

FUNDING CLIMATE ACTION

Partnering with Grassroots
organizations

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Elan is passionate about working with organizations and projects that are engaged in positive social and environmental change in local and global communities to help provide knowledge and tools necessary to build sustainable communities.



**PASSIONATE ABOUT
BUILDING
SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES**

PURPOSE

With climate change being such a pervasive issue, Pangea Giving has begun exploring the effects of climate change both globally and in the regions they fund. Pangea's next step is to better understand where our encouragement and funding could best apply in climate action.

This report aims to highlight the current landscape of climate philanthropy, the important role small funders like Pangea Giving plays in the fight against climate change and offer recommendations what next steps may be.

**PANGEA GIVING
FUNDS GRASSROOTS
ORGANIZATIONS IN
EAST AFRICA, LATIN
AMERICA, AND
SOUTHEAST ASIA**

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CLIMATE PHILANTHROPY

Climate change as we know it is a global and complex issue requiring collaboration across disciplines and sectors to help communities both mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. Effective climate action requires us to address two main areas: mitigation, which involves “reducing emission of and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere” and adaptation, which is “adapting to the effects of climate change already in the pipeline” (NASA, 2019).

Although there is a growing trend in climate focused philanthropy, less than 2% of all philanthropic giving goes to fight climate change and over half of this climate-related funding goes toward large capital mitigation efforts that target energy efficiency or renewable energy (McGill 2018). During the Global Climate Action Summit in 2018, a summit hosted by California’s former governor Jerry Brown that aims to address climate change by bringing non-state actors together, 29 of the largest foundations committed \$4 billion to climate action. Their commitment's goal is to “advance affordable, low-and zero-carbon solutions to reduce the harmful emissions that cause climate change” (Nisbet, 2019). Note that these are all mitigation efforts. These same funders call this \$4-billion commitment a “down payment” or a drop in the bucket for money that is needed to fight climate change (Philanthropy News Digest, 2018). Although recognition in the importance of funding climate adaptation is growing, still a very small percentage of total climate-focused philanthropy goes towards climate adaptation and funding of grass roots initiatives. In the broad scope of climate action, both large and small funders play very different yet complimentary roles which are both integral in the fight against climate change.

It is important to note that both mitigation and adaptation, although operating on different scales, have a symbiotic relationship and must both be addressed to maximize effectiveness (Stephan & Buob, 2013). Because mitigation solutions are experienced on a global scale, it is considered “an investment into a global public good” and adaptation strategies on the other hand are considered a “private investment” because they operate on a more local scale mainly benefiting people of a specific community or locality (Stephan & Buob, 2013). The spatial scale at which both strategies operates directly correlates with the most effective roles both large and small funders play in climate action.

Current contributions to adaptation projects are miniscule compared to the resources needed. Public funding for climate adaptation is currently estimated to be about \$23 billion, yet the cost of adaptation could range from \$140 to \$300 billion by 2030 (UN Environment DTU Partnership, 2018). With such a small amount of philanthropic dollars going towards climate action, a reassessment of funding strategies for climate philanthropy is necessary in order to create more targeted funding to yield maximum impact.

This report on climate philanthropy is broken down into five main sections: a methods section; a list of climate related key terms; an overview of the roles philanthropy plays in climate action; case studies of foundations that are similar in scale and focus to Pangea Giving; and a recommendation section focusing on the importance of forming partnerships.



METHODS

I collected the information and data for this report via four main approaches: the Foundation Center Directory, foundation websites, literature reviews, and interviews with staff at several foundations.

I took three main steps in my approach to researching climate philanthropy:

1. Research the overall trends about the scope of climate philanthropy
2. Find foundations who are similar in funding and focus to Pangea
3. Provide case studies for a few of the foundations similar to Pangea

The Foundation Center Directory provided me with a list of foundations who gave climate related grants, total assets of the foundation, their average grant sizes, who their grantees were and the individual grant amounts. With that data, I did an analysis of organizational websites and philanthropic news to find major trends and commonalities among funders and

to identify foundations who possess similar scale in funding and focus areas as Pangea Giving.

I looked for foundations that (1) fund climate action, (2) support grassroots initiatives and (3) give similar grant amounts as Pangea Giving. Once I found foundations that may be most similar in at least two of the three areas, I reached out to the foundations in hopes of getting an interview with someone at the foundation and decided on a few to do case studies on. Through speaking with and analyzing foundation websites, I assessed the criteria they were using for funding climate action, the areas they were funding, their average funding amount, how some of key terms in climate change (mitigation, adaptation, resiliency, and justice) are defined and applicable to their organization, what they thought some of the gaps and opportunities for doing more in climate philanthropy were, and what they thought the roles of smaller funders were.

