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**NGO SUSTAINABILITY**

GLOBAL WARNING 1.2°C

*LATEST NEWS IN SUSTAINABILITY*

*NO. 154 | August 2024*

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVING AND RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET

[ngosustainability@gmail.com](mailto:ngosustainability@gmail.com) | [unngosustainability.org](https://www.unngosustainability.org)

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*- NGO Sustainability Team*

**United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 global objectives established by the United Nations in 2015 to address social, economic, and environmental challenges. Each objective has specific targets that cover issues including clean water, quality education, climate action, and gender

equality.

Their aim is to eliminate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.

The SDGs are designed to be universal, inclusive, and integrated, encouraging countries, organizations, and individuals to collaborate towards a more sustainable world.

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**SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**

*Amuktamalyada Panchangamvenkata (NGO Intern)*

In today’s era of unprecedented challenges, the global economy stands at literal crossroads. Multiple crises, including the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and climate change, are threatening the stability and growth prospects of economies worldwide. During these challenges, Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) advocates for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all. This goal isn’t only essential for economic prosperity but also for the social and environmental well-being of societies globally.

In recent years, with the global economic landscape, we have witnessed significant fluctuation. There have been positive trends, like the increase in labor productivity and the decrease in unemployment rates. The global unemployment rate fell significantly from its peak during the pandemic, reaching 5.4% in 2022, which is lower than the pre-pandemic level of 5.5% in 2019. Yet these statistics cover underlying issues that need urgent attention. Decent work is a crucial aspect of SDG 8 and includes opportunities for everyone to engage in productive employment that provides a fair income, workplace security, and social protection for families. It also includes better prospects for personal development and social integration. The absence of decent work opportunities, insufficient investments, and under-consumption can erode the basic social contract, which undermines democratic societies: the principle that all members must share in progress.

Challenges include persistent unemployment, particularly among youth, the prevalence of informal employment, labor market inequalities such as the gender pay gap, and unsafe working environments. Young people aged 15–24 continue to face severe difficulties in securing employment, with nearly one in four young people globally not in education, employment, or training. In the light of things, governments must implement dynamic, sustainable, innovative, and people-centered economic policies. Investing in education and training is crucial to equip youth with skills that match labor market demands. Providing access to social protection and basic services, regardless of contract type, is essential to leveling the playing field. Furthermore, promoting women's economic empowerment and ensuring equitable pay are critical steps towards inclusive growth.

A wholesale reform of the financial system is also necessary to tackle rising debts, economic uncertainty, and trade tensions. Such reforms should aim to create an environment where equitable pay and decent work are accessible to all, particularly young people. Ensuring access to financial services is another pivotal aspect, as it enables individuals and businesses to invest in their futures and contribute to economic growth. Safe and secure working environments are fundamental to achieving decent work. This is especially relevant for health workers and those providing essential services, we are in the forefront of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Implementing adequate health and safety measures and promoting supportive working environments are crucial for protecting the well-being of workers and ensuring sustained productivity. Sustained and inclusive economic growth can drive progress, create decent jobs for all, and improve living standards. Achieving this requires a concerted effort from governments, businesses, and civil society. Policies that promote innovation, infrastructure development, and equitable access to resources are vital. Additionally, fostering a culture of sustainability within businesses and encouraging practices that prioritize long-term ecological and social benefits over short-term gains can contribute significantly to this goal.

SDG 8 represents a comprehensive vision for the future, one where economic growth is inclusive, sustainable, and beneficial for all members of society. While the path to achieving this goal is fraught with challenges, it is also ripe with opportunities. By investing in education, reforming financial systems, ensuring safe working environments, and promoting equitable employment practices, we can build a resilient and prosperous global economy. The journey towards inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all is not just a necessity but a moral imperative, ensuring a better future for current and future generations.

