

CASE COMPILATION

Joining Forces for a Just Transition

Sustainable and Responsible Markets, and Employment Opportunities for the Next Generation

October 2025



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ABBREVIATIONS

BHR	Business and Human Rights
CRGE	Climate Resilient Green Economy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCA	DanChurchAid
EHRD	Environmental Human Rights Defender
ESCO	Energy Service Company
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FBOs	Faith-Based Organisations
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KNCHR	The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification
MSI	Multi-Stakeholder Initiative
NAP	National Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OECDG	OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct
RBC	Responsible Business Conduct
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights
WAGs	Women Action Groups



Photo: Zinyange Auntony

INTRODUCTION

Transitioning toward low-carbon and resilient economies and societies is essential to securing a climate-proof and environmentally sustainable future. Beyond responding to the urgent climate crisis, this transition presents transformative opportunities to advance sustainable development. When pursued in a fair and inclusive manner, it can reshape economies and labour markets to be environmentally sound, socially just, and economically equitable. For younger generations, it offers pathways into green jobs and emerging sectors that contribute meaningfully to a sustainable future.

To realise this potential, people must be placed at the centre of the transition. This means creating decent work opportunities, actively reducing harm to communities, and ensuring that no one is left behind. A just transition must support those most vulnerable to climate change - particularly in low-income countries that contribute least to global emissions yet face the greatest risks. Without deliberate safeguards, the shift to low-carbon economies risks deepening social inequalities and excluding marginalised groups from its benefits. Mitigating these risks requires investment in skills development, inclusive policy processes, and the upholding of fundamental rights at work.

Globally, over 1.2 billion jobs depend on stable environments and healthy ecosystems. Nature-positive solutions, aimed at halting and reversing biodiversity loss, are projected to generate 395 million new jobs by 2030. These roles offer a unique opportunity to foster decent employment for young people while restoring ecosystems and strengthening climate resilience. Ensuring that these jobs are not only green but also decent is essential for individual well-being and the long-term sustainability of societies.

Green employment policies focused on climate mitigation and adaptation must be developed through inclusive social dialogue. This includes meaningful participation of young people and vulnerable communities to ensure that policies are locally relevant, socially responsive, and broadly accepted. Inclusion in both policy design and implementation helps ensure that diverse perspectives and social impacts are considered, fostering fairness and cooperation throughout the transition.

Institutions such as the International Labour Organization and UNDP have recognised that sustainable markets and employment opportunities require a strong foundation in Responsible Business Conduct (RBC). Increasingly, companies are integrating RBC into their business models, recognising its strategic value in opening new markets, mitigating climate and social risks, and strengthening supply chains. Business and human rights due diligence, environmental and social safeguards, and partnerships with civil society are becoming central to building resilient and future-proof enterprises.

To fully realise these ambitions, collective action is essential. The complexity and scale of the green transition demand coordinated efforts across sectors and stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder partnerships and cross-sector collaborations are critical to ensuring that the transition is not only environmentally sound and economically viable, but also socially just and responsive to the needs of vulnerable communities. The private sector must leverage its influence and engage in alliances and Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs) to drive a more just transition, while also recognising the business case for investing in inclusive and sustainable growth.

This case compilation seeks to broaden understanding of how RBC can be practically implemented across diverse contexts. It presents examples that explore key dilemmas, share innovative approaches, and reflect on collaborative efforts among businesses, civil society, and policymakers. Rather than offering definitive solutions, the cases aim to foster dialogue, inspire learning, and open up opportunities for new partnerships across sectors. They illustrate how MSIs can contribute to shaping more inclusive and sustainable markets, and support progress toward a just transition. By highlighting experiences from actors who have promoted, adopted, or navigated challenges, this publication serves as a resource for companies, investors, and decision-makers. It offers insights not only to replicate success, but to learn from setbacks, adapt strategies, and strengthen approaches to RBC, ultimately supporting the creation of more sustainable and responsible markets.

Disclaimer

This publication draws on experiences and research conducted by the authoring organisations presented as cases in brief chapters. Each case and related statements solely represent the views of the author and authoring organisation, and each author is responsible for the data and references presented. Thus, the statements do not reflect the view of DCA nor other organisations contributing to the compilation if these are not listed as author of the specific case.

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Photo: Prakash Jimba

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following seven recommendations synthesise key insights and reflections drawn from across the case examples. They aim to support more inclusive, rights-based, and environmentally sound approaches to a just transition, in alignment with internationally recognised standards and principles. Sharing practical experiences, including challenges and setbacks, helps build trust, foster peer learning, and accelerate collective progress. Transparency in transition efforts is not only a matter of accountability, but a catalyst for innovation and collaboration.



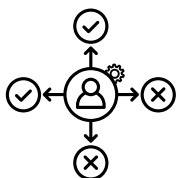
1. Scale Up Responsible Business Conduct to Enable a Just Transition

Delivering on the promise of a just transition requires scaling up effective Human Rights Due Diligence across both internal operations and value chains. Alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises provides a globally recognised foundation for responsible business conduct. This includes integrating environmental and social safeguards, respecting labour rights, and ensuring access to remedy for affected communities. Actors across sectors can take practical steps to embed these principles into operations, draw on peer experiences, and prepare for evolving regulatory requirements. Transparent reporting and case sharing can help others navigate similar challenges and build momentum for responsible practices.



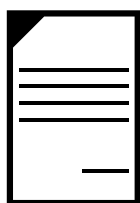
2. Foster Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Locally Relevant Solutions

No single actor can drive a just transition alone. Inclusive collaboration among businesses, governments, civil society, and financial institutions is essential to align efforts, share risks, and invest in long-term partnerships. Co-created solutions help ensure that transition strategies are locally relevant, socially inclusive, and environmentally effective. Multi-stakeholder collaboration is widely recognised as a key enabler of equitable climate action. Stakeholders can build on existing platforms, share lessons from successful partnerships, and explore redistributive mechanisms, such as benefit-sharing models or climate equity funds, that channel resources to frontline communities. Documenting and sharing collaborative approaches can inspire replication and adaptation across contexts.



3. Ensure Meaningful Participation of Rights Holders, Especially Young People and Women

A just transition must actively include those most affected in decision-making processes. Meaningful stakeholder consultations should be embedded in planning, implementation, and monitoring. As illustrated by cases from Kenya and Nepal, large-scale initiatives can have unintended impacts such as displacement and exclusion. Women and young people are often disproportionately affected yet underrepresented. Inclusive engagement contributes to better outcomes and stronger legitimacy. Practical steps include creating participatory platforms, supporting youth-led innovation hubs, and ensuring that affected communities shape, not just respond to, transition strategies. Sharing examples of inclusive governance can help normalise these practices and encourage uptake.



