Towards a Shared Horizon for Climate Justice

The learning journey of the Partos Climate Justice Community

November 2025

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The learning journey of the Partos Climate Justice Community

The Partos Climate Justice Community of Practice (CoP) was launched in 2023 to support Dutch development and environmental organisations in integrating climate justice into their programmes, partnerships, and advocacy. Bringing together practitioners, policy staff, and partners from across the sector, the CoP was created to strengthen collective learning, align strategies, and deepen practice. Members share a common understanding: that climate action is inseparable from social justice, and that addressing climate change requires transforming the systems that produce inequality.

Over the course of 2023–2025, the CoP met across fifteen sessions—both in person and online—to explore how climate justice principles can be applied within international cooperation. Participants examined how to strengthen inclusive climate finance, embed decolonial and feminist approaches, centre community leadership in adaptation, and navigate tensions in themes like nature-based solutions, public–private partnerships, and organisational mainstreaming. These conversations reflected the complexities of applying climate justice in practice, and the potential for shared learning to shift the sector.

This publication captures the collective reflections, emerging principles, and examples that emerged from the CoP's learning journey. It is a space to build shared understanding, deepen analysis, and support organisations in strengthening climate justice across their work. Importantly, it offers a compass for ongoing practice, with an invitation to learn, unlearn, and act together towards a world where justice, care, and climate resilience are inseparable.

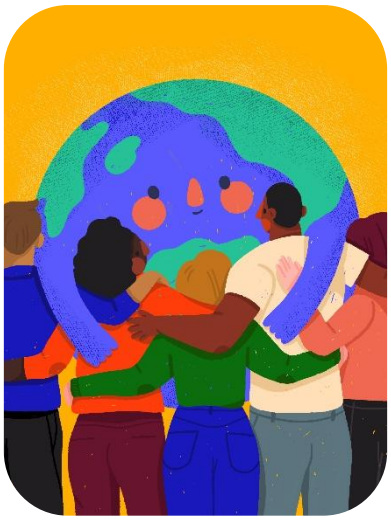
Climate Justice as Our Compass

There is a growing recognition across movements, institutions, and communities that **climate justice is not optional — it is urgent**. Without embedding justice into the core of our economic systems, government agendas, and institutional practices, we risk losing a liveable planet as well as the ethical compass needed to sustain it.

Within the CoP, climate justice quickly became apparent as both essential and contested. Members brought forward multiple interpretations shaped by their mandates and experiences: from decolonial critiques and just transition frameworks, to gender-just and locally led adaptation, to rights-based approaches and demands for reparations. Rather than seeking a single definition, the CoP treated climate justice as more than a political demand or policy framework, but rather as a *shared horizon*—a direction for action rooted in a set of ethical commitments.

As practitioners, donors, campaigners and members of the complex ecosystem of actors working to advance climate justice, this means that **how we work** is just as important as **what we do**. For organisations working in international cooperation—many of them Dutch NGOs with long histories in development practice—this means recognising the sector's own positionality and legacy. It requires facing the tensions between urgency and depth: between the need for rapid climate action and the necessity of doing so in ways that redistribute power rather than replicate past harms. The programmes, campaigns, and partnerships we design can either contribute to the redistribution of power and resources, or unintentionally reinforce the same inequalities that fuel the crisis. To practise climate justice is to take responsibility for **redistribution and reparation**: of wealth, governance, and decision-making.

The good news is that we are not starting from scratch. Across the world and our network, there are already rich examples that show what just transformational transitions can look like in practice. The task before us is to learn from these efforts, connect them, and deepen our collective capacity to practice climate justice in durable, grounded, and context-specific ways. Implementing climate justice sustainably in ways that avoid tokenism requires candour, critical internal examination, and time to learn and put changes into practice.



Tengwan Quek for ArtistsForClimate.org

This learning journey emphasised that climate justice is not simply a technical field of work. It is a political and deeply relational practice that asks organisations to interrogate their assumptions, methods, and internal cultures. Therefore, at its heart, this learning journey is an **invitation to practice**. Climate justice asks us to pay attention to our *hows*: how we organise, how we think through dilemmas, how we distribute resources, and who we listen to and value in the process. This platform brings together the insights, reflections, and emerging principles from Partos members and partners who have spent the past three years learning how to move from principles to practice, from rhetoric to redistribution.

Cross-Cutting Takeaways from the Climate Justice Community of Practice

1. **Center rights-holders' agency across the programme cycle.**
   Climate justice begins with procedural justice, and ensuring that participation, consent, and language access are not afterthoughts but core outcomes. Those most affected by the crisis must define priorities, shape decisions, and hold power over implementation.

2. **Treat climate justice as both programmatic practice and organisational transformation.**
   Advancing justice requires internal change: revisiting governance, HR, MEL, partnerships, and safeguarding systems to confront inequities and embed redistribution and accountability into everyday operations.

3. **Move finance closer to the ground.**
   Simplify access to funding for grassroots and community-based organisations through small-grant mechanisms, budget tagging, fiscal transparency, and participatory accountability systems that track where money flows, and who benefits. *Learn more in Cluster 2.*

4. **Reframe finance and adaptation as acts of reparation and redistribution.**
   Climate finance must shift from counting dollars to cultivating justice: recognising historical responsibility, prioritising grant-based over debt-inducing finance, and aligning funding with locally defined needs, especially for adaptation and loss & damage.

5. **Apply intersectional, gender-responsive, and conflict-sensitive lenses.**
   Intersectionality is not an add-on but a method of justice. Address overlapping systems of exclusion — gender, class, age, caste, ability — and design adaptation and resilience initiatives that are inclusive, feminist, and attentive to local power dynamics. *Learn more in Cluster 4.*

6. **Bridge environmental, social, and peace-building agendas.**
   Integrate nature-based solutions and peace-building approaches through community stewardship, conflict prevention, and ecological restoration — while staying alert to risks of greenwashing, militarised conservation, and elite capture.

7. **Redistribute knowledge and power through collaboration.**
   Build alliances that bridge Global North and South, civil society, state, and private, environment and development sectors. Co-create evidence, advocacy, and learning to challenge the dominance of technocratic and donor-driven narratives.

8. **Embrace flexibility, subsidiarity, and learning as justice practices.**
   Justice requires flexibility — adaptive funding, iterative programming, and downward accountability to communities. Decisions should be taken at the lowest meaningful level, grounded in local knowledge and capabilities.

9. **Measure success through justice metrics, not delivery metrics.**
   Beyond outputs and budgets, track shifts in power, participation quality, and equity outcomes. True progress lies in how climate action transforms relationships — between people, institutions, and ecosystems — in the direction of dignity and rights.

Cluster 1: Decolonisation & Power Shifts

Context

Why Decolonisation Matters for Climate Justice

Decolonising climate justice begins with recognising that the climate crisis is fundamentally historical and political. The same extractive systems that colonised lands and peoples continue to shape today's global political economy, determining who pollutes, who profits, and who pays the price. This topic inevitably challenges organisations to acknowledge their complicity in structures of power — economic, political, and social. While we can recognize that full decoloniality may be impossible within capitalism, the responsibility to repair, internally and externally, remains. Addressing this crisis of injustice therefore demands more than technical fixes or 'climate solutions'. It requires confronting the colonial roots of climate vulnerability and transforming the power relations that maintain it. As one participant reflected, *"We cannot achieve climate justice through the same systems that caused climate injustice."*

Just Transition & the Limits of False Solutions

A central framework in this transformation is the Indigenous-led Just Transition principles, which call for a shift towards low-carbon and resilient economies grounded in responsibility, sovereignty, and transformation.

- Responsibility demands acknowledgement of historical and ongoing ecological debts
- Sovereignty insists that affected communities must define and lead their own adaptation and development pathways
- Transformation calls for systemic change that prioritises justice and care over profit.

