feminist communities for climate justice

National Women's Council, Community Work Ireland

Feminist Communities for Climate Justice

Care Section of the full Baseline Review of Irish environmental and climate policy

Report prepared by Dr Fiona Dukelow, Dr Catherine Forde and Edith Busteed, University College, Cork.

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Introduction

This Care section is part of a full report that provides a baseline review of Irish environmental and climate policy for the National Women's Council (NWC) and Community Work Ireland (CWI) Feminist Communities for Climate Justice project (FCCJ) from the perspective of intersectional feminist climate justice.

Baseline review aims and questions

Baseline reviews are designed to establish the current position, in this case with respect to Irish environmental and climate policy, from a particular vantage point and to identify gaps therein. This report identifies the gaps in knowledge, understanding and policy action, in relation to climate change and its impact on women and marginalised communities in Ireland. It does this with reference to intersectional feminist climate justice. The full report is guided by three research aims as set out by the NWC and CWI:

- Examine Irish climate and environment policy from the perspective of women and marginalised communities, detailing
    - how climate change impacts differently on women and marginalised communities and
    - highlighting where these impacts have been a consideration and identifying where they have not.
- Identify key areas and strategies for improving the gender proofing of policy from this perspective.
- Reference relevant case studies, internationally and or nationally where this analysis does exist or where policy is reflective, as applicable.

These aims are addressed by three question sets. The second set of questions were applied to the care section **Question Set 2:** What is the impact of Irish environmental and climate policy on women and marginalised communities in relation to Care?

Key areas analysed

This care section and the full report builds on an existing literature review carried out by the NWC/CWI project team and completed in August 2023 (NWC, 2023).

Methodology

The methodological approach adopted is a rapid review as a form of condensed systematic review. In addition to reviewing the *Climate Action Plan 2023* (CAP 2023) as the current centre piece of Ireland's response to the climate crisis, current national policies related to care were also included. Policy critiques, research findings and other relevant information sourced from governmental, non-governmental and academic sources at local, national, and international levels were also included in the review. Utilising a select number of academic databases our core keyword search terms were 'Climate Justice', 'Feminist Climate Justice' and 'Intersectionality and Climate Policy' and in the case of the care section, 'Care' was used as an additional keyword. The analysis presented here is based almost entirely on desk-based research. However, it is complemented by reference to excerpts from a series of workshops and exercises about climate justice that the FCCJ project team held with various individuals and community groups across Ireland in 2023. These excerpts are referred to as 'Voices from FCCJ'.

Care

Care and care work might seem rather disconnected to climate and climate policy. However, this is to ignore longstanding connections that have been made between care of people and care of planet, as well as the fact that care work is predominantly 'green' or low carbon work. Care is virtually invisible in Irish climate policies. For this reason, the analysis begins with a wider discussion of why care is of central importance to climate policy and to intersectional feminist climate justice. It then proceeds to analyse the extent to which relevant Irish policy domains address care and climate, and the gaps therein from an intersectional feminist climate justice perspective. Thirdly, it points to international examples of policy analysis and initiatives where climate action is being informed by care, specifically around the idea of a care economy.

Connecting care and climate

Care is multi-dimensional. As Lorek et al. (2023) point out it involves at least three dimensions. It firstly can be understood as a **mindset**, referring to a disposition towards care centering on empathy, not only for humans but also non-humans and nature, and which can involve emotional, relational, and ethical dimensions. This is encapsulated in the notion of an **ethic of care** and specifically a feminist ethic of care, with the work of Fisher and Tronto (1990) being widely quoted inspiration. According to Fisher and Tronto (1990: 40) care is a

> 'species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web'.