**Sources:**

United Nations Statistics Division. (2023). *Sustainable Development Goals report 2023.* Retrieved from [ https://shorturl.at/enICi]

United Nations Environment Programme. *Why do Sustainable Development Goals matter? Goal 8.* Retrieved from [https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals/why-do-sustainable-development-goals-matter/goal-8]

**SDG 9: Industries, Innovation, and Infrastructure**

*Alex Kawa (NGO Intern)*

**Background**

The United Nations has outlined 17 Sustainable Development Goals for a sustainable future. Goal 9, “seeks to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the decline of global manufacturing, which was present even beforehand, was accelerated, thanks in large part to inflation and supply chain breakdowns. While medium-high- and high-technology industries have seen strong rates of growth in manufacturing, underdeveloped countries have seen a much slower rate of progress, which is keeping the international community from reaching its goal “of doubling the manufacturing share in gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.”

**Climate concerns and targets**

The UN notes how industrial emissions have ballooned to 36.8 billion metric tons worldwide, a new record. To achieve the aforementioned goal of a doubling of the share in GDP of manufacturing by 2030, the UN recommends investing in more broadband infrastructure, as well as projects which lower carbon emissions.

Targets outlined by the UN are rooted in a commitment to economic growth through sustainable development. These targets include infrastructure upgrades and retrofitting in order to increase sustainability, as well as upgrading technological capabilities. These targets, the UN states, would not only help the international community achieve its 2030 goal, but would grow the economies of underdeveloped countries, while making strides towards a more sustainable future.

**Source:**

United Nations. (n.d.). *Infrastructure and industrialization.* United Nations. Retrieved from [https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/infrastructure-industrialization/]

**SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**

*Caitlin Reed (NGO Intern)*

The United Nations recognizes the global trend of gross overconsumption of resources to be unsustainable, earning it a place as the organization’s 12th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). This goal is ambitious and extremely widespread, especially given the amount of materials that are wasted daily, including food, plastics, and other materials expanding humanity’s ecological footprint when left in the environment. Although production and consumption is inevitable, it is often the methods for the disposal and use of materials which are unsustainable and lead to immense waste.

Fossil fuels are among the resources whose production has skyrocketed in previous decades, which are highlighted within this SDG as one of the most notable and damaging resources that should be used minimally, or not at all. Similar to many other problems that are causing environmental damage, measurements of material footprint versus material consumption are drastically larger in developed countries, with developing countries often having a larger material footprint that indicates a larger amount of waste being generated relative to materials produced. Additionally, a lot of this waste has myriad potential impacts on the environment and human society. Food waste, for example, both exacerbates global hunger and malnutrition experienced by millions, while also generating greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to global warming.

Much of the reporting done on this SDG by the U.N. is effective at understanding the scope of the problem of global waste in general, but does not necessarily propose effective solutions. Incremental progress is highlighted by the U.N. from previous climate conferences that have addressed some form of waste. Parties within the Montreal Protocol, for example, honored commitments to phase out chlorofluorocarbon waste from aerosol and other products, in order to stop the damage done to the ozone layer by CFCs. In general, 62 countries as well as the European Union have also introduced nearly 500 policies that aim to make production and consumption more sustainable, although these policies and their effectiveness need more detail.

The first initiative by the United Nations is the implementation of a 10 year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, where committed countries will develop policies and instruments that will allow for more sustainable consumption. Many goals specify targeting industries that account for significant waste, including food, chemical waste, and rapidly increasing electronic waste. Given that the world is on track to continue producing millions of tons of waste in virtually all countries, there should be pressure from the United Nations during conferences including the Conference of the Parties (COP) to begin rolling out commitments that will reduce waste. Although there has thus far been minimal commitments that hold countries accountable, this may be necessary in the near future to begin to slow the rate at which humans are polluting the environment. Let's look at yearly reporting.

