

A photograph of two men standing in a lush green field. The man on the right is wearing a blue and white striped polo shirt and has a professional camera hanging from his neck. The man on the left is wearing a yellow and blue long-sleeved shirt and is gesturing with his hands. In the background, there are trees and a building with a corrugated metal roof.

**Bridging the Communication Gap**

# **Empowering Communities Through Climate and Energy Storytelling in Southeast Asia**

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# The energy story is difficult to tell

In Southeast Asia, energy reporting often sits in two separate worlds

**BUSINESS REPORTERS  
COVER ENERGY**

*Prices, investments,  
utilities, power supply,  
markets*

**ENVIRONMENT REPORTERS  
COVER CLIMATE**

*Impacts, disasters,  
emissions, ecosystems,  
communities*

But the energy transition needs both

The background of the slide is a photograph of several people in a meeting or workshop. They are seated at a table, and some are holding pens and looking at documents. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark, muted color palette. Overlaid on this image are several text boxes in different colors (orange, teal, and dark teal) containing white text.

# The communication gap is also a language gap

Energy transition is often explained through:

- *English-first materials*
- *technical terms*
- *policy and finance language*
- *expert-heavy conversations*

But Southeast Asia is multilingual, unequal, and deeply diverse

A woman with dark hair and glasses is shown from the chest up, holding a Sony video camera. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt under blue denim overalls. A black backpack with a red 'LiveU' logo is on her back. A blue lanyard with a white ID badge hangs around her neck. In the background, a man with a beard is partially visible, and a sign with the words 'HOLD THE LINE' can be seen.

# How is energy being reported in Southeast Asia?

*Energy stories were mostly told from an economic-development perspective, sometimes at the expense of environment and human-impact stories.*

*Most journalists framed energy stories as business stories, often listed under business or economy sections of news websites.*

*Editorial priorities affected how much time journalists spent on energy articles, and how in-depth their reporting could be.*



# Three problems kept showing up

**1**

## **BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT SOURCES DOMINATED**

Energy stories quoted from a narrow pool

**2**

## **LOCAL CITIZENS WERE UNDERREPRESENTED**

Communities were often missing from stories about energy decisions.

**3**

## **REPORTERS NEEDED MORE SUPPORT**

Tools, sources, training, time, and editorial backing.

# What we built in response

- Energy Reporting Guide
- Reporter and editor trainings
- Content creator workshops
- Storytelling bootcamps
- Story grants and cross-border collaborations



# Good storytelling strengthens energy planning

- Translate technical plans into lived realities
- Surface local risks and concerns early
- Build trust before conflict begins
- Counter misinformation
- Create feedback loops between communities and decision-makers



# The clean energy transition needs public understanding

*Bring communicators in earlier*

*Fund local-language explainers*

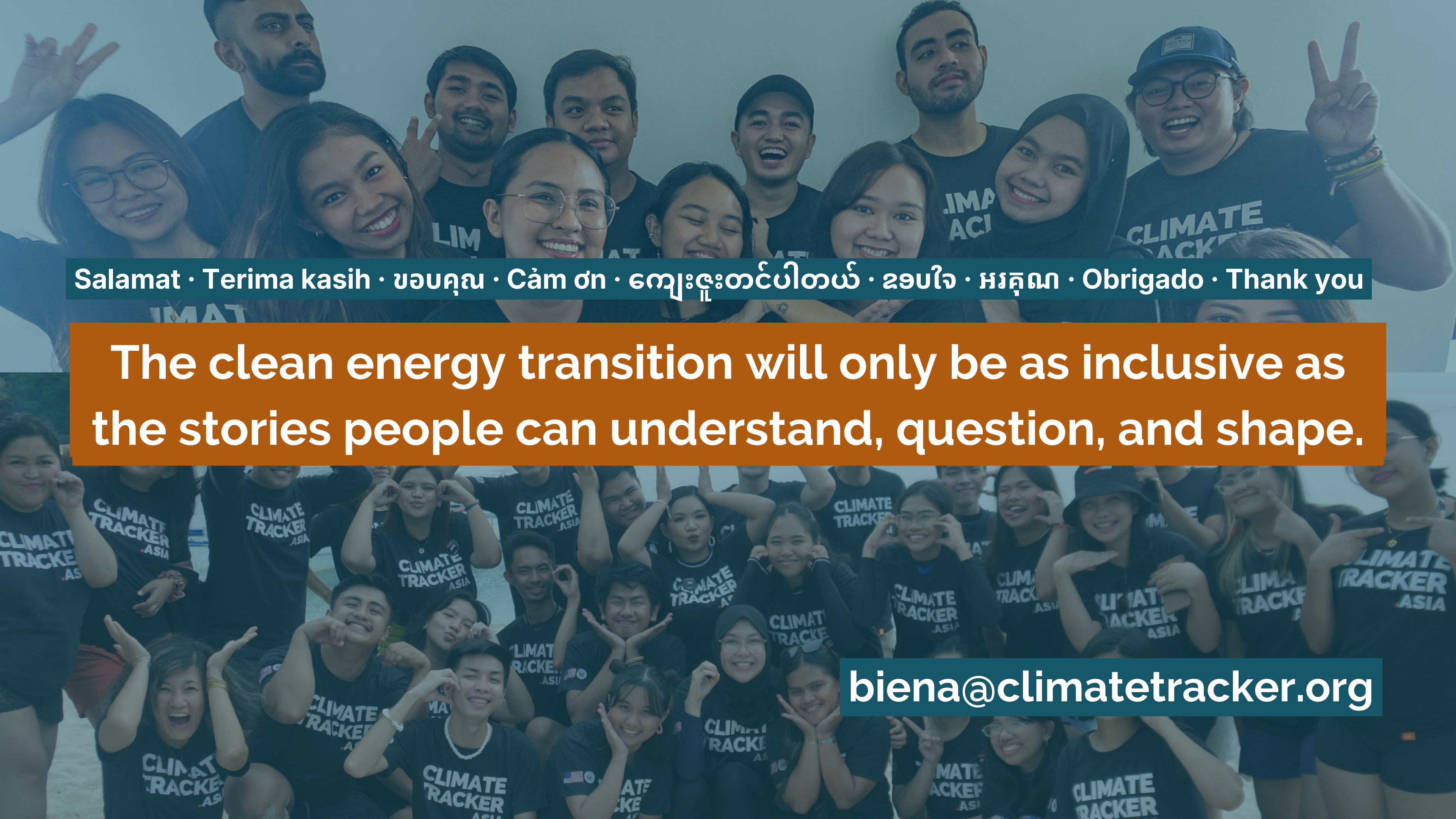
*Treat trust as part of implementation*

*Every reporter should be a climate reporter*

## Scaling the bridge

- Climate and energy literacy
- Technical terms made simpler
- Short, accessible lessons
- Better storytelling practice
- Newsrooms, classrooms, and communities





Salamat · Terima kasih · ขอบคุณ · Cảm ơn · ကျေးဇူးတင်ပါတယ် · ຂອບໃຈ · អរគុណ · Obrigado · Thank you

The clean energy transition will only be as inclusive as the stories people can understand, question, and shape.

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