



WHAT DOES
CLIMATE JUSTICE
MEAN TO YOU?



‘What does Climate Justice Mean to You?’

A Note from the Christian Aid Collective

Young adults are leading the climate justice movement as powerful agents of change, yet their voices and stories are often left unheard. [This resource aims to amplify the stories of young adults from the global majority.](#)

These [unedited stories](#) were collated through 4 focus groups hosted by the Christian Aid Collective with 8 young adults based in Colombia, Nigeria, and the UK.

Their stories are a rich and authentic expression of climate justice, calling for collective solidarity, reparations, and the restoring of power.

Our hope is that you truly hear their voices through this creative and illustrative storytelling as they stir our hearts into action for climate justice.

A Note from the Illustrator



Trini-Maria Katakwe (TMK), Visual Artist & Designer

Trini-Maria Katakwe (TMK) is a British Nigerian-Zambian Visual Artist and Designer from North London. The work she creates is based on her identity, culture, faith and spirituality. Working in the medium of digital illustration and traditional sketching, her ongoing project the 'Bold Series' uses vivid colours and fragmentation to explore her interpretation of how she views the world. The message behind her work is to uplift those who are underrepresented and showcase them in a vibrant outlook.

“The process I undergo with creating these illustrations always starts with prayer. I ask God to use me as a vessel to create the artwork that translates and showcases the voices of the people involved in this project. Additionally, I then sketch out the ideas on paper and proceed with digitising the drawings. The colour palette was influenced by Christian Aids branding colours, which helped me form each piece to be unique to the stories.

I use my art to uplift those who are underrepresented, my prayer is that being a part of this project will be able to highlight these issues and amplify everyone’s voice. I enjoyed the process of creating these illustrations as I became informed about climate justice issues and ways that we can play our part with creating awareness. What climate justice means to me is to work in unity, the impact is amplified with several voices whether it’s in our local communities and the government. The change won’t be effective unless we implement global strategies to make climate issues mandatory.”



British, 25, male

“**Positive collective action.** I think a lot of what we have in activism right now is empty words, people say I care about the environment, I can write this or that they’ll retweet something hashtag something. Like Black Lives Matter posted Black square on their Instagram and [we’re done with] racism. I feel like if you want to be an activist, if you want to take that space, you have to have action, you have to be doing things.

That can be small things like writing to your PM, so I think petitions, but that is action. Protests are action that might be small action. We’re going to go bigger. **You start campaigning and lobbying the big groups, it has to be positive,** you have to work to dismantle the systems.

You can’t work within the city, you can try working within the systems, but at the end of the day, the systems are what’s holding up the issues in the first place. You have to take that down, which is again a very hard thing to do and that’s why my final point is [we’re] meant to be collective.

Not one person can solve this. It needs support, collective organizations, massive groups and mass amounts of people coming together helping and supporting. **This isn’t a one man fight, this is the whole world, but it isn’t a world issue for one [person to save].”**

