Policy Brief: From Fossil Fuels to Gender-Just Futures – Land, Care, and Livelihoods as Foundations of a Just Transition

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR GREEN AND GENDER ACTION

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1. A Critical Turning Point: Momentum with Contradictions

As rapid economic growth continues to be prioritised on a global scale, it is projected that several planetary boundaries will be exceeded - most critically the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases driving climate change. Current trajectories point toward accelerating global warming, destabilization of ecological systems, and an intensification of climate-related hazards, with disproportionate impacts on structurally excluded populations, specifically non-binary and trans people.

Accordingly, international efforts to address the structural drivers of climate change have gained increasing political relevance. In this context, the rapid phase-out of fossil fuels is widely regarded as the single most critical mitigation priority given that the burning of fossil fuels constitutes the dominant source of global greenhouse gas emissions.

A major milestone was reached at COP28, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process, where governments agreed formally for the first time to pursue a transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly, and equitable manner (Decision 1/CMA.5). This decision recognizes that limiting global warming to 1.5˚C requires deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions during this critical decade. While the language stopped short of mandating a legally binding phase-out, it marked a historic shift in international climate negotiations and reflected growing pressure from civil society, frontline communities, and in particular feminist civil society, including grassroots women-led organisations demanding a just transition.

This momentum has continued beyond the UN climate process, albeit mostly outside of the official negotiations. The First Fossil Fuel Phase-Out Conference, hosted by the governments of Colombia and the Netherlands this year, reflects a growing recognition that it is no longer a question on if fossil fuels should be phased out, but about how this transition can be implemented in practice. Governments, multilateral organizations, philanthropy and civil society networks are increasingly discussing concrete timelines, financing, and just transition pathways, highlighting the need for coordinated global action grounded in the best available science and aligned with international climate commitments. The just energy transition is also a critical geo-political issue, reshaping international security and resource competition.

At the same time, the growing political consensus around phase-out carries contradictions and significant risks. The lack of binding timelines, insufficient financial support and the influence

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of fossil fuel corporation interests threaten to undermine the credibility of global pledges and promote an unsustainable, poorly planned energy transition. Current commitments remain largely voluntary, and many countries continue to approve new oil, gas, and coal projects even while endorsing climate targets. Both fossil oil and gas extraction and renewable energy production (including the mining of 'green' metals and minerals needed for renewable energy) are on the rise across the world. In fact, in 2023 67% of the global energy supply came from fossil fuels. The International Energy Agency reports that upstream oil and gas investment increased in recent years, while the United Nations Environment Programme Production Gap Report warns that planned fossil fuel production in 2030 would severely exceed levels compatible with the 1.5˚C goal.

At the same time, global energy investment trends show that developments in clean energy production are already well underway. Investment in renewable energy is rising rapidly and is expected to represent the majority of global energy spending in the coming years, with renewable energy projected to account for a growing share of electricity generation by 2030. While this shift creates important opportunities for reducing emissions and transforming energy systems, it also carries significant risks if not guided by strong social, environmental, and human rights safeguards. Without the necessary precautions and protections in place, rapid expansion of renewable energy, critical minerals, and new infrastructure may reproduce patterns of green extractivism, including large-scale mining, land grabs, and the loss of access to land, water, and livelihoods for local communities. This would result in a transition that deepens existing inequalities, particularly for those already disproportionately impacted by extractive industries, such as women, intersex, non-binary, and trans people, Indigenous Peoples, workers, and communities in the Global South.

The challenge ahead

The challenge ahead is therefore twofold: to maintain the current momentum toward fossil fuel phase-out, while ensuring that implementation is equitable, gender-just, and aligned with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5˚C. As outlined in Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement, Parties are obliged to align financial flows with low-emission and climate-resilient development, a provision widely interpreted as requiring the progressive phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies and investment.

