FOSSIL-FREE FUTURES:

Arguments, ideas and tools to build collective power

OXFAM Novib

Suggested citation: Fossil-Free futures: *Arguments, ideas and tools to build collective power, Oxfam Novib*, April 2026.

Authors: Sayuri Andrade, Marcela Madrid Vergara, and Clémence Abbes Castillo
Graphic designer: Naandeyé García Villegas
Layout: Juan Carlos Oliver

If you want to reach out to the team that created this toolkit, you can email us at
tippingpoint@oxfamnovib.nl
www.oxfamnovib.nl

PREFACE

Welcome everyone,

You are about to read the Fossil Free Futures toolkit! This is an invitation to explore the conversation of our time: how can we imagine a world free from fossil fuels? How can we pursue a fair and just energy transition that leaves no one behind? How can we address the root cause of the climate crisis while building stronger and healthier communities?

This project started as an offering to youth-led climate movements and is part of an ongoing Oxfam Novib programme called Tipping Point, where we support climate activists around the world in strengthening their movements, accessing care and wellbeing, and delving deep into the most pressing climate topics.

The fight for a just and fair energy transition is at the heart of the climate movement. Fossil fuels are overwhelmingly responsible for the climate crisis (among other problems) and yet phasing them out looks different depending on where we sit. This tool embraces this complexity and offer ideas, arguments, and tools to nurture your discussions, workshops, campaigns, and advocacy plans. And we not only invite you to bring out your nerdy side, but also to dream and imagine what your community, city, and country could look like if we ended that dependency.

This is the result of more than a year of collaborative work, rooted in many conversations with activists, researchers, and colleagues. It grew from places that bring the climate movement together and make us stronger, such as the Renew Our Power gathering organized by 350.org in Brazil, the Bonn Climate Camp organized by a wonderful team of activists, and the Climate Activist Camp organized by Roots in Mexico. And while this handbook has been supported by Oxfam Novib, it also reflects the views of movements, activists, and organizations in their diversity.

I want to especially thank the team that wrote this toolkit and brought it to life: Sayuri, Marcela, and Naandeyé. You will learn from them below.

This tool is now yours, and we sincerely hope it will inspire new light, knowledge, and creativity in the fight our movements are leading for a just and flourishing planet.

Clémence Abbès Castillo
Oxfam Novib

Get to know the team behind this toolkit!

Marcela Madrid Vergara. I am a Colombian journalist and researcher, passionate about translating complex knowledge into creative and practical content. For almost 10 years, my work has focused on human rights, environmental justice, and the struggles of peasant movements in Colombia, where I have collaborated with NGOs and media outlets as a researcher, reporter, and content creator. I hold a Master's degree in Agrarian, Food, and Environmental Studies from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague. Currently, I work as Climate and Environmental Justice coordinator at the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (INCLO).

Sayuri Andrade. I'm a Peruvian researcher with a militant heart, an organizer, and a campaigner. Trained as an anthropologist, my drive to break out of the academic box led me to get involved in social movements working to challenge the deep inequalities in Peru. Over the last ten years, my path has been shaped by diverse experiences, including roles as a parliamentary officer, researcher, project manager for NGOs, and consultant for development projects. My intellectual curiosity led me to return to academia, and I'm currently a doctoral researcher in social anthropology at the University of Manchester (UK). My project focuses on how the relationship between Indigenous communities and global capital shapes the current energy transition. But one always returns to their first passions. It's been a great privilege to contribute to an amazing team in bringing this toolkit to life, which we're now making available to all of you. Feel free to reach out to me on LinkedIn.

Clémence Abbès Castillo. I work for Oxfam Novib Climate Justice Team, supporting and creating cool projects with climate movements and activists. I'm Peruvian and French, and my work has led me to work with rural and indigenous communities defending the Amazon, campaigning against big oil companies poisoning ecosystems, and, more recently, becoming absorbed in the fossil-fuel phase-out conversation. I am also always exploring ways to link feminist thinking to our climate justice fights.

Naandeyé García Villegas. I am a Mexican graphic designer and a graduate of UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), with postgraduate studies in Spain. In 2013, I founded my studio, Naandeyeah. My career is distinguished by numerous awards and recognitions in international poster competitions, including prestigious accolades in Mexico and abroad. My work has been exhibited in more than 20 countries and featured across various platforms and publications. I have also served as a juror in both national and international design competitions, and through my studio and personal projects, I continue to develop visual proposals that integrate culture, design, and social impact.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

It all begins with a story. We tell stories about crises, and in times of crisis, we turn to them to make sense of what is happening around us. The great story of our time is that we are running out of time to prevent a global catastrophe. Yet, the effects of the climate crisis directly contradict an equally compelling myth: the capitalist illusion of endless growth fueled by *infinite* resources.

Fossil fuels, including coal, oil, and gas, are the primary drivers of global warming. More than 90% of global carbon emissions come from the extraction, processing, and burning of fossil fuels.[1] Indigenous movements, climate activists, unions, civil society organizations, scientists, and researchers have urged governments to prevent global temperatures from rising more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels for decades. Despite their warnings, governments have continued to fall far short of the structural changes required to shift away from fossil fuels and protect communities already facing the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

The prevailing narrative from the Global North presents a solution in the form of an energy transition. This narrative suggests that we should simply replace fossil fuels with renewable energies, such as wind, solar or hydropower. History challenges this idea of a straightforward substitution. Past energy transitions – from wood to coal, coal to oil, oil to gas – didn't eliminate previous sources so much as added new ones alongside them. This layering effect expanded overall energy consumption instead of reducing it. If nothing changes and the transition to renewable energy is approached the same way, we risk replicating the extractive, fossil-fueled logic they are meant to replace. It's critical that we consider not only the speed of a green transition, but how it will develop.[2]

Any real hope of addressing the climate emergency requires leaving fossil fuels behind and building a post-fossil society. Long before this need was tentatively recognized in the COP28 declaration, communities in the Global South warned the world about the devastating impacts of extractive industry in their territories. From the Niger Delta to the Ecuadorian Amazon, communities suffer human rights violations, environmental destruction, and public health crises. In the Niger Delta, the Ogoni people have fought to "leave oil in the ground" for decades in response to the devastating toll of oil extraction. In Ecuador, Indigenous activists continue to resist oil drilling in the Yasuní region of the Amazon.

1 Global Carbon Budget. (2024). *Annual CO2 emissions – GCB* [dataset]

2 Fressoz, J.-B. (2024). *More and More and More: An all-consuming history of energy.* Allen Lane.

Different people have different visions of what a fossil fuel phase-out could and should look like, each rooted in specific political and social contexts. In many places, the issue is not how to transition, but how to simply access electricity. For Indigenous groups in Latin America, the rights of nature must be at the heart of the conversation. Meanwhile, many governments in the Global South still rely heavily on fossil fuel revenues to provide essential services to vulnerable populations. These are collective struggles, shaped by shared experiences. As Eqram Mustaqeem**,** a young activist from Malaysia, put it: *"Our colonial history and desire for accountability are what binds us together."*

While crises can isolate us, stories have the power to connect us. As we finish writing this toolkit, social movements in both the Global North and South are advancing bold proposals to stop fossil fuels from destroying lives and territories. In Bogotá, Colombia, during the Summit of Amazonian Presidents, Indigenous leaders from eight countries called for the Amazon to be declared the world's first "no-go zone" for fossil fuel exploration and production. At the same time, across the Atlantic, in Norway, Greta Thunberg and two hundred other climate activists blocked the country's largest oil terminal, demanding a clear phase-out plan from Europe's top oil producer.

Any real hope of addressing the climate emergency requires leaving fossil fuels behind and building a post-fossil society.

Across the world, movements are organizing and winning important battles to prioritize people and the planet over profit. There's an abundance of ideas, manifestos, and case studies pointing towards a fundamentally transformed energy system. And still, the path forward remains difficult. On one hand, the energy industry and many governments are actively resisting change by sparking new oil wars, boycotting ambitious initiatives, threatening environmental defenders, and spreading disinformation. On the other hand, concerns in many low- and middle-income countries are legitimate, as fossil fuel revenues fund public services in the absence of other means.

This toolkit seeks to equip activists with practical and theoretical resources to address both of these challenges and advocate for an equitable fossil fuel phase-out. It's organized in three main sections:

- An **Anti-glossary** that introduces key concepts commonly used in phase-out discussions. Unlike a dictionary, these definitions are grounded in diverse sources: specialized literature, lived experiences, and testimonies from activists we have interviewed across geographies.

- An **Argument Deck**, featuring 25 "cards" to advocate for a fossil fuel phase-out in various scenarios, including mobilizations, advocacy spaces, community discussions, and peer training. The arguments are organized into four "suits": climate justice, socio-economic development, social justice, and people's sovereignty. Acknowledging that leaving fossil fuels behind is not a straightforward task, especially in the Global South, this section embraces its contradictions, paradoxes, and risks. It doesn't just list benefits, it also raises difficult questions (sometimes without an answer).

- Finally, **From the deck to the ground** details practical activities to help activists apply the toolkit's ideas and arguments in their organizing. Some tools are designed to support training with peers, both within and beyond climate movements. Others aim to help participants imagine a fossil-free world and develop narratives for campaigns. Some are crafted to spark dialogue with communities directly affected by a fossil fuel phase-out.

This toolkit is designed for activists in climate movements and other social struggles. Its main goal is to support capacity-building among fellow activists, helping us learn from each other, sharpen our analysis of the climate emergency, and strengthen our organizing for an equitable fossil fuel phase-out. The toolkit offers shared language, arguments, and tools that can be adapted to local and global contexts. Whether you're already involved in this fight or just starting out, navigate it as you need. If you're preparing a campaign and want to refine your messaging, dive into the Argument Deck. If you're exploring concepts like *Buen Vivir* or a just transition, check out the Anti-glossary. If you're facilitating a community discussion or strategy session, Section 3 has ideas to support you. In short, it is intended to serve two purposes. First, to strengthen capacities within climate and other social movements. And from there, to support these movements to influence other actors involved in phase-out discussions, including communities, decision-makers, journalists, and beyond.

The following pages are the result of a collective process of research, listening, and creative thinking. We combined academic publications (scientific reports, theoretical analyses, and case studies) with conversations involving experts and activists (who are also experts!) across different places. These rich exchanges helped us understand how the challenge of phasing out fossil fuels is perceived in different contexts and what support activists need to engage with it.

This toolkit is shaped by feminist and decolonial perspectives, which confront the deep-rooted inequalities of global energy systems. A decolonial lens allows us to understand how energy access is entangled with a long history of colonial extraction, where natural resources and human labor in the Global South have been exploited to fuel Global North development.[3] This wasn't incidental, but a deliberate structure that produced and reproduced underdevelopment in colonized nations. This capitalist system has left many Global South countries without the capacity to build sustainable, decarbonized energy systems.[4]

A feminist perspective deepens this analysis by showing how energy systems are not just technical infrastructures but are also deeply political structures that shape our everyday lives, relationships, and economies. Feminist energy systems are world-making projects: they imagine and build futures rooted in care, reciprocity, and non-extractive ways of living. Instead of simply including more women in existing frameworks, they call for a transformation of those frameworks altogether. A feminist energy system challenges the patriarchal logic of control, exploitation, and domination that has long governed energy production and use.[5]

A feminist and decolonial approach begins by asking fundamental questions about the burdens and benefits of energy production. Who is energy for? Who remains excluded? Who controls how energy is produced and with what resources? At what cost to social, environmental, and political systems is energy generated? Who carries that burden? Whose knowledge and priorities are shaping the energy transition, and whose are being ignored?

3 Pirani, S. (2018) *Burning up: a global history of fossil fuel consumption.* Pluto Press.

4 Hickel, J. (2018). *The Divide. A brief guide to global inequality and its solutions.* Penguin Random House.

5 Bell, S. E., Daggett, C., & Labuski, C. (2020). Toward feminist energy systems: Why adding women and solar panels is not enough. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2020.101557

To envision decolonial energy systems means rethinking how we relate to land, resources, people, and power. It means rejecting the current model's extractivist and patriarchal logic. Instead, it centers the struggles and knowledge of Indigenous peoples, grassroots movements, and civil society actors, who often shoulder the responsibilities that governments fail to fulfill. This is not a technical fix or a short-term project. Reimaginging energy systems is a political struggle rooted in justice, self-determination, and collective care. Because energy shapes every aspect of our lives, from housing and food to health and political voice, this is not just about climate. It's about reclaiming power in every sense of the word.

Will we, perhaps, be the last generation to make politics? If we do not break the logic of accumulation and exploitation, those who come after us will be forced to fight for survival amidst famine, pandemics, droughts, hurricanes, and other so-called *natural* disasters. Let's seize this moment to think together, to create new stories that bring us closer and point us toward more hopeful futures for generations and communities to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Knowledge is never produced in isolation – it's always a collective effort. We're deeply grateful to the activists who have inspired us along the way: Ireen Twongirwe, Muya Mustaqeem, Pavel Martiarena, Yolotzin Zamora, Natalie Sifuma, Diana Chávez, Gregorio Mirabal, and those who participated enthusiastically in the two workshops we facilitated at the Climate Justice Camp in Mexico. A special thanks to Serayna Keya Solanki for her insightful contributions and support. We're also thankful to Ruth Mayne, Greg Muttitt, Wouter Blankestijn, Hilde Stroot, Mateo Adarve and Mwangala Matakala for their valuable ideas and comments and to Maya Khanna for the copywriting. And because every process has a beginning, we want to thank Clémence Abbes for setting us on this path and for her enthusiastic leadership throughout.

Finally, as we write this toolkit, we cannot ignore Israel's **ongoing genocide in Gaza, expansion of illegal settlements, and increasing settler violence in the West Bank, unfolding before our eyes**. Colonial violence has historically been tied to the control of land, water, and resources. We must remember that standing for a free Palestine means standing for the sovereignty of all peoples over their lives, lands, and futures.

ANTI-GLOSSARY:

key concepts (and alternative visions) to start the conversation

Conversations about phasing out fossil fuels don't happen in a vacuum. They are deeply connected to broader debates about historic and current struggles for a livable future. We offer a (non exhaustive) list of key concepts to help you navigate dialogues with communities, policymakers, workers, and other activists. These include basic yet deeply political concepts like climate justice and the just energy transition; paradoxes or contradictions, such as green colonialism; and frameworks to help envision a radically different future, like energy sovereignty and Buen Vivir.

This is not a traditional dictionary (we hope!) with static definitions pulled from textbooks. These concepts are alive, evolving through the practices and lived experiences of people who are shaping and scaling them. That is why we have compiled the Anti-glossary from a mix of sources: academic literature, alternative visions, and testimonies from climate activists.

We see this Anti-glossary as a living document which is open to debate, revision, and expansion. We invite you to engage with it: question it, adapt it, or add to it based on how you understand and experience these ideas in your own context. This toolkit is meant to be used, reshaped, and reimagined by groups working in different places, whether locally, nationally, or internationally. If you are running workshops or building materials within your organization or network, take what is useful and make the Anti-glossary your own.

Climate justice

Just Energy Transition

Equitable phase out

Green colonialism

Energy sovereignty

Energy democracy

Degrowth

Buen Vivir

Climate justice

Climate justice is a widely used term across the globe today. However, the shift from talking about *climate change* to demanding *climate justice* is the result of a long struggle led by social and environmental movements. That shift matters because it reframes climate change as not only an environmental issue but as a struggle deeply tied to human rights. We can understand climate justice as a practice or a process, as much as a guiding vision.

Talking about climate justice highlights the fact that those most affected by the climate crisis are often the ones who have contributed the least to it: Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and women in rural areas, particularly in low-income countries. In other words, historical injustices must be recognised in order to enable and support communities to thrive.

Solutions to the climate crisis must also address the unequal responsibilities and disparate capacity among countries and populations. An energy transition that does not center climate justice risks exacerbating inequalities, especially within marginalized communities in the Global South. A justice-centered phaseout of fossil fuels, on the other hand, should recognize that a phase-out will necessarily involve different timelines and a contextually-specific allocation of resources, according to countries' needs.

Diana Chávez Vargas, Indigenous leader of the Kichwa Nationality of Pastaza, Pakkiru, in Ecuador, and member of the Alliance for an Amazon Free of Fossil Fuels, puts it this way:

> "It is important to recognize that what happens in the North directly affects us here in the South, and that we are all part of one interconnected world. Climate justice begins with raising our voices, with calling out those who are contributing to greater pollution. In the Amazon we are the ones leading conservation, yet our most basic needs remain unmet. From Indigenous territories, we are speaking out and proposing that the Amazon be declared a zone of exclusion from extractive activities."

Just Energy Transition

The concept of *Just Transitions* originated in the United States labour movement in the 1970s, when trade unions from industrial sectors raised concerns about how environmental regulations might affect their livelihoods. Years later, as awareness of climate change grew and fossil fuels were identified as its primary cause, the idea of a just energy transition reemerged.

Today, the concept of a just transition has expanded beyond its original (and still relevant) focus on jobs to include the broader needs of workers and communities at the center of energy systems. It now reflects a deeper understanding of justice, not only in terms of labor, but also in relation to equity, historical responsibility, and power. Many communities are, and will continue to be, impacted along the extensive global supply chains of both fossil fuels and renewable energy. A just transition seeks to avoid, anticipate, and compensate communities for harms and injustices by involving them in phase out decisions that directly affect them. Building on the work of the labor rights and environmental justice movements, Oxfam has outlined four principles that must be applied to ensure a just transition: recognition justice, procedural justice, distributional justice, and remedial justice.[6]

Today, communities in the Global South are reimagining the concept of a Just Energy Transition based on their own realities. In Latin America, for instance, movements speak of a Popular Energy Transition. This framework recognizes that a fossil-fuel phase-out is not only an ecological necessity, but also a social, economic, political, and even ontological challenge.

> "A just transition is the path along which we move toward profound systemic change, from the people and for the people and nature" - Latin American and Caribbean Platform.[7]

The Popular Energy Transition recognizes that the transformation of our global energy systems must be structural, not merely technological.[8] For a transition to be popular and just, projects must be decentralized, rooted in local contexts, built through social participation, and not driven by profit.[9] Crucially, it must also recognize the historical responsibilities of the richest nations when defining the timelines and pathways for phasing out fossil fuels.

6 Oxfam. (2022, December 7). *Towards a just energy transition: Implications for communities in lower- and middle-income countries* (Research Report). Oxfam. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/towards-a-just-energy-transition-implications-for-communities-in-lower-and-mid-621455/

7 Plataforma Latinoamericana y del Caribe por la Justicia Climática. (2022, June). *Glosario de la Justicia Climática.* https://plataformajusticiaclimatica.org/recurso/glosario-de-la-justicia-climatica-en-espanol/

8 Chemes, J. (2023). Narrativas de transición energética. Un análisis desde la epistemología del Sur. *Ecología Política*, *65,* 66-71.

9 Chemes, 2023.

Ireen Twongirwe, a climate activist from Uganda and leader of the Women for Green Economy Movement emphasizes the importance of community-centered approaches[10]:

> *"Communities should be in the position to use renewable energy sources that are community centered, degendered, decolonized, decentralized and income generating to reduce gender based violence and unpaid care work. They must also be able to understand why they need to transit and the alternative they are transiting to. The road map or strategy must be clear."*

Equitable phase out

The need to abandon coal, oil and gas became undeniable by the end of the 20th century, as a growing body of scientific evidence confirmed that those are the primary sources of CO2 emissions. However, leaving fossil fuels in the ground is not an overnight task. It was from the tension of these two challenges that the idea of a *progressive phase-out* emerged.

Over time, *progressive phase-out* evolved into an *equitable fossil fuel phase-out*, reflecting a growing recognition of the vastly different historical responsibilities, capacities, and economic dependencies of countries, communities, and industries on fossil fuels. Civil society warned that imposing the same deadline for and approach to a phase-out on every country would deepen existing global inequalities. In this context, more than 200 organizations and movements supported a framework proposed by the Civil Society Equity Review (CSER) that sets differentiated timelines to a phase-out for countries based on factors like their dependence on fossil fuels, capacity to transition, and historical emissions.[11] (We'll return to this report later in the toolkit, but if you're curious, check Argument Card 19).

10 The Women from a Green economy movement is a Community Based Organization dedicated to influencing and promoting women and girl's participation in the greener economy to promote social and economic development. They are part of the campaign to stop the East African Crude Oil Pipeline https://www.wogemuganda.org/.

11 The Civil Society Equity Review Coalition gathers civil society groups—including social movements, NGOs, trade unions, and faith organizations to assess climate commitments from UN negotiations.

CSER (2023, December). *An equitable phase out of fossil fuel extraction: Towards a reference framework for a fast and fair rapid global phase out of coal, oil and gas*. https://www.equityreview.org/extraction-equity-2023

Eqram Mustaqeem, a young climate advocate from Malaysia, and member of the Third World Network, a movement defending the rights and needs of peoples in the Global South[12], summarizes the challenge clearly:

> "As much as the phase-out must be rapid, it must also be fair, just, and centered on the needs and capacities of developing countries."

