



REAL SOLUTIONS NOW!

Women Lead Climate Action

SECTION 1

False Solutions, Real Harm

Global South feminists have said it all along: False solutions are not climate action—they are dangerous distractions.¹ Carbon markets, carbon offsets, carbon capture and storage and any form of unsustainable renewable energy do not address the root causes of the climate catastrophe. Instead, they are largely characterised by neoliberal corporate capture as well as the Global North's hegemony of climate action and corporate greenwashing which essentially perpetuate climate injustices. Civil society and grassroots movements have been advocating for decades against false solutions because these solutions are dangerous distractions that do not contribute to the actual reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions urgently needed to stop global warming from worsening.²

These false solutions often promote nature-based solutions and unproven techno-fixes to the advantage of neoliberal corporate interests and serve to delay the phaseout of fossil fuels. Examples include: carbon trading, carbon markets, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), land-based removals, geo-engineering removals and unsustainable renewable energy (e.g. large biomass burning, large hydro and geothermal energy). In these 'solutions', safeguards and grievance mechanisms are generally lacking and are merely a tick-the-box exercise when it comes to respecting and upholding the human rights of the local communities and Indigenous Peoples (IPs) rights.³ Violations of human rights—e.g. Gender-Based Violence (GBV), land grabbing as well as the militarisation, repression, imprisonment, harassment and killing of environmental human rights defenders, have become the norm perpetrated by states and/or the non-state actors all in the name of climate mitigation and adaptation actions. Often these result in much harm and destruction to local and Indigenous Peoples.

The 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) of the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Baku in 2024 will be remembered by civil society as the 'False Solutions COP' because the COP president on the very first day gavelled the decision on Article 6.4—that is the Paris Agreement carbon market mechanism—

¹ This analysis is based on the Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) conducted by Badabon Sangho - Bangladesh, Berenda Perempuan - Indonesia, Kelompok Feminis Muda Sulewana (KFMS) - Indonesia, Women Leader Foundation (WLF) - Mongolia, Sama-samang Artista para sa Kilusang Agraryo (SAKA) - Philippines and Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) - Thailand in 2023 to 2024.

² Carrington, D. (2025, March 5). *Half of World's CO2 Emissions Come from 36 Fossil Fuel Firms, Study Shows*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/mar/05/half-of-worlds-co2-emissions-come-from-36-fossil-fuel-firms-study-shows>

³ Lim, H.M. (2025, January 16). *The Article 6 Carbon Market Mechanism: A house in Shambles*. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung. <https://rosalux.nyc/the-article-6-carbon-market-mechanism-a-house-in-a-shambles/>

before Parties had the time to negotiate and come to any consensus.⁴ Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement is the UNFCCC carbon market mechanism.⁵ This bulldozing approach raised many procedural issues as well as a question whether a party-driven process could be discarded by a COP president at his whims and fancies in pursuit of his own agenda.⁶ If this trend continues in future COPs, we will see an increase in autocratic decision-making in the international climate change space instead of collective decision-making. Article 6.2, which is another false solution, was also adopted at the end of COP29. Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement is about bilateral carbon trading between two countries.⁷ Both Articles 6.2 and 6.4 are false solutions because carbon trading and carbon markets do not contribute to real reduction of GHG emissions.

The outcome on climate finance at COP29, that is the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), unveiled how the Global North maneuvered its way out of committing to new and additional public finance. Instead, they will take the lead to mobilise at least USD 300 billion per year by 2035 for Global South countries to implement climate action.⁸ Moreover, contrary to abiding by the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) and their financial obligation as historical polluters, the Global North has successfully included in the outcome that climate finance could come from the 'public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources' and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) also known as International Financial Institutions (IFIs).^{9,10}

Those sources of climate finance are problematic in many ways. Why?

Firstly, private finance must not be part of climate finance as this type of finance, usually in the form of loans, would increase Global South countries' national indebtedness and lessen their capacities to respond to climate crisis. Instead, climate finance should be solely in the form of public finance from Global North countries.

⁴ APWLD. (2024, November 14). "Let's Talk about Real Solutions Now!" Asserts Civil Society at COP29 Amid the Dominance of False Climate Solutions. <https://apwld.org/lets-talk-about-real-solutions-now-asserts-civil-society-at-cop29-amid-the-dominance-of-false-climate-solutions/>

⁵ For more information on the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/article-64-mechanism>

⁶ Lim, H.M. (2025, January 16). *The Article 6 Carbon Market Mechanism: A house in Shambles*. Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung. <https://rosalux.nyc/the-article-6-carbon-market-mechanism-a-house-in-a-shambles/>

⁷ For more information: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement/cooperative-implementation/article-62>

⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2024). *Matters Relating to Finance. Draft Decision -/CMA.6. New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance*. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2024_L22E.pdf

⁹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2024). *Matters Relating to Finance. Draft Decision -/CMA.6. New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance*. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2024_L22E.pdf

¹⁰ A Collective Reflection by APWLD and Members. (2024, November 18). *False Solutions: Dangerous Distractions at COP29*. <https://apwld.org/false-solutions-dangerous-distractions-at-cop29/>

Secondly, IFIs, similar to the private sector, mainly give out loans instead of grants. This too would aggravate Global South countries' national indebtedness and their capacities to respond to the climate crisis. Additionally, IFIs' complex bureaucratic processes hinders local communities and Indigenous Peoples from directly accessing the fund for climate actions.

Thirdly, climate finance must not come from 'alternative sources'. The inclusion of 'alternative sources' is very worrying because it is altering the fundamental concept of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) climate finance and moving toward climate colonialism where the Global North will dominate Global South through their financial control and capital flows to mostly fund false climate solutions. This option will become the foreseeable entry point for carbon trading and carbon markets—both being false solutions—to be included into the UNFCCC climate finance framework.

