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GENDER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

For the sustainability of life and climate resilience



CREDITS

This document has been produced as part of Oxfam's work on Gender and Climate Justice in Latin America. Text by Alexandra Vásquez Fárez. This report includes a literature review and virtual interviews conducted with key women respondents to understand the intersections between gender justice and climate justice in the region.

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Problematizing the origins of the climate and gender injustice crisis



PHOTO: PABLO TOSCO

1.

1.1 ANTHROPOCENE, ECOFEMINISM AND COMMUNITY FEMINISM: A CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE PATRIARCHY

We are facing a planetary socioeconomic crisis of such categorical importance that it has been termed the “Anthropocene”¹. This concept has been used to define the geological epoch in which human activity has caused irreversible changes to biological and geophysical systems, and to refer to a critical paradigm that includes the severity of current global problems such as global warming, the loss of biodiversity, growing social injustice, and the limits of nature. These problems are directly linked to human activity and are consequences of a pattern of global capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal power, the expansion of the borders for capital, the dominant development model, the cultural ideology around modernity (Svampa, 2019), and the affirmation of a deeply-rooted patriarchal culture.

Ecofeminist and community feminist movements share a critical assessment of the Anthropocene and its causes. Ecofeminism argues against the domination of nature and subordination of women that comes with this male-centric and patriarchal model. Community feminism sees the patriarchy as the system of all oppressions, including oppression over women’s bodies, territory, and land.

Humanity has exceeded the limits of nature. The economic model has wrought severe and irreversible impacts on natural and human systems: climate change, a reduction in biodiversity, exhaustion of natural resources, contamination, and environmental degradation are all part of this ecological crisis. The crisis goes hand-in-hand with growing inequality that allows some to maintain their wealth and consumption, while great swaths of people and territories are devastated, especially women and indigenous populations (Herrera, 2010).

The emphasis on growth and production is sustained by care work that is mainly done by women. Care work is relegated and hidden in the economy, meaning that the sexual division of labor and the distribution of power and property keep women and the natural environment in submission.

¹ Epoch in which human activity has begun to cause biological and geophysical changes on a global scale. This new geological epoch follows the Holocene, the warm period since the last ice age. This stage considers human activity over the last 200 years to be responsible for the possible collapse of the planet. Paul Crutzen coined the concept, arguing that humanity entered this epoch around 1780 with the Industrial Age, the invention of the steam engine and the use of fossil fuels. Other authors such as Jason Moore have used the concept “Capitalocene” to refer expansion of capitalism since the Middle Ages (Svampa 2018, Svampa 2019).



PHOTO: RENÉ CALDERÓN

Peña (2021) describes how ecofeminist theory holds that the anthropocentric structures that exploit nature are intrinsically linked to the structures of patriarchal oppression and other forms of oppression upon which capitalism has historically been built, including the racist and Eurocentric positions of modernity (Moore, 2018).

On this racist and Eurocentric character, Quijano (1993) writes that a new pattern of global power emerged with the invasion of the Americas, which implied the colonial configuration of the world through the universalization of modernity based on the European experience. This process was grounded in the creation of a new axis of cultural domination that codified the racial differences between the conqueror's and the conquered, naturalizing these differences as the basis to justify the inferiority of the Other to white Europeans, and ensuring colonial dominance and power.

Just as race served to naturalize relationships of domination and the distribution of global power in given ranges, places, roles, and structures, capitalism generated new structures for the control of labor. Race and the division of labor were two technologies for domination and exploitation that sustained and continue to sustain colonialism and the Eurocentric nature of global capital, just as the sexual division of labor² sustains the subordination of women.

² Although the concept of the “sexual division of labor” is a category that has been well-documented by feminist economists, there is still a binary bias to the gender-assigned roles and stereotypes in this distribution. For this reason, we prefer to describe the division of labor in terms of gender, to recognize the distribution of work beyond the binary notions of sex.



The racial classification of people also meant the division between salaried and non-salaried employment. Europe configured the dominated world, with its diverse and heterogeneous cultural histories, into a cultural, intellectual, and subjective form that controlled labor in function of capital. This configuration repressed unique cultural forms of knowledge production and forced the learning and adoption of the culture of the colonizers. From the temporal standpoint of modernity, colonized peoples were situated firmly in the past. Europe represented the modern present with a belief in its own superiority, and everything opposite from what was European - and male - was deemed inferior, irrational, or primitive (Quijano, 1993).

This process also meant the exacerbation of the ancestral patriarchy³ with the systems of oppression put in place with the colonial patriarchy. Community feminism questions the colonial process and sees the patriarchy² as a system of multiple oppressions in connection with capitalism and modernity. In fact, the ancestral patriarchy grew further entrenched with the colonial and modern patriarchal system.

The patterns of capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal power and the current economic and ideological models continue to drive inequality and social and environmental injustice. Democratic governance has eroded and concentrated power into few hands. Nearly half of humanity lives under the poverty line, extractive economic models are causing a global climate crisis that deepens poverty, and gender-based violence continues to be one of the most common human rights violations around the world. The patriarchy and other forms of oppression are mutually reinforcing and have perpetuated discriminatory power relations that exclude women and girls, lesbians, homosexual men, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex (LGBTQI) persons and gender non-binary individuals, refugees and migrants, people with disabilities and people without formal education (Oxfam, 2020).

Unlimited economic growth is rooted in the exploitation of nature and the exploitation of women and their bodies, through reproductive and care work that is unpaid and unvalued socially, as established by the patriarchal order.⁴ As a result, women and girls bear a disproportionate measure of the consequences of this socioecological degradation, in function of the multiple inequalities that they face, intensified by the sexist and violent cultural patterns that persist in different societies.

³ According to Martínez (2019), women in the Americas and in Europe had different life experiences with the patriarchy. While the ancestral patriarchy oppressed and subordinated women, some aspect of it also valued their knowledge; women also had the experience of land ownership, unlike European women.

⁴ The sexual division of labor, feminization of poverty, violence against women, mercantilization of women's bodies, trafficking in women and prostitution, forced and vulnerable maternity, body dependence and affective submission, and occupational and political segregation are only examples of the problems derived from the patriarchal system that still rules (Carosio, 2017).

1.2 Progress, modernity, and development

According to Koldo Unceta (2009), the notion of Progress, upon which ideas on Development would later be based,⁵ emerged in the late XVIII century and early XIX century as a symbol of modernity.⁶ This process joined two complementary phenomena: a philosophical universe in which reason and scientific knowledge triumph, and definitive changes in the system of production as part of the Industrial Revolution. Today's global warming stems from the concentration of greenhouse gasses that is a consequence of the industrial revolution.

Rational thought and production would transform economic processes, making a decisive change in the ways we understand human progress, locating an anthropocentric understanding of the colonial legacy for relations between humans and nature. These relationships would be ruled by technical and scientific knowledge, leaving aside empirical and ancestral wisdom, while establishing a hierarchy among cultures and people according to criteria of biological superiority that had in turn been built on ideas of racialization and gender present throughout human history, since primitive society.

The predominance of reason (Enlightened Thought), law and free critique, the notion of equality among people - understood as the defense of individual interest -, the opposition to absolute power, knowledge as a source of progress, growing trade and market expansion are all characteristics of these conditions of modernity. In this context, women's struggle focused on eradicating the prejudice of the naturalized inferiority of women, and the role they should play in the new society: "During the Enlightenment, feminist debate argued for equality between men and women, criticized male supremacy, identified the social and cultural mechanisms that influenced the construction of female subordination, and developed strategies to achieve the emancipation of women. The foundational texts of enlightened feminism continued by emphasizing that power relationships that held men over women could no longer be attributed to divine design, nor to nature, but were the result of a social construction" (Bonilla, 2010).

Modernist thought produced a unique way of life that would overcome other "backward" forms of social organization, naturalizing a liberal market-driven society, with the illusion of a market capable of self-regulating and finding equilibrium if external factors did not intervene. From the start, this view revealed the radical incompatibility of the market economy with social stability and environmental sustainability (Lander, 1997).

⁵ An approach that emerged after World War II, espoused by U.S. President Truman, who popularized the term underdevelopment.

