



FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT ON THE PARADIGM OF LIFE SUSTAINABILITY

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Ecofeminism Area
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1.0 INTRO

The current environmental and social crisis demands that we imagine and do our part to build a world in which many worlds can coexist, far from the false universality of our Eurocentric, patriarchal and colonial outlook. Capitalist society is rapidly collapsing, leaving behind a depleted planet.

In light of our present-day reality, we can draw inspiration and learn from old and present ecofeminist efforts. They can help us imagine a pluriverse of worlds with different modes of social organization and economic horizons.

Ecofeminism may not provide all the answers we need to evolve towards models that protect nature and support social justice; however, ecofeminism will provide the key elements to make the transition possible.

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY ECOFEMINISM?

Francoise d'Eaubonne coined the term ecofeminism in 1974 to describe a feminist approach that incorporated environmentalism. She realized that violence against women, nature exploitation, and lack of respect for non-human beings had the same root.

In these early years, this school of thought and activism criticized progress and growth based on an anthropocentric, androcentric, and ethnocentric vision. It also condemned the arms industry and the role of technology as the all-solution (with a marked anti-nuclear viewpoint).

During the last decades around the world, women's groups have carried out actions based on their approach to ecofeminism. In some cases, they focused on the direct effects of pollution and climate change on women; in other cases, their actions had a marked anti-capitalist or anti-colonial nature. Consequently, today we speak of ecofeminisms (plural) and not of ecofeminism (singular). Ecofeminism is as diverse as its battles.

ECOFEMINISM IN GREENPEACE SPAIN

Three sources are the basis of the ecofeminist philosophy, and they relate directly to Greenpeace's origins and [the life story of our female founders](#): These sources are the feminist utopias of the 1970s (radical feminism), the anti-militarist activism of the time, and the anti-nuclear movement.

Ecofeminism is one of the transverse principles that govern Greenpeace Spain's 2020-2023 Strategic Framework. Greenpeace wrote this document in line with the ten principles of the Gender Policy and with our mission and values. When Greenpeace Spain wrote its Gender Policy, it became the first office to have a public gender policy. This had several consequences: we wrote an Equality Plan and created a Violet Group to bring the gender perspective to our volunteer network. We developed tools to incorporate the gender perspective into our campaigns, reports, communications, meetings, and training; and to make Greenpeace aware of ecofeminism.

In parallel and internationally, the JEDIS principles (justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and safety) were developed and implemented. We invite you to review them so you can understand them and know how we integrate them into Greenpeace.



This framework document expands our previous work by bringing into the organization the ecofeminist model based on the sustainability of life. In 2022, Greenpeace brought together people from the Spanish ecofeminist arena to write this document; they had different origins, ages, and personal and collective trajectories. These conversations and the study of ecofeminist ideas and activism were the basis for a new sustainability of life model and for the ecological and just transition we work for every day.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ECOFEMINISM MODEL

Below you will find the key elements we took from the different ecofeminisms to guide us toward a new paradigm based on the sustainability of life.

Each key element is thought-provoking on different levels. To facilitate ideas, you will find specific proposals to implement in our work areas after each key element:



PROGRAMS/PROJECTS we implement for the issues we work on: climate, biodiversity, and mobility...



POLITICAL INCIDENCE we organize to achieve our objectives.



COMMUNICATION the messages, communication channels, etc., we use to reach different audiences.



MOBILIZATION to denounce and make our demands heard and to bring new people to protect the planet.



BRAND AND ALLIANCES, processes and spaces we formulate to make our name coherent and adapt it to the values we want to see in the world.



The ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE we build every day through the structures, policies, processes, and relationships we use daily in the organization.

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PROGRAMS/PROJECTS



POLITICAL INCIDENCE



COMMUNICATION



MOBILIZATION



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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

1. SUSTAINABILITY OF LIFE

as a horizon, as a goal, as a starting place, and as a finish line. Ecofeminisms invite us to ask ourselves why we want energy, the economy, or the agri-food system? Their answer is to sustain lives worth living; why else?

