

# CLIMATE BEYOND CLASSISM

A manual to make the  
climate movement more  
class inclusive

CLIMATE PROTECTION  
AND  
CLASS STRUGGLE

ENVIRONMENTALISM  
WITHOUT CLASS STRUGGLE  
IS GARDENING

SYSTEM CHANGE  
NOT  
CLIMATE CHANGE



This manual is the outcome of the seminar „**Climate Beyond Classism**“  
organised in Sonthofen from 23-30 September 2021

by Service Civil International Deutscher Zweig e.V.

[www.sci-d.de](http://www.sci-d.de) | [www.sci-d.de/climate-beyond-classism](http://www.sci-d.de/climate-beyond-classism)

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# Table of contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Why this manual?.....                            | 4  |
| Introduction to the topic.....                   | 5  |
| Classism in the climate movement.....            | 7  |
| Anti-Classist checklist .....                    | 9  |
| Non-formal Education (NFE) methods .....         | 11 |
| World Café: Introduction to classism .....       | 12 |
| Quote Guessing .....                             | 14 |
| Silent Discussion .....                          | 16 |
| Self-Reflection Walk with the Power Flower ..... | 18 |

Throughout the handbook, you will find quotes from participants of the seminar "Climate Beyond Classism" in speech bubbles like this one. They talk about their experiences with classism in their own climate and environmental groups.

# Why this manual?

**To overcome the climate crisis, we need big social movements that demand a massive change in the way that we do economics and politics.** And while the climate movement has grown a lot in 2019, it still doesn't have the necessary impact on policymakers. Large amounts of people need to become active parts of the movement. Accordingly, the climate movement needs to open up!

**Poor and working-class youths are massively underrepresented in the climate movement, which in Europe is mostly run by those who are middle-class, white, and university educated.** Yet, economically weak and working-class people are the ones most affected by the effects of the climate crisis, both in the present and the future, and both globally and nationally. The ones losing their jobs in coalmines through a transition to renewable energies are workers. Working class people often cannot afford to consume expensive green alternatives to unsustainable products. And working-class people are much more endangered by environmental disaster, pollution and lack of resources. How can we bring social and climate movements closer together? What are the reasons for poor people and working class people not to feel comfortable in the climate movement? How is all this related to capitalism? And how can we make structures in the climate movement more inclusive?

**This manual aims to inspire you in creating a more inclusive climate movement.** We introduce our reflections, learnings, practices and methods connected to the topic of classism. We were inspired by our own experiences of being in the climate movement as well as by Karen Bell's book "Working Class Environmentalism" (2021) when creating this manual.

**Who is behind this manual?** Activists of SCI Germany and the educational collective "Bildung für utopischen Wandel" initiated and created this manual. Service Civil International (SCI) was created in 1920 in the aftermath of World War I. Then, the goal of the organisation was to bring together people from different countries that had just been enemies in the war, and to create spaces for cooperation, understanding and peace building through volunteering. SCI strives to contribute to a culture of peace also today. SCI currently has branches in 43 countries, and the network organises approximately 1.000 volunteering camps per year. SCI also organises campaigns and educational projects such as seminars. SCI and other international volunteering organisations face similar challenges as the climate movement: Most people doing international voluntary services with SCI come from academic and middle-class backgrounds, while the purpose of SCI has always been to bring together people across diverse backgrounds. This manual for us, the initiators, is also a self-reflection on our own practices within SCI.

**This is the outcome of the seminar "Climate Beyond Classism".** In autumn 2021, we organised a seminar in Sonthofen, Germany, to discuss challenges related to class when working with young people around the climate crisis. Participants shared their experiences of being active in the climate and environmental movement as well as labour movements, and of doing international voluntary work.

