CLIMATE JUSTICE 4 ALL

Webinar Series
An approach to Intersectional and Feminist Climate Action
CLIMATE JUSTICE 4 ALL - AN APPROACH TO INTERSECTIONAL AND FEMINIST CLIMATE ACTION
Policy Brief

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DISCLAIMER
“Climate Justice 4 All - An Approach to Intersectional and Feminist Climate Action” was a series of seven webinars throughout 2021 that aimed to empower activists, academia, policymakers, and civil society in using climate advocacy and implementation strategies in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through an intersectional feminist lens. The goal was to open the floor to as many people as possible so that different voices can be heard, but also to heighten awareness of topics usually avoided or of which many are simply not aware.

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REFERENCES
INTRODUCTION

The climate crisis brings forth inherent global injustices with already marginalized groups bearing the brunt of rising sea levels, droughts, and pollution. The realities of people experiencing climate change first-hand are often overlooked. Women and children, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities, and many more lack a seat at environmental decision-making and negotiation tables. By acknowledging structural inequalities, we want to lay the groundwork for intersectional and effective climate action that benefits all.

1.1. What is the issue?

The climate crisis is in full swing. As many states fail to find the right ways to tackle this emergency and barely manage to adhere to the goals agreed upon in the Paris Agreement, it is (young) climate activists, civil society, and academia that drive the fight against climate change. All over the world, youth are protesting and demanding that those in power make climate-just decisions that will provide a better future for the next generations while implementing sustainable and effective policies for climate mitigation and adaptation.

Furthermore, it has primarily been marginalized people that have given warnings about the climate crisis and very early on connected it to our ways of living, to everyday struggles of people, and to our relationship with nature. Yet, due to the marginalization of e.g. indigenous knowledge through systemic racism, entire perspectives and bodies of work are barely heard or valued within the dominant paradigm. Despite being the sector of society that has historically contributed the least to the causes of climate change, BIPOC continue the fight for climate justice at the frontlines. This is an injustice that can only be rectified by swift and ambitious climate action that puts achieving climate justice first. In achieving climate justice, the international community needs to be as inclusive, as creative, and as fast as possible. All over the globe, people from different backgrounds are already coming together, forming alliances, and finding alternative ways of knowing and adjusting to the changing climate and its impacts. It is the goal of this policy briefing to highlight these collective efforts and shine a light on these diverse climate activists and their different approaches to climate justice.
1.3. About the webinar series

Over the course of eight months in 2021, the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP) and the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens (BKMC) have jointly conducted a series of seven webinars, each focusing on analyzing and offering intersectional feminist approaches to climate justice in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The topics ranged from theories of intersectionality and Feminist Foreign Policy to marginalized climate activism and the role of art and culture in tackling climate injustice. Each webinar introduced one or more experts on the various topics, enabling a broad and rich conversation between activists, scientists, policymakers, and people who care about our endangered planet. We are proud to have welcomed inspirational powerhouses such as Nisreen Elsaim, Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Mitzi Jonelle, David Lammy, Mary Robinson, and many others to our webinars. The audience and the organizers have benefited hugely from their expertise. This policy briefing aims to compile their knowledge and make it available to everyone because we know we will only achieve climate justice with shared efforts.

In this briefing, each session and its key takeaways will be summarized, leading to seven clear demands for the international community.

1.2. Our understanding of Climate Justice

“The concept of climate justice emerged as a result of introducing a rights approach to the challenges posed by climate change” (Agostino/Lizarde 2012, 257). It can also be defined as “addressing the climate crisis whilst also making progress towards equity and the protection and realisation of human rights” (Friends of the Earth Europe 2019).