A fossil fuel phase-out cannot be understood as a purely technical or economic process; rather, it is fundamentally shaped by questions of justice, power, and inequality. The ILO guidelines for a Just Transition explain how women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, informal workers, migrants, and youth face disproportionate job and livelihood losses during energy transitions. Adaptive capacity is lowest among structurally excluded groups, as noted by the IPCC, making them more susceptible to transition-related shocks. These groups are not only disproportionately affected by climate change and extractive industries, but are also actively advancing locally grounded, sustainable alternatives. Recognizing, resourcing, and meaningfully including the leadership of women and intersex, non-binary, and trans people, Indigenous Peoples, and communities in the Global South are therefore essential to ensuring that just transition pathways are both inclusive and transformative.

Civil society coalitions play a critical role in ensuring accountability and preventing the reproduction of inequalities in the transition process. The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA), through a decade of work supporting more than 2,590 women-led community-based organisations across 60 countries, brings extensive frontline experience from initiatives at the intersection of climate justice, environmental governance, and gender equality. This breadth and depth of this engagement offers critical perspectives and experience on how transition processes can be implemented in practice and highlights the conditions required for them to be equitable and effective.

Case study: Just transition policies informed by community participation and knowledge

Feminist movements and women-led community-based organisations are not only highlighting the multiple risks and challenges associated with just transition, but also championing the integration of knowledge and priorities from groups that are typically excluded from formal climate governance. This includes Indigenous communities, workers, consumer groups, and urban residents, whose lived experiences and socio-economic realities are often not reflected in national policy design. These actors are advancing decentralised, participatory, and community-based ownership and governance models that reframe how just transition is conceptualised and implemented.

GAGGA partner, Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY), a women-led Malaysian organisation, works to institutionalise community participation and gender-responsive approaches within Malaysia's Just Energy Transition (JET) policy landscape. KAMY identifies institutional gaps across finance, participation, data, and labour intersections that weaken Malaysia's JET mechanisms. To surface these gaps and strengthen JET responses, as well as to assess the environmental and social impacts of JET programmes, KAMY draws on community knowledge and applied data analysis. This includes stakeholder mapping, focus group discussions (FGDs), gender-disaggregated measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) approaches, and beneficiary incidence analysis. These processes help to identify who benefits from national JET projects and plans, how risks are distributed and mitigated, and where interventions can be strengthened or scaled.

Insights generated through this work are translated into policy advocacy efforts, including advancing gender-responsive budgeting, gender-inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and green skills targets within national JET planning.

KAMY is currently working to influence climate–gender governance mechanisms in Malaysia, including the development of a national Gender Action Plan under the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), through the introduction of gender–climate indicators. It also contributes to national policy processes such as the Climate Change Bill and the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAPBHR), with the aim of strengthening gender-transformative approaches to climate action.

2. The danger of repeating extractive logics in “clean” transitions

The dominant framing of the “green energy revolution” increasingly reveals continuities with the extractivist logic that has contributed to the climate crisis and reproduces territorial dispossession, violence and the loss of livelihoods and cultural practicas, prioritizing economic growth over human rights. While the rapid expansion of renewable energy represents an important development in efforts to reduce emissions, it is not without significant social and environmental implications. The large-scale deployment of technologies such as wind turbines, solar panels, battery storage systems, and electric vehicles requires substantial quantities of raw materials, including so-called “green” minerals and key critical minerals and metals such as lithium, copper, cobalt, nickel, manganese, and rare earth elements. While new energy carriers such as green hydrogen are increasingly promoted as key components of low-carbon energy systems, their production is highly resource- and land-intensive, requiring large-scale renewable energy infrastructure with significant implications for land use and local communities. At the same time, natural gas continues to be framed by some actors as a “transition fuel” or comparatively climate-friendly alternative, overlooking the fact that while gas may emit less carbon dioxide at the point of combustion than other fossil fuels, its full lifecycle emissions-particularly methane leakage-significantly undermine its climate compatibility, given methane’s substantially higher global warming potential. The pattern across these clean transitions is the same: communities bear the cost while certain industries reap the benefits.