# Introduction to the topic

**What is classism?** Classism is the structural discrimination of people based on their own or their family's social status, income, job or education. It affects especially working-class people, people without higher education, and poor people. We can observe classism in many different spheres of society. Here are some examples we collected during our seminar:

- Education is inherited: Young people whose parents have university degrees are much more likely to have a university degree themselves.
- Meritocracy is a myth: While in popular culture, we are very often told that we can "achieve whatever we want if we just work hard enough", this is not the case in reality. The opportunities we have in life depend very much on the privileges we are born with.
- Rich people live longer and healthier: Access to good healthcare, to lives without a lot of stress factors and to information about healthy lifestyles are very much connected to our income.
- Money makes more money: While humanity's wealth increases and there are more and more resources available, people with more money have an advantage in our current system of globalised capitalism. They can invest their money in the stock market, real estate, etc. and thus grow their wealth. This contributes to an increasingly unequal distribution of wealth – while poverty continues to exist.
- The global working class: According to Oxfam (<https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/just-8-men-own-same-wealth-half-world>), eight men own as much wealth as the poorest 50% of humanity. Especially in the Global South – in the former colonies of the European empires – people often work under horrible labour conditions without getting their fair share of the profit they produce with their bodies and the resources of their land.
- Classism is highly interlinked with racism: Because of centuries of European colonialism, the global working class, those affected most by poverty, are often Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Also in Europe, mostly people who migrated from poorer regions of the world do the working class jobs nowadays – working class people in this case are often affected by both classism and racism.

## How is the climate crisis related to class?

- Rich people are much more responsible for the climate crisis than poor people. Studies show that people with higher income consume more and thus have a higher carbon footprint than people with lower income (see here: <https://www.moment.at/story/einkommenstarke-haushalte-oesterreich-belasten-das-klima-mehr>). While we speak about flying as an individual action that affects the climate, a vast majority of the world's population has never been inside an airplane (see here: <https://stay-grounded.org/get-information/#injustice>).

- The working class is more affected by environmental destruction. Karen Bell in her book "Working Class Environmentalism" (2021) points out how poor and working-class people are more in danger of droughts, floodings, extreme weather, pollution, of their livelihoods being destroyed and of their health declining due to these environmental problems. They often have fewer possibilities to protect themselves from extreme weather events. Governmental reactions to the climate crisis (e.g. additional taxes) are proportionally more drastic for poorer people, whilst environmentally harmful production methods often harm working class people (e.g. jobs in health-damaging industries or housing next to landfills). This is both the case with poor and working class people in Europe and in the Global South.

**Why do we need working class youths in the climate movement?** The working class is powerful – it holds the means of production. In recent years, the predominantly middle-class Western climate movement has had some minor successes, mainly by influencing the public discourse on climate. However, the achieved political changes were often put into practice in a way that disproportionately burdens people from the working class. Sustainable and just change against the forces behind the climate crisis will only happen if the transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to a renewable energy economy equitably meets the needs of the working class. Capitalism both exploits working-class people and the natural resources of the planet – building an alliance between climate activists and the working class could help us overcome this.

*"When I enter a climate group, I often feel alone because I am - I think - the only person who grew up with unemployment benefits. It would be better and more comfortable for me if there were more people with different experiences and not only people from the middle and upper class or eco-bubble."*

*"When we barbecue in our environmental group, everything is always vegan or at least vegetarian. There is often a lot of ignorance when someone else doesn't have this lifestyle. Whether it's eating vegan or reducing plastic, I often hear: 'How can people eat meat/buy things in plastic? There is a complete lack of understanding that other people can't afford this standard, and it looks very down on me. In my group, I really had the feeling that there was no understanding for the fact that people simply have different life realities and simply cannot afford some things.'"*

# Classism in the climate movement

During the seminar, we have collected some experiences of classism in the climate movement we had observed ourselves. Some of them are personal experiences; others are critical reflections on big climate movements such as Fridays for Future or Extinction Rebellion. Here are some overall observations we have made:

**There is lots of pure classist discrimination in the climate movement.** While there is also great solidarity with workers' movements, we have also observed the opposite and a lack of reflection on it. Classist jokes, slurs and comments such as "He didn't even finish middle school", assuming everyone in a room has a university degree, or dismissing or ignoring the concerns of working class people, have been observed by us within the climate movement.

**Now and then.** The climate movement focuses its rhetoric mainly on the consequences the climate crisis will have in the future. Fridays for Future has this framing in its name, implying that future generations will be more affected by the climate crisis. This is true of course, but also does not recognise that the climate crisis already has a lot of direct consequences on poor and working-class people all over the world.

**Here and there.** Researcher Karen Bell points out that the classification of climate change as the biggest environmental problem does not include the environmental difficulties poor and working-class people are facing. Poor and working-class people in Europe have long been more affected by natural disasters, the transition to renewable energy and local environmental problems such as pollution.