The lack of commitment and political will from the Global North countries is shamefully obvious. All the scheming is the Global North's way of preserving western imperialism and climate colonialism, which allows Global North countries to continue plundering and exploiting the Global South in the 21st century to achieve their own decarbonisation ambition. As described earlier, the Global North is aggressively rewriting the rules of climate finance, especially with regard to their responsibility to abide by the principle of CBDR-RC and their financial obligation as historical polluters. Besides climate finance, the strong dominance of the Global North is also apparent in the food and agriculture negotiations. Global North industrial agriculture and agribusiness lobbyists (e.g. Bayer, JBS, Nestle, PepsiCo and Syngenta) are increasingly making their presence known in the COP space and influencing the outcomes.¹¹ Also, Global North corporate lobbyists from the fossil fuel, energy, agribusiness and transportation sectors have direct access to their country's ministers, senior officials and national delegations to COP, thus enabling them to influence and shape the outcomes at the COP meetings to further their company's interests.

¹¹ Sherrington, R. (2024, November 18). *Meat, Dairy, Pesticide Lobbyists Return in High Numbers to Climate Summit*. DeSmog. <https://www.desmog.com/2024/11/18/big-ag-delegates-cop-29-azerbaijan-baku/>



SECTION 2

Why Do Grassroots Women Oppose False Solutions?

False solutions are aggressively promoted in Asia and the Pacific. One infamous example is Japan's initiatives since 2021 to sell its fossil fuel-based technologies for false solutions such as CCS, blue hydrogen, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and ammonia co-firing, to Asian countries including India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, for the next 10 years.¹² Civil society and environmental organisations pointed out that these are technologies for false solutions, which prolong the use of fossil fuels, may increase the region's GHG

¹² Energy Tracker Asia. (2024, March 21). *False Solutions to Climate Change Promoted in Southeast Asia Pose Various Risks*. <https://energytracker.asia/false-solutions-to-climate-change-promoted-in-southeast-asia/>

emissions and worsen Asia's climate crisis.^{13,14} The latter would lead to increased deaths and health risks due to increased air pollution, water pollution and extreme weather events; destruction in ecosystems and biodiversity; and displacement among communities.¹⁵ Asian civil society and environmental organisations accused Japan of ingeniously marketing its false solutions technologies to their countries as well as using this approach to legitimise coal to get buy-in from investors and banks.¹⁶

In addition, a large group of Global North countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA and the European Commission) have been financing REDD+¹⁷ through the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) since its launch in 2008.¹⁸ Countries in Asia and the Pacific participating in the REDD+ preparatory, readiness and implementation programme are Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Vanuatu and Vietnam. REDD+ implementation projects have deviated from its original concept of financing ecosystem services and have been generating carbon credits that are traded in voluntary carbon markets.¹⁹

From 2023 to 2024, APWLD implemented a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) focusing on false solutions to climate change with six women's grassroots partner organisations in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines and Thailand. The following are case stories from the FPARs depicting how women and their communities are directly affected by false solutions. It has impacted grassroots women's human rights, particularly their right to health, right to food, right to clean water, right to land, right to self-determination and right to enjoy a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

¹³ Fossil Free Japan. (2025, May 2). *Joint Statement: Japan Must Stop Derailing Southeast Asia's Energy Transition*. <https://fossilfreejapan.org/joint-statement-japan-must-stop-derailing-southeast-asias-energy-transition/>

¹⁴ Fossil Free Japan. (2025, May 2). *Joint Statement: Japan Must Stop Derailing Southeast Asia's Energy Transition*. <https://fossilfreejapan.org/joint-statement-japan-must-stop-derailing-southeast-asias-energy-transition/>

¹⁵ Fossil Free Japan (2025, April 29). *Climate Groups Slam Japan's AZEC Framework During PM Ishiba Visit, Call on Japan to End Fossil Fuel Support*. <https://fossilfreejapan.org/media/media-releases/climate-groups-slam-japans-azec-framework-during-pm-ishiba-visit-call-on-japan-to-end-fossil-fuel-support/>

¹⁶ Energy Tracker Asia. (2024, March 21). *False Solutions to Climate Change Promoted in Southeast Asia Pose Various Risks*. <https://energytracker.asia/false-solutions-to-climate-change-promoted-in-southeast-asia/>

¹⁷ REDD+ stands for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

¹⁸ Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. (n.d.). *Donor participants*. <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/donor-participants>

¹⁹ Carbon Market Watch. (2023, November 9). *REDD+ FAQs: Explaining the Ins and Outs of Forestry Climate Projects*. <https://carbonmarketwatch.org/2023/11/09/redd-faq/>

False solutions enable corporate land grabs and destroys the environment

In Indonesia, conservation company PT REKI received a 60-year permit with a possibility of extension every 35 years, from the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry to manage the Ecosystem Restoration Concession (ERC), also known as ‘Harapan Forest’ to address deforestation in the Jambi province. The influence of known²⁰ partners from the Global North—that is the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and BirdLife International—is so evident that the communities nicknamed the ‘Harapan Forest’ as King Charles’ Forest. Ironically, the deforestation was the result of the state’s previously approved logging concession. PT REKI, which managed the forest conservation efforts in the former logging area, supports the REDD+ programme and carbon credit trading.²¹

‘Since PT REKI began managing the forest, the trees have been rotting much faster. Fewer animals are coming around, and we’ve seen an increase in pests that are harming our rice crops.’

— Mek Rohila, Indigenous woman leader
in Pangkalan Ranjau village, Jambi Province, Indonesia

The Batin Sembilan tribe—descendants of the oldest tribe of Indigenous Peoples in Jambi—from the Pangkalan Ranjau District who were dependent on forests and forest products for their livelihoods, were severely impacted. PT REKI restricted the IPs’ access to their forest and violated the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principle which safeguards their rights. Indigenous women reported losing access to their customary forest. Their traditional practice of collecting forest products (e.g. medicinal plants, rattan, fruits and flowers) would put them at risk of being labelled as trespassers and liable to be arrested by security officers hired by the state and company. Apart from their livelihood, it also affected women’s food security and nutrition. The violations of the Indigenous women’s rights and their agency highlight the absence of climate and gender justice in Indonesia’s national climate agenda and action. This resonates awkwardly with the state’s commitment to the UNFCCC Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its gender action plan. Furthermore, during the FPAR, the women found that ironically, deforestation is increasing in the province. They discovered that state-owned companies were constructing roads and transporting oil and gas drilling machines into the ERC area for oil and gas exploration work.