⁶ According to Giddens, the historical era of modernity describes "modes of social organization that emerged in Europe starting around the XVII century, and whose influence later grew to more or less global scale" (Giddens, 1990).

As market-driven capitalism and industrialization developed, there were important transformations in conceptions on family. The sexual division of labor grew deeper, with household and domestic labor considered less productive, while ensuring and supporting the workforce for productive processes. In this process, many women were exploited according to their class status as supplementary and lower paid labor. Therefore, capital has used the patriarchal structure to consolidate and entrench itself, while the patriarchal order also grew stronger with the separation of the productive and reproductive spheres (Commane, 2003).

In the mid-twentieth century, the idea of progress transformed into the paradigm of development or other equivalents: economic growth in the modernist tradition, which sidelines most human, social, ecological and ethical considerations (Unceta, 2009). This development approach sponsored the modernization of underdeveloped countries through financing and technological support from developed countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this model meant the start of large-scale exploitation of broad swaths of rural territory, as well as the beginning of a global warming curve and higher concentrations of carbon dioxide, along with the degradation of the wellbeing of the indigenous communities in the region.

Nonetheless, the quantitative logic of development has been the subject of constant critique due to the unfair relationships and interdependence between industrialized countries and the so-called underdeveloped countries. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, critical arguments around development questioned the capacity of this model to achieve human wellbeing; the results showed that contrary to expectations, economic growth correlated with rising inequality, the intensification of the environmental crisis, and human rights violations.

The idea that development is essentially economic remained through the late 1980s. In the 1990s, Human Development was proposed as an agenda that included elements related to peace, the environment, justice, and others, outside the traditional perspectives. Other concerns in relation to traditional conceptions of development were linked to the relationship between the wellbeing of present and future generations. These considerations make up the foundation for the emergence of Sustainable Development, which is also often a controversial theme, given the difficulty in measuring natural conservation against the sustainability of economic and social processes (Unceta, 2009).



PHOTO: PABLO TOSCO

The attempts of global officialism to maintain the development proposal with any number of unique adjectives - local, human-scale, sustainable, etc. - have not brought about real transformations in economic, social and cultural structures. On the contrary, they have maintained and exacerbated poverty, social inequity, cultural exclusion and extreme environmental degradation.

Feminist critique of the concept of development has varied from the initial conceptions until today. For example, care economy and ecofeminist approaches have criticized the devaluation of the natural and feminine, and revalued the use of time as a parameter for good living (*Buen Vivir*). Especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, critiques of development have recognized the tensions around social justice, overcoming inequality, extractive industries, and the rights of nature. Along these lines, feminist thinkers have proposed alternatives and organized forms of feminist struggle through what is known as people's and community feminism, with arguments that link the socioecological crisis to the production and development model, denouncing how extractive development models have exploited nature, and have been profoundly racist, patriarchal, and classist (Aguinaga et al, 2016).

PHOTO: PABLO TOSCO



1.3 A systemic, feminist, and intersectional view of the climate crisis

Climate change is a complex phenomenon. Although it is more known for its biophysical aspects, climate change is intimately linked with environmental, social, economic, cultural, and political aspects that must be examined (Martín, Rivera, and Castizo, 2018).

According to CAF (2014), the complexity of climate change requires a systemic approach that considers its linkages with current economic and political models, which have privileged unsustainable consumption and economic accumulation. Many of the fundamental causes of climate change sit at the core of this model.

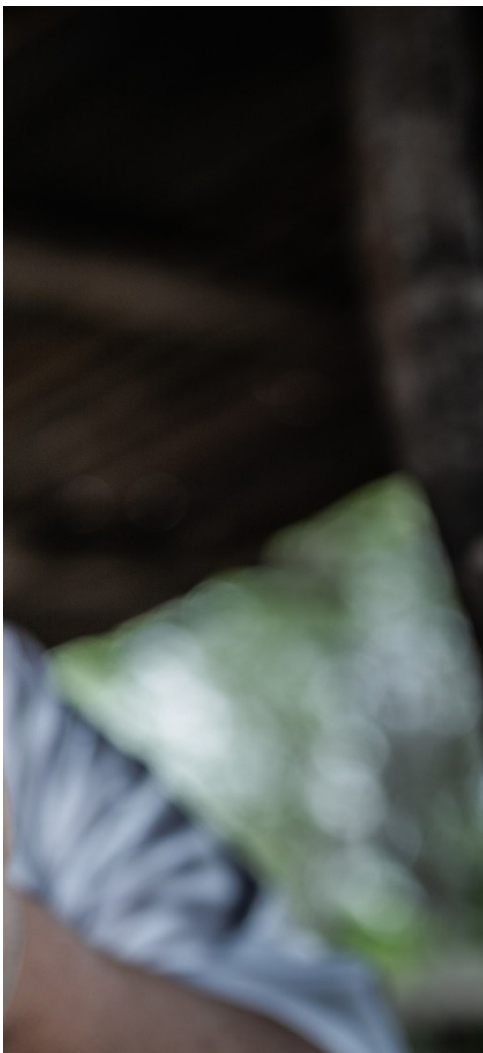
Extractivist modes of production such as mega-mining, the expansion of the oil and energy frontier, the construction of large hydroelectric dams, and the expansion of fishing and forestry borders or the agribusiness model and genetically-modified crops have a long history in Latin America (Wagner, 2020). These forms of production continue to affect ecosystems and the sustainability of life, especially in the communities and populations that depend the most on natural resources.

Official narratives on climate change highlight technical scientific knowledge models and climate forecasting. This information puts human responsibility at the center of the problem. Nonetheless, industrialized countries and multinational markets are the principal emitters of greenhouse gas emissions, the leading cause of global warming and climate change, but have not taken responsibility for the harm caused against nature nor have they offered sufficient support to the people most affected.

These narratives also exclude women, indigenous populations, and local systems of knowledge, silencing the people most affected and excluded by the neoliberal, colonial, and patriarchal system (Schnabel, 2014, cited in Ravera and Iniesta, 2017).

International policies have proposed technological and market-based responses to climate change that safeguard economic interests and distribute the responsibility of caring for the planet unequally.

Many countries have resisted taking on climate change commitments in order to keep from putting their growth and employment rate at risk. The Paris Agreements included voluntary commitments that fail to establish penalties in cases of non-compliance (Issberner and Léna, 2018).



The global governance strategies adopted thus far in response to climate change have produced a series of false solutions. These strategies focus on activities whose capacity to reduce or fix greenhouse gasses is questionable, while simultaneously diverting attention from actions that could effectively reduce the extraction and combustion of fossil fuels, as a central solution to climate change. These are nothing more than actions proposed to avoid the undeniable need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, a central struggle in Latin America, and organize our societies in function of something other than the imperative for abstract and unlimited economic growth. In this regard, these measures seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while sustaining the mercantile and expansionist nature of the dominant modes of production and consumption
(Moreano, Lang, Ruales, 2021).

False solutions to climate change include carbon markets that respond to the pressures of the financial market rather than striving for a real reduction in emissions, and which maintain inequality between countries with different economic capacities. REDD+ mechanisms seek to protect forested areas to fix CO₂ emitted around the world. But beyond benefiting the communities linked to the forests, they offer polluters an easy way to offset their emissions by planting trees, in any sort of plantation, including intensive timber species for productive ends. These mechanisms also restrict community rights and limit the ability of rural and indigenous communities to use the forests for other subsistence activities.


Proposals for climate-smart agriculture tend to generate dependence on seeds that have been modified to be climate change resistant. Other false measures include nature-based solutions, large-scale biofuel production, and a range of proposals from the financial sector that end up further harming the climate by failing to produce real emissions reductions.

Although climate phenomena are felt the world over, historic social causes of unequal development have left the countries most affected with the least capacity to deal with climate risk and extreme events.⁷ Paradoxically, these are also the countries that have contributed the least to the environmental emergency.

High income countries are home to only one-sixth of the global population. Nonetheless, the World Bank has calculated that these countries emit 44 times more CO₂ than lower income countries. Rich countries consume an average of ten times more resources than poor countries (Rodríguez, 2021).

