



Justice Cohort

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Introduction

A review of definitions of justice situates fairness at the heart of the term. Within the context of sustainability, this notion of fairness manifests in the form of **just transitions**.

The disciplines of law and philosophy identify three dimensions to just transitions: recognitional, procedural, and distributional (Bennett et al., 2019; Krawchenko & Gordon, 2021).

- **Recognitional justice** refers to the acknowledgement of and respect for pre-existing governance arrangements as well as the distinct rights, worldviews, knowledge, needs, livelihoods, histories and cultures of different groups in decisions;
- **Procedural justice** refers to the level of participation and inclusiveness of decision making and the quality of governance processes; and,
- **Distributional justice** can be defined as fairness in the distribution of benefits and harms of decisions and actions to different groups across space and time (Bennett et al., 2019; Krawchenko & Gordon, 2021).

These three dimensions offer a lens for understanding the relationship between justice and sustainability in terms of functionality.

An alternative lens for understanding just transitions is built around three thematic categories: **social justice**, **environmental justice**, and **economic justice**. First, just transitions for society involve upholding the value of fairness as it relates to human rights violations and inequity. Second, just transitions for the environment occur within the context of harmful resource extractions and ecological instability. Third, just transitions for the economy strive toward dignified, productive, creative, and welfare economies.





UBC Context

At UBC, aspects of social justice are explored in the [Inclusion Action Plan](#) (2020), the [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#) (2020), and commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Similarly, UBC's [Climate Emergency Declaration](#) (2019), [Climate Emergency Task Force Report](#) (2021), [Climate Action Plan 2030](#) (2021), and Zero Waste movements reflect the university's robust engagement with environmental justice topics.

Program Approach

A critical gap in UBC's policies surrounding just transitions lies in its attention to economic justice. While labour and equity issues in the Inclusion Action Plan (2020) and circular economy ambitions in UBC Sustainability Hub's [Strategic Plan](#) (2022) show promise, overall engagement with this theme is currently lacking. To fill these gaps, the Justice team will explore the theme through the lens of the [17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) to draw on diverse disciplinary perspectives to unpack challenges and solutions related to the SDGs.