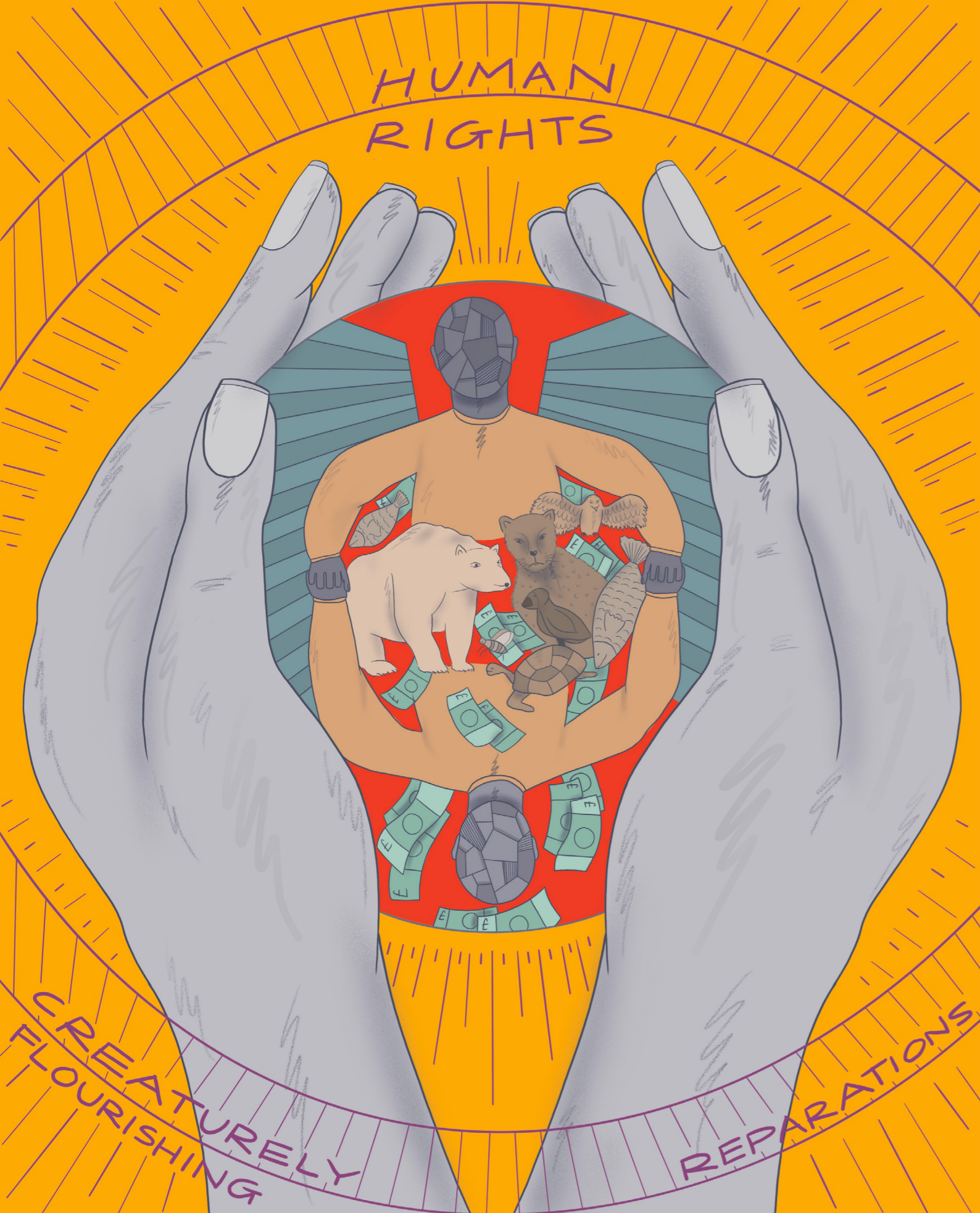


Nigerian, 28, male

I would say **replenishing the earth** because you know climate justice is trying to look at how the issue of the recovery or maybe the climate crisis is being cracked down to make everybody live in a safe environment.

Irrespective of your ethnic, religious background or what have you or maybe educational level or maybe needs right, we've seen the impact of this climate action. So I've really made the effort to be a condition that it is not safe for everybody [when it is not safe] for anyone.

[Where you] can **live safely without any fear** of any form of impact on gender on else on maybe economy or maybe or any form of impact whatsoever yeah that was saying.



British, 28, female

“I think I would describe climate justice as **the pursuit of rights and dignity for everyone through the lens of changes to climate**. So, climate justice identifies the threats to human rights and dignity that climate change and ecological collapse represent and treats it as a lens for identifying which rights or dignities, or which people, will most be threatened by climate breakdown.

That will be the initial description that most people who do climate justice would recognise. I think a secondary description of climate justice might want to identify justice through the lens of climate change and ecological breakdown, as well as **being concerned with justice for the non-human**. That is a secondary definition that not everyone who identifies as someone who is passionate about climate justice would think of, but it is a sort of growing trend in the ways people talk about it.