**Source:**

United Nations. (n.d.). *Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production.* United Nations. Retrieved from [https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12#targets\_and\_indicators]

**SDG 13: Climate Action**

*Andrew Edwardson (NGO Intern)*

Climate Action (SDG 13) is critical to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It emphasizes the urgent need to address climate change and its impacts, recognizing it as one of the most pressing issues of our time. The goal is to enhance resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards, integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning, and improve education, awareness, and institutional capacity for climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning systems.

Climate change poses significant challenges to the environment, human health, and the global economy. Rising temperatures, melting polar ice, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise are among the many profound effects of climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global temperatures have increased by approximately 1.1 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with severe repercussions for ecosystems and human societies.

Integrating climate action into national policies is crucial for effective mitigation and adaptation. Governments must prioritize climate issues in their planning processes to develop resilient infrastructure and communities. This integration involves creating policies to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable land use, and disaster risk reduction.

The European Union's Green Deal serves as an exemplary model of effective policy integration. This ambitious initiative aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. It focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing energy efficiency, and advancing sustainable agriculture and forestry. By incorporating climate action across various sectors, the EU sets a benchmark for other nations to follow.

Education and awareness are fundamental aspects of SDG 13. Increasing public understanding of climate change and its consequences can drive behavioral change and bolster support for climate measures. Educational programs should equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in climate action, from reducing personal carbon footprints to advocating for systemic reforms. Political engagement is vital.

Building resilience and adaptive capacity is essential for communities to withstand and recover from climate-related disasters. This includes investing in resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and assisting communities in developing adaptation plans.

For instance, the Netherlands has implemented innovative flood control measures, such as constructing flood-resistant infrastructure and restoring natural floodplains. The same for Venice. These initiatives have significantly reduced a country's vulnerability to flooding, underscoring the importance of proactive adaptation strategies. Enhancing resilience not only protects lives and livelihoods but also supports long-term development.

Transitioning to renewable energy is a key component of climate action. Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydropower, offer sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change.

Efforts like Project Drawdown highlight the potential of renewable energy alternatives. Onshore wind and solar photovoltaic (cheapest and fastest in renewable energy installments) technologies generate clean energy, create job opportunities, and stimulate economic development. Supporting the advancement of renewable energy is essential for achieving SDG 13 and ensuring a sustainable future.

Sustainable Development Goal 13 is a crucial element of the global endeavor to tackle climate change and its impacts. By integrating it into national policies, enhancing education and awareness, strengthening resilience, and fostering renewable energy adoption, we can make significant strides toward this goal. Through collective action, we can address the urgent issue of climate change and build a more sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.

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# **An Ode We Owe By Amanda Gorman[[1]](#footnote-0)**