This approach links directly to the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), enshrined within international environmental law, which asserts that countries' obligations to act on climate change must reflect their historical emissions and capacities (See Thematic Cluster 2 for more on this). While embedded in international law since the 1992 Rio Summit, this principle has been eroded in recent years by the global push for "Net Zero" targets that rely on carbon offsets and emissions trading schemes — false solutions that allow wealthy nations and corporations to buy their way out of real decarbonisation.

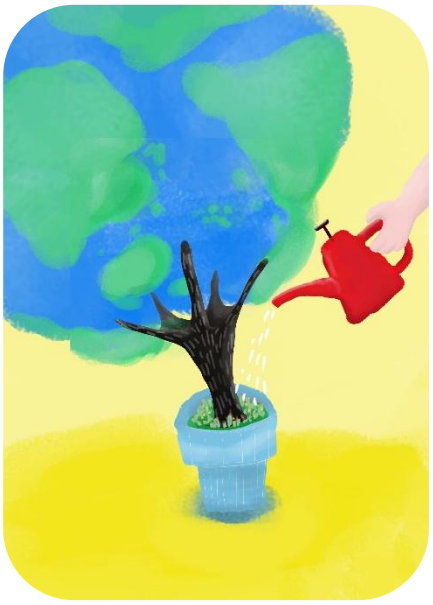
Repair and Right Relationship

In contrast, a decolonial approach to climate justice demands honesty about historical responsibility and a commitment to **reparations**, not only financial but also political, social, and ecological. Reparations encompass restitution, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition. They mean supporting the recovery of lands and livelihoods, restoring ecosystems, and ensuring affected communities can shape their own futures. This means recognising how funding mechanisms, partnerships, and reporting practices often perpetuate dependence, extract local labour and knowledge, and reproduce Eurocentric worldviews of what counts as "expertise". As activists and thinkers have argued, reparative justice is not charity; it is about **rebuilding right relationship** — between peoples, and between humanity and the Earth.

What is Decolonial Climate Action in the Global North?

Across the Global North, decolonial climate action begins with acknowledging **historical responsibilities**, and goes a step further to recognising that climate injustice is also contemporary and domestic. The North is not only implicated in climate injustice through emissions or past colonialism; it is reproduced through institutional patterns of extraction, decision-making power, knowledge hierarchies, and control over funding and narratives. As a result, many climate programmes inadvertently reproduce the hierarchies they aim to dismantle, even when their intentions are just.

Further, decolonial climate action is inherently politicised, and rejects the myth of neutrality. Justice work—especially in the Global North—requires taking a (politicized) stand with those most affected by climate crises, recognising that redistribution of resources, power, and voice is not a neutral process but a deliberate intervention to challenge entrenched inequalities. For organisations, this means shifting from "acting for" to "standing with," from control to collaboration, and from technocratic neutrality to repairing and reclaiming agency, imagination, and collective power within and beyond institutional spaces. This demands internal transformation anchored in moral accountability, reflection on positionality, and active engagement with structural forces shaping climate work. As one facilitator summarised, "Justice starts where we are — in our budgets, our storytelling, our hiring, our solidarity."



Chia Yu Hsu

Finally, decolonising power is relational. Building **trust-based alliances** through dialogue and shared decision-making helps transform mistrust into collaboration. Campaigns can set not only policy goals but also relational ones, such as strengthening networks of solidarity that can sustain communities through crisis. Many grassroots movements across Europe and North America are already modelling this — from Indigenous-led climate networks to migrant-justice groups, anti-extraction movements, and decolonial environmental collectives. Their work demonstrates that decolonising climate justice can, and must, be practised from within the heart of institutional power. And it requires a reorientation of relationships between institutions and movements, between funders and communities, and between the North and the South.

Emerging Principles and Lessons

1. Reframe climate justice as historical justice.
Understanding the climate crisis as a continuation of colonial exploitation reframes the role of NGOs and donors. Decolonising practice begins with naming responsibility — acknowledging that climate debt, land dispossession, and extractive economies are intertwined. Integrating reparative justice and historical accountability into climate strategies opens pathways for solidarity-based partnerships rather than transactional aid. For many CoP participants, this shift also means recognising the North's obligation to repair harm, embedded in the structures of the international economy, not merely fund adaptation.

2. Shift governance and resourcing to those most affected.
The decolonisation sessions underscored that equity cannot be achieved through symbolic participation. INGOs must reconfigure governance models to ensure decision-making power, resources, and authorship rest with partners in the Global South and local communities. This could mean co-designing programmes, transferring financial management roles, or sharing leadership in consortia or trust-based alliances. Power shifts also require institutional courage — to let go of control, embrace uncertainty, and trust local expertise.

3. Centre multiple knowledge systems.
Participants called for an epistemic shift — recognising Indigenous and local ecological knowledges not as complementary but as coequal sources of understanding. This involves unlearning hierarchies of knowledge production, changing how research and learning are valued, and co-creating methodologies that reflect diverse cosmologies and languages. As one participant noted, *"We can't talk about systems change if we're still privileging Western epistemologies."*

4. Commit to internal accountability and repair.
Decolonisation is not a destination but a continuous practice of reflection and accountability. Organisations can embed this by developing decolonial learning agendas, publishing power analyses, or committing to transparent reparative actions — such as redistributing overheads, credit, and visibility. Power analysis is not only external; it begins internally, in how we treat staff, partners, and knowledge.

Compassion Contagion

Case studies

The Gastivists – Anti-Extractivism and Transnational Solidarity

The Gastivists Collective, a transnational group working against fossil fuel infrastructure, mobilises campaigns across Europe on the principle that "solidarity means aligning with liberation struggles". Their opposition to the EastMed pipeline — which would export gas from Israel through occupied Palestinian territories — explicitly connects climate justice to anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles. In their Palestine solidarity statement, they declare: *"We reject false solutions built on occupation, oppression and greenwashing."* This stance reflects Indigenous and decolonial Just Transition principles, which reject "market-based mechanisms that commodify nature" and instead call for rights-based, community-led energy transitions.

Through their campaigning and advocacy, The Gastivists have helped amplify Palestinian environmental defenders and reframe European gas politics as a colonial question of land and sovereignty. Their power-shifting strategy is rooted in transnational solidarity, echoing reparations logic — that those who have historically benefited from extractive economies must bear the cost of the transition.

Ecofeminist Energy Transition Coalition (Spain) – Feminist Economies of Repair

The Ecofeminist Energy Transition Coalition in Spain, featured by the Transnational Institute (TNI), merges feminist, labour, and environmental movements to advocate for energy democracy and climate reparations. Their manifesto, Fueling the Journey to Energy Democracy, links ecofeminism directly to decolonisation: "Ecofeminism is about dismantling the capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal system that exploits both women and nature." By framing energy as a commons and a right, the coalition ties local struggles against energy poverty to global calls for reparations and redistributive justice. This positions ecofeminism as both a political and economic framework for repair, demanding that care work, food sovereignty, and public ownership be central to the green transition.

Their campaigns have influenced Spanish municipal policies, promoting public renewable energy cooperatives and opposing privatised "green growth" models that replicate colonial hierarchies. One concrete outcome has been the influence of ecofeminist advocacy on Spanish energy policy, including Law 24/2015 in Catalonia, which bans disconnections for vulnerable households and frames access to energy as a human right. The coalition's practice of participatory policymaking — including women-led energy cooperatives and social movements — mirrors the Indigenous just transition principle of "community-driven governance", where transitions are defined by those most affected.

Rooted in feminist and Indigenous Just Transition principles, this coalition calls for a regenerative economy "based on care, not profit", echoing IIED's framing that reparations must address both historic extraction and contemporary inequalities. Their praxis demonstrates a decolonial pathway for the Global North: dismantling extractivism within its borders while ensuring the transition is led by those most affected.

