



## WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME (WEP)

*Innovating for Change...Expanding Boundaries*

AN NGO WITH UNITED NATIONS ECOSOC CONSULTATIVE STATUS



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS



## TRAINING MANUAL





Women Environmental Programme (WEP)



# Environmental Justice and Human Rights

# Training Manual

# Training Manual for Environmental Justice and Human Rights

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# TRAINING MANUAL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Women Environmental Programme (WEP) for the Environmental Justice and Human Rights Booth Camp, under the WomenPower2030: Feminist Accelerate Action for Sustainable Development project currently implemented by WEP in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

WEP is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political, non-religion organization with headquarters in Abuja Nigeria, and with offices in Tunisia, Togo, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Niger and Canada. WEP has a vision of a world where the lives of women and youth around the globe are positively transformed. WEP works to achieve her vision through four programme areas: Environment, Climate Change, Governance, Peace and Security.

## Background

The WomenPower2030 Project is a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement between the European Union and a consortium of five feminist organizations led by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), alongside four other feminist organizations, including WEP. The overall objective of the WomenPower2030 Project is to strengthen the capacity of feminist civil society networks and organizations to fight inequalities and advance gender-equal sustainable development by claiming space in global and regional policy processes to influence legislation and improve women's rights in countries and communities, while mobilizing women, youth, feminist, and gender-diverse activists (WECF, 2023).

Environmental Justice and Human Rights Boot Camp is one of the activities expected to contribute to the realization of the overall objective of the WomenPower2030 Project. The Boot Camp will build the capacities of feminist organizations on different aspects of environmental and human rights issues that are hindering sustainable development and the attainment of gender equality. Beneficiaries will also acquire advocacy and project management skills in the area of environmental justice and human rights to advocate and implement actions that contribute to sustainable development (WomenPower2030, 2023).

## Delivery Method

The challenges of environmental degradation and human rights violations are becoming increasingly evident, impacting communities across the globe. For young people, understanding these issues is not just important; it is essential for shaping a future where justice, equity, and sustainability are at the forefront. Adult learning plays a crucial role in this context, as it provides young individuals with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary to engage meaningfully in advocacy and action for environmental justice and human rights.

Adult learning, specifically tailored for young people, recognizes the unique experiences, motivations, and challenges that this demographic faces. Unlike traditional educational models,

which often emphasize rote learning and standardized curricula, adult learning for environmental justice and human rights focuses on experiential learning, critical engagement, and empowerment. This approach is particularly relevant for young people, who are often at the frontline of activism and social change.

Environmental justice and human rights are complex and interconnected issues that require a deep understanding of both local and global contexts. Young people are increasingly aware of these challenges and are eager to contribute to solutions. However, to do so effectively, they need access to education that goes beyond theoretical knowledge. Adult learning strategies offer practical tools, real-world applications, and a framework for understanding how to navigate and influence the systems that govern environmental and human rights policies.

Moreover, adult learning emphasizes the importance of lifelong education, a concept that is increasingly relevant for young people. As they transition from adolescence to adulthood, their roles and responsibilities evolve, and so too do their learning needs. An adult learning approach helps young people adapt to these changes, providing them with the continuous support and resources they need to remain engaged and informed advocates for environmental justice and human rights.

Adult learning tailored to young people serves as a powerful strategy for empowering the next generation of leaders and change-makers. By fostering a deep understanding of environmental justice and human rights, it equips young individuals with the tools they need to drive meaningful, sustainable change in their communities and beyond.

## **Objectives of the manual**

This "Environmental Justice and Human Rights" training manual is designed to empower young people with a comprehensive understanding of the critical intersection between environmental sustainability and human rights. This manual aims to provide a foundation in the principles of environmental justice, helping young participants recognize the profound impact that environmental degradation has on communities, particularly those most vulnerable.

Through this manual, young people will be introduced to the concept of human rights, exploring how these rights are often compromised by environmental injustices. They will learn to identify and analyse key issues both locally and globally, gaining insight into how environmental challenges intersect with human rights violations.

The manual is also focused on equipping youth with the tools and skills necessary for effective advocacy. By fostering their ability to engage in activism and lead campaigns, the manual seeks to empower them to champion environmental justice and human rights campaigns within their communities and on broader platforms. Critical thinking will be nurtured, encouraging participants to delve into the root causes of the injustices they are fighting against, understanding the complex social, economic, and political factors at play.

This manual emphasizes the importance of sustainable development, guiding young people in understanding how this can be achieved by addressing both environmental and human rights issues together. It encourages community engagement, inspiring participants to take proactive steps in creating networks of support and leading initiatives that drive positive change.

Furthermore, the manual seeks to cultivate ethical leadership among youth, urging them to adopt

responsible roles in advocating for a just and sustainable future. Participants will be introduced to relevant legal frameworks that protect both environmental and human rights, helping them to understand how these can be leveraged in their advocacy efforts.

Finally, the manual aims to broaden the horizons of young people, fostering a global awareness of environmental justice and human rights. It emphasizes the importance of solidarity and collaboration across borders, highlighting that the fight for a just and sustainable world is one that requires collective effort.

## **Target groups - Young People and Women**

Young people and women are at the forefront of the environmental justice and human rights movement, making them critical audiences for this training manual. Both groups face unique challenges and have powerful potential to drive positive change.

*Young People* represent the future of our societies and will be the ones to inherit the consequences of today's environmental and human rights decisions. They are increasingly aware of the urgency of addressing environmental degradation and its impact on human rights, and they bring fresh perspectives and energy to the movement. Empowering young people with knowledge and skills through this manual will not only help them advocate for their own futures but also mobilize their peers and communities in the fight for sustainable development and justice. Young people are often the most adaptable to new ideas and technologies, making them ideal agents of change in pushing for innovative solutions to complex global challenges.

*Women*, especially in marginalized communities, often bear the brunt of environmental injustices, as they are typically responsible for managing natural resources and caring for families. They are disproportionately affected by issues such as access to clean water, food security, and the impacts of climate change. However, women also possess invaluable knowledge and leadership abilities in community organizing and sustainable practices. By targeting women in this training, we recognize their central role in advocating for environmental justice and human rights, while also addressing gender-specific challenges that hinder their participation and empowerment. Equipping women with the tools to lead in this space not only promotes gender equality but also strengthens the overall movement toward sustainable development.

## **How to Use This Manual**

This training manual on Environmental Justice and Human Rights is designed as a comprehensive guide for facilitators working with young people and women. The manual is structured to provide both theoretical knowledge and practical activities, helping participants understand the complex relationship between environmental justice and human rights and empowering them to take action.

### **Step-by-Step Guide**

1. *Familiarize Yourself with the Content:* Begin by reviewing the manual in its entirety. Familiarize yourself with the objectives, key concepts, and the flow of the content to ensure you can effectively guide participants through the material.

2. *Tailor the Content to Your Audience:* Consider the specific needs and backgrounds of your

participants. The manual is designed to be flexible, so you can adapt the language, examples, and activities to suit the group you are working with.

3. *Facilitate Discussions:* Use the discussion prompts provided in the manual to encourage participants to engage with the material critically. Facilitate open dialogues where participants can share their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives.

4. *Incorporate Activities:* The manual includes interactive activities designed to reinforce learning. Ensure that these activities are well-integrated into your sessions, allowing participants to apply the concepts in practical ways.

5. *Encourage Action:* Guide participants in identifying actionable steps they can take in their communities to advocate for environmental justice and human rights. Use the manual's resources and strategies to inspire and empower them to lead initiatives and make a tangible impact.

6. *Review and Reflect:* After each session, conduct a review with the participants. Reflect on what was learned, discuss any challenges faced during the activities, and consider how the knowledge gained can be applied in real-life situations.

## **Conclusion**

In the fight for a just and sustainable future, the role of young people and women cannot be overstated. This manual on *Environmental Justice and Human Rights* serves not only as an educational tool but as a catalyst for change, equipping these vital groups with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to confront the environmental and human rights challenges that threaten our world. By understanding the deep interconnections between environmental degradation and human rights violations, participants are empowered to become advocates, activists, and leaders in their communities. They are not just inheritors of the future but shaper of it—poised to drive transformative actions that honour the dignity of all people and protect the planet we all depend on. The time for action is now, and through this manual, we pave the way for a more equitable and sustainable world.

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Women Environmental Programme

# Environmental Justice and Human Rights

## Module I

Understanding Environmental  
Justice and Human Rights

## Understanding Environmental Justice and Human Rights

**Module Overview:** Understanding Environmental Justice and Human Rights explores the intersection of environmental justice and human rights; it examines how environmental issues disproportionately impact marginalized communities and how these impacts relate to fundamental human rights. Participants will learn about the history of environmental justice movements, key principles, and how global and local environmental policies can either protect or violate human rights. The module will also cover case studies from around the world, providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in promoting environmental justice.

**Objectives:** This module empowers participants with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to understand environmental and human rights. This is geared towards providing participants with adequate knowledge to drive sustainable change within their environment and the human right perspective to environmental justice.

**By the end of this module, participants will be able to:**

- i. Define environmental justice and explain its relevance to human rights. (*Educating participants on the concepts of environmental justice and, with a focus on how it relates to human rights*)
  - ii. Analyse the historical development of the environmental justice movement (*Provide participants with knowledge on the historical perspective of the intent of environmental justice and in human rights components*)
  - iii. Identify the key principles of environmental justice (*Enhance the identification of the key principles of environmental justice*)
  - iv. Discuss the role of international human rights law in addressing environmental injustices (*Enlighten the participants on the roles played by international human rights with a key focus on environmental injustices*)
  - v. Apply knowledge from case studies to assess real-world environmental justice issues.
- At the end of this module, participants will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to critically assess environmental justice issues and advocate for policies that uphold human rights.

### **Defining Expectations: Exercise: What are Expectations?**



Participants are divided into five groups. Each group is asked to come up with their expectations for the workshop and reasons why each is important to the training workshop. The working results are presented in a workstation that will be used during the gallery walk.

**Debriefing:** Make sure you don't become bogged down in semantic details. The important point is that participants understand the concept of training expectations, which serves as a guideline. Inform the group that their expectations will be discussed alongside the organizers' expectations. If participants request that additional items be added to the program, this will be communicated to the WEP team. Collect all ideas and create a synthesis chart on a flipchart entitled "Why it is important to clarify training session expectations."

## **Visioning Exercise**

**Objectives:** To enable participants to generate and share their aspirations and expectations and define a positive vision for their future that people can work towards.

**Process:** There are many processes to establish joint visions. Because the main aims are to establish a joint and agreed vision within the group it is important to ensure that all members have a fair chance to contribute and to be heard. You might want to consider breaking into homogeneous subgroups and then combine the results to get an agreement. Here is a possible process for a visioning exercise:

1. Introduce the concept of a vision or a dream - that will allow people to have a direction for their learning and developmental journey.
2. Ask people to close their eyes and imagine they have been away and now flying back over their home area in 5 years' time. They are looking down at the houses where people live, the streets, the infrastructure, etc. Ask them to imagine what people are doing. After 3 minutes ask people gently to come back.
3. In sub-groups, ask people to draw what they saw. Explain that it is not important that the picture should be beautiful or accurate, but rather that should capture in some way what people have seen. Ask them to be sure to draw what they have envisioned people doing.
4. After 10 minutes ask the different sub-groups to present their visions to the larger group. Display the presented drawings publicly - and see if you can help the group synthesize a vision statement that captures all or as many as possible of the aspects presented by the group without introducing a fundamental contradiction.
5. Discuss steps on the journey towards the vision and plan for action.

**Materials needed:** Flip chart paper, crayons, marker pens, masking tape

**Note:** It is important to allow everyone to participate in the drawing exercise. This will ensure that everyone will be heard, and that broad ownership is ensured.

## **Session 1**

### **Definition of Environmental Justice**

The fair treatment and meaningful participation of all people in the creation, application, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies regardless of their race, colour, national origin, or income is known as environmental justice, (Bullard 2021). It aims to address the disproportionate environmental burdens that marginalized communities bear, which are

frequently brought on by societal injustices on a systemic level. In the past, most environmental risks, including pollution, toxic waste, and industrial facilities, have fallen on low-income neighbourhoods, communities of colour, and indigenous populations, (Pellow 2020).

These groups frequently face restricted access to essential resources like clean air and water, resulting in negative health outcomes and diminished quality of life (Bullard, 2005). Environmental justice seeks to address these disparities by advocating for equal access to a healthy environment for all communities and ensuring protection from environmental hazards (Pellow & Brulle, 2005). The notion of environmental justice is deeply connected to the wider fight for civil rights and social justice.



Originating in the United States during the 1980s, the movement was initiated by communities of colour protesting against environmental racism, which refers to the practice of disproportionately locating hazardous waste sites, landfills, and polluting industries in or near minority neighbourhoods (Taylor, 2014). Over time, this movement has gained global traction, as environmental injustices are now recognized as widespread in both developed and developing nations (Agyeman, 2005).

Environmental justice also includes the recognition of the right to participate in environmental decision-making processes (Schlosberg, 2007). It promotes the inclusion of marginalized groups in policy-making to ensure that their concerns and needs are addressed (Bullard, 2005). This participation is vital for achieving equitable outcomes and building trust between communities and governmental or corporate entities (Agyeman, 2005). Ultimately, environmental justice seeks to guarantee that all individuals, regardless of socio-economic status, have the right to live in a clean and healthy environment, free from environmental harm and discrimination (Pellow & Brulle, 2005).

### ***Components of Environmental Justice***

Environmental justice encompasses several key components that together ensure fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in environmental policies and practices. These components address the socio-economic and racial inequalities that lead to disproportionate environmental burdens on marginalized communities.



### ***Fair Distribution of Environmental Benefits and Burdens***

This component ensures that no group, particularly marginalized communities, bears an undue share of environmental harms such as pollution, waste disposal sites, and industrial hazards. Equitable access to environmental benefits, such as clean air, water, and green spaces, is also crucial. The goal is to prevent environmental racism, where minority communities are often disproportionately affected by environmental hazards.

### ***Meaningful Involvement in Decision-Making***

Environmental justice requires that all communities, especially those most affected by environmental decisions, have a voice in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws and policies. This means ensuring that marginalized groups are represented in environmental decision-making processes and that their concerns are considered and addressed.

### ***Access to Information and Education***

Ensuring that communities have access to relevant environmental information is critical for informed decision-making and advocacy. This includes transparency from governments and corporations about environmental risks and the provision of educational resources that empower communities to understand and engage with environmental issues affecting them.

### ***Recognition of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities***

Indigenous peoples and local communities often have unique cultural and spiritual connections to their environments. Environmental justice recognizes the importance of protecting these rights and acknowledges that these communities should have control over the natural resources on their lands. This includes respecting traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to environmental stewardship.

### ***Legal and Policy Protections***

Strong legal frameworks are essential to enforce environmental justice. This includes anti-discrimination laws, environmental regulations that prevent harm to vulnerable communities, and policies that promote sustainable development. Legal recourse should be available for communities to challenge environmental injustices and hold violators accountable.

### ***Redress and Compensation***

Environmental justice also involves mechanisms for addressing past injustices. This includes providing compensation to communities that have been disproportionately harmed by environmental degradation and implementing measures to restore and rehabilitate damaged environments.

## **Definition of Human Rights**

Human rights are the fundamental rights and freedoms that every person is entitled to simply by virtue of being human. These rights are universal, inalienable, and inherent to all individuals, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, or any other status. They are predicated on the ideas of respect, dignity, and equality. A wide range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights are included in human rights. The rights to life, freedom from torture, freedom of speech, employment, education, and a fair trial are a few important examples. Because of their interdependence and indivisible nature, these rights frequently depend on one another for protection.



Globally, human rights are enshrined in several treaties and declarations, the most famous of which is the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This historic agreement upholds the notion that every person is entitled to respect and dignity and establishes

the framework for international human rights law. To achieve justice, peace, and social well-being, human rights must be upheld and promoted because they provide a barrier against mistreatment, prejudice, and oppression.

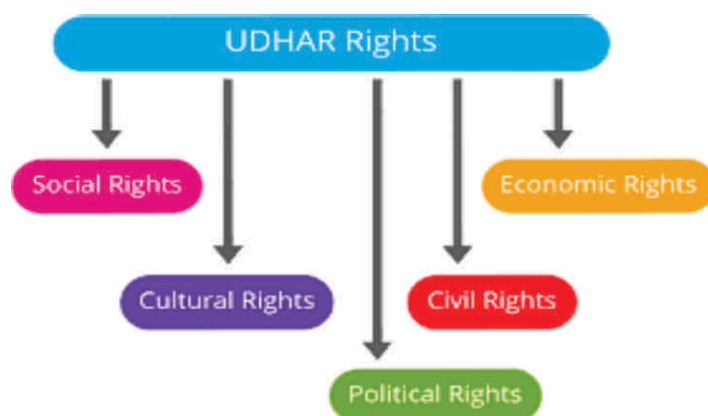
## Concept of Human Rights

The concept of human rights is broad, encompassing civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Civil and political rights include the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to a fair trial. Economic, social, and cultural rights cover the right to work, education, health, and an adequate standard of living. These rights are interdependent and indivisible, meaning the fulfilment of one right often depends on the realization of others.