**Long plenaries with academic language dominated by middle class voices.** Sometimes in climate activism – and activism overall – we participate in long meetings, with most people in a room being middle class and university-educated, especially those in leading positions. This is not inviting for poor and working class people.

**Green consumption and individual action as the main solution for big systemic problems.** Not everyone has the financial means to buy organic food, build solar panels on their house (Who owns houses?) or to consume in a more "green" way. Focusing on consumption as a solution for environmental problems assumes that people can just choose their consumption habits. But: If you consume mainly for your survival, you have no choice in your consumption.



**Consume less.** In the climate and environmental movements, framings around consuming less, degrowth or zero waste lifestyles are popular. However, this assumes that people consume too much to begin with when actually, consumption is much higher and carbon footprints are much bigger among richer people rather than poorer people.

**When civil disobedience affects working class people more than those in power.** There has been criticism against some forms of action such as blockades of highways and transport hubs in cities by Extinction Rebellion and other groups. Working class people often felt ignored by these actions, as these blockades made it impossible for them to get to work on time and threatened their job security. Civil disobedience is a form of political protest that only few people have access to, because repressions are generally a higher threat to marginalised people.

"If the climate movement could become so inclusive that more people from the working class were there and not just me, then I would like to be part of it again. I think it would be cooler then. I'm also careful about sharing what background I have because I don't want to be the one great example that is fully well included."

"Personally, I'm often bothered by the lack of awareness of privilege among richer people. I feel with some people that they go out into the world very confidently because they know that they are completely financially secure. And I feel like there needs to be a lot more awareness that this is not the case for everyone."

"We once did a campaign in a supermarket and labelled products as cheap meat. But we didn't think about what that would do to the people who worked there. You could take the labels off without any problems, but it was unpleasant additional work for the staff and it is not an easy situation for the workers when demonstrators are there. It's not the staff's fault that there's cheap meat in the supermarket. It didn't even occur to us that this wasn't the right action. The people who produce the meat should be made responsible, not the people who work there. So we didn't even think about the fact that it's not a cool situation for the workers and that they are not responsible for it."



# Anti-Classist checklist

**Checklist for anti-classism in your climate group** (inspired by Karen Bell):

## **Try to avoid borders to join:**

- Think about timing: When do you meet? Is everyone available at that time or do people have to work? How can people who work in shifts be included?
- Think about the location: Where do you meet? Is the location convenient to reach for everyone? Does the place exude a certain (e.g. academic) atmosphere? Do poor and working class people normally also visit the location?
- Secure a place to stay for the participants that live far away and cannot afford accommodation.
- Offer childcare (or other means of collective care).
- Make events cost-free. If you have costs for food or location, collect the money based on donation and anonymously. Also think about (hidden) costs at the location (e.g. pressure to buy a drink when meeting in a bar).
- If you need to have a member fee or an entrance fee, make sure you offer different prices which represent different financial situations.
- Get translation when there is no common language that everyone feels comfortable with.
- Create a solidarity fund: collect money inside the movement (e.g. through donations or funding). It can be used to pay fines or salary cuts.
- Try to pay people for their work whenever it is possible.

## **Create a comfortable atmosphere for everyone**

- Make events joyful and fun. Provide food (you could collaborate with collective kitchens).
- Keep the atmosphere non-formal rather than academic. Use simple language with clear messages and explain academic terms.
- Democratise your knowledge: organise skill shares and write how-tos that are accessible for everyone. That way, everybody can take over tasks.
- Create a constructive mistake culture. Don't judge people for not being aware of all politically correct wordings.
- Do not judge people for their consumer decisions. Not everyone has the money to buy organic food or the time to get used to a vegan diet.
- Find tasks that are not risky, so that everyone can get involved.
- Respect knowledge based on experience. Listen to people that experience discrimination!
- Reshape the image of activism. Care work is a part of activism!

- Make sure you have a balance of people from different classes, as well as a balance of gender, age, race, etc. when organising public events, like panel discussions, presentations, workshops or press conferences.
- Offer diverse cultural events, which address people from different backgrounds.

### **Tackle classism in your group:**

- Reflect your own privilege. If you belong to the middle class, drop your superiority attitude and give space to working class people.
- Think about how much space people with academic backgrounds take in plenaries. Do they talk more? Do they set the topics in your groups?
- Include working class people as organisers. If possible, pay them for their work.
- Talk about classism in your group and the movement. Organise Workshops on the topic.
- Sometimes it can help to create safer spaces for working class people where they can talk and exchange more comfortably about their experiences inside and outside of the group.
- React to classism when you see it.