KEY TERMS

FRAMING YOUR WORK



Throughout my research, I identified some key terms in the world of climate

philanthropy that are used to frame an organizations work in climate action. Many of these terms have flexible definitions that are broad in scope. These flexible definitions serve two major functions:

- 1. they allow philanthropic groups an opportunity to interpret and decide on how their organization best fits into the fight for climate change**
- 2. they allow for continual negotiation of definitions to fit the needs of the time and community.**

Below is a list of some of the key terms I identified. For each term, I have provided one to three definitions from different sources to provide examples of the flexible use of these terms. I have also included some notes on each term based on my analysis of their use among organizations engaged in climate-based philanthropy.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

“Helping communities adapt to the effects on their livelihoods and community security”
- FundrasingIP.org

"The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects."– Oxford Research Encyclopedia

Note: Before Oxford defines this term, they note: “there is no unanimity to the definition of the term climate change adaptation” and specify that this definition has “undergone several changes over the last few decades” and this specific version came from the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC))

Examples of climate adaptation: can include but are not limited to projects building flood defenses, creating more drought resistant crops, and biomimicry (including rain gardens or bio swales).

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

“The ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner, including through ensuring the preservation, restoration, or improvement of its essential basic structures and functions” - IPCC

“The ability to anticipate, prepare for and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate”
– Center for Climate and Energy Solutions

Note: Climate resilience is a relative term, not an absolute one. The definition depends on the context of the issue and is based on perspective.

Examples of climate resilience: increasing business, state, city, and finance resilience. One can increase the resilience of a community by diversifying their income source and/or helping them develop a sustainable food and water source. so they can be more resilient to the effects of climate change.

CLIMATE MITIGATION

“Reducing the human causes of climate change, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” - FundrasingIP.org

"A human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases” - IPCC

“Efforts to reduce or prevent emission of green house gases.” - UN Environment Programme

Main goals are energy efficiency, switching to low-carbon energy sources, and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Examples of mitigation efforts: funding the research and innovation of renewable energy sources, creating energy efficient buildings and transportation , expanding forests and other “sinks” to help remove more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and funding carbon tax and emission markets.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

“Focuses on root causes of climate change – making systemic changes that are required to address unequal burdens to our communities and realign our economy with our natural systems.”
– Alternatives for Community & Empowerment

** Used to frame climate change as an ethical and political issue and encompasses strategies used in adaptation, mitigation and resiliency with a focus on equity.

ROLES OF PHILANTHROPY

LARGE AND SMALL FUNDERS



GRANT SIZES

In researching the roles that philanthropies play in climate action, I found that grant sizes was a useful indicator of funding areas. The attributes of large and small funders make them uniquely positioned to fund different areas of climate action, yet play a complementary role. It is important to note that there are of course exceptions to these trends.

Small Funder:
Grant size <\$25,000
Large Funder
Grant Size > \$25,000

DEFINING LARGE AND SMALL FUNDERS

For the purpose of this research, I defined large funders as those with average grant sizes above \$25,000 and small funders as those with average grant sizes below \$25,000. In climate philanthropy large funders mainly fund in the area of mitigation, while small funders mainly fund in the area of adaptation and in grassroots organizations.

ROLE OF LARGE FUNDERS

Mitigation is a long-term and scaled-up solution with the main goal of reducing greenhouse gases or reversing the effects of climate change. Mitigation strategies include energy efficiency, alternative energy solutions, carbon sequestration, promoting climate friendly investments, and building more energy efficient building and transportation systems. These solutions target five main sectors (power, industry, buildings, transportation and forestry) that play a leading role in greenhouse gas emissions (ClimateWorks Foundation, 2007).

Because large funders have immense networks and capacities, financially and in power, they can pour billions of dollars

into high capital mitigation efforts for an extended period and have a significant influence in global politics. Their primary role is to invest in long-term innovation and research, launch programs and organizations off the ground, fund larger capital projects, and influence international cooperation and policies towards climate action. Most mitigation strategies typically take a top down and prescriptive approach to implementation and create a blanket solution benefiting the greater public good. The resource investment required for mitigation strategies to happen at an accelerated pace utilizes the strengths of large funders and makes them uniquely positioned for this task.

LARGE FUNDERS

The MacArthur Family Foundation, Barr Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bullitt Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation are all examples of large funders who focus their funding efforts on solutions that lower carbon emissions. Two of the most popular grantees among this group is the Energy Foundation and Climate Works Foundation, both of which promote climate mitigation efforts. Below are some examples of large funders and their work.

WILLIAM & FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION



The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation was established in 1966 and is now one of the largest philanthropic institutions in the United States. In 2018, they awarded over \$400 million in grants globally and their total assets sit at approximately \$9.8 billion.