# How can I ask you to do good,

# When we’ve barely withstood

# Our greatest threats yet:

# The depths of death, despair and disparity,

# Atrocities across cities, towns & countries,

# Lives lost, climactic costs.

# Exhausted, angered, we are endangered,

# Not because of our numbers,

# But because of our numbness. We’re strangers

# To one another’s perils and pain,

# Unaware that the welfare of the public

# And the planet share a name–

# –Equality

# Doesn’t mean being the exact same,

# But enacting a vast aim:

# The good of the world to its highest capability.

# The wise believe that our people without power

# Leaves our planet without possibility.

# Therefore, though poverty is a poor existence,

# Complicity is a poorer excuse.

# We must go the distance,

# Though this battle is hard and huge,

# Though this fight we did not choose,

# For preserving the earth isn’t a battle too large

# To win, but a blessing too large to lose.

# This is the most pressing truth:

# That Our people have only one planet to call home

# And our planet has only one people to call its own.

# We can either divide and be conquered by the few,

# Or we can decide to conquer the future,

# And say that today a new dawn we wrote,

# Say that as long as we have humanity,

# We will forever have hope.

# Together, we won’t just be the generation

# That tries but the generation that triumphs;

# Let us see a legacy

# Where tomorrow is not driven

# By the human condition,

# But by our human conviction.

# And while hope alone can’t save us now,

# With it we can brave the now,

# Because our hardest change hinges

# On our darkest challenges.

# Thus may our crisis be our cry, our crossroad,

# The oldest ode we owe each other.

# We chime it, for the climate,

# For our communities.

# We shall respect and protect

# Every part of this planet,

# Hand it to every heart on this earth,

# Until no one’s worth is rendered

# By the race, gender, class, or identity

# They were born. This morn let it be sworn

# That we are one one human kin,

# Grounded not just by the griefs

# We bear, but by the good we begin.

# To anyone out there:

# I only ask that you care before it’s too late,

# That you live aware and awake,

# That you lead with love in hours of hate.

# I challenge you to heed this call,

# I dare you to shape our fate.

# Above all, I dare you to do good

# So that the world might be great

**Special Topic Report: The United Nations “Race to Zero” Campaign**

*Arian Isaczai (NGO Intern)*

The “Race to Zero” campaign under the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate Change (UNFCCC), aims to mobilize non-state actors including regions, cities,

companies, and educational, financial and healthcare institutions to join the Climate Ambition

Alliance to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. In 2020 the campaign was launched in

alignment with the goals of the Paris Agreement to halve global emissions by 2030 and ensure

global warming does not surpass 1.5°C.

The “Race to Zero” campaign has developed a set of Criteria to ensure its participants'

actions and commitments correspond to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. The criteria are

known as the 5 Ps, as members are required to Pledge, Plan, Proceed, Publish and Persuade.

There are two categories known as the Starting Line criteria which outlines the baseline

requirements that all members must achieve, and Leadership Practices, which indicate the

methods by which leading entities can pave the way towards achieving net zero emissions.

Failing to meet these standards is not permissible if they wish to participate in the campaign.

When members pledge to achieve net zero emissions they are required to set an interim target by

2030 to cut emissions by no less than 50%. Following this, a concrete plan must be developed

by members explaining the actions taken to achieve net zero. Subsequently, members must

proceed by reporting progress through immediate and ongoing action to implement the net zero

plan.

A key aspect of the “Race to Zero” campaign is transparency through publishing progress

and reporting on the actions taken annually towards achieving short and long-term goals. Lastly,

members are urged to persuade others by aligning their objectives of net zero with their policy

engagement and advocacy. Therefore they should strive to impact the standards of industries,

market behaviour and public policies in a manner that makes progress towards the net zero goal.

Since the “Race to Zero” campaign was established, it has seen strong growth as the

campaign has expanded significantly since 2023, with more than 13,500 members from 146

countries. This is particularly shown in the growth in Asia Pacific including 518 new members.

Whereas regions in North Africa and the Middle East (MENA) have shown an increase of 104%

in participation in 2022. The growth serves as evidence for the efforts of the campaign to

improve regional relevance by creating strategies that are suited to the specific challenges and

goals of each region.

Italy’s largest utility producer, Enel is a prime example of leadership in the “Race to

Zero” campaign. By the year 2030, the company intends to minimize its emissions intensity to

73 grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour, which is approximately an 80% decrease in

contrast to the levels in 2017. With already having achieved 54 gigawatts of renewable energy

capacity, by 2030 Enel intends to generate 57 more. Making improvements to the flexibility of

grids along with increased investments in battery storage are key elements of Enel’s plan for

achieving a greater amount of clean energy. The company is also expanding its electric vehicle

charging stations and behind-the-meter storage systems significantly, in an attempt to empower

consumers to take part in the energy transition.