### **Make your group more diverse:**

- Rather than thinking about the future and abstract issues, try to focus on everyday problems that concern people directly.
- Go into districts or to events of poor and working class people and work together with people on the topics that are important for them.
- Network with organisations of the poor and working class and join forces if you have common issues. This can be syndicates, unions or other working class organisations. Be careful to work together on an equal footing.
- Don't expect people from working class to join your movement but join them in their fights.
- Include working class people in creating visions and utopias.
- If you hire someone, prefer working class people to middle class people if they have the same skills, experience and knowledge.
- Reflect for every activity how this is accessible for people who have a low income and/or are overworked.

*"If you have more privileges, you have to learn a lot, you have to be much more patient, you have to work on yourself."*

# Non-formal Education (NFE)

## methods

Non-formal education can be very helpful to deepen and discuss topics of climate and classism. With these methods, you do not have to be an expert on the topic of social classes, classism or climate justice to facilitate a workshop. Your task is rather to prepare a concept, to create a frame for the workshop, and to facilitate the group dynamics. The following ideas should be used as a starting point to inspire your research and to create workshops that fit your target group.

Every method description starts with some general information followed by a detailed explanation. Of course, you can combine different methods to plan a workshop.

It is important to use different types of methods to make your workshop more dynamic. Also, try to create a good and inclusive environment, to effectively absorb new information, to encourage self-reflections and to create respectful interactions in the group during your session.

Feel free to adapt the methods to the needs of your group and of yourself, depending e.g. on the individuals' age, education, abilities, personal needs, preferences and personal experiences.

Here you have an overview over the methods in this toolkit:

- World Café
- Quote Guessing
- Silent Discussion
- Self-Reflection

*"Climate groups always try to organise some kind of action and project, and that's good. But then, the question of how the group can be better and more diverse falls by the wayside. Thinking more about these things is always the last item on the agenda."*

*"I was once on a team weekend for a climate camp and during the introduction we were asked who was studying or had studied. Actually, all of us said yes. That was kind of astonishing, because students are a minority in Austria, but in politically active groups they simply represent the absolute majority of people. And there is of course the question of why the academic minority is the majority in all political processes and simply determines a lot while other people do not find a connection to it."*

## World Café: Introduction to classism

**GENERAL USE:** Introducing a topic and getting deeper into it; starting discussions, sharing thoughts and opinions; getting to know different aspects or topics; discuss statistics, graphics, etc.

**AIM:** Introduction to classism; getting to know numbers and examples about classism

**TIME:** 45 min

**GROUP SIZE:** min. 10

**MATERIALS:** flipchart paper, pens

### EXPLANATION:

The participants stand or sit at tables distributed in the room in groups of three to six people. The tables are equipped with flipchart paper (with a question/task written on the flipchart) and markers. The facilitator explains the process: each group starts at one table and discusses the graph, picture or question there. They write down their main ideas, questions and outcomes of the discussion. After around 15 minutes, they change tables. Using the notes of the previous group, they can continue the discussion and add their own thoughts. When every group talked about every question or graph, the participants come together and shortly present the outcomes on every flipchart in the plenary.

As a variation, you can also have a host at each table who stays there for all rounds as a facilitator and connects the thoughts from group to group.

The World Café concludes with a period of reflection, where questions like the following are asked:

- What was new to you? What surprised you?
- What did you learn?
- Which points do you still want to discuss?
- How can we go on with the outcomes of the discussions?

**ANTI-CLASSIST EVALUATION:** It is easier to participate and express ideas when participants are in smaller groups. Statistics and graphs can be hard to understand for some people and are a very classicist, academic ways of acquiring knowledge.

### TO CONSIDER:

It is important to take into consideration

- that the topics are not too scientific/technical/complicated
- that no one is excluded in the group discussions (make sure the rules of respect are followed)
- that there is enough time for all “tables”
- that the reflection in the “big group” after the end of the whole session can be overwhelming (proposal: offer the possibility to first exchange with your neighbour).

**MORE INFORMATION:** <http://www.theworldcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Cafe-To-Go-Revised.pdf>

## A World Café about climate and class

You can use a World Café to introduce to the topic of classism. Before you start with the World Café, it is helpful to have a short input presentation, which shortly explains what social class and classism are.

