

PICKFORD FILM CENTER
Bellingham, WA
DOC-ED

**YOUTH UNSTOPPABLE:
The Rise of the Global Youth Climate Movement (2018)**

Director and Composer: Slater Jewell-Kemker
https://www.imdb.com/name/nm2293123/?ref=tt_ov_dr
<https://www.facebook.com/youthunstoppablemovie/>

FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE

STORY: Traveling around the globe on the front lines of climate change, Slater Jewell-Kemker captures the inspiring voices and fierce tenacity of those too young to vote, to have a say in the direction of the planet they will inherit.... *Youth Unstoppable* takes everyone on a journey that lets you connect with the activists of the next generation and instills hope to know that the future is in their capable hands.

Born in LA to filmmaker parents, **Slater Jewell-Kemker** has grown up with a passion for film and the idea she could change the world by making her own media. At 15, Slater began documenting the rise of the global youth climate movement, which has taken her around the world to UN Climate Conferences and communities on the front lines of climate change. The UN, TIFF, Forbes.com's "Millennials on a MISSION," Mountainfilm and SilverDocs have recognized Slater for her activist filmmaking and led workshops at schools and film festivals highlighting the power of film and activism. Slater is currently a Resident of the Canadian Film Centre Director's Lab. --Green Film Festival, Aug. 24, 2018.

<https://www.connect4climate.org/article/youth-unstoppable-rise-global-youth-climate-movement-green-film-festival>

FEATURING conference delegates and members of Climate Change organizations

Abrar Anwar, Bangladesh Youth Delegate

Ben Wessel, Kyle Gracey, Marcie Hawkins--SustainUs

Daniel T'Seleie--Canadian Youth Coalition

Christopher Baan--World Student Community for Sustainable Development

Prince Papa Omugataya, African Youth Climate Coalition

Meaghan McKeen, Alex Doukas-- Canadian Youth Climate Coalition

Emily Hunter, Journalist & Climate Activist—Greenpeace International

Tim Harris--Climate Camp UK

Jeremy Osborn, Kelly Blynn, Co-Founders--350.org

Danny Hutley--UK Youth Climate Coalition

Melina Laboucan-Massimo--Indigenous Environmental Network

Anna Oposa, Youth Activist, Philippines

Iain Keith, Global Campaigner--AVAAZ.org

Martin Vainstein, Young Friends of the Earth Europe

Julian Velez Alvarez—Earth in Brackets
Xiuhtezcatl Martinez—Earth Guardians

NURTURING PASSION and COMMITMENT:

The documentary begins and ends in the present. In between these bookends, Slater chronicled her journey—from concerned citizen, to activist, to activist documentary filmmaker. Consider the many people who nurtured her passions and sharpened her determination along the way.

1. Slater's parents were in the filmmaking industry. What roles did her parents play in helping Slater become a filmmaker and produce this documentary?
2. At age 11, as part of the "My Hero" filmmaking project, she met and interviewed the renowned biologist, Jean-Michel Cousteau, who explained, "We are all connected to the ocean, our life support system, [through the water cycle]." As a result, Slater suddenly fully comprehended the concept of planetary interdependence-- that "all living things are connected and we can't separate ourselves from the world." At the end of her meeting with Cousteau, he handed Slater a sea urchin shell and said, "I am passing the baton to you. Now it's your job." Describe how this meeting shaped Slater as a person and as a filmmaker/environmental activist. (Did you spot the urchin shell in footage throughout her film?) Who has inspired and nurtured your passions?
3. Although the first youth climate activist, Severn Cullis Suzuki, spoke to the first UN Climate summit in 1992, the year in which Slater was born, Severn's activism was an inspiration to Slater. You can view Severn's complete 1992 speech at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5qcFpPlsYI> and compare it to Slater's speech in Ottawa 20 years later:

"1992, the year I was born, our world leaders gathered at the first climate conference in Rio de Janeiro and told us they would take action on climate change. 17 years have passed....and still our leaders are not leading. We've given our government enough time and now there is no time left to give. If they aren't willing to lead us into a future that we would be proud to leave our children then they should get out of the way. We can't afford to wait any longer."
-Slater Jewell-Kemker, Ottawa, Canada 2010

4. Slater eventually became part of a larger group of youth activists. How did these more experienced teens help Slater find her 'voice' and navigate the political process? Discuss what she learned from these peers, as well as the general benefits that could be derived from belonging to a group.
5. Finally, Slater went into the field to see for herself the impacts that climate has had on the rural people of Bangladesh and Nepal, the home countries of two of her climate-activist friends. Then she traveled closer to home to see Alberta's 'Florida-sized' oil-sand extraction process for herself. These events deepened her empathy for others and clarified the powerful, opposing economic forces of the fossil fuel industry in her own country. Discuss the importance of developing empathy for others very far away and for confronting hypocrisy in one's own backyard.
6. At 17, Slater attended her first Youth Summit for the Environment (Kobe, Japan 2008). We see her packing clothes and "silently freaking out." How did Slater change as a human being, a

filmmaker, and a climate activist from her first climate conference in 2008 to her final climate conference, COP 2016 (Paris, France)?

