

Climate Justice in Basel

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Basel, a prosperous city on the Rhine, has a complex climate justice history, from the 1986 Sandoz disaster sparking environmental activism to recent net-zero campaigns. This block explores grassroots movements, equitable governance, and radical policies shaping Basel's response to climate change. How can a wealthy Global North city address systemic inequities in its climate actions? Can grassroots initiatives and institutional policies align for justice? Discussions and readings examine protests, energy transitions, initiatives, and Switzerland's *Climate Action Plan*, revealing Basel's innovative yet challenged path toward a sustainable, equitable future in a warming world.

Basel, a wealthy city on the Rhine, addresses climate justice. It balances environmental goals with wealth-driven complacency to reduce inequities. The 1986 Sandoz chemical spill polluted the Rhine. It harmed ecosystems and started environmental activism. This activism shaped Basel's sustainability efforts. It influenced movements across Switzerland. Local warming reaches 2.6°C, above the global 1.5°C target. Prosperity slows action, as noted by Mr. Hearn. Wealth creates unequal climate outcomes. This is a common issue in Global North cities. Fair urban planning includes all voices. It helps solve this problem and promotes equity (Granberg & Glover, 2021).

Grassroots activism fights inequities in Basel. Diverse coalitions give voice to marginalized groups. They create campaigns that connect broadly. These campaigns use past and present protest methods (Social Change Lab, 2023). Basel 2030's campaign gained 56% voter support for net-zero by 2037 as Dr. Schubert pointed out. It benefited from different approaches like door-to-door talks to engage people. Collective Climate Justice's climate camps, active since 2017,

link climate issues to migration and equity. They build community awareness. Eco-communities improve Basel's neighborhood resilience. They are designed as shared spaces. They provide equal access to green areas. This supports sustainability and community ties (Pickerill et al, 2024).

Governance aligns policies with fairness (Granberg & Glover, 2021). It requires strong systems in Basel. Switzerland's *Climate Action Plan* calls for financial institutions to act. Many are based in Basel, a financial hub. They must stop funding fossil fuels. They need to align investments with the 1.5°C target. This lowers global emissions (Klimastreik, 2021). Through the discussions governance was described as shared decision-making. They suggested urban solutions like superblocs. They also proposed fossil fuel bans. These ideas came from the Sandoz disaster's lessons. BastA!'s policies, such as fossil heating bans, show progress in this matter. The 2037 net-zero target falls behind global goals. Resistance from powerful groups causes delays. Wealth hinders policy changes. This continues inequities (Granberg & Glover, 2021).

Practical projects link policies to equity. One example is urban gardens which are part of eco-communities. They increase resilience in Basel. They build community connections (Pickerill et al., 2024). The second example is Erle Perle. Their 3000m² gardens unite different generations. They create shared spaces for all. As the third example, Backwaren Outlet saves 150kg of food daily. This helps low-income people access food. The *Climate Action Plan* supports climate reparations. It encourages Switzerland's financial sector to fund community-led adaptation in the Global South. Limited funds make scaling difficult and other priorities also create challenges in this

matter (Klimastreik, 2021).

Basel's climate justice path has strengths and challenges. Zürich's Hunziker Areal shows renewable energy progress. It highlights affordability issues. Basel faces similar concerns about fair energy access. This affects low-income groups (Hearn et al., 2021). Right-wing opposition and seem-to-be minor issues like parking disputes delay progress. They show resistance to change. Without equity, policies may exclude vulnerable groups. This worsens social gaps (Granberg & Glover, 2021). But on the other hand, continued activism overcomes resistance. It keeps efforts moving forward (Social Change Lab, 2023).

Combining grassroots and institutional efforts uses Basel's history. The Sandoz disaster led to environmental groups in Basel. These groups drive local solutions. They promote new ideas for sustainability. Shared governance models create inclusive neighborhoods. They blend top-down and grassroots actions. This strengthens equity (Pickerill et al., 2024). The Climate Action Plan promotes global governance. It includes Global South voices. It urges cities in Switzerland like Basel to support fair climate talks. This builds global fairness (Klimastreik, 2021). Active participation and strong activism help Basel reduce inequities. This is a secure way to a fair, sustainable future (Granberg & Glover, 2021).

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