Then you split up the group and start the World Café with statistics, quotes and other materials on the topic of classism:

### Class & Health:

- <https://t1p.de/lifeexpectancyengland>
- <https://t1p.de/coronadeaths>
- <https://t1p.de/mentalhealtpoverty>

### Class & Money

- <https://t1p.de/inheritedInequality>
- <https://t1p.de/wealthDistribution>
- <https://t1p.de/cartoonTaxes>

### Class & Education

- <https://t1p.de/schoolChancesParents>
- A personal quote about experiences of working class children at university:  
*"The self-confidence of the others made me understand that the room belonged to them more than to me. When I reached for french fries instead of salad in the cafeteria, they gave me a humorously disguised criticism. In my childhood, we ate whatever we could afford. [...] At flat-sharing parties, it was a popular game to ask strangers where he or she had "already travelled around. In such moments, I hid inconspicuously in the corner of shame. [...]"*  
*"At university, I tried hard to cover up my social background. The fear of saying something stupid was even present at the barbecue with the neighbours from the dormitory. The others know more, can do more, want more, I thought, as if they were carrying a final secret, the decoding of which would remain hidden from me forever.."*

### Class & Media & Politics

- <https://t1p.de/classismChildrenMovies>
- <https://t1p.de/classistMedia>
- <https://t1p.de/representationParlament>

- Author Brigitte Theissl about classism:

*"The best known are reality TV formats in which unemployed people are staged as if they were sitting at home on the couch all day, gambling, and as if they didn't want to look for work. Then, of course, there are newspapers, which have run a real campaign against people like the "laziest unemployed person in Germany". All in all, [...] people from the working class and the poverty class are not present enough in media. Poverty reporting is often problematic when journalists travel to a problem district with a view from the outside [...]. The people concerned could tell a lot about poverty, about discrimination, about problems with the authorities, but they should only tell when the money was not enough, what they ate and how small the children's room is." (https://taz.de/Autorin-Brigitte-Theissl-ueber-Klassismus/!5752623/)*

### Class & Climate

- <https://t1p.de/emissionsClassAustria>
- <https://t1p.de/injusticeFlying>
- Quote of climate activist about shame when shopping:  
*"I see climate classism above all when politicians and companies impose the responsibility on consumers to be climate-neutral in order to avoid responsibility themselves. This creates a certain shame when those consumers cannot afford the - significantly more expensive - products. This both reinforces capitalist power structures and polishes up the image of the companies – after all, they offer climate-neutral products." (https://taz.de/taz-Community-ueber-Klima-und-Klassismus/!5773706/)*

## Quote Guessing

**GENERAL USE:** Discover different intersections of a topic; interactive input; show historical developments of a topic and visualise the evolution of the concept

**AIM:** Discover different perspectives on social class and classism; reflect on omnipresence of discriminatory structures, especially classism in history and recent times

**TIME:** 75 min

**GROUP SIZE:** 10-30

**MATERIALS:** prepared quotes

### EXPLANATION:

Distribute several quotes or historical events to the participants (individually or in pairs). The quotes are without date and author. The task for the participants is to reflect on the historical context of the quote and who could have said it. After 5-10 minutes, everyone presents their quote and thoughts on it in the plenary and puts it on a timeline in the middle of the room. Others can spontaneously share ideas on the quotes, too. Afterwards, the facilitators present the origin of the quote and its connection to the topic. It can be helpful to change chairs after each quote to improve the concentration in the group.

After all quotes are presented and explained, you can have a reflection round with questions like:

- What surprised you?
- What do you think when you see the timeline?
- What are the similarities of the quotes?

The content of this method very much depends on the selected quotes. You can use typical mainstream historical quotes that show classist structures in the world over centuries, or use quotes by less prominent people in history to show the perspectives of oppressed groups.

**ANTI-CLASSIST EVALUATION:** Pre-knowledge can be necessary to guess the context. When explaining the method, make it clear that not finding the right answer is not a problem. Participants can also answer the questions anonymously to avoid highlighting educational differences.

**WHAT TO CONSIDER:** Depending on the participants, paintings, pictures or songs can be used instead of quotes.

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:** You can find some quotes here (in German): <https://www.connecting-the-dots.org/>

## A Quote/Event Guessing about climate and class

Here you can find some quotes connected to classism. Please be aware that you still need to do some research on the background and the connection to the topic.

