



NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US

ABSTRACT

The Climate Justice Project seeks to create a space where those directly impacted by climate change can share their concerns, stories, and ideas about how to respond to their immediate needs and build resilience, while building the community agency to articulate their issues to contribute to ensuring a transition that is just and equitable.



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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last 20 years, the world has been stuck in a deep crisis of capitalism which is worsened by a closely related environmental crisis at the centre of which is climate change. We have seen environmental, and economic breakdowns worsened by the still ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Few have been completely untouched by these developments but the greatest impacts have been experienced by those already made vulnerable by inequalities and injustice.

While we are currently anticipating global warming between 1.5°C and 3.2°C, we already find ourselves in unprecedented times.

Evidence shows that climate change is increasing the intensity and frequency of storm systems worldwide. And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently assessed that an upward trend in extreme rainfall events can already be detected in Southern Africa's eastern parts.¹ Further rises in intense rainfall events are projected in the region for as long as the world continues to warm.

¹ <https://sajs.co.za/article/view/12679>

In May 2022, heavy rains and catastrophic floods wracked the coastal city of Durban and surrounding areas, killing hundreds of people and destroying thousands of homes. Events like the recent floods underscore the deep connections between climate change and social inequality. Numerous studies have pointed out the disproportionate impacts that global warming and climate-related disasters have on certain populations. As extreme weather events worsen, so will their impacts on the world's most vulnerable people.

The speed with which environmental changes are unfolding will result in direct impacts on communities in different ways, from changes to air quality, to drastic changes to temperature and weather patterns, and even impacting on food security and disease burden.² The various effects of climate change on rural communities are expected to include: drought, depletion of water resources and biodiversity, soil erosion, decreased subsistence economies and cessation of cultural activities.³

Communities affected by mining are often in the direct line of fire as the destructive nature of mining activities have catastrophic consequences to the environment, biodiversity, health, quality of life and livelihoods. Mining activities, which produce high levels of greenhouse gases, pollute the air and water sources and denude the land of its life giving nutrients, and have a dire and catastrophic impact on the health of communities living close to mines.

II. WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change may be referred to as a long-term shift in weather patterns and temperatures. These shifts may be natural or manmade. Human activity has

² <https://www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph>

³ <https://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability>

been the main contributor and driver of climate change due to its profit seeking activities which includes the burning of fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal. Burning fossil fuels produces greenhouse gas emission (smoke and gas).

This emission then acts like a blanket wrapped around the earth and traps the sun's heat, which raises temperatures.

As a result, the earth gradually becomes warmer, producing severe consequences such as droughts, veldfires, floods, water scarcity, rising sea levels, storms and declining biodiversity (loss of plant and animal species). Since the start of the industrial revolution in the late 19th century, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

Examples of greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane. These come from using petrol for driving a car or coal for generating electricity, for example. Clearing land and forests can also release carbon dioxide. Landfills for garbage are a major source of methane emissions. Energy production, manufacturing industry, transport, commercial agriculture and mining activities, are among the main emitters.

Many people think climate change mainly means warmer temperatures. But temperature rise is only the beginning of the story. Because the Earth is a system, where everything is connected, changes in one area can influence changes in all others.

The consequences of climate change now include, among others, intense droughts, water scarcity, severe fires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting polar ice, catastrophic storms and declining biodiversity.

The emissions that cause climate change come from every part of the world and affect everyone, but some countries produce much more than others. The 100 least-emitting countries generate 3 per cent of total emissions. The 10 countries with the largest emissions contribute 68 per cent. Everyone must take climate action, but people and countries creating more of the problem have a greater responsibility to act first and do more.

Climate change has affected people in diverse ways, but currently, the poor and most vulnerable members of society such as women, children and the elderly are suffering the most. Climate change affects health, food security, safety, housing, work and livelihoods.

III. PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING CLIMATE CHANGE IN DIVERSE WAYS

Climate change can affect our health, ability to grow food, housing, safety and work. Some of us are already more vulnerable to climate impacts, such as people living in developing countries. Conditions like sea-level rise and saltwater intrusion have advanced to the point where whole communities have had to relocate, and protracted droughts are putting people at risk of famine. In the future, the number of “climate refugees” is expected to rise.