Reflection Prompts and Team Exercises

1

Mapping power and voice

In a team or partnership meeting, draw a "map" of your current programme or coalition. Identify who holds decision-making authority, who manages funds, and whose voices shape narratives. Then ask: *What would this map look like if power were truly shared?*

The Partos Power Awareness Tool is a practical tool to shine a light on power dynamics in partnerships and explore how power can be shifted while ensuring that all partners are involved.

2

Honesty in the political

The CoP's discussions underscored that moving away from neutrality is key to decolonial practice. A campaign that claims to be apolitical often reinforces the status quo. Instead, you can ask these questions honestly:

1. Are those most affected by loss and damage visible and leading?
2. Is trauma and loss recognised as the starting point for collective healing?
3. Are decisions made by, or genuinely shaped by, those communities?
4. Do objectives restore and empower, or simply represent?

3

Reparative action planning

With your team, brainstorm one concrete reparative practice you could adopt within the next year, such as pursuing co-authorship with local partners, budget redistribution, or establishing a solidarity fund. Identify barriers to this action and how to address them collectively.

Resources

- White Supremacy Culture, and how it shows up in work spaces, partnerships and relationships
- Declaration of Belem +30;
- The Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save our Earth
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth
- Indigenous Just Transition
- Renewable energy and land use: barriers to just transition in the Global South
- Reparations as a pathway to decolonisation

- Ecofeminism: fueling the journey to energy democracy
- Is the European Green Transition Leaving Indigenous People Behind?
- Podcast: Millenials are killing capitalism ep. Green New Deal
- Book: Inflamed, by Rupa Marya & Raj Patel
- Dark Laboratory's book recommendations
- Check the recaps of the sessions!

Cluster 2. Inclusive & Fair Climate Finance

Context

Historical Context of Climate Finance

The global climate finance system was conceived under the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, both of which enshrine the principle of *Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC)*. This foundational idea — that wealthier, high-emitting nations should take greater responsibility and support developing countries — was meant to anchor equity in the global response to climate change. Yet, as participants in the CoP observed, the reality has diverged sharply from the rhetoric. The architecture of global climate finance still mirrors colonial hierarchies: power remains concentrated in donor capitals and multilateral banks, while the communities most affected by climate breakdown are often framed as beneficiaries rather than decision-makers.

The magnitude of this gap is clear in Oxfam's Climate Finance Shadow Report (2023). While developed countries reported $83.3 billion in finance flows for 2020 — short of the $100 billion annual target — the real grant-equivalent value reaching developing nations is closer to $21–25 billion. Over 60% of total funding is delivered as loans, adding to debt burdens rather than building resilience. There remains a stark mitigation bias: around 86% of mobilised private finance supports mitigation, while only about 5% supports adaptation, despite COP26 commitments to double adaptation funding by 2025. CoP participants noted that **climate finance has become another frontier of inequality, a system that calls itself support, but functions as control.**

Loss and Damage: The Missing Piece

A central gap in the current architecture is the absence of meaningful, binding finance for Loss and Damage (L&D) — the unavoidable impacts of climate change that go beyond adaptation. Although the 2022 COP27 decision to establish a Loss and Damage Fund represented a historic breakthrough, discussions within the CoP highlighted how this came after three decades of advocacy from Global South negotiators demanding recognition of historical responsibility. Even now, critical questions remain about how this fund will operate, who will access it, and whether it will truly address intersecting vulnerabilities. Many existing mechanisms, such as the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, rely heavily on economic metrics to quantify loss, overlooking intangible and cultural dimensions such as the loss of heritage, identity, and ecosystems. Members of the CoP called for L&D approaches that foreground intersectional and gendered vulnerabilities, and link directly to restorative justice, not just compensation. For many NGOs globally, this has become the defining frontier of climate justice work — shifting from a reactive model of damage control to an agenda of **reparation, redress, and recovery**.

Systemic Challenges in Climate Finance

This imbalance is underpinned by systemic problems: overreporting and double-counting of funds, debt-inducing loans, and the persistent opacity of climate finance flows. Civil society partners in the CoP shared experiences of how national-level budgets often integrate climate finance into broader development envelopes, making it nearly impossible to trace where funds go or what outcomes they achieve. As one participant put it, "the money disappears into categories before it reaches the people." Others raised the issue of private finance underperformance, with mobilised funds plateauing at around $14 billion per year, and highlighted how

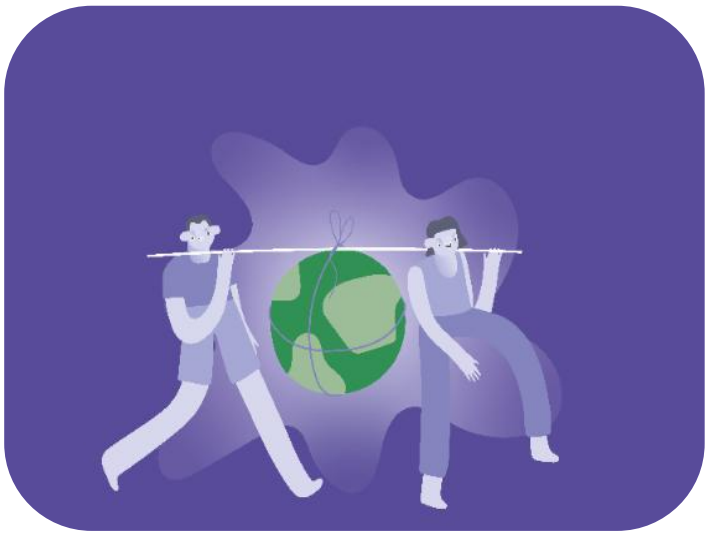
rigid donor criteria and risk assessments often exclude grassroots organisations, cooperatives, and local governments. These reflections point to a broader crisis of trust: a system intended to redistribute resources has instead reproduced structural dependency and exclusion.

Towards a Justice-Oriented Climate Finance

The overarching takeaway from these sessions with the CoP learning journey was clear: if NGOs and donors are serious about justice, finance structures undoubtedly must change. An alternative climate-just finance system goes beyond mobilising funds: it redistributes power. Finance is reframed not as aid, but as reparation and redistribution guided by **rights–based principles** ensuring participation, transparency, and remedy; **gender-responsive approaches** recognising the differentiated impacts on women and marginalised groups; and territorial grounding that responds to locally defined priorities and ecological realities. Central to this vision is the call for restorative and reparative justice — linking L&D finance to historical accountability and intergenerational healing for ecosystems and communities.

Instead of measuring "money moved," justice-oriented climate finance assesses whether investments strengthen local agency, address historical and structural inequities, and contribute to communities' long-term ability to thrive. CoP discussions emphasised the need for grant-based and flexible financing mechanisms, participatory monitoring, and transparent budget tracking, alongside advocacy to reform the global architecture itself. Linking adaptation and development through inclusive, accountable finance is essential to sustainable resilience (CARE, 2023 and Oxfam, 2023). For many CoP members, the question is no longer *how much* money flows, but *to* whom, under whose terms, and with what consequences.