- 👉 In the first documented strike in history, about 50 workers laid down their work and demonstrated for the payment of their wages | Strike of Deir el-Medina, 1159 b.c.
- 👉 "So three million people died in the years between 1494 and 1508 through war, enslavement and in the mines. Who in future generations will believe that?" | Bartolomé de las Casas, 1508
- 👉 James Watt improves the efficiency of steam engines | 1756
- 👉 US American writer publishes about 130 stories in which a poor hero, through hard work and thrift, pulls himself out of poverty to wealth and happiness. Through these stories, the saying "from rags to riches" became famous. | Horatio Alger, 1834 – 1899
- 👉 First use of the term classism | 1842
- 👉 Workers of the world, unite! | Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1848
- 👉 "The bourgeois reformers who wanted to carry out their social reforms to banish the revolution, but not at the expense of the sacred profit, the bourgeoisie's position of domination had to look for another economic basis for the reforms. They found it outside their homeland, in the exploitation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, whose unscrupulous, inhuman plunder and servitude brought supernormal profits from which the capitalists paid the crumbs of trade union concessions and social reforms." | Clara Zetkin, 1924
- 👉 As part of the Action "Arbeitsscheues (work-shy) Reich", more than 10.000 men were deported to concentration camps as so-called "a-socials" and forced into forced labour. | 1938
- 👉 The Easterlin Paradox shows the connection between income and happiness for the first time. | 1974
- 👉 Emma DeGraffenreid, along with several other Black women\*, sues General Motors for discrimination. At GM, there were jobs for Black men and for white women (and for white men, of course). GM did not hire Black women. The court rejects the lawsuit. | 1976
- 👉 "We are all middle class now" | Tony Blair, 1999
- 👉 "One of the arguments that is repeatedly given as a reason why we need high growth rates is: growth leads out of poverty. A simple metaphor is used for this: If there is no growth, the pie does not get bigger, and without a bigger pie, the poor would not get a bigger piece of the pie. But it is exactly the other way around, economic growth steals the cake for the poor. Growth takes away their bread." | Vandana Shiva, 2010
- 👉 "You want a hot body? You want a Bugatti? You want a Maserati? You better work, bitch!" | Britney Spears, 2013
- 👉 The first solo school strike demanding government action on climate change started by a 15-year old Swedish student. | 2018 by Greta Thunberg
- 👉 Workers at a plant of the German automotive supplier BOSCH, which is threatened with closure, join forces with climate justice groups to form the initiative "Climate Protection and Class Struggle" and demand the preservation of the plant and a change in production to climate-friendly products (buses, trains, etc.). | 2021



## Silent Discussion

**GENERAL USE:** Create more balanced discussions in a group with some dominant speakers; dealing with controversial and intensive topics; share information; gather opinions and experiences

**AIM:** Discover different narratives around social class/classism

**TIME:** 30-60 min

**GROUP SIZE:** any

**MATERIALS:** prepared flipcharts, pens for everyone

### EXPLANATION:

Distribute flipcharts with discussion questions or statements around classism and climate in the room. You can also add laptops with video input (+ headphones), statistics, images, cartoons – anything you can think of that is related to the topic and that can give interesting input. Make sure that your questions lead to an interesting discussion, which people in the room actually have different opinions on.

Give the participants the instructions: Everyone walks around in silence and comments in written form on the flipchart papers with questions. They can also comment on others' opinions and start a written discussion. Encourage participants to write a “plus” next to comments they agree with, and encourage them to revisit flipchart papers that they have already written on. There is no need to comment on every flipchart paper. There is no need to write names next to their comments, but remind everyone to be respectful even if they disagree. It can be helpful to play some relaxing background music while discussing.

After the silent part, you can bring all flipcharts in the centre so that everybody can have a look on how the different discussions developed. You can ask the group if they want to discuss any specific topic in the plenary. Make sure you also debrief on how everyone feels after the discussion.

**ANTI-CLASSIST EVALUATION:** This method can help to include participants whose written language is better than their spoken language, or participants who do not like to speak up in big groups. Personal feelings are protected by anonymity (minimises the difference of class), and this method can be used for almost every topic.

**TO CONSIDER:** It is important to take into consideration, that

- there is enough time for everyone to express themselves
- some people do not like writing so much
- the method can be classist and ableist, because maybe there are people with some handicaps or people who do not know how to write
- you reassure a diverse context.

