

Gender and the Climate Crisis: Equitable Solutions for Climate Plans

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Executive Summary

The effects of rising greenhouse gas emissions are more harmful to women, gender diverse people, and Black, Indigenous and people of color, although these communities contribute less to climate change. This underscores the need to include gender frameworks and gender diverse voices from communities of color into climate action planning.

The Center for Biological Diversity sought to learn if gender and solutions related to gender were included in municipal climate plans. Twenty-one climate plans from cities across the United States were analyzed for this report, representing approximately 10% of the U.S. population (30,492,353). The plans were reviewed for the frequency of inclusion of each of the following topics: consumption, education, family planning/contraception/reproductive health, gender, human population/population growth/growth, public health/pollutants and vulnerable populations.

The report analyzes gender-based solutions in municipal climate plans and provides practical policy recommendations for stakeholders to enhance their plans with mitigation and adaptation efforts based on gender empowerment and social justice. Gender empowerment initiatives include universal access to voluntary modern family planning methods (e.g. the oral contraceptive pill, long-acting reversible contraception, condoms and emergency contraception); LGBTQIA+ inclusive, culturally responsive and medically accurate comprehensive sexual education; and affordable sexual and reproductive healthcare that allows individuals to have agency and autonomy over their bodies. Additional solutions include supporting educational opportunities, redefining gender roles, creating equitable opportunities for women and LGBTQIA+ individuals, and guaranteeing safety from harassment and violence.



Key Finding: None of the climate plans reviewed mentioned family planning/contraception/reproductive health and only one plan mentioned gender as a solution.

In addition to the 21 plans that were analyzed, seven informal interviews were conducted with sustainability professionals who had worked or are currently working on climate plans at both the international and municipal level to determine why gender equity and empowerment had been left out of climate plans. The following themes were identified:

- Gender empowerment solutions can be difficult to measure.
- The need for government approval can be a barrier to including gender empowerment in climate plans.
- It matters who is at the table. Having diverse views represented in the discussion and decision-making throughout the development of climate plans is critical.
- The pandemic may offer an opportunity for more inclusive climate plans.

Key Recommendations:

We recommend the following steps and policies be implemented at the local government level, as well as through state and federal policies that can support local efforts to incorporate gender-based strategies into climate plans:

- Work within existing climate plan structures to address gender inequality as a public health issue.
- Collect relevant data related to gender, race and the climate crisis.
- Educate and train government staff on gender, inclusion and the climate crisis.
- Build gender empowerment programs that include offering comprehensive sex education, supporting contraception access, keeping abortion legal, providing access to period products, funding quality education programs and addressing racial inequality in schools.
- Include gender action plans in climate plans and create gender advisory committees.

By implementing practices noted in this report, policymakers will be better able to create intersectional climate plans that support their communities, wildlife and the planet.

