

Men, Masculinities & Climate Justice

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30 Voices on Men, Masculinities & Climate Justice

This collection brings together 30 key quotes from our first joint webinar spanning 12 themes and drawing on the voices of editors, scholars, youth activists, and practitioners. Whether you are new to this conversation or already deep in it, these quotes offer a window into why engaging men and boys is essential to climate justice, and what that actually looks like in practice.

MEN, MASCULINITY & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

1.

“Men tend to have a bigger impact in terms of carbon footprint and environmental impact generally in terms of consumption, travel, transport, particularly tourism. And those industries such as the meat, military, petrochemicals tend to be dominated very much by men, both in the leadership and the ownership.”

— **Jeff Hearn** | NORMA Editor; Senior Professor, Örebro University

2.

“It is very obvious to see the counter forces the links between anti-climate consciousness, right-wing politics, and petrochemical politics and militarism. Those links are really clear on that side. So it's like creating something equivalent or more on this side.”

— **Jeff Hearn** | NORMA Editor; Senior Professor, Örebro University

PATRIARCHY, COLONIALITY & THE ROOTS OF CRISIS

3.

“Patriarchy, coloniality, and global capitalism really intersect with a set of logics that are based on a set of binaries. The idea that humans are something other than other species and the planet. The feminist and ecofeminist project has long been thinking about that.”

— **Tamara Shefer** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Women's & Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape

4.

“Climate justice, or the climate crisis, is deeply rooted in patriarchal, colonial resource extraction and capitalist models of industrial production. These systems also organize power in ways that maintain hierarchy and exclude women, gender-diverse people, and many men and boys, while exploiting nature.”

— **Iaxman Belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat; Faculty, George Washington University

5.

“We are living in a masculinist world where institutions are patriarchal — not only dominated by individual men, but also shaped by particular kinds of leadership, particular ways of interacting, and a valorization of particular principles of engagement.”

— **Tamara Shefer** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Women's & Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape

THREE FORMS OF MASCULINITY & THE ENVIRONMENT

6.

“We are entering a period in which we are living through the effects of a hotter world and biodiversity loss. Masculinity studies has a crucial contribution to make by critically analyzing the norms connected to patriarchal and extractive industries, but at the same time looking into those who can actually change their practices and values.”

— **Martin Hultman** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Sociology, University of Gothenburg

7.

“The conservative men's movement of the 1990s used nature as a backdrop to reinstate hegemonic masculinity, it didn't change men's relationship to patriarchal structure or deepen their connection to ecosystems. Ecofeminism, by contrast, was doing the transformative work, and was targeted precisely because of that.”

— **Martin Hultman** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Sociology, University of Gothenburg

8.

“Eco-modern masculinity offers techno-fixes without challenging the underlying logic of domination and extraction. Men responding to floods through engineering solutions without deepening their sense of responsibility for environmental damage is a form of progress that leaves the system intact.”

— **Tamara Shefer** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Women's & Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape

INTERCONNECTED SYSTEMS — NOT SEPARATE PROBLEMS

9.

“Climate crisis is rooted in patriarchal masculinities, but at the same time, the realities of climate crisis are also shaping notions around masculinity. That further has connections with violence, militarisation, health, economy, and so on. It is important to look at these as interconnected systems rather than separate.”

— **Iaxman belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat

10.

“I think we can't look at these issues separately. Not only at a philosophical, conceptual level are they all linked, but also because climate crises and environmental disasters always impact worst on those already disadvantaged.”

— **Tamara Shefer** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Women's & Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape

11.

“These insights can be extended to other issues, on the connections between masculinities, systemic challenges, the experiences and needs of men and boys, and the need to center care. Men and boys as beneficiaries means they can't be passive — they need to be active agents of change.”

— **Joni v/d Sand** | MenEngage Global Secretariat

CARE AS METHOD, NOT JUST GOAL

12.

“Care is not only the goal, it is the way. Throughout this process, we need to work with boys and men so that care, cooperation, and ecological stewardship become the path, not just the destination.”

— **laxman belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat; Faculty, George Washington University

13.

“We can't keep caring for humanity if the Bay of Bengal is completely flooded and we are continuing to destroy the climate. It has to be connected. While we care for ourselves, that implies caring for humanity and everyone else, including the planet. Care in that broader sense has to be unpacked and understood.”

— **laxman belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat

14.

“There's a more careful and caring, ecofeminist and ecological masculinity strand, and that is what we need to understand how to reconnect to our ecosystems and the modern human world, so we can have as inclusive and fair and just a transition together as possible.”

— **Martin Hultman** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Sociology, University of Gothenburg (Asked to sum up the session in one word)

BEYOND ALLYSHIP — MEN AS BENEFICIARIES

15.

“If we are seeing climate justice as benefiting men as well, then we are not only helping others. We are benefiting from a just system ourselves. Boys and men can't just be passive beneficiaries. They need to step in, step up, take on appropriate responsibility, accountably, and act as agents of change alongside feminist leadership.”