For **Natalie Sifuma**, Kenyan activist and founder of the Pan-African ecofeminist community Sisters in Climate[13], the phase-out is a chance to listen to the right people:

> "An equitable phase-out means that no one is left behind. It could open up opportunities to center different voices of people who are usually ignored or sidelined, especially African women and climate defenders."

Green colonialism

Green colonialism reveals the deep contradictions at the heart of the global energy transition. While many projects are framed as *sustainable*, they often replicate colonial patterns of exploitation. Instead of breaking from the past, they continue to drive dispossession, injustice, and ecological harm in the Global South to sustain consumption, lifestyles, and profits in the Global North. As Eduardo Gudynas warns, the term "green" often masks ongoing systems of domination.[14]

Many assume that colonialism ended with national independence. However, its legacy continues to shape lives through the evolution of colonial power relations. The unequal power relations didn't disappear—they evolved. Today's extractive projects still operate through

12 Third world Network is an independent non-profit international research and advocacy organisation involved in issues relating to development, developing countries and North-South affairs**:** https://twn.my/

13 Sisters in Climate is a PanAfrican ecofeminist community advancing knowledge and collaborations on climate for sustainable futures: https://www.sistersinclimate.org/

14 Gudynas, E. (2021). *Extractivisms: Politics, economy and ecology*. Fernwood Publishing.

unequal legal, economic, and political systems that place one society in a position of control over another. These dynamics are often rooted in persistent, Eurocentric ideas of racial, cultural, or geographic inferiority.

Entire regions are treated as sacrifice zones (check Argument Card 15), where communities bear the costs of resource extraction to meet the interests of states and corporations (check Suit 3: Social Justice). This pattern reproduces uneven development between resource-rich *peripheries* and industrial *centers* within our global capitalist economy.

While the Global North-South divide is becoming more complex, with emerging economies like China also playing major roles in raw material extraction, the underlying logic of green colonialism remains intact: resource control, externalized harms, and profit over justice.

Oxfam's recent publication *Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the Energy Future from Climate Colonialism* compiles data revealing the context of profound inequality within which the energy transition is taking place.[15] Key findings include:

- A single person in the richest 1% of Global North countries consumes enough energy in one year to meet the modern energy needs of 440 people in the Global South.
- Tesla earns over US$3,000 per electric car, while the Congolese miner who extracts the cobalt inside earns just US$7. The Democratic Republic of the Congo receives less than US$10 in royalties.
- Latin America holds nearly half of the world's lithium, but captures only 10% of the battery value chain through limited processing, taxes, and royalties.
- In 2024, Africa, home to 85% of all people who live without electricity, received just 2% of global clean energy investment. High-income countries, by contrast, captured 50%.

---

15 Oxfam. (2025, September 24). *Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the Energy Future from Climate Colonialism* (Briefing paper). Oxfam. https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621732/bp-unjust-transition-240925-en.pdf?sequence=7

Energy sovereignty

Energy sovereignty draws upon the anti-colonial principle of *permanent sovereignty over natural resources*, as affirmed in the 1967 UN General Assembly Declaration. It asserts the right of nations and communities to control their energy resources without interference from colonial powers, foreign corporations, or global market forces. But energy sovereignty goes beyond state control or nationalization. It is about reclaiming democratic decision-making and building alternatives rooted in local self-determination, justice, and collective ownership, rather than extractive, top-down models.

In practice, energy sovereignty is tied to goals like energy self-sufficiency, resilience to external shocks, transparency, and gender justice. These principles push for energy systems to be not just sustainable, but also socially and politically just, especially for marginalized communities.

Yolotzin Zamora, Indigenous leader of the Masehual people of Cuetzalan in Puebla, Mexico, shared how her community underwent a process of creating a *Plan of Life* (Plan de Vida) to collectively decide which activities would guide livelihoods and the use of natural resources in the territory. The Cuetzalan people rejected extractive projects and outlined new ways to approach energy. For example, they created a plan to build ecologically-friendly stoves that are effective for household needs, particularly the needs of women. This example of energy sovereignty stems from the concept of *Buen Vivir* (see more in the final concept).

> "There is a concept called Yeknemilis in our mother tongue, referring to Buen Vivir, meaning steps oriented toward living well, in peace, tranquilly. From there, we reflected on how we can make energy serve us for Buen Vivir in the territory. If we know what values, what principles, and what activities we want to endure in our territory, then we choose what type of energy and technologies we can adopt."

Energy sovereignty reframes energy not only as a resource, but as a site of struggle and resistance. In Indonesia, trade unions have long defended public ownership of electricity. After a 2002 law opened the electricity sector to privatisation, union-led mobilisation led to the law's revocation.[16] Continued organising also shaped the 2009 Electricity Law, helping to preserve

16 Boys, D. & Budiarti, I. (2024, December 3). *Indonesian Unions Win Supreme Court Victory Blocking Energy Privatisation.* Public Services International. https://publicservices.international/resources/news/indonesian-unions-win-supreme-court-victory-blocking-energy-privatisation?id=15523&lang=en

public ownership and limit provisions that could open the door to partial privatisation. Despite ongoing government efforts to bypass these protections, energy workers continue to defend energy as a public good. Similarly, in Puerto Rico, grassroots movements have built energy sovereignty from below, creating community-owned renewable systems that challenge extractive logics and center justice, autonomy, and care.[17]

Energy democracy

Energy is not a luxury or a commodity, it is a basic human right. That's the foundation of *energy democracy,* a political and social movement that demands public ownership and collective control over energy systems.[18] Advanced by Indigenous groups, trade unions, ecofeminists, and climate justice movements, energy democracy aims to guarantee access to energy for all while reducing emissions and resource use. At its heart lies a simple question: Who decides? Our answer: communities, not corporations.

The concept of energy democracy shares many elements with energy sovereignty. The terms are sometimes used interchangeably. But whereas sovereignty emphasizes self-determination and control; democracy focuses on participation, inclusion, and governance, especially by those historically excluded. Indigenous-led efforts, for example, often link energy democracy to land defense, cultural resistance, and ecological protection.

Most energy democracy projects today operate at local or regional scales. While they may not transform national energy systems overnight, they offer real alternatives to both corporate monopolies and centralized state-run models. One key critique of traditional public ownership is that it can replicate top-down structures, excluding the very communities it aims to serve.

Public–community partnerships offer a path forward. Costa Rica's energy system, which comprises state utilities, municipal enterprises, and rural cooperatives, supplies nearly 100% renewable energy to its constituents.[19] Though not without flaws, it illustrates what's possible when public systems are not only nationalized but democratized.

17 Find out more about the work of Casa Pueblo here: https://350.org/casa-pueblo-puerto-rico/

18 You can read the Energy Democracy Movement Declaration here: https://energydemocracydeclaration.org/

19 Steinfort, L., Mataram, R., & Angel, J. (2024, December 5). *Reclaiming Energy Public pathways to break the fossil fuel cycle.* Transnational Institute. https://www.tni.org/en/publication/reclaiming-energy

Trade Unions for Energy Democracy (TUED) is a growing global network which includes over 120 union bodies across nearly 50 countries. TUED promotes public ownership and the democratic control of energy systems as essential responses to the climate crisis, energy poverty, and labor injustice. Its TUED South platform brings together union leaders from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean to counter the *privatise-to-decarbonise* agenda and promotes a people-led *public pathway* grounded in equity and justice. Explore more at**:** https://www.tuedglobal.org/ and on social media as @TUED_Global.

Degrowth

Degrowth is a political and ecological project that calls for reducing society's resource use (including energy) while improving social well-being and equity.[20] It challenges the idea that endless economic growth is either desirable or sustainable, especially given the risk of ecological collapse. In today's rules of the global economy, growth measured by GDP is often seen as progress.[21] But this *progress* ignores the environmental harms and planetary consequences of unbridled economic growth. Degrowth advocates emphasize that they are not promoting austerity or economic decline. Rather, degrowth is a planned, democratic reduction of overproduction and overconsumption, aiming to shift collective priorities towards care, autonomy, and shared resources. It questions the *growth at all costs* logic that drives climate injustice and offers new ways of living that are more socially just and environmentally sustainable.

These ideas are already being practiced in what some call *nowtopias*, real-life examples of post-growth alternatives. In Catalonia, the Catalan Integral Cooperative (CIC) is building an autonomous network of cooperatives in food, housing, education, and healthcare, operating with its own currency and horizontal governance.[22] In Barcelona, projects like Can Masdeu combine urban gardening, communal living, and ecological rituals to create spaces of resistance.

20 Kallis, G. (2018). *Degrowth*. Agenda Publishing. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv5cg82g

21 Gross Domestic Product.

22 ¿Qué es la CIC? (*What is the CIC?*): https://cooperativa.cat/que-es-la-cic-3/

A common critique of degrowth is that it only applies to the overdeveloped economies of the Global North, while countries in the Global South still need growth to meet basic needs. Those who support degrowth recognize this imbalance. They argue that scaling down material consumption in the North would reduce global demand for raw materials and industrial goods. In doing so, those materials and goods are likely to become cheaper and more accessible to communities in the Global South. The goal isn't for the South to degrow like the North, but to create conceptual and ecological spaces for diverse societies to define their own visions of a good life, like *Ubuntu* or *Sumak Kawsay* (Buen Vivir), for example.

Buen Vivir

Buen Vivir (or *Sumak Kawsay* in Quechua) is more than a concept: it's a lived, territorial practice rooted in Indigenous worldviews and resistance to extractive development. It emerges from bottom-up, community-led transformations, particularly in Andean regions, where ancestral knowledge is integrated with selected *western* institutions to create alternative ways of living. Instead of accumulation, Buen Vivir centers on relationality, reciprocity, and harmony with nature.

Buen Vivir does not mean *going back* to the past; it is a dynamic and evolving project of territorial autonomy and systemic change.[23] It offers a powerful counter-narrative to extractivism and neoliberal development. Buen Vivir seeks to open up space for diverse societies, especially in the Global South, to define their own visions of a good life on their own terms.

In Ecuador, Buen Vivir is more than a guiding worldview; it's enshrined in the Constitution as a principle for national development.[24] At least on paper, it calls for a fundamentally different relationship between people, nature, and the State. Crucially, it recognizes nature as a rights-bearing subject, not merely a resource to be extracted.

23 Lang, M. (2019). Plurinationality as a Strategy. Transforming local state institutions toward Buen Vivir. In: Klein E., & Morreo, C, (Eds). *Postdevelopment in practice, Alternatives, Economies, Ontologies*. Routledge, pp 176–189.

24 Ecuador is currently experiencing a deep political crisis, with organisations such as Amnesty International and the UN warning of serious human rights violations resulting from Daniel Noboa's government's militarisation strategy. Further information can be found at the following links: https://amnistia.org.uy/ecuador-alerta-por-represion-a-protestas-independencia-judicial-y-desapariciones-forzadas/; and https://es.mongabay.com/2025/10/paro-ecuador-detenciones-arbitrarias-uso-excesivo-fuerza-entrevista/

Gregorio Mirabal, an Indigenous leader from the Huaquena and Curripaco peoples of the Venezuelan Amazon and climate change coordinator at COICA (a regional Indigenous coalition that demands a fossil-free Amazon), explains the essence of the concept:

> *"Buen Vivir has been taking shape from the Andean vision of our brothers and sisters who live more than 4,000 meters above sea level. For us in the Amazon, Buen Vivir means a full life: the spiritual connection that Indigenous peoples have with the water, the forest, the fish, the animals, the spirits of the jungle, and the universe. Community life has a fundamental essence, because it is collective, but it also means caring for our ways of life: not only consuming, but protecting."*

ARGUMENT DECK:

Reasons to advocate for a fossil free future (beyond cutting emissions)

> **"According to the different movements for climate justice, 'transition is inevitable, but justice is not.' We still have time to start a just and democratic transition. We can transition away from the neoliberal economic system in a direction that sustains life, combines social justice with environmental justice, brings together egalitarian and democratic values with a resilient, holistic social policy, and restores an ecological balance necessary for a healthy planet. But for that we need more political imagination and more utopian visions of another society that is socially just and respects our planetary common house."**
>
> - *Manifesto from the Peoples of the South: For an Ecosocial Energy Transition, Pacto Ecosocial e Intercultural del Sur.*[25]

When we talk about phasing out fossil fuels, the first arguments that usually come up are the need to cut carbon emissions, stop the planet from warming, keep the poles from melting, and avoid the rising oceans –in short, stop the climate emergency before it's too late. While these arguments are relevant and urgent enough, they do not capture the full range of reasons to push for a fossil fuel phase-out. Across diverse communities and movements, there are many other motivations, grounded in justice, sovereignty, health, and well-being, to demand a different future. This section reflects on some of them.

We invite you to imagine these arguments as a deck of cards. Their utility depends on the context, with greater impact in a political debate, community workshop, or campaign strategy meeting. Some argument cards work best when played together in a strategic order. Like in any game, the strength of your hand depends on the players, the rules, and the situation. In one setting, you might need arguments about the economic impacts of phasing out fossil fuels. In another, your strongest move —the 'ace'- might be a card that highlights how a fossil-fuel phase out and a just energy transition can help close inequality gaps.

25 You can find the full manifesto here: https://pactoecosocialdelsur.com/manifesto-for-an-ecosocial-energy-transition-from-the-peoples-of-the-south/.

This Argument Deck offers 25 cards that Global South activists can use, combine, and adapt for a range of scenarios, from policy spaces to grassroots mobilizations. They're grouped into four suits according to the topic:

CLIMATE JUSTICE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL JUSTICE

PEOPLE'S SOVEREIGNTY

To help you navigate the deck, we've also marked each card by color according to their potential strategic use.

- **Red:** Problem-based argument (what's wrong with business as usual[26])
- **Green:** Opportunity-based arguments (potential benefits of a just transition)
- **Yellow:** Transition challenges (risks, trade-offs, and open questions)

At the end of each card, you'll find guiding questions designed to support you in adapting the message to your own context, whether you're speaking to policymakers, communities, youth, or fellow activists.

In Section 3, you'll find practical activities to use this deck creatively: for training, workshops, campaign planning, or just starting powerful conversations. Let's play to win, and to transform!

This deck contains the following cards:

26 By *business as usual* we refer to the current systems and practices that have contributed to the climate emergency. It includes fossil fuels, but also broader scenarios where no significant change is made to address the roots of the problem.

Colors (type of argument) → / Suit (issue) ↓	Red *Problems of fossil fuels and business as usual*	Green *Opportunities of a just energy transition*	Yellow *Addressing the challenges*
SUIT 1 **Climate justice** 	**1.** The #1 driver **2.** More renewables? Great, but... **3.** Same storm, different boat **4.** False solutions	**5.** Global 'consensus' to end fossil fuels	**6.** What about the harms of transition minerals?
SUIT 2 **Socio-economic development** 	**7.** The resource curse **8.** The illusion of progress **9.** Fossil fuels are still profitable... But for whom?	**10.** Affordability for consumers	**11.** What about the energy access gap? **12.** What about job losses? **13.** Who must finance the phase-out? **14.** What about public revenues?
SUIT 3 **Social justice** 	**15.** Sacrifice zones and environmental racism **16.** A public health issue **17.** Exclusion and risks for women	**18.** An opportunity to close gaps	**19.** How fast should we phase-out? **20.** What about geopolitics?
SUIT 4 **People's sovereignty** 	**21.** Risks of centralized energy systems	**22.** Descentralized is safer **23.** The right to say 'No' **24.** Communities lead the way	**25.** The risk of deepening inequalities

SUIT 1:
CLIMATE JUSTICE

Phasing out fossil fuels to mitigate the climate crisis

1. THE #1 DRIVER*

The climate crisis is fueled first and foremost by our dependence on coal, oil, and gas. Nearly 90% of global CO2 emissions come from the extraction, processing, and burning of fossil fuels. In order to achieve the goal of limiting the global temperature to 1.5 °C, fossil fuel production must decline immediately and stop globally by 2050.[27]

Not all people bear the same responsibility for global warming. The richest individuals and a few developed countries contribute the majority of CO2 emissions throughout history. As of 2015, the G8 nations (the USA, EU, Russia, Japan, and Canada) were responsible for 85% of excess historical CO2 emissions[28] since 1850. By contrast, most Global South countries were within their fair share, including India and China (although China will soon exceed it).[29]

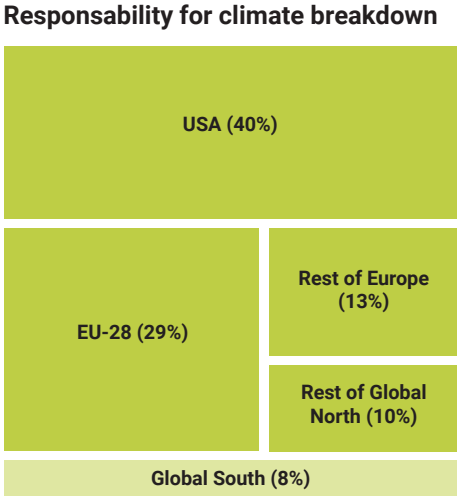


Figure: Hickel, 2020

27 CSER, 2023.

28 Refers to emissions that exceed a country's fair share of the global carbon budget, which is the total amount of CO_2 that can be emitted while staying within planetary boundaries. This budget can be allocated across countries based on principles of equity, and those that emit beyond their share are considered to have produced "excess emissions."

29 Hickel, J. (2020). Quantifying national responsibility for climate breakdown: An equality-based attribution approach for carbon dioxide emissions in excess of the planetary boundary. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 4(9), e399-e404. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(20)30196-0

Even though the Global North uses more fossil fuels, we cannot ignore the increasing use of fossil fuels in the Global South. It is critical that we do not miss this opportunity to ensure that the world collectively transitions to renewable energy. If we do not do so, Global South countries risk becoming trapped in fossil fuel-dependent economies: the problem at the center of the climate crisis.

Of course, the issue isn't just fossil fuels. We live under a growth-obsessed global economy that fuels endless extraction, emissions, and inequality. Phasing out fossil fuels is only the first step towards building a truly livable and just planet.

*This argument is like a 'Joker' card: versatile and always useful. It can stand alone when needed, but it's even more powerful when played with the right combo.

Let's go local!

Think about how you see fossil fuels showing up in your daily life and surroundings:

- Does your country produce fossil fuels (oil, coal, gas)?
- How are fossil fuels used in your country's economy or export model?
- Are certain industries or businesses especially dependent on coal, oil, or gas?
- How are fossil fuels discussed in your local or national politics?
- What impacts do fossil fuels have on your community (economically, socially, and environmentally)?

2. MORE RENEWABLES? GREAT, BUT...

Renewable energy is growing fast. In 2023, for the first time, renewables supplied 30% of global electricity demand.[30] According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the share of renewables in global electricity generation is projected to rise from 32% in 2024, to 42% by 2030.[31] The sad reality is that even with a greater proportion of renewable energy, the use of fossil fuels is still breaking records. How can both be true? While solar and wind are expanding, overall energy demand is growing too. Instead of replacing fossil fuels, renewables are just being added on top. This means coal, oil, and gas production have continued to expand, just a bit more slowly than before.

No matter how much renewables grow, we still need to actively phase out fossil fuels. Increasing the proportion of clean energy isn't enough if governments continue approving new oil fields or coal plants. Many governments highlight their renewable investments, while remaining silent or evasive about fossil fuel phase-out plans. When we advocate for a just energy transition, we must hold them accountable for both sides of the story.

Let's go local!

Think about the current conversation around renewable energy in your context:

- Where and how do people talk about renewables, in politics, the media, or your community?
- Are renewable energy projects growing in your country?
- Is the need to phase-out fossil fuels part of that conversation?
- How could you introduce this contradiction in your own advocacy or organizing?

30 Ember. (2024, May). *Global Electricity Review 2024* (Report). Ember. https://ember-energy.org/app/uploads/2024/05/Report-Global-Electricity-Review-2024.pdf

31 IEA (2025), Renewables 2025, IEA, Paris https://www.iea.org/reports/renewables-2025

3. SAME STORM, DIFFERENT BOAT

The world is already facing the devastating effects of an energy system built on unlimited fossil fuels: severe storms, longer droughts, rising sea levels, and more frequent wildfires. These climate impacts are disrupting the lives of billions worldwide, affecting food systems, clean water access, housing, and infrastructure.[32]

We all share the same planet. Yet we are not all in the same boat when it comes to the climate emergency. Many low and middle-income countries, particularly those in the Global South, are suffering the worst consequences, despite having contributed the least to the problem. At the same time, most wealthy countries, which carry the greatest historical responsibility, refuse to commit to a strong plan to abandon fossil fuels.

