

activism

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: To understand the range of strategies activists use to challenge established power structures; to consider how activists contribute to democratic processes and environmental governance.

VIDEOS:



A Totem Journey (Canada) Amy George, a Tsleil Waututh elder, joins forces with artists to defend their coastal territory from petroleum pipelines.



Resisting Arctic Oil (Norway) Silje Lundberg, a youth activist, warns that oil drilling in Arctic Norway endangers the largest arctic coral reef in the world.



Youth Leaders of the Salish Nation (Canada) Activist Takaya Blaney trains inner city youth to be leaders in environmental justice.



Glacier Nation (Chile) Activist Matías Asun has created a Glacier Nation in his campaign to stop destructive mining practices.



Confronting Disaster Together (USA) After Hurricane Sandy, local builder Joe Mangino co-founded a grassroots initiative to bypass government bureaucracy and get to work rebuilding his community.



Rethinking Beach Replenishment (USA) Surfer and activist John Weber helps communities to understand the limits of beach replenishment along the Jersey Shore.

QUESTIONS:

- Make a list of the different threats these activists have identified. Who are they holding accountable? Who are they trying to influence?
- Describe the assumptions they are trying to challenge.
- What are their long-term goals and what actions are they taking in the present? How are they communicating their goals?
- How do different strategies like art, law, community building, protests or direct action contribute to democratic processes?

ACTIVITIES:

- Find a local environmental activist group in your community. Interview them about how they came to activism, what past social movements have inspired them, and what strategies they find most effective? Share your story with others. Invite one of the activists to present at a class or event. Pair their talk with a compelling film related to the issues they work on.
- Read local or national news on environmental issues from three different sources, including an activist source. How do these three different sources frame the issues differently? What does the activist perspective contribute?

RESOURCES:

- This Changes Everything Tools thischangeeverything.org/tools/
- Toolkit for civic engagement of young people iicrd.org/projects/creative-tools-civic-engagement-young-people
- Indigenous environmental network ienearth.org/

KEYWORDS:

activism, organizing, art, environmental justice, grassroots, pipelines, mining, oil, protest, youth, indigenous, environmental justice