⁷ Poor countries and less developed countries are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. For example, a drought or flood can lead to food insecurity, widespread health and sanitation issues, and increased internal displacement or emigration. These situations exceed the economic capacity of the governments in these countries, often forcing them to turn to international humanitarian aid.

This unfair dynamic impacts Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that is responsible for less than 10% of global CO₂ emissions but is highly sensitive to the impacts of climate change. This specific vulnerability is caused by factors including geography and climate, and socioeconomic, demographic, and institutional conditions, as well as the natural assets' high sensitivity to the climate.



The economy of Latin America in particular is highly dependent on natural resource exploitation. Extractive activities performed to meet the demands of the industrialized countries are significant contributors to the generation of greenhouse gasses. These activities also cause serious environmental and social harm, and influence local vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

In addition to facing water and soil contamination or the socioenvironmental conflicts associated with extractive industries, the populations who depend on natural resources must also deal with the impacts of climate change, which bring additional challenges for natural and human sustainability (Gudynas, 2019).

The difference in the impacts of climate change on different countries is also reflected among their people; the experience of vulnerability to climate change is also unequal and dependent on socioeconomic conditions, ethnicity, and gender (IPCC 2014, Arana 2017, cited in: Vásquez, 2020). Social and economic disadvantages and exclusion correspond to greater climate vulnerability.

The IPCC itself (2014) recognizes that differences in vulnerability and exposure are linked to non-climate related factors and the multidimensional inequalities often produced by unequal development processes. These differences in development produce corresponding differences in climate change risk. People who face social, economic, cultural, political, institutional or other forms of exclusion are especially vulnerable to climate change, as well as to some of the adaptation and mitigation responses. High vulnerability is rarely due to a single cause. More often, it is the product of interrelated social processes that translate to socioeconomic and income inequality, as well as greater exposure. These social processes include discrimination on the basis of gender, class, ethnicity, age, and disability (IPCC, 2014).

The current pace of climate change is rapid and accelerating. The most recent IPCC report clearly establishes that if the current rate of emissions continues, human-caused global warming will exceed 1.5 ° C by around 2040. Even if the temperature increase is limited to 1.5°C, the world will face an increase in extreme weather events: floods, droughts, heat and cold waves, sea level rise, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services affecting water and food systems. This will mean increased hunger and poverty for millions of people, many of whom will be forced to migrate and will lose their livelihoods, as climate disasters pose important challenges for humanitarian aid around the world (Oxfam, 2019).

1.3.1 IMPACTS AND NEW CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE


The challenges posed by climate change are greater for indigenous, rural, and Afro-descendant women; according to their assigned gender roles, these women hold the primary responsibility for feeding their families. As natural resources become scarce and their livelihoods are affected, women and girls carry heavier burdens, which deepens existing inequalities.

The greatest vulnerability for these women and girls lies in gender discrimination and inequality. Their vulnerability is the result of systematic exclusion that is sustained by socially-assigned gender roles, racism, classism and patriarchy, with discriminatory norms, economic practices and laws that translate into poverty (Sotelo 2021).

The Montevideo Strategy⁸ identifies four structural nodes of gender inequality: socioeconomic inequality and persistent poverty, the sexual division of labor and the unjust social organization of care work, the predominance of the culture of privilege and patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns, and the unequal concentration of power. Women and men have different ways of responding to environmental change, environmental degradation processes, social crisis, or climate related danger. Gender-based violence increases in situations of social or environmental stress and intensifies the vulnerability and harm caused to women and girls, as demonstrated by the secondary impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic. Systemic and gender-based violence also puts displaced persons, people living in poverty, and racialized and LGBTIQ+ communities in a situation of greater vulnerability (Oxfam, 2020).

In Colombia, for example, civil society organizations report that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of activists and human rights defenders; at least 28 were killed in the last months of 2020 (Oxfam 2020). On a global scale, there has been an increase in reports of violence against women who had to be confined with their aggressors due to sanitary measures: "In Peru alone, after eight weeks of confinement, 12 femicides and 226 rapes were recorded, 132 of these cases were against minors. All of the cases occurred under isolation and lockdown, leaving victims defenseless against their aggressors" (Aristia, 2020).

⁸ The governments of the region have recognized four structural nodes for unequal gender relations, as set out in the Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the 2030 Sustainable Development Framework. These structural nodes are a consequence of external factors and endogenous characteristics within the socioeconomic and cultural structures in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Montevideo Strategy explicitly seeks to untangle these structural nodes of gender inequality (Agencia Uruguaya de Cooperación Internacional 2021). <https://www.gub.uy/agencia-uruguaya-cooperacion-internacional/comunicacion/publicaciones/montevideo-strategy-for-implementation-regional-image-gender-framework>



According to data from the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OIG), for every 100 men living in poor households, there are 112.7 women in a similar situation, as described by their lack of economic autonomy. The Covid-19 health crisis and its economic consequences have deepened poverty and inequality, and women are more likely to be affected.

Women have been hit especially hard by the severe drop in economic activity in key sectors for female employment. This has produced a sharp departure of women from the labor force, with a drop in the female labor participation rate that represents a 10-year setback and an increase in the number of Latin American women projected to live in poverty (ECLAC 2021).

The Latin American and Caribbean region is the most unequal in the world, and thus has been one of the regions most affected by Covid-19. Poverty and inequality have deepened with the health emergency, and have thus exacerbated the unequal impacts of climate change (ECLAC, 2021).

Gender inequalities, which are present in all areas of performance for women, men and gender and sexually-diverse communities, reveal gaps in terms of women's lower access to land, water, health, and education, with an unequal distribution of domestic work and wage opportunities (Moreano, et al, 2021).

Gender inequality intersects with other inequalities that underpin the economic development model, resulting in specific and diverse individual and collective experiences for women and men in the region, which do not depend on gender alone.

Latin America is characterized by contrasts in the situation of women compared to men, and also among women themselves. Women's job placement in the labor market remains precarious, with persistent and significant wage gaps. Women are also especially located in informal activities and economic sectors, with longer workdays due to the burden of unpaid care work, to go along with lower incomes. The Covid-19 pandemic has produced patterns of greater feminization of poverty, as well as continued forms of gender-based violence.

Nonetheless, there are also deep differences among women in the region. Women from middle and upper classes have access to education and decent work, as well as the opportunity to exercise their citizen rights. This is not often the case for women from, lower, urban, and mestizo settings. Unlike women from rural sectors, Afro-descendant and indigenous women continue to report high rates of unemployment and precarious work conditions, along with poverty and less access to social protections (Esquivel, V., 2016).

Rural women with formal employment frequently perform work that is less safe, more dangerous, and poorly paid, without access to social security benefits. It is less likely that these women have had access to formal education and they face greater risk of trafficking and forced labor. They are also at a higher probability of suffering from malnutrition or dying due to preventable causes due to the lack of healthcare services. Additionally, these women are more likely to be excluded from spaces of power and decision-making, they are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, and the lack of access to justice and effective legal resources (United Nations, 2021).

In Latin America, 58 million women live in rural areas. Nonetheless, only 30% of these women own agricultural land, and just 5% have access to technical assistance (Oxfam). Rural women are worse off than rural men and urban women and men, and are disproportionately affected by poverty and exclusion. They face systemic discrimination in access to land and natural resources, bear most of the burden of unpaid work, inequality in the home, the lack of infrastructure and services, as well as issues of food production and care work (United Nations, 2016), and are less connected to information and communication technologies in the world (IDB, 2021).

In Latin America, rural, indigenous and Afro-descendant women have led and participated in historic struggles for the defense of territory and the environment, to resist extractive industries and different forms of violence by external markets against their territories and their bodies. In addition to the historical violence from the capitalist, patriarchal and colonial system, women territory defenders are more exposed to criminalization and attacks from corporate and state agents, and even from their own communities and organizations. The criminalization and stigmatization faced by women defenders can be expressed through sexual violence, defamation and smear campaigns, social and economic exclusion, and other manifestations (Aler, 2020).

These situations of violence - the most dramatic evidence of which is femicide - include early pregnancies and the systematic violation of the rights of women and girls, their exclusion from spaces of power, and the permanent invisibility of their fundamental contribution to sustaining life. These forms of violence are structural aspects that keep women and girls in circles of poverty and exclusion according to their social, economic and cultural characteristics, which translates into lower capacity to deal with climate change, particularly in the case of rural, indigenous and Afro-descendant women.

