2021 was another year of struggle, lockdowns, and isolation. The coronavirus pandemic entrenched inequality with the incomes of the poorest 40% falling by nearly 7 per cent, pushing another 97 million people into poverty. The violent coup and brutal repression which followed it in Myanmar strangled the hopes of a young democracy. Regimes and corporations continued to threaten environmental and human rights defenders in the name of development. Extreme weather events – from floods and storms to fires and cyclones – brought misery to millions as climate change continues to worsen.

But there is always hope.

It is there in the courageous struggles of communities and local civil society against unjust development – such as the communities affected by coal plants funded by the IFC in the Philippines, through an intermediary bank, RCBC.

Hope is there in the solidarity of regional and international groups with their friends and colleagues in Myanmar – like the workshops hosted by ALTSEAN Burma, which Recourse joined, on how to stop finance propping up the coup and the junta.

It is there in the commitment of major shareholders of international financial institutions to end public finance for fossil fuels, at the climate talks in Glasgow.

Recourse staff find their motivation and inspiration in campaigning in common with allies and partners all over the world. Our annual review 2021 tells the story of our continuing determination to hold international financial institutions to account, and to shift finance out of dirty and harmful development towards a greener and more just future for us all.

This 2021 annual review is dedicated to friends in Myanmar, with our love and solidarity.
OUR VISION

A world where people and the planet are at the heart of development.

Recourse targets development finance as a means of influencing the wider investment community, financial flows, and governments, to ensure inclusive, environmentally sustainable, socially just, and pro-poor development.

OUR TEAM

The Recourse team is made up of professionals from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. We expanded our team in 2021, welcoming new staff to our campaigns on the IMF and World Bank.

Nezir Sinani, Co-Director and Ecological Justice Program Lead
Kate Geary, Co-Director and Rights & Accountability Lead
Petra Kjell Wright, Campaigns Manager
Sargon Nissan, IMF Project Manager
Fran Witt, Campaigns Lead
Jen Derillo, Communications and Research Fellow
Ceren Temizyurek, Researcher

OUR BOARD

Kris Genovese | Chair to May 2021
Susanne Breitkopf | Chair from June 2021
Theodoros Chronopoulos | Treasurer
Joe Athialy | Board Member
Makoma Lekalakala | Board Member
Chad Dobson | Board Member
RE COURSE IMPACT IN 2021: SOME HIGHLIGHTS

RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Recourse supports communities in their struggle for their rights to be respected and their voices to be heard, so that they benefit from, rather than bear the costs of development, and gain their rights to information, justice and redress. We hold investors to account for harms and campaign to stop discriminatory investment.

International Monetary Fund Campaign

This year we launched a new campaign towards the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that helped ensure that it included climate change systematically into its surveillance work for the first time. See our IMF reports on surveillance and capacity building: Missing Links and Out of the Shadows.

We ensured that climate change issues were reflected in civil society advocacy to influence how the IMF re-channels to the global south the rich countries’ portion of the $650 billion Special Drawing Rights.

World Bank Country Strategies Campaign

Our deep dive into the World Bank’s Country Programme Framework for Indonesia 2021 - 2024, included developing a joint position statement with our partner, Trend Asia. This raised critical concerns about the bank’s policies on gas transition, its exposure to coal and delayed action on climate change.
Regional and national development finance institutions

This year we extended our reach to other international financial institutions, campaigning to improve FI lending standards at the European Investment Bank, the Dutch bilateral FMO, and the UK bilateral CDC.

Recourse successfully influenced the new Environmental and Social Framework of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), published in May 2021, achieving crucial reforms on transparency and accountability in financial intermediary (FI) lending.

With partners in Pakistan and Indonesia, we analysed the impacts of development policy finance (DPF). This included partner-led work around the Pakistan energy plan (IGCEP) and the role DPF prior actions (or conditionalities) have played in weakening renewable energy targets.

Together with partners, we engaged critically with the retrospective review of the DPF lending instrument of the World Bank, highlighting how its DPF have continued to finance fossil fuels and unsustainable energy models.

Recourse has contributed importantly towards strengthening our work on IFI finance and monitoring of the energy sector in Pakistan. This all has been possible due to timely, meaningful, extensive engagement of Recourse with national civil society forums.

- Hussain Jarwar, Indus Consortium -

We produced a critical analysis of the AIIB’s accountability mechanism, calling into question barriers to effective accountability.
For several years, Recourse has campaigned with allies to get IFC finance out of fossils. With partners in India we focused on implementation of the IFC’s new Green Equity Approach, which seeks to reduce equity clients’ exposure to coal and increase their climate lending.

In 2021 India’s seventh largest commercial bank, Federal Bank, became the first to rule out support for new coal. The bank became the country’s first to “terminate financing of development of any new coal-related assets, including coal-fired power plants once IFC becomes a shareholder in the Bank.” In 2022, we will push to create a domino-effect with other banks and lenders across the region.

"Recourse has provided grounded information and analysis to CFA to hold IFIs to account with regard to financial intermediaries and climate commitments. We look forward to continuing to work with Recourse to collectively fight against injustice."

-Anuradha Munshi, Centre for Financial Accountability-
ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

The climate crisis demands urgent action from IFIs: Recourse campaigns to stop financial institutions bankrolling fossil fuels and causing environmental destruction, and to instead promote renewable energy, energy access and secure rights to natural resources for local communities. We advocate that this must happen in a way that supports and does not undermine the livelihoods of local communities but rather puts them at the centre of development decision-making.

We campaigned together with Indonesian partners to hold the International Finance Corporation (IFC) accountable over its investment in the Java 9 and 10 coal plants via its FI client, Hana Bank.

Our new analysis on World Bank Group’s performance in the top five energy poor countries in the world, concluded that it is failing to align its priorities with those of borrowing countries on energy access.

Our campaigning expanded to cover the Asian Development Bank (ADB), focusing on shifting investments out of fossil fuels. Our first ADB publication focused on the Energy Policy review, and following formal submissions to the Energy Policy review, the ADB vowed to stop all coal finance.

For the millions of people still living without access to sustainable modern energy we continued coordinating with civil society organisations in Africa to advocate with the World Bank to improve its energy access policy and practice.

We sustained pressure on the AIIB to become Paris aligned and shift its portfolio out of fossil fuels, including working with partners on a study of AIIB’s fossil fuels investments in Bangladesh. Our report 10 Essentials for AIIB’s New Green Equity Strategy and our campaigning and advocacy helped result in AIIB finally committing to review its Energy Sector Strategy (ESS) in 2022 and consulting the public.
FINANCE

Income

Expenditure