In Thailand, women in the Pred Nai village in the Trat Province shared a rather similar experience as their counterparts in Pangkalan Ranjau. In 2022, the Thai

²⁰ There is a lack of transparency and information on who PT REKI’s foreign partners or donors are.

²¹ Currently, Indonesia has bilateral carbon trading agreements with Japan and Norway under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement. Antara Indonesian News Agency. (2025, May 8). *Indonesia expands carbon trading agreements with multiple countries*. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/354481/indonesia-expands-carbon-trading-agreements-with-multiple-countries>

Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) announced the first allotment of mangrove forest for carbon credit schemes. This was in line with the Thai government's plan to embark on carbon credit trading under the Bio-Circular-Green economy policy, which was announced at the 2022 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting. The DMCR allocated about 2,080 hectares of mangrove forest in the Trat Province for carbon credit projects.

'I am against the policy of selling carbon credits from our mangrove forest. We haven't seen any benefits from it despite having taken care of the forest for many years.'

— Somporn Pimubon, woman from the Pred Nai village,
Trat Province, Thailand

Resulting from the FPAR training sessions, the women became aware that the DMCR's mangrove planting policy is interlinked with carbon credits and profit-oriented. It prioritised corporate interest rather than the conservation of mangrove forests and promoting sustainable resource utilisation among local communities living near the mangrove forests. Furthermore, women became aware that their traditional knowledge and skills on fishing and farming were often overlooked in patriarchal society and began to realise the importance of women's meaningful participation to form inclusive governance and processes in managing and utilising the mangrove forest. The women were upset to learn that the carbon credits project in their village would be implemented by the DMCR and PTT Global Chemical²² without the community's consent and participation. Unanimously, the women and villagers in Pred Nai agreed that the carbon credits project threatened their livelihoods, their rights to manage and use the mangrove forests and it threatened the mangrove ecosystem itself.

Another key mitigation action is the shift from fossil fuel energy to renewable and clean energy, which is indicated in most countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Indonesia has been investing in hydroelectric power as a source of clean renewable energy. One of the hydropower projects is the Poso Energy hydropower project in the Poso Regency, Central Sulawesi. Villages situated along the Poso River have been impacted by the construction and operation of the two hydropower plants owned by PT Poso Energy.^{23, 24} The Indigenous women of the Pamona tribe, living in Saojo, Sulewana, Kuku, Tampemadoro and Pandiri villages recalled that water discharged from the dams have flooded their paddy fields and this led to crop failure making it difficult for local smallholder farmers to pay their loan

²² PTT Global Chemical is the largest integrated petrochemical and refining company in Thailand.

²³ The two hydropower plants are named Poso 1 and Poso 2 and are located on the Poso River in Sulewana village.

²⁴ PT Poso Energy is a subsidiary of the Kalla Group owned by Yusuf Kalla, a former vice-president of Indonesia. Ironically, he was the Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare of Indonesia in 2003.

debts. The dredging activity in the Poso River—to increase the efficiency of the power plants—has also polluted and destroyed the biota in the river.

The women shared during the FPAR that villagers were evicted or forced to sell their land when it was earmarked as a hydropower plant project development area. As a result, the women lost the customary area where they used to catch fish using traditional methods on the edge of Lake Poso. They lamented that they could no longer pass this traditional skill to their children and grandchildren. Apart from the violation of the FPIC principle, the communities were hoodwinked with empty promises of job opportunities and free electricity. The Indigenous women expressed that the violation of their human rights would be exacerbated with the commencement of a third hydropower plant by PT Poso Energy in collaboration with PowerChina Chengdu Institute in the Tampemadoro village.

‘The construction of the Poso Energy Hydropower Plant has had a tremendous impact on my life and livelihood. The enormous land clearing for the project has caused recurrent flooding in my field, including the durian orchard. The frequent floods have resulted in large crop failure and loss of income.’

— Wemi Nggau, a woman smallholder farmer from Kuku village,
Poso Regency, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia

False solutions, though more prevalent in mitigation actions, are also present in some adaptation actions. The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authorities under the Ministry of Shipping in partnership with the Mongla Port Authority—financed by the China International Development Cooperation—implemented a sand embankment project. The objective of this adaptation action is to improve the river navigation system to reduce climate change induced impacts on the lives of the coastal communities and to facilitate shipping at the Mongla Port. Instead of improving the resilience of the coastal communities living in the Sundarbans,²⁵ it has had the opposite impact. Women from Mongla Upazila in Bagerhat District were among those affected.

During the FPAR, these women fisherfolk shared that they have lost their livelihood and income as they were no longer able to fish due to the presence of the excavating machines in the Pashur River, which destroyed the ecosystem of the river and coastal area. They also mentioned that sands excavated from the river were dumped on the belt of the river and villagers’ land, this resulted in communities living there being displaced. Some women landowners, including single mothers, widows and divorcees, said that they have lost their land rights due to land acquisition for the project and they did not receive any payment despite signing the agreement.

²⁵ The Sundarbans situated in the Bay of Bengal is the world’s largest mangrove forest extending across Bangladesh and India.

Meanwhile, some women landowners complained that their lands—adjacent to the plot of land bought by the private company—were filled with sand and they did not receive any compensation for this either. There were also women landowners in similar situations who had decided to sell their land since it is now filled with sand. However, no agreements were signed and these women have been left in a bleak situation without payment or compensation, even though their land is still being used for sand filling, with the estimated height of the sand exceeding 30 feet as at the time of this report.

The women reported that internal displacement and losing their livelihood made them more vulnerable to GBV in their household and community. Some of them also experienced harassment from project contractors living within their community and law enforcement officers when they protested against the sand embankment project.

The Mongla Upazila women and communities organised collective actions such as rallies and meetings with the local government and Upazila-based officials to stop the sand embankment project and to demand that the project hold meaningful consultations with the community, especially women fisherfolk. The interim government responded to the situation and demands of the women and instructed the local administrators to identify and register affected women fisherfolk in Mongla and its surrounding areas in order to help them access social safety nets (e.g. allowances during fishing ban season, livelihood and skills training and other government benefits). However, many women faced difficulties to register due to the lack of either national identification cards, proof of fishing occupation from the local government, or land ownership documents.

