

Gender and Climate Justice



Feminists from the Global South and the Global North stress that the climate crisis is a social crisis. The environmental challenges posed by climate change are universal, affecting every nation and community. The climate crisis exacerbates inequality, intensifies poverty, and plunges the world's most marginalised populations into heightened insecurity. This briefing paper describes the relationships between gender and climate justice.

Climate change has been identified as the defining human development issue of our time. While often viewed as a purely scientific and technical phenomenon, climate change is a social, economic and political phenomenon with profound implications for social justice and gender equality. The concept of climate justice is highly relevant in addressing climate change and environmental protection as it refers to the historically unequal responsibility that countries and communities have in terms of the climate crisis. Advocating for climate justice means putting equity and human rights at the core of climate action and decision-making. In addition, it means holding accountable the countries, industries, businesses and people that are emitting large amounts of greenhouse emissions and are therefore contributing more to the crisis than those who are greatly affected by it, usually vulnerable countries and communities.

It is evident that vulnerable groups, encompassing women, children, LGBTIQ individuals, people with disabilities, minorities and indigenous peoples, bear the brunt of the impact of climate change. The escalating threats, ranging from rising sea levels to more frequent extreme weather events, disproportionately affect these groups. The prevailing discrimination and exclusion faced by these social groups render them exceptionally

susceptible to the adverse impacts of climate change. In addition, we see that climate solutions and policies are being influenced by powerful groups within our current political and economic governance such as huge trans-national companies that are responsible for most of the CO₂ emissions. We also see policies and solutions that are blind to the impact they have on these marginalized social groups. Older white males tend to be overrepresented in European climate change policy-making groups.

The Linkages between Gender and Climate Change

A striking aspect underscored by research is the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on women compared to their male counterparts. This gender-unequal situation stems from deeply ingrained patriarchal structures entrenched in societies, intersecting with neo-colonial, neo-liberal and racist structures globally. Consequently, these socially constructed barriers contribute to gendered, vulnerable circumstances, reinforcing the urgency for a policy-driven approach to address these interconnected challenges.

In essence, gender serves as a conceptual framework delineating the roles, behaviours and opportunities deemed appropriate for individuals identified as 'women' and 'men' or another gender. The linkage between gender and climate change has fairly recently gained recognition as a distinct field of study. In 1988, a seminal work entitled "Women and Environment in the Third World: Alliance for the Future" by Irene Dankelman and Joan Davidson marked one of the earliest contributions to this discourse. Since then, feminist



Climate Strike Glasgow on 5 November 2021

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scholars and activists worldwide have endeavoured to illuminate the gender dimensions within urgent environmental challenges.

Gendered roles - a set of socially proscribed behaviours and attitudes deemed appropriate or desirable for individuals based on their birth sex - are key factors in the context of climate justice, including access to resources and capital and meeting societal expectations. Gendered behavioural patterns emerge as a reflection of cultural norms and values within a society, thus giving rise to societies often perceived as dominated by patriarchal structures. However, there also exist examples of matriarchal societies where women hold central roles. The concept of gender serves to illuminate that gender inequality is not a fixed reality but rather a dynamic issue capable of transformation.

Traditional gender expectations significantly influence access to vital resources, with women often facing constraints due to their marginalised societal position. Conversely, men tend to benefit from societal privileges that facilitate relatively unhindered access to resources. Climate change exacerbates existing gender inequalities, disproportionately impacting women and girls who face heightened risks of gender-based violence (GBV) during crises, such as sexual assaults and human trafficking. As climate change is not "gender-neutral", it is imperative to address gender-specific impacts within a comprehensive policy framework to

address the root causes of gender disparities.

Queer–Feminist Terminology

It is important to note that the climate crisis is not a binary scenario because individuals across genders who are affected embody a diverse spectrum of qualities, privileges, and attributes. The framing of genders as stark opposites oversimplifies the intricate realities of human existence. It is crucial to acknowledge the distinction between 'gender' and 'sex'. Gender has emerged as a concept distinct from biological sex, which pertains to the physiological differences between males and females (e.g. gonads, sexual organs, chromosomes, hormones). (see the Council of Europe's information on "Sex and Gender").

Gender is a layered construct shaped by social, psychological, and cultural influences, evolving through processes of socialisation. This encompasses the norms, behaviours, and roles associated with various gender identities, including women, men, girls, boys and gender non-conforming individuals, as well as the relational dynamics between them.

Across different societies and cultures, perceptions of what constitutes 'masculine' or 'feminine' may vary. Societies establish norms and expectations around gender, transmitted through familial, educational, and media contexts, thereby shaping individual behaviours and societal structures. Notably, gender serves as both an analytical framework for understanding identity formation and a political concept addressing power dynamics within societies. As a socially constructed phenomenon, gender exhibits variability across cultures and may undergo evolution over time.

In our approach to gender equality, we recognise the importance of acknowledging more than two genders. This entails including other gender identities such as transgender individuals, queer persons, and those identifying as non-binary within our analysis and comparison framework. While various definitions exist, we adhere to the one adopted by the European Union, encompassing LGBTIQ identities. Additionally, terms such as gender-nonconforming individuals and gender-marginalised groups are employed, emphasising the need to move beyond a binary understanding of gender. However, for the sake of clarity and due to limitations in available research, this paper primarily references gender in terms of men and women. It's worth noting that the majority of research does not delve into additional analysis regarding gender-marginalised groups, thus restricting the scope of our



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analysis to women and girls for practicality and readability purposes.

Intersectional Feminist Perspective

Combining an intersectional approach with a gender lens is essential, as each man or woman is uniquely influenced by a set of privileges and disadvantages pertaining to this individual only. An older woman being racialized in a big town might have little in common with a young white woman in a village. An intersectional approach helps people to steer clear of oversimplified classifications of men and women.

Intersectionality, a cornerstone concept within both feminist and environmental spheres, was first introduced by American scholar, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989. This concept recognises individuals as multifaceted beings with diverse experiences, resisting the tendency to categorise them in narrow terms. Fundamentally, intersectionality acknowledges the impossibility of confining individuals to singular categories, emphasising the need to comprehend human complexity beyond a single form of identity, such as gender. Instead, it underscores the interplay of various types of identity, including ethnicity/racialization, gender, class, age, (dis)ability, and geographic location, which are intertwined with societal power structures and inequalities.

Feminist Perspectives on Climate Justice

Mary Robinson, former U.N. climate envoy, once stated: "*Climate change is a man-made problem and must have a feminist solution*". Gender considerations must not be an adjunct but rather a fundamental element in shaping ideas for a just transition through a feminist lens. Consequently, such concepts should be informed by feminist principles, alongside de-colonial and anti-racist methodologies.

Feminist analysis has scrutinised the dominance of

Western knowledge paradigms, highlighting the subjugation and exploitation of indigenous knowledge systems. Particularly within ecofeminist discourse, notably prevalent in Latin America, emphasis is placed on the nexus between violence against nature, territories, and human bodies. Feminist critique has consistently pointed out that the commodification of productivity, efficiency, and competition tends to sideline the imperative of nurturing both human and environmental well-being. Western political-economic governance is geared to enhance a relentless pursuit of productivity, measured by GDP growth, that results in an enduring crisis of social reproduction. Notably, prevailing green economic discourses often prioritise technological solutions, thereby obfuscating the underlying economic and ecological structures. This perspective narrowly focuses on technological advancements' capacity to remediate, enhance, or streamline processes while at the same time failing to address the root causes of contemporary challenges.

Feminist advocates have consistently opposed the practice of patenting living organisms and the commodification of women's bodies, prioritising scrutiny of the social ramifications and associated costs. Their emphasis lies in reclaiming communal resources and fostering collective ownership. Central to ecofeminist thinking is the recognition of climate change, gender disparity, and societal inequity as interrelated challenges, all stemming from the prevailing dominance of patriarchal structures within society. Part of this critique is the development of (eco-) feminist alternatives that aim to put reproduction or care at the centre of the economy, based on a socio-economic model that is not aiming for as much economic growth as possible but balanced sustainable growth in which people live within planetary means. An example of such alternative models and practices is the development of the *Buen Vivir* concept, stemming from indigenous communities in Latin and Central America. Another is the role of local/regional cooperatives that focus on basic needs.