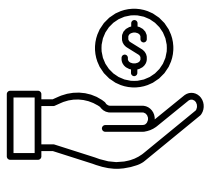
4. Strengthen Civil Society Engagement in Policy Development and Implementation

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a critical role in ensuring climate strategies are grounded in local realities and inclusive of marginalised voices. As seen in the case from EOC-DICAC & DCA-Eth, CSOs promote accountability, bring local knowledge, and support capacity strengthening. Excluding CSOs increases the risk of maladaptation and weakens coordination. Governments, donors, and private actors can take practical steps to involve CSOs in co-developing policies, monitoring implementation, and shaping transition metrics that track equity, participation, and environmental integrity. Sharing civil society-led approaches and tools can help build capacity and foster more inclusive policy ecosystems.



5. Promote Decent Green Work Opportunities and Skills Development for Young People and Women

Inclusive green employment strategies are essential to ensure that young people and women benefit from the transition. These strategies should prioritise decent work, reskilling, and financial literacy to enable entry into emerging green markets. Tailored training and capacity-building are critical to overcoming intersecting barriers. Cases from Bangladesh and Kenya show how green enterprises can empower youth and women through technical support and start-up capital. Stakeholders can build on these models, invest in inclusive workforce development, and promote digital inclusion to ensure broad participation in green and tech-enabled economies. Sharing success stories and lessons from inclusive employment initiatives can help scale impact and inform future programming.



6. Mobilise Blended Finance for Small Green Enterprises

Small businesses are key drivers of innovation and low-carbon development, yet often face barriers to accessing finance. Achieving a just transition requires coordinated efforts to mobilise blended finance. Enabling policies, de-risking instruments, and inclusive investment criteria can help unlock capital for green SMEs. Actors can draw on lessons from impact investors, development finance institutions, and community-based finance models to support youth-led and nature-based enterprises. These models offer scalable pathways for ecosystem restoration, climate resilience, and inclusive livelihoods. Transparent sharing of financing models, including what worked and what didn't, can help others design more effective and inclusive financial mechanisms.



7. Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks to Uphold Environmental and Social Rights

A just transition requires legal and policy foundations that protect both people and the planet. This includes enforcing environmental laws, integrating climate justice principles into national strategies, and ensuring access to remedy for business-related human rights abuses. National Action Plans (NAPs) and sectoral policies must be inclusive, accountable, and responsive to vulnerable groups. Policymakers, regulators, and advocates can take practical steps to align with international standards, safeguard land tenure and indigenous rights, and promote transparency and accountability. Sharing policy innovations and implementation challenges can help build a stronger evidence base and support more coherent legal frameworks across jurisdictions.



Photo: Prakash Jimba

CASE PRESENTATIONS



Inclusive Platforms for Just National Adaptation Plans: Unlocking the power of CSOs in Ethiopia towards a just transition for climate adaptation.

By Getachew Tesfaye, Gebreselassie Atsbha Zegeye, Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), Elmi Nure and Alma Garcia, DanChurchAid (DCA-Eth)

A just transition is most often associated with the energy sector, specifically with ensuring that the transition away from fossil fuels is fair and inclusive, and that it leaves no one behind. However, a just transition also means ensuring an inclusive and just shift towards climate resilient communities, leaving no one behind, especially those that are bearing the brunt of climate change.

The inclusion of climate justice principles in decision-making around climate adaptation is key to maximise the social and economic opportunities of climate action and to avoid maladaptation, i.e., to avoid adaptation strategies that increases people's vulnerabilities, for example, by excluding vulnerable and marginalised groups.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) and DanChurchAid Ethiopia (DCA-Eth) are bringing together Ethiopian civil society organisations (CSOs) and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) to promote effective multistakeholder dialogue towards an inclusive, locally relevant and responsive implementation of Ethiopia's National Adaptation Plan (NAP-Eth).

Ethiopia: From Adaptation Planning to Just Action

Ethiopia is significantly affected by climate change, experiencing challenges such as droughts, floods, and irregular rainfall. These issues predominantly impact vulnerable populations, including women, young and old people, individuals with disabilities, refugees, smallholder farmers, and pastoralists. Despite insignificant contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, the country faces substantial challenges due to its limited adaptive capacity, dependency on the vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, forestry, water and socio-economic vulnerabilities.



In the last 15 years, Ethiopia has developed a number of comprehensive policies and important initiatives to address climate change including the Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy (CRGE), the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LTLEDS), and the Green Legacy Initiative, a national reforestation program aimed at combating deforestation, restoring degraded landscapes, and building climate resilience. These initiatives demonstrate the government's commitment to supporting integrated climate action. Moreover, the National Adaptation Plan (NAP-Eth), initiated in 2017, aims to enhance resilience by incorporating climate adaptation into national development planning.

The policy framework is in place, however, as highlighted in a study commissioned by EOC-DICAC and DCA-Eth in 2024/5, there are several factors hindering the achievement of climate goals and social outcomes, as well as the inclusivity and transparency of the process. These factors include lack of robust coordination mechanism for non-state actors such as CSOs, FBOs, NGOs, and other organisations working on climate issues, lack of knowledge management systems, weak monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems to track progress, low level of private sector engagement, and limited resource mobilisation to support the actual implementation on the ground of the adaptation strategies. According to this study, CSOs in Ethiopia are playing a limited role in shaping Ethiopian climate change policy. Very few CSOs and consortiums have been actively engaged in the preparation and implementation of the NAP-ETH, as well as in international fora.

There is a lack of strong platforms that can facilitate the engagement of CSOs with government institutions. This leads to lack of national and local coordinated action on climate adaptation action and can also lead to maladaptation due to lack of participation of marginalized groups.

Unlocking the power of CSOs for inclusive and just adaptation action

Alongside multilateral and bilateral development organizations and private sector, CSOs, FBOs, and other organisations including community-based organisations, play a crucial role in supporting adaptation efforts in Ethiopia. In order to tap the full potential of Ethiopian civil society to contribute to the effective and just implementation of the NAP-Eth and to hold government and other duty-bearers accountable, EOC-DICAC and DCA-Eth are working to facilitate establishing and strengthening partnerships and platforms, while strengthening decision-making capacities and negotiation skills, and producing evidence based reference materials and engagements to inform adaptation policy and programmes that respond to the needs of those that need it most.



