

Dear Friends:

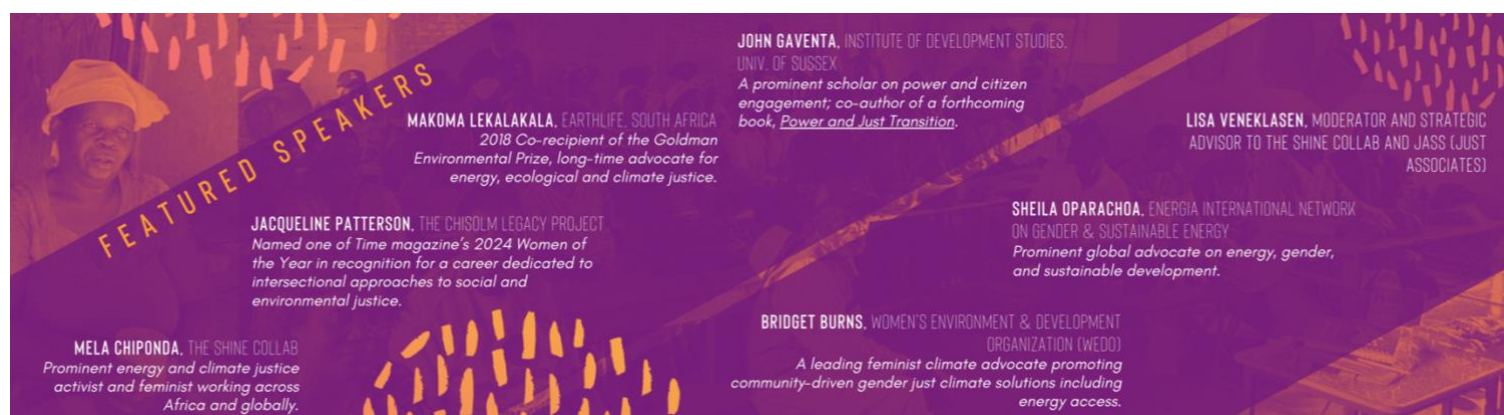
Thanks for your interest in **“Power to the People,”** the SHINE Collab’s webinar, **A Gender Just Energy Transition and Why It Matters**. We are delighted that over 200 people from 42 countries registered, and that 110 people joined us – including participants from 20 African countries. We are pleased to share the [recording of the webinar](#), and a few of the provocative highlights and quotes below.

First, a bit of context about the energy, justice, and power intersections:

- The reality we face today is that the dominant approaches to just transitions are top-down, technocratic, and leave many people out. **A just transition will require all of us, many different approaches, and a major role for governments, finance, civil society, and social justice movements.**
- This webinar conversation aimed to put people, power, and justice back at the center of the conversation about just transition, with a particular focus on **how community access and control of renewable energy solutions is a vital justice strategy** to make the transition transformational.
- When we use the word **“power,”** we mean **energy for electricity and ending energy poverty**. We are also talking about **structural imbalances of power**, and the messy political contests and conflicts that characterize transitions. Whose interests and voices count? Whose rights are respected and needs considered? Who decides, and what solutions and knowledge are valued and resourced?

These are not minor questions—this is at the heart of what a “just” transition demands.

Our conversation engaged leading advocates, organizers and scholars working with communities, policymakers, advocates, funders, and investors. The examples they drew upon ranged from Bikita, Zimbabwe at the edge of one of the largest lithium deposits in the world, to South Africa where the government-led Just Energy Transition is steered and financed by G-8 countries; from rural Kentucky where the closure of coal mines nearly fifty years ago has left new forms of inequality in its wake to the hallways of climate policy and finance and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.



FEATURED SPEAKERS

MELA CHIPONDA, THE SHINE COLLAB
Prominent energy and climate justice activist and feminist working across Africa and globally.

JACQUELINE PATTERSON, THE CHISOLM LEGACY PROJECT
Named one of Time magazine’s 2024 Women of the Year in recognition for a career dedicated to intersectional approaches to social and environmental justice.

MAKOMA LEKALAKALA, EARTHLIFE, SOUTH AFRICA
2018 Co-recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize, long-time advocate for energy, ecological and climate justice.

JOHN GAVENTA, INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, UNIV. OF SUSSEX
A prominent scholar on power and citizen engagement; co-author of a forthcoming book, *Power and Just Transition*.

