

A HEALTHY CLIMATE? GENDER JUSTICE AND CLIMATE PROTECTION

Are climate policies and the consequences of climate change gender neutral?

In climate protection, as in other areas, gender differences are most immediately visible at the level of **participation and involvement**. Women are underrepresented in all relevant political and economic decision-making bodies, and this is true not only at the local level, but also at the national and international levels. For example, the proportion of women in government delegations at the UN climate change negotiations fluctuates between 15 and 25 %, and there is not a single woman in a senior management position dealing with climate protection at the German Environment Ministry.

The proportion of women at decision-making levels in some of the international environmental NGOs working in climate protection is somewhat higher – however, this does not automatically mean that the latter are more gender-sensitive in their attitude to work, nor that they give attention to gender relations.

Gender differences in terms of the degree to which people are affected by the impact of climate change in the South are equally clear to see. A greater amount of time spent on obtaining food and fuel leads directly to a reduction in opportunities to secure an income, to give but one example. In the North, on the other hand, gender differences are not as easy to recognise and their exist-

ence is frequently doubted. On closer analysis, however, they are impossible to overlook: they are evident, for example, in the higher mortality rate among women of all ages in the hot summers of recent years.

Women and men **perceive risks differently**, and this also applies to climate change. Women's considerably higher sensitivity to risk leads them to view the success of climate policies less positively than men and to favour other measures or steps necessary for preventing climate change. Far fewer women than men believe that science and technology will solve environmental problems without our having to change our lifestyle. They also rate more highly the influence that each individual has on climate protection.

How well-informed people are about climate protection and climate change also varies according to gender. Generally, women see themselves as being less well informed and do in fact have less knowledge about climate change. These differences are particularly noticeable with regard to the extent to which people are informed about the international climate negotiations. Despite their relative lack of knowledge, women are more able than men to recognise the **urgency of the need for changes in behaviour** and in many areas are already adjusting their behaviour to meet this need, for example by reducing their energy consumption, using more public transport and changing their eating and shopping habits.

All these gender-specific differences are based on the social roles assigned to women and men in society. These roles are linked to **gender hierarchies in terms of opportunity and participation in power structures in society**. When considering the issue of gender relations, one must therefore also always bear in mind the power relations associated with them.

If climate-protection policy ignores the aforementioned and many other (proven or as yet only suspected) gender aspects, it cannot be sustainable, since it would have a counterproductive effect on gender equality. Without taking gender aspects into consideration, the task of preventing climate change will be difficult to achieve.

Where can further information be found?

www.climateforchange.net

www.genanet.de

www.gencc.interconnection.org

www.energia.org

www.wecf.org

What are we doing?

We are supporting institutions and organisations in integrating the gender perspective into their climate-protection policies by:

- producing information on gender issues in climate protection
- conducting gender analyses for climate-protection projects and measures
- monitoring gender mainstreaming processes
- raising awareness of gender issues through training courses and workshops

We are co-operating with women's and gender networks in order to:

- develop and discuss gender positions
- exert influence on national, European and international climate-change policy
- disseminate information about climate protection in women's organisations
- increase, through networking, the proportion of women in areas of work and decision-making positions relevant to climate protection

We are promoting awareness of gender justice in climate protection by:

- conducting public relations work as well as projects and conferences
- carrying out studies on gender and climate protection
- compiling and disseminating cast-iron arguments and useful examples

Taking gender differences into account in the planning of climate-protection measures and shaping climate-protection policy from the gender perspective would signify an important step not just toward gender justice, but also toward a society in which sustainable climate protection is not merely a vision but a practical reality.

What needs to be done?

- All climate-protection measures and programmes and also all instruments for mitigating climate change or adapting to climate change must be subjected to a gender analysis.
- Women must be involved at all levels in climate-protection negotiations and in all decisions on climate protection. However, representation based purely on numbers does not guarantee that gender relations and the specific situations and interests of women will be acknowledged in debates and decisions. The participation of gender experts from the relevant areas (energy, transport, agriculture etc.) must therefore explicitly be ensured.
- The gender perspective must be universally integrated into climate protection negotiations and the formulation of climate-protection policy at the national and international levels (gender mainstreaming). This also means that all climate-protection policies and programmes must take into account the differing situations of women and men and their differing needs, opportunities and goals.
- All personal data relating to the analysis of problems and the description of situations in the area of climate change and climate protection must be analysed in a gender-disaggregated way. It is precisely in the North that this data, which is needed to draw up suitably appropriate climate protection programmes, is lacking.
- Gaps in knowledge in the area of gender and climate protection must be closed by designing and sponsoring relevant research projects.
- In order to counter the current information deficit, information on climate protection and climate-protection policy must be drawn up that will meet target group requirements and, in particular, take into account women's interests and information channels.
- A monitoring system must be set up at national and international levels to monitor the universal integration of the gender perspective and, where necessary, call for its implementation.

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www.wecf.org

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