student Eco Citizenship Program



STUDENT EDITION

Environmental Equity and Sustainable Cities

DID YOU KNOW?

Environmental equity describes a country, or world, in which no single group or community faces disadvantages in dealing with environmental hazards, disasters, or pollution. Ideally, no one should need extreme wealth or political connections to protect the well-being of their families and communities.¹ In other words, every human should enjoy the same protection from major environmental impacts and health hazards.

Every day, humans are impacted by their environments. Weather, climate, pollution, community safety conditions, and community accessibility are all examples of environmental factors that impact people in their day to day lives. These impacts can be both positive and negative, but regardless of which they are, these impacts contribute to and help determine the quality of life for those community members.

For a moment, think about your community. Think about your family community, school community, neighborhood community, and your larger town or city community. Do you think right now, every human in your communities is protected from major environmental impacts? Why does it matter? Whether you live in a small town, a large city, or something in between, every community member has the right to feel safe and protected against these environmental factors.

LET'S THINK ABOUT IT

Let's pretend a major snowstorm is headed towards your city. It is expected to hit in 24 hours.

What preparations will you and your family make before the storm hits? List some here.

What is needed to make these preparations?

What hazards does the storm pose?

What challenges will be left after the storm?

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When a major environmental event, like a snowstorm, hits a community, everyone is affected but in different ways. While we cannot predict everything about a storm, we can identify groups who might be hit harder than others, even before it starts.

Let's think about that snowstorm again.

Will everyone in your city be able to prepare before the storm hits?

What groups of people will be the most vulnerable in the storm?

How can the city protect these groups of people?

How will your city recover after the storm? Who will help?

You might have found these questions harder to answer than the first set. These are the types of questions that everyone, not just city leaders, should ask themselves while working toward environmental equity.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This might feel overwhelming, but the good news is, no one is alone in this work! When a community works together to protect every member, every member benefits. Even communities with millions of people can work together to ensure a safe, healthy living environment for all. These cities are called Sustainable cities. Sustainable cities are cities that work to be inclusive, safe, and resilient, especially in the face of environmental and health hazards.²

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CONNECT IT

Think about your community. Think of a time when your city was impacted by a major environmental event or health hazard.

Environmental event / health hazard:

List some of the challenges that occurred:

How did the city work to help during each stage that you listed? If the city did not help during a stage, write what you think the solution should have been.

Before the event:	Before:
During the event:	During:
After the event:	After:

CALL TO ACTION!

Whether you live in a small community or a large city, there are always steps to take towards reaching environmental equity and sustainability, and those steps can be taken by you! Every person has the power to make their community, safer, more inclusive, and more resilient.

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SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Small steps can lead to big change. When everyone commits to taking bite-sized, actionable steps toward a goal, everyone benefits.

Complete this sentence by choosing one goal and offering an actionable step to meet that goal:

I can help make my community more _____ (safe / inclusive / resilient) by

AND GO!

As you move about your daily life, remember this actionable step. You might not realize it, but your commitment to making this small impact on your community is getting your city, and the world, closer to a place of environmental equity and sustainability.

Information in this lesson was obtained from these sources:

¹ Environmental Equity Vs. Environmental Justice: What's the Difference? Mobilize Green.
www.mobilizegreen.org/blog/2018/9/30/environmental-equity-vs-environmental-justice-whats-the-difference#:~:text=Environmental%20equity%20describes%20a%20country,of%20their%20families%20and%20communities

² Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. United Nations.
www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities

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