Like many, I watched in shock as the terror attacks unfolded in Paris in November of last year. ISIS, the same group that had killed 43 innocent people in a double-suicide bombing in Lebanon the day before, was now attacking Parisians. I checked Facebook to see if my Parisian friends were safe and noticed two things: first, that several friends had messaged me to ask if my friends in Paris were safe (I lived there in 2008), and second, that there was a feature enabled called the Facebook Safety Check. This service was developed to allow users to mark themselves as "safe" after an attack, earthquake, or other disaster.

I was relieved to know that my friends were safe, but I also felt the weight of the questions that followed in my mind: why didn’t my family in Lebanon have access to the same safety feature following the bombing there? Are some lives more worthy of mourning?

As an educator, I couldn’t help but wonder: what kind of impact will the media’s asymmetric attention have for our students who come from countries where this type of violence is a daily reality?

Students that have family backgrounds from such contexts come to class and experience a collective mourning for French people, knowing full well that similar attacks in their native country have not received such attention in their school. It would be almost impossible for these students not to draw the obvious conclusion: that the deaths of people who are racialized and look like them receive comparatively little international attention, whether in the media or in their schools.
As Elie Fares, a Lebanese doctor interviewed by The New Yorker writes, “[W]hen my people died, no country bothered to light up its landmarks in the colors of their flag… [W]hen my people died, they did not send the world into mourning. Their death was but an irrelevant fleck along the international news cycle, something that happens in those parts of the world.”

This fact—this asymmetry of care and concern—is but one of the many faces of Islamophobia.

**Islamophobia is usually defined as the “unfounded hostility towards Muslims and therefore fear and dislike of all or most Muslims”**

–University of California's Center for Race and Gender Studies

This article is dedicated to my mother. My mother is a remarkable French and resource-room teacher. She is also a tireless advocate for social justice in her community. Part of her efforts have involved running a refugee welcoming committee and founding a multifaith group that works to build interfaith awareness.

The day after the Paris attacks, my mom and I were going to go to the mall. As I was getting ready to go, I could sense that she wasn’t in the mood. Thinking it might be because she was worried about our family in Lebanon and the rising threat of ISIS, I asked her what was bothering her.

What she said was so disturbing and shocking that I felt I had been hit with a ton of bricks: “I am ashamed to leave the house in my hijab.” The person I look up to most was afraid to leave the house because she felt that people would associate her with the terrorist attacks in Paris? I couldn’t believe it. I haven’t been able to stop thinking about my mother’s words and the paradox of her being associated with ISIS, the very group that had put her own family in danger a few days prior.

This is a direct effect of Islamophobia: the drastic oversimplification of the world that correlates people like my mother with those who carried out the attacks. An oversimplification that leaves someone like my mother, who faces the same fears as the Parisians face, comforted by and even excluded from the solidarity of public mourning that is the privilege of non-racialized groups. And if a woman as strong as my mother can feel shame after a terror attack, many of our students and their families are likely feeling the same way.

Islamophobia spikes after terror attacks are carried out in the name of Islam. Indeed, hate crimes against Muslims in America have tripled since the attacks in Paris (Campbell, 2016). Canada is no exception. For example, in the days following the Parisian attacks, a Muslim woman was picking up her children from a Toronto school when two men attacked her. They pulled off her hijab, punched her, stole her phone, called her a “terrorist” and told her, “go back to your own country.”

These instances are not isolated; walking down the street has become a charged activity for Muslims, even more than before. This, at a time when they need the kinds of love, support, and collective mourning so readily and visibly offered in other instances.

On the Monday after the Paris attacks, classrooms across the country were lit up with discussions about what had transpired in Paris. These are valuable discussions, but they must be facilitated carefully if we are to ensure that all students, regardless of their faith or ancestral origin, feel safe in our classrooms. Acknowledging one terror attack while ignoring others, debating about whether or not Islam is inherently a violent religion, or asking Muslim students to defend their faith can result in Muslim students and their families feeling even more alienated in a society that already stigmatizes them.

It seems absurd to associate the KKK with Christianity, but the same distinction is rarely made for Muslims. As Wajahat Ali shared in a report on the impact of school bullying and discrimination on California-Muslim students, “Your existence is always interrogated, investigated and questioned.” The reality for many of our Muslim students is that they are not only unfairly blamed for the violence, but are also the ones suffering from it; whether it be in the form of having their communities attacked by ISIS or being the targets of Islamophobia.

In order to deepen my understanding of this lived experience, I interviewed my cousins about their experiences as young women wearing the hijab in Canadian public schools. The full interview will be included in a series of lesson plans about Islamophobia and posted on the BCTF website.

Islamophobia is undoubtedly on the rise, but schools can be powerful places of welcoming. For example, when my cousin
Amel’s classmate “chose to cherry-pick verses from the Quran that mentioned battles, claiming that Muslims were all about violence,” the majority of her classmates stood up for her, leading her to share, “I feel safe in school and my community because even though there will always be a group of people who fear and mistreat Muslims, the people who support Muslims outweigh the ones who mistreat them.”

As educators, we know that our words carry a powerful weight. While we cannot control how the media portrays Muslim people, we can encourage our students to think critically about the messages that they receive from the media. We must also protect our students from classroom debates where they are singled out and feel like they have to defend their faith. As 12-year-old Farah reported to The Guardian, “before the attacks I was mostly treated like everyone else. But now I’m having to answer questions about my religion and the actions of people I don’t even know. It’s a lot of pressure. I mean, I’m only 12.”

One way we might be able to mitigate the impacts of Islamophobia is to teach our students about it to create safe avenues for them to dispel the myths constructed about Islam in the media, in public discourse, and even in their classrooms. Further, we can create space for dialogues in our classrooms about how our Muslim students feel after a terrorist attack is carried out in their names, and what we might do to help them feel safe.

As my wise friend and fellow teacher, Ryan Cho, recently reminded me, “It is hard to recognize your historical moment when you are in it.” As anti-Muslim sentiments continue to deepen, particularly after terror attacks and the rise of Donald Trump’s anti-Muslim campaign, we must use our position as educators to ensure that our students have a critical eye and are able to separate the violent actions of ISIS from the lives of the one billion Muslims that exist across the world.

We cannot leave our young students in a situation in which they have to defend themselves in the face of racism and religious discrimination. We can—and must—identify the ties between Islamophobia and other forms of intolerance. This is a crucial moment in history in which we can choose to be true allies and fulfill our commitments to create safe spaces in our school communities. The need for self-reflexivity on the part of students, educators, and all of society has never been greater.

I encourage you to use the following resources and upload any lesson plans and resources that you are already using to TeachBC or email them to me at nelbardouh@bctf.ca so that they can be included on the BCTF website.

Thank you to Amjad Khadhair, Naava Smolash, David Butler, Heather Evans, Tom Malleson, Maryam Adrangi, Glen Hansman, Yasmine, Sarah, and Amel Bardouh for their invaluable input on this article.

Dedicated to my mother.

Nassim (middle), with sister (left), and mother (right).
RESOURCE LIST

1. “Hamdulillah” (music video)
The Narcicyst featuring Shadia Mansour “Hamdulillah” official music video
To say “Hamdulillah” is to be grateful for what one has. The images of the past decades have cast a veil on our identity as a people. This video is a global collaborative effort by 10 photographers—from London to Lebanon, Cairo to Canada, Abu Dhabi to America—to create a portrait of the new global citizens. They are DJs, MCs, poets, architects, teachers, doctors, parents, and children. Most of all they are people. www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ISHZQJdeSw

2. Single Stories (Ted Talk)
Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice—and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding: bit.ly/1RCNuZV

3. Loves Me Not (poem and video)
“Loves Me Not,” a video poem created earlier this year during a filmmaking workshop hosted by Toronto International Film Festival’s Special Delivery program and advocacy group Outburst, tells the story of a young Muslim girl who wears the hijab. The poem begins with the girl, her hijab constructed with colourful petals. She holds a flower in her hand, but as she suffers from Islamophobia her flower begins to die: huff.to/1Pxaphf

4. Muslim woman attacked outside a public school in north Toronto (news)
Toronto police are treating the assault and robbery of a Muslim woman outside a public school in north Toronto as a hate crime. A woman was on her way to pick up her children from a school in North York when two men physically attacked her while hurling racial slurs, according to police: huff.to/1SwzXE8

5. Psychological toll of anti-Muslim harassment (news)
This article examines the psychological toll that anti-Muslim harassment has on some students. “Before the attacks I was mostly treated like everyone else. But now I’m having to answer questions about my religion and the actions of people I don’t even know. It’s a lot of pressure. I mean, I’m only 12.” bit.ly/1QVVld4

6. “New Muslim Cool” (music)
Puerto Rican-American rapper Hamza Pérez pulled himself out of drug dealing and street life 12 years ago and became a Muslim. Now he’s moved to Pittsburgh’s tough North Side to start a new religious community, rebuild his shattered family, and take his message of faith to other young people through hard-hitting hip-hop music. But when the FBI raids his mosque, Hamza must confront the realities of the post-9/11 world, and himself. “New Muslim Cool” takes viewers on Hamza’s ride through streets, slums, and jail cells—following his spiritual journey to some surprising places in an America that never stops changing. Preview before showing upper intermediate: www.pbs.org/pov/newmuslimcool/