A dramatic example is the case of Vanuatu, a small country in the Pacific that risks disappearing due to the effects of climate change, despite being responsible for only 0.00057% of CO2 world emissions.[33] After Cyclone Pam in 2015, the island suffered damages equivalent to 64% of its GDP.[34] In contrast, developed nations keep failing to consistently meet the US$100 billion annual goal agreed to finance climate action in developing countries. Most of the funds developed nations have provided are in the form of loans, which is increasing the debt problem for receiving countries[35] (Check Argument Card 13).

This is why a global phase-out must be guided by principles of justice. The timeline to a phase-out must allow a longer runway for countries that have contributed least to the crisis and where the social impacts of transition will be more challenging to manage.

32 Gupta, J., Hogenboom, B., Rempel, A., Valladares, C. & Verrest, H. (2024). Leaving Fossil Fuels Underground. In Gupta, J., Hogenboom, B., Rempel, A. & Olofsson, M. (Eds). *Leaving Fossil Fuels Underground: Actors, Arguments and Approaches in the Global South and Global North.* Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.5117/9789048560370

33 Worldometer (2022). Vanuatu CO2 Emissions. *Worldometer.* https://www.worldometers.info/co2-emissions/vanuatu-co2-emissions/

34 ADB. (2015). Cyclone Pam Road Reconstruction Project: Report and Recommendation of the President. *ADB.* https://www.adb.org/projects/documents/van-cyclone-pam-road-reconstruction-project-rrp

35 Oxfam & CARE. (2025, October 6). Climate finance shadow report 2025. Analysing progress on climate finance under the Paris agreement (Report). https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621735/bp-climate-finance-shadow-report-2025-061025-en.pdf?sequence=1

Let's go local!

Consider the local inequalities linked to the climate crisis and the commitments to phase-out fossil fuels:

- In what ways is your community already affected by climate change? Who is feeling these impacts the most?
- What are you hearing about fossil fuel phase-out plans in rich nations? Are they moving at a pace and in a way that is fair?

4. FALSE SOLUTIONS

We're living through the worst global crisis of our time, and yet we are bombarded with countless policies, technologies, and proposals that promise transformation but are really more of the same. For example: geoengineering interventions;[36] carbon offset markets for corporations to cancel out their emissions instead of actually reducing them; or empty net-zero pledges with no real phase-out plans behind them.[37] These false solutions that are widely promoted and invested in by powerful corporations, wealthy individuals, and Global North governments, the same actors who benefit most from delaying real structural change.

Among the most seductive solutions are those that claim to remove carbon dioxide already released into the atmosphere. In theory, this could be done by planting forests or using technologies to capture carbon and store it underground. While scenarios assessed by the IPCC show that some carbon removal will be needed to meet the 1.5° target, these approaches are often presented as *the* solution to the climate crisis. Such measurements can only play a limited role and must come on top of rapid emissions cuts, not replace them.

In addition, these *solutions* involve serious concerns. Large-scale afforestation (planting trees in areas that were not forests) demands huge portions of land, often the same land needed for food production, biodiversity, or community livelihoods. In reality, there simply isn't enough land available to absorb emissions at the scale needed to avoid a fossil fuel phase-out.

36 Geoengineering refers to large-scale interventions in the Earth's atmosphere, oceans, and land to counteract some of the effects of climate change. Read more in https://www.ciel.org/why-geoengineering-is-a-false-solution-to-the-climate-crisis/

37 SOMO. (n.d.). Facing the facts: carbon offsets unmasked. Retrieved October 20, 2025, from https://www.somo.nl/facing-the-facts-carbon-offsets-unmasked/

As for technological fixes like carbon capture and storage (CCS), they have not yet been proven to work on a large scale. Betting on future technologies to clean up today's pollution is a dangerous gamble, especially when a safer and more just path is already clear: rapidly reducing fossil fuel use.

Let's go local!

- Have you seen any of these "false solutions" promoted in your country or region?
- Are any of these being implemented in practice? (like carbon offset markets, mega 'green' projects, or techno-fixes)
- How are local communities responding? Are there forms of resistance or alternatives being built?

5. GLOBAL 'CONSENSUS' TO END FOSSIL FUELS

In 2023 in Dubai, for the first time during a Conference of Parties (COP), nearly 200 nations agreed on the need to transition away from fossil fuels in order to reach the 1.5 °C goal.[38] Although the acknowledgment came incredibly late and the agreement has many loopholes, there's now a global consensus which requires that countries commit to a concrete plan for an equitable transition. This is the commitment, extracted from COP28's final text:

"Transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science".

This statement marked a historic turning point: for the first time, fossil fuels, one of the main drivers of the climate crisis, were explicitly named in a COP outcome. Alongside it, the launch of the Global Stocktake (GST) introduced a new tool to the climate process: a mechanism for

38 UN. (2023, December 13). COP28 ends with call to 'transition away' from fossil fuels; UN Chief says phaseout is inevitable. *UN*. https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/cop28-ends-call-%E2%80%98transition-away%E2%80%99-fossil-fuels-un-chief-says-phaseout-inevitable

assessing global progress toward the goals of the Paris Agreement.[39] None of this happened easily. These breakthroughs were the result of sustained pressure from civil society and climate justice movements, who intervened at every stage: negotiating, challenging, sharing evidence and stories, and demanding accountability from governments and institutions.

The COP text states that transitioning away from fossil fuels should be "just, orderly and equitable." While "equitable" is often understood to mean that Global North countries— those most responsible for emissions—must move faster and provide financial and technological support for transitions in the Global South, the final agreement leaves these processes undefined. It offers no clarity on who must act, when, how, or with what resources.

Despite continued policy challenges, change is coming. The world's highest court, the International Court of Justice, recently issued an advisory opinion on climate change declaring that fossil fuel production, consumption, licensing, or subsidies could be considered a wrongful act under international law by the countries involved.[40]

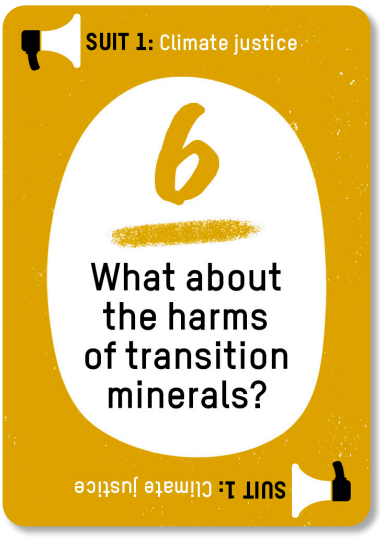
Let's go local!

Think about how your country and community are positioned in this global consensus:

- Has your country signed the 2015 Paris Agreement?
- What has your country agreed to do on the international stage?
- Has your country formulated National Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reduce its reliance on fossil-fuels?
- What accountability mechanisms are necessary for countries to accomplish their commitments?
- How relevant is it for your community to know what's been agreed globally?

39 The Global Stocktake (GST) is a formal process under the Paris Agreement that evaluates collective progress toward limiting global warming to 1.5°C, based on countries' climate plans, actions, and support. It occurs every five years and is meant to inform stronger, more ambitious commitments, especially from major emitters.

40 International Court of Justice. (2025, July 23). *Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change (Request for Advisory Opinion)*: Summary of the case. https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/187/187-20250723-sum-01-00-en.pdf



6. WHAT ABOUT THE HARMS OF TRANSITION MINERALS?

Some minerals (e.g., lithium, copper, cobalt, nickel, and rare earth) are essential for the energy transition. They are often labelled as *critical* [41] due to concerns over supply chains, but this term can also be used to justify sourcing practices that carry environmental and social risks.

According to the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, major mining companies (such as Glencore, Codelco, Grupo Mexico, Georgian American Alloys, and China MinMetals) and leading suppliers of transition minerals are involved in more than 150 allegations of human rights abuses, environmental damage, and community conflicts.[42] South America had the highest number of cases, while complaints in Europe and Central Asia increased by 50% last year.

When we look at the environmental impacts of mineral extraction, particularly lithium and copper, South America is center stage. The region contains more than half of the world's lithium reserves. It is also home to two of the world's top copper producers, Chile and Peru. One of the most emblematic cases is Chile's Atacama desert, the driest place on Earth, where Indigenous Lickanantay communities live alongside massive mining operations. They've denounced how extraction has already caused land subsidence, ecosystem collapse, and the disruption of ancestral water systems.[43] Lithium mining consumes up to 65% of the local water supply, drying wetlands, damaging agriculture, eroding cultural traditions, and forcing young people to migrate, threatening the communities' future. These impacts are not only environmental, they are also violations of the communities' right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC),[44] which requires that Indigenous peoples be consulted before any project affecting their territories can proceed.[45]

41 International Energy Agency. (2021, May). *The role of critical minerals in clean energy transitions*. https://www.iea.org/reports/the-role-of-critical-minerals-in-clean-energy-transitions

42 Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. (2025, May 7). Boom in energy transition minerals fuels human rights abuses, provokes conflict and threatens fast transition to clean energy, new analysis shows. *Business & Human Rights Resource Centre.* https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/from-us/media-centre/boom-in-energy-transition-minerals-fuels-human-rights-abuses-provokes-conflict-and-threatens-fast-transition-to-clean-energy-new-analysis-shows/

43 Mongabay. (2024, December 20). As lithium mining bleeds Atacama salt flat dry, Indigenous communities hit back. *Mongabay.* https://news.mongabay.com/2024/12/as-lithium-mining-bleeds-atacama-salt-flat-dry-indigenous-communities-hit-back/

44 FPIC is a principle rooted in international human rights law that recognizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to make autonomous decisions about *if* and *how* external activities, such as extractive industries, infrastructure, or conservation and climate-related projects, take place on their lands and territories. "Free" means consent must be given without coercion, intimidation, or manipulation. "Prior" requires that consent is sought well in advance of any authorization or commencement of activities. "Informed" implies access to all relevant information - including risks, benefits, and alternatives - in accessible formats that are sensitive to cultural differences. Crucially, "consent" shouldn't be a one-time event or a box to tick, it is an ongoing process of dialogue and decision-making that can include the right to withhold or withdraw approval. For more information: https://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/pillars-of-work/free--prior-and-informed-consent/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

45 IWGIA. (2024). *The Indigenous world 2024: Chile.* International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. https://iwgia.org/en/chile/5379-iw-2024-chile.html

But it's not all bad news. In Mexico, for example, historic reforms were passed in 2023 to limit the environmental and social harm caused by mining and to strengthen protections for Indigenous Peoples.[46] Indigenous communities and civil society, united in the *Cambiémosla Ya* alliance, led the way in creating these new laws on mining, water, waste, and environmental protections. While business resistance blocked some proposals, these reforms represent an important step toward defending territories and ecosystems from destructive mining practices.

However, implementation gaps remain. Key regulations are still missing, and powerful corporate actors are pushing back, challenging the reforms in court and through international trade mechanisms. Meanwhile, high global demand for transition minerals is being used as an excuse to rush projects and undermine community protections.

- **Check:** Environmental justice atlas **to follow up to date environmental conflicts around the globe.**

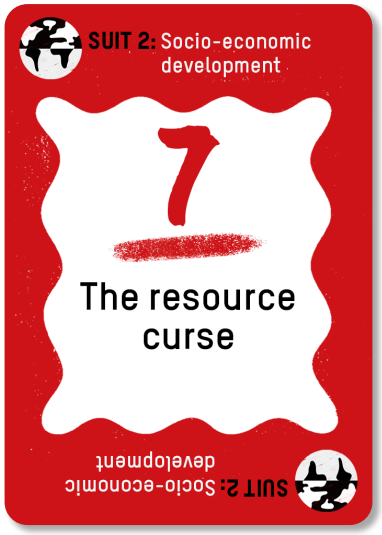
Let's go local!

- Are transition minerals (like lithium, cobalt, copper, or nickel) being explored or extracted in your country or region? Where?
- What environmental impacts have been reported or observed near these extraction sites (e.g. water use, contamination, deforestation, loss of biodiversity)?
- Are these projects happening on or near Indigenous lands? Were Indigenous peoples meaningfully consulted and did they give free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)?
- Who benefits most from the extraction of these minerals? Who bears the costs?
- What narratives are used to promote mining projects? Do they reflect the reality in the communities?
- Are local communities organizing or resisting these extractive projects? What forms of resistance or alternative proposals have emerged?

46 Mayne, R., Dalabajan, D., & Zuluaga, M. A. (2025, May 22). *Pathways to a fast and just energy transition: Insights from clean energy case studies* (Case study). Oxfam GB. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/pathways-to-a-fast-and-just-energy-transition-insights-from-clean-energy-case-s-621695/

SUIT 2:
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Responding to "the right to development" argument



7. THE RESOURCE CURSE

Despite narratives that link fossil fuel economies to development and progress, research shows that these are hardly the realities for Global South countries. On the contrary, studies show that wealth generated from fossil fuels actually slows economic modernisation, poverty alleviation, and democratic institution-building in the Global South.[47]

Economies dependent on fossil fuels are more exposed to economic instability. The reason is that prices of coal, oil, and gas are highly volatile, which means they are constantly changing in unpredictable ways. Often these changes are related to market dynamics or geopolitical events. As a result, countries dependent on these commodities may experience fiscal instability, sudden revenue losses, and even economic crises when prices decline.[48] For example, between 2014 and 2016, oil prices fell more than 70% globally due to increased oil production in the United States and the removal of sanctions against Iran.[49] Nigeria, a country where more than 70% of GDP was dependent upon oil sales, fell into an economic recession.[50] By contrast, renewable energy is typically more resilient to global shocks. Because sources like sun and wind are abundant and not subject to international market price changes, renewable energy can help keep energy costs more stable and predictable.

47 Gupta, J., Hogenboom, B., Rempel, A. (2024). Analytical Framework: Inclusive Development, Justice and Energy Transition. In Gupta, J., Hogenboom, B., Rempel, A. & Olofsson, M. (Eds). *Leaving Fossil Fuels Underground: Actors, Arguments and Approaches in the Global South and Global North.* Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.5117/9789048560370

48 Bois von Kursk, O., Culbert, V., Darby, M., Gerasimchuk, I., Jones, N., Kuehl, J., Muttitt, G., Picciariello, A., Ullah, F., & Yanguas Parra, P. A. (2024, mayo). *Transitioning Away From Oil and Gas: A production phase-out primer.* International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2024-05/transitioning-away-from-oil-gas.pdf

49 Stocker, M., Baffes, J., & Vorisek, D. (2018, January 18). *What triggered the oil price plunge of 2014-2016 and why it failed to deliver an economic impetus in eight charts*. World Bank Blog. https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/developmenttalk/what-triggered-oil-price-plunge-2014-2016-and-why-it-failed-deliver-economic-impetus-eight-charts

50 The World Bank (2022, February). *Nigeria Poverty Assessment 2022. A Better Future for all Nigerians.* World Bank Group. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099730003152232753/pdf/P17630107476630fa09c990da780535511c.pdf

Countries that depend on fossil fuel exports are also more likely to experience currency appreciation, under which a local currency becomes stronger. Although this sounds like a positive impact, it can have negative consequences. For instance, currency appreciation can weaken other domestic sectors (such as manufacturing or technology) by making a country's exports too expensive for foreign buyers.[51] This could reinforce a country's dependence on fossil fuels, making it more vulnerable to global changes. This happened in Kazakhstan in the early 2000s, when the oil boom weakened the manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Goods from those sectors became less competitive abroad, while revenues from oil exports were used to import consumer goods. This dynamic further weakens local industries.[52]

Oil and gas extraction can also increase a country's international debt burden. This occurs through a harmful cycle in which governments borrow more when oil and gas prices are high due to their improved credit ratings. When prices inevitably fall, revenues then decline and budgets shrink, intensifying debt challenges.[53] According to the International Monetary Fund, this phenomenon can permanently increase government debt and even trigger economic crises.[54]

Let's go local!

Take a look at how countries dependent on fossil fuel exports can be vulnerable to economic shocks and crises.

- How is your economy dependent on fossil fuels?
  - Is this through exports and/or imports?
  - Is this through the private sector?
  - Is this through government power and relationships?
  - Is this through important industries in your country?
- Have you experienced an economic crisis in your country that was caused by its dependence on fossil fuel exports?
- Can you identify any realities and/or myths about needing to depend on fossil fuels to address social inequalities?

51 Bois von Kursk, O., Culbert, V., Darby, M., Gerasimchuk, I., Jones, N., Kuehl, J., Muttitt, G., Picciariello, A., Ullah, F., & Yanguas Parra, P. A. (2024, mayo). *Transitioning Away From Oil and Gas: A production phase-out primer.* International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2024-05/transitioning-away-from-oil-gas.pdf

52 Dautova, I. (n.d.). *Avoiding Dutch disease in the oil industry of Kazakhstan.* Eurasian Research Institute. https://www.eurasian-research.org/publication/avoiding-dutch-disease-in-the-oil-industry-of-kazakhstan/

53 Steadman, S., Gençsü, I., Mustapha, S., Colenbrander, S., & Tyson, J. (2023, June). Indebted: How to support countries heavily reliant on oil and gas revenues to secure long-term prosperity (Report). Overseas Development Institute. https://odi.org/en/publications/indebted-how-to-support-countries-heavily-reliant-on-oil-and-gas-revenues-to-secure-long-term-prosperity/

54 Ruzzante, M., & Sobrinho, N. (2022, January 21). The 'fiscal presource curse': Giant discoveries and debt sustainability (IMF Working Papers No. 2022/010). International Monetary Fund. https://doi.org/10.5089/9781616358990.001

8. THE ILLUSION OF PROGRESS

The global demand for fossil fuels is predicted to decline in the coming years, meaning they are gradually losing their place in energy markets. In 2024, oil demand grew by just 0.8%, nearly half the growth rate of 2023.[55] Additionally, fossil fuel projects are extremely expensive to build and maintain. Some fossil fuel projects may take up to 15 years to start generating revenue.[56] In this context, it's not such a strategic move to invest in expensive infrastructure that could soon become obsolete, especially as global energy systems begin to shift away from fossil fuel dependency.

This trend presents a dilemma for many countries in the Global South. In Senegal, for example, The Rufisque Offshore Profond Project has been promoted by the government as key to economic growth and improved energy access. However, research suggests that the global energy transition could make this project obsolete, putting Senegal at risk of accumulating debt for a venture that may never deliver its promised benefits.[57]

In contrast, renewable energy is becoming increasingly competitive in the global economy. It's expected to be cheaper than fossil fuels within the next few decades, and accelerating the transition would push costs down even faster—with a full shift to clean energy by 2050 saving trillions.[58] Although they involve high initial installation costs, renewables have significantly lower maintenance costs. Unlike fossil fuels, they do not rely on expensive fuel purchases, a major cost-driver in fossil-based energy production.[59] (Check Argument Card 10).

But the current energy transition also reflects inequalities. Global financial and economic systems allow investment in renewable energy in the Global North while blocking it in the Global South—where countries are burdened with debt and face high interest rates. Simply put, investing in renewable energy is cheaper in the UK than in Nigeria. For the energy transition to be fair and just, these inequalities rooted in debt, aid, investor expectations, and capital flows must be addressed.[60]

55 International Energy Agency. (2025). *Global Energy Review 2025: Global trends* (IEA Report). https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2025/global-trends

56 CSER, 2023.

57 Oxfam America. (2023, June 7). Senegal's petroleum future or a stranded asset risk? Financial modelling, energy-transition pricing scenarios and potential government revenue from the Rufisque Offshore Profond project (Fact sheet). https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/senegals-petroleum-future-or-a-stranded-asset-risk/

58 University of Oxford. (2022, September 14). *Decarbonising the energy system by 2050 could save trillions – new Oxford study*. Oxford University. https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2022-09-14-decarbonising-energy-system-2050-could-save-trillions-oxford-study

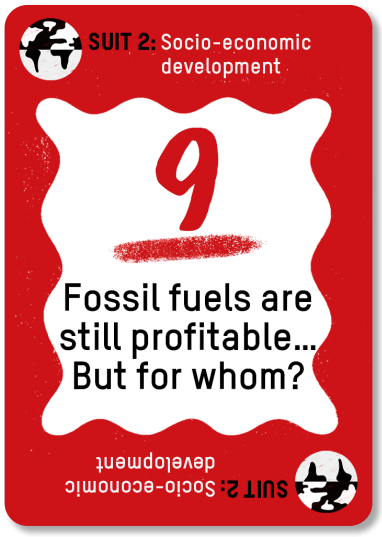
59 Rogelj, J., Stern, N., Zenghelis, D., Valero, A., & Ekins, P. (2024, June 13). *The truth about climate action in the UK: Dispelling common myths to underline the importance of acting on net zero* (Report). Imperial College London. https://doi.org/10.25561/112195

60 Oxfam. (2025). Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the energy future from climate colonialism https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/unjust-transition-reclaiming-the-energy-future-from-climate-colonialism-621732/

Let's go local!

Consider that fossil fuel infrastructure is becoming obsolete and unprofitable.

