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## 2010 TEACH-IN FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE REPORT

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### THE VISION

The goal of the Teach-In is to start focusing the minds and resources of tomorrow to tackle the issues of climate justice facing our world today. Post-secondary institutions have the potential to realize solutions to both climate justice and climate change. They bring together diverse expertise, have large economic impacts and are cradles of innovation. Most importantly, however, post-secondary institutions are educators and it has been proven time and time again that education is the key to change.

With a focus on climate justice, we aimed to expand the reach of the 2010 Teach-In beyond BC's borders. The third annual goBEYOND Teach-In was held from March 1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

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### BACKGROUND

goBEYOND has now designed and coordinated three Teach-Ins under the umbrella of our education pillar. The goBEYOND Education Pillar is based on the recognition that from political sciences to the visual arts, from engineering to sociology, our education system shapes our citizens and leaders, and in doing so, informs the decisions they will make in a rapidly changing world. We envision an education system that connects the classrooms to the community to deliver knowledge with practical applications.

We envision an education system that provides hubs for local solutions to climate change.

The Teach-In is a dialogue that is grounded in ideas, but directed toward action. Faculty donate class time or assignments to engage their classes in ideas about climate justice, and the actions our colleges and universities can take to focus their incredible resources on generating equitable climate solutions.

Faculty need not be experts on climate change, as the exercise is about a two-way discussion that encourages us to explore how each of our disciplines – from social sciences, engineering, and visual art, to economics, forestry, education, and everything in between – can contribute to solving this global issue

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### THE ORGANIZERS

goBEYOND collaborated with staff, students and faculty on 13 campuses in BC, 2 campuses in Ontario and one campus in Kenya to deliver the Teach-In for Climate Justice to thousands of students. The Sierra Youth Coalition made this a reality in Ontario and the Inter-Varsity Environmental Network (IVEN) were our Kenyan partners.

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### THE PARTICIPANTS

112 faculty members participated in the Teach-In, engaging over 6,100 students in discussions about how their respective disciplines can be a part of creating a just and equitable climate solution.

The following institutions participated in the 2010 Teach-In:



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- British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Camosun College (BC)
- Capilano University (BC)
- College of the Rockies (BC)
- Emily Carr University of Art & Design (BC)
- Fleming College (ON)
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University (BC)
- Laurentian University (ON)
- Simon Fraser University (BC)
- Strathmore University (Kenya)
- Royal Roads University (BC)
- Thomson Rivers University (BC)
- University of British Columbia, Vancouver
- University of British Columbia, Okanagan
- University of the Fraser Valley (BC)
- University of Northern British Columbia
- University of Victoria (BC)

### THE HIGHLIGHTS

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The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Teach-In for Climate Justice surpassed all expectations with over 6,100 students and faculty taking part. Knowing that the Teach-In was happening in classrooms throughout B.C., Ontario and Kenya simultaneously was really inspiring and helped shed light on the *justice* piece of the discussions.

*"I would say that the overall experience was both positive and powerful. The videos were very effective and the questions inspired some very constructive conversation"*

*"The most important point was the emotional response. Subdued shock and worry. Some enthusiasm and energy for change. "*

*"The students were so engaged! They didn't all agree, but they really got into the discussion".*

*"[My students] said it was their favorite project. Their eyes lit up, as if they don't often get the opportunity to participate in real solutions*

*"My discipline studies weather and climate from a science perspective, so the discussion of social and justice aspects of climate change are a worthwhile addition."*

*"Students connected issues of gendered consumption/recreation in North America with global issues; the concept of climate justice, which was new to almost everyone, was explored with relation to gender equality"*

*"I enjoyed being able to talk about the ethical implications of food shortages due to climate change and food trade imbalances which currently exist"*

### STUDENT FEEDBACK

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Of the 38 students that responded to an online e-mail survey, 23 agreed that climate justice issues are **really important**. One student commented on an assignment he/she was given as part of the Teach-In:

*"my assignment was to write on what we can do, as university students, and what I believe should change in the class setting. As I said in my assignment, although I am a music major at Kwantlen, I still believe we should be taught the facts, and help prevent and aid the wounded climate".*

The students feedback regarding the major priorities that need to be addressed in order to



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create a just and equitable climate solution varied, indicating a wide-range of comprehension and engagement with the issues of climate justice.

One student wrote: *"I believe that AirCare on vehicles must be enforced more, as even some classmates of mine own old cars that do not comply with the law. I believe recycling is another prevalent point that will help the climate, thus the environment... Finally, big companies, though they may fund much of the things we do daily, must cut down on emissions to the environment, as even today I see billows of toxic smoke downtown from large factories"*.

Another student wrote: *"The three priorities that need to be addressed in looking to create a just and equitable climate solution are: 1. Help developing countries combat the climate by providing them leaderships and innovations in every aspect from industries to local environmental problems. 2. Create more laws, so every product is eco-friendly or recyclable. 3. Raise the taxes or fees higher on things that cause the climate problems, for example cars or gasoline"*.

One student from a UBC Development of Environmental thought class wrote that the three major priorities that need to be addressed are *"1. That it actually works, and is not just a feel-good fix. 2. That it does not negatively impact any group of peoples. 3. That it is something that everyone can take part in to feel like they are part of the solution"*.

