



CLIMATE JUSTICE NEEDS AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

TOOLKIT



This toolkit has been produced by Jada L. Kennedy, as part of Youth and Environment Europe's strategy to spread more awareness to the interconnecting issues faced when analyzing the climate crisis. Youth and Environment Europe aims to build a bridge between climate action and social justice. All figures and tables are developed by Youth and Environment Europe, unless otherwise mentioned. Copying parts of this publication is allowed on condition that the source is mentioned.

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INTRODUCTION

This toolkit will provide a gateway to a brighter tomorrow in Europe! In the midst of pressing environmental challenges, it is time to harness the transformative potential of intersectionality. This toolkit invites you to embark on an inspiring journey where inclusivity and empowerment become the driving forces behind climate action.

The climate crisis is not an isolated issue; it intertwines with existing social, economic, and political inequalities, magnifying their impacts on vulnerable populations. Gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, disability, and other intersecting identities shape how individuals experience and respond to environmental challenges. Recognizing these intersections is crucial for developing effective and equitable solutions that leave no one behind.

Our Intersectionality Toolkit offers a comprehensive guide to understanding and integrating intersectionality into climate action. It provides a framework to navigate the interconnected web of social identities, power dynamics, and environmental impacts. Through a combination of research-based insights, practical tools, and case studies, this toolkit empowers users to approach climate activism, policy-making, and community engagement through an inclusive and justice-centered lens.

By embracing intersectionality in the context of the climate crisis, we can build a more inclusive and resilient future for all. The Toolkit aims to facilitate this transformative process, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex challenges we face and empowering change-makers to drive sustainable and equitable solutions.

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit covers a wide range of topics, including:

- 1. Intersectionality and Environmental Justice:** Unpacking the connections between intersectionality and the climate crisis, exploring how power dynamics shape vulnerability and resilience, and understanding the importance of inclusivity in environmental decision-making processes.
- 2. Climate Impacts on Marginalized Communities:** Examining how climate change disproportionately affects marginalized communities, including indigenous peoples, people of colour, low-income populations, and those living in vulnerable regions, and how these impacts intersect with other forms of discrimination.
- 3. Partnership, Representation and Engagement:** Providing guidance on fostering inclusive dialogues, amplifying marginalized voices, and building partnerships to address climate challenges collectively. It also explores effective strategies for advocating for climate justice and amplifying intersectional perspectives in policy-making and advocacy efforts.
- 4. Tools for Intersectional Analysis:** Equipping users with practical tools, sources and frameworks to analyze the intersections of power, privilege, and vulnerability within climate issues. These tools give an understanding to, help identify and address disparities, develop tailored solutions, and foster collaborative approaches to climate action.

Let us embark on this journey together, exploring the transformative potential of intersectionality in addressing the climate crisis. By recognising and respecting the diversity of experiences, identities, and voices, we can forge a path towards a just and sustainable world for generations to come.

WHO WE ARE

Youth and Environment Europe (YEE) is the largest independent European network of environmental youth organizations. YEE unites 42 member organisations coming from 25 countries.

YEE was founded as the European region of the International Youth Federation for Environmental Studies and Conservation (IYF) in 1983. YEE is a member of the United Nations Environment (UNEP), European Environmental Bureau, and European Youth Forum, CAN Europe, and a co-founding member of the EU4Ocean Coalition. Our HQ is in Prague, Czech Republic.

All activities and projects of YEE are organized and carried out by young people under 30. YEE organizes, facilitates and supports projects and campaigns aiming to increase the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the environment and the awareness of climate issues among young people in Europe.



KEY TERMS

Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in 1989 to describe Intersectionality as a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. Based on identity traits: race, sex, gender, abled bodied, religion, etc.

Social Justice

Social justice means everyone’s human rights are respected, protected, and promoted. Everyone has access to equal opportunities and the resources necessary to thrive. This doesn’t guarantee a perfect society where everyone is always happy; however, everyone will have a fighting chance at the life they want. They aren’t held back by things they can’t control like systemic barriers, prejudice, and discrimination.

Justice in relation to the allocation of resources, opportunities, and privileges within a society. The idea of justice is fairness. Fairness in society is referred to as social justice. Fairness in housing, employment, and other areas is included in this. Human rights are upheld and discrimination is not tolerated in a society that values social justice. The way it is perceived depends on factors including ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, being able-bodied or not, and gender.

Climate Justice

Climate justice is the idea that climate change needs to be framed as an ethical, economical, political, and social issue. Climate justice is linked to human rights in that it highlights how the burden of climate change does not fall equally on everyone, it impacts under-represented and historically excluded groups/countries in society and demands justice for these groups.

Minority groups

A population subgroup with social, religious, ethnic, racial, or other characteristics that differ from those of the majority of the population. The term is sometimes extended to cover any group that is the subject of oppression and discrimination, whether or not it literally comprises a minority of the population.

Social Global North, Global South and Global East

This terminology refers to the power imbalance in global politics. The Global South is made up of poorer nations whose development has been restricted due to colonialism typically enforced by the Global North, which is made up of wealthier nations. This is not a strict geographical distinction (for example Australia and New Zealand are in the Global North), but it is preferred to other terms such as developed/developing which suggest a hierarchy of countries. In recent years, the term Global East has been used to explain the dynamics of Eastern Europe and Central Asia which were part of the Soviet Union and Soviet influence. This is important as there is a tendency in Western European media and politics to ignore the complexities of the process of decolonization of countries in the Global East, and the different historical development people in these countries experienced under Soviet oppression and communism.