Link to “New Muslim Cool” lesson plan: www.pbs.org/pov/newmuslimcool/lesson-plan/
6. Show Racism the Red Card (lesson plan)
The pack is intended to accompany the Show Racism the Red Card Islamophobia DVD. It is not intended to provide education about the Islamic faith. The activities are designed to help young people challenge stereotypes and prejudices toward Muslims and gain a greater historical and political awareness of the climate that has enabled Islamophobia to flourish in recent times. See page 5 for a great 15-minute myth-busting quiz: bit.ly/1LsduM0

7. Do You Know Who I Am? (video)
Watch British-Muslim youth explain how they feel in 2015 UK. Since the terrifying attacks on Paris in November, there’s been a huge spike in attacks on British Muslims, with over 115 recorded in a single week during that month, including a petrol bomb being thrown into a mosque in East London. On the streets, those targeted are mostly young, female Muslims, women wearing hijabs: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDOmk-r-oSrE

8. #DoIMatterNow campaign (news)
The #DoIMatterNow campaign was started by Inuit women who donned makeshift niqabs and took pictures decrying the systematic disenfranchisement of Native people, while expressing solidarity with Muslim women affected by Stephen Harper’s policies. As explained by the campaign’s manifesto (cited by VICE: bit.ly/1UH3Rg5), it aimed to build solidarity and draw attention to long-standing systemic issues affecting indigenous Canadian women, including the high rates of unresolved kidnappings and murders. See full story here: bit.ly/1SCUjtV

9. Impact of School Bullying and Discrimination on California Muslim Students (report)
“Your existence is always interrogated, investigated, and questioned.”– Wajahat Ali
The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is the largest American-Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States. Its mission is to enhance a general understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding: bit.ly/1mG3W9h

10. Defining Islamophobia—Upper-intermediate definition (web)
The term “Islamophobia” was first introduced as a concept in a 1991 Runnymede trust report and defined as “unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims.” The term was coined in the context of Muslims in the UK in particular, and Europe in general, and formulated based on the more common “xenophobia” framework: bit.ly/1aN746c

11. Academic journal for a more in-depth understanding of Islamophobia: bit.ly/206zEZj

12. The Global Educator Newsletter
Published by the BCTF’s Peace and Global Education provincial specialist association. The Winter 2015 issue includes a special section on the Syrian-refugee crisis and an article by a Grade 8 student, Alice Myeisha, about why she is proud to be a Muslim: pagebc.ca/The-Global-Educator.php

13. Council on American-Islamic Relations’ (CAIR) Department to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia
CAIR is America’s largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding: www.islamophobia.org/
Broaching the tough topics with Voices into Action

by Jodi Derkson, BC Regional Director of Educational Programs, Fighting Anti-Semitism Together (FAST)

Voices into Action (www.voicesintoaction.ca), a free, Education Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC) approved, online teaching resource offers teachers the support they need to explore human rights, genocide, prejudice, discrimination, and immigration with their students. It is current and topical, and is composed of primary and secondary resources, as well as first-person accounts through original short films that are truly compelling and eye-opening. The intention is to support teachers as they present these difficult topics to their students in order to fuel conscious dialogue rather than emotionally charged rants.

Let’s face it, in today’s tumultuous political climate teachers often feel challenged. While topics like immigration, Islamophobia, and Aboriginal and LGBTQ rights must be broached, student discussions can be riddled with prejudice and personal biases. Educators are supposed to remain neutral, but it’s not easy when classroom dialogue grows heated and wrought with emotion. Teachers encourage critical thinking and the sharing of perspectives while they grapple with their own beliefs and emotions about today’s divisive topics. So, the question is, how can we safely facilitate discussions to help students adopt more educated viewpoints on today’s contentious issues?

One way to weave our way through today’s news topics is by deconstructing history. Some of the media sources throughout history have skewed the truth in such a way that the public never fully learned about the events. By analyzing the media’s versions of those events (like the Holocaust or the Bosnian War), students can understand how, in the past, misguided opinions were habitually formed by the general public. After students better understand our past mistakes, they can begin to view today’s events with a more critical eye. When analyzing Islamophobia or immigration and terrorism, they can develop an informed perspective by deconstructing modern media’s storytelling practices.

Then there is the matter of social media and the way it can manipulate public opinion. We may find ourselves reading articles about refugees or terrorism and siding with one opinion, only to find ourselves flip-flopping to an alternate viewpoint when presented with a trending YouTube video. How are teachers to inspire dialogue when the information students are filling their minds with may be incorrect? The time it takes to research each topic far exceeds the time we may actually have when planning lessons. Yet, we have a responsibility to inspire our students to learn about their world.

Voices into Action’s team at Ontario Issues for Studies in Education (OISE) did their research for you, and a large part of the resource asks thought-provoking questions to spark discussion: can Canada be proud of its human rights record? Should we continue to search for leaders involved in past “crimes against humanity”? Are there children elsewhere in the world whose lives are at risk not because of what they’ve done, but because of who or what they are?

Then there are heavily debated questions, such as Canada’s treatment of our Aboriginal peoples: to what extent has Canada, as a nation, fulfilled our human rights obligations to our Aboriginal peoples? Regarding the stereotypes, what impact do these stereotypes have on the creation of policies involving Aboriginal people?

Our transgender section asks, is being a transgender person considered a disorder? Empirical evidence and knowledgeable sources help dispel damaging myths.

On South Africa’s apartheid we ask, do you think that peaceful demonstrations alone could have changed the fate of apartheid? Applying the potential for peaceful
Blood minerals:
Child labour in mining materials for electronics

by Dan Hula, Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ), Peace and Global Education Action Group

An issue of direct concern to teachers is the protection of children. Of the many issues harming children in 2016, one of the more sinister ones is the practice of child labour to mine for cobalt (and other minerals) for the manufacture of electronics. Every day, children are risking their lives to work in extremely unsafe cobalt mines, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Amnesty International recently highlighted this problem in this video: bit.ly/1T06hrA

The Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ) is proposing a motion to both raise awareness of this problem, as well as request that our union lobby the largest electronics manufacturers to change their practice of purchasing cobalt from suppliers using child labour. Some
Food Welfare Challenge 2015

by Annie Ohana, Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ), Antipoverty Action Group

Day 1: $21

$21 worth of food. No room for error. No room for snacks like nuts or fresh fruit. Shopping was hard—18-hour days as a secondary school teacher with many extra-curricular commitments and high stress levels—it will be interesting to see how my body reacts.

Day 2: Welcome to Vegas

As I continue the challenge, people are reaching out to me, telling me their stories of dealing with social assistance. This is the true meaning of the challenge. When we say we have the highest child-poverty rate in Canada, I hope you think of all that entails: from hunger pangs, lack of access to resources, the stereotypes and stigmas people place on you, to the fact of if you are "lucky" enough to have support. There are so many "ifs" to the reality of poverty. I thought we were a country of opportunity, of people believing in equity—not a Vegas-style, random-blind-draw-of-luck-type of people.

Day 3: The dirty water of privilege

People keep asking me why I am keeping such strict tabs on myself. Why I won’t eat at events where food is provided. It’s all about privilege. I have been lucky to be able to get a very strong, advanced post-secondary education. This multiyear, extremely expensive endeavor led to me landing a union job as a professional teacher.

This means that in paying for my benefits I can take a sick day; it means that during events, my fellow teachers will often provide food. This is not the reality of someone on welfare. In fact, it is the opposite. I would never be allowed in the building or given food so easily. The stereotypes that abound around welfare, the way that we choose not to interact with people we marginalize because of poverty, these are all things I do not face.

Privilege is a system, and can be a sign of oppression. We have a government that readily erases away the idea that all people deserve fair treatment, by providing them with welfare rates that are simply not livable. The only reason I haven’t given up is that my privileges have held me up. Therefore, I try to eat and act on the basis of not having these privileges before me. I guess this makes some uncomfortable.

The lack of food is not the whole of it. We need to think bigger; we need to think systemic. A fish does not know of the water it is surrounded by, but it sure feels it when it is out of the water. And if you are in dirty water it affects us all. Check your privilege, in all of its multidimensional realities, and realize that we are living in very dirty water.

It is certainly not up to BC educators to solve every problem in the world, but if we don’t show students how to change the world in a positive way, who will? When we have the opportunity to use “people power,” let’s do it!

The following motion was passed at the February 2016 BCTF Executive Committee meeting:

That the BCTF support the Amnesty International campaign to end child labour and exploitation in mineral mining for technology use by lobbying Apple, Samsung, Volkswagen, Sony, Mercedes, and other companies to examine the sources of minerals used in their batteries, and by informing the membership about this campaign.

of these child labourers work in these dangerous conditions just to pay for school fees! One example of a company making an effort to create a more “ethical” cell phone is Fairphone. We encourage you to check out their ideas and actions: fairphone.com/
Day 4: Emotional health
Today was a bit tough and the weekend won’t be easier. I’ve gotten used to the dull pain of a headache that just won’t go away, and my ability to regulate emotions has taken a hit. How do you regulate your own mental health? Can you be calm when your body is craving food? What happens if you are always on the short end of the stick, can your mental health really be at its peak best? How would people perceive your decision to take a break? Not well, we know that for a fact. In the struggle to make ends meet, are we asking the right questions? Are we putting the blame in the right place? Certainly there is enough blame to go around, but let’s start at square one: a government that nickels and dimes its citizens and refuses to see the value in every one of its people. When the government you are supposed to trust is one of your worst enemies, no wonder we all go a little crazy.

Let’s be honest, if you only have $3 dollars, you only give $3 dollars. And for those that push through the hunger to be better, to get better, to leave that cycle are so empowering and powerful. But is that the society we want? A Hunger Games-style killing off until only the “strongest” make it? Talk about dystopia.