Fisher and Tronto's point also reflects the second dimension of care, that is, understanding care as an **activity**, concerned with the wellbeing of humans, non-humans, nature, and the physical environment, at multiple scales. Third, care can be understood as **care work**. Crucially this includes both paid and unpaid care work. It includes care work as paid work in the care sector of the economy involving social care, childcare and healthcare. It also involves care work which is paid but carried out in less formal settings; including care recipients' homes. It also encapsulates unpaid care work carried out in families and communities, including care for family members, neighbours, and networks of friends. Widening the lens further to focus on environmental and climate justice, care work includes care for the environment in all its forms including for resources such as land and water, for species of all kinds, and community and public spaces. In this sense it has strong ties with **'repair' and repair work** (Carr, 2023). This involves repair of objects, of bodies, of community infrastructures as a matter of routine, and work done in the aftermath of

climate disasters such as floods and wildfires. It includes physical care and repair, but also intangible care and repair of relationships in communities and public spaces. It is also work that is frequently unpaid, carried out by unpaid community activists and community groups.

Feminist analysis highlights the fundamental importance of care to all of life, without which all other aspects of social and economic activity would cease to function. Care is central to feminist and intersectional social policy analysis (Williams, 2021). Core points include the fact that the majority of care work, both paid and unpaid, is perceived as 'women's work' and is carried out by women. Consequently, it comes with a care impact or economic disadvantage. Paid care work is typically low paid and precarious, especially childcare, older person's care and home-based personal care (Lightman, 2019). Care provision/ the care sector is also heavily marketised and privatised, which can imply weak protection of both care workers and care receivers. In Ireland, 70% of childcare and 85% of older person's care is delivered through private, for-profit services (Murphy, 2023). These are sectors dominated by women workers and there are, moreover, intersections with class and migrant status, with women working in this sector likely to be from working class and migrant communities. The privatised nature of the care provided also makes access to care difficult due to affordability. Unpaid care work receives minimal recognition and limited state support, which is also gendered. The 2022 Census showed that 61% of unpaid carers are women compared to 39% who are men. Time spent caring is also gendered with women spending more hours per week in caring activity. 31.3% of female carers spend 43 or more hours a week doing care work compared to 25.6% of male carers (CSO, 2023). This care is also more likely to be undertaken by people from disadvantaged or very disadvantaged communities (CSO, 2019). For example, of those who provide 20 or more hours of care a week, 23% are located in very affluent areas, compared to 36% in very disadvantaged areas. In terms of state support, the largest care payment, which is means tested and paid at a rate of €248 per week in 2024 (which is below the poverty line) is paid primarily to women. In 2022 women comprised 77% (71,392) of Care Allowance recipients (Department of Social Protection, 2023).

Eco-feminism and feminist ecological economics point to the fundamental importance and links between care for people and care for planet. Care and environmental resources are treated as infinite and freely available. Both share characteristics of being invisible, undervalued and exploited, and without which life would cease to function (Dengler and Strunk, 2018). In that sense the climate crisis is a symptom of our lack of care for the planet. As clearly illustrated by Raworth's doughnut model of economics the climate crisis breaks a safe planetary boundary alongside many others, including biodiversity loss and land use conversion. These breaches are driven by other inequalities such as care and gender inequalities that altogether undermine the basis for a just and safe space for the flourishing of all forms of life (Raworth, 2017). These points are reflected in concepts such as the 'iceberg economy' (Mies, 2007) and the 'maintenance economy' (Jochimsen and Knobloch, 1997) put forward by feminist

ecological analysis. Both reinforce the point that there is much caring activity of people and the environment occurring below the surface without which the visible, monetised economy would not operate. In this respect there are links to be made between care in this section and care for the land and natural resources as discussed with reference to social farming and urban gardening in the discussion of agriculture later in the full baseline research review (to be launched Thursday 11th April 2024). There are also connections to be made to the section on just transition in the full baseline research review. These concern the degree to which care (and repair) work is recognised as work in just transitions to a low carbon economy and how we approach just transition with an ethic of care (Carr, 2023; Barca, 2023).