Girls and women do not experience climate change in the same ways as boys and men. Historical and structural gender inequalities- which also affect how and the extent to which girls and women can lead, make decisions, take actions and advance solutions to combat climate change

Explicit and implicit social norms and laws have imposed differentiated powers, roles, and responsibilities on women and men in all aspects of life. Girls and women — especially those living in the Global South — bear an unequal

responsibility for securing food, water, energy, and other vital resources as well as for caring for the young and elderly — all of which place them at greater risk of experiencing detrimental climate impacts. For example, girls and women often suffer the most when heat waves, droughts, severe storms or other extreme climate events strike. They face physical and mental health complications, bear the burden of traveling further to collect scarce food, water, and firewood, and are often forced to stay behind in disaster-prone areas to care for the vulnerable.

In addition, girls and women have been prevented from full and fair participation in the global climate action movement. They continue to face gender-specific violence and harassment as a result of their climate activism, remain underrepresented in global climate negotiations, and their solutions are drastically under-resourced.

The fact is environmentalism has *always* been a women's issue.

ACTIVITY A: Climate Change and It's Diverse Impact (30 minutes)

IV. THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER AND CLIMATE

Here are five ways in which gender inequality and climate change intersect, threatening livelihoods, well-being, and progress for girls and women around the world:

1. Women face barriers to leaving areas prone to climate change and natural disaster.

The World Bank's 2021 *Groundswell* report found that climate change could force up to 216 million people to move within their countries by 2050. Migration decision-making in the face of climate risks is informed by gender roles and

responsibilities. Women often face increased barriers to leaving disaster-prone areas because of their caregiving obligations, lack of financial assets, and limited rights to land and property. When they do manage to leave, girls and women face higher risks of unemployment, child marriage, human trafficking, and gender-based violence.

2. Women face disproportionately high health risks from the effects of climate change.

Climate change threatens reproductive and maternal health. Increases in temperature, rainfall, and humidity create favourable conditions for vector-borne diseases, such as malaria, dengue fever, and Zika virus, which can cause miscarriages, premature birth, and anaemia among pregnant women. And the February 2022 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that girls and women are also at higher risk of food insecurity than boys and men, are more likely to die in extreme weather events, and are more likely to experience mental health impacts caused by climate change.

3. Gender-specific threats are used to silence female environmental leaders.

For generations, women across the world have shown resilience and leadership in protecting their communities, land, livelihoods, and natural resources. And yet, female environmental defenders consistently experience disproportionately high rates of gender-based violence as a result of their activism. These assaults range from verbal abuse and harassment based on sex, to intimidation, exclusion, sexual abuse, and rape. All are meant to undermine their voice and leadership in these movements.

4. Women are excluded from decision-making spaces and climate change negotiations.

Despite the unequivocal value of women's participation in climate movements and their history as environmental defenders, men still fill 67% of climate-related decision-making roles and women's representation in national and global climate negotiating bodies remains below 30%. Women's leadership and full participation in the climate movement are essential if we want to design solutions and responses to the climate emergency that address women's differentiated needs and protect their rights.

5. Female-led groups do not receive sufficient climate funding.

The Generation Equality Action Coalition on Feminist Action for Climate Justice found that just 3% of philanthropic environmental funding supports girls' and women's environmental activism. Additionally, female-led organizations, which are often small, have difficulty accessing funding from climate finance providers, which mostly invest in large-scale projects, starting at \$10 million. But because of their societally imposed caregiving roles, girls and women have a deep understanding and extensive knowledge of their natural environment and resources. Financing their vision and backing their ideas for sustainability is key for successful climate change adaptation and mitigation, regardless of the dollar value of their projects.

V. ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN IN CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

Despite women's leadership in the grassroots climate movement and their particular vulnerability to climate change, gender has yet to be adequately integrated into climate plans, policies, and strategies.

The 2022 SDG Gender Index, published by Equal Measures 2030, a leading global partnership on accountability for gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provides a snapshot of where the world stands on the vision of gender equality embedded in the 2030 Agenda. The results of the index are staggering: Insufficient progress has been made on gender equality at the global level between 2015 and 2020. Of the 17 SDGs, Goal 13 (climate action) was one of the three lowest-scoring goals. What's more, even high-performing countries on the index were found to have weaknesses on gender equality under SDG 13.