**"TOTAL ASSETS SIT
AT APPROXIMATELY
\$9.8 BILLION"**

Their areas of focus span across education, the environment, global development and population, performing arts, effective philanthropy, and support for disadvantaged communities in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Hewlett Foundation has a history of funding climate change projects starting in 2008 with their Climate Initiative, when they pooled funding and resources with the Packard and McKnight Foundations to create the ClimateWorks Foundation, a foundation made up of researchers, strategists, collaborators and grant makers around the world to find solution for climate change through mitigation strategies and the support of climate related policies. Every five years since 2008, they have renewed the Climate Initiative with a continued emphasis on the importance of collaborative philanthropy, a continual assessment on best strategies and their goal of reducing emissions. The Hewlett Foundation was one of the 29 philanthropies who contributed to the \$4 billion commitment for climate action at the Global Climate Action Summit in 2018.

Under the focus of the environment they have two strategies: (1) Climate and Energy and (2) Western Conservation. Their first fundamental logic that guides their grant making states the following, “We should focus our charitable dollars on mitigating climate change. The window for effective mitigation is rapidly closing, and the more society can reduce future warming, the less it will need to adapt.” In the area of funding climate change they have five focus areas: reduction of fossil fuels, work on energy systems, work that integrates across sectors, carbon sequestration methods, and the promotion of innovation (“research, analysis and advocacy for policies that drive innovation in advanced energy systems and technologies”).

Their goals include focusing their funding on mitigation strategies in the “biggest emitting countries of the world: China, the United States, Europe, and India,” and in “the highest emitting industries and sectors, including electricity and transportation, as well as industrial processes, the built environment, and forests and land-use.” The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation states that “philanthropy can speed emission reductions by supporting a mix of analysis, advocacy, communications, technical assistance, innovation, business sector engagement, public-private

partnership, and building public support and will for policy change.”

In 2018, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded \$104 million in grants to support climate mitigation which is 24% of their total grant funding.

AWARDED \$104 MILLION TO CLIMATE MITIGATION

In 2019, The smallest grant they gave under the category of Climate and Energy, was one grant of \$30,000 to Carnegie Mellon University with grants ranging up to \$17 million to the Energy Foundation. Most of their grants supporting climate change fall in the range of \$300 thousand to \$3 million. Examples of the projects they fund are the following: Tsinghua University for the Global Green Finance Leadership Program, Georgetown University for clean energy and transportation programs, the Climate Group to help accelerate electric vehicle adoption in India, and the Environmental Law Institute for capacity building of the environmental law system in China. All the projects the Hewlett Foundation funds are large capital projects which explains the large grant amounts that are given.

MACARTHUR FOUNDATION



John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, established in 1970, joins the Hewlett Foundation in being in the top 20 largest independent foundations in the United States. In 2018, the MacArthur Foundation awarded \$328.5 million in grants and impact investments globally with their total assets equaling \$6.6 billion. Since its beginnings, the MacArthur Foundation has funded in over 50 countries. In addition, to their continued commitment in Chicago and in investing in independent journalism and media, their grants mainly support four focus areas: climate solutions, criminal justice, nuclear challenges, and reducing corruption in Nigeria.

Climate solutions received the highest funding amount of any program category totaling \$60 million in 2018, giving out 24 grants. This amount makes up 41% of the total grant amounts

allocated to their four areas of focus. The lowest grant amount

\$60 MILLION TO CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

they gave was one grant for \$120,000 with the highest at \$4.5 million. Many of their grants are above \$400,000 with 46% of them exceeding \$1 million. The MacArthur Foundation's goal in their commitment to combating climate change is through mitigation strategies by reducing carbon emissions and supporting global leadership on climate solutions. Because the United States, China, and India are the world's largest emitters, they only fund in these countries in hopes of fostering international cooperation to promote climate policy, decrease the use of carbon, increase the use of



renewable energy sources, and implement international agreements with key developing countries on policies and programs.

Examples of grants that reflect The MacArthur Foundation's values and mission include funding research and information to power distribution utilities in India to help create more efficiency, supporting the Campaign for Climate Leadership through ClimateWorks, and supporting the development and implementation of clean air action plans in India.

**FUND IN CHINA, US
AND INDIA TO
FOSTER
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION**

ROCKEFELLER BROTHER'S FUND

The Rockefeller Brother's Fund established in 1940, is a private family foundation whose funding focuses on three major themes: democratic practice, peacebuilding, and sustainable development. Although the Rockefeller Brothers Fund mainly funds within the United States, they have specific place-based programs in China, the Western Balkans, and New York City. The 2018, \$1.22 billion made up their total assets, awarding \$34.1 million through 322 grants. Their average grant size is \$97,000.

The Rockefeller Brothers Fund puts climate solutions under their sustainable development program with the goals of bolstering public and policy maker support and understanding of climate solutions, supporting efforts to build a clean energy economy at all levels of government, reducing the use and reliance of carbon-intensive energy sources, and supporting efforts that advance international progress on climate change. Although grants through the sustainable development program are mainly focused on the United States, their work has also spurred collaboration with the fund's place-based programs (China, Western Balkans, New York) and their Global Governance Portfolio under the Democratic Practice Program.