— **laxman belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat

16.

“Many men still see this as giving power away while in essence it is not that. It is more about sharing power. And that concept of 'power with' is still emerging in the field.”

— **laxman belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat

17.

“If you give particularly young men a genuine listening ear and invite them to speak about their dreams, they easily come up with care issues for the climate, for kids, for relationships. But they also indicate how difficult it is for them to practice that care in the world as it is.”

— **Jan Reynders** | MenEngage Europe; Gender Justice & Sustainable Development Consultant, Netherlands

GRASSROOTS PRACTICE & LOCAL ACTION

18.

“The climate crisis is not just an environmental challenge. It is a social challenge, deeply shaped by power, norms, privilege, and masculinity. In Bangladesh, we see how patriarchal systems influence who makes decisions, whose voice is heard, and how resources are used. Without addressing these norms, our climate solutions remain incomplete.”

— **Sohanur Rahman** | MenEngage Climate Justice Working Group; Founder, YouthNet for Climate Justice, Bangladesh

19.

“EcoMen is not a men's empowerment program. It is a program that supports everyone, with feminist leadership at the center. It is not only individual behavior change. It is individual, structural, and systemic change. And it is explicitly pro-care, pro-justice, and anti-patriarchal.”

— **Sohanur Rahman** | MenEngage Climate Justice Working Group; Founder, YouthNet for Climate Justice, Bangladesh

20.

“Climate crisis is accelerating, and it is the right time to hold powerful men accountable and protect our environment and nature.”

— **Sohanur Rahman** | MenEngage Climate Justice Working Group; Founder, YouthNet for Climate Justice, Bangladesh

GLOBAL SOUTH & DECOLONIAL KNOWLEDGE

21.

“It was very heartwarming that we received articles located in the Global South. People always struggle to foreground the work of Global Southern scholars, our literary and research engines are biased. It is important to actively sort and actively include this knowledge.”

— **Tamara Shefer** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Women's & Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape

22.

“In a Muslim-majority country like Bangladesh, even the word 'transformation' triggers anxiety about gender identity change. We had to redesign our language entirely. Contextualization is necessary work.”

— **Sohanur Rahman** | MenEngage Climate Justice Working Group; Founder, YouthNet for Climate Justice, Bangladesh

EMBODIED CONNECTION TO NATURE

23.

“Men who studied ecofeminist texts and gathered six times in different urban nature environments including exploring a culverted brook under the city came to understand how they themselves were culverted as men in their masculinity. Reconnecting to the ecosystem was also reconnecting to themselves.”

— **Martin Hultman** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Sociology, University of Gothenburg
(Describing the 'Flow Feelers' project, Sweden)

24.

“Engaging in the ocean, wild swimming, freediving, opens up affordances for seeing oneself as part of, and therefore responsible to, environmental injustice. Being in the ocean, seeing other species, being part of an alternative world creates effective emotional engagement.”

— **Tamara Shefer** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Women's & Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape

INDIVIDUAL CHANGE IS NOT ENOUGH

25.

“If we only zoom in on individual change, we will lose out on connecting it to the bigger picture. Changing environmental laws, workplaces, and infrastructures needs to happen simultaneously, otherwise we are left changing only individuals and not the big structures.”

— **Martin Hultman** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Sociology, University of Gothenburg

26.

“The solution is not training certain people in certain positions, either. It is about how do we really touch hearts and minds because until we do, the ownership, commitment, and sustainability of the agenda is not possible.”

— **Iaxman Belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat

YOUTH, EDUCATION & INTERGENERATIONAL WORK

27.

“Working with children and young people from an early age shapes behaviors and attitudes toward care, cooperation, and ecological stewardship. That is a path we need to look at and that is why care is not only the goal, it is the way.”

— **Iaxman Belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat

28.

“What is needed is also education for adults, for adult men. When it comes down to it, there are a lot of older men who control the levers of power. This might sound utopian, but there is a need for education of those men who are controlling these systems. This is not to neglect youth education, but it is really important.”

— **Jeff Hearn** | NORMA Editor; Senior Professor, Örebro University

HOPE, COMMITMENT & THE LONG VIEW

29.

“Until and unless we are really able to touch the hearts and minds of people, the ownership, commitment, and sustainability of this agenda is not possible. That is what the work of Sohan, and colleagues in Uganda, and Vidar and the team in Sweden demonstrates. You cannot get there through training alone.

— **laxman belbase** | MenEngage Global Secretariat (Asked to sum up the session in one word)

30.

“Hearing what people are doing on the ground always brings alive the more theoretical inputs, and really, you know, brings hope. One can see that there is a way forward.”

— **Tamara Shefer** | NORMA Editor; Professor of Women's & Gender Studies, University of the Western Cape