



Tishman Environment  
and Design Center



TISHMAN CENTER · NOVEMBER 30, 2015

# Young #ClimateCitizens Talk Climate Change, Cities and Youth Engagement At The New School



On Thursday, November 19, The  
Tishman Environment and Design

Center and [Equity For Children at The New School](#) brought youth leaders in climate change to discuss how young people have the power to drive change in the movement to address climate change. Alberto Minujin, Executive Director for Equity for Children, delivered opening remarks, reflecting on the importance of engaging youth, particularly when it is their future that is at stake. Sheridan Bartlett, co-editor of [Environment and Urbanization](#) contextualized how climate change negatively impacts children in particular. Children are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of climate change in terms of health and well-being, long-term development, and lack of socio-political representation and protection.

*Children are often the most affected by climate change and always the least responsible for the climate change.*

## YOUTH CLIMATE ACTIVIST PANEL

The panel of young climate activists presented how they each affected

change within their own communities. **Jefferson Diaz**, 13 and **Zakeeya Harris**, 18 represented the [Ironbound Community Corporation](#) (ICC) based in Newark, NJ. Diaz serves the ICC and the Newark community as an Environmental Justice Leader for the the past two years. During the summer 2015, he was part of an Urban Farming Training Program where his project consisted of building a hoop house and an urban farm. These types of projects will decrease the effects of disasters caused by climate change that could destroy Diaz's community. Harris got involved in social justice through a friend who brought her over to the ICC Community Center in her Newark neighborhood. She first found out about climate change when she attended the People's Climate March in September 2014. Since then, she attended rallies, especially for Black Lives Matter. Harris participated in building an urban farm in her neighborhood through an Urban Farm Training Program and in the fall 2015, she completed the Environmental Justice Leadership Institute Program. **Amanda Cronin**, is a high school junior and young activist. She has contributed to several articles and publishes her own food activism blog, called [Gourmanda](#). She is currently a member of [iMatter's Youth Council](#), which takes action

across the country to protect the planet from the impacts of climate change by holding adult leaders accountable. **Alex Loznak** is one of twenty-one young people from across the US who recently filed a suit with an Oregon-based nonprofit called [Our Children's Trust](#) against the US Federal Government to demand a robust national climate policy. This complaint asserted that the government violated the youngest generation's constitutional rights and failed to protect public trust resources. This suit would require the President of the United States to implement a national plan to decrease atmospheric concentrations of CO2 to safe levels. **Anze Zadel** is an Amenawon Solar School Initiative as a part of [2014 New Challenge Project](#) with The New School. He is also enrolled in a PhD Program in Public and Urban Policy at the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. He explored community participation related to housing and health outcomes through comparative research in New York City and Lagos, Nigeria. Through their presentations and discussions with the audience, the young activists demonstrated that children in urban environments can and have created solutions to current environmental issues, and they discussed how young people can be

politically engaged in promoting their own policy agenda. To these young activists, young people's most significant contribution is the moral authority to speak up, even though they are often expected to remain silent, to adult leaders and to hold those leaders accountable to take action to curb climate change.



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