The sustainable development program

received the second highest funding budget after their democratic practices, totaling \$7.2 million awarded in 2018.

\$7.2 MILLION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Although sustainable development is one of their six programs areas, its theme and values pervade through other program areas and are evident in their grants. For example, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, funding Comet-ME, an Israeli-Palestinian organization that provides basic energy and clean water services to off-grid communities in the South Hebron Hills through environmentally and socially sustainable methods. Although the values and goals of this project are tightly aligned with the mission of their sustainable development program, it is a project categorized under their Peacebuilding Program. The second example of a grant which reflects Rockefeller's sustainable development mission and values is their support in projects related to integrating and promoting resilient, sustainable and adaptive built environments in order to reduce the consumption of fossil fuel and greenhouse gas emissions.

LARGE FUNDER

COMMON
THEMES



Consistent among large funders is the overarching goal of reducing/removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. Funding areas to achieve that goal include energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable development, carbon reduction methods, supporting global leadership

for climate action, and supporting climate policies. Projects commonly funded among these large funders target the largest greenhouse gas emitters geographically (China, India, US) and by sector (power, industry, buildings, transportation and forestry).



ROLE OF SMALL FUNDERS

While mitigation efforts offer global solutions that benefit the greater good, climate adaptation efforts provide unique solutions tailored to a locality or community in order to adapt to the effects of climate change. The goal of climate adaptation is to reduce vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change by making changes in a community to increase resiliency. Because climate adaptation brings the issue of climate change from a global to a local scale, people of those communities most impacted are the ones that have the most at stake and are experts in their locality. Community-based or grassroots adaptation solutions “identifies, assists, and implements community-based development activities that strengthen the capacity of local people to adapt to living in a riskier and less predictable climate” (Ayers & Forsyth, 2010). Because these grassroots climate strategies are typically developed through a participatory process that involves the local community, it builds on a cultural norm that already exists and gives a discourse to existing development issues (Ayers & Forsyth, 2010).

Grassroots climate solutions are defined as “solutions that move systems toward equity through networks rooted in the power of the people; are the result of principled, collective, and direct action; create targeted pressure and are born out of the communities in which they operate” (Elliott, Berger, & Bidad, 2019). The main characteristics of grassroots climate solutions are that it is led by communities, builds resilience, is place-based, empowers local leaders, and addresses the issues of equity and human rights. These solutions address the root causes of climate change and allow the community to be the driver of change. “These solutions embody an approach that addresses environmental, economic, and social issues simultaneously, recognizing the wholeness of people’s lives” (Global Greengrants Fund, 2019). In addition to moderating and alleviating damages to communities in developing countries, funding grassroots adaptation has the benefit of “ensuring that developing countries remain viable partners for economic growth, global governance, and international security” (Stephan & Buob, 2013)

"THE GRUNT WORKERS"

Small funders are the “grunt workers” in climate philanthropy taking a more hands-on approach with their grantees. Their skills and attributes make them best positioned to fund climate adaptation and grassroots projects. Key attributes include having a major theme for equity; empowering voices and leaders from local communities; they often assume more risk by taking on local projects that may not be highly visible or have all the metrics and methods required by large funders to obtain grants; they are flexible to change with the needs of the community, time, and place; they work directly with the communities affected which allows them to understand the needs of the community which builds expertise; they help scale up and increase visibility for local projects; and they provide additional support in addition to funding like helping their grantees write their next grant or finding new partners.

MIZE FAMILY FOUNDATION

is a Seattle-based foundation who funds grassroots climate adaptation projects with an overarching emphasis on climate justice. In the past 6 to 7 years, they have shifted their focus from mitigation to adaptation, adjusting to the needs of the world. Their definition of climate justice “is a movement to ensure that climate change policies are equitable, acknowledging the disproportionate burden of climate change on poor and marginalized communities, safeguarding human rights, and providing solutions through systemic change.” Their mission is to support “organizations that promote global environmental justice and a diverse environmental movement, building a sense of urgency around the impacts of climate change on human and wildlife communities. To seek funding from the Mize Family Foundation, an organization must possess one or more of the following strategies: innovative media, leadership development, community empowerment and human rights. It is evident throughout their website that their work is heavily aligned with their support for climate justice that their work is heavily aligned with their support for climate justice. Geographically, the Mize Family Foundation funds in the United States and sub-Saharan Africa.



According to the Foundation Center Directory, the Mize Family Foundation’s most common grant amount is

\$15,000 with an annual giving of about \$200,000.

AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT: \$15,000

On average, the Mize Family Foundation gives out about 13 grants per year. This foundation only provides general operating grants with the trust in the vision and leadership of the organizations they fund. Their most consistent grantees between 2014 - 2019 are the following: Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide, Front and Centered, Front Line Defenders, Global Press Institute, and Urgent Action Fund - Africa, all of which provide a representation of projects that tightly align with their values and emphasis of climate justice.

I have highlighted three of their grantees who showcase the Mize Family Foundation’s commitment to climate justice, fit their four areas of focus (innovative media, leadership development, community empowerment, and human rights), and aligns tightly with their values (supporting emerging leaders, climate justice, interdependence of our ecosystems and trust in their partners).

CASE STUDIES



Global Press Institute is an international journal that works with journalists in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This institute trains local women throughout the developing world to become professional, ethical journalists. In addition, they offer these local journalists' long-term employment with Global Press Journal once these women complete their training. Global Press Institutes' goal is to be able to have global communities represented accurately and cover topics that are not typically covered in other news sources. They are trying to change the mainstream media narrative and provide more "local voices, deep context, and nuanced analysis on topics rarely covered elsewhere." With these skills training and employment opportunities, they are contributing to the development and empowerment of these communities and creating a greater transparency to their countries which will change the way the rest of the world views their communities' people and cultures.



ELAW is an alliance of attorneys, scientists and advocates who work together across borders to "promote grassroots efforts to build a sustainable and just future." They work and empower communities to speak out about having clean air, water, and a healthy planet. Each ELAW advocate works in their home country, because it is those people who know best what the community needs. ELAW provides a network of legal and scientific support to those working on the ground. Their advocates make sure they help empower communities pursue environmental justice, by creating leaders and providing support for those communities to speak up. They accomplish this by training community paralegals to represent community interest, helping communities pursue legal action, and providing scientists to look over plans for development, monitoring environmental conditions, and provide alternatives. Lastly, the public interest lawyers "help protect advocates who face legal or other consequences for their advocacy."



FRONT AND CENTERED "is an action coalition of racial and economic justice organizations which strives to elevate the voices and interests of communities of color to the center of public policy, community-based education and organizing, and impact investments addressing climate change." They are made up of more than 60 organizations and groups in Washington state that work in communities of color and low-income areas. Their focus and belief are that "climate and environmental change can only be addressed when equity for the communities first and worst affected are at the center of the solutions." "Front and Center builds and amplifies a more powerful movement by engaging and bringing leaders together, building capacity, and providing coordination and technical support." Front and Centered provides support in building partnerships and collaboration; policy research, writing, and advocacy; grassroots and voter education and mobilization; fund development; and communications and storytelling.

THOUSAND CURRENTS

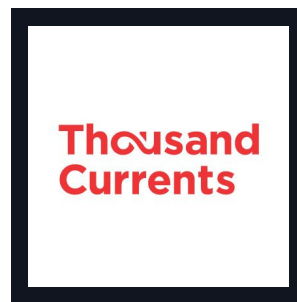
is a foundation based in Oakland, California who is heavily focused on funding grassroots initiatives and advocates for making the community leaders of change. This foundation was started in 1985 under the name of IDEX by ex-Peace Corp members who saw the potential in locally led initiative and was frustrated by top down approaches to reduce poverty that were imposed on local communities in the Global South. In 2016, IDEX was rebranded to Thousand Currents and continued their motto: “Keeping to a trajectory marked by continual learning, growing, and reflection - while always centering the voices of leaders of the Global South.”

Thousand Currents, mainly funds grassroots adaptation projects in Africa,

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES

CLIMATE JUSTICE



Asia, the Pacific and Latin America with project focuses on food sovereignty, alternative economies, and

climate justice. For an organization that aims to partner with Thousand Currents, they only offer operational grants with the belief that these unrestricted grants allow their partners to be more responsive to communities. Thousand Currents, plays a more hands-on role in supporting their partners by assisting in capacity building activities that meet the needs of their partners as they evolve.

According to the Foundation Center Directory, Thousand Currents most common grant amount is \$20,000 with an annual giving of about \$800,000 in 2018, giving out 39 grants.

AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT: \$20,000

Thousand Currents lays out their definition of each focus area they serve, and I provide case studies below to exemplify how their projects reflect their definitions of climate action terms

CASE STUDIES

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

“puts the people who produce, distribute and consume food at the center of decisions of food systems at the center of decisions of food systems and policies.”

Partners of Thousand Currents support this focus with projects that share sustainable and organic food production methods, organizing farmers to sell their food collectively for fair prices, protecting biodiversity and genetic resources within ecosystems; lowering cost while improving the quality and quantity of their yields; and educating their governments to put smallholder farmers’ interests before those of multinational corporations.”



Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic Farmers’ Forum

a Thousand Currents’ partner since 2016, is an organization made up of smallholder farmers that works to influence policy and raise awareness of issues regarding food sovereignty, land justice, and environmental justice of smallholder farmers. Their work helps bring awareness to the topic of agro-ecological farming methods and promotes organic farming techniques, natural resource management,

product valorization, and establishment of herbal gardens.

ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES

“prioritizing producers and consumers over shareholders”

Examples of how Thousand Currents’ partners support alternative economies are to “build skills to use existing land and other natural resources in sustainable ways; create access to collective savings and affordable credit through village banking; generate income based on sustainably produced traditional arts and food production; support collective manufacturing and capital generation to enter local and international markets; train each other in financial management and cooperative development to survive employment discrimination; ensure healthy and safe working conditions; and equitably distribute decision-making power among all economic players.”



Nari Chetana Kendra (Women Awareness Center Nepal), a partner since 2005, is a women-led organization looking to improve socio-economic status and self-development capacity by combining farming, economic development and gender justice in their mission. Nari Chetana Kendra established savings and credit cooperatives for women which has contributed to poverty reduction and raising living standards. The efforts of Nari Chetana Kendra has not only increased women’s social and economic power in rural areas but changed

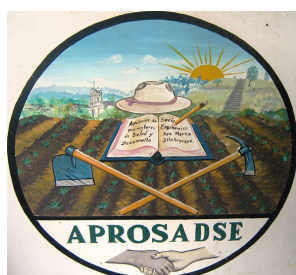
the banking landscape in Nepal to be more competitive with cooperatives offering lower and fairer lending rates.

CASE STUDIES

CLIMATE JUSTICE

"safeguarding the rights of people most impacted by climate change and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly."

For Thousand Currents, climate justice includes creating opportunities for communities by working in the area of building resilience by reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and creating alternative economies; reclaiming ancestral knowledge of land stewardship and food production; education in sustainable farming practices and new technology; combating pollution, and advocating for environmental justice.



Asociación para la Promoción de la Salud y el Desarrollo Socio-Económico (APROSADSE) who has been a partner of Thousand Currents since 2006 is an organization that has aimed to support community-led solutions in the areas of health, education, and sustainable food production. This organization mainly works in the municipality of San Martín Jilotepeque, Guatemala where most of the indigenous members are peasant farmers and has been a target of indigenous persecution. Their

work supports building leadership in rural communities and contributes towards community rights especially those of the most vulnerable.

LAIRD NORTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

is a Seattle-based foundation first established in the 1940s under the name Briarcombe Fund. They transitioned to the Laird Norton Family Foundation in 2016 and shifted their global focus to funding mainly in the Pacific Northwest and California. The Laird Norton Family Foundation funds in five focus areas: arts and education; human services; youth development (Sapling Fund); watershed stewardship; and climate change.

Annually, they grant \$1.25 million with a budget of about \$325,000 allocated to each focus per year. This foundation gives both operating and project grants on a year to year basis to partners.

The Laird Norton Family Foundation represents an exception to the trend for small funders by funding in the area of climate mitigation. Their approach in climate action is towards policy, research, and demonstration projects mainly in the areas of reducing the use of fossil fuels, carbon sequestration methods, and promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency. Their goals and strategies statement for their climate change area of focus is the following: “Climate change poses a significant global threat, one which we are addressing by striving to ensure an equitable, resilient, habitable, and enjoyable world for current and future



generations. While our work is focused on climate change, we believe in the value of ecosystems

services and in the stability and resiliency of healthy natural systems. We also believe it is essential that the cost of externalities be incorporated into lifestyle, policy, and business considerations.”

In 2018, they gave 11 grants totaling \$315,000 most of which focused on carbon sequestration through policy and research, and an effort to stop the use of coal and fossil fuel with one project for agriculture policy directed towards sustainable and organic farming and one towards sustainable infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest to increase sustainable and resilient infrastructure systems (energy, transportation, water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste).

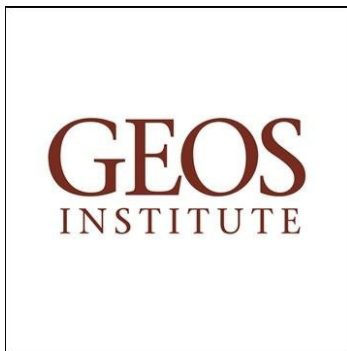
I have highlighted three grantees that demonstrates the Laird Norton Family Foundations dedication to “hasten the demise of coal, [...] and increasing the ability of the forests, agricultural land and estuaries [...] to sequester carbon. These grantees embody Laird Norton’s role in climate action through supporting mitigation strategies.