The first one would be looking at human rights and dignities through the lens of climate change and ecological breakdown, and the second one would be **looking at wider creation as a category of concern for justice issues**. You then have questions emerging like what would be a just outcome for particular species or ecosystem, so I think those would be the two ways that climate justice is understood.

I'd say **human rights, creaturely flourishing and reparations** would be the three words I would pick [to describe climate justice]. So, I think the primary lens people tend to use for climate justice as human rights. As that the second one links to my secondary observation, so this idea that climate justice recognize that there's no human flourishing without wider creaturely flourishing.

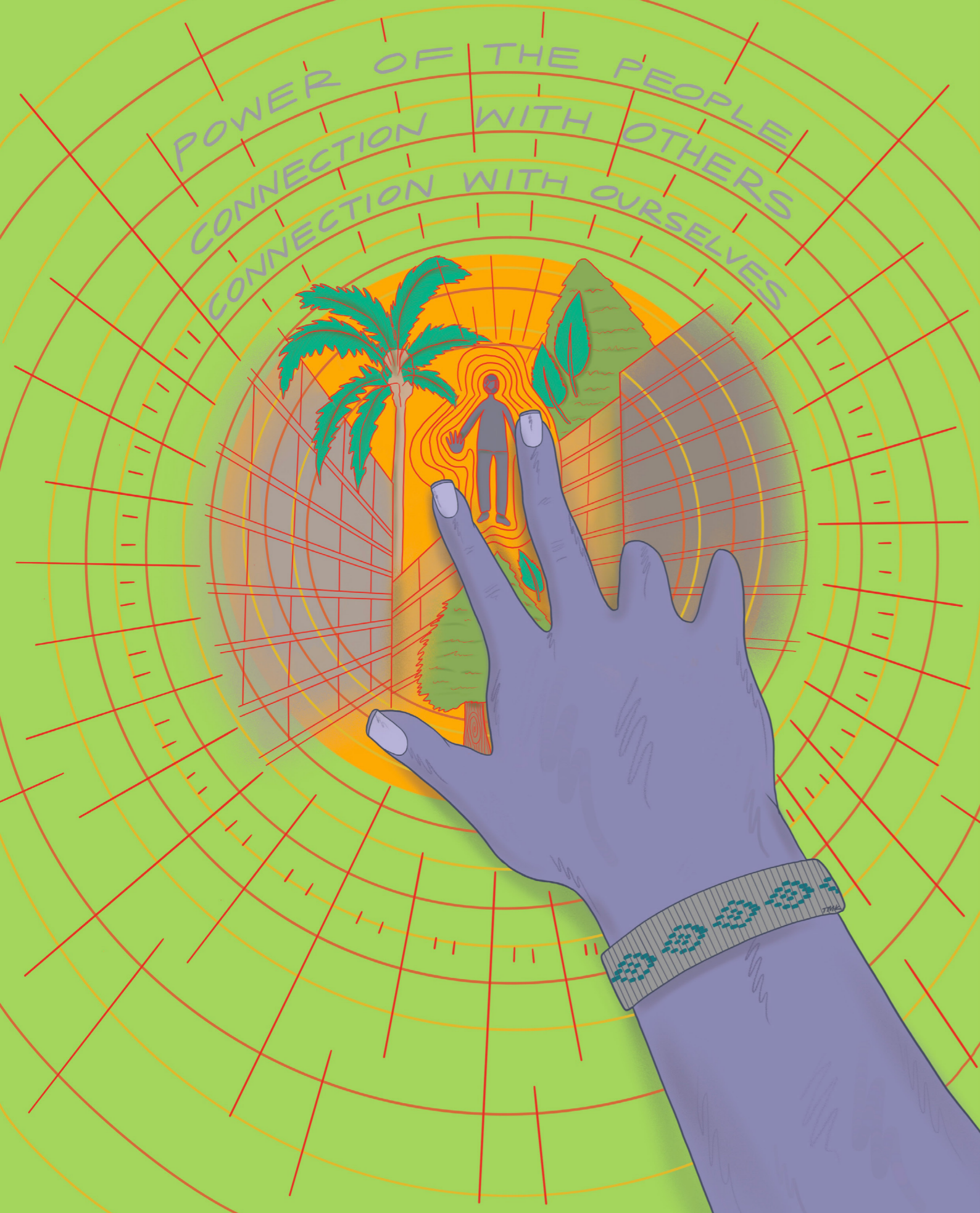
Then the third one reparations because I think climate justice also tries to recognize the ways that climate breakdown ecological collapse are the latest iterations of a much longer uneven distribution of wealth and also the product of you know, seizing lands and controlling them so climate justice is related to longer histories of colonialism and the ways that particular and, more recently, is **global capitalist systems have destroyed land elsewhere in the world in order to make money in the West**. So I would say reparations are the is the other kind of big theme and that that climate justice has to be repetitive justice.