Human Rights also emphasizes the importance of protection against abuse and discrimination. It holds that individuals have the right to seek redress if their rights are violated and that states have the duty to provide mechanisms for such redress. Human rights are designed to protect individuals from injustice and to ensure that everyone can live with dignity and equality. In essence, human rights are the bedrock of human dignity and are crucial for the development and well-being of individuals and societies. They serve as a universal standard against which the treatment of individuals by states and other entities can be measured and challenged.

## Types of Human Rights

Human rights are broadly categorized into civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, each addressing different aspects of human dignity and freedom.



- 1. Civil Rights:** These protect individuals' freedoms and ensure equal treatment under the law. They include the right to life, liberty, and personal security, freedom from torture and slavery, and the right to privacy.
- 2. Political Rights:** These rights enable individuals to participate in the political life of their society. They include the right to vote, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and the right to participate in government.
- 3. Economic Rights:** These rights ensure that individuals have the means to secure their basic needs. They include the right to work, the right to a fair wage, the right to safe working conditions, and the right to own property.
- 4. Social Rights:** These rights guarantee access to essential social services. They include the right to education, the right to health care, the right to social security, and the right to an adequate standard of living.
- 5. Cultural Rights:** These rights protect individuals' access to cultural life and heritage. They include the right to participate in cultural activities, the right to enjoy one's culture, and the right to use one's language.

## Session 2

### Interconnection Between Environmental Justice and Human Rights

Environmental justice and human rights are deeply interconnected, as the pursuit of a healthy environment is fundamentally linked to the protection of basic human rights. Environmental justice addresses the inequities that marginalized communities face in terms of environmental burdens, while human rights provide a legal and moral framework for protecting individuals from harm, including harm caused by environmental degradation.

At its core, environmental justice is about ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status, have equal access to a clean and safe environment. This aligns directly with the human right to life, health, and well-being. For instance, the right to a healthy environment is increasingly recognized as essential to the realization of other human rights. Without access to clean air, water, and uncontaminated land, the right to life and the right to health are compromised. This connection underscores the importance of protecting the environment to safeguard human rights.

Historically, marginalized communities often composed of low-income groups, indigenous peoples, and people of colour have been disproportionately affected by environmental hazards. These communities frequently live in areas with higher levels of pollution, toxic waste sites, and industrial activities. Environmental justice seeks to address these disparities by advocating for the fair treatment of all people in environmental policymaking, which is inherently tied to their human rights. The failure to protect these communities from environmental harm is not just an issue of environmental injustice; it is also a violation of their basic human rights, such as the right to health, housing, and even the right to equality.

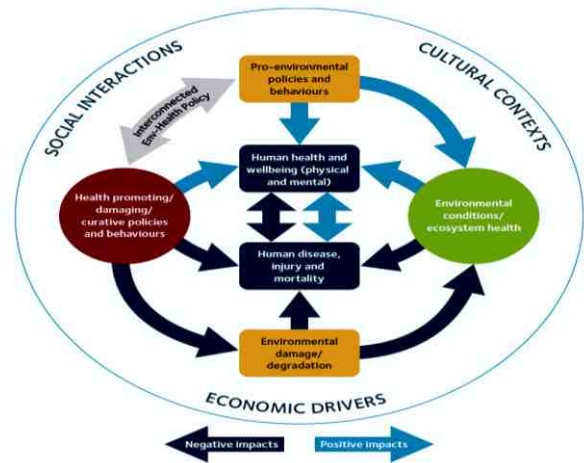
Moreover, international human rights frameworks provide crucial support for environmental justice movements. Instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and subsequent treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), underscore the responsibility of states to ensure that their citizens' human rights are not compromised by environmental degradation. These documents also highlight the right to participate in environmental decision-making, which is a cornerstone of environmental justice. Participation ensures that communities affected by environmental policies have a voice in shaping those policies, thus linking environmental justice to the human rights principles of participation and empowerment.

The global nature of environmental issues, such as climate change, further illustrates the interdependence between environmental justice and human rights. Climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, exacerbating inequalities and threatening their fundamental rights to food, water, and shelter. Addressing climate change through an environmental justice lens requires recognizing and protecting the rights of those most affected. However, environmental justice and human rights are intertwined, as the protection of the environment is essential to the realization of human rights, and human rights frameworks are vital tools for achieving environmental justice. Together, they form a comprehensive approach to ensuring that all individuals can live in a healthy, safe, and equitable environment.

## Session 3

### Importance of Environmental Justice in Achieving Sustainable Development

Environmental justice is critical to achieving sustainable development, as it ensures that the benefits of development are equitably distributed and that no group bears an unfair share of environmental harms. Sustainable development aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To achieve this, there must be inclusivity, equitability, and environmentally sound, and environmental justice to play a vital role in each of these aspects.



#### ***Equitable Resource Distribution***

One of the fundamental goals of sustainable development is the equitable distribution of resources. Environmental justice ensures that all communities, regardless of their socio-economic status, have equal access to natural resources such as clean air, water, and fertile land. Without environmental justice, marginalized communities often face disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards, while benefiting less from environmental goods. This inequity undermines the sustainability of development, as it leaves certain populations more vulnerable to environmental degradation and less able to recover from its impacts.

#### ***Inclusive Participation in Decision-Making***

Sustainable development requires the active participation of all stakeholders, including marginalized communities who are often the most affected by environmental policies. Environmental justice emphasizes the need for meaningful involvement of these communities in environmental decision-making processes. When these communities are excluded, the resulting policies may fail to address their specific needs and may even exacerbate existing inequalities. By ensuring that all voices are heard and considered, environmental justice promotes more effective and equitable decision-making, leading to more sustainable outcomes.

#### ***Protection of Vulnerable Populations***

Environmental justice is particularly important in protecting vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of development. These populations, which often include low-income communities, indigenous peoples, and people of colour, are more likely to suffer from environmental injustices such as exposure to pollution, toxic waste, and hazardous working conditions. Sustainable development cannot be achieved if these populations are left behind or disproportionately harmed. Environmental justice seeks to address these disparities by advocating for policies that protect the rights and health of vulnerable communities, ensuring that they too can benefit from sustainable development.

#### ***Enhancing Social Stability and Reducing Conflict***

Inequitable development can lead to social unrest and conflict, particularly when certain groups feel that they are being unfairly burdened by environmental harms. Environmental justice helps to reduce these tensions by promoting fairness and equity in environmental governance. When communities feel that their rights are respected and that they are being treated justly, they are



more likely to support sustainable development initiatives. This, in turn, fosters social stability, which is essential for long-term sustainability.

### ***Addressing Global Challenges***

Environmental justice is also crucial in addressing global challenges such as climate change, which disproportionately affects vulnerable populations. These populations often have the least capacity to adapt to changing environmental conditions, yet they are frequently the most impacted. Sustainable development strategies must incorporate environmental justice principles to ensure that efforts to combat climate change are inclusive and equitable. This means prioritizing the needs of those most at risk and ensuring that they have access to the resources and support necessary to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

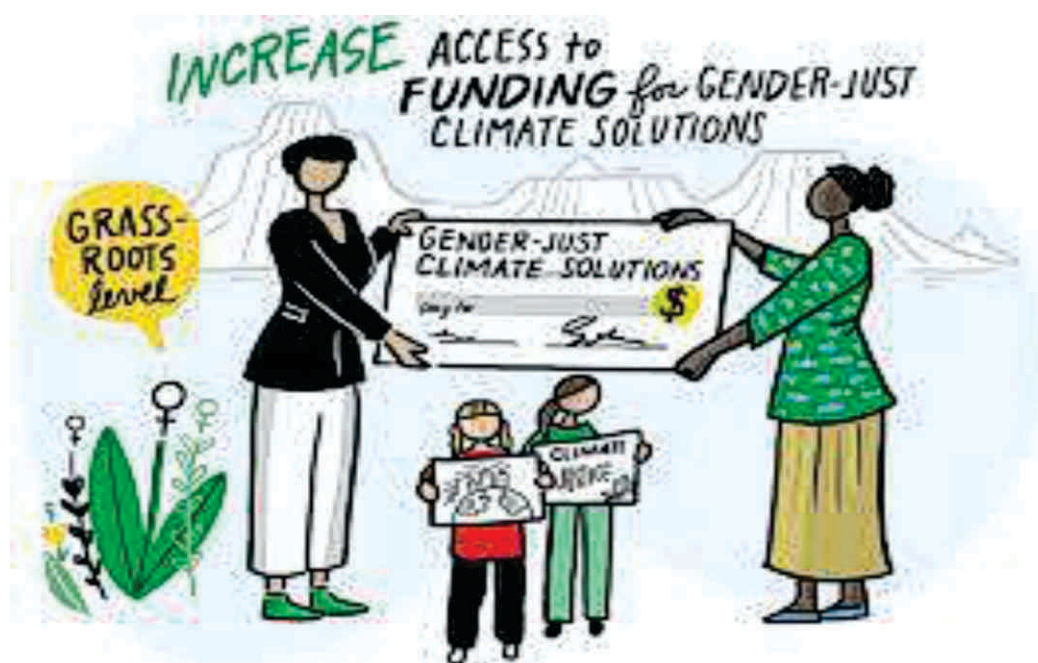
### ***Promoting Intergenerational Equity***

Environmental justice contributes to intergenerational equity, a key component of sustainable development. It ensures that today's development practices do not unfairly compromise the ability of future generations to enjoy a healthy environment. By advocating for the responsible and equitable use of natural resources, environmental justice helps to preserve these resources for future generations, ensuring that sustainable development can continue over the long term.

However, for environmental justice to achieve sustainable development it must ensure that development is fair, inclusive, and equitable. It must address the needs of vulnerable populations, promotes social stability, and supports the responsible use of natural resources. Without environmental justice, sustainable development would fail to meet its core objectives, leaving behind those who are most in need and compromising the well-being of future generations. Therefore, integrating environmental justice into sustainable development efforts is not just a matter of fairness, it is a necessity for the long-term viability of our planet and the well-being of all its inhabitants.

## **Session 4**

### **Gender Equality and Environmental Justice**



Gender equality and environmental justice are deeply interconnected, with each reinforcing the other in the pursuit of a fair and sustainable world. Both concepts address systemic inequalities that prevent certain groups from fully participating in society and from enjoying the benefits of development. While environmental justice seeks to ensure that no group bears an unfair share of environmental harms, gender equality aims to eliminate disparities between men and women, particularly in terms of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. The intersection of these two principles is critical for creating a just and sustainable future.

### ***The Gendered Impacts of Environmental Degradation***

Environmental degradation often affects women and men differently due to existing gender roles and inequalities. In many parts of the world especially Nigeria, women are primarily responsible for securing water, food, and energy for their households. As a result, they are more directly impacted by environmental issues such as deforestation, water scarcity, and soil degradation. For instance, when water sources become polluted or dry up, women and girls are often forced to travel longer distances to find clean water, which can expose them to physical danger and reduce the time they have for education or income-generating activities.

Climate change is another area where the intersection of gender and environmental justice is evident. Women, particularly in developing countries, are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events and changing agricultural conditions. These challenges can exacerbate existing inequalities, as women often have less access to resources like land, credit, and technology that could help them adapt to changing environmental conditions.

### ***Gender Inequality in Environmental Decision-Making***

Despite being disproportionately affected by environmental issues, women are often underrepresented in environmental decision-making processes. This lack of representation means that policies and programs may not adequately address the specific needs and concerns of women, leading to solutions that are less effective or even harmful. Environmental justice advocates for the inclusion of all affected groups in decision-making, recognizing that diverse perspectives lead to more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Gender equality in environmental governance is crucial for ensuring that women's voices are heard and that their rights are protected. When women are empowered to participate in decision-making, they can contribute valuable insights and solutions based on their experiences and knowledge of natural resource management. This can lead to more effective and equitable environmental policies that benefit entire communities.

### ***The Role of Gender Equality in Promoting Environmental Justice***

Promoting gender equality is essential for achieving environmental justice. When women have equal access to education, resources, and decision-making power, they are better able to advocate for their rights and for the protection of their environments. For instance, women's involvement in community-based natural resource management has been shown to improve conservation outcomes and ensure that environmental benefits are more equitably distributed.

Moreover, addressing gender inequalities can help break the cycle of poverty and environmental degradation. Empowering women economically and socially enables them to invest in sustainable practices, such as adopting cleaner energy sources or engaging in sustainable agriculture. These practices not only protect the environment but also improve the well-being of families and communities.

### ***Intersectionality in Environmental Justice***

Understanding the intersectionality of gender with other social factors such as race, class, and ethnicity is also important in the context of environmental justice. Women from marginalized communities often face compounded challenges, experiencing both gender-based and environmental discrimination. Addressing these intersecting inequalities requires a holistic approach that considers the unique experiences and needs of different groups.

Therefore, gender equality and environmental justice are mutually reinforcing goals that are essential for creating a fair and sustainable world. Achieving environmental justice requires addressing gender inequalities, particularly in terms of representation and access to resources. By empowering women and ensuring their full participation in environmental decision-making, societies can develop more effective and equitable solutions to environmental challenges. In turn, promoting gender equality contributes to the broader goals of sustainability and justice, benefiting both current and future generations.

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Women Environmental Programme

# Environmental Justice and Human Rights

## Module II

Environmental and Human Rights  
Issues Hindering Sustainable  
Development



## Environmental and Human Rights Issues Hindering Sustainable development

**Overview:** The relationships between the environment and human rights form the wholly inextricable foundation of any discussions about sustainable development. Sustainable development aims to balance economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection to meet present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs. However, numerous environmental and human rights issues pose significant barriers to achieving this balance.

Environmental degradation, such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change, directly undermines sustainable development by depleting natural resources, disrupting ecosystems, and threatening the livelihoods of millions. These environmental issues disproportionately impact marginalized communities, exacerbating inequalities and violating basic human rights like access to clean water, food, and a healthy environment. Human rights violations, including forced displacement, exploitation of indigenous lands, and inadequate Labour rights, further hinder sustainable development. When communities are denied their rights to participate in environmental decision-making or are forcibly removed from their lands for resource extraction, both their well-being and the environment suffer.

Moreover, the lack of access to justice and weak governance exacerbates these challenges, allowing environmental harm and human rights abuses to persist. Addressing these intertwined issues is crucial for fostering truly sustainable development, ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of environmental integrity or human dignity. By promoting environmental justice and upholding human rights, sustainable development can be more inclusive, equitable, and resilient.

**Objectives:** This module empowers participants with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to understand those Environmental and Human Rights Issues hindering Sustainable development. This is geared towards providing participants with adequate knowledge to drive sustainable change within their environment and the human right perspective to environmental justice.

1. Understand the Interrelationship Between Environmental Justice and Human Rights *(Participants will gain a deep understanding of how environmental justice and human rights are interconnected, particularly in the context of sustainable development. They will learn how environmental issues can impact human rights and how human rights frameworks can be used to address environmental injustices)*
2. Identify Key Environmental and Human Rights Challenges to Sustainable Development *(Participants will be able to identify and analyse critical environmental and human rights issues that hinder sustainable development, such as pollution, deforestation, climate change, and social inequalities. They will explore how these challenges affect marginalized communities and the broader implications for global sustainability).*
3. Explore the Role of Policy and Governance in Promoting Environmental Justice *(This objective focuses on equipping participants with knowledge about the role of laws, policies, and governance structures in advancing environmental justice. Participants will learn how effective policy-making and strong governance can protect vulnerable communities and promote equitable development).*

4. Develop Skills for Inclusive Decision-Making and Advocacy (*Participants will build skills in inclusive decision-making, ensuring that marginalized voices are heard in environmental and human rights discussions. They will also learn advocacy techniques to promote environmental justice and human rights within their own communities and professional contexts*).
5. Promote Sustainable Development Through an Intersectional Lens (*Participants will be encouraged to approach sustainable development with an intersectional perspective, understanding how various social factors, such as gender, race, and class, intersect with environmental and human rights issues. They will be prepared to contribute to solutions that are both socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable*).

## Expectations Exercise

**Objective:** To align the module's content with participants' expectations and to tailor discussions to their interests.

