

# WEBINAR FOLLOW-UP



## POWER TO THE PEOPLE WEBINAR SERIES

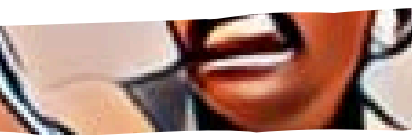
### HOW COMMUNITY-LED, DECENTRALIZED RENEWABLE ENERGY ENABLES GENDER AND CLIMATE JUSTICE SOLUTIONS

On October 30th, 2024, the SHINE Collab hosted its second dynamic webinar in the ***Power to the People series: How Community-led, Decentralized Renewable Energy Enables Gender and Climate Justice Solutions***. The Power to the People webinar series has multiple objectives, all striving to challenge the dominant technocratic, top-down approach to the energy transition and offer a people-centered, democratized alternative. At SHINE, knowledge and learning are at the heart of our work. This webinar series is designed to highlight critical gaps, present compelling evidence, and explore opportunities for bold, collaborative actions centered on people, power, and justice in the energy transition. It underscores the potential of decentralized renewable energy solutions to drive transformative and lasting power shifts, particularly for women and communities.

This webinar discussion posited that women-led, community-driven access to renewable energy enhances livelihoods, well-being, and climate resilience while empowering women's leadership in achieving a genuinely JUST transition. It emphasized the need to center gender and new energy access as essential components of a Just Energy Transition—elements that SHINE and others believe are currently underrepresented in existing energy transition designs and funding. It built on the discussion from SHINE's first webinar, *A Gender Just Energy Transition and What it Means*, which offered a multi-perspective exploration of a Gender Just Energy Transition and why it matters.

The October conversation took us from rural, remote, unelectrified areas of Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Kenya, to the forefront of global and regional climate justice -anti-fossil fuel movements. The discussion brought together five different voices and experience-informed perspectives on decentralized renewable energy (DRE) and its role in enabling gender and climate justice solutions.





Kevin Johnstone, Senior researcher, at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), started the conversation with a framing of community-led energy access as a means of systems/institutional change, a shift away from top-down technology driven planning. Pulling from a recent [report](#), Kevin framed first steps towards promoting a common understanding among the worlds of climate adaptation, resilience and energy access.

*“Why wouldn’t we opt for a community-led approach? It all comes down to the evidence—we must elevate these voices. Technology sits within these local contexts. There is a clear need to engage with donors, amplify community perspectives, and make those crucial connections as effectively as we can from our position of privilege” - Kevin*

*“.... the solution lies in creating an energy system controlled by the people who use it, informed by those who need it most—particularly women, who face the harsh realities of energy poverty.” - Mela*

Mela Chiponda, Director, The Shine Collab, shared what a Gender Just Energy Transition means in Bikita, Zimbabwe, the site of critical mineral extraction. What is a just transition in Bikita? transition for who? And From what?

Sonia Kwame, Head of Campaigning and Organizing at [350.org](#) eloquently drew the line from local to global, sharing their [RePowerAfrika](#) campaign and the focus on local collective action linking to global policy influence.

*“While it can be exhausting to hear and say the same things, it’s essential to convey these ideas repeatedly but in new ways. We need to adapt, change, and add different perspectives—this is crucial.” - Sonia*



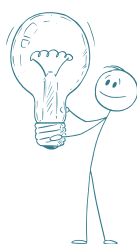


Olasimbo [Sojinrin](#), COO, [Solar Sister](#), brought the conversation to local communities and women – the Solar Sisters – that are delivering multiple levels of impact through their improved agency as women entrepreneurs, for their customers gaining access to the live-improving benefits of solar and the resiliency of their communities in the face of climate change.

*“Women are disproportionately impacted by energy poverty and climate change, yet women are solution providers and must be prioritized in the how energy access is delivered and used.”* – Olasimbo



*“Decentralized renewable energy solutions alone don’t guarantee benefits for the people; there’s much more needed to make them truly effective. Many renewable companies are focused on shareholders, not communities. What we need are more ‘compassionate’ business models, paired with community organizing, cooperatives, and a solidarity approach that puts women’s needs and voices at the center.”*



Virginia Sibanda, Founder and CEO of [VIRL](#), a microfinance services company in Zimbabwe, shared a finance voice in the conversation, detailing how VIRL seeks to understand what energy access customers need and can afford, and challenging that we ask who are the right people we should be talking to for finance and what is the intentionality of impact investment interest?

## Call to ACTION



Sonia concluded by stating that, *“we have a one trillion financing gap for the energy transition. Global pressure on governments is needed to scale up community energy solutions”.*

The discussions and insights from our **Power to the People Webinar Series** show the incredible potential of community-led, decentralized renewable energy solutions in creating a gender-just and climate-resilient future. But we need your help to turn these ideas into action!



"We need to adopt a cross-sectoral approach and break free from our silos. It is essential to think from the bottom up to ensure that the solutions are informed by the voices of those at the grassroots level, particularly the women in our communities."- Christine Eibs Singer, Moderator



We are off to a good start, as represented by the Diversity of over 200 registrants and 81 participants joining from 17 African nations, cutting across the energy, climate and gender nexus - with advocates, researchers, entrepreneurs, investors and funders in the virtual room.

## What can YOU DO ?



**Watch the Webinar Recording:** If you missed the live session, or want to revisit key moments, the full webinar recording is now available: [SHINE Webinar 2: Power to the People](#).

**Support Community-Led Solutions:** Whether through funding, advocacy, or collaboration, your support can make a tangible difference in advancing a gender-just energy transition. Learn more about [SHINE's](#) mission and how you can contribute to transformative change.

**Stay tuned for the next webinar in the Power to the People Series**

Let's continue pushing for solutions that empower women, uplift communities, and put people at the heart of the energy transition.

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