Overall the student feedback was very positive and provided some insight on how the Teach-in affected them, where it was successful and where it could use some improvement. Many of

the comments touched on the idea of change, and what is needed to make change occur. Many of the students reflected on the fact that much of the material was not new to them and that they had been subject to Climate Change issues and Climate Justice discussions prior to the Teach-In. Nonetheless, most students felt that the Teach-in was a needed discussion for the classroom and got some positive value from it.

### FACULTY FEEDBACK

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*"I'm an ecologist and environmental scientist. The discussions in my courses were very sobering. The students were subdued and mostly asked informational questions, and traded knowledge. They were seemingly aware mostly tangentially about climate change, and especially climate justice issues"*.

—Charles Ramcharan  
Laurentian University

One faculty member stated that the best way to approach issues surrounding Climate Justice was education and awareness raising in the developed and developing world. This was one of the key elements and highlights of this year's Teach-In—introducing Kenya into the participating countries.

Another faculty member commented that "we discussed the roots of North American perceptions of wildness and the inception of sociological approaches to ecological issues, then discussed how conservation biology could provide direction to future climate justice issues".

Overall 12 Faculty members completed and submitted a survey answering 6 questions



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regarding their Teach-in experience including a question referring to any suggestions or ideas. Only one response was submitted in reference to any suggestions and ideas and it detailed the need for more scientific papers, follow-up materials and suggested using a webinar.

### A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The Teach-In has been a critical part of the education pillar, and goBEYOND programming in general, having helped us expand the reach and awareness of the project enormously. It is unknown, however, how many students who participate in the Teach-In go on to become more involved with goBEYOND or climate-related initiatives in general.

It is interesting to note that there is virtually 100% turn-over in participation from faculty from one Teach-In to the next. Whether this is because they are generally unsatisfied with the exercise, felt it was too much work, or felt they had already "done their part" is unknown, as much of the feedback we get from professors is positive. At any rate, it has significant implications for the future of the Teach-In because there is a finite number of faculty in the province, and many of the individuals more likely to participate already have. Furthermore, this means that we have to invest as much or more capacity in recruiting faculty each year, and cannot rely on the momentum of past Teach-Ins to carry us forward with many of the same participants. Another reason for the turn-around might be attributed to a general dissatisfaction in the quality of facilitation and lack skills shown by presenters, although judging from the teacher's feedback in the survey this is unlikely the case. The importance of the Teach-in and Climate Justice in general surely

would overcome the judgment made by a professor who was unsatisfied with the presentation.

Perhaps the lack of subsequent participation is due to an ever-increasing awareness of Climate Issues and a "fatigue" arising throughout the educational field and it's professors pertaining to the issues. Unless the subject is updated with relevant information and timely enough to adapt to the ever-changing curriculum, it is possible that many professors simply do not engage in subsequent years. It is therefore very important to be able to get as much information as possible to the teachers and facilitators well in advance of the Teach-in, in order to gain interest of the professors and facilitators and have them sign-up yearly.

While the numbers were lower in 2010, we had some success in recruiting a somewhat different subset of faculty with a focus on justice, and the quality of the Teach-In seemed to be higher than usual. Instead of leading brief 15 minute discussions, many faculty held full-class discussions, assignments and even some regional solutions type projects. This was a result of offering different tiers of engagement--ranging from a 15 minute discussion to large community based projects.

### NEXT STEPS

The Sustainability Education Across the Province (SEAP) Workshop is a new development in the education pillar, and was piloted May 16-18, 2010. The impetus for SEAP emerged after we had hosted two Teach-Ins, and were hearing from professors: "what next?". While discussions were happening in classes, relatively few teachers were taking a



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"campus as a living laboratory" approach, giving students the opportunity to experiment with practical applications on campus or in the broader community. goBEYOND was inspired by the knowledge that a comprehensive train-the-trainer model for sustainability education existed in the United States, and that BCIT and UBC had both spawned their own sustainability education training programs from attending the US-based workshop. The untapped demand for the program was evident by the ease with which partnerships were developed between WalkingtheTalk, Common Energy and the host school, SFU. With relatively little outreach effort, the course filled with 30 participants from 11 different post-secondary schools. To facilitate, the coordinating team brought in Geoff Chase, the director for the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and the individual responsible for the development and success of the US-based sustainability curriculum train-the-trainer workshop. Geoff's high profile made the workshop attractive for even seasoned sustainability champions, and made it easy for many departments and schools to sponsor faculty to attend.

The SEAP workshop proved to be an important element in setting the direction for the education pillar; with faculty going back to their own institutions to lead sustainability curriculum workshops for colleagues, a greater role for goBEYOND may be found in supporting and connecting faculty, as well as identifying and documenting projects that lead to sustainability outcomes across the province. The focus for the 2011 Teach-In is on *Climate Solutions, From Classroom to Community*. With the aim of focusing on more on

assignment-based or regional solutions projects, deepening its impact.

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### QUESTIONS

Any questions, comments, suggestions or interest in participating can be directed to [info@campusclimatenetwork.org](mailto:info@campusclimatenetwork.org).