



Key Questions to Shape a Feminist Green New Deal

We live in a moment of both immense threat and vital opportunity. All around us, we see the signs of climate breakdown, and frontline communities are already facing its worst dangers.

But we also stand at the cusp of another possibility: to use this moment of crisis to build a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. To achieve that, we need urgent mobilization at all levels, from local communities to global movements - and policymakers have an important role to play.

The Green New Deal is a proposed US framework to confront the climate crisis and entrenched economic inequality. As US policymakers translate this broad framework into concrete policies, a feminist analysis - combined with the expertise of women climate defenders worldwide - offers crucial guidance.

The Context

Climate catastrophe is a global challenge that requires solutions that transcend borders. To successfully confront this crisis, the US must act urgently to curb its own emissions, phase out fossil fuels and move to a sustainable, regenerative economy, while collaborating with other countries to meet ambitious targets. And as the largest historic emitter of greenhouse gases, the US owes a debt to those who now suffer climate breakdown's worst effects: floods, droughts, and cyclones that plunge communities into poverty. The Green New Deal offers a chance to change trajectory and repair this injustice.

What's more, climate breakdown is hardest on those who are already marginalized. Those who have less access to rights, resources, and power - because of their gender, race, class, disability or other marginalized identity - face worsening dangers and inequalities.

The Solution

Women are not just victims of climate disaster. Globally, women in frontline communities are mobilizing to protect their communities, shift policies and demand fundamental change. Their solutions offer a blueprint for policymaking and provide a model for the kind of community-owned, democratic response to climate breakdown we need - here in the US and worldwide.

The Green New Deal's expansive vision already touches a multitude of domestic policies, from agriculture to healthcare. To achieve its goals, the Green New Deal must bring a similarly holistic lens to every aspect of US foreign policy, while centering gender and global justice.

A feminist analysis offers a way forward, allowing us to:

- **Build policies that address the gender impacts of climate breakdown**
- **Uplift more effective solutions innovated by those on the margins, including women, girls and gender-non conforming people**
- **Advance a holistic approach to the Green New Deal that recognizes we cannot achieve climate justice without fundamentally transforming all areas of US domestic and foreign policy, such as military, trade, aid, and immigration**

Here are six questions to help jumpstart a feminist global Green New Deal.



Was the policy developed in partnership with grassroots women in frontline communities to help advance their solutions?

Women in frontline communities worldwide bring key expertise to combat the climate crisis. They are stewards of land, water and natural resources, and women make up nearly half of smallholder farmers globally. Drawing upon this experience and expertise, women have launched successful climate solutions at the community level, from constructing wind-resistant housing in Bangladesh to setting up seed banks to protect against worsening hurricanes in Nicaragua. What's more, Indigenous women are building powerful movements to confront extractive industries, from resisting the construction of oil pipelines in North Dakota to organizing to protect their lands from agribusiness and mining in Brazil.

Yet, women community leaders are routinely excluded from the halls of power. It's time for policymakers to shift this trend by partnering with them to create, implement and evaluate the Green New Deal's policies.

The Green New Deal Should:

- Prioritize building a network of grassroots women policy advisers from frontline communities.
- Fund, adapt, and replicate women's local, community-based solutions.

Does the policy prioritize community consent and ownership?

As the Green New Deal develops, it must recognize that the US has a human rights obligation to prioritize the free, prior and informed consent of those who will be impacted by its programs and policies. Governments and international financial institutions have long abused their power to seize communities' land and livelihoods, a threat that Indigenous Peoples have faced disproportionately. For instance, the construction of the Garrison Dam on the Fort Berthold reservation in North Dakota forced 90% of the Indigenous Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Peoples out of their ancestral homes and destroyed 94% of their farmland.

Community and women-led ownership over Green New Deal-supported programs is also vital. The evidence is clear that when women are leaders in decision-making over programs - like the management of local forests, water resources, or disaster relief - the results are far better for communities and for environmental sustainability. Whether in the US or globally, this is a matter of justice to ensure that marginalized women and frontline communities are able to reap benefits from the initiatives that the Green New Deal seeds.

The Green New Deal Should:

- Properly consult communities impacted by its programs, guided by the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent advanced by Indigenous movements.
- Require project implementation plans to secure environmental impact assessments, letters of support from local communities, and audits to ensure community consent and ownership.

Was the policy screened for its gender impacts, recognizing that women, girls, gender nonconforming and LGBTIQ people are disproportionately affected by climate disaster?