This initiative was launched in 2024, by engaging key government stakeholders and CSOs in dialogue and roundtable discussions to create awareness on the need for more meaningful CSO engagement in climate policy processes and discuss the way forward to establish platforms that promote inclusive and active participation in climate-related decision-making at national level. Some of the key actors engaged include representatives from the Ministries of Planning and Development, Finance, and Agriculture, as well as representatives from civil society (Annex 1). The two events organised by EOC-DICAC and DCA-Eth, served as a starting point for relevant actors to meet or re-connect, discuss and have a joint understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and gaps for in national adaptation strategies. They also created a very good opportunity to explore the reasons for limited representation of CSOs in climate policy processes. Participants agreed on establishing a strong CSO platform for policy dialogue and advocacy to influence the government and international agencies for more and better adaptation finance and action.

Building on the momentum created in 2024, EOC-DICAC and DCA-Eth will continue working on accelerating the implementation of the NAP-Eth to consolidate the establishment of a multistakeholder platform for NAP-Eth implementation, supporting continues dialogue among platform members with an emphasis on the integration of climate justice principles in the NAP-Eth program, funding mechanisms and regulatory frameworks. The initiative will also support capacity strengthening on climate finance mobilisation and climate negotiation for CSOs, FBOs, Sector Ministries and Private sector actors. Furthermore, through the platform, evidence-based information will be gathered to inform NAP-Eth processes, and biannual meetings will be conducted among platform partners to assess progress.

The participation of CSOs in the development and implementation of the NAP-Eth and other climate related plans is essential to ensure that adaptation strategies are inclusive, locally relevant, and responsive to the needs of vulnerable communities. CSOs have long time experience working at community level with the most climate-vulnerable groups, for example, with pastoralists, smallholder farmers, refugees and IDPs. Nevertheless, they have limited representation in climate policy formulation, implementation and monitoring processes. The meaningful engagement of civil society, private sector and other relevant stakeholders needs to be strengthened and sustained through dedicated and continuous efforts and resources.



Establishing a strong CSOs platform is critical to advocate and accelerate the NAP-Eth implementation. Having a strong platform will strengthen their collective voice and help creating mechanisms for collaboration, fostering relationships and a collective effort towards achieving shared success and making meaningful changes. The platform should engage CSOs from various sectors to participate in policy dialogue on diverse policy issues related to climate adaptation, for example those related to climate resilient agriculture, sustainable natural resources management, improving early warning systems, etc.

A strong CSO platform also ensures the inclusion of a diversity of CSOs, including small grassroots organisations and amplifies their voices. CSOs can be a voice for marginalised communities, not only at national fora, but they can also represent the interests of local communities at the international level, for example at regional fora such as the African Climate Summit or at global events such as the annual Climate Conference of Parties (COP).

This calls for the need to continue advocating and creating room for CSOs to enhance their engagement in climate and other relevant sectoral policy process, for example those related to land use, agriculture, energy, etc.



About The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC)

EOC-DICAC) was established as a development wing of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) with the objective of enhancing the development efforts of the country by legal notice No.415/72 in 1972. The organization has been also re-registered as Ethiopian Residents Charity in accordance with the Charity and societies Proclamation No.621/2009 with certificate No.1560. The intervention areas of EOC-DICAC include but are not limited to Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation for communities affected by natural and man-made calamities (food and nonfood items, psychosocial support and DRR). The organization also implements social service interventions including education, WASH and health and nutrition. EOC-DICAC also implements food security and livelihood improvement including agriculture and income generating activities. Natural resources management and climate action including climate advocacy, irrigation scheme development and Church forest management are also the thematic intervention areas of EOC-DICAC. EOC-DICAC operates all over the country and has coordination offices and projects in most of the national regional states.

DanChurchAid

DanChurchAid (DCA) has been operating in Ethiopia since 2004. While supported relief projects in Ethiopia through local partners as early as the 1970s, the country office in Addis Ababa was officially established in 2004. DCA Ethiopia's Country Programme (2022–2027) commits to promoting equality, resilience, and peace by integrating humanitarian response, resilience building, and peacebuilding efforts, with a strong focus on gender transformation, climate-resilient food systems, and youth empowerment.

Catalyzing a Just Transition: Financing Green and Gender-Responsive SMEs in Bangladesh Through Blended Impact Investment

By Sharawwat Islam and Machteld Ooijens, OneTrueValue

Turning climate vulnerability into inclusive opportunities in Bangladesh

Bangladesh finds itself at a critical crossroads—economically ascendant yet increasingly vulnerable to climate change. As the third largest economy in South Asia, the country has achieved consistent annual GDP growth of 6 to 7 percent. Yet its development trajectory is increasingly threatened by climate-related shocks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that, by 2050, the country's GDP could shrink by up to nine percent, with 17 percent of its land submerged and 20 million people displaced. At the same time, energy demand is growing faster than supply, and although enabling policies for renewables are being adopted, barriers remain for SMEs to adopt clean energy and other green technologies. In this context, the notion of a just transition—where the move to a low-carbon economy is equitable and inclusive—is not merely aspirational but essential.

Seizing this opportunity requires a shift in mindset. Finance must be mobilized not just for returns but also for impact. Public and private sectors must align their efforts, share risk, and invest in long-term partnerships. The success of this transition depends on empowering those most affected — especially small growing businesses and women entrepreneurs — to become agents of change. Bangladesh can lead by example, proving that equitable, sustainable growth is possible even under the pressure of the climate crisis. This is the essence of a just transition: ensuring that economic progress uplifts the vulnerable, protects the environment, and builds a foundation for shared prosperity.

To support and accelerate this transition, Truvalu and OneToWatch, two impact investors active in Bangladesh, have developed a blended finance approach to enable climate action, gender equity, and inclusive growth by targeting green and gender-responsive SME investments. Through collaborative initiatives, such as the Access to Green Finance for Enterprises (A2GF) and a green investment fund called ORE II, Truvalu and its partner OneToWatch are fostering collaboration among the public and private sectors to advance a Just Transition.

SMEs at the heart of the transition

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are central to Bangladesh's economy, contributing over a quarter of GDP and employing nearly eight million people. They operate across diverse sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, and services, and are widely distributed between urban and rural areas. SMEs are agile and innovative, often better positioned than large corporations to pivot quickly in the face of market or environmental shifts. However, they are also highly exposed to climate risks and are typically underserved by the financial sector. Resource constraints, limited access to green technologies, and lack of financial literacy mean that most SMEs struggle to adopt environmentally sustainable and climate resilient practices, even as they face rising operational disruptions due to climate change.

The barriers are multifaceted. Conventional financial institutions view green SME investments as high-risk and low-return, often overlooking these enterprises due to lack of collateral or credit history and high due diligence costs. Bangladesh Bank's green finance schemes, while robust on paper, predominantly benefit large corporations. Women-led SMEs face even steeper challenges, as gender biases in lending practices, limited formal registration, and disproportionate climate vulnerability exclude them from meaningful participation. Even where policy frameworks support green growth, implementation remains fragmented and incentives weak. On top of this, many SMEs lack awareness of sustainable business models and access to clean technologies, making them ill-prepared for the demands of a climate-resilient economy.