We understand climate justice as an inherently intersectional concept and goal. This take on climate justice offers a holistic view of the intertwined issues and challenges the international community faces. Thus, climate justice means racial, social, environmental, economic, and health justice, and, in striving for it, we must always apply an intersectional perspective that keeps all these issues in mind as one interconnected system. Climate justice puts people and their relationship to nature at the heart of the issue and fights for a sustainable and healthy planet for all.
WEBINAR I: THEOREY & GROUNDWORK

The first webinar with Dr. Priscilla Achakpa, Founder and Executive Director of the Women Environmental Programme (WEP), focused on the climate crisis beyond global warming and the need to produce less carbon dioxide, emphasizing how the climate crisis works as a multiplier of inequality.

It aimed to highlight the importance of fostering climate justice from a truly intersectional perspective: tackling racial, social, economic, health, and environmental injustice together, thus providing the groundwork for an intersectional, inclusive, and people-centered approach to the climate emergency.

Dr. Achakpa explained the concept of intersectionality and the very intersectional manifestations of the climate crisis. She drew attention to the crucial role of women in the climate discourse, explored how we can achieve intersectional climate justice, and introduced the work of WEP, a non-governmental and nonprofit voluntary organization with headquarters in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia, and the United States.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR

An intersectional analysis of the climate crisis focuses on how social categories such as gender, race, socio-class, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion, and other aspects of our identity interact at various levels, thus contributing to discrimination, exclusion, social inequality, and systemic injustice.

Globally and locally, the climate crisis specifically impacts people who are already marginalized.

Women are vital to building climate resilience in communities because they are often well acquainted with what their communities want and need.

New international alliances among disparate actors and social movements are required to deliver more transformative versions of climate justice.

We need a global movement of climate change feminists to continue advocating for solutions from a gendered perspective.
WEBINAR II: FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS

This webinar explored how to get environmental demands onto governmental decision-making tables and discussed challenges and opportunities in the implementation of inclusive and climate-friendly action.

The speakers highlighted successful climate justice projects and programs and spoke about social justice within the climate movement. With our guests, Kavita Naidu, International Human Rights Lawyer and Member of the Women & Gender Constituency, UNFCCC, and David Lammy, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice in England, the participants discussed best practices and overcoming challenges.

Lammy elaborated on environmental racism and the way it targets BIPOC. He urged people to recognize who has been hit hardest by the climate crisis and not be color-blind in finding solutions.

Naidu introduced the work of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development (APWLD), which amplifies grassroots voices in 27 countries. She further explained the need for spaces for women and marginalized communities to share their success stories and truly be heard.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR

Black people need to breathe again: matters of racial and climate justice must not be separated.

We cannot invest in the very system that led to the climate crisis in the first place. Patriarchal, neoliberal, capitalist systems are engineered in a way that discriminates against women and other marginalized groups.

Policymakers need to realize that climate change has an impact on health, economies, peace, and security.

We need feminist advocacy by developing grassroots activism and demanding accountability and justice.

There is a need to decolonize university and school curricula and provide young people with leadership power to take on the challenge of the climate crisis.
WEBINAR III: FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY & CLIMATE JUSTICE

This webinar discussed the implementation of international climate agreements with an intersectional feminist approach and further touched upon Feminist Foreign Policy as a means to rebalance power inequalities in the fight against the climate crisis.

In her keynote, Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and Adjunct Professor for Climate Justice in Trinity College Dublin, highlighted the relationship between the climate crisis and gender. She shared her experience on how the debate about the climate crisis has changed over the past decades from a very technical to a justice issue.

In the subsequent conversation together with Dorothy Nalubega, the Ugandan Human Rights Activist and Founding Chairperson of the East African Greens Women’s Network, the two experts discussed why climate and gender are inseparable.

Concrete examples from Nalubega’s work in Uganda and Robinson’s international career were shared, and they exchanged strategies on keeping your cool, staying focused, and taking care of your well-being in an ever-challenging environment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR

There are several injustices within the climate crisis: racial injustice, gender injustice, intergenerational injustice, transitional injustice, and, of course, injustice to nature itself.

There continue to be heavy imbalances between all genders at a local and global level when it comes to the climate crisis as a security threat.

There is an urgent need for more intergenerational dialogue.