‘Before the FPAR I didn’t know how to speak up. Now I can explain why this embankment project is not the answer. We took to the streets. We told the media and the ministries that the embankments are ruining our lives. Not a single family got proper compensation after losing their home.’

— Monika, a small-scale fisherwoman
from a village in Mongla, Bagerhat District, Bangladesh



False solutions destroy peoples' health

In Mongolia, though the government has set a goal to reduce GHG emissions primarily from the energy sector, the women from the Dalanjaragalan village in Dornogovi Province pointed out that their country's national policy contradicts its commitment to the Paris Agreement. The women cited Mongolia's New Revival Policy—which promotes the mining sector as the key sector in the state's economy—and the 2023 amended Law on Minerals, which made application for mining licences easier. Under these perverse policies and laws, they believed that mining permits for coal and other minerals as well as related operations, would increase drastically. They shared that the government has granted 82 companies with 108 special mining licences to operate in the Dalanjargalan village.²⁶ The Mongolian government has been promoting energy efficiency by mandating households to shift from using raw coal to clean coal,²⁷ especially in Ulaanbaatar since 2019.

Through the FPAR, the nomadic herdswomen began to realise that their rights to health, livelihood and healthy environment were under threat. They started to document the adverse impacts of mining and extraction activities. These included: respiratory diseases, allergies and asthma due to fine particles released during extraction activities (air pollution), drinking water from water wells contaminated with dust (dust pollution and water pollution). The underground water was also being depleted because the minerals extraction industry utilised a large amount of water and this led to springs drying up, decreased grazing pastures and increased desertification. This resulted in either it becoming impossible for nomadic cattle to breed or a drop in livestock quality, which in turn resulted in lower quality of wool, cashmere, meat and dairy products.

False solutions spread false narratives

'The way the Golden Rice is marketed here puts pressure on us in Calpi to be 'good mothers.' We will probably be accused of not caring for our children's nutrition if we don't serve Golden Rice at home.'

— Calpi peasant women, Barangay Buyo, Albay, Philippines

The Philippines Department of Agriculture and the Philippines Rice Research Institute have been promoting the Genetically Modified (GM) rice, known as Golden Rice or Malusog Rice²⁸ since 2021 in the Philippines. This is being supported by the

²⁶ One of the companies is Mongolyn Lat (MAK) LLC, which is the largest conglomerate in Mongolia that is involved in coal, gold and copper mining.

²⁷ Clean coal is another form of greenwashing of fossil fuel energy. Clean coal technology will still emit carbon dioxide and this technology also utilises CCS, which is a false solution.

²⁸ Golden Rice fortified with Vitamin A is claimed to be a solution for vitamin A deficiency.

International Rice Research Institute—which is also funded by industrial agriculture giant Syngenta—and Helen Keller International. It has been argued that genetically modified rice, as the government's mitigation action, supports food security and reduces the negative impact of climate change. The FPAR women from the Sitio Calpi, Barangay Buyo, Manito, Albay were campaigning to stop the propagation of Golden Rice in their Bicol region. This high yielding GM rice needs expensive chemical inputs such as pesticides and fertilisers. As smallholder farmers and members of the Active Calpi Organic Farmer Association (ACOFA), they have personally experienced how chemical fertilisers and pesticides have affected their land productivity negatively. For instance, using the same amount of seeds, a peasant woman and her family could now harvest 22 canvas bags of rice compared to just 15 canvas bags when they were using chemical pesticides.

Through research during the FPAR, the peasant women found studies that show the threat that Golden Rice poses as it would cross-pollinate and cross-contaminate wild rice and local rice varieties. This would lead to a change in the genetic composition of the wild rice and local rice varieties as well as lower the yield of non-Golden Rice farms productivity. It would be very difficult to reverse the contamination. They also found that the vitamin A content in this GM rice would decrease with long storage and after cooking. The peasant women considered it a deception by their local government who provided disinformation on the benefits of Golden Rice.

Additionally, the women highlighted that peasant communities were experiencing increased militarisation during President Marcos Junior's rule, which restricted their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association to fight for social and climate justice. The aggressive corporatisation of farmlands in the militarised areas has resulted in the peasant communities facing human rights violations, including increased risk of sexual violence among women as well as land rights violations, particularly in their region.

The case stories above reinforced what was previously documented in the region, that is false solutions have negative impacts on the communities. The expansion of false solutions projects in the communities has adversely exacerbated issues already being faced by grassroots women, such as threats to their livelihood and way of life and ongoing violations of their human rights. Those gaining from the mitigation and adaptation actions in the villages in the five countries are mainly the local and international private companies, private investors and the carbon markets. These are the results of the interplay between globalisation, neoliberal corporate capture and capitalism operating in a patriarchal system. The priority is profit rather than addressing climate change issues for the benefit and well-being of grassroots women and Indigenous women. Therefore, in some instances, militarism in the form of political suppression, intimidation and violence, were utilised by patriarchal

governments and authorities against grassroots women and Indigenous women fighting to reject false solutions. This reflects systemic gender injustice where women would face constant hardship, suppression and oppression in the name of climate actions.

Furthermore, the expansion of false solutions in the Global South when scrutinised, reveals the western imperialism playbook and climate colonialism where the Global North maintains dominance over the Global South. Global North countries continue to assert power to control finance flows and dictate the types of climate solutions that should be carried out by Global South, which often do more harm than good and often benefit actors in the Global North. In doing so, the lands of Indigenous peoples and local communities are commodified and their sovereignty over their lands are annulled.



