

ECUITY: Empowering Change Makers - Urban Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth

Engaging with Local Phenomena - Descriptive Transcript

Describer: *This video contains audio descriptions for the blind and visually impaired.*

ECUITY, spelled E-C-U-I-T-Y, Empowering Changemakers: Urban-Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth. A project of WestEd, the K-12 Alliance at WestEd, the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, and LA Sanitation and Environment.

ECUITY Project: Engaging with Local Phenomena.

Graham Montgomery, UCLA Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. As he speaks, photos and videos play showing Graham and various students interacting in lush outdoor spaces.

Graham Montgomery: The overall goal of our unit is to get people thinking about the connection between biodiversity, green space, and their mental health and how those resources might be distributed unequally across the landscape as well as like what students might be able to do about it.

Describer: *Edith De Guzman, UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation. As she speaks, video shows various printed research articles, ecology posters, outdoor spaces, and student drawings.*

Edith De Guzman: So we've created essentially very far from natural set of conditions. There are solutions that are practical and implementable starting at the campus level or at the home level. So it's really critical to have that changing science inform how we educate and engage students and the next generation in not only understanding the problems but then also providing solutions to the problem.

Describer: *Next, several eighth grade students, Vincent, Elle, Ogechi, Leahnna, Jazzlyn, and April, speak in an outdoor urban school garden.*

Vincent: This area around my school does have a lot of biodiversity, but it's like surrounded by a bunch of urban buildings, like the hospital behind us, and I just think it needs to change.

Elle: It makes you think more about what you're doing and how you impact the world, I guess.

Ogechi: In the valley, it's very hot, so like if we know more how to prevent it from getting hotter, we can help it get cooler.

Leahnna: I learned how biodiversity could affect people's mental health and how it improves students, especially in learning, in academic and attendance.

April: It really makes us care more about the environment and want us to improve it more and more, when we're around.

Describer: *Judy Kerber, Los Angeles Unified School District. As she speaks, video plays showing her interacting with students in the classroom.*

Judy Kerber: I think as humans and as young people, there's a real danger to being so self-centered in the way of like not perceiving that interconnection of everything and having the understanding of reciprocity. The connection is if I take care of this and I actually want more of this to be available to not only myself, the questions and the curriculum are really about, what about everyone's access in Los Angeles to nature, essentially.

Describer: *As Rodrigo, another eighth grade student, speaks, more video shows the school garden and the wildlife present in the space.*

Rodrigo: I hope people can also do the same thing we're doing and I hope they can do it outside of school or in school as well to help biodiversity here in LA County. It makes me feel kind of proud because with all of the refineries and all of these other things we have going around, it affects us, but it felt kind of good, worth doing that, just not for a grade, not for anything, just for, like, I wanted to do that on my own and I actually wanted to help. So it felt pretty good doing that.

Describer: *Karen De Leon, Los Angeles Unified School District, speaking from a park.*

Karen De Leon: Think that the structure of the unit leveled out the playing field for a lot of these kids. Everything was accessible to them, which is great, and it's, like, related to them because it's in their city, you know? That's very different than when they read a textbook that has words that they don't understand, that's not at their level, let alone near them. So just bringing that all together made it super accessible for everybody and I think that that's why it's been a success. The more that they're aware that they do have power and can make change, I think that we have a better chance at making an impact.

Describer: *Brian Learn, Los Angeles Unified School District, in a classroom.*

Brian Learn: By the end of this unit, they felt more empowered to make a change in their community and I think they saw the connection between skills they're learning in school and an actual application in real life.

Describer: Heaven, eighth grade student, speaking as scenes of students working in nature go by.

Heaven: It made me want to focus more on being outside in nature, you know, and protecting it, 'cause I saw how there was a lot of wildlife that used to have big population and it was dwindled down because of people. So that made me think more about the wildlife that we have and be more cautious about what I do.

Describer: Travis Longcore, UCLA Institute of Environment and Sustainability. As he speaks, photos show an oil refinery in front of a pond with ducks.

Travis Longcore: This provides an opportunity to not just investigate and understand it and document it, but the beauty here is, you can change it.

Describer: Mas Dojiri, Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment. As he speaks, video shows students interacting in the classroom.

Mas Dojiri: If we can get a significant number of kids to be environmental stewards, to be aware of environmental science, even if they go into a different field, but they're aware of environmental science, what they do in their everyday lives and their professional lives and how it affects the environment, then we will have made quite a bit of progress.

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A production of Empowering Changemakers: Urban-Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth. Produced by Jill Grace. Directed by Chris Olivas. Coordination by Dianna Cazarez. Features Edith De Guzman, Mas Dojiri, Brian Learn, Travis Longcore, Judy Kerber, Karen De Leon, Graham Montgomery, and students Vincent, Elle, Ogechi, Leahhna, April, Jazzlyn, Rodrigo, and Heaven.