

Power Literacy in Just Sustainability Transitions

Panelists



Nontokoza Sabic

"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change."

Audre Lorde

International facilitator and consultant
Founder of [Nonty Charity Sabic](#) & co-founder of [Rise Ubuntu Network](#)

Nontokoza is an advocate for climate and social justice, community living and North-South healing and reconciliation, utilising the principles of UBUNTU. She works with international environmental and social movements to develop ways of dismantling systems of oppression, decolonising and healing of internalised racism.

"Under a growth-based, capitalist system, a transition to renewable energy will merely reproduce existing relationships of power. A post-growth socio-economic system can and should prioritize social and ecological sustainability."

Community Engagement Manager at [Electra Energy Cooperative](#)

Chris works for [Electra Energy Cooperative](#), a social enterprise that promotes the active engagement of citizens in renewable energy production in Greece, the Balkans and abroad. His research interests lie on the [post-growth transformative capacity](#) of energy communities, where he merges his practical and academic works.



Chris Vrettos

"Power defines the legitimacy of knowledge. Transforming unequal power relations in knowledge production through co-learning & co-production can lead to equitable, just & practical solutions to development challenges."

Professor of Gender and Development, University of East Anglia
Director of the [Norwich Institute for Sustainable Development](#)

Nitya's commitment to social & gender justice led her to focus on engaging with power inequalities in knowledge production & development practice for transformative change, whether relating to the impacts of climate on gendered livelihoods & wellbeing, or transforming food systems to ensure equity, inclusivity, resilience & sustainability.



Nitya Rao

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Adrian Smith

"Power shapes the truth; countering that through democratic deliberation is vital. Being power illiterate can be useful. Or more precisely, being literate about it, but ignoring its operation as democratically & safely as you possibly can in any situation."

Professor of Technology & Society
[University of Sussex](#)

Adrian is a researcher who investigates the politics of innovation in sustainability transitions. He studies and collaborates with creative grassroots initiatives associated with social movements and attempts to address (un)sustainability in more institutionalised settings.

"Power is not inherently bad, we need power & agency to enable transformative change; the key is learning to work with power & reconfigure its relations to allow unheard voices to have as much impact as those currently wielding their power to maintain inequitable/unsustainable systems & structures."

Associate Professor and Researcher at [Stockholm Resilience Centre](#)

Laura is an interdisciplinary sustainability scientist with a background in ecology, law and human geography. She is interested in the interface between traditional knowledge and innovation, the role of futures techniques in enabling transformative change and developing innovative methods for knowledge co-production in Global South contexts.



Laura Pereira

"The (perception of) powerlessness is a greater impediment to change than the power of vested interests"

Associate Professor
[Erasmus University Rotterdam](#)

Flor has been researching #PowerinTransition at [DRIFT](#) since 2005. She led the [TRANSIT-project](#) on transformative social innovation, and is currently involved in several projects on #JustSustainabilityTransitions, incl. the [Vital Cities & Citizens Initiative](#), the [UrbanA-project](#) on #SustainableJustCities and the [SONNET-project](#) on social innovation in energy transitions.



Flor Avelino

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Facilitators



Tessa de Geus

"(Un)learning the thoughts you take for granted is your greatest power move"

Action Researcher Energy Transitions
DRIFT

Tessa researches how we can organise energy transitions that are radical, legitimate and fair. She does so by developing roadmaps with cities (in the TOMORROW project), and researching power in social innovation (see the SONNET power guide).

Lucia loves quoting Brene Brown, who says "We should move away from the belief that power is finite to the belief that power can be infinite and expands when shared with others."

Facilitator, Project Manager & Policy Advocate
ICLEI

She has a degree in Sustainability Science at Lund University and is Just Transition officer at ICLEI Europe, where she supports local governments to integrate social justice into urban sustainability



Lucia di Paola

Illustrator

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Menah is an illustrator and live visual notes artist. She makes visual summaries of what's going on around her.



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Hosting team



Magdalena Pitzer

Intern
DRIFT

MSc in Development and
Rural Innovation

*“Power comes with
blind spots- so we need
to actively look at who
we are disempower-
ing when we strive for
change, to make sure
we do not repeat unjust
patterns.”*



Yannick Overzee

Intern
Erasmus University

MSc in Cultural Anthropology
and MSc student in Industrial
Ecology

*“Never surrender your
power to imagine.”*



Franco Crudi

Research Assistant
Erasmus University

MA in Architecture & MSc
in Urban Studies

*“Learning how power
relations unfold in our
daily life is the first step
to understand why so
often a small group of
people dominates our
political agendas.”*

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