Gendered Vulnerabilities

The disproportionate impact of climate change on women in comparison to men is intricately linked to various societal, cultural, and economic factors. The fundamental query, Why does climate change impact women differently than men? has been scrutinised by experts in the climate field, with a resounding response pointing to gender inequality. The United Nations underscores that gender inequality, coupled with the climate crisis, constitutes one of the most formidable threats to women's livelihoods, health, safety, and security globally. Consequently, it is imperative to acknowledge that climate change acts as a catalyst, reinforcing existing gender disparities, and rendering it inherently non-gender neutral.

Globally, women bear the responsibility of sustaining households by ensuring access to food, water, and fuel. Despite agriculture being a pivotal sector for women's employment in the Global South, women still have limited access to land and other natural resources, which leads to their dependence on their husbands' decisions. The pressure on young girls to leave school prematurely to take up household duties further exemplifies this inequality. Moreover, women's and girls' health is adversely impacted by climate change, as they grapple with limited resources to access essential services and healthcare.

During climate disasters, the vulnerability of women intensifies and the proliferation of diseases occurs, with childbirth becoming more perilous, with a greater risk of fatality for both the mother and the child. Women also play a central role as primary caretakers of families, ensuring the safety of their children during crises. As food becomes scarce due to insufficient rainfall, women often sacrifice their own nutrition to feed their families. Women also bear the brunt of water scarcity, facing the perils of long journeys in search of clean water during droughts. This exposes them to heightened risks such as sexual assault, harassment, and human trafficking. The domestic sphere is not exempt from dangers, with GBV rates, including domestic violence, surging during climate disasters. Furthermore, the aftermath of climate-related disasters often forces women into precarious situations. Fleeing from flooded homes, they seek shelter in informal urban settlements, commonly referred to as urban slums, living in uncertain and vulnerable conditions. Women's lack of access to social, economic, and educational capital makes them particularly vulnerable to the existential threat posed by climate change.

Recent research suggests a shift in perspective concerning gender-related vulnerabilities in the context of the climate crisis. Rather than solely examining the direct effects of climate on gendered vulnerabilities, emphasis should be placed on comprehending the dynamic

Climate Strike and March in Pittsburgh on 24 September 2021

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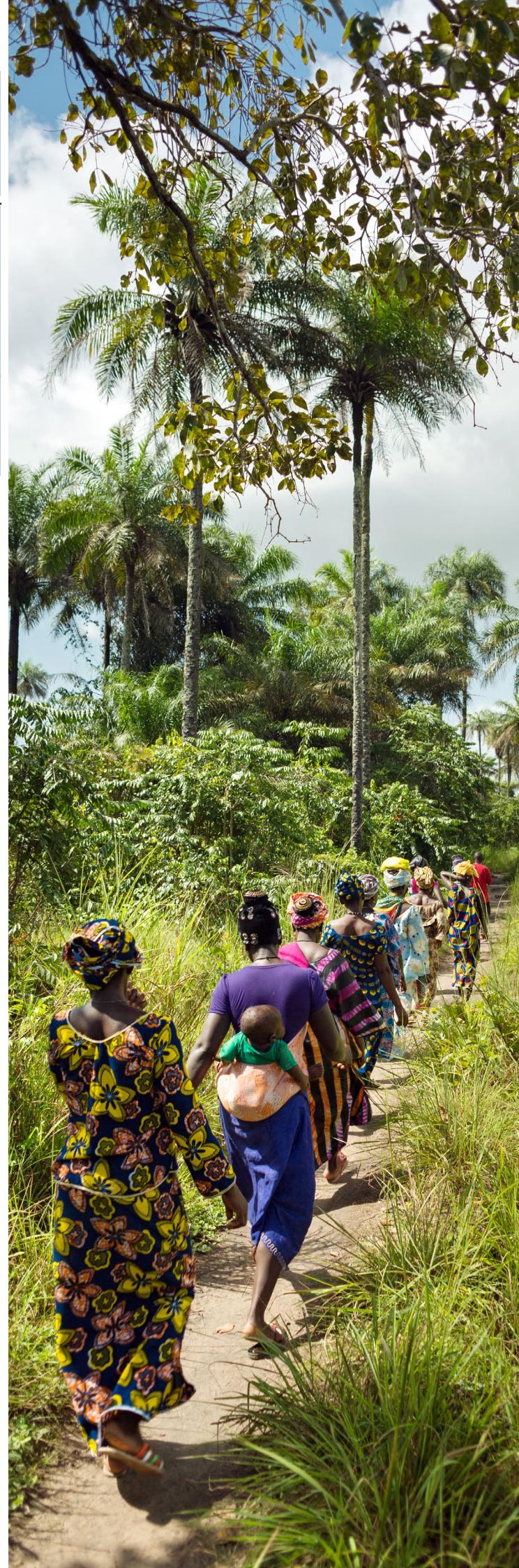
nature of these vulnerabilities. Women are not vulnerable because they are women, but because of socially constructed patriarchal power structures that they often live within. These power structures result in restricted access to essential resources and public services, limited educational opportunities, and constraints on owning land. Women typically possess fewer businesses, encounter challenges in formal employment, and encounter barriers in accessing credit and financial resources compared to men. A significant portion of unpaid care work falls upon women within families. These responsibilities encompass tasks such as procuring water and food, duties that become increasingly burdensome in climate-vulnerable areas where resources are scarce. The existing gendered division of labour further exacerbates the challenges faced by women.

Essentially, individuals' adaptive capacity is intricately linked to factors such as gender, socioeconomic background, financial resources, power dynamics and access to and control over essential resources, notably land. The extent of gender inequality in these factors directly correlates with the challenges women face in implementing effective adaptation strategies. Addressing and mitigating these disparities is imperative for the development of robust policy frameworks aimed at enhancing women's resilience in the face of climate-induced challenges.

Women as Active Agents in the Context of Climate Change

To enhance the efficacy of strategies addressing climate change, it is imperative to leverage the expertise of women across various domains. Women play pivotal roles in agriculture, biodiversity conservation, household management, income generation and in political spheres. Despite the prevailing discourse highlighting the vulnerability of women in the Global South to the impacts of climate change, it is crucial to recognise their proactive engagement in developing adaptation strategies. Women, often faced with unequal access to resources and bearing a disproportionate burden of climate change risks, exhibit remarkable resilience. They not only confront challenges but emerge as agents of change. While acknowledging the heightened vulnerability of women, it is equally important to underscore their role as key contributors to sustainable solutions. Efforts towards gender equality and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes are paramount in steering the trajectory towards a sustainable future. The intersectionality lens encourages a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics.

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Scholars have critiqued the depiction of women in the climate discourse as merely “vulnerable”. Consequently, the focus has shifted towards recognising the agency, skills, and voices of women who defy the portrayal of inherent victimhood. Despite the myriad challenges women encounter in diverse societal contexts, they actively seek alternative avenues for self-empowerment. Organising at different levels from local grassroots to international cooperation, women resist oppressive systems and establish networks that afford them collective power to pursue common objectives. This collective action not only provides a platform for resistance but also cultivates opportunities for resilient livelihoods. In adopting a policy-oriented tone, it is imperative to highlight the agency of women in the face of climate change challenges.

A demonstrable example of women’s agency can be seen in their political participation, as research reveals that countries with more women in parliament often implement stringent climate change policies. Therefore, the increased presence of women in government correlates with stronger climate policies. Furthermore, women and girls around the world have been at the forefront of climate activism and have used a variety of methods to protect, restore and regenerate the environment.