“By human rights, I'm referring to particularly that group of people who have had their rights taken from them or their rights violated by climate breakdown. By creaturely flourishing. The idea of healing is one

of flourishing, so the idea is **a vision of creature flourishing creatures being anything that God has created** so creaturely flourishing is human flourishing, as well as the non-human and then reparations being part of a kind of holistic vision of healing that doesn't just take into account the last five years but longer histories of communities so yeah like I think one of the things that it'd be really interesting to pick out in your work in the ways that people can refer to these bigger themes, but we're slightly different language.

So, you could say something like you know I mean human rights as a conviction is based in the belief that humans are made in the image of God and that's a universal belief and creaturely flourishing is based in the **conviction that we're all creatures before God and that the earth in its abundance is made for flourishing**.

Reparations is out of a conviction of both worshipping a god of history where the histories of people matter and repentance matters. Also, a God who is on the side of justice for the poor and the oppressed, so you could take some quite technical language that's used I guess in outside of sort of biblical theological circles and reframe it in that way.



Colombian, 32, female

“It is me, I lost my connection. I think CJ is related with, obviously with the people, the **power of the people** maybe, I don’t know. The second one may be, will be, **connection with others, connect with ourselves**. Connect with our feelings.

Maybe can be roots, in our roots, in the people that is connected with our history. The indigenous communities. The peasant communities. Our grandfathers, grandmothers that are, that may be fishing, how to protect all the things that are being in the nature. Maybe these 3 words. My English is not its best.”



Colombian, 24, female

“I am a climate activist but I also see the **climate crisis by the lens of ecofeminism, decolonial ecofeminism**. In that theory, it is said that the social crisis, the human rights crisis, the climate crisis, what is going on right now is because we are, we are right now, we are because 3 patterns, 3 models we cross.

The models are patriarchy, capitalism and racism. The 3 words I will pick to define and talk about CJ, is the opposite, **anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism and anti-patriarchy**. I think that you can cover the CJ with those 4 terms”



Nigerian, 25, male

“**Ubuntu, global citizenry and altruism.** The first word is ubuntu. This is an African word which refers to acting in a way that benefits the community. You exist because I exist, I don’t know how to... it is a popular African phrase.

The first one is ubuntu. I don’t know if you understand it or heard the explanation, but ubuntu is an African philosophy that thrives on community. Understanding that you are because we are. Trying to **promote acting in benefiting the collective, serving the common good.**

The second one is altruism, I don’t have to explain it but there is no climate justice without the three words I put in the chat – this is my own opinion. With altruism, promoting acts not because of your selfish interests, helping people not because of your selfish interests. **Richer countries should be able to channel more funds into climate finance.**