Spotlights: Green hydrogen in Namaqualand in South Africa

The Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen Project is a major component of the South African government’s strategy to navigate the country out of its economic crisis is the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP). This plan aims to create jobs, re-industrialise the economy, and accelerate economic reforms largely focused on the extractives sector.

One of these projects is the Boegoebaai Port Development, located between Alexander Bay and Port Nolloth in the Northern Cape, which includes the development of a natural deep seaport, and a rail infrastructure project. The South African government, and Transnational Corporations like Sasol, have pinpointed the Boegoebaai Harbour as key to the export of green hydrogen and ammonia.

This harbour will form part of a R14 billion plus green energy development project to produce Green Hydrogen. Green hydrogen development will require massive cold storage facilities, electrolysers to split hydrogen from water, and about 260 000 hectares of land for renewable energy like solar panels and wind turbines. Boegoebaai will function as a hub and shipping corridor for green hydrogen between Boegoebaai and Rotterdam, which is establishing itself as the main gateway for green hydrogen and critical minerals like manganese as well as other low carbon fuels into Northwest Europe.

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The Northern Cape Economic Development Agency (NCEDA) heralds green hydrogen as South Africa's new gold rush, particularly emphasizing the potential of green hydrogen from Boegoebaai Hydrogen Plant. The President has claimed that South Africa possesses some of the world's best solar and wind resources, and significant international investment, such as the Just Energy Transition – Investment Plan (JET-IP) programme, offers over $10 billion in concessional loans to stimulate the development of renewable energy sectors, including a green hydrogen industrial complex.

However, this influx of investment from predominantly European sources (Germany and other States as well as the European Development Bank) aims to support the Global North's energy transition rather than comprehensively address the needs of South African communities and the South African energy crisis. The development of Green Hydrogen specifically the Boegoebaai Green Hydrogen Plant port, rail and harbour as Strategic Integrated Project (SIP) is prefaced on the availability of the communal land of Indigenous communities in Namaqualand. While the land is meant to be transferred and returned to these communities they have been identified as strategic and cheap sites for green hydrogen and renewable energy, undermining the communities' Indigenous land rights and land reform that they have been fighting for for centuries. As this green extractivism intensifies, vast areas of communal land in Namaqualand are threatened, sparking fears among rural communities that prospects of new jobs will jeopardise their cultural heritage, land rights, and livelihoods. The Northern Cape, particularly Namaqualand, has been earmarked as a strategic location for new green extractive projects due to its rich renewable energy potential and the abundance of 'affordable' land for renewable energy production. In Namaqualand and throughout the Northern Cape, this new form of extractivism is resulting in a surge of applications for the mining of 'green' minerals and metals, alongside oil and gas extraction.

Despite the lack of meaningful consultation with affected communities, the Northern Cape Economic Development Agency, Transet Port and Rail Authority, SASOL and other multinational corporations are advancing with plans that include establishing special economic zones, new port infrastructures, and extensive renewable energy projects. As things currently stand despite the South African government's desire to produce green hydrogen coupled with the large investments into South Africa's just transition, green hydrogen development especially in the Northern Cape is just finalising a Strategic Environmental Assessment along with a feasibility study. The Boegoebaai Strategic Integrated Plan (SIP) and the Namakwa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) as the South African government, its development agencies and transnational corporations require at least 700 000 hectares of communal land in Namakwaland to make this project feasible.

The Strategic Environment Assessment has been led by CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), which established a working group to complete the assessment by January 2026. The working group excluded the directly impacted communities, who were neither consulted nor asked for consent, which is part of the legal principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent and the Right2SayNo. The business case for Boegoebaai as a greenfields site was released by Transnet in October 2024, raising significant concerns for communities who face the loss of communal land in the face of a white elephant infrastructure project.