This can be seen in the Pallur Dalit Women’s Collective which began in 2016 when 40 landless Dalit women reclaimed over seven acres of illegally occupied land in their community to promote food sovereignty through collective farming. Girl-led and youth-led groups, networks, and collectives are emerging as influential voices, actively advocating for the integration of gender equality concerns into discussions on climate change. Some of these vital voices include Ainura Sagyn, Autumn Peltier, Disha Ravi, Elizabeth Wathuti, Greta Thunberg, Hilda Flavia Nakabuye, Howey Ou, Isra Hirsi, Luisa Neubauer, Vanessa Nakate and Xiye Bastida.

Policy Recommendations

A logical policy recommendation is to promote the inclusion of a gender perspective that is intersectional with specific gendered targets in policies. Climate change policies should not be gender blind, nor be blind to the impact and interrelationships with racism or neo-colonialism. However, feminists have argued that mainstreaming gender into climate policies is not enough to achieve climate justice. The discourse surrounding climate change and gender necessitates a shift towards addressing underlying issues conducive to effecting transformative gender change.

European countries and the EU should take responsibility for current macroeconomic policies that contribute hugely to pollution such as CO₂ emissions and they should transform these policies. This entails supporting macroeconomic strategies aimed at transitioning towards a “well-being” or “caring economy.” Such an economy would also necessitate holding companies accountable for upholding human rights and environmental protection standards, while also ensuring that extractive industries are held liable for any adverse impacts they may cause.

Gender equality interventions must address the structural barriers embedded in norms, laws and policies that contribute to inequality and injustice. Women, girls and gender minorities, particularly those who experience intersecting inequalities based on class, race, ethnicity, caste, and age, need to be promoted to engage fully and equitably in land use decisions, climate management and policy development at national and international levels. To enhance the capacities of women and their communities to advocate for their rights and interests, feminist leaders should come together across movements to make sure that excluded voices are heard.



Spotlight on Women's Collective Farming

The Women's Action in Development (NAWAD), an organisation established in Uganda in 2009, is dedicated to empowering women and girls while advocating for social justice, economic stability, and sustainable environmental management. The organisation emphasises collaborative empowerment, stressing the importance of cooperation with men to strengthen families and communities and unlock the full potential of all Ugandans. Notably, NAWAD actively engages in agriculture, advocating for collective farming to address land-related challenges. By encouraging women to combine resources for joint land purchases, NAWAD highlights the enhanced protection that comes from collective ownership, making external interventions, particularly from husbands, more difficult. Harvesting is also approached as a collective effort, allowing women to reap greater benefits from their combined hard work throughout the year. In this way, NAWAD offers women the opportunity to leverage their diverse skills, knowledge, and experiences collectively, thus promoting the development of community resilience.



Spotlight on Fridays For Future

Individual examples, particularly notable among female climate activists, further highlight the impactful role of young women in climate action. One prominent illustration is the global climate strike movement, Fridays for Future, which commenced in August 2018. While inclusive of diverse participants, the movement was sparked by Greta Thunberg, a Swedish girl who was 15 at the time. Noteworthy leaders in various countries, such as Luisa Neubauer in Germany, Disha Ravi in India, and Hilda Flavia Nakabuye in Uganda, exemplify young women in pivotal roles, significantly contributing to the movement's national impact. Fridays for Future activists wield moral influence on policymakers, urging them to prioritise scientific insights and implement robust measures to combat global warming. Their advocacy specifically calls for policies aligned with the Paris Agreement, aiming for a pathway well below 2°C. A significant milestone occurred during the Global Week for Future in September 2023, with an estimated four million participants, marking one of the largest climate strikes in recorded history.



Climate Strike Glasgow on 5 November 2021

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Spotlight on Female Indigenous Activism

Within the sphere of climate activism, a notable subset includes activists from indigenous communities. Despite constituting only 5% of the global population, indigenous communities play a crucial role in safeguarding 80% of the world's biodiversity, rendering them indispensable actors in climate protection strategies. Taily Terena from Brazil stands out as a significant female indigenous activist, advocating for indigenous women's rights and environmental causes. As a member of the "Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas" (Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas), she has delivered powerful speeches at the United Nations Framework Convention, highlighting the intersection of indigenous rights and environmental stewardship.



Climate Strike Glasgow on 5 November 2021

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Glossary

- **Allies:** People who are (typically) heterosexual and/or cisgender and support the LGBTIQ community.
- **Change Agent:** An individual or a group of individuals who take initiative and orchestrate social changes in an organised manner.
- **Cisgender:** People who identify with the gender assigned at birth.
- **Climate Justice:** Relates to concerns about the inequitable outcomes for different people and places associated with vulnerability to climate impacts and the fairness of policy and practice responses to address climate change and its consequences.
- **Climate Vulnerability:** The degree to which natural, built, and human systems are at risk of exposure to climate change impacts.
- **Decolonialism:** A lens and process that grapples with deconstructing imperial colonisation, whiteness, inclusion and exclusion power dynamics and Eurocentrism.
- **Energy Justice:** Involves ensuring equitable access to clean, affordable energy resources and addressing social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with energy production and consumption. It seeks to mitigate disparities in energy access, affordability, and environmental burdens, with particular attention to marginalized communities disproportionately affected by energy-related issues.
- **Energy Poverty:** An expression used to describe a situation where a household is unable to afford the most basic levels of energy for adequate heating, cooking, lighting and use of appliances in the home.
- **European Green Deal:** A set of policies proposed by the European Commission to make the EU economy sustainable and climate-neutral by 2050. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote environmental sustainability, and invest in renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transport, and biodiversity conservation.
- **Feminist Just Transition:** An approach to transitioning to a sustainable economy that prioritises the needs and rights of women and marginalised groups, aiming to address social, economic, and environmental injustices inherent in the process.
- **Feminisation:** Refers to the process or trend whereby certain occupations, industries, or social roles become increasingly dominated by women. It can have various social, economic, and cultural implications, including changes in power dynamics, labour market trends, and societal perceptions of gender roles.
- **Gender:** Refers to roles, behaviours, attributes and opportunities that society considers appropriate for 'women' and 'men'. Genders are socially constructed, learnt through socialisation processes and vary across cultures/societies and change over time. Gender is a spectrum that can include identities other than traditional binary ones.
- **Gender Blindness:** Failure to recognise that the roles and responsibilities of women/girls and men/boys are ascribed to, or imposed upon, them in specific social, cultural, economic, and political contexts.
- **Gender Mainstreaming:** Integrating a gender equality perspective into all stages of policy processes, ensuring that both women's and men's concerns and experiences are considered in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes across all societal spheres. Its ultimate aim is to achieve gender equality by ensuring that women and men benefit equally and that inequality is not perpetuated.
- **Gender Neutral:** Policy, programme or situation that has no differential positive or negative impact in terms of gender relations or equality between women and men.
- **Gender-Neutral Language:** A broadly encompassing term for language practices aimed at avoiding bias, discrimination, or demeaning implications based on gender or sex. Its purpose is to avoid the choice of words that might imply one gender as the standard or norm.
- **Gender-Minority:** Refers to minority gender identities outside of the traditional gender binary, which includes transgender women, transgender men, and non-binary people, among many other marginalised gender identities.
- **Gender Roles:** A set of socially proscribed behaviours and attitudes deemed appropriate or desirable for individuals based on their sex.
- **Gender-Sensitive:** The ability to acknowledge and highlight existing gender differences, issues and inequalities, and consider them in the design and implementation of strategies and programmes.
- **Grassroots Collectives:** A grassroots movement that leverages the residents of a particular location or community as the foundation for a political or economic initiative. These movements and organisations employ collective action at the local level to enact change that can resonate regionally, nationally, or even globally.
- **Housing Insecurity:** An umbrella term that encompasses several dimensions of housing problems people may experience, including affordability, safety, quality, instability, and loss of housing.
- **Heteronormativity:** Denoting or relating to a worldview that promotes heterosexuality as the norm or preferred sexual orientation.
- **Intersectionality:** A tool for understanding how various personal characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity intersect to create unique experiences of discrimination. It acknowledges that individuals possess multiple, layered identities shaped by social relations and power structures. Examining these intersections reveals the complexities of discrimination and disadvantage resulting from the combination of identities.
- **LGBTIQ:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgender, Intersexual, Queer
- **Neo-Colonialism:** The economic and political policies by which a great power indirectly maintains or extends its influence over other areas or people.
- **Neoliberal:** A political ideology that favours policies that promote free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending.
- **Non-Binary:** Refers to individuals who do not exclusively identify as male or female. Instead, they may identify as a combination of both genders, neither gender or as a different gender entirely. Non-binary individuals may use various terms to describe their gender identity, such as genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, or bigender. This identity challenges the traditional binary understanding of gender as strictly male or female, acknowledging the diversity and complexity of gender identities.
- **Paris Agreement:** An international treaty under the UNFCCC aimed at limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and striving for 1.5 degrees Celsius. It outlines commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance climate resilience, and provide financial support to developing countries.
- **Queer:** Denoting or relating to a sexual and gender identity that does not correspond to established heterosexual and cis-binary norms.
- **Safe Spaces:** A place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm.
- **Sex:** Refers to the biological characteristics which define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive as there

are intersex individuals who possess both, but in the majority of cases, these characteristics differentiate humans as males and females.

