

# ICEO Community Dialogue: Exploring Climate & Environmental Justice

## Workshop Recap

### Description:

This workshop gave MIT Community members an opportunity to reflect on their roles in promoting climate and environmental justice at MIT to nurture a commitment to advancing a sustainable, just, and equitable future together.

The session featured a presentation of the Two-Eyed Seeing Approach by [Patricia Saulis, MLK Visiting Scholar](#), and various definitions of environmental justice by MITOS. Attendees worked in small groups to reflect and share ideas about taking action at the individual, campus, and community scales, guided by the following questions:

1. **Individual:** In what ways can individuals take action on climate & environmental justice today?
2. **Campus:** What could the integration of environmental and climate justice into emerging campus policies and plans look like?
3. **Community:** Who are the environmental justice related partners we should engage with, learn from, and work with?

### Presentation Takeaways:

The 2 Eyed Seeing Approach enables us to combine Indigenous and Western Knowledge systems and to take the best of both. It provides the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of understandings and the co-development of a fulsome, enhanced understanding of the world, on our way towards finding solutions to climate and environmental crises.

Environmental justice makes the connection between the climate crisis and human lives, including, but not limited to:

- death and chronic illness due to exposure to toxins from coal fired power plants and other toxic facilities,
- Increase in the severity of storms which devastate communities
- access to nutritious food

The effects of environmental injustice are compounded by COVID-19 and are felt in MIT's home communities of Boston and Cambridge

Every community member has a unique "sphere of influence". As a start to understanding your role in advancing climate & environmental justice, consider what people and areas of campus you are able to reach to have an impact. This might be a committee you are on, a department Chair you are working on a project with, and so on.

Community Members are interested in learning more about several different aspects of environmental justice. Some common interests include:

- Building a culture of equity and justice engagement at MIT
- Integrating justice into specific individual and department-level goals
- Understanding impacts of environmental racism across demographics, particularly Indigenous communities

[Link to ICEO Community Dialogue Slides](#)

### **Discussion Takeaways:**

Attendees were split into breakout rooms of four to share ideas about climate and environmental justice action. Some ideas included:

- Raising awareness of climate and environmental via choosing vendors and purchasing practices
- Reaching out beyond our personal sphere of influence to advocate in places where our voices aren't often heard
- Creating resources to help departments across the Institute take action on environmental justice in both the short- and long-term
- Extending the climate and environmental justice dialogue to research and education side of MIT, beyond DEI discussions and campus sustainability
- Highlight environmental justice action and progress on MITOS website

### **Next Steps:**

MITOS plans to advance climate and environmental justice in our campus sustainability work and learn more about what the campus community cares about.

[Link to Workshop Resources](#)

For upcoming Community Dialogues & more, visit the ICEO at <https://diversity.mit.edu/>

If you have any questions, ideas, and/or resources to share, contact Asia Hypsher, Campus Environmental Justice Student Fellow, at [ahypsher@mit.edu](mailto:ahypsher@mit.edu) or Susy Jones at [susyj@mit.edu](mailto:susyj@mit.edu).