SECTION 3

Real Solutions from the Grassroots

While false climate solutions are centred on techno-fixes and profit, real climate solutions from a feminist perspective are centred on recognising local, traditional knowledge and grassroots leadership and amplifying marginalised voices, in particular grassroots women and Indigenous communities.²⁹ It also takes into account addressing the systemic inequalities between and within nations as well as combining urgent emissions reduction with adaptive capacity-building while acknowledging the complexity of climate action.³⁰

Women in Asia and the Pacific region have been actively involved in community-based real solutions for a long time. However, their efforts have not received due recognition nor attracted much media attention. We believe the narrative that women are passive beneficiaries of climate actions is a myth. Women have been showing strong agency and leadership to work alongside their community members to mobilise and implement real climate solutions. They are resourceful and holders of knowledge and practices passed down from previous generations. The following are case stories of community-led real solutions by grassroots women and their communities in Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines.

Real Solutions: Indigenous farming and forestry in Indonesia

For the Batin Sembilan Indigenous community living in the Pangkalan Ranjau District, Indonesia, the forests and rivers hold a deep cultural and spiritual significance for them, serving as a vital connection to their ancestors and the supernatural guardians of the land.

For generations, this Indigenous community and their women have been using Indigenous knowledge and practices for farming, fishing and forest management. Examples of farming practices are beumo, a form of shifting cultivation, and nunu, a traditional cooperative practice utilising controlled burning for planting paddy. Also, their indigenous farming methods prevent pest infestations and do not utilise chemical pesticides. An example of indigenous fishing method is nube, that is using sap from the roots of a local tree to irritate the fish eyes and causing the fish to float to the surface of the river. Women of Batin Sembilan tribe generally practice beumo, where they cultivate rice, sweet potatoes and bananas as sources of food and for their livelihood. In the cycle of shifting cultivation, they would apply several traditional techniques used to prevent pest attacks. Unlike modern farming

²⁹ Celestial, A. G., & Talens, V. (2024). *Sisterhood for Survival*. APWLD. <https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/SISTERHOOD-FOR-SURVIVAL.pdf>

³⁰ Celestial, A. G., & Talens, V. (2024). *Sisterhood for Survival*. APWLD. <https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/SISTERHOOD-FOR-SURVIVAL.pdf>

practices, shifting cultivation does not rely on chemical inputs thus does not create soil dependence and contamination from chemical fertilisers. Indigenous women also practice nube, a fishing activity usually carried out by women rather than men. They go fishing either before or after doing their household activities and it does not take much time.

Figure 1: Beumo, a form of shifting cultivation.

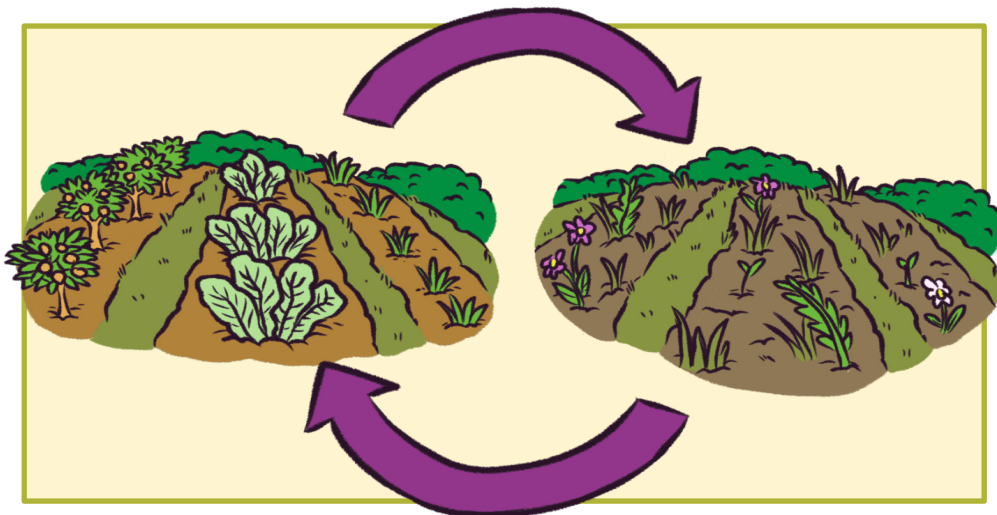


Figure 2: Nunu, a traditional cooperative practice utilising controlled burning for planting paddy



Figure 3: Nube, an indigenous fishing method that uses sap from the roots of a local tree to irritate the fish eyes and causing the fish to float to the surface of the river.



As for forest management, the Batin Sembilan tribe has customary rules on forest management. One of the customary rules is the prohibition to cut down Sialang trees, which serve as habitats for bees that produce natural honey. Whoever cuts down a Sialang tree will have to pay a customary fine, that is providing compensation to the leader of Batin Sembilan (customary institution) with a shroud as long as the height of the tree that was cut down. The shroud is used as a measuring tool to estimate the height of Sialang tree. Another customary rule requires that the Batin Sembilan Indigenous community should only harvest what they need from the forest to ensure enough is left for future generations. This indicates a respect for the forest ecosystem balance and a sustainable approach to forest management. In the opinion of Indigenous women, this Indigenous knowledge and practices for farming, fishing and forest management are the real solutions because these solutions do not exploit and damage their forest and land.

When PT REKI was given the concession to manage the conservation and restoration of the ERC or 'Harapan Forest', the Batin Sembilan tribe lost access to their customary land as it is now designated as land for the 'Harapan Forest' project. The emerging conservation industry operated by the private sector is a dilemma for the Indigenous community. The latter were implicitly given two choices: that is to either partner with PT REKI or get sidelined. The Batin Sembilan Indigenous

community refused to partner with PT REKI because the project is in conflict with their customary principle of 'planting plants for life'.³¹ The partnership demands that the Indigenous community plant valuable timber trees instead of food crops. In choosing the second option, the Indigenous community faced discrimination and violation of their human rights, especially their land rights. Losing sovereignty over their customary land means they are no longer able to practice real solutions for farming, fishing and forest management.

Despite the challenges, the Indigenous women and other community members are persistently resisting the surrender of their customary land to PT REKI and demanding their Indigenous Peoples' rights, particularly their land rights, to be respected and upheld. The fight is ongoing and they hope that one day they will regain their sovereignty and be able to continue applying their Indigenous knowledge and practices on farming, fishing and forest management without restriction.

