



Foyle Womens  
Information Network

feminist communities  
for climate justice

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Gender Equality &  
the Climate Crisis

6<sup>th</sup> March 2024



Rialtas  
na hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040



*The project is funded under the Community Climate Action Programme: Climate Education, Capacity Building and Learning by Doing (Strand 2) through the Department of Environment Climate and Communications.*

introducing  
the project



# feminist communities for climate justice

Joint project between the National Women's Council of Ireland and Community Work Ireland

Funded by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications under the Community Climate Action Programme (Strand 2): Climate Education, Capacity Building and Learning by Doing

All-island project – the climate crisis is an all-island issue, and environmental impacts and degradation will have ramifications for the entirety of the island.



# feminist communities for climate justice

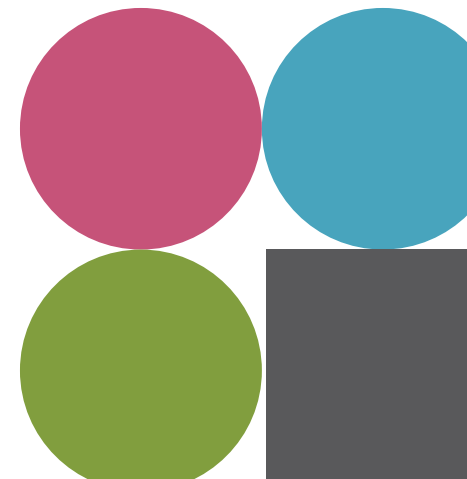


**Amplify** the voices of women and marginalised communities most impacted by climate crisis

**Advocate** and influence policy with women and marginalised communities

**Mobilise** communities to support and learn from one another, with the establishment of a Communities for Climate Justice National Network

**Train:** those working with or active within women's and marginalised groups and communities – *Community Work in a Changing Ireland Certificate Programme* in partnership with the Department of Applied Social Studies at NUI Maynooth; developing toolkits for communities and community workers



# why a feminist community work approach?

Addresses and tackles the root causes of inequality and climate injustice – system change, not climate change.

Cares – it champions caring work, paid and unpaid, and calls for it to be appropriately valued and recognised as green work.

Transforms consultation into meaningful, non-tokenistic participation in decision-making.

Focuses on the issue of women's representation in decision-making as well as other marginalised groups – those most impacted by the climate crisis need to be at the centre of decision-making spaces.

Champions a collective focus – we must fight for the many, not the few.

Means better public services to benefit people and the planet!



## climate justice

**The climate crisis is an everything crisis.**

**Climate justice** means that while reducing carbon emissions we are also reducing social inequalities, creating a fairer and more just world in the process.

Climate justice recognises that the effects of climate breakdown are not felt equally.

‘those that cause the least of the climate crisis are the most affected, with the least resources to respond’





Mikaela Loach "*... the climate crisis is not the so-called great equaliser; in reality, it is **the great multiplier**. It enhances existing inequalities and oppression and, more than that, it's a product of the same systems that created and inflicted inequality and oppression in the first place.*"