"Climate finance must go beyond numbers and move towards justice."
- Florencia Ortuzar, AIDA



Olga Mrozek for ArtistsForClimate.org

Emerging Principles and Lessons

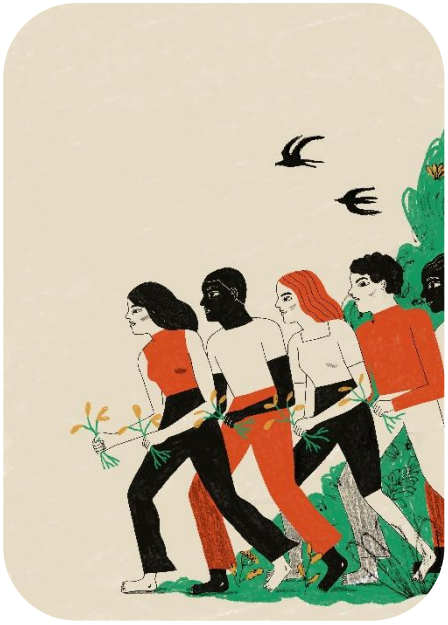
1. Human rights and justice must anchor all finance decisions.
Climate finance cannot be measured only by scale but by fairness, transparency, and protection of rights. Embedding human rights due diligence, including gender, Indigenous, and environmental safeguards must become a standard, not an afterthought. Building on Oxfam's framing of equity and accountability, and AIDA's advocacy for rights-based approaches, six core principles of climate-just finance provide a guide for transformation:

- **Human rights-based** – Finance must uphold the rights to participation, information, non-discrimination, and remedy.
- **Gender-just** – Funding must recognise gendered climate impacts and strengthen women's leadership.
- **Participatory** – Decision-making must include civil society and affected communities as co-creators, not consultees.
- **Territorially grounded** – Finance should respond to locally defined priorities and ecological specificities.
- **Transparent and accountable** – Mechanisms must ensure oversight at national and community levels.
- **Transformative** – Climate finance must dismantle the inequalities and extractive logics that caused the crisis.

2. Design funding systems for accessibility and trust.
The CoP discussions highlighted that many of the most effective climate solutions come from small, informal, or community-based groups that often cannot access traditional funds. Simplified procedures, small-grants facilities, and flexible reporting mechanisms — such as those used in VCA's Next Level Grant Facility — make it possible for funding to reach those on the frontlines. This requires INGOs and donors to build relationships of trust rather than control and to accept community-defined forms of accountability and success.

3. Embed gender and intersectionality in financial governance.
A gender-just approach to finance, as AIDA and Oxfam Novib stressed, must go beyond "adding women" as beneficiaries. It requires acknowledging that women and marginalised groups experience climate impacts differently, while also leading innovative responses. This calls for gender analysis, inclusive participation, and equitable access to leadership positions in funding governance bodies. As one participant put it, *"Gender justice is not a side note in climate finance; it's the test of whether justice is real."*

4. Build transparency and shared accountability across the system.
For finance to be just, all actors — from donors to local NGOs — must be transparent about where funds go, who benefits, and what trade-offs occur. Participatory monitoring systems and public disclosure of funding decisions can make climate finance traceable and responsive to local priorities. INGOs can also play a bridging role by facilitating community audits, citizen monitoring, and south-led oversight mechanisms that hold both governments and funders accountable.



Alba Domingo for ArtistsForClimate.org

5. Work towards "justice metrics" in climate finance.
More progressive approaches make the case that climate finance must move from "delivery metrics" to "justice metrics", which go beyond tracking money moved to evaluate whether funding strengthens local agency, addresses historical and structural inequities, and delivers tangible outcomes for affected communities. In this reframing, climate finance becomes not a technocratic tool, but a moral and political act: a means of redistributing power and rebuilding trust in pursuit of climate justice. Justice metrics include measures of power shifts, quality of participation, inclusivity of decision-making, accountability to local actors, alignment with gender and intersectional priorities, and restoration of ecological and social well-being. Embedding justice metrics ensures that finance is not only efficient, but also equitable, participatory, and transformative — reinforcing climate action as a tool for reparative justice rather than control.

Case studies

Voices for Just Climate Action – The Next Level Grant Facility

The Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) Alliance is reimagining climate finance through its Next Level Grant Facility, which channels small, flexible grants directly to grassroots organizations, informal groups, and movements in the Global South. Unlike traditional funding that flows through multiple intermediaries, VCA's model simplifies access: local actors apply with proposals shaped by their own priorities, and funding decisions are guided by trust-based partnerships rather than rigid donor requirements. Grants can be used for 1) locally defined climate solutions, including capacity-building, or community organizing, and for 2) climate emergencies (e.g., fire response, drought relief), allowing recipients to respond to urgent needs with flexibility and autonomy.

The facility is built around accessibility, flexibility, and solidarity, aiming to redistribute power and support long-term climate resilience. While VCA continues to refine its processes for scoping, selection, and impact measurement, the approach demonstrates a practical shift from top-down funding to community-driven resource allocation and agenda-setting. By putting resources directly into the hands of those most affected by climate change, the Next Level Grant Facility empowers communities to define and lead their own climate action.

Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA)

The approach of the Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA) embodies the core principles of just climate finance. They advocate that international finance, be it for development or climate, must do more than "move money"—it must transform systems of inequality. AIDA acts as a bridge between international climate-finance institutions, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the communities affected by their projects.

For example, in 2024 AIDA supported indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in Nicaragua who filed a complaint with GCF's independent redress mechanism against the forestry project called "Bio-CLIMA." The complaint argued that the project lacked adequate disclosure of information, indigenous consultation, and free, prior, and informed consent. Furthermore, the project would cause environmental degradation and increase violence against indigenous communities due to land colonisation. In response, the GCF became the first global climate fund to cancel a project on human-rights grounds by formally withdrawing support before any disbursement or implementation had taken place.

Through their work, AIDA demonstrates that inclusive and fair finance is inseparable from human rights and gender justice. Their work challenges the technocratic architecture of global development and climate finance by grounding it in communal realities, intersectional analysis, and lived experience. By mediating between global financial institutions and grassroots movements, AIDA is shifting the dial in the Dutch and European climate justice space—reminding donors, banks, and governments that

development and climate finance must be accountable not to markets, but to people and the planet. In doing so, they embody the fundamental tenet of international and climate-just finance: justice is not a co-benefit, but the core condition of effective and equitable climate action.

Reflection Prompts and Team Exercises

1

Follow the money (team mapping exercise)
With your team, map the flow of funds in one of your current projects — from donor to final beneficiaries. Identify decision points: who decides, who signs off, and who reports? Then ask: *At what point could communities have more control? What could shared decision-making look like at each stage? What could it look like to create local (financial) circuits to make sure the money reaches and stays where it is most needed?*

2

Redesigning a grant call
Imagine your organisation is issuing a new call for climate adaptation funding. Together, rewrite the criteria, language, and process to ensure accessibility for grassroots actors (e.g. in local languages, flexible reporting, no requirement for prior funding experience). Reflect on what structural barriers persist, and who the process still excludes.

3

Community accountability forum
In pairs or small groups, design a mock "accountability forum" where communities present how they would evaluate the impact of your project. What indicators or forms of success might they propose that differ from your current reporting frameworks? Discuss how these could be integrated into future programme monitoring.

Resources

- Oxfam Climate Finance Shadow Report 2025, Oxfam (2025)
- Climate Adaptation Finance: fact or fiction?, Care (2021)
- Seeing Double, Decoding the additionality of climate finance, Care (2023)
- From Pledges to Progress: Tracking climate finance flows and accountability in Nigeria and Uganda - Oxfam Policy & Practice, Oxfam (2025)
- Check the recaps of the sessions!

Cluster 3. Nature, Peace & Resilience

Context

Nature-Based Solutions: Promise and Contention

In recent years, **nature-based solutions (NbS)** have become a central concept in international climate policy — promoted as an approach that can simultaneously address biodiversity loss, climate adaptation, and human well-being. Yet, as the Climate Justice Community of Practice explored, the term remains highly contested. NbS sit at the intersection of ecological restoration and social justice, and the question is not only *what works* but *for whom* and *on whose terms*. Proponents see it as a powerful framework to bridge conservation and development, offering common ground between environmental and human rights agendas. Critics, however, warn that without justice at the core, NbS can become a "false solution," a way for corporations and governments to greenwash extractive or inequitable practices under the guise of sustainability.