Day 5: The $3 dystopia
I am a high-energy person. I teach, listen, and do everything with high energy. Hello, I am the energizer bunny.

Yesterday we had parent-teacher interviews. It never crossed my mind not to have them; it has never crossed my mind to give kids an “easy” lesson, or to shut down and tell people to go away because of the headaches I feel or the hunger pangs interrupting my work.

But, and as teachers we see this, some do, especially kids. The hunger and worry will and do take away from one’s ability to focus, to be engaged and ready. This is not an excuse, but rather an indictment of what our government forces its own residents to go through.

Yes, I do hate welfare. I hate it for the destructive mechanism it has been used as by our government. Reform welfare by raising the rates and acknowledging that the stigma of poverty and starvation by government are the real problems.

Day 6: Food Welfare Challenge: Hungry for change
Erase deficit thinking. Enough of the stereotypes that the poor simply do not have the same skills as the rich. Yes, I understand that maladaptation can occur, that conditions, external conditions, can affect the lives of those struggling with poverty, and yet there are success stories. But we need to be clear: the conditions that cause some of the highest poverty rates in Canada are all external, many are systemic, and none have anything to do with the strange, oppressive notions that some simply don’t measure up.

Yes, I do hate welfare. I hate it for the destructive mechanism it has been used as by our government. Reform welfare by raising the rates and acknowledging that the stigma of poverty and starvation by government are the real problems.

Day 7: Hunger
I am very hungry.
I am hungry for change.

Visit www.welfarefoodchallenge.org for more information on the Food Welfare Challenge.
Food justice: Setting the table for everyone

by Ian Marcuse, Grandview Woodland Food Connection, a Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Network
Originally printed in The Global Educator, the Peace and Global Educators BC journal

Following the damming report on our food security situation by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Olivier de Schutter, 2013 was perhaps the year that food-justice concerns attained mainstream Canadian discussion. His report revealed deep levels of food insecurity in Canada, particularly in the North and in Aboriginal and Inuit communities where up to 70% of the population are unable to access nutritious, affordable food, quite sadly, within a country with great wealth. The full report can be viewed at bit.ly/P6qZIp.

Still others, such as Graham Riches from the University of British Columbia, have been writing for decades about the food-in/security issue in Canada. In his 1986 prescient book, Food Banks and the Welfare Crisis, Riches documents the proliferation of emergency food services in Canada, arguing that food banks represent the collapse of the social safety net and the rise of neoliberal austerity. Food banks are now institutionalized, replacing government assistance programs with charity.

Food insecurity here in Canada largely comes down to income security. Lack of work or adequate wages and other social programs have resulted in many Canadians unable to purchase enough nutritious food. Food insecurity is growing or persisting in every Canadian province and some four million Canadians currently experience some level of food insecurity. Particularly troubling is that 61.1% of food-insecure households were reliant on wages or salaries from employment, according to the most recent Household Food Insecurity in Canada (2013) report by PROOF (an international interdisciplinary team of researchers committed to reducing household food insecurity).

In response, recent discussions and efforts are now pointing the way toward a new food justice understanding defined by Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshias in their book Food Justice as “representing a transformation of the current food system, including but not limited to eliminating disparities and inequities.” This is a necessary refocusing that creates new opportunities for a deeper analysis of structural inequality in the food system and connection of the food movement to broader social movements.

This is encouraging because the narrower food localization interest that has dominated much public food discourse the last decade has largely emphasized new forms of production based on the re-emergence of smaller-scale ecologically sustainable farming practices and exchange, including direct consumer to farmer exchange such as farmers’ markets or co-operatives. This is an important condition toward transforming our food system from highly commoditized and unsustainable systems dependent on capital-intensive inputs and exploitative social and economic relationships, but these alternative agricultural systems still grapple with complex issues of equity, perhaps most visible at the supermarket where quality nutritious food is still unaffordable for many people. We also see in these new food systems an...
assumption that localized production and distribution will ensure better working conditions and the conversation about labour rights and inequality is often ignored (though less so these days as in the case of farm-worker rights, which are now included in most food-policy discussions).

Awareness of food justice is currently at a high. Here in Vancouver we have a Food Strategy (2013) that lays out a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach “in the development of a just and sustainable food system for Vancouver.” This is an important step toward incorporating food justice in a food-systems change strategy. As a part of this strategy, for example, are a number of community food organizations that work to build food security at the local level and espouse food-justice principles such as food equity and access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods for those most vulnerable in our communities. Community food programs such as community gardens, bulk-buy groups, pocket markets, food workshops, community meal programs, community kitchens, and the like are assumed to advance food justice. While such programs do improve the food access for many struggling households, arguably, like food banks, they may be regarded as only a temporary solution. So what then constitutes food-justice practice?

Kirsten Cadieux’s and Rachel Slocum’s, of the University of Minnesota, article “What does it mean to do food justice?” (bit.ly/1KqktbJ) describes four key points of intervention necessary in transforming food systems. These include inequity, exchange, land, and labour. Through a systematic identification of such existing areas of exploitation and inequality can we then begin to put food justice into practice.

An example that illustrates well a transformative food-justice practice is the work of the US organization Growing Food and Justice Initiative (GFJI) “aimed at dismantling racism and empowering low-income and communities of color through sustainable and local agriculture.” Their work is foremost validated through an antiracist framework recognizing relations of power and privilege as they confront race and class inequity. GFJI also provides leadership, training, and empowerment supporting communities of colour to engage in food-system policy and advocacy (systems change) and more directly by creating meaningful employment opportunities in the food and agricultural sector for these communities through non-exploitative mechanisms of co-operation, equitable land access with sound environmental practices, and fair working relations valuing all labour.

The Growing Food and Justice Initiative illustrates the importance of engagement and empowerment of those communities most affected by food insecurity, giving them a strong voice to address systemic inequality and relations of power, while also creating opportunities for direct control over one’s livelihood and food situation. This is transformative work that is rebuilding a new alternative food system based on dignity and communal self-reliance. Furthermore, such work is linked to the broader social justice movement.

While many food organizations are struggling to keep up with the growing demands that austerity is creating and doing their best to get healthy food into household cupboards, we still need a deeper level of engagement and leadership in decision-making and policy work inclusive of those communities most affected by food insecurity if we are to achieve true food justice. This will probably only come about through collaboration outside of the food sector and since food connects all of us, there is considerable opportunity for greater impact when we connect the food movement to these other social justice movements (environmental, Aboriginal, feminist, etc.) to address power and inequality. Such is a food-justice practice that moves beyond basic program delivery, but rather demands of us a much deeper challenge to the current neoliberal and corporate domination of our food system.
As a part of Child Poverty Awareness Month, the BCTF CASJ Antipoverty Action Group (in collaboration with the BCTF Graphics Division) created a series of infographics to help teachers, students, and parents have conversations about how poverty affects BC families, students, and schools, and what we can do about it. With data taken from the BCTF Poverty and Education Survey: A Teacher’s Perspective, the infographics explore four areas: the economic pressures on families, student food insecurity, school fundraising and financial accessibility, and what we can do to make real systemic changes.

We made these infographics because we recognize that teachers see the effects of poverty everyday and we as a profession want to change that for our students and communities. We also recognize that poverty and its effects are not natural or inevitable. They happen because the systems that surround us and the choices we make as a collective allow them to happen. As a province, we can pursue action that reduces poverty and reduces its effects, including changing our tax system to be more fair, and making the collective decision to invest in policies that support children, families, and people who live in poverty.

We greatly encourage you to share these infographics with your communities and colleagues and use them in your classrooms. Although February was marked as antipoverty month, anytime of the year is fine to teach about poverty. Together, we can work to make BC more equal, and more fair.

**AGM 2015 decision**

Resolution 156—Child Poverty Awareness Month

That the BCTF encourage members to recognize every February as Child Poverty Awareness Month and take steps individually and/or as part of their Social Justice network to help eliminate child poverty in BC.
Youth talk to youth about their rights in empowering law-focused workshops

by Alana Prochuk, Manager of Public Legal Education at West Coast LEAF

How do you teach your students about their legal rights and responsibilities when it comes to getting consent for sexual activity? Or about what their employers can and cannot legally do? Or about legal options for youth who are experiencing violence or harassment online, including the non-consensual sharing of their intimate images?

These are legally complex and socially sensitive topics—ones that are likely to prompt challenging conversations in your classroom about power, violence, and inequality. That's why West Coast LEAF, BC's only non-profit organization dedicated to advancing women's equality through the law, offers interactive, peer-led workshops to provide youth with accurate information about the law and to engage them in conversations about how legal issues connect with social justice.

Each youth workshop takes two to three hours, covers prescribed learning outcomes from the BC curriculum, and can be booked on a sliding-fee scale, with a recommended donation of $100 per workshop and a no-fee option where cost would be a barrier. Four workshops are available:

- **No Means No** covers sexual harassment, sexual assault, consent and the law; it is recommended for students in Grades 5–9.
- **Youth in the Workplace** gives students tools to understand and defend their rights on the job through an exploration of the Employment Standards Act and BC Human Rights Code; it is recommended for students aged 15 and up.
- **TrendShift** challenges students to reflect on what violence and harassment look like in online spaces and what the law says about their rights and responsibilities on the internet; it is recommended for students in Grades 8–12.
- **PowerPlay** explores how the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to our everyday lives; it is specially designed for Law 12 and Social Justice 12 but can be adapted for other classes.

Last year alone, West Coast LEAF's youth outreach program reached over 2,000 students in the Vancouver and Nanaimo regions. This year, we are thrilled to have expanded our No Means No and TrendShift workshops to Kamloops and the surrounding communities.