**Debrief:** Ask each participant to write down two or three key expectations they have for the module regarding environmental justice and human rights in sustainable development. In small groups, participants share their expectations and discuss common themes. Each group presents a summary of the common expectations to the larger group. The facilitator reviews the expectations, addressing how the module will meet them and making note of any specific interests to integrate into the sessions.

## Visioning Exercise

**Objective:** To help participants apply their understanding of environmental justice and human rights by analysing real-world scenarios where these issues intersect and exploring solutions that promote sustainable development.

### Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small groups of 4-6 members. Each group will be assigned a different case study related to environmental and human rights challenges that impact sustainable development.
2. Provide each group with a detailed case study. Possible topics could include:
  - The impact of mining operations on indigenous communities' land rights and environmental health.
  - The consequences of industrial pollution in low-income neighbourhoods.
  - The effects of climate change on vulnerable coastal communities.
  - Deforestation and its impact on the rights of local and indigenous populations.
  - Water scarcity and the human right to access clean water.
3. Each group will have 15-20 minutes to read through their case study and answer the following questions:
  - What are the primary environmental challenges in the case study?
  - Which human rights are being violated or threatened?
  - How are these issues disproportionately affecting marginalised or vulnerable groups?

- What are the short-term and long-term impacts on these communities?
- What policies or governance structures have contributed to or mitigated these issues?
- How effective are the existing policies in addressing the challenges?
- What solutions can be implemented to address both the environmental and human rights issues?
- How can these solutions promote sustainable development and ensure equity?

**4. Presentation and Discussion:** Each group will present their analysis and proposed solutions to the larger group in a 5-minute presentation. After each presentation, open the floor for a 10 minutes discussion where other participants can ask questions, provide feedback, and suggest additional solutions.

**5. Reflection:** After all groups have presented, facilitate a group reflection session. Ask participants to reflect on the following:

- What common themes emerged across the case studies?
- How can they apply the lessons learned from these cases to their own work or community?
- What role can they play in promoting environmental justice and human rights in sustainable development?

### **Materials Needed:**

- Printed or digital copies of the case studies.
- Flip charts or whiteboards for each group to jot down key points.
- Markers, pens, and paper for note taking.

### **Duration:**

- Total exercise time: 35mins (including analysis, presentations, and reflection).

### **Expected Outcomes:**

- Participants will deepen their understanding of the complexities of environmental and human rights issues in sustainable development.
- They will develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills by analysing real-world scenarios.
- Participants will be equipped with practical ideas and strategies to advocate for environmental justice and human rights in their own contexts.

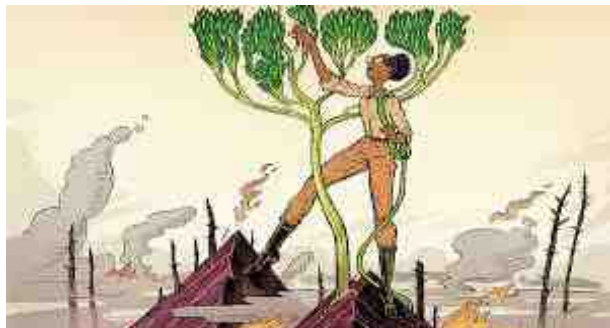
## **Session 1**

### **Climate Change and its Impact on Gender Equality**

#### **Introduction to Climate Change and Gender Dynamics**

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns, primarily caused by human activities, especially the burning of fossil fuels, which increases greenhouse gas emissions. These gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere, leading to global warming. The consequences of climate change are widespread and severe, including rising sea levels, more frequent and intense extreme weather events (such as hurricanes, droughts, and floods), and disruptions to ecosystems and biodiversity. Climate

change also impacts human societies, threatening food security, water supply, and health, and disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations, especially in developing countries. Addressing climate change requires global cooperation and urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to renewable energy sources, and implement adaptation strategies to protect communities and ecosystems from its inevitable impacts.



Gender dynamics play a crucial role in shaping the impacts of climate change. Women, particularly in developing regions, are often more vulnerable due to their roles in agriculture, water collection, and caregiving, which rely heavily on natural resources affected by climate change. Additionally, women have less access to resources like land, credit, and technology, limiting their ability to adapt. Despite these challenges, women are

key agents of change, possessing valuable knowledge for sustainable resource management. However, gender inequalities, such as limited political representation, hinder their full participation in climate-related decision-making and solutions.

## **Disproportionate Impacts on Women and Girls**

Climate change disproportionately affects women and girls due to existing gender inequalities and societal roles. Women, particularly in developing countries, are more reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods, such as farming, water collection, and energy sourcing. As climate change exacerbates resource scarcity, women must travel longer distances for water and fuel, increasing their workload and reducing time for education or income-generating activities. This economic vulnerability heightens the risk of poverty and food insecurity.

Health impacts are also significant, with women and girls facing greater exposure to climate-related diseases and malnutrition due to their roles in food preparation and caregiving. Furthermore, climate-induced displacement often leads to heightened risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, and loss of access to essential services like healthcare and education.

Social and cultural factors compound these challenges, as women and girls often have limited access to decision-making processes and resources that could help them adapt to climate change. These disparities reinforce existing gender inequalities, making women and girls more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Addressing these disproportionate impacts requires gender-sensitive climate policies that empower women and ensure their active participation in climate action and decision-making processes.

## **Women as Agents of Change**

Women play a pivotal role as agents of change in addressing global challenges, particularly in the context of climate change and environmental sustainability. Their unique knowledge and experiences, often rooted in their roles as caregivers, farmers, and community leaders, position them to make significant contributions to climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. In many communities, women manage essential resources like water, food, and energy. This gives them firsthand insights into the environmental changes affecting their livelihoods and the resilience strategies needed to cope with these changes. Women-led initiatives, such as community-based

resource management, sustainable agriculture practices, and disaster preparedness programs, have proven to be highly effective in building local resilience.

However, women's potential as change-makers is often limited by barriers such as lack of access to education, resources, and decision-making power. Overcoming these barriers is crucial for enabling women to fully participate in climate action. When empowered, women can lead efforts to develop sustainable solutions, advocate for equitable policies, and inspire collective action within their communities. By recognizing and supporting women as agents of change, societies can harness their strengths and creativity, leading to more inclusive and effective responses to the pressing challenges of climate change and sustainable development.

## Intersectionality in Climate Change and Gender Equality

Intersectionality refers to the way different social identities, such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, and age, overlap and intersect, creating unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. In the context of climate change and gender equality, intersectionality highlights how women's vulnerabilities and capacities are shaped not just by their gender, but also by other aspects of their identities.



For example, indigenous women, women of colour, and women in low-income communities often face compounded challenges from climate change. These groups may experience greater exposure to environmental hazards, less access to resources, and heightened risks of displacement or violence during climate-related disasters. Their marginalised status can limit their participation in decision-making processes, further exacerbating inequalities.

An intersectional approach to climate change recognizes these overlapping vulnerabilities and ensures that climate policies and programs are inclusive and equitable. It advocates for tailored solutions that address the specific needs of different groups of women, considering the complex interplay of social factors. By embracing intersectionality, climate action can be more just and effective, empowering all women to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development while addressing the root causes of inequality.

## Activity

**Perception exercise and Gallery Walk**— ask participants to paint a picture of their perception of women as agents of peace (*this exercise will help the participants to express their perceptions through painting, materials needed will be flip charts, markers, duct tapes, scissors etc.*)

After painting, each participant should paste their painting creating a vision wall, participants should be asked to talk about their painting while the facilitator guides them through the conversations with thought provoking questions – how do you feel about this painting? What do the colours represent? Etc

Students actively engage with the material, synthesizing concepts and building consensus.

## Session 2

### Pollution and Health

Pollution poses a significant threat to human health, impacting individuals and communities worldwide. It is a major environmental issue that encompasses various types of contaminants, including air, water, soil, and chemical pollution. Each type of pollution affects health in distinct ways, leading to a range of acute and chronic health problems.

#### *Air Pollution*

Air pollution is one of the most pervasive and harmful forms of pollution, primarily caused by emissions from vehicles, industrial processes, and the burning of fossil fuels. It introduces harmful substances such as particulate matter (PM), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), and carbon monoxide (CO) into the atmosphere. Exposure to these pollutants is linked to respiratory diseases like asthma, bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Long-term exposure can also lead to cardiovascular diseases, lung cancer, and premature death. Vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions, are particularly at risk.



#### *Water Pollution*

Water pollution, caused by the discharge of industrial waste, agricultural runoff, and untreated sewage into water bodies, can lead to severe health consequences. Contaminated water can carry pathogens that cause diseases such as cholera, dysentery, and typhoid fever. Chemical pollutants, including heavy metals like lead and mercury, can accumulate in the body, leading to neurological disorders, developmental issues in children, and other long-term health problems.



#### *Soil and Chemical Pollution*

Soil pollution, often resulting from industrial waste, pesticides, and improper disposal of hazardous materials, can contaminate food supplies and enter the human body through



ingestion. This can lead to health issues like cancer, reproductive problems, and immune system disorders. Chemical pollution, including exposure to toxic substances such as pesticides, industrial chemicals, and plastics, can disrupt endocrine systems, cause birth defects, and increase the risk of chronic diseases.

However, the health impacts of these pollutants are not far-reaching, they contribute to millions of premature deaths each year and exacerbate global health inequalities. Addressing pollution requires urgent action at both individual and governmental levels, including stricter regulations, the adoption of cleaner technologies, and increased public awareness. Reducing pollution is essential for protecting human health and ensuring a healthier, more sustainable future for all.

**Activity** – participants should be grouped into four groups to play the PLAN Game from Ecocycle

- Asked participants how they feel about the exercise
- Ask if they want more time
- Would they rather play with another team or with an individual
- How was collaboration between team members
- Was there a leader
- How did they arrive at agreeing on cards

## Session 3

### Access to Clean Water and Sanitation

Access to clean water and sanitation is a fundamental human right essential for the health, dignity, and well-being of individuals. It is also a critical component of sustainable development, as it impacts education, gender equality, economic productivity, and environmental sustainability. Despite its importance,

millions of people worldwide still lack reliable access to clean water and adequate sanitation, leading to severe health and social consequences.



Clean water and proper sanitation are vital for **preventing** waterborne diseases such as cholera, dysentery, and diarrhoea, which are major causes of illness and death, particularly among children in developing countries. Without safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, communities are at higher risk of contamination, leading to widespread **health** crises that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems.

The burden of inadequate water and sanitation services often falls **disproportionately** on **women and girls**. In many communities, they are responsible for collecting water, which can involve long, dangerous journeys that consume significant time and energy. This responsibility can limit their opportunities for education and economic activities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and gender inequality. Additionally, the lack of privacy and safety in sanitation facilities increases the risk of harassment and violence against women and girls, particularly in emergencies or refugee settings.

Access to clean water and sanitation is also linked to **economic development**. Safe water supplies improve productivity by reducing the time spent fetching water and the days lost to illness. Moreover, proper sanitation protects water sources and the environment, reducing the costs associated with water treatment and environmental degradation.

Therefore, the ensuring of universal access to clean water and sanitation is essential for achieving broader development goals. It requires concerted efforts from governments, communities, and international organisations to invest in infrastructure, education, and policy reforms that prioritise these basic needs, thereby improving health, promoting gender equality, and fostering sustainable economic growth.

### Activity - Storytelling time

- Ask participants to tell stories about water and sanitation in the communities
- Have the group discuss it, do play role and general discussion on the subject
- Discuss way to clean water at home



## Session 4

### Land Rights and Land Use

Land rights and land use are crucial components of environmental justice and sustainable development, with significant implications for social equity, economic stability, and environmental stewardship. Land Rights refer to the legal and customary entitlements that individuals or communities must access, control, and use land. These rights can include ownership, usage, and management of land. Secure land rights are fundamental for ensuring that people can invest in and sustainably manage their land resources. For many indigenous peoples and rural communities, land rights are not only about property but also about cultural identity, social cohesion, and economic security.

In many regions, particularly in developing countries, land rights are often contested. Weak legal frameworks, inadequate land tenure systems, and land grabs by corporations or governments can



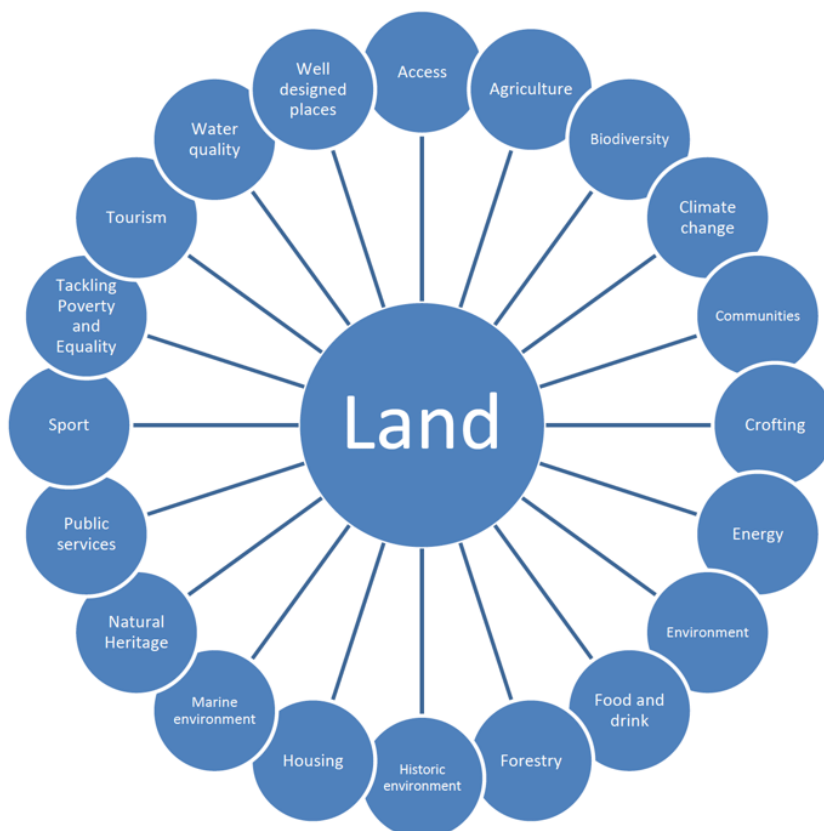
lead to the dispossession of vulnerable communities. This lack of security undermines their ability to engage in long-term agricultural practices, conserve natural resources, or develop economically. The struggle for secure land rights is thus central to addressing social inequalities and ensuring that all communities can benefit from and contribute to sustainable development.



Land Use involves the ways in which land is utilized for various purposes, such as agriculture, urban development, conservation, and industry. Sustainable land use practices are essential for maintaining ecological balance and ensuring that land resources are managed responsibly. Mismanagement of land, including deforestation, over-extraction of resources, and unplanned urban sprawl, can lead to environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, and climate change.

Effective land use planning requires balancing different needs and interests, including environmental protection, economic development, and social equity. Inclusive land use policies that incorporate the perspectives of all stakeholders, especially marginalized communities, are vital for achieving sustainability. This means engaging local populations in decision-making processes, respecting traditional land uses, and ensuring that development does not come at the expense of environmental health or community rights.

However, secured land rights and sustainable land use are intertwined elements that impact environmental justice and sustainable development. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that recognizes the complex relationships between land, people, and the environment, and ensures that land resources are managed in a way that benefits all.



## Session 5

### Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Biodiversity and ecosystem services are fundamental to the health of our planet and the well-being of all living organisms. Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on Earth, encompassing the diversity of species, ecosystems, and genetic variations. Ecosystem services, on the other hand, are the benefits that humans derive from ecosystems, including provisioning, regulating, supporting, and cultural services.

Biodiversity plays a crucial role in maintaining ecosystem health and resilience. Diverse ecosystems are more robust and better able to withstand and recover from environmental stresses such as climate change, pollution, and habitat destruction. The rich variety of species ensures the stability of ecological processes, such as nutrient cycling, pollination, and water purification, which are vital for sustaining life.



#### Ecosystem Services can be categorized into four main types:

- 1. Provisioning Services:** These are the tangible products that ecosystems provide, such as food, water, timber, and medicinal resources. For instance, forests supply wood and non-timber products, while wetlands filter and clean water.
- 2. Regulating Services:** Ecosystems help regulate environmental conditions, including climate, air quality, and disease. Forests and oceans, for example, sequester carbon dioxide, mitigating climate change. Wetlands control flooding and reduce the impact of storms.
- 3. Supporting Services:** These are essential processes that support other ecosystem services, such as soil formation, nutrient cycling, and pollination. Healthy soils, enriched by diverse plant and animal life, are crucial for agriculture and food production.
- 4. Cultural Services:** Ecosystems provide non-material benefits, such as recreational opportunities, spiritual values, and aesthetic enjoyment. Natural landscapes and biodiversity contribute to cultural heritage and personal well-being.

