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Climate Dialogues – The Climate Crisis, Global China and Civil Society Advocacy in Asia



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Joanna Klabisch and Nandhitha Babuji

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Stiftung Asienhaus, Hohenzollern-
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E-Mail: asienhaus@asienhaus.de

Phone: 0221 716121-13

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Content

Editor’s Note	4
Enhancing Indonesia’s Energy Transition through China-Indonesia Cooperation	8
Stronger Transnational Knowledge Dialogues for Just Energy Transition	11
Protecting the Last Rainforests of Borneo	14
The Talk Before the Walk: Transnational Dialogue as Method—The Case of APAN and BKKCAW, 2025	16
Empowering Women and Advancing Green Jobs for Climate Resilience in Nepal	20
Small-Scale Community Roll-Out of Electric Cooking Solutions	23
Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Adoption of Solar Lift Irrigation in Nepal	26
Concluding Reflections	28
Acknowledgements	30

Editor's Note



Renewable Energy Industrial Park visit with Nepalese NGOs in Chongqing (Photo: CRES)

Setting the Scene: Ambition and Uncertainty

The three years of this project were shaped by profound disruptions, hard-earned successes, and unanticipated shifts. They marked a decisive transition for the Asia House Foundation's China Programme (German: Stiftung Asienhaus), which builds on long-standing experience in transnational civil society cooperation. Against a rapidly changing geopolitical and environmental backdrop, we focused our work around the intersection of the climate crisis, foreign investment, and civic space across Asia.

The project *The Climate Crisis, Global China and Civil Society Advocacy in Asia* was conceived in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, at a time when climate change impacts were becoming increasingly tangible worldwide. South and Southeast Asia emerged as particularly affected regions, facing rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation with far-reaching consequences

for livelihoods, biodiversity, food security, and public health. At the same time, investment-driven development trajectories, though briefly disrupted, continued to shape local environments and political dynamics, notably in countries such as Indonesia and Nepal.

China plays a central role in this context. Beyond its domestic carbon footprint, China's own climate ambitions and its overseas investments contribute to climate-relevant impacts abroad. While global commitments to greener development have multiplied, practical challenges persist, especially in the implementation of infrastructure development projects and transnational investment flows. Among the most prevalent are limited transparency, insufficient monitoring mechanisms, and weak channels for engagement with local communities and civil society organisations in host countries.

Against this backdrop, the project set out to create transnational civil society spaces linking organisations from



China, Indonesia, Nepal, and Europe while supporting locally grounded initiatives with positive climate impacts. Its ambition was not to offer ready-made solutions but to foster dialogue, mutual learning, and joint advocacy around the climate impacts of foreign investments in climate-sensitive contexts. Three years on, many of the questions that shaped the project's inception have returned with renewed urgency, underscoring both the relevance of its original ambition and the need for continuous adaptation.

Adapting Dialogue: Methods, Formats, and Learning

Since 2012, the Asia House Foundation's China Programme has functioned both as a platform for knowledge exchange on Chinese civil society and as an initiator of transnational dialogue with partners across Europe and Asia. When China's law on the management of international NGOs entered into force, the regulatory framework for transnational civil society cooperation became redefined and put under the oversight of the Ministry of Public Security. Organisations without a registered office in China were required to operate through approved cooperation arrangements with locally authorised partner NGOs, a process that proved administratively complex and time-intensive.

Despite early expectations to secure the necessary permit shortly after the project's launch in November 2022, the approval process took considerably longer than anticipated. Only in early 2024 were we able to obtain the first formal registration, following sustained efforts by our Chinese colleagues and the support of experienced partner organisations. An accompanying change in cooperation partners and a relocation of project activities to central-western China eventually enabled us to commence work inside the country, almost a year later than originally planned.

Confronted with these constraints, we drew on lessons from earlier initiatives, including *Civil Society Dialogue in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative*, which had already necessitated methodological adjustments during the pandemic. In the project's first phase, we therefore shifted from predefined analogue formats to more adaptive, process-oriented digital approaches. Dialogue came to be under-

stood not as a series of isolated meetings, but as a continuous practice of exchange, reflection, and peer-to-peer learning, supported by digital spaces and expanded partner networks.

While digital formats could not replace in-person interaction, they allowed for sustained engagement across political and geographic boundaries. They also created room to explore both access and limitations in transnational civil society work with China, through engagement with Chinese actors inside the country, as well as through encounters with Chinese organisations abroad in Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, and on transnational platforms in Germany. This period also exposed persistent asymmetries in access, resources, and visibility, which themselves became part of the collective learning process. At the same time, new partnerships emerged beyond the project's original scope, extending into Europe and South and Southeast Asia and shaping the work until its conclusion in late 2025.

Local Perspectives at the Core: Indonesia and Nepal

At the heart of this publication are six civil society-led project reports from Indonesia and Nepal. Rooted in local realities, they examine the climate, social, and governance implications of investment-driven development across climate-sensitive sectors and regions. Rather than offering abstract assessments, the contributions foreground community perspectives, local knowledge, and the strategies civil society organisations employ to navigate complex stakeholder environments. Together, they illustrate how climate justice debates materialise on the ground and how national and transnational dynamics intersect in practice.

Indonesia and Nepal were selected as core focus countries due to their distinct yet interconnected development trajectories. Indonesia combines rapid economic growth with ambitious renewable-energy transition goals and is China's largest economic partner in Southeast Asia. Nepal, by contrast, is a mountainous country highly vulnerable to climate impacts, situated between two of the world's fastest-growing economies and characterised by a vibrant and engaged civil society.

Editor's Note



Capacity Building on Climate Finance in Bangkok between Southeast Asian, Indian and European NGOs (Photo: Germanwatch)

The project participation applications we received reflected a wide thematic spectrum: from community-led advocacy on deforestation, hydropower, and geothermal energy, to transnational climate finance, renewable-energy-based adaptation measures, and women- and youth-focused mitigation efforts. Following extensive consultation with our Chinese partners and our international advisory board, six seed grants were awarded. In Indonesia, support went to the Indonesian Centre for Environmental Law (ICEL), a leading research and advocacy organisation providing evidence-based environmental policy recommendations; Sustain, a relatively newly established entity formed by experienced climate-finance and investment specialists; and Lembaga Pemberdayaan Ekonomi dan Sosial Masyarakat Riau (LPESM), an organisation bringing together grassroots environmental and social-justice advocates through cross-sectoral cooperation.

In Nepal, the selected partners were the People, Energy & Environment Development Association (PEEDA), known for its work on electricity access in remote regions; Small

Earth Nepal (SEN), which applies a holistic approach to disaster management, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development; and the Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC), which advances climate resilience and environmental protection through governance reforms, education, and community initiatives.



Presenting on gendered approaches to climate change adaptation (Photo: Stiftung Asienhaus / Asia Houses Foundation)



Intense discussions on transnational cooperation opportunities continue into the breaks between workshops in Bangkok (Photo: Germanwatch)

Across these diverse contexts, the project consistently grappled with differing perspectives on the roles of China, European actors, and civil society itself in shaping development pathways. Integrating local experiences into national, regional, and transcontinental conversations proved complex, but ultimately indispensable for meaningful climate action.

A Process of Unfolding

This publication documents a process rather than a final outcome. It captures a series of encounters, questions, and evolving relationships among civil society actors working across political, cultural and geographic boundaries.

While the project unfolded differently from its initial design, its core commitment remained unchanged: strengthening civil society capacities, fostering transnational dialogue, and amplifying voices that are often marginalised in the fight against climate change.

The conversations initiated through this work extend beyond the project's formal timeframe. They point toward the continued relevance of dialogue, not as an end, but as a necessary condition for collective learning, cooperation, and sustained engagement in addressing the climate crisis.

The chapters that follow trace these dynamics from the local to the transnational, offering grounded insights into how climate action, investment, and civil society engagement intersect in practice. It is in this spirit that we invite readers to engage with the contributions that follow as situated reflections from practice, rooted in specific contexts, yet connected by shared questions and concerns.

Joanna B. Klabisch

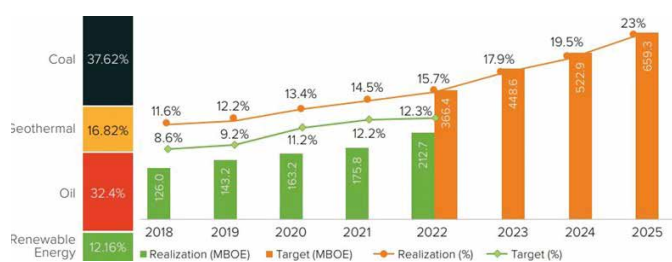
Enhancing Indonesia's Energy Transition through China-Indonesia Cooperation

The following is an adaptation of the final research report Sustain published after participating in the Climate Dialogues project. The full report¹ can be accessed at Stiftung Asienhaus' website (see Endnotes).

