

Guiding Principles to Address Climate Change and Environment

JSI's Climate and Environment Initiative -
Greening Health and Education Series



The JSI Greening Health and Education Series and the Principles that Guide our Work

JSI is driven by the fundamental goal to ensure that all individuals can live their best and healthiest life and that everyone has a right to quality education, regardless of age or circumstances. JSI's steadfast commitment to equity and justice across our health and education portfolio advances this goal. The climate crisis and environmental disaster we face today affect people and activities across our diverse portfolio. Our actions can build resilience to and mitigate climate change and environmental degradation. To do so, JSI must integrate climate and environment considerations in everything we do, and to do that, we must address the systemic issues that simultaneously perpetuate inequity and injustice and drive the climate crisis and environmental disaster. JSI compiled the following guiding principles – rooted in our organizational vision and ethos - to lead our work integrating climate and environment across our portfolio and operations.

JSI'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

People who suffer the effects of biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and climate change most acutely are often those who have contributed to them the least. They are also excluded from solution seeking and policy making processes. These inequities reflect colonial systems still upheld by racism, classism, white supremacy and patriarchy. These systems have stripped Indigenous people of access to their land, exacerbating global inequities and preventing people from practicing millennia-old ways to conserve biodiversity and maintain the planet's balance.

JSI must acknowledge its role and that of similar organizations in perpetuating these systems and take a decisive stand against them. Our efforts to understand the causes and mitigate the effects of the environmental crisis and climate change must uphold the following guiding principles.





Unequivocally embody anticolonialism, antiracism, equity, inclusion, and belonging

We must thoughtfully advance the latest thinking on the intersection of environment and climate with our health and education work. At the same time, we must acknowledge and honor that many Indigenous ways of knowing have always valued the interconnectivity of environment, health, and education. We must root our work in them, rather than selecting components to gratuitously “supplement” it, and acknowledge the systemic injustices that prevent these practices from governing the environment, health and education efforts being funded, including ours.

JSI must name historic and systemic racism as the root cause of the injustices that underlie the health, education, and environmental challenges that we strive to overcome, and we must support efforts to dismantle colonial systems. We must work alongside historically excluded communities such as pastoralists, older people, youth, girls and women, and people with disabilities. We must do so by building meaningful and genuine relationships with organizations that represent the communities we seek to serve. These relationships must not be extractive; they must be reciprocal and mutually beneficial. We must ensure that our business model does not allow us to compete with these organizations for funding.



Ensure our thinking and action is youth-led

We must, wherever possible, ensure that our approaches and interventions are youth-led and informed. Our projects must embody the principles of youth development and honor the fresh insights of young people in all our activities.



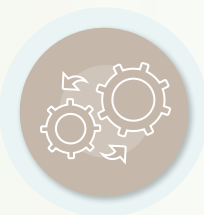
Take a transformative systems approach

Our work should take a transformative systems approach that reimagines policies, systems, operating environments, and power dynamics systems. We should rework policies, systems, and environments to ensure they are rooted in environmental justice. Our approach to education should be transformative and invoke a sense of responsibility in caring for the environment through all layers of the system: family, community, school, regional, and national.



Require programs to be community-led

We must require that our programs are led by and resonate with the communities we serve. We must promote participatory approaches such as human-centered design. We should partner with clinics and schools to engage communities. Our work should be rooted in trust and solidarity with and driven by community priorities.



Approach with a cross-sectoral lens

We must approach all interventions from a cross-sectoral lens, integrating environment and climate considerations throughout. Environment and climate cut across everything we do. We must establish cross-sectoral partnerships and advance ties between the public and private sectors. Our programming should reflect the fact that working across domains—integrating health, environment, education, development, justice, and equity—yields the most profound and sustainable results.



Lead with data that resonates with all parties

We must promote a culture that uses evidence to inform our work. We must be aware, however, of the source of the data we use and ensure they are rooted in the knowledge of those with whom we work.

JSI must acknowledge our role—and that of organizations like us—in upholding these systems and take a decisive stand against them. Our efforts to understand the causes and mitigate the effects of the environmental crisis and climate change must uphold the following guiding principles.

LOOKING AHEAD

The guiding principles presented in this document reflect JSI's long-standing commitment to addressing the global climate crisis and environmental disaster through our public health and education work. Moving forward, they will guide our transformative approaches to integrating climate and environmental considerations across our portfolios and throughout our operations long into a more just, equitable and greener future.