

Shape the Camp 1 # Feminism

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Introduction: who organizes & why?

This Shape the camp #1 Feminism was organized from 2 to 6pm on March 23 2019 by Climate Justice Camp Belgium, a group of activists involved not only in the climate struggle but in other struggles as well. We are an open group, which means that anyone can join at any moment, by joining one of our thematic groups (logistics, communication, organization of shape the camp meetings, outreach etc.).

The idea is to organize a climate justice camp from September 4 to September 8. This camp will be a space dedicated to exchanges and learning but also to civil disobedience trainings.

The aim of these Shape the camp meetings is to build the most intersectional and inclusive camp possible. The objective is to co-construct the identity of the camp, and especially its political (ie. claims and practices) and visual dimensions. Other struggles will also be covered like LGBTQI+, antiracism & decolonialism, social justice & poverty, ableism, ageism and intergenerationality. There will also be a final plenary to exchange on all what was created. These meetings will take place in places which echo with what we want to share. This is why this shape the camp took place in a feminist café, namely [le poisson sans bicyclette](#).

Feminist caucus workshop (between people concerned)

General remarks

We should not talk about inclusiveness but rather about **intersectionality**, since the feminists have also to be at **the centre of the struggle**, and not only invited. We should acknowledge that the climate urgency framing can imply a "hierarchy between struggles", which is perceived as **very violent** by some groups and people.

We should also pay attention to try to use **words** which do not hurt anyone and which are understandable for everyone.

Whats is specific to feminist movements and people concerned?

Particularity of feminist movements in the climate struggle

- ❖ Feminist movements better acknowledge the necessity for intersectionality and are more caring in general.
- ❖ They value oral knowledge (usually detained by people concerned)
- ❖ The personal experience of an oppression gives another meaning to a struggle
- ❖ The coherence between speeches (ie. claims, messages) and practices (the way we wage our battles) is usually stronger
- ❖ The issue of speech legitimacy is key and tools like caucuses are used. However, based on their lived experiences, people often do not dare to speak or to be a spokesperson.
- ❖ Criticism is easier to make
- ❖ Capitalist and productivist destructions are more central in their discourse.

Particularity of people concerned in the climate struggle

- ❖ People concerned are more sensitive to environmental issues and know more about them in general;
- ❖ They are more affected by the economic system (labour division and recognition, period poverty because of high taxes on hygiene products, including cups) and industrial (land expropriation) and its impacts (pollutions).
- ❖ They suffer from 'mental load' (eg. Individual changes towards more "zero waste" ways of living are often taken up by women)
- ❖ Some people are reluctant to take part in civil disobedience actions because they fear violence: this mode of action & the way we communicate on it should be redesigned, by including a part on the fear of violence during trainings for example.
- ❖ They are subject to male domination (like animals) and toxic manhood (eg. Being a powerful man, having manhood symbols like a big polluting car, refusing to be vegan because necessary to eat meat to be strong etc.)

What do we want to put on the political agenda of the camp?

Messages

- ❖ Give a big space for eco-feminism, which questions the reproduction of systems of oppressions.
- ❖ Make the links between climate change impacts and 1) migration, especially women migration (international chain of care, emotional load on diasporas), 2) the extractivist development model
- ❖ Show international solidarity with people impacted by climate change, especially in the South
- ❖ Social change (towards zero waste) should not impact women (by increasing their 'mental load')

Claims

- ❖ Setting-up caucuses
- ❖ Building safe activist spaces by aligning our big ideas and our behaviors in activist circles. This involves having a safe party culture (alcohol/drugs = big capital = potential increase in the number of assaults), based on the Zapatista model which forbids alcohol?

- ❖ Thinking about civil disobedience in a more inclusive manner
- ❖ Who organizes the camp? Maybe give the leadership to affected communities like the farmers? And maybe acknowledging that there are other ways to wage struggles...
- ❖ Ensuring criticism is easier to make (so that our struggle is not a "struggle between us"): we should be able to criticize a banner or the way an assembly is conducted so that the climate struggle is easier to integrate
- ❖ Using tools to increase real or felt legitimacy to speak of concerned people so that they speak more and/or feel like becoming spokesperson.

What should be done in order to build a welcoming camp for all?

How to favor a true and sincere participation?