Real solutions: Community management of mangroves in Thailand

The community in the Pred Nai Village in Trat Province, Thailand depended on the mangrove forest for their livelihood and food sources. Apart from being smallholder farmers, some of the women in the village are fisherfolk who make their living by catching aquatic animals in the mangrove forests and along the coastal areas.

The Pred Nai Village has a Mangrove Forest Conservation and Development Group, which uses traditional knowledge and community rules for mangrove forest management. Decades ago, the villagers would use the traditional knowledge to restore the biodiversity of their mangrove forest (e.g. restoring aquatic animals, such as fiddler crabs and fishes) when their forest became severely degraded due to charcoal production and shrimp farming by private companies, through concessions from the government. However, due to some internal conflicts the group became inactive and had stopped its activities to care for the mangrove forest for more than five years prior to the FPAR.

When threat came in the form of carbon credit schemes, the community realised that they risked losing their mangrove forest to the private sector, including their rights to access and use the mangrove forest as well as being banned from practising their community rules and traditional knowledge for mangrove forest management. The carbon credit project would also threaten the ecosystem and biodiversity of the mangrove forest. Previously, the villagers had witnessed the destruction of their mangrove forest when it was cleared for a monoculture plantation project. Being proactive, the group reconvened to discuss a joint solution with the Sustainable Development Foundation organisation acting as an intermediary. This time the group

³¹ The 'Planting Plants for Life' principle means they plant food crops, fruit trees and economically valuable plants to support themselves and the future generations.

underwent a drastic transformation. The Mangrove Forest Conservation and Development Group was previously an all-men's group. Since its revitalisation during the FPAR, this group—made up of 23 male members—progressed to include eight women. Also, the newly elected chairperson of the group is a woman. A total of five working groups were established, including a working group to study the economic, social impacts and resources required for gender equality. The inclusion of women in leadership has resulted in the strengthening of an intersectional approach and gender perspective to climate solutions and good governance in the village. This led to the dismantling of the village's traditional male-dominated structure and challenged patriarchal norms. This Group even came up with a mangrove forest management plan and focused on reclaiming their right to manage the forest.

Subsequently, the villagers appointed the members of the Mangrove Forest Conservation and Development Group to take charge of the conservation and management of the community's mangrove forest. Through this initiative, the villagers unanimously agreed that their village will not participate in the carbon credit scheme. They came to a consensus that they will prioritise the community's rights in the management of the mangrove forests for the purpose of enhancing biodiversity and ensuring food security. The villagers realised that despite managing the mangrove forest all these years their efforts and rights were not recognised by the state. During the FPAR, they conducted joint advocacy with other affected villages demanding that the DMCR allow communities to officially participate in mangrove forest management. This led to the DMRC issuing a new policy allowing communities to participate in mangrove forest management through the registration of their community-managed mangrove forest, in particular villages that are participating in the carbon credit scheme. The Pred Nai village applied to register their community-managed mangrove forest but stated in the application that the village will not participate in the carbon credit scheme. Their application was subsequently approved. The Pred Nai villagers now have the right to continue managing their mangrove forest using traditional knowledge. Furthermore, they are inspiring other communities to register their mangrove forest without the carbon credit scheme.

Real solutions: Peasant women successfully lead organic farming in the Philippines

The women peasants in Calpi, a mountainous terrain in the Bicol region of Philippines have been practicing organic farming to help improve their livelihoods and food security. They were introduced to this type of agroecology farming by the charity, Good Shepherd Homes.³² With the guidance of the charity, they established

³² The Good Shepherd Homes is a religious charity institution run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. In the Philippines, they focus on working with single mothers, slum dwellers, landless farmers, indigenous groups, overseas contract workers and their families, street children, women working in prostitution and women experiencing GBV.

the Active Calpi Organic Farmer Association (ACOFA). ACOFA is a peasant women-led organic farming organisation in a mainly male-dominated local agriculture context. Members of the ACOFA carry out organic farming on a communal farm. They believe that organic farming is a real solution because it results in the sustainable production of safe food crops,³³ improves the livelihood of farmers, ensures food security, safeguards the health of their families, protects the ecosystem and enriches the soil quality and local biodiversity.

During the FPAR, the organisation SAKA worked with the ACOFA to stop the propagation of the GM Golden Rice as a climate adaptive crop, it being a climate false solution. Through the FPAR journey, Calpi peasant women realised that the propagation of GM rice would have negative impacts on organic farming by cross-contaminating the wild rice and local rice varieties, affect the yield of organic farms thus diminishing their income and impinge on their agency to choose seed varieties and farming practices.

The peasant women faced various challenges in their organic farming. Since they did not have an irrigation system, they had to depend on rain water for farming. They lacked access to agriculture services such as training, technical support and latest information and technology that does not harm the ecosystem and biodiversity. They also lacked funds for scaling-up organic farming. The women said that the government's policy focused mainly on livelihood assistance instead of strengthening and equipping peasant communities, especially peasant women. They also experienced state-sponsored attacks for defending their land rights and were banned from practicing sustainable farming.

Despite the hardships, the peasant women's dedication to organic farming has produced some positive results. They practiced seed-saving methods and polycropping,³⁴ which further enriches the soil. ACOFA has contributed to MASIPAG³⁵ and FARMER Inc.'s³⁶ repository of traditional farming knowledge. This includes its innovation in creating an organic pesticide using Philippine chilis to get rid of hordes of pests called dayangaw. The peasant women also shared their knowledge on creating fermented plant juices, which are used as natural and organic fertiliser for crops.

As part of their movement-building initiatives to promote organic farming, ACOFA founded the ACOFA-Youth and Kabataan para sa Kalikasan at Bayan (KKB)-Bicol to involve youth in strengthening and scaling-up the community's advocacy work within and outside of Calpi. The peasant women through ACOFA continue to

³³ As opposed to genetically-modified food crops.

³⁴ As opposed to monocropping practices in commercial plantations.

³⁵ This is a Farmers and Scientists for Agriculture Development organisation.