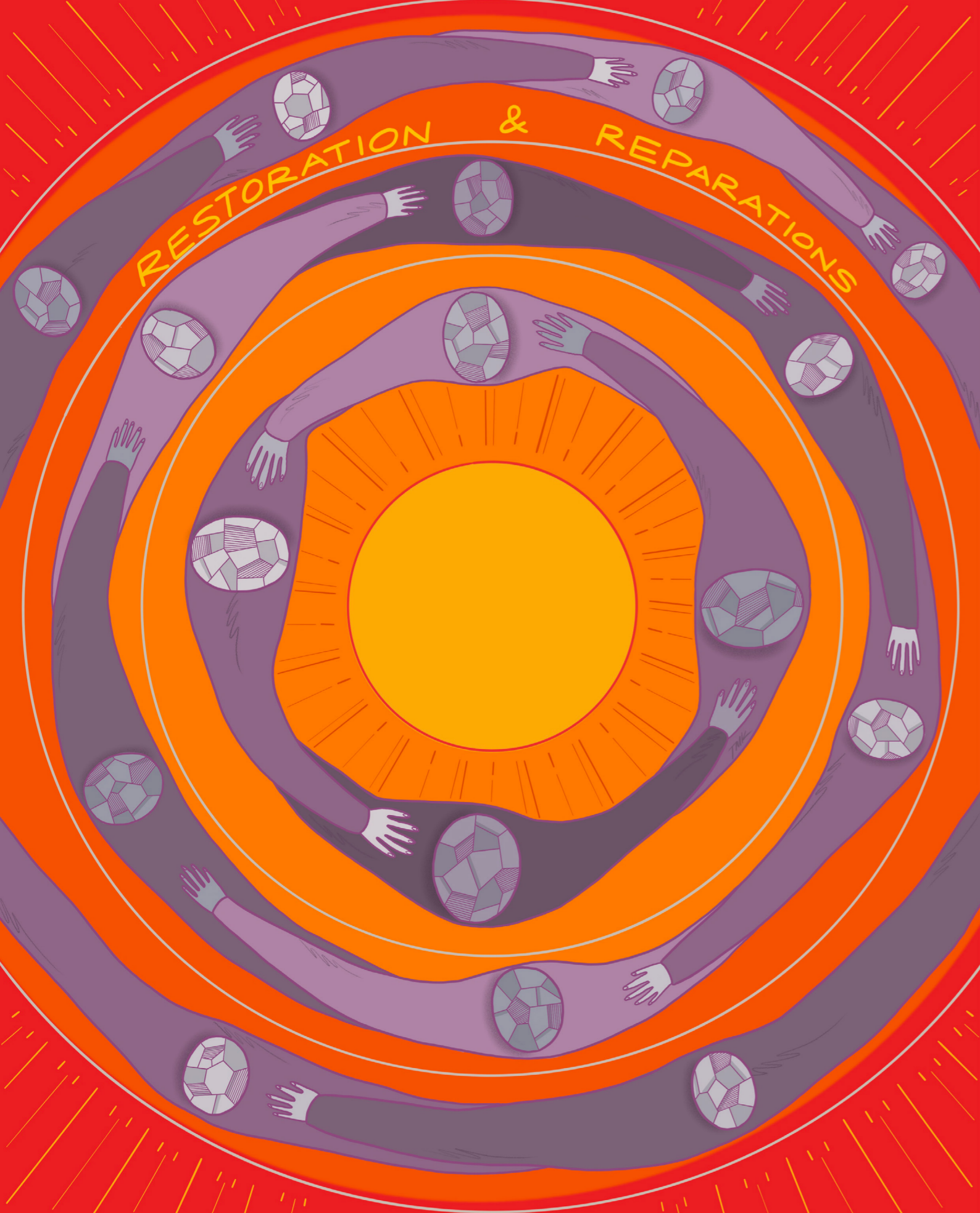
Not because they want to help their ego, not because they want to look good, look good in the media, wanting positive media coverage, but they see it as something that is morally right.

Taking out selfish interests in how we approach or try to tackle CJ. The underlying motivation that guides my second word. Then the third word is global citizenry, seeing ourselves as global citizenry.