With only eight years left to deliver on the promise of the SDGs, increasing women's leadership and decision-making power in the climate space is urgently needed. Research shows that when women are adequately represented, there is a positive impact on sustainable natural resource management and climate change adaptation activities, including setting aside protected land areas and ratifying multilateral environmental agreements.

The link between climate and gender equality is receiving rightly renewed attention and focus on the international level. Both the Generation Equality Forum and the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which this year considered the theme of gender equality in the context of climate change, are elevating the intersections and the urgency of tackling the gender dimensions of climate. We must keep this momentum going and keep pushing for greater recognition, participation, and funding in the global climate action movement for girls and women everywhere. Indeed, we will be able to ensure the lasting, transformative change our planet so desperately needs only when we fully account for and include *all* people who call it home.

Many climate change solutions can deliver economic benefits while improving our lives and protecting the environment. We also have global frameworks and agreements to guide progress, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. Three broad categories of action are: cutting emissions, adapting to climate impacts and financing required adjustments.

Switching energy systems from fossil fuels to renewables like solar or wind will reduce the emissions driving climate change. But we have to start right now. While a growing coalition of countries is committing to net zero emissions by 2050, about half of emissions cuts must be in place by 2030 to keep warming below 1.5°C. Fossil fuel production must decline by roughly 6 per cent per year between 2020 and 2030. Fossil fuels are by far the largest contributor to the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, which poses many risks to all forms of life on Earth.

ACTIVITY B: CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER

VI. IMPACTS OF MINING

Katharina Rall, a senior researcher of environmental health interviewed residents of communities in South Africa's Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, and North West provinces and heard many stories of how mining has impacted on the human rights of communities.

Somkhele is a community near one of the coal mines mentioned in the Human Rights Commission's report. Rall spoke with Wandile, a 67-year-old woman who grew up in the area and who was forced by the mine to relocate. (Her name has been changed for her protection).

"There are so many problems we don't even know where to start," she said. "We used to have land for farming... but the mine took it away and we did not get any compensation for that."

The mining company, Tendele Coal, has said on several occasions that while it compensates for houses and other belongings, it is prevented from paying the villagers for the land when they are evicted because the land is owned by the Ingonyama Trust Board, a traditional body mandated to hold land for communities.

The Human Rights Commission said that this practice of not paying compensation for land is *"below what is considered to be appropriate in terms of global industry standards,"* citing standards of the International Finance Corporation, which is a World Bank institution that encourages private sector investment in developing countries.

Mining-affected communities across South Africa have said that mining needs to respect the customary rights of the people who have lived on the land for generations, even if they do not have a formal land title.

When Wandile showed Rall around her new home, built by the company in an area about 1,000 meters from the mine, she pointed to an area where coal dust was visible in the air during operations: *"Our kids get sick. They have respiratory illnesses and asthma. When we harvest rainwater it is polluted with dust."*

The company says that it carries out continuous air pollution monitoring. The report of the Human Rights Commission found concerns about air quality, dust control, and blasting in many communities. It criticizes the lack of regulation around blasting operations and urges the government to enforce air quality standards.

On August 24, the Pietermaritzburg High Court presided over a case on related concerns. Members of the Somkhele community, under the banner of the Mfolozi Community Environmental Justice Network, and the Global Environment Trust and MACUA, argued that Tendele Coal's current operations are unlawful because the company didn't obtain the needed environmental and land use licenses. The community members have also asked the court to order the government to halt the mining operations to protect their constitutional right to a healthy environment.

The Human Rights Commission has made it clear that its recommendations and directives to the government to monitor the rights impacts of mining operations are mandatory – which means they cannot simply be ignored.

However, in a the recently released Social Audit Report by MACUA & WAMUA, we found that government continues to fail in its duty to regulate the sector. This failure by governemet to protect the people and the environment requires communities to urgently organise themselves to protect their human and environmental rights.

VII. EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

South Africa is one of the driest countries in the world, which makes it extremely crucial to preserve this precious and scarce natural water resources. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa provides that: “Everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water.”

However, mining has undermined this right. The preservation of our water must be of utmost importance because water is vital for survival, livelihoods, biodiversity, food source, quality of life and socio-economic development.