The climate crisis interlocks with the reality of a **care deficit** and care crisis. The care deficit and care crisis are manifest in unfulfilled care needs, lack of care services, lack of time to care, and the undervaluing of care work whilst at the same time care is an increasingly commodified activity (Fraser, 2016). The care deficit in Ireland and elsewhere is not a new phenomenon (Lynch, 2010; Featherstone, 2012). However, the importance of care and care as essential work was brought to surface by the Covid-19 pandemic when great swathes of the monetised economy came to a halt, but care activity was deemed an essential service. The intensification of care deficits during the pandemic generated profound burdens and distress, particularly on women and marginalised groups in their paid and unpaid caring roles, accelerating the notion of a care crisis (Barry, 2021; Dowling, 2022; Camilletti and Nesbitt-Ahmed, 2022). The proportion of Ireland's population providing regular unpaid care grew from 4% in the 2016 Census to 6% in the 2022 Census which may also be an indication of a growing care deficit in Ireland (CSO, 2023). Ireland's care deficit may also be indicated by the fact that Ireland has the highest reliance on unpaid caring in the EU, with most of this work related to childcare (Cantillon and Teasdale, 2021). Moreover, the fact that demographic changes in Ireland and elsewhere indicate that even more care will be needed in the future means that the crisis in care the pandemic revealed will be an enduring one if not addressed (Garavan, 2024).

There are also more pragmatic, **empirical connections** between care and climate. Care work is green or low carbon work, whether undertaken as paid or unpaid work. With regard to the latter, research on time use and everyday activities demonstrates the low carbon nature of care work. Smetschka et al.'s (2019) research in Austria found that time spent on personal care, household and care-work is relatively low carbon. By contrast, leisure time varies widely depending on the activity involved and, in particular, whether and what type of transport is used. Similar findings applied to care in research on energy use in household settings in France, where time devoted to care (providing care to other family members or to pets) is one of the lowest energy intensity activities (De Lauretis et al., 2017). Smetschka et al.'s (2019) research also looked at the gendered distribution of time use, finding that men typically have more time and money to spend on leisure activities. In contrast, women, particularly if they are both working in paid employment and caring, experience a time-squeeze leading to more intense resource use, if

financially feasible, to fulfil household and care work. This includes greater use of energy intense household appliances and pre-prepared food which typically has a higher carbon footprint. Similar findings emerged in research carried out in the UK context by Druckman et al. (2012). Another connection between time spent caring and climate stems from the fact that time women spend in paid work decreases during adverse weather events that cause school closures (e.g., high levels of pollution, flooding). Their time switches to caring for their children home from school (OECD, 2021). In the round such findings raise issues about the importance of time policies that encourage the redistribution of care and paid work which we return to below. In broad terms however, it implies that extra time spent on care work, in contrast to increases in paid employment has a minor impact of resource consumption and as such can be considered an environmental policy measure (De Lauretis et al., 2017). Yet this is a blind spot in labour market policy where, in general, there is a 'disregard for the domain of unpaid work' (Bohnenberger, 2022: 348).

Moving to care work as paid work in the formal economy, again the low carbon nature of care work in contrast to other types of work is notable. Yet there are blind spots here too. Reiterating the discussion in the section on gendered employment in just transition in the full baseline review, Bohnenberger's (2022) analysis of green jobs shows that understanding of what they are tends to neglect care work and focus instead on sectors that concentrate on employment in renewable energy, retrofitting and recycling. This follows through in how green jobs are counted. Bohnenberger (2022) focuses on the Eurostat approach that treats the environmental goods and services sector as 'activities that measure, prevent, limit, minimise or correct environmental damage' (Eurostat, 2009 in Bohnenberger, 2022: 350). This obscures 'sectors with a high share of female employees as opportunities for green employment' (Bohnenberger, 2022: 350) including health care, social care and also education. Looking at the implications of this in the UK context, the Women's Budget Group (WGB), in its recommendation of a care-led response to the Covid-19 crisis, pointed out that employment in care services would fulfil the triple roles of improving employment, improving gender equality and meeting climate change targets because of the low carbon nature of the work. They calculated that investing in care would be three times less polluting per job created than jobs created in the construction industry (De Henau and Himmelweit, 2020). Care jobs also compare favourably to jobs in other industries. Typically jobs in health and care produce 26 times less GHG emissions than manufacturing jobs, and over 200 times less than agricultural jobs (Diski, 2022).