Climate change is a 3 headed monster that aims to, some communities feel the impact of this climate change more. It's not always okay to be in the comfort of your house in one of the higher communities, and you have everything, and

someone in the world is feeling the impact. **Seeing ourselves as global citizens, in practice, not just in words.** The pain in someone in Kenya, in south Sudan, in Sudan, you should be able to see yourself as 'what if I am the person staying in the conflict regions, in the desert prone regions in sub-Saharan Africa, or typhoon hit areas in Philippines, in small island states like Solomon islands, they are on the verge of, option of, sea level rises.

Seeing yourself not from the comfort of you already have this privilege. Look at other, try to understand other people, putting yourself in it, is it empathy? I don't know how to describe it."



British and Zambian, 28, female

“Seeing climate justice as a **process of restoration and reparations** and I know that a lot of people are a little bit sketchy about anytime reparations is mentioned for anything. Going back to my initial point that when I think about who it’s impacting, the most my individual lens always thinks is about my family, my community, my country.

Knowing that that has happened, following action that have been either commissioned or just negligent or whatever it is, and so I think I see the purpose of climate justice much more about restoring and repairing rather than just breaking even you know.

I think I’m still forming a lot of that because I guess the urgency of it is growing in my own understanding of things, a lot more, especially over the last year. But I would say, if I was going to identify two ideas that I had the top today, I might mine’s more I would say restoration and reparations.”

“I would link it to the way in which **our societies are kind of skewed** towards either sort of empirical everything or experience and allowing that to shift and evolve over time and I think that sometimes that focus on what the numbers, you know, having gone down half a degree or whatever is, just continues to separate us, because then when we’re

trying to engage with communities or countries who very much their understanding of stuff is from an expert their experience or other people's experience will shape the way that they understand something it just continues to create a distance, but then it means that you know, like you were saying about ensuring that **governments and people in the global South have the power to be able to make decisions.**

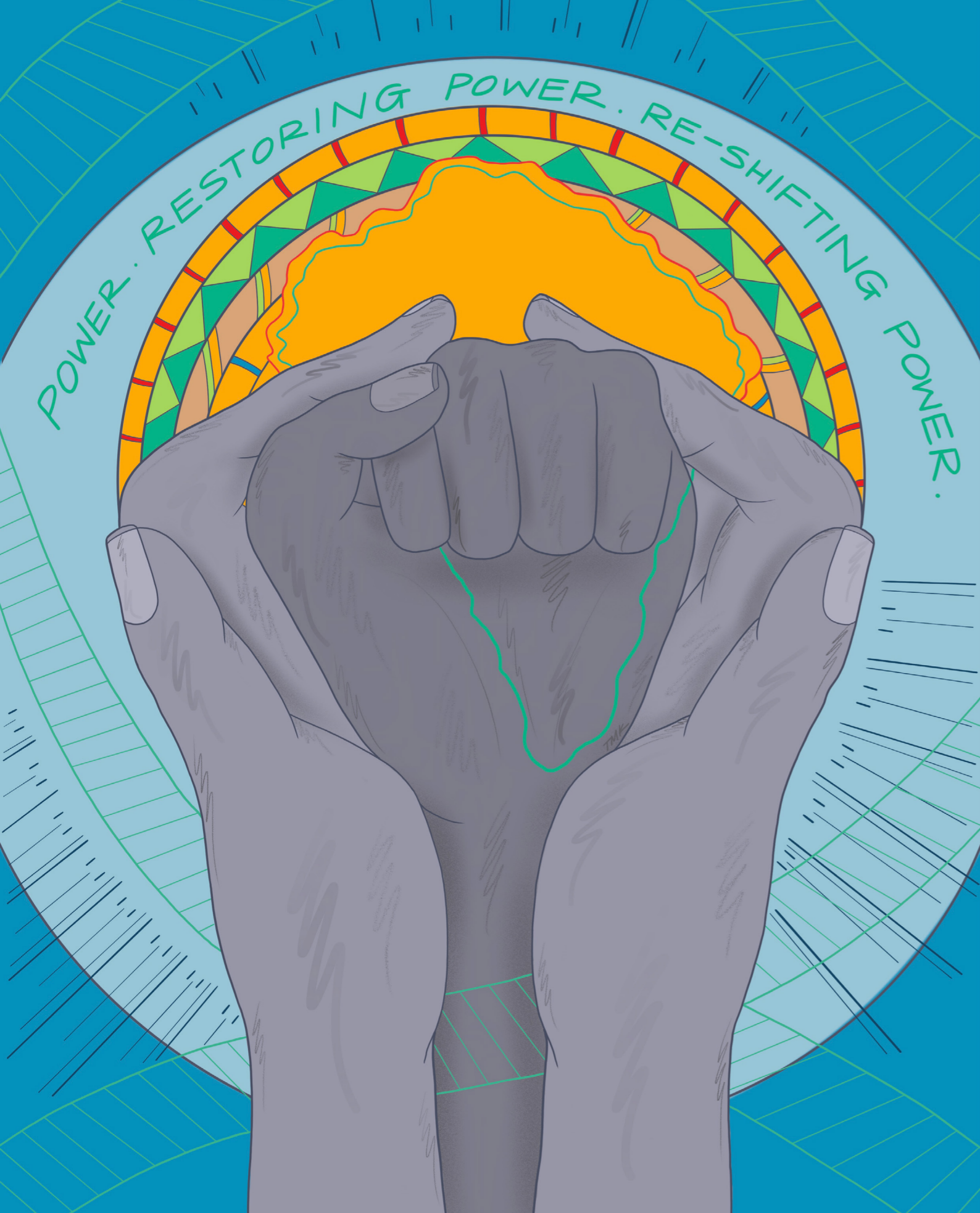
We just continue to hold on to this and by we, I mean to Western bodies hold on to this power because we don't trust people to make decisions for themselves, like we're like all parameters such a big change big thing, and you show African Union you're ready to handle that.