Rethinking Resilience

This tension exposes a deeper question about the **politics of resilience**. Who defines what resilience means, and how it should be achieved? In climate justice theory, resilience is not merely the ability to "bounce back" but the collective capacity to transform the systems that produce vulnerability in the first place. This shift, echoed in feminist and decolonial frameworks, repositions communities not as passive victims adapting to external shocks but as agents of ecological and social repair. Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) frameworks advance this thinking by insisting that those most affected by the climate crisis must lead in defining risks, priorities, and responses. In practice, this means transferring not only funds but also decision-making power; respecting customary, Indigenous, and place-based knowledges becomes foundational.

Peace-Based Approaches and Social Cohesion

The cluster also engaged with **peace-based approaches** to climate action, recognising that ecological degradation and conflict are intertwined. As water scarcity, migration, and land pressure intensify, competition over resources can escalate tensions, but so too does the potential for cooperation and dialogue. Peace-based approaches build on the understanding that ecosystems are social systems: restoring wetlands, forests, or coastal ecosystems can also restore trust, reduce tensions, and rebuild the social fabric fractured by environmental and economic stress. This aligns with the Bali Principles of Climate Justice, which affirm communities' rights to be free from climate harm, to self-representation, and to protect cultural survival through ecological stewardship.

Ulas Eryavuz

Within this theme, **public–private partnerships (PPPs)** emerged as another locus of debate. For some actors, PPPs offer a pragmatic entry point to mobilise finance, scale innovation, and influence corporate behaviour towards sustainability. For others, they represent a structural risk: partnerships that blur accountability and privilege profit over justice. The lesson that emerged from the CoP discussions and wider research is that partnerships must be values-based and community-accountable — judged not by efficiency alone but by whether they re-distribute power, protect rights, and reinforce ecological integrity.

Ecological peacebuilding

Taken together, these discussions reframed climate justice as a form of **ecological peace-building**, one that connects environmental stewardship, inclusive governance, and social transformation. In this approach, ecosystem restoration and social justice are inseparable: neither can thrive without the other. By embedding justice at the heart of ecological interventions, communities are empowered to repair both the land and the social relations that sustain it, advancing resilience, equity, and long-term sustainability.

Emerging Principles and Lessons

1. Justice-centred nature-based solutions start with rights and relationships.
Nature cannot be protected without protecting the rights of those who live within and depend on it. NbS must therefore be guided by rights-based frameworks, community consent, and locally led governance. Building relationships of trust and reciprocity between communities and institutions is more effective than imposing external conservation or adaptation models.

2. Resilience must mean transformation, not endurance.
From a climate justice perspective, resilience is not about returning to an unequal "normal." It means changing the economic, political, and ecological systems that create vulnerability. INGOs can support this by funding community-led experiments, connecting local adaptation work with policy advocacy, and ensuring that resilience-building doesn't shift the burden of adaptation onto the poorest.

3. Integrate peacebuilding into environmental action.
Ecological restoration and conflict prevention are mutually reinforcing. Projects that restore natural resources through inclusive governance — such as shared water management or cooperative land use — can rebuild trust across communities divided by scarcity. INGOs can adopt "do no harm" approaches, but go further to embed "**do good**" strategies — supporting mediation, dialogue, and gender-responsive leadership in environmental programming.

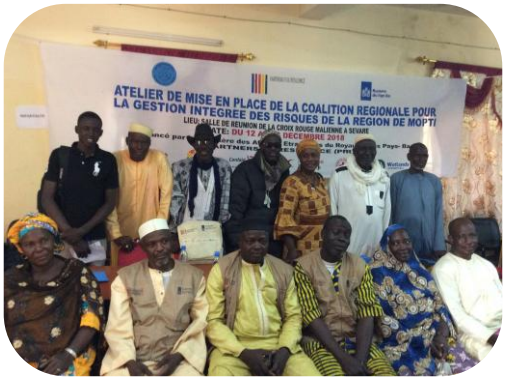
4. Reconsider partnerships through a justice lens.
Public–private partnerships can unlock resources but also reproduce inequities if not grounded in accountability. Partnerships must centre community-defined goals and be transparent about risk and profit distribution. NGOs can act as intermediaries to uphold justice principles in multi-actor collaborations, ensuring that no partnership compromises rights or ecological integrity.

Case studies

Wetlands International Sahel – Coalition Building for Climate Resilience in Mali's Inner Niger Delta

Climate justice in practice requires connecting ecosystem restoration, peacebuilding, and equity. In Mali's Inner Niger Delta, Wetlands International Sahel, through the Partners for Resilience (PfR) programme, demonstrates how Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can embody the Bali Principles of Climate Justice. The initiative—grounded in principles such as the *right to be free from climate harm (Principle 1)*, *community self-representation (Principle 3)*, and *the protection of women's and youth's rights (Principles 22–23)*—strengthens both ecological and social systems. It shows that nature-based adaptation must be built on justice: devolution of power, local knowledge, and the right of communities to define their own resilience.

Boats on the Niger rivers in Mopti
(Wetlands International Sahel Office)



Members of Regional Coalition in Mopti/IND
(Partners for Resilience in Mali)

The Inner Niger Delta (IND), one of West Africa's largest wetlands, sustains over a million people. Farmers, fishers, and pastoralists whose livelihoods depend directly on its ecosystem services. As recurrent droughts, erratic rainfall, and desertification accelerate, the degradation of this wetland has led to livelihood insecurity, migration, and conflict over scarce resources. Between 2016 and 2020, Wetlands International Sahel, through the Partners for Resilience (PfR) programme, worked to restore ecological and social balance by strengthening community coalitions for shared resource governance.

PfR supported 130 coalitions uniting more than 700 community-based organisations. These coalitions became decision-making platforms for Integrated Risk Management (IRM) and participatory planning. These coalitions became local platforms for dialogue,

early warning, and advocacy—enabling communities to map climate risks, identify locally appropriate NbS, and influence local government planning. This approach embodies the LLA principle of devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level, while investing in local leadership to leave an enduring institutional legacy.

A clear example emerged in Sobé village, where advancing sand dunes were threatening homes and farmland. After a vulnerability and adaptability analysis with national partner ODI Sahel, the community planted *Euphorbia balsamifera*, a hardy native species requiring no irrigation, to stabilise dunes and protect the settlement. The intervention succeeded in halting sand encroachment, restoring vegetation, and safeguarding livelihoods, which inspired similar actions in surrounding communes. Beyond its ecological success, it fostered locally-led adaptation principles that enabled social cohesion and women's leadership in local adaptation committees, as well as by devolving authority to farmers' unions, fisher groups, and pastoralist associations. All of this, while building their advocacy, monitoring, and negotiation capacities, and fostering collective action and investment through the joint lobby by coalitions on IRM measures.

The PfR experience in the Inner Niger Delta demonstrates how locally led, nature-based adaptation can operationalise the justice principles that international frameworks often overlook. By reinforcing the role of communities as custodians of their ecosystems, Wetlands International Sahel helped translate the abstract goals of LLA and NbS into tangible outcomes that helped restore land and renew agency. In doing so, this case shows that resilience is not simply ecological recovery, but a redistribution of power, authority and responsibility within the landscapes that sustain life.

To learn more from the people involved in Sobé village, take a look at this video.

Reflection Prompts and Team Exercises

1

Reflection: what is resilience?
In teams, list how your organisation currently defines and measures "resilience." Then, using a climate justice lens, rework these definitions: what would resilience look like if it centred transformation and equity rather than simply recovery? Discuss how this reframing might alter your programming or partnerships.

2

The partnership compass
Draw a compass with four axes: *resources, decision-making, accountability,* and *values*. Place your organisation and a key partner (e.g., a company, government, or community group) along each axis. Where are the imbalances? What actions could move the partnership towards more equitable collaboration?