In order to achieve climate justice, people must work together - there will be no success without joint effort.

Passion, hope, and the will to include as many people as possible are values not to be underestimated in the fight for climate justice.
WEBINAR IV: CONNECTING THE SDGS TO CLIMATE ACTION

This webinar discussed how the interconnectedness of the 17 SDGs helps to apply a holistic view to the climate emergency. It also specifically looks at the role of indigenous and LGBTQIA+ communities in the implementation of the SDGs.

A Ban Ki-moon Centre SDG Micro-Project presentation demonstrated a “think glocal” approach when tackling the climate crisis through the SDGs.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, President at the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad and UN SDG Advocate, shared how indigenous people’s lives are linked to nature and that we need to tackle all 17 SDGs together and with the same effort in order to not leave anyone behind.

Ruvimbo Samanga, BKMC Global Citizen Scholar and Founder of AgriSpace, elaborated on the situation in Zimbabwe. She introduced her SDG Micro-Project that developed into a startup.

Finally, Martin Karadzhov, Executive Board Member at ILGA World and Young Leader for the SDGs, explained how climate justice and queer rights are connected and that it is more important than ever to fight multiple and intertwined crises.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR**

We need to bring back the momentum and fully focus on the climate crisis.

Young people are acting and sharing their vision of the world.

We only have this one planet, and we need to act together to protect it properly.

Queer people need to be valued, listened to, and included in climate justice discourses.

We need radical reforms to adapt to the climate crisis and alternative ways of knowing.
WEBINAR V: ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM & BIPOC CLIMATE ACTIVISM

This BIPOC-only seminar created a safe space for BIPOC climate activists, focused on environmental racism, and placed BIPOC at the forefront of many climate movements and struggles. BIPOC are among the most vulnerable groups when it comes to the climate crisis, yet they are often also found at the front lines. With our panelists, Chido Nyaruwata, Kiana Kazemi, and Mitzi Jonelle, we learned more about the deep roots and effects of environmental racism, how BIPOC knowledge can teach us about and guide us towards climate justice, and shared experiences among young BIPOC climate activists who are already leading the way.

Chido Nyaruwata, an Afro-feminist Researcher, Consultant, and Digital Storyteller, drew attention to the intersection of climate and gender justice and what it means to be an African activist, knowing that the continent has contributed little to the climate crisis but is now greatly feeling its impacts.

Kiana Kazemi, an Environmental Justice Advocate and Intersectional Engineer, shared details about starting her own community-based and -led activism and organization.

Mitzi Jonelle, Convenor and International Spokesperson of Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP), highlighted how climate activists in the Philippines fear for their lives; she highlighted the many diverse ways of becoming an activist.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR

Some people might not even identify as activists, but their existence and survival are resistance.

BIPOC communities do not need reckoning when it comes to racism because racial injustice is their reality; they are facing intersectional oppression all the time but still keep on fighting for justice.

We often fail to see how marginalized people, like women, BIPOC, and gender non-conforming people, interact with the environment.

Community care is self-care.

There is a need for safe spaces for BIPOC to come together and understand what can be learned from each other; uplifting each other is essential.
This webinar acknowledged the intersections of art, activism, creativity, and environmental justice for effective climate awareness strategies. The panelists discussed art and design-based methods to engage more people in the climate discourse and reimagine our relationship with nature.

Yessenia Funes, Environmental Justice Journalist and Climate Editor at Atmos, spoke about how the media has failed to communicate the climate crisis from a human-centered perspective.

Finn Harries, Co-Founder of Earthrise Studio, elaborated on using creativity to communicate the climate crisis to target climate curious people.

