



The Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Project is a 5-year SSHRC-funded initiative based out of York University. The primary objectives of the project are:

- to advance the theoretical and methodological foundations of environmental justice by engaging with and documenting Indigenous intellectual traditions, and,
- to contribute to the development of a unique Indigenous environmental justice policy framework and knowledge network aimed at facilitating progress towards greater environmental justice in Canada and elsewhere.

This progress report will provide a brief recap of notable activities undertaken by the IEJ Project from 2016 to 2017.

Part I: Outreach & Communications

I. Indigenous Environmental Justice Website Launch

URL: <http://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/>

This website was created as a point of reference for community members wanting to learn more about our project or the associated subject matter. Acting as a hub for the project, this site provides information on IEJ-sponsored and community events, amalgamates video recordings from past events, and consolidates resources, academic and otherwise, for those interested in learning more about existing Indigenous conceptions of environmental justice.

Incorporating social media on the website, such as the Twitter feed, gives visitors an opportunity to engage more actively with the project, and provides current updates on events. The website was officially launched on March 10th, 2017 at the Faculty of Environmental Studies 2017 Research Symposium. As of April 2017 the website has had over 2, 200 visitors.

II. Outreach

This past year the communications and outreach branch of the IEJ Project has made substantial strides in connecting the project to external actors. Through our social media presence, we have accumulated over 385 followers on Twitter and over 100 subscribers on Facebook. These social media platforms have been used to circulate educational material pertaining to the efforts of Indigenous environmental justice, as well as information on upcoming events and opportunities for community action. Engaging with a large demographic, the project's social media pages have garnered attention from local and international scholars, environmental and feminist activists, grassroots organizations, students, and Indigenous communities. Both the Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to live stream our five-part speaker series during the 2016/2017 academic year, and enabled virtual viewers to engage with the speakers through the comment section on both feeds.



The IEJ Project has networked with 52 York-based campus clubs oriented around environmental, legal and feminist activism. Through in-class presentations and collaboration with three York-based colleges, the IEJ project's resources have been disseminated to over 6,000 students.

Part II: Events

I. Indigenous Environmental Justice Knowledge Sharing Symposium



The symposium took place at the Ignat Kaneff Building in Osgoode Hall Law School at York University on Thursday, May 26, 2016. This event served as a forum for sharing ideas, knowledge and experiences to help understand what environmental justice means from the perspective of Indigenous youth and women, artists, Elders, scholars, leaders, environmental practitioners, advocates and community members. The dialogue advanced the theory and practice of environmental justice scholarship by engaging with Indigenous peoples to more fully develop the concept of 'justice' and the policies and laws necessary to enable just relations. During the symposium, two questions were put to the speakers: What does environmental justice mean in Canada, in an Indigenous context and from an Indigenous perspective? What is currently known about Indigenous environmental justice in Canada?

The symposium encompassed teachings shared by Elders, scholars, women and youth with knowledge disseminated through panel discussions, roundtables, formal presentations and creative expression. Speakers included Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award winner, [Josephine Mandamin](#), who has walked the equivalent of half



Pictured: Josephine Mandamin

the earth's circumference to build awareness about pollution, laws, fracking, and the selling of

the water, and Potawatomi scholar, [Kyle Whyte](#), whose work examines the effects of climate



Pictured: Kyle Whyte

change on Indigenous communities. Further, activist [Annie Clair](#), shared her memorable experience protesting the pipelines, and a number of [youth](#) discussed what it is like to be a young person with a strong interest in environmental justice in today's society. Student led [video projects](#) were

created in support of the symposium. The short videos looked at concepts of environmental justice through the lens of panelists and participants, focusing on their knowledge, reflections and relations with environment, water justice, decolonization, responsibilities and language.

The symposium promoted knowledge sharing and greater dialogue on the subject of Indigenous environmental justice. Nearly 100 people attended in person, with an additional 339 people from 10 countries attending through the live stream option. We would like to thank all attendees, panelists, collaborators, and sponsors, including York University, Osgoode Hall Law School, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Institute for Feminist Legal Studies, Centre for Feminist Studies, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, and Faculty of Communications, Art & Design, Seneca College. For more information on the Symposium, please visit:

<http://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/iej-symposium/>.

II. FES Speaker Series

With generous support from York's Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES), the Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) project hosted a five-part speaker series during the 2016/2017 academic year. The series, which sought to highlight Indigenous women and youth

perspectives on environmental justice, was well attended by community advocates, local high school students and members of the York community. In keeping with place-based objectives of Indigenous protocols, four of the five invited speakers hailed from the Great Lakes region in Southern Ontario.

The Line Up:

1. **November 2016:** Isabel Altamirano- Jimenez - [“The Sea is Our Bread”: Interrupting Green Neoliberalism in Mexico](#)
2. **January 2017:** Sylvia Plain - [Great Lakes Canoe Journey - Mobilizing Indigenous Knowledge and First Nations Communities by Birch Bark Canoes](#)
3. **February 2017:** Vanessa Gray - [Environmental Racism in Canada's Chemical Valley](#)
4. **March 2017:** Lindsay (Beze) Gray & Shane Camastro - [Violence on the Land, Violence on our Bodies: Supporting Indigenous Feminist Land/Body Defenders](#)
5. **April 2017:** Adrienne Lickers - [Longhouse to Greenhouse: An Emerging Food System at Six](#)

In the spirit of social justice, four of the five events were live streamed via the IEJ project’s social media (Facebook and Twitter) channels to ensure that those who were interested but unable to travel for various reasons (financial, time, etc.) could participate. Further, all five presentations were video recorded and transcribed. Once edited, these videos will be made accessible to the public through the IEJ Project’s website. The 2016/2017 Speaker Series was made possible through support from the following: Faculty of Environmental Studies; Osgoode Hall Law School; Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC); Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies; Faculty of Geography; Faculty of Political Science; York Graduate

Studies; Accessibility, Community, Equity (ACE); Aboriginal Students' Association at York (ASAY); and Centre for Aboriginal Student Services (CASS).

Chi Miigwetch for your support, curiosity, and commitment to establishing more just relations.

Our team looks forward to continuing this important work in the coming year.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch. Comments, questions, and/or suggestions for improvement can be sent to iej@yorku.ca.



faculty of
environmental
studies

The IEJ Project is led by Deborah McGregor, Canadian Research Chair, Indigenous Environmental Justice. The IEJ Project was supported by the following York University students during the 2016-2017 academic year: David Bazargan, Meagan Dellavilla, Nasreen Husain, Yumiko Kiuchi, Esther Lee, Peter Mangaly, Shelley O'Brien, Salisha Purushuttam, and Monica Shafik.