What can this element teach us?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES. What lives are worth living? How do we change what is destroying all those human and non-human lives? How much energy do we need to sustain ourselves without devastating additional land? How do we satisfy the need for energy? Which policies destroy life and which ones support it? And how do we move from one to the other? These and similar questions invite us to reflect on why we act, they help us focus and put effort into what is essential, and they prompt us to act consciously.



The world is being destroyed, but we see in the HORIZON how to REBUILD IT COLLECTIVELY. To do so, we need to talk and imagine a desirable future that is only possible through collective action. What world is possible if everything we demand becomes a reality? Perhaps we have not thought about this or even if we have, we haven't communicated it properly.



Appreciate and visibilize all the work that keeps the organization going, acknowledge their importance, and reflect it in specific policies.



2. LIFE VULNERABILITY

Ecofeminism offers another worldview, different from the mainstream anthropological vision that turns its back on our vulnerability. Ecofeminism acknowledges our vulnerability and imperfection, our need for care; we accept we are eco-dependent and interdependent.

What can this element teach us?

WE ARE NOT SAVIORS: To be and do from different perspectives and activism, with no formulas, emphasizing the need to move together towards other socioeconomic models. We do not have all the answers, nor do we intend to, what we want is to be part of the transformation. This allows us to let go of the activism model we've been performing so far, to stop sacrificing ourselves for our work or acting as heroes; we acknowledge our work is for the long haul. We will get tired, be afraid, and suffer physical and mental illnesses. However, we can survive by building **COLLECTIVE STRUCTURES** and safe spaces to sustain and care for ourselves as a community.



PUBLIC POLICIES (health, equality, employment, housing...) should focus on how to collectively sustain life in the coming climatic and environmental scenarios that will increase our vulnerability.



When we accept the vulnerability of life and our lives, **NEW STRUCTURES** and ways of relating will emerge to allow us to care for it (it will allow us to reconcile, to take responsibility for the job of caring for our environment, to substitute those who are sick, to reflect on what is happening outside and how it affects us, etc.). For example, no one-person management structures, as they encourage our vulnerability, and no structures that only allow for hyper-specialized work in isolated departments (they are less resilient).



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3. TOGETHER AND INCORPORATING OTHER VOICES

Sustaining life is complicated, particularly during crises; thus, it should be a collective responsibility. Our ecoddependence and interdependence show us that only collectively can we face the present life-destroying. Moreover, to move towards a world worth living in, it is essential to listen to every voice, especially the most silenced, those who suffer in their bodies systematic exploitation, abuse, and rage. Alternative systems emerge on the fringe.

What can this element teach us?

ASSESS WITH WHOM: Life sustainability is a collective task and therefore we must forge alliances. We can think about who sets the agenda and what speed it imposes on us, with whom we ally ourselves, which groups we support, and from which groups we need support.



Since sustaining life is a collective responsibility, we mustn't focus on saving people but on creating **SPACES TO MEET AND PROVIDE SUPPORT** for the different activisms so caring can take place. We can ask ourselves what role are we playing and what role we want to play.



Everyone can care for life, we can all be activists and act and form a **COMMUNITY FROM INTERSECTIONALITY**. We are all indispensable, and we want to be so from a place of justice and equity.



DEMOCRATIZE THE ISSUES. When we understand that every voice, knowledge, and experience is necessary and valid for the ecological and just transition, we can democratize the debate. We can involve more people without infantilizing them and give up the elitism that sometimes creeps into our proposals. Approaches such as “people are only interested in how much money they can save in the grocery store or how much their gas is going to go up” are elitist because they show we believe only we are capable of understanding the magnitude of a problem, its systemic consequences, and overall complexity.

This is not always the case, for example, Plataforma de Afectados por las Hipotecas, or food banks, not only supply food to vulnerable populations but try to identify where it comes from and how it was produced. Talking about the right to food or energy provides a multifaceted systemic vision on issues where anyone can have something to say.



If sustaining life is a collective responsibility and we all do something about it, we could think about making time in the organization for the **COLLECTIVE WORK** of creating and sustaining something (an annual space we build together, a part of the organization that is everyone’s responsibility and that we carry out as a group).