The promise of blended finance

Despite these obstacles, SMEs have the potential to drive low-carbon development, enhance energy efficiency, and promote climate-resilient livelihoods—if equipped with the right resources. Recognizing this untapped opportunity, Dutch impact investors Truvalu and OneToWatch initiated a series of innovative initiatives in Bangladesh to support green and gender-smart SMEs through blended finance models. Their efforts aim not only to provide funding but also to create enabling conditions for long-term sustainability and systemic change.

In 2023, Truvalu and OneToWatch, in partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh, launched the Access to Green Finance for Enterprises (A2GF) initiative. This multi-year program addresses both the supply and demand sides of green finance by building the capacity of SMEs, strengthening financial institutions, and fostering a regulatory environment conducive to inclusive green investment. The goal is to improve economic opportunities and climate resilience, particularly for marginalized communities.



Finance must be mobilized not just for returns but also for impact. Public and private sectors must align their efforts, share risk, and invest in long-term partnerships. The success of this transition depends on empowering those most affected.

A2GF adopts a holistic approach. On the SME side, the program provides financial literacy training, business development support, technical assistance, and guidance on investment readiness with a green lens. This includes a strong emphasis on financial literacy and governance, awareness building about green businesses, introducing the green financing schemes, and equipping SMEs to manage risk, reduce emissions, and grow sustainably. Special attention is given to women-led businesses, recognizing their unique vulnerabilities and transformative potential.

The program for example supported the women-owned SME named Eminent Agri-Industries that specializes in premium dairy products, including cheese, ghee, and butter, with a production capacity of 200 kg per day. It supplies to hotels and restaurants in Dhaka and 83% of its employees are women. The company plans to expand operations with energy efficient machinery and adopt solar energy solutions. The company received training in financial management and was supported to implement the use of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) as part of the digital literacy training that they received. The staff was also trained on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions calculation and received financing readiness support including connection to a financial institution and loan application preparation. Other SMEs in the program are also being supported to improve their waste management practices and adopt sustainable agricultural practices.

On the supply side, A2GF works with financial institutions and impact investors to create incentives for financing green SMEs. Bank staff receive training in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) evaluation and risk management and are encouraged to expand their green portfolios towards SMEs. To mitigate the perceived risks associated with SME financing, the program integrates impact-focused incentives and partially covers deal execution costs for financial institutions and investors. These mechanisms are designed to unlock private capital and catalyze broader market transformation. The program also advocates to policymakers to embed inclusivity in green finance frameworks and other relevant regulations.

Scaling through a dedicated Green Fund

To scale these efforts and to make the initiative sustainable, Truvalu and OneToWatch have formalized their collaboration through a joint venture—OneTrueValue. Their investment initiative under this banner is ORE II, a €10 million green equity fund focused on accelerating a just energy transition to low carbon supply chains in South and Southeast Asia. The fund's primary focus is investing in Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) that install rooftop solar for commercial clients in Bangladesh and Nepal. Operating on a “pay-as-you-save” model, these ESCOs eliminate the need for upfront investment by client SMEs, making solar energy more accessible and cost-effective.

This model is especially timely in Bangladesh, where energy demand is growing faster than supply, and fossil fuel dependency makes the economy vulnerable to price shocks and disruptions. Despite high solar potential, less than five percent of viable rooftop capacity has been installed. Government policies now favor the adoption of renewables, and solar energy has become cheaper than grid electricity. ORE II leverages these favorable conditions to de-risk investments and demonstrate viable business models for clean energy. It aligns with Bangladesh's commitments under the Paris Agreement, which call for \$172 billion in climate and energy investments by 2030.

ORE II is not just about environmental and climate outcomes. The fund also embeds social impact into its strategy by prioritizing gender inclusion in employment, particularly in solar project construction and maintenance. It provides patient, affordable capital to SMEs, while offering technical assistance to build capacity. Strong impact measurement frameworks ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with global standards.

Multi stakeholder collaboration is needed to drive just transitions

The success of these efforts depends on multistakeholder collaboration. No single actor can drive a just transition alone. Governments must play a leading role by implementing enabling policies, integrating green SME finance into national climate strategies and other relevant sectoral policies, strengthening environmental regulations, offering tax incentives for green investment, and improving access to credit and environmental data. Public policy is vital to give confidence to investors and entrepreneurs.

Private sector investors, particularly impact investors, must integrate ESG criteria including a gender lens into their investment strategies, and invest with the intention to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. They can co-develop innovative tailored financial products and share risks through partnerships.

Civil society organizations bring critical local knowledge, engage communities, and ensure accountability in how funds are deployed. They can also support capacity strengthening of local entrepreneurs and advocate for inclusive outcomes.

At the center of this ecosystem are the SMEs themselves. They are not just recipients of finance but co-creators of solutions. Engaging them early, understanding their challenges, and co-designing interventions that respond to their realities are crucial to building lasting change. Programs like A2GF and funds like ORE II show that when SMEs are empowered with knowledge, finance, and opportunity, they become the engines of climate resilience, low-carbon development, and social inclusion.

About OneTrueValue (OTV)

OneTrueValue (OTV) is an investment management and advisory firm driving green growth solutions across emerging markets. We unlock private capital and scale solutions that deliver strong financial returns alongside measurable environmental and social outcomes. Formed as a joint venture between One to Watch and Truvalu, OTV leverages two decades of combined investment and business development expertise to build successful solutions that tackle climate and development challenges head-on. Through financing solutions and tailored support, OTV aims to help businesses scale, create value and drive long-term impact.



Beyond the Grid: Advancing a Rights-Based Renewable Energy Transition for Women and Youth in Kenya

By Christina Arrumm & Noreen Wewa, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

Development in Kenya, like in any other growing economy, has been exponential over the years. The country's development agenda is outlined in the Fourth Medium Term Plan (MTP IV) 2023-2027 of the Vision 2030 which is aligned with its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA). These are all strategies the Government seeks to employ to ensure inclusivity, reduce inequalities and ultimately, leave no one behind as the country develops.

In the business arena, Kenya has adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights, that domesticates the United Nations Guiding Principles on Human Rights and is aligned to the SDGs. The NAP offers guidelines for enhanced government policies that would ensure the respect for human rights by businesses.

Renewable dreams or gendered nightmares?

The State has committed to a climate-resilient and low-carbon future. Through its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), it has an ambitious goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35% compared to the projected business-as-usual levels by 2035. In the energy sector, the State has pledged to increase its renewable energy generation from the current 83% to 100%. Kenya is a global leader in geothermal energy, with over 800 MW generated from the Rift Valley region, much of it concentrated in Olkaria and an upcoming power plant in Suswa.