Mines release polluted water into rivers, damaging freshwater ecosystems and affecting water supply necessary for irrigation, water and food supply and sustainability and livelihoods. Communities near mines often use these rivers as a water supply- not only for human consumption such as drinking and bathing, but for food security such as vegetation and livestock. This contaminated water released by the mines is a health risk for both animals and humans and destroys the biodiversity.

South Africa is a country rich in natural resources. However, climate change is fast destroying this. Agriculture is a contributor to the South African economy. Mining has a huge impact on agriculture as it erodes arable land, making it difficult for agricultural production. Topsoil is essential for cultivation, but mining removes large quantities of topsoil. Soil degradation then becomes unavoidable. The movement of wet soil and heavy machinery used causes compaction and the soil also becomes infertile because of acidification. Due to compaction, organic material is smothered and roots can no longer penetrate deeply into the ground. Furthermore, subsidence is another environmental impact caused by mining, which greatly affects agriculture and food security. When it comes to underground board and pillar mines, when these pillars collapse, they cause sinkage of the surface area, and these effects are mostly felt years later, by future generations.

It is both concerning and troubling that after mining, the soil can never be rehabilitated back to its original potential.

Air, water, and soil pollution caused by mining pose a great threat to food security, especially those who rely farming for subsistence. The effects of mining, which include air pollution, soil pollution and water pollution makes it hard or even impossible to sustain agricultural activities on land near mines.

Fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – are by far the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions. As greenhouse gas emissions blanket the earth, they trap the sun's heat. This leads to global warming and climate change. The world is now warming faster than at any point in recorded history. Warmer temperatures over time are changing weather patterns and disrupting the usual balance of nature. This poses many risks to human beings and all other forms of life on Earth

HOTTER TEMPERATURES

As greenhouse gas concentrations rise, so does the global surface temperature. The last decade, 2011-2020, is the warmest on record. Since the 1980s, each decade has been warmer than the previous one. Nearly all land areas are seeing more hot days and heat waves each year. Higher temperatures increase heat-related illnesses and make working outdoors more difficult. Wildfires start more easily and spread more rapidly when conditions are hotter. Temperatures in the Arctic have warmed at least twice as fast as the global average.

MORE SEVERE STORMS

Destructive storms have become more intense and more frequent in many regions. As temperatures rise, more moisture evaporates and is held in the atmosphere, which exacerbates extreme rainfall and flooding, causing more destructive storms. The frequency and extent of tropical storms is also affected by the warming ocean. Cyclones, hurricanes, and typhoons feed on warm waters at the ocean surface. Such storms often destroy homes and communities, causing deaths and huge economic losses. The deadly floods in KwaZulu Natal in April 2022, which claimed a reported 450 lives and left thousands homeless show the human costs of the severe weather events due to climate change.

INCREASED DROUGHT

Climate change is changing water availability, making it scarcer in more regions. Global warming exacerbates water shortages in already water-stressed regions and is leading to an increased risk of agricultural droughts affecting crops, and ecological droughts increasing the vulnerability of ecosystems. Droughts can also stir destructive sand and dust storms that can move billions of tons of sand across continents. Deserts are expanding, reducing land for growing food. Many people now face the threat of not having enough water on a regular basis.

A WARMING, RISING OCEAN

The ocean soaks up most of the heat from global warming. The rate at which the ocean is warming strongly increased over the past two decades, across all depths of the ocean. As the ocean warms, its volume increases since water expands as it gets warmer. Melting ice sheets also cause sea levels to rise, threatening coastal and island communities. In addition, the ocean absorbs carbon dioxide, keeping it from the atmosphere. But more carbon dioxide makes the ocean more acidic, which endangers marine life and coral reefs.

LOSS OF SPECIES

Climate change poses risks to the survival of species on land and in the ocean. These risks increase as temperatures climb. Exacerbated by climate change, the world is losing species at a rate 1,000 times greater than at any other time in recorded human history. One million species are at risk of becoming extinct within the next few decades. Forest fires, extreme weather, and invasive pests and diseases are among many threats related to climate change. Some species will be able to relocate and survive, but others will not.

NOT ENOUGH FOOD

Changes in the climate and increases in extreme weather events are among the reasons behind a global rise in hunger and poor nutrition. Fisheries, crops, and livestock may be destroyed or become less productive. With the ocean becoming more acidic, marine resources that feed billions of people are at risk. Changes in snow and ice cover in many Arctic regions have disrupted food supplies from herding, hunting, and fishing. Heat stress can diminish water and grasslands for grazing, causing declining crop yields and affecting livestock.