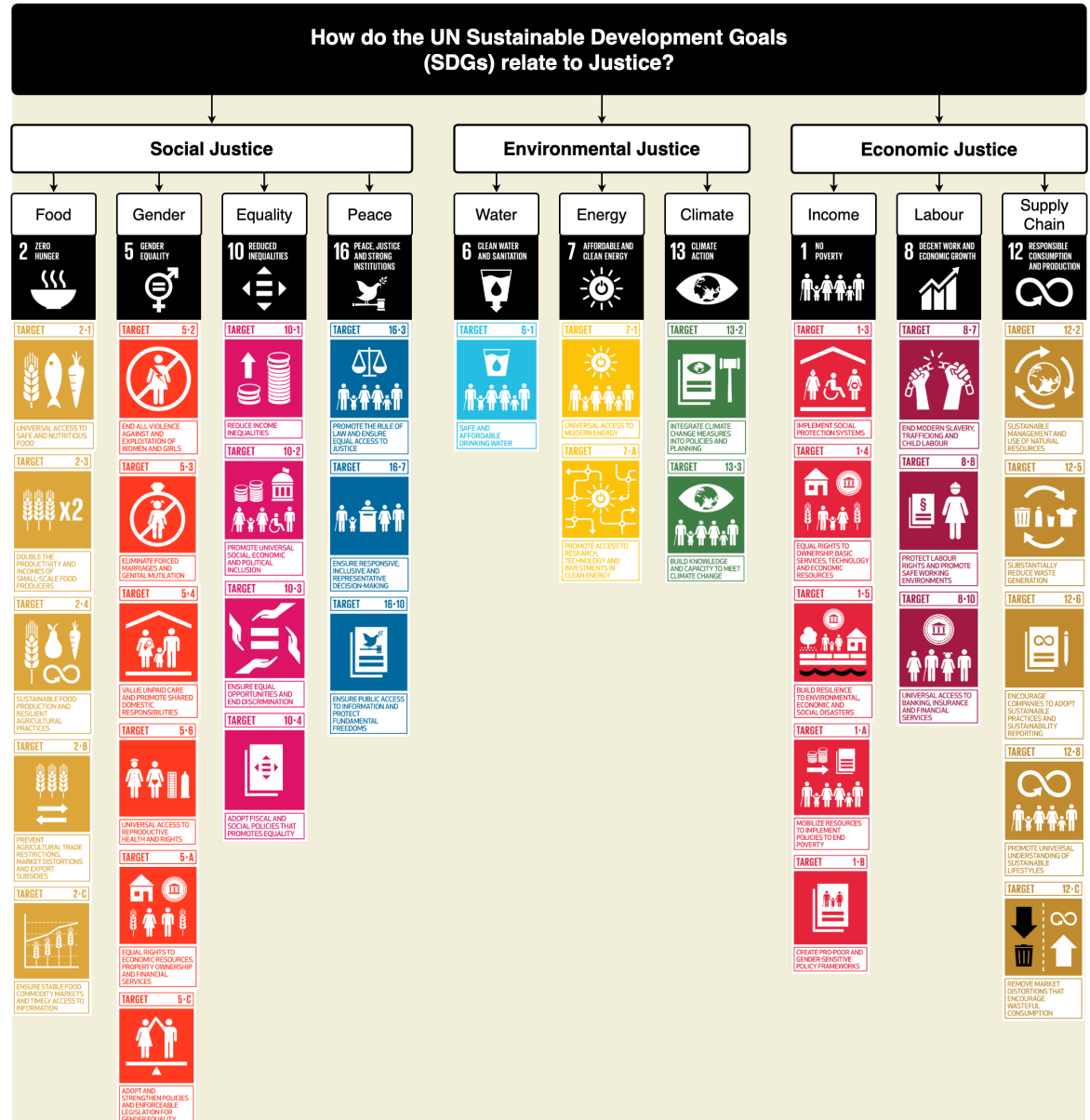
References

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Appendix 1: Mapping Justice onto the SDGs





Appendix 2: Just Transitions for Society, Environment, and Economy

Social Justice

Concept Definition

"Social justice is justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. [...] Social justice is also a concept that is used to describe the movement towards a socially just world [...]. In this context, social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality, and can be defined as 'the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society'." — [Source](#)

Justice Tag

#Equity

Theoretical Frameworks

Intersectionality, rights-based approach

UBC Context

Inclusion Action Plan (2020), Indigenous Strategic Plan (2020), UNDRIP

Related SDGs

Goal 1 (End Poverty), **Goal 2** (Zero Hunger), **Goal 3** (Health and Wellbeing), **Goal 4** (Education), **Goal 5** (Gender Equality), **Goal 10** (Reduce Inequalities), **Goal 16** (Peace and Justice), **Goal 17** (Partnerships)

Case Studies

Access-based social justice (e.g. services, facilities, labour), **demographic-based social justice** (e.g. class justice, gender justice, immigrant justice, racial justice), and **miscellaneous** (e.g. food justice, health justice, Indigenous peoples and treaty negotiations/title claims, intergenerational justice)



Appendix 2: Just Transitions for Society, Environment, and Economy

Environmental Justice

Concept Definition	"Environmental justice is a social movement to address the unfair exposure of poor and marginalized communities to harms associated with resource extraction, hazardous waste, and other land uses." — Source
Justice Tag	#Safety
Theoretical Frameworks	Environmental discrimination, environmental racism, Indigenous / traditional knowledge systems, land-based learning, white environmentalism
UBC Context	Climate Action Plan 2030 (2021), Zero Waste
Related SDGs	Goal 6 (Clean Water), Goal 7 (Energy Access), Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 14 (Life Under Water), Goal 15 (Life on Land)
Case Studies	Carbon offset purchasing, carbon registry, climate justice, energy justice, rights of nature, rights to nature



Appendix 2: Just Transitions for Society, Environment, and Economy

Economic Justice

Concept Definition	"Economic justice aims to create opportunities for every person to have a dignified, productive and creative life that extends beyond simple economics." — Source
Justice Tag	#Welfare
Theoretical Frameworks	Alternative economics (e.g. Marxian economics, degrowth, post-growth economics), cultural-level (e.g. glorification of hustle and burnout, valorization of vocational calling), system-level (e.g. capitalism, profit, exploitation)
UBC Context	Sustainability Hub Strategic Plan (2022)
Related SDGs	Goal 8 (Economic Growth), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities), Goal 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production)
Case Studies	Burnout / hustle culture, circular justice, employment standards (e.g. fair compensation, labour rights, trade unions), work as identity