While positive impacts of inclusive development on communities is the dream, large-scale projects such as renewable energy projects, have a likelihood of adversely impacting communities.



This has attracted substantial investments from partners in geothermal and, more recently, solar energy; contributing significantly to the national grid and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. While positive impacts of inclusive development on communities is the dream, large-scale projects such as renewable energy projects, have a likelihood of adversely impacting communities.

Access to energy, particularly electricity, can well enhance the quality of life for project affected communities. However, they continue to suffer from energy poverty and in most cases women and youth are likely to suffer disproportionately from the negative impacts of these renewable energy projects. This is the case for indigenous and pastoralist communities inhabiting these lands, with transition coming at a steep cost for the Maasai of Naivasha and Suswa.

Communities face a raft of challenges including displacement, loss of ancestral land, and exclusion from decision-making processes. Androcentrism remains at the center of many Kenyan communities and women are often disenfranchised. Moreover, women are not a homogenous group, and female youth often suffer double discrimination. It is imperative, therefore, that businesses in the renewable energy sector address existing inequalities within communities in favor of women and girls, rather than exacerbate them or create new inequalities.

Women who traditionally rely on land for livelihood and are cultural stewards of natural resources, are disproportionately affected due to their lack of land ownership and limited participation in community-level governance. Youth who attempt to speak out or demand more inclusion in energy conversations are labelled “rebellious” or “ungrateful.” This stigma discourages meaningful youth engagement in environmental governance and the green economy, despite the youth being the largest demographic affected by green transition policies. Defying the odds, there now stands a young female human rights defender has chosen to speak up on behalf of the Maasai community representing the voice of many women and youth to articulate their concerns and fight for their rights.

In the Maasai Community women and girls are care givers, bread winners, homemakers among other gendered roles assigned to them. Many barely have time to engage in any other income generating activities outside of their homes because of these responsibilities. For those engaged in paid work, this means they take on the double burden as they still have unpaid care work which includes sourcing for and relying on less efficient energy sources.



Maasai women have expressed interest in being part of renewable energy supply chains or maintenance work. However, there is a lack of training and capacity-building programs tailored for indigenous women. As a result, they remain locked out of green job opportunities despite their proximity to large-scale energy infrastructure. They argue that if the older generation cannot secure jobs, their youth many of whom are educated, should be considered and equipped with necessary skills to take up these opportunities.

Additionally, traditional open-fire cooking, still widely practiced among the Maasai Community, comes with a host of negative effects both environmental and social. Women and girls living in these areas with an abundance of renewable resources, face the paradox of languishing in poverty and greatly contributing to environmental degradation and increased carbon emissions through cutting down of trees and burning of firewood and other fossil fuels for domestic use and subsistence. They are also more likely to suffer health risks from smoke inhalation due to working in poorly ventilated and polluted spaces. By ensuring that these communities have access to electricity, the time poverty women and girls suffer as a result of having to travel long distances to collect firewood will be significantly reduced and the safety risks that leave them exposed to sexual and gender-based violence may also decrease.

Cognizant of their contribution to climate change, the young Maasai women acknowledge that they too have a role to play in just transition and call on businesses to support them to venture into alternative livelihoods such as small-scale business, eco-tourism, or clean energy entrepreneurship. They further seek energy efficient solutions to help them use less energy to achieve the same level of output or performance. The young women are advocating for businesses to support communities to use *eco-jikos* (energy-saving cookstoves) which present a practical solution. These stoves use significantly less fuel, emit less smoke, and cook faster, allowing women to reclaim time, safeguard their health, and reduce their environmental footprint. Moreover, the production, sale, and distribution of *eco-jikos* offer women an entrepreneurial opportunity that aligns with the goals of a green economy.

Additionally, Women Action Groups (WAGs) in parts of Naivasha in Nakuru County have expressed strong interest in learning how to manufacture and market *eco-jikos* locally. With proper training and access to start-up capital, such initiatives can scale into viable social enterprises that economically empower women, improve health outcomes, and support environmental conservation.



The place of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI's) in climate change

The Constitution of Kenya provides for the right to full and equal enjoyment of all rights including the right to a clean and healthy and environment as well as the right to equal political, economic and social opportunities for women and men (Article 27). The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) is mandated to protect and promote human rights in public and private spheres. Drawing from this and its role under Kenya's NAP, the KNCHR advocates for a human rights-based approach in business practice and in this case, Kenya's energy transition.

The extractives and energy sectors, both high risk sectors, have been a key focus for the KNCHR owing to the nature of complaints it receives. Land and natural resources, is a key thematic area in the NAP with one of the concerns being the lack of sustainable benefits for host communities from the exploitation of natural resources despite the constitutional imperative for equitable sharing of benefits. To promote a culture of respect for human rights in these sectors, the KNCHR adopts different strategies.

The Commission has been at the forefront in capacity building of businesses to enhance understanding of their responsibility to respect human rights as guided in the UNGPs. At the same time, the KNCHR in collaboration with other stakeholders, is sensitizing communities on their right to hold both the State and businesses accountable. The Commission has also facilitated community forums and legal aid clinics and sensitization forums for indigenous youth and women, supporting them to access remedy for business related human rights abuses. It has been able to bring together county officials, businesses in the energy sector, NEMA, and community representatives in dialogue sessions that have led to review of some resettlement plans and implementation of gender-sensitive grievance redress mechanisms.



Conclusion

The case of the Maasai community in Olkaria underscores the urgent need to embed human rights in Kenya's renewable energy transition. A just transition is not only about generating clean energy it is about ensuring that vulnerable communities are not left behind. And while culture plays its role in the Maasai communities like in many others, businesses need not forget the leverage they have to influence change in behavior and attitude. Women must be empowered so as to make informed decisions on matters concerning them and they be given leadership opportunities to represent their plight especially in the various grievance committees.

Businesses should come up with inclusive policies that promote meaningful community engagement, training and reskilling where possible and economic diversification. As part of promoting responsible business conduct, the Government should provide guidance to businesses leading by example through state owned enterprises.

At the heart of it, the KNCHR is calling on businesses to uphold rights in the changing climate. Businesses including state owned enterprises that dominate the energy sector, should engage in meaningful stakeholder consultations as part of their due diligence processes to ensure their respect for human rights.

About Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights ("KNCHR" or "Commission") is an independent National Human Rights Institution established under Article 59 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and operationalized under the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights Act, Cap 71, Laws of Kenya. The Commission's core mandate is to promote and protect human rights across private and public spheres in the Republic of Kenya. KNCHR is accredited as an A-status National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) having fully complied with the United Nations Paris Principles and it also enjoys Affiliate Status before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Best Practice: The Operational Approach to Sustainability Due Diligence

The Role and Promise of Human Rights Due Diligence in Enabling a Just Transition

By Sara Stendevad, Communications & Sustainability Director, Aeven and Sune Skadegaard Thorsen, CEO, GLOBAL CSR and SEE impacts.