The project also has implications for South Africa's economy. As the majority of funding comes in the form of loans rather than grants or aid, the project risks further entrenching South Africa's debt crisis at the expense of public services and exacerbating poverty and inequality. This economic landscape presents minimal prospects for reducing the staggering unemployment rate, which stands at almost 45%. The resulting socio-economic instability manifests in horrifying levels of violent crime, particularly gender-based violence and femicide, highlighting how women disproportionately shoulder the burdens of the ongoing crises.

As the crisis of social reproduction intensifies amid the collapse of basic service provision, women emerge as central figures in the social predicament, often bearing the brunt of these challenges. The rise of green extractivism fails to prioritize the developmental needs and interests of women and their communities. Energy generated from large-scale renewable projects and green hydrogen initiatives is likely to benefit corporations and the elite, while the majority of produced green hydrogen will be exported rather than utilised to benefit local communities.

Spotlight: Rare minerals in Uganda

The Makuutu Rare Earths Project is a rare earths mining project in eastern Uganda within Busoga subregion. It is controlled by IonicRE (Australia) through Uganda-registered Rwenzori Rare Metals Ltd. The project will extract rare earths from ionic adsorption clay. These rare

earths are used in high-intensity permanent magnets for electric vehicles, offshore wind turbines, defence and other technologies such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). According to reports from ProactiveInvestors.com, Makuutu site contains an unusually high proportion of heavy rare earths and is considered one of the most advanced ionic adsorption clay projects outside of China and Myanmar. The developers plan to use open-pit mining and heap desorption processing methods (a process where rare-earth-bearing clay is piled up and washed with a chemical solution that strips out the minerals). In January 2024 the company was granted a 21-year mining licence for the central tenement covering approximately 44 square kilometres of the projects within a broader project area nearly 300 square kilometres.

The project is being positioned as critical to the global "green transition" particularly for use
in wind turbines and other clean energy technologies. It is located on land largely held under customary and communal tenure systems where communities depend on this land for farming, water access, grazing and everyday livelihoods. Community testimonies and field observations have raised significant environment, and social concerns about:

- Insufficient evidence that affected communities have been adequately consulted in accordance with national and internal laws, with specific concerns on violations of consent rights and the absence of clear processes to ensure Free Prior and Informed consent (FPIC) especially given women's exclusion from decision making and limited land ownership.
- Risks of communities losing access to ancestral and communal land. Women as primary users of land and natural resources are likely to face severe impacts including loss of farmlands, restricted access to water points and increased violence.
- Potential of long-term soil, water and air pollution due to chemical processing methods and lack of transparency and accessibility of environmental impact assessments.
- Threats to forest and vegetation cover as a result of the clearing of land for mining, contributing to violations of rights of nature and contributing to biodiversity loss and climate stress. Makuutu subcounty is particularly significant for Indigenous tree species that support local ecosystems and livelihoods.
- Food scarcity and disruptions of local farming systems as a result of open-pit mining. Sub counties such as Buwunga and Kapyanga which are key food producing areas in the district fall within the project area.
- Access to basic services, including education and health centres, and community wellbeing. The project has so far led to the closure of one primary school and is likely to affect the essential community infrastructures including health centres, trading centres, and orphanages.
- Lack of transparency and planning outlining how affected communities will be compensated for land and property, leading to stress and anxiety.
- Lack of clarity on how communities will be temporarily relocated and resettled. The developer has indicated that mining will be conducted in phases but provided no assessment on the safety and viability of returning to altered land including concerns of soil stability, land demarcation and long habitability of resettled areas.

Makuutu must be understood within the broader geopolitical context of rising global demands for critical minerals, with Makuutu set to be positioned as a future supply source for markets in the US, UK and Europe. The case raises concerns about whose transition is being prioritised and at what cost: the demand for critical minerals is driving renewed rush for extraction and framed as part of the green transition, yet reproducing patterns where resources are extracted from Africa and benefits accrue elsewhere.