- In your community/city/country, what challenges might arise for workers, communities, and public budgets that currently rely on fossil fuel-related jobs or revenues?
- What opportunities can appear from the saved costs of using expensive fossil fuel infrastructure in your country? (For example, could money saved on fossil fuel imports be used to fund health, education, or local renewable energy projects?)



9. FOSSIL FUELS ARE STILL PROFITABLE… BUT FOR WHOM?

If governments are worried about revenue losses due to a fossil fuel phase-out (Check Argument Card 14), private fossil fuel companies are doing just fine, at everyone else's expense. In 2022 alone, the five largest Western oil and gas multinationals —ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron, BP, and TotalEnergies —made over $200 billion in combined profits.[61] These gains were achieved even amid increasing public awareness of the climate crisis and mounting demands for a phase-out.

How do these companies keep winning? They do so through intense lobbying, the exploitation of legal loopholes, and influence over tax and regulatory systems. In the United States, fossil fuel corporations spent over $200 million to influence the 2024 election.[62] In the European Union, just 18 months into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, oil and gas lobbyists met with the European Commission officials more than 100 times, turning a geopolitical crisis into a lobbying opportunity. These companies also shape tax systems and regulatory frameworks to avoid accountability and extend the life of fossil fuel infrastructure, all while shifting responsibility for the climate crisis away from themselves and onto governments and individuals.

61 Reuters. (2023, February 8). Big Oil doubles profits in blockbuster 2022. *Euro News*. https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/02/08/oil-results#:~:text=LONDON%20%2D%20Big%20Oil%20more%20than,cases%2C%20the%20industry%27s%20climate%20ambitions.

62 Kirk, K. (2025, January 3). *The fossil fuel industry spent $219 million to elect the new U.S. government*. Yale Climate Connections. https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2025/01/the-fossil-fuel-industry-spent-219-million-to-elect-the-new-u-s-government/

Let's go local!

Consider how fossil fuel companies continue to profit while shifting the costs of the climate crisis onto communities and governments:

- How do fossil fuel companies operate in your country or region? What kinds of influence do they have over policy or public opinion?
- Have there been examples of lobbying, corporate greenwashing, or legal loopholes being used to block climate action in your community?
- What would it take to challenge the influence of fossil fuel companies? How could public power be redirected away from corporate interests and toward community priorities?

10. AFFORDABILITY FOR CONSUMERS

Millions of people across the Global South still live without reliable or affordable electricity. In many communities, energy access is not a right, it is a luxury. Even in wealthier countries, the poorest 10% of households often spend over 20% of their income on energy.[63]

In these contexts, financing renewable energy is harder. High interest rates, unstable policies, a lack of public infrastructure, and dependence on private investors all drive up costs. For example, in many African nations, the cost of the startup capital is two or three times higher than in Europe. These inequities make it difficult to unlock renewable energy's full potential.[64]

From a climate justice perspective, this is unacceptable. A transition that is affordable for the Global North, but inaccessible for the Global South will only deepen existing inequalities. Making renewables affordable and accessible everywhere requires systemic change: transforming how energy is financed, rejecting the privatization of renewable infrastructure, and advocating for public ownership, community control, and fair global financing.[65]

63 Ibid.

64 International Energy Agency. (2024, May). Strategies for affordable and fair clean energy transitions: Executive summary. https://www.iea.org/reports/strategies-for-affordable-and-fair-clean-energy-transitions/executive-summary

65 Ibid.

In 2023, 81% of newly installed renewable electricity was cheaper than the lowest-cost fossil fuel option.[66] This marks a globally significant shift: renewable energy is no longer just cleaner—it is increasingly becoming more affordable, both for producers and consumers. But here's the paradox: many of the projects that make up the remaining 19%—where renewables are still more expensive—are located in the Global South, particularly in countries burdened by poverty, debt, or limited access to capital.

Even so, the rise of affordable renewable energy can help close the divide in energy access. For example, in the Philippines, the rollout of renewable energy helped bring electricity prices down by nearly 30%, saving consumers around $360 million between 2014 and 2015.[67]

Let's go local!

- Is the high cost of energy for consumers a problem in your country? Check data about an average monthly energy bill for users of community-owned renewable energy, and compare rates to energy bills for communities dependent upon traditional energy sources.
- In your country or region, are renewables cheaper than fossil fuels? If not, why?
- Who controls the financing of renewable energy projects in your country? Is it the government? Private companies? International banks?
- How is energy poverty experienced in your community or country? Who is the most affected?

66 IRENA. (2024, September). *Renewable power generation costs in 2023.* International Renewable Energy Agency. https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2024/Sep/IRENA_Renewable_power_generation_costs_in_2023.pdf

67 Oxfam. (2022, December 7). Towards a just energy transition: Implications for communities in lower- and middle-income countries (Research report). Oxfam. https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621455/rr-just-energy-transition-071222-en.pdf?sequence=11

11. WHAT ABOUT THE ENERGY ACCESS GAP?

Energy poverty remains a daily reality across much of the Global South. This is especially true in Sub-Saharan Africa, where 565 million people (nearly half the region's population) lack access to electricity.[68] Governments and businesses in several of these countries argue that expanding fossil fuel production is necessary to close the energy access gap.[69] This concern is to a certain extent valid: for some nations, an abrupt fossil fuel phase-out would increase the risk of energy insecurity and economic instability.

However, fossil fuel production will not automatically translate into energy access. Nigeria, for instance, is one of the world's top oil exporters. Yet it also has the largest population without electricity access—an estimated 86.8 million people.[70] This highlights a broader problem: while fossil fuel exports primarily benefit companies in the sector, many rural and low-income communities at home continue to lack reliable energy access.

Most people without electricity live in remote or rural areas. For this reason, decentralized renewable energy, particularly solar, is the most effective and equitable energy source. According to the *African Energy Leadership Report*, the continent has enormous potential to close its energy access gap through renewables. A green transition is not just viable, it is cost-effective. Transitioning to a 100% renewable energy system by 2050 could save the African continent $3–5 trillion, while fuel cost savings ($8.3 trillion) would more than cover the total investment needed ($7.3 trillion).[71] Making this transition a reality will require meaningful financial support from wealthier countries, in line with their climate responsibilities and greater capacity.

Access to clean energy for cooking is another urgent challenge. Around two billion people globally still rely on traditional fuels like firewood and charcoal, especially in rural and low-income areas. Indoor pollution created by traditional fuels causes an estimated three million premature deaths each year, the majority of which are women and children.[72] While cleaner stoves using firewood have been introduced, their adoption remains low and their health benefits are limited if they are not used correctly. (For more information related to health issues, check Argument Card 16)

68 World Bank. (2025). *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report 2025 - Chapter 1: Access to electricity*. https://trackingsdg7.esmap.org/sites/default/files/download-documents/chapter1_accesstoelectricity.pdf

69 African Energy Chamber. (2023, December 9). *African countries should reject anti-fossil fuel policies at COP 28*. https://energychamber.org/african-countries-should-reject-anti-fossil-fuel-policies-at-cop-28/#:~:text=Advisory%20Services-,African%20Countries%20Should%20Reject%20Anti%2DFossil%20Fuel%20Policies%20at%20COP,fuel%20policy%20that%20may%20arise.

70 World Bank. (2025). *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report 2025 - Chapter 1: Access to electricity.* https://trackingsdg7.esmap.org/sites/default/files/download-documents/chapter1_accesstoelectricity.pdf

71 Duma, P. L. (2024, 19 junio). *African Energy Leadership Report: The case for 100 % renewable energy*. Power Shift Africa. https://www.powershiftafrica.org/publications/african-energy-leadership-report

72 World Health Organization. (2024, October 16). *Household air pollution and health*. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/household-air-pollution-and-health

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is often presented as a healthier, short-term alternative fossil fuel due to its lower emissions. However, LPG programs come with challenges: government subsidies are expensive and disproportionately benefit wealthier households.[73] There's also a risk that the introduction of LPG will create long-term dependency on the fuel, even once cleaner energy options are available. If widely adopted, its use may delay the implementation of cleaner solutions if not phased out properly.[74]

Electric cooking is increasingly seen as the best long-term solution for healthier cooking. With efficient appliances like induction stoves, pressure cookers, and rice cookers, it also offers a relatively affordable and clean alternative to firewood or LPG. However, the shift to electric appliances requires reliable electricity, strong grids, and government support to make these appliances accessible and affordable for low-income households. Cultural traditions also matter, as traditional cooking methods are often deeply personal and social. In some places, electricity is welcomed as a modern solution; in others, cooking over a flame is preferred. Any transition strategy must respect and be sensitive to these local customs.

Public investment, social programs, and infrastructure upgrades are key to enabling the transition to electric cooking. Gas infrastructure can lock countries into long-term fossil fuel use and are vulnerable to price shocks. For this reason, governments should focus their limited funds on expanding and strengthening electric grids, supporting access to clean cooking appliances, and providing financial assistance to households.[75] In the meantime, LPG can be used as a temporary bridge.

Let's go local!

One of the many paradoxes of fossil fuels is the persistence of energy poverty in producing countries—where even communities near energy plants frequently lack access to electricity.

- Is there energy poverty in your country or in a community you know of?
- What are the main barriers to energy access in your context? Are they related to infrastructure, affordability, political decisions, or powerful interests?
- Look up data on energy access in your country or region. How does it compare to your country's dependence on fossil fuels? Check indicators like the percentage of GDP from fossil fuel revenues, or the share of energy produced using fossil fuels.
- What cooking methods are most common in your city/community? How do people feel about the use of traditional fuels? What opportunities or challenges exist around adopting new cooking options like electric stoves?
- What challenges or cultural practices affect the adoption of electric cooking options in your area?

73 See Muttitt, G., Sharma, S., Mostafa, M., Kühne, K., Doukas, A., Gerasimchuk, I., & Roth, J. (2021, June). *Step off the gas: International public finance, natural gas, and clean alternatives in the Global South* (Report). International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2021-06/natural-gas-finance-clean-alternatives-global-south.pdf

74 Muttitt et al., 2021.

75 Muttitt et al., 2021.

12. WHAT ABOUT THE JOB LOSSES?

One of the biggest concerns about phasing out fossil fuels is the impact on those whose livelihoods depend upon this industry. In some parts of the world, fossil fuel extraction constitutes the entire local economy. There's no easy answer to address this legitimate concern. However, the principles of a just transition provide a framework for beginning to address it, emphasizing support for affected workers, investment in alternative industries, and participatory decision-making processes.

First, *recognition*. Any phase out plan must acknowledge the experiences of workers and communities affected by it. But recognition is, on its own, insufficient. Decisions about a phase-out should be made through participatory dialogues between workers, governments, businesses, and affected communities. As the International Trade Union Confederation noted in 2011:

> **"Leadership by the labour movement is needed for transforming the system. Unless we fight to make this transformation work for the people, ensuring a Just Transition towards a truly sustainable model, we will only see superficial changes."**[76]

Second, *support*. A just transition must provide material support, not just policy statements. Communities dependent on fossil fuel jobs need access to retraining, social protection, and investment in alternative economic activities. Governments must provide public funding to create new, decent jobs, not just in renewable energy but across multiple sectors, including care work, ecological restoration, and local food systems. It also means targeted public investment in areas where fossil fuel dependence is highest, such as the Niger Delta in Nigeria or Mpumalanga Province in South Africa.[77]

Finally, *time*. Creating new jobs implies diversifying an economy, which is not an overnight task. Therefore, countries where a large proportion of jobs rely on the fossil fuel industry should have more time to phase out progressively. By contrast, less dependent countries should do so more quickly.[78]

There's a strong potential for job creation in the renewable energy sector if the energy transition is well-planned and properly funded. In the Philippines, for instance, renewable energy projects have created around 178,000 jobs.[79] If the country abandons coal energy

76 Newell, P. & Mulvaney, D. (2013). The political economy of the 'just transition'. *The Geographical Journal, 179* (2). https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12008

77 CSER, 2023.

78 CSER, 2023.

79 International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). (2021). *Renewable energy and jobs: Annual review 2021*. https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2021/Oct/IRENA_RE_Jobs_2021.pdf

completely by 2035 and gas by 2040, estimates suggest that the transition could add 40,000 new jobs every year until 2050.[80] In Africa, a full switch to renewable energy could generate 2.2 million extra jobs across the continent by 2050.[81]

But here's the challenge: this job potential won't automatically benefit the communities that currently rely on fossil fuel industries. In fact, if left to market forces, new *green* jobs could end up concentrated in urban centers or tech corridors, bypassing the regions most in need of economic alternatives. That's why public investment in alternative sectors, tailored to regions with high fossil fuel dependency, is essential.

Let's go local!

It's not an easy process to transform an entire industry and its associated industries. We must center the workers who are affected by the energy transition and include them and young people in conversations about the potential for new jobs.

- What would an intergenerational dialogue look like in your community or country? How could workers and youth come together to imagine new livelihoods?
- Would this transition require social dialogue with unions or cooperatives? What kind of training would be needed? Who would lead it?
- What kinds of social protections would workers need to feel secure in the energy transition? (e.g. unemployment benefits, housing support, guaranteed jobs)
- What kinds of jobs should exist in your region in a post-fossil fuel future? Think beyond solar panels: care work, land restoration, local food systems, repair economy. What's missing and what's possible?

80 Climate Analytics. (2023, November 15). *A 1.5°C future is possible: Getting fossil fuels out of the Philippine power sector*. https://climateanalytics.org/publications/a-15c-future-is-possible-getting-fossil-fuels-out-of-the-philippine-power-sector

81 Power Shift Africa, University of Technology Sydney Institute for Sustainable Futures, Independent Expert Group on Just Transition and Development, & Least Developed Countries Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative for Sustainable Development. (2025). *African Energy Leadership: The case for 100% renewable energy*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/657880dcd408ac495a5cc888/t/685d1a66e04e9216732b7ade/1750932151318/African+Energy+Leadership+Report.pdf

13. WHO MUST FINANCE THE PHASE-OUT?

As we have seen so far, the impacts of phasing out fossil fuels will not be felt equally. Countries that rely heavily on oil, gas, or coal for public revenues, employment, or basic energy access face greater challenges than those with diversified economies and stronger institutional capacities. To ensure equity in the fossil-fuel phase out, these countries must receive international support, including grants to build resilient, low-carbon alternatives. Without targeted financial and technical assistance, many Global South nations will be unable to transition away from fossil fuels without deepening poverty and inequality.

The Civil Society Equity Review has been developing a framework to guide an equitable global phase-out.[82] Their research, which continues to evolve, uses two key criteria. First, they consider a country's historical responsibility for emissions and its current capacity.[83] This framework applies to *all* countries, whether they currently extract fossil fuels or not. In their 2023 report, they calculated what each nation's fair share of international support should be. The United States, for instance, would be responsible for 48.5% of the global total, followed by the European Union (21.4%), Japan (8.7%), the UK (4.5%), and Canada (3.8%). These aren't just numbers, they reflect how deeply these countries have shaped the climate crisis and their capacity to provide solutions.

► **You can find more details about the criteria used and the full list of countries in the full report here:** https://www.equityreview.org/extraction-equity-2023

Despite these efforts, there is still no global agreement on how much support is needed for an energy transition or how it should be structured. While cost estimates exist, they often focus on high-income countries and fail to address the political and economic complexity of transforming economies built around extraction in the Global South. That's why the most important question isn't about finding the *right* number alone. Rather, it is about making sure that wealthy nations contribute their fair share based on justice, not convenience.

The gap between rhetoric and action in the energy transition is not new. In the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, developed countries pledged $100 billion per year in climate finance. That promise wasn't met in 2020, and was only partially fulfilled in 2022.[84] The finance that did arrive came as loans, not grants, often increasing debt burdens for nations in

82 CSER, 2023.

83 "Capacity refers to a country's ability to address the global climate problem. It relates to the financial, technological, and institutional resources available to contribute to a global climate transition. Though it is multi-dimensional, it is extremely strongly correlated with income, and, more specifically, the income that is not already committed to meeting basic needs" (CSER 2023, p.15)

84 Carty, T., & Kowalzig, J. (2022, October 19). *Climate finance short-changed: The real value of the $100 billion commitment in 2019–2020*. Oxfam.

the Global South, rather than enabling real transitions. According to Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, developed countries are obligated to financially support developing countries. The International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of July 2025 confirms that developed countries have legal obligations to provide climate finance to developing states.[85] Even more, the court is clear that ending fossil fuel subsidies is not just a matter of good practice, but a legal imperative.[86]

So, what should true support look like? A fair fossil fuel phase-out must go far beyond technical cooperation or carbon offsets. It must include:

- Direct transition assistance for workers and affected communities
- Social protections and compensation mechanisms
- Job creation in sustainable sectors with public investment
- The diversification of economies away from fossil fuel dependence
- The restoration of extraction-damaged territories and reparations to communities
- Large-scale funding for publicly accessible renewable energy systems

Still, climate justice demands more than just money. It requires transforming global systems that govern debt, trade, finance, and technology; structures that currently limit the ability of poorer countries to chart equitable, sovereign pathways forward.[87]

COLOMBIA'S EXAMPLE

While global agreements remain slow, some countries are taking the lead in quantifying the real costs of an energy transition. In September 2024, the Colombian government announced a $40 billion investment plan to phase out fossil fuels and adapt to climate change.[88] This isn't just a policy statement, it's a tool for mobilizing global support. By identifying the specific financial needs of their transition, countries like Colombia are laying the groundwork for *country platforms*, an emerging model of development cooperation that centers local priorities and ownership. Beyond mobilizing financial and technical resources, energy transition projects must be implemented through sustained dialogue and agreements with affected communities, grounded in the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) in their territories. Many of these initiatives are unfolding in regions with a history of fossil fuel

85 International Court of Justice (July 2025) Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change, Advisory Opinion. https://www.icj-cij.org/case/187

86 IISD (October 2025) ICJ AO: Implications for Phasing Out Public Finance for Fossil Fuels https://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/icj-ao-implications-for-phasing-out-public-finance-for-fossil-fuels/

87 For more on this, read the following report: Oxfam .(2025).Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the energy future from climate colonialism.

88 Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible. (2025, January 8). *Colombia fortalece alianzas estratégicas internacionales para la transición energética.* https://www.minambiente.gov.co/colombia-fortalece-alianzas-estrategicas-internacionales-para-la-transicion-energetica/

operations. Meaningful participation in these contexts can help strengthen national energy security and ensure that the benefits of the transition reach local populations.

ECUADOR AND THE YASUNÍ ITT

The Yasuní-ITT Initiative, launched by Ecuador in 2007, proposed leaving over 800 million barrels of oil (around 20% of the nation's reserves) beneath the biodiverse Yasuni National Park. In exchange, the international community would provide the Ecuadorian government $3.6 billion to protect biodiversity and Indigenous rights. The agreement would also promote a post-oil model grounded in Buen Vivir.[89] Despite support from the UNDP and pledges from countries like Germany, the trust fund secured only about $13 million. The fund was ultimately cancelled in 2013, when oil extraction continued. But in a landmark 2023 referendum, Ecuadorians voted against oil drilling in the Ishpingo- Tambococha- Tiputini (ITT) block.[90] The election marked the first time a nation has used direct democracy to mandate a fossil fuel moratorium, with around 60% of voters in favor of stopping extraction in this sensitive ecological area. The government is now legally required to dismantle existing oil drilling infrastructure, although progress has been slow and contested. Despite the failure of the original Yasuní-ITT Initiative, the ITT referendum represents a promising future for Ecuador and has left a powerful legacy.

BONUS TRACK: FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES… FOLLOW THE MONEY

Any conversation about a fossil fuel phase-out must confront the contradictions of the current financial system. In 2022, fossil fuel subsidies reached a staggering $7 trillion globally – a figure that exposes the deep disconnect between climate pledges and actual policy.[91] While many governments in the Global North speak about urgent climate action, they continue to direct significant public funding towards the oil, coal, and gas industries.

In the Global South, fossil subsidies are often framed as tools to keep energy affordable. Nevertheless, this narrative raises an important question: who really benefits from these subsidies? communities or corporations? In many cases, subsidies support foreign-owned fossil fuel operations, or delay the shift toward renewable alternatives that could be more cost-effective over time. Redirecting even a portion of these subsidies could unlock significant funding for renewable infrastructure, public services, and economic diversification. It's not just about stopping the harm, it's about choosing where public money goes.

89 See the definition of Buen Vivir, in the Antiglossary section.

90 Gabay, A. (2024, August 20). One year after oil referendum, what 's next for Ecuador' s Yasuní National Park? *Mongabay*. https://news.mongabay.com/2024/08/one-year-after-oil-referendum-whats-next-for-ecuadors-yasuni-national-park/

91 International Monetary Fund. (n.d.). *Fossil fuel subsidies*. https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/climate-change/energy-subsidies#:~:text=Globally%2C%20fossil%20fuel%20subsidies%20were,tax%20revenue%20(5%20per-cent).

Let's go local!