LISA VENEKLASEN, MODERATOR AND STRATEGIC ADVISOR TO THE SHINE COLLAB AND JASS (JUST ASSOCIATES)

SHEILA OPARACHOA, ENERGIA INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON GENDER & SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
Prominent global advocate on energy, gender, and sustainable development.

BRIDGET BURNS, WOMEN’S ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (WEDO)
A leading feminist climate advocate promoting community-driven gender just climate solutions including energy access.

Here are a few summarized statements to encourage our continuing attention to advancing the “just” of the energy transition:

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When I discuss energy and power with the women in Bikita, Zimbabwe (an unelectrified community at the edge of the lithium mine), their understanding of power is terrific. They were talking about physical power, the power they get from the sun, from rivers, from the flowing of water, from the wind, from their ox-drawn ploughs... **When people who have a solid understanding of what energy is are not involved in defining what kind of energy system they want—what kind of energy technologies they require—we reduce them to just consumers and deny them the power to be part of the solution.**

— MELA CHIPONDA, THE SHINE COLLAB

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Now, when the mines close, the old power-holders—the elites associated with the coal industry and their politicians, friends and allies—they don’t just go away. They struggle to cling on to power... But, on the other hand, **the decline in these old forms of power creates new spaces for new forms of mobilization from below, as communities struggle now both to reclaim their past, and also demand a new future.**

— JOHN GAVENTA, IDS

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Recently, I was talking with people from Uganda to Mozambique, to South Africa, to the Niger Delta about the impacts of Shell and Total on their communities. They talked about the poisoning of the water, livelihoods lost, flooding and climate change that resulted from the change in the topography as [the corporations] developed the oil and gas. Women-led, people-led projects on energy are the solution. [They said] **“It’s not a matter of us not needing energy. It’s a matter of doing energy in a way that has safety, has security, builds financial impact, financial stability and wellness for a community. And we can have both energy and wellness.”**

— JACQUI PATTERSON, CHISOLM LEGACY PROJECT

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It’s an irony that a process that is intended to be supportive of the just transition actually brings more confusion. **We see that the international partners have their own interests... and we see this as a form of a new energy colonialism.** It’s just a top-down approach to say, “This is what we are bringing to this community. This is what we think is good for you.”

— MAKOMA LEKALAKALA, EARTHLIFE AFRICA

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A just and sustainable future would actually require that universal energy access is based on sustainable forms of renewable energy, and that energy is under the control of the communities living in poverty that are meant to be the beneficiaries, decentralized community access, devolved to a local level as much as possible, and gender responsive. **Even when we see that the market models for renewables could, if just left alone, outpace fossil fuels, the regulatory framework is still being crafted in favour of maintaining business as usual.**

— BRIDGET BURNS, WEDO



We know that the gender smart investment is a billion-dollar fund and that women are getting richer, but we find that they're not necessarily investing in women-owned businesses. An example of the impact that can be reached is if you combine what three SHINE partners (Solar Sister, Frontier Markets and Energia) have done in less than a decade: **they've supported 42,000 women entrepreneurs in Asia and Africa that have delivered energy access to 21 million consumers in low-income communities and these have supported smallholder farmers to adapt to climate, to grow their businesses and to contribute to local economies.**

— SHEILA OPARACHOA, ENERGIA INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Strategies that seek to achieve a just and inclusive energy transition have to be joined up. **They have to take a multi-sectoral approach which links the struggles for economic, environmental, energy, climate, racial and gender justice.** The movement for just energy transition, therefore, offers a big umbrella for groups who have often worked separately to now come together, and in fact, it's critical that that we do.



— JOHN GAVENTA, IDS

We will be sharing more highlights and analysis from the webinar in the coming weeks. Meanwhile, you are welcome to download and share the recording: [Power to the People: A Gender Just Energy Transition and What it Means.](#)

We welcome your thoughts and hearing more from you about what you're thinking and doing in relation to the just energy transition.

Stay tuned for our soon-to-be refreshed social media platforms, for the next webinar in this series, and for our posts during two upcoming events:

- 5th African Philanthropy Conference | Zimbabwe | 29 July – 2 August
AfricanPhilanthropyConference.com
- Climate Week NYC | USA | 22 - 29 September | ClimateWeekNYC.org

Warmly,

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Director

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