Leveraging China's Green Financing and Indonesia-China Sub-National cooperation to learn newer renewable energy methodologies and policy.

Indonesia's energy transition remains sluggish, with the energy sector still heavily reliant on coal. According to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR), approximately 85% of the country's electricity, equivalent to around 86 gigawatts, is generated from fossil fuels. Meanwhile, renewable energy accounts for only 15% of total electricity generation, falling short of the National Energy Policy's 2025 target of 17–19%.

The slow progress of renewable energy development reflects a growing misalignment between Indonesia's climate commitments and actual implementation. While fossil fuel generation has surged over the past decade, renewable energy growth has remained modest. As a result, Indonesia continues to lag behind its regional peers in scaling up clean energy capacity.



Indonesia's electricity generation mix and renewable energy share development, Source: Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Indonesia, 2023a.

Despite these challenges, Indonesia has made ambitious commitments on the global stage. At the G20 Summit in November 2024, President Prabowo pledged to phase out all coal and fossil-fuel-fired power plants by 2040 and to develop 75 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity. This commitment was reiterated at COP29. However, concrete implementation strategies remain unclear, raising questions about whether Indonesia can meet its targets.

Meeting the 2040 coal retirement goal would require Indonesia to shut down around 3 gigawatts of coal power annually while adding approximately 8 gigawatts of renewable energy each year. In reality, between 2018 and 2023, Indonesia added only around 3.3 gigawatts of renewable capacity, while fossil fuel capacity increased nearly six times faster.

Financing Gap and the Limits of JETP

The sluggish pace of renewable energy deployment is closely linked to a significant financing gap. Investment in Indonesia's energy sector remains heavily skewed toward fossil fuels, while renewable energy investment has stagnated. In 2023, Indonesia attracted only around USD 1.5 billion in renewable energy investment, far below what is required to stay on track with national and international climate commitments.

To accelerate the energy transition, Indonesia and the International Partners Group launched the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) at the G20 Summit in Bali in 2022, with an initial commitment of USD 20 billion. However, according to the JETP Comprehensive Investment and Policy Plan (CIPP), Indonesia requires an estimated USD 97.3 billion by 2030 to implement its energy transition roadmap. As of early 2025, approved JETP investments totalled only around USD 1 billion.

The slow disbursement of JETP funds, combined with political uncertainty and the withdrawal of the United States from its role as JETP co-chair, has weakened confidence in the partnership's ability to catalyse large-scale investment. While JETP remains important, it is insufficient on its own to finance Indonesia's energy transition.

Focus Area	2023-2030	
	Units	Investment needs* (US\$ Bn)
IFA1 Transmission lines and grid deployment	~8,000-14,000 kmc	19.7
IFA2		
Early CFPP retirement**	1.7 GW	1.1
CFPP Managed phase-out***	55.8 GWh (2030)	1.3
IFA3 Dispatchable renewable energy deployment acceleration	16 GW	49.2
IFA4 Variable renewable energy deployment acceleration****	40 GW	25.7
IFA5 Renewable energy supply chain enhancement	N/A	TBD
Just transition	N/A	
Assessment		0.2 (minimum)*****
Interventions		TBD
Total		97.3

JETP pledged funding versus Indonesia's investment needs, Source: [Indonesia JETP Comprehensive Investment and Policy Plan \(2023\)](#).

China's Investment and the Opportunity for Energy Transition

China is Indonesia's largest infrastructure investor and has played a significant role in the country's energy sector. Between 2006 and 2022, Chinese investments in Indonesia reached approximately USD 35 billion, with around a quarter directed to the energy sector. However, around 86% of these energy investments were channeled into fossil fuel projects.

Recent developments indicate a gradual shift in this investment trajectory. In 2024, more than half of China's energy-related engagement in Indonesia was directed toward renewable energy projects. Based on historical trends, Chinese financing for Indonesia's energy sector is estimated to range between USD 490 million and USD 900 million annually. Over the 2024–2030 period, this could amount to between USD 3.4 billion and USD 6.3 billion.

Given Indonesia's large financing needs, redirecting Chinese investment from fossil fuels to renewable energy could make a significant contribution, particularly for solar, wind, and other priority renewable technologies. Rather than replacing JETP, China's investment could complement existing international efforts to accelerate Indonesia's energy transition.

Learning from China's Renewable Energy Expansion

China's rapid renewable energy expansion has been driven by a combination of ambitious government policies, large-scale implementation, and strong manufacturing capacity.

One notable example is the "Whole County PV" program, launched in 2021 to accelerate distributed rooftop solar deployment at the local level.

Provinces such as Shandong have emerged as leaders in implementing this program, demonstrating how coordinated planning, economies of scale, and clear targets can significantly reduce costs and accelerate solar adoption. By early 2023, Shandong had installed more than 30 gigawatts of distributed solar capacity, benefiting both urban and rural communities.

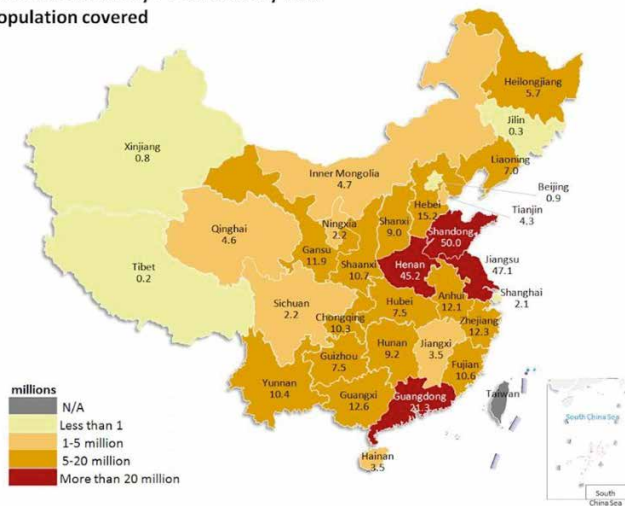
This experience offers valuable lessons for Indonesia. Provinces such as Jakarta and Bali, which have already introduced regulations to promote rooftop solar ahead of national policies, could benefit from sub-national cooperation with Chinese provinces like Shandong. Such cooperation could facilitate knowledge exchange, technical assistance, and investment opportunities to scale up distributed solar deployment.

Danantara and the Way Forward

The establishment of Badan Pengelola Investasi Daya Anagata Nusantara (Danantara Indonesia) in early 2025 presents a strategic opportunity to better align foreign investment with Indonesia's energy transition goals. Danantara is a newly established state investment management body mandated to consolidate and manage national strategic investments, improve asset efficiency, attract global capital, and strengthen Indonesia's competitiveness in key sectors.

As Indonesia urgently needs large-scale financing to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy, Danantara has the potential to play a pivotal role in directing both domestic

2021 Whole County PV counties by total population covered



Share of county population covered by the Whole County PV programme. Darker colours indicate a higher share covered. The designations employed and the presentation of the material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Carbon Brief concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Source: Anders Hove, OIES, 2023

Distributed rooftop solar development under China's Whole County PV Program, Source: Carbon Brief (2023).

and foreign investment toward clean energy development. By prioritising renewable energy and providing consistent policy signals, Danantara could help channel Chinese and other foreign investments toward renewable energy projects rather than fossil fuels, while signalling the government's commitment to Indonesia's long-term energy transition.

Conclusion

Indonesia's energy transition faces a significant financing and implementation gap. While the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) remains an important platform, it has not delivered funding at the scale or speed required. In this context, cooperation with China—through redirected investment, policy learning, and sub-national collaboration—offers a complementary pathway to accelerate renewable energy development.

Recommendations

For the Indonesian Government:

1. **Implement policy and fiscal reforms** to demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to renewable energy development through consistent policy signals.
2. **Strengthen the energy sector policies** to meet President Prabowo's pledges at the G20 Summit and COP29 to develop 75 GW of renewable energy by 2040 and achieve Net Zero Emissions (NZE) by 2050.
3. **Ensure Danantara prioritises to direct China and other foreign investments toward renewables**, not fossil fuels.
4. **Undertake subnational cooperation** for cities like Jakarta and Bali to partner with provinces in China to learn its expertise in accelerating renewable energy projects.