- **Shared Mobility:** Broadly defined as transportation services and resources that are shared among users, either concurrently or one after another.
- **Time Poverty:** The disproportionately large amount of time that women spend in unpaid work, which constrains their ability to engage in other spheres and activities.
- **Transgender:** People whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms such as transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, non-gender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.
- **Unpaid Labour:** Refers to work that individuals perform without receiving monetary compensation. This can include domestic chores, caregiving responsibilities, and other tasks (that are mostly carried out by women) that contribute to society but are not formally recognised or remunerated in the traditional sense.
- **Vulnerability:** The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.

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About The Project

'Gender and Climate Justice: Knowledge for Empowerment' with the acronym 'COPGendered' is an EU-funded project under the Erasmus+ programme that commenced in December 2022 and will run for three years. The project is led by WIDE+ and a transnational consortium of seven leading partners, including Gender CC, WIDE Austria, GADIP, KULU Women and Development, Mundubat, and CSCD. The primary aim is to equip learners with tools, knowledge, and methodologies to understand and address the critical connections between gender inequality and the climate crisis.

This briefing paper is part of a series of papers that delve into specific themes on the nexus of gender and climate justice. This includes the following briefings:

- Gender and Climate Justice
- Climate Justice, Gender and Energy
- Climate Justice, Gender and Transport
- Gender and Climate-Induced Migration
- Climate Justice, Gender and Extractivism

You can read more about the COPGendered project at: <https://wideplus.org/copgendered-project/>



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Climate Justice, Gender and LGBTIQ

As there are more than two genders, it is important to reflect on the interrelation between climate justice, gender and LGBTIQ persons. The other gender-related identities — such as transgender, genderqueer and non-binary — need to be part of the analysis when reflecting on gender justice. This briefing provides some insight into the many ways in which LGBTIQ individuals are disproportionately affected by climate change. It gives examples of good practices and suggests ways to move forward to achieve climate justice.

LGBTIQ is an umbrella term for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people. There are many different forms of the acronym; however, in this paper, the EU standard (LGBTIQ) will be used.

While gender equality is partially incorporated into policies to promote climate justice, there remains a notable oversight regarding LGBTIQ perspectives. Policies that are developed to be gender-responsive often operate within a binary framework, failing to adequately encompass the diverse needs of LGBTIQ individuals. This extends to data collection efforts, resulting in a significant dearth of information on the specific impacts of climate change on the LGBTIQ community. The imperative for further exploration of

this issue is underscored by existing research highlighting the marginalisation of LGBTIQ individuals and the disproportionate impact of environmental issues on marginalised groups.

Economic Inequality and Vulnerabilities in LGBTIQ Communities

Discrimination against LGBTIQ communities permeates modern history, resulting in deep social injustices and a general vulnerability that is amplified by climate change and disasters. The stigma around being LGBTIQ and the lack of institutional support pushes people toward (further) socio-economic vulnerability. Apart from often being denied job opportunities and equal pay, sexual and gender minorities are at greater risk of poverty and housing insecurity than cisgender heterosexuals. A recent survey by ILGA Europe suggests that one in five LGBTIQ individuals in the European Union experiences homelessness. This number increases to a third of trans persons and 40% of intersex individuals.

It is crucial to recognise that LGBTIQ individuals facing homelessness encounter heightened risks of violence, discrimination, and exposure to extreme weather events. Financial constraints and housing insecurity





can impede their ability to procure and store necessary food supplies for disaster preparedness. Consequently, it is imperative to adopt an integrated approach that acknowledges the intersectionality of poverty, homelessness, and vulnerability to climate change.

The diversity within LGBTIQ communities further highlights the need for adopting an intersectional lens. LGBTIQ individuals of colour face a higher likelihood of experiencing poverty and homelessness compared to their white counterparts within the community. In the United States, the intersectionality of being transgender, young, and a person of colour amid the climate crisis renders this demographic statistically the most susceptible to poverty, homelessness, and violence. Similarly, the struggles of LGBTIQ individuals experiencing poverty may have little resemblance to the struggles of their wealthier counterparts.

LGBTIQ People and Climate Disasters

Sexual and gender minorities are often excluded from information campaigns, emergency services, and relief

support. Many countries lack laws and policies that protect the right to disaster relief for LGBTIQ people, even though previous events show how discrimination against LGBTIQ individuals affects their ability to cope with environmental disasters. For example, Puerto Rican queer and trans individuals had limited access to certain medicines and hormones while also dealing with an increase in discrimination and violence after Hurricane Maria. Cases have been documented in which violence against LGBTIQ persons increased in response to natural disasters, following remarks made by religious authorities blaming LGBTIQ people for the events. Incidents of discrimination involving faith-based organisations are especially problematic since these institutions have key roles in disaster relief.

Promoting Meaningful Participation and Preventing Discrimination

Policymakers at all levels (international, national, regional, local) and civil society leaders need to create the conditions for meaningful LGBTIQ representation and participation. As Rebecca Sutton from the organisation Lesbisk Makt (Lesbian Power) points out:

"It is important not to put the responsibility on LGBTIQ people to create an inclusive environment but to work proactively to create an environment where people can devote themselves to the issue without having to spend their energy on dealing with microaggressions."

Organisers and allies must be aware of and try to minimise potential risks associated with being publicly visible as an LGBTIQ person who speaks out on climate justice. Activist movements should also ensure that activists who identify as LGBTIQ have access to safe spaces and influential platforms. Increasing the representation of LGBTIQ is one step toward creating safe spaces. There are many more ways to do this, such as gender-neutral and inclusive language.

The changes needed to promote equal participation of LGBTIQ people must be part of a structural transformation in all societies towards more gender-inclusive equality, addressing the structural discrimination stemming from patriarchy, heteronormativity and other intersecting structures of discrimination and oppression. States have to assume their responsibilities and ensure the human rights of sexual and gender minority populations are met and that their climate change and adaptation policies respond to their needs as well. They must adopt laws and guidelines that prevent discrimination, especially for disaster prevention and relief institutions.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Non-discrimination policies should include measures to protect people's right to sexual orientation and gender identities at all levels, including those of states, corporations, and associations, to ensure comprehensive protection.
- ⇒ Integrate intersectional gender and LGBTIQ perspectives throughout the entire spectrum of data collection, analysis, and advocacy efforts aimed at advancing climate justice, thus fostering a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by diverse communities.
- ⇒ Recognise and amplify the vital role of civil society in driving climate justice awareness and holding polluting entities accountable. Strengthening these grassroots initiatives is paramount.
- ⇒ Provide increased resources to numerous LGBTIQ organisations striving to broaden their outreach within the community, thereby facilitating greater inclusivity and empowerment.
- ⇒ Foster a robust and inclusive culture of civic engagement that embraces all marginalised groups, as the vitality of our democracies hinges upon the active participation and representation of diverse voices in the pursuit of collective progress.

