

Women and Climate Change

Climate change affects everyone, but research shows that the financially poorest peoples of the world suffer the most. Women are the majority of those living in poverty in the world. The world's women perform 66 per cent of the work, produce 50 per cent of the food, but earn only 10 per cent of the income and own a mere one per cent of global property. In some regions, women provide 70 percent of agricultural labour, produce more than 90 percent of the food, and yet are nowhere represented in budget deliberations.

Gender inequality elucidates why it is more difficult for women to escape poverty because many women live with persistent discrimination which block opportunities, including access to education and resources such as land or credit. When women find employment, it is often low-skilled and poorly paid which is in addition to other work such as household and care-giving responsibilities, which are unpaid, undervalued and often invisible.

When resources are scarce, women show great endurance and livelihood skills which prop up an entire community because women are most often the care-takers, educators, medicine makers and small farmers who hold real, local-based solutions. When women are supported, the entire community benefits not only based on women's skills but also because when women have an income they spend much more of it on food, medicine and schooling for children.

The impacts of climate change impede the important daily activities of women. Some of the impacts include flooding, prolonged droughts, lack of access to drinking water and water for agriculture, impact on food sovereignty, greater dependence on the economy and the market, heavy unseasonal rain, forced displacement, amongst others.

In addition to climatic shifts and changing weather patterns, development projects such as oil, mining and heavy industry also play an enormous role in social and environmental conflicts. In fact, it is because of this predatory type of "development" that we are in a climate crisis in the first place and women are the most vulnerable group.

Attempts by policy-makers to curb climate change have led to market-based strategies which benefit the biggest polluters and often cause social and environmental harm. These so-called solutions aim to maintain an oppressive and patriarchal political and economic system. Some of these projects are found in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and in Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation projects (REDD) [nored.d.makenoise.org]. These projects include monoculture tree plantations, large-scale windmill farms and major hydroelectric dams promoted as supposedly clean energy sources. From the standpoint of climate they do not reduce emissions but exacerbate local conflicts, worsening the lives of women in particular.

Women are often in the center of these struggles and many experiences have shown that when women are empowered to struggle with their communities, the outcome is often more successful. Empowering women and girls is central to achieving gender and climate justice.

This page is dedicated to women who struggle and the people who support them.

Some Facts on Inequality:

More than a billion people live on less than US\$1 dollar a day and 3 out of 5 of them are women and girls [United Nations Development Program 2006]

1 in 3 women will suffer violence in her lifetime [United Nations Development Program 2006]

Women comprise 2 out of 3 of the world's 960 million illiterate adults [United Nations Development Program 2006]

For every year beyond fourth grade that girls attend school, wages rise 20%, child deaths drop 10% and family size drops 20% [Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development and Peace website, accessed 12 October 2009]

Worldwide, over 6 out of 10 people working in family enterprises without pay are women [State of World Populations 2005]

Read and sign the position statement on Women and REDD

Climate change, one of most serious problems facing the world today, will have disastrous consequences for everyone, and especially for women. What is most tragic is that women will also suffer especially from the false solutions for climate change that are being negotiated internationally.

On the occasion of International Women's Day we invite you to reflect on these issues and to participate in the following actions:

Watch and share the video on Women and Climate Change: False solutions

http://wrm.org.uy/subjects/women/Women_and_Climate_Change.html

and

Read and sign the position on Women and REDD

For further information on International Women's Day, please visit:

http://www.wrm.org.uy/subjects/women/women_day_2011.html

Letter of solidarity with the struggle of women in the world

This "Letter on solidarity with women's struggles around the world" was written by a working group composed by women from different organizations considering the debates carried out during the World Social Forum held in Dakar, February of 2011.

Peasant women occupy tree plantation of Veracel Celulose

On February 28, fifteen hundred women of the MST occupied the Cedros tree plantation, belonging to Veracel Celulose. The action is part of the struggles marking the International Women's Day on March 8. Also available in Portuguese

Tools for gender analysis, gender sensitive communication, participation & training

In this section you will find downloads and links to methodologies and practical tools to support the integration of gender aspects and to improve equal participation of women and men. Although there is a wide range of tools available, addressing many different issues, tools addressing exclusively climate change measures, programmes and projects are missing. At least we don't know about them. If anybody is aware of such tools, please let us know.

<http://www.gendercc.net/resources/gender-tools.html>