

Justice Discussion For Our Kids - June 18

- Present: Lella, Galen, Marian, Jinhwa, Marianne A., Andrea, Rebecca C., Jon D.
- Introduction
 - Context: quick review of our June 8 strategy meeting (Lella)
 - **What do people want to get out of discussion today?** Most of you were at the June 8 strategy meeting. (Go 'round')
 - How do we incorporate anti-racist ideas at an org level, and in local teams?
 - We need to incorporate this into the purpose our green & just recovery town halls
 - How do you increase diversity without putting pressure on people who don't have the bandwidth. How to do it in a way that isn't self-serving, and that helps people.
 - As a volunteer-powered org, how do we increase diversity w/o burdening people? Climate change, environmental justice, racial justice... how can we find intersectionality and frame it in a good way?
 - There's a lot to climate justice and environmental justice - let's keep connections open - equity conversations are not new
 - Knowing when to move out of the way
 - See if we are in alignment about ideas moving forward
- Debrief from June 11 "Why a Just Recovery Must Be Anti-Racist" teach-in that many of us attended (If you missed it, you can [view it here](#), or [view our notes here](#)) - or another event you've attended, something you've read, etc. that's relevant to the discussion today. (Popcorn style) (Galen)
 - Keep asking questions; challenge our assumptions and the way that we do things; being willing to ask questions and put yourself out there and realize you will make mistakes

- Addressing the blind spots of the climate movement; conversation has been shifted to where some people have already been - this is good
- This “work” is not “extra” - it is all work that needs to be done - systemic change is the only change that will make a difference; environmental change is social justice change
- We are not alone
- We are needed as accomplices, not only allies
- Action is needed, as well as performance - performative action is a start
- Capitalist economy values productivity and not necessarily humanity - degrowth of the economy: how can this be done in light of justice issues
- So many resources available and being shared; lots to process - feels like there is a lot of energy and potential in this moment, which is strange, coming right after COVID, perhaps as a result of the speed with which government responded to the pandemic, and the rapid changes we adopted - there is a sense that we can make deep and rapid change (i.e. defunding the police, etc.) - imaginations have been opened.
- important to recognize that the leadership of BIPOC on climate/environmental issues is longstanding and there are organizations that are already mobilizing on that issue. There's sometimes a sense that if BIPOC aren't in mainstream climate orgs that we need to find/invite them to join our thing, but IMO it's often more productive to seek out BIPOC-led climate work and support it. One example is Indigenous Climate Action. They're very active on social media if you want to look them up.
- Overview of Pour nos enfants/For Our Kids Montreal's BLM statement: (Natalie not available, but the statement is here for reference: <https://forourkidsmtl.wordpress.com/2020/06/08/black-lives-matter/>)
- Discussion of a National FOK network statement (& actions beyond)

Is solidarity statement necessary/desirable?

- Other organizations have done this well - do we need to reinvent the wheel, especially as a small organization?
- Needs to be a first step; actions need to be built into the statement and committed to
- Important to show that we are not silent; we are engaged in the conversation
- could it be more incorporated in a “vision” statement towards a climate justice

Note: see Appendix at the end of this document for a draft FOK statement

What can FOK do nationally/in local teams?

- Commit to not having events that are completely white (how do we follow through with this practically)? Especially not all-white panels - if this is not possible, it should be addressed honestly at the event
- How do we look through a lens of inclusivity for all events? Gender, age, etc.
- Set targets and goals
- Being cautious about tokenism and adding to the burden/workload of BIPOC as representatives of entire communities
- How can FOK be part of amplifying organizations led by BIPOC? Promoting events, etc. rather than creating new organizations and working in silos
- Stepping back, and also stepping forward - where can we lend some of our energy and resources?
- Do we create our own events or support others?
- Specifically in Vancouver: BLM group is very specifically addressing defunding the police - FOK Vancouver could support/participate in this - local groups could look at what local campaigns are happening and support those.
- Resources do exist at FOK level - decisions can be made as a network about how that money is spent; \$\$ is a way of specifically supporting others
- Further meetings/specific committee to plan these actions? Integrated into monthly team meetings.
- Rebecca: this is NB and can make time; Jinwha = monthly call - no one has time, but this is NB enough.
- Drafting statement: asking for team leaders to be part of that; to be reviewed by all team leaders (add power that parents have, support/amplify other organizations' voices, using inclusion lens for all events)
- Set up justice meetings on an ongoing basis to continue to work on actions
- Share events and organizations that we can all amplify
- Look at how to change public schools system (i.e. start teaching the actual history of Canada, the traditional “Family tree” project is not always a positive undertaking), etc.

Next meeting? Monthly: date TBD

Appendix: DRAFT solidarity and action statement for For Our Kids Canada

For Our Kids connects parents and grandparents across Canada in the desire to work for and create a better future for all children. That vision explicitly compels us as an organization and as individuals to stand in solidarity with Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, taking action with them to dismantle systemic racism and injustices which place more value on a better future for white children than for any others.

Acknowledging all the ways and places in which we need to be active in demanding and enacting change, we will begin by:

- using our platform to highlight and amplify the voices of leaders in climate change and social justice who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC),
- holding a mirror to ourselves as an organization and as individuals to identify where we are falling short, and committing to learning and training on how to be better accomplices,
- growing diversity within all aspects of For Our Kids, and
- supporting local groups of parents and grandparents undertaking to do the same.

These changes involve short-term and long-term action; we will continue to implement and revisit them, and invite input, feedback, and guidance along the way. We acknowledge that racism exists in the environmental movement and in the nonprofit sector, and that recent events have deepened the grief and trauma long experienced by racialized communities. We commit ourselves to actively working to eradicate it and create a just society, for all children.

Background: Notes from Team Leaders' June 8 strategy meeting:

Address racism in environmental movement and focus on diversity

- **More discussion at the organizational level about diversity.** From what I've seen so far, the majority of folks in For Our Kids groups are white.
- A forum or some sort of **process for integrating anti-racist practice into our work.** Super important that racial justice is climate justice.
- Tap into resources that are out there to integrate anti-racist practice into our work
- (Invitation to team leaders to post resources on FB group that they find helpful, and suggest outside resources with expertise on this issue that FOK can bring in for training sessions) Amplify the forums that are out there, be visible, develop a solidarity statement and support local teams in developing their own - maybe a session on how to do this?
- **Reach out to leadership organization of minority groups to see how to work collaboratively**
- It's too urgent to make this a niche (*aka white people) concern - need to be reflective of community
- At town halls, **add to the three levels of gov't by inviting indigenous government leadership to have equal time/space** at the event and to recognize their authority.
- **Be constantly thoughtful about raising voices of minorities** - ensuring that there are invitations and opportunities for voices to be heard.
- **Embrace flexibility to go in a different direction** than what was intended.
- **Invite BIPOC to be part of our events**

Other resources & articles:

- <https://www.vogue.com/article/why-every-environmentalist-should-be-anti-racist>