MORE HEALTH RISKS

Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity. Climate impacts are already harming health, through air pollution, disease, extreme weather events, forced displacement, pressures on mental health, and increased hunger and poor nutrition in places where people cannot grow or find sufficient food. Every year, environmental factors take the lives of around 13 million people. Changing weather patterns are expanding diseases, and extreme weather events increase deaths and make it difficult for health care systems to keep up.

POVERTY AND DISPLACEMENT

Climate change increases the factors that put and keep people in poverty. Floods may sweep away informal settlements, destroying homes and livelihoods. Heat can make it difficult to work in outdoor jobs. Water scarcity may affect crops. Over the past decade (2010–2019), weather-related events displaced an estimated 23.1 million people on average each year, leaving many more vulnerable to poverty. Most refugees come from countries that are most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change. *(Based on various UN sources)*

ACTIVITY C

VIII. CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF MINING ON HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

Mining is commonly defined as the extraction of valuable minerals and other geological materials from the earth. Mining sits at the heart of almost all economic activity and has been a driver of wealth accumulation during the colonial period and has continued to be used by the Global North as means to extract wealth from the global south in a neo-colonial setting. Neo-colonialism is a term developed to characterise the present situation in which the fundamental economic foundations of colonialism (exploitation of the land, labour and natural resources of the Global South by the Global North capitalist class) remains despite an end to the political system of direct colonial rule and apartheid.

The mining industry generates high levels of waste containing high concentrations of metals and metalloids which are highly toxic to the environment. Moreover, the continued use of the traditional methods of mining intensifies the emission of toxic and non-eco-friendly products.

COMMON HEALTH THREATS POSED BY COAL MINING

Pneumoconiosis (black lung disease or CWP) is caused when miners breathe in coal dust and carbon, which harden the lungs. Cardiopulmonary disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hypertension, lung disease, and kidney disease have been found in higher-than-normal rates among residents who live near coal mines.

Toxic levels of arsenic, fluorine, mercury, and selenium are emitted by coal fired electricity generation, entering the air and the food chain of those living nearby.

RESPIRATORY COMPLICATIONS

Studies indicate that mining is one of the most perilous occupation in the world in terms of injuries and fatalities, and also due to the long-term health effects associated with it. Long-term effects include respiratory problems such as pneumoconiosis, asbestosis, and silicosis.

The health effect of mining is based on the type of mining activities, namely deep mining and the open cast methods of mining. A coal mine produces lots of dust, which if inhaled, can lead to the black lung disease among the miners and other people living within the surrounding region.

Due to blasting and drilling, the fine mineral particles of dust are inhaled and they accumulate in the lung, causing pneumoconiosis. And when miner inhales excessive amounts of quartz or crystalline silica, he or she is likely to suffer an irreversible disease called silicosis.

In addition, miners and people living around areas where radioactive gases such as Radon are emitted can suffer from long term respiratory diseases such as lung cancer. Chronic exposure to welding fumes can also cause lung irritation and poisoning, and inhalation of mercury can lead to mercury poisoning.

CANCERS DUE TO RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL EXPOSURE

People in industries that mine radioactive elements or in fields that generate hazardous gases such as Radon are in danger of having terminal diseases, especially cancers. Also, people living in these regions will be affected by radioactive materials.

POISONING AND ORGAN DAMAGE DUE TO HEAVY METALS EXPOSURE

Mining activities ordinarily generate high concentrations of metals and metalloids. When these metals leach they can reach the groundwater and surface water and find a way into the food chain and even climb up the food chain through bioaccumulation (Bioaccumulation is a process of accumulation of chemicals in an organism where chemicals are introduced into the organism through exposure to the environment (soil, water, air) or as dietary intake). If a metal such as mercury is ingested it can lead to poisoning, organ damage, and even death in high concentrations.

EFFECTS OF MINING ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Water pollution

If proper precautions are not taken, mining can have adverse effects on both the surface and groundwater. Due to the high amount of chemicals that mining activities generate; unnaturally high concentrations of arsenic, mercury, and sulphuric acid will be deposited in the water bodies.