The loss of biodiversity poses a significant threat to ecosystem services. Habitat destruction, climate change, overexploitation, and pollution reduce species diversity and disrupt ecological functions, leading to diminished ecosystem services. This, in turn, affects human health, livelihoods, and overall quality of life. Protecting biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem services are thus critical for achieving sustainable



development. Conservation efforts, sustainable management practices, and policies that integrate ecological considerations are essential to preserve the intricate web of life and ensure that ecosystems continue to provide vital services for future generations.

## **Session 6**

### **Case Studies: Real-world Examples**

#### **Oil Extraction in the Niger Delta**

The Niger Delta in Nigeria has faced severe environmental degradation due to extensive oil extraction activities. The region, rich in oil reserves, has suffered from oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation, leading to significant land and water pollution. Local communities, predominantly Indigenous and low-income, have experienced health problems, loss of livelihoods, and displacement. The situation exemplifies how corporate interests can undermine environmental justice and human rights, as local voices are often excluded from decision-making. The resulting environmental damage impedes sustainable development by depleting resources and exacerbating poverty, highlighting the need for more inclusive and environmentally responsible practices.

#### **Deforestation and Indigenous Rights in the Amazon**

In the Amazon rainforest, deforestation driven by logging, agriculture, and mining has led to severe environmental and human rights issues. Indigenous communities, who rely on the forest for their cultural and physical survival, face displacement and loss of traditional lands. The destruction of their environment not only threatens biodiversity but also undermines their rights to land and self-determination. This case demonstrates the intersection of environmental and human rights issues, as unsustainable development practices violate Indigenous rights and disrupt ecosystems crucial for climate regulation. Ensuring the protection of these lands and respecting Indigenous rights is vital for sustainable development and environmental preservation.

#### **Climate Change Impact on Coastal Communities in Bangladesh**

Coastal communities in Bangladesh are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, increased flooding, and more frequent cyclones. These environmental changes disproportionately affect low-income women and marginalized groups who live in high-risk areas. The increased frequency of natural disasters exacerbates existing inequalities and threatens access to basic needs such as food, clean water, and shelter. The lack of adequate infrastructure and support further hinders these communities' ability to adapt and recover. This case underscores the importance of integrating gender and human rights considerations into climate adaptation strategies to ensure equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

#### **Mining and Water Rights in Chile**

In Chile, large-scale mining operations have significantly impacted local water resources, leading to conflicts over water rights between mining companies and local communities. Indigenous communities and small-scale farmers have faced reduced access to water for agriculture and daily needs due to the heavy water usage by mining operations. This conflict illustrates how environmental degradation caused by resource extraction can infringe on basic

human rights, such as the right to clean water and food security. Effective management of natural resources and respect for local rights are crucial for achieving sustainable development and preventing conflicts.

These case studies highlight how environmental and human rights issues are intertwined and how addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that considers the needs and rights of affected communities while promoting sustainable practices.

**Activity:** Mapping the Barriers to Sustainable Development

**Objective** - Participants will identify and analyse key environmental and human rights issues that hinder sustainable development, exploring their interconnections and proposing potential solutions.

**Materials Needed:**

- Large country or regional maps (physical or digital)
- Sticky notes or index cards
- Markers and pens
- Flip charts or whiteboards
- Infographics or articles on environmental and human rights issues
- Case studies or examples from different regions

**Activity Structure**

1. Introduction - Begin with a brief recap of the module, emphasizing the connection between environmental and human rights issues and their impact on sustainable development.

Highlight key concepts such as environmental justice, human rights violations, and sustainable development goals (SDGs).

2. Issue Identification - Ask participants to brainstorm and list environmental and human rights issues they believe hinder sustainable development (e.g., deforestation, pollution, land grabbing, forced displacement, etc.).

**Write these issues on sticky notes or index cards.**

3. Mapping the Issues - Provide participants with a large map of the world or a specific region, depending on the context of the module.

Ask them to place their sticky notes or index cards on the map in locations where these issues are prevalent or have significant impact.

As they place the issues on the map, encourage them to think about the geographical, social, and political context of each issue.

4. Group Discussion and Analysis - Divide participants into small groups and assign each group a set of issues to analyse. Have them discuss the following:
  - Impact Analysis - How do these issues affect sustainable development in the region? Consider social, economic, and environmental dimensions.
  - Human Rights Implications: What human rights are being violated or threatened by these issues?

- Interconnectedness: How are these issues interconnected? For example, how might environmental degradation exacerbate human rights violations?
- Barriers to Solutions: What are the major barriers to addressing these issues (e.g., lack of political will, corruption, economic dependency on harmful practices)?

#### 5. Presentation and Synthesis

- Each group presents their analysis to the larger group.
- As each group presents, encourage others to add to the discussion or ask questions.
- Use a flipchart or whiteboard to synthesize the key points from each presentation, highlighting common themes and challenges.

#### 6. Solution Brainstorming

- Transition to a solution-focused discussion.
- Ask participants to brainstorm potential strategies or actions to address the issues identified, focusing on both environmental protection and human rights promotion.
- Consider local, national, and global levels of action and the role of various stakeholders (governments, NGOs, communities, etc.).

7. Conclusion and Reflection - Conclude the activity with a reflection session where participants share their thoughts on the interconnectedness of environmental and human rights issues and the importance of addressing these challenges for sustainable development.

- Provide participants with resources or action steps they can take in their own communities to address these issues.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Participants will develop a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between environmental and human rights issues and how they impact sustainable development.
- The activity will encourage critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving, equipping participants to identify barriers and propose actionable solutions.
- Participants will gain insight into the global and local dimensions of environmental and human rights challenges.

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Women Environmental Programme

# Environmental Justice and Human Rights

## **Module III**

Advocacy For Environmental Justice

# Module: Advocacy for Environmental Justice

## Overview

This module aims to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for environmental justice, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental issues, social equity, and human rights. Through exploring advocacy strategies, tools, and the role of feminist organizations, participants will gain a deeper understanding of how to influence policy and create change at the grassroots and systemic levels.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, participants should be able to:

1. *Define and explain advocacy in context, including strategies and tools for effective advocacy actions.*
2. *Explain the key concepts of environmental justice and their relevance to marginalized communities.*
3. *Demonstrate sufficient knowledge and capacity for use of advocacy strategies to promote environmental justice.*
4. *Recognize the unique contributions of feminist organizations in advancing environmental justice.*
5. *Develop action plans to address environmental injustices in their communities.*

**Ice Breaker:** Environmental Justice Word Game (trivia) or Plan Game from Ecocycle

### Instructions:

Participants will receive a bingo card filled with terms related to environmental justice (e.g., climate change, clean water, land rights, pollution, renewable energy). As the facilitator reads out definitions or scenarios, participants will mark the corresponding terms on their cards. The first person to get five in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) shouts "Bingo!" and wins a small prize. This activity will help familiarize participants with key terms and concepts in a fun and engaging way.

## Session 1

### Understanding Advocacy

Advocacy refers to the act of supporting or promoting a cause, policy, or idea with the goal of influencing public opinion, government policies, or decision-making processes (Cohen, de la Vega, & Watson, 2001). It involves raising awareness, shaping opinions, and driving change by representing the interests of



individuals, groups, or communities that may lack the power or resources to advocate on their own behalf (Reid, 2000). Advocacy can be carried out by individuals, organizations, or coalitions, and it can take many forms, including lobbying, public campaigns, legal action, education, and direct action.

In the context of environmental justice, advocacy may include efforts to protect vulnerable communities from environmental harm, to ensure that environmental policies are fair and equitable, or to promote sustainable practices that benefit both people and the planet.

Some myths and misconceptions about advocacy:

<b>Myths/ Misconceptions</b>	<b>Clarification</b>
<p>Advocacy is the same as fundraising or donating to charity.</p> <p>Advocacy is walking down the street with a bull horn or advocacy is rioting in a demonstration or protest rally:</p> <p>This myth mixes different concepts; rallies are activism, which are sometimes useful, but it's not always effective advocacy.</p>	<p>Again, as we said above, advocacy is all about initiating social change, which definitely cannot be achieved through just collecting funds. Social change is often achieved with little or almost no funds.</p> <p>Advocacy is the act of supporting or recommending a cause, policy, or the interests of a group or individual. It involves activities aimed at influencing decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. Advocates can help by providing information, supporting decision-making, and representing individuals or groups in various settings</p>
<p>Advocacy consumes a lot of time; I am too busy to get involved in advocacy</p>	<p>Advocacy doesn't have to be complicated and time-consuming – a properly planned and organized campaign requires small actions from many people rather than big ones from a few</p>
<p>Advocacy is all about “politics” (in a negative connotation)</p>	<p>Advocacy can be political (i.e. lobbying for a specific piece of legislation) but is more often socially and intellectually focused on speaking out on behalf of those without a voice or whose voices are unheard or suppressed</p>
<p>Advocacy is only for professional lobbyists</p>	<p>Obviously, advocacy is a public activity while lobbying requires “behind-the-scenes” activities in its very essence</p>

## **Advocacy Strategies for Environmental Justice**

Advocating for environmental justice requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the root causes of environmental inequities. Strategies include grassroots mobilization, public awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, and coalition-building. Grassroots mobilization empowers communities to take action by organizing protests, petitions, and community meetings to voice their concerns. Public awareness campaigns leverage media and social networks to educate the public and policymakers about environmental injustices, amplifying marginalized voices. Policy advocacy involves working with lawmakers to draft and promote legislation that protects vulnerable communities from environmental harm. Coalition-building brings together diverse groups to create a united front, increasing the impact and reach of advocacy efforts. By

employing these strategies, advocates can effectively challenge power structures and demand accountability from those responsible for environmental degradation.

### **Understanding Advocacy in Environmental Justice**

Advocacy in the context of environmental justice is about raising your voice and taking action to address environmental issues that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. It is about ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, has the right to a healthy environment. This could mean clean air, safe drinking water, access to green spaces, or protection from harmful industrial activities.

### **Grassroots Mobilization Means Empowering Communities from the Ground Up**

Grassroots mobilization is the foundation of environmental justice advocacy. It involves organizing and empowering community members to stand up for their rights and take collective action and could take a number of interlinked steps as explained below.

**Community Meetings** - Organize gatherings where people can discuss their environmental concerns. This could be as simple as a meeting in someone's living room, a community centre, or even an outdoor space. The goal is to create a platform for people to share their experiences and brainstorm solutions.

**Petitions** - Start or sign petitions to demand action from local or national authorities. Petitions can be a powerful tool to show decision-makers that there is broad support for an issue.



Whether paper-based or online, petitions are a straightforward way to gather and demonstrate collective concern.

**Protests and Rallies** - Peaceful protests and rallies are visible ways to show solidarity and demand change. These events can draw media attention, raise public awareness, and pressure those in power to address environmental injustices. The key is to ensure these actions are well-organized and safe for participants.

### ***Real-Life Example of Grassroots Mobilization***

*In the Niger Delta, local communities have mobilized against oil companies that have polluted their land and waterways. Through protests, petitions, and community meetings, they have brought national and international attention to their plight, demanding that companies clean up spilled oil and compensate affected communities.*

## Public Awareness Campaigns Means Educating and Engaging the Wider Public

Public awareness campaigns are about spreading the word. They educate the broader public and policymakers about environmental injustices, making it impossible for them to ignore these issues. The more people know, the more they can contribute to the cause.

**Social Media Campaigns** - Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok can be powerful tools for spreading information quickly and engaging people across the world. Use hashtags, share stories, and create visual content like videos or infographics to capture attention.



**Media Outreach** - Engage with local and national media to cover environmental issues affecting your community. This could involve writing opinion pieces influencing public discourse, giving interviews, or hosting press conferences. Media coverage can amplify your message and reach a wider audience.

**Workshops and Seminars** - Hosting educational events can help inform people about environmental justice issues and how they can get involved. These events can target specific groups like students, local leaders, or activists.

### *Real-Life Example of Public Awareness Campaigns*

*The #FridaysForFuture movement, started by Greta Thunberg, is a global campaign that uses social media to raise awareness about climate change. What began as a solo protest in Sweden has now inspired millions of young people around the world to demand action on climate change. (Thunberg, 2019)*

## Policy Advocacy Means Influencing Laws and Regulations



Policy advocacy involves working directly with lawmakers to create or change laws and regulations to protect communities from environmental harm. This might seem intimidating, but it is a crucial part of creating lasting change.

**Lobbying** - Engage with local, regional, or national politicians to discuss environmental justice issues and advocate for specific policies. This can be done by individuals, but it is often more effective when done by groups or coalitions.

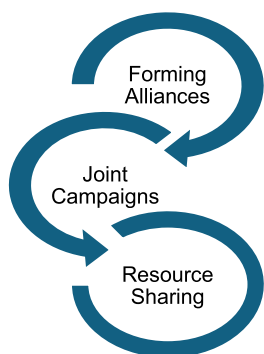
**Drafting Policy Proposals** - Sometimes, advocacy groups work together to draft new laws or regulations that address specific environmental issues. This can involve legal experts, community members, and other stakeholders who understand the local context.

**Public Hearings and Consultations** - Participate in public hearings or consultations where policies affecting the environment are discussed. This is an opportunity to voice your concerns and suggest improvements to proposed legislation.

### ***Real-Life Example of Policy Advocacy***

*In Nigeria, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act was developed with contributions from communities affected by environmental challenges, particularly in regions like the Niger Delta. The Act seeks to address environmental degradation by enforcing regulations that protect vulnerable populations from pollution and ecological harm. Local advocacy groups, such as the Environmental Rights Action (ERA), played a key role in influencing this legislation, ensuring that the voices of impacted communities were heard, and their concerns were integrated into policy-making.*

### **Coalition-Building Means Strength in Numbers**



Coalition-building involves forming alliances with other groups who share your goals. By working together, you can pool resources, share knowledge, and amplify your impact.

**Forming Alliances** - Reach out to other environmental, social justice, or community organizations to form a coalition. This could include women's groups, labour unions, or indigenous rights organizations. The idea is to unite on common goals and support each other's efforts.

**Joint Campaigns** - Run joint advocacy campaigns where multiple organizations work together to achieve a shared objective. This might involve coordinated protests, shared media campaigns, or joint lobbying efforts.

**Resource Sharing** - Coalitions can be a great way to share resources like funding, expertise, and contacts. This can make it easier to tackle large or complex issues that might be difficult to address alone.

### ***Real-Life Example of Coalition-Building***

*The Coalition for Socioecological Transformation is a coalition of environmental, labour, and social justice organizations in the Nigeria that work together to advocate for bold climate action. By bringing together diverse groups, they've been able to organize advocacy movements and influence climate policy on a national and global scale.*

### **Activity**

Community Action Planning Workshop

*Objective:* To empower participants to develop a localized action plan for addressing environmental justice issues in their communities.

### **Instructions**

- I. Divide participants into small groups. Each group represents a community facing a specific environmental justice issue (e.g., pollution, deforestation, water scarcity).

- II. Scenario Setting: Provide each group with a scenario that outlines the environmental issue, the community affected, and the key stakeholders involved.
- III. Action Plan Development: Ask each group to develop an advocacy action plan that includes:
  - a. Grassroots mobilization strategies (e.g., organizing community meetings, protests).
  - b. Public awareness campaigns (e.g., social media strategies, local media engagement).
  - c. Policy advocacy efforts (e.g., lobbying local government, drafting petitions).
  - d. Coalition-building efforts (e.g., identifying potential allies, forming alliances).
- IV. Presentation: Each group presents their action plan to the larger group, followed by a discussion on the strengths and challenges of each plan.

*Reflection: How do these strategies help empower communities? What challenges might arise when implementing these strategies? Facilitator to assess how appropriate each of the developed actions in the action plans are appropriately suited to the contexts of the identified communities.*

## **Session 2**

### **Tools and Techniques for Effective Advocacy**

Effective advocacy for environmental justice hinges on the strategic use of tools and techniques that amplify the voices of marginalized communities. Digital tools such as social media platforms, online petitions, and crowdfunding sites enable advocates to reach wider audiences and mobilize support quickly. Storytelling is a powerful technique that humanizes environmental issues, making them relatable and urgent. Data collection and research provide the evidence needed to support advocacy efforts, whether through community-based participatory research or environmental impact assessments. Visual tools like infographics, videos, and art can distil complex information into compelling narratives that resonate with diverse audiences. Additionally, direct action, such as peaceful protests and civil disobedience, can draw attention to urgent environmental issues and pressure decision-makers to act. By harnessing these tools and techniques, advocates can craft campaigns that are both persuasive and impactful.