For the Chinese Government:

5. **Convert China's green finance policies from voluntary to mandatory** to implement greener overseas development policies.
6. **Channel investments toward Indonesia's energy transition** by ensuring that financing actively supports renewable energy development rather than fossil fuel projects.

-
- 1 Full report: https://www.asienhaus.de/fileadmin/uploads/china/docs/Report_-_Enhancing_Indonesia's_Energy_Transition_through_China-Indonesia_Cooperation_-_SUSTAIN.pdf



Yayasan Kesejahteraan
Berkelanjutan Indonesia
(SUSTAIN)

SUSTAIN is an independent startup organization that was co-founded by a small group of people from various backgrounds, including bankers and fund managers, economists and academic, former journalist, researcher and CSO activists. With diverse experience and expertise of its co-founders, SUSTAIN aims to contribute to green transition at the sub-national, national, regional, and global level.

Stronger Transnational Knowledge Dialogues for Just Energy Transition

Purpose of the Project

Just energy transition has become an imperative of global order to tackle climate change. Indonesia as one of the biggest present-time emitters globally, has both a duty and opportunity to accelerate its contribution in addressing climate challenges. For starter, this must be reflected in Indonesia's second National Determined Contribution (NDC).

Our project wants to highlight the urgency of putting stronger ambition for energy transition in Indonesia's climate commitment, backed with robust and sound policies both into international and national level plans. The project aims to convene strategic discussions among civil society organizations and policy makers to introduce a recommendation for power sector emission targets and mitigation actions into Indonesia's second NDC.

In this process, we also need to look at other growing economies for learnings. We decided to choose China, since the country has grown to be a key player in global energy transition agenda in recent years. Furthermore, China also has a robust long-term plan in renewable energy deployment that Indonesia could learn from as a new player in the field.

Key Activities of The Project and Outputs

CSO Convening on COP

In December 2024, ICEL hosted the first convening for Indonesian CSOs on COP 29 results. Attended by 15 organisations, the convening was divided into three parts: updates from those attending COP 29 including ICEL, a discussion on key information that need to be underlined on the road to COP 30, and the last part was a priority list of issues to focus on during the strategy building process towards COP 30.

Discussion with policy maker representative on just transition in climate negotiation and Indonesia's second NDC

We held a one-on-one discussion with Mr. Franky Zamzani (Ministry of Environment) on Just Transition negotiations and the second NDC. The exchange informed on our policy



ICEL conducting a focus group discussion with Indonesian civil society groups working on energy and nature issue (Photo: ICEL)

brief recommendations and helped build trust and highlighted the necessity of openness from policymakers to civil society input on NDC development and negotiation positions.

Civil Society Discussion Roundtable on Just Transition Work Programme and its Opportunity to Accelerate Just Energy Transition in Indonesia

This discussion aimed to build the bridge between energy transition, nature protection, and economic transformation as three important pillars of just transition:

- Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP) negotiation at COPs;
- Just transition policy and how JTWP can accelerate just transition and integration with NDC;
- Adaptation as prerequisite to just transition.

The discussion was attended by 15 organisations and resulted in six recommendations for the NDC and more:

1. Develop and integrate just transition pathways into national policies.
2. Ensure the protection of the most vulnerable during the green transition.
3. Guarantee public participation in the process.
4. Focus on decarbonising the system by accelerating fossil fuel phase out and renewable phase-in.
5. Recognize that transition to low carbon economy is a part of building resilience.
6. Transition to low carbon economy should underline the just distribution of access and resources to those who were marginalised

The summary of the discussion can be found on [ICEL's website](#)¹.



ICEL at the Bangkok Capacity Building Workshop Panel with Asia House Foundation, Greenpeace Beijing, PACS Manila and LPESM (Photo: ICEL)

Policy Brief on Aligning the Power Sector Commitment with 1.5°C Pathways in Indonesia's Second NDC

Based on the discussions, ICEL drafted a policy brief on recommendation to align the power sector commitment in Indonesia's second NDC with the Paris Agreement 1.5°C objectives. This includes:

- Setting a clear coal phase-out target, especially for aging power plants, and peaking emissions by 2030.
- Avoiding future fossil fuel lock-ins, including gas as a transitional fuel and biomass co-firing without sustainability safeguards.
- Raising the renewable energy target to a minimum of 45% by 2030.
- Incorporating a just transition framework to address social and economic impacts.
- Strengthening enabling conditions through reform in electricity planning, market design, carbon pricing, and fossil fuel subsidy policies.

Capacity building and exchanges with Chinese CSOs on climate policy and communication

ICEL also joined the Climate Dialogue's project's conference in Bangkok. Gaining insights on global climate finance, China's role in regional and global climate issues, COP30 expectations, and gaps in Indonesia's support for community-scale projects.

Deep dive into China's and Indonesia's climate links "Fostering South-South collaboration on Climate Action: Exploring China-Indonesia Partnership"

During the last leg of the program, ICEL, together with colleagues from the Indonesian environmental and climate protection NGOs SUSTAIN and LPSEM, organized a webinar discussing the scope of China-Indonesia collaboration on climate action.



Think Tank research and Grassroot campaigning perspectives on China's engagement in Indonesia create a bigger picture (Photo: Germanwatch)

Some key takeaways from the webinar are:

- Clear, consistent policy signals are essential to enable a credible and sustainable transition.
- Stronger accountability and responsible investment are needed to align capital flows with real emissions reductions and community benefits.
- Targeted fiscal support for clean energy helps low-carbon technologies mature and accelerates the shift to a low-carbon economy.
- Robust international cooperation and middle-power solidarity can strengthen learning, partnerships, and collective bargaining power.
- Civil society is central to climate action, ensuring accountability and advancing climate justice across all interventions.

The article on the webinar can be found on [ICEL's website](https://icel.or.id/en-us/search/v/menjakaki-peluang-just-transition-work-programme-jtwp-dalam-negosiasi-iklim-global-untuk-transisi-berkeadilan-di-indonesia).

Key Learnings from The Project and Outlook on Future Collaboration(s)

While there are numerous learnings from the project, these are key points of this project's outcomes:

- **Opened China-focused CSO collaboration:** Participating in this project enabled ICEL's first direct engagement with Chinese CSOs, identifying potential partners for Coal Fired Power Plant (CFPP) retirement, energy transition, and transition mineral advocacy.
- **Strengthened policy and climate finance lens:** Expanded ICEL's climate policy analysis through engagement with regional CSOs, with scope for collaboration on decentralised renewable energy.
- **Expanded China-Indonesia energy transition expertise:** Deepened ICEL's work on China-Indonesia energy transition dynamics and increased media visibility post-workshop.

- 1 Article with recommendations from the CSO Discussion Roundtable: <https://icel.or.id/en-us/search/v/menjakaki-peluang-just-transition-work-programme-jtwp-dalam-negosiasi-iklim-global-untuk-transisi-berkeadilan-di-indonesia>.
- 2 Webinar Summary: <https://icel.or.id/en-us/search/v/fostering-southsouth-collaboration-on-climate-action-exploring-the-chinaindonesia-partnership>.



INDONESIAN CENTER
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
(ICEL)

ICEL is an organization that fights for the realization of environmental justice based on the values of democracy, human rights, civility, sustainability, the rule of law, and good sustainable development governance. Founded in 1993 by Indonesian activists, academics, and advocates, ICEL works to promote legal and policy reform, strengthen affected communities, and enhance the capacity of state institutions in the field of environment and natural resources.

Protecting the Last Rainforests of Borneo

Investigating links between Chinese investments as well as timber and pulpwood supply chains to deforestation in Indonesia: the case of Borneo, Kalimantan Island.

Overview

The project consisted of two key activities: first, a research study of the investment of PT Phoenix Resources International, carried out by Auriga Nusantara; and second, an assessment of the social impact of Phoenix Mill and its suppliers, specifically pulpwood plantation companies, in Kalimantan, with a focus on the Tanah Tidung, Nunukan, and Tarakan subdistricts.

Implementation of Activity and Results

The research, conducted by Auriga Nusantara, focuses on identifying and mapping Chinese investments that lead to deforestation in Indonesia, particularly in Borneo, Kalimantan Island. PT Phoenix Resource International, and PT Balikpapan Chip Mill and its suppliers are the focus of this study. A number of direct and indirect Chinese shareholders and investors have been identified within the companies as well as supply chains that provide raw materials or sale of products to China.