“Rural and indigenous women play an important role in facing climate change, especially in terms of the food security of their households and countries, as well as in climate change adaptation. The impacts of this phenomenon affect everyone differently, but gender discrimination makes women more vulnerable to the negative effects. This is especially the case for rural and indigenous women, whose living conditions and exclusion mean they are more exposed to risk”

(Oxfam).

1.3.2 EVIDENCE ON WOMEN'S VULNERABILITY AND CONTRIBUTIONS UNDER IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

According to WHO data (2016), climate change is causing droughts and floods that threaten livelihoods, food security and the people's lives with increasing frequency. In rural areas where women work exclusively in subsistence agriculture and livestock-raising, or in areas where these activities are their only income source, women are the most affected. Droughts affect the availability of water to drink, cook, and wash; water scarcity also leads to food insecurity.

Changing climate patterns and extreme weather events cause losses in biodiversity, native plants and animals. In contexts where the expansion of monoculture, extractive industries, and seed distribution jeopardize traditional initiatives and agroecology practices, women have greater difficulties in securing food for their families (Casas, M. 2017).

Women and girls suffer the consequences of water and food shortages, as they must spend more time searching for food or producing it, which increases their workload and leaves them exposed insecurity and violence. According to UNDP studies (2020), the impact of climate change increases the risk of violence against women. In periods of prolonged drought, women and girls make more frequent and longer journeys to obtain food or water, making them vulnerable to sexual assault. Food vendors, farmers or landowners sometimes insist on sex with women in exchange for food or rent (Gevers, Musuya, Bukuluki, 2020).

The loss of traditional livelihoods (harvests, livestock, income, food security) puts pressure on the traditional gender role of "provider" that is assigned to men, who may in turn resort to alcohol and become more violent at home. In households where men emigrate to make a living, women, girls, and boys have to subsist on their own, leaving them vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation (Gevers, Musuya, Bukuluki, 2020).

In rural areas it is common for women to take care of the family, managing and cooking food, providing drinking water, and caring for the various family members and animals, while the men go out to perform paid work. When disasters such as floods occur, women must cope with the emergency and safeguard household assets and their children. For this reason, women and girls are more likely to die during climate disasters.

“In some parts of the planet, some activities such as swimming and climbing trees are only seen as acceptable for boys. In Sri Lanka, for example, the NGO Flower Aceh found that this fact meant that more men than women were able to survive the tsunami that hit the region in 2004. According to the NGO, in one extreme local case, 750 men survived compared to only 40 women” (ECODES, 2019, p. 33).

Many girls and adolescents drop out of school due to the greater burden of domestic work, which limits their opportunities to develop a life project. This dynamic is worse in the case of early pregnancies (Casas M., 2017).

The WHO estimates that between 2030 and 2050, climate change will cause an additional 250,000 deaths per year from heat waves, diarrhea, malaria, and child malnutrition, among other causes. Rising temperatures may result in increased transmission of malaria or other diseases. Pregnant women are especially vulnerable to this situation.

Unlike men, women tend to have much less access to information in general, especially when it comes to weather warnings and cropping patterns, which affects their ability to respond effectively to climate variability. "Women may have less access to information in emergency situations in certain contexts, as well as being less represented in decision-making bodies" (ECODES, 2019, p.33).

When populations face long-term changes in climate, men prefer to migrate, while women may remain in the communities, taking on new responsibilities and becoming single mothers (Arana, 2016, p. 18). Women who manage to migrate usually suffer various forms of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence, over the course of their journey (ECODES, 2019).

Even as they are more affected by the impacts of climate change, women have developed and are developing multiple strategies to cope, adapt and resist the scenario posed by this phenomenon: "The skills and knowledge of women and other groups in the face of climate change are still not sufficiently recognized" (CDKN, 2020, p. 23). Women, indigenous peoples and rural communities have important knowledge about land management practices to adapt to climate change. While women are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, they are also knowledgeable about how to prevent crop losses, reduce workload, increase nutritional intake, increase sustainable water management, diversify and grow income, and contribute to improved strategic planning (CDKN, 2020, p.23).

ECONOMIC JUSTICE, CLIMATE JUSTICE, AND GENDER JUSTICE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE



PHOTO: RENÉ CALDERÓN

2 .

2.1 SOLUTIONS FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL CRISIS

2.1.1 POST-DEVELOPMENT AND *BUEN VIVIR*: SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME THE SOCIOLOGICAL CRISIS FROM ABYA YALA

In response to the homogenizing proposal of development and its harmful results for the environment and society, post- and anti-development approaches have emerged that weave relationships of continuity between the biophysical, natural and human worlds (Escobar 2002). Examples of these proposals include the approaches of anti-system social movements (ecologists, feminists, pacifists, cultural and sexual diversities, etc.), such as degrowth, feminist economics and ecofeminism, and community feminisms.

In the context of Abya Yala (Latin America), the social and popular world has produced alternative proposals such as social and solidarity economics whose purpose is to expand and grow natural and human life, as opposed to the accumulation of wealth in a traditional capitalist economy. There are also anti-racial, anti-extractives, and anti-colonialist proposals coming from the feminist sphere.

Latin American is also home to ancestral worldview, such as the Ecuadorian “Buen Vivir” or *Sumak Aily Kaway*, the Bolivian “Vivir Bien” or *Suma Qamaña*, the Mapuche *Kime Mogen* or the Guaraní *Teko Kavi*, whose most salient ideas defend the value of community and harmony with nature

(Cáceres 2013). Rather than by efforts to make these conceptions official in State constitutions, such as the case of Ecuador and Bolivia, these models are essentially sustained by social struggles to defend territories against the over-exploitation of natural resources. This extractive greed is evidence of the traditional economic growth pattern that has remained in place despite corporate social responsibility policies, ecological modernization, the green economy, or the convergence of market-based logic models and new clean technologies (Svampa, 2018).



PHOTO: VALERIE CAAMAÑO

The worldviews from Abya Yala intersect at the idea that human beings, plants, animals and lands are a community under constant revitalization, with complementing elements that come together, reciprocate, and relate, producing not just agreements, but rather disagreements and contradiction as well as essential elements for dynamic cycles. Community is made up of one and the other, the above and the below, one side and the other, masculine and feminine, and diversity within the spatial whole of the Mother. ALL mothers are community; humans can have the joy of being and having only in the measure that this motherhood is exercised.

It is only by being, by living as such that individuality can be protected, and humans can be sheltered, belong, and be shared owners. The steepest punishment and harshest suffering that can be inflicted on a person who has failed to rise to this duty is to leave them unprotected and outside of this cosmic community (Andrade et al., 2014).

Community feminism recovers and reinterprets these notions of community by questioning the ancestral and traditional patriarchy present in these cosmogonies, which is rooted in millenary structures of oppression against indigenous women and reinforced by the colonial patriarchy.

"This system establishes its base of oppression from the philosophy that establishes cosmogonic heterosexuality as a mandate for the lives of women and men and in their relationship with the cosmos. Original cosmogonic heterosexuality is the norm set by ethnic essentialism, establishing that all relationships among humanity and between humans and the cosmos are rooted in principles and values such as heterosexual duality and complementarity as the bases for the harmony of life. There are practices of hegemonic spirituality in which the feminine is dependent and complementary to the masculine. This perpetuates the oppression of women in their heterosexual relationship with nature. This is the basis of Sumak Kawsay or Good Living"

(Marínez, 2019, p. 28).

The renewed ideas of community and reciprocity brought by community feminism promote an egalitarian view of community coexistence between men, women, and nature that is free from racism, patriarchy, and capitalism. These ideas argue for an emancipatory project that seeks to dismantle capitalist order and replace it with something that is neither patriarchal nor capitalist, by building free and egalitarian communities, without disregarding the singularity of social subjects as a material and immaterial totality, singular and collective, natural and cultural (Martínez, 2019).