Several achievements and ongoing challenges are highlighted in the “Race to Zero” 2023

Progress Report. Currently, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) account for over 50%

of members of the campaign and there has been a considerable amount of growth from new

regions among them as well. There has also been great progress made towards transparency, as

there is a substantial increase in the proportion of large companies and SMEs announcing their

progress with contending to have increased no less than one of their net zero goals by 75%

Based on the 2023 State of Climate Action report, mandatory corporate risk disclosure is

one of the seven indicators on the right track, as more regulators around the world have become

concerned about the threats climate change presents to businesses. As a result, new laws have

been established including those put forth by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

(SEC), and European Union regulations including the updated EU Emissions Trading System

(EU ETS), and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Given the need to fulfil

these imminent obligations, several actors such as Race to Zero Partners are improving reporting

and expediting the procedure for non-party stakeholders globally. Furthermore, more areas are

starting to require these disclosures with jurisdictions that collectively account for half of the

world’s GDP being subject to climate-related regulation according to current legislation.

Consistency amongst the reporting of non-party stakeholders is brought by disclosures, which in

turn secures funding dedicated to climate action. Moreover, it was estimated that large company

members participating in the “Race to Zero” campaign are accelerating annual progress in

cutting emissions, which contributes to aligning their financial expenditure with climate goals.

This is based on the Carbon Disclosure Project (CPD) data which illustrates how from 2022 to

2023 there was an increase of almost three times in the proportion of members reporting that

their capital expenditures, operational expenditures, and revenue alignment are in line with their

climate transition goals.

Regardless of the positive trend, The “Race to Zero” campaign faces major obstacles,

including a lack of financing and capacity building for SMEs, regions, states, cities, and

non-party stakeholders from developing economies and emerging markets. It was estimated that

climate-related projects that require financing are present in 74% of “Race to Zero” cities.

Moreover, approximately $42 billion in financing is necessary for the 1217 projects listed with a

stated value of $108 billion. Furthermore, Non-party stakeholders are seeking policy

recommendations and guidance from governments due to the unpredictable and evolving nature

of the regulatory environment. Another challenge is the significant variances in the format and

scope of these plans due to the lack of independent verification and standardized framework,

further putting the credibility and efficacy of the transition plans at risk.

Despite the great progress made in mobilizing global action to achieve net zero, it is

essential to remove systemic barriers to speed up the transition to a net zero environment. There

is also a need for sustained action, collaboration and a greater focus on accountability and

implementation to achieve the campaign's ultimate objective.

**Sources:**

UNFCCC. (2023). *Race to zero 2023 progress report* [PDF]. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Retrieved from [https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Race-to-Zero-2023-Progress-Report\_29112023.pdf]

UNFCCC. (n.d.). *Race to zero*. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Retrieved from [https://shorturl.at/1WYSn]

The Climate Group. (n.d.). *Join Race to Zero*. The Climate Group. Retrieved from [<https://www.theclimategroup.org/join-race-to-zero>]

**Environmental Organization Report: SeaLegacy**

*Wonsuk Cho (NGO Intern)*

**Introduction**

SeaLegacy, a pivotal non-profit organization, operates at the confluence of conservation, storytelling, and innovative engagement strategies to protect the world's oceans. With a vision that transcends traditional conservation efforts, SeaLegacy employs the profound power of visual storytelling to illuminate the beauty and fragility of marine ecosystems, advocating for their protection. This exploration into SeaLegacy's values, vision, funding mechanisms, and accomplishments reveals a comprehensive approach to ocean conservation.

**Core Value: Empowerment Through Hope**

At the heart of SeaLegacy's mission is the fundamental belief that hope can catalyze change. Unlike narratives that focus solely on environmental degradation and loss, SeaLegacy chooses to tell stories that inspire and empower individuals and communities. This ethos is predicated on the understanding that showing the possibility of a thriving ocean can motivate people to act more decisively and passionately in its defense. Through captivating imagery and compelling narratives, SeaLegacy strives to transform public perception, highlighting not just the ocean's vulnerability but its resilience and capacity for recovery.

