

THE POWER OF COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY:

Giving Together to Address the Climate Crisis

The world faces many climate hazards now, and even greater threats in the years ahead. Immediate and more ambitious action is urgently needed to address climate risks, support resilient and equitable communities, and secure a liveable future.¹ To ensure the safety of people, biodiversity, and the planet, science tells us we must limit warming. This requires systemic change at the local, national, and global levels: shifting how we produce energy, construct homes and buildings, provide food for a growing population, and move people and goods. We also must protect the natural ecosystems that absorb more than 40 percent of greenhouse gas pollution today.² And all solutions must prioritize equity and justice: This is not only a moral imperative; it is a pragmatic and necessary approach to ensure we all enjoy the lasting benefits of a climate-safe world.

One bright spot is the surge of interest among philanthropists who can use their resources to advance solutions quickly. Yet despite growing awareness and concern, less than 2 percent of philanthropic giving currently goes to climate solutions globally.³

Many high-impact solutions already exist and the emergence of collaborative giving platforms over the past decade is a means of actively moving them to scale. These platforms are efficient, often staffed by experts so that both new and experienced philanthropists can work collectively, confidently, and swiftly to achieve far-reaching and outsized impact in their giving.



“The urgency of the climate crisis is clear and the solutions may be complex. But understanding how to give shouldn’t be the obstacle to action for philanthropists. I have found that giving collaboratively—and partnering with others to combine resources and funding—amplifies impact and helps us move at a faster pace.”

Sir Christopher Hohn, Founder, Children's Investment Fund Foundation

What are collaborative giving platforms?

Donors working together is a long tradition, from informal giving circles to local fundraising campaigns. Collaborative giving platforms take these efforts to the next level, formalizing collective giving to amplify impact. They are philanthropic organizations specifically designed to bring donors together, provide deep subject matter expertise, and channel resources to the people and groups best positioned to accelerate progress on complex issues such as poverty, equity, global health — and climate change.



“Even putting all of our resources together, we couldn’t possibly do as much as these collaboratives are doing with so many other institutions and philanthropists coming in to pool not just their money, but their minds, their hearts, and their experience.”

Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies

A 2021 research project, conducted by the Bridgespan Group and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, identified hundreds of collaborative giving platforms that have collectively channeled more than \$10 billion to social causes. The advantages they offer include:

- **Partnerships with other donors** that leverage capital to scale solutions quickly.
- **Specialized knowledge** and **important relationships** with community leaders and grassroots groups that may otherwise be inaccessible.
- **Coordination** in developing targeted, networked strategies that take leadership from the field and address complex, cross-cutting issues.
- **Opportunities to engage** depending on interest, with governance structures that offer hands-off approaches or more engagement in learning and decision-making.
- **Efficiencies** that free donors from having to become experts in new fields, and provide assurance that priorities and realities on the ground are taken into account.

Many collaborative giving platforms are working to combat climate change, and this overview shares illustrative examples that highlight their diversity and reach. Solutions are organized and presented according to categories that many donors find helpful as they explore how to deploy their philanthropy:

- **Decarbonizing economic sectors** to reduce sources of emissions, and **protecting nature and improving land use** to bolster the natural ecosystems that absorb them.
- **Pulling levers** that influence and compel broad, system-level change.
- **Centering equity** and ensuring **just transitions**.
- **Driving technological innovation** to accelerate discovery and incubate new solutions.
- **Geographical approaches** focused on local, national, or regional priorities that are consistent with the perspectives of communities on the ground.

A more comprehensive listing of collaborative giving platforms is included in the Appendix.

DECARBONIZING ECONOMIC SECTORS



Many sectors of our economy generate emissions, and making progress on climate change requires cutting those emissions in half by 2030 on the way to “net zero”—almost no emissions—by the middle of this century. The main sectors that must transition off fossil fuels are transportation, energy production, manufacturing, buildings, and agriculture. There are many strong collaboratives in this space.