CASE STUDIES



Power Past Coal is a coalition of health, environmental, businesses, clean-energy, faith and community groups working together to stop the building of new coal terminals through the Northwest. Exporting coal creates negative impacts on climate change, the economy, environment, health and safety, mining, and transportation. In addition to stopping the building of new coal terminals, they are also dedicated to improving the safety measures for oil currently travelling through the region. The

Laird Norton Family Foundation gave Power Past Coal a grant in 2018 to support the work to make sure that no coal export terminal is built in Longview, Washington



Geos Institute is made up of a group of scientists, facilitators, planners that work in the areas of community decision making, forest management, and river system restoration to address systemic causes of climate change. Currently they have four climate initiatives that address building more resilient communities, adapting communities to the impacts of climate change through consulting services and resilience planning, providing policy makers and land managers with scientific information and guidance, and ensuring safe water for whole

ecosystems. Laird Norton supported carbon research in regional and national forests and outreach to private landowners, policy makers and state agencies across Washington and Oregon.

Carbon Cycle Institute is a California-based organization whose mission is to stop and reverse the effects of climate change by supporting research and solutions that reduce carbon from the atmosphere and promote environmental stewardship, social equity, and economic sustainability. Although land management and agriculture are some of the biggest contributors to climate change, sustainable practices in these areas are perfect for capturing carbon out of the atmosphere and providing a place for long term storage. Carbon Cycle institute works on

Carbon Cycle Institute

carbon farming practices that are “known to improve the rate at which CO₂ is removed from the atmosphere and converted to plant material and/or organic matter.” They not only work with farmers to assess opportunities to reduce greenhouse gases and increase carbon sequestration on their land, but they have developed a framework for land management that emphasizes carbon sequestration as its main goal.

SMALL FUNDER

COMMON THEMES




Common among small funders are projects and organizations with an overarching theme of climate justice. Social justice is a sensitive and contentious area for many foundations to fund due to often heavy scrutiny from the government, the public, and the press. Therefore, many foundations who fund social justice issues, and specifically identify themselves as funding social justice tend to be smaller, newer, and public foundations (Suarez, 2012). With an emphasis on grassroots initiatives, many organizations operate on the doctrine that people of the

With an emphasis on grassroots initiatives, many organizations operate on the doctrine that people of the community know the needs of the community best and should be the drivers of change. Small funders often utilizes the bottom-up approach in climate action to encourage community-led solutions. General operating grants are common among small funders to show trust in their grantee organization's vision and allow them to be more responsive to changes in community needs. Common project themes are human rights and advocacy, community development, women-led initiatives, and food sovereignty.



PARTNERSHIPS



Currently funding for adaptation solutions and grassroots initiatives are minuscule compared to the resources needed. Effective climate action does require us to address both mitigation and adaptation, however adaptation strategies are severely underfunded. Without targeted funding toward adaptation and a continued effort of supporting community-led solutions and voices, the disparity between the Global North and the Global South will only continue to grow. It is a bottom-up approach that will empower communities and lead to sustainable change. Because climate change impacts pervade all aspects of life and spatial scales, climate action requires multidisciplinary and global collaboration. Understanding and utilizing the strengths and roles of large and small funders is essential to forming strategic partnerships to tackle climate change. To maximize impact and create targeted funding, collaboration and partnerships are necessary next steps and critical to success.

BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Although partnerships and collaboration echo loudly in the philanthropic world, when speaking with some of the smaller foundations, many seemed to be working independently, not aware of other foundations in the local area. Many of these small funders have aligned values, focus, and projects and fund in the same localities. There are many benefits to forming partnership and giving collectively with other foundations both for the funders and the grantees.

Partnerships create learning opportunities, allowing collaborators access to knowledge, experiences, expertise, and strategies. With a network of partners, advisors, and shared resources, this can help mitigate risk when the organization is learning about a new area of funding or even trying when new strategies. There is power in numbers whether it is through pooling funding, aligning projects, or sharing ideas. Collaboration creates greater impact allowing for long-term support and bigger visions. A table made up of different viewpoints from diverse backgrounds and expertise is an incubator for innovative ideas; well thought out strategies are just the holistic approach we need to address the root causes of climate change. (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2017).

PARTNERSHIP MODELS

There are many models that foundations can follow when forming partnerships ranging from most to least integrated (see figure 1). These models are not strict prescriptive approaches, but something to be constantly analyzed and negotiated among the organization and their partners in order to benefit from collaboration. Organizations can and often use more than one model at the same time and it should strategically reflect the projects, time, and place.