**Vision: A Symbiotic Relationship Between Humanity and the Ocean**

SeaLegacy envisions a world where humanity and the ocean coexist in a mutually beneficial relationship. This vision encompasses not only the preservation of marine biodiversity but also the sustainable utilization of ocean resources. They see the ocean as a protagonist in the global narrative of climate change and biodiversity conservation, a critical player in the planet's health that deserves a central role in our collective efforts to forge a sustainable future. Through their work, SeaLegacy aims to foster a deeper connection between individuals and the marine environment, promoting a shift towards more responsible and informed stewardship of oceanic ecosystems.

**Innovative Funding: Engaging a Global Community**

While explicit details on their funding strategies are carefully managed, it's known that SeaLegacy harnesses the power of community through initiatives like The Tide, a group of committed donors. Their funding model likely emphasizes the importance of scalability and sustainability, possibly leveraging partnerships, grants, and public donations to fuel their operations. By appealing to a global audience with their stunning visual content, SeaLegacy taps into a broad base of support, mobilizing resources that enable them to undertake significant conservation projects. This approach underscores the potential of collective action and shared responsibility in driving meaningful environmental progress.

Notably, their work in Norway's Arctic to protect orcas from oil drilling and their success in protecting 54 species of sharks under Panama's Proposal 37 at CITES are just a few examples of how visual storytelling can lead to tangible policy changes and conservation successes. These victories are a testament to SeaLegacy's effective blend of advocacy, art, and action in fostering a healthier relationship between humanity and the ocean.

**Accomplishments: Tangible Conservation Wins**

SeaLegacy's track record is marked by significant accomplishments in ocean conservation. Their work has contributed to the establishment of marine protected areas, the protection of endangered species, and the fostering of sustainable practices within communities and industries alike. Through strategic collaborations and public engagement campaigns, they have managed to influence policy, shift public opinion, and bring about concrete changes in how ocean resources are managed and conserved. Each project, whether focused on the icy realms of the Antarctic or the vibrant coral reefs of tropical seas, is a testament to the impact that informed, passionate advocacy can achieve. Therefore, SeaLegacy's campaigns extend beyond mere documentation, serving as a catalyst for policy change and conservation action. They have played a crucial role in mobilizing public and political will for the protection of critical habitats, leveraging their visual storytelling prowess to spotlight issues that might otherwise remain unseen.

Notable expeditions to Antarctica, Timor-Leste, and Patagonia, among others, have not only showcased the intrinsic beauty of these locales but have also spotlighted the threats they face, from overfishing and pollution to climate change impacts. Through these journeys, SeaLegacy not only documents the state of our oceans but also actively participates in creating solutions, such as advocating for marine protected areas and engaging in on-the-ground conservation efforts​.

**Future Directions**

Looking ahead, SeaLegacy is committed to expanding its reach and impact through new projects, partnerships, and initiatives. With the ocean's health increasingly recognized as critical to addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable development, SeaLegacy's work is more relevant than ever. By continuing to leverage the universal language of photography and film, they aim to inspire a global audience to take action for the oceans, ensuring a legacy of conservation for future generations. Moreover, SeaLegacy not only dreams of a healthier relationship between humanity and the oceans but actively works towards making it a reality. Their accomplishments in the conservation sphere underscore the potential for visual media to effect tangible, positive change, setting a benchmark for future efforts in the realm of environmental protection.

**Podcast Report: “A Matter of Degrees”**

*Lucia Ferreira (NGO Intern)*

The podcast “A Matter of Degrees” with Dr. Lee Stokes and Dr. Katherine Wilkinson offers stories about the power of climate change and the ways that we can fix it through 30-45 minute episodes over the course of 3 seasons. Their goal is to help their listeners understand the deep past about climate change with the hopes to answer any questions they may have. They frequently have climate leaders come on the show to share their own climate change stories and offer a new perspective.

Doctor Lee Stokes, one of the two hosts of the award winning show is an energy and climate policy specialist as well as author. She is a graduate from M.I.T., Columbia, and the University of Toronto and has achieved many awards throughout her career amongst them being named a 2020 Grist fixer. Stokes earned this title by providing advice on climate change centered issues to policy makers at all levels both federal and state. Currently, Stokes works as a professor of Environmental Politics at the University of California Santa Barbra, as well as a senior policy consultant for advocacy groups Evergreen Action and Rewiring America.