Massive contamination can also occur due to the water generated from the mining sites. This water is concentrated with high amounts of chemicals used for mining as well as metals from the ground ore. Also, water produced from mine cooling, aqueous extraction, and mine drainage among other mining activities further augment the contamination of water surfaces.

Heavy metals can be transported into the groundwater by runoff leading to devastating effect if consumed by humans or animals.

Erosion

The exposed hillsides, tailing dams and mine dumps become eroded through mining activities. Siltation of drainages and rivers due to erosion contribute to environmental degradation. Moreover, mining activities may render farming

or grazing land unproductive. Shallow extraction techniques, geological discontinuity (a general term to describe any mechanical break within rock masses), and weak overburden (The rock section above the area being mined), can cause sinkholes which create a large depression on the surface of the mining area.

Effects on biodiversity

When mining, extensive areas of land and vegetation are cleared. The viability of the land for farming activities deteriorate and animals lose their habitats. Biodiversity losses are, therefore, experienced in the area due to habitat modification in terms of factors such as pH changes (pH is a measure of how acidic/basic water is) and temperature changes.

The local animal, insect and plant species of the area will, as a result, be highly affected owing to their sensitivity to the environmental changes. One important thing to note is that the impact of the mining activities on biodiversity will depend on bioavailability (the extent and rate at which the active contaminant enters systemic circulation. and mobility of the contaminant. When contaminants have low mobility, they will stay passively in the mining area. Those that have high mobility will move into another area occupied by organisms leading to poisoning.

Biomagnification

Another critical concern of mining to the environment is Biomagnification. Animals in the lower levels of the food chain and living near mining areas will consume heavy metals. These animals are then consumed by those above them in the food chain and this continues until to the top of the chain. The toxic metals will move gradually from the consumer to the top of the chain through the feeding relationship.

Effect on aquatic animals

Mining activities can cause direct poisoning of the marine animals when the toxic chemicals and heavy metals are transported through run off to the water bodies. Due to the bioavailability of these hazardous materials in the water, they can modify the pH affecting the plants that the aquatic animals feed on.

There is also a physical effect caused by the silt deposited in water surface as a result of mining. The silt can lead to reduced visibility and clogging of respiratory surfaces of the aquatic animals.

Destruction and loss of vegetation cover

Surface mining results in deforestation and this has long-term effects even after the mine has been decommissioned and the land refilled with soil and replanted. Besides, the majority of plant species have a very low tolerance to high concentrations of metals in the soil except for grass.

Plants that are intolerant to such conditions will fail to germinate in the reclaimed areas. Plants in such areas are normally affected through direct poisoning, modification of pH, clogging of their leaf surfaces by dust particles, or unavailability of nutrients.

ACTIVITY D

IX. CLIMATE JUSTICE?

Climate justice is a concept that addresses the just division, fair sharing, and equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of climate change and responsibilities to deal with climate change.

"Justice", "fairness", and "equity" are not completely identical, but they are in the same family of related terms and are often used interchangeably in negotiations and politics. Applied ethics, research and activism using these

terms approach anthropogenic(originating from human activity) climate change as an ethical, legal and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature. This is done by relating the causes and effects of climate change to concepts of justice, particularly environmental justice and social justice.

Climate justice examines concepts such as equality, human rights, collective rights, and the historical responsibilities for climate change. Climate justice actions can include the growing global body of legal action on climate change issues. In 2017, a report of the United Nations Environment Programme identified 894 ongoing legal actions worldwide. Needless to say climate justice is a fundamental aspect of SDG 13 under UN Agenda 2030.

Use and popularity of climate justice language has increased dramatically in recent years, yet climate justice is understood in many ways, and the different meanings are sometimes contested.

At its simplest, conceptions of climate justice can be grouped along the lines of procedural justice, which emphasizes fair, transparent and inclusive decision making, and distributive justice, which places the emphasis on who bears the costs of both climate change and the actions taken to address it.

Working Group II of the IPCC now adds as a third type of principles of climate justice “recognition which entails basic respect and robust engagement with and fair consideration of diverse cultures and perspectives”. Alternatively, recognition and respect can be understood as the underlying basis for distributive and procedural justice.