Aeven is among the first companies globally to implement Human Rights Due Diligence in full alignment with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). Aeven appreciates the importance of and actively contributes to the green transition, while recognising that scaling up responsible business conduct is crucial for ensuring a Just Transition.

By implementing the UNGPs – the foundation for recent sustainability regulations in the EU and elsewhere – Aeven becomes part of the Just Transition and aims to inspire other companies to follow suit. Aeven fully supports that ‘principled pragmatism’ is necessary to scale up responsible business conduct globally.

Established in 2023 as a carve out from NNIT, Aeven’s new CEO, Henrik Bodskov, was determined to embedding sustainability at the core of the company’s foundation. “We’re on a quest to keep digital infrastructure critical to the lives of millions, safe, secure, and productive”.

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As a leading provider of critical digital infrastructure, we understand our impact on our surroundings and consistently seek ways to improve

Sara Stendevad, Communications & Sustainability Director

Through his professional network, Henrik Bodskov became aware of the success of the 'Operational Approach' to Sustainability Due Diligence offered by GLOBAL CSR. In August 2023, Henrik Bodskov and Sara Stendevad gathered Aeven's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and key colleagues to conduct impact assessments of Aeven's operations in Denmark.

The five-day on-boarding program was designed to develop capacity of the ELT and the in-house team to take full ownership of sustainability. It also laid the foundation for Aeven to demonstrate best practices in responsible business conduct, in alignment with the internationally recognised framework of the UNGPs and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct (OECDG) – collectively referred to as the 'Standard'.

Case description and analysis

The five-day onboarding program was strategically designed to form a long-lasting and solid foundation for Aeven's sustainability efforts. The objectives and deliverables of the program were clearly defined in advance:

1. Developing Capacity:

The first day focused on strengthening the participants' capacity to fully understand and appreciate the value of implementing the Standard. This included understanding the Standard's connection to the UN Global Compact, the Sustainable Development Goals, existing and upcoming regulations – particularly those from the European Union – including related sustainability reporting requirements.

2. A Policy Commitment:

The ELT and Aeven's in-house team prepared an overarching Policy Commitment for adoption by the Company's Board of Directors. By including Aeven's responsibility to respect all human rights from the International Bill of Human Rights – as stipulated in the UNGPs Foundational Principle 12 – this policy commitment meets the UNGPs Operational Principle 16. A draft Policy Commitment was prepared by GLOBAL CSR prior to onboarding to facilitate discussion and refinement.

3. Aeven's First Operational-level Impact Assessments in Own Operations:

These impact assessments were designed to foster sustainability ownership within the ELT, supporting their understandings on how sustainability can be affected by business operations in general, and by Aeven's activities in particular. Through this process, Aeven's operational team developed capacity to conduct Sustainability Due Diligence in own operations, through regular operational-level impact assessments across key areas of Social Sustainability (including at a minimum, the human rights from the International Bill of Human Rights), Environmental Sustainability, and Economic Sustainability.

Using written materials provided by Aeven, GLOBAL CSR prepared a draft human rights impact assessment, environmental impact assessment, and economic impact assessment for Aeven's Danish operations on the SEE impact platform. These preparations allowed the participants to finalize the social, environmental, and economic impact assessments within just three days during the on-boarding.

These operational-level impact assessments focused on identifying risks of Aeven 'causing' or 'contributing to' adverse impacts, as described in the UNGPs Foundational Principle 13(a). In addition, the first assessments assessed solely on 'potential' impacts – not 'actual' impacts – enabling Aeven's forward-looking and collaborative approach to human rights risk management, rather than taking a defensive stance. Subsequent regular reassessments include actual impacts for the period assessed.

During the first operational-level assessments, Aeven's Danish operations were found to have potential impacts across 15 of the 48 human rights areas, with 4 classified as potentially severe impacts (i.e. material impacts). With ELT participating, decisions on preventative or mitigating actions could be agreed immediately.

The first impact assessments create a precondition for 'informed stakeholder engagement' using the SEE impacts platform's grievance mechanism 'Tell-Us' – designed in alignment with the eight effectiveness criteria for an "operational-level grievance mechanism" outlined in the UNGPs Operational Principle 31. The platform enables Aeven to share its impact assessments with potentially impacted stakeholders, also allowing them to provide feedback or suggest improvements; all as required by the UNGPs. Thus, during the first impact assessments, direct engagement with impacted stakeholders beyond the immediate participants was not undertaken.

By starting assessments within the context of the Headquarter (HQ) operations first, Aeven established a strong internal precedent, and was in a better position to engage with subsidiaries in other jurisdictions on human rights due diligence. The SEE impacts platform also facilitated this process by allowing Aeven to share HQ assessments as templates to subsidiary accounts, improving assessment efficiency.

Following the completion of the Danish assessments, Aeven's expert team conducted Sustainability Due Diligence for its operations in the Philippines and is scheduled to assess its Czech operations in 2025.

4. A Code of Conduct for Employees

Aeven's Code of Conduct for Employees should be clear, accessible, understandable, and easy to read. Its purpose is to strengthen employee understanding of and engagement in corporate sustainability, and it should reflect the conduct that Aeven expects from its employees, particularly in relation to the risks of adverse impacts identified through the sustainability impact assessments.

On the final day of the onboarding program, informed by the results of the impact assessments, GLOBAL CSR presented a draft Code of Conduct for Employees to Aeven for review and its subsequent adaptation.

5. A Code of Conduct for Business Relationships.

The final day of the onboarding emphasized the fact that Aeven – like any other businesses – is responsible for impacts that occur throughout its external value chains. While Aeven has fulfilled its responsibility to avoid causing or contributing to adverse impacts by conducting regular operational-level impacts (UNGPs Foundational Principle 13(a)), it should also “seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts” that it is merely linked to, in line with the UNGPs Foundational Principle 13(b).

Hence, Human Rights Due Diligence also covers Aeven's value chain activities. Aeven recognises that the Standard instructs them to require all its business relationships to implement the Standard as well; this expectation is expressed in Aeven's Policy Commitment. In addition, Aeven prepared a Code of Conduct for Business Relationships, which provides further guidance on how business relationships can meet the Standard.

Aeven understands that the promise for a Just Transition relies on the opportunity to scale up proper Human Rights Due Diligence across value chains. By requiring business relationships to meet the Standard, Aeven's business relationships will also have to require their business relationships to do the same. Having implemented the Standard internally and being capable to share the methodology and results with business relationships, Aeven becomes a catalyst for enabling responsible business conduct to scale up.