3

Land, people, and power mapping
Select a landscape or ecosystem your team works in. Map the key actors, customary systems, and sources of power that shape its management. Identify which groups are underrepresented in decision-making and brainstorm strategies to

elevate their voice in your work — through co-management, community monitoring, or shared benefit agreements.

Resources

- Catalog of Nature-based Solutions for Peace & Security
- Bali Principles of Climate Justice
- UNEP Perspectives paper by PAX on Nature in Action for Peace: Challenges and Opportunities to Address Environmental Dimensions of Conflict through Nature-based Solutions
- The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue report on Linking Conservation and Peacemaking
- NbS in humanitarian contexts
- Green humanitarian response
- How the Rights of Nature Movement is Reshaping Law and Culture
- Guide to Rights of Rivers
- More than Human Rights project
- Check the recaps of the sessions!

Cluster 4. Participation & Intersectionality

Context

Rethinking Participation in Climate Action

Participation has long been a watchword in international development and humanitarian work — yet, as many participants in the Climate Justice CoP noted, not all participation is just. In climate action, participation too often remains tokenistic: communities are consulted after decisions are made, or their inputs are filtered through technocratic processes that strip them of power and agency. The CoP began this discussion with a provocation: *Who participates, on whose terms, and to what end?* Addressing this question requires not only participatory tools but a transformation in power relations — one that centres **locally led adaptation**, **intersectional analysis**, and **feminist rights-based approaches**.

Intersectionality, grounded in Black feminist thought (notably the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw and bell hooks), offers a way to understand how systems of oppression — gender, race, class, disability, age, caste and sexuality, among others — intersect to shape climate vulnerability and resilience. In climate justice practice, intersectionality challenges linear understandings of vulnerability and recognises that climate impacts, and the ability to respond to them, are conditioned by overlapping power dynamics. A woman farmer in a flood-prone area, a young migrant worker, and an Indigenous elder each face distinct risks and possess different capacities for resilience and solutions.

Anina Takeff for Fine Acts

The sessions highlighted that **participation must therefore be transformative**, not procedural. This means designing processes that do more than "hear" marginalised voices — they must redistribute decision-making power, change resource flows, and strengthen the leadership of those historically excluded. As many participants reflected collectively, intersectionality is not just about identity, it's about power: who gets to define what resilience and justice look like. From a climate justice perspective, participation then is inseparable from rights and accountability.

Locally Led Adaptation as a Practical Framework

Embedding intersectionality into climate justice work connects directly to the growing movement for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA). The eight Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, developed by the Global Commission on Adaptation and endorsed by over 100 organisations, offer a practical framework for this shift. They call for devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level (the principle of *subsidiarity*) so that communities and local institutions can shape how adaptation resources are defined, prioritised, and governed. LLA also emphasises addressing structural inequalities, particularly those rooted in gender, race, class, and displacement; providing predictable, long-term and accessible funding; investing in local capabilities; building on diverse knowledges, including Indigenous and traditional systems; and ensuring transparency and downward accountability to local stakeholders. CoP participants reflected that these principles are not just technical but political: they call for a redistribution of power in how adaptation is financed, implemented, and evaluated.

Feminist adaptation and **rights-based approaches** provide an ethical and practical compass for achieving these shifts. They situate participation within struggles for justice, recognising that adaptation cannot succeed in contexts of exclusion and inequality. This involves integrating gender analysis at every stage, from vulnerability assessment to resource allocation, and supporting women's and marginalised groups' leadership as agents of transformation, not beneficiaries. Rights-based frameworks also link local adaptation efforts to broader systems of accountability, connecting local realities to international human rights obligations and the Bali Principles of Climate Justice, which affirm the right of affected communities to speak for themselves. CoP discussions emphasised that achieving gender-just, locally led adaptation is as much about process as outcome — about how power is exercised, how knowledge is valued, and how institutions practice solidarity.

From Tokenistic to Transformative Participation

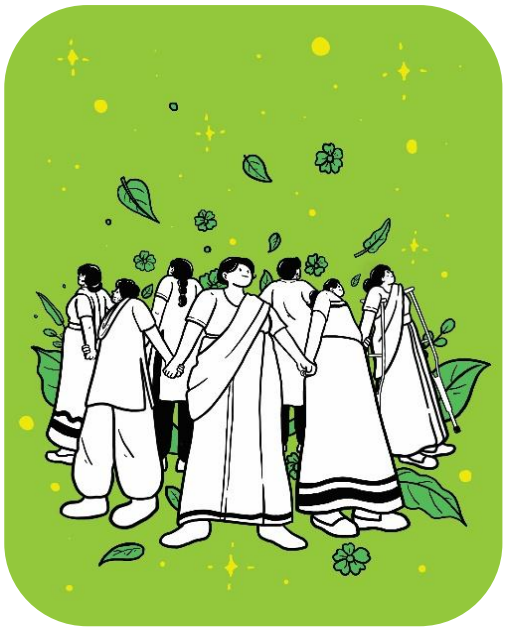
Ultimately, this cluster underscored that **intersectionality and local leadership are not add-ons**, **but methods of justice.** Together, they demand that programmes and institutions recognise difference, confront power, and cultivate accountability from the ground up. As one CoP participant reflected, *"True participation means those affected decide how success is defined, not just that they are heard."* The move from tokenistic participation to transformative participation — grounded in feminist, intersectional, and locally led principles — is both a political act and a moral imperative. It means designing systems that are capable not only of managing climate risk, but of redistributing power and restoring dignity in the process.

Emerging Principles and Lessons

1. Participation is transformative when it redistributes power.
Meaningful participation cannot be reduced to consultation or presence in a workshop. It becomes transformative only when it shifts who holds decision-making authority and who defines priorities. This requires designing governance arrangements where communities — particularly those most affected — influence strategy, budgets, and accountability. Moving from representation to co-creation means embedding practices such as shared decision-making, participatory budgeting, and community-led monitoring.

2. Justice-oriented, gender-just and locally led adaptation requires flexibility, subsidiarity, and downward accountability.
Flexibility means designing programmes that can evolve with shifting contexts, recognising that climate impacts are dynamic and uncertain. It demands patient, adaptive funding and learning-oriented programme cycles. Subsidiarity ensures that decision-making occurs as close as possible to where impacts are felt, at the community level, where local actors hold contextual knowledge and moral legitimacy. And downward accountability flips the conventional hierarchy of responsibility: rather than communities being accountable to donors, institutions must be accountable to the communities they serve.

3. Intersectionality deepens analysis and responsibility.
An intersectional lens exposes how gender, class, age, caste, ethnicity, ability, and displacement shape climate vulnerability and resilience. It helps organisations understand not just "who is affected," but *how* different forms of marginalisation interact. Intersectional analysis should inform assessments, design, and monitoring — ensuring programmes do not reproduce structural inequalities. It also serves as an internal mirror, prompting organisations to examine how their own systems and partnerships may privilege certain voices while sidelining others.



Compassion Contagion

4. Build and sustain spaces for women's, youth, and community leadership.
The CoP discussions highlighted how feminist, youth-led, and community-based movements are at the forefront of climate justice. Strengthening their leadership requires more than participation slots: it calls for long-term, flexible support that enables organising, protects leaders from backlash, and values lived experience as expertise. Creating enabling environments — through mentorship, safe spaces, and accessible funding — helps ensure that those most affected by climate injustice hold meaningful influence over solutions.

5. Anchor participation within rights and justice frameworks.
Participation is a right, not a project activity. Embedding participation within human rights and climate justice frameworks ensures that inclusion is not negotiable. This orientation compels organisations to work with social movements, invest in local governance capacity, and ensure that inclusive processes lead to inclusive outcomes. Linking participation to rights frameworks moves climate action from benevolence toward accountability and structural justice.