It is useful to understand the Global dynamics as it has important implications for gender and climate. For example, one of the reasons that the Global South countries are less able to handle the climate crisis is because of their exploitation and extraction by the Global North. Additionally, the Global North as colonizers used their colonies to industrialize rapidly, meaning they are more responsible for global warming. In the Global East, issues such as energy are tied to power politics and decolonization with Russia using energy to influence regional politics.

KEY TERMS

BIPOC

BIPOC, which stands for “Black and Indigenous people of colour,”. It enables a shift away from terms like “marginalized” and “minority.”

BIPOC is an attempt to centre the violence, systemic racism, and cultural erasure against Black and Indigenous people and how it is foundational to the United States, a country founded on the enslavement of Black people and the genocide of Indigenous people.

There are other, more inclusive umbrella options such as ALAANA, which stands for African, Latinx, Arab, Asian, or Native American. But it is less commonly used, the conversation about umbrella terms extends beyond racial and ethnic identities.

BIPOC emphasises, more specifically than the term “People of Color.

In other words, the term aims to bring to centre stage the specific violence, cultural erasure, and discrimination experienced by Black and Indigenous people.

It reinforces the fact that not all People of Color have the same experience, particularly when it comes to legislation and systemic oppression.

Example: in history, we can find that even after slavery racial segregation is still present.

Racial segregation: the separation or segregation of races in everyday life (schools, bars, public spaces), either as prescribed by law or by social norms.

One example of racial segregation is the paper bag test: The “paper bag test,” was used to determine if someone was allowed to enter churches, nightclubs, and fraternities. So, people who were darker than the colour of a brown paper bag would not be allowed to enter.

Therefore we can argue that people with a darker skin tone are more prone and experience more racism and the act of being alienated. Then colourism takes place.

KEY TERMS

Colorism

Prejudice or discrimination especially within a racial or ethnic group favouring people with lighter skin over those with darker skin.

Safe space

The term safe space generally means “a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other emotional or physical harm.” It is a place in which you are protected from any harm, danger, or bias.

Equity

The term “equity” refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

Equality

Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

KEY TERMS

LGBTQIA+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual Plus is an umbrella term that encompasses groups living out with the dominant sexual orientation (straight) and gender identity (gender assigned at birth, aka cisgender). Also often referred to as the rainbow/queer community.

Sexism

Sexism, prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women.

Ableism

Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as 'less than,' and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities.

Ageism

Discrimination against people based on how old they are.

Racism

A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on phenotypic properties (e.g., skin color and hair texture associated with “race” in the United States). This “system”—which ranges from daily interpersonal interactions shaped by race to racialized opportunities for good education, housing, employment, and so forth—unfairly disadvantages people belonging to marginalized racial groups and damages their physical and mental health, unfairly advantages individuals belonging to socially and politically dominant racial groups, and “ultimately undermines the full potential of the whole society”. Racism can be held in several forms; including, structural (systemic/institutional), interpersonal, or individual.

The following more specific forms of racism also exist:

- structural racism: results from laws, policies, and practices that produce cumulative, durable, and race-based inequalities and includes the failure to correct previous laws and practices that were explicitly or effectively racist.
- institutional racism: results from policies, practices, and procedures of institutions—such as school, health care, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems—that marginalize diverse racial groups.
- interpersonal racism: occurs when individuals from socially and politically dominant racial groups behave in ways that diminish and harm people who belong to other racial groups. Interpersonal racism is therefore distinct from bigotry (negative attitudes about an outgroup, not necessarily tied to race) or prejudice (a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience).

internalized racism: refers to the acceptance by diverse racial populations of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about themselves—including negative stereotypes and beliefs about complexion and color (i.e., colorism) that reinforce the superiority of Whites and can lead to the perception of themselves as devalued, worthless, and powerless (APA, 2021a).

Environmental Racism

Environmental racism is the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on people of color. Environmental justice is the movement's response to environmental racism. Environmental racism is a form of systemic racism whereby communities of color are disproportionately burdened with health hazards through policies and practices that force them to live in proximity to sources of toxic waste such as sewage works, mines, landfills, power stations, major roads and emitters of airborne particulate matter. As a result, these communities suffer greater rates of health problems attendant on hazardous pollutants.

Tokenism

The practice of creating only a symbolic effort to appear more diverse by including minority groups, to prevent criticism and give the appearance to the outside world that diversity, inclusivity and equality stand at its core.

Example: The usage of a POC (person of color) in media or a TV show to create some sort of public viewed diversity. Besides making a public appearance there is often little to no action taken to achieve actual diversity or an inclusive environment. Tokenism is performative and symbolic. That creates a false sense of diversity and inclusion to either reach a specific community, more viewers, or to create a better image._

Security

Security is about efforts and measures which protect us from deliberate harm and threats that are outside of our control. When we talk about security, we generally mean the protection of individuals, organizations, and assets against external threats and criminal activities that are likely to cause harm.

KEY TERMS

Safety

The term safety is used to refer to the condition of being protected from the aspects that are likely to cause harm. In addition, the term safety can be used to refer to the state at which one has control of the risk-causing aspects hence protecting himself or herself against the risk that is fully unintended.

Social movement

A social movement may be defined as an organized effort by a large number of people to bring about or impede social, political, economic, or cultural change. Social movements often work outside the system by engaging in various kinds of protests, including demonstrations, picket lines, sit-ins, and direct action.