#### **Introduction to Advocacy Tools and Techniques**

Effective advocacy requires not just passion and commitment, but also the strategic use of various tools and techniques that can amplify your message, mobilize supporters, and influence decision-makers. This section explores key tools and techniques that environmental justice advocates can use to make their efforts more impactful.

#### **Introduction to Advocacy Tools and Techniques**

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## Harnessing Technology for Advocacy - Digital Tools

Digital tools have revolutionized advocacy by making it easier to reach large audiences, organize campaigns, and engage with supporters. These tools are particularly powerful because they can spread information rapidly and connect people across geographic boundaries.

**Social Media Platforms** - social media is one of the most accessible and effective tools for advocacy today. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok allow you to share your message with a broad audience. For environmental justice, you can use these platforms to:

**Create Awareness** - Share stories, photos, videos, and infographics that highlight environmental injustices in your community. Use hashtags to connect with broader movements and attract more followers.

**Mobilize Action** - Organize events like protests, webinars, or community cleanups and promote them through social media. You can also create Facebook events or Twitter threads to keep supporters informed and engaged.

**Build Networks** - Connect with other activists, organizations, and influencers who can amplify your message. Engage in conversations by commenting, sharing, and retweeting relevant content.

**Online Petitions** - Online petition platforms like Change.org or Avaaz enable you to gather support for a cause quickly and effectively. Petitions can be targeted at governments, corporations, or international bodies, demanding action on specific environmental justice issues. The signatures collected can demonstrate widespread public support and be a persuasive tool when lobbying for change.

**Crowdfunding** - Platforms like GoFundMe, Kickstarter, and Patreon allow you to raise funds for your advocacy campaigns. Whether you need money for legal fees, organizing events, or creating educational materials, crowdfunding lets you tap into the power of small contributions from a large number of people.

### ***Real-Life Example***

*In Nigeria, activists have utilized social media to launch campaigns like #EndSARS, which protested police brutality and systemic injustice. The movement gained significant traction, mobilizing thousands of individuals across the country and globally. Activists used various platforms to raise awareness, share experiences, and call for reforms, ultimately pressuring the Nigerian government and financial institutions to address the issues raised. This grassroots mobilization demonstrated the power of social media in amplifying voices and demanding accountability from authorities.*



## Making Environmental Justice Personal through Storytelling

Storytelling is a powerful technique that humanizes environmental justice issues, making them more relatable and compelling. By sharing personal stories, you can connect with your audience on an emotional level, which can inspire action and change.



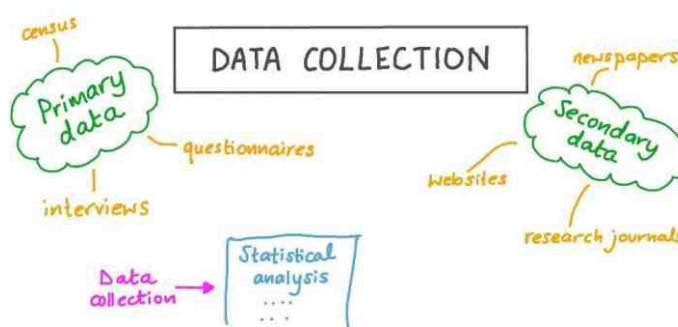
**Personal Narratives** - Share the stories of individuals or communities affected by environmental injustice. This could be through written articles, video interviews, or social media posts. Personal stories make the issues more tangible and can evoke empathy from those who might not have been directly affected.

**Case Studies** - Use case studies to illustrate the broader impact of environmental issues. These stories can show how policies, corporate actions, or environmental degradation have affected communities over time. Case studies provide concrete examples that can be used to argue for policy changes or interventions.

**Creative Storytelling** - Consider using creative mediums like documentaries, podcasts, or photo essays to tell your story. These formats can reach different audiences and present complex issues in an engaging way. Visual storytelling, in particular, can be very impactful, as it allows people to see the effects of environmental injustice firsthand.

### Real-Life Example

*The documentary "This Is Nigeria," directed by Ayo Shonaiya, uses storytelling to highlight various social and political issues in Nigeria, including corruption, poverty, and human rights abuses. By showcasing the experiences of everyday Nigerians, the film raises awareness about the challenges faced by communities and the need for change. Its powerful narratives have inspired discussions around accountability and civic engagement, encouraging viewers to advocate for a more just and equitable society.*



## Building a Solid Foundation through Data Collection and Research

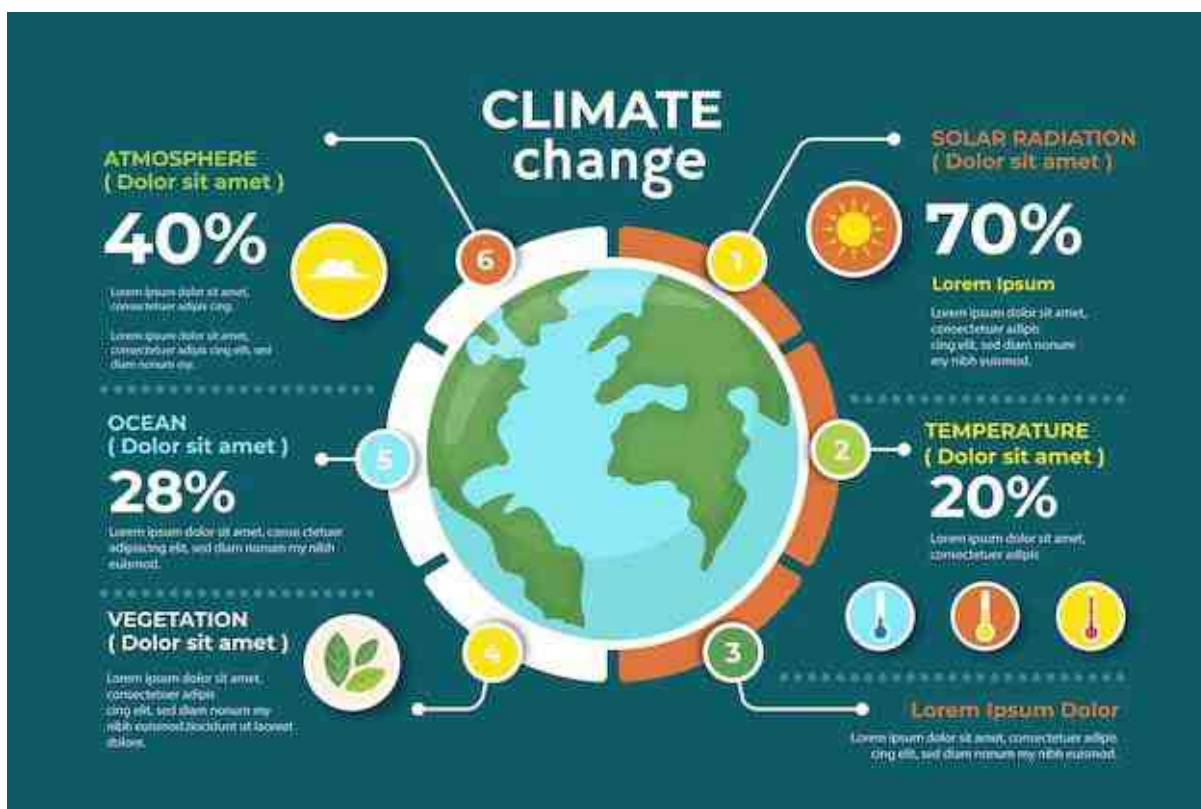
Data collection and research provide the evidence needed to support your advocacy efforts. Accurate and compelling data can strengthen your arguments, convince policymakers, and mobilize public support.

**Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)** - In CBPR, community members collaborate with researchers to collect data on environmental issues affecting their lives. This approach ensures that the research reflects the community's priorities and provides credible evidence that can be used in advocacy campaigns.

**Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)** - Conducting or reviewing EIAs can provide critical information about the potential environmental and social impacts of proposed projects. This data can be used to argue against harmful projects or to advocate for mitigation measures that protect vulnerable communities.

**Surveys and Polls** - Conduct surveys or polls to gather opinions and experiences from community members. This data can highlight the prevalence and severity of environmental injustices and show that there is strong public support for addressing these issues.

**Infographics and Data Visualization** - Once you have your data, presenting it in a clear and engaging way is crucial. Infographics, charts, and maps can help translate complex information



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into easily understandable visuals that can be shared on social media, in reports, or during presentations.

### Amplifying Your Message with Visual Tools

Visual tools are incredibly effective in advocacy because they can convey complex messages quickly and memorably. Whether through art, photography, or graphic design, visual tools can capture attention and inspire action.

**Infographics** - Infographics combine text and visuals to explain a concept or tell a story in a concise and engaging way. They are especially useful for breaking down data or summarizing

key points. Infographics can be shared on social media, included in reports, or used in presentations to make your message more impactful.

**Videos and Documentaries** - Videos are one of the most powerful visual tools available. Short videos can be shared on social media to raise awareness, while longer documentaries can provide a deep dive into environmental justice issues. Video content is engaging and can be easily shared, making it an effective tool for reaching large audiences.

**Photography** - A single powerful image can convey a message more effectively than words. Use photography to document environmental injustices, celebrate community resilience, or highlight the beauty of natural environments under threat. Photos can be used in campaigns, reports, or exhibitions to draw attention to your cause.

**Art and Murals** - Art can be a powerful form of protest and expression. Murals, street art, and other creative expressions can bring visibility to environmental justice issues in public spaces. Art can also be used in campaigns to create powerful symbols and slogans that resonate with people.

### ***Real-Life Example***

*The "We Are the Oceans" campaign used stunning photography and videography to raise awareness about ocean conservation. By showcasing the beauty of the oceans and the threats they face, the campaign inspired global action and reached millions of people through social media and exhibitions.*

### **Making a Bold Statement through Direct Action**

Direct action involves taking bold, often public, actions to demand change. This can include protests, sit-ins, or other forms of civil disobedience. Direct action is a way to draw attention to urgent issues and pressure decision-makers to respond.

**Protests and Marches** - Organize or participate in protests and marches to raise awareness and demand action on environmental justice issues. These events can be local or global and are often highly visible, attracting media attention and mobilizing public support.

**Sit-Ins and Occupations** - A sit-in or occupation involves taking over a space (such as a government building or corporate office) to protest a specific issue. These actions can disrupt business as usual and draw attention to the cause.

**Civil Disobedience** - Civil disobedience involves deliberately breaking laws or regulations to protest against unjust policies or practices. This could include blockades, hunger strikes, or trespassing on restricted sites. While civil disobedience carries risks, it can be a powerful tool for highlighting injustice and forcing change.

### ***Real-Life Example***

*Facilitator is to seek-out a real-life example to buttress the point. Real life examples should come from communities showcasing action taken.*

## **Activity: Advocacy Tools Simulation**

*Objective: To practice using digital, storytelling, and visual tools for effective environmental justice advocacy.*

### **Instructions**

**Group Assignment** - Divide participants into groups, with each group focusing on a different tool or technique (e.g., social media campaigns, storytelling, data visualization).

### *Task Assignment*

**Social Media Group** - Create a mock social media campaign using platforms like Twitter or Instagram. Design posts, hashtags, and a strategy for engaging followers.

**Storytelling Group** - Develop a brief narrative (written, video, or podcast) that tells the story of a community affected by an environmental issue.

**Data Visualization Group** - Create an infographic or map that presents key data on an environmental justice issue (e.g., pollution levels, deforestation rates).

**Presentation** - Each group shares their work with the larger group, explaining their approach and how they would use these tools in a real advocacy campaign.

*Discuss* the effectiveness of each tool in raising awareness and mobilizing action. What are the strengths and limitations of each tool?

How can combining these tools enhance an advocacy campaign? What considerations should be made when choosing which tools to use?

## **Section 3**

### **Role of Feminist Organizations in Advocacy**

Feminist organizations play a crucial role in environmental justice advocacy by highlighting the gendered impacts of environmental degradation and promoting intersectional approaches to addressing these challenges. These organizations bring attention to how women, particularly those in marginalized communities, are disproportionately affected by issues like climate change, pollution, and resource scarcity. Feminist advocacy emphasizes the importance of inclusive decision-making processes that consider the voices and experiences of women and other marginalized groups. By fostering solidarity and collaboration among diverse communities, feminist organizations amplify the call for environmental justice, ensuring that the fight for a healthy planet is also a fight for gender equity. Their efforts not only advance environmental protection but also challenge patriarchal systems that perpetuate inequality and environmental harm.

### **Introduction to Feminist Advocacy for Environmental Justice**

Feminist organizations have long played a critical role in advocating for social justice, and their involvement in environmental justice is no exception. These organizations bring a unique and essential perspective to environmental advocacy by highlighting the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and environmental issues. They emphasize the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on women and marginalized communities, and advocate for

inclusive, equitable solutions that address the root causes of both gender inequality and environmental harm.

### **Addressing Gendered Impacts of Environmental Degradation**

Environmental degradation often disproportionately affects women, particularly those in marginalized communities. Feminist organizations play a vital role in bringing attention to these gendered impacts and advocating for policies and practices that protect and empower women.

In many communities, women are the primary **caregivers** and are responsible for securing water, food, and fuel for their families. Environmental degradation, such as deforestation, water pollution, and climate change, directly threatens their ability to perform these essential tasks. Feminist organizations highlight these challenges and advocate for sustainable practices that protect natural resources and support women's livelihoods.

Women are often more vulnerable to the **health** impacts of environmental pollution and climate change. For example, exposure to toxic chemicals from industrial activities or contaminated water sources can lead to reproductive health issues, increased maternal mortality, and other health problems Sorensen C, Murray V, Lemery J, Balbus J (2018). Feminist organizations advocate for stronger environmental regulations and health protections that specifically address the needs of women.

Women, particularly in rural areas, are often **economically marginalized** and have less access to land, resources, and decision-making power (UNWomen 2022). Environmental degradation exacerbates this marginalization, making it even more difficult for women to sustain their families and communities. Feminist organizations work to ensure that women have equal access to resources, land rights, and economic opportunities in the context of environmental justice.

#### ***Real-Life Example***

*Facilitator should be able to identify and use examples with the local context of country while looking at other countries stated here. In Kenya, the Green Belt Movement, founded by Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, has been instrumental in addressing both environmental degradation and women's rights. The movement focuses on tree planting to combat deforestation while also empowering women by providing them with economic opportunities and leadership roles in their communities.*

### **Promoting Intersectional Approaches to Environmental Justice**

Feminist organizations advocate for intersectional approaches to environmental justice, recognizing that environmental issues are deeply connected to other forms of social injustice, including gender inequality, racial discrimination, and economic exploitation.

Feminist organizations emphasize that environmental justice cannot be achieved without addressing the **intersecting** oppressions that affect marginalized communities. For example, indigenous women may face both gender discrimination and the loss of their land due to environmental exploitation. Feminist advocacy calls for policies that address these overlapping issues holistically.

Feminist organizations advocate for **inclusive decision-making** processes that ensure the voices of women and other marginalized groups are heard and respected. This means involving women

in leadership roles in environmental movements, ensuring that their perspectives shape policies and practices, and challenging patriarchal structures that exclude them from decision-making.

Feminist organizations often work in **collaboration** with other social justice movements, recognizing that the fight for environmental justice is interconnected with struggles for racial, economic, and gender justice. This collaboration strengthens the overall impact of advocacy efforts by building solidarity across different movements.

### ***Real-Life Example***

*The Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) is a global organization that promotes an intersectional approach to climate justice. WECAN works with women leaders around the world, particularly indigenous women, to amplify their voices in climate negotiations, promote sustainable practices, and advocate for systemic change that addresses the root causes of both gender and environmental injustice.*

### **Challenging Patriarchal Systems and Advocating for Equity**

Feminist organizations challenge patriarchal systems that contribute to both gender inequality and environmental degradation. They advocate for equity in environmental policies and practices, ensuring that women and marginalized communities have equal access to resources and opportunities.

**Patriarchal** systems often prioritize profit and power over the well-being of people and the planet. This leads to environmental exploitation, where natural resources are extracted and polluted with little regard for the communities that depend on them. Feminist organizations challenge these systems by advocating for policies that prioritize sustainability, equity, and the rights of all people, especially women.

Feminist organizations focus on **empowering women as leaders** in environmental advocacy. This includes providing training, resources, and support to women who are fighting for environmental justice in their communities. By elevating women's voices and leadership, these organizations work to create more equitable and effective environmental movements.

Feminist organizations **advocate for gender-responsive environmental policies** that take into account the specific needs and contributions of women. This includes advocating for gender equality in land ownership, access to clean water and sanitation, and participation in environmental decision-making processes.