SPOTLIGHT on Queers x Climate and Out for Sustainability

There is a lot of resilience and knowledge within different LGBTIQ communities. Many activists as well as grassroots collectives — like Queers x Climate and Out for Sustainability — gather and spread information about the environmental impacts on LGBTIQ individuals. For example, Queers x Climate is an international queer-led initiative dedicated to promoting climate activism in the LGBTIQ community and beyond. They bring together queer-led groups that are setting up or participating in climate justice marches. Recently, Out for Sustainability became the first LGBTIQ organisation to receive observer status by the UNFCCC.



Fridays for Future protest in Berlin 2021

Credit: [Stefan Müller](#) via [Flickr](#), CC 2.0 License



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Abbreviations

LGBTIQ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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Climate Justice, Gender and Energy



The energy sector encompasses a vast and intricate network of companies engaged in the production and distribution of energy, essential for powering the economy and supporting production and transportation as well as private homes. The burning of fossil fuels is one of the root causes of climate change. Despite their integral role in daily life, it is imperative to phase them out. This briefing provides a short introduction to the interrelationships between gender inequality and energy justice, providing examples of inclusive and sustainable energy projects as well as recommendations.

Energy systems are broadly categorised according to the source of the energy they use: non-renewables (fossil fuels) and renewables. Given the huge impact of fossil-fueled energy on climate change, the decarbonization of existing systems emerges as a pressing issue. Energy systems must transition towards renewable sources, such as wind and solar power. Additionally, there is a critical need to reduce energy consumption in the Global North and ensure a more equitable distribution of access to energy.

In 2015, the EU adopted the Energy Union Strategy aiming to diversify energy sources and to foster cooperation among EU nations, aiming for an internal energy market while embracing the principles of the Paris Agreement to decarbonise the economy (reducing CO₂ emissions). However, despite shared competence in the EU in certain energy policy areas under Article 194 of the TFEU, each Member State retains the right to determine its energy resource exploitation conditions, energy source preferences, and overall energy supply structure. Although the consumption of renewable energy has been growing each year, in 2021, most of the EU's energy came from fossil fuels, particularly natural gas, highlighting the continued slow pace of Europe's green transition.

There is growing evidence that the energy crises disproportionately impact women and girls, including LGBTIQ people. Still "gender and energy" remain an under-researched area. The lack of intersectional and transformative gender mainstreaming in energy policy, regulations and subsidies contributes to exacerbating inequality. Recognising and tackling crucial intersections in the gender-energy relationship to generate climate solutions is of paramount importance. It is not only a matter of promoting energy-efficient technologies, but also of ensuring equity in energy use, and about fundamentally adjusting macroeconomic policies that are currently geared to an unlimited use of energy.

Male Dominance in Energy Decision-Making: From Politics to the Home

The industrial energy production sector at the global level is historically male-dominated, with 76% fewer women engaged in it than men. In the EU, the gender disparity of wages across the energy sector is nearly 20%, and women only occupy up to 20% of senior roles in some energy sub-sectors. Data also shows that women are underrepresented at all levels of political decision-making worldwide, including the European Parliament, which affects their ability to participate in policy-shaping.

In the domestic sphere, gender imbalance in decision-making is also visible in daily life. For example, in Germany, typical investors in domestic renewable energy are male, have a higher income, a higher level of education, strong pro-environmental beliefs and usually live in rural areas. In contrast, women tend to invest less in renewable energy home renovations, not because they're not interested in doing so, but because they fear the expense, as they tend to have limited

Photo by Yating Yang





disposable income and financial savings. This demonstrates the importance of including diverse gender perspectives in both the energy sector and in policy-making, to ensure that women's substantive needs are accounted for.

Gender Roles and Energy Poverty: From Unpaid Labour to Rising Fuel Costs

Energy underlies all economic activities, including unpaid labour, such as caring and housework that still falls mostly on women worldwide. During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that women in the EU dedicated 18 hours per week to cooking and housework, compared to 12 hours for men. Women in the Global South spend up to 18 hours per week collecting fuel for cooking. This means that women and girls in the Global South experience precarious health and safety conditions when cooking with toxic and dirty fuels, as they are exposed to indoor air pollution. In addition, they have to walk long distances to collect biomass/firewood which often exposes them to gender-based violence. For women in Europe, spending more time at home implies that they rely more on heating and indoor air quality compared to men. A gender perspective in energy policy and projects is essential to enable healthy opportunities and access to clean energy for all.

Gender roles do not only impact energy use but they also affect access and affordability. The "feminisation" of energy poverty means acknowledging that women and girls are disproportionately affected by living with energy poverty, which is inadequate access to energy in the form of light, heat and cooling. In the EU, gender disparities in income are one of the factors leading to energy poverty inequality. However, the existence and scale of energy poverty is a result of macroeconomic policy choices, in which many European states have privatised energy supply, introducing market mechanisms into cost calculation.

In Europe, lone, female-headed households with lower incomes often experience energy poverty while elderly women are also at greater risk due to their higher life expectancy and lower pensions. During the summer of 2022, it is estimated that the extreme heatwaves in Europe killed more than 61,000 people across Europe, most of them women over 80. This demonstrates that energy poverty is not exclusively an issue for the winter months in Europe but also affects the lives of women during the summer, and thus, policy considerations need to be made on this basis.

Putting Feminist Action at the Centre of Energy Justice

Energy justice has emerged as a response to the need to address social justice issues in energy access, use and policy making. It advocates for a global energy system that fairly disseminates both the benefits and costs of energy services and that has representative and impartial energy decision-making. A feminist approach to energy justice seeks to offer alternative perspectives to neoliberal views on energy solutions, which are still dominant in European policymaking. It advocates for an intersectional and decolonial framework to dismantle multidimensional power structures and address the resulting inequalities, all while transitioning away from fossil fuel consumption.

A feminist, just transition seeks to challenge gendered perceptions of energy, recognising that fossil fuel extraction and consumption often serve as a demonstration of masculinity while also benefiting fossil capitalism. "Petro-masculinity" refers to how masculine values such as toughness, strength, and self-sufficiency can discourage the transition to clean energy because it might be seen as "weak" and "feminine". As the energy industry is directly related to toxic masculinity, women and non-binary people are marginalised further within it.

Policymaking remains a key avenue for challenging the current system, yet far from adopting a feminist lens, gender-mainstreaming approaches remain limited. The European Green Deal issued in 2020 by the European Commission aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 in the EU. This is despite the fact that one of its core objectives, reducing carbon emissions, largely overlooks gender and other intersectional considerations. Moreover, feminists have called for a shift from gender-blind to gender-transformative policies within the context of transforming the EU's economic system. This requires the reimagining of the European Green Deal as more than a growth strategy focused on increasing gross domestic productivity and instead, prioritising the care of both people and the planet.

Recommendations

- ⇒ The EU and member states should reconsider macroeconomic energy policies, transforming energy as a tradable commodity to energy provision based on energy justice.
- ⇒ The EU and member states should strengthen broader participation to include feminist civil society when developing and implementing energy poverty mitigation strategies.
- ⇒ Energy policies, programmes and projects should include conclusions from intersectional gender impact assessments to identify potential differential impacts on women, men, and gender-diverse individuals. This means collecting much more gender-disaggregated intersectional data.

Spotlight on Women in Agriculture and Sustainable Energy AUSTRIA & MOLDOVA

Engaging women as active contributors to off-grid renewable energy solutions can create opportunities for their leadership and employment, particularly in the agriculture sector. In 2023, the Austrian Development Agency supported 32 women-led agricultural businesses by financing the installation of photovoltaic panels, solar collectors, and biomass boilers. These technologies generate clean and reliable electricity, heat water, and enhance overall energy efficiency. This initiative not only promotes the adoption of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies but also supports economic sustainability, aligning businesses with environmentally friendly agriculture practices. It is estimated that across the 32 projects, with a total capacity of 518 kW and an average coverage rate of 50% of current energy consumption needs, the generated green energy could result in minimum annual savings of 780,000 Moldovan lei (€40,500). This contributes to an estimated reduction of 152 tons of carbon emissions per year.