Grassroots movements

Grassroots movements are self-organized local-level efforts to encourage other members of the community to participate in activities, such as fundraising and voter registration drives, in support of a given social, economic, or political cause. Rather than money, the power of grassroots movements comes from their ability to harness the effort of ordinary people whose shared sense of justice and knowledge about a given issue can be used to influence policymakers. In growing the seeds of an idea into a flourishing cause through increased participation in the political process, grassroots movements are often said to create democracy - government by the people.

Grassroots organizations increase their size and power by recruiting and training new volunteer leaders and activists.

KEY TERMS

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

An organisation that operates without the assistance of a government is known as a non-governmental organisation (although it may receive government funding). Typically, it is non-profit. NGOs, often known as civil society organizations, are created on a local, national, and international scale to advance a social or political objective like a humanitarian cause or environmental protection.

Youth Participation

Youth participation refers to numerous ways of involving young people as an integral part in the process of planning, identifying needs, finding solutions, implementing programs and decision-making within organisations and communities.

Advocacy

The act or process of supporting a cause or proposal. It is the act, or process of advocating.



INTERSECTIONALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

EMBRACING THE COMPLEXITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

When we are talking about the complexity of Environmental justice or Climate Justice we refer to the interconnections the climate crisis has. But is this all really that complex? Or is society framing intersectionality as complex as a way out, and to not educate on the topic? Well, let's find out.

Not everyone can afford a hospital bill and have a large amount of debt that they won't be able to pay off. Unconsciously, the parents have already made a couple of intersections by themselves. The intersection they found was that financial instability may occur if we go to the hospital and have them take care of the child's injury.

In our daily life, we contemplate and make decisions to find the right answer or solution to a specific situation. We weigh out the best options and assess the situation by looking through different angles and at various aspects to get to the most desired outcome.

But how come Western society frames Intersectionality in regard to human rights and climate impacts as such a dangerous or even complex issue? And does it make sense when we say that only through an intersectional lens can we achieve climate justice?

Example:

When a child falls with their head on the salon table and is bleeding, our first instinct is to go to the hospital, as the kid might need stitches. However some families will also think, or even analyse the situations thoroughly and find other options on whether they can afford to go to the hospital, even when health insurance is involved.

DEEP DIVE ON INTERSECTIONALITY AND PRIVILEGE

When Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term 30 years ago, it was a relatively obscure legal concept. Then it went viral.

There may not be a word in American conservatism more hated right now than “intersectionality.” On the right, intersectionality is seen as “the new caste system” placing nonwhite, non-heterosexual people on top.

To many conservatives, intersectionality means “because you’re a minority, you get special standards, special treatment in the eyes of some.” It “promotes solipsism at the personal level and division at the social level.” It represents a form of feminism that “puts a label on you. It tells you how oppressed you are. It tells you what you’re allowed to say,

what you’re allowed to think.” Intersectionality is therefore “really dangerous” or a “conspiracy theory of victimisation.”

Yes. The dominant group, white, heterosexual people in society feared such terms. Yet, the term Intersectionality had no different impact than the terms “gay, woke, cis-gendered, and more’ once had or still have. They all changed the narrative and contributed to the fight for freedom and justice. Words, language, and specifically these terms paved the way to the society that is present today. Another common misconception that white, heterosexual, conservatives often have is that privilege is a limited resource. Nothing is less true.

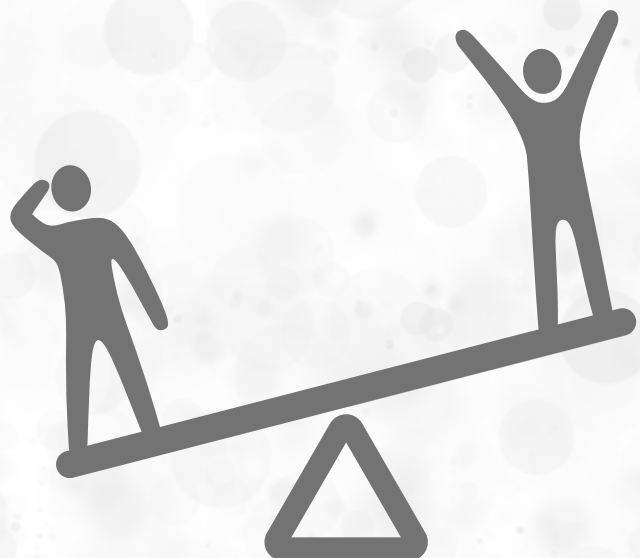
DEEP DIVE ON INTERSECTIONALITY AND PRIVILEGE

Example: The Black Lives Matter Movement was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. BLM's mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy.

A counter movement that arose: All Lives Matter

Yet, no one said that white lives didn't matter. However, when one house is burning in a street full of non-burning houses we will urgently act towards the house that is on fire. We won't wait to put out the fire of the one burning house in order to first check on all other houses that are intact. The Black community is a burning house, yet All Lives Matter arose.

Through history we have seen counter movements arise, with the fear of their privilege card being revoked. Yet, it was never about All Lives Matter. Through language we shape and create the society we live in today, and the one that will be present tomorrow. Giving people basic human rights in order to live and stop surviving, those gaps between the rich and poor, men, women and LGBTQIA+, Black, brown and white, abled and disabled, that is what intersectionality brings to light. That comes with privilege.



WHY IS TRUE CLIMATE JUSTICE ONLY ACHIEVABLE WHEN VIEWED THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS?

Intersectionality is critical because it helps people understand that systems of oppression do not occur in isolation from one another but, rather, collide and merge together in ways that shape people's lives differently.

When looking at climate change, it's essential to understand that it is an issue that affects everyone but can negatively affect certain groups more than others. Intersectionality shines a light on the fact that climate change can also go hand in hand with other forms of inequity and can exacerbate issues for certain communities due to social injustices they battle with simultaneously.

