

BODY MAPPING

'Body mapping – A Feminist methodology connecting Experiences with Climate Change' is created by LIFE e.V. in Germany in 2025

LIFE e.V. or LIFE Bildung, Umwelt Chancengleichheit is a non-profit organization that focuses on projects and campaigns around socio-political aspects such as education, sustainability and equal opportunities and inclusion. The aim is to strengthen gender and climate justice within climate action. As NGO based in Berlin they focus mainly on local and national aspects, but they have a small team working on international issues. They are closely collaborating with gender and climate advocates from around the world to make local voices heard and are actively engaged in the UNFCCC.

This method is part of the online trainers hub, which is one of one of the key adult education tools developed in the multi-year collaboration entitled: **"Gender and Climate Justice: Knowledge for Empowerment", in brief COPGendered**. This project builds up tools and knowledge for learners to upskill themselves (in groups, individually or with a teacher) in the relationships between gender inequality and the climate crisis. This includes providing tools for adult education providers. The project which lasted for three years ended in November 2025.

The associations involved are in this project: WIDE+ (Europe), GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice/LIFE e.V in Germany, WIDE in Austria, GADIP in Sweden, KULU Women and Development in Denmark, Mundubat in Spain and CSCD in Bulgaria.

COPGENDERED PROJECT PARTNERS



Mundubat



Center for Sustainable Communities Development



Bildung Umwelt Chancengleichheit

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Photos of people are taken with explicit consent by the participants during events organized in the context of the COPGendered project. Consent has been given before or at the beginning of the event that is pictured. The selected pictures are taken at the transnational workshop in 2025 (the one person that did not give consent has been erased from the pictures) and the bodymap is from a multiplier event organised by LIFE e.V. in the same year. The picture of the speaker at page 2 is Elena Georgiadi, who facilitated the workshop at the transnational event.



This project is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the writers and participants and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



BODY MAPPING - A FEMINIST METHODOLOGY CONNECTING EXPERIENCES WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

MAIN PURPOSE

This method sets out to create more understanding through articulating the connection between personal bodily experiences and climate change, emphasizing how environmental injustices impact our physical and emotional well-being. It develops the ability of participants to use body mapping to identify and express feelings and emotions related to climate injustices, including systemic issues affecting our communities. In this way it helps people to engage in politically active climate action by leveraging personal bodily awareness to advocate for environmental justice.

SUMMARY

The method engages participants in both mental and physical activities that foster a deeper connection of participants to the gender and climate justice. They will be encouraged to reflect on how climate change and environmental violence affect them not just intellectually, but also physically and emotionally. The method emphasizes how injustices done to the environment can be felt in the body, creating a personal and intimate link between global issues and individual experience. As they engage in this process, participants will likely gain a greater understanding of their own needs, feelings, and experiences, empowering them to take more active political or social action on climate change.

Time needed: 90 minutes

Number of participants: A minimum of 2-3 and a maximum of 20 participants is recommended

Age: Adult learners of all ages

Material needed: Art materials such as paper, markers, crayons and magazines are needed

Citation: Body mapping from feminists and activists from Latin America adapted by Life - Bildung, Umwelt Chancengleichheit <https://life-online.de/>

FACILITATION GUIDE

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The method described here has been adapted from practice of body mapping by feminists and other activists from Latin America. It emphasizes that the body is the main territory where injustices are manifested. The method encourages participants to use their bodily experiences as knowledge for action. The body mapping should strengthen the participants' agency to act.

The method aims to connect the feelings, emotions and perhaps even also the pain or energies that are present in our bodies with climate change. It works from the assumption that the violence that is done to our environment is transferred to our own bodies. The session will give participants an alternative way of expressing their views and experiences related to climate change through non-verbal storytelling. It allows for a greater understanding of people's needs, views, feelings, and experiences which can lead to empowering political climate action.

STEP 1: PREPARATION

Art materials such as large sheets of paper, markers, crayons, and magazines will be necessary for participants to visually map their feelings and experiences. These materials will help them express their emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations through images, colours, and textures. There are no pre-prepared handouts or presentations required by the method, as the focus is on the active, creative involvement of the participants rather than on lecture-style content.

STEP 2: INTRODUCTION

You open the session with welcoming the participants. It takes you at minimum a few minutes to introduce the exercise, up to 10 minutes. You introduce the body mapping method (see below) and explain its background in rights-based community activism and feminism in Latin America and its focus on the body as a territory where environmental injustices are manifested. You explain that the exercise offers a conscious engagement with your body, so that you learn to understand your bodily perceptions and emotional experiences as a source of knowledge for action.



It is important to create a safe(r) space by explaining confidentiality. And part of creating safety is consciously focus on how people can set their boundaries: tell them that they can leave the room at any time if the exercise is too overwhelming for them. You can inform participants that the body captures our emotions as well and that they are free to express themselves so that they can allow feeling the connection between their body and their emotions during the session. And it is important to clearly inform participants to take care of themselves during the body mapping.

It will be beneficial if you explain that during the drawing session that it is their decision whether they want to keep the map private or share it with others. It is also their decision what kind of map they want to draw. They can also choose to draw a part of the body, like the hand. So you inform the participants that the end of this session there will be time to share between each other and provide/get emotional support. The joint reflection should help to create solidarity and gain energy for action.