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Abbreviations

DG: Directorates-General

EU: European Union

TFEU: Treaty Functioning of the European Union

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Climate Justice, Gender and Transport

Transportation or mobility is a critical aspect of modern society, facilitating economic activities, social interactions and access to essential services. However, it comes at a significant environmental cost, with the global transport sector contributing approximately 24% of CO₂ emissions. This briefing paper sheds light on the different dimensions of transportation, examples of gender justice in the transportation sector, gender imbalances and gender-blind spots in European policies.

With roughly a quarter of CO₂ emissions resulting from the transport sector, its contribution has been steadily increasing by around 1.7% annually since 1990, underscoring the urgency to implement sustainable solutions. Despite efforts to curb emissions, the transport sector remains heavily reliant on oil products, which account for nearly 91% of its energy consumption. While road transport is the primary contributor to CO₂ emissions within the sector, other modes such as cargo ships and aviation also play significant roles in climate change.

The global transportation of oil and goods plays a pivotal role in capitalism and globalisation, directly linked to the exploitation of natural resources and labour. This system is marked by unequal exchange dynamics and hierarchical labour arrangements which often reflect racial and gender biases. It is sustained by global trading policies in which the European Union aims to enable European companies to move their investments anywhere in the world and export to a range of sectors, to increase the movement of goods and services. For example, EU agricultural subsidies and trade policies have promoted the export of agricultural products of lower quality at cheaper prices to countries in the Global South, outcompeting local subsistence farmers who are often women, while contributing to an increase of CO₂ through transportation.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), women represent approximately 17% of the global transport workforce, with only 1-2% in seafaring roles. The European Commission reports that women comprise 22% of the transportation workforce in the EU. Increasing women's representation in the trans-

port sector's policy formulation is vital to addressing women's mobility needs. For this reason, significant efforts need to be made to adopt a systematic gender analysis and mainstreaming in all planning and development processes for transportation.

When it comes to transportation consumption, research indicates notable disparities in mobility patterns between women and men (there is very limited data on mobility patterns with intersections belonging to LGBTQI groups).

Road Traffic: High Pollution and Substantial Gender Imbalance

Individual mobility patterns of men are linked to motorised traffic – men constitute the majority of car users and motorcycle drivers. In contrast, women represent the majority of users of (urban) public transportation systems, and they rely more than men on walking. In the Global South, many women cannot afford any means of transport due to women's economic situation, caregiving roles and safety concerns. Barrier-free accessibility is another concern e.g. for women with children, elderly people or persons with disabilities, while personal safety in transportation is often also a concern of LGBTQI+ people. Understanding these (intersecting) gendered dynamics alongside the broader environmental impacts of transportation is crucial to developing effective policies and initiatives to mitigate climate change and promote equitable access to transportation resources.

Road traffic is the primary contributor to CO₂ emissions in the transport sector. Given that men predominantly use cars and motorcycles, their travel patterns result in higher energy consumption and carbon emissions compared to women. Research in Europe indicates that women demonstrate greater environmental awareness, particularly regarding car usage. From a climate justice standpoint, reducing motorised road mobility is imperative. While remote rural areas in the Global South may benefit from improved road connections (e.g. better access for girls and women to education, health services or for marketing agricultural produce), urban planning experts advocate for denser settlements to reduce the



need for new roads in the Global North. Concentrating settlements in villages and cities supports public transport solutions and promotes walkability, benefiting women and those with caregiving responsibilities.

Women & Transportation: From Unpaid Care Work to Safety Concerns

Globally, women shoulder three-quarters of unpaid care work, leading to more complex travel patterns for women compared to men. Women often undertake shorter trips but with multiple tasks, such as taking children to school while running errands or assisting family members with mobility limitations. However, existing transport networks primarily cater to commuting needs, neglecting women's requirements for multiple off-peak trips. Furthermore, personal safety concerns significantly influence women's mobility choices. Fear of sexual harassment and assault leads women to prioritise safer transport options, even if they are more time-consuming. This exacerbates time constraints and "time poverty" for women with unpaid caring responsibilities.

Gender differences in the use of bicycles and new shared mobility options in Europe are notable. Research indicates that men cycle significantly more than women, with women's lower bicycle usage largely attributed to concerns about traffic safety. Similarly, men tend to utilise new mobility services such as e-scooters and car sharing more than women. Barriers to women's adoption of these services include concerns about security (e.g., sharing vehicles with strangers), availability, complexity (e.g., cumbersome registration processes), cost, and limited carrying capacity. Bike-sharing and e-scooters are often unsuitable for transporting children, additional passengers, strollers, luggage, or shopping bags. Moreover, the design of these services often seems to be masculine-oriented, with factors like the weight of bikes or e-scooters posing challenges for

women in terms of manoeuvrability.

The Lack of Intersectional Consideration in the European Green Deal

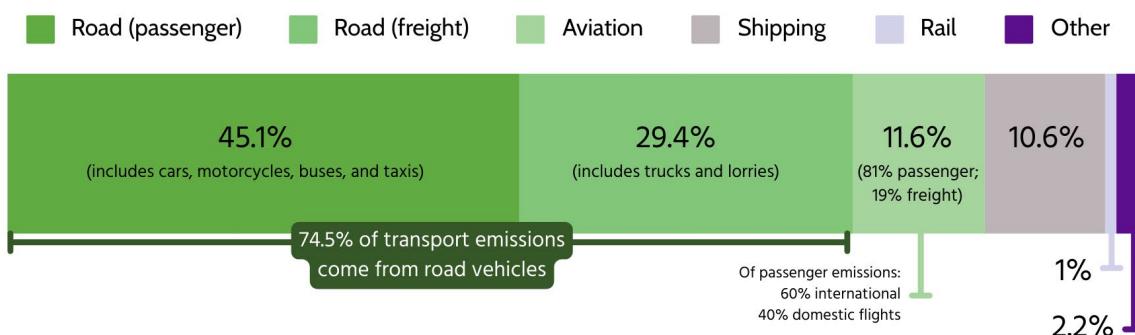
The European Green Deal aims to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, with the "Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy" (SSMS) being a key component. While the strategy acknowledges gendered employment gaps, it lacks proposals for mainstreaming gender equality in mobility and transport policies and fails to address safety concerns for vulnerable individuals using public transport or working in the industry. Moreover, critics argue that the policy overly prioritises individual mobility by promoting electric cars over public transportation. This approach exacerbates environmental damage due to increased demand for raw materials like minerals and rare earth for electronic devices and batteries. The strategy's emphasis on male and middle-class mobility patterns and neocolonial extractivism further perpetuates inequalities and environmental degradation.

Railways play a significant role in both goods and passenger transport for longer distances, contributing only 1% to greenhouse gas emissions within the transport sector, making them highly sustainable. Despite this, many countries face challenges in maintaining and improving railway infrastructure due to the prioritisation of motorised vehicle use and aviation over the last decades. It is also important to note that rail transportation presents a lower gender disparity in usage compared to all other transport modes. Nevertheless, the persistence of pricing disparities poses a significant barrier to accessibility, particularly for women and marginalised groups. Prioritising investment and policy initiatives that bolster railway infrastructure while eliminating harmful subsidies or tax exemptions such as kerosine for aviation, is key to building sustainable transportation.

Global CO2 emissions from transport

This is based on global transport emissions in 2018, which totalled 8 billion tonnes CO2.

Transport accounts for 24% of CO2 emissions from energy.



OurWorldinData.org - Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems.

Data Source: Our World in Data based on International Energy Agency (IEA) and the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT). Licenses under CC-BY by the author Hannah Ritchie.

(mainly transport of oil, gas, water, steam and other materials via pipelines)

Recommendations

- ⇒ The EU and Member States should prioritise sustainable and equitable public transport options, catering to the diverse needs of women and other underserved groups of people by integrating a gender-responsive approach in policy development.
- ⇒ Policymakers and decision-makers at both a government and private sector level should work towards increasing women's representation in the transport and mobility sector while also increasing the meaningful participation of women and caregivers in climate and transport policy development.
- ⇒ The EU and Member states should redirect public investment and subsidies from environmentally harmful transport infrastructure towards cleaner public mobility solutions.
- ⇒ Governments should promote sustainable consumption, based on macro-economic policies that promote reusing materials and decrease the excessive global shipping of goods and oil. Part of these policies are trade policies based on human rights, environmental standards and feminist social justice. The EU and Member States should ensure fair pay and labour conditions, along with stringent environmental standards, to foster more sustainable production, transport, and consumption cycles.