A main factor in the increased popularity and consideration of climate justice was the rise of grassroots movements. A special focus is placed on the role of Most Affected People and Areas (MAPA), i.e., groups overall

disproportionately vulnerable to or affected by climate change, such as women, racial minorities, young, older and poorer people.

Historically marginalized communities, such as low income, indigenous communities and communities of colour often face the worst consequences of climate change: in effect the least responsible for climate change broadly suffer its gravest consequences. They might also be further disadvantaged by responses to climate change, which might reproduce or exacerbate existing inequalities, which has been labelled the 'triple injustices' of climate change.

Some climate justice approaches promote transformative justice where advocates focus on how vulnerability to climate change reflects various structural injustices in society, such as the exclusion of marginalized groups from climate resilient livelihoods, and that climate action must explicitly address these structural power imbalances. For these advocates, at a minimum, priority is placed on ensuring that responses to climate change do not repeat or reinforce existing injustices, which has both distributive justice and procedural justice dimensions.

Other conceptions frame climate justice in terms of the need to curb climate change within certain limits, like the Paris Agreement targets of 1.5 °C, as otherwise the impacts of climate change on natural ecosystems will be so severe as to preclude the possibility of justice for many generations and populations.

Moreover, others argue that failure to address social implications of climate change mitigation transitions could result in profound economic and social tensions and delay necessary changes while ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a socially just way – called a 'just transition' – are possible, preferable, in better agreement with contemporary human rights, fairer, more ethical as well as possibly more effective.

X. JUST TRANSITION?

Climate justice “insists on a shift from a discourse on greenhouse gases and melting ice caps into a civil rights movement with the people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts at its heart,” said Mary Robinson former President of Ireland and who is no stranger in the world of politics and human rights.

Now, thanks to the recent marches, strikes and protests by hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren, activists and NGOs, we have begun to understand the intergenerational injustice of climate change, stressing the importance of intergenerational partnerships where young people are seen as “means of implementation” and “creators of opportunities” and not just beneficiaries.

Young Africans, government and the private sector must be committed to breaking down climate science into a national conversation and connecting it to domestic social and economic values to build relevance. However, one of the challenges for the African youth in mobilizing themselves is that it is so disconnected and often when organizations are formed they have a hierarchical structure. Climate change should be approached in such a way that policymakers make a commitment to ensure that youth voice, agency, and leadership are at the centre of policy discussions and decision-making.

YOUTH UPRISING

The whole idea of the school climate strikes is also an issue of common but differentiated responsibility and respect of capabilities. Tens of thousands of young people, mostly in the West, have taken to the streets in recent months with a clear and urgent message to world leaders – act now to save our planet and our future from the climate emergency.

“My generation has failed to respond properly to the dramatic challenge of climate change. This is deeply felt by young people. No wonder they are angry,” said Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations) in a recent op-ed in The Guardian.

The youth are the majority. Youth have to have their voice, their perspective and their urgency included,

A just transition for all towards an environmentally sustainable economy.

It needs to be well managed and contribute to the goals of decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty. Communities are not passive bystanders, but rather agents of change, who are able to develop new ways of working that safeguard the environment for present and future generations, eradicate poverty and promote social justice by fostering sustainable enterprises and creating decent work for all.

ACTIVITY D

XI. THE CLIMATE JUSTICE PROJECT

Women in rural and peri-urban areas, where MACUA and WAMUA organise, play key roles as food producers and caregivers. Many depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. So extreme climate-related droughts, flooding and other disasters disproportionately impact women’s health, food security and livelihoods.

In places where mining and extractive industries produce greenhouse gases and associated chemicals that cause severe environmental problems, women often bear an unequal share of social, economic and environmental risk.

Contamination of fertile farmland destroys their livelihoods and forces many women into transactional sex work; mining communities tend to have higher

numbers of sex workers. Mining pollution also threatens women's reproductive health, resulting in higher rates of miscarriage and children born with abnormalities.

Rural women's health and livelihoods, which are directly affected by the quality of their environment are important entry points for grassroots organisations to help communities understand women's rights and the impact environmental degradation, including climate change, has on their lives.

These areas also present rich opportunities for women's participation in decision-making processes related to health and economic livelihoods.

a) PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

This project seeks to provide a space where those directly impacted by climate change can share their concerns, stories, and ideas about how to respond to their immediate needs and build resilience, while building the community agency to articulate their issues to contribute to ensuring a transition that is just and equitable.