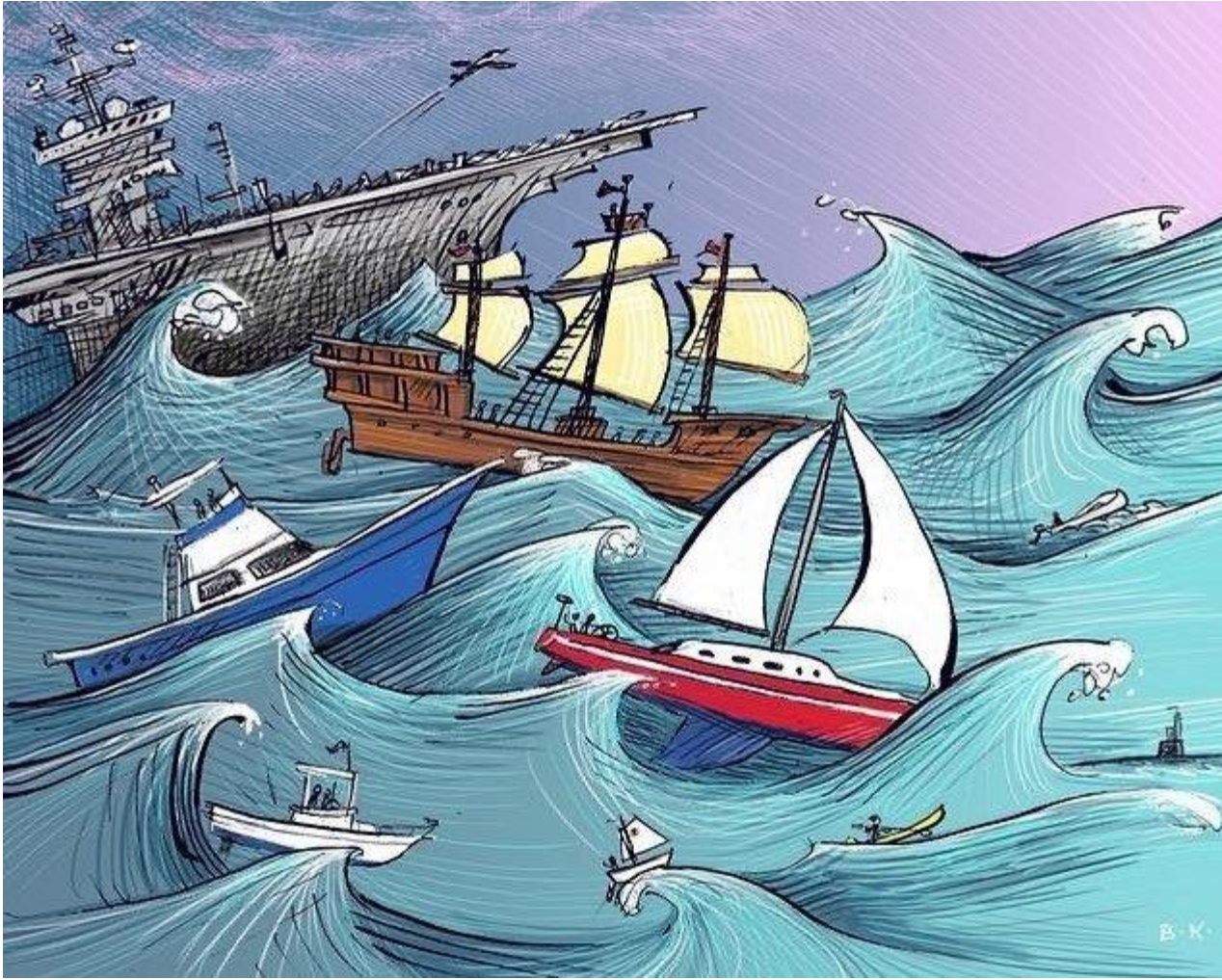


Not a single-issue problem – climate crisis intersects with other crises (e.g. racism, sexism, cost of living, wealth inequality)

Impacts of climate change are global and local – and always hit already disadvantaged groups harder

Climate change will impact us all, **but not equally**.





Another expression used to discuss climate justice is, *'We are all in the same ocean (climate change), but not the same boat'*.

Some are in cruise ships, some are in yachts. Some are in canoes. Some people don't have a boat at all.



## **Women are more likely to be hardest hit by the impacts of climate emergency, in Ireland and globally:**

They are socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to men

Care work is key to how women experience and are impacted by the climate crisis.

Their voices must be central; their input is essential in ensuring that future climate action does not worsen existing gender inequality



## women & girls

80% of the world's displaced climate migrants are women and children.

The majority of deaths related to extreme weather events are women – **up to five times the rate of men.**

Women are disproportionately represented in deaths related to air pollution.