Photo by UN Habitat, Cairo

Women's experience in Greater Cairo's public transportation system

"The studies point to a number of challenges faced by women, including irregular service, overcrowding, and constant risk of sexual harassment. Participants called for expanded public transport fleets to address overcrowding and improve reliability. Complaint redressal systems are needed to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice. Safe, universally accessible sidewalks with adequate lighting and shopfronts that offer an 'eye on the street' effect are needed to improve security during the walk to public transport stops and stations." (UN-Habitat, 2021)

Informal transport: Women's neglected mobility needs

"Popular transport services (...) provide huge coverage, high-frequency services at a low cost. Popular transportation is often the only service available and offers relatively short walking distances from origin to destination. Despite the necessity of these services, popular transit being out of government control has little to no regulation, contributing to shifting prices, lax safety, labour and environment laws and overly centralised and congested routes. Like formal transport services, popular transit is often blind to the complex mobility needs of women which go beyond those of an able-bodied man. Women's journeys are less linear and often involve more stops than a man's, for instance, to drop children at school, check on elderly parents, or run household chores. Moreover, women rely more on pedestrian routes, and they are more likely to use public transit during off-peak travel times. Women also have less access to private vehicles and are less likely to have a driver's license than men. Lastly, women also report regular incidents of sexual harassment and assault on popular transit." (Baskin, 2023)



Photo by Jeffrey Czum

Make (female) care-oriented values become the norm

"It needs to be carefully considered how the interests and needs of women can be met without promoting unsustainable means of transport. In industrialised countries, a crucial question is how to make women's more environmentally friendly behaviour a benchmark for all – how to support such behaviour instead of hampering it and forcing women to adopt male behaviour." (GenderCC)



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Mundubat



Gender and Climate-Induced Migration

Different migration patterns exist, encompassing both short and long distances, and these patterns impact men, women, and gender-minority groups differently. The ongoing climate crises serve as a catalyst for individuals in vulnerable situations to seek alternative living arrangements. This briefing paper explains how climate-induced migration leads to different patterns for men and women, highlights its root causes and provides examples of women's leadership and recommendations.

The International Organisation of Migration defines "migration" as an umbrella term, not defined under international law but which reflects the common understanding of a person who moves away from their place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.

Climate-induced migration is context-specific and results from a multitude of factors influenced by gender inequalities, further impacting marginalised groups. For instance, during disasters, it is often women and girls who find themselves disproportionately affected and left behind to attend to family members. It is essential to approach this issue from an intersectional perspective, recognising the intricate interplay between different genders and other factors such as class, race, age, ethnicity, or disabilities. There should be much more research done and data collected that make these intersections visible, not only for men and women but also for LGBTQI people.

What is Climate-Induced Migration?

Two primary climate dynamics are contributing to migration: 1) slow-onset events, such as ongoing droughts and rising sea levels, and 2) rapid-onset events

such as hurricanes. In the former, people gradually lose their livelihoods, prompting a slow but steady need for relocation, while the latter necessitates immediate evacuation in the face of sudden disasters. Despite the historical existence of climate-related events, human-induced climate change has heightened their frequency and intensity.

An illustrative example of the complex relationship between climate and gendered migration is evident in the connection between conflicts and climate change as the latter contributes to the escalation of violent conflicts, leading to more (sexual) Gender Based Violence. Equally significant is the reverse relationship - climate vulnerability during times of conflict. During conflict, women often assume caregiving rather than combat roles, and they encounter unique challenges that lead to distinct migration patterns. These distinct migration patterns emerge from the intersection of culture and social relations. Societal norms and expectations, valuing women's caregiving roles, confine them to specific spaces and roles. This creates a cycle where the limited mobility of women becomes both a cause and a consequence of their gender-defined societal roles. Despite these challenges, UN data reveals that women globally account for nearly half (48.1%) of global migrants, a trend sustained for almost six decades. While men and women do not significantly differ in total migration flows, substantial regional differences persist across the globe.

Navigating on Migration Routes: Challenges Women Face

Women undertaking migration journeys confront a distinctive set of vulnerabilities arising from the convergence of factors such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity





or race and parental status. Amidst these intersections, they consistently encounter heightened risks to their safety and well-being. This exposes them to various forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse, encompassing issues such as human trafficking, sexual harassment, and forced labour. Moreover, insufficient access to critical resources compounds the challenges faced by women on migration journeys. This includes the limited availability of sanitation facilities, hygiene products, sexual and reproductive healthcare, as well as general healthcare services. These inadequacies intensify their precarious situation, affecting both their physical health and overall well-being. The absence of gender-sensitive services and resources along migration routes creates barriers for women seeking shelter, food, healthcare and legal assistance tailored to their specific needs. This unequal access not only heightens their vulnerabilities to abuse but also perpetuates and increases cycles of disadvantage and inequality.

Decolonising the Narrative & Empowering Women

The climate crisis disproportionately impacts societies shaped by gendered power relations, leading to distinct challenges for women and girls and LGBTQI people in adaptation and climate-induced migration. Understanding these gendered aspects requires a focus on patriarchal power structures. Women are not vulnerable per se but become vulnerable due to these structures that impact women in all kinds of domains, including limited access to public services (not only health services), reduced educational opportunities, and diminished prop-

erty rights and formal employment. Addressing these power structures necessitates dealing with the hugely unequal power relations between the Global North and the Global South that are not natural but rather part of a global system favouring a privileged few. A decolonial feminist lens is essential when examining the interplay of women's rights, climate issues, and migration.

In discussions on gender and climate-induced migration, it is crucial to emphasise that women are agents of change. They play vital roles in disaster response, often ensuring family survival through their resilience and problem-solving abilities. Their participation in decision-making processes leads to more climate-friendly and inclusive outcomes. Despite the significance of this intersection, research and public funds dedicated to gender, climate, and mobility remain scarce. Given that gender and migration brought on by climate change are context-specific, there is an urgent need for more funding dedicated to the nexus while deploying an intersectional lens in gender analyses. It is crucial to embrace both an empowerment and a decolonial approach, allowing women to actively engage in discussions rather than being passive subjects. Establishing a legal framework for protection is imperative to safeguard individuals facing climate disasters. Presently, there is a shortage of adequate global instruments addressing the needs of those affected by the climate crisis, especially those who have not contributed to the issue.

Recommendations

- European countries and the EU must allocate funds for climate mitigation, adaptation, and addressing losses and damages. This climate finance should prioritise gender sensitivity, involve women in decision-making processes, and address their specific needs. When implementing projects, they should be inclusive and aim to change gender inequality over the long term.
- European countries and the EU should uphold accountability policies for companies, ensuring they adhere to human rights standards and environmental protection measures. This requires stronger regulation than adopted by the EU in 2024.
- There is a pressing need for the development of human rights-based migration policies at the national, regional, and global levels to address the complexities of migration with a rights-centred approach. This includes reversing an ongoing backlash on human rights and dignity in asylum policies in many European countries.



Spotlight on Women's Experiences – FIJI

At the CSW67 (2023), women from Fiji shared their perspective from the front line of climate disasters. They claimed that some women are at home, cooking and caring for the community and some are involved in immediate disaster response. Being at different locations, they try to stay connected, which is often difficult due to a lack of energy, telecommunication or internet service. "You can scream in order to help each other", one of them said. More access to information about flooding and weather conditions would also help them as they could keep their children at home in case of a warning. At the moment there are high death rates due to drowning, as the window to react in case of emergency is very small. The group of women at the CSW called for education and training on technologies, but also for knowledge on how to act in case of harassment, as well as knowledge and scope of action about legislative rights and policies.

