
USCCB Environmental Justice Program & Catholic Campaign for Human Development



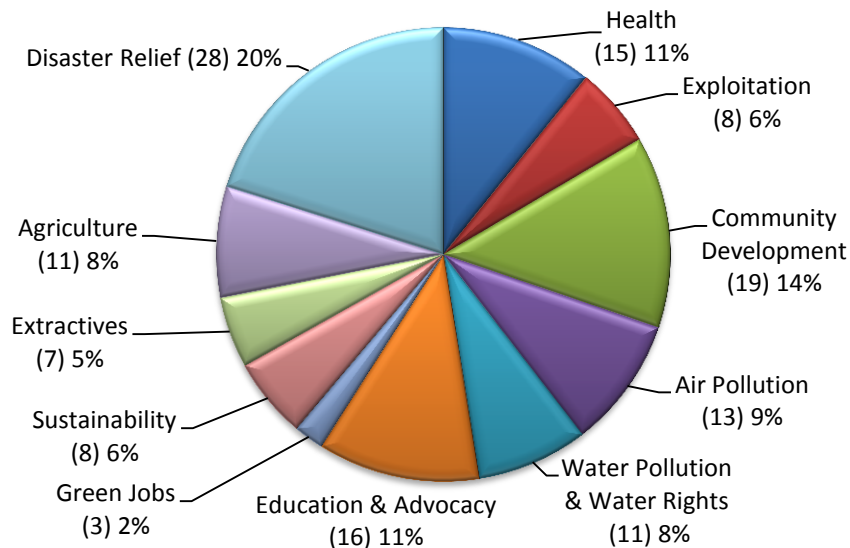
CCHD. Working on the Margins.
Major Environmental Justice Initiatives Funded by CCHD

Summary of Trends

CCHD Supports Grassroots Organizing and Education on Environmental Justice

The USCCB Environmental Justice Program and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development are working together to identify the breadth and depth of CCHD-funded work related to environmental justice. This initiative will help reveal the key environmental issues being focused on at the local level, as well as significant regional and national trends. Since 2000, CCHD has invested over \$5 million in over 75 groups which have undertaken more than 150 projects related to environmental concerns ranging from air and water pollution, to agriculture, extractive industries, green jobs, disaster relief and community development projects. Many of these environmental concerns are related to protecting the health of communities.

CCHD Environmental Justice Issue Distribution



Agriculture

Farming communities rely on local lands and watersheds to provide both food and a way of life. Stewardship of creation is crucial for the well-being of these communities. CCHD-supported groups from these areas address a host of interlocking issues, promoting laws and practices that will sustain the land that sustains the people. Industrial agricultural practices, such as massive confined animal feeding operations, often pollute air and streams with excessive waste. Polluted air and water exposes residents to chemicals that may harm their health. Agricultural groups work to rein in factory farms. When extractive industries such as mining, oil and gas industries threaten to harm land and contaminate air and water, agricultural groups empower local farmers and community residents to fight for the protection of their lands and livelihoods. Through education programs and advocacy, agricultural groups promote and protect family farms, which are much more environmentally sustainable than factory farms. By providing funds to organizing groups in farming communities, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development fosters agricultural practices that preserve the land, air, and water for the people who live from its fruits.

Water

Healthy communities need clean water. Extractive industries, such as coal mining and fracking, threaten the health of communities by contaminating water with dangerous chemicals. Community organizing groups in Appalachia have been fighting to keep their watersheds clean for decades, while the fracking industry has raised new concerns across the country. Factory farms and industrial agriculture also endanger the well-being of rivers and streams. In agricultural communities, the discharge from extractive industries can contaminate local water sources, which are necessary to irrigate crops and raise cattle. Organizers work to protect water resources, as well as the water rights of farmers in places where water is threatened by pollution or scarce, possibly due to droughts induced by climate change. CCHD groups have also helped low-income and vulnerable communities respond to the impacts of man-made disasters, such as water contamination, and attendant economic and health concerns caused by the BP oil spill. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development helps to support healthy communities by supporting the work of those fighting to protect a most precious resource.

Air

Air pollution presents problems to the health of both the earth and the people who inhabit it. Not only do greenhouse gas emissions cause climate change, but toxic pollution from dirty power plants, factories, and refineries make air unsafe to breathe, leading to environmentally triggered illnesses such as asthma, respiratory diseases, certain cancers, and other illnesses that adversely affect public health and children's health. CCHD-funded groups address air pollution on a number of fronts. Groups from Appalachia work to curtail the effects of a major culprit of air pollution, the coal industry. In urban areas and cities like Chicago, groups have worked to pass legislation that requires factories and power plants to reduce emissions of dangerous chemicals. In rural areas, confined animal feeding operations at factory farms release dangerous methane into the air. Agricultural groups work to protect rural communities from the harmful practices of industrial agriculture. Bucket Brigades, that use an air sampling program approved by the EPA, empower everyday citizens to take action. The Louisiana Bucket Brigade trains community members to test the air with easy-to-use buckets. These air testing programs arm communities to advocate for clean air when nearby oil refineries release hazardous pollution into the air. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development supports all of these efforts to reduce toxic emissions in the air and to improve the health of communities across the country.