Defend and Protect the Right To Say No and Free Prior and Informed Consent

The Right to Say No affirms communities' authority to decide their own futures. Rooted in Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), it ensures that communities can accept or reject decisions affecting their land, livelihoods, and ways of life. This right draws on local bylaws, national legislation, and regional and international human rights frameworks, as well as customary and traditional laws.

At its core, the Right to Say No promotes community-centred development - supporting health, wellbeing, food sovereignty, and self-determined pathways that respect the relationship between people and nature. It strengthens democratic decision-making by shifting power toward those most directly affected, particularly marginalised and working-class communities.

Crucially, the ability to say no also enables the power to say yes - to protect shared resources, sustain cultural traditions, and pursue locally defined visions of development. In doing so, it helps rebalance unequal power dynamics between communities, corporations, and the state.

While the transition away from fossil fuels is undeniably essential, the cases highlighted raise important questions regarding the nature and governance of this transition. While clean energy is widely promoted as a sustainable alternative, it is critical to examine the specific ways in which it is implemented and to interrogate its underlying social and environmental implications. Without such scrutiny, legitimate concerns at the local level - including the impacts associated with the extraction of so-called green minerals and metals, the expansion of large-scale renewable energy infrastructure, and instances of corporate misconduct - risk being overlooked or insufficiently addressed. This may also contribute to regulatory complacency among governments and weaken broader efforts to ensure an effective and just transition. Advancing meaningful climate action therefore requires a clear understanding of how extractive processes are reconfigured rather than eliminated, particularly when they are framed as “clean” or “green.”

Case Study: why extractive transitions fail women, The League of Queens International Empowerment, in Nigeria

Evidence from the Onelga and Abua communities in Nigeria's Niger Delta illustrates the social and environmental consequences of long-standing extractive economies and the risks of replicating similar dynamics within "green" transition pathways. Decades of oil, gas, and water extraction have contributed to severe flooding, coastal erosion, and increasing salinisation of soil and water resources. Repeated oil spills have contaminated water sources, depleted forests, and rendered agricultural land increasingly unproductive, thereby undermining food systems and local livelihoods. These impacts are not gender-neutral. Women and girls are disproportionately affected due to existing inequalities in access to land and natural resources, as well as their central role in securing water, food, and household wellbeing. Environmental degradation intensifies unpaid care burdens, as women are forced to travel longer distances to access potable water while simultaneously managing declining food security. Health impacts linked to gas flaring further compound these challenges, while restricted land and resource rights limit women's ability to adapt through agriculture or alternative livelihoods.

In response, women-led community based organisations are advancing what can be understood as post-extractive pathways - approaches that move beyond mitigation of extractive harms toward the restoration of ecosystems, the strengthening of community control over resources, and the redefinition of development beyond extraction. The League of Queens International Empowerment, a GAGGA partner supported through Urgent Action Fund Africa, exemplifies this approach. Working with young women in Niger Delta communities, the organisation has strengthened leadership on women's, environmental, and climate rights, while engaging government stakeholders-including the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, and Women's Affairs-to advance gender-responsive climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. These efforts have supported the formation of women-led climate action groups with dedicated resources. Within months, these groups planted over 2,000 trees, promoted environmentally sound waste management and recycling practices, and strengthened local environmental stewardship.

This experience demonstrates both the deep and differentiated harms produced by extractive development models and the potential of women-led locally led action to advance post-extractive pathways grounded in care for ecosystems and livelihoods. It further shows that such approaches are not only reactive but also transformative, as they actively reconfigure relationships between communities, land, and resources. This provides a critical entry point for broader discussions on finding real alternatives through the recognition and governance of land, energy, and nature commons, which is explored in the following section.

3. Advancing Post Extractive Pathways – Real Alternatives grounded in the Recognition of the Land, Energy and Nature Commons

GAGGA and WoMin adopt a post-extractive framing to articulate pathways that move beyond harm reduction within extractive systems toward structural transformation. This brief positions the commons as the central analytical and political framework for these alternatives.

