

Recognised Authors



The role of equity and inclusion in achieving net zero



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She has a Master's degree in gender peace and security and a Bachelor's in political science and sociology. Antoinette is deeply committed to creating sustainable, strategic, and climate-resilient solutions that promote social inclusion and gender empowerment in developing communities. Antoinette is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment and the Association for Women's Rights in Development.



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Irene Yeboah is an Environmental and social safeguards and climate specialist at Constromart Africa in Accra, Ghana. She holds an MSc in urban management and development from Erasmus University and an integrated development studies from the University for Development Studies.

Irene is adept in climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental and social impact assessment, and preparation of environmental and social management plans and implementation. She is a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, International Association for Impact Assessment and International Water Association (IWA) working on multilateral development bank-funded projects as environment and social safeguards analyst and assistant urban planner on other projects. Her research focuses on embedding social sustainability in development projects to a sustainable society. She is passionate about sustainability and protecting the interest of people especially the vulnerable in making society a better place.



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Edward M. Melomey is an experienced civil engineer and project manager, steeped in construction and engineering leadership spanning two decades. He has led the implementation of several infrastructure projects as well as a bid of a local and international consortium to win the contract to provide consulting services for the first OPRC (World Bank funded performance-based contract) in Ghana.

Edward has graduate education in engineering project management, public administration and legal studies. He is a professional engineer and member of the Ghana Institution of Engineering and the American Society of Engineers.

He is the managing director at Constromart and has overseen the growth and expansion in Ghana and the establishment of offices in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

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Introduction

In recent years, the concept of achieving net zero emissions has gained considerable traction as a critical target in the fight against climate change. The net zero goal refers to the balance between the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere and the amount removed or offset, resulting in no additional emissions being added to the atmosphere.

While reducing greenhouse gas emissions is essential to mitigating the impacts of climate change, it is equally crucial to ensure that efforts to achieve net zero are equitable and inclusive. This article explores the role of equity and inclusion in achieving net zero, with a focus on social sustainability and the importance of centring social justice in climate policy and action.

The case for equity and inclusion in climate action

The concept of equity and inclusion is foundational if we are to create a just and sustainable society. Equity refers to ensuring fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and benefits, while inclusion involves actively involving and valuing diverse perspectives and voices in decision-making processes. When we talk about climate action and achieving net zero emissions, it is crucial to integrate equity and inclusion practices to ensure that the transition to a low-carbon economy is fair and inclusive for all members of society.

One of the key arguments for integrating equity and inclusion practices in climate action is the recognition of the unequal impacts of climate change on different communities. Vulnerable populations, such as lower-income communities, communities of colour and indigenous communities, are often disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change, such as extreme weather events, rising sea levels and food insecurity.

These communities often have limited access to resources and face systemic barriers that prevent them from fully participating in decision-making processes related to climate action. By prioritising equity and inclusion in climate policies and initiatives, we can ensure that those most affected by climate change are not left behind and are empowered to participate in the transition to a sustainable future.

Furthermore, integrating equity and inclusion practices in climate action can help to address social inequalities and promote long-term societal well-being. By considering the needs and perspectives of marginalised communities, we can develop more effective and holistic solutions to climate change that benefit all members of society. This can involve initiatives such as providing job training and employment opportunities in the renewable energy sector for disadvantaged communities, investing in green infrastructure in underserved neighbourhoods and ensuring that climate policies are designed with a social justice lens.

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Approaches to ensure equity and inclusion in achieving net zero

There are several approaches to ensuring equity and inclusion in achieving net zero emissions. One key approach is to prioritise the needs and perspectives of marginalised and vulnerable communities in climate action initiatives. This can involve conducting thorough assessments of the social, economic and environmental impacts of climate policies on different populations and actively engaging with affected communities to co-design solutions that meet their needs.

Another approach is to promote diversity and representation in decision-making processes related to climate action. Ensuring that a diverse range of voices and perspectives are included in these processes, policymakers and stakeholders can make more informed and inclusive decisions that reflect the interests of all individuals. Additionally, investing in capacity-building and empowerment initiatives for marginalised communities can help ensure that they have the knowledge and resources to participate meaningfully in climate action efforts.

Furthermore, it is crucial to consider intersectional factors when addressing equity and inclusion in achieving net zero emissions. This involves recognising that individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage and tailoring climate action initiatives to address these intersecting challenges. An intersectional approach to equity and inclusion across the global community can develop more holistic and effective solutions that promote social justice and environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

The integration of equity and inclusion practices in climate action of net zero is essential for achieving a fair, just and sustainable future for all individuals. Prioritising the needs and perspectives of marginalised communities, promoting diversity and representation in decision-making processes and considering intersectional factors in climate action initiatives, is essential if the global community wishes to achieve a more inclusive and effective solutions to address the impacts of climate change.

As we work towards achieving net zero emissions and mitigating the effects of global warming, it is imperative that equity and inclusion principles guide our efforts to create a more equitable and resilient world for future generations.