Case studies

CARE Bangladesh's SHOUHARDO II Programme

In Bangladesh's riverine and coastal regions, among the most climate-vulnerable areas globally, **CARE's SHOUHARDO II programme** (Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities) linked local governance, food security, and climate adaptation for more than 370,000 poor and extreme poor households across 11 districts. By rooting adaptation in women's empowerment and participatory governance, SHOUHARDO II shifted from a traditional climate adaptation model toward a climate justice approach — one that recognised climate resilience as inseparable from social equity and rights.

Through women-led EKATA groups (Empowerment, Knowledge, and Transformative Action), the programme addressed intersecting inequalities by creating platforms where women and adolescent girls organized to challenge gender-based violence, child marriage, and exclusion from public decision-making. As the evaluation notes, women's contributions to household income, control over resources, and participation in decision-making increased dramatically, with men also recognizing the economic and social benefits of women's employment and leadership. Women reported being able to travel independently, engage in markets, and negotiate collectively — a profound social shift in deeply patriarchal contexts.

Crucially, SHOUHARDO II's approach mirrored Indigenous and feminist just transition principles: it sought transformation not only of livelihoods but of relations and structures. Local committees (Village Development Committees and Union Parishads) were trained to integrate women's action plans into climate and development budgets, making equity a criterion for resource allocation. This participatory governance led to community-driven adaptation plans and improved responsiveness to climate-related disasters, empowering communities to participate in planning and resource management, and showing that climate resilience can only be achieved if adaptation is connected to the development of local communities and their institutions. In this sense, SHOUHARDO II exemplifies how locally led, intersectional adaptation can dismantle systemic barriers to justice and create conditions for self-determined resilience; a necessary foundation for climate reparations and transformative recovery.

Women's Leadership in Resilience Building:
Under SHOUHARDO II, women emerged as a powerful force for building community resilience. The program collaborated with Union Disaster Management Committees and the Teen Brigade to ensure meaningful participation of women and young people in local planning and decision-making processes. Their leadership became particularly visible during emergencies—women supported evacuation efforts, disseminated early warnings, and managed shelters with notable coordination and care.

Read more here.

Reflection Prompts and Team Exercises

1. **The participation ladder audit**
Draw a "ladder" showing levels of participation: *information → consultation → involvement → co-decision → leadership*. Together with your team, plot where your organisation's programmes currently sit on this ladder. What would it take to move one level higher? What internal barriers — procedural, cultural, or attitudinal — need to shift? A practical tool to help with this conversation is Partos' Power Awareness Tool.

2. **Intersectionality mapping**
In small groups, pick a community or context where your organisation works. Map intersecting social identities (e.g., gender, class, caste, age, disability, ethnicity) and note how each shapes exposure to climate risk and access to decision-making. Then, identify strategies to ensure these intersections inform your planning — for instance, through gender and social inclusion budgeting, or participatory monitoring led by affected groups.

3. **Co-design lab**
Invite colleagues and partners to design a mini "co-decision-making process" for an upcoming project. Define who must be involved from the start, how information is shared, and how final decisions are made. Compare this with your organisation's current approach. What shifts in mindset or structure would make co-creation possible?

Resources

- Learn more about Both END's Negotiated Approach for long-term participation
- Check the recaps of the sessions!

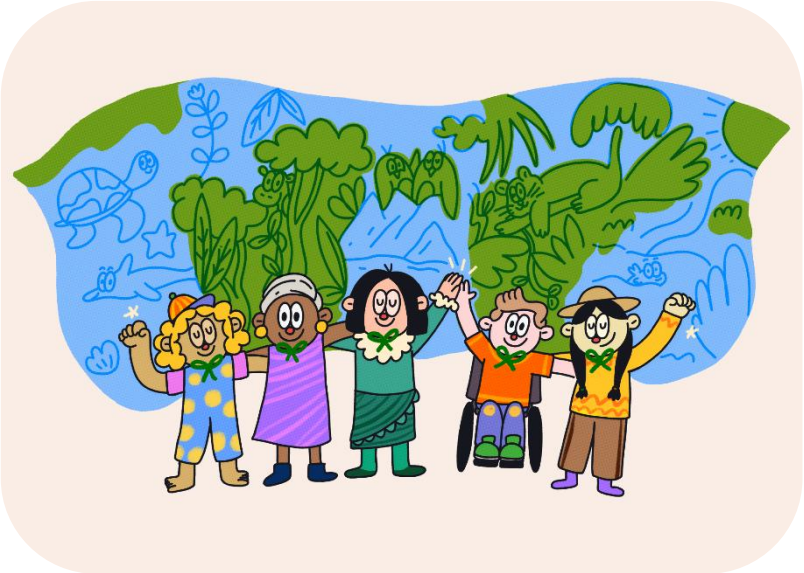
Cluster 5. Leading with Justice: Reimagining Organisational Practice

Context

Why Leading with Justice Starts from Within

To lead with justice means transforming the systems, cultures, and power structures within organisations — not simply adding "climate justice" to existing agendas. Throughout the Climate Justice Community of Practice, members reflected on how INGOs and networks often advocate for equity externally while still reproducing inequity internally — in decision-making, funding flows, governance, and everyday working culture. As one participant observed, *"You can't mainstream justice through unjust systems."* This insight anchored the cluster's exploration of how climate justice can become an organisational compass, guiding internal reflection, governance reform, and accountability.

Climate justice as an organisational practice builds on decades of feminist, decolonial, and intersectional thinking about power and transformation. These frameworks share a key insight: **systems do not change through policies alone but through relationships, cultures, and ways of being and knowing**. Applying this to the NGO sector means acknowledging that each organisation itself is part of the climate system — actively embedded in political economies, histories, and epistemologies that shape whose voices are heard and whose knowledge counts. **To "decarbonise" operations without "decolonising" relationships is to miss the heart of climate justice.**



Victoria Valdez for Fine Acts

Aligning Internal Governance With External Values

In the CoP sessions on mainstreaming and institutional change, participants discussed the importance of aligning internal governance with the principles they promote externally — including shared decision-making with partners, fair and transparent financial flows, participatory monitoring of justice outcomes, and equitable representation in leadership. The goal is not to perfect the system but to **build cultures of accountability and learning** that can hold complexity and contradiction. This requires patience, humility, and institutional courage: the

willingness to ask hard questions about privilege, complicity, and the gap between values and practice.

A recurring theme across sessions was that **mainstreaming climate justice begins with design**, not retrofitting. Justice cannot be appended at the end of a project or confined to a "social inclusion" annex. It must shape programme design, staffing, evaluation, and the political stance of the organisation as a whole. As one CoP participant summarised, *"To mainstream justice is to make it impossible to ignore."*

Embedding Justice Across the Organisational Ecosystem

This internal transformation also connects to broader theoretical traditions in systems change and organisational learning. Adaptive organisations cultivate what scholar Otto Scharmer, pioneer of the Theory U model of change, calls "awareness-based systems change" — the capacity to reflect on their own patterns and assumptions. Mainstreaming climate justice, then, is a form of inner work for institutions: unlearning extractive logics, valuing care and collaboration, and ensuring that structural and relational change move together.

Mainstreaming climate justice within organizations is not only about adopting new frameworks; it requires restructuring governance, funding, and accountability to redistribute power. As seen across this learning journey, climate justice becomes tangible when institutions shift from implementing solutions *for* communities to co-creating them *with* communities. Integrating insights from the earlier clusters — intersectionality (Cluster 4), inclusive finance (Cluster 2), and locally led adaptation (Cluster 3) — means embedding participation, equity, and local ownership into every stage of organizational practice. Climate justice must become a *lens for transformation*, not a thematic add-on.

Emerging Principles and Lessons

1. Mainstreaming justice starts with governance and values.
Climate justice cannot thrive in hierarchies that silence, exclude, or control. INGOs and networks need to reconfigure governance systems to share decision-making power — with Southern partners, frontline communities, and staff from underrepresented groups. Embedding equity in leadership and budgeting processes ensures that justice is not aspirational but operational. Governance reform is the clearest expression of an organisation's values in action.

