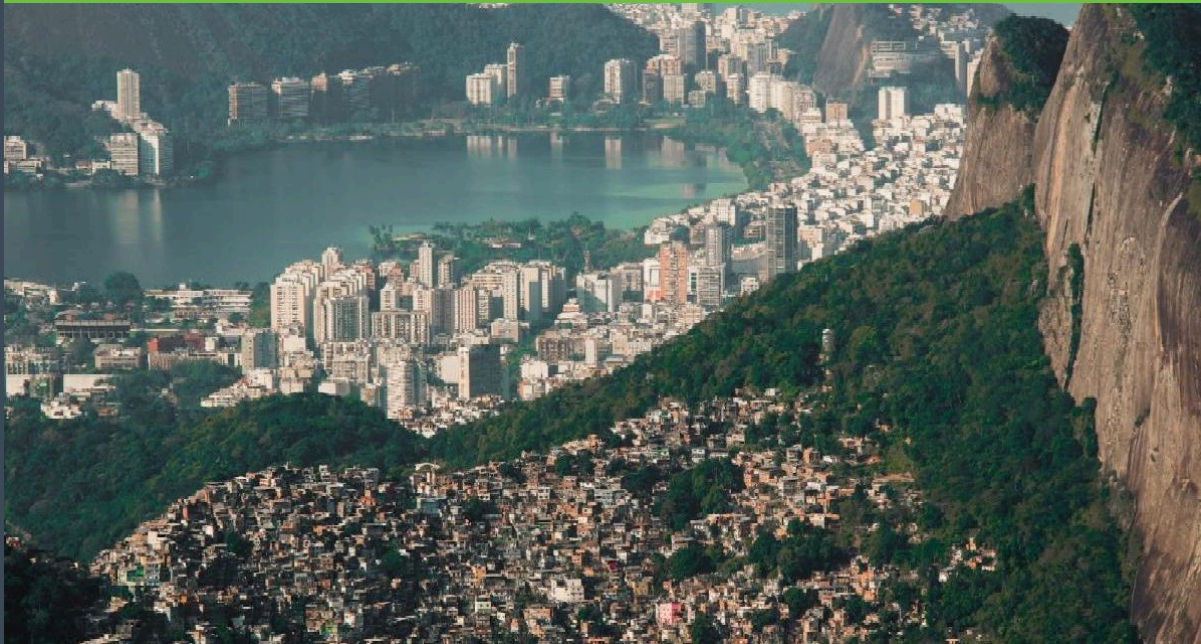




SESYNC Feedbacks

News from the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center



ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITY | How to Address It

In today's world, a leading topic of focus and discussion is economic inequality and its devastating impacts. But what is less discussed is the parallel rise in **environmental inequality**.

In the context of human decision making, what benefits *some* (both economically and environmentally), does not benefit *all*. Instead, marginalized and vulnerable communities often end up facing the greatest environmental burdens, such as pollution, climate change, and land and resource degradation.

The way people experience environmental inequality takes many forms, including limited access to resources (e.g., food and water); greater susceptibility to illness and disease; increased risk of death or displacement from natural disasters; and loss of economic opportunity. Below, we highlight different resources that explore the causes and damaging effects of environmental inequality, as well as approaches for creating a more equitable future.

Participatory Futures Planning Lesson: Reducing Environmental Inequality

Participatory futures planning is a form of stakeholder engagement that involves the sharing of knowledge and desires in a way that may give less-empowered groups an opportunity to engage in vision- and decision-making alongside more empowered groups. **In this lesson, learners will design and implement a participatory futures**



planning session with targeted members of their communities. The ideal outcome is to identify marginalized stakeholders, invite and facilitate their visions of future socio-environmental betterment, and present the insights to local managers.

Introduction to Socio-Environmental Systems Lesson: A Lens to Examine Sustainability with a Food Insecurity Exercise

This lesson explores socio-environmental systems, using an example system that's tied to the problem of food insecurity.

Learners examine different scenarios and systems that play a role in creating food insecurity worldwide, including issues such as climate change, agricultural pests, food deserts, war and other conflicts, and lack of water access.



Advancing Sustainable Development Goals Lesson: Gender Equality and Environmental Health

This lesson uses a recent literature review to detail the most effective women's empowerment initiatives to achieve more sustainable methods in the three environmental occupations of agriculture, fishing and aquaculture, and forestry. **In this lesson, learners will investigate the**

challenges to sustainable development in the three sectors and develop innovative initiatives with gendered needs in mind. Their learning may be extended to develop a formal grant proposal for a sponsoring organization.

Introduction to Political Ecology

A key focus of the field of political ecology is "who wins and who loses" based on decision making. **This lesson aims to get learners to understand how political ecology is linked to environmental and social equity.** It also seeks to explore how environmental vulnerability relates to social capital and geopolitical context rather than simply environmental risk.



Political Ecology in Action Lesson: Water and People



Building on the previous lesson, "Introduction to Political Ecology," this exercise aims to help participants put those conceptual and theoretical topics into practical thinking. Using issues at the intersection of water and communities, this lesson has learners apply a political ecology lens to identify factors driving water resource decisions, as well as the consequences of those decisions. **This lesson illustrates how political ecology frameworks can help provide insights into**

the origins, dynamics, and inequities associated with socio-environmental problems.



Air Quality Inequality

Succinct Science—Audio Interviews f... • By The National Socio-Environmental Synthesis... • Sep 23, 2021



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SESYNC Audio Interview: Air Quality Inequality

Asthma affects approximately one in eight individuals in the United States and has effects ranging from minor inconveniences to loss of life. But, in order to ameliorate this problem, a better understanding of what causes asthma is needed. In this audio interview, SESYNC's Erin Duffy talks to Dr. Kelly Jones about her research looking into the role of the neighborhood environment on children's respiratory health outcomes.

Lesson: Understanding Disease and Illness as a Socio-Environmental Problem

Theoretical and empirical research has now convincingly identified strong linkages between human health, social dynamics, and the environment. **This lesson explores how enhancing and protecting health requires understanding and preparing for the complex causal dependencies between the environment and social dynamics.** It also considers how the nexus of vulnerability, hazard, and exposure contribute to human health risks.



Integrating Social and Equity Dynamics into Ecological Studies Lesson: The Landfill Case Study

This lesson illuminates a specific case study of the interface between communities and their environmental conditions: in this case, the municipal landfill. Learners will investigate how cultural practices and social inequality lead to marginal living environments, which

disproportionately affect the poor and people of color.

Redlining and Tree Cover Lesson: Measuring Environmental Inequality in Baltimore

This lesson is a simplified, web-based exploration of the residual effects of redlining on neighborhood tree cover and species diversity in the city of Baltimore. Using online databases for redlining maps and tree surveys, learners will explore contrasting neighborhoods in Baltimore to better understand how historical inequality endures to this day and how cities may implement proactive measures to increase environmental equality across a metropolitan area.



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