What are students saying about our workshops?

"I'll remember my rights and what to do when being treated unfairly."

"I'm just thinking about power in society in a whole new way now. This just changes everything for me."

To learn more about West Coast LEAF's youth programs or to book a workshop, visit [www.westcoastleaf.org/workshops/](http://www.westcoastleaf.org/workshops/) and click on “Youth Workshops,” or contact Alana Prochuk, Manager of Public Legal Education, at education@westcoastleaf.org or 604-684-8772, extension 117.
Is it too much to expect that rape kits be available in all BC hospitals?

by Kristin Quigley, Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ), Status of Women Action Group

I attended the regular BC Federation of Labour (BCFed) Women’s Rights Committee meeting on January 13, 2016, as a member of the CASJ Status of Women Action Group and I learned some alarming information about rape kits in BC. These kits are not available in every BC hospital. Apparently, these kits are only stored in major hospitals, such as Vancouver General Hospital (VGH).

Perhaps overstating the obvious, the trauma of rape and sexual assault can occur to any individual living in any location in our large province. However, according to the facts gleaned at this meeting, rape kits are only available to victims living near a designated hospital. Consequently, the lack of availability of these kits would prevent some victims from submitting evidence in a timely manner, should the individual decide to report the incident and undergo the medical process. In some jurisdictions, rape-kit evidence from several victims has proved invaluable in identifying a serial rapist. At the BCFed meeting, it was also revealed that a recently raped woman was actually told to travel to a different hospital (VGH) after having already checked into the UBC facility where no rape kits are kept. This does not demonstrate the kind of sensitivity, care, and attention expected to be offered to a victim, especially someone who has just experienced rape and/or sexual assault. Sincerely, I ask the BC Minister of Health, Terry Lake, how can we change this situation so that rape kits are accessible to all victims in every BC hospital?

The Fall Representative Assembly 2015 passed the following motion:

Rape kits in all home communities
That the Federation express grave concerns to the Ministry of Health about the lack of access to forensic nurse positions or other trained personnel, in order to ensure timely administration of rape kits in all home communities.

Although a letter was sent from the Federation, this does not preclude any member from writing or calling the Ministry of Health to let them know your thoughts on this dangerous situation for women in our province:

Honourable Terry Lake
Ministry of Health
Po Box 9639 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9P1
Phone: 250 953-3547
Fax: 250 356-9587
Email: hlth.minister@gov.bc.ca
For years, I have been pondering the idea of community engagement for my Grade 3 class. Our school is situated in Lynn Valley, in North Vancouver. Lynn Valley is a community with a number of retirement homes in close proximity to our school, Ross Road Elementary. With the help of an active parent we established contact with the Sunrise Senior Retirement Home. This home is walking distance from our school and features a wonderful, cozy, and spacious community room with round tables and comfy chairs. We agreed on a biweekly visit.

After some brainstorming with my Grade 3 students, we agreed to visit the seniors to read them our favourite English picture books. The children were eager to pick a well-liked book from home and to start their reading practice at home and in school with a buddy, before setting out for our first visit.

You cannot describe the friendly welcome we received from the seniors. My class was equally well-behaved and attentive, responsible and caring in a way that surpassed my expectations. An invisible connection of unspoken understanding filled the room. The children read with enthusiasm and attention for about 40 minutes and received the undivided attention of their hosts. The seniors look forward to our next visit as much as the children do.
On May 22, 2015, at 7:15 a.m., four water taxis departed from Port McNeill to rendezvous in Alert Bay en route to Village Island, situated just beyond the entrance to Knight Inlet in the heart of the Broughton Archipelago. Village Island, or ‘Mimkwamlis, is the ancestral home of the Mamalilikula people. It is the site of the Last Coastal Potlatch that took place in 1921 in contravention of the Indian Act. Forty-five people were arrested. Twenty-two women and men were sent to prison for refusing to give up their masks, coppers, and other ceremonial pieces. The village continued to exist until 1970, when the last families moved to Alert Bay. This was our third annual cultural sharing event that connects Elders and other community members with students of Grades 6–12 to learn about the history and culture of the Mamalilikula people.

Below is an account from Nikki Shaw and Kathy Martin, representatives of Literacy Now (one of the project’s sponsors).

On May 22 we were given the opportunity to be a part of a cultural journey to ‘Mimkwamlis (Village Island) in the company of four Hereditary Chiefs, Harry Hanuse, Robert Mountain, Arthur Dick and, newly named to the position of Chief, John Macko along with visiting students and teachers from Inuvik, students, support workers, and the principal of North Island Secondary School, students and First Nations support workers from Port Hardy Secondary School, witnesses from local government, Literacy Now, and residents from Sointula, Port McNeill, and Alert Bay.

There were about 100 of us. Tables, chairs, boxes of food and other supplies were moved from boat, to skiff, to shore, and through the bush, set up, and the fire started for the salmon barbeque.

The day had the appearance of a very informal gathering, however, we were being taught significant pieces of the history of the place and its people.

We learned ‘Mimkwamlis, at the mouth of Knight Inlet, was once the largest of the Kwakwag’wakw villages and the site of the last big Potlatch. We heard how “when the tide was out the table was set,” and that there were 19 big houses on Village Island with three to four families in each house. There were names on each of the houses. There was a school with two teachers and one nurse, which was very appreciated by the people. Everyone got along so well until the RCMP came and took the children away to residential school. This was the downfall of the village as now there were no children. We learned of the heartbreak and loneliness of the children and the parents and the cultural genocide perpetrated by the Indian Residential School system and its administrators. The Chiefs told us there was a very dark period of hopelessness when many First Nations people died or sunk into deep alcoholism or drug addiction, while at the same time there was an underground movement keeping the traditions alive.

To me, this was the reason for all of us being there. To feel the power in the land, the thousands of years of occupation which only ended in 1966, and to reflect upon the relationship between and amongst the First Nations and Canadians as it is unfolding. It was truly an honour to be a witness and an actor in the reconciliation we are creating.
The partners in making this day possible were:

- East Three Secondary School, Inuvik, Northwest Territories
- BC Teachers’ Federation’s (BCTF) Ed May Social Responsibility Fund
- McKay Whale Watching
- North Island Secondary School Parent Advisory Council
- Literacy Now
- Silver King Marine Ventures
- SD 85 First Nations Program.
Global leadership

by Kevin Hans, student at Lester B. College of the Pacific

Sitting in math class as a secondary school student, I would constantly wonder when I would ever use quadratic functions in real life. I had never been in a situation outside of school that called for finding the roots of an equation, and could not imagine a real world return from the countless hours I invested in math. Math is not the only class where what I learned seemed disconnected from the world around me—memorizing long-ago wars felt equally irrelevant. I don’t believe that I was unique in feeling that the link between the classroom and the real world fell somewhere between faint and non-existent. This isn’t because kids are averse to learning, I felt that it was a sign that our education system could do a better job of connecting students to the real world. To me, learning must have purpose. Fortunately, I was able to feed the need for a meaningful and relevant school experience through taking Global Leadership class.

Service-learning connects to the real world since it is designed to make a meaningful impact on the local and global community. By linking learning in the classroom with positive, effective action outside the classroom, it motivates students to be active participants in their learning. My experience in service-learning began in
Kevin, originally from Calgary, Alberta, is currently studying in British Columbia at Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, one of the 15 United World Colleges around the world. Kevin has pursued environmental and social justice issues since Grade 8 when he joined a Global Leadership class and implemented a service-learning project with CAWST’s Youth Wavemakers program. Since then, Kevin has volunteered with the Ripple Effect, a youth group concerned with water conservation issues, lead a school twinning project with a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency, and was president of his secondary school’s environmental club. Kevin hopes to study political science and be a champion for environmental issues in his later life.

Grade 8 when I decided to join an elective class called Global Leadership. Global Leadership was a class focused on environmental and social justice issues. It gave our class the tools and skills to work on projects or movements that were focused on dealing with these issues. It seemed like culture shock: all of a sudden I was no longer surrounded by students who were buried in books, rushing through passages of Kipling to ensure they didn’t have any homework for the night. Instead, I was surrounded by students who were doing bike-drives to round up bikes to donate to Bicycles for Humanity, or finishing up project proposals to send to the Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology (CAWST) to help reduce our community’s water consumption, or Skyping a school in Grenada to try and better understand the importance of preserving Caribbean coral growths. Never before did I feel so engaged in a classroom, because what I did in school was so closely linked to measurable change in the world.

Having this class allowed me to apply what I learned in other subjects in a way that made them relevant. There were always proposals to be written, events to be organized, and emails to be sent. It was as if every other class was in some way a tool that could be applied to this class. Math was needed to develop infrastructure to help people get the basic exigencies of life. Social studies explained why some people ended up impoverished and some did not, and English taught the rhetoric needed to communicate and explain these problems we were facing. The Global Leadership class answered my questions about the purpose of almost all other subjects by allowing me to incorporate them into real-world situations.

While taking this course allowed a greater appreciation for the utility of my other courses, to me, the greater benefit still remained the personal growth it required of me. In order to effectively perform in Global Leadership, I was required to take initiative. It was in this class more so than any other that I was given freedom in my choice of focus. With the freedom also came an expectation that what I was doing was in fact useful and conducive to the end goal of serving others. Having this responsibility brought upon me was a catalyst for developing a sense of leadership. I had been shown just how impactful my decisions could be, it was not that I was now making decisions of more importance, but merely the connection between myself, my decisions, my actions and their impact on the real world had become clear. I began to see myself as someone who had power and was encouraged to lead with the power I had.