To paraphrase Swampa (2018), the current socioecological crisis cannot be seen as just another aspect or dimension of the public agenda, or even as an added dimension to social struggles. It must be imagined from an inter- and trans-disciplinary perspective, from a holistic and integral discourse understood in terms of the crisis of civilizations and from a broad postcapitalist perspective.

2.2 ECOFEMINISM, FEMINIST ECONOMICS AND COMMUNITY FEMINISM

2.2.1 FEMINIST ECONOMICS AND ECOFEMINISM

Feminist proposals in economics and ecofeminism question the androcentric and anthropocentric logic of economic growth and its absolute centrality in the market and private property, to the detriment of finite natural resources. These processes have severely damaged ecological, biological and social systems.⁹ These proposals also signal another profound contradiction between social reproduction and wellbeing and the accumulation of capital (Herrera, 2012). Different ecofeminist currents criticize the logic of subordination and domination of natural and human life and link the subordinate female condition with the exploitation of nature. Both types of domination have harmed nature and human groups, and especially women through the domination of their bodies.

These currents denounce how environmental deterioration mainly affects women due to their gender. This sustains inequalities in different areas of life, poverty, diminished income-generation potential, and less control over natural, economic and social resources, as well as a scarce presence in areas of power and decision-making.

Feminist economics questions the limits of traditional economics and its androcentric power relations. These relationships sustain historical inequalities between men and women, in the sense that some roles have been separated, hierarchized and socially and economically valued to the detriment of others. The result has been to render reproductive work invisible and exclusively utilitarian,

⁹ According to systems theory, economic systems and the higher ecological system are interrelated through energy flows and recycling of materials, characterized by complex feedback mechanisms and delayed repercussions. From this perspective, sustainability means that the services provided by the global ecosystem and necessary for the economic subsystem to function must be maintained in the long term. Thus, the economic system must not exceed the limits set by the surrounding ecological system. <http://cidbimena.desastres.hn/ri-hn2/pdf/doch0004/pdf/doch0004.pdf>



In feminist economics: “care work began to emerge as a central aspect of domestic work. In addition to food and clothing, protection from the cold and disease, study and education, we also need care, to learn to build relationships and to live in community. All of this requires an enormous amount of time and energy. In this new perspective, work performed at home was not presented as a series of tasks that could be classified, but rather as a series of needs to be met” (Carrasco 2009: 172).

This responsibility, which cannot be neglected if life is to continue, has been relegated to women and to the invisible spheres of the domestic economy, where patriarchal conflict remains hidden and the fabric of social life is sustained, tensions between the various sectors of the economy are adjusted and, as a result, the foundations of the economic edifice are cemented

(Bosch, Carrasco, and Grau 2005, cited in Herrera 2016).

and rendered almost exclusively by women who provide the necessary care to ensure life in their interdependence.

Care work and daily reproductive work seeks to meet the needs of the community and ensure its survival and reproduction; it is focused on people and their needs.

With women’s immersion into the labor market, the model of sexual distribution of labor that had been functional for social reproduction, albeit unfair, broke down, giving way to the so-called care crisis. Women's access to employment is not free from inequality, wage gaps, glass ceilings and sticky floors, nor has it meant a redistribution of care work with men and with the community; women experience a work overload that, according to statistical data, is greater for rural women.¹⁰

¹⁰ In Latin America and the Caribbean, time-use surveys conducted in various countries confirm the persistent and imbalanced sexual division of labor and the unjust social organization of care. According to data from these surveys, women spend more time on unpaid work, with an average of two-thirds of their time on this activity and one-third of their time spent on paid work. while, The trend is reversed for men, with one-third of their time spent on unpaid work and two-thirds on paid work (Aguilar 2021, https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/c2100453_web.pdf). In Ecuador, for example, women spend an average of 77.39 hours per week working, while men work an average of 59.57 hours per week. The greatest difference can be seen in rural areas, where women work an average of 23:14 hours more than men. According to self-reported data, indigenous women work an average of 86:45 hours per week, 24:36 more than men (INEC 2012).

Puleo (2015) proposes an intrinsic linkage between feminism and sustainability, highlighting how the care that women provide and the cultures that receive the greatest impacts of climate change and are under constant attack by extractive industries, large-scale mining, genetically-modified crops and the economic interests underpinning the neoliberal development model. This author thus considers that further work is needed for ecojustice and sisterhood. Along the same lines, Puleo (2015) recognizes the differentiated impact of environmental deterioration and climate change according to gender roles, as well as the consumption of industrial products and pollution. This author reiterates that poverty and extreme poverty represent additional vulnerability factors in this model.

The alternative to the logic of capitalist accumulation, which arises from feminist proposals based on an understanding of the interdependence and ecodpendence of life, is sustainability, allowing

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for human, social, and ecological life to continue. Their central concern focuses on human and non-human life, which is in crisis, and they advocate not only to improve women's lives and transform their conditions, but also to recover harmony between ecological, human, social, and care elements, which requires building environmental justice and gender justice as essential foundations of sustainability.

The idea of sustainability is based on two principles, universality and singularity, for all people to live with dignity, according to the diversity of their life experiences and cultural expectations (Agenjo 2011).

What makes it possible to sustain life is not exhausted in human-nature relationships; it also depends on care relationships that support the maintenance of each human life, as well as each successive generation (Herrera, 2026). This includes material, emotional, and affective aspects. Sustainability reaffirms a vital relationship between economic and social aspects, interdependence, and the priority of people: "Sustainability as a process refers not only to the real possibility for life to continue - in human, social, and ecological terms, but also to the process of developing living conditions that are acceptable for all of the population, as an ethical condition" (Herrera, 2016).

The vision of interdependence and the ethical condition of the sustainability overlaps with areas of feminist,

ecological, and indigenous thinking (Vega, 2014), as well as community feminism practices that demand environmental and social justice, as well as gender justice, as basic requirements for sustainability.

These axes of justice lie in the balance of power relations to achieve equality, peoples' and cultural autonomy and difference, and the preservation of the planet. This justice pushes for structural changes in the economy and its relationship with the environment, including the commodification of natural resources and threats to food sovereignty, and in the economy and its relationship with the social sphere, with unjust conditions that perpetuate poverty and inequality, the feminization of poverty, and the unfair distribution of care work. The sustainability and maintenance of life includes addressing the relationships between the different structural drivers of inequality and the multiple forms of discrimination based on gender: age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among others.

This logic of justice demands actions that respect human rights, particularly human rights and economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls, as well as the rights of nature. It is necessary to revise the militarized peace and security model and reform production and consumption practices towards sustainability, fair distribution, and respect for planetary limits (Social Watch 2014),¹¹

Climate justice includes issues related to climate impacts, resilience, and adaptation, as well as climate mitigation and impacts related to the extraction of natural resources needed for climate adaptation (OXFAM 2021),¹²

2.2.2 COMMUNITY FEMINISM

Community feminism is a political and theoretical movement that emerged in Bolivia in the late 20th century and has spread through other Latin American and Caribbean countries. This is a type of feminism characterized by its radical and original political and theoretical thinking.

As a political movement, it demands a radical change in the patriarchal-capitalist-racist-colonial order that has historically subjugated not only women, but also men and nature, reproducing a system of discrimination, oppression and violence built on women's bodies. It raises the need to reestablish a new political order based on equality, complementarity and reciprocity between men and women and with nature. As a theoretical movement, it attempts to build a new social theory that interprets the history, memory, values and non-capitalist community life of Latin American and Caribbean peoples. It proposes to reconceptualize theoretical categories such as patriarchy, reciprocity, memory, community, people, body-territory and body autonomy, among others

(Martínez, S., 2019, p. 21).

¹¹ These precepts are enshrined in the Post-2015 Feminist Declaration, a proposal of women from different regions, sectors, identities, races, ethnicities, and cultures that promotes gender, social, economic, cultural and ecologic justice; and structural changes and the current neoliberal, extractive and exclusionary development model, which perpetuates inequalities in economic matters, power relations, between and within countries, and between men and women.

¹² TÉRMINOS DE REFERENCIA “ Consultoría para el Proyecto de Investigación y Aprendizaje - Género Justicia Climática “.

