

Abstract FNE-Project

Responsible for the project

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Sexual and Gender-based Violence as a Sustainability Problem

Abstract

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a challenge for sustainable development. More than 30% of women worldwide have experienced physical violence, sexual violence or both. The total yearly costs of SGBV are estimated as about 9.4 trillion USD, equivalent to 11% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). This is why the prevention of SGBV took an important place in the United Nations' 'Agenda 2030', as well as in world politics and global debates. Two 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs 5 and 16) directly address violence against women and girls and tacitly acknowledge that such violence is preventable. The aim of the seminar is to link the three pillars of sustainability with the topic of SGBV and to discuss why and how SGBV lowers the pace of reaching the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the seminar will aim to carve out points where prevention of SGBV can start for inclusive sustainable development. The focus of the seminar is, on the discussion of the social, economic and ecological pillars of sustainability from an SGBV perspective.

The Brundtland Report (1987) presented the widely accepted three-pillar (economic, social and environmental) concept of sustainability. However, the report did not focus on intra-generational or gender equality. Detraz (2017) described several reasons for using a gendered sustainability approach, the most important of which are as follows: First, viewing sustainability through the lens of gender raises important questions and broadens the sphere of analysis; second, such an approach shows specifically gendered manifestations of injustice; and third, the approach should aid in developing a more holistic understanding of global environmental problems and responses to them using gender-sensitive policies. Leach et al. (2016: 6) discussed intersection of sustainable development and gender equality and defined sustainable development as 'development that ensures human well-being, ecological integrity, gender equality and social justice, now and in the future'. The definitions established by Leach and Detraz are the bases of this seminar. The planned seminar will integrate a gender perspective in all dimensions of sustainability, especially including gender relations, and more generally, issues of power and inequality.

The use of a gender-specific sustainability approach can promote different competencies: On the one hand, the gender perspective raises several important questions and broadens the scope of analysis. This promotes cross-linked thinking. On the other, such an approach reveals gender-specific manifestations of injustice and addresses power relations (empowerment). This fosters critical thinking and reflection on values, norms, power relations and gender roles. Furthermore, a sustainability approach with a gender focus should help develop a more holistic understanding of global problems and identify or elaborate possible responses via gender-specific policies, debates and actions.

The research, teaching and working activities in the field of Gender Studies and Sustainable Development are confronted with similar challenges: The legal norm of international law sets a mandatory legal framework. However, its social values – in terms of what constitutes gender or sustainable development – differ greatly according to the context. The work in these fields enables scientists and actors to critically reflect dominant values.

The content of SGBV and sustainable development will be taught through innovative didactic methods directly applied by the students, paving the way for valuable discussions. Each session will consist of a theoretical and a practical part. In the theoretical part, the students will present the key facts of the session. In the practical part, the students will use 'new' methods (film, interviews with stakeholders, the Jigsaw Teaching Technique and more) to foster the discussion. A collection of didactic methods will be provided on ILIAS. Moreover, external experts will be invited to elucidate on SGBV in the SDGs from an insider perspective.