Take a look at the numbers involved in the fossil fuel industry in your country:

- Who in your country benefits most from fossil fuel subsidies? Do citizens benefit? Or large corporations?
- What could your government fund instead if fossil fuel subsidies were redirected?
- Does your country subsidize fossil fuels more than it invests in renewable energy or climate resilience?
- Is the public aware of fossil fuel subsidies in your country? Are there any movements trying to challenge them?
- What kinds of international support (like climate finance, technology sharing, or debt relief) does your country or community need to leave fossil fuels behind?

14. WHAT ABOUT PUBLIC REVENUES?

One of the biggest questions facing countries heavily dependent on fossil fuel exports is: how will a phase-out impact national budgets? According to Carbon Tracker, 28 countries (including United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait) rely on oil and gas for more than 20% of their income.[92] 14 of those countries (including Nigeria, Angola, and Venezuela) depend upon oil and gas for 50% of their national revenue. In these economies, the funding of essential public services—including public sector salaries, healthcare, education, and infrastructure—relies on fossil fuel revenues. Under a *moderately-paced* energy transition, the nine most fossil-dependent countries (including Nigeria, Iraq and Turkmenistan) would lose more than 40% of their total government revenues.

As discussed earlier in this toolkit, the rapid growth of electric vehicles, solar, wind, and battery technologies is already reducing global demand for coal. Gas and oil may take longer, but its role is also being questioned. It's clear that fossil fuels will not remain profitable or reliable forever. Now is the time for governments to restructure economies built around extraction.

In Indonesia, for example, the state-owned oil company Pertamina has projected a 50% loss in revenue by 2030 unless it quickly begins to diversify its income sources beyond fossil fuels.[93]

92 Carbon Tracker Initiative. (2023, December 1). *PetroStates of decline: Corporate & sovereign debt markets face growing risks as the energy transition unfolds*. https://carbontracker.org/reports/petrostates-of-decline/

93 Furnaro, A., & Manley, D. (2023, November 28). *Facing the future: What national oil companies say about the energy transition*. Natural Resource Governance Institute. https://resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/Facing%20the%20Future%20What%20National%20Oil%20Companies%20Say%20About%20the%20Energy%20Transition.pdf

Let's go local!

Understanding the dependence of your country's public revenues on fossil fuels is key to advocating for a reasonable plan towards a phase-out.

- How dependent is your country's national budget on fossil fuel exports or royalties?
  What percentage of public revenues come from oil, gas, or coal? How are those revenues currently used (e.g., health, education, infrastructure)?
- What role do fossil fuel companies play in shaping energy and climate policies in your country? Are those companies state-owned, privately owned, or both? How visible is their influence on politics, public opinion, or media narratives?
- If the demand for fossil fuels declines, who in your country or region would be most affected economically? How would workers, communities, and government programs be affected? What would a just transition need to prioritize to protect these groups?
- Is your government planning for the economic impacts of a fossil fuel phase-out?
  Are there public plans for diversification, alternative revenue streams, or social protections for affected workers and communities?

SUIT 3:
SOCIAL JUSTICE

Fossil fuels and its link to colonization and discrimination

15. SACRIFICE ZONES AND ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Even though fossil fuels have historically provided energy access to a large portion of the world, their extraction often comes hand in hand with the creation of *sacrifice zones*. Sacrifice zones are places that are already marginalized, and whose vulnerability is further compounded through environmental degradation, evictions, water scarcity, food insecurity, and other human rights violations caused by fossil fuels and other highly polluting industries. One example is Mpumalanga province, where 80% of South Africa's coal extraction is concentrated. Mpumalanga is known as one of the world's most polluted regions, where communities have long struggled to access clean water and grow their crops due to mining operations.[94]

Sacrifice zones are usually situated on Indigenous, peasant or racialized territories. This is not a coincidence, but the result of environmental racism.[95] One of the most infamous examples of this is the Trafigura waste dump. In 2006, oil trader Trafigura produced toxic waste while refining dirty petroleum. The company attempted to dispose of the toxic waste in the Netherlands, Italy, and Malta without success. Eventually, it paid a local company $17,000 to illegally dump the hazardous waste in Ivory Coast. The hazardous waste caused the death of 17 people, required more than 100,000 people to seek medical care, and contaminated local water sources.[96]

94 Center for International Environmental Law. (CIEL) (2016, December). *Coal mining threatens people's access to water in Mpumalanga, South Africa*. https://ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Coal-mining-threatens-peoples-access-to-water-in-Mpumalanga-South-Africa.pdf

95 The Climate Reality Project. (n.d.). *Sacrifice zones 101*. https://www.climaterealityproject.org/sacrifice-zones

96 Amnesty International. (2016, April 11). *Trafigura: A toxic journey*. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/04/trafigura-a-toxic-journey/

ALERT:

Without careful attention to an equitable transition, the shift to renewables could create new *sacrifice zones*. Already, renewable projects have generated human rights violations at mineral extraction sites, displaced communities to build solar farms and wind parks, and created pollution near battery plants (See Argument Card 6). This is why we insist a just energy transition will never be achieved by reproducing the practices of the fossil fuel industry. A new mindset is needed, and this is our opportunity to redirect the energy transition toward equity and sustainability.

Let's go local!

We must work to eliminate existing sacrifice zones and prevent new ones from emerging through the energy transition.

- Are there sacrifice zones near your community? What specific harms (health, water, land, displacement) are your neighbors facing?
- What can these experiences teach us about designing a just, community-led energy transition, one that avoids repeating past injustices and supports resilience and sovereignty?

16. A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

The exposure to fossil fuel burning —in areas close to power plants, in the public space, or inside households —is linked to respiratory diseases, cardiac conditions, and cancers. In 2025, the UN Special Rapporteur for climate change warned that burning fossil fuels "contributes to over 8 million premature deaths annually worldwide, occurring mostly in low- and middle-income countries."[97]

Besides contaminating the air, the extraction and processing of fossil fuels creates a high risk of accidents that can devastate ecosystems, cause harmful health effects, and destroy livelihoods. Disasters such as oil spills "travel hundreds of kilometres and last for years in the sediment

97 United Nations Human Rights Council. (2025, May 15). *The imperative of defossilizing our economies. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Elisa Morgera.* A/HRC/59/42. https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/59/42

and marine environment".[98] This is exactly what happened in March of 2025 off the northern coast of Ecuador, when a rupture in the national oil pipeline caused a spill of more than 25.000 barrels. The oil spread through 80km of rivers. 300,000 people living next to the affected rivers suffered from skin lacerations, breathing difficulties, and stomach problems. Many communities also lost access to their drinking water and fishing grounds.[99]

Environmental disasters can devastate the physical, mental, and social health of a community. The storytelling nonprofits A Growing Culture and Shado share stories about the health impacts of fossil fuels around the world.[100] One of these stories takes us to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, where the largest oil field in North America was established in 1968.[101] Since then, the Iñupiaq communities have faced an increase in asthma and respiratory problems, along with a gradual erosion of their livelihoods and traditional hunting grounds. These changes have led to a rise in suicide rates, alcoholism and drug abuse.

For the Ugandan activist Ireen Twongirwe, mental health is an essential piece of climate justice: "Communities affected by fossil fuels deserve psychological support and emotional wellbeing as we fight for a just, inclusive, equitable and feminist Energy Transition and Climate justice."

Let's go local!

We've seen how deeply fossil fuels have harmed health. Now reflect on your own context:

- What public health impacts, such as air quality, environmental disasters, or mental health crises, have you witnessed in your community? How are these events linked to fossil fuel use?
- As climate change intensifies, what health threats do you foresee affecting your region (e.g., heat stress, water-borne illnesses, or poor air quality)?

98 United Nations Human Rights Council. (2025, May 15). *The imperative of defossilizing our economies. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Elisa Morgera.* A/HRC/59/42. https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/59/42

99 Alvarado, A. C. (2025, 4 de abril). *Estas son las huellas del petróleo que dejó el derrame de Petroecuador en una de las provincias más pobres de Ecuador*. Mongabay Latam. https://es.mongabay.com/2025/04/huellas-petroleo-derrame-petroecuador-esmeraldas-ecuador/

100 More on a Growing Culture and Shadow mag here:https://www.instagram.com/agrowingculture/ https://www.instagram.com/shado.mag/?g=5

101 See the stories here: More on the story here: https://www.instagram.com/p/DFVjl57ORM0/?igsh=MXdkaHhpenN3cXpzMw%3D%3D

17. EXCLUSION AND RISKS FOR WOMEN

Our current energy system imposes disproportionate burdens on women, especially women from poor and racialized communities. The unpaid domestic responsibilities typically assigned to women increase their exposure to multiple risks, including health hazards from cooking fuels and threats encountered when collecting firewood.[102] The time required to complete these activities also restricts women's equal access to education, while increasing their vulnerability to violence and injury.

Extractive projects like mining and oil development frequently exclude women from decision-making processes in affected communities. During the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project in Uganda, entire communities were displaced. Yet compensation was directed almost exclusively to men, deepening gender inequities. This exclusion exacerbated multiple social problems. As Ugandan climate activist Ireen Twongirwe explained, "We began seeing issues such as early marriages for young girls, school dropouts, prostitution, and men marrying other women outside their families because they had the money."

On the other hand, community-driven renewable energy projects can mitigate women's vulnerabilities. For example, Solar Sister, a nonprofit operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, empowers women to lead and operate clean-energy initiatives. They have trained more than 10,000 women in technical and business skills, creating benefits for trainees and communities. Through this work, Solar Sister has brought clean solar energy to more than 4.3 million people.[103]

Let's go local!

A just energy transition can — and must —be a feminist movement. Reflect on your own context:

- How are women and other marginalized groups in your community impacted by energy systems? How are the care burdens, health risks, education, and exclusion of those energy systems distributed?
- How are women and other marginalized groups participating in energy initiatives right now? How are they involved in clean energy systems, activism, advocacy, and/or governance?
- What new energy solutions in your community are women-led? What can we learn from these approaches?
- What would a feminist, caring, and inclusive energy transition look like in your community or country? Who should lead it?

102 Asia Feminist Coalition. (2023, December). *Towards a feminist just energy transition in Asia. Key principles and barriers.* (Policy Brief). https://oi-files-cng-v2-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/asia.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/Asia%20Feminist%20Coalition%20-%20Feminist%20JET%20Policy%20Brief.pdf?VersionId=NpXFUqkM_g08Z-rWSzqpmMvUraDvntd7p

103 Solar Sister. (n.d.). *Our model.* Retrieved October 23, 2025, from https://solarsister.org/what-we-do/our-model/

18. AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLOSE GAPS

An energy transition, if grounded in principles of justice, can be an opportunity to confront historic inequalities and discrimination. For this to happen, there must be systemic changes at the local, national and global levels. Rich polluters must pay and we must confront overconsumption. Most importantly, we must prioritize the rights of those who have historically been excluded from energy governance, while placing equality, wellbeing, and ecological limits at the center of the energy transition, as outlined in Oxfam's report *Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the energy future from climate colonialism*.[104]

Colombia's energy communities initiative demonstrates how renewables can help tackle energy inequality at the national level. In 2022, the Colombian Ministry of Mines and Energy launched a program inviting local communities from the country's most marginalized areas to generate, manage and commercialize renewable energy projects.[105] The selected communities will produce energy for their own consumption and for the national energy supply.[106] The initiative focuses on territories that have historically been neglected and affected by the Colombian internal armed conflict. The majority of participants are from Indigenous, peasant and Afrodescendant communities. Some energy communities are already operational, including a hospital on San Andrés Island that has used energy savings to enhance its infrastructure and services.[107] The design of the initiative shows how renewables can help tackle inequality at the national level: by giving the power, tools and public resources to historically excluded communities.

104 Adarve Zuluaga, M., Shortall, N., Stroot, H., Wayand, N., Ruiz, V., & Fadel Diop, M. (2025, September 24). *Unjust transition: Reclaiming the energy future from climate colonialism* (Briefing Paper DOI 10.21201/2025.000086). Oxfam International. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/unjust-transition-reclaiming-the-energy-future-from-climate-colonialism-621732/

105 Ministerio de Minas y Energía. (2023). ABC de Comunidades Energéticas [PDF]. https://www.minenergia.gov.co/documents/11069/ABC-ComunidadesEnergeticas-2023.pdf

106 La Silla Vacía. (2024, April 7). La apuesta para que las comunidades produzcan su energía: ¿Y eso a mí qué? [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSAn_aMgE9U

107 Oxfam (2025). Pathways to a fast and just energy transition. Insights from clean energy case studies. (Case study). Oxfam International. https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621695/cs-pathways-to-a-fast-and-just-energy-transition-220525-en.pdf?sequence=2

Let's go local!

An energy transition grounded in justice must reflect your ideas and aspirations—so ask yourself:

- What does justice mean for your community when it comes to energy access and control?
- What changes or resources would you like to see in your local or national governments?
- What energy opportunities (like solar for schools, microgrids, or community workshops) would be most transformative where you live?

19. CHALLENGE: HOW FAST SHOULD WE PHASE-OUT?

WHO HAS TO PHASE OUT FIRST?

Determining timelines for a fossil fuel phase-out requires centering climate justice. As we have previously emphasised, countries with the greatest historical responsibility for emissions –as, for example, the USA or the European Union– and the capacity to bear transition costs must act first and provide substantial support to others (check Argument Card 13).

It is essential that they provide financial support, technology transfer, and debt relief to developing countries, otherwise the speed and feasibility of the transition will be under threat. Meanwhile, countries whose economies and livelihoods are more deeply tied to fossil extraction may need more time. It's the duty of wealthier nations to ensure that these countries' transitions are feasible, just, and do not fall back into the same extractivist logic that defined the fossil-fuel era.

In this sense, developed countries must lead the way and must begin reducing fossil fuel extraction immediately, and all Governments must stop all extraction that violates human rights. Furthermore, new explorations are incompatible with staying within 1.5°C according to the IPCC scenarios. Developing countries must therefore be supported in implementing a just transition, including through investments in renewable energy and the diversification of their economies to end fossil fuel dependency.

WHAT DOES A "FAST" ENERGY TRANSITION MEAN?

For the world's largest fossil fuel producers, any phase-out timeline might seem too quick, but for the planet, that same timeline will be too slow. Under the Low Energy Demand scenario fossil fuel production and consumption must fall by 58% by 2030.[108] By 2050, the production and consumption of fossil fuels, measured in CO2 emissions, must be reduced by 92% compared to 2020 levels. The scale of the necessary energy transformation leaves no room for delay or the expansion of fossil fuels. The question is not who gets to extract more, but who must phase out first, and who must do so even faster.

PROPOSED TIMELINES

The Civil Society Equity Review reports includes a guiding framework for the rapid phase-out of fossil fuel extraction aligned with the 1.5°C limit on global warming. It emphasizes that national strategies must reflect both urgency and justice, shaped by each country's dependence on fossil fuels and its capacity to transition.

We are sharing here key phase-out deadlines per type of fossil fuels:

All countries must begin reducing extraction **now**. The stated date represents when they must fully phase out fossil fuel production.

- High-capacity, low-dependence countries (e.g., Germany, UK, the United States, Australia): must phase out by 2030–2031.
- Moderate-capacity countries (e.g.,India, South Africa): can phase out by 2036–2040.
- Low-capacity, high-dependence countries: may phase out closer to 2045–2050, with substantial support.

All countries must begin reducing extraction **now**. The stated date represents when countries must fully phase-out oil production.

- Wealthy producer nations (e.g., Norway, the United States, Canada): should end oil production by 2031.
- Countries with economic dependence on oil (e.g., Colombia, Nigeria): may require timelines closer to 2040–2050, contingent on financial and technological support.

All countries must begin reducing extraction **now**. The stated date presents when countries must stop natural gas extraction completely.

- High-capacity nations should phase out by 2031.
- Gas-dependent nations (e.g., Mozambique, Algeria): could extend gas phase-out to 2045–2050, with a focus on just transition strategies and external support.

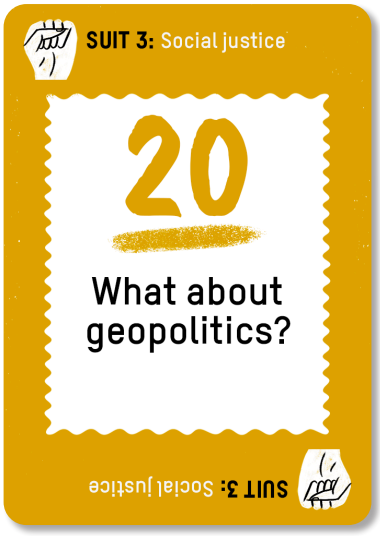
108 The Low Energy Demand (LED) scenario is a climate pathway that limits global warming to 1.5°C by radically reducing global energy use, especially in wealthy countries. Instead of relying on risky technologies, it focuses on efficiency, sufficiency, and equity; meeting everyone's basic needs with less energy through better public services, transport, housing, and food systems.

Let's go local!

Create the timeline to a phase-out for your country.

- Start by checking the CSER Report (2023).109
- Remember, this framework is a work in progress and may be updated in the future.
- Understand your country's energy reality:
  - What is your country's main energy source? (You can check your Ministry of Energy or national energy agency website for this information).
  - Is your country a producer or exporter of fossil fuels (oil, gas, or coal)? If yes, what share of the national economy, jobs, and energy supply depends on them?
- Explore dependence indicators
- CSER highlights three areas of dependence: government revenues, employment, and energy access.
  - Which of these are most relevant in your country? Try to identify available data for each.
- Where does your country stand in terms of equality?
  - Based on CSER's criteria, does your country need more international support and time to phase out fossil fuels? Or does it also have some capacity or historical responsibility that would justify contributions to a phase-out?
- Connect to the bigger picture:
  - What types of support would be most useful for your country in a fossil fuel phase-out? (e.g. worker transition, economic diversification, energy access, compensation for communities, etc.)
  - Does your government talk about an energy transition? Is it focused more on renewables, or does it still promote fossil fuel exploration?
  - Can you identify any community-led or grassroots efforts that already push for a fair and locally rooted transition?

109 CSER 2023. An Equitable Phase Out of Fossil Fuel Extraction. https://www.equityreview.org/extraction-equity-2023



20. WHAT ABOUT GEOPOLITICS?

Geopolitics plays an increasingly complicated role in energy policies. The beginning of 2026 has proved a breaking point. Donald Trump's second presidency has come with a "drill, baby, drill" mandate, a halt on renewable energy projects in the US, and a political, economic and military intervention of Venezuela to access its oil reserves that benefits powerful multinational fossil fuel corporations. In parallel, the US administration is also in competition with China over mineral dominance. The US Government has pressured countries like Ukraine and Greenland over gas, oil, and transition minerals, and has offered military support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in exchange for access to its critical minerals like cobalt. At the same time, the European Union has signed a minerals deal with Rwanda, despite Rwanda's involvement in the ongoing conflict in the eastern DRC. The EU has also promoted controversial lithium extraction projects in Portugal and Serbia, despite strong local opposition.

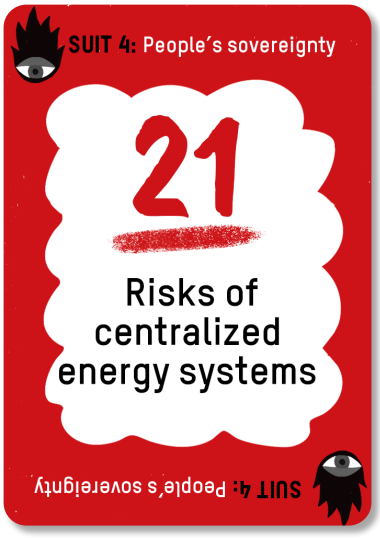
As importing fossil fuels like Russian gas becomes politically sensitive, countries in the Global North are increasingly discussing renewables as a question of national security, rather than justice. Clean energy may be greener, but without a just transition, the extractive and imperial logics behind it, will remain the same.

Let's go local!

- Have you seen your country or region used as a source of critical minerals or fossil fuels for other countries/powers?
- Are local communities resisting these extraction projects? What are they demanding?
- How do global events, like wars, elections, or trade deals, affect how climate and energy are discussed in your national or local context?
- How can young activists from the Global South bring geopolitical awareness into their advocacy for a just transition?

SUIT 4:
PEOPLE'S SOVEREIGNTY

Power and decisions in people's hands



21. RISKS OF CENTRALIZED ENERGY SYSTEMS

The fossil fuel-based systems that prevail today operate in a highly centralized way. Most energy is produced in a few large power plants, then distributed across vast geographies to consumers. The concentration of production means that millions of people rely on just a few production sites, making the system vulnerable to conflict, natural disasters, unfavourable trade deals, and sudden market shifts.[110] In addition, continued investment in large fossil fuel projects risks locking in infrastructure that may rapidly lose value as the world shifts to cleaner energy –or what economists call *stranded assets*–[111] delaying the transition to more resilient, decentralized renewables.