The proposal of community feminism locates the root of the historical oppression of women's bodies in an intrinsic relationship with the land, territory and daily life: "Oil, mining and gas exploitation cause the destruction of communities and unleash violence against women; it is here where the defense of territory, bodies, and land against the logic of contamination and exploitation is situated" (Adriana Guzmán, Bolivia, 2021).

Community feminism raises the need to recover the territory body and the body territory: since the body of women has historically been the territory of dispute of patriarchs, it also constitutes the first territory in which the different manifestations of patriarchies have been experienced, and all the oppressions, discriminations, and violence derived from them, exercised against women, men, intersex people, bodies and non-genders (Martínez 2019).

This feminist approach takes distance from Western feminism, whose concerns are based on "individualism, modernity, private property, democracy, civil rights, Manichaeism, and the linear conception of time, (Paredes,2015, p.11). Instead, the concerns of community feminists are "community, *Buen Vivir*, a circular temporal logic, love and respect for ancestral cultures, the autonomy of bodies, territories and knowledge, freedom, and politics as peoples' struggles" (Guzmán, N.,Triana, D., 2019).

“Women defenders of territory build other understandings against colonial, academic, and cooperation logical models. We do not see how you can accompany and finance the defense of territory on one hand, while destroying and exploiting it on the other.... It is necessary to recover territory through policy, but also through spirituality and rooted in our own bodies. Defending life with dignity for all, not just for the developed world”

(Adriana Guzmán, Bolivia).

The concerns of community feminism are positioned from a critical point of view in the sense that they dismantle the patriarchal relations present in ancestral worldviews, as well as in communities. The proposal of community feminism integrates the historical struggle for the recovery of territory with the struggle for the defense and recovery of the body territory: "While recognizing that there has been progress in terms of uprisings of indigenous peoples to recover their territories, indigenous women are still under a system of oppression and of sexual, symbolic, and economic violence, because the territory of women's bodies continues to be expropriated and in the power of men (Martínez, 2019, p. 30).

2.3 FEMINIST RESISTANCE PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In a broad sense, resilience can be understood as socioecological systems' ability to face shocks and stress. Climate resilience is defined as the ability of socioecological systems to absorb and recover from climate shocks and stresses, while adapting and transforming their structures and livelihoods in the face of long-term change and uncertainty (adapted from Mitchell, 2013, cited by: GIZ, 2014).

As was discussed, the ongoing impact of environmental deterioration and climate change on rural and indigenous livelihoods, as well as the disadvantages that women and girls face for access to and control over productive and natural resources, employment, and credit, in addition to the workload of care responsibilities, all deepen the existing inequality and make these populations more vulnerable and less able to adapt and show resilience.

The world is experiencing impacts of the climate crisis that are as intense as the impacts of the extractive model, and entail all of the violence that people and community territorial defenders experience. The interests and strategies employed by the extractive industries, with the approval of State institutions, run afoul of the collective rights of the affected populations; their struggle has been criminalized. In 2019, 212 land and environmental defenders were killed in Latin America and the Caribbean, which accounts for 60% of such murders worldwide (Global Witness, 2019).

"In Honduras, the defense of territory has been criminalized. There is a management plan for the community and punishments for taking a load of firewood, but large-scale timber extraction has legal permits and is causing the death and displacement of indigenous peoples. Few of us dare to defend land, territory, the environment, and freedom of expression. There are many attacks against human rights defenders; if these aggressions are reported, they do not produce a fair trial, due to lack of resources or the power of large companies"
(Adalina Gutierrez, 2021)".

The expansion of extractive models such as mega-mining, the expansion of the oil and energy frontier, the construction of large hydroelectric dams, and the expansion of fishing and forestry borders or the agribusiness model and genetically-modified crops, have multiplied land conflict and sent the levels of violence against people defending water, land, forests, rivers, and women's rights soaring. Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and rural communities and these defenders have suffered threats, harassment, legal persecution, illegal surveillances, forced disappearances, blackmail, sexual assaults, and killings (Oxfam).

Indigenous peoples and women especially are subject to ongoing attacks against their human rights. But the rights of the water, land, and forests that women have protected for years are also under threat. "As women, we fight to defend land and to express ourselves, but the law limits our right to protest, and they even send the armed forces to stop us"

(Adalina Gutierrez, Lenca People, Honduras).

Extractive industries especially affect women's lives: the practices of displacement and contamination of territories also come with the resurgence of patriarchal violence against women and girls and the exacerbation of gender inequalities (Carvajal, L. 2020). "Extractive practices make it impossible to recover, the loss of biodiversity and the imbalance only gets stronger (Adalina Gutiérrez, Honduras, 2021).

"This occurs in all areas of their lives and is expressed in the increase in the burden of care work for women; the loss of economic autonomy and food sovereignty; an increase in psychological, physical, economic, patrimonial and sexual violence in family and community contexts; physical, emotional and reproductive health problems caused by contact with polluted air, soil and water; gender-based discrimination and violation of the right to citizen participation and free, prior and informed consultation processes; increased sexual exploitation of the bodies of women and girls; and the loss of cultural identity and weakening of women's community and ancestral roles

(Carvajal, L. 2020).

According to a focus group of women environmental and land defenders who offered their reflections for this document (November 11 and 12, 2021), the fundamental contributions of women environmental and territorial defenders lie in the realization that there are concrete alternatives to the dominant development model, and practices that differ from individualism, private property, and the defense of economic interests over the very life of the planet and its people. The defense of collective territories and the ways in which territories are managed show that it is possible to create bonds of justice and solidarity among those who inhabit them; experiences of care for natural resources, communities and their organizations; and other modes of production and other forms of knowledge, where diverse women contribute, lead and drive actions for the defense and sustainability of life and the construction of *Buen Vivir*, as "practices of resistance rather than resilience" (Mayra Dogo)¹³.

¹³ Oxfam focus group participant (November 11, 2021).

PHOTO: PABLO TOSCO



Women in the territories undertake ancestral production and organizing processes on a community level. There is little awareness of these practices as climate change adaptation strategies, although ancestral practices are indeed climate change adaptation measures (Mayra Dongo, Peru, 2021).

"Beyond contributing to climate change adaptation, as women we contribute to the construction of a Good Life (*Buen Vivir*) for the present, not 30 years from now. We contribute to dignity and a life without gender-based violence" (Adriana Guzmán, Bolivia, 2021). In Honduras, the organization UTC La Paz, through the Advocacy School for Indigenous Women and Youth, promotes the defense of the territory and the common good, as well as the defense of women: "Other generations will inherit the struggle of women who have defended indigenous peoples and the countryside" (Adalina Gutiérrez).

From the experience of the Cara Cara people (Potosí, Bolivia), the struggle of defenders against extractive industries and exploitation has taken place from the standpoint of indigenous peoples who define complementary and non-utilitarian relations with nature: "We cannot live well if it is our very body that is exploited" (Cara Cara, Bolivia) (Adriana Guzmán, Bolivia, 2020).

In La Paz - Bolivia, there are experiences of resistance against multinational food corporations promoting monocropping agriculture practices. Women have organized themselves through autonomous networks linked to NGOs or cooperation organizations, in order to resist the practices of companies that deliver canned food to women, putting their food sovereignty at risk.

Other contributions of women defenders of territories have to do with food sovereignty and production. Free trade agreements have damaged indigenous territories. In Honduras in particular, native products have been lost, and organizations such as UTC La Paz or the AMIR Women's Association of Honduras seek to defend organic crops and associated production, as well as care for their forests and seeds. "The land is a living being, we must return to crops, to plots to grow our own food, return to our own products and sow" (Adalina Gutiérrez, Honduras, 2021).

Community organizing experiences are also relevant: focus group participants in Guatemala and Honduras highlighted the importance of organizing around food sovereignty initiatives, for agroecology production, improved seed management, reforestation, and the defense of territory and nature, defense of indigenous rights, and the defense of the rights of women and youth. These groups also mentioned land collective and individual land purchases and deeds, especially for women.

The focus groups also discussed indigenous peoples' resistance to the monocultural and monoethnic state, arguing for the proposal of a pluricultural and intercultural state, as well as resistance to the racism that continues to be present in the cultural dynamics of Central America and Latin America (Sonia López, Guatemala, 2021).