- ❖ Invite NGOs or concerned people to these shape the camp meetings, in order for them to participate in the whole process (not just invite them to a panel when everything is already decided)
- ❖ Examples: farmers' associations, CNCD, SOS Faim, Gasap, MAP, Bees-coop, Maison des femmes, Network of migrant women, La voix des sans-papiers, collect-actif, networks of associations where people are in precarious situations, filter café filtre, yellow vests, etc.
- ❖ Do not use "victimization" language

Being able to participate when you have children

- ❖ Have a "child care centre" managed by cis-gender men
- ❖ Being tolerant of children who talk, play, including during activities and speeches (that children are not asked to be silent)
- ❖ A program for children
- ❖ Caring and safety (if a child gets lost, a way to quickly find him/her)
- ❖ Have a specific space for families who need peace and quiet (& the possibility to wash babies for example)

Make sure that everyone can sleep well

- ❖ Two different camping areas: one for people who want to rest, one for people who want to do something else
- ❖ Make sure that the camping area is a quiet, and that the rest is not
- ❖ Building a silent space of relaxation outside the camping, for introverted activists ☺
- ❖ Proposing an external accommodation solution, being sleeping at locals' homes or renting a place.

Avoid the reproduction of male domination in the management of the camp

- ❖ Presentation of the camp (its philosophy and dynamics), from the beginning, during an assembly
- ❖ Setting-up a "task board" where everyone can add their name for these tasks (which could be rotating)
- ❖ Discuss methods for facilitation/animation beforehand, in the camp building process, so that as many people as possible are empowered to facilitate (& recognize that facilitation methods are not neutral) and that speaking out is as egalitarian as possible.
- ❖ Leave a free space for people to offer workshops on topics (avoid that there are only spaces for planned workshops)

How to avoid the construction of a virilist camp?

- ❖ Talk about the violence of the actions, either before or during the camp;
- ❖ Promote the significant participation of the concerned people in the building and planning of the camp and ensure that the logistics team is gender balanced/equal
- ❖ Build an inclusive camp, so that it is visible from the start (ie. accessibility of the place and accommodation: some people who cannot camp could be accommodated in the surroundings, in hostels or with people)
- ❖ Avoid gendered task distribution in activities in general

Think about the speakers and panelists

- ❖ See the databases that list all women with expertise on a subject like [expertes Brussels](#), [expertes](#), [expertalia](#).
- ❖ Who decides on the choice of panelists?
- ❖ Ensure diversity by enabling on-line participation of people who are not necessarily in Belgium/Europe? Establish the technical means to involve some people without them taking a flight to come
- ❖ Question of knowledge transmission: avoid the esplanade model

Make sure everyone can speak

- ❖ Ensure that there is a kind/benevolent atmosphere
- ❖ Facilitation techniques that encourage everyone to speak: moderators can regularly remind people to practice self-discipline and ensure that representativeness is effective
- ❖ One person counts how many cis-gender men and others speak
- ❖ Attention to the language issue: implementation of an interpretation system that allows each person to speak in their own language
- ❖ Establish a real opportunity to speak for everyone (without forcing anyone) at the beginning and end of a meeting
- ❖ Coaching on empowerment, legitimacy and visibility (in a caucus)?

Make sure everyone listen or does not bother someone who is speaking

- ❖ Using microphones in an assembly makes the voice louder and makes people more focused. It can also help the person speaking not to perceive any whispers or comments
- ❖ You have to display the blame, you can have a sign with "hello sexist comrade ", "hello troll who does not listen" to make sure it doesn't happen
- ❖ If these people are in the panel, you should have an active moderation. The moderator can ask the people in the panel who are not listening to stop talking.
- ❖ Everyone has a role to play if someone is trying to talk to us (we can say we are listening) or if a person is near (we can ask politely this person to stop).

Question the presence of alcohol and make everyone feel safe

- ❖ How do we break this very capitalist relationship?
- ❖ Social vulnerability > some people are embarrassed to participate in informal moments without alcohol
- ❖ Have sales start and end times in specific locations
- ❖ Have alternatives to alcohol (coffee, maté, soft)
- ❖ Have party caucuses (without cis-gender men OR without alcohol)
- ❖ Revolutionary experience: Should we be inspired by the Zapatista experience (with the strongest revolutionary discipline) and totally abolish alcohol for 4 days?
- ❖ Security shifts?

Showers, toilets, food

- ❖ Do not use binary labels
- ❖ Shower areas: in addition to individual showers, have small common shower areas? (max 3 or 4 people so that everyone can go with their friends); idea of having specific schedules for cis men.
- ❖ Special toilets: special cup toilets (with hand washing and rinsing the cup), special children's toilets (adapt the sinks), toilets for people in wheelchairs.
- ❖ Food: vegan food (the most inclusive option) and registration/special queue for people with allergies

Short summary of the workshop on the deconstruction of privileges

The first part was about privileges (what is it? Check-up). The second part aimed to answer this question: How, as a cis man, to be an ally of this struggle and what place should we have? How can privileges be deconstructed or used wisely?

Several possible directions:

- ❖ How to go where men don't go often and take on invisible tasks > washing dishes, children daycare
- ❖ Specific action: how could we, as cismen, explain to other cismen what feminism is?
- ❖ Sanctions framework for men > see [SACHA](#) plan (safe attitude against harassment and assaults) which was used during Esperanzah festival