Decentralised energy systems —small-scale, local generation paired with storage and distribution— can play a vital role in building more democratic, low-carbon systems. By placing energy generation closer to communities, they enhance resilience and foster local ownership. Yet decentralisation alone is insufficient. When community energy schemes are forced into profit-driven markets, they can reproduce inequality and exclusion. For example, the rollout of rooftop solar has disproportionately benefited wealthier households that are able to afford upfront costs. Lower-income houses are then forced to subsidize the system by paying higher energy bills.[112]

110 This was starkly illustrated by the 2026 unlawful US-Israel attacks on Iran: within days of strikes on energy infrastructure across the region, global fossil fuel supplies were disrupted and gas prices surged by up to 50%. Global Witness. (2026). Why the US and Israel attacked Iran and what it means for oil. Retrieved from https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/fossil-fuels/why-the-us-and-israel-attacked-iran-and-what-it-means-for-oil/

111 Laan, T., Brnic, A., Darby, M., Gerasimchuk, I., & Urazova, I. (2025, April 22). *Seven ways fossil fuel subsidies undermine energy security.* International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://www.iisd.org/articles/deep-dive/seven-ways-fossil-fuel-subsidies-undermine-energy-security

112 Sweeney, S., Treat, J. and Shen. I.H. (2020). *The Rise and Fall of 'Community Energy' in Europe.* (Working Paper No. 13). Trade Unions for Energy Democracy. https://rosalux.nyc/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/tuedworking-paper13.pdf

The case of Bangladesh reflects the limitations of rooftop solar projects.[113] Household solar home systems expanded rapidly from 2003 and peaked between 2013 and 2018. Growth slowed sharply in the years that followed as rapid national grid expansion, expectations of imminent connections, and regulated grid tariffs (that did not fully reflect generation costs) reduced demand for off-grid systems.[114]

The shortcomings of rooftop solar are further illustrated by estimates that it could provide only around 18 % of the EU's electricity needs, even if every suitable rooftop were fitted.[115] These examples show that distributed generation will not fix energy inequality on its own. Furthermore, they highlight that large-scale and well-planned energy infrastructure still matters, and the democratic potential of decentralised energy depends on who controls access, who benefits and how the systems are governed. A democratic energy future should aim for the democratisation of power, not just the decentralisation of energy generation.

Check out this policy report from the Transnational Institute on "Energy transition mythbusters"

Let's go local!

Let's unpack the role of centralised and decentralised energy systems in your context:

- Are there energy projects near you that reflect a centralised model (like large power plants or extraction zones)? Who benefits most from them, and who bears the costs?
- Have you seen examples of community-led or decentralised energy initiatives where you live? What made them successful or what barriers did they face?
- How are low-income or marginalised groups in your community included or excluded from decisions about energy access or infrastructure?
- If you could redesign your local energy system, what would democratisation, not just decentralisation, look like?

113 Tachev, V. (2021, July 2). *The state of renewable energy in Bangladesh – Slow transition, but big potential*. Energy Tracker Asia. https://energytracker.asia/the-state-of-renewable-energy-in-bangladesh/

114 Debnath, K.B. and Mourshed, M. (2022). Why is Bangladesh's electricity generation heading towards a GHG emissions intensive future? *Carbon Management, 13*(1), 216–237. doi.org/10.1080/17583004.2022.2068454.

115 Steinfort, L., & Angel, J. (2023, September 21). *Common findings — From private profiteering to public energy transitioning*. Transnational Institute. https://www.tni.org/en/article/common-findings-from-private-profiteering-to-public-energy-transitioning#:~:text=However%2C%20here%20lies%20another%20myth.%20Rooftop%20solar,solar%20compatible%20has%20a%20PV%20system%20installed.

22. DECENTRALIZED IS SAFER

Solar, wind and geothermal energy can be more easily decentralised. These energy sources produce power at many locations across a country, rather than from a few large, centralized plants, depending on where the source is found. This dispersion enhances resilience: when production is spread out, a storm, attack, or a single grid-failure is less likely to bring down the whole system.[116] In fact, renewables can reduce the likelihood that a single actor seizes control of energy resources for political leverage.[117]

Still, decentralized renewables come with their own challenges. Many deployments have faltered because of weak operation and maintenance frameworks, inadequate monitoring, and limited local technical capacity. These challenges are particularly significant in off-grid and remote areas. The greatest resilience gains are made when decentralization is paired with smart management, including real-time data, predictive maintenance and digital integration.[118]

True resilience and equity will not be achieved simply by scattering solar panels across rooftops. Equitable energy access demands distributed generation that is backed by inclusive governance, sustainable finance, and durable, technical infrastructure. Inspiring examples can be found in the 350.org *Our Own Power* Initiative. Take a look at their Community.led renewable energy toolkit.

Let's go local!

Decentralised energy systems are often more resilient, but they come with unique challenges.

- What skills, knowledge, or resources would your community need to effectively manage and maintain a decentralised energy project?
- Who should be involved in the governance of community energy initiatives to ensure inclusive decision-making and accountability?
- What local risks or challenges might threaten the long-term sustainability of decentralised energy in your area? How could you address them through collective action?

116 Laan et al., 2025.

117 Edwards, I. (2018). The role of decentralized renewable energy in peacebuilding. Quaker United Nations Office. https://quno.org/sites/default/files/resources/QUNO_Role%20of%20DRE%20in%20Peacebuilding_FINAL_0.pdf

118 Mani, S., Tunga, A., Gupta, S., & Soman, A. E. (2025, June 5). Smarter, stronger, scalable: The case for digital innovation in distributed renewable energy. *International Institute for Sustainable Development.* https://www.iisd.org/articles/deep-dive/distributed-renewable-energy-digital-innovation-india

23. THE RIGHT TO SAY "NO"

One of the most fundamental arguments for keeping fossil fuels in the ground is people's consent. Several UN agreements and international laws establish the right of Indigenous and local communities to self-determination. This right includes the power to decide whether extractive industries fit within their vision of development and cosmovision.

Across the globe, communities have come together to reject coal, oil, gas, and other extractive projects. Many of these struggles are led by women who combine democratic decision-making, legal action, and grassroots mobilization. In Amuru, Northern Uganda, women elders and their community successfully resisted the attempts of their national government and foreign fossil fuel companies to seize 100,000 acres of their ancestral land.[119]

Communities are not homogeneous, and internal disagreements and tensions regarding energy projects are common. Yet, even amid these tensions, communities can assert their rights and influence outcomes. In Puebla, Mexico, for example, the issue of consent was key to halting mining projects on Indigenous lands. After eight years of legal battles, a federal court canceled three mining permits because authorities had failed to obtain prior informed consent from local communities.[120] Yolotzin Zamora, a community leader from Cuetzalan, explained that this victory was built on years of strengthening the community's capacity to engage in collective decision-making: "In many communities, people still practice solidarity, mutual aid, and spirituality. You strengthen those things, so that when companies or outsiders eventually come to the assemblies, those values are so strong that you choose them over the money they offer you."

119 WoMin African Alliance. (2025, June). *Building the Right to Say NO to safeguard women's rights to land and natural resources in East Africa* [PDF]. https://womin.africa/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Building-the-R2Say-NO-in-East-Africa-FINAL-ENG-3.pdf

120 Miguel, T. de. (2022, March 19). La Justicia anula tres concesiones mineras en Puebla por no haber consultado a las comunidades. *El País Mexico.* https://elpais.com/mexico/2022-03-19/la-justicia-anula-tres-concesiones-mineras-en-puebla-por-no-haber-consultado-a-las-comunidades.html

Let's go local!

Consider the fossil fuel phase-out and transition to renewable energy in your communities and country:

- How does your community currently exercise its right to decide about development projects on your territories?
- Are there voices, especially from women or marginalized groups, that need greater representation in these decisions?
- What strategies — legal, cultural, or grassroots — could strengthen your community's ability to say no to harmful fossil fuel projects?
- How might shared values like solidarity and mutual aid support collective resistance in your context?

24. COMMUNITIES LEAD THE WAY

Fossil fuel–based energy systems concentrate power in the hands of a few. By contrast, a just transition to renewables offers a real chance to democratize energy, placing control back into the hands of communities. Community-led projects enable local people to make decisions and take ownership of their energy systems. When communities govern their energy, benefits like jobs, income, and reliable electricity can remain local and be shared more fairly.[121]

One striking example comes from Palestine, where Israel has weaponized energy. Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have depended almost entirely on Israel energy imports and distribution for decades, while the Israeli government has blocked all efforts to expand local energy production. Since October 2023, Israel has destroyed up to 90% of Gaza's electricity networks and solar infrastructure.[122]

121 WECAN International. (2025). *How local community power is central to the renewable energy shift* [PDF]. Retrieved October 23, 2025, from https://www.wecaninternational.org/_files/ugd/d99d2e_f76ead261c734fc2a53a10112a4eb2ed.pdf

122 Oxfam. (2025, September 24). *Unjust Transition: Reclaiming the Energy Future from Climate Colonialism* (Briefing paper). Oxfam. https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621732/bp-unjust-transition-240925-en.pdf?sequence=7

In response, some communities have pursued community-owned renewable projects to gain more control over their energy access. In 2024, the community of Deir Al-Balah in Gaza installed a solar-powered water pump. This pump supplied clean water to 2,000 people without relying on diesel or gas generators, which have repeatedly been destroyed as part of Israel's ongoing genocide. After Israel cut off Gaza's electricity supply in March of 2025, this project became a powerful act of resistance and a symbol of sovereignty in the face of oppression.[123]

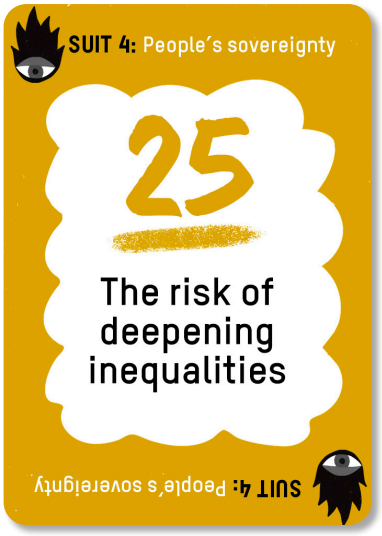
It's important to recognize that many low-income communities lack the upfront capital to develop their own energy projects without external support. For this reason, national grids remain essential. But they must be managed effectively, equitably, and with accountability to serve everyone.

Let's go local!

Imagine your country is full of creative leaders with lived experiences ready to guide a just fossil fuel phase-out:

- What local and community systems already exist that could inspire or support an energy transition?
- How can community dialogues and projects be designed to build unity, trust, and care, ensuring the fossil fuel phase-out benefits everyone?
- What challenges might arise from bringing together diverse voices? How could they be addressed to keep the movement(s) strong and inclusive?

123 350.org. (2025, March 27). *Reclaiming power: Solar powered water pumps in Gaza* [Webpage]. https://www.350.org/story-solar-water-pumps-gaza/



25. CHALLENGE: THE RISK OF DEEPENING INEQUALITIES

In the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, *clean energy* mega projects like wind farms operated by Iberdrola, Eólica del Sur, and Mareña Renovables, have disrupted Indigenous communities under the guise of sustainability.[124] Agricultural and pastoral lands were repurposed for turbines without meaningful consent or culturally sensitive agreements. The projects exacerbated wage disparities, led to the collapse of local agriculture, and further marginalized communities.

These so-called renewable projects fractured community life.[125] Community assemblies were allegedly manipulated, decisions were made behind closed doors, and divisions were sown across communities. Many families were coerced into signing leases for their lands, received inadequate compensation, and lost their livelihoods. These interventions also eroded fishing and subsistence traditions. Rather than empowering communities, they reinforced colonial dynamics, sacrificing marginalized territories for global decarbonization goals without energy sovereignty (See *Energy sovereignty* in the Anti-Glossary).

Land conflicts are not unique to Mexico. In Morocco, the Ouarzazate solar complex, a key renewable project, took shape on Amazigh agro-pastoralist lands without their consent.[126] Ouarzazate deepened debt burdens, relied on public subsidies to cover deficits, and drained water resources crucial to pastoral livelihoods. In Tunisia, the energy system was publicly owned for nearly sixty years through Société Tunisienne de l'Électricité et du Gaz. After energy was nationalized in 1962, just six years after independence, STEG expanded electricity access from 21 percent of the population to almost universal coverage by 2016. Today, however, the government is gradually opening the sector to private investors in the name of promoting renewable energy. Independent power producers are being granted contracts to generate and sell electricity, including to foreign markets. This shift moves Tunisia away from a model centered on public provision toward one increasingly shaped by private investment, raising concerns about rising costs, reduced public control, and whether renewable energy will primarily serve investors rather than local communities.[127]

124 Dunlap, A. (2017). The 'solution' is now the 'problem:' wind energy, colonisation and the 'genocide-ecocide nexus' in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, *22*(4), 550–573. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1397633

125 International Service for Peace. (2013, September 4). Impacts and affects of the wind-energy projects in the Tehuantepec Isthmus. *SIPAZ*. https://www.sipaz.org/in-focus-impacts-and-affects-of-the-wind-energy-projects-in-the-tehuantepec-isthmus/?lang=en

126 Steinfort, L., Mataram, R., & Angel, J. (2024, December 5). *Reclaiming Energy Public pathways to break the fossil fuel cycle.* Transnational Institute. https://www.tni.org/en/publication/reclaiming-energy

127 Steinfort, L. et al, 2024.

Let's go local!

Let's consider the fossil fuel phase-out and transition to renewable energy in our communities and country:

- Are there renewable energy projects in your country which are framed as "clean", but which have resulted in land dispossession, cultural erasure, or inequality?
- Do affected communities, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups, have a voice in government and company decisions, including the right to FPIC?
- Who really benefits from renewable energy projects: local communities or external investors?
- Do the promised 'benefits' (jobs or infrastructure) reach most people, or only a few people/landowners?

As we move forward, remember that community leadership is key to a fair fossil fuel phase-out, but systemic transformations are needed to make this energy transition a reality. The next section will offer practical exercises to help you build on these ideas and bring them into action in your own contexts.

FROM THE DECK TO THE GROUND:

Practical tools for action

Welcome to the practical part of the toolkit!

So far, we have explored the main debates and arguments for phasing out fossil fuels in the Global South (turns out, it's not *just* about climate!). Now, it's time to turn that knowledge into plans and action. In this section, we offer practical tools to help you bring the ideas we've discussed into your own context. Together, we can build a fossil-free future from the ground up!

Our goal is to weave together different types of knowledge— data,facts, and lived experiences from our territories, so that you can organize, reflect, and take action in ways that feel real and relevant to your community.

Here's how the section is organized:

First section:

Mastering the arguments

These exercises are designed to help train activists from climate movements and beyond to understand and take ownership of the demand for an equitable fossil fuel phase-out. They are intended to help participants familiarize themselves with the data, open up dialogue, spark reflections, and build confidence in talking about the issue.

Second section:

Imagining a post carbon future

The second block digs into the narratives and power structures that uphold fossil fuel dependency. It includes exercises to shape narratives that can serve as a foundation for public campaigns. This block also offers creative exercises to envision a post-carbon future, centering imagination and hope as tools for political strategy.

With this basic toolkit, you can organize two types of spaces:

- A half-day workshop using an exercise from the first block (especially Exercise 1, with optional add-ons) and one from the third block as a closing.
- A full-day activist lab using all three sections of the second block, ending with the third block.

All the methodologies you'll find here are grounded in our own experience training and working with grassroots organizations, shaped by rich conversations with fellow activists and researchers, and informed by a wide range of literature. This toolkit is built under our shared commitment to justice, community, and the belief that we can build a better world, together.

Quick notes for facilitators

Designing your workshop

Choose your tools intentionally. Each exercise in this toolkit requires different amounts of time and energy. Some exercises may resonate more with certain groups than others. Think about what activities would be most appropriate for your group, context, and objectives. It can be helpful to start with the tools and formats you are most excited about, or feel most confident using.

Avoid planning a rigid agenda. The idea is to use creativity to help participants think differently, not to rush through tasks. The exercises are prompts, not goals. Let the prompts guide the flow of your conversation and adapt them as needed based on the group's interests and energy.

Time management

Be sure to dedicate enough time for both opening and closing. This includes:

- **Arriving:** welcoming participants, introductions, setting group agreements, clarifying goals, and doing a check-in.
- **Ending/Closing Out:** making space for reflection, identifying next steps, sharing feedback, and closing together.

Setting the tone

Focus on building trust and creating a space where people feel safe and heard. Encourage respectful dialogue, make sure everyone has a chance to speak, and explain ideas clearly and in ways that feel relevant to your group's realities.

Facilitating the conversation

You are not there to control the discussion or produce specific outcomes. Your role is to hold space, to make room for exploration, reflection, and reimagining together.

Be mindful of power dynamics in the room. Activist spaces are not immune to unequal power dynamics; they can reflect the same hierarchies found elsewhere. Factors like gender, class, race, age, language, professional background, or reputation can all shape who feels comfortable speaking or participating. Pay attention and work to make the space more equitable.

Be open to emotional responses. Difficult or charged conversations might emerge. Don't shut them down. As long as they remain respectful, they are an important part of the process. It is okay to leave some questions unanswered.

Facilitating these exercises well requires not just skill, but honesty and presence. Be transparent about your own position, stay curious, and always come back to your core purpose: creating a space where people can connect, reflect, and act.

FIRST SECTION: MASTERING THE ARGUMENTS

1. The ace up your sleeve

Winning the fight against fossil fuels, by building your ideal deck of cards.

Estimated time: 2.5 hr.	**Level of difficulty:** Medium-High
Objective: Choosing the most persuasive arguments about the need to phase out fossil fuels is not an easy task. This exercise is intended to get activists familiar with key arguments, invite them to adapt arguments to their context, and use arguments in different scenarios.	
Audience: Climate activists, civil society, and anyone interested in promoting a fossil fuel phase out in the Global South.	
Materials: Download and print the deck of card here! https://oxfam.app.box.com/s/tdl9vnug4vrt5ouq4spt84h6ha4iosrz Flipcharts, cardboards, markers.	

Suggested ice-breaker (optional): What's your 'go to' dance move?

Play some upbeat music that is good for dancing! Make sure to choose a song that will get everyone moving! Ask participants to stand up and form a circle. Tell them to get ready with their best dance moves. Then, explain that you'll be asking a series of questions. If their answer to a question is **"yes"** they should dance into the center of the circle before returning to their spot.

- Dance forward if your country/region produces and exports fossil fuels.
- Dance forward if your country's/region's economy is highly dependent on fossil fuels.
- Dance forward if your country/region has committed to phasing out fossil fuels.
- Dance forward if communities around you are developing renewable energy.
- Dance forward if you want to learn new tools to advocate for an equitable phase-out.

Stage 1: Get familiar with the deck (35 mins)

1. The session facilitator divides the audience in four groups by assigning each participant a number. Each number responds to one suit in the deck: 1-climate justice, 2-socioeconomic development, 3-social justice, 4-people's sovereignty.
2. The representatives from each suit will gather at a 'station' (e.g., all the no. 1 suit representatives will go to the climate justice station). There, suit members will have thirty minutes to read the arguments of their suit and briefly discuss how these arguments relate to their context.

*Pro tip: It is helpful to have one facilitator with some expertise on the topic in each group. That facilitator can help explain the arguments and guide the discussion.

Stage 2: Define your scenario (5-20 mins)

3. Come back to the plenary and make new groups with at least four members. Each group should have a member from each of the suits (one person who read the climate justice arguments, one person who read the economic arguments, etc).
4. Each group will have to create a real or hypothetical scenario in which they will have to use arguments for a fossil fuel phaseout. The scenario can be designed based on the following questions:
    - **Audience:** who will you be talking to? Be as specific as possible.
    - ▶ (Examples: local government, national government, union leaders, community leaders in areas of fossil fuel projects, other climate activists, etc)
    - **Space:** where will you use the arguments?
    - ▶ (Examples: public community meetings, a public protest, a Congressional audience, policy dialogue, climate camp, etc.)
    - **Goal:** what do you want to achieve?
    - ▶ (Example: convincing your country's representative to include concrete goals for a fossil fuel phase-out in national development plans).
    - **Key context:** What elements from the context are important to acknowledge in your argumentation? *(Example: 80% of the jobs in the community where you are using the deck depend on the mining industry).*

*Pro tip: As an alternative you could also assign each group a pre-made scenario. Here are some ideas:

A. You are a climate youth group preparing for the COP Conference. You are starting to campaign for a fossil fuel phase out in your country [you can choose a country!]. Ahead of your trip, you've been invited to a press conference organized by the national network of climate organizations to share the main reasons why your government must commit to a phase out in their NDCs.

B. You are a student group active in environmental mobilizations. The international oil company OilForever exploits an oil field in your region. Their exploitation permit is up for renewal at the end of the year. They are pressuring the Government to renew their permit for 10 more years. Your student group is organizing a campaign to stop this. What will be your main arguments?

