



Feminist movements leading just transitions

What do we mean by just transition?

Just transition refers to an equitable and inclusive shift from fossil fuel-based economies to sustainable, low-carbon systems, centering considerations of decent work as outlined in the [UNFCCC Paris Agreement](#).

Rapid and unchecked transitions into renewable energy that fail to address structural inequalities [risk reproducing extractivism](#) and perpetuating or exacerbating social and environmental harm. Increased demand for critical minerals such as lithium,

cobalt, and nickel has intensified land degradation and [labour exploitation](#). In a context where access to affordable, reliable, and safe energy [remains highly unequal](#), renewable energy supply chains have often [failed to consider and protect human rights](#) and the needs of structurally excluded groups. In low-income contexts, women disproportionately experience [energy poverty](#) due to [unpaid care work](#), greater exposure to [health risks](#) from unsafe cooking fuel, and [limited opportunities for economic participation](#).

International climate and human rights guidelines emphasise the need for gender-responsive and locally-led just transitions. The [ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition](#) highlight displacement of workers, rapid community adaptation leading to loss of livelihoods and involuntary migration, and adverse effects on low-income households from higher energy and commodity prices. Without adequate protections, the guidelines explain how women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, informal workers, migrants, and youth [face disproportionate job and livelihood losses during energy transitions](#). Specifically, the IPCC notes that adaptive capacity is lowest among structurally excluded groups, making them [more susceptible to transition-related shocks](#). More recently, coordinated advocacy led by social justice and feminist movements, including the [UNFCCC WGC](#), significantly contributed to the approval of the [Belem Action mechanism](#) which includes language on “equitable, inclusive and just transitions”.

Shifting to renewable energy sources requires transforming governance of energy production, ownership, and decision-making processes to address social and economic inequalities, including ensuring that women and structurally excluded groups are not confined to low-paying informal employment. If managed effectively, transitions to environmentally sustainable economies can create job opportunities, introduce resource efficient practices, encourage innovation, build resilience, and drive investment. The need to meaningfully engage women and structurally excluded groups in just transitions is recognised by parties to the UNFCCC, through a [state declaration in COP28 on gender-responsive just transitions, signed](#) by 82 countries, as well as through [CEDAW's recommendation](#) for women's meaningful participation in energy decision-making processes at the local, national, and international levels.





Ensuring inclusive and effective just transitions

Feminist organisations globally are leading just transition approaches **beyond a narrow focus on energy systems** to centre the interconnected nature of economic, ecological, labour, care, and **governance systems**. Their work centres anti-extractivist, gender-transformative, and locally-led solutions, including through ecosystem restoration, strengthening adaptive capacities, and sustainable livelihood creation. Feminist movements are not only highlighting the multiple risks and challenges associated with just transition, but also championing decentralised, participatory, and community-based ownership and governance models.

The work of feminist organisations on just transitions is aligned with the ILO guidelines and the principles set out in the UNFCCC Paris Agreement, Belem Action Mechanism, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 13 (climate action). The following section of this brief explains the work of **Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY)**, a youth- and women-led Malaysian organisation and Mama Cash grantee-partner, which aims to institutionalise community participation and gender-responsive approaches in Malaysia's Just Energy Transition (JET) policy.

Policy and advocacy and inclusive adaptation informed by community knowledge

KAMY identifies institutional gaps across finance, participation, data and labour intersections that weaken Malaysia's just energy transition (JET) mechanisms. To identify these gaps and strengthen JET responses, it relies on community knowledge and data analysis including stakeholder mapping, focus group discussions (FGDs), gender-disaggregated measurement, reporting and verification systems (MRVs), and beneficiary incidence analysis. This reveals who benefits from national JET projects and plans, how risks are reduced, and how interventions can be scaled. Specifically, it uses community baseline surveys that quantify livelihood loss avoided, community nodes that document hectares restored and species conservation, and Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) certified land use practices underpinning

project eligibility, to evaluate the success and environmental and ethical impact of JET programs. This data analysis is transformed into policy advocacy efforts to push for gender-responsive budgeting, gender-inclusive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), green skills targets, and other considerations to be integrated into national JET plans.

So far, KAMY has successfully integrated community knowledge and data into the Gender & Action Plan of the Malaysian government by introducing 11 key gender-climate indicators, in addition to making policy submissions to the national Climate Change Bill and National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAPBHR) to maximise gender-transformative climate action.

Through its JET advocacy, KAMY focuses specifically on:



Preparing Gender-Inclusive JET Labour Pipelines

KAMY supports and prepares the JET labour pipeline and care economy by:

1. Gauging industry demand for green jobs,
2. Ascertaining apprenticeship to employment pipelines for participation of women in the workforce,
3. Designing gender-responsive TVET curricula aligning with contemporary demands, and
4. Ensuring social protection that enables women's participation in the workforce.

The organisation ensures that employers engage with the TVET and report apprenticeship placements through Key Performance Indicators such as enrolment, completion, and employment placement, so that it is able to monitor and analyse the inclusiveness of JET labour pipelines.



Enforcing Institutional Safeguards for Defenders

According to the UN Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders [under the Aarhus Convention](#), restrictions on civic space and threats to environmental defenders multiply the risks that investors of JET projects face, ultimately delaying and deterring projects. KAMY documents how failure to protect defenders has led to litigation, reputational loss and scrutiny of investors, and supplements this documentation by preparing project design frameworks for the protection of defenders, anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit against Public Participation) protections, and community grievance redress mechanisms. It also works to mainstream additional safeguards such as anti-reprisal protocols, public reporting clauses, measures that reduce operational and reputational risks for financiers, and metrics for compliance with international safeguarding tests (such as International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standards, and Aarhus obligations, thereby ensuring that funders of JET projects both expand civic space and reduce reputational and operational risks.

KAMY's policy and advocacy on meaningful participation, regional cooperation, and technical assistance related to the JET has produced significant, measurable results. So far, KAMY has successfully embedded gender-disaggregated beneficiary documentation and community knowledge into national plans, ensured integration of women into green jobs through regional dialogues and industry placement, and protected environmental and human rights defenders while reducing risks for JET project funders.