

Picture credit : Pakhi Megna - River

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Gender and climate toolkit

No climate justice without gender justice!

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Climate change is one of the most urgent global challenges. However, the climate scientists are clear, there is still action possible to avoid the worst effects of global warming if we act now. We are also aware that climate change is also a deeply unjust phenomenon: Those who contribute the least to climate change are often the ones that are most affected by its impacts. This is why, while tackling global warming, we also need to look at the transformations that are needed in our societies to make this world fairer and more just. Since the beginning of international climate policy, an important debate has focused on the existing divide between countries in the Global North who are historically more responsible for the global pollution and those in the Global South who are more vulnerable to climate change consequences.

But are you aware that inequalities within each country have to do with climate change, as well?

The social divide between privileged and underprivileged people can be as large as the international divide. Carbon footprints - the size of individuals' contributions to climate change - increase with income. On the other hand, higher income improves the opportunities to cope with the negative effects of climate change. In contrast, poor people with smaller carbon footprints are usually the most vulnerable groups in times of disasters such as thunderstorms, drought and flooding.

And what does this have to do with gender?

One of the major divides in societies is gender inequality. The gender pay, pension and employment gaps remain significant in our societies. Women are still low represented in positions of power and decision-making and the gender division of labour keeps attributing women the responsibility of the majority of the unpaid care work. This different social and economic reality conditions women's responsibilities, vulnerabilities and opportunities to respond and adapt to climate change. Therefore, all aspects of climate change have a gender dimension: the causes, the impacts, as well as the policies to respond to climate change which can have different effects on women and men.

Are you aware that this linkage is also an issue in Europe?

Very often, the first image that sparks in our minds when thinking about gender inequality and climate change are women walking long distances to fetch water and firewood in a country of Global South. Even if most of us do not need to collect firewood, even in EU countries that are more advanced in terms of

gender equality, the gender gaps are still significant and patriarchy as a social system of masculine domination over women is equality present. Therefore, the slogan of gender activists in the international climate negotiations is ‘No climate justice without gender justice’, meaning that a just transition must include efforts towards gender equality
(...)

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