(Isabella Szukits)

Credit: [Maggie Boyle, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade via Wikimedia Commons, CC 2.0 License](#)

Spotlight on Women's Experiences – GUATEMALA

A case study about Guatemala and climate mobilities from 2022 shows that the impact of natural disasters disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, including the elderly, women (particularly indigenous women), children, and those residing in impoverished rural regions. Moreover, it has been reported that six out of ten women who migrate experience rape during their journey, with girls travelling alone and LGBTQI+ individuals being at a heightened risk of human trafficking.

(University of Bologna: Beyond Pandemic? 2022)



Credit: [UN Women/Ryan Brown via Flickr, CC 2.0 License](#)



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Abbreviations

CSW - Commission on the Status of Women

LGBTQI+ - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersexual

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Climate Justice, Gender and Extractivism



There are interconnections between extractivism, large-scale (mega-)extraction of natural resources such as minerals, oil, or gas, gender-based inequality in resource access and control, conflicting land uses, and stacked resource transactions over the same area. Similarly, gains and liabilities are distributed in socially distinct ways, with companies mostly in the Global North benefiting. Parallel to earlier colonial practices, rural and indigenous groups in the Global South - particularly women - are disproportionately affected.

What is extractivism?

Natural resources such as oil, gas, or minerals are often extracted in regions that are peripheral to the global economy and exported as raw materials to other parts of the world where they are further processed and sold. This is made possible through an international governance of financial and economic policies, such as free trade agreements.

Extractivism is embedded in the logic of the commodification of nature. While the burning of fossil fuels as energy sources is the major cause of global warming, processes of extraction also contribute significantly. A study assessing the total greenhouse gas emissions from the mining sector (considering 65 mineral materials) estimated that it accounted for 15% of GHG emissions in 2020. This estimate excludes the emissions from billions of tons of sand and gravel extraction and the substantial volumes of water extracted.

The extraction and use of fossil fuels as energy sources play a key role in global warming and today's climate crisis. The EU has approved a set of policy initiatives, called "Green Deal", wherein it has committed to phasing out

the use of fossil energy and becoming "climate-neutral" by 2050. However, the production of both electric cars and solar panels also requires the use of minerals and rare earth elements that need to be imported from abroad. For instance, for the batteries of electric cars, lithium is needed, besides cobalt, graphite, nickel and manganese. Meanwhile, the electronic industry (mobiles, computers, smart devices) is a significant end consumer of tin, cobalt, platinum metals, and other metals and rare earths, such as tantalum, gold, palladium, silver and copper.

Gendered Impacts and interrelationships of extractivism

A common feature of extractivism is the massive ecological costs, negative health impacts and the displacement of people. People who live near big extractive industries are bearing these costs, being confronted with water scarcity, unsafe water and air pollution, and women – due to their socially assigned role as caregivers – also with increased care duties. For example, a rare mineral such as lithium comes from a few countries, including the "lithium triangle" in the highlands of Bolivia, Chile and Argentina, in which it uses an immense amount of water in already very dry areas, leading to local communities losing their livelihoods and traditional ways of living.

Extractivism has direct implications on health, especially on women's and girls' reproductive health, while rising poverty and food insecurity impact [maternal and neonatal health](#). Effects such as the loss of income and resources, displacement and humanitarian crisis may result in increased rates of gender-based violence, including sex trafficking and harmful practices such as early marriage and forced unions. The effects of extractivism





are long-lasting. The multiple threats posed by mining also weaken the ability of marginalised groups of people to adjust to climate change and other environmental pressures.

Mining is a male-dominated sector, with women playing a minor role as employees, often informally at the margins of mining sites, with a lack of safety measures and in low-paid activities. The concentration of a male workforce in mining and in the (linked) transport sector goes hand in hand with increased sexual exploitation of women and girls, health risks (like HIV) and gender-based violence.

Disputes over access to resources and the role of the State

Post-colonial countries that are resource-rich are often confronted with a “resource curse”, though not exclusively. This means that these countries are highly exposed to corruption, lack of good governance, and a lack of diversification of the economy. This often results in lax environmental regulations and tax evasion which impacts the provision of public services – essential for women’s health, education and the reduction of unpaid care work. Mining carried out by licensed companies may coexist with a large informal mining sector where safety and labour standards tend to be even lower. Struggles over access to resources are connected with the recurrent appropriation of new spaces on the one and dispossession of – often indigenous – land on the other hand.

Multifaceted conflicts frequently appear between extractive companies, state agencies, non-governmental

organisations, environmental-social movements, and heterogeneous groups of local people. These conflicts often concern the need to challenge the authority to make decisions over how environments are to be used, how the benefits and burdens of extraction are to be distributed, and who bears responsibility for the resulting harms. Asymmetric power relations provide significant opportunities for companies to trade off amongst local leaders. Furthermore, extractivism often leads to militarisation and securitisation at extraction sites and in the regions. Local protests against labour exploitation, environmental damage and health implications are often heavily repressed.

Women’s resistance to exploitative extractivism

Gender and climate justice in extractivism means a fair distribution of benefits and burdens, but also taking into account the different stakeholders’ representation in diverse spheres of decision-making. Women and girls historically suffer from systemic discrimination derived from the stereotypes and differentiated social, economic, and political roles that are assigned to them in cultures and societies across the world and are therefore less represented in decision-making spaces. Women face the worst impacts of a neoliberal extractive agenda. However, women also engage in resistance to extractivism, stepping out of traditional gender roles, and becoming leaders in movements fighting destructive extraction.

Recommendations

- ❖ Implement CEDAW Article 14 in domestic and international (trade) policies on the right of women living in rural areas to participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels and enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly concerning housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, among others.
- ❖ Implement ILO Convention 169 domestic and international (trade) policies on indigenous peoples’ rights, an international legal instrument that includes the right to be consulted on issues affecting their lands, territories and resources.
- ❖ Governments need to mainstream the rights of women, children, LGBTI people, people with disabilities, minorities, indigenous peoples and other groups that face intersectional discrimination in national and international climate change strategies and extractivism policies. The rights of people cannot be compromised for the rights of companies to make a profit.



Credit: [Sosialistisk Ungdom via Flickr, CC 2.0 License](#)

"Extractivism has not happened through time without resistance."

For instance, Nigerian women have been resisting oil extraction in the Niger Delta for up to 70 to 80 years now. In Marikana (South Africa), women protested when 34 mine workers were murdered by the police because they were striking for a decent wage. Women affected by coal extraction in South Africa have been resisting; women in the peace movement in the Niger Delta; women fighting oil extraction on extremely unequal terms."

(Samantha Hargreaves, WoMin)

This story began in 2017 when the local people from a region known as the "Granary of Bulgaria" found out that a company had an investment plan to do gas exploration in the region. The method of exploration and development of the gas fields was euphemistically called "horizontal drilling" in the documentation submitted to the relevant government institutions. A closer reading by specialists reveals that the full description of the method coincides with "fracking". Independent expert assessments were that such exploration, and consequently gas extraction, would lead to radioactive and chemical pollution apart from soil, water and air pollution, as well as polluting Varna Lake and the Northern Black Sea coast. In late 2017, a referendum was held in the region and over 97% of those who voted were against such investment. Initial opinions from the relevant institutions were negative and did not allow the company to start its exploration. Since 2018, lawsuits have been filed against the institutions that issued the relevant prohibitive decisions, and the company has also initiated lawsuits against the officials themselves to intimidate and instil fear in anyone who tries to confront them. Using various administrative ploys in the process of litigation, and an army of highly paid lawyers, the investor firm has been trying to achieve the objectives without regard to the life and health of people. Three brave women led the successful fight against the investor - Dr Donna Pickard from Sofia, PhD in Sociology and owner of land in a village in the region, Ivanka Kazakova, an individual member of the Initiative Committee "For a Clean Bulgaria", and Ayden Yaiya, resident of a local village and organic honey producer.



Credit: [Rick Hurdle via Flickr, CC 2.0 License](#)



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Abbreviations

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

GHG - Greenhouse Gas

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ILO - International Labor Organization

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Mundubat