Do not monopolize or tutelage. **INCLUDE** those excluded who do not have a voice. Provide economic support and training to give others the privilege to take time to think, debate, and organize to generate alternatives. We must understand this is a crucial role of the organization, with no paternalism, the task to redistribute experience and resources.



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4. CAPITAL-LIFE CONFLICT

Ecofeminist activism believes the economic philosophy centered around capital accumulation is antagonistic to the ecosystemic and human logic and will lead us to sacrifice some regions and people for others. Capitalism and patriarchy, colonialism, racism, animal abuse, and wars all go hand in hand. To sustain life we must end capitalism in all its forms. To do it justly, it is also necessary to end heteropatriarchy.

What can this element teach us?

Allows us to easily identify MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONFLICTS and STRUCTURAL CAUSES to give us a more complex systemic vision and a better understanding of the inequalities within. Carry out holistic analysis to choose spaces, struggles, and proposals that make these causes and conflicts visible. To overcome once and for all the social/environmental dichotomy, not only in theory (which we know well) but also in practice, co-creating with those who work on the frontlines or suffer in their bodies environmental degradation.



When we choose locations where the capital/life conflict is evident, our SYSTEMIC MESSAGES are EASIER to UNDERSTAND. If we want to integrate social justice, we can learn from ecofeminism. For example, we can show the macro-farms conflict when we talk about the agri-food system, work on water depletion by highlighting the conflict with the work of migrant female day laborers or talk about climate change by emphasizing how in other countries the extractivist projects of energy corporations increase violence. Although a priori these issues -labor rights, health, employment, and rural depopulation- might seem unrelated to the environment, they are not only linked but might be more relevant to people; thus, allowing us to make environmental proposals more understandable and desirable.



5. BODIES AND TERRITORIES

Ecofeminist fights teach us there are bodies, history, and territories behind every nature destruction act.; thus, issues that might seem abstract, such as biodiversity loss, land use changes, or climate change, become tangible. By making visible those who suffer these problems, those who resist them, or those who defend the land, we pinpoint the problems, we feel them and we visibilize the need for social and environmental justice.

What can this element teach us?

When conflicts are personified in actual lives and territories, we see the importance to VISIBILIZE AND HIGHLIGHT TERRITORIAL STRUGGLES to globalize our work. In our world, it is important that no struggle feels left behind.



“Caring for” must be part of the organizational culture without losing sight of the conflict. But, what is care? Who usually does the caring? What structures facilitate care? What invisible processes care for or harm us? Stop feeling guilty when we need to rest, stop being so self-demanding, etc.



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6. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

We must analyze where we are now and who is more responsible for the environmental crisis, both in terms of the environmental situation and the ecological footprint, as well as the care footprint which shows who has sustained and sustains the reproduction of life. The role of women and the communities in the Global South is essential in this regard.

What can this element teach us?

REDUCTION AND REDISTRIBUTION are essential to achieve social justice and a just transition. Decarbonizing the economy while promoting a gradual and equitable reduction of resource use, redistribution of wealth, and relocation of economies.



Allows us to generate messages from an INTERSECTIONALITY perspective and incorporate DECOLONIALIZATION. We must understand our mindset because it influences our actions. That is, it will influence the decisions we make, for example: who we ask, the examples we provide, who we meet, and who communicates. We must also identify and visibilize the people who are directly involved in environmental struggles. If we do not analyze our mindset, we might reproduce a colonialist vision where white Western people are the ones given voice and shape the environmentalist discourse, making the vision of white people from the Global North universal.



ADEQUATE AND SATISFACTION OF NEEDS to ensure everyone has the basics they need to sustain their lives. On a planet with limited resources and undergoing an environmental crisis, ecofeminisms invite us to rethink how we satisfy everyone's needs, having adequate resources is a right and an obligation. The key is to differentiate between our needs (which are equal to all human beings) and how we satisfy them. Adequate can guarantee a good life.