It made me think about what when we think about terminology made me think about the way that say even we understand decolonization you can we know we can unpack in really nice theoretic ways and it's very intellectual and academic but actually i'm having a chat with my grandma. She's might have an understanding

of what it means to decarbonize her experience but she's going to talk about encountering white people in Malawi, not about you know critical race theory or anything like that.

Creating that space to understand what it means actually to be in solidarity with people, we can then bridge those gaps and think okay fine we know the science, we know the experience how do we make sure that the people's voices who needs to be had are being had.

But I feel like that's just too much bigger story and we're not going to be shaping, the global power anytime soon, but I think that, like the example that you gave the more that people are able to find language to place to say, this is what we want and the closer that we can get to actually understanding what solidarity means but um yeah I think that the terminology itself can be helpful, because it gives you an entry point but um, it has to be allowed to change and shift, and you know be called different things in different spaces, so that it's relevant to whoever's in the conversation at that time."



British and Kenyan, 28, female

“I feel like it’s just another buzzword and I think the focus on naming something, rather than doing something sometimes holds us in shackles. I think justice means for different people different things. I think **climate justice is interrelated with so many other forms of injustice** and depends like I said just depending on the context.

Restoration and reparations are a huge part of that you know if we look at the African context it’s the extraction of so much, starting from the extraction of materials and resources and people and culture and community.

If you look at the Caribbean context, its slavery. It’s so much, there’s just so much that it’s tangled up in that, it’s beyond kind of just the climate bit. So, if I, if I have to say what climate justice is [...] restoration and reparations really resonated with me.

Power. Restoring power. Re-shifting power as a form of climate justice. I think the climate narrative is so much rooted in the West and it doesn't really enable I think those who are most affected by climate change, to have ownership of it it's something they are told to engage with or told to do.

We have all these mechanisms, and we have all these articles, that we have all this stuff around climate but who

decides those things like who leads those things? Who leads those spaces?

It's often here in this part of the world, and so I think justice would have to be that what the future looks like or **how we can reimagine that future needs** to be led and designed and it needs to the global South, so to speak, needs to be empowered and need to have that power used to be redistributed back to them.



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