³⁶ This stands for Farmer's Assistance for Resource Management, Education and Rehabilitation Incorporate.

advocate with other like-minded organisations and allies to demand for an organic farming ordinance in their barangay to protect the practice, livelihood and industry of organic farmers and, at the same time, recommend a stronger penalty against GMOs.³⁷

In summary, the grassroots women and their community have been utilising real solutions for forest management, farming and fishing. These community-based solutions apply indigenous/traditional knowledge and practices that do no harm to the people and environment. However, with the expansion of false solutions at the grassroots level, these women and their communities are now faced with challenges to keep their traditional knowledge and practices alive. The resilience and willpower of the community, including leadership from some grassroots women, are evident in spite of the trials. These strengths emboldened them to fight against despotic and patriarchal government and corporate interests to reclaim their sovereignty and rights to manage and use their land as well as preserve their indigenous/traditional knowledge and practices.



³⁷ Some municipalities already have similar ordinances, which Barangay Calpi could adapt and use.

SECTION 4

Feminists' Collective Demands

Local and Indigenous women across these contexts learned during the FPARs that their voice matters. Based on their lived experiences as frontline communities being impacted by the implementation of false solutions, they came up with feminist collective demands that take into account their human rights as well as gender, social and climate justice.

Climate finance must come in the forms of grants

Climate fund from climate finance mechanisms (e.g. the Green Climate Fund or GCF, Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility) and the IFIs (e.g. World Bank, Asian Development Bank) must be in the form of grants instead of loans for Global South countries to implement mitigation and adaptation actions and address loss and damage in line with the countries' latest NDCs. Grants must be provided without any conditionalities for real climate solutions. Mitigation and adaptation actions must strictly adhere to the precautionary and do-no-harm principles when implemented on the ground. Also, Global North countries must deliver on their climate finance commitments from their public funds, to Global South countries in the forms of grants and fund real solutions instead of false solutions. They must treat climate finance to the Global South as reparation instead of aid or investment.

Shift from gender-responsive budgeting to gender-transformative budgeting

We call on all parties involved in preparing gender budgeting for climate actions—whether at the local, national or international level, as funders or recipients—to shift from gender-responsive budgeting to gender-transformative budgeting. It is way overdue that gender budgeting takes into account factors such as gender inequality and structural barriers (e.g., patriarchal systems, technology, language). These systemic obstacles have for years prevented grassroots women from accessing climate funds as well as blocked the development and implementation of community-led or women-led solutions that benefit women and their community. It is time that climate finance mechanisms and the IFIs create a level playing field for grassroots women and Indigenous women to access climate funds.

Climate finance should be directly accessible at community level

Continuing from the point above, climate finance mechanisms and the IFIs should accelerate its reform and make it possible for grassroots women and Indigenous women, particularly from the Global South, to have direct access to climate funds to implement rights-based real solutions. Priorities should be on funding community-led, gender-responsive solutions on mitigation, adaptation and

addressing loss and damage (either in the form of pilot projects or scaling-up existing projects), as well as building grassroots women's capacity to meaningfully engage in decision-making throughout all the project phases.

States should consider establishing a national climate change mechanism that is equitable and inclusive, specifically for grassroots women and Indigenous women. This mechanism will serve to fund feminist climate change research and awareness programmes, provide access to climate technologies that are gender-just, technical assistance and training/capacity building programmes to equip and empower grassroots women to address climate change issues, as well as develop community-led, gender-responsive climate solutions. The mechanism should also provide grassroots women direct access to grants to implement locally adapted ecosystem-based solutions (e.g. agriculture, livestock, forest management, coastal management, fishery, food production), and prioritise those that integrate local and Indigenous knowledge, skills and practices. The target fund recipients would be women from marginalised communities and Indigenous women who are vulnerable to adverse climate change impacts to ensure that they are not left out from just and equitable transitions.

Meaningful representation and engagement of local women and Indigenous women

Local women and Indigenous women must be included as one of the rightholders at the national and local levels for crafting and implementing climate-related bills, policies, plans, strategies and budgets. This inclusion must shift from tokenistic inclusion to substantive and transformative participation of women. They must be meaningfully engaged in decision-making spaces for climate-related policies and solutions as well as to strengthen women's human rights, gender equality and intersectional approaches in climate-related matters. Their knowledge and experiences must form the basis of decisions for any projects/programmes on climate solutions. They must be consulted in any periodic review that is carried out, including the review of NDCs and climate-related plans, strategies, budgets and reports.

Respecting the human rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples

The rights of the local communities and the IPs must be respected and upheld, especially the principles of FPIC and do-no-harm. The constant violations of the human rights of the local communities and Indigenous Peoples, including the use of militarism during the implementation of false solutions, call for the establishment of a national inquiry to enable women and communities impacted, particularly environmental and land defenders, to give their testimonies and evidence. The process must be conducted in a safe, transparent and inclusive manner. Witnesses must be protected from retaliation by private companies, politicians or government

officials who have vested interest in the false solutions projects. The affected communities should be fairly compensated for the economic (e.g. land, livelihood, damaged property) and non-economic losses incurred (e.g. no longer able to carry out religious practices and customary practices). Safeguards should be in place to protect Indigenous Peoples rights and the rights of the local communities, including women's rights, from the onset of the project.

Grievance mechanisms must be set up either at the local or national level to enable the local communities and Indigenous Peoples who are affected by false solutions projects to report their complaints, including incidents of GBV. The grievance process must be transparent, inclusive, non-partial and user-friendly for the communities. Also, the complaints and witnesses must be protected from retaliation.

SECTION 5

Looking Inward: Questions for Climate Movements

Stories from the ground, through the FPARs, show that grassroots women and Indigenous women are in many ways negatively impacted by false solutions implemented as mitigation and adaptation actions. The key drivers of false solutions are corporate capture, capitalism and patriarchy. Countries of the Global North play a significant role in the expansion of false solutions in the Global South, with the former undoubtedly perpetuating western imperialism and climate colonialism towards the Global South.

The findings reaffirmed evidence that false solutions affect women's human rights, including the right to health, food security, clean water, land, to self-determination and the right to enjoy a safe, healthy and sustainable environment. The ongoing expansion of false solutions projects have resulted in grassroots women and Indigenous women experiencing exacerbated hardships with regard to their livelihood and way of life, and their rights are increasingly violated. They have experienced militarism in the form of political suppression, intimidation and violence when they fought against climate and social injustice.