The greatest value of this course is connecting the classroom with the ongoing happenings of the world outside of school. Students who have experienced service-learning are much more ready and eager to bring positive change to their communities. I could now see a real and viable application for what I was being trained to do in a classroom and how I could so easily transfer that skill set to my community. I was given the relevance I was looking for in the classroom; not only did it narrow the chasm between the real world and school, but made me a better and more well-rounded student. Global Leadership was a class that finally offered the time and space to explore important issues that I am passionate about and enabled me to take meaningful action.
As BC Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) members, we can be proud of our role as a social justice union. Workers’ solidarity is at the root of a strong labour movement, and the BCTF has consistently supported workers not only at home, but on an international scale. We are renowned and appreciated for the work we have done in partnership over the years to strengthen unions and defend their members. One such action is reflected in policy 17.15 in our Members’ Guide to the BCTF, which calls on teachers to support our sisters and brothers in Colombia through joining a boycott of Coca-Cola products:

17.15—That the BCTF support workers in Colombia by asking members to join the boycott of Coca-Cola products. (Nov 05 RA, pp. 11-12)

At the time, there was a campaign of violence where trade unionists were being murdered because of their attempts to organize for better working conditions.

Although there is no longer an organized boycott, it is imperative to keep policies such as this one on the books. The Coca-Cola Company still has labour practices that include intimidation, harassment, and dangerous conditions for workers—escalating to threats on the lives of union leaders. Their environmental record is appalling. Teachers need to be reminded of historical atrocities and present practices in order to inform our teaching about consumerism and to make decisions about what companies’ products we buy. We know that pressure from the public can be responsible for changes in attitudes and actions of corporate entities, and it is our duty to share our knowledge so that individuals have the information they need to make responsible choices.

Referring to the website killercoke.org, I learned that in countries as diverse as China, Columbia, Guatemala, and Turkey, workers have been forced to work 12-hour days, 7 days a week. They are cheated out of profit sharing, and child labour is common. Coca-Cola has employed illegal marketing practices. Not only are their labour practices questionable, their environmental track record is frightening. In India, they have drained vast amounts of ground water, which has devastated farm lands, and polluted the countryside with hazardous waste.

So you may want to think about buying Coca-Cola or any of its products: Dasani, Evian, Minute-Maid, and Sprite, to name a few. Recalling when the above policy was passed, I will always remember the pride I felt for my Local President who through sheer will power and profound respect for human rights, was able to lend her support to policy 17.15 by overcoming her addiction to Coca-Cola! She knew the right thing to do.

Of course, Coca-Cola is not the only global corporation meriting our censure. Think of mining companies and the textile industry. Any company that threatens workers, opposes the rights of unions to organize for better working conditions, or destroys the natural environment should be held accountable and forced to change their practices. People the world over deserve safe working conditions and a clean environment. As proud BCTF members, let’s continue our record of keeping informed and being leaders in the fight for a better world for all through support for our fellow trade unionists and all workers.
**Climate change: The elephant in the staffroom**

*Heather Kelley and Julie Johnston, Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ), Environmental Action Group*

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**Heather:** As a new teacher, there is a lot to think about. When will I get hired? How long will I be a TTOC? Will I get a contract? What subjects will I teach? Do I have resources? Will I like my co-workers? What type of assessment should I use? What does it mean to dress professionally? The list goes on and on. There isn’t much discussion about work-life balance and with the long nights marking and early mornings prepping, there isn’t much time left over for family, friends, or activism.

**Julie:** As a veteran teacher, there is a lot to think about. When will I retire? Do I still have the energy levels to work full-time? Can I afford to be on a part-time contract at this point in my career? Where is this new curriculum leading us? Will my teaching style and strategies fit the new expectations? Do I have what it takes to teach in new ways? The list goes on. I hear there’s a series of work-life balance workshops I can attend, but I don’t have the time. After all these years, there still isn’t much time left over for family, friends, or activism.

**Heather:** Activism is usually the first thing to fall off the to-do list. Well, right after making healthy lunches and not eating in the school cafeteria. I understand this: along with being rewarding and awesome, teaching is mentally and emotionally draining. Don’t get me wrong, I wouldn’t change what I do, but it isn’t always easy and it doesn’t leave much room for other activities.

**Julie:** Ditto!

**Heather:** Climate change is the elephant in the staffroom. Globally, we are already seeing the impact of anthropogenic climate change in droughts, extreme weather, crop failures, habitat loss, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and the list goes on! Anyone can whip out their smart phone and google what is happening as a result of climate change right now. Scroll down a little and you can see what will happen in the near future, right here. We have the information at our fingertips, yet we tend to avoid, deny, ignore, and disregard it.

**Julie:** Climate change is the elephant in my staffroom, as well. People will talk about the drought in BC, but not about the changing climate that contributed to it. We’ll talk about the rising cost of food, the disappearing salmon, the “blob” of warmer water off the coast, or the short (or non-existent) ski season, but never the climate disruption behind these changes. Embarrassed silences suggest what my colleagues are thinking: “If we ignore her, maybe she’ll go away…and if we’re lucky, so will climate change.”

**Heather:** As a society this is awkward and a bit silly, but as educators this is especially problematic. How can we possibly equip our students with the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to thrive in a future world impacted by climate change, if we refuse to teach them these skills because we’re collectively pretending that it isn’t happening?

**Julie:** Isn’t our social contract as teachers to care about our students’ future? Or is it only their individual futures we’re supposed to prepare them for and not their common future—which is looking pretty grim at the moment, I have to say.

**Heather:** I know what you’re thinking: it is too political. It is too depressing. It is too complicated. There’s a new curriculum I need to learn about. Or if we are really honest: it scares me too much to admit that this is happening and I don’t know what to do about it.

**Julie:** I know I’ve been called a Debbie Downer. “See you in the cave,” one colleague retorted when I suggested there might be ways to change our fossil-fuelled economy. (To her credit, she later explained that she was just playing devil’s advocate—frankly though, don’t we have enough of those already?)

**Heather:** It is easier to pretend that nothing is going on, that everything is peachy keen. But let’s be...
honest, when has that strategy actually panned out for you?! Has pretending like nothing is wrong in your relationship worked in your favour? If it has, you’re luckier than I am. I would argue this coping mechanism won’t work in the long term. We need to act.

_Julie:_ “We need hope,” I keep hearing. “Hope shmope,” I find myself muttering in response. While it’s true that the brain will turn off if it can’t anticipate a positive future, feeling good in the face of the climate change crisis is something we have to earn. Hope is not an action verb. Action is our only hope.

_Heather:_ This issue sure can seem depressing. It’s a bummer and there’s no doubt that the impending crisis can seem overwhelming. When I think about impacts of ocean acidification, or melting ice caps, or climate migrants, or droughts and food loss, my heart does hurt. But not talking about it doesn’t make it go away. I can tell you that our students are dealing with these realities—the fear, the emotional distress, and the uncertainty—already, but they are dealing with them alone, without the support of their educators, schools, and communities. We have to do better, if only to support our students’ mental well-being.

_Julie:_ We met recently with a team led by Shari Laliberte, a faculty member from the Vancouver Community College (VCC) Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, to hear about plans for exploring the impact of environmental threats such as climate change on youth mental health. Can you imagine the cognitive dissonance our young people must be experiencing? They know climate change is happening, and they know how urgently we should be addressing it. But do they see the adults in their lives—including their parents and teachers, but especially their elected officials—dropping everything to turn this boat around? Not likely. It must feel like we’ve abandoned them to a future with no future.

_Heather:_ Climate change is a complicated and multifaceted matter, but as teachers we have the ability to break complicated ideas into small parts, see the connections, and make it work. This is our job! Saying this is too complicated is a cop-out. We have the information, we have the lesson plans, we have the resources (see our awesome resources at bit.ly/1UHCcM7), and we have the skills to do this! And did I mention that most of this easily fits into the new curriculum? Yahoo!

_Julie:_ I wonder if one of the reasons for the widespread denial and avoidance is our collective scientific (and especially ecological) illiteracy in North America that leads to lack of understanding of things like feedback loops, weight of evidence, exponential growth, and causality. And that’s something we can address as teachers. In the school garden, we can help students learn how to grow their own food, collect their own rainwater, build their own soil, and generate their own energy in a changing climate. Is there a single school subject that can’t be integrated somehow into that “new” curriculum?

_Heather:_ Now that we have those problems out of the way, let’s get to the heart of it. We are scared and we should be. Now what? The good news is it is never too late to be a change maker. The even better news is that someone else has already thought up what we need to do to make the best possible outcome happen. So let’s come together for our students, and for ourselves.

_Julie:_ Let’s acknowledge as a social justice union of professionals that climate change is the mother of all umbrella issues, one that is going to impact all life on the planet and everything we do as educators. That’s an important first step we can take. Let’s talk about climate change in our staffrooms and our classrooms—not just for our students and for ourselves, but also for all the other beloved children, of all species, in our lives.

_Heather:_ You are not alone. We are all in this together.
Teaching permaculture ethics and design principles at Gabriola Elementary School

by Kate Reynolds, Joan Merrifield, Shelly Serebrin (teachers), and Stephen Levesque, owner of Rooted in Nature Permaculture Education and Design

A visioning process at Gabriola Elementary in the winter of 2014 called for incorporating more environmental education within the curriculum. The school already had an active composting and recycling program as well as a vegetable garden, and a native-plant garden. There were also environmental classroom initiatives taking place, such as intermediate students raising salmon fry and releasing them into local salmon streams, and a number of primary grades using the Gabriola Commons for field trips. (The Gabriola Commons is a community property across from the school with a pond, community gardens, and many other co-operative ventures.)