In addition to requiring business relationships adhere to the Standard, Aeven is committed to engaging with companies in its value chains that cause or contribute to *actual severe human rights impacts*. Such impacts are indicative of the absence of proper Human Rights Due Diligence by business relationships, which – if implemented – should have prevented or mitigated the impact.

Upon becoming aware of severe actual adverse impacts in its value chains, Aeven is committed to use or build leverage to seek to make the causing company cease its impact and start implementing the Standard. This engagement reflects Aeven's commitment to responsible business conduct and to upholding the Standard.

Conclusion

Aeven concludes that, first, a systematic, pragmatic, and continuous approach to Human Rights Due Diligence – supported by the strong backing and understanding of executive leadership – enables Aeven to manage human dignity well, to engage employees and impacted stakeholders meaningfully, and to demonstrate industry leadership.

Second, Human Rights Due Diligence aligned with the UNGPs is the key to a Just Transition.

Third, Human Rights Due Diligence creates a solid, and recognised foundation for Aeven to best execute its strategic objectives of becoming part of the green transition and contributing to the right to freedom of information.

Key Recommendations

- Involve top management from the outset of Sustainability Due Diligence to ensure ownership and commitment across the organisation.
- Establish Human Rights Due Diligence in two distinct management streams: one for the company's own operations, and another for business relationships in value chains.

- Incorporate the regular operational-level human rights impact assessments into the company's annual planning and reviewing.
- Ensure transparency by sharing impact assessments with both impacted stakeholders and business relationships.
- And remember - do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

About Aeven

Aeven provides top-tier data centres and hybrid cloud solutions for both private and public customers. Aeven Group (incl. Sentia, acquired in 2023) employs app. 2,000 employees across Denmark, The Czech Republic, The Philippines, and Hungary. We assist companies in critical industries stay on course in a changing world by offering adaptable, specialized, and locally anchored digital infrastructure. We serve clients with global reach, operating within critical and regulated industries, such as life science and healthcare, the public sector, finance, energy and utilities, industrial goods and manufacturing, and retail and consumer goods. Driven by ingenuity, presence, and confidence Aeven bases its operations on a strategic focus on, inter alia, Responsible Business Conduct.

About GLOBAL CSR

GLOBAL CSR has since 1998 advised companies on sustainability, with leading expertise in business and human rights. GLOBAL CSR worked closely with the late Prof. John G. Ruggie during his mandate from 2005 developing the globally agreed minimum standard for Responsible Business Conduct – the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), to unanimous endorsement in 2011. GLOBAL CSR has developed the cloud-based platform 'SEE impacts' to assist companies conduct and maintain sustainability due diligence throughout their operations in full alignment with the UNGPs and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECDG).



Standing Up for the Right to a Healthy Environment:

The Benefits of Training Environmental Human Rights Defenders in Nepal

By Tek Nath Acharya and Khadka Raj Joshi, Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC)

Surya Kumari Sunar, Nirmala Limbu and Kriti Shrestha, DanChurchAid in Nepal

Industrial pollution continues to jeopardise the health, livelihoods, and environment of communities across Nepal. Facilities such as brick kilns, cement factories, and sugar production plants often discharge pollutants and untreated waste into air, water, and soil. The resulting impacts, including respiratory illnesses and contaminated water sources, violate the fundamental human right to a healthy environment.

Despite legal provisions in Nepal's Constitution Article 30 (1) which states that every citizen has the right to live in a clean and healthy environment, The Environmental Protection Act, and Local Governance Act, enforcement remains weak, allowing polluters to evade accountability. Recognising this gap, DCA in Nepal and its implementing partner, the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), initiated the SAMRAKSHAN project funded by DANIDA to empower Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) to protect environmental rights through community-driven advocacy and legal action.

Training EHRDs to Drive Change

As part of the initiative, DCA in Nepal and INSEC trained 63 EHRDs across three provinces Sudurpashchim, Lumbini, and Madhesh as well as at the federal level. These EHRDs received comprehensive training on the links between climate change, climate justice, and human rights including the National Action Plan on Business in Human Rights of Nepal. The sessions covered fact-finding, monitoring, and documentation tools and techniques to identify violations of environmental rights and understand national human rights frameworks.

Importantly, the training sessions prioritized inclusivity. Of the 63 participants, 28 women, two LGBTQIA+ representatives, and eight Dalits participated, ensuring that marginalised groups were actively engaged in the advocacy for environmental justice.



Through the training, EHRDs gained the knowledge and tools to monitor environmental conditions in their communities, collect credible evidence of violations, and advocate effectively with relevant authorities and institutions. They were also sensitised to the safety risks that EHRDs may encounter and briefed on protective measures available to them.

Taking Legal Action for Environmental Justice

The impact of this capacity building was clearly demonstrated through a fact-finding mission led by trained EHRDs on the environmental and health impacts of the Mahakali Sugar Industries in Sudurpashchim Province. The EHRDs documented severe pollution from the factory, which had been affecting nearby communities.

Mahakali Sugar Industries Pvt. Ltd., located in the Belauri Municipality-10, discharged its waste and wastewater into a nearby natural canal through underground pipelines. This has resulted in a foul odour, making it difficult for people to pass by. The pollution has also killed aquatic life in the canal, and livestock can no longer drink the contaminated water. Furthermore, the roads surrounding the industry are in poor condition, with numerous potholes, making travel difficult. In terms of employment, 95% of the workforce consists of Indian nationals, while only 5% are Nepali workers. In short, the industry is creating no livelihood benefits to locals and making them more vulnerable to resulting environmental and health challenges.



The chemical waste from industry is being discharged into the biological sewage drains, leading to the destruction of aquatic life. The transportation vehicles of the mill are parked on the road, obstructing the pathways of the residents. In addition to sugar, local liquor is also produced at the mill. Despite operating for 15 years, they have still not installed a single light bulb at the industrial gate.

Bir Bahadur Singh, Resident Ward no 10, Belauri Municipality.



The industry has made no contribution under corporate social responsibility. The condition of the road surrounding the mill has worsened compared to before. Despite the commitment to allocating 10% of the income for social responsibility, 100% of the earnings have been made without any contribution

Based on the evidence collected and in consultation with civil society organisations and legal professionals, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in December 2024. The PIL called for the factory operator to minimise pollution and health risks and urged the local government to monitor and report on the company's compliance with environmental regulations.

The Dipayal High Court in Doti district responded by issuing an interim order against Mahakali Sugar Industries in early 2025, marking a landmark moment for environmental justice in the region. The case created a formal space for EHRDs to advocate continuously engaging both the plant operator and local government to ensure accountability and compliance.

