

Module 2 Response For Our Common Home

Lesson 5

Agency and Advocacy

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What is meant by human agency?

(Agency is the power people have to think for themselves and act in ways that shape their experiences and life trajectories. Agency can take individual and collective forms.)

How can individual human agency ignite collective action to protect and care for our common home?

What methods can individuals and groups use to protect and care for our common home in the Amazon biome here and now?

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prep

Have a playlist ready on your phone for the Ignite exercise (or borrow a student's phone and previewed playlist)

Prep

Download and prepare to project the accompanying power point

Print

The lesson plan

The folder Teacher Background Resources provides additional websites and documents for teachers.

Lesson Summary

Students will view two short videos. In the first, they will learn about how the organization Greenpeace, in the late 1990's, acted in solidarity with Indigenous peoples to protect the Great Bear Rainforest in Canada. In the second, they will learn about one woman who took a stand to protect the land and her home in Peru, 2011-2016, and gained success through the international attention that was generated. The focus then moves the loci of urgency to the Amazon. The two videos are designed to inspire discussions and decisions about using our own agency, individually and collectively, to work in solidarity with Development and Peace to care for our common home in the Amazon in these tumultuous times of climate change. Two specific actions of citizenship are suggested but the creative power of the students is also beckoned.

LESSON PLAN

IGNITE

Project Slide 1: Enduring Understandings.

Read through each of the four points separately and slowly, without commentary, but asking students to consider what each means.

Musical Pairs

Ask each student to choose one of the enduring understandings and think of an example to support it. Give them a minute to think. In an open space, have students move about while the music is playing; when it stops, ask them to turn to the person nearest them (partners) and share their examples.

Play the music and repeat a few more times.

IMMERSE

Explain that with these enduring understandings in mind, we are going to watch two stories on video and see how human agency in citizenship can ignite collective action to protect people and ecological systems.

Project Slide 2

This is the story of one group's actions of advocacy and solidarity to save the Great Bear Rainforest in Canada. Show the [Great Bear Rainforest video \(3:02\)](#). Ask students to respond in pairs to the following See, Think, Wonder questions:

Note: To make thinking visible, you can ask them to record answers on sticky notes (or write responses on 3" x 4" pieces of paper) which they then affix to a wall, allowing them to see the breadth and depth of their collective thinking.

See, Think, Wonder

- What did you see that stands out for you?
- What did you learn that you didn't know or hadn't considered before?
- What do you wonder? What question does this video raise in your mind?

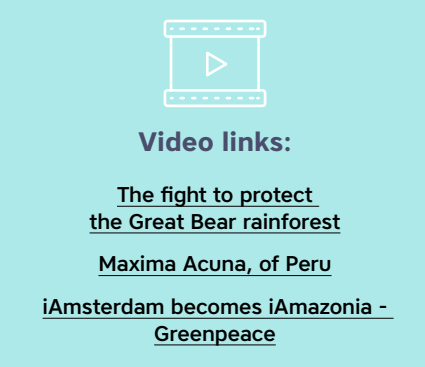
After synthesizing their responses, ask:

what were the elements that led to success in the attempt to protect the Great Bear Rainforest? (Working with the Indigenous peoples in solidarity, political pressure nationally and globally, honest and respectful dialogue with stakeholders i.e. forest companies, clarity of strategy, clear stated attainable goals founded on ethical principles, patience and persistence towards the goals.)

Project Slide 3 to introduce the second story of Maxima, in Peru. (Teacher [background info](#)) Before showing the video, give the following information.

This is the story of Maxima Acuna, an illiterate Peruvian woman who fought to protect the land she lived on, and in so doing, gained the attention of the world.

"The case of Máxima Acuña is an example of systematic harassment against human rights defenders in the context of development projects in the Americas," said Erika Guevara Rosas, Americas director for Amnesty International. "It is necessary that the Peruvian government respond to the thousands of voices who have spoken out for Máxima Acuña and protect her from any type of intimidation."



Video links:

- [The fight to protect the Great Bear rainforest](#)
- [Maxima Acuna, of Peru](#)
- [iAmsterdam becomes iAmazonia - Greenpeace](#)

Between the years 2011 and 2014 Máxima Acuña denounced various acts of harassment, aggression, and attempted forced eviction by members of the Peruvian National Police. In 2016 Amnesty International drew attention to incidents of the Yanacocha mining company's security forces destroying crops that belonged to Máxima's family. A campaign of letter writing followed.