In the case of the Guatemalan participants, ancestral resistance and organizing actions associated with climate justice "are resilient actions at the community level as well as resistance against extractive industries and the economic model. If the system does not change, however, the effects of climate change will continue to upon on the vulnerable indigenous population" (Patricia Tax, 2021). Given that climate injustice mainly affects women, due to their vulnerability and experience of violence, it is essential to link climate justice with strategic gender justice actions. Mercedes García (AMIR Women's Association in Honduras, 2021) relates food security activities, agroecology, integrated farms and production, transformation and marketing efforts as practices that generate climate resilience: these practices allow women to be more prepared and resist the onslaught of climate change.

Sonia López (Oxfam Guatemala, 2021) notes that climate justice has to do with respecting the rights of communities to their food sovereignty, to a natural life, and to the compensation and recognition of communities for the damages generated through anthropogenic processes.

2.4 PROGRESS IN THE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA TO PROMOTE CLIMATE ACTION WITH GENDER EQUALITY

Climate action links international climate governance bodies with the commitments and practices of national governments and civil society organizations. There are important gender equality considerations and the participation of women and excluded groups in climate change responses is essential.¹⁴ However, these responses have not sufficiently addressed the structural issues that maintain social inequality in general, and gender inequalities in particular.

Thanks to advocacy efforts pushing to recognize the central nature of gender equality and the relevance of human rights in sustainable development frameworks and spaces for environmental protection and climate change response, environmental agreements, legal instruments, and the decisions of the Conferences of the Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other intergovernmental processes in recent decades have begun to incorporate language that recognizes and promotes gender equality and human rights

(Aguilar 2021: 6)¹⁵.

¹⁴ See: Prácticas promisorias que promueven la igualdad de género y autonomía de las mujeres en respuestas frente al cambio climático (Aguilar 2021):

https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/c2100453_web.pdf

¹⁵ The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS), as well as the main environmental financial mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Adaptation Fund (AF), among others.

At a regional level, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (a subsidiary body of ECLAC) has brought together governments, women's organizations, feminists and civil society for four decades to influence public policy on gender equality and evaluate regional and international agreements on women's rights and gender equality (Aguilar, 2021).

The Brasilia Consensus (2010), which recognizes aspects of climate change and disasters that may particularly affect women, stands out among agreements in the field. The Montevideo Strategy for the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda in the 2030 Sustainable Development Framework (2016) identifies four structural nodes for that must be addressed to reach gender equality in the region. These nodes also play out in the context of climate change. The Santiago Commitment (2020), an agreement among ECLAC Member States, establishes specific commitments to mainstream a gender lens in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Another essential instrument is the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, or the Escazú Agreement, the first binding regional treaty on the environment (Aguilar, 2021).

“Despite this international and regional framework, many efforts to incorporate gender equality into climate change responses are limited to interventions that have failed to break down unequal power structures or close structural gender gaps. As a result, gender inequalities continue hinder sustainable development and emerge in different areas and sectors: climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives are no exception.”

(Aguilar 2021: 6).

There are other efforts to promote gender equality and international dialogue, such as the Generation Equality Forum, organized by UN Women, in collaboration with the Governments of Mexico and France, with the close participation of civil society. Coalitions of youth, the private sector, UN agencies and international organizations have been organized out of this forum.

“The Feminist Action Coalition for Climate Justice recognizes that environmental sustainability is inextricably linked to social justice” (Aguilar 2021:7).

The Feminist Action for Climate Justice Coalition's vision focuses on the needs of the people most excluded and affected by environmental crises, who depend on natural resources for their families and livelihoods.

At the country level, gender has been mainstreamed into climate change instruments and policies such as the Nationally Determined Contributions, Climate Change Adaptation Plans, Climate Change Strategies, Gender and Climate Change Action Plans, as well as action plans related to forestry, tourism, energy, agriculture and livestock, among other sectors related to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. One of the gaps in the application of these processes has been that national policy instruments have not yet sufficiently permeated the concrete processes in local territories, and that the instruments' design and implementation processes still face serious challenges in terms of integrating the visions and realities of the people affected by climate change.

PHOTO: TATIANA FERNÁNDEZ



SUSTAINABILITY OF LIFE AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE: COMMON SCENARIOS BY OXFAM



PHOTO: PABLO TOSCO

3 □

OXFAM is a global movement that fights inequality and poverty and advocates for social justice. Its work with multiple social and community organizations seeks to improve lives, resilience, and livelihoods in times of crisis.

The vision of a just and sustainable world guides its actions focused on addressing the structural causes rather than the symptoms of inequalities: "A world in which our economy revolves around people and the planet. A world in which women and girls live free from violence and discrimination. A world in which we have been able to stem the climate crisis, and in which governance systems are inclusive and allow those in power to be held accountable" (Oxfam).

Oxfam's actions take a systemic approach to address inequalities, poverty, and injustice. The transformations it proposes are based on a multidimensional approach, a feminist lens, and the recognition that "there is no economic, social, and environmental justice without gender justice" (Oxfam Strategic Framework 2020-2030).

Oxfam believes that sustainability, resilience and justice are inseparable. The goals of this organization for 2030 include:

- **Fair economies:** Fair and sustainable economic systems put people and the planet first.
- **Gender Justice:** Women and girls live free from discrimination and gender-based violence.
- **Climate justice:** The climate crisis is contained through responses led by those least responsible for it, but most affected - Accountable governance: inclusive and accountable governance systems protect human rights and the planet.

A holistic approach between different areas of intervention is a key characteristic of the Oxfam Strategic Framework for 2020-2030: "One element cannot be properly analyzed if it is separated from the relationship that defines it. A program that focuses only on one area of intervention could be qualified as holistic, if that area is understood in relation to its context. A program that combines a wide range of activities covering all possible sectors of intervention, but still understands each of them as a discrete set of problems and solutions, will remain sector specific"¹⁶.

Oxfam programs address power inequalities, injustice, and vulnerabilities that are exacerbated in times of crisis, tension and uncertainty. This focus also lets the organization integrate a resilience approach in its way of thinking and working on its interventions.

Oxfam's vision, approach, and aspirations reveal a perspective on the sustainability of life and resilience in general, and in the face of climate change in particular, in the understanding of the realities

¹⁶ Oxfam Framework and Guide for Resilient Development.

that it seeks to transform, as well as the actions to overcome inequality, promote rights and gender justice, and build capacity to deal with crisis.

Oxfam's Economic Justice and Climate Justice programs necessarily address gender injustice and a structural consideration of inequality and power relations, as well as building resilience. For Oxfam, this "does not only reduce vulnerability and risk, but rather builds capacity to deal with crisis and tension" (Oxfam 2017:21)¹⁷

To truly achieve transformative changes in addressing climate justice, programs need to go beyond simply addressing gender-specific needs and address social norms (Oxfam). This can be done through:

- Addressing power imbalances and inequality in decision-making. To this, it is important to build women's leadership and participation in decision-making, increase access to resources and information, and work with men and boys on new masculinities and women's rights.
- Driving participatory and collaborative social change processes, which requires special consideration of which stakeholders are involved, to ensure that all stakeholders are able to participate fully. In this way, existing power structures are challenged and excluded groups are empowered.
- Changing the way vulnerability analysis is conducted and incorporating structural gender and power analysis is a critical first step in determining theories of change with specific gender justice outcomes and indicators.
- Resilience-building programs should have a gender lens. In order to move deliberately towards change and detect the transformations that occur, it is essential to define and monitor gender outcomes, establish the corresponding indicators, and include a gender budget.

In terms of the challenges that need to be addressed to achieve gender justice, Oxfam recognized the climate emergency, the current economic model, and the need to achieve social justice. These perspectives are approached by the organization from the ethics of care and inequality. Oxfam's vision is to achieve social justice and guarantee universal human rights by adopting a different approach to social organizing, one that focuses on care as a fundamental right and in which care underpins both policy development and government action.

According to the Oxfam Strategic Framework for Latin America and the Caribbean 2021- 2025, which is consistent with the principles and lines of action of the Global Framework, "In Latin America, together with other allies, Oxfam works for the construction of an economic, political, and social system based on respect for planetary boundaries, the inclusion of those who have been most affected by the crisis, the elimination of all forms of discrimination affecting women, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and migrant populations, moving towards a sustainable, equitable and inclusive system".