Some groups in society therefore need more support and more drastic measures than others in order to be able to adapt to loss and damages, to make sure Western society doesn't impact the Global South for example with fast fashion, child labour, modern slavery, exploitation, genocide, etc.

Examples of these intersections are how, due to previous systemic oppressions, Black people are more likely than every other demographic to live near hazardous waste sites, or how LGBTQ+ people are more likely to experience housing insecurity due to social stigmas, making them more vulnerable to environmental hazards.

HOW CAN YOU ADD AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS TO CLIMATE ISSUES?

The best way to learn more about intersectionality is by educating yourself. There is no quick way to be educated on a topic without working for it or putting effort in understanding an issue.

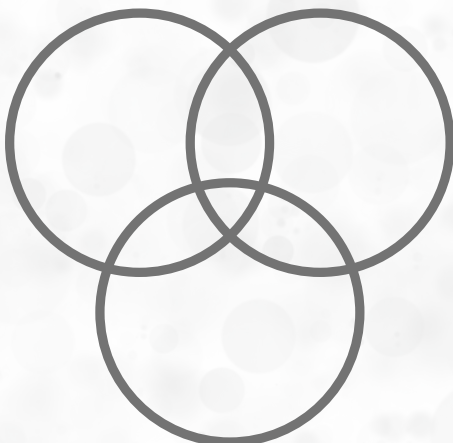
Nowadays, a large majority have access to social media, and the internet within Europe. Which makes it easier to have direct access to an infinite amount of sources. This also comes with concerns about absorbing misinformation.

However, misinformation can be countered by:

- Analysing multiple sources
- Not taking one source as factual

What you can do to add an intersectional lens to your work:

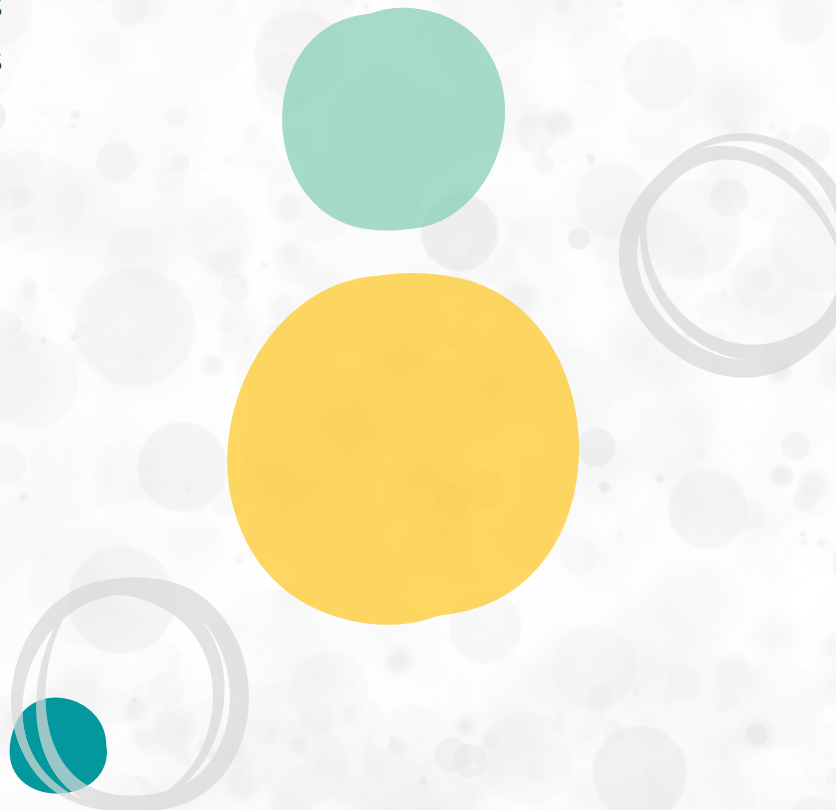
1. Researching and understanding the definitions of intersectional environmentalism, environmental justice, and equity is crucial in understanding the concept of Intersectionality.
2. It is imperative that you diversify where you research your information on climate change. However, we frame science as factual, we cannot ignore that we approach a certain situation with interest and bias. Therefore it is crucial to not only read from white, Western scientists but also from scientists from the Global East and Global South.
3. Listening to what environmental defenders and indigenous people from different backgrounds have to say about climate change (as their personal identities and experiences influence the way they perceive the issue) and how they address challenges with solutions that you may have never considered.



HOW CAN YOU ADD AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS TO CLIMATE ISSUES?

Listening to the communities most impacted by environmental racism and the broader climate crisis. It means ensuring they have a leading role in the decision-making processes regarding the policies that shape where they live and work. And it means holding those in power accountable for honoring the rights of all people to clean air, clean water, and healthy communities. In other words, true environmental justice requires dismantling the racist structures that created this problem.

Fighting climate change is a difficult and drawn-out process. The best way of action, yet, is to combat climate change on all fronts. Everyone benefits by uplifting communities that are disproportionately impacted.



CLIMATE IMPACTS ON MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

Disadvantaged communities are the first to suffer the worst consequences of the climate crisis, many reports show. Existing social and racial inequalities put marginalized communities at greater risk of suffering in the face of climate impacts, and those inequalities will be exacerbated as the climate crisis deepens. Movements and various reports stress the vital importance of building climate justice into ambitious mitigation and adaptation measures.