By "commons," we refer to systems of collective governance and stewardship over land, water, forests, energy, and food systems. These include customary land tenure regimes, collectively owned and democratically governed energy systems, and community-led food systems rooted in feminist agroecology.

Rather than being newly constructed models, commons reflect existing practices of care, reciprocity, and collective resource management. A just transition must therefore build from these lived systems rather than impose market-led or extractive solutions. Across diverse contexts, particularly in communities led by women and intersex, non-binary and trans people, Indigenous Peoples, and rural populations, such alternatives already exist and sustain life.

3.1 Defending the Commons: Land, Territory, and Tenure

Just transitions depend on systems of collective stewardship over land, water, forests, energy, and other life-sustaining resources. However, these commons are increasingly undermined by privatisation, commodification, militarisation, and extractive development. This includes the rise of "green grabs," where land is appropriated for renewable energy or conservation projects, often accompanied by state or corporate enforcement that displaces communities. At the same time, climate change, weakened governance systems, and rising pressures on social reproduction - disproportionately borne by women - further strain commons-based systems. This erosion is not only ecological, but social and political, weakening long-standing governance systems that have sustained communities across generations.

Despite these pressures, communities retain deep knowledge of how commons are governed and sustained. In Africa, where an estimated 65–95% of land is held under customary and communal tenure, these systems remain central to livelihoods and survival.

Policy frameworks must therefore recognise, strengthen, and formalise these systems. Securing collective land and resource rights - and supporting communities to defend and make their commons visible - can enable more democratic and informed governance of territories.

3.2 Commons as Social Infrastructure: Care, Labour, and Stewardship

Commons are sustained through everyday systems of care and social reproduction. Women, intersex, non-binary, and trans people play a central role in this stewardship through their work in forests, farms, water systems, and community governance. Yet this labour remains undervalued and often excluded from formal decision-making structures.

Recognising and strengthening their leadership is therefore not additive, but foundational to commons governance. Where such leadership is centred, commons systems are reinforced through practices of care, reciprocity, and interdependence, deepening democratic governance.

Commons are not only ecological systems but also social infrastructure that sustains collective wellbeing. They underpin food production, ecosystem regeneration, and cultural continuity.

A just transition must therefore include a redistribution of power over land, water, energy, and other shared resources, recognising communities as legitimate governing authorities of their territories. It must also value social reproductive labour as essential to sustaining economies and societies. In this context, “green jobs” must extend beyond industrial sectors to include care work, food systems, and community-based livelihoods, ensuring decent and dignified work in the care economy.

3.3 Community-owned energy futures - system transition

Energy must be reclaimed as a collective good governed by communities, ensuring access, affordability, and ecological sustainability. A just energy transition requires shifting away from extractive and profit-driven models toward decentralised, democratically governed energy systems. Such a transition must address structural inequalities embedded in the global extractive economy, which concentrates power while exploiting both natural resources and human labour - particularly the unpaid and undervalued labour of women and intersex, non-binary and trans people. It must also ensure that transitions do not reproduce existing inequalities, but instead transform systems to prioritise ecological sustainability, social justice, and community wellbeing.

A regenerative economic model is therefore required - one grounded in community resilience, equity, and ecological care rather than extraction and accumulation. This also demands recognition of historical and ongoing climate injustice. Communities most affected by extractivism are owed climate reparations for centuries of environmental harm and resource extraction. These injustices are deeply gendered, shaping women and intersex, non-binary and trans people’s disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, subsistence production, and household provisioning.

3.4 Feminist agroecology and the commons - lived alternative system

Women-led community based organisations are already driving effective and transformative interventions to build post-extractivist pathways and equitable food systems through feminist agroecology. Feminist agroecology offers a viable post-extractive pathway that is built upon creating, maintaining and caring for the commons. It integrates food sovereignty, ecosystem restoration, territorial governance, collective action and gender justice, while sustaining livelihoods and community wellbeing. Yet this perspective remains largely absent from international fossil fuel phase-out and just transition spaces and narratives.