C. You are participating in a national meeting [select a country!] of social movements to respond to a political crisis. Participants include a coal workers' union, feminist movements, students, peasant organizations, and Indigenous movements. You will need to present the main arguments for a fossil fuel phase-out and ensure that they are included in the final declaration. Remember, you must convince them!

D. You are participating in the community assembly of your Indigenous community. Your community is preparing a campaign to stop an oil project by a transnational company that threatens your territories and livelihoods. Furthermore, the project does not include prior and informed consultation (FPIC). At the same time, the company promises that the project will create new jobs for 30% of the population and boost the local economy, which has been in crisis since the pandemic.

*Pro tip: You could also prepare the groups in advance, allowing participants to choose their suit and study their arguments in preparation for the workshop.

Stage 3: Choosing your deck (30 mins)

6. Each group will have to pick the best argument cards from all the suits to convince their audience. They can take 15-20 minutes to discuss and decide which 4 to 6 cards are most strategic to achieve their particular goal. Any combination of suits is possible.

   - Which would, in your scenario, be your **Aces**? Those key arguments will lead your conversation and make your deck stronger to achieve your goal and reach your audience. Which arguments would be your **K**'s, **Q**'s and **J**'s ? These will support your argument and help you in this discussion.

7. Write your arguments on the flipcharts:

8. Below the title of the card (e.g., *The no. 1 driver*), write your own version of the argument, adapting it to your scenario. You can use the questions from the "let's go local!" sections to do this.
9. Each group should designate one delegate to present the deck in the plenary and one 'devil's advocate'. The facilitator will talk separately with each devil's advocate to assign them a group to target in the plenary.

Stage 4: trial by fire (plenary session) (40 mins)

10. Go back to plenary, where you will take the audience into a role-play exercise. Each group will have five minutes to present their arguments to the plenary. The delegate must commit to impersonating their role (student activist, Indigenous leader, etc) while doing so.
11. After the delegate of each group finishes their presentation, it is time for the devil's advocate to step in. This person will have 2 minutes to ask difficult questions to the group or present counter-arguments depending on their role (e.g., a government representative, a lobbyist, or the press officer of the oil company).
12. The delegate or someone else from the group will have three minutes to reply to the devil's advocate. This will help participants strengthen their arguments by facing the opposition.
13. Repeat this dynamic with each of the groups: group delegate → devil's advocate → group delegate → go to the next group.

2. World Café:

A just transition is everyone's conversation

Estimated time: 2.5 hr.	**Level of difficulty:** Medium	**Audience:** climate justice activists.
Materials: large paper (flip chart sheets taped together), markers, sticky notes, colored pens, crayons, paint, post-it notes, cards, tape, printed table guides with discussion prompts, and a watch to keep time. If you want to decorate the room like an actual cafe, you can use small round tables, sheets or paper to cover the table, decorations, and food to share (whatever you have on hand will work!).		
Objective: To collectively explore the multi-dimensional arguments for a just and equitable fossil fuel phase-out, grounded in the lived realities, knowledge, and struggles of Global South communities. Participants will: a) reflect on key terms from the toolkit (the four suits of the Argument Deck), b) connect these themes to their own contexts, and c) co-create knowledge through dialogue, art, and collective sense-making.		
Roles: **Facilitator:** Introduces the session, manages time, supports the flow of conversation. **Table hosts** (one per table): stay at the same table during all rounds, welcome new participants, summarize previous discussions, and track evolving ideas. It is best to invite an outside host, ideally someone who has expertise on the topic.		

Process:

Welcome and introduction (15 min)

- Explain the World Café method and its purpose in this context.
- Emphasize the informal, collaborative, and inclusive spirit of World Café.
- Introduce the four suits: climate justice, socio-economic development, social justice, and people's sovereignty.
- Assign each table one of the four suits (the people at the tables should be randomly distributed.).

Round 1: Exploring personal and local realities (25 min)

- Focus: Personal experiences and the local/community-level implications of each theme.
- Sample guiding prompts:

- Climate justice: How do climate impacts show up in your community? Who is most affected and why?
- Socio-economic development: What are the promises or myths of fossil fuel development where you live? Who benefits?
- Social justice: Which communities are often excluded from decisions about energy or land? How does this affect their rights?
- People's sovereignty: Do people in your context have control over their energy sources? If not, who does?

- Encourage drawing, keywords, diagrams.

After 25 min, participants (except the host) rotate to a new table.

Round 2: Mapping challenges and contradictions (25 min)

- Focus: What blocks an equitable transition? Where do contradictions appear?
- Sample prompts:
- What obstacles prevent a just fossil fuel phase-out in your context?
  - Are there examples of "green" initiatives that replicate old injustices?
  - What tensions exist between energy transition and economic survival?
  - What forms of resistance already exist?

Rotate again.

Round 3: Visioning alternatives and strategies (25 min)

- Focus: What does a truly just transition look like? What alternatives are already being built?
- Sample prompts:
  - What would energy systems look like if communities had control?
  - What local projects or ideas reflect a just transition from the bottom up?
  - How can we make the fossil fuel phase-out equitable across countries and communities?
  - What kind of alliances or strategies are needed for a just transition?

Bringing it together: Collective harvest (30 min)

- Each table host shares the top three insights or tensions that emerged.
- Participants can cluster ideas, post drawings, or create a drawing wall to bring the ideas and insights of the collective together.
- Optional: a few individuals share key takeaways or moments of clarity.

Optional: Creative reflection (15 min)

Invite participants to:

- Journal a takeaway question or insight.
- Write a message to their future self as an energy justice advocate.
- Draw or make a collage of your vision of a fossil-free future

Note to facilitators:

- Set a warm, respectful tone. This can be fast-paced and fun *without* being superficial.
- Play soft music to create a welcoming atmosphere, and keep the space accessible and culturally sensitive.
- Remind participants there are no "right" answers, just perspectives that open up the work.
- Encourage people to write or draw on the table paper as they talk; these become "artifacts" of the conversation.
- Feel free to share your raw ideas, opinions, and arguments. Raw and unpolish is itself a tool of power.
- Ensure that each person gets to speak in every round.
- Let participants know that disagreement is okay. The just transition is not about consensus, but about inclusion and justice.

3. Checklist: Questions to advocate for a phase-out plan in your community

Author: Serayna Solanki, own adaptation.

Use this checklist to explore how your community, country, and region are connected to fossil fuels. The checklist can also help identify entry points for action and advocacy toward a just, equitable transition. You can use this worksheet as a complement to the questions from **the Let's go local sections**, located at the end of each Argument (see Argument Deck above).

Global Relationships

- Is fossil fuel extraction (coal, oil, gas) taking place in your locality or country?
- Does your country rely on fossil fuel imports or exports? With which countries?
- Has your government signed fossil fuel or energy-related deals with other nations?
- What commitments has your country made under the UN climate negotiations?
- Is your country advocating for international financial support (such as grants or debt cancellation) to enable a fair fossil fuel phase-out for its communities?

National Relationships

- What laws, public investments, and regulations currently support fossil fuels?
- Are fossil fuel subsidies still being provided in your country?
- Has your government committed to a clear deadline for ending fossil fuel extraction and use (including a ban on new licenses)?
- Is this timeline aligned with principles of equity and historical responsibility?
- Does your government rely on fossil fuels for GDP growth (e.g. exports, industrial use, or manufacturing)?
- Are there national incentives or pilot programmes for clean and renewable energy?
- Are these programmes inclusive and informed by public and community dialogue?
- What are the barriers preventing marginalized and vulnerable communities from having their voices heard in clean energy developments?
- Has your government defined principles for a "just transition"? How were they created?
- Do you know where to find your government's just transition or energy transition

plan? Are there public consultations or forums taking place?

- What fossil fuel-dependent industries are operating in your country?
- Who are the major emitters and heavy fossil fuel users?
- Who is being harmed —now or in the future — by fossil fuel and mineral extraction?
- How are fossil fuels connected to key sectors like transport, agriculture, waste management, and healthcare?

Local Relationships

- Do many people in your community work in fossil fuel-related industries?
- What are their main concerns or fears about the phase-out of fossil fuels?
- Are there plans for retraining, income support, or worker protections in your area?
- Has your community discussed the social and environmental impacts of fossil fuels?
- Has your community talked about what a just transition would look like locally?
- Have there been conversations about compensation or reparations for fossil fuel-related harm (e.g. land degradation, pollution, displacement)?
- Have community members explored the role of local knowledge, traditional knowledge, care work, and creativity in a just transition?
- Are there inclusive and safe community spaces where these conversations can happen, especially involving women, diversities, youth, Indigenous peoples, and affected workers?

4. Forbidden words for climate clarity

Estimated time: 30 minutes	**Level of difficulty:** Easy	**Audience:** Climate activists

Credit: Inspired in the board game 'Mimiretto'.

Objective: Talking about a fossil fuel phase-out can get very technical. The concept of a "phase-out" itself might be unknown for many people, even within the environmental movement. This exercise seeks to translate the key concepts outlined in the Anti-glossary (section 1 of this toolkit) into clear explanations to reach broad, diverse audiences and bring more allies to the cause.

Materials: Small paper cards, pen, paper, timer.

Preparation:

- Create small cards with each of the concepts from the anti-glossary
- For each card, write the name of the concept at the top and a list of the technical words associated with it. These will be the 'forbidden words'. Example:

CLIMATE JUSTICE

Inequalities
Responsabilities
Capabilities
Emissions
Fossil Fuels

Process:

- Divide the audience into small groups and give each group a package of three cards. Ask them not to reveal their cards to anyone else by placing them face-down on the table.
- Ask each group to choose one "interpreter". This person will be in charge of giving a one-minute explanation of the word on the first card. The group will have to guess the word.
- The interpreter will be forbidden to use the words on the list. They should give an explanation that is as clear, creative, and avoids argon as much as possible.
- Prompt: imagine you are talking to a curious friend who has very little knowledge of the climate movement. How would you explain the word to them?. You can use metaphors, stories, examples…be creative!
- Choose one "notetaker". This will be the person in charge of writing down the explanation given by the interpreter.
- When the first card is done, move to the next one. A new person from the group should take the position of the "interpreter" and another new person should be the "notetaker". There will be three total rounds, with a new notetaker and interpreter each time.
- Plenary: When the three cards have been interpreted by every group, ask them to go back to the plenary and share their re-made explanations. The plenary will vote for the clearest and most creative explanations of each concept.

5. Creative slogans for an equitable phase out

Estimated time: 30 minutes	**Level of difficulty:** Easy	**Audience:** Climate activists
Objective: Help activists transform complex arguments into concrete and catchy messages		
Materials: Download and print the deck of card here: https://oxfam.app.box.com/s/tdl9vnug4vrt5ouq4spt84h6ha4iosrz Cardboards, markers, argument deck.		

Process:

- Divide the audience into small groups
- Give each group one card from the argument deck
- Ask them to follow this process:
  - Reduce each argument to one sentence.
  - Reduce it again to 5–7 words
  - Finally, turn the argument into a catchy slogan
  - Create a sign for a protest
- At the end, place the original cards in a wall next to the new signs. Discuss how the signs can be used in real mobilizations.

*Pro tip: as an alternative, ask participants to compose a chant instead of a sign if they prefer.

SECOND SECTION: IMAGINING A POST CARBON FUTURE

6. Iceberg of stories for a possible future

This exercise unfolds in four interconnected steps. First, we will build a mosaic of stories (6.1) to identify the dominant narratives shaping how fossil fuel phase-out is talked about in our communities. We will also identify the stories we want to tell. Second, we will use the iceberg tool (6.2) to place these narratives at different levels of visibility, helping us uncover the beliefs, values, and power systems that sustain them. Third, we will move from reflection to action by developing collective strategies (6.3) that challenge those systems and build transformative power. Finally, we will ground all of this through a Body-Territory Mapping (7), a practice that focuses on the lived experiences of communities, especially the ones impacted by fossil fuel extraction. This exercise allows us to connect narrative and power to the territories and bodies that hold memory, resistance, and healing.

6.1 Mosaic of stories

Estimated time: 1.5 -2 hrs.	**Level of difficulty:** Medium	**Audience:** Climate activists and communities involved.
Credit: Inspired by the Feminist Influencing Basket of Resources[120].		

120 The Feminist Influencing Basket of Resources is a wonderful recollection of feminist tools and practices for activists and facilitators. Discover it here: Feminist Influencing Basket of Resources

Objective: This exercise helps you identify and analyze the dominant narratives surrounding the issue your community or organization is tackling. By exploring these stories, you'll uncover the systems and patterns that shape public understanding and influence action. Whether you choose to work with one of the argument deck suits or focus on phasing out fossil fuels in your country, the goal is to critically assess who controls the narratives, whose voices are heard, and how these stories impact collective decision-making. This methodology provides a foundation for crafting alternative narratives that better align with your community's values and vision for the future. These alternative narratives provide a strong basis for transformative action.

Materials: Flip chart or paperboard, markers, crayons, post it notes, tape, glue, pictures, magazines.

Introduction:

Narratives can be understood as systems, or mosaics. They are made up of many interconnected stories that help us make sense of the world. These stories take shape through conversations, news headlines, social media posts, viral content, images, everyday sayings, and ancestral knowledge. By exploring what lies beneath these narratives, we begin to uncover the often-invisible forces that sustain the status quo. When we examine the patterns and systems of the stories we live in and contribute to, we become more aware of how narratives shape our realities. That awareness can influence our organizing and impact our ability to imagine change. This awareness also opens up the possibility of telling stories differently, and of shaping collective narratives with greater intention and power.

Process:

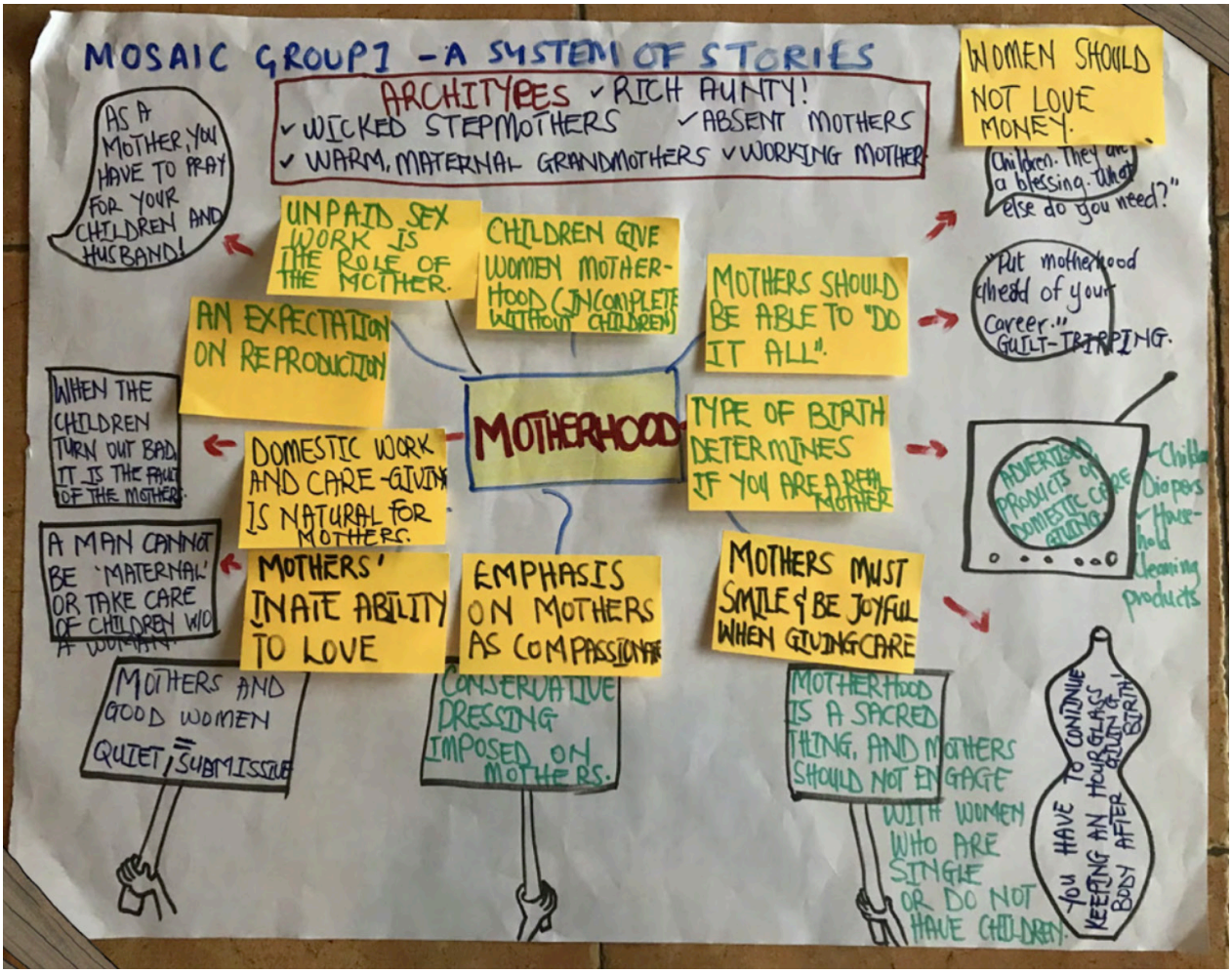
- Form small groups of 3-4 people to explore a system of stories together.
- Choose an issue you want to examine (you can use the argument deck as a guide). This could be a topic you are all familiar with, or one connected to someone's current organizing work.
- Using flip charts and post-its, map out the stories that shape how this issue is understood in your community or context.These stories might include everyday conversations, news headlines, social media debates, viral content, memes, popular sayings, cultural beliefs, ancestral knowledge, or dominant societal values.
- Arrange these elements visually to create a "narrative mosaic" that helps reveal the patterns, voices, and power dynamics at play.

Prompts / guiding questions:

- What headlines have you seen related to this issue?
- How is this issue portrayed on social media, television, in soap operas, and on the radio?
- How do people engage with or talk about this issue in their daily lives?

- How is this issue discussed across different generations?
- How is the conversation different in private spaces (like homes) compared to public ones?
- What metaphors or symbols are commonly associated with this issue?
- What values are reflected or reinforced in how this issue is framed?
- How is culture expressed through or challenged by this issue?
- What social norms shape or are shaped by this issue?
- What political forces or agendas are connected to this issue?

You can create a collage with the issue you choose in the middle, writing down ideas that emerge from the conversation or looking for images or figures that could serve as metaphors for your ideas. Below is a guide for the presentation, but feel free to be creative!



Source: Feminist Influencing Basket of Resources.

Bringing it together (plenary session):

Gather everyone back into the plenary and invite each group to share what they discovered about the system of stories surrounding the issues they explored.

- As a whole group, reflect together:
- What similarities and differences do we notice across the narrative mosaics?
- What do these patterns reveal about how our issues are framed, perceived, or contested?
- How might this shape or challenge the way we organize and build collective power?

*If you want to use an extension (extra 30 min):

Imagine the future. What would the system of stories around this issue look like if you succeeded in shifting the narrative?

Use these prompts to help envision that future narrative:

- What headlines would you see related to this issue?
- How would this issue be discussed on social media, TV shows, radio, or other popular media?
- How might people talk about this issue in everyday language?
- How would different generations speak about the issue?
- How would conversations at home differ from those in public spaces?
- What new metaphors or symbols would be connected to this issue?
- What values would be highlighted or celebrated?
- How would culture be expressed or transformed through this issue?
- What social norms would support this new narrative?

6.2 An iceberg for systemic thinking

Estimated time: 1.5 hrs.	**Level of difficulty:** Medium	**Audience:** Climate activists
Materials: Mosaic of stories (previous exercise), flip chart or paperboard, markers, post-it notes, tape.		
Objective: This exercise invites us to apply a power analysis to our narrative work, helping us uncover the deeper systems that shape the stories we hear and tell. By exploring the different forms of power at play — from visible, formal power in decision-making spaces to hidden cultural norms, shadow forces, and invisible power — we can deepen our understanding of the forces that uphold the status quo. This approach reminds us that narrative change is not just about storytelling; it's about challenging the underlying structures that shape our public imagination. It helps us see that shifting narratives is both cultural and political work. To build transformative change, we need strategies that both confront existing power structures and cultivate new forms of collective power from the bottom up.		

Why use the iceberg metaphor?

We use the iceberg as a metaphor to support systems thinking and to deepen our power analysis. Just as only a small portion of an iceberg is visible above the surface, the most obvious expressions of an issue—such as media headlines, public debates, or viral content—are only the tip. Beneath the surface lie deeper layers: social norms, cultural values, dominant worldviews, and hidden power structures that shape our visible narratives.