In the introduction you show the participants the materials that they can use for their body mapping – give them enough colour pencils, markers, etc. and provide everybody with a sheet of paper.

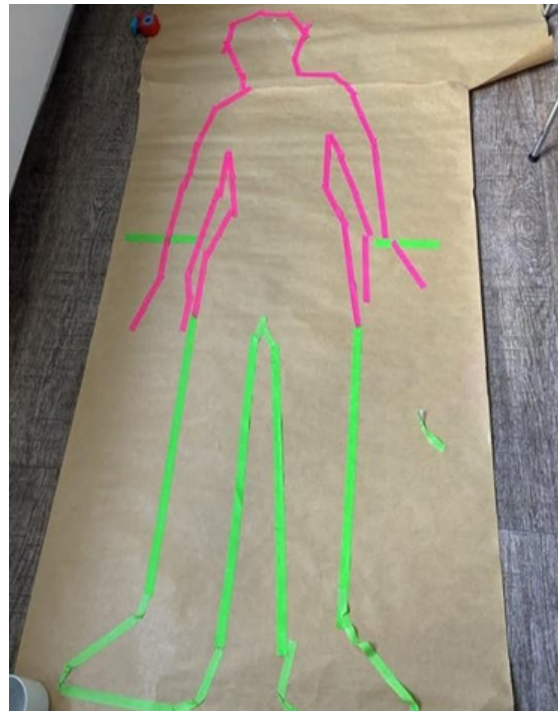
STEP 3: IMPLEMENTING THE MAPPING

For this part you can plan around an hour. To commence the body mapping you can create a moment for participants to connect with their body. You can offer to the participants a simple relaxation exercise (e.g. breathing exercise) or a short, guided meditation that supports the shift of focus from thinking to perceiving their body and encourages self-care and appreciation of all experiences. Then start the body mapping with the following instruction:

Draw (a part of) your body either freehand on a small sheet or have someone draw around you.

Take time for each of the following steps:

- Map everyday places on your body drawing: Consider daily places/spaces (home, work, school, etc.). Place these intuitively on your body map. Reflect on the feelings and moods these spaces evoke and where you feel them in your body.
- Map daily paths: Identify the paths/streets you walk every day. Draw these on your body map. Include any significant landmarks (trees, parks, etc.).
- Family & important people: Think of family and friends who are important to you. Draw them on your map.
- (Feelings toward spaces: Reflect on places you like vs. those that make you feel unsafe, anxious, or threatened. Draw these spaces and feelings on your map.
- Climate crisis reflection: When you think of climate change, what comes to mind? Draw your thoughts (e.g., coal mining, drought, floods) on your map and note where you feel them in your body.
- Media & climate events: Reflect on daily media reports (floods, wildfires, food/water shortages, floods). Place these events on your map.



- Denial & indifference: How do you feel when you hear people deny or ignore the climate crisis? Draw these feelings on your map.
- Patriarchy/power reflection: Consider the effects of patriarchy and gender expectations in your life. Draw where you feel oppressed or powerless. Reflect on power dynamics and injustices.
- Energy for change- places of power: Where in your body do you feel the energy to act for change? Identify sources of this energy and your personal strength.

Participants can put the answers on their map. And you can finish the Body Map with another exercise that fosters connection with the body, for example, offer the participants to stand up and shake their bodies softly.

STEP 4: REFLECTION PHASE

If you have decided to share (some) maps you can ask participants to place all body maps in the centre of the group and start the discussion by asking for commonalities. Alternatively, you start a reflection in the whole group. The time for this step will be around 15 minutes. Relevant reflection questions that you could use are:

- Which body parts are drawn? And which are not? Why?
- What parts of the climate crisis or patriarchy/power-dynamics did you map? How do you feel about these issues emotionally?
- Does the map reflect your personal connection to climate issues, and how can you use this awareness to act on climate change?

Ensure that participants recognize their body as a source of knowledge which empowers them to act.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS

This workshop methodology requires a large, safe, and comfortable space that allows participants to move freely and engage creatively. The environment should foster openness and safety, as participants are being asked to explore and express emotions related to climate change and environmental injustices. Thus, the space should be big enough, allowing for personal reflection and shared discussions within the group.

The recommended number of participants is between a minimum of 2-3 and 20 adults, ensuring a balance between intimate personal expression and the richness of group interaction. The group should be diverse, as participants of all ages are welcome, as long as



they are adult learners. The trainer will need to create an atmosphere of trust, openness, and care, as participants will be engaging in a vulnerable process that connects their bodies to the larger issue of climate change.

The trainer's role is to also facilitate the creative process, offering guidance when necessary but allowing the participants to shape their own representations of the climate crisis. As the session progresses, the trainer will encourage participants to reflect on how the violence done to the environment could be felt in their bodies and how their personal experiences intersect with larger global issues. By the end of the session, participants should have gained a deeper understanding of their own emotional and physical responses to climate change, leading to greater empowerment and a sense of collective responsibility for political climate action.)

CONCLUSIONS

The body mapping workshop offers participants a unique way to explore their emotional and physical connections to climate change through creative expression. With meditation to centre participants at the start, the workshop creates a safe space for reflection. By mapping their experiences, participants connect personal feelings of environmental injustice to larger global issues, empowering them to take action. The trainer's role is to guide this process, ensuring a caring environment.