Having set out this broad terrain for understanding care and the connections between care and climate, the next section analyses Irish climate, environmental and care policy, where such connections are neither acknowledged nor inform policy.

Dis/connections between care and climate in Irish policy

The core point to be made in this section is that care and climate exist in very siloed spaces in Irish policy making. Ireland does have a dedicated carers strategy (albeit now out of date). However, this does not make any connections between care and issues of concern to intersectional feminist climate justice. On the other hand, **the centre piece of Irish climate policy invisibilises care**. In the CAP 2023, no consideration is given to the centrality of care to our survival and to the threats that the climate crisis poses, nor to the idea of care work as green work in any of the sectors where connections could be made, in particular industry and just transition. This follows through in cognate organisations and discourses. Care does not feature, for example, in the work of the Climate Change Advisory Council nor in the work of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which reflects its limited remit and vision on climate justice issues (O'Neill et al., 2022). We can, however, find some recognition of care in the 2020 government's adoption of a wellbeing framework. Yet this initiative remains limited and is marginal to core climate policy.

The most explicit mention of gender in the CAP 2023 is with reference to international development. The core statement on gender in the plan namely, that 'climate change impacts more on women and other marginalised groups, peoples, and communities through the exacerbation of pre-existing inequalities, including varying impacts in a just transition, and access to social and healthcare infrastructure in extreme climate events' (Government of Ireland, 2022: 266) chimes with much of the analysis in this baseline review. However, the narrow lens with which it is understood is problematic. It is understood exclusively with reference to the need for gender sensitivity in international development contexts. The impact of climate change on women and other marginalised groups in Ireland is not acknowledged. While this statement does mention care, it is only in the context of access to care needed in the event of extreme climate disruption such as heat waves, wildfires, or flooding. As such then none of the dimensions of care outlined above, nor its fundamental role in a safe and flourishing climate future feature in the CAP 2023.

Besides this reference to care, the broad statement 'that we must take better care of our planet' (Government of Ireland, 2022: 8) in the foreword by the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications and Transport is the only other reference to care in the CAP 2023. This might be understood an expression of an ethic of care, but the action plan does not pursue this in any sense. Our responsibility to care and the importance of care work does not feature in any of the substantive sections of the plan. Sections where care work ought to play a role, namely with respect to industry, the public sector, just transition and agriculture do not take account of care. Sections on resources, including land and the marine environment do not consider the care of resources, or at least not outside of a growth lens, whilst sections on policy areas such as transport and the built environment do not consider the needs of carers and caring activity.

The section on industry rests on a limited notion of the green economy that does not include care work. Instead, it focuses on creating high quality employment in 'retrofitting, renewable energy, clean mobility, and sustainable agriculture' (Government of Ireland, 2022: 17). These are sectors where men are disproportionately employed. Investment is pledged to decarbonise industry and thus lower emissions. Investing in sectors which have clear supply issues, such as the care sector and the fact that care is relatively low carbon work is not included. The section on the public sector focuses on buildings, transport, waste, and energy usage and how these areas are where the public sector can reduce carbon emissions. There is no recognition of care work in the public sector, of investing in it and improving the employment conditions of care workers; nor of improving the supply of care services or basic services more broadly to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of carers and people cared for. Aspects of care and just transition are addressed in the section on just transition in the full baseline research review, so it suffices to say here that care work is not envisaged in the set of actions to achieve a just transition in the CAP 2023.

The invisibility of care carries through in the work of Ireland's **Climate Change Advisory Council**. In its commentary and its responsibility to review, advise and provide evidence to support a just transition, care does not feature. Areas where care is of particular relevance do not recognise its role. For example, in its 2023 Annual Review it notes that the changed nature of the Irish climate will impact on the healthcare system and the health needs of the population. However, it does not comment on the implications of this for care nor on the limited response of the CAP 2023 which understands the challenge (listed in its annexe of actions) as 'building the climate resilience of the health systems' (Climate Change Advisory Council, 2023: 16). Actions here are limited to how the healthcare system copes with severe weather events. No mention of the impact on care in any form is recognised.