## A Silent Discussion about climate and class

You could use this method to discuss experiences about class in the climate movement and give different perspectives on that topic. Questions that you ask on several flipcharts could be:

- 🗣️ What images and visuals do you associate with the climate movement? How do they relate to social class?
- 🗣️ How do you think focusing on individual consumption as a solution to the climate crisis affects working class people?
- 🗣️ How does this seminar reproduce classism?
- 🗣️ How does your organisation reproduce classism?
- 🗣️ How can veganism be classist? / How could a working class veganism look like?
- 🗣️ What could be reasons that working class children join Fridays for Future protests less than middle-class children do?
- 🗣️ How do meetings by and for people who are mainly working class differ from those of groups dominated by middle class people?
- 🗣️ How does the climate movement benefit from having working class people in it?
- 🗣️ What examples do you know of working class movements and climate movements cooperating?
- 🗣️ What environmental working class movements do you know?
- 🗣️ ...

## Self-Reflection Walk with the Power Flower

**GENERAL USE:** Reflect own experiences and positioning in society; reflect about own relation to a topic

**AIM:** Self-Reflection; being aware of own positioning concerning social class

**TIME:** 60-120+ min

**GROUP SIZE:** min. 3

**MATERIALS:** prepared reflection papers, pens

### EXPLANATION:

The facilitator explains the task to the whole group. The participants should split up in groups of two or three people. They are free to choose their team members, as everyone should feel more or less comfortable during the session. Everyone gets a paper with the printed Power Flower and every team gets a paper with the explanation. Split the self-reflection in a first part, in which participants work individually, a second part in which they exchange about their Power Flowers, and third part in which they discuss additional questions. The time in the small groups depends on how deeply you want the groups to discuss the topic. They should have at least 45min to reflect in the small groups, but more is easily possible. It is nice if the groups go for a walk or hike during their reflection talk. You find the detailed task in the Power Flower explanation on the next page.

After a certain time in the small groups, everyone meets again in the plenary for a debriefing. The facilitator asks the participants about the experiences they made during the reflection, questions that came up or interesting topics they discussed. Nobody has to share personal things in the plenary!

**ANTI-CLASSIST EVALUATION:** This activity has no need for money, but if you go for a longer hike be aware that not everybody is equipped for that. It is about experiences and not about knowledge, which can be good for a diverse group with different backgrounds.

### TO CONSIDER:

It is important to take into consideration

- that you inform people that they should only share what they want to share, and that nobody is obliged to answer to personal questions if they do not want to
- that you ensure that the environment is a safer space (not too many strangers around)
- if there is need for suitable / specific equipment (if needed inform participants before or provide it).

## A Power Flower Reflection about climate and class

This exercise can be very personal. It is just for you and will not be shared in the large group. Even in the small groups, only share what you are comfortable with.

### Part 1: Power Flower individual work (10 min):

Take a few moments alone to fill in the Power Flower. In the middle of the flower, you can see some categories that can be important for your identity. Write in the outer leaves of the flower your corresponding positioning (e.g. gay for sexual orientation). It may well be that categories important for you are missing. You can add these in the lower leaves. In a second step, you can colour the leaves, depending on how privileged you are with your positioning in the social context. A coloured leaf means many privileges.

Afterwards, find another person with whom you can exchange ideas and answer the following questions.

### Part 2: Exchange about your Power Flowers (15 min):

Share your Power Flowers in your small group. It is up to you what you want to share and what not. You can use these questions as a guide:

- Was it difficult to identify an affiliation or group in those categories?
- Which groups or affiliations are important to you right now? Do you associate individual group affiliations with positive or negative experiences?