Agroecological practices and principles are recognised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as highly impactful and transformative climate adaptation measures, that include promoting intercropping using local seeds, organic fertilisers and reduced irrigation for improving soil health, water retention, and biodiversity. They also increase resilience to climate shocks such as droughts, extreme rainfall, and disease outbreaks, while supporting more stable and adaptive food systems.

Case Study: Feminist agroecology schools advancing agroecological transitions, CONAMURI, in Paraguay

CONAMURI operates in 23 districts across Paraguay to strengthen food sovereignty through agroecology, political education, and the protection of native seeds. CONAMURI's School of Agroecology spanning membership across 10 Indigenous communities represents a scalable model of feminist agroecological training that both strengthens community resilience and deepens local leadership in food systems transformation. CONAMURI's community-based seed governance model, Semilla Róga (House of Seeds), documents, protects, and exchanges native seeds and is an example of seed commons. Their School of Agroecology and House of Seeds function as a horizontal learning models that provides an adaptable and replicable framework for other rural movements advancing agroecological transitions.

Agroecology also promotes economic diversification, economic independence and job creation especially for rural and Indigenous women and intersex, non-binary and trans people, bringing a steady source of income into their communities. This is done through collective systems of exchange, reciprocity and peer-learning as well as centering women's farmer networks and collectives. Securing women's collective access to and control over land and productive resources is also a central principle of this work.

Case Study: Economic independence through collectivised systems of exchange, Women Environs Zambia, in Zambia

Women Environs Zambia uses demonstration plots in six districts to train women farmers in feminist agroecology, specifically, to make bio-fertiliser, natural pesticides, and grow and store Indigenous seeds. It distributes seeds through a seed bank system, where participants grow new crops and return seeds, sustaining the cycle and ensuring a steady supply for the whole community.

Their Indigenous seed multiplication project engaged 600 rural women farmers across eight districts. With its national network and peer-learning structure, they effectively provided affordable Indigenous seeds at scale to curtail the high costs of commercial, often genetically modified, seeds. This ensures that food markets create a level playing field for rural women farmers to access seeds and sell their produce.

Recommendations for Policy-Makers, Decision-Makers and Funding Partners

To align fossil fuel phase-out with gender justice, climate effectiveness, and equity, policy-makers, decision-makers and funding partners must act decisively:

Scale and Transform Climate Finance

- Recognise and operationalise climate reparations as a central pillar of climate finance. This requires acknowledging the climate debt owed to communities in the Global South for centuries of extraction, environmental degradation, and unequal development. Climate finance should therefore be reframed beyond voluntary solidarity or development assistance towards a rights-based and justice-oriented system grounded in historical responsibility, the polluter pays principle, and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC).
- At a minimum, meet existing targets on climate finance, sustainable development, and gender equality and ensure climate finance is contributed as additional to ODA budgets.
- Increase the proportion of climate-related ODA that serves gender equality objectives to 88%, including ensuring 15% of this funding has gender equality as a principle objective.[1]
- Prioritise funding to women and intersex, non-binary and trans people, Indigenous Peoples, and frontline communities whose lands, bodies, and livelihoods have borne the cost of extractivism.

[1] Crisis modifiers are contingency mechanisms within development or peacebuilding programs that enable rapid humanitarian response to emerging shocks (e.g. conflict, climate disasters) without interrupting long-term goals. Aligned with the Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) Nexus, they allow flexible budget use to meet urgent needs while maintaining program continuity and adapting to evolving contexts.

