Women, gender equality and climate justice: a case for the Defensoras

Inspiring stories from Latin America

**Location:** Pianofabriek, Brussels.

**Date:** 9th of January

**Time:** doors open at 19.00, event starts at 19.30.

Female activists are crossing borders in many ways (cultural, social, religious). By breaking taboos and social standards, they often provide drastic changes in legislation, policy and practice. But this also causes resistance from powerful institutions who consider equality between men and women as a threat to social stability and to established economic interests. ‘Defensoras’ (female human right activists) in Latin America also deal with these kind of problems. They experience difficulties while raising their voice to protect their community and the climate from extractive industries.

Want to know more about the relationship between gender equality and climate justice? Go to the Pianofabriek on the 9th of January and listen to interesting stories from Latin America! Defensora Mirtha Vasquez and UGent researcher Amelia Alva Arevalo will tell their story and answer al your questions.

This event is organised by Catapa in context of the defensoras project (see underneath).

**Speakers:**

**- Mirtha Vasquez** is director of GRUFIDES, a NGO in Peru. They work on the topic of human rights and the environment with a focus on ecological sustainability, the right to water, fair economy and gender equality. Vasquez is also lawyer of the Chaupes, a family who became famous because of their conflict with a big mining company who wanted to claim their territory to start a mine there.

- **Amelia Alva Arevalo** is a researcher at the university of Ghent where she’s doing research about the implementation and practice of the right to prior consultation of indigenous people.

**Defensoras project**

The project "Strategies of women human rights defenders confronting extractive industries" is organised in collaboration with CATAPA, Ingeniería Sin Fronteras (ISF), Red Latinoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras, Grufides and FEDEPAZ. The project is aimed at uncovering the prejudices and (violent) confrontations women environmental activists in Latin-America have to deal with. Some extractive industries are well-connected with different governmental and private actors. That's why opposition to these industries can often lead to discrimination, violence, impunity and human rights violations. CATAPA and its partners want to give a voice to these women to improve the visibility of their precarious situation. The project aims to raise awareness to organisations and political institutions in order to create effective protection mechanisms and mechanisms aimed at empowering these ‘defensoras’. The goal is to encourage political institutions to implement a gender perspective in their legislation and policy that addresses the issue of violence against defensoras confronting extractive industries in Latin-America.