Following from the visioning process an environmental education steering committee was established consisting of teachers, parents, and community members. Two members of the committee had a background in permaculture ethics and design principles and expressed a desire to share their knowledge with the children at the school.

The study of permaculture allows for a dynamic view of how we interact with the environment and has been successfully implemented worldwide for the last 30 years. However, there has been little work done in bringing this learning to elementary students, therefore we believed this to be an innovative, original project. It flowed from our work establishing a nature garden at Gabriola Elementary School, a project that had actively engaged students in making change and learning about local ecology. Our intent had been that the nature garden should enhance students’ appreciation and concern for the environment. We thought that an introduction to permaculture would encourage this caring and concern along with giving the students the skills and knowledge needed for them to become active stewards of the Earth.

In the fall of 2014 our school applied for and obtained a social justice grant from the BC Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) to put together a series of lessons to teach permaculture ethics and design principles to Gabriola students from Kindergarten to Grade 7.

A small group of four met several times in the winter and spring of 2015 to design the lessons. The group took this definition from the permacultureprinciples.com website as a guiding vision: “Permaculture is a creative design process based on whole-systems thinking that uses ethics and design principles. It guides us to mimic the patterns and relationships we can.
find in nature and can be applied to all aspects of human habitation, from agriculture to ecological building, from appropriate technology to education and even economics.”

By adopting the ethics and applying these principles in our daily life we can make the transition from being dependent consumers to becoming responsible producers. This journey builds skills and resilience at home and in our local communities that will help us prepare for an uncertain future with less available energy. In other words, by developing an understanding of permaculture ethics and design principles students build resiliency, creativity, and responsibility for the Earth.

By late spring, the lessons were completed and ready for implementation. Classroom lessons across the grades built an understanding of the three permaculture ethics of Earth care, people care, and fair share. For example, the book *Wangari’s Trees for Peace* by Jeanette Winter was read to primary students. This lead to a discussion of how the world was a better place because of what Wangari did. Intermediate students viewed and discussed the film, *The Man Who Planted Trees*, and talked about how one person can effect great change. The concept of “fair share” led to many interesting discussions on the needs and wants of individuals and how our island community has created systems for sharing such as the GIRO recycling depot, the library, the community gardens at the Gabriola Commons, the Gabriola food bank, and the community bus line, called Gertie, that connects the south island and north island.

### Permaculture ethics

- Care of the Earth
- Care of people
- Fair share.

### 12 design principles

- Observe and interact
- Catch and store energy
- Obtain a yield
- Apply self-regulation and accept feedback
- Use and value renewable resources and services
- Produce no waste
- Design from patterns to details
- Integrate rather than segregate
- Use small and slow solutions
- Use and value diversity
- Use edges and value the margins
- Creatively use and respond to change.

From: [permacultureprinciples.com](http://permacultureprinciples.com) and Holmgren Design Services, [www.holmgren.com.au](http://www.holmgren.com.au)

Through the three ethics of permaculture, along with the 12 design principles, there is an intention to implement systemic change. David Holmgren, co-originator of the permaculture concept has written, “The Earth is a living, breathing entity. Without ongoing care and nurturing there will be consequences too big to ignore.” He has also written of the need to “creatively redesign our environment and behaviour in a world of less energy and less resources.” What important ideas to share with children!

After the initial classroom lessons, three mornings (referred to as “permaculture days” by the students) were chosen to do multi-age activities outside, involving all students and providing older...
students with leadership opportunities. These activities introduced each of the 12 permaculture design principles, which can be found with the classroom lessons at the TeachBC website (teachbc.bctf.ca). Students moved through four stations each morning, observing and interacting with nature, engaging with stories, doing an art activity, or playing a game with an environmental theme. For example, for the design principle “catch and store energy,” students gathered around a green plant and the teacher explained the process of photosynthesis. Students, using props, acted out the process and then drew the process of photosynthesis in their learning logs. At another station, “use and value renewable resources,” the students created a natural work of art inspired by the work of Andy Galsworthy, a found-object artist. For our school, this was our first experience with the joys of outdoor education. Feedback from the students was overwhelmingly positive. Students and staff came to a new appreciation of the school grounds and surrounding forest.

These activities also helped students and staff to engage with the BCTF Social Justice Lens (bit.ly/1QGQStH). For example, by considering the permaculture ethics and design principles students developed agency, learning how to think critically about how we can live in harmony with the natural world and became aware of their role as stewards of their natural environment. They learned how to advocate on behalf of the environment and realized that we can live on Gabriola in a more sustainable way, causing less damage to the environment. By working co-operatively and building links with community members and organizations, students were made aware of the impact of coalition building and how to find common ground to achieve equity.

Our aim as a staff is to continue developing our skills in implementing environmental education within the curriculum and our school-wide professional development has focused on gaining confidence as outdoor educators. Students are already asking if we are going to have permaculture days in the spring of 2016.

As the final part of this process, our lessons were uploaded to the TeachBC website under our heading Teaching Permaculture Ethics and Design Principles in the Elementary School (bit.ly/1nO75El). Please use and enjoy as you explore the joys of the environmental education with your students.

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**Trade unions join the fight against climate change**

by Lisa Descary, secondary school teacher in Richmond

Originally appeared on socialist.ca.

Something exciting happened at the UN Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) Paris climate talks in December. However, it wasn’t the COP21 conference itself; environmental groups like 350.org overwhelmingly agree that our leaders, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau included, provided little leadership in Paris on the issue of climate change. But another group also met at the Paris climate talks. This group, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (bit.ly/1VQT7MD) is actually trying to build a movement to take action on climate change.

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) includes unions and trade union federations from seventeen countries, including Canada. The TUED website explains their goals, and why unions must be involved in the fight against climate change:

*We are facing an energy and climate emergency that amounts to a planetary crisis. The growing levels of fossil-based energy are stretching planetary limits by raising greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution to alarming levels. This is affecting the health and quality of life of millions.*

*The power of fossil fuel corporations has made it practically impossible to protect the health and safety of workers and communities, and union representation is under attack across the globe.*

*It has become increasingly clear that the transition to an equitable, sustainable energy system can only occur if there is decisive shift in power towards workers, communities and the public.*

One of the sessions that TUED co-sponsored with the group Global Climate Jobs (globalclimatejobs.wordpress.com) at the Paris climate conference was a forum that featured Canadian writer and activist Naomi Klein and British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. “Naomi Klein’s book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* and Jeremy Corbyn’s Protecting Our Planet leadership campaign statement get to the root causes of climate change, namely an economic system that serves the interests of the large corporations and the one percent,” said Sean Sweeney, co-ordinator of TUED.
“This is the reality that unions and other social movements must confront, and it explains why the UN climate talks have failed to produce an agreement that can ensure a truly just societal transition.”

This partnership between unions and climate activists is encouraging to see. While the one percent try to sell us the idea that we must decide between jobs and the environment, we know this is not the truth. Working people must push for a just transition to clean energy, and trade unions can be part of demanding that governments act on such a plan.

One of the concrete actions that TUED has recently undertaken of particular interest to us in Canada is a campaign called Trade Unions against Fracking (bit.ly/1UO20pZ). Their statement calls for a global moratorium on hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for shale gas, coal seam gas, and shale oil, as this fracking is hazardous to the health of workers and people living in communities near the fracking wells. Their website summarizes the effects of fracking: it depletes aquifers and contaminates water supplies, as well as releases large amounts of methane trapped in the shale. This release of methane makes fracking worse than coal in its effect on global warming, since methane is such a potent greenhouse gas.

This campaign has recently been endorsed by several Canadian unions, including Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), as well as the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). If your union would like more information on the campaign, or would like to endorse it, contact Unions against Fracking at unionsagainstfracking.org/contact/.

Building connections between the trade union movement and the climate justice movement is essential if we want to fight to stop climate devastation. It’s not just that there are no jobs on a dead planet: collective action, through our unions and social movements is our best chance for forcing our government to act now on climate justice.

Climate Change Science: An Updated Resource with Canadian and global impacts, mitigation, and adaptation

by Harold Gopaul, retired biology and Earth science teacher in Coquitlam

This resource supports curriculum concepts in social studies and the sciences. It is my wish that all students, including those in elementary schools, would have the opportunity to access this free and updated copy from the BCTF website, TeachBC. It is an updated resource for educators and dedicated to our youth and schools. For teachers, my message is to select what fits in your teaching and peruse the questions at the end of each chapter for students’ discussion.

An earlier edition was posted on TeachBC, but since so much has happened in the past year on climate change, including the politics at the UN Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21) in Paris, this revision was necessary. About 80% of the content from my earlier edition is retained, including the section on debunking the “deniers” of climate change; I also made some grammatical corrections. There are four chapters (over 270 pages) not short on details, and illustrations, graphs, and photos from well-established research centres and from my globe-trotting. Canada’s contribution at the COP conferences from Kyoto to Paris is given extensive coverage. Much of the material is of global consideration and not sparing Canadian environmental issues, from the Arctic to the oilsands, and what British Columbians are saying about pollution-free ecosystems and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions.

As a science resource, it cites peer-reviewed journals, established international organizations such as NASA, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Environment Canada, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Royal Society of Canada Expert Panel, the Canadian Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the
Oil Sands Advisory Panel, and many more. There are no doom-and-gloom scenarios presented, but scientific evidence supported by hundreds of climate scientists and media sources.