The world's poorest people are disproportionately women, leaving them with less of a socioeconomic safeguard to recover from loss of resources essential to their livelihoods, such as their home or land.

Women across Europe in all age groups are more at risk of falling into energy poverty than men.

Women are more likely to carry out caring work, **which is key to how they experience and are impacted by the climate crisis**



## care

Care work: essential and low-carbon, but undervalued, underpaid or taken for granted – and largely carried out by women.

Caring jobs like teaching, community work and healthcare are **26 times greener than manufacturing jobs** but are seldom part of the green jobs discourse.

Care work genders women's patterns of energy use, transport and economic activity. These all impact their experience of the climate crisis.

**Care work should be recognised as the essential green work that it is.** Better pay, better hours and better working conditions to allow for women to fully participate in economic, political and social life.



# climate change & climate impacts



**Climate change** is the change in climate patterns caused by global warming

**Global warming** is when the Earth heats up, mostly, by burning fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas) which release carbon dioxide that traps in the heat from the Sun and other greenhouse gases

**Greenhouse gases** such as carbon dioxide and methane trap the heat from the Sun radiating from the Earth's surface causing warming in the lower atmosphere



## what about ireland?

All of our seasons are getting **hotter**; our average surface air temperature is increasing

Our cold and frosty season is **shortening**

Sea levels **rising** – seas around Dublin in particular rising at an alarming rate compared to global average

Our Spring and Summer is getting **drier** and **less rainy**; our Autumn and Winter are getting **rainier**, including an increase in **extreme rainfall** and **flooding events**



# ‘The lough isn’t just dying, it’s been killed’: How Lough Neagh reached crisis point

The largest freshwater lake in Ireland and Britain - the source of 40 per cent of Northern Ireland’s drinking water - is being contaminated by poisonous algae, endangering people, pets and wildlife



A butterfly caught in the toxic algae of Lough Neagh. Photograph: Enda O'Dowd

## Report says Northern Ireland is one of the world’s most nature-depleted areas

Key findings include a sharp decline in farmland birds, butterflies and plant species



What comes to mind or how do you feel when you think and or talk about climate change and its relation to your community?





## energy and housing

The unstable nature of fossil fuel energy costs impacts on rising energy bills. We need secure green energy, not choosing between heating and eating.

Much of Ireland's housing stock is energy inefficient, meaning that it costs more to keep them warm in winter and cool in the Summer.

The upfront cost of retrofitting remains out of reach for the majority of the population. There is no existing Government-provided retrofitting scheme in Northern Ireland.

Many older homes are ineligible for retrofitting; renters do not get a say.

Many coastal residential addresses are at risk from sea level rise – consider how this interacts with the housing crisis.

**Women are at greater risk of energy poverty**



# transport

Only 2% of transport budget spent on active travel; 69% of all trips in the North are taken by car – half of these are journeys of under two miles.

However, rural areas in particular lack alternative transport infrastructure, locked into car dependency.

Upfront cost of electric vehicles is still out of reach for many, and adequate charging infrastructure will be needed to make them viable.

Transport is not a gender-neutral issue – women's transport needs are different to men's. Safety concerns on public transport still a big issue, as are accessibility issues for disabled women.



# biodiversity, food & agriculture

Northern Ireland has recently been identified as one of the most nature depleted areas in the world.

Once a species is extinct, we can never get it back.

Bee and bird species endangerment has serious implications for production of food by our farmers – resistance to pests and changing weather relies on biodiversity.

Farmers are the custodians of our land with rich knowledge and understanding of it – they must be supported and encouraged to conserve and restore biodiversity.



# migration

Climate change will have internal and external impacts on movement of people in Ireland.

Outside of Ireland, numbers displaced by climate change averages **21.5 million a year** due to storms, floods, wildfires and extreme heat which create unlivable conditions in their homelands.

Climate change could displace **1.2 billion people** globally by 2050

The climate crisis has been cited as the largest displacer of people globally; but there are currently no legal protections for those who are forced to leave their homes due to the impacts of climate change.