A critical focus of the project revolves around ensuring that global priorities and local realities are able to engage in dialogue which recognises the importance of each. Decisions taken at the local level have a significant contribution to make towards the resolution of the global crises. By the same token decision that are taken at a global level often have severe consequences at the local level.

The need to build strong resilient organisational structures in communities that are both marginalised and directly impacted by climate change, are critical to addressing the egregious structural violence that continues to legitimise patterns of disadvantage, such as racial and gender inequality.

As a national movement representing marginalised and impacted communities, MACUA and WAMUA have understood that the members and communities of mining affected communities, who are mainly rural and peri urban, and who live cheek by jowel with some of the most ecologically harmful industries, are at the coal face of the most severe climate impacts. As such the movement has an obligation to highlight and inform the community and to build their agency to advance their own interests.

Through building the agency of the community to address the issues that affect them, we hope to build stronger communities who are well informed, able to produce their own knowledge and develop action plans to challenge or address those issues directly.

The project aims to build sustainable structures at community level that would lay the foundations for community organisations that are able to manage and account for funds which in turn will lend it credibility in pursuing other sources of support and funding in the community and beyond

b) HOW WILL THE PROJECT WORK?

Each branch will broadly undertake the following programmes:

- Project Kick Off Meetings: (Educational workshop to elect CJT and subsequent CJT Planning meetings)
- CJT Meetings to develop survey and plan engagements with the community.
- Community Health and Environment Surveys which includes:
 - Preparation and planning workshop
 - Actual surveys
 - Analysis of the surveys workshop
- Community report back Meeting on outcomes of survey.

- Campaign Meetings
- Develop Campaign Materials.
- Community Actions

c) WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE CLIMATE JUSTICE PROJECT?

In order to build resilient organisational structures in marginalised and excluded communities, the project proposes to support the communities as they build sustainable structures that are able to collect and record data and information which can be used as both an evidence base, but also as a means of developing their own knowledge on the impacts of climate and the structural pillars which enables their continued exposure to impacts of climate change.

Through engaged and active involvement as citizens communities will be encouraged to find creative ways to imagine and develop innovative ways to address challenges faced by mining affected communities as a result of climate change.

d) EXPECTATIONS FOR THE CLIMATE JUSTICE TEAM?

The project expects the Climate Justice Teams (CJT) which will monitor and record local surveys which track the impacts of climate change on people's daily lived experiences and compile important information about environmental and social health issues affecting the community.

The Climate Justice Teams (CJT) will have also stimulated public debates at the local level on the impacts of climate change on the community through having run public awareness campaigns and holding public dialogues.

Along with building awareness at the local, level the CJT's will have also mobilised the community around holding duty bearers to account for harmful practises.

The CJT's are also connected into the MACUA and WAMUA branches and the shared capacity will assist in ensuring that project is able to build and grow over time

e) DESIRED OUTCOME

The project expects that at least 10 Branches will have active Climate Justice Teams (CJT) which will monitor and record local surveys which track the impacts of climate change on people's daily lived experiences and compile important information about environmental and social health issues affecting the community.

The Climate Justice Teams (CJT) will have also stimulated public debates at the local level on the impacts of climate change on the community through having run public awareness campaigns and holding public dialogues. Along with building awareness at the local, level the CJT's will have also mobilised the community around holding duty bearers to account for harmful practises.

ACTIVITY D

Questions and suggestions concerning the project

XII. GUIDELINES

- a) SURVEY FORMATION**
- b) DATA CONSOLIDATION**
- c) CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT**
- d) MOBILISING**
- e) EXECUTION OF CAMPAIGN**
- f) REPORT DRAFTING**

XIII. TIMELINE (Note: different for every branch)

- a) WORKSHOP**
- b) SOCIAL AUDIT**
- c) COLLATION OF DATA**
- d) BRANCH BRAINSTORM ON FINDINGS**
- e) DEVELOP CAMPAIGN PLAN**
- f) LAUNCH CAMPAIGN PLAN**
- g) LOCAL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY AT LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL**
- h) SHUTDOWN BY YOUTH**
- i) REPORT**

XIV. FINAL REPORT

XV. REFERENCE LIST

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