[Show the video \(2:30\)](#)

Ask students to respond in pairs to the same See, Think, Wonder questions as above, and use the same strategy to make their thinking visible.

See, Think, Wonder

- What did you see that stands out for you?
- What did you learn that you didn't know or hadn't considered before?
- What do you wonder?
- What question does this video raise in your mind?

Synthesize their responses.

Project Slide 4. to show the impact of actions of *agency and advocacy*. Share the following information with the students.

Maxima said: "I want to thank with all my heart for the number of letters that have been sent to me. They give me courage and encouragement, to continue fighting," said Máxima Acuña. "I ask that you help me to seek justice so that I can live in peace and tranquility."

Women in the Americas are exposed to violence by companies, governments and institutions. Patterns of physical and symbolic gender violence include smear campaigns, defamation, and rumors about the sexuality and the status of women that reinforce gender stereotypes. These campaigns damage the leadership of women in organizations and movements.

The Minister of Justice and Human Rights, Marisol Pérez Tello was present to receive the 150 thousand signatures and messages that Amnesty International collected in solidarity to tell the Peruvian government that 'Máxima is not alone'.

Ask:

What were the elements that led to success in Maxima's attempt to protect the land and her home?

COALESCE

Now, to bring it all home: Let us apply our agency into actions of citizenship in the campaign: For our Common Home- A future for the Amazon is a future for all.

Project Slide 5

Invite student response to the quote on the slide.

Project Slide 6

Ask:

Why is a future of the Amazon a future for all? (*Consider the science.*) Move through the 6 points on *slide 7 and 8*.

Project Slide 9

[iAmsterdam becomes iAmazonia - Greenpeace \(2 min\)](#).

Share:

This video is to provide further clarification on a country's recognition that *A future for the amazon is, indeed, a future for all*. It is a Greenpeace video in Europe, specifically in Amsterdam. Greenpeace is known for its direct actions and has been described as the most visible environmental organization in the world. Today, all organizations *need to work cooperatively* in an effort to bring the shift that is necessary to heal our relationships with one another and with the earth.

Project Slide 10

a discussion that segues into decisions in the classroom to organize a citizenship action *For our Common Home—a future for the Amazon is a future for all*. Invite students to do a two-minute free-write on the questions first, and then to share responses in a group of four. The teacher should then elicit responses from the class as a whole to synthesize their thinking.

Project Slide 11

Ask:

What citizenship actions can we take to protect our common home in the Amazon?

Project Slide 12

Recall the letters of Solidarity that we signed in the previous lesson (lesson three) and the upcoming *advocacy work of Development and Peace which you are a part of*. This slide was also shown in Lesson three and is here for review. (*Teacher: also see attached Summary Canadian Citizenship Actions.*)

Project Slide 13

and discuss organizing and arranging for a meeting with your MP.

Project Slide 14

and discuss how important it is to *share the message*.

Project Slide 15 and 16

Discuss the act of fund-raising as an important citizenship action. The gospel imperative is to continue Jesus' work of bringing justice and peace into the world. This is the mission of Development and Peace. All of its work is based on principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The annual campaigns are designed to *educate and mobilize Canadians in current global issues that need attention now, at the same time as the organization continues its important work of supporting partners in the Global South*. Development and Peace relies entirely on the generosity of donors to do its work of education, advocacy, and solidarity. Any fund-raising effort **For our Common Home** is a significant help and contribution to Development and Peace as it strives to fulfill its mission. Best citizenship practices create awareness, interest, and engagement in the cause as the first step towards fund-raising. We are all part of one human family in one world. The future is in our collective hands.

Discuss THINKfast an activity that has both education and fund-raising.

- You can choose from a collection of activities and reflections that will help you and your group experience the challenges of poverty and injustice in concrete ways.
- By participating in this 25-hour educational and fundraising fast you stand in solidarity with those in the Global South who need our support, both through financial support to projects they are leading, and through a greater understanding of the structures that perpetuate poverty and injustice.
- You can hold a THINKfast for 10–12 hours, during one day at school, OR do a different type of fast, fasting from electronics and screens as an alternate THINKfast!
- A THINKfast can happen anywhere – your school, your parish, your home, or in any chosen location with a group of friends! Some organizers tackle a THINKfast by themselves, but organizing the event is a great chance for youth to get involved and share the responsibility and the fun of planning while building community.
- Mobilize the masses and make the most of your THINKfast!