The third panelist, Henry McGhie, Founder of Curating Tomorrow and Member of Reimagining Museums for Climate Action, explained how museums can offer different concepts of understanding and communicating the climate crisis.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR**

- Museums are places where people have the possibility to participate as people and not as consumers.
- Urgent action is required but so is optimism that we can change the system.
- It is essential to center diverse voices in the discourse, like those of the queer and BIPoC communities.
- It is about people - a focus on climate justice shows exactly that. We need to tell stories and narratives that can change people’s position towards the climate crisis.
The seventh and final webinar took the discussion back to the very heart and focus of this webinar series: the crucial and immensely important work and voices of young climate activists all over the world, who are finding alternative and various ways to tackle the climate crisis. This peer exchange sought to promote climate advocacy and implementation strategies. It was about learning from young people, bringing a feeling of community to the forefront, and offering a space for solidarity.

The webinar started with creative tools gathering insights from the participants on questions such as their expectations for COP26 in Glasgow and recommendations when feeling anxious about the future and climate crisis.

Following that, the webinar offered a panel discussion with Nisreen Elsaim, Climate Activist and Chair of the UN Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change; Anna Filsinger, Marine Biologist and Speaker for Students for Future; and Jannie Staffansson, Saami Activist promoting indigenous people’s rights and climate activism.

Elsaim shared her experiences with ageism in regards to her expertise in climate negotiation spaces. Fiesinger explained how universities, particularly in Germany, offer insufficient curricula in terms of addressing the climate crisis and should assist in mobilizing young people. Staffansson raised awareness of the struggles of indigenous people in Europe and the fact that indigenous representatives are missing at an EU level.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR

- Storytelling can be an effective tool in raising awareness and doing advocacy work.
- Climate activism is energy-consuming, financially consuming, and mentally consuming, so getting enough rest and sleep is crucial.
- Schools and universities must increasingly engage in conversations around climate justice and encourage students to participate.
- Many young people are not only activists but peacebuilders and conflict preventers; they offer resilience and plenty of community strengthening.
- Making allies with women in positions of power to support the important voices on the ground is vital.
SUMMARY

This project centered on community efforts and diverse forms of climate action. It sought to bring together young climate activists from all over the world to think about ways to achieve intersectional feminist climate justice in the framework of the SDGs. The outcome was seven insightful webinars highlighting just a few of the leading, diverse, and important voices at the forefront of climate activism and providing a way of coming together, exchanging experiences, and joint learning.

As organizers of the webinars, we acknowledge that we have much to learn and a long way to go - but that we all have a responsibility and a role to play in achieving climate justice. It was and is our common goal to offer platforms and spaces to bring feminist activists, policymakers, and academia together to find alternative ways of knowing and learning, all hopefully leading to more inclusive solutions to the climate crisis, based on the needs of the most marginalized.

It is crucial not to lose momentum and to continue empowering, promoting, and highlighting climate activists’ hard work. Implementing and achieving the Paris Climate Agreement goal of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels requires time and everyone’s efforts to not only act and stand up for nature but also to rethink our relationship with the earth that we inhabit. In the end, we have to make the climate crisis an issue of justice.
These demands are the outcome of all seven webinars over the course of eight months. They constitute the results of a global learning experiment, an intergenerational exchange, intersectional feminist perspectives, diverse and marginalized climate activism, the promotion of the SDGs, and knowledge based on the everyday experiences of people.

**GENERAL DEMANDS TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DERIVED FROM ALL SEVEN WEBINARS**

- Foster and support international alliances between climate activists, especially with a feminist and people-centered perspective.
- Accelerate the strengthening of international law in terms of climate justice, addressing ecocide, protecting people and the environment from reckless leaders and their damaging short-sighted policies, and, finally, valuing indigenous communities and their land.
- Include women and vulnerable groups at the forefront of climate justice decision making.
- Make it a legally binding promise to not risk a generation with no voice in the future.
- Appreciate and listen to the voices of marginalized climate activists, especially BIPoC activists leading the way, and think of alternative ways of achieving climate justice that protect the people and the planet.
- Be creative in changing the very institutions that maintain the status quo and challenge political elites who are sustaining their power instead of sharing it.
- Adopt an equity approach and perspective when tackling the climate crisis - it is essential to understand the issue of disproportionate power structures, especially with regards to the Global North.
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