



MAKE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable Development Goals from a feminist viewpoint

The full exercise of the right to the city and all common space by women cannot be understood without the right that all women should have to live a **life free of violence**.

How does the patriarchal system determine the right of women to common space?

Male violence is evident in all corners of the city and in all common social space, both created by the patriarchal system. The fear of suffering sexual assault and/or harassment in public spaces by women and girls severely restricts them exercising their right to the city, as it limits their mobility and the use of some spaces. If to this we add other factors of oppression such as an irregular administrative situation, functional diversity, age, working as sex workers, gender and sexual identity, ethnicity, etc., then exercising this right becomes even more restricted. Feminism has brought to light and denounced the fact that in the patriarchal system, girls are socialised in fear and, this fear of being assaulted learned from their childhood, **acts as a control mechanism with a loss of autonomy and freedom**.

Despite the fact that male violence, and therefore sexual violence, is of a structural nature, many of the answers offered are individualising policies that are oriented from a perspective of individual action versus collective action. The diverse expressions of male violence seen in cities **highlight the fact that the public space is a political space** where people play out hegemonic gender roles and where **power relationships** are not only present but **shape these spaces**.

There is an **explicit sexual violence** with sexual assault and harassment that coexists alongside an **implicit sexual violence** that **“teaches” women not to be raped**, to avoid certain places at certain times, to not dress

as they want and to avoid certain spaces, instead of teaching men not to rape. This is a culture that makes women feel guilty for being assaulted. **Fear and guilt as a mechanism for controlling women and as a form of oppression**.

Explicit sexual violence occurs due to a context of **symbolic patriarchal violence** which, as defined by Rita Segato **“is the mortar that holds together and explains the hierarchical structure of society”**. In other words, **it is a violence that converts the exercising of social inequality into something natural** as the patriarchal construction turns symbolic violence into something natural, thereby eliminating any possible resistance by the oppressed group.

To achieve safe cities for all women it is necessary that the 2030 Agenda and public policies on safety and urban planning in countries relinquish androcentric approaches whereby if there is no criminality there is automatically safety. Because the majority of sexual assaults and cases of harassment suffered by women are not classed as an offence in the criminal codes of different countries. It is therefore essential to break with the division between the public space and private space in the design of policies on safety and urban planning and integrate the gender and feminist perspective when drafting these.

What feminist initiatives that facilitate the right to the city do we know about?

There have been many diverse initiatives that have emerged from feminism to guarantee women's right to the city, from the **“Take Back The Night”** initiative that was started in the 70s by groups of women in the USA, where they encouraged women to occupy the streets, to the **Jane Jacobs Walk**, which are walks by residents through their neighbourhoods where they observe, an-



analyse and take action to improve their towns and cities through the community. At present, the **action protocols against sexual assault and harassment** that have originated from **feminist collectives** in different neighbourhoods and communities where **feminist self-defence** is key for the eradication of sexual violence are the instruments that empower women and achieve social transformation. In some cases, these have achieved processes of truly innovative community building where all **social, institutional and community players** participate and where alliances are created with a transformative potential that consolidates the change.

| What is the city we want?*

Rethinking the city from a feminist perspective is to stop producing spaces from a productivist and mercantilist logic and start thinking about environments that prioritise the persons that use them (Blanca Gutiérrez Valdivia). Feminist urban development demands that persons must be at the centre of the design and planning of cities **giving greater prominence to and revaluing care and reproductive work, acknowledging that we are all interdependent: we are persons who are carers and we are persons who are cared for.**

The design of cities is not neutral, but rather is determined by and reproduces the hierarchical relationships found in patriarchal societies where some activities are given greater value than others. In the cities we inhabit the movement of private vehicles has been prioritised over the public and they are designed giving priority to routes dominated by men whereas, in the care work carried out by women, the journeys are shorter and more numerous during the day and usually made on public transport.

In opposition to the neoliberal and patriarchal city in which there are **"cities without citizens and citizens without cities"** (Enrique Ortiz) and Smart Cities, **feminist urban planning** proposes the caring and feminist city. This is a city that permits you to care for and be cared for, a city **free of all types of violence**, and also of male violence: a city that is **inclusive of all diversity** and more viable for its citizens.

| Why do we need a new global governance?

Thanks to popular and social movements and to the women's and feminist movement, it has been possible to include the **Right to the City** in the draft outcome document of the declaration of the **New Urban Agenda Habitat III**. Nevertheless, it is still the States that decide on the New Urban Agenda without the substantive participation of the cities. The same is happening with the 2030 Agenda where the cities, that are primarily responsible for its implementation, do not have the competence to decide. They continue to take a backseat in global governance in spite of the fact that large urban areas are home to the majority of the world's population. Typically, cities across the world have no competence over migration policies and/or refugees and, furthermore, they are underfunded, even though they are where the greatest global challenges of the world population are to be found.

A new global governance is required where cities and their citizens participate in decision-making, and also a global governance where organisations of women's and the feminist movement are represented, participating and making decisions in a substantive manner.

* We want a caring city, a feminist city.

Catalonia Legislation

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1945.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- The Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1950.
- European Social Charter, 1961.
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000.
- European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, 2000.
- World Charter for the Right to the City - V World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, 2005.
- European Charter of Women in the City, European Commission, 1995.
- Citizen's Charter. Barcelona Charter of Rights and Duties, approved in 2011.
- Government measure "Barcelona, City of Rights", Barcelona City Council, 2017.
- Plan for Gender Justice. Barcelona City Council, 2016.

El Salvador Legislation

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1945.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966.
- Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women. Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994.
- World Charter for the Right to the City - V World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, 2005.
- Declaration of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, April 2004. First Latin American Cities Conference and Local Governments' Initiatives of the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Local Government Associations.