2. Build internal capacity for reflection, accountability, and care.
Organisational transformation requires investing in skills that are often undervalued: listening, facilitating dialogue, and naming power dynamics. Teams can integrate reflection spaces into their workflows, use justice-focused monitoring indicators, and design internal accountability systems that measure participation and equity as seriously as financial performance. Caring for staff wellbeing — particularly those experiencing discrimination or burnout — is also part of justice work.

3. Justice must inform how we design, not just what we deliver.
The CoP emphasised that the most successful organisations start by embedding justice in programme design — in the governance structures, partnerships, and funding mechanisms that define their work. This means negotiating with donors to enable flexibility, supporting participatory agenda-setting, and making justice criteria central to project approval. Design is where intentions become structures.

4. Transformation is iterative, not linear.
Mainstreaming climate justice is a continuous process of learning and unlearning. It requires an institutional-level humility which allows organisations to make mistakes and learn from them publicly, to share ongoing lessons, and to be changed by partners. Organisational change must balance accountability with experimentation, allowing space for discomfort, creativity, and reflection. As one CoP facilitator remarked, *"Transformation is not a checklist; it's a practice of becoming."*

Case studies

WWF – Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA)

The Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) program, led by WWF-Netherlands in partnership with Southern-based organizations, exemplifies how climate justice can be mainstreamed through governance, funding, and design. From its inception, WWF and its consortium partners negotiated with the donor (the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to ensure that 50% of program resources flow directly to Global South partners and that governance structures are shared. The program was co-created with civil society organisations from across seven countries, centering local voices, priorities, and self-defined climate solutions rather than prescriptive project templates. This deliberate design decision — "to start with justice, not add it later" — positions VCA as a living model for efforts to shift power in organisational practises.

VCA's network now connects approximately 215 civil society organizations, fostering horizontal learning and collective advocacy among climate justice movements. Partners convene before key negotiations, hold each other accountable, and jointly develop narratives that reframe the global climate debate. Guided by locally led adaptation principles, the program builds on intersectional, gender-responsive, and rights-based approaches, ensuring that women, youth, and marginalized groups influence both the *content* and the *direction* of climate action. This governance model demonstrates how international NGOs can act less as implementers and more as enablers and advocates of locally driven systems change, echoing the inclusive finance principles explored in the AIDA case study.

Within WWF itself, VCA has become a strategic catalyst for mainstreaming climate justice and rights-based approaches across its conservation portfolio. Recognising that

traditional conservation models may overlook social dimensions, WWF has made deliberate internal shifts to ensure human rights and inclusivity are front and centre: by building staff capacity, hiring equity-focused experts, and developing tools to monitor inclusivity and accountability. Monitoring frameworks are also now established at a network-level to track how inclusivity and benefit-sharing is being strengthened across all WWF offices and programs. As WWF staff reflected, they are "not the experts on climate justice," but are committed to *learning with and from* their partners to embed justice across all thematic areas. By transforming its own systems alongside those of its networks, WWF is moving toward a model where mainstreaming climate justice means ensuring that *governance, funding, and vision* are co-owned by those most affected by the climate crisis.

Save the Children – Mainstreaming Climate Justice through Child Rights and Participation

Save the Children has integrated climate justice across its organizational strategy — a remarkable evolution for an NGO historically rooted in child rights and humanitarian response. As the only child-focused organization accredited to the UN Green Climate Fund (GCF), Save the Children connects global finance mechanisms to locally led adaptation efforts, ensuring that climate action directly benefits children and families most affected by inequality and environmental degradation. At the organizational level, Save has committed to cutting emissions by more than 50% by 2030, while responsibly offsetting remaining unavoidable emissions. These efforts are underpinned by country-level carbon footprint analyses and a sustainable supply chain policy, reflecting a deep internal commitment to align operations with planetary boundaries. As a signatory to the *Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations*, Save demonstrates that INGOs should *not wait for donors* to demand climate action — but instead proactively green their operations and lead by example.

Beyond mitigation, Save the Children advances procedural justice by centering the agency and participation of children themselves. Through initiatives like Generation Hope — co-created with over 55,000 children from 41 countries — the organization supports youth climate campaigning, provides access to child-friendly information, and facilitates children's participation in political spaces such as COP negotiations. Building on its long-standing expertise in child rights, education, and disaster risk reduction, Save now links climate action with empowerment, supporting young people, especially girls and those from marginalized communities, to influence decisions that shape their futures. This integration of climate justice within a rights-based framework embodies the intersectional and participatory approaches seen across other clusters — from gender and equity (Cluster 4) to accountability in finance (Cluster 2). By reframing climate justice through the lens of intergenerational equity and human rights, Save the Children models what it means for large INGOs to mainstream justice as both a moral and operational imperative.

Reflection Prompts and Team Exercises

1. **Power and practice audit**
Gather your team and map where decision-making power sits in your organisation — across governance, programming, and partnerships. Discuss: Where does power align with your justice values, and where does it contradict them? Identify one structural and one relational shift you can make in the next six months.

2. **Mapping visions**
Using your organisation's vision or strategy statement, underline every reference to justice, equity, or partnership. Then, for each one, identify concrete evidence of how it is enacted in practice. What is missing? What new practices could make those commitments real?

3. **Designing for justice**
When developing a new project, begin with a design lab that includes staff, partners, and affected communities. Use the guiding question: *"How does this project redistribute power?"* Map the design decisions (e.g., funding allocation, roles, evaluation criteria) that influence justice outcomes. This can be used to prototype internal "justice checkpoints" for future programme cycles.

Resources

Some NGOS working on Climate Justice to look out for and build connections with:

- Climate Action Network
- Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance
- Feminist Green New Deal
- La Ruta del Clima
- Women's Budget Group – The UK's leading feminist economics think tank
- Climate Action Network
- Slum Dwellers International
- Check the recaps of the sessions!

Overview sessions

Session	Date	Recap
Community of Practice's first online kick-off event	2023 February	Mainstreaming climate justice in international development programming
Climate Justice in Adaptation Programmes	2023 March	
Decolonisation and systems change for climate justice: the role of INGOs	2023 May	
Decolonising development aid, containing climate justice narrative workshop	2023 July	Special symposium on Decolonising Development Cooperation - Partos English
Mainstreaming climate justice in international development programmes	2023 July	
Climate finance	2023 October	Recap: Inclusive and Fair Climate Finance
Integration of climate adaptation by Dutch International Development Cooperation	2023 December	Recap Integration of Climate Adaptation by the Dutch Development Cooperation Sector
Brown Bag session: Climate Justice and Intersectionality	2024 March	Recap Brown Bag Session 2 - Intersectionality and Climate Justice - Partos
Nature Based Solutions	2024 April	Recap learning session - Nature Based Solutions for Climate Justice: concerns, roles and responsibilities - Partos
The role of PPP for Climate Resilience	2024 April	Recap learning session - The role of PPP for Climate Resilience - Partos
Brown Bag Session #4 – Nature in action for Peace	2024 June	Recap: Brown Bag Session #4 Nature in Action for Peace - Partos
Unlocking Climate Finance: the Role of Civil Society in promoting Accountability and Accessibility on a National level	2024 December	Recap – Unlocking Climate Finance: the Role of Civil Society in promoting Accountability and Accessibility on a National Level - Partos
Advancing Climate Justice through Inclusive Decision-Making: Global South and Indigenous Perspectives	2025 March	Recap: Advancing Climate Justice through Inclusive Decision-Making: Global South and Indigenous Perspectives
Harvesting Insights, Planting New Seeds: the closing of the Climate Justice CoP	2025 November	Recap Harvesting Insights, Planting New Seeds: the closing of the Climate Justice CoP