



HIGH SCHOOL DISCUSSION GUIDE

It's Good Business: Moving Beyond Conservation

Directed by Simone Kisiel

2019 | USA | 12.5 min

INTRODUCTION

This discussion guide is intended to provide you and your students with thought provoking questions around the topics of conservation and biodiversity. These questions are designed to engage students in meaningful conversation about the complex issues that our changing ecosystem raises. We encourage you to frame the challenges of loss of biodiversity as opportunities to improve on how we care for our natural world.

FILM INTRODUCTION

'It's Good Business: Moving Beyond Conservation' is a short documentary that explores the antiquated idea that capitalism must be at odds with the health of the environment in order to profit. While we all want to protect our planet, some current models of environmental conservation are failing. It's clear that we urgently need a fresh approach to protecting nature. In 1990's Mexico, many believed major deforestation was simply the cost of doing business. But one man saw an alternative and launched what would become the most successful biodiversity program in history: The National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO).

Dr. José Sarukhán, the National Coordinator for CONABIO, won the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement in 2017, indeed, many of those interviewed for this film are Tyler Prize Laureates, experts on biodiversity and environmental conservation. This documentary analyzes what made CONABIO successful, and aims to inspire other conservation efforts to think beyond our current conservation systems.

THE TYLER PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT

The Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement is one of the oldest and premier awards for environmental science, environmental health and energy. Often referred to as the 'Nobel Prize for the Environment', the Tyler Prize Laureates include some of the most brilliant minds in the environmental arena. These Laureates are often in the forefront on environmental issues, leading science, awareness, and policy creation to help conserve nature and the essential role that it plays.



TYLER PRIZE
for Environmental Achievement



VOCABULARY

Biodiversity: The variety of life on Earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems, and can encompass the evolutionary, ecological, and cultural processes that sustain life. Biodiversity includes not only species we consider rare, threatened, or endangered but also every living thing – from humans to organisms we know little about, such as microbes, fungi, and invertebrates.

CONABIO: Mexican biodiversity agency (National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity). **Note:** The acronym comes from the Spanish: **Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad.**

PRE-SCREENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is biodiversity important for our planet? How important is it?
2. What do you think is the main issue that's preventing us from solving our conservation problems?
3. Who has the ability to solve these kinds of problems? Eg. Government, Not-for-Profits etc.
4. How do you measure success in conservation?

POST-SCREENING KEY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did your perspective change on the importance of biodiversity? What did you learn specifically?
2. Did your opinion on how these problems can be solved change? How?
3. Did your opinion on who can solve these problems change? How?
4. Why have previous efforts in conservation failed?
5. What changes would you make in your community to combat the loss of biodiversity?
6. What would you like to tell your government leaders (or the world at large) about biodiversity and conservation?

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were the global issues discussed in this film?
2. How did this film help you to analyze and interpret points of view about biodiversity and how it affects us?
3. How does this story help you to understand your role in our environment? Your place in our biologically diverse ecosystem?
4. After learning about the relationship between humans and the state of our ecosystem, what kind of responsibility do you feel to take action?
5. Are you now motivated to act on behalf of our planet's environment? Why or why not?
6. How did learning about citizen science make you feel?
7. Have you personally felt the effects of loss of biodiversity? Do you know anyone who has been affected by conservation issues?
8. What were the events/issues that led to the creation of CONABIO?
9. How do the three components of CONABIO work together to create success in conservation?
10. How does the economy (money) affect implementation of conservation efforts?



Stills from the documentary.



GET INVOLVED

Speak Up:

Now that we understand that every living creature, plant and animal, has an essential role in our ecosystem, it's up to us to spread the word. It's likely that you know someone who swats at bees when they buzz by, or who drops trash wherever they please. Remind your friends and family that while our natural resources can be used to our benefit without destroying them, it is indeed up to us to care for the world around us.

To learn more about why biodiversity is essential, visit: www.amnh.org/research/center-for-biodiversity-conservation/about-the-cbc/what-is-biodiversity.

IT IS INDEED UP TO
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WORLD AROUND US

Use Your Skills:

Not everyone ends up being an ecologist, but we all have skills that can help with this issue. Identify your skill set and leverage it to spread the word in a way that is specific to you.

Write To Your Politicians:

As we learned, the gatekeepers around this issue are governmental institutions, regulations and laws. Conservation problems and loss of biodiversity require direct action and political involvement. Reach out to your politicians - local and otherwise - and in public. Use platforms like Facebook and Twitter to publicly address these issues with your elected officials. Not only will they read what you have to say, but your friends will see you're personally making a difference.

Here is a guide on contacting your elected officials: www.usa.gov/elected-officials

RESOURCES

CONABIO | www.biodiversidad.gob.mx

The National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity is a permanent inter-ministerial commission of the Federal Mexican government, created in 1992.

Contact your Congressperson | www.govtrack.us/congress/members

Tell our elected officials what they should be doing about conservation and loss of biodiversity.



Stills from the documentary.

Right: An orangutan physically fights for its habitat as bulldozers clear the trees it calls home.