

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

ECUITY Project Introduction - Descriptive Transcript

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

ECUITY spelled E-C-U-I-T-Y, empowering change makers. Urban-Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth. A project of WestEd, the K through 12 alliance at WestEd, the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, and LA Sanitation and Environment. ECUITY Project Introduction. Clouds blow across a red tinted sky, smoke billows from a factory, and palm trees sway in front of a city skyline.

Scenes of nature such as a clear sky and fields of grass flash by alternating with scenes of Mas Dojiri from Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment speaking outdoors.

Mas Dojiri: Scientists agree that we are in the sixth mass extinction. It is possible that humans could become extinct in the next few centuries, and the cause of that would be the lack of biodiversity. A biodiversity collapse could end up eliminating our fruit food sources.

Describer: *Travis Longcore, UCLA Institute of Environment and Sustainability, is on a deck observing nature. As Travis speaks, scenes of cities, wildlife and educators, and professional learning sessions go by.*

Travis Longcore: Biodiversity is a diversity of life at many different levels. ECUITY is a project to develop biodiversity and environmental justice related curriculum for middle school that's funded by the National Science Foundation, and is a collaboration between WestEd and others of us who are partnering with them like UCLA.

Mas Dojiri: If we teach our youths about biodiversity, healthy soils, environmental science, maybe they'll grow up to be stewards of the environment. That's hugely important.

Describer: *Edith De Guzman, UC division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation, speaking in the classroom.*

Edith De Guzman: We have a increasing urgency around mitigating extreme heat around the world, particularly in cities which are heating up on average at a rate of two times as much as the rest of the planet.

Mas Dojiri: ECUITY is empowering change makers urban biodiversity initiative for teachers and youth.

Describer: *Graham Montgomery, UCLA Ecology and Evolutionary Biology speaks.*

Graham Montgomery: The ECUITY project is designed to incorporate NGSS, these next generation science standards in a rigorous way, while also incorporating environmental justice as a component.

Mas Dojiri: Students are able to take new questions and investigate them, and that leads to some of the most meaningful learning experiences. They actually develop new knowledge, but take away the skills that are necessary to either do science or even to run projects or collect data or analyze your world.

Edith De Guzman: You will encounter some student aha moments in the process. It's a meaningful way for them to understand why not all neighborhoods look the same. Why having heat waves in Beverly Hills feels a lot different than having heat waves in South Central LA.

Describer: *Stacey Vigallon nature Nexus Institute is speaking in front of a home.*

Stacey Vigallon: Some of the best science conversations I've ever had have been with LA Unified School District students on their schools and in the field.

Describer: *Rodrigo, eighth grade student is speaking in a classroom.*

Rodrigo: We went to our school garden and we realized that there wasn't enough biodiversity basically in our garden. When something was wrong, we just have to figure something out until it was right, or something that when we saw change, that meant that we were doing something good.

Describer: *Brian Learn, Los Angeles Unified School District speaking from the classroom.*

Brian Learn: Students made a small yet measurable impact on our community, not just in terms of increasing biodiversity, but increasing student engagement with others on campus and improving our mental health.

Describer: *Jazzlyn and April, 8th grade students, speaking by trees in the sun.*

April: After going through a project, I do see myself kind of like in the future, I may become a scientist. Because becoming a scientist, like it has different meanings where you could do many things to help prove whether it's someone's life, animal's life, or especially your surroundings.

Describer: *Scenes of young people taking care of the environment and learning in the classroom go by as Brian Learn stands next to another individual speaking outdoors.*

Brian Learn: Engaging in science does require a lot of critical thinking and collaboration and care for communities. And those things can all be very joyful. They can provide a lot of satisfaction in our students, and that is something that we really wanna provide with this unit, is that they feel empowered as a scientist, and as an individual who can positively contribute to others. And that type of joy is what we hope to achieve.

Describer: *A butterfly lands on a leaf, then a cut back to Rodrigo in the classrooms.*

Rodrigo: I hope people can also do the same thing we're doing, and I hope they could do it outside of school or in school as well, to help biodiversity here in LA County.

Describer: *Students studying in nature, then a return to Brian Learn speaking.*

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.

Mas Dojiri: There is an African motto that says, if you want to go fast, go alone. If you wanna go far, take the entire village. This is gonna take the entire village.

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A production of Empowering Change Makers, Urban-Biodiversity Initiative for Teachers and Youth, Produced by Jill Grace, Directed by Chris Olivas, Coordination by Dianna Cazarez, featuring Edith De Guzman, Mas Dojiri, Brian Learn, Travis Longcore, Stacy Vigallon, Graham Montgomery, Jazzlyn, April, and Rodrigo.