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHALLENGES: Why Care?

1. One of Slater's goals was to make a documentary that would educate, engage and inspire future activists to take action. Did the filmmaker convince you that we should be urgently concerned about climate change and that we should take action to do something about it—if not for the health of the planet, then for preservation of our species? If so, what messages or film segments persuaded you?
2. Which of the many climate issues that were described by Slater and her climate-activist friends concern you the most? Are any of these issues touching Whatcom county?
 - Ice-free Arctic summers, consequent sea rise, threats to arctic wildlife
 - Rising sea level, coastal and island communities under water, population displacement and migration
 - Extreme weather events (e.g. record and unpredictable storms, heat waves, wildfires, drought), consequent increase in disease extreme flooding, mud slides, disruption to farming, food insecurity, poverty, famine
 - Oil-sand extraction processes that result in contaminated water, increased cancer rates, dried up rivers, loss of fisheries, habitat loss.
 - Bee colony collapse, threat to food resources
 - Transportation of oil and its byproducts via pipelines and coal trains across public and sovereign lands, public safety, breaking of treaty rights with indigenous people, loss of a way-of-life
3. Using your prior knowledge, what other local and/or global environmental impacts caused by global warming can you add to the list?
4. Do you understand the science that explains how various interacting sub-systems can lead to large effects? For example, how does the release of carbon from burning fossil fuels lead to economic crises? How do hurricanes and flooding also lead to drought and famine? How is terrorism a result of climate change?

GLOBAL YOUTH CLIMATE MOVEMENT: VISIONS and CONSTRAINTS

1. Another of Slater's purposes was to chronicle the rise of the Global Youth Climate Movement. Over the years, what actions did the delegates take, and were those actions successful? Describe the evolution of strategies enacted by the Youth Movement.
2. During the process of documenting the rise of the Global Youth Climate Movement, Slater created networks and friendships with people around the world. Some of the members saw themselves as 'advocates' and some as 'activists.' How are these roles the same or different? Compare and contrast the perspectives offered by her colleagues. Which organizations are likely to push for visible, grassroots social mobilizations such as protest marches to pressure policy makers? Which organizations would rather "be in the room" to help make "fair, ambitious, and legally binding" changes occur? (View organization websites in the Resource Section of this guide.)

- a. “The benefits that come from climate change are cleaner air and water, better jobs, more innovation and these are all good reasons to act on something regardless. We all want these things. We want a better world, we all agree on that and we have a whole bunch of ways to do it so why are we sitting around talking about it. Let’s go make it happen.”
-Kyle Gracey, SustainUS
 - b. “This conference is a sham. The conference is more about climate domination by the rich and powerful than it is a negotiation of people from around the world and their voices. And youth are definitely one of those voices being shut out the doors....Our future is the biggest one at stake and we should have a say in our own lives.”
- Emily Hunter, Greenpeace
 - c. “What’s come out of it [COP15] is more money-making and more money for corporations...Look around, it’s a ‘green wash.’
-Tim Harris, Climate Camp UK
3. Slater began her journey as an optimistic idealist. Over time, she learned that political processes are highly constrained by conflicting forces and that many voices—including those of youth and Indigenous people—are often patronized, disrespected and silenced. Besides having their commentary written out of the official records of the proceedings, many were also arrested.

“Twenty people were forcibly removed [by police] just for counting the number of deaths due to climate change...They [police] don’t get the seriousness and when we highlight the seriousness, they remove us. They don’t want to know. They turn their backs and that’s exactly what just happened.”
--Danny Hutley, UK Youth Climate Coalition

Do you agree with Hutley’s explanation for why police removed and arrested non-violent protesters? In what other ways did the ‘Youth Movement’ find itself constrained?

4. What does “green washing” mean? Explain what is meant by “green” in this context. Think back to the film’s segments about Alberta’s oil-sands extraction and President Trump’s appointing to high office people with close ties to fossil fuel industries.
5. Define “Climate Justice.” This is a hugely complex concept. One basic question: Who created the greenhouse effects and who should pay for the cleanup? Learn more at <https://www.pbs.org/video/who-should-pay-to-fix-climate-change-kzejkv/>