Climate justice is both a concept and movement that recognizes that communities will be affected differently and unequally by climate change based on race, socioeconomic status, class, gender, age, dis(ability), sexuality, and other social identities. Rising sea levels, disappearing shorelines, frequent and heavy rainfalls, floods, heat waves, wildfires, and poor air quality are more likely to impact Indigenous,

Black and other marginalised communities are first and worst.

A climate justice lens speaks to how important it is for climate change policy to consider both the ecological and the human impacts of climate change in Indigenous, Black, and other marginalized communities. Explicitly incorporating this kind of socio-ecological analysis into climate policy research can lead to stronger and fairer climate policy.

The climate crisis has reached Europe, the United Kingdom, and North America, as unprecedented extremes of heat, flooding and fires are recorded across the world. The vulnerability of communities to global heating intersects with a matrix of systemic injustices: income inequality, racism, immigration status, gender, rural underdevelopment, and a history of colonisation and genocide of Native peoples.

EXAMPLE OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN THE EFFECTS OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Natural disasters are set to increase with global warming, and yet gender, race, sex, and more intersect with other factors to mean that they disproportionately impact marginalized groups.

NOTE: When climate-related disasters strike environmental racism occurs, and the overall impacts of discrimination become greater and undeniable.

Examples:

- *LGBTQIA+ persons are more likely to experience discrimination and violence in the aftermath of natural disasters.*
- *During the big freeze in Texas 2021, Black and Hispanic people were more impacted and likely to lose their lives due to living in poorer insulated homes and having on average less income. This is an example of environmental racism.*

Women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die from natural disasters.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM?

The phrase environmental racism was coined by civil rights leader Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. He defined it as the intentional siting of polluting and waste facilities in communities primarily populated by African Americans, Latines, Indigenous People, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, migrant farmworkers, and low-income workers.

Study after study has since shown that those communities are disproportionately exposed to fumes, toxic dust, ash, soot, and other pollutants from such hazardous facilities located in their midst. As a result, they face increased risks of health problems like cancer and respiratory issues.

WHY DOES ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM EXIST?

It's a form of systemic racism. And it exists largely because of policies and practices that have historically, and to this day, favored the health, well-being, and consumer choices of white communities over those of non-white, low-income communities.

Many communities of color still suffer from the legacies of segregation and redlining, which were shaped and enforced through land use policies and local zoning codes. These racist practices discouraged investment in these areas, which eroded asset values and the tax base, leading to crumbling housing and public infrastructure.

WHERE DOES ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM TAKE PLACE?

It happens all over the world—although what it's called or how it's framed can be different. Race is used as the primary mechanism to distribute environmental benefits and harms in the United States, but in other countries, caste, ethnicity, and class can function in similar ways. Still, the outcomes are the same.

Environmental racism also rears its ugly head in the overall climate crisis. The world's wealthiest economies produce 80 percent of global emissions from coal, oil, and gas, but it's developing nations that bear the brunt of global warming's impacts.

PARTNERSHIP, REPRESENTATION, AND ENGAGEMENT

HOW TO BUILD A PARTNERSHIP WITH MINORITY GROUPS?

For legitimate representation in society and to be able to implement and include their needs and viewpoints in decision-making processes, it is essential to engage with and forge partnerships with minority groups.

Sensitivity, respect, and cultural awareness are necessary for developing and visualizing a partnership with minority groups, as well as for efficient communication and teamwork.

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE?

Inclusive language aims to treat people with respect and avoid offense. It does that by avoiding words and certain expressions that exclude, stereotype, discriminate, or assign negative connotations to personal characteristics of certain people and communities.



Socio-economic status

Term to avoid	Suggested alternative	Comment
the poor low-class people poor people	people whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold people whose self-reported incomes were in the lowest income bracket	Many people find the terms “low-class” and “poor” pejorative. Use person-first language instead. Define income brackets and levels if possible.

Sexual orientation and gender diversity

Term to avoid	Suggested alternative	Comment
birth sex natal sex	assigned sex sex assigned at birth	
born a girl, born female born a boy, born male	assigned female at birth (AFAB) assigned male at birth (AMAB)	
hermaphrodite tranny transvestite transsexual (unless being used medically)	LGBTQIA+, etc. transgender people trans and gender nonbinary folks or folx genderqueer queer*	The term “tranny” is considered a slur. *Consider your audience when using the term “queer”; not everyone receives this word positively; many members of the LGBTQIA+ community have now reclaimed it.

Disability status		
Term to avoid	Suggested alternative	Comment
Use of person-first and identity-first language rather than condescending terms		
special needs physically challenged mentally challenged mentally retarded handi-capable	person with a disability person who has a disability disabled person people with intellectual disabilities child with a congenital disability child with a birth impairment physically disabled person person with a physical disability	Use person-first or identity-first language as is appropriate for the community or person being discussed. The language used should be selected with the understanding that disabled people's expressed preferences regarding identification supersede matters of style. Avoid terms that are condescending or patronizing.
mentally ill	person with a mental disorder person with a mental illness person living with a mental health condition	

WHAT GOALS DOES INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE SEEK TO ACHIEVE?

Language that is inclusive understands "that words matter and that word choice can be used, intentionally or unintentionally, to include or exclude others." People can be respectfully spoken with and included in conversations when inclusive language is used.

Additionally, inclusive language avoids presumptions about individuals and stays away from defaults that can make someone feel unwelcome or alienated.

The ultimate objective of inclusive language is to foster an atmosphere where everyone feels empowered to speak and assured that their opinion will be heard. We deliberately seek to accommodate and provide room for everyone to be their most authentic selves.

