

# 30 Voices from the Frontlines

*Patriarchy, Backlash, and Climate Justice*

MenEngage Working Group on Environmental and Climate Justice · Webinar 2 · April 23, 2026

## 01 ON CLIMATE VULNERABILITY AND GENDER

*"Climate change doesn't just create new problems it amplifies existing inequalities. Women have less access to land, to financial resources, and to information. When climate shocks happen, they hit women harder, reinforcing cycles of vulnerability and inequality."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"When we talk about climate change in Madagascar, we need to understand that its impacts are not neutral. They are deeply gendered. Women are the primary managers of vital resources such as water, food, fuel. And yet they remain largely excluded from the spaces where decisions about those resources are made."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"These threats are not abstract. They are lived every season by millions of people."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"In Bangladesh, women are the main burden-holders of the climate crisis. When disasters occur, they are the most affected. They carry the household responsibilities. And they are also more vulnerable because of the patriarchy, because of the toxic masculinity that exists."*

**Aruba Faruque** · Deputy Executive Coordinator, YouthNet Global, Bangladesh

*"Women in Uganda often face increased risk of gender-based violence and poverty following climate shocks. As climate-induced crop failures reduce household incomes, families prioritize boys' education first. Girls are pulled out of school — for domestic labor, for early marriage, to fetch water and firewood that climate change has made scarcer."*

**Kayinga Muddu Yisito** · Network Coordinator, COTFONE, Uganda

## 02 ON PATRIARCHY AND STRUCTURAL EXCLUSION

*"Mivoria Lahy E" is not a detail. It is the architecture of exclusion in Northern Madagascar."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · TI-Madagascar slide, "What the Ground Taught Us"

*"In Madagascar, climate and environmental initiatives remain largely masculine by design. The values, despite being at the heart of natural resources management, are largely composed of men. This is not merely a cultural issue — it is the result of political and programmatic choices accumulated over time."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"The commitments made by individual leaders matter. But individual commitment cannot dismantle structural exclusion alone."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · TI-Madagascar slide, "Progress Within Persistent Structures"

*"In Uganda, patriarchy influences the education curriculum by reinforcing gender stereotypes. Cultural norms prioritize boys' education and shape learning to favour female-dominated roles. Despite government policies promoting gender equality, the curriculum, along with teacher attitudes and hidden pedagogical practices, frequently perpetuates traditional gender roles."*

**Kayinga Muddu Yisito** · Network Coordinator, COTFONE, Uganda

*"Patriarchy has a dominant mindset of extraction and exclusion of women and gender-diverse people, and this is a mirror to the climate crisis itself."*

**Khurram** · Session Co-facilitator

*"Men's engagement is not getting recognition. The myth is that gender is only about women's empowerment."*

**Sohanur Rahman** · Executive Coordinator, YouthNet Global, Bangladesh

### 03 ON ENTRY POINTS AND METHODOLOGY

*"Don't start with gender. Start with what men are already committed to."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · TI-Madagascar slide, "What Worked — And Why"

*"We did not lecture. We asked questions and listened. This worked because men start to recognize the problem themselves. Instead of feeling attacked, they begin to reflect — and they were not being criticized. They were understanding their own system."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"The most powerful moment was not when we explained patriarchy to them. It was when they named "Mivoria Lahy E" themselves."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · TI-Madagascar slide, "What Worked — And Why"

*"Men who are already in the climate movement have existing values — responsibility, protection, community survival. Connecting gender justice to those values creates internal motivation, not just compliance."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"Context is not the background to the work. Context is the work. We must listen before we train. We must understand before we prescribe. If we skip that step — if we arrive with our tools before understanding the terrain — we will design interventions that look right on paper and miss in practice."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"Instead of saying we need a more gender-balanced approach, start by talking to men about what they already care about: caring for the environment, caring for others. Then we can ask: but who is doing this care work? Mostly women. So we need to go and ask them, how can we build better together?"*

**Khurram** · Session Co-facilitator

## 04 ON LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND PEER ACCOUNTABILITY

*"External organizations can open doors. But it is community leaders who walk through them."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · TI-Madagascar slide, "What the Ground Taught Us"

*"We were not the messenger, not because our message was wrong, but because we were not from the community. We did not share their daily reality. But the community leaders did. When they spoke about climate governance or women's participation, the message was stronger because it came from someone they trust. In Madagascar, context is everything — and local connection is the key. So the answer is simple: invest in local messengers, not just local audiences."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"When community leaders share experience with each other, something shifts. Commitment made in front of peers carries social weight that commitment made in front of facilitators does not. In a patriarchal context, male peer accountability is powerful. When men commit in front of other men, the social cost of breaking that commitment increases."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar

*"A commitment made in a room is not yet a transformation lived in a community. It is where the work starts."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · TI-Madagascar slide, "What the Ground Taught Us"

*"Presence without voice is not participation. What we witnessed and what our evaluation confirmed was not attendance. It was agency."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoharana** · TI-Madagascar slide, "They Were There — And They Spoke"

## 05 ON ACTIVISM UNDER THREAT

*"The question of how I dare to continue is often answered by the very crisis we are fighting. We are speaking up for communities facing severe hunger and food insecurity communities whose voices are not being listened to. We cannot stay silent when the climate crisis destroys livelihoods and lives."*

**Kayinga Muddu Yisito** · Network Coordinator, COTFONE, Uganda

*"I refuse to pass down a non-livable planet. Knowing that our work could make the difference between a sustainable future and a catastrophic one for the next generation is a profound motivator."*

**Kayinga Muddu Yisito** · Network Coordinator, COTFONE, Uganda

*"Our strength comes from our togetherness matching together, sharing stories, and supporting one another after being released from detention."*

**Kayinga Muddu Yisito** · Network Coordinator, COTFONE, Uganda

*"We are driven by the firm belief that another world is possible and that we must do everything in our power to secure it."*

**Kayinga Muddu Yisito** · Network Coordinator, COTFONE, Uganda

*"It is so sad that education, which should support emancipation, is used to reinforce systems of oppression."*

**Mark Langdon (he/him)** · White Ribbon Scotland

## 06 ON EDUCATION AS A BATTLEGROUND

*"In ninth grade, I was told I had to study Home Economics, cooking, cleaning, interior decoration, and was barred from Political Science because I was a girl. Boys took agriculture. We took sewing. They planted trees. We sewed clothes. Why couldn't we plant the trees and they sew the clothes? That kind of narrative is being pushed through the curriculum."*

**Aruba Faruque** · Deputy Executive Coordinator, YouthNet Global, Bangladesh

*"With every government change, the curriculum changes. Political ideologies are reflected in what gets taught, and right now we are seeing radical politics rising. That creates real uncertainty about whether gender justice ideas will survive the next election."*

**Aruba Faruque** · Deputy Executive Coordinator, YouthNet Global, Bangladesh

*"Beyond the formal curriculum, a hidden curriculum exists where teacher expectations, school routines perpetuates gendered behaviour, leading to lower confidence and different career aspirations for girls. And climate change makes it worse: when drought destroys crops, girls are pulled out of school first."*

**Kayinga Muddu Yisito** · Network Coordinator, COTFONE, Uganda

*"I see positive movement coming through youth associations and civil society. Young people are carrying these ideas into international spaces. But at the government level, I don't see strong genuine will. The pressure mostly comes from international funders. Real force is coming from below."*

**Nomena Liantsoa Rafanoarana** · Environmental Project Officer, TI-Madagascar