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## Introduction

In recent decades, a transformative wave of social struggles has surged across the global north, championing the ideals of justice, equality, and equity. Historically, these movements have aimed to expose and challenge the various forces of segregation and oppression that have arisen against certain population groups, due to some of the particularities that define their identity.

On a practical level, these social movements of liberation are confronted by the structural opposition of the system that reproduces those same oppressions, as well as with the institutions and individuals who possess social and economic power. Despite structural opposition from systems perpetuating these oppressions, and resistance from powerful institutions and individuals, the role of numerous entities and individuals in raising awareness and socializing these narratives is notable. Gradually, these efforts are driving social progress, trying to reduce inequalities between groups and moving towards a fairer world.

Within all these currents of opposition to the hegemonic system, the one developed by feminist movements stands out in pursuit of equality between men and women. Not only seeking pure equality, but aiming at changing the whole structure of the system built on patriarchal premises. Although modern feminism originated in the mid-eighteenth century<sup>1</sup>, a new wave of feminism is now making its mark globally, addressing issues across all societal sectors. This widespread approach has enabled feminist theories to influence various spheres and sectors, even those eminently masculinized or under strong patriarchal control. In this sense, the energy sector has not been an exception, gradually including the gender perspective in its economic activities, as well as in its intersection with the social and environmental spheres.

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<sup>1</sup> The considered first wave of European feminism was developed during the period of enlightenment in the mid-18th century. Its development occurred parallel to that of the French Revolution of 1789.

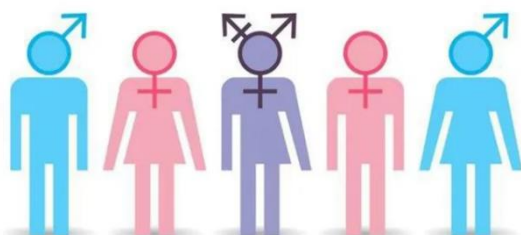
## Gender oppression and the application of gender perspectives.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) was one of the great United Nations conventions in defense of gender equality. Following the foundations laid by this convention, gender inclusion in both public and private entities had its official origin in Beijing, during the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (1995).



Gender mainstreaming involves the inclusion and implementation of measures and actions that take into account the diverse realities, roles, needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys. Its goal is to eliminate these differences, focusing in the elimination of all oppressions over women bodies in order to achieve a more equitable and egalitarian society. This approach has subsequently been endorsed and developed by numerous organizations, private entities, protocols and other conventions, all of them focused on the pursuit of social equality.

The entities that currently apply the gender perspective at a global level, range from government institutions (such as the Ministries of Equality or the UN), to research centres and universities (for example, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), NGOs and cooperation entities (Oxfam Intermón, Médecins Sans Frontières...), or private entities of different sizes (from Google, to small-scale cooperatives such as Azimut360).



It is critical to understand that the concept of "gender" is a social construct that evolves in response to changing social contexts. It adapts and molds itself according to the social trends that influence it. This concept is developed around attributes and

subjectivities traditionally associated with the categories of man and woman, that is, with the feminine and the masculine, historically linked to biological sex<sup>2</sup>. From this foundation is where gender roles emerge, which are also products of specific socio-cultural and economic contexts. Despite the inherent malleability of gender, a predominant patriarchal context persists globally, in which women have historically been subjugated and dominated. In this context, patriarchy itself has been responsible for defining the dynamics of the relationship between men and women, thus perpetuating its functioning and the gender oppression it implies in most modern societies. The subjugation and omission of women's interests and needs often leads to some type of sexist gender violence (from men to women), understood as any form of physical, psychological, sexual or economic damage.



Both at the governmental level in terms of economic benefit, and in the framework of cooperation, gender approximation is identified as one of the first mechanisms of action to combat the oppression of women. The struggle against this subjugation is prioritized in the search for social equality, not only because it directly affects 50% of the world's population (and indirectly its totality), but also because of its contextualization as historical repression and its

interconnections with all sectors and areas of modern societies, representing, together with class oppression, the greatest source of inequalities and injustices globally.

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<sup>2</sup> Currently, the theorization of sex and gender is problematized from different social sectors, especially in relation to the understanding of gender as an identity, as well as the understanding of biological sex as a new social construction. These theories have been born especially from the struggle for the rights of trans and non-binary people, in direct confrontation with certain movements of so-called radical trans-exclusionary feminism, as well as other reactionary movements. Radical feminism defends the sexual differentiation between men and women as the main oppression against women (materialized for example by the cooptation of women's reproductive capacity, only linked to the existence of the anatomical reproductive system).

The roles of power and domination of men towards women have a completely transversal and intersectional implication, affecting all levels and spheres of life, from the personal private sphere to the work and political spheres... These asymmetries of power are increased at their intersection with other mechanisms of oppression such as economic class, ethnicity or race, sexuality or physical abilities, among others... This idea also implies, therefore, that although all



women, by virtue of being identified as such, suffer different types of discrimination, not all women suffer it in the same way, or at the same level. Far from seeking to compare oppressions, the intersectional framework focuses on the correct contextualization of all oppressed groups, so that the measures taken are effectively adapted to each of the social realities. To their case-specific needs and demands. Especially in the case of women in vulnerable situations. It also seeks to prevent the struggle for women's rights from unintentionally generating injustices against other oppressed groups or other women.



It must also be understood that the struggle against gender oppression is not only a struggle for the emancipation of women, but for the emancipation of all humanity, which is undermined by the existence of oppression over the whole. The gender roles *performed* by women and men generate a whole series of transversalities that

affect all social sectors. For example, the feminist approach is, by necessity, a humanitarian and child protection approach, since it is women who are in charge of the care of children, and in general of all family care networks. This also applies to people belonging to other vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities or the elderly.

## The gender perspective in Azimut360.



At Azimut360 we have considered and defended the fight for gender equality since our origins as one of our top priorities, being intrinsically present in our definition as a cooperative, as well as in our daily actions and projects. One of the founders of the cooperative, and current managing partner, is engineer Mireia Gil. Women's decision-making has been present, therefore, since our origins, structuring the growth of the company and preventing its tendency towards a more patriarchal drift of action.

Internally, the cooperative exercises so-called positive discrimination. This initiative promotes the participation of women in interviews and recruitment processes. This action is not exclusively aimed at benefiting women, but at achieving gender parity, where both women and men have equal opportunities in the workplace. This is especially relevant in a predominantly male-dominated sector, particularly in specific roles such as solar panel installers or engineering positions.



At the national level, many of the projects developed consider the sex-specific needs of the population affected by the implementation of the project. In these cases, projects are designed considering how they can positively affect women's lives, for example, by facilitating their access to vocational training or positions that they would otherwise have

difficulty accessing. During these periods they are offered support, so that the training comprehensively affects their skills, training possible leaders of the sector for the future, but above all, creating references and role-models for other women and girls who dream of becoming professionals of the energy sector.



In the field of international cooperation, Azimut360 is in the process of



integrating the gender perspective in all new projects, as well as adapting and updating those already underway to achieve more egalitarian impacts on targeted societies. The measures that can be taken are endless. Among other things, cooperation projects seek to design surveys and interviews in such a way as to increase the representativeness of women, so that they can express their views and specific needs. In other cases, when designing the objectives of the project together with the right to be given access with the implementation of the project, the specific needs of women are always considered and specific actions are implemented to benefit them, for example, by supporting women's cooperatives, offering specific awareness and education programmes for mothers and children, or offering advantages of access to services for women.





## References:

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