Our children and grandchildren are more likely to experience the consequences of climate change in the decades ahead; they need to be empowered to make wise decisions about their future. I believe that this book provides some of the tools necessary to guide them in making such decisions.

Questions of an interactive nature for students and teachers are provided at the end of each chapter for discussion, followed by a list of references. Appropriate websites and a glossary appear at the end of the book with a brief biography of the author.

I leave you with these three wise men and their message:

The renowned biologist Edward Wilson bluntly asks, “Do we want to destroy the creation? That is what we are doing at an accelerating rate.”

Mahatma Gandhi, ahead of his time, pleaded, “We must be the change we wish to see in the world.”

Nelson Mandela, in his wisdom proclaimed that, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world, we know what needs to be done—all that is missing is the will to do it.”

Climate Change Science: An Updated Resource: teachbcdb.bctf.ca/permalink/resource629

The Paris Climate Agreement: Crime against humanity or “a monumental triumph for people and the planet”?

by Kathy Hartman, journalist and secondary teacher in Vancouver

Back off, back off. We want freedom, freedom. All your oil, gas, and coal, we don’t need ‘em, need’ em.

It’s December 11, 2015, the last day of the UN Conference of the Parties COP21 climate talks in Paris. Along with dozens of other journalists who received a text a few hours ago, I’m waiting at La Bourget in the green zone. The text told us that the youth delegations, in the green (open to public) and the blue zones (accredited delegates only), were walking out of the climate talks at exactly 2:00 p.m. We are trying to wait with nonchalant unobtrusiveness, but there is an unusual air of excitement in this sterile and corporate environment. Suddenly, cell phone alarms begin to ring all around the building.

Imagine, a thousand young people at precisely 2:00 p.m. standing up wherever they are in the green and blue zones, abandoning their booths, panels, and national delegations—everywhere at the climate talks. Beginning a quiet chant that soon rises to a ringing volume, they walk to their meeting areas. They grow exponentially: from 1 to 2, to 10 to 100, to 300 as they march out of the green zone to meet each other in front of the accredited blue zone. They march arm in arm chanting, to meet together to declare publicly that, as the first generation to be affected by climate change, these talks will not bring about a solution. They publicly denounce the resolutions and declarations as “false solutions” and physically, with a moment of silence, turn their backs on La Bouget and the policy-makers inside: a powerful statement from youth of all countries.

It was a moving moment. It took a lot of organization, timing, and passion. Why did they do it? What does this have to do with teaching?

What is Conference of the Parties (COP)?

There have been 21 annual COP meetings from 1994 to 2015. They were inspired by what is informally known as the Rio Earth Summit (this was where our own Severn Suzuki, at age 12, spoke to all the delegates). The parties to this initial convention have met annually since COP1 in 1995 as the Conference of the Parties to assess progress in dealing with climate change. According to a recent article in The Guardian, global carbon emissions from energy are up 48% since 1992.

Some benchmarks worth knowing

• COP3, 1997, in Japan—The Kyoto Protocol was concluded establishing, in theory, legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions on an average of 6–8% below 1990 levels between the years 2008–2012. This is the only COP where ➔
resolutions on emissions reductions have been “legally binding.”

- COP11, 2005, in Montreal—An agreement was reached to “extend the life of the Kyoto Protocol beyond its 2012 expiration date and negotiate deeper cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions.”

- COP15, 2009, in Copenhagen—The plan was to establish an ambitious global climate agreement for the period from 2012 when the Kyoto Protocol expired. No agreement was reached despite, for the first time in over a decade, the attendance of an American president, one who, moreover, ran on the commitment to tackle climate change seriously. This is the first COP where the presence of civil society and activists was prominent, and hopeful, in the city.

**What does the Climate Agreement in Paris have to do with teaching?**

First, as the youth at COP21 stated, this is your students’ issue. They claim to be the first generation to fight against climate change. Second, we teach critical thinking and this is an opportunity to use this issue to explore multiple viewpoints and their representations and/or misrepresentations. Finally, while recognizing that civil disobedience is illegal and teachers cannot encourage students to take part in any illegal activities, it would certainly be possible to examine its role in social and political change in social studies, history, or social justice class. It is arguable that the civil rights, women’s rights, and workers’ rights we enjoy today came as a result of past generations of ordinary Canadians who went into the street to fight for social and political justice. Connecting the issue of climate change, an issue most students are aware of and many are passionate about, and historical social change is a wonderful opportunity for teachers of all grades. I will list some resources for a variety of grades at the end of this article.
Why did the youth walk out of COP21?

According to mainstream media and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, this climate agreement was “a monumental triumph for people and planet.” The final agreement at Paris called for a reduction in emissions to limit global temperature rise to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius before 2100. It set a “goal” to make the planet carbon neutral between 2050 and 2100. It was agreed that rich countries, those who developed largely because of cheap fossil fuel, would create a fund of $100 billion for poorer countries (mainly countries that contributed virtually nothing to climate change, but with the populations suffering the most from its effects). These countries are also the least able to develop their economies without the massive use of fossil fuels, unless they receive aid from the developed world. Finally, the parties agreed to continue to monitor their emissions and share technological solutions with all countries so everyone could move quickly to transition to a de-carbonized economy.

The youth could see what was agreed—but not promised

Well, was it, “a monumental triumph for people and planet”? The youth didn’t think so.

1.5 degrees Celsius? No, according to each of the countries’ Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) global emissions will increase the temperature by 3 degrees Celsius. Even at that, these INDCs are voluntary and not legally binding.

Is “sometime between 2050 and 2100” soon enough? Depends on how protected you are from the elements. Storms, floods, sea-level rise, mudslides, typhoons, forest fires, drought, and crop degradation are all different in different parts of the world. Generally speaking, the smaller, poorer countries and/or countries
with a large population at sea level have suffered much more than the richer, northern countries.

$100 billion? According to one UN report, the cost of mitigating the damage caused to the poorer countries from climate change is in the trillions. The developed countries removed a clause that required compensation (it is now non-binding) and also removed the offer to share technological advances to the poorer countries allowing them to de-carbonize their economies more rapidly. Trillions of dollars could be made available to mitigate climate change—right now. The International Monetary Fund estimated that global tax subsidies for the fossil fuel industry were approximately $5.3 trillion in 2015. A logical place to start would be to stop direct budgetary supports for the mature fossil-fuel industry and direct it toward populations that are currently dying or being displaced because of climate change. By eliminating tax havens, funds for research and development and transition to good green jobs for governments would be made available. Globally, in 2010, it is estimated that there were $21 trillion to $32 trillion hidden away in tax havens. In Canada, according to a story in *The Tyee*, federal and provincial governments lose an estimated $7.8 billion in tax revenues each year because of tax havens. The government knows who they are. CBC even published an interactive map so you could see how many tax evaders live in your neighbourhood.

What was removed or not mentioned in the text? Terms like “fossil fuels,” “carbon tax,” and “polluter pays” are never mentioned. Two giants in the transport sector were removed from any regulation: international shipping and aviation. The “reason”? They don’t physically occur within the boundaries of any specific nation. Be that as it may, international shipping produces 2.4% of global greenhouse gases and aviation produces about 2%.

What else was removed? Any mention of human rights, gender rights, and the rights of First Nations. Despite Canada’s strong objections, indigenous rights were removed from the binding text. There is a strong correlation between large extraction projects and the proximity to indigenous communities throughout much of the world.

**Trade deals**

Finally, the youth knew that trade deals, such as NAFTA and the FIPAs, and new deals on the books, like Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), that these world leaders are thinking of signing would make all climate negotiations unenforceable. These multinational trade deals are legally binding, have clear benchmarks, and very harsh penalties for non-compliance. Written into the body of these trade agreements and therefore binding is a statement that says “trade trumps environment.” Canada’s current trade deals, such as NAFTA, CETA, and the TPP promote corporations to the status of nation states by allowing fossil fuel companies to sue governments if they impose climate protections that will cut into their profits. This has already happened to the government of Quebec under the NAFTA trade rules when they put a moratorium on fracking in the St. Laurence Seaway and was instrumental in dismantling the government of Ontario’s Bold Green Plan. The TPP has even stronger language, effectively cutting off the Government of Canada’s ability to impose regulations that will reduce Canada’s emissions. Unless something changes, taking real action to reduce emissions is literally illegal. The youth at the climate talks see this and are asking “if governments can reach binding agreements like these on trade, why can’t they reach binding agreements like these on mitigating climate change?” It’s a good question.

**Civil disobedience**

What the youth at La Bourget were doing was illegal. Under the *State of Emergency Act*, brought in after the horrific terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015, it is illegal for more than two people, in public, to discuss politics. These youth occupied a private space singing and giving speeches without permission from the owners for over two hours while surrounded by heavily militarized police. It was peaceful, no one was arrested, and the media was able to report the concerns of the young people to the public. These hundreds of young activists understood that sometimes, the first step in changing an unjust law is to refuse to obey it. Historically, in Canada, we were not just handed our rights by politicians. The *Trade Union Act* of 1872 that gave Canadians the right to unionize and the Suffragette Movement that gave women the right to vote in 1918 are two good examples of times when Canadian women and men have broken a bad law to create a just law. These young activists follow in these honourable footsteps.
Check out this short YouTube video (bit.ly/23JEaS7) of the COP21 youth walk-out to get a glimpse of their spirit.

**Climate justice resources available from TeachBC** (teachbc.bctf.ca)
- Climate Justice in BC: Lesson for Transition
- Connecting with Nature: Kindergarten to Grade 7 from the Suzuki Foundation
- Labour History Project
- Social Justice 12 Labour History Studies
- Understanding International Law.