# health

Increase in respiratory illnesses and deaths due to air pollution; children particularly vulnerable.

Increase in heat-related deaths, and skin cancers like melanoma due to heatwaves – pregnant women & elderly women particularly vulnerable.

Extreme heat also interacts unfavourably with a number of medications.

Injuries and fatalities from extreme weather events like floods and storms.

Increases in waterborne and foodborne diseases from contaminated water supplies.



# just transition: nobody left behind

If we do not solve existing inequalities, then those already disadvantaged will fall further behind in our green transition.

The concept of a just transition calls for **nobody to be left behind in our journey to a zero emissions society, for justice and equity**

- Rural communities – consultation and support, not blame
- Accessibility must be part of the planning process, not an afterthought, for disabled people to be able to fully participate, eg: pedestrianisation of streets.
- Participating in green behaviours – reusable cups, electric cars, etc. – should not dependent on disposable income. It must be accessible to ALL.

A truly just transition means the green transition should be enjoyed and participated in by all – **not by a few at the expense of the majority.**

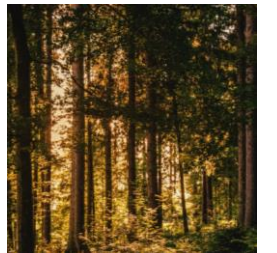


The communities of Ireland themselves should have the knowledge, tools and capacity for the green transition.

Community workers have always been at the forefront of identifying issues that risk disrupting or unfairly impacting the areas they work in.

Our project is aimed at helping the people who will be most impacted.

Nobody knows a community better than the people who call it home!





Our climate policy needs to be gender, poverty and equality proofed – we cannot risk creating sustainable futures where inequality and discrimination are also sustained!

We don't want 'green' sexism.

We don't want 'zero emissions' poverty or homelessness.

**Everyone** deserves clean air, secure and warm homes, reliable public transport and access to delicious organic food.

We want **everyone** to enjoy our green future on equal footing.

**We have a chance to create a world which is fairer to our environment and marginalised groups in our society, and we need to take it!**



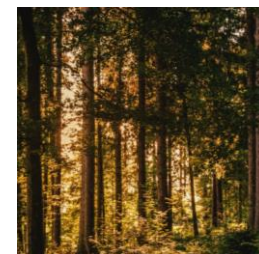


## Lunch break!

Take a break and digest what you've heard so far today!

When we come back, you will have the opportunity to apply the learning to your own and other communities in small groups.

Enjoy your lunch!



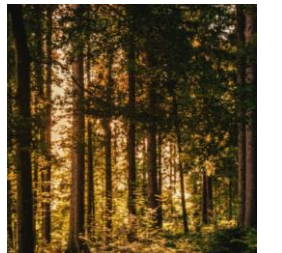
let's discuss!