Some Findings of the Research are:

- The majority shareholders of Chung Hua United Resources Sdn Bhd and Chung Hua United Capital Sdn Bhd are owned by Phoenix Resources Holdings Ltd, registered in the Cayman Islands.
- A Chinese company collaborates with MPX Logistics International (MPXL) through a strategic partnership signed on 31st May 2023 with PT China West Development Indonesia for projects in Indonesia.
- PT Balikpapan Lestari (BCL) is owned by Malaysian companies BCL Industrial Sdn Band Great Mahakam Sdn Bhd, whose ownership links to Taroko Investment Holdings Limited, registered in the British Virgin Islands.
- The shareholder structures of suppliers PT BCL and PT PRI are connected to Nusantara Fiber and companies registered across China, Hong Kong, and tax haven jurisdictions.



Meeting with Buong Baru communities to collect information on how company operation impacts community life (Photo: LPESM)



Village meetings (Photo: LPESM)

- Beyond shareholding ties, PT BCL maintains market relationships with EGL Capital Sdn Bhd (Malaysia), which supplies products to Green Meadows Fiber Products Ltd (China).
- 309,903 hectares of natural forest in East Kalimantan and North Kalimantan are at risk due to increased timber demand linked to Chinese investment.

Social Impact Assessment of PT Phoenix Resources International (PRI) and its Concession PT Adindo Hutan Lestari (AHL):

Social impact assessment was carried out in two villages namely Melasu Baru village, subdistrict Sebuku, North Kalimantan District, and Buong Baru village, subdistrict Betayau, Tana Tidung District, North Kalimantan. Assessment on social impact of PT PRI and its supplier was done in two steps, firstly a spatial analysis was done during



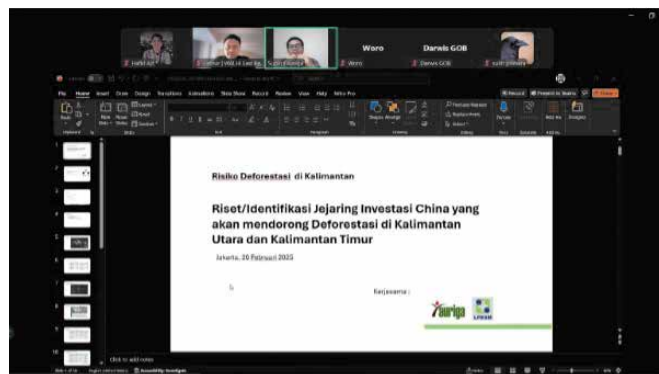
Eucalyptus Plantation in Melasu Baru village, Sebuku sub-district, Nunukan District, North Kalimantan (Photo: LPESM)

which the concession map was compared with the village map. Secondly, village meeting with community representatives (sources person) were conducted to dig further on the village situation regarding company activities.

Some of the key impacts of PT PRI and PT ADL include the extensive control of land by PT Adindo Hutani Lestari (PT AHL/ADL) and other corporations, which together dominate nearly 70% of Tana Tidung Regency, encompassing even government infrastructure and main roads. PT AHL began its operations without conducting Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the Buong Baru community, leading to long-standing conflict. Company activities have polluted the Betayau River, an essential source of livelihood and daily water use for the Tidung Indigenous people. Similar water pollution has affected Maning and Kujau villages. Although communities submitted official protest letters, PT AHL failed to respond. The entire Buong Baru village area, covering approximately 29,008 hectares, falls within PT AHL's concession, triggering severe land conflicts. Since the company's arrival in 1994, Indigenous land rights have been eroded, community movement has been restricted, and many Tidung people have faced criminalisation. Documentary evidence, including a 1991 SPPT letter, confirms community land ownership prior to the company's entry. In Melasu Baru village in Sebuku Sub-district of Nunukan District, about 80% of village land overlaps with PT ADL's concession, creating deep uncertainty around farming and land management. PT ADL also failed to conduct FPIC in Melasu Baru, resulting in continued and unresolved community - company conflict.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the timber industry activities of PT Phoenix Resources International, PT Balikpapan Chip Mill, and their concessions, particularly PT Adindo Hutani Lestari, have significantly increased deforestation risks in North and East Kalimantan, while the far-reaching investment structures, including significant Chinese capital, further intensifies this impact through both complex ownership structures and market supply chains. Beyond environ-



Discussion on Research and Assessment results with NGOs: Green of Borneo and Auriga Nusantara, February 2025 (Photo: LPESM)

mental damage, PT RPI and PT ADL have created deep social and economic consequences for local communities, affecting livelihoods, land security, and overall environmental conditions. Land and livelihood conflicts have become a lived reality for many, worsened by the repeated failure of companies to carry out proper and standardised Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes, highlighting the urgent need for stronger accountability and more responsible investment practices.

Recommendations

1. When the investigation from shareholders structure leads to Chinese investments, there is a need to look at the link between China's financing sector and the company's activities. This may lead to the identification of stakeholders that can be contacted and educated in order to safeguard the companies' operations.
2. There is a need to have more wholistic social impact assessment in other impacted villages, as the projects cover an area that reach more than 2 villages.
3. It is necessary to disseminate and spread the result to parties who may have relations to China's financing organization such as banks, or investors. In this particularly the support from Chinese NGOs is crucial.



**Lembaga Pemberdayaan
Ekonomi dan Sosial
Masyarakat Riau
(LPESM Riau)**

LPESM Riau, formerly known as ISEC (Institute of Social and Economic Changes), is a non-profit civil society organization established in 2009 and renamed in 2018. Founded by three experienced NGO activists, the organization works to promote more just and sustainable socio-economic conditions through economic empowerment, advocacy, capacity building for marginalized groups, particularly women, and initiatives in natural resource management and sustainable energy.

The Talk Before the Walk: Transnational Dialogue as Method – The Case of APAN and BKKCAW, 2025



In September and October 2025, Bangkok hosted the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) Forum and Bangkok Climate Action Week (BKKCAW), bringing together civil society organisations and multi-level stakeholders from across Asia and Europe. Among them was a transnational consortium that included participants from the project Climate Crisis, Global China and Civil Society Advocacy in Asia. This opinion piece reflects on these spaces to argue that transnational dialogue is not a precursor to climate action, but a method of climate response in its own right.

Introduction

‘The whole is greater than the sum of its parts’.

This statement rings true for me from Biology class, year 6. A cell is made of lipids, organelles and proteins, but life does not emerge from simply stacking these elements. Life emerges through their interaction. The whole becomes something different, something more.

When I began working on climate change, the idea of emergence stayed with me. If we step away for a moment from scientific and economic discourses and look at climate change through a metaphorical lens, two things become clear: human impact on the climate is emergent from countless individual actions, and meaningful climate response must itself be emergent, built through interconnected efforts rather than isolated interventions.

This article recounts my experiences as a participant in Bangkok’s eventful climate weeks and at the same time it is going to look at the potential emergence of fostering an interconnected network of human participants in doing climate response.

Transnational consortium building among civil society organisations already exists in the climate space, though often fragmented or still nascent. This article reflects on what these collaborations can achieve, what limits they face, and what needs to change if they are to become more than the sum of their parts.

Why Dialogue Matters (practice, not theory)

Participating in APAN and BKKCAW in September–October 2025 for the first time, I was inspired to capture the essence of the dialogue work I encountered. Tens of thousands of participants from across Asia Pacific and Europe came together in parallel events filled with workshops, technical sessions, and deep dives. There was a lot of talking.

Working in a consortium of small NGOs dealing with localised climate impacts like recurring floods affecting housing and crop growth cycles and being one of the people responsible for creating knowledge exchange, documenting outcomes and formulating recommendations, I quickly felt overwhelmed by the question of how do we all become part of the Big Solution.

It is through my experiences with global CSOs dialogues, I understood that dialogue is not something that simply happens. Knowledge exchange needs to be deliberately created, facilitated, and resourced. Without this step, financial, human, and political resources risk being poorly aligned or wasted. Yet it is precisely this “talking” phase that is often questioned or defunded, in favour of highly visible, short-term actions. APAN and BKKCAW offered a rare opportunity to invest time and space into dialogue as practice and to see how it can shape more grounded and effective climate action.



APAN Deep Dive on climate financing for adaptation (Photo: INECC)

APAN & BKKCAW as Deliberate Spaces for Dialogue

From the outset, APAN and BKKCAW stood out as inclusive, accessible, diverse, and largely non-hierarchical spaces.

APAN, the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network Forum, is a regional programme established by the UN Environment Program (UNEP), builds on years of international collaboration and brings together practitioners from science, finance, civil society, government, youth movements, and the private sector to strengthen climate adaptation across the Asia-Pacific region.

BKKCAW complements this with a different, but equally important focus. Framed as a platform for whole-of-society action, it centres the voices of those already living with the impacts of climate change and foregrounds local leadership and collective imagination.