Student Leadership in Sustainability (SLS) and Le Leadership Étudiant vers le Développement Durable (LÉDD) are available at Be The Change Earth Alliance. Contact admin@bethechangeearthalliance.org to find out how you can receive a $650 grant from Healthy School Network to pay for the program or check out their site at www.bethechangeearthalliance.org/.

**History of the COPs**
- “History of Climate Negotiations Up to Paris COP21” with a video by our own Severin Suzuki called “The Girl Who Silenced the World for Five Minutes” at bit.ly/1TgAAb4
- Short description of results of each COP according to Wikipedia at bit.ly/1nPDB1q
- “21st Century COP Out” A satirical look at the COPs in comic from The New Internationalist Magazine at bit.ly/1Ksokoz

**Civil disobedience**
- “The Nine-Hour Movement: How civil disobedience made unions legal” at bit.ly/1NSqEA0
- “Climate Games: The Largest Disobedient Action Adventure Game” at www.climategames.net.

**Films**
- *This Changes Everything*—A feature film covering many of the issues in Naomi Klein’s book *This Changes Everything.*
- *Suffragettes*—A feature film with Meryl Streep (playing Mrs. Pankhurst) and showing the struggles and suffering of the women’s rights movement before the vote.
- *Black Gold White Water*—Follows a water drop to the tar sands. Contact whitegoldproductions@gmail.com for permission to screen in your classroom.
- *Running on Climate*—A film about our first Green MLA Dr. Andrew Weaver. You can rent the film to screen at www.icycle.ca/runningonclimate.
- *Whoa Canada*—About the Canadian government’s surveillance state in an era of climate change: bit.ly/1VQOD8I

**Blogs**
- DeSmogBlog—Canada’s oldest climate change blog at www.desmogblog.com
- Read more from Kathy Hartman (article’s author) at kathychaos.wordpress.com/

**Referenced in the article**
- “Global carbon emissions rise is far bigger than previous estimates” in The Guardian at bit.ly/1UNY8Fn
- “How to stop Canadian Multinationals from Dodging Their Taxes” in The Tyee at bit.ly/1s1bvV8
- “Canadian names in offshore files” at the CBC at bit.ly/1X5ZLj4
- “Exxon Knew about Climate Change almost 40 Years Ago” in Scientific American at bit.ly/1LxZ0ux.
Report: The Every Teacher Project on LGBTQ-inclusive education in Canada’s K–12 schools

by Heather McDonald, Lizzie Midyette, and Nichelle Penney, Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ), LGBTQ Action Group

The Manitoba Teachers’ Society, with support from the Universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba, investigated the question “What are Canadian educators’ experiences and perspectives on LGBTQ-inclusive education?” Over 3,400 teachers participated, with 8% of participants from right here in BC.

There are a number of findings to celebrate, yet there are significant opportunities for teachers in BC to work toward full inclusion and celebration for LGBTQ students and staff. BC ranks second highest in Canada for school safety for LGBTQ students, yet only ranks eighth for school safety for transgender students.

Less than half of Canada’s physical education teachers see LGBTQ content as being relevant content to their curriculum. How does this translate to access for gender-inclusive change-room policies and practices at a school, district, or provincial level? One-quarter of respondents were aware of teachers being harassed because of gender expression. This sends a strong message regarding how dangerous schools can be for people who don’t fit a preconceived notion of societal gender expectations. Shockingly, only one-third of respondents had attended professional development by their school or school district on LGBTQ content. Educators in BC have work to do to ensure our teachers are aware of current issues and have knowledge of evidence-based best practice, with tangible action plans to make and maintain safe schools for all students.

Educators across the country can identify their schools as being “safe” or “somewhat safe” for 97% of students. However, when specifically asked about students who are LGBTQ, have LGBTQ parents, act opposite to binary gender expression, or who identify as trans*, the numbers tell a very different story: there is only an 18% perception of safety for trans* students.

Verbal harassment is the most commonly experienced form of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic harassment, with 67% of respondents reporting an awareness of verbal attacks in the last 12 months. Of respondents, 24% identify “outing” as a form of abuse, which can be particularly damaging to an individual, especially if their close family and friends are not aware first.

The Committee for Action on Social Justice has gathered a number of resources to use in schools and classrooms, partnered with community advocacy and agency groups across the province, and developed workshops to:
• increase awareness and develop action plans to support students and staff.
• build capacity among educators for comprehensive sexual health education from K–12.
• increase understanding of gender and trans* issues, and build an inclusive school culture.

These workshops are free to book, well-received, and developed by BC educators.

The Every Teacher Project identifies over half of BC respondents as displaying posters or pictures in their classes (54%). This is an important action to take to increase visibility of diversity, but there are other important steps teachers can take, and it’s beyond time, according to the findings of the project:

1. For teachers who wish to work toward creating safe spaces in schools, initial actions they can take are to request rainbow stickers identifying their classrooms as safe for LGBTQ persons. Email socialjustice@bctf.ca to request the stickers, including the number you would like and the address they should be sent to.

2. Studies from the University of BC indicate establishing a gay-straight alliance (GSA) presence in schools has benefits for all students across a number of high-risk behaviour domains, regardless of their gender or sexual identities. Contact Susan Ruzic (sruzic@bctf.ca) for information on setting up a GSA.

3. Book a free workshop from the BC Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) on LGBTQ issues, trans* issues, or comprehensive sexual health education. For further information, please contact Ashley Gurat, agurat@bctf.ca or 604-871-1857 (direct line), or 1-800-663-9163, local 1857.

The full report from the Manitoba Teachers’ Society can be viewed here: bit.ly/1UoLKNZ
How would your story change the world?

Out in Schools brings fresh and relevant films into classrooms to facilitate dialogue about the reality of LGBTQ youth experiences.

Audience: Middle & secondary school students (priority), educators, service providers, parents, corporate supporters.
Length: Flexible but 1 hour to 1.5 hours, recommended
Size: Single classrooms or small groups to large auditoriums and theatres
Cost: $150 per presentation, We also offer group rates and subsidies to accommodate your budget!

About our presentations:

We understand that media, whether it be film, television or other creative art forms, are tools that can empower students. We want to inspire and challenge youth and educators to take action by using creative (and fun) approaches to social justice and human rights. We believe that all young people have the capacity to change the world through their own creative lenses.

Our presentations are fun and flexible: Our films are engaging, “safe” and appropriate for youth ages 10-19. Our diverse team of trained facilitators are some of the brightest young LGBTQ teaching artists, advocates and changemakers in the province. We will lead you through a dynamic presentation, provide you with an overview on up-to-date terminology, concepts, and statistics, and share our personal and inspiring stories with you. You will learn about the impacts of homophobia, transphobia and other forms of discrimination and walk out of a presentation with a fresh perspective and commitment to stop bullying.

Now you know how our presentations work. Let’s inspire and challenge BC youth and educators to take action by using creative and fun approaches to social justice and human rights.

We can’t wait to see you!

Brandon Yan
Out in Schools Program Coordinator
brandon@outonscreen.com | 604.844.1615 | www.outinschools.com

Out in Schools saves lives.
Queer youth are bullied and experience prejudice on a daily basis in their homes, in their communities and in their schools. As an out City Councillor, I support Out in Schools as a way to stop this discrimination. I wish it had been there when I was a student.

ELLEN WOODSWORTH
FORMER VANCOUVER CITY COUNCILLOR

www.twitter.com/outinschools
www.facebook.com/outinschools
2015–16 Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ)

- advises the BCTF on social justice issues
- reviews and promotes social justice workshops
- liaises with community groups and NGOs
- develops policy on emerging issues
- reviews and develops materials for classroom teachers
- develops and supports networks of social justice contacts in the following action group areas: Antiracism, Antipoverty, Status of Women, LGBTQ, Peace and Global Education, Environmental Justice
- co-ordinates the work of the six action groups.

Antiracism Action Group
Maryam Adrangi
Sara McGarry
Nassim Elbardouh
Natalie Wai

Workshops
- Bafa Bafa Rafa Rafa
- Oppression, Justice, and Schools
- Antidiscrimination Response Training.

Status of Women Action Group
Carol Arnold
Laura Lafortune
Kristin Quigley
Elizabeth Wolber

Workshops
- Assertive Communication
- Stamping Out Cyberbullying
- Youth Relationships in a Sexualized World.

Antipoverty Action Group
Ryan Cho
Bhearni McAleer
Annie Ohana
Sue Spalding

Workshops
- Poverty as a Classroom Issue
- A Follow Up to Poverty as a Classroom Issue.

Environmental Justice Action Group
Sue Ghattas
Julie Johnston
Heather Kelley
Richard Pesik

Workshops

LGBTQ Action Group
Heather McDonald
Lizzie Midyette
Lam Ngo
Nichelle Penney

Workshops
- Breaking the Silence
- From Silence to Action: How to Be an Ally on LGBTQ Issues
- Creating a Gender-Inclusive School Culture
- Teaching Inclusive, Comprehensive Sexual Health Education in K–12 Classrooms.

Peace and Global Education Action Group
Dan Hula
Katherine O’Connor
Shanee Prasad
Deidre Torrence

Workshops
- Bringing Global Education into Your Classroom
- Creating Cultures of Peace
- Strategies for Discussing Controversial Issues

Important SJ dates to celebrate
April 13 International Day of Pink
April 22 Earth Day
May 3 World Press Freedom Day
June 21 National Aboriginal Day
Show racism the red card

Multicultural and antiracist education