We must ask ourselves what decisions or activities lead to the commodification of life and nature in any form (privatization of natural resources, of basic services for daily sustenance, etc.) because this leads to greater difficulty in sustaining life and to a resurgence of patriarchal dynamics. For example, the constant commodification of the energy system means that fewer people can meet their energy needs, and when the market becomes unaffordable, it is up to each home to meet these needs as best they can.



By demanding specific policies and reinforcing public services that promote community-based models and by supporting other non-dominant and transformative economies (promoting rural areas, halting urban expansion, questioning digitalization, localization, fewer miles everything, etc.) we generate the conditions to allow more people to ADAPT to the scenarios to which the climate and biodiversity crisis are leading us.



Take responsibility for what each of us has (privileges of any kind: time in the organization, your origins, the education you had access to, the network of people that sustain your inner environment, your family responsibilities, etc.). Know ourselves better to better understand others.



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7. LOCAL VISION-GLOBAL VISION

Ecofeminisms show us how to break the false local-global dichotomy. Having a global perspective, as global as the environmental crisis we are experiencing, does not mean not having a perspective of what is happening locally. The challenge lies in applying a systemic analysis and global framework to what happens locally.

What can this element teach us?

BIG GOALS with INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES: Ecofeminist struggles think in big terms. For example, when they fight against the construction of a river dam, they imagine what the energy system should be like, and when they stop deforestation, they think about what should the agri-food system look like. They teach us how to focus on a specific place or problem and not lose sight of the big changes we pursue.



We should always ask ourselves if our proposals or the issues we tackle can impact negatively other places, if they support a new updated version of patriarchy or follow a capitalist philosophy.



Give value to generating and supporting networks, specific spaces and alliances that connect struggles.



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8. RESPONSIBILITY NOT GUILT

Everyone can care for life, it is our responsibility, a collective responsibility. Ecofeminism brings to light the structural causes of the environmental and social crisis and invites us to take action, not because of individual guilt, but because of our collective responsibility; while pointing out the culprits (large corporations, States, [the 1% rich responsible for 23% of global emissions...](#)).

What can this element teach us?

It is not necessary to give one's life for the cause, THE CAUSE IS LIFE: ecofeminist struggles embody a paradigm based on strengthening ties that allow us to sustain ourselves without destroying nature. They teach us the tactics and strategies that take into account life vulnerability, including that of those who resist and oppose these destructive dynamics.



We must make visible and build because of our collective responsibility, not our guilt.



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9. JOY AND PACIFISM

Ecofeminist activism teaches us that joy is an important form of collective resistance; therefore they are capable of transmitting hope, which is something we need to fight for something (pessimism can disengage while optimism can sometimes be ridiculous). These activists are also extremely pacifist and show a variety of nonviolent actions.

What can this element teach us?

They provide the space to imagine ECOUTOPIAS that mobilize; new narratives based on hope, joy, empathy, and collective responsibility.



To be and exist in a non-violence culture, to collectively rethink the types of violence that affect us and other individuals, such as personnel, volunteers, members, and other spaces.



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10. TIME FOR LIFE

life on our planet does not develop linearly, it is cyclical and slower; we are beings bound by the limits and times of nature. The processes that sustain living systems are complex and need time to develop. Our everyday tempo is far removed from this reality and we go about at lightning speed. We burn fossil fuels at a speed that does not take into account the rhythm of life, the same speed that creeps into our days.

What can this element teach us?

Our impact and our activism are not anachronistic and serve only a limited time. We are heirs of the generations who fought for our rights and the land before us. We become part of a process that others will come to join in the future. This notion of time allows us to generate more INTERGENERATIONAL COMMITMENT.



ACTING FOR THE FUTURE WHICH IS ALSO THE PRESENT: Ecofeminism does not focus on the apocalyptic time of a decisive moment, but on the times of life processes, lives that in many cases have already crumbled.



Knowing how to respond to emergencies while respecting people's time to do their part, to satisfy their needs. Putting life sustainability at the center helps us break the urgent/important dichotomy, as both are necessary. When this becomes clear, we can work on what is important. Our lives, like the planet's resources, are limited and their processes require time, and this time varies depending on our circumstances (dependants, health conditions, etc.).



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