Experiencing both platforms in the same week was a truly eye-opening experience and enabled us to become part of two kinds of interconnected dialogues. Between 29th Sept and 3rd Oct I started to think that neither of these conversations could exist or function fully well without the other: Local knowledge and hope are essential for shaping meaningful climate strategies, while regional and international platforms provide the enablers needed to move from isolated initiatives toward transformational change.

Dialogue as Method

Dialogue is a method. It is not a “nice-to-have” nor is it something to save money or time on. Transnational dialogue enables the exchange of perspectives that actors would otherwise never encounter, while allowing participants to remain grounded in their own political and social realities. As such, dialogue becomes an instrument for aligning knowledge, priorities, and action across contexts.

Knowledge Sharing at APAN: Climate Finance for Transformation

One APAN session organised by the expanded consortium focused on Transformational Adaptation Finance in Asia. Contributions from Chinese and Southeast Asian civil society organisations highlighted a recurring challenge: adaptation finance remains severely underfunded, and where resources do exist, they are often poorly aligned with local needs and local implementation realities.

A key insight from the Chinese context was that climate risk is highly sector- and region-specific, making one-size-fits-all financial approaches ineffective. Participants emphasised that the core constraint is not only a lack of funding, but a lack of investable adaptation projects. Barriers such as fragmented data systems, unclear accounting standards for adaptation finance, and difficulties in quantifying adaptation benefits continue to limit bankability—an observation that resonated strongly across country contexts.

Contributions from the Philippines reframed adaptation as an issue of macroeconomic stability rather than future-proofing alone. Presenting climate impacts in economic terms: linking temperature rise, extreme weather events, and long-term growth losses proved effective in bridging civil society concerns with fiscal and policy debates. At the same time, this reframing sparked critical discussion about the risk of reducing lived climate vulnerability to a purely technocratic governance exercise, underscoring the need to keep community realities at the centre of adaptation finance decisions.

For example by strengthening the enabling environment rather than just the tools, implementing better data governance to support decision making and establishing knowledge sharing infrastructures to improve monitoring and support what decision makers ask for under the term “evidence based” work.



Cross national collaboration to strategize green skill pathways for youth (Photo: INECC)

BKKCAW: Ideas are Borderless

During BKKCAW, our consortium hosted three sessions on different aspects of climate action: *Localising Adaptation and Mitigation: Finance, Power and Practice in the Asia-Pacific—Climate Response through Decentralised Renewables*; *Green Skills for Resilience: Rethinking Capacity for a Just Transition*; and *Financing NDCs and NAPs in South-, Southeast- and East Asia*.

Among these, the session on green skilling stood out as one of the most valuable learning experiences for me, largely due to its participatory structure and its emphasis on cross-national, interdisciplinary strategizing. As a young person facing an increasingly uncertain climate future, the idea of being practically equipped for the necessary green transition, particularly in areas such as renewable energy, offered a rare and much-needed sense of possibility.

As communities move away from fossil fuels and climate impacts increasingly shape livelihoods, capacity building must evolve beyond one-off training events toward ecosystem-rooted practice. This session explored how green skills can translate into real livelihoods, ensuring that the transition is not only green, but also just, inclusive, and community-led.

The workshop followed a Shark Tank-inspired format. As co-designer and facilitator, I was exhilarated by the kind of engagement the diverse room, consisting of CSO staff, forward thinking company members, academics and activists, garnered. Watching participants exchange experiences, challenge assumptions, and collectively develop new ideas was a powerful illustration of what collaboration can enable.

Clusters of 6–7 people, heads down, papers and pen out, jotting down ideas, nodding vigorously and small cries of eureka! – that is a room I want to be part of, and gladly, I was.

Working in small groups of six to seven, participants moved through a structured process. A *Climate Word Chain* energiser surfaced shared emotions and associations—among them action, resilience, future-proofing, innovation, and hope. This was followed by short *Lightning Stories from Asia*, showcasing proof-of-practice cases across mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

The core exercise, *The Tomorrow Shark Tank*, asked groups to design a one-page green skill pathway for careers. Amongst them EV assistants, decentralized renewable energy repair stewards, or climate change awareness agents emerged. Each pathway mapped the role itself, how the skill is learned and demonstrated, the certification or recognition required, and the point at which paid work begins,

whether through a job, apprenticeship, gig, startup, or community contract.

Groups also identified who is typically excluded and proposed one concrete measure to improve inclusion, before pitching their ideas in fast-paced, two-minute rounds.

Three green skills pathways emerged: integrating climate education through games and gaming, building a workforce of *GreenSkill* agents who train others and connect learners to opportunities, and developing EV-related green energy skills. Across groups, common “unblockers” were identified, including funding for practice time, partnerships with employers, and curriculum co-creation with communities.

This session worked because it condensed the green skill priorities into a single, practical exercise. By condensing complex debates into a single, practical exercise, it shifted the conversation on green skills from abstract ambition to actionable pathways. In that sense, the outcome wasn't just about competition, but about surfacing what this ecosystem is currently ready to take forward: solutions that are implementable, scalable, and able to balance inclusion with urgency.

Why Transnational Dialogue Works, and Where it Fails

Using APAN and BKKCAW as a backdrop and case study for transnational dialogue, I have looked at the contributions such spaces can make to global climate dialogue and action, as well as their limitations.

Across both platforms, one pattern became clear: while experiences, analyses, and political priorities differed widely, many of the structural barriers to effective climate action were shared. It was from this convergence, rather than from abstract policy debate, that the consortium's recommendations emerged and fed into diplomacy processes around climate policy.

As a consortium, we formulated two key recommendations that were shared with APAN and fed into COP-related discussions:

1. There is a clear need to build capacity through shared taxonomies, climate literacy, and common conceptual frameworks that enable countries to identify appropriate adaptation measures, access finance, and implement effective action.
2. Participants emphasised the importance of developing standardised monitoring and evaluation tools applicable across the Asia-Pacific region, in order to assess impact more systematically and facilitate learning and replication.

Empowering Women and Advancing Green Jobs for Climate Resilience in Nepal

Women and Economic Independence

Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) Nepal, with support from The Asia House Foundation, implemented the project 'Empowering Women and Advancing Green Jobs for Climate Resilience in Nepal' in Buddhabhumi Municipality, Kapilvastu District, Lumbini Province. The project was implemented between 1st April and 30 September 2025, covering Wards 1, 8, and 9. The initiative aimed to empower women through green job capacity building and promote eco-friendly livelihoods to enhance climate resilience.

Over the project period, KIRDARC successfully organized women into eight self-help groups (SHGs) consisting of 200 members. Through skill development, climate change awareness, and enterprise promotion, the project enabled women to strengthen their economic independence while contributing to environmental conservation and sustainable development. The project also built strong collaborations among local government, private sector actors, and community-based groups to ensure long-term sustainability. Similarly, the exchange and regional workshops strengthened collaboration, knowledge sharing, and inclusive community climate initiatives.

Buddhabhumi's Climate and Livelihood Challenge

Buddhabhumi Municipality in Kapilvastu District faces growing challenges due to climate change, including erratic rainfall, decreasing agricultural productivity, and limited livelihood diversification opportunities. Women, who play key roles in agriculture and household management, are disproportionately affected by these challenges.

The project was designed to address these vulnerabilities by promoting green jobs and women-led enterprises. Its specific objectives were to:



Meetings were organized with women's groups in Wards 1, 8, and 9. A total of 166 women from eight SHGs participated in the kick-off, discussing green job opportunities, skills training, and enterprise development (Photo: KIRDARC)

1. Enhance the capacity of women to understand and respond to climate change impacts.
2. Promote environmentally sustainable income-generating activities.
3. Facilitate market linkages for women's products and enterprises.
4. Strengthen collaboration among government, private sector, and community actors for inclusive climate resilience.

How Women Came Together to Lead Change

The project began with an inception meeting held on 22nd June 2025 to introduce the project framework and objectives to local stakeholders. The meeting was attended by government officials and representatives from local bodies. It served as a platform for aligning expectations, introducing the project team, and ensuring stakeholder ownership for effective implementation.

Green Jobs and Enterprise Development

Two major capacity-building events were conducted to strengthen green job creation and enterprise development among women. The first was a ten-day training on handcraft production using sustainable local materials like Moonj and Kaasa grass. Twenty-four women from Tingharwa and Laligurash SHGs participated, learning to pro-



To promote collaboration and market access, a multi-stakeholder dialogue was held involving representatives from the private sector and local government (Photo: KIRDARC)

duce marketable items such as baskets, mats, pen holders, and trays. This training revitalized traditional crafts while fostering environmental stewardship.

