

GENDER EQUITY FOR ALL
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CLIMATE CHANGE & ECOFEMINISM

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WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change is a pattern of “long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns” (United Nations, n.d.). Unlike seasonal weather patterns, climate change describes the overall rise in global temperatures as a result of greenhouse gasses and other anthropomorphic changes. Climate change is generally the result of human actions like industrialization and other harmful activities that can pump excess amounts of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. Experts agree that if the world does not meet net zero emissions soon, we may be past the point of no return. As global citizens and agents of change – for both good and bad – it is our responsibility to understand and act in the face of a climate crisis.

Climate change can have a myriad of impacts on the environment. Although global warming is often equated to the phrase climate change, it's just one facet of the climate crisis's impact on the planet. For example, rising global temperatures have resulted in more frequent and extreme natural disasters. These natural disasters are of particular importance to ecofeminists because they disproportionately impact women and less fortunate individuals. Other concerns involve quality of life, including water scarcity, heat waves, and declining biodiversity. These consequences reduce the ability to access clean water, grow and maintain necessary agricultural systems, and live comfortably in any type of environment. Since women are often tasked with providing resources like food and water, these impacts are especially harmful. Women across the globe are using their lived experiences with climate change's consequences to enact change and fight the climate crisis.

WHAT IS ECOFEMINISM?

Ecofeminism is a philosophy that combines feminism and environmentalism to draw parallels between the degradation of nature and submission of feminine individuals. The movement recognizes that the inherent hierarchies that result in patriarchy also empower individuals to weaken our environment. By working to dismantle inequalities between people, we are also able to blur the disconnect between people and the environment. In the modern day, this philosophy highlights women's empowerment as an essential tool for ensuring the preservation of our planet.

Although ecofeminism's framework can be used to dissect humans' desire for power, it has been criticized for neglecting the class and race differences between women that make feminism such a complex issue. However, modern ecofeminist initiatives work to elevate women across these intersectionalities. For example, women's empowerment across all sectors has led to recent decreases in carbon emissions and a renewed dedication to the environmental movement. As ethical ecofeminists, we should strive to include all feminine individuals in our fight for a cleaner planet.

The movement was created in 1974, and has experienced rapid momentum since. As the climate crisis has worsened, women-led environmental movements have enjoyed success against the disproportionate impacts that climate change can have on feminine individuals.

WOMEN & THE CLIMATE CRISIS

One way that modern ecofeminists have reconciled the movement's past mistakes is by acknowledging the increased burden that climate change has on women in least-developed countries. According to UN Women, women and girls "bear a disproportionate responsibility for securing food, water, and fuel." They are also more impacted by natural disasters and climate change-induced violence.

From India's Chipko Movement to prevent deforestation to UN Women's gender action plan at the UN's COP22, efforts from local activists and policymakers alike have helped push ecofeminist movements forward. Motivated by their disproportionate experiences of climate change, women across the globe have mobilized to protect their liberties and livelihoods as global warming threatens their communities:

SPOTLIGHT: HINDOU OUMAROU IBRAHIM

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim is an ecofeminist activist from Chad. For the past decade, she has worked to connect policymakers with local activists to refocus the climate movement on what matters most: the people who it seeks to help. Ibrahim's firsthand experiences with resource scarcity and changing roles in climate-impacted communities led her to successfully lobby for indigenous rights and protections from the impacts of global warming.

SPOTLIGHT: SUNITA NARAIN

Since 1982, Sunita Narain has represented indigenous Indian climate activists as an ecological researcher and advocate. She boasts a resume of air pollution research and political lobbying to encourage the presence of local voices in international climate mitigation discussions. Currently, her work focuses on urging the Indian government to take natural disasters, such as flooding, more seriously in indigenous communities.

SPOTLIGHT: GRETA THUNBERG

Greta Thunberg's School Strike for Climate broke headlines in 2018, when the young activist began skipping school to lobby the Swedish government on climate change. Since then, Thunberg has started her own organization, spoken at the United Nations, and maintained her school strike for over 250 weeks.

To learn more about these inspirational activists, visit time.com/5669038/women-climate-change-leaders/

We are united by a global community of people who inhabit the earth, and we must do our part to save it from the harm that humans have caused. As young ecofeminists, it is our duty to educate ourselves on current climate issues, empower others' perspectives on global warming, and support climate justice movements.

JOIN THE FIGHT

Women's Earth and Climate Action Network Webinars & Trainings:
www.wecaninternational.org/online-trainings-network-calls

Women's Environmental & Development Organization
wedo.org/get-involved/

The Climate Initiative
www.theclimateinitiative.org/for-youth/

SOURCES

[“What is Climate Change?”](#)

[“How Can Climate Change Affect Natural Disasters?”](#)

[Climate Change & Natural Disasters Fact Sheet](#)

[“Ecofeminism: Where Gender and Climate Change Intersect”](#)

[“Women Climate Change Leaders”](#)

[“Explainer: How Gender Inequality & Climate Change are Interconnected”](#)