### ***Real-Life Example***

*In India, the Chipko Movement, which was led by rural women, is a powerful example of how feminist organizations can challenge patriarchal systems and advocate for equity. The movement began in the 1970s when women in the Himalayas organized to protect their forests from logging. They physically "hugged" the trees to prevent them from being cut down, drawing attention to the importance of forests for their livelihoods and the environment. Their activism not only protected the forests but also highlighted the vital role of women in environmental conservation.*

### **Fostering Solidarity and Collaboration Among Diverse Communities**

Feminist organizations play a crucial role in fostering solidarity and collaboration among diverse

communities in the fight for environmental justice. By building networks of support and sharing knowledge, these organizations help create a united front that can more effectively challenge environmental injustices.

Feminist organizations often work to **build alliances** between different communities, including women, indigenous peoples, people of colour, and low-income groups. These alliances are crucial for creating a broad-based movement that can address the multiple dimensions of environmental injustice.

Feminist organizations emphasize the importance of **sharing knowledge**, resources, and strategies among communities. This includes providing education and training on environmental issues, supporting grassroots organizing efforts, and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups in national and international forums.

Feminist organizations often work on both local and global scales, recognizing that environmental justice is a global issue that requires global solutions. They build networks of **solidarity** that connect local struggles with global movements, ensuring that the voices of women and marginalized communities are heard in international policy discussions.

### ***Real-Life Example***

*The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) is a network of feminist organizations, environmental justice groups, and women's rights organizations that work together to address environmental and gender injustices. GAGGA supports grassroots women's movements around the world, providing funding, training, and advocacy support to strengthen their efforts and connect them with global networks.*

### **Activity: Intersectionality Mapping Exercise**

Objective: To explore the interconnectedness of gender, race, class, and environmental issues and understand the role of feminist organizations in addressing these intersections.

#### **Instructions**

- a. Begin with a brief explanation of intersectionality and how feminist organizations address overlapping issues of gender, race, class, and environmental justice.
- b. Group Work: Divide participants into groups and provide each group with large sheets of paper and markers.
- c. Ask each group to map out the intersections between gender, environmental justice, and other social justice issues (e.g., economic inequality, racial discrimination). Encourage them to include specific examples, such as how climate change affects women differently in various regions or how indigenous women are impacted by land rights issues.
- d. Each group identifies and maps out the roles that feminist organizations play in addressing these intersections (e.g., advocating for women's land rights, promoting inclusive environmental policies).
- e. Groups present their intersectionality maps and discuss how feminist organizations can effectively advocate for environmental justice within these intersections.



*Reflection* - How does intersectionality enhance our understanding of environmental justice? What specific roles do feminist organizations play in advocating for marginalized communities?

### **Closing Group Activity:**

#### **Environmental Justice Advocacy Simulation**

*Activity: Mock Advocacy Campaign*

Objective: To apply all the strategies, tools, and techniques learned in the module by designing and simulating a comprehensive advocacy campaign.

#### **Instructions**

- Present a fictional but realistic environmental justice issue (e.g., a proposed factory that threatens a local water source).
- Divide participants into groups, each representing different stakeholders (e.g., a feminist organization, a local community group, a media outlet, policymakers).
- Each group develops a part of the campaign, such as:
  - Advocacy strategies to mobilize the community.
  - Tools and techniques to raise awareness (social media, storytelling, data collection).
  - The role their organization will play in advocating for environmental justice.
- Conduct a mock meeting where each group presents their strategy and negotiates with other stakeholders to create a unified advocacy campaign.

*Discuss* the outcomes of the simulation, focusing on collaboration, the effectiveness of the strategies used, and the role of each organization in achieving environmental justice.

How did different stakeholders work together to create a successful advocacy campaign? What challenges were faced in coordinating efforts, and how were they overcome?

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Women Environmental Programme

# Environmental Justice and Human Rights Booth Camp

## **Module IV**

Behavioural Change Communication

# Behavioural Change Communication

## Overview:

This module focuses on understanding the principles, strategies, and applications of Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) in various settings, including health, education, and community development. It explores how communication can be used as a powerful tool to influence and modify behaviour, leading to positive social and health outcomes. The module will cover key theories of behaviour change, the design and implementation of BCC campaigns, and the evaluation of their effectiveness. Learners will gain insights into how to craft messages, select appropriate media channels, and engage communities to foster sustainable behaviour change.

Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) is a strategic approach that uses communication to influence and promote positive changes in behaviours, particularly in areas like health, education, and social welfare. BCC is rooted in behavioural science and employs various communication tools, including mass media, interpersonal communication, and community engagement, to reach and influence target audiences. It involves understanding the barriers to behaviour change and designing tailored messages that resonate with specific groups. Effective BCC strategies are evidence-based, culturally sensitive, and aim to foster sustainable behaviour changes that improve individual and community well-being.

**Objectives:** The module will enhance participant's knowledge on how to design and implement effective BCC campaigns, apply behavioural change theories, critically evaluate communication strategies, and create culturally sensitive materials. They will also understand the ethical considerations involved in influencing behaviour through communication.

## By the end of the module, participants will be able to.

1. Have a comprehensive understanding of behavioural change theories *and how they apply to communication strategies.*
2. Develop practical skills in designing and implementing BCC campaigns *that effectively address public health, social, and environmental issues.*
3. Critically evaluate BCC programs *in terms of their impact, sustainability, and ethical implications.*
4. Create culturally sensitive and inclusive communication materials *that respect the diversity of target audiences.*
5. Encourage reflective thinking on the role of communication in shaping behaviour, *and the responsibilities of communication professionals in this field.*

## Defining Expectations: Exercise: What are Expectations?

Participants are divided into groups. Each group is asked to come up with their expectations for the workshop and reasons why each is important to the training workshop. The working results are presented in a workstation that will be used during the gallery walk.

Debriefing: Make sure you don't become bogged down in semantic details. The important point



is that participants understand the concept of training expectations, which serves as a guideline. Inform the group that their expectations will be discussed alongside the organizers' expectations. If participants request that additional items be added to the program, this will be communicated to the WEP team. Collect all ideas and create a synthesis chart on a flipchart entitled "Why it is important to clarify training session expectations."

### Vision Exercise

**Objective:** To enhance participants' understanding of how to create an effective BCC message that addresses a specific behavioural issue.

**Duration:** 10 minutes

#### Process:

- 1. Identify a Behavioural Issue (2 minutes):** Participants should think of a common behavioural issue in their community or work environment (e.g., smoking, handwashing, healthy eating).
- 2. Define the Target Audience (2 minutes):** Identify the primary audience for the BCC message. Consider factors like age, gender, cultural background, and any barriers they may face in adopting the desired behaviour.
- 3. Craft a BCC Message (4 minutes):** Using the identified issue and target audience, participants will draft a short, clear, and persuasive message that encourages behaviour change. The message should include:
  - A **call to action** (e.g., "Start washing your hands with soap today!")
  - A **motivating factor** (e.g., "Protect your family from illnesses by practicing good hygiene.")
  - A **simple and memorable slogan** (e.g., "Clean Hands, Healthy Lives.")
- 4. Share and Discuss (2 minutes):** In small groups or pairs, participants will briefly share their messages. They will discuss the strengths of each message and suggest any improvements.

#### Debrief:

- Facilitator highlights key takeaways, emphasizing the importance of audience analysis and clarity in BCC messages.
- Encourage participants to reflect on how they can apply this exercise in real-world BCC scenarios.

## Session 1

### Understanding Behavioural Change Communication

Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) is a strategy used to influence and modify behaviours in a way that promotes positive outcomes, particularly in health, social, and



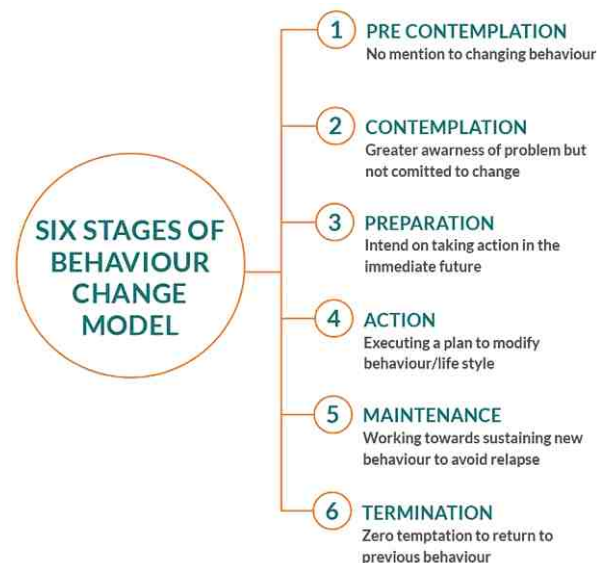
Environmental contexts. Rooted in behavioural science, BCC involves the systematic use of communication strategies to encourage individuals or groups to adopt a more constructive behaviour.

At its core, BCC is about understanding the factors that influence human behaviour and leveraging communication to address these factors. It recognizes that behaviour change is a complex process influenced by multiple elements, including knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, cultural norms, and environmental factors. Effective BCC interventions are designed with these complexities in mind, ensuring that messages are tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the target audience.

BCC draws on several behavioural theories, such as the Health Belief Model, Social Cognitive Theory, and the Transtheoretical Model. These theories help explain why people engage in certain behaviours and what factors might motivate them to change. For example, the Health Belief Model suggests that people are more likely to change their behaviour if they believe they are at risk of a serious problem, believe that the benefits of change outweigh the barriers, and have confidence in their ability to make the change.

### Stages of Behavioural Change Communication

As earlier stated, that (BCC) is a systematic process that involves multiple stages, each designed to guide individuals or communities through the journey of adopting new behaviours. Understanding these stages is important for designing effective BCC interventions that are tailored to the specific needs and readiness of the target audience.



**Pre-Contemplation:** In the precontemplation stage, individuals or communities are not yet considering change. They may be unaware of the problem or may not see the behaviour as harmful. At this stage, the goal of BCC is to raise awareness about the issue and highlight the benefits of change. Communication strategies might include educational campaigns that present facts, share stories of those affected by the behaviour, and begin to challenge existing norms and beliefs.

**Contemplation:** During the contemplation stage, individuals become aware of the problem and start to think about making a change. However, they may still be ambivalent or uncertain. The focus of BCC at this stage is to increase motivation and reduce barriers to change. Communication should address the pros and cons of the behaviour, providing clear information about the risks of continuing the behaviour and the benefits of changing. This stage often involves personalized messages that resonate with the audience's values and emotions, encouraging them to consider the possibility of change.

**Preparation:** In the preparation stage, individuals have decided to change and are planning how

to do so. They might start taking small steps toward the new behaviour, such as gathering information or seeking support. BCC at this stage should provide practical guidance and resources to help individuals prepare for change. This might include offering tips, step-by-step guides, or tools to plan for potential challenges. The communication should reinforce confidence and self-efficacy, helping individuals feel ready and capable of making the change.

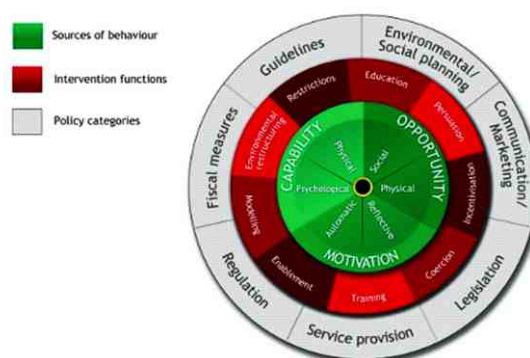
**Action:** The action stage is when individuals actively begin to modify their behaviour. At this stage, BCC should focus on supporting and reinforcing the change. Communication strategies might include providing positive feedback, sharing success stories, and offering ongoing encouragement. It's important to address any challenges or setbacks that individuals may face and provide strategies to overcome them. The aim is to sustain the behaviour change by maintaining motivation and providing the necessary support.

**Maintenance:** In the maintenance stage, individuals have successfully adopted the new behaviour and are working to sustain it over time. BCC at this stage focuses on preventing relapse and reinforcing the benefits of the new behaviour. Communication strategies might include reminders, continued support through follow-up messages or community support groups, and celebrating milestones. It's also important to help individuals identify potential triggers for relapse and provide strategies to manage them.

**Termination:** The termination stage is when the new behaviour becomes a permanent part of the individual's life, and there is little to no risk of relapse. At this stage, BCC efforts may taper off, as the focus shifts to reinforcing the behaviour's benefits as a long-term, sustainable change. The goal is to ensure that individuals feel confident in their new behaviour and continue to recognize its value.

## Designing BCC Interventions

When designing BCC interventions, it is essential to conduct a thorough audience analysis. This involves understanding the demographic, cultural, and psychological characteristics of the target group, as well as identifying the barriers they may face in adopting the desired behaviour. Messages should be crafted in a way that resonates with the audience, using language, imagery, and channels that are accessible and relevant to them. BCC strategies often employ a mix of communication channels, including mass media, social media, community outreach, and interpersonal communication. The choice of channels depends on the target audience and the context. For instance, in a rural setting, community-based approaches might be more effective, while urban audiences might be better reached through digital media.



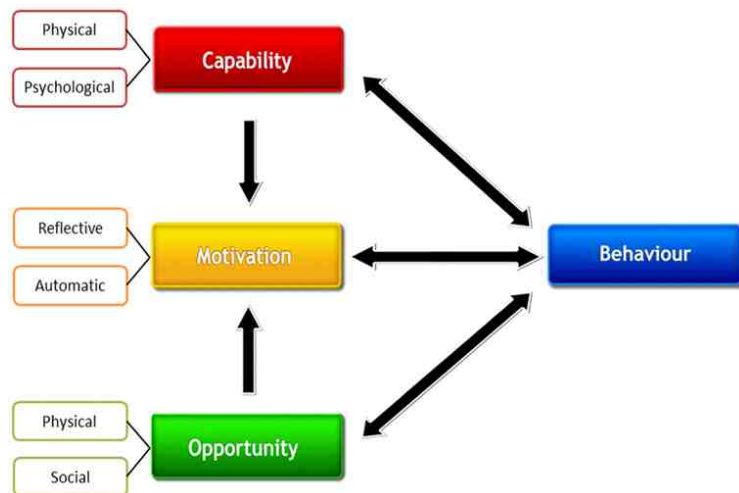
## Evaluating BCC Interventions

Evaluation is a critical component of BCC. It involves assessing the impact of the communication efforts on the target behaviour, as well as measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. This helps in refining and improving future BCC initiatives. Evaluation can be done through various methods, including surveys, focus groups, and monitoring behaviour trends. Ethics also play a significant role in evaluating BCC. Practitioners must ensure that their

messages are not manipulative, respect the autonomy of individuals, and are culturally sensitive. It is essential to engage with communities in a way that builds trust and fosters genuine participation.

## Session 2

### Strategies for Effective Communication



Effective communication is a

process of sharing information in a way that is clearly understood by all parties involved. It is essential in both personal and professional settings, as it fosters collaboration, builds



Presented by Enam Agha

relationships, and ensures that goals are achieved. Understanding the audience is also crucial. Different audiences have unique needs, preferences, and levels of understanding. Tailoring the message to these factors ensures it is relevant and easily comprehensible. For example, the way you communicate with a colleague might differ from how you communicate with a client or a friend. Effective communication involves a two-way exchange. Encouraging feedback ensures that the message is understood and allows for adjustments if necessary. This dialogue fosters collaboration and mutual

understanding, leading to better decision-making and problem-solving.

There are key elements of effective communication includes clarity, active listening, and understanding the audience. Clarity involves delivering messages in a straightforward manner, avoiding jargon or ambiguity. This helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures that the message is received as intended. Active listening, on the other hand, requires full attention to the speaker, responding appropriately, and providing feedback. This not only shows respect but also confirms that the message has been understood correctly. Strategies for effective communication encompass various techniques and approaches that ensure messages are delivered clearly, understood accurately, and received with the intended impact. These strategies are vital in achieving goals, resolving conflicts, and fostering collaboration. Here are key strategies to enhance communication effectiveness:

**Active Listening:** Active listening is the cornerstone of effective communication. It involves fully concentrating on the speaker, understanding their message, responding thoughtfully, and remembering what was said. By giving the speaker full attention, asking clarifying questions, and providing feedback, communicators demonstrate respect and empathy, fostering a more meaningful and productive exchange. Active listening also helps avoid misunderstandings, as it ensures that the message is received as intended.



**Clarity and Conciseness:** Clear and concise communication is essential to avoid confusion and misinterpretation. Communicators should focus on delivering their message in a straightforward manner, avoiding jargon or overly complex language. Being concise means expressing thoughts in as few words as necessary without losing the essence of the message.

Clarity involves structuring the

message logically, using simple language, and ensuring that the main points are easily identifiable. This approach helps the audience grasp the message quickly and accurately.