Green New Deal policies should be screened with an understanding of how gender intersects with race, class, sexuality, disability and other identities to shape access to power and resources, leaving some more vulnerable. In some flood-prone parts of Pakistan, for instance, women are forbidden to leave home without permission from a male relative, making them less likely to escape safely during a disaster. In New Orleans, black women were more likely to remain homeless and in poverty after Hurricane Katrina.

As another example, green jobs tend to concentrate in industries with historically low participation of women, like manufacturing, engineering, and construction. A gender lens would revalue caregiving work that women typically perform – which is historically underpaid and also inherently low in carbon emissions – as part of the green economy. It would consider paid family leave and free child care as crucial to support our just transition to a green economy, and ensure that people are not locked out of jobs because of gender discrimination.

The Green New Deal Should:

- Screen all policies for their disparate impacts on people marginalized because of their gender, including as it intersects with race, class, sexuality, disability and other identities.

Does the policy confront root causes of the climate crisis and reject false solutions?

The climate crisis will not be resolved by changes in individual behavior. It is driven by economic systems that prioritize excessive consumption, corporate profits, and limitless growth. Any solution that advances climate justice must challenge this status quo.

Further, proposed policies must avoid harmful ‘solutions’ that allow the drivers of the climate crisis to persist, including:

- Market-based and technological “fixes” such as carbon trading and offsets, which allow industries to pay to pollute and harm and displace communities.
- Biofuels, which promote industrial monoculture that impoverishes smallholder farmers and increases food prices, hurting women who produce up to 80% of food crops in the Global South.
- Nuclear energy, which poses a risk of accidents, urges nuclear proliferation, and produces radioactive waste, often dumped or stored on Indigenous lands.
- Hydroelectric dams, which have displaced 40 to 80 million people globally, disproportionately impacting women farmers and infringing on Indigenous territorial rights.

The Green New Deal Should:

- Phase out fossil fuels and ban fracking, which pollutes the air and drinking water and emits greenhouse gases.
- Transition to 100% renewable sources of energy, like solar and wind power.
- Reject false solutions that allow for the continued proliferation of polluting industries, harmful resource exploitation, and rights abuses.

Does the policy recognize the connections between domestic actions and global impacts? Does it advance justice and provide compensation to women and communities in the Global South?

All climate policy is inherently global. We all share one planet, and while US actions have major impacts on vulnerable communities at home and worldwide, climate breakdown won't be solved by the US alone. The US must recommit to multilateralism and shared approaches to this crisis.

Further, the US's historic consumption, resource extraction, and militarism have fueled climate disaster, leading to immense human suffering. Those most impacted have contributed least to this crisis, including marginalized and frontline communities in the US and in the Global South. The US owes them a debt and must compensate by funding a just energy transition, including for countries of the Global South. It should also welcome in women and families forced to migrate by climate disaster, while funding adaptation in their home communities.

Finally, the Green New Deal should end the exploitative role of US oil, mining, and agribusiness corporations, including by ending global fossil fuel subsidies, erecting trade barriers for fossil fuel products, and prohibiting financing for overseas fossil fuel projects.

The Green New Deal Should:

- Contribute its fair share of resources globally for adaptation, mitigation, and reparations, recognizing its responsibility for climate breakdown.
- Fund women-led local climate justice organizing and solutions that advance gender equity and sustainability.
- Invest in the transfer of renewable technologies to the Global South.

Does the policy address the connections between climate breakdown and other global dangers, from militarism to neoliberalism?

We must recognize the intersections between the climate crisis and every other area of foreign policy. For instance:

- Militarism worsens climate breakdown. The US Department of Defense is the world's largest institutional user of fossil fuels. "Greening" the military is another false solution; rather, we need to confront US militarism and the drive to make war, and close military bases.
- Retaliation against environmental activists allows polluters to evade accountability. For example, Afro-Colombian women activists who organize against extractive industries face state repression and violent attacks. Several US states have passed laws that criminalize peaceful protests against fossil fuel extraction.
- Neoliberal economic policies decimate social safety nets and labor protections through privatization, deregulation and austerity. This empowers corporate interests and polluters at the expense of people, deepening climate breakdown and leaving communities impoverished and unable to protect themselves.

The Green New Deal Should:

- Take a stand against the militarism that worsens climate breakdown and violence worldwide.
- Include legislation to protect the right to peaceful protest.
- Recognize that neoliberal orthodoxies are a root cause of climate crisis, and reject those failed policies in favor of building a just, sustainable economy.