- **Drive Electric** is a global campaign accelerating the move to electric vehicles (EVs)—from cars and trucks to two-wheelers—on a massive scale. Eliminating vehicle pollution has an immediate impact on emissions and the air we breathe. The experts collaborating on an ambitious strategy to phase out the internal combustion engine come from the geographies that make up the biggest share of the global vehicle market: the U.S., Europe, China, and India. This effort enables donors to take coordinated action to quickly achieve change—advancing government policy, engaging business leaders, and mobilizing people-powered coalitions that represent diverse interests, including frontline communities.

Funders include: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, IKEA Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Oak Foundation, Pisces Foundation, Quadrature Climate Foundation, and Sea Change Foundation.



CASE STUDY

Seizing the Methane Moment

Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas, with 84 times the warming impact of carbon dioxide. Reducing methane emissions is the fastest down payment the world can make to address climate change. According to experts, reducing methane emissions from human activity could avoid nearly 0.3° Celsius of global warming by 2050. This would prevent 255,000 premature deaths, 775,000 asthma-related hospital visits, 73 billion hours of lost labor, and 26 million tons of crop losses globally.

Yet coordinated efforts to reduce methane have not scaled at the pace we need. To seize the moment on this urgent issue, philanthropists committed \$200 million ahead of the U.N. climate meetings in Glasgow in 2021 to create the **Global Methane Hub**. This helped inspire 111 countries to sign the Global Methane Pledge, agreeing to take voluntary actions toward reducing their methane emissions.

The Global Methane Hub coalesces philanthropists, experts, non-profits, and governments to ensure united action around a strategy that can develop and quickly scale up cost-effective, high-impact methane mitigation solutions, contributing to transformational change in the energy, agricultural, and waste management sectors.

Priorities include:

- **Technical support** to governments who have signed the Global Methane Pledge, and **advocacy** to persuade additional governments to sign on (the Hub already is supporting 30 countries with their methane reduction plans).
- **Diplomatic engagement and leveraging of international organizations** like the World Bank to implement and finance global reductions.
- **Aggregating data** to ensure accurate monitoring, verification, and reporting of methane emissions and to inform enforcement mechanisms.
- **Creation of a center of expertise** for agricultural methane work, using innovation, policy, and corporate engagement to drive real reductions.

In addition to consolidating knowledge and offering efficiency and scale, the Global Methane Hub has the ability to deploy resources to diverse opportunities in a coordinated way—thus avoiding redundancy or underfunding as well as the fragmentation that comes when different organizations operate discretely. By sharing strategies, resources, expert staff, and metrics, this collaborative endeavor enables greater ambition and a faster path to impact for the 21 participating donors.

Funders include: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Breakthrough Energy, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Erol Foundation, Grantham Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, High Tide Foundation, IKEA Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, McCall MacBain Foundation, Packard Foundation, Pisces Foundation, Quadrature Climate Foundation, Skoll Foundation, Sobrato Philanthropies, and Zegar Family Foundation.

PROTECTING NATURE AND IMPROVING LAND USE



Intact forests, peat lands, and oceans remove more than 40 percent of our current emissions from the atmosphere and are an important part of addressing climate change. Destroying these natural resources not only releases the greenhouse gases that were stored in the land, oceans, and trees—it prevents them from absorbing emissions in the future. Solutions that stop deforestation and protect these important ecosystems are vital. Here are four strong collaborative examples:

- **The Platform for Agriculture and Climate Transformation (PACT)** is a new collaborative giving project created by the Walton Family Foundation. PACT re-envisioning how we farm in the U.S., shaping the policy needed to integrate climate-friendly practices into farmers' operations; amplifying the market demand for changes in agricultural practices; and driving resources to the research and development needed for innovation in agriculture. These strategies are critical to the future of American farmers and provide wide-ranging public benefits that can be a model for the rest of the world.

Funders include: Builders Initiative, Conscious Bay Research, Walton Family Foundation, and Ziff Family Foundation.