### Part 3: Privileges and discrimination in society (20min):

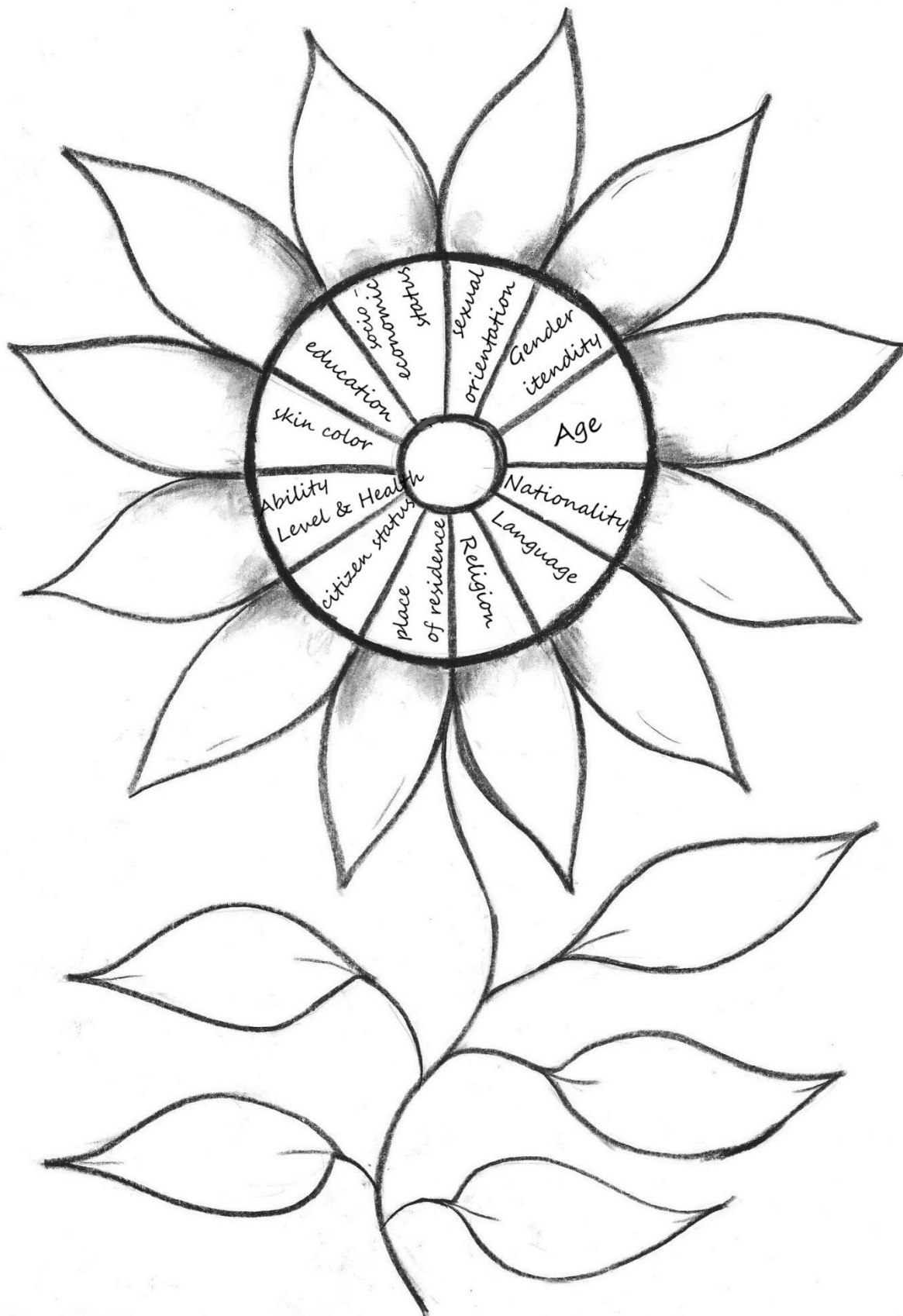
Our lives are not only dependent on us individually, but are also shaped by social hierarchies. For example, women are treated differently than men, white people have different experiences than Black people, and social backgrounds influence our lives.

- Which positioning is considered privileged and which one disadvantaged for each category? What are the consequences for the individual?
- How would you classify your own positioning? How are you privileged? Where are others?
- What feelings do you associate with your positioning and the resulting consequences?
- Do you notice persons (groups) which are particularly oppressed in this society (intersectionality)?

### Part 4: Classism (30min):

We talk about classism when people experience exploitation, marginalisation, violence or other forms of discrimination because of their social background or position. Take another 5-10 minutes alone to answer the questions individually before sharing together in your small group.

- How do you feel about classism after the first day (of a seminar/workshop/training)?
- Where do you encounter classism in your everyday life? When have you been affected by it yourself/friends/others?
- When have you been acting classist yourself?
- Where do you encounter classism when it comes to the climate?
- What do you wish for a world/climate movement with less classism?





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