Ensure Direct Access for Women-Led Community Based Organisations

- Finance under the Paris Agreement must be not only 'adequate' and 'ambitious' but also 'appropriate' and 'accessible'-meaning it must reach locally-led actors, use grants (not only loans), be gender-responsive and avoid adding debt burdens.
- Increase the proportion of climate finance that is delivered through transparent, accessible, grants-based mechanisms that protect human rights and is in accordance with the commitments set out in the Paris Agreement and OECD guidance on development cooperation.
- Expand financial access for women-led community based organizations by ensuring funding for organizations of all sizes and legal statuses, fostering partnerships between registered women-led community based organisations and activists without access to registration and financing, and removing bureaucratic barriers such as rigid reporting requirements and limited language accessibility.
- Engage with effective intermediaries (women's funds, feminist funds, socio environmental funds) that already channel resources to grassroots movements.

Ensure Women's Decision-Making Power in Climate Finance

- Mandate the full, meaningful participation and leadership of women and intersex, non-binary and trans people-including Indigenous, rural, and grassroots women-in all climate finance mechanisms
- Ensure women's leadership in:
  - Governance structures of climate funds
  - National and international decision-making platforms
  - Emerging mechanisms such as the Belém Action Mechanism (BAM)
  - Deepen collaboration with feminist climate activists, including through their meaningful engagement in climate finance discussions and decisions, to support greater understanding of the intersection between gender equality, climate and environment.

Put Feminist Post-Extractive Pathways and Commons at the Centre

- Enforce land tenure protections and legally recognise customary and communal land rights.
- Establish binding safeguards against land grabbing, including for renewable energy, mining, and conservation projects.
- Require all funded projects to demonstrate:
  - Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)
  - Protection of water, forests, and ecosystems
  - No dispossession or forced displacement
  - Support community-led territorial governance systems that:
  - Strengthen collective stewardship of land, water, and energy
  - Recognise local knowledge and governance institutions

End False Solutions

- Divest from extractive industries, and, throughout the transition, mitigate the gendered, environmental and conflict-related harm caused by extractive industries by implementing mandatory human rights and gender due diligence during the environmental licensing process and towards companies by ensuring conflict-sensitive and transparent supply chains, upholding free, prior, informed and ongoing consent for affected communities, and conditioning investment and financing on compliance with human rights, environmental sustainability, and do no harm standards to prevent land grabs, forced displacement, gendered violence, and ecological destruction.
- Promote a gender-just, conflict-transformative transition from extractive industries by investing in inclusive, sustainable livelihoods and community-led renewable energy. Support women's leadership and economic diversification for conflict-affected and extraction-dependent populations. A conflict-transformative approach also anticipates new tensions, such as job losses or exclusion, and emphasizes inclusive dialogue, shared decision-making, and just transitions that address past harms and prevent future conflict.
- Reject the increasing capture of renewable energy transitions by corporations and states that dispossess communities, privatise land and resources reproduce extractive and colonial dynamics
- Immediately phase out funding for false solutions, including:
  - Fossil gas as a "transition fuel"
  - Large-scale carbon offset projects that displace communities
  - Extractive green hydrogen and mining projects without safeguards
  - Redirect funding toward community-owned renewable energy, decentralised energy systems, agroecology and food sovereignty and care economies

Conclusion

The fossil fuel phase-out is inevitable-but the form it takes is not. Without considered and thoughtful intervention, it risks reproducing the status quo: extractivism, deepening inequality and failure to meet climate goals. If governed in line with climate justice principles, the phase out has the potential to redistribute power, restore ecosystems, and build resilient, just societies. The difference lies in who controls resources, whose knowledge counts, and who leads. This is a defining moment: together we can advance a feminist, locally-led and commons based just transition for people and planet.

About the authors and organisations

Launched in 2016, the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) rallies the collective power of women's rights, environmental and climate justice movements around the world. GAGGA's vision is a world where women's rights to water, food security, and a clean, healthy and safe environment are recognised and respected.

For more information visit the website www.gaggaalliance.org. You can also contact, Noemi Grütter, Head of Advocacy and Partnerships, n.grutter@fcamfoundation.org

WoMin supports the deepening power of peasant and working-class African womxn to counter destructive extractivism, advance justice through reparations, and shape a different world. For more information visit the website: WoMin - WoMin. You can also contact WoMin on info@womin.africa.

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