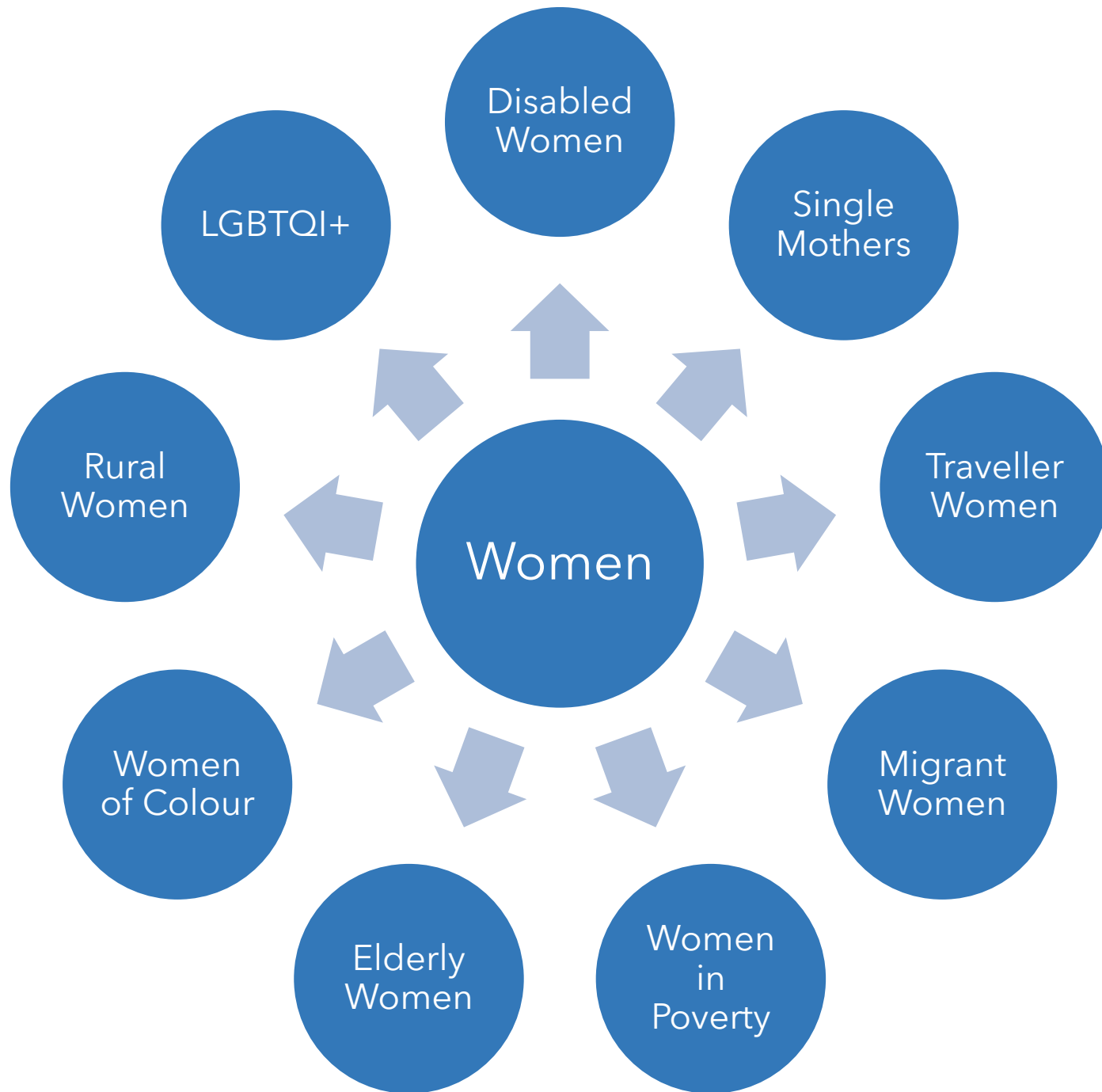


as you can see...

