
A Climate of Change: Gender-Justice and Girls' Leadership
in the Age of Climate Change
March 9th 2022

On **March the 9th at 7.30 am EST- 1.30 CET**, the group of girls from the **Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM)** organised an **online webinar** via Zoom with the aim of creating an open space for dialogue between different generations (young and adults) to share their views on girls' rights and climate justice. The idea was to prepare and inspire young people for the **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66 - 14th - 25th March 2022)**.

The organisation of this **intergenerational dialogue** was structured in different sections whose results and description are presented below:

Section 1: Introduction and Welcoming

At the opening of the event, the four organisers (Riya, Zindzi, Ailish and Carlota) had the opportunity to present themselves and give a warm welcome to all the attendees (mainly women and girls). Here, the guest speakers were also briefly introduced: Ms. Marta Martínez, Ms. Jeevika Shiv, Ms. Olive Lanyon and Ms. Anitalia Pijachi. The main topic: Climate Change and Women's Leadership and Rights was introduced.

Section 2: Youth Engagement in Climate Change

The objective of this section was to inspire attendees and inform about what young people had been doing so far. Some initiatives were shown such as the 2021 International of the Girl campaign, the Youth-Led Conversations on Climate Justice webinar in October 2021, the WGG's Global Conversation Circle (December 2021) as well as the IBVM's schools National Conversation Circles in Spain in February 2022. Moreover, organisers also talked about the WGG's Girl Caucus meeting throughout February and the statement written to be submitted to CSW66.

Section 3: Youth Survey

In order to give more *consistency* to the topic of the event, organisers explained the results from a survey they conducted beforehand. The survey was directed to young people aged between 15-30 and it was a real success: 325 respondents showed their concerns towards the climate crisis and women's status.

The results from the survey can show a blueprint of young generations' willingness to take action. Thus, some takeaway messages are shown below:

-
- Young people are clearly affected by climate change. Most of them highlight the significance of the geographical area where they live.
 - Heavy precipitation, intense heat waves (increase in temperatures) and excess cold (decrease in temperatures) are among the main consequences of the climate change phenomenon.
 - Young generations are deeply concerned about the future of the planet. They are also scared about their future living conditions. Moreover, they also believe that governments, world leaders and activists must contribute to mitigation.
 - Recycling clothes, food and products used; reducing food waste; using public transport; reducing plastic consumption; promoting green spaces with tree-planting; reducing meat consumption (turning vegetarian/vegan) are some of the main actions being taken by respondents to tackle climate change.
 - Young people think that their voices must be heard. This means leaders from the politics, business and state sectors must listen to their demands for a greener and more sustainable world. In this aspect, women and indigenous communities are the most vulnerable to climate change and must have a space for speaking up.

Section 4: Panel Discussion and Q&A

Four guest speakers were invited to share their opinions. Their main messages were:

Marta Martínez (Head of Analysis and Special Projects, Climate Change and Alliances Division, Spain): emphasised the importance of the energy sector towards building sustainable development. Clean energy can contribute to decarbonising the old fossil fuel system. Here, technology and girls can play a crucial role: by creating digitised greener jobs led by strong women.

Jeevika Shiv (National Gender Youth Advocate to UN Women, India): placed the spotlight on the CSW66 Global Youth Recommendations from February 2022. Bringing topics like Human Rights, Quality Education, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Green Jobs, Disaster Risk Reduction as well as Loss and Damage is key in an era of climate emergency. This is clearly another source of inspiration for young people who want change to take place.

Olive Lanyon (Student from Loreto Ballarat School, Australia): shared her personal experience and contribution to combat climate change. In a short video, Olive was able to call for a wider space for young people to advocate and become leaders towards the strive for sustainability.

Anitalia Pijachi (Indigenous Rights Activist, Colombia): explained the critical situation that many indigenous women in the Amazons like her face. The need to make governments accountable for climate change ineffective measures is crucial. Additionally, making climate education available for everyone is also one of the main areas to work on.

After the amazing panellist's speeches, there was a final space for attendees to ask questions. Very interesting issues came up like new sources of clean energy like hydrogen and the opportunities to employ them to tackle climate change or the terrible climate situation that is being lived in small island states (mostly in the Global South region) and the lack of effective response from the Global North.

Conclusions

The overall feedback received after the event was very good. Both **speakers** and **attendees** were amazed by all the **opportunities** that young people have to start to **take action** and contribute to **end the climate change disaster**. To make things clear, the intergenerational dialogue from March 9th can be summarised in two words: **hope** and **action**. It is now time for young people (especially girls) to stand up and **make an impact**.