These green job initiatives empowered women with technical and entrepreneurial skills while establishing a foundation for sustainable, community-led enterprises that align with climate adaptation goals.

Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, Challenges, and Way Forward

This event created linkages between women’s enterprises and local markets, cooperatives, and retailers. Discussions focused on understanding market demand, enhancing value chains, and aligning local policies to support women-led green enterprises.

As a result, a value chain mapping for handicrafts was developed, and women’s groups prepared an action plan to ensure consistent supply to the private sector. A marketing task force was also established to strengthen producer-customer connections.

Despite these achievements, the project faced challenges, including limited market access, financial constraints, and the need for continuous mentoring and technical support.



The second was a one-day specialized training on coriander seed production for 23 participants. It focused on seed selection, plantation, harvesting, and post-harvest techniques (Photo: KIRDARC)

Study Visit to Chongqing, China – China-EU-Nepal Exchange on Climate Resilience and Technology Cooperation

As part of regional learning and exchange, KIRDARC Nepal representatives participated in a study visit to Chongqing, China, aimed at fostering cross-country learning on sustainable development practices and strengthening collaboration among civil society organizations from China, Nepal, and Europe. During the visit, participants observed local initiatives demonstrating innovative climate-resilient practices, including solar-powered systems and renewable energy solutions.

Lessons learned have been integrated into KIRDARC’s ongoing programs, particularly in promoting climate-smart agriculture and women-led green enterprises in rural municipalities. The visit also reinforced regional networking, policy and knowledge exchange, linking local community experiences with different actors.

From Local Action to Regional Influence: Capacity Building and Regional Learning and Collaboration

As part of the project’s knowledge-sharing and regional capacity development component, KIRDARC Nepal engaged in a series of international and regional activities aimed at enhancing institutional learning, collaboration, and advocacy on climate resilience and green employment.

Geeta Pandey, Director of Policy Advocacy and Research at KIRDARC Nepal, represented the organization during the Bangkok Climate Action Week, in workshops co-organized by The Asia House Foundation and its partners, and as a panelist at the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) Conference from 27th September to 1st of October 2025.



Geeta Pandey at a panel at APAN, Bangkok 2025 (Photo: KIRDARC)

During the Deep Dive session, Ms. Pandey shared insights on addressing barriers that limit access to funding for community-based green-skills programs. She illustrated practical fixes that improved local participation and highlighted outcomes showing measurable adaptation benefits. She also emphasized the importance of designing inclusive funding features stipends, childcare, travel support, exposure visits, local intermediaries, and capacity-building programs, that allow women, low-income groups, and remote communities to participate meaningfully.



Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) Nepal

Formally registered in 1999 in District Administration Office (DAO) Jumla envisioned by youth of Karnali, Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) Nepal is a national Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) dedicated to empowering marginalized, vulnerable, and excluded communities across 24 Districts and 180 Local Government (Palikas) of Sudurpachhim, Karnali, Lumbini, Bagmati, and Gandaki Provinces.

Small-Scale Community Roll-Out of Electric Cooking Solutions

Background: Understanding the Landscape

In Nepal over 65% of households, particularly in rural areas, depend on firewood as their primary cooking fuel. This reliance has far-reaching social, economic, and environmental consequences. Traditional cooking methods contribute significantly to indoor air pollution, leading to respiratory illnesses, especially among women and children.

Nepal has made notable progress in expanding its electricity grid, with more than 95% of households now connected to electricity, according to the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). Transitioning to electric cooking could reduce indoor air pollution, improve health outcomes, and alleviate the burden of firewood collection, especially for women and children. Despite these potential benefits, the adoption of electric cooking in Nepal remains limited.

Major barriers include the high upfront cost of e-cooking appliances, limited awareness, cultural cooking practices, and concerns over electricity reliability.

Objectives: Can Electric Cooking Change Daily Life?

The project aims to understand the change in cooking behaviour by transitioning 80 households of wards 1 and 2 of Gaurishankar Rural Municipality (GRM) within Dolakha district of Nepal from biomass-based fuels or other polluting fuels to electric cooking.

Implementation Approach: Working with Communities to Make the Shift

Engagement with local government: In the context of the project a kick-off meeting was conducted and during which representatives of the local government were informed them of its details.

Household Selection and Baseline Survey: Households (HH) were selected from farmer groups that would represent the profile of the project site. For the baseline situation,



Baseline survey with local household women and members of selected regions (Photo: PEEDA)

desk work was conducted to prepare a baseline survey questionnaire to assess the existing cooking practices and habits, along with the type of fuels used, with consumption patterns. 54 households were surveyed using the baseline survey questionnaire.

Community Mobilization: PEEDA conducted sensitization among the local community, women in particular, through word-of-mouth communication, especially during the baseline survey and technology demonstration events, to make them aware of various electric cooking solutions.

Technology Demonstration: Technology demonstrations of electric cooking technologies were conducted in June to July before the support of the technologies to create demand, awareness of the technology, and user experience.

Technology Installation and Household Wiring Upgradation: Post-demand creation, PEEDA installed the induction stoves in the households that were willing to adopt the technologies and contributed financial support as part of project ownership, allowing the households to gain experience with those technologies.

Endline Survey: PEEDA conducted an endline survey of around 40 households (50% of supported users) after 2 months of technology usage by the users. The survey focused on assessing the change in behaviour, fuel stacking options, cost-benefit analysis, user experience, challenges of using induction stoves, and any other experience or change as expressed by the users.

Findings and Project Results: The Results – Small Shifts, Big Signals

Out of 40 households met during the endline survey, 34 households had adopted electric cooking. Thus, the results below are those of the 34 households.

1. Current Cooking Practices

During the baseline survey, 90.74% and 62.96% of respondents used wood and LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) as primary and secondary fuel, respectively. At the endline, 55.88% and 52.94% of respondents use wood and electricity as primary and secondary sources of fuel. This shows that the use of electricity for cooking increased significantly as a secondary fuel, as reflected in the endline survey.

Table 1. Energy Use and Cost

SN	Particulars	Baseline (N= 54)	Endline (N= 34)	% Change
1	Average Wood Quantity (in Bhari)	31.22	19.5	37.54%
2	LPG Sufficiency (in months)	4.86	4.09	15.84%
3	Average Electricity Bill Amount (NPR/ month)	49.6	106	113.71%
4	Average Electricity Units	14.03	26.22	86.89%

Note: 1 bhari = 30 kg (approx.), Nepali Rupees (NPR)

2. Energy Use and Cost

Table 1 shows the change in different parameters, such as average wood quantity used, sufficiency of LPG, and average consumption of electricity. It shows that post-electric cooking adoption, on average, 37.54% of wood consumption is reduced, 15.89% of LPG consumption is increased, while there has been a significant increase in the average electricity bill amount, and electricity units increased by 113.71% and 86.89% respectively.

3. User Experience and Challenges

The lack of reliable electricity is the major hindrance to electric cooking adoption in rural households, as expressed by all 34 households. Besides that, the other challenges



Endline survey after 2 months of technology integration in selected households (Photo: PEEDA)

of using induction stoves were lack of proper knowledge on the usage (3 HHs), Cooking habits/meals (2 HHs), and financial operation costs (2 HHs). 2 households found some meals difficult to cook on induction stoves, and 2 households expressed the higher financial electricity costs of using induction stoves as a challenge.

4. Gender Roles and Shift

The study also shows the shift in gender roles and sharing of responsibilities for cooking post-adoption of electric cooking. It reflects that:

- 94% agree that the responsibility for cooking has shifted.
- 97% agree that men, younger members, or elderly people cook more frequently in the induction stoves, particularly tea.
- 56% agree that their personal role in cooking has changed with the new induction stove.

5. Perception of cooking with electricity

Finally, the study reflects the perception of cooking with electricity. The majority of the respondents agree that it is faster and cleaner to cook on electricity. There was a mixed

response from the respondents regarding the decision to use induction stoves based on the recommendations from known people in the community and the cost. Further, the majority agreed (60%) that it is safe to cook with electricity.

6. Participation in international capacity building platforms

During the project, Mr. Biraj Gautam, Chief Executive Officer of PEEDA visited China.

This was PEEDA's first opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions with Chinese NGOs. The exchange provided valuable insight into the Chinese NGO ecosystem, which differs in many ways from the civil society context in Nepal. The visit also offered strong networking opportunities with Chinese civil society organizations.

