



**UNITE EDUCATION**

[WWW.UNITETHEUNION.ORG/EDUCATION](http://WWW.UNITETHEUNION.ORG/EDUCATION)

**UNITE**

**Reps and the**

**Environment**

**Day 4 and 5**

**RESOURCES**







# **UNITE REPS AND THE ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES**

## **CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY**

- ACTIVITY 1**      RECAPPING OUR ACTIONS
- ACTIVITY 2**      THE STORY OF SKILLS
- ACTIVITY 3**      A COP26 OUT?
- ACTIVITY 4**      A JUST TRANSITION IS A WORKER’S TRANSITION
- ACTIVITY 5**      EQUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
- ACTIVITY 6**      OUT OF TIME
- ACTIVITY 7**      DEVELOPING POLICY
- ACTIVITY 8**      NEGOTIATING POLICY
- ACTIVITY 9**      A CALL TO ACTION
  
- SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY** (TO BE COMPLETED AS A PART OF 2 DAY BLOC RELEASE)
- ACTIVITY A**      REVISITING ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy, teal-colored bands that flow from the bottom left towards the top right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

**RESOURCES**

**CRISIS AND  
OPPORTUNITY**



### **ACTIVITY 3: A COP26 out?**

Access Greta Thunberg’s ‘Blah, Blah, Blah’ speech using the QR code below or by accessing on YouTube.



QR: Greta Thunberg – Blah, Blah, Blah  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2TJMpiG5XQ>



Young activists demand more action at COP26  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZj1rZ7HxC4>



STUC General Secretary addresses COP26 in Glasgow  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDLB9sb-VE0>



## **ACTIVITY 5: Equality and the Environment**

### **Case Study A – Consumers and equality**

Women in Britain and Ireland tend to be the primary carers for children, women also are more likely to find themselves in less secure forms of employment and on lower wages. Most single parent families consist of a woman and children in the family home, with that woman providing for the everyday needs of the children, even if economic support may come from the fathers of the children.

This being the case women are often having to make the daily choices regarding food purchases and those choices will often be governed by available income and constraints in the household budget.

A mum may be heavily inclined to ensure that the children have a healthy diet which is environmentally friendly, plenty of locally harvested organic produce and less reliance of mass produced frozen and tinned fruit which may have travelled halfway around the world.

Parents also want to bring their children up to respect the planet and to learn at an early age, the importance of ethical and environmentally friendly consumption.

### **Case Study B – Hurricane Katrina**

A disaster like a hurricane can exacerbate the factors that lead people to commit sexual assault, such as poverty, displacement, lack of housing, and lack of a police presence. A disaster can also put people in situations where they're at greater risk of being assaulted, from living with an abusive family member to staying at a crowded shelter. A reliable count of sexual assaults during Hurricane Katrina which hit Louisiana in 2005 is hard to come by because the barriers to reporting assault — always high, even without a natural disaster looming — are even higher during a storm, when resources are stretched and law enforcement is focused on search and rescue.

Almost a third of sexual assaults reported during that storm and Hurricane Rita, which hit New Orleans a month later, took place at evacuation shelters, according to a survey by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. Shelters were the most common site of reported sexual violence. The most dangerous shelters tended to be those that were understaffed, or where staff were not trained in disaster relief, said Greg Forrester, the president of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Overcrowding and chaotic shelter conditions can put evacuees at increased risk of sexual assault. So can inadequate lighting and an abundance of out-of-the-way areas where people can commit violence unobserved. The American Red Cross, which runs the majority of shelters in the Houston area, requires that each shelter have law enforcement present at all times, said Forrester. All Red Cross shelters also have safety officers who are trained to spot warning signs of sexual abuse and assault.

Trans people, especially BAEM trans people, face heightened suffering at all stages of the natural disasters which are becoming more frequent in our changing climate. During Katrina, trans people faced discrimination in emergency shelters, and some were even turned away due to their characteristic. Over a decade later, the Black gay community of New Orleans has still to fully recover. Homeless people are particularly vulnerable to the erratic weather events brought by climate change. In the UK, 24% of homeless youth are LGBTQ+. In Kingston, Jamaica, many ostracised LGBTQ+ young people live in makeshift camps outside the city which can be flattened or flooded by hurricanes. LGBTQ+ are more likely to have trouble crossing borders to escape conflict and disaster.

Article amended from Vox article, Anna North.



### **Case Study C – Cumbria Floods**

Heavy rainfall from Storm Desmond in 2015 - 2016 caused severe disruption due to unprecedented rainfall. Carlisle, Appleby, Keswick and Kendal amongst many other areas suffered power outages, collapsed bridges, homes evacuated and workplaces flooded or closed.

In Carlisle, production at the McVitie's biscuit factory was halted when flood waters entered the site early on December 6, when the site experienced 5 feet of floodwater which cause significant damage to the brick ovens, workers livelihoods and even product shortages on retail shelves. With support from Unite, McVitie's 600 workers were told to remain at home due to significant risks to their health, safety and wellbeing.

The cost to Cumbria of Storm Desmond, the worst flooding in 600 years as far as the county was concerned, was estimated at over £500m. But as a report from the Carlisle Flood Action Group, pointed out, the damage is not just financial: "The human cost of the storm and its aftermath is similarly incalculable. The effect of evacuation and displacement on physical and mental health, with lives put on hold, was significant and remains so for many."

McVitie's has since erected flood gates and defences around their perimeter to protect the workplace and crucially, workers.

## **Flood victims more likely to suffer poor mental health, survey reveals**

ITV News: Thursday 5 September 2019



People whose homes have been damaged by storms and flooding are at greater risk of mental illness, according to a new study.

Research led by the University of York found that in flood-hit areas like Cumbria and southern Scotland those directly affected are 50% more likely to have mental health problems.

The university team and the National Centre for Social Research analysed more than 7,500 responses to the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey in England.

For the first time, participants were asked whether their home had been damaged by extreme weather in the last six months.

During this time - December 2013 to March 2014 - the UK saw more than four million flood warnings and more than 10,000 properties were left underwater.

Analysts then looked into incidences of common mental health disorders (CMD), from depression and phobias, to anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

Their research found storm related damage was significantly associated with CMD, suicidal ideation and previous suicide attempts.

People were more likely to experience poor mental health even when the damage was relatively minor and they were not forced to leave their homes, the study suggested.





The clear up operation at Pooley Bridge after it was washed away by high water in December 2015.

*"This is reflective of the huge impact storms and flooding have on people's lives as alongside the physical damage to homes and businesses, there is the emotional damage to the sense of security that many people derive from their home." - Professor Hilary Graham, from the department of health sciences at the University of York.*



## **ACTIVITY 6:** Out of time

Refer to:

*'BEES UNDER SIEGE FROM HABITAT LOSS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND PESTICIDES'* – World Wildlife Fund

[https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL_17MAY2019.pdf)

[05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL\\_17MAY2019.pdf](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL_17MAY2019.pdf)