The iceberg metaphor helps us shift from simply reacting to surface-level problems to analyzing their underlying causes and relationships within a broader system of power. By looking at what's submerged, we can begin to understand how invisible or less visible forms of power — like cultural dominance or internalized beliefs — reinforce *business as usual.* It also helps us identify where we can intervene most strategically, shifting not just dominant stories, but the systems that uphold them.

(*Want to dive deeper into the three levels (or faces) of power? Check out Annex 3: Definitions — you can print it as a handout or project it for the group.*)

Process:

Step 1: Draw the iceberg (check Annex 2)

On a flip chart or worksheet, draw an iceberg divided into three levels:

- **Visible** (above the surface): What we can easily see or hear: public expressions of the narrative. Examples: news headlines, trending hashtags, political speeches, memes, ads, slogans.
- **Hidden** (just below the surface): The less visible beliefs, behaviors, and social patterns that shape the visible level. Examples: norms, values, habits, stereotypes, assumptions, roles in society.
- **Invisible** (deepest level): The underlying structures, worldviews, ideologies, and systems of power that sustain everything above. Examples: capitalism, colonial legacies, patriarchy, racism, extractivism, historical trauma, systemic inequality.

Step 2: Map your narrative mosaic onto the iceberg

As a group, take the elements you uncovered in the narrative mapping exercise (5.1) and place them on the iceberg:

- What stories, messages, or symbols fit into the visible layer?
- What cultural values, common beliefs, or social norms are part of the hidden layer?
- What deep power structures and worldviews belong to the invisible layer?

Step 3: Connect to the future narrative vision

Now, using your imagined future narrative system (you can write it down next to the iceberg drawing or use a new iceberg):

- **Visible:** What would change in the public stories? What new messages would make the headlines? What new symbols could we use? What new expressions would appear?
- **Hidden:** What values, assumptions, or behaviors would need to shift to support that change?
- **Invisible:** What systems or power structures must be challenged or transformed to make that future narrative possible?

Bringing it together (plenary session):

Bring everyone back together and invite each group to share their icebergs. Afterwards, discuss the following questions as a collective:

- Who holds power at each layer?
- Where is your community best positioned to intervene?
- How can you build collective power to shift what lies below the surface?

These are some limitations to be aware of:

- **It's a starting point, not the full picture:**
  The strength of the iceberg lies in its ability to help us visualize systems and deeper layers, from headlines to worldviews. However, the iceberg model can also oversimplify complex realities. Use it as an entry point to spark deeper conversations, not as a complete systems analysis. Let it open doors to more detailed mapping and strategy-building later on.

- **It's shaped by perspective:**
  What lies "beneath the surface" depends on who is looking. What's invisible to some might be very visible — and lived — to others. For example, frontline communities directly impacted by fossil fuel extraction will often see and feel "hidden" patterns more clearly than those with distance or privilege. That's why it is essential to center the voices and leadership of those with lived experience when using this tool.

6.3 Strategies for change (optional)

Estimated time: 2 hrs.	**Level of difficulty:** High	**Audience:** Climate activists/campaigners (We suggest inviting people with experience in advocacy).
Materials: Iceberg (previous exercise), flip chart or paperboard, markers, crayons, post it notes, tape, and a lot of creativity! You will also need: Annex 3: Using the Power Framework Worksheet Annex 4: Power and Strategy Worksheet Annex 5. Strategies for Power, examples Complementary resources: We Rise Toolkit - JASS https://werise-toolkit.org/		
Objective: After completing the power analysis exercise, you can begin outlining a draft strategy plan. While developing a full strategy isn't the primary goal of this section, the tools and annexes in this toolkit can help you sketch out initial strategic directions. In small groups or as a plenary, use the provided worksheet (or create your own on large paper) to identify starting points for organizing. The goal is to ground your strategy in real-life dynamics and begin mapping concrete pathways toward a just and equitable fossil fuel phase-out. This step is about connecting analysis to action – sharpening our approach by aligning it with lived contexts, power relationships, and local realities.		

Key takeaways:

- Effective strategy responds to all three forms of power: visible, hidden, and invisible.
- Many organizing efforts focus on formal power. Yet real and lasting transformations also depend upon naming and challenging deeper systems of influence.
- Strategic action means both resisting domination and building collective, transformative power in our communities, movements, and daily lives.

You can close with a reflection on how power operates across different realms: personal, public, and intimate. Reflect with the plenary: how can we organize across all three dimensions?

7. Mapping Body-territory

Estimated time: 1.5 - 2 hrs.	**Level of difficulty:** Medium (possible distress, vulnerability)	**Audience:** Communities affected by fossil fuel projects or by renewable energy projects, climate activists, activists in general.
Credit: Inspired by the feminist Latin American collective *Miradas críticas del Territorio desde el feminismo*		
Materials: large paper (flip chart sheets taped together), markers, crayons, paint, post-it notes, tape, optional materials (leaves, stones, seeds, plants, etc)		
Objective: The intent of this activity is to connect abstract systems of narrative and power with the concrete, lived experiences of communities affected by fossil fuel extraction. This exercise brings awareness to how extractivism is not only territorial but also bodily, affecting health, memory, identity, and emotional life. It allows participants to map harm and resistance onto both the body and land, surfacing stories that dominant narratives often erase. We have also included a focus on envisioning a fairer and more just future.		

Process:

Step 1: Introduce the concept of body-territory (10 min)

Briefly explain:

- The body and the land are not separate: they are interconnected and affected by the same systems of power.
- Extraction, pollution, and violence against the land often show up in people's bodies, through illness, trauma, displacement, and emotional pain. Communities resist with their bodies too, through protest, care, storytelling, healing, and cultural practices.
- This approach comes from feminist and Latin American traditions, where women affected by mining and development projects have created powerful tools to understand how their bodies and lives are impacted. These tools can also help those of us in territories make sense of our own experiences —whether joyful, painful, or unjust.

You can use the quote often referenced in feminist and Indigenous pedagogies:
"My body is my first territory."

Step 2: Create the body-territory outline (10 min)

On large paper, have one group member lie down while others trace the outline of their body. Around or within the body, draw a rough outline of their community's territory, river, forest, or site of extraction (this can be symbolic or based on local knowledge). This becomes your shared body-territory canvas.

Note: Not everyone feels comfortable with someone else tracing their body, and that's okay! Each person can decide to draw their own body too if that helps them feel more at ease.

Step 3: Mapping harm (20-30 min)

Ask participants to reflect and draw/write:

- Where has extraction harmed the land or community?
  - Mark those on the **territory** part of the drawing.
- Where has this shown up in people's bodies? (illness, stress, loss, silence)
  - Mark those on the **body** (organs, skin, voice, heart, etc.)
- What emotions are tied to these experiences?
  - Use colors, symbols, or words to represent these.

Encourage people to share memories or stories as they draw. There's no need to be "artistic", the power is in the meaning.

Step 4: Mapping resistance and memory, and imagining new futures (20-30 min)

Next, invite the group to mark:

- Where has the community resisted or protected their territories?
  - Add symbols of strength or memory to the territory.
- How have people resisted with their bodies?
  - Add gestures, tools, symbols of healing, or cultural practices to the body.
- What gives people strength to continue?
  - Include ancestral memory, spirituality, plants, music, community gatherings.
- What would a more just future look like within your body-territory?
  - Include symbols and words that translate new imaginaries and a hopeful future.

Step 5: Connect to narrative and power (15-20 min)

Bring the group together for a collective conversation and reflect:

- What stories have been told about this territory or community from the outside?

- What parts of your reality have been invisible or silenced in public narratives (connect to the iceberg)? Who has benefited from those silences?
- What would a narrative rooted in your body-territory experience look like? How would it sound?
- What would new imaginaries rooted in your body-territory experience look like? How would your territory look like?

Step 6: Optional closure (collective offering or ritual) (10 min)

Invite the group to make a small offering to the body-territory drawing—this could be a word, a gesture, a leaf, a breath, or a moment of silence. This helps honor the memory, grief, and resistance mapped through the process.

Note to facilitators:

- This exercise can surface trauma - create a respectful, contained space and check in with participants.
- Invite local healers, leaders, elders, or artists if appropriate.
- Link this exercise to narrative strategy by identifying how these embodied stories can challenge dominant frames (from the iceberg) and fuel organizing or campaigning.

Check Annex 7. Breaking Isolation: Self Care and Community Care Tools for our People

Adittional resource: https://www.ahk.nl/lectoraten/lectoraat-sociale-rechtvaardigheid-en-diversiteit-in-de-kunsten/eerdere-lectoraatsperiode-2022-2024/aanpak/body-territory-mapping-methodology/

8. Postcards from the future (closure)

"We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art, and very often in our art, the art of words"

Ursula K. Le Guin

Estimated time: 20-45 min	**Level of difficulty:** Easy	**Audience:** Climate activists, communities involved.
Credit: Inspired by the Artful Activism: A toolkit for creative activism.		
Materials: Paper (postcard-sized), pens, pencils, markers, crayons, paints, glue, or tape. We suggest playing some background music.		
Objective: This is a quiet, reflective exercise that invites participants to imagine futures where our struggles have made a difference. Writing or drawing a postcard from the future gives us space to connect the personal and political, and to tap into the dreams that inspire our organizing.		

Process:

Step 1: Set the scene

- Invite everyone to take a breath (*perhaps a little dancing?*) and imagine a future where we have succeeded in shifting the narrative, phasing out fossil fuels, and building a more just and livable world. This could be 10 or 20 years from now (*remember the deadline: 2050*).

Step 2: Write and draw/paint your postcard

- Each person creates a postcard from that future - addressed to themselves or to someone they care about today.
- It can be a message of hope, a reflection on the journey, or a glimpse into daily life in this reimagined world. Encourage participants to combine words and images. No drawing skills are needed, just creative honesty!

You can prompt them with questions like:

- What do you see, hear, or feel in this future world?
- What has changed?
- How did we get there? What arguments helped us get there?
- What are some visions of climate justice or just transitions that we are seeing in the world?
- Do you see any coincidence with the ideas of *Buen Vivir* or degrowth?
- What role did you or your community play?

Step 3: Share in small groups or as a circle

- Once everyone is finished, invite participants to share their postcards. What common themes emerge? What emotions? What visions or values are reflected in this imagined future?

Suggestion: Once the workshop is finished, you can set up an exhibition with the postcards.

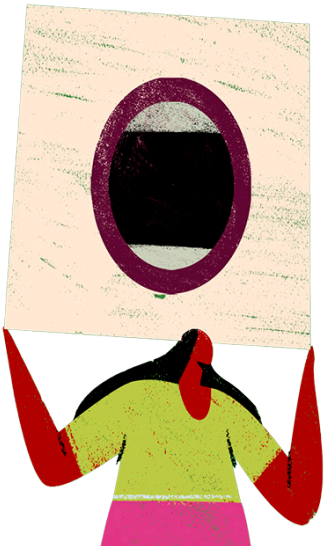
Why this matters?
This exercise helps us dream collectively, reconnect with why we organize, and remind ourselves that futures are not given—they are built. Imagining a fossil-free, just world is not a distraction from strategy, it is part of the strategy.

> **"To imagine is itself a form of resistance."**
>
> Angela Davis

EPILOGUE

This toolkit is still a work in progress. We don't have all the answers, and we'd love to hear your feedback on how you're using this toolkit. How are the tools we've shared — the more theoretical ideas, or the action-based methodologies — working in practice? We are especially curious about:

- How does the *Anti-glossary* work in your community, country, or organization? Which concepts feel problematic or unclear? Are there definitions you'd change or add? Do you agree with them all, or see any contradictions? Can you share local examples that relate with them?
- We're also interested in what other arguments, narratives, or issues you've heard or experienced where you live. What suits your context best? Would it help to have more technical definitions or tools?
- Are the descriptions guiding practitioners through the practical tools for action clear and easy to follow? Do the activities help bring people together—even those who are not involved in climate movements? Are they useful in turning words into action and supporting your advocacy work?



Feel free to share your experiences using the hashtag **#FossilFreeFutures** *or reaching out to us at* **tippingpoint@oxfamnovib.nl** *so we can learn from what you're building!*

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1.
THE ICEBERG METAPHOR FOR POWER ANALYSIS

Own creation adapted from Oxfam advocacy toolkit

HOW IS POWER DISPLAYED?

VISIBLE ACTORS AND PROCESSES

Visible
Establish formal rules for decision making, laws, policies, budgets.

Hidden + shadow
AGENDA + POLICIES
Corporations, oligarchies, churches (private institutions seeking to control public space, establish policies, obtain public and private funds).

Invisible
INTERNALIZED
Beliefs, norms, ideologies, public narratives, gender, race, class, sexuality values.

Actors + norms + beliefs
In the shadows or Invisibles

ANNEX 2.
USING THE POWER FRAMEWORK: THE THREE FACES OF POWER

Source: JASS, Understanding power over Toolkit

Faces/Levels of Power	Definition/MMain ideas
Formal Power: Making Decisions & Enforcing the Rules	This kind of power includes the most visible and easily defined aspects of political power — the formal rules, authorities, institutions, procedures of decision-making, and the enforcement of rules. Examples include elections, laws, legislatures, budgets, courts and policing, and government (from local to global). Strategies that target this kind of power are usually trying to change one or more of the following: who makes decisions, how decisions are made, and what the outcome of a particular decision will be.
Shadow or Hidden Power: Setting the Political Agenda	Often operating behind the scenes, powerful people and institutions exercise their influence by controlling who has access to the decision-making tables and whose concerns are a part of the public agenda. Examples include: corporate interests, organised crime cartels, churches, social movements, and paramilitaries. This form of power excludes and devalues the concerns of less powerful groups, attacking and delegitimizing their leaders and ideas. By preventing important voices and issues from getting a fair public hearing, decision-making can be skewed to benefit the interests of a few. By contrast, strategies that focus on strengthening community organizations and movements can build collective power and new leadership to influence and shape the political agenda. This work can also strengthen the legitimacy and voice of bottom-up movements.
Invisible Power: Shaping Meaning, Values and Norms	Invisible power isn't really invisible — we see it all around us, if we know what to look for. Through processes of socialization, culture and ideology, invisible power works to legitimize certain ideas, beliefs and behaviors, and delegitimize others. By influencing how individuals think about their place in the world, this form of power shapes people's beliefs, sense of self, and their acceptance of the status quo. Significant problems and issues are not only kept from the public agenda, but also from the minds and consciousness of the people involved. Challenging power at this level requires strategies that help people share their experiences, build confidence and political awareness, and challenge oppressive ideas. This work transforms not only how we see ourselves, but how we perceive the world.

ANNEX 3.
USING THE POWER FRAMEWORK WORKSHEET

Source: JASS Toolkit

The campaign or issue:		
Form of power	**How does it contribute to the problem or to block our demands?**	**Who are key actors?**
Visible	E.g. decision to cancel pilot at community clinics to provide AZT medication for free	President and Minister
Hidden	E.g. Pharmaceutical industry	Pfizer
Invisible	E.g. HIV is spread by "bad women"	Conservative churches

ANNEX 4.
POWER AND STRATEGY WORKSHEET

Source: JASS, Power, Analysis for Strategy Toolkit

Our issue (e.g. Communities have a high dependence on oil for domestic energy.)	**Our goal** (e.g. equitable phase-out of oil)	
Form of power over* impacted our issue	**Strategies to Impact, Challenge or Resist**	**Strategies to Build our Own Transformative Power**
Visible		
Hidden		
Invisible		
Combination		

ANNEX 5.
STRATEGIES FOR POWER, EXAMPLES

Source: Adapted from: JASS, Power, Analysis for Strategy Toolkit)

This section introduces two interconnected dimensions of strategy: those we use to challenge power over, and those we use to build our own power for safety, resilience, and transformation. The first strategy focuses on how we resist and confront power in its visible, hidden, and invisible forms. The second invites us to explore the strategies that help us nurture collective strength, deepen relationships, and grow the power needed to sustain our movements. Together, these two dimensions can guide us in setting strategic priorities rooted in resistance and regeneration.

Challenge and Resist Power Over	Build and Create Our Own Power for Transformation
Visible Power: ■ Expose corruption and ties to hidden power ■ Hold decision-makers accountable to existing laws and community commitments, including through direct action and protest ■ Challenge discriminatory and inequitable laws and policies that reinforce fossil fuel dependence and inequality	**Organize to Impact Decisions and Governance: Laws, Policy, Judicial and Budgets** ■ Mobilize collective political power, especially of young people and frontline communities, to demand accountability – our power to ■ Leverage relationships with key decision-makers ■ Engage in legal, policy, and judicial advocacy ■ Shape the policies and governance practices we need for a just and equitable phase-out.
Shadow Power: ■ Expose and discredit shadow actors, naming the interests, actors, and institutions that operate behind the scenes to block just transitions ■ Research non-state actors and their influence and power (such as fossil fuel companies, financial institutions, lobbyists) to better understand their influence and tactics ■ Develop community-based protection strategies to respond to threats, repression, or backlash. This is especially for those on the frontlines ■ Integrate risk and conflict analysis into our networks and strategies ■ Use technology to expose abuses of power and to protect us (to document, communicate, and protect)	**Build Our Own Movement Infrastructure:** ■ Strengthen women's/ youth movements/Indigenous peoples/ frontline communities' leadership and organizing skills, our power to ■ Build diverse, inclusive alliances and networks centering the voices and leadership of those most impacted by fossil fuel extraction and climate injustice ■ Grow and engage a base of activists, rooted in shared values and a long-term vision for a just transition ■ Build our organizations' capacity and collective power, our power with ■ Create strategies for our safety and well-being, including safe spaces, healing practices, and protection for those at risk ■ Strategically build alliances with powerful state and non-state actors when doing so aligns with our goals
Invisible Power: ■ Challenge and disrupt social norms and narratives ■ Question taboos, negative traditions, and control tactics rooted in patriarchy, colonialism, or extractivism ■ Name and expose underlying interests and values of dominant players behind messages ■ Reveal contradictions and the impacts of invisible power ■ Understand fear and its impact on our bodies, identities, and choices	**Create Critical Awareness and Communicate Our Own Ideas:** ■ Foster critical consciousness rooted in lived experience and collective reflection ■ Amplify women's voices, ideas, views and power within young people, women, and frontline communities ■ Influence and inform public discourse, attitudes and behavior ■ Creatively use and produce media and knowledge content and products as a form of cultural and political intervention ■ Cultivate an alternative vision for a better future and understand the critical role we play in building it, our power for ■ Nurture solidarity and shared power, grounded in a collective vision for a just future

ANNEX 6.
BREAKING ISOLATION: SELF CARE AND COMMUNITY CARE TOOLS FOR OUR PEOPLE

A crucial, but often overlooked, part of activism is the emotional weight many carry within and beyond their organizing spaces. We live and struggle within systems shaped by patriarchal, colonial, and extractive cultures that show up in our movements too. In this section, we offer tools to support reflection and care, including:

A. Context on the risks and violence faced by defenders in the Global South,
B. Space to reflect on the nonlinear path of organizing, learning from so-called 'failures' as part of our collective growth, and
C. Resources on radical self and collective care, inspired by Black feminist movements, as a vital part of building sustainable organizations, communities, and resistance.

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

Audre Lorde

SELF & COMMUNITY CARE: HOLDING OURSELVES, HOLDING EACH OTHER

Inspired by the Audre Lorde Project

In moments of grief, crisis, or exhaustion - before, during, and after the struggle - we need one another not just to survive, but to live fully. Taking care of ourselves and our communities isn't separate from organizing- it is organizing.

Many of us carry deep pain. We've seen harm. We've felt the cost of resistance. Activists around the world are isolated, silenced, imprisoned, disappeared, deported, or killed. In this reality, choosing to care — for ourselves and each other — is a radical act of love and resistance.

We're often taught to turn to institutions in moments of crisis, even when those same systems are sources of violence. But our strength lies in turning to each other.

By naming our pain, listening deeply, and supporting one another, we resist disconnection and build spaces of healing and transformation.

This is a space to remember what grounds us — rituals, practices, movement, rest, joy, creativity — and to begin shaping practices that sustain us and our movements.

EXERCISE: CREATE YOUR WELLNESS PLAN

Start with yourself:

Take a few quiet moments to reflect and write down your answers to these questions:

- What helps me feel grounded when things get hard?
- Who can I reach out to for support? How can I show up for others?
- What signs tell me I'm close to burnout?
- What do I need to rest, recharge, and keep going?

Talk it through with someone you trust. Invite others in your group to do the same. Your plan might include establishing personal boundaries, regular check-ins, creative practices, rest time, or spiritual tools.

Then, come together to reflect as a group:

- What collective care practices can we commit to as a group or movement?
- How do we hold space for care (not just urgency) in our organizing culture?
- What would it look like to build a culture of care that carries us for the long haul?

Event/Critical Moment / Conversation/Questions/ etc.			
What are the needs you can anticipate during this event?	**Is it a heart, body, mind, or community need?**	**Who can help support these needs, and how?**	**Is there anything you'd like us to know?**


OXFAM Novib