As PEEDA works closely with communities in Nepal to promote renewable energy, the participation helped us better understand the range of technologies currently being implemented in China and facilitated useful professional connections. Following the visit, PEEDA has been in contact with CRES, and other NGOs on several occasions to discuss potential areas for future collaboration.

We believe the relationships and understanding developed during this engagement will add long-term value to PEEDA's efforts to build meaningful cooperation with Chinese NGOs.

Similarly, Mr. Prem Bikram Karki, Assistant Manager participated in different roundtable discussion and pre-events organized by the Asia House Foundation in Bangkok.

On the 28th September 2025: Mr. Prem participated in the project roundtable discussion where he shared the project implementation approach, lessons learned during the intervention, best practices and further reached out to project participants and cooperation partners for collaboration opportunities.

On the 29th and 30th September 2025: Mr. Prem participated in two deep dive sessions during the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) at the United Nations Conference Centre, and in three roundtable workshop discussions at the Coral Life Building as a part of the Bangkok Climate Action Week.

Key Impacts of the participation in international capacity building platforms:

Enhanced Knowledge Base: Gained insights into transformational adaptation finance, systemic barriers and lo-

calized climate responses, which can inform ongoing and future projects.

Strengthened Networks: Established connections with international cooperation partners, project participants and regional political, economic and civil society stakeholders, opening avenues for collaboration.

Exchange of Best Practices: Shared lessons learned and project implementation approaches, positioning PEEDA as a contributor to regional climate adaptation dialogue and tackling climate change impacts.

Strategic Alignment: Participation in financing discussions for NDCs and NAPs provided practical guidance for aligning organizational projects with national and regional climate priorities.

Capacity Building: Exposure to discussions on green skills and just transition will support internal strategies for workforce development and resilience planning.

In short, the engagement in the international capacity building platforms amplified PEEDA's profile and presence working in climate change issues and created collaboration opportunities that can be leveraged for future initiatives.



People, Energy & Environment Development Association (PEEDA)

People, Energy & Environment Development Association (PEEDA) was established in 1997 for the enhancement of the renewable energy sector in Nepal. PEEDA aims to mobilize both local and external resources to harness Nepal's indigenous resources, thereby promoting activities for economic development and poverty alleviation.

Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Adoption of Solar Lift Irrigation in Nepal

Introduction

In April 2024, The Small Earth Nepal (SEN) joined the project “The Climate Crisis and Civil Society Advocacy in Asia”, organised the China Program of the Asia House Foundation. Through the small seed project funds, SEN conducted a research study titled **“Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Adoption of Solar Lift Irrigation in Nepal.”** Besides the study, the overall program was accompanied by various engagement and capacity building workshops, networking events and peer-to-peer learning exchanges for all the participating NGOs.

Field Study: Understanding the Landscape

Nepal remains an agrarian country, with about 62% of the population engaged in agriculture, contributing one-third of the national GDP¹. However, almost 67% of agriculture is still based on rain-fed farming despite of Nepal’s abundance in freshwater resources. Such inadequate provision of irrigation facilities is one of the major causes of the underperformance of the agriculture sector of Nepal according to World Bank reports². Solar powered irrigation systems present a promising solution to Nepal’s irrigation water related challenges. Evidence shows, that including this form of green technology improves water security and boosts agro-economy along with reducing communities’ drudgery, thus, changing lives of thousands of smallholder farmers in Nepal’s rural areas.

Though solar irrigation systems have been implemented for the past decade and are therefore seen as a proven technology in Nepal, rates of adoption are still low³. It faces institutional, social, governance, and economic hurdles in its implementation, hindering its widespread adoption. In this context, SEN conducted a total of six case studies of community-managed irrigation systems from three districts Dhading, Ramechhap and Lalitpur. The project aimed at identifying existing barriers that hinder the implementation and sustainability of solar irrigation technology in rural mid-hills of Nepal.

Out of six cases, the field survey found that five irrigation systems were non-functional. The study highlighted a



Key Informant Interview (KII) with Mr Manish Maharjan, Irrigation Division Chief, Dhading (Photo: SEN)

range of technical, social, and institutional barriers that are hindering the sector transformation. Communities reported frequent pipe bursts, damage due to lightening and flooding events, declining panel efficiency, weak maintenance mechanism due to lack of maintenance funds and insurances, as some of the most prevalent reasons that are limiting the sustainability of solar irrigation system. Furthermore, committees lacked the capacity as well as resources to manage systems effectively and work through conflicts with the neighbouring community for water resources. One case study revealed that if solar irrigation is augmented with other intervention such as tunnel farming, drip irrigation, grafting technology and mechanization, agricultural production was found to be boosted.

However, farmers still struggled with poor market access. At the policy level, drinking water is prioritized over irrigation, a few projects therefore remained incomplete after changes in government representatives and there is lack of coordination among government agencies underscoring the need for the multi-year investment and adopt holistic approach. Damages due to intense flooding, in recent year, were found to be another major climate-induced problem for which intensive climate risk assessments are required. Communities expressed that while solar irrigation is beneficial as a long-term solution, the high initial investment, potentially higher maintenance cost and lack of local technical expertise remain major barriers to its sustainability and wider adoption. Hence, community are switching to electricity-based lifting systems or hybrid systems which are cheaper to install and operate compared to solar. Few recommendations from the study so far:



Focus Group Discussion (FGD) at Ramechhap (Photo: SEN)

1. Strengthen maintenance support systems by establishing local technical support by government, create maintenance funds by communities or promoting insurance schemes
2. Build up community capacities by training locals for operation and maintenance of the systems
3. Integrate comprehensive climate risk assessment into site selection to minimise damage from floods and landslides
4. Promote productive use of solar irrigation by integrating other agriculture related intervention
5. Ensure projects continuity with multi-year investment plans
6. Promote hybrid systems wherever feasible
7. Facilitate access to finance to support upfront cost as well as maintenance cost.

Networking and exchange visits

A **China-Europe-Nepal Exchange on Climate Resilience and Technology Cooperation Experience Sharing Session** held in Chongqing, China on 22nd July 2025 jointly organised by Chongqing Renewable Energy Society and Asia House Foundation, created a space for networking with several like-minded organizations. It provided a platform for informal dialogue on cooperation opportunities and getting acquainted with the technical advancement of China in energy transition and green economy.

The project's final conference held in Bangkok, Thailand from 27th September to 1st October 2025 provided an opportunity to exchange learnings from grassroots projects implemented by partner organisations and provided an international forum to share the experiences and learnings in.

At Bangkok Climate Action Week (BKKCAW), a side-event "Localising Adaptation and Mitigation: Finance, Power and Practice in the Asia Pacific", co-curated by Asia House Foundation, Germanwatch and the Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change (INECC) was held during which Ms. Shrestha (SEN) had an opportunity to be one



With women only group in Sunakothi, Lalitpur Metropolitan City (Photo: SEN)

of the panellists, and contributed to the global discourse of localizing the adaptation and mitigation measures. She talked on how the prioritization of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures of local governments has a major influence on its adoption. She also talked about the lack of access to finance for implementing such measures at community level. Besides, she also attended deep dive sessions at Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation (APAN) Forum which enabled her to be a part of global discussion on transformational adaptation and an opportunity to widen her horizon of knowledge.



During a discussion on "Finance, Power and Practice", Suchita Shrestha (SEN), Governor Noel Rosal (Albay, Philippines), and Edwin Tesaluna (PMCJ) explore how climate responses can be effectively localised across Asia (Photo: INECC)

- 1 Pradhan, 2023
- 2 CIAT; World Bank; CCAFS and LI-BIRD, 2017
- 3 World Bank Group, 2019



Small Earth Nepal

The Small Earth Nepal stands as a non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to promoting sustainable lifestyles and reducing Nepal's global footprint. Since its inception in March 2001, SEN has been committed to advancing sustainable development and fostering choices that bolster system resilience.

Concluding Reflections



Visiting NGO partners in Sichuan (Photo: Haihui Poverty Alleviation Center, Chengdu)

The project *The Climate Crisis, Global China and Civil Society Advocacy in Asia* was shaped from the outset by two closely connected perspectives. Its point of departure was the observation that in many parts of South and Southeast Asia, the climate crisis becomes particularly acute where large-scale infrastructure and investment projects intersect with limited opportunities for civil society participation, oversight, and accountability. At the same time, the project explored how existing and new spaces for transnational civil society cooperation can be created and sustained under changing geopolitical and civic conditions, including in relation to China and Europe.