The 2020 Programme for Government proposed the development of a **wellbeing framework** for Ireland. It follows the example of other countries in this regard including New Zealand, Scotland, and Iceland all of which have advanced the promotion of wellbeing in their policy making frameworks (Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2020). This in turn is underpinned by the idea that the purpose of economies is to deliver wellbeing, as opposed to the classic economic goal of maximising consumption. It shifts the focus from measuring progress by GDP to measuring wellbeing for the purposes of 'achieving sustainable wellbeing with dignity and fairness for humans and the rest of nature' (Costanza et al., 2018, n.p.). The Irish version has been complemented by preparatory and consultative work by NESC and the main outcome to date is the creation of a wellbeing framework based on 11 dimensions of wellbeing centred on environmental, climate and biodiversity, subjective wellbeing, community participation, work quality, time use, and income and wealth. These are measured through 35 indicators. The framework is complemented by a Wellbeing Data Hub published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) (CSO, n.d.). It is notable that care is recognised in this framework. The key measure involves the amount of time spent caring over 20 hours a

week, but regular data is very limited and devoid of an intersectional lens. There are strengths and limitations to the current iteration of Ireland's wellbeing framework as noted by NESC (2023). It does contribute to the identification of inequalities and bring them 'into the policy space' and 'offers an opportunity to make environmental justice more explicit' (NESC, 2023: 31, 32). Yet, data available lacks the breadth and depth to do this and it lacks input from groups impacted by environmental and climate injustices. While data gathering and disaggregation is a challenge, Ireland is also an outlier in areas such as care and time use compared to other EU countries, the US and Australia (Cantillon and Teasdale, 2021). Nor is the wellbeing framework tied to any specific policy goals or outcomes. In short, the wellbeing framework offers the seeds of thinking about and acting on care from a feminist, intersectional climate justice perspective but much work in terms of data gathering and explicit policy commitment is needed to realise this.

Finally, mention can be made of the **National Carers Strategy** which was published in 2012 (Department of Health, 2012) yet sits in a policy space that lacks connection with climate policy. It was the first strategy of its kind in Ireland and the result of years of campaigning. It focused on unpaid carers, centring on recognising, supporting and empowering carers. While it represented a milestone in terms of recognition, the Strategy represents a very limited analysis of care in the wider context of care services, of gender and intersectional inequalities, and of the impact of climate change on care. It set out a broad roadmap for recognising, supporting and empowering carers but lacked ambition and resources and was only partially implemented (Dukelow and Considine, 2017). Research by Pierce et al. (2021), looking at the Strategy almost ten years on and what carers would prioritise in a new strategy, points to two key priorities that connect with ideas from a care economy perspective. These are the fundamental importance of community-based supports and income supports, with ideas for the latter ranging from the removal of the means test for Carers Allowance to the introduction of a universal basic income. The former idea chimes with the role of universal basic services and the latter with forms of income support that sustain care in a care economy framework.

A care economy

Intersectional feminist climate justice analyses of care call for the development of various versions of a **care economy** as climate policy. These range from work by the Feminist Green New Deal Coalition (Novello, 2021); the Women's Budget Group (WBG) and Women's Environmental Network Feminist Green New Deal project (Diski, 2022); and the caring societies project carried out by the Hot or Cool Institute (Lorek, et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Sometimes this is also referred to as a **care-full economy**. What it entails is a recognition that care is the foundation upon which societies and economies are built. Care is understood in holistic terms as care for humans and care for

all aspects of the natural world and the provision of necessary care needed for the 'health, welfare, maintenance and protection of humans and the more-than-human world' (Harcourt and Bauhardt, 2019: 3). In policy terms it entails an acknowledgement that care work is green work and requires a major investment in our social infrastructure, in providing decent jobs in care in all its forms and adequately valuing unpaid care. Besides investment in care jobs (which simultaneously contributes to the policy ideal of universal basic services as a form of eco-social policy allowing universal access to adequate care) a range of other policies are invoked. These include time policies with objectives such as reducing working time, and reducing and redistributing the care work that women do. They also include diverse income support policies ranging from universal basic income to various forms of participation or care incomes.