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TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

Sustainable Development Goals from a feminist viewpoint

The participation of women in decision-making has important implications for mitigating climate change.

Is climate change the greatest challenge facing humanity and the planet?

- The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) estimates that over the next 50 years there could be **250 million to 1 billion displaced persons**¹ owing to the climate.
- An annual average of 21.5 million people have been forcibly displaced each year since 2008 by sudden threats related to the climate, such as floods, storms, forest fires and extreme temperatures.
- **Women represented more than 80% of persons displaced by climate change.** They constitute 20 million of the 26 million persons (77%) who it is estimated have been displaced by climate change.²
- During and after disasters, the **rates of sexual and gender violence often increase**: it has been estimated up to 300%. Similarly, it has also been shown that human trafficking increases from 20% to 30% during disasters.³

In 2013, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its *Fifth Assessment Report*, categorically concluded that **climate change is real and human activities are its main cause**. Science has demonstrated, with a reliability of 95%, that human activity is the principal cause and to curb it, it will be necessary to substantially and sustainably reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Can the 2030 Agenda fight climate change from the current logic of economic growth?

Feminism, along with many other social movements, is fully aware that **climate change is the product of an economic model where an extractive logic and processes of accumulation and exacerbated consumerism prevail** that generate millions of expelled and displaced persons and destroy and deplete natural resources. Moreover, feminism underlines the fact that this economic model should be understood as **part of the patriarchal system**.

It is an economic model where large transnational companies are the main culprits responsible for climate change, being the biggest GHG-emitting agents. For example, in Spain, ten companies emit 65% of all the CO₂ originating from the Spanish industrial and energy sectors.⁴

These transnational companies, that shape corporate power, enjoy an unprecedented concentration of power that permits them to impose their interests across the planet without there being any opposing mechanisms to control them. This results in the militarisation of territories, the dismantling of local economies, the contamination of water, an increase in diseases and the generation of violence. And, most importantly, **it generates sexual violence against women** as a means of annihilating the social and community fabric that contributes to eradicating any possible **resistance arising from the communities**.

1. http://blogs.fuhem.es/forotransiciones/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2017/05/GranEncrucijada_feb2017_baja.pdf

2. Women's Environmental Network. Gender and the Climate Change Agenda: The Impacts of Climate Change on Women and Public Policy. 2010

3. United Nations Women. Why Is Climate Change a Gender Issue?. 2014. + UNEP Women at the Frontline of Climate Change - Gender Risks and Hopes, 2010

4. <https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/global/20984-top-ten-empresas-mas-contaminan.html>



How does climate change impact the lives of women?

Climate change impacts the lives of men and women differently. The distinct climatic impacts are not only the consequence of this model of economic development, but also of the **patriarchal system** that it forms part of.

The relationship between the land and women has always been and continues to be a key element in the work of reproduction and the sustainment of life. Historically, women have selected the seeds, have cultivated the land, and have gone in search of water. As Silvia Federici tells us, “capitalism changed the relationship between the land and women”. But even today, **70% of persons responsible for subsistence agriculture are women.** Subsistence agriculture is vital for being able to cope with crises, periods of food shortages and famine. The occupation of a territory by a megaproject, whether it be an extractive industry or infrastructure, signifies the disappearance of lands intended for traditional agriculture. Women know this, and for this reason, it has traditionally been them who have most resisted the commercial use of land. And for this reason also, it is mainly **women that lead the movements to slow down climate change and the fights against transnational companies.**

For example, **Nigerian women** have been fighting for decades against the effects of oil companies in their territory as they know that they destroy the environment and are harmful to health. In **Kenya, Wangari Maathai** founded the *Green Belt Movement* through which they have managed to plant more than 30 million trees to redress the effects of deforestation. In **Latin America, community feminists and popular feminists** have linked the defence of their territory against the attacks of transnational companies with the **defence of their own body.** In Asia, a fight has begun in defence of seeds and of indigenous peoples that has brought them to take on the large transnational companies.

In spite of this, **women are not owners of the land and furthermore have no decision-making power over how to use it.** They have been, and continue to be, under-represented in environmental policy-making despite the fact that their participation in decision-making has important implications for climate change.

What is the relationship between sexual and reproductive rights and climate justice?

Many feminist activists have been warning about the **dangerous message that seeks to interrelate population control with debates to halt climate change.** This message links climate change to the increase in population and hints that the number of children of women with low incomes, of black women and of women in the global south is one of the main causes of climate change.

Apart from being a false message, as the GHG-emitting countries are the “developed” countries, it is a racist, class-based and male chauvinistic message that distances us from the **true causes of the warming of the planet: war and militarism, environmental racism and the neoliberal economic model.**

Feminist organisations remind us and reiterate that the exercising of **sexual and reproductive rights** by women is a Human Rights issue and not a vehicle to stop the effects of climate change. And they also remind and caution us on population control strategies that have resulted in violations of the Human Rights of women. For this reason, it is necessary to continue focussing on the need to **fight against the manipulation of discourses of rights** that is increasingly widespread and used by fundamentalist movements. And, above all, it is essential to **guarantee sexual and reproductive rights as inalienable, universal and interdependent rights for all persons.**

Catalonia Legislation

- Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1994.
- Kyoto Protocol, 2005.
- Paris Agreement, 2015.
- Catalan Law on Climate Change, 2017.
- Catalan strategy for adapting to climate change Horizonte 2013-2020.

Morocco Legislation

- Framework law no. 11-03 on the protection and enhancement of the environment.
- Law no. 13-03 on the fight against air pollution.
- Framework law no. 99-12 on the National Charter for the Environment and Sustainable Development. 03/06/2014.



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