¹⁷ For Oxfam, resilience outcomes include three mutually reinforcing capacities: absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity and transformative capacity.

With a perspective that integrates economic justice with gender justice and climate justice, Oxfam prioritizes actions aimed at:

- Protecting environmental and territorial defenders
- Population in conditions of human mobility
- Closing civic spaces and democratic backsliding
- Enabling and strengthening active citizenship

The cross-cutting work strategies to achieve the changes proposed for the transformation of the economic, political, and social system include:

- **Influencing** in different geographic spaces, from local to global spheres, through knowledge generation (evidence), intervention in the public debate (narratives) and public policy advocacy.
- **Transformative education** for active citizenship as a means to dismantle patriarchal imaginaries and practices, and to address the causes of economic inequality, gender and age inequalities, as well as the climate crisis.
- **Partners and allies** strengthening the voice and agency of those we seek to accompany, as well as the coordination among different actors, spaces, themes and influencing processes.
- **Work in crisis** by understanding the root causes: an inequitable development model, environmental degradation, and social tension in the face of the ineffectiveness of the States.
- **Research** for the production of evidence and scalability of knowledge.
- **Communications** to position alternative narratives in the region through innovative models and formats.
- **New technologies** for influencing, to bridge the technological and digital divide.
- **Learning and knowledge**, promoting the decentralization and democratization of learning processes, to value voices, perspectives and knowledge, diversifying and innovating in sources and methodologies.
- **Capacity-building** and enhancing technical, political, economic, knowledge, management, sustainability, influencing, technology, communication, risk management, adaptation, and technical capacities, and resilient development to help improve the work of social organizations.

In terms of climate action with gender justice, as part of the Generation Equality Forum,¹⁸ Oxfam and other civil society actors and stakeholders including governments, intergovernmental institutions and bodies; financial, multilateral and international institutions, and philanthropic and private sector actors, have committed to working together for women's land rights to accelerate gender equality.¹⁹

The following commitments were established for civil society:

- Follow up on the Coalition's actions in terms of how it will defend and promote the rights of women, youth and indigenous peoples.
- Mobilizing civil society actors in pertinent sectors (women, youth, farmers, indigenous rights, land, environment and climate activists, women's/feminist movement) to exchange data, skills, knowledge and resources that empower these actors and address/repair discriminatory gender power relations to achieve shared objectives.
- Working closely with customary/traditional and religious authorities to secure land tenure rights for women and youth.
- Promoting and supporting integrated approaches to land use planning and management (urban, peri-urban and rural), housing and natural resource property rights.
- Integrating gender and land rights for women and youth into land degradation neutrality programming, addressing climate change, sustainable food systems, and biodiversity restoration through policy influencing, research and advocacy.
- Developing women-centered programs that enhance the knowledge and skills of indigenous and grassroots women on their land rights, while fostering principles of benefit sharing, burden sharing, and responsibility sharing on a community level.
- Mobilizing civil society actors and policy makers and customary/traditional and religious authorities to launch campaigns for women's land rights.

18 The Equality Generation Forum was held in Paris and Mexico in 2020, and the Feminist Action Coalition for Climate Justice is part of this forum. This particular forum brought together governments, corporations, and change agents from around the world to define and announce ambitious investments and policies. These diverse stakeholders have embarked on a five-year plan to accelerate equality, leadership, and opportunity for women and girls around the world. This work will be completed by 2026.

19 The agreements described above are enshrined in international instruments such as the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, Rio Conventions, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Agenda 2063 of the African Union, among others.

WORKING APPROACHES ON ECONOMIC JUSTICE, CLIMATE JUSTICE, AND GENDER JUSTICE



4.

PHOTO: PABLO TOSCO

Recommendations to strengthen the integrated approach for Oxfam action on economic justice, climate justice, and gender justice:

• ***Deepen common causes and responses to the climate emergency, the current economic model, the organizing for social justice.*** Oxfam programs for economic justice, climate justice, and gender justice must deepen their analysis of common problems, and determine theories of change, outcomes, and indicators that clearly define how these areas are interconnected, and how each intervention contributes in its specific field as well as to the common problems. The analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the actions planned according to these connections will strengthen an integrative and holistic approach, with ongoing self-reflection and exchange to recover and improve our work.

To build a more complete understanding and act in consequence with this view, self-reflection and knowledge management will be important to guide institutional efforts, recognizing best practices in understanding and enacting a holistic approach, as well as lessons drawn from failed attempts.

• ***Deepen the organization's knowledge generation and dissemination of narratives on the connections between climate justice and gender justice,*** focusing on the systemic causes of climate change, social injustice and gender injustice, and promoting understanding of intersectional vulnerability²⁰ and contextual vulnerability to climate change. Above all, it is important to highlight the substantial contributions of women, environment and territorial defenders, and affected populations to climate change adaptation, the sustainability of life and resilience-building.

• ***Speak out and show solidarity with the reality of persecution, violence and criminalization experienced by women environmental defenders.*** This understanding is necessary to influence national and international policies and to ensure that global climate finance flows are invested in gender-just and environmentally-just climate solutions.

²⁰ An intersectional approach recognizes gender as a distributor of inequality in combination with other categories related to socioeconomic status, age, geographic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc., to define particular situations of multidimensional inequality that signify greater or lesser vulnerability to environmental and social crises.

• **Recover, disseminate and value concrete experiences that indigenous women, rural women and territorial defenders are building from their daily lives to sustain natural and human life, resist the economic model and create resilient communities in the face of climate change.** Food sovereignty, territorial defense, agroecology, environmental conservation, ancestral organization and its generational exchange, networks for the defense of indigenous peoples' rights, rights of nature and women's rights, should be presented from a reading of alternative proposals to development such as feminist economics, social and solidarity economics, connections with the ancestral worldviews of Good Living (*Buen Vivir*) or its equivalents, according to each culture; but also as actions that build resilience against the impacts of climate change that place greater challenges upon rural and indigenous women with extractive activities activity in all their expressions.

• **Identify the impacts of climate change solutions and responses linked to gender equality and promoted by national and international climate change governance bodies in local contexts,** so that local climate action initiatives can link to global, regional, and national spheres and include the voices and priorities of women, men, affected populations, and diverse local actors.

FOTO: LESLIE SEARLES



• ***Promote spaces for transformative education, dialogue, and engagement among stakeholders for a systemic analysis of climate change and its impacts, as well as critical responses and solutions.***

This means dismantling false solutions and placing the rights and fundamental contributions of territorial actors and women to the sustainability of life and climate resilience at the center. It is important to promote the capacity to understand and act from a holistic and interconnected approach to link economic justice with environmental justice and gender justice, in the organization itself, as well as with the groups and stakeholders with which it works.

• ***Recover the voices of rural, indigenous and urban women on how they are being affected by the economic model, extractive industries, and climate change, in their rights, as well as their proposals to achieve climate justice, economic justice and gender justice.***

It is important to put these experiences and ideas in dialogue with the proposals and commitments around climate policy in the region. Bridges must be built between the community, and the State, and international climate change institutions in order to influence action based on evidence narrated first-hand by these women.

• ***Promote transformative actions in the programs and processes supported by the organization, and influence regional governance***

to emphasize the structural causes of differentiated vulnerability to climate change and gender inequality, considering the structural factors that sustain inequality, which according to the Montevideo Strategy are concentrated in the nodes of socioeconomic inequality and the persistence of poverty (it is necessary to emphasize the causes), the sexual division of labor and the unjust social organization of care, the predominance of the culture of privilege and patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns, and the unequal concentration of power. With regard to structural causes, it is important to raise awareness and transform traditional masculinities so that boys, men and young people can become change agents for gender equality in climate actions.

• ***Promote capacity-building for local actors, especially women and youth,***

through regional experience exchange to incorporate their contributions, knowledge, and priorities around the impacts of climate change into policy advocacy, seeking to recognize not only the vulnerability of these actors, but rather their contributions and the compensation they deserve for their efforts to sustain life and adapt to the challenges of climate change.

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