Voices of FCCJ

What would climate justice mean for you and your life?

Childcare - affordable and reliable
Care work - green work (paid and unpaid)

Looking at some of these strands of work and policy proposals in more detail, at EU level both the Friedrich-Elbert-Stiftung's (FES) report titled '*A Feminist European Green Deal*' (Heffernan et al., 2021) and the European Environmental Bureau and Women Engage for a Common Future report (Heidegger et al., 2021) have progressed ideas and analysis around a feminist green deal that incorporates care. In both cases the work has emerged in response to the EU's Green Deal in 2019 and that the EU's plan is significantly gender blind. The FES report centres on the idea of a **feminist wellbeing economy** informed by a feminist and intersectional approach to just transition. Though primarily focused on energy, transport, agriculture, food and nature, the report's analysis weaves the importance of care throughout and draws upon the importance of the maintenance economy to do so. In this regard it outlines why care jobs are green jobs and are necessary for a just transition:

> Care and education are two particularly female-dominated sectors that need to be included as jobs at the core of the transition, equally redistributed between genders and conferred with the same economic and social advantages that traditional 'green' jobs hold (Heffernan et al., 2021: 10).

Heidegger et al.'s report is based on a similar feminist analysis and proposals for what it frames as a feminist economy of wellbeing and care. Amongst other things it recommends that 'a right to care should be recognised as a fundamental right of the EU', which should be linked with 'inclusive and quality caring public services' (Heidegger et al., 2021: 8). Alongside this the report makes a series of short term and longer-term recommendations at EU level related to realising a feminist economy of wellbeing and care. These range from specific recommendations related to adequate minimum pay and decent working conditions in low-paid and gender segregated sectors such as care, to proposals around working time reductions, job guarantee schemes for 'socially and environmentally sustainable

jobs' (Heidegger et al., 2021: 57), to a new economic model for the EU which 'abandons GDP growth' (ibid.) and adopts wellbeing economy principles.

Work by the WGB's Commission on a Gender - Equal Economy (2019-2020) is premised on a caring economy model. This was reinforced by a collaboration between the WGB and the Women's Environmental Network on a Feminist Green New Deal (2021-2022). Together these are further examples of a feminist intersectional climate justice approach to climate policy as it concerns care, which as both projects articulate, are indivisible.

Box 1: Eight steps to creating a caring economy

1. **'Re-envision what we mean by 'the economy'**, so that the centrality of care to the economy is recognised.
2. **Invest in social and physical infrastructure**, so that public services address diverse needs on an equal basis, and allow people to flourish in a way which protects and values the planet.
3. **Transform the worlds of paid and unpaid work**, to provide not just more jobs, but better jobs.
4. **Invest in a caring social security system** which is based on **dignity and autonomy**, and which helps to ensure people fulfil their capabilities and live a meaningful life, in and out of employment and regardless of migration status, throughout their lives.
5. **Transform the tax systems …** to make them more progressive and fair, and to generate more revenue to invest in social security and social and physical infrastructure.
6. **Refocus the overall fiscal and monetary policy framework on building a caring economy.**
7. Work to develop a **trade system** that is **socially and environmentally sustainable.**
8. Work to transform the **international economic system**, so that it is supportive of the creation of caring economies across the world.

Source: Commission on a Gender Equal Economy / Women's Budget Group (2020) *Creating a Caring Economy A Call to Action* (pages 8-11).

In more concrete terms the Commission and the subsequent Feminist Green New Deal project outline numerous policy proposals (see Box 1). These include the idea of a universal care service alongside free, universal childcare provision. In terms of time policies, it recommends strengthening and equalising entitlements to paid caring leave, not only for caring for children but also for older people, disabled people, and older children. It also addresses working time reductions and the need for flexibility around models such as a shorter working day and shorter working weeks as suited to individual needs. With regard to income, it stops short of advocating a universal basic income except for retired people with the replacement of means -tested with non-means tested benefits for others.