Through inclusive language you can achieve:

- Trust based relationships
- Safe environment
- Effective communication
- Support on specific projects
- Exchange in knowledge and resources
- Collaborations

NOTE: Inclusive language is key especially when there is a power imbalance between for example a partnership of marginalized youth activists and organizations/institutions/governments. With the use of inclusive language within organizations, institutions and other places that could drive change we open the door for accurate representation of the diverse society Europe has.

WHY IS ACCURATE REPRESENTATION KEY FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?

Different bodies like the UN have recognized that young people are a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic growth and technological innovation.

It's simple. Youth engagement can and does change lives. Youth engagement recognizes young people's right to participate in decisions that impact them and acknowledges the great skills and strengths they bring to the table. It injects young people as valued stakeholders into creating effective and inclusive policies, programs and environments.

However marginalized youth are often forgotten within these spaces. And therefore a large group of people in society fall through the cracks when we look at decision-making processes and in which environment they take place. For example when we talk about European and international politics we see by looking at various reports that when policy makers speak about gender inequality/equality this most often stops at (cis-gendered) women and girls. A very small number of institutions and organizations talk about the gender gap where people who are trans, non-binary, or people that are gender-nonconforming often are forgotten and what climate impacts they go through.

WHY IS ACCURATE REPRESENTATION KEY FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?

Example on how LGBTQIA+ people may experience climate related impacts:

LGBTQIA+ youth are more likely to experience homelessness than their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts. Housing instability, food insecurity, and general uncertainty about overall well-being are factors that contribute to extreme poverty and homelessness. The climate crisis exacerbates all of these things.

Due to rising sea levels and toxic air pollutants, low-income communities are becoming inhabitable. Individuals and families in these areas are vulnerable to the threat of forced migration as well as adverse health effects. Health problems that can result from increased exposure to pollutants include higher levels of asthma and cancer.

Gender minorities and racial minorities are more likely to experience environmental hardships than other groups.

NOTE: Due to this direct link to the climate crisis it is key that minority groups that are largely underrepresented in spaces that hold power have a seat at the table. As countered earlier, youth engagement can and does change lives. However when global leaders talk about “we”, “our people”, and “the people” we see that these words don’t refer to ALL people, but only a selection of humankind. Taking an intersectional perspective on climate-related crises will not only help you advocate for but also stand with ALL people.

HOW DOES EFFECTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION LEAD TO A POSITIVE OUTCOME IN ADVOCACY?

Effective youth engagement leads to positive outcomes for young people at three levels:

1. The Individual level: e.g. increased personal skills, healthy choices, and sense of identity.
2. The social level: e.g. stronger positive connections, organizations, movements, collectives, and a larger support network.
3. The system level: e.g. greater civic engagement, policies and programs responsive to the needs of young people, and new creative ways to govern.

These three different levels of engagement have different impacts, which will also determine how big your impact will be. However these 3 different levels can be seen as a chronological path to follow: starting out as an activist, then joining a movement and later on you might end up working in an NGO, non-profit or as a politician.

These 3 different levels can also be seen as an individual advocacy goal. One might prefer community organization instead of engaging with institutions.

NOTE: in the process of changemaking we need all types of engagement to create effective change. One might be more suitable for you, but this does not mean that other ways of engagement are less relevant, or not as important. Different levels of engagement can also work together for a specific demand or goal.

Example: Organizations can work together with, support, and provide resources to movements, and groups as well to demand a phase out of fossil fuels on a bank or government.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND GRASSROOTS GROUPS

What is a social movement?

Social movement, a loosely organized but sustained effort in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society's structure or values. Although social movements differ in size, they are all essentially collective. That is, they result from the more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined by rules and procedures but who merely share a common outlook on society.



What is grassroots?

More specifically, grassroots movements are self-organised local-level efforts to encourage other members of the community to participate in activities, such as fundraising and voter registration drives, in support of a given social, economic, or political cause. Rather than money, the power of grassroots movements comes from their ability to harness the effort of ordinary people whose shared sense of justice and knowledge about a given issue can be used to influence policymakers. In growing the seeds of an idea into a flourishing cause through increased participation in the political process, grassroots movements are often said to create democracy—government by the people.

As we have now countered the difference between a grassroots movement, and a social movement we will be able to discuss the different types of actions one movement or group might take.

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT ON TYPES OF ACTION

Whenever there's a positive change in society, we can thank activists. They work in every corner of the world on issues like racial injustice, gender discrimination, and the countless intersections of social issues. You can find activists lobbying their governments, calling for corporate accountability, and campaigning for equality. Visions and specific goals vary, but activists want a better world.

To be effective, activism combines many strategies. Below are different types of action written down that you can read through. After you have done that please answer the questions stated underneath the different types of action.

Goal: gain an understanding on why certain actions for specific causes are, or may be not as ideal for the type of impact you are searching for.

Boycotts

Boycotts are designed to economically impact a "target," like a business that's engaging in exploitative practices. Like with protests, boycotts are most successful when large groups of people participate. The 2009 Fruit of the Loom boycott is a good example. Fruit of the Loom/Russell closed a Honduras factory after workers organized a trade union. Around 1,800 Honduran garment workers lost their jobs. The Workers Rights Consortium and Fair Labour Association found that the company was at least partially motivated to close because workers were organizing a trade union. Students in Canada, the UK, and the USA pressured their universities to boycott Fruit of the Loom. Over 100 universities joined in the largest garment boycott in history. The result? Fruit of the Loom reopened the factory, returned the jobs with union rights, and awarded workers \$2.5 million. To be effective, boycotts need clear goals and strong leadership.