The second host of the show is Doctor Katharine Wilkinson who has been named by the New York Times one of the 15 “women who will save the world”. She has curated the All We Can Save Project which focuses on climate leadership as well as All We Can Save Circles. Wilkinson is an author, teacher, as well as strategist who graduated from Sewanee with a BA in religion as well as a doctorate in geography and environment from Oxford. She has given multiple talks on climate change from TED Talks to the United Nations.

One of my favorite episodes of the podcast is “The Journey of Justice40”. In this episode the hosts, Dr. Leah Stokes, Dr. Katharine Wilkinson, and Nikayla Jefferson, give a policy analysis of Justice40. Justice40 is a policy that was enacted by the Biden administration requiring that 40 percent of federal investments go to disadvantaged communities. However there are many issues with Justice40 as like all federal policies, it is a work in progress. Some of the issues with Justice40 that the episode talks about are how do you measure what a benefit is and how do you measure what a disadvantage is. During the podcast multiple guests are brought on to answer some of these questions. Shalanda Baker, a professor, lawyer, and environmental advocate is an expert in this field. She answers the question of how you can measure what a benefit is. Understanding this is crucial to Justice40 because the underserved communities don’t just get 40 percent of the 100 billion dollars that are given towards clean energy and climate, they receive 40 percent of the benefits. There is a big difference there. Baker gives the example that a benefit could be job production that is created by improving the environment. Therefore under Justice40, 40 percent of those jobs need to be given to people who live in disadvantaged communities.

The second question is how do you measure what a disadvantaged community is? This label could include many different factors and many different ways to measure what constitutes as disadvantaged. In the podcast it is answered that there are mapping tools that measure health impacts, pollution, and economic factors. However the podcast mentions one very important factor that was not taken into consideration. That factor is race. In the CLCPA’S definition of what a disadvantaged community is, race was included. Their definition includes race by saying “Members of groups that have historically experienced discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity.” However when New York was creating their definition of what a disadvantaged community they did not include race as a factor. I would say it is very crucial to include race as a factor in defining a disadvantaged community. It is a known fact that some communities are disadvantaged due to inequalities that are historical and they have not been able to bounce back. Take redlining as an example. We know that some cities like Baltimore, Maryland are still feeling those effects today. Therefore this would make Batlimore, Maryland a more disadvantaged community then say a city that was not negatively impacted by redlining in the past. The pod-cast also says that if you do not include race as a defining factor in a disadvantaged community the main identifier would be income, which is not an accurate measurement. The whole purpose of Justice40 is to provide assistance and benefits with those who need it the most. In order to do this you need one of the most important factors to be taken into consideration which is race. I think the idea behind Justice40 is extremely important but without proper implementation, this policy will not reach all of its goals. Another big part of Justice40 is how the benefits will be properly distributed. The money that is received from Justice40 can be put into federal grants, however this takes someone to apply for the grants which takes knowledge, resources, and time. The disadvantaged communities may not have all of these resources to get those grants. Therefore a more accessible way to receive the benefits needs to be further looked into.

This episode amongst many others is a key example of how this podcast offers many eye opening perspectives on climate change and how we can best deal with it. Each episode helps to answer questions, provide guidance, and create solutions for the many different parts of climate change. Having two hosts as well as guests on most episodes allows the listener to hear multiple perspectives on climate change, educating the listener on climate change in the most effective way possible. The podcast is entertaining, educating, and effective in its goal of sharpening curiosity and eliminating climate change guilt.

**Producer:** Roma Stibravy, President

**Editor:** Adrianna Mannino - Columbia University School of Professional Studies

**Contributors:** NGO Sustainability Interns

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