Services, time policies and income policies are also discussed extensively by the Hot or Cool project on a caring economy. Here discussion points to the broad range of perspectives on how care should be supported with different views evident for example, on whether unpaid care should be recognised monetarily (Lorek, et al., 2023). There are also questions of whether income support for care should be tied explicitly to care work through, for example, a care or participation income or whether unconditional, universal basic incomes are more appropriate. There are also questions about the degree to which shorter working weeks and income supports in whatever form, actually lead to the desired outcome of fairer distributions of care or whether they risk reinforcing gendered care and ecological burdens. There are no 'silver bullets' with respect to any proposal.

Voices of FCCJ

Challenges and opportunities in achieving climate justice

Who gets to be in these spaces? Carers don't have time, capacity or knowledge.

Attention has also been given to the fact that the connections between care and climate are not part of mainstream political and public imagination and what strategies ought to be adopted to develop these connections and ultimately promote a care economy. This is taken up by work from the Feminist Green New Deal Coalition (Novello, 2021) and also by a second Hot or Cool project report on *Care-full Climate Communication* (Wang et al., 2023). Both draw attention to how important it is to create a narrative shift around care and climate and that this narrative reflects equity, intersectionality and inclusivity. Key points emerge around the idea that 'care work is climate work' (Novello, 2021: 8) and that positive framing is more effective than negative framing, which entails an emphasis on 'empathy, solidarity and compassion for a care-filled future' (Wang et al., 2023).

Voices of FCCJ

Opportunities and challenges in achieving climate justice

Find a narrative that works.

Finally, we can also point to some examples in the present where care work as climate work has made progress. A key example is the city of Barcelona which identifies itself as a 'caring city'. Amorim-Maia et al. (2023) contextualise the Barcelonian example as one where purposeful intersectional climate justice practice has been pursued since the mid-2010s. It was instigated by the election of Ada Colau from the left-wing Barcelona en Comú party as city mayor in 2015. A series of feminist intersectional climate justice plans, declarations and commitments have followed. Though challenges remain around the feminisation and precaritisation of care, several initiatives aim to address this. These include, amongst other things, the establishment of local care centres around the city that serve as hubs to support carers and that offer meeting spaces, opportunities for shared parenting, and municipal childcare. This is in tandem with enhancing Barcelona's cycling and walking networks in ways that are informed by the everyday journeys undertaken for caring activities. In this regard, activities such as walking are understood as taking care of the environment and taking care of oneself.

In 2022 the idea of a caring city was progressed further with the introduction of a 'carers card' as a form of taking care of carers. The card is associated with supports and services ranging from training to artistic and entertainment activities for emotional wellbeing, to legal advice and services to migrant care workers, especially those in vulnerable and invisible domestic care settings. Barcelona also serves as an example of how intersectional feminist climate justice has been approached in energy poverty and housing, interconnected with the city's focus on care.

Box 2: Barcelona as a caring city

"Barcelona is a pioneering city in implementing feminist policies in one of the areas that creates the most discrimination and inequality: care work. Tasked with a clear transformational purpose, Caring City aims to be a tool to help bring recognition to the social value of care work, and to ensure the right to care and be cared for in decent, quality conditions".

Source: www.barcelona.cat/ciutatcuidadora/en

In sum this section began with a discussion of care and how it is understood for the purposes of outlining its centrality to climate policy and its equally central importance to intersectional feminist climate justice. It reviewed how care can be understood in ways that are inclusive of both people and planet, and that care work is climate work. This can be juxtaposed with the reality that care is highly feminised and precaritised, reflecting an interlocking of the climate and care crises. Analysis of Irish climate policy reveals the invisibility of care. While Ireland's adoption of a wellbeing framework is promising, much more needs to be done to ensure the framework is informed by intersectional feminist climate justice. The invisibility of care is again not exclusive to Irish climate and environmental policy; this is something it shares with numerous Green Deals and a lack of attention to care internationally. In response to this there are a number of informative feminist policy analyses of Green Deal proposals that centre care and the idea of a care economy. Equally there are numerous policy ideas that integrate care and climate policy.

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