

## EXTRACTING US

### Feminism, Coal and Just Transition

The story of coal brings together human and non-human forces over multiple scales of space and time. In a single moment, the product of geological processes spanning multiple millennia is burned to feed the illusions of economic growth and human progress. Coal is mined, transported, and combusted every day to produce just over a third of global electricity upon which our political and economic systems rely. Deep time and the Earth's natural processes are reduced to a "cheap and easy" source of energy from which industry and governments profit.

But the market fails to account for the true costs of coal extraction. Lives, livelihoods and liveable environments are robbed from the communities impacted by coal mining, and from generations yet to come. The combustion of coal contributes significantly to anthropogenic climate change, the realities of which are becoming increasingly evident. Concerned citizens everywhere are urging governments and industries to keep fossil fuels in the ground, but often overlooked is the devastation the global coal industry brings to the local communities where coal is extracted.

Indonesia is the second largest coal producer globally, exporting 70% of its production to feed the energy-hungry economies of China, India, Japan and South Korea, and Europe which in turn produce commodities traded and consumed the world over. Across Indonesia, human and environmental health is threatened in areas of coal extraction, in many cases leading to deaths and the destruction of local ecosystems and livelihoods.

Indonesian activists call coal a "sexy killer": far from the sites of extraction, dirty coal is traded as energy and profits are invested in attractive industries such as European football clubs, and in sponsoring Indonesian politicians. The coal companies are largely owned by Indonesian oligarchs, one of it purchased from British mining companies who have left their legacy on the practices and operations of coal mining.

The benefits and burdens of the coal industry are unevenly distributed globally, nationally and locally. The most impacted communities are in rural and economically poor areas, and within these communities the most threatened are also those least valued by the political and economic systems. The gendered division of labour means women disproportionately bear the brunt of the burden as they lose their children, their homes, and the rivers, forests, and rice-fields upon which their livelihoods depend.

When the world calls for Just Transition to respond to the impacts of climate change, including the transition to renewable energy, it turns out that the need for coal cannot be separated. In Indonesia, nickel mining and smelting are used to make electric batteries, mainly using coal energy. Europe is one of the destinations for nickel exports from Indonesia.

The story of coal in Indonesia is one of a web of relations that ties the global economy and climate crisis to local areas of coal extraction; it is a story of industries and powerful elites extracting not only a natural resource but extracting us.

This traveling exhibition shows snapshots of the realities of some of the 35+ children and youth whose lives were lost since 2011 in abandoned open-cast coal mines in East Kalimantan, the biggest coal-extraction province in Indonesia. The images show the intrusion of coal mines upon the lived spaces of communities, where everyday activities such as growing food, playing and walking through villages are made impossible or dangerous and where new shared realities including grief and protest are forced into being.

Through this exhibition, we can begin to look differently at the politics of coal and just transition. An intersectional feminist approach recognises how multiple simultaneous injustices of globalised systems manifest in local realities. The photos are from a large and growing collection documenting the impacts of coal extraction in East Kalimantan. They have been taken over the last eight years by activists and members of the community on East Kalimantan, and friends from national and international solidarity and campaigning networks: Abdallah Naem, Ahmad Saini, Didit Hariyadi, Henri Ismail, I Ketut Bagia Yasa, Jatam Kaltim, Mareta Sari, Maulana Yudhistira, Merah johansyah, Pradarma Rupang, Robi Johan, Romiansyah (Nebo), Sarah Agustiorini, Theresia Jari Tommy Apriando.

Exhibition co-curated by Siti Maimunah, Elona Hoover, Rebecca Elmhirst, Dian Ekowati, Alice Owen members of the WEGO-ITN network, University of Brighton Centre for Spatial, Environmental and Cultural Politics, along with ONCA Gallery manager Lydia Heath.

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