Demonstrations and protests

Demonstrations are arguably the best-known type of activism. During a demonstration or a protest, people united by a common belief meet together. They might march along a specific route, sit-in at a specific place to draw attention to the cause or hold a vigil to honour someone's life. Time and place are often important. Many demonstrations take place on the anniversaries of certain events, like the birthday/death of someone important to the movement or the birthday/death of a victim of injustice. Organizers often also pick a location that's meaningful, like outside a capitol to protest a law.

The right to peaceful assembly is so important, it's included in the United Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19 and Article 20 protect the right to gather publicly and express, promote, and defend a belief. Together, these rights are often called the right to protest. National constitutions (like the United States) also protect this right. Demonstrations and protests are often complicated by the presence of law enforcement and counter-protesters. Activists should anticipate resistance and work to ensure everyone's safety.



Strikes

When workers deal with unfair or dangerous work conditions, low wages, or other issues, they might refuse to work when negotiations are refused or they fail. Strikes were a feature of the Industrial Revolution as there were few work protections and companies depended on mass labor. Many countries made strikes illegal to deter workers from engaging in them. While strikes are most associated with businesses, they're also used to pressure governments to change certain policies. In 1975, 90% of women in Iceland went on strike to protest the gender pay gap. This included women who worked in offices and stay-at-home moms. Factories, banks, schools, and childcare centres had to close and men were left to pick up the work. The next year, parliament passed a law ensuring equal pay. Five years later, Iceland chose the first democratically elected female president in the world.

Letter-writing and petitions

Letter-writing and petitions are two of the most common forms of activism. They're used to pressure public officials, corporations, and other power-holders. The more letters or signatures on a petition, the more likely it is that people will pay attention. Organizations like Amnesty International understand the power of letter-writing. In the internet age, emails are also a common strategy. They have some benefits, like being useful in urgent situations and when postage is expensive. On the downside, officials sometimes shut down their emails so emails bounce back. They can't do that with physical letters or faxes. Letters also imply a degree of commitment that emails don't, which makes it harder for power-holders to dismiss people's demands. Petitions also have the downside of being so accessible and easy that they lose some of their power. They are most successful when paired with other actions.

Social media campaigns

Social media activism is a new form of activism taking the world by storm. Also known as “hashtag activism,” it brings activism to social media networks like Instagram and Twitter. Users raise awareness of issues, organizations, and actions through posts, graphics, videos, and more. The reach of social media activism became clear in 2020 with the hashtag “Black Lives Matter.” According to data from Pew Research, the hashtag was used over 47 million times on Twitter between May 26 and June 7. Despite its popularity, many are sceptical about social media activism. It often stops at simply sharing a post, so there’s no real-world action. It becomes performative. However, when paired with other strategies, social media activism is a very effective way to share information and broaden an issue’s reach, especially among the young. According to Pew Research, the number of 18-29-year-olds using social media for social and political issues has doubled since 2018. The first step to activism is engagement, and while many people will stop at sharing posts, others will take what they’ve learned on social media to the real world.

Now that you know various types of activism I would like you to answer the following questions.

1. What change do you want to see in society?
2. How do you want to achieve that objective (type of activism – a combination is allowed)?
3. Why would you choose that specific type of activism?
4. How does that type of activism relate to you?
5. Would you use the chosen type of activism for every action, or would you change it depending on the strategy and objective? And why would you use the same type of activism, or change it up?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: This is an assessment to keep you thinking about why, what, and how you want to create an impact in this world.

TOOLS FOR INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Living in 2023, most of us in Western society have access to all kinds of sources, case studies, and information due to the internet. This makes it easier to educate yourself. Now the implementation of these practices is up to you. It's time to take the initiative and inform yourself, additionally to the knowledge this toolkit provided you with. Below you will find a resource list that may help you on that exploration journey!



Bad Activist Collective
The YIKES Podcast: climate justice,
activism, liberation and more
Your Angry Neighborhood Feminist
Therapy for Black Girls



[Change.org](https://www.change.org)
[Avaaz.org](https://www.avaaz.org)

TOOLS FOR INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS



“It’s Not That Radical” by Mikeala
Loach

“This Changes Everything
Capitalism vs. Climate” by Naomi
Klein

“What is intersectionality” by
Kimberlé Crenshaw

“Hood Feminism” by Mikki Kendall

“Freedom is a constant struggle”
by Angela Davis

“Pleasure Activism” by Adrienne
Maree Brown

“It’s Not Just You” by Tori Tsui

“We Will Not Cancel Us” by
Adrienne Maree Brown

“Beyond the Gender Binary” by
Alok Vaid-Menon

“The Intersectional
Environmentalist” by Leah Thomas

“Rest Is Resistance” by Tricia Hersey

“Unapologetic: a Black, queer, and
feminist mandate for radical
movements” by Charlene A.