the climate crisis impacts all major areas  
of our day-to-day lives

different communities may have  
different needs and areas of concern

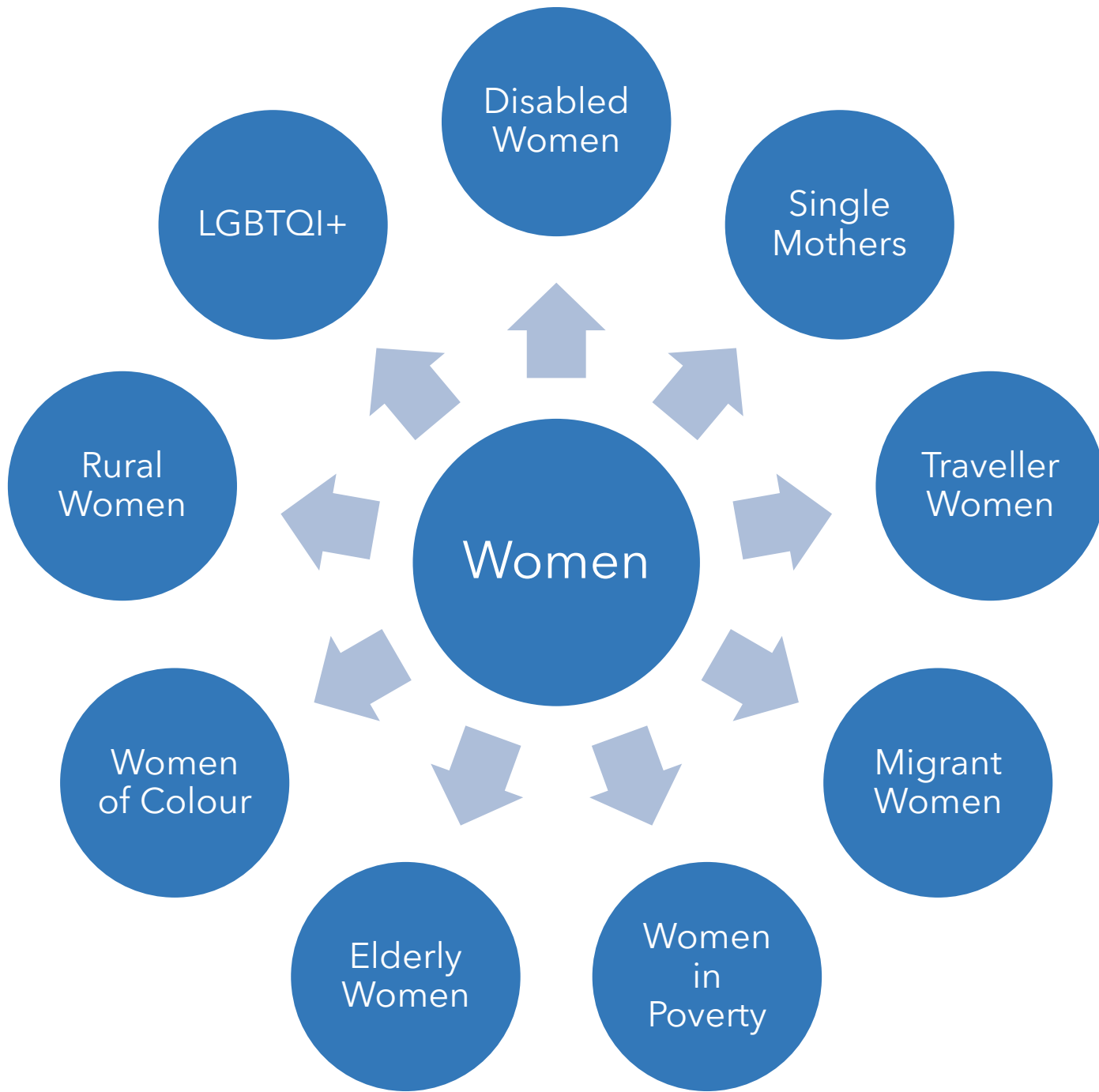




Women are not all the same – it is important to use an **intersectional approach!**

We must consider how multiple disadvantages can interact and create unique challenges and impacts.

Here are some examples – the needs of the women here might be unique and require us to add more considerations to a gendered impact of climate change.



Consider a community

Will they be able to access retrofitting?

Will they be able to purchase and use an electric vehicle?

Can they access public transport?

Will the transition impact their means of employment?

Do they have disposable time and income to attend community initiatives?

Are they considered in green decision-making at local and national levels?

Anything else?

1. What would climate justice mean for you and your life?
2. Name some opportunities and/or challenges in achieving climate justice. What changes need to happen at:
  - (a) a structural level
  - (b) a community level
3. What skills, knowledge and/or experience do you have to help achieve climate justice? This could be in your community, county or country!





get involved!

Sign up to our project mailing list

Join our Feminist Communities for Climate Justice  
National Network

Invite us to speak to your community group

Other ideas? Contact us!





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