- **The Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA)** is a collaborative of experienced foundations with deep expertise working globally to halt and reverse forest loss, advance sustainable land use and development, and secure the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous and forest communities, enabling them to protect their ecosystems and people. Its work is primarily focused in Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, and Central America, where CLUA has strong and diverse networks—ensuring programming is led by local experts who work directly with frontline practitioners.

Funders include: Ford Foundation, Good Energies Foundation, Cargill Philanthropies, Moore Foundation, and Packard Foundation.

- **The Forests for People and Climate Initiative (FPCI)** brings to bear the ambition, focus, knowledge, and partnerships required to halt tropical deforestation by 2030 and reinforce the protective value of these natural places that remove carbon pollution from our atmosphere. FPCI aligns diverse global strategies with emphasis on important tropical regions that are especially at risk: the Amazon, Indonesia, and the Congo Basin. FPCI is focused on shifting economic incentives for forest protection, strengthening public support for strong policies, and protecting communities and their land rights. This coordinated effort will set the stage to unlock public and private sector funding at scale.

Funders include: Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Ford Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Packard Foundation, Good Energies Foundation, Cargill Philanthropies, and Moore Foundation.

- **Oceans 5** is an international donor collaborative that seeks to strategically influence governments on the highest conservation priorities defined by marine scientists and government leaders, including establishing marine protected areas and constraining offshore oil and gas development.

Funders include: Adessium Foundation, Arcadia, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Marisla Foundation, Moore Foundation, Oak Foundation, Oceankind, Packard Foundation, Allen Family Foundation, Angell Family Foundation, Planet Heritage Foundation, Sobrato Philanthropies, Tiffany & Co. Foundation, Waitt Foundation, and Waterloo Foundation.

PULLING LEVERS TO INFLUENCE AND COMPEL CHANGE



"Levers" are tactical, strategic interventions that influence key actors—governments, businesses, markets, and an engaged public—who can compel action and unlock systemic change. They include policy advocacy, strategic communications, litigation strategies, research and development, movement building, and more. These levers for change may be deployed as cross-cutting approaches across carbon-emitting sectors or geographies—driving progress from all angles and catalyzing the political, economic, and social transitions we need. Here are a few examples.

Movements

Throughout history, every issue of social significance has had a movement of people pushing for it—from women's right to vote to the end of apartheid. People-powered movements engage citizens, generate political will, and hold leaders and institutions accountable to accelerate transformation.

- **Urban Movement Innovation Fund (UMIF)** harnesses the untapped potential of movement building power through cross-cutting approaches that focus on building capacity, aligning and incubating projects, and championing the voices of the critical actors on the frontlines of the climate crisis. Focused efforts in key global geographies and program areas include growing the global youth movement; accelerating the decarbonization of transport; and promoting fair and people-centric transition strategies.

Funders include: Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Hampshire Foundation, IKEA Foundation, Oak Foundation, and Resonance Philanthropies.

Strategic Communications

Communicating effectively is essential to engage people, move them to want change, and build broad public support for climate solutions. In addition, countering entrenched corporate interests—fossil fuels, palm oil, cement, and more—requires combating misinformation and leveraging many different channels to reach new audiences and the diverse communities that typically experience the worst impacts of a changing climate.

- **Communicating Our Power** is a communications initiative that gives agency to grassroots actors and organizers on the frontlines of climate impacts in the U.S.—primarily communities of color. This initiative prioritizes the community expertise held by these local stakeholders, lifting their narratives and helping them build communications and digital capacity to motivate action and advance just transitions. Communicating Our Power works in partnership with the **Digital Climate Coalition (DCC)**, a core group of organizations that help NGOs build digital campaigns, counter anti-climate propaganda, and gather and share data to determine how to reach and move audiences to climate action. These complementary efforts offer donors an easy way to tap into the knowledgeable groups that are actively working locally and nationally on harnessing the power of