The locally rooted project work documented in this volume demonstrates how climate justice debates materialise on the ground. Whether addressing renewable energy transi-

tions, natural resource governance, disaster risk, or community livelihoods, civil society organisations in China, Indonesia and Nepal navigate complex constellations of state, corporate, and financial actors. Their experiences underline that effective climate action depends not only on technical solutions, but on participation, accountability, and long-term engagement.

At the same time, the project functioned as an innovative and analytical space for transnational civil society cooperation. Through dialogue formats, network-building activities, and engagement in international platforms, actors from Asia, and Europe tested how collaboration can be sustained across different political contexts, geopolitical shifts, knowledge systems, and degrees of civic space. These exchanges demonstrated that transnational



dialogue is not an end in itself, but a necessary condition for translating local experience into regional and global policy debates.

The project's central contribution lies in bringing these two approaches together. Locally anchored work on the climate impacts of investment and infrastructure development was complemented by process-oriented and exploratory forms of transnational cooperation. In this way, the project not only highlighted concrete challenges, but also helped to build relationships, shared learning processes, and points of reference between civil society actors across Asia, China, and Europe.

Based on the insights generated through this project, several cross-cutting recommendations can be drawn:

- Protect and stabilise civil society space. Long-term and flexible funding remains crucial to enable civil society organisations to engage strategically and to sustain work beyond short project cycles.
- Consolidate transnational civil society networks. Existing networks and dialogue spaces should be strengthened to allow for continuous exchange, mutual learning, and joint advocacy along global investment and climate governance pathways.
- Anchor civil society expertise more firmly in climate and investment governance. Local and regional knowledge must continue to inform global climate forums, investment-related policy debates, and implementation processes.
- Deepen context-sensitive engagement with Chinese actors. Ongoing dialogue with Chinese civil society organisations, companies, and intermediaries remains essential for addressing the climate impacts of overseas investments and for building shared analytical ground.
- Advance binding participation standards for foreign investment projects. Transparent consultation processes and enforceable accountability mechanisms are key to ensuring that affected communities and civil society actors can meaningfully shape development outcomes.



Strong Symbol for a better Future - Art at the Bangkok Climate Action Week (Photo: Stiftung Asienhaus/Asia House Foundation)

Taken together, these recommendations point toward a central conclusion: addressing the climate crisis in the context of Global China requires more than isolated interventions or short-term projects. It requires sustained civil society cooperation across local, national, and transnational levels, supported by political will and institutional frameworks that recognise participation and dialogue as core components of climate action. The experiences documented in this publication offer both cautionary lessons and practical entry points for advancing such an approach.

同心协力

Working Together with a Shared Commitment

Meaningful dialogue is built through patience, cooperation, and mutual trust. This project was made possible by many long-standing and new partners, colleagues, and friends who contributed their knowledge, time, and commitment throughout this shared journey.

While it is impossible to name everyone who accompanied us throughout the three years of this project, we extend our sincere gratitude to all organisations and individuals whose steadfast support, collaboration, and trust made this work possible, including:

Our Board of Experts

Our Board of Experts, whose networks, in-depth regional and thematic expertise, and guidance proved invaluable at crucial moments throughout the project.

Whether joining Zoom meetings around midnight in the United States or early mornings in the Philippines, offering advice between UN SB62 consultations, delivering training while travelling from one country to another, taking up the mantle of teacher to bring order to chaos, or encouraging colleagues and friends alike to contribute their time and expertise, Board members went far beyond what could reasonably be expected from a volunteer-based group of high-profile experts.

- Zhong Huang
- Giovanni Pradipta
- Raju Pandit Chhetri
- Zhao Zhong
- Tom Wang
- Yiping Cai
- Lina Li
- Sam Geall



Intense Conference Start with Advisory Board members and project participants in Bangkok (Photo: Stiftung Asienhaus / Asia House Foundation)

NGO Partners, Knowledge and Network Sharers



CRES organized a multi-stakeholder workshop in Chongqing for the project (Photo: CRES)

The Chongqing Renewable Energy Society (CRES), our official partner in China, in particular Mr Dingping Ma, whose knowledge and experience guided us through Chongqing's remarkable green transformation landscape, and Mr Subhani Mirza Umar, whose ability to build bridges across countries and sectors proved invaluable throughout the project.



Haihui Founder and supporter of the Chinese- Thai Children and Youth Centre work of Mr. Pramote in Chiang Dao, Taiyong Chen (Photo: Stiftung Asienhaus/ Asia House Foundation)



Young Leaders at the Youth Center in Chiang Dao introduced us to their Chinese-Thai cooperation project (Photo: Stiftung Asienhaus / Asia House Foundation)

Mr Taiyong Chen and Mr Jack Li of the Sichuan Haihui Poverty Alleviation Service Center, who warmly welcomed our project delegation in Chengdu and introduced us to their rural development work in China and Thailand, as well as to Mr Pramote's remarkable initiatives supporting children

and youth in the mountainous regions around Chiang Mai and Chiang Dao.

Yao Zhe and Xincen Gu at Greenpeace Beijing, who provided in-depth insights into China's national and international climate strategies.

Our colleagues at Greenovation Hub, with whom we have remained in close exchange for more than ten years since first meeting during the EU-China NGO Twinning Programme.

The team of China Development Brief, including Mr Zhuolun Wang who joined the project, and remains committed to contribute to international civil society cooperation.



New NGO partners from India (INECC, Myron Mendes), the Philippines (ICSC, Angel Chan) and Indonesia (IRID, Henriette Imelda) joined our project efforts in Bangkok (Photo: Germanwatch)

We would like to thank Myron Mendes and all colleagues at INECC, whose ambition and tireless commitment to climate advocacy opened doors we had not previously imagined and brought additional partners, including IRID and ICSC, into this collaboration. Special thanks also go to our colleague Martin Voss at Germanwatch, who introduced us to this consortium.

The colleagues at People of Asia for Climate Solutions in Manila, in particular the organisation's funder Tom Wang, whose efforts connected our discussions with emerging transnational climate advocates as well as high-level political representatives.



Thanks to the BKKCAW and Yu Yin more international speakers joined our workshops (Photo: Ketty Nguyen, Stiftung Asienhaus /Asia House Foundation)

The outstanding organising teams at APAN and BKKCAW in Bangkok, in particular Babu and Yu Yin, whose support made our participation in these platforms possible.

Titi Soentoro, a dedicated advocate for women's and climate justice, whose commitment brought her across monsoon seasons and North Rhine-Westphalia's public transport networks alike to engage with our project and its participants.

同心协力 (tóng xīn xié lì)

A Chinese proverb (chengyu) meaning "working with one heart and one mind," expressing the idea of people joining their efforts toward a common goal.

The project was funded by Bread for the World and the Mercator Foundation. Without their trust and strategic guidance, the work and impacts reflected in these pages would not have been possible.

Any omissions remain unintentional and reflect the collective nature of this work.

About this publication

This publication documents the project “*The Climate Crisis, Global China and Civil Society Advocacy in Asia*”, implemented by the Stiftung Asienhaus China-Programme. The project established platforms for dialogue among civil society, business, and political stakeholders to address the opportunities and challenges of foreign investment in responding to the climate crisis. It implemented initiatives on sustainable technological transformation in the renewable energy sector and conducted research on the social dimensions of development processes.

Over a three-year period, the project fostered transnational civil society initiatives aimed at addressing the climate-related impacts of foreign investment projects in Asia. Civil society actors from China, Europe, Indonesia, and Nepal engaged in knowledge exchange, cooperation, and joint advocacy, ranging from grassroots and community levels to international policy arenas. The project promoted collaboration with relevant stakeholders and encouraged the sharing of best practices in global climate forums, thereby contributing to a more coordinated international response to climate change.

In this context, the China-Programme sought to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to strengthen climate partnerships with Chinese actors, against the background of the *EU–China Strategic Outlook (2019)*. *From a cross-cutting perspective, the project addressed SDGs 5, 7, 11, 13, 16, and 17.*

About Stiftung Asienhaus

The Stiftung Asienhaus (eng. Asia House Foundation) follows the principle “Connecting People, Promoting Insights, Shaping the Future” and works to build bridges between civil societies in Asia and Europe. The foundation is committed to human rights, the strengthening of social and political participation, as well as the protection of social justice and the environment.

About the China-Programme

The China-Programme is an innovation and knowledge platform for civil society dialogue with China. It is active in education, outreach, networking, and the implementation of dialogue-based projects. The programme’s goal is to provide in-depth knowledge about China, its civil society, and its evolving role in the world—through cooperative knowledge creation with Chinese partners, Europe–China policy engagement, and contributions to multilateral global climate governance.