False solutions also threaten their utilisation of Indigenous/traditional knowledge and practices for forest management, farming and fishing. These community-based real solutions do not endanger the biodiversity and ecosystem of the forests and rivers or jeopardise the well-being and livelihoods of the community. Notwithstanding the challenges and barriers, grassroots and Indigenous women

and their communities in the FPARs are not passive to the onslaught of false climate solutions in their community. Together they have the agency, leadership and camaraderie to fight against despotic and patriarchal authorities and the private sector, to reject false solutions and reclaim their sovereignty and rights, including their right to practice community-based real solutions using their traditional and indigenous knowledge.

Based on the summary above, we know how grassroots women and Indigenous women are impacted by false solutions. They have also experienced push-back when fighting for their rights, including their rights to land use and to practice community-based real solutions. With a view to strengthening feminist resistance, we would like to put forward the following questions to climate movements advocating against false solutions and promoting real solutions, to ponder and act upon.

- What can movements do to increase the pressure on Global North countries and the private sector to provide reparations to grassroots communities in the Global South, who are suffering the most from climate change impacts and the consequences of false solutions?
- How can movements strengthen their campaign to challenge the Global North-led narrative that promotes carbon markets and private finance and instead demand that they redirect military spending to meaningful climate action in the Global South?
- What can movements do to hold the countries and corporations of the Global North accountable for promoting false climate solutions and their continued exploitation of the Global South, derailing community-based real solutions?
- How can movements shift the widespread narrative among CSOs that climate justice can be achieved by only the just transitioning away from fossil fuels, to a narrative that includes addressing capitalism, corporate capture, climate colonialism and patriarchy?

For cross-regional movements and international movements working together to reject false solutions and promote real solutions, it is due time these movements engage in honest discussions within themselves to address dark historical issues (colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, slavery, etc.) and rise up stronger together in view of the shrinking space for civil societies at national, regional and international levels.

- How can CSOs in the Global North and South build solidarity and scale-up collaboration to reject false solutions and promote community-based real solutions?

- How can CSOs in the Global North proactively address the legacies of colonialism, including climate colonialism, within movements and the CSO space?
 - How can CSOs in the Global North and South work through differences across regions, cultures and ideologies, to find a common ground and amplify their collective voices?
 - How can feminist movements and climate movements work in solidarity with an intersectional and gender lens to reject false solutions and promote community-based real solutions?
-

ANNEX

Brief profiles of the FPAR partners

Bangladesh

Badabon Sangho is a women-led movement-building organisation focusing on women's human rights with a feminist approach. This organisation works with marginalised and disadvantaged women who face violence and discrimination due to their ethnicity and social status. For the FPAR on false solutions, this organisation partnered with women from the Mongla Upazila in Bagerhat District to mobilise, organise and empower them to stop sand dredging embankments at the bank of Pasur River.

Indonesia

Beranda Perempuan focuses on advancing women's human rights and promoting anti-discrimination against women as well as the prevention of Gender-Based Violence and child marriage. This organisation collaborated with the indigenous women from the three villages in Pangkalan Ranjau district to lead the resistance against the Ecosystem Restoration Concession (ERC) for the FPAR on false solutions.

Kelompok Feminis Muda Sulewana (KFMS) also known as the Sulewana Young Feminist Collective believes that the collective power of young women can transform the fight for justice against various oppressions faced by women in the

Poso District. For the FPAR, KFMS partnered with women from five villages to reject the Poso Energy hydropower project as a solution to climate change.

Mongolia

Women Leader Foundation (WLF) provides social activities and programmes related to women's leadership, increasing the capacity of feminist movement of young grassroots women and amplifying the voice of women in climate justice. WLF also advocates for women rights and gender mainstreaming in multiple sectors. For the FPAR, WLF worked with herdswomen from the Dalanjargalan village to reject false solutions associated with coal.

Philippines

Sama-samang Artista para sa Kilusang Agraryo (SAKA) also known as Artist Alliance for Genuine Land Reform and Rural Development is an anti-feudal network of art and cultural workers that support and advance the peasant agenda of genuine agrarian reform, rural development and food security. SAKA supported the Calpi peasant women and youth to stop the propagation of Golden Rice and its climate effects in Manito for the false solutions FPAR.

Thailand

Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) is a rights-based environmental NGO promoting gender equality and just, social inclusion toward people-centred ecosystem-based natural resources, ensuring customary rights, and good governance toward sustainable development. For the FPAR, SDF facilitated the women in Pred Nai community to understand the carbon credit policy of Thailand and reclaim their right to manage mangrove



ABBREVIATIONS

ACOFA	Active Calpi Organic Farmer Association (Philippines)
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
CBDR-RC	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities
CCS	Carbon Capture and Storage
COP	Conference of the Parties
DMCR	Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (Thailand)
ERC	Ecosystem Restoration Concession
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FPAR	Feminist Participatory Action Research
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GM	Genetically Modified
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



The **Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)** is the region's leading network of feminist and women's rights organisations and individual activists. For over 35 years, we have been carrying out advocacy, activism and movement-building to advance women's human rights and Development Justice.

Written by: Hwei Mian Lim

Based on the Feminist Participatory Action Research conducted by Badabon Sangho - Bangladesh, Berenda Perempuan - Indonesia, Kelompok Feminis Muda Sulewana (KFMS) - Indonesia, Women Leader Foundation (WLF) - Mongolia, Sama-samang Artista para sa Kilusang Agraryo (SAKA) - Philippines, Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF).

Edited and reviewed by: Ranjana Giri and Sagarika Bhatta (Programme Leads) and APWLD Secretariat

Designed by: E. Maravilla

Year of Publication: 2025

This publication was produced with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), Foundation for a Just Society (FJS), and Open Society Foundations (OSF).



apwld.org



apwld@apwld.org



[apwld.ngo](https://www.facebook.com/apwld.ngo)



[@apwld](https://twitter.com/apwld)



[apwld_](https://www.instagram.com/apwld_)



[Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development](https://www.youtube.com/AsiaPacificForum)