SOLUTIONS

1. After being disillusioned by the political process, Slater decided to apply her values by “living the change” as a beekeeper and, later, as a fabricator of sustainable tiny houses. Identify personal actions that you and your friends could take right now that might help to reduce greenhouse emissions or enhance local ecosystems. Resource: Cascadia Weekly Issue 35, Vol 13. Pgs. 6-7, 8. <http://www.cascadiaweekly.com/pdfs/issues/201835.pdf>.
2. So, should one act locally or globally? What is the most effective use of one’s time/energy? Which actions will affect the largest degree of change in the least amount of time? Should one engage in personal lifestyle changes such as recycling or driving an electric car, or would it be more effective to pressure world leaders to legislate social and economic reform on a planetary scale? Watch and discuss the ‘double binds’ described in “Forget Shorter Showers.” <https://vimeo.com/137294079>

FILM MAKING

1. Point-of-View: Many people in the current US Administration, including the head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), are said to be “climate deniers.” How do the positions of the ‘deniers’ differ from the positions of the activists in the Global Youth Movement? Only a few points made by Lord Moncton, a representative ‘climate denier,’ were presented in the film, and then only briefly. Should a documentary that strives to increase climate activism present only its own view, or should it strive to fairly represent multiple points of view?
2. Filmmaking is a deeply collaborative process including dozens of people with different skills and roles. While appearing to be “low budget,” this documentary was shot in 18 locations within 8 countries. As you watched the credits roll with hundreds of names, it’s apparent that “many feet” were responsible for creating the film. Discuss the skills, time, energy, logistics and complexity required to bring this documentary and its message to the public.
3. What are some of the technical skills required to become a good filmmaker? Did you see these skills improving over the course of the film? Compare the quality of the early footage to scenes shot later on.
4. What personal attributes are needed to see long-term projects through to completion? How did Slater exemplify these characteristics? What kept her motivated?

FINALLY:

1. “Young people bring a different perspective and the next 40 years is when the transformation of society is going to happen. So that’s going to be our lives...I want my future to be simple things like green jobs...and positive societies where our energy doesn’t come from a war zone. I think that young people can bring this to the negotiation and change things.”

-Danny Hutley, UK Climate Coalition

“Young people now are a lot more global in outlook, a lot more focused on the idea of justice, a lot more connected to the concept of humanity. So I think the system [United Nation] is shaking and new ideas are taking root.

--Iain Keith, AVAAZ.org

Is your generation committed to being “unstoppable? Describe the world you wish to inhabit and the solutions you propose. Resource Documentary: The Future of Energy: Lateral Power to the People, 2016. <http://www.thefutureofenergy.org/>

2. **“We are the only species on the planet that has the capability and the privilege to decide not to disappear”**

-Jean-Michel Cousteau

RESOURCES

ABOUT THE DOCUMENTARY

Book: *We Rise, We Resist, We Raise our Voices* by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Hudson, Eds. (ages 8-14).

Video of full Speech 1992-- Severn Cullis Suzuki

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJJGulZVfLM>

List of documentaries that chronicle activism

<https://letterboxd.com/monocle/list/revolting-truths-documentaries-about-activism/>

Another Film by Slater Jewell-Kemker

<http://www.aninconvenientyouth.com/>

Video interview with Slater Jewell-Kemker

<https://vimeo.com/268672668>

Lummi Nation Youth Bring Climate Film to Summit in France, 2015

<https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/local/article48070945.html>

Greenpeace USA

<https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/about/>

Indigenous Environmental Network

<http://www.ienearth.org/>

SustainUS

<https://sustainus.org/>

350.org

<https://350.org/about/>

AVAAZ.org

<https://avaaz.org/page/en/about/>

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

City of Bellingham Climate Protection Plan

<https://www.cob.org/services/environment/climate/Pages/program.asp>

Whatcom County Climate Protection and Energy Plan

<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/DocumentCenter/View/36617/Whatcom-County-2007-Climate-Protection-and-Energy-Plan>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2TbrtCGbhQ>

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

<https://www.cob.org/Documents/pw/environment/things-you-can-do-about-climate-change.pdf>

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/how-to-help/>

https://support.nature.org/site/SPageNavigator/action_center/action_center.html

Whatcom County Sustainable Schools Program, Middle and High School

<http://www.re-sources.org/programs/sustainableschools/middleandhighschoolprograms>

Wild Whatcom, programs for youth

<http://www.wildwhatcom.org/ourprograms>

SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Arguments for and against climate change

<https://skepticalscience.com/argument.php>

Answers to Climate Denial

<https://grist.org/series/skeptics/>

Excellent PBS Newshour video segment on Rainforest's carbon sequestration, threats, and protectors: Indigenous Forest Guardians

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/amazon-forest-guardians-fight-to-prevent-catastrophic-tipping-point>

List of PBS educational video segments related to climate change

<https://www.pbs.org/search/?q=climate+change>

Such as this one on *Who Should Pay for Climate Change*. 4 minutes.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/who-should-pay-to-fix-climate-change-kzejkv/>

Films: Recently released documentaries recommended by EcoWatch

The Age of Consequences, 2016

To the End of the Earth, 2016

Forget Shorter Showers, 2017

The Future of Energy: Lateral Power to the People, 2016