

IS THIS A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION?

As we face the dramatic consequences of the climate crisis, there is broad consensus on the urgent need for action. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) brands itself as the “climate bank” of the Asia-Pacific, saying it is mobilizing billions to tackle climate change and promote sustainable development.

Yet, in reality the ADB is **exacerbating many of the problems it claims to solve**. Instead of addressing its root causes, the ADB is treating the climate crisis as a business opportunity, and perpetuating a top-down, extractivist economic model.

But there is **some good news**. Across Asia, the Pacific and the Caucasus, grassroots communities, Indigenous leaders and civil society groups are resisting this predominant, harmful development model.

And they are leading powerful struggles to **protect our planet**, stand up for **human rights**, and ensure **prosperity** for all.

PROMISES VS REALITY



From 2022 to 2025, the ADB has invested a **total of USD 11.9 billion for 192 projects** in the energy sector, but investments included support for so-called “false solutions”.



Human rights defenders and communities, who raise concerns around problematic projects imposed without their consent, are increasingly facing **threats and attacks**.



Despite its climate commitments, the ADB is still **indirectly supporting fossil fuel-dependent infrastructures**. The Energy Transition Mechanism - supposed to promote early retirement of coal power plants - is failing to hold fossil fuel companies accountable.



Large-scale renewable energy projects are often pursued **without meaningful participation** of impacted communities.



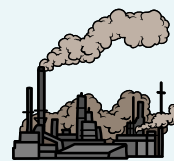
The ADB is investing in the development of *Critical Minerals to Clean Energy Technology Manufacturing Value Chains (CM2CET)*, but has failed to recognize harm on communities through **militarization, resource exploitation and pollution**.



The closing off of large tracts of land for these projects has been a source of **displacement, dispossession, and violence**.



ADB loans are burdening countries vulnerable to climate change, by exacerbating existing **debt crises**.



Projects defined as “green” - driven by overconsumption in the Global North - are reducing territories in the Global South to **sacrifice zones**, affecting particularly Indigenous Peoples, women and workers.

In **Tajikistan**, several development banks are financing the Rogun hydroelectric dam, despite the risk of catastrophic environmental, social and financial impacts – including displacing over 60,000 people, in one of the world’s most repressive countries.

In **Nepal**, the ADB is co-financing the Tanahu Hydropower Project. For the Magar community, the Tanahu dam is anything but sustainable, as it will lead to the flooding of their land and the sacred burial sites of their ancestors.

In **Indonesia**, geothermal energy projects such as Dieng-2 are threatening the livelihoods of local farmers, contaminating the water, destabilizing the soil and reducing crop yields. There are also serious threats to local communities opposing the project.

In **Vietnam**, while negotiating and rolling out an international agreement on just energy transition (JET) with several DFIs and governments, the Vietnamese government has been criminalizing environmental and climate leaders on false charges.

In **Mongolia**, the ADB is supporting a “climate-smart” mining initiative to further accelerate the extraction of resources, without taking into account the impact of such a project on the local communities.

In **India**, the ADB is planning to support the construction of a large-scale solar farm. The Assam Solar Project risks forcing around 9,000 people in 23 villages to leave their land, without adequate compensation or consultation.

WHAT DO WE WANT

Promote community self-determination and ensure meaningful participation

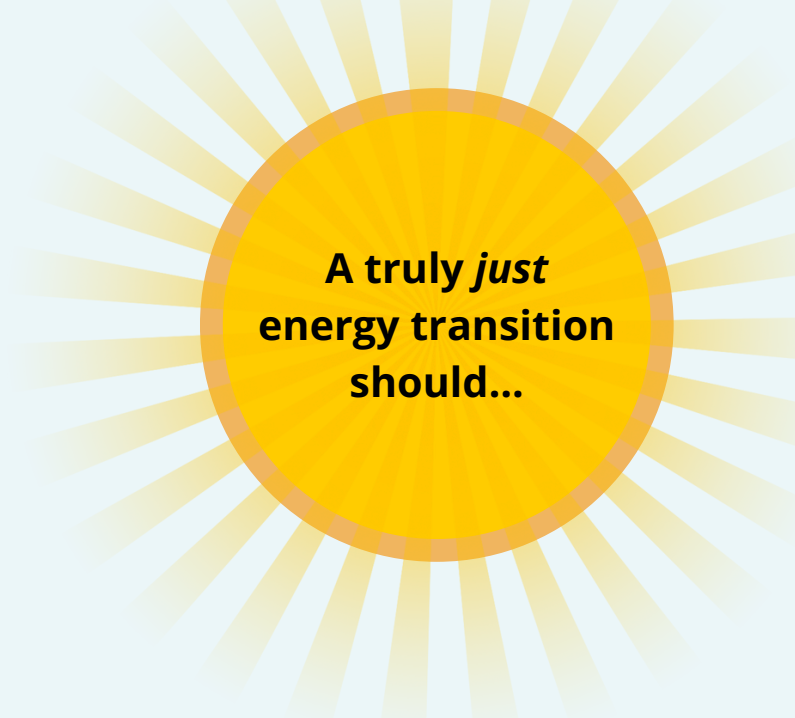
- Ensure communities have a genuine role in decision-making processes.
- Guarantee Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), with the right to say no and withdraw consent at any time.
- Safely engage with affected communities, taking into account the risk of threats and attacks against people speaking out, in a context of shrinking civic space.
- Promote direct financing for community-led and Indigenous-led initiatives.

Ensure equity in development finance and energy access

- Shift from loans to grants, to reduce the level of debt.
- Decentralize and democratize energy transition projects, prioritizing small-scale, context-specific solutions that can be led by local communities, so they better meet their needs. and ensure energy security.
- Mining of critical minerals (including cross-border and regional grids) should not create 'sacrifice zones'.
- Performance indicators should measure actual community benefits.

Guarantee accountability and protection of human & environmental rights

- Adopt and align with international human rights standards in all operations and policies, and commit to conduct mandatory human rights due diligence.
- Strengthen environmental and social safeguards to protect land, livelihoods, food production, ecological resources, and cultural heritage.
- Ensure a participatory approach to impact assessment and project monitoring, taking into account differentiated impacts and risks (incorporating insights from community-led research).
- Establish accessible, gender-responsive, and culturally appropriate accountability mechanisms with enforceable sanctions and adequate, timely provision of remedy for any harm, environmental damage or rights violations committed.



A truly *just* energy transition should...

THE WAY FORWARD: RESISTANCE AND COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS

In **Cambodia, Cameroon, DR Congo, El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, and Timor Leste**, the Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples (REP) - in collaboration with UNDP-SGP-GEF - is facilitating access for Indigenous Peoples to resources, knowledge, and tools to implement their own renewable energy solutions.

Their goal is to advance Indigenous-led development, ensuring energy equity, and supporting sustainable, community-driven progress. Together with Tonibung and AMAN (and with support from IFAD), REP is also facilitating South-South exchanges on community based mini-hydro systems between Indigenous Peoples of Malaysia and Indonesia.

Nepal: Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ) - together with other partners - has been implementing an initiative to support Indigenous and marginalized communities to identify possible local sources of renewable energy and set up community-led projects (including micro hydropower projects).

In a country where many Indigenous and rural communities suffer immense harm because of large-scale hydropower dams, this project shows how community-led projects offer a viable solution.

This infographic was developed with contributions from members and partners of the Coalition for Human Rights in Development, who work together to ensure development is community-led, and protects peoples and the planet.

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