Carruthers

“Feminism Is For Everybody” by
Bell Hooks



Freedom For Alaa

Environmental Justice movement

Civil Rights Movement (history)

Black Liberation Movement

Gay Rights Movement (history)

LGBTQIA+ Movement

Indigenous Peoples Movement

Immigrant Rights Movement

Women’s Rights Movement

Modern Slavery + Anti-Human

Trafficking Movement

Black Feminist Movement



Systemic Justice NGO: <https://systemicjustice.ngo/>

Oxfam NOVIB: <https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/>

Center for Intersectional Justice: <https://www.intersectionaljustice.org/>

MamaCash: <https://www.mamacash.org/en/en-homepage>

SEEK Feminist Research Network: <https://www.seekresearchnetwork.eu/>

Organisation Intersex International Europe: <https://www.oii europe.org/>

Young Feminist Europe: <https://www.youngfeminist.eu/>

Multitudes Foundation: <https://wearemultitudes.org/>

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network: <https://ergonetwork.org/>

European Network of Women of African Descent: <https://enwad-eu.org/>

European Roma Rights Center: <http://www.errc.org/>

EGALITÉ: <https://egalite-online.eu/>

European Sex Workers Rights Alliance: <https://www.eswalliance.org/>

Caritas Europa: <https://www.caritas.eu/>

Equinox: <https://www.equinox-eu.com/>

ENAR: <https://www.enar-eu.org/user/enwad/>

Open Society Foundations: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/>

New Women Connectors: <https://www.newwomenconnectors.com/>

The Collective for Countering Islamophobia in Europe:

<https://ccieurope.org/en/collectif/>

TGEU: <https://tgeu.org/>

Centre for Foreign Policy: <https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/>

ILGA Europe: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/>



International

Fridays For Future International: <https://fridaysforfuture.org/>

Climate Activist Defenders:

Black Lives Matter: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

Greenpeace International: <https://www.greenpeace.org/global/>

Civil Rights Defenders: <https://crd.org/>

Amazon Frontlines: <https://amazonfrontlines.org/>

Earth Uprising: <https://earthuprising.org/>

Climate Activist Defenders: <https://climateactivistdefenders.org/>

Women Engage for a Common Future: <https://www.wecf.org/>

350.org: <https://350.org/>

Climate2025: <https://www.climate2025.org/>

One: <https://www.one.org/de/>

Intersectional Environmentalist: <https://www.intersectionalenvironmentalist.com/>

Black Girl Environmentalist: <https://blackgirlenvironmentalist.org/>

Black Women Radicals: <https://www.blackwomenradicals.com/>

Oxfam International: <https://www.oxfam.org/en>

Human Rights Watch: <https://www.hrw.org/>

Amnesty International: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>

Color Of Change: <https://colorofchange.org/>

NRDC – Natural Resources Defense Council: <https://www.nrdc.org/>

Frontline Defenders: <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/>

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

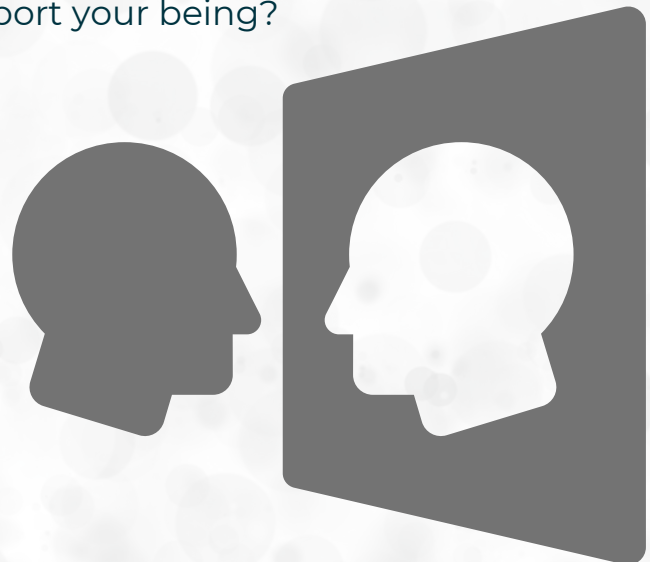
Women and Gender Constituency: <https://womensgenderclimate.org/>

Demand Climate Justice: <https://demandclimatejustice.org/>

PERSONAL REFLECTION

This section of the toolkit gives you the opportunity to actively think about what you learned while reading through this toolkit and how reading through these different sections shaped your vision and perspective on intersectionality.

1. How did you feel after reading through the toolkit? Were there any examples that stood out to you?
2. Are you taking an intersectional approach to climate justice towards the future? Why do you think that is?
3. How will you benefit from approaching certain issues from an intersectional perspective?
4. What can you, or your organization improve on to be more inclusive?
5. Do you believe that your organisation will take the necessary measures to be inclusive and approach issues through an intersectional lens? How so?
6. What climate change-related issue(s) matter the most to you? Why? How will taking an intersectional lens impact all communities around you positively?
7. What aspects of your identity do you struggle with when speaking out for (environmental) justice? How do you think taking an intersectional approach will support your being?



Analyse yourself and your organisation

	YES	NO	MAYBE	COMMENT
How did you feel after reading through the toolkit? Were there any examples that stood out to you?				
Are you taking an intersectional approach to climate justice towards the future? Why do you think that is?				
Will you benefit from approaching certain issues from an intersectional perspective?				
Can you, or your organisation improve on being more inclusive?				
Do you believe that your organisation will take the necessary measures to be inclusive and approach issues through an intersectional lens? How so?				
What climate change related issue(s) matter the most to you? Why? How will taking an intersectional lens impact all communities around you positively?				
What aspects of your identity do you struggle with when speaking out for (environmental) justice? How do you think taking an intersectional approach will support your being?				

CONCLUSION

We hope that this toolkit has sparked your interest in intersectionality and helped you gain a better grasp of how it benefits humankind. Activism and advocacy should be thrilling. It can be intimidating to start from scratch, so we've provided a place for you to ponder and figure out what matters to you and how you interact with the world.

In order to build and advocate for a world that values and respects all people, communities, and religions and dares to take responsibility for historical and current wrongdoings in the interest of all people and our planet, it is essential that we approach the issue of climate justice through an intersectional lens.

We would be very interested in hearing from you and seeing how your initiatives use an intersectionality lens!



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