Building Strong Networks for Advocacy

To sustain this momentum, the project also established three provincial EHRD networks and one national network. These platforms promoted collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strategic engagement among EHRDs. Members were given opportunities to interact with law enforcement agencies, provincial parliaments, and local human rights groups, further strengthening their advocacy skills.

The networks facilitated capacity-sharing sessions on how to identify, document, and report environmental rights violations. A custom reporting tool was developed to streamline the process of evidence gathering. Through these networks, EHRDs collaborated closely with civil society and legal professionals, enabling them to design effective advocacy strategies rooted in community realities.

The involvement of trained, local EHRDs ensured that environmental rights violations were documented from the lived experiences of the communities affected. This grounded approach enhanced the credibility of the findings and mobilised public and legal pressure for change.



The Transformative Impact of Empowering Community Environmental Human Rights Defenders

The Mahakali case illustrates how empowered community actors can create significant legal and policy impact. It also highlights the importance of bridging legal expertise with grassroots insights. The media interest in the communities' fight for environmental justice further underscores the critical role that local EHRDs are playing in upholding environmental human rights in Nepal.

Beyond this single case, the project has laid a foundation for sustained environmental justice by:

- Strengthening community capacity to detect and respond to environmental threats.
- Promoting inclusive networks that represent the diversity of Nepal's population.
- Facilitating collaboration between EHRDs, legal professionals, and institutions.
- Advocating enforcement of Nepal's environmental legislation at local and provincial levels.

By building the capacity of EHRDs across Nepal, INSEC and DCA in Nepal enabled community-led identification, documentation, and legal action against environmental violations, resulting in a court-ordered intervention and strengthened advocacy for the right to a healthy environment especially for marginalised groups.



About Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC)

Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) is a human rights NGO, founded in 1988, by the unrelenting Human Rights defender Prakash Kaphley and prominent Human Rights activist Sushil Pyakurel. Started with the objective of protecting the rights of people engaged in informal sectors, it has significantly contributed to protecting and promoting the fundamental rights of people in virtually all sectors. It has focused its efforts towards disadvantaged groups, including agricultural labourers, underprivileged women, and socially discriminated people including Dalits and children. In the early days, the organisation effectively contributed to institutionalising democratic political systems in the nation taking a human rights based approach, both at the policy and grassroots level after the restoration of democracy in 1990/91. INSEC closely collaborates with grassroots communities, legal entities and the National Human Rights Commission to monitor, document, access legal remedies to and publish human rights violation cases, including environmental human rights violations.

DanChurchAid

DanChurchAid (DCA) has been working in Nepal since 2008. Nepal's Country Programme (2022-2026) commits to mainstreaming climate action in all projects through a human rights-based approach, building resilience to climate change impacts, contributing to climate mitigation and advocating for climate and environmental justice. DCA in Nepal strives to promote climate action at the local level by building the capacity of all implementing partners and providing technical assistance to local municipalities as well as strengthening the role of climate justice and environmental human rights defenders and their networks.

Responsible Business Conduct and Green Economy

By Olando Samuel, Pamoja Trust

The pursuit of a green economy is both justified and actively undertaken, and Kenya is no exception. Following this discussion, it is essential to consider the role of just transitions in advancing responsible business conduct and ensuring decent employment opportunities for youth. The article thus seeks to look at just transitions from two perspectives. The first one is in relation to the labour practices. These include human rights standards to the labour relations in the debate of responsible business conduct. The second strand relates to the implications of greening the economy to communities and the attendant justice questions. The nexus between the two is broadly based on the term social-safeguards' to greening the economy and the attendant infrastructural development.

Social Safeguards

1. Engagement on Land:

Approximately 70% of land in Kenya is classified as community land, yet only 2% of it is formally registered. In cases where land remains unregistered, the respective County Governments hold it in trust on behalf of the community. Given that community land is frequently targeted for resource extraction without consultation or compensation, there are high chances of land related impacts i.e., displacements requiring relocation action plans, environmental and social impacts necessitating Environments and Social Impact Assessment, and disputes that call the establishment of Grievance Redress Mechanism, among others.

2. Protection of Vulnerable Groups

Local populations living on community land in Kenya are predominantly vulnerable and/or indigenous people. The vulnerability manifests in terms of economic inequality, such as higher levels of poverty which increase dependency on external systems, health disparities, limited land rights, and restricted access to resources such as water, which is particularly important in this context due to the high water consumption associated with hydrogen production.

To address these vulnerabilities, civil society organizations (CSOs) must advocate for and support the implementation of key social safeguards, including:

- Cultural Heritage Protection Plan
- Gender Equality and the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), and Sexual Harassment (SH)
- Child Protection Strategy
- Inclusion of indigenous people

3. Public/stakeholder engagement;

Effective public and stakeholder engagement involves understanding how local populations interact with investors, how investors approach and engage with communities, and how to ensure the implementation of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). It also requires the ability to communicate complex technical information in ways that are understandable to local grassroots communities.

4. Labour Management Plan

A Labour Management Plan should focus on the creation of decent jobs for the local population, outline fair and safe working conditions, and ensure inclusive representation in decision-making processes related to energy transitions.

Where we can plug in:

1. Advocacy and Lobbying for favourable policies, regulations, and financial incentives for green hydrogen investments. We can also monitor the implementation of policies and hold governments and businesses accountable for their commitments to clean energy (e.g. the Local Content Bill, Benefit sharing Bill).
2. Advocacy on the social safeguards (highlighted above) includes building public awareness, ensuring fairness, driving demand, fostering innovation, and holding stakeholders accountable.
3. Monitoring and Accountability: Civil society organizations play an important role in monitoring the environmental and social impacts of green hydrogen projects. Misnet can ensure that projects are implemented sustainably, with attention to local ecosystems, indigenous rights, and community well-being.

About Pamoja Trust

Pamoja Trust (PT) is a non-profit making organization founded in 1999. PT is dedicated to promoting access to land, shelter and basic services for the marginalized populations. The organization takes pragmatic approaches to protection and promotion of social and economic rights through advocacy and precedence setting models for problem solving. PT provides social, technical and legal expertise at local communities, national and international levels to ensure that human development adhere to social justice principles and those national and international Human Rights standards are implemented in favour of the most vulnerable of citizens. PT collaborates closely with people's organizations', federations of over 30,000 households living in 400 informal settlements across Kenya. Over the last decade, we have pursued this mandate by organizing the vulnerable and marginalized; undertaking trainings and advocacy and setting problem solving models. The vision of the organization is based on five pillars: State and Market Justice; People's Movement; Ecological Justice; Institution Building and Sustainability; Asset building and models for Rights.



2025