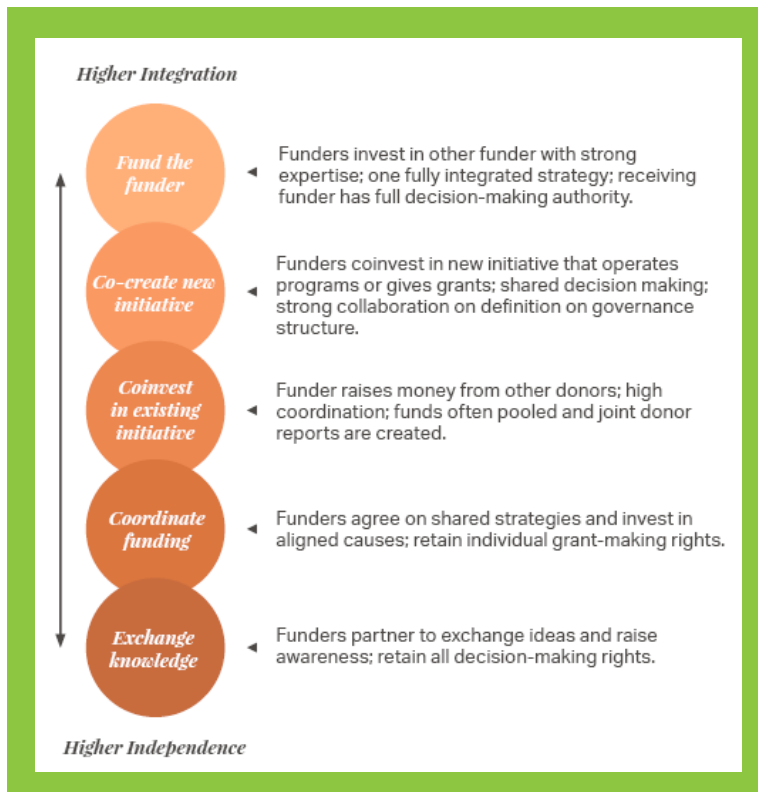


Figure 1: Partnership model shows different levels of integration. (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2017)



PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE

If collaboration and working together was easy, everyone would do it. The more integrated collaborators get, the higher the risk to both succeed and to fail (lose time, money and effort). However, understanding and preparing for the types of pitfalls and challenges ahead of time can help eliminate some risks. Pitfalls mainly happen during decision making when tensions run high. One of the best ways to avoid these pitfalls is to establish governance procedures early on so both parties understand the expectations of the partnership. All parties should start by establishing a decision-making process and governance within the partnership and work together to define and agree on shared values and goals. Once you know the direction and impact you are trying to achieve, it is necessary to define impact measurements; when, how and for how long will you bring new partners in; and who gets credit and at what level (Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, 2017).

EMERGENT STRATEGY

For philanthropists to make the most impact in climate action they must be strategic and choose interventions with the most potential to assist our world in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. Due to the ever evolving and growing issues of climate change, the call for solutions is increasing in urgency, the disparities between the Global North and Global South are

growing, and only funding mitigation is no longer enough. Effective mitigation and adaptation strategies positively affect each other and are more powerful when combined.

Due to the dynamic nature of climate change, funders should adopt the emergent strategy approach which allows for the foundation to take on the root causes of major issues by embracing the dynamic nature of the problem. In this approach the foundation pivots its strategy in order to be relevant and effective to a time, place, or community. Because the strategy is always changing, this method helps with eradicating the root causes of problems. This method also requires continual analysis in the foundations' strategy and close collaborations with its grantees and partners. (Kania, Kramer, & Russell, 2014)

Adaptation and grassroots solutions continue to be severely underfunded but utilizing the key attributes of small funders and forming strategic partnerships can help generate targeted funding needed to maximize impact. These characteristics provide a much more proactive and hand-on approach to philanthropy required of successful grassroots adaptation solutions. Understanding and capitalizing on the attributes and roles both large and small funders play in climate action can help funders create better strategies and partnerships to advance climate solutions and generate more impact per dollar. Climate change is the most urgent threat facing our world today and we can't have global solutions acting alone. We must work collectively because we cannot afford to underfund either solution.

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FOUNDATION & PARTNER WEBSITES

William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

<https://hewlett.org/programs/environment/>

John D. and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation

<https://www.macfound.org/programs/climate/strategy/>

Rockefeller Brother's Fund

<https://www.rbf.org/programs/sustainable-development>

The Mize Family Foundation

<https://mizefamilyfoundation.org/>

ELAW: <https://www.elaw.org/>

Front and Centered: <https://frontandcentered.org/>

Global Press Institute: <https://globalpress.co/>

Thousand Currents

<https://thousandcurrents.org/>

Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic Farmer' Forum: <http://zimsoff.org/>

Nari Chetana Kendra: <https://wacn.org.np/>

APROSADSE: <https://thousandcurrents.org/partners/aprosadse/>

The Laird Norton Family Foundation

<https://www.lairdnorton.org/climate-change.html>

Power Past Coal: <https://powerpastcoal.org/>

Geos Institute: <https://www.geosinstitute.org/>

Carbon Cycle Institute: <https://www.carboncycle.org/>

THANK YOU



We are a giving circle that gives our members direct, thoughtful, and effective ways to help grassroots organizations in the Global South to improve the quality of life in their communities.