The two links below give info to students, [the rationale and inspiration for students](#) to put the energy into organizing a THINKfast, and the [Organizer's Toolkit](#) makes the event simple to organize, engages a lot of people (which is a good thing), and invites everyone into citizenship action.

CREATE

Design a citizenship action **For our Common Home**. Keep in mind the power and support offered through BOTH awareness building and fund-raising, charity and justice.

Invite students to return to the *Enduring Understandings*, responding to them anew, integrating and applying what they have learned in this lesson.

Please consider making a donation to support our mission at Development and Peace – working with partner organizations in the Global South who promote alternatives to unfair social, political and economic structures, and educating Canadians about the causes of poverty and mobilizing towards actions for change.

Catholic Social Teachings

Our campaign

Our campaign, *For our Common Home*, operates under the theme, *A future for the Amazon, a future for all* in its first year. It urges Canadians to act to protect the Amazon through solidarity, advocacy and personal commitment. By showing solidarity with and advocating for Amazonian communities facing the impacts of deforestation and wanton resource exploitation, we support their defense of their land, which in turn protects the Amazon and can avert climate catastrophe. By making sustainable choices like reducing consumption and using public transport, we address the root causes of climate change.

Solidarity Letters

We invite Canadians to support two Brazilian communities — the *seringueiros* of Machadinho d'Oeste and the Mura people of Manaus — by signing or writing a letter of solidarity. This will shine a spotlight on these communities' struggles against dispossession and destitution, their courage in defending their land and the root causes of their plight (see Action Sheet for details). The more individuals, communities, schools and parishes that sign the Solidarity Letter, the more attention these communities will receive. These letters, which will be brought to the communities, will show them that they are not alone, and that we stand with them in defending their land and our whole planet. devp.org/act

Advocacy Letters

We will use the signed letters to apply pressure on the Canadian government, Canadian embassies, local and national governments in Brazil, and implicated companies. Citing the numbers of Canadians concerned about the situation of the Amazon's defenders, we will write and publicize forceful advocacy letters. These letters will include specific demands to protect the defenders and will emphasize Canadians' awareness of and solidarity with their struggles. They will be sent, with due fanfare, to companies that threaten the communities and to agencies tasked with their protection.

MP engagement

We will encourage our members to meet their federal Members of Parliament to share the urgency of acting to protect the Amazon and its defenders. The post-election period will be an opportune time to meet new and re-elected MPs. Some questions that can be posed to MPs are:

- Given the importance of the Amazon in regulating global climate and the Bolsonaro government's undermining of Indigenous land defenders' rights, what will your party do to pressure the Government of Brazil to protect the environment and respect human rights?
- Canada is currently negotiating a possible Mercosur free trade agreement. What will your party do to ensure that this agreement is contingent on respect for human rights by all parties?
- The Trudeau government had promised to create an independent ombudsperson empowered to investigate alleged human rights abuses linked to the overseas operations of Canadian resource and energy companies. So far, this ombudsperson has not been given enough power and independence to be truly effective. What will your party do to ensure that the new Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) is effective in ensuring that communities suffering from the impacts of Canadian mining operations have access to justice? Members who meet an MP should submit a report at devp.org/campaign/reportac.

Intergenerational pledge

Canadians are challenged to take our *Intergenerational pledge for our common home* at devp.org/pledge. The pledge invites people of all ages to commit to at least one lifestyle change for the sake of the environment. Examples including reducing meat consumption and using public transport. Pledge-takers can also upload a selfie for a mosaic of engaged citizens.

Voices at risk: Canada's guidelines on supporting human rights defenders

https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/rights_defenders_guide_defenseurs_droits.aspx?lang=eng

- The Canadian government can work with other governments, civil society, international organizations and the private sector to strengthen the international rules that protect universal human rights. This also means supporting human rights defenders: the brave women, men and youth in communities around the world who hold governments and companies to account. These are the people who stand up for others who face discrimination; the people who persist in saying what they believe—even when doing so can endanger their own lives.
- Canada's Guidelines on Recognizing and Supporting Human Rights Defenders is a how-to guide for supporting human rights defenders—with practical advice for officials at Canadian missions abroad and at Headquarters—as well as a clear statement of Canada's commitment to promoting all human rights, including by supporting the vital work of human rights defenders.
- The ultimate goal is to ensure that Canada continues to provide effective support to people around the world who are working for human rights—from helping human rights defenders be more effective advocates to helping protect them from harm.