**Tailoring the Message to the Audience:** Understanding the audience is crucial for effective communication. Different audiences have varying needs, preferences, and levels of understanding. Tailoring the message to the audience involves considering factors such as their knowledge level, cultural background, interests, and expectations. For example, technical language may be appropriate for experts but could confuse a general audience. Effective communicators adapt their tone, style, and content to resonate with their specific audience, ensuring the message is both relevant and relatable.

**Nonverbal Communication:** Nonverbal cues, such as body language, facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact, play a significant role in communication. These cues can reinforce the spoken message or, if misaligned, create confusion. Effective communicators are aware of their nonverbal signals and use them to enhance their verbal communication. For instance, maintaining eye contact shows confidence and engagement, while open body language fosters trust and openness. Being mindful of nonverbal communication helps convey sincerity, enthusiasm, and attentiveness.

**Feedback and Two-Way Communication:** Effective communication is not just about delivering a message; it also involves receiving and responding to feedback. Encouraging feedback ensures that the message is understood and allows for clarification if needed. Two-way communication creates a dialogue, where both the sender and receiver participate actively. This approach fosters a collaborative environment, where ideas are exchanged, and mutual understanding is achieved. Feedback also provides valuable insights for improving future communication efforts.

**Empathy and Emotional Intelligence:** Empathy involves understanding and sharing the feelings of others. In communication, empathy allows individuals to connect with their audience on an emotional level, making the message more impactful. Emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, is essential for managing emotions during communication. By demonstrating empathy and emotional intelligence, communicators can navigate sensitive topics, build rapport, and handle conflicts more effectively.

**Using Appropriate Channels:** Choosing the right communication channel is vital for the message's effectiveness. Different channels, such as face-to-face meetings, emails, phone calls, or social media, have their strengths and limitations. For example, complex or sensitive messages are often best delivered in person, while routine information might be effectively

communicated via email. Understanding the context and purpose of the communication helps in selecting the most appropriate channel, ensuring that the message reaches the audience in the most effective manner.

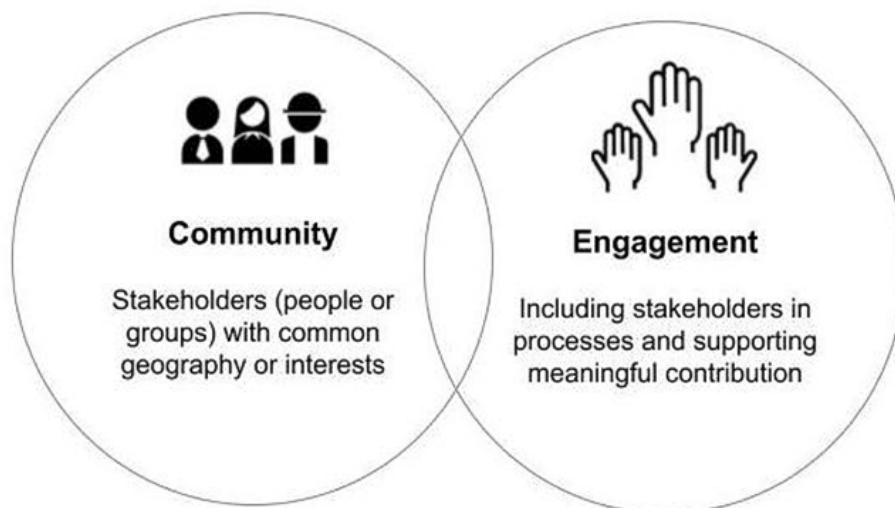
**Continuous Improvement:** Effective communication is an ongoing process that requires continuous improvement. Regularly reflecting on communication experiences, seeking feedback, and learning from mistakes are essential for developing better communication skills. Staying open to new ideas, adapting to changing circumstances, and being willing to adjust communication strategies contribute to long-term success in both personal and professional interactions.

Summarily, effective communication requires a combination of active listening, clarity, audience awareness, nonverbal communication, feedback, empathy, appropriate channel selection, and continuous improvement. By applying these strategies, communicators can enhance their ability to convey messages clearly, build stronger relationships, and achieve desired outcomes.

## Session 3

### Engaging Communities and Stakeholders

Engaging communities and stakeholders are an essential process in driving successful initiatives, particularly in areas such as development, education, and environmental sustainability. Effective engagement ensures that the voices, needs, and concerns of all involved



parties are considered, leading to more inclusive, sustainable, and impactful outcomes. It fosters a sense of ownership, collaboration, and trust, which are essential for the long-term success of any project or initiative.

### Importance of Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement is important for several reasons.

- It ensures that projects are relevant and responsive to the actual needs of the people they are intended to benefit. By involving communities and stakeholders from the beginning,

initiatives are more likely to address real challenges and leverage local knowledge, resulting in more practical and sustainable solutions.

- Engagement builds trust and transparency. When communities and stakeholders are actively involved in decision-making processes, it reduces the risk of resistance and opposition, as they feel their perspectives are valued. This collaboration also enhances accountability, as stakeholders are more likely to hold themselves and others responsible for the success of the initiative.
- Engaging communities and stakeholders lead to innovation and creativity. Diverse perspectives bring new ideas and solutions that may not have been considered otherwise. This diversity can also help in identifying potential risks and challenges early on, allowing for more effective planning and implementation.

### **Strategies for Effective Engagement**

To engage communities and stakeholders effectively, it is important to employ strategies that promote inclusion, participation, and meaningful dialogue.

**Early Involvement:** Engaging stakeholders and communities from the very beginning of a project is crucial. This early involvement helps to build trust, identify key issues, and ensure that the project aligns with the needs and priorities of those it aims to serve. It also allows for the co-creation of solutions, fostering a sense of ownership among participants.

**Inclusive Participation:** Effective engagement requires the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, particularly those who are often marginalized or underrepresented. This includes considering factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. By ensuring that all voices are heard, the initiative becomes more equitable and reflective of the community's diversity.

**Transparent Communication:** Clear, consistent, and honest communication is essential for building trust and maintaining engagement. This involves regularly sharing information about the project's goals, progress, and challenges, and being open to feedback. Transparency helps to manage expectations and fosters a collaborative environment where stakeholders feel informed and involved.

**Empowerment and Capacity Building:** Empowering communities and stakeholders is key to sustainable engagement. This can be achieved through capacity-building activities, such as training and education, that equip participants with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute effectively. Empowered stakeholders are more likely to take an active role in the project and advocate for its success.

**Regular Feedback and Adaptation:** Ongoing engagement requires mechanisms for regular feedback and adaptation. This involves creating spaces for dialogue where stakeholders can express their views and provide input. Feedback should be taken seriously and used to make necessary adjustments to the project. This iterative process ensures that the initiative remains responsive to the evolving needs and conditions of the community.

**Building Partnerships:** Collaboration with local organizations, leaders, and other stakeholders can enhance the reach and impact of an initiative. Partnerships help to pool resources, share

knowledge, and coordinate efforts, making the project more effective and sustainable. Working with trusted local partners also helps to build credibility and strengthen relationships within the community.

## Challenges and Considerations

While engaging communities and stakeholders is essential, it is not without challenges. These can include power dynamics, where certain groups may dominate discussions, leading to the exclusion of others. Additionally, cultural differences, language barriers, and varying levels of literacy can complicate communication. It is important to be aware of these challenges and take steps to mitigate them, such as using facilitators, providing translation services, and adopting culturally appropriate methods of engagement.

However, engaging communities and stakeholders is a vital component of successful initiatives. By fostering inclusion, transparency, and collaboration, it ensures that projects are more relevant, sustainable, and impactful. Effective engagement requires thoughtful strategies that empower participants, encourage dialogue, and build lasting partnerships. Through these efforts, communities and stakeholders can work together to achieve shared goals and create positive, long-lasting change.

## Session 4

### Creating Impactful Messages

Creating impactful messages is an important skill in communication, marketing, education, and advocacy. An impactful message effectively conveys its intended meaning, resonates with the audience, and inspires action or change. Whether you are crafting an Environmental campaign, a social media post, or an educational lesson, the ability to create messages that leave a lasting impression is essential.

There are key elements and strategies that can be adopted for crafting impactful messages:

***Understanding the Audience:*** The foundation of any impactful message lies in a deep understanding of the audience. Knowing who you are communicating with allows you to tailor the message to their needs, preferences, values, and concerns. This involves considering factors such as age, gender, cultural background, education level, and emotional state. For example, a message aimed at young adults might use more informal language and digital platforms, while a message targeting older adults might be more formal and delivered through traditional media. Understanding the audience also helps in identifying the barriers they may face in accepting or acting on the message, allowing for more effective persuasion.

***Clarity and Simplicity:*** An impactful message is clear and simple. It should be easy to understand, with no room for ambiguity or misinterpretation. Avoid using jargon, technical terms, or overly complex sentences that might confuse the audience. Instead, focus on straightforward language that conveys the core message quickly and effectively. The goal is for the audience to grasp the main idea immediately. Simplicity is particularly important in



environments where people are bombarded with information; a clear, concise message is more likely to stand out and be remembered.

**Emotional Appeal:** Emotion is a powerful driver of behaviour, and messages that evoke strong emotions are more likely to be impactful. Whether it's happiness, fear, empathy, or anger, tapping into the emotional responses of your audience can help reinforce the message and motivate action. For example, a message about the dangers of smoking might use fear to highlight the health risks, while a campaign to promote charitable donations might use empathy by showing the positive impact on those in need. The key is to align the emotional appeal with the message's purpose and the audience's values.

**Storytelling:** Storytelling is a highly effective technique for creating impactful messages. People are naturally drawn to stories because they are relatable and memorable. A well-crafted story can illustrate a problem, show the consequences, and present a solution in a way that resonates with the audience on a personal level. Stories help to humanize abstract concepts and make them more tangible. For instance, instead of simply stating statistics about poverty, telling the story of an individual or family affected by poverty can create a deeper emotional connection and a more profound impact.

**Call to Action:** An impactful message often includes a clear and compelling call to action (CTA). A CTA tells the audience what you want them to do after receiving the message. It could be as direct as “Donate Now,” “Sign Up Today,” or “Share This Post,” or it could be more subtle, such as encouraging the audience to reflect on their behaviour or consider a new perspective. The CTA should be specific, actionable, and aligned with the overall goal of the message. It should also be easy for the audience to follow through on, with minimal barriers.

**Visual and Verbal Harmony:** Visual elements can significantly enhance the impact of a message. Images, colours, typography, and layout all play a role in how a message is received and interpreted. Visuals should complement the verbal content, reinforcing the message rather than distracting from it. For example, an anti-bullying campaign might use sombre colours and images of affected individuals to underscore the seriousness of the issue. Consistency between visual and verbal elements ensures that the message is coherent and more likely to be retained by the audience.

**Relevance and Timeliness:** An impactful message is relevant to the audience's current situation or concerns. It addresses issues that are important to them and offers timely solutions or perspectives. Timing can also play a critical role; for example, a health campaign promoting flu vaccines is more impactful when launched at the start of flu season. Staying attuned to the audience's needs and the broader social context helps in crafting messages that resonate deeply and are acted upon.

**Repetition and Reinforcement:** Repetition is key to making a message stick. Repeated exposure to a message helps to reinforce its importance and increases the likelihood that the audience will remember and act on it. This can be achieved through consistent messaging across different platforms and channels, ensuring that the audience encounters the message multiple times in various forms. Reinforcement through follow-up messages, reminders, and consistent branding also helps solidify the message in the audience's mind.

It is imperative to note that creating impactful messages involves a strategic blend of audience understanding, clarity, emotional appeal, storytelling, a clear call to action, visual harmony,

relevance, and repetition. By mastering these elements, communicators can craft messages that not only capture attention but also inspire meaningful action and lasting change.

## Session 5

### Using Media and Social Media for Advocacy



Using media and social media for advocacy has become increasingly powerful in today's digital age, offering a platform to reach large and diverse audiences, amplify voices, and drive social change. These tools allow advocates to spread awareness, mobilize supporters, and influence public opinion and policy in ways that were previously unimaginable. Here are key strategies and considerations for effectively using media and social media in advocacy efforts.

***Understanding the Media Landscape:*** Before launching a media-based advocacy campaign, it's essential to understand the media landscape. This involves knowing the different types of media (traditional (such as newspapers, television, and radio) and digital (including blogs, online news outlets, and social media platforms)—and their respective audiences. Traditional media still holds significant influence, especially among older demographics, policymakers, and in regions where internet penetration is low. On the other hand, digital media, particularly social media, is crucial for reaching younger, more tech-savvy audiences and for creating content that can go viral.

***Crafting a Clear Message:*** For media and social media advocacy to be effective, the message must be clear, compelling, and easy to share. The message should resonate with the target audience, align with their values, and be presented in a way that is both engaging and informative. Using storytelling techniques can make the message more relatable and memorable. It's also important to ensure consistency across different media platforms to reinforce the message and make it more recognizable.

***Leveraging Social Media Platforms:*** Each social media platform has its unique characteristics, and understanding these is key to using them effectively for advocacy:

- **Facebook** is excellent for building communities, sharing detailed content, and creating events. It's useful for reaching a broad audience and fostering discussion through comments and shares.
- **Twitter** is ideal for real-time updates, engaging in public discourse, and reaching influencers, journalists, and policymakers. Hashtags can be used to join or start conversations around specific issues.
- **Instagram** is highly visual, making it a great platform for sharing powerful images, infographics, and short videos that can quickly capture attention. It's particularly effective for reaching younger audiences.

- **YouTube** is the go-to platform for video content, allowing advocates to create in-depth documentaries, interviews, and how-to guides that can educate and inspire viewers.
- **TikTok** is increasingly popular for short, creative videos that can quickly go viral, especially among younger users. It's useful for humanizing advocacy messages and making them accessible through trends and challenges.

**Building and mobilizing a community:** social media is not just about broadcasting messages but also about building a community. Engaging with followers, responding to comments, and encouraging user-generated content helps to create a sense of belonging and shared purpose. This community can then be mobilized for collective action, such as signing petitions, attending events, or spreading the message further through their networks. Advocacy campaigns can use hashtags to unify the conversation and make it easier for supporters to find and join the movement.

**Using Influencers and Partnerships:** Collaborating with influencers—individuals with significant followings on social media can greatly amplify an advocacy campaign. Influencers can lend credibility, reach new audiences, and make the message more relatable. Partnerships with organizations, brands, or media outlets can also extend the reach and impact of the campaign. These collaborations should be carefully chosen to ensure alignment with the advocacy goals and values.

**Measuring Impact and Adapting:** One of the advantages of using digital media and social media for advocacy is the ability to measure impact in real time. Metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and video views provide immediate feedback on how the message is being received. Tools like Google Analytics, Twitter Analytics, and Facebook Insights can offer deeper insights into audience demographics, engagement levels, and the effectiveness of different types of content. This data can be used to adapt and refine the strategy, ensuring that the campaign remains effective and responsive to audience needs.

**Ethical Considerations:** While media and social media offer powerful tools for advocacy, it's important to use them ethically. This includes ensuring that the information shared is accurate and not misleading, respecting the privacy and dignity of those featured in advocacy content, and avoiding tactics that could harm or exploit vulnerable populations. Advocates should also be mindful of the potential for backlash or negative responses and be prepared to address criticism constructively.

Thus, using media and social media for advocacy is a dynamic and evolving process that requires a strategic approach. By understanding the media landscape, crafting clear messages, leveraging the strengths of different platforms, building communities, partnering with influencers, and measuring impact, advocates can effectively harness these tools to drive meaningful change. Ethical considerations should guide all actions, ensuring that advocacy efforts are responsible and respectful of the audiences and causes they aim to support.



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Women Environmental Programme

# Environmental Justice and Human Rights

## **Module V** Environmental Governance

## Comprehensive Module on Environmental Governance for a Feminist Group *Module*

### *Overview*

Environment refers to the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates. The environment includes water, air, soil and physical properties and the inter relationship which exists among and between them and human beings, other living creatures, plants and microorganisms.

Governance is however an overall complex system or framework of [processes](#), functions, structures, [rules](#), [laws](#) and [norms](#) borne out of the [relationships](#), [interactions](#), power dynamics and [communication](#) within an organized group of individuals which not only sets the boundaries of acceptable conduct and practices of different actors of the group and controls their decision-making processes through the creation and enforcement of rules and guidelines, but also manages, allocates and mobilizes relevant resources and capacities of different members and sets the overall direction of the group in order to effectively address its specific collective needs, problems and challenges.

**Objective:** The objective of this module is to empower women issues around environmental governance and policies. With a hands-on experience on existing frameworks governing environmental use women will be empowered to act in capacities that were exclusively reserved for the male gender. It is also to facilitate policies that promote women's environmental leadership that will contribute to more sustainable and equitable practices in their various communities and the society at large.

### **It focuses on five key areas:**

- i. Understanding the principles of environmental governance (*Educating participants on the concepts of environmental governance with a focus on feminist principles.*)
- ii. Overview of international environmental laws and agreements (*Equipping participants with effective knowledge about international environmental laws and agreements.*)
- iii. National Environmental Policies and Laws (*educating participants about the national environmental policies, enabling them to advocate effectively for policies that support their local communities.*)
- iv. Role of Civil Society in Environmental Governance (*Educating participants on effective participation with civil society organizations and their roles as regards environmental governance and integrating women.*)
- v. Incorporating a gender equality perspective in Environmental Governance (*designing policies with participants that recognize the needs of women in Environmental Governance.*)

By the end of this module, participants will have knowledgeable skills about environmental governance, participate effectively with civil society organizations in promoting their various communities, and implement the policies that promote gender equality in environmental governance.

## **Defining Expectations: Exercise: What are Expectations?**

Participants are divided into five groups. Each group is asked to come up with their expectations for the workshop and reasons why each is important to the training workshop. The work results are presented in a workstation to be used for a gallery walk.

### **Debriefing:**

Ensure that you don't get bogged down in semantic details. The important point is that participants have grasped the idea of expectation for the training which is a kind of guiding direction.

Inform the group that the expectations of the group will be discussed with the organizer's expectations. If participants express the need to have additional items added to the program, that will be passed to the WEP team. Collect all ideas and create a synthesis chart on a flipchart: "why it is important to clarify expectations of a training session".

### **Visioning Exercise**

#### **Objectives**

To enable participants to generate and share their aspirations and expectations. To define a positive vision for the future that people can work towards

#### **Process**

There are many processes to establish joint visions. The main aim is to establish a joint and agreed vision within the group. It is important to ensure that all members have a fair chance to contribute and to be heard. You might want to consider breaking into homogeneous subgroups and then combine the results to get an agreement.

#### **Here is a possible process for a visioning exercise:**

1. Introduce the concept of a vision or a dream - that will allow people to have a direction for their learning and developmental journey.
2. Ask people to close their eyes and imagine they have been away and are now flying back over their home area in 5 years' time. They are looking down at the houses where people live, the streets, the infrastructure, etc. Ask them to imagine what people are doing. After 3 minutes ask people gently to come back.
3. In sub-groups, ask people to draw what they saw. Explain that it is not important that the picture should be beautiful or accurate, but rather it should capture in some way what people have seen. Ask them to be sure to draw what they have envisioned people doing
4. After 10 minutes ask the different sub-groups to present their visions to the larger group.
5. Display the presented drawings publicly - and see if you can help the group synthesize a vision statement that captures all or as many as possible of the aspects presented by the group without introducing a fundamental contradiction.
6. Discuss steps on the journey towards the vision and plan for action.

## Materials needed

*Flip chart paper, crayons, marker pens, masking tape*

## Note

*It is important to allow everyone to participate in the drawing exercise. This will ensure that everyone will be heard, and that broad ownership is ensured.*

## Session One

### Introduction to Environmental Governance

Environment: this refers to the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates. The environment includes water, air, soil and physical properties and the inter relationship which exists among and between them and human beings, other living creatures, plants and microorganisms. It is also the sum of all external conditions affecting the life, development and survival of an organism (any form of animal or plant).



Governance: is the overall complex system or framework of [processes](#), functions, structures, [rules](#), [laws](#) and [norms](#) borne out of the [relationships](#), [interactions](#), power dynamics and [communication](#) within an organized group of individuals which not only sets the boundaries of acceptable conduct and practices of different actors of the group and controls their decision-making processes through the creation and enforcement of rules and guidelines, but also manages, allocates and mobilizes relevant resources and capacities of different members and sets the overall direction of the group in order to effectively address its specific collective needs, problems and challenges. It is the system by which an organization is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account.

Environmental governance consists of a system of laws, norms, rules, policies and practices that dictate how the board members of an [environment related regulatory body](#) should manage and oversee the affairs of any [environment related regulatory body](#) which is responsible for ensuring [sustainability](#) ([sustainable development](#)) and [managing](#) all human activities—[political](#), [social](#) and [economic](#). It involves the processes of [decision-making](#) involved in the control and management of the environment and [natural resources](#). Environmental governance includes government, business and civil society, and emphasizes whole [system management](#).

[International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) (IUCN), define environmental governance as the 'multi-level interactions (i.e., local, national, international/global) among, but not limited to, three main actors, i.e., state, [market](#), and civil society, which interact with one another, whether in formal and informal ways; in formulating and implementing policies in response to environment-related demands and inputs from the society; bound by rules, procedures, processes, and widely accepted behaviour; possessing characteristics of “good governance”; for the purpose of attaining environmentally-[sustainable development](#)'.

### Principles of Environmental Governance

Environmental governance principles include participation, the rule of law, transparency,



responsiveness, consensus oriented, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability. These principles aim to promote environmentally sustainable development through decision-making processes that involve various actors at regional, subregional, and national levels. The concept of environmental governance encompasses the management of the environment, conservation, protection, and exploitation of natural resources. It also includes the formal and informal processes and institutions that guide citizens, organizations, social movements, and interest groups in accessing and using natural resources. Environmental governance is crucial for effective environmental management and conservation actions, and

it should be effective, equitable, responsive, and robust.

These objectives need to be considered across the institutional, structural, and procedural elements of environmental governance.

1. **Participation:** Good governance needs to be participatory. Participation can happen directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It includes the obligation of providing information. The rights of free association and freedom of expression are fundamental to participation.
2. **Rule of law:** Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. The judiciary and executive powers need to be impartial and incorruptible.
3. **Transparency:** Transparency means that the decision-making processes, as well as the enforcement of decisions, follow rules and regulations. In addition, information needs to be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Information needs to be provided in an easily understandable form and through appropriate media that reaches the people concerned
4. **Responsiveness:** Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to respond to all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame.
5. **Consensus oriented:** Good governance requires that different interests within society be considered and that decisions follow the objective of reaching a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the whole community.
6. **Equity and inclusiveness:** Good governance does not only serve the interests of the mainstream of society but also includes its most vulnerable and minority groups.
7. **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.
8. **Accountability:** Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Governmental institutions, but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to

those who will be affected by their decisions or actions.

**Activity: Word Cluster** – *ask participants to write down some of the principles of environmental governance*

### **Importance of Environmental Governance**

1. Effective environmental governance is crucial for regulating adoption of green concepts in environmental management, ensuring compliance with laws, regulations, and policies, promoting conservation, protection, and preservation of the environment.
2. Governance ensures long-term public policy, considers future generations, addresses corruption, economic freedom, terrorism, and money laundering, promoting environmental protection and intergenerational equity.
3. Effective environmental governance is crucial for integrating disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and sustainability goals.
4. Effective environmental governance is crucial for decision-making on sustainable development, emphasizing participation, transparency, equity, and accountability among various actors at regional, subregional, and national levels.
5. Effective environmental governance is crucial for economic growth, enhancing company performance, and advancing sustainability efforts. It ensures better environmental protection, resource management, and overall organizational and national sustainability.
6. Corporate governance significantly impacts firms' environmental performance, especially in sustainable business scenarios. Effective governance ensures alignment with shareholders and stakeholders, enhancing environmental sustainability and overall business success.
7. Effective environmental governance involving government, enterprises, and public participation enhances pollution control, promotes sustainability, and boosts public satisfaction, crucial for addressing complex environmental issues like in China.
8. Effective environmental governance is crucial for managing natural resources. Shifts towards decentralization involve civil society and the private sector, enhancing participation and sustainability in environmental management.
9. Effective environmental governance is crucial for preventing resource collapse, managing diverse resource users, and balancing conservation with poverty reduction, as highlighted in the paper.

### **Activity: Group Discussion**

*Divide participants into small groups and discuss the challenges they face in their communities with regards to:*

- *Environment*
- *Governance*
- *Principles of environmental governance*
- *The importance of environmental governance*



- *Share experiences and identify common issues.*

**Exercise: Personal Empowerment Journey**

- *Each participant writes about a time they felt empowered or disempowered.*
- *Share stories in small groups and reflect on lessons learned.*

## Session Two



### International Environmental Laws and Agreement

International environmental law refers to the set of agreements and principles that reflect the world's collective effort to manage our transition to the Anthropocene by addressing serious environmental challenges. [These agreements cover issues such as climate change, ozone depletion, and the mass extinction of wildlife.](#) Most of these agreements are legally binding for countries that have formally ratified them. The role of legislation in inducing responsible attitudes and behaviours towards the environment cannot be overlooked. Legislation serves as an effective instrument for environmental protection, planning, pollution, prevention and control to support health and welfare both today and in the future. It is necessary to safeguard global ecosystems and conserve natural resources. These laws include:

1. African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
2. Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment
3. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
4. Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
5. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
6. United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
7. Paris Agreement
8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### National and Environmental Policies and Regulations

Nigeria is committed to a national environmental policy that will ensure sustainable development based on proper management of the environment. This demands positive and realistic planning that balances human needs against the carrying capacity of the environment. This requires that several complementary policies, strategies and management approaches are put in place which should ensure, among others, that environmental concerns are integrated into major economic decision-making process, environmental remediation costs are built into major

development projects, economic instruments are employed in the management of natural resources, environmentally friendly technologies are applied. Environmental Impact Assessment is mandatorily carried out before any major development project is embarked on. These national policies include:

- National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act
- Environmental Impact Assessment Act
- The Land Use Act
- Harmful Waste (Special Criminal Provision)
- Hydrocarbon Oil Refineries Act
- Associated Gas re-injection Act
- The Endangered Species Act
- Sea Fisheries Act
- Exclusive Economic Zone Act
- Oil Pipelines Act
- The Petroleum industry Act (PIA)



### Activity: Debate

*Participants should be divided into sub-groups and debate on some environmental policies and regulations, their inclusion of women and how they will benefit their communities. Peer feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.*

### Exercise: Communication Practice

*Pair up and practice active listening and clear communication. Share feedback with each other.*

## Session Three

### Role of Civil Society Organizations in Promoting Gender Equality in Environmental Governance

Gender equality in the environment is pertinent for sustainable development and effective ecosystem management. Access to and secure tenure over land is essential for livelihoods, decision making, and cultural identity. However, globally, women make up only 13.8% of landowners. Legal and social barriers prevent women from fully participating in sustainable management efforts if they don't own land or have their names on land titles. This and many others are issues faced by women in their local communities and society.



Civil Society Organizations play a crucial role in incorporating women's voices and experiences in climate action, advocating for gender-responsive policies that address specific needs of gender inequalities within environmental governance, vulnerabilities, and capabilities of women and girls. Environmental issues are also a social justice issue, amplifying existing gender inequalities. Promoting gender equality is not only about women's participation or a matter of justice, but also about challenging gender norms and power dynamics and a prerequisite for sustainable development and effective ecosystem management.

1. **Gender responsive climate action and disaster management:** Climate change acts as a threat multiplier exacerbating social, political and economic tensions in fragile settings. Intensified climate events such as floods, cyclones, heatwaves, and wildfires disproportionately affect vulnerable groups including women, girls and LGBTQI individuals.
2. **Gender and environmental policies:** To address environmental challenges effectively, governments, national organizations and international institutions must use gender approaches. These approaches ensure that both women and men participate as leaders in environmental policies and conservation projects, from resource productivity to sustainable energy, water and food systems.
3. **Inclusive participation and decision making:** CSOs should actively involve women and marginalized groups in project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Ensure that women have equal representation in decision-making bodies related to environmental initiatives
4. **Gender responsive policies and practices:** Advocate for policies that address gender disparities in access to resources, benefits, and opportunities. Promote gender-responsive practices in areas like sustainable agriculture, forestry, and water management.
5. **Capacity building and training:** Provide training on gender awareness, rights and empowerment for CSO staff project partners, and community members. Enhance skills related to gender-sensitive project design, monitoring and evaluation.
6. **Advocacy and awareness:** CSOs can advocate for gender equality within broader environmental policies and frameworks. Raise awareness about the intersection of gender and environmental issues through campaigns, workshops, and media.
7. **Addressing gender-based violence:** Recognize that environmental projects can impact safety and security differently for women, implement measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in project areas.

**Activity: Policy Simulation**

- *Role-play a policy advocacy meeting.*
- *Develop arguments and present them to a panel.*

**Exercise: Drafting a Petition**

- *Draft a petition to include women in environmental governance*
- *Collect signatures from fellow participants.*

**Activity: Networking Session**

- *Participants share contact information and resources.*
- *Plan future meetings and collaborative projects.*

**Exercise: Action Plan Development**

- *Develop a personal action plan for involvement in environmental governance.*
- *Share your plan with the group for feedback.*

## Evaluation and Feedback

### *Final Session: Reflection and Feedback*

- Reflect on the day's activities and lessons learned.
  - Provide feedback on the module and suggest improvements.
- Additional Resources

### - Reading List

- Articles and books on feminist theory, sustainable farming, and climate advocacy.
- Links to online communities for continued support and learning.

## Conclusion

Environmental justice and human rights are intrinsically linked, forming the foundation for sustainable development and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Throughout these modules, the knowledge has delved deeply into the multifaceted relationship between these two critical concepts, explored the challenges that impede sustainable development, and examined the various strategies for advocating for change and fostering a more just and sustainable world.

The first module, *Understanding Environmental Justice and Human Rights* laid the groundwork by defining these concepts and illustrating their interconnectedness. Environmental justice seeks to ensure that no group of people, particularly marginalized communities, bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences. Human rights, on the other hand, guarantee the basic rights and freedoms to which all individuals are entitled, including the right to a clean and healthy environment. The module highlighted that achieving environmental justice is not only a matter of protecting the environment but also upholding the human rights of those most vulnerable to environmental harm. This understanding is critical as it frames the entire discourse around sustainable development and the need for a rights-based approach to environmental governance.

The second module, *Environmental and Human Rights Issues Hindering Sustainable Development*, provided an in-depth analysis of the specific challenges that obstruct progress toward sustainable development. These challenges include pollution, climate change, deforestation, and the exploitation of natural resources, all of which disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities. The module emphasized that these environmental issues are often exacerbated by systemic inequalities, such as poverty, lack of access to education, and weak governance structures. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that not only targets the environmental problems themselves but also tackles the underlying social and economic inequalities that perpetuate them. By identifying the root causes of these challenges, we can develop more effective strategies for promoting sustainable development that is inclusive and just.

In the third module, *Advocacy and Project Management in Environmental Justice*, explored the tools and strategies needed to advocate for environmental justice and manage projects effectively. Advocacy is a powerful tool for raising awareness, influencing policy, and mobilizing communities to demand change. The module discussed various advocacy techniques, including grassroots organizing, lobbying, and strategic communication, highlighting the importance of collaboration and coalition-building. Additionally, effective project management was identified as crucial for the successful implementation of environmental justice initiatives. This includes setting clear objectives, developing actionable plans, and monitoring and evaluating progress to ensure that projects achieve their intended outcomes.

*Behavioural Change Communication* was the focus of the fourth module, where it examined the role of communication in influencing attitudes and behaviours related to environmental justice. Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) is a strategic approach that uses various communication channels to encourage positive behaviour change in individuals and communities. The module underscored the importance of understanding the target audience, crafting culturally sensitive messages, and utilizing appropriate communication mediums to reach and engage people effectively. BCC is essential in environmental justice as it helps to shift perceptions, build public support, and encourage sustainable practices that contribute to long-term change.

The fifth module, *Environmental Governance*, delved into the frameworks and institutions that govern environmental protection and the promotion of justice. Good environmental governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and the rule of law. The module highlighted the importance of involving all stakeholders, particularly those from marginalized communities, in decision-making processes to ensure that policies and actions reflect the needs and rights of all. Strengthening environmental governance is vital for creating the conditions necessary for sustainable development and ensuring that environmental justice is achieved.

The last module on *Capacity Building and Empowerment*, it explored the importance of equipping individuals and communities with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to advocate for their rights and participate actively in environmental governance. Capacity building empowers communities to engage in decision-making processes, hold authorities accountable, and drive change at the grassroots level. The module emphasized that sustainable development can only be achieved when all people have the capacity to contribute to and benefit from environmental protection efforts.

However, it is pertinent to state that these modules have provided a comprehensive overview of the critical issues, strategies, and frameworks necessary to advance environmental justice and human rights. By understanding the challenges that hinder sustainable development, advocating for change, and building the capacity of individuals and communities, we can work towards a more just and sustainable future for all. The knowledge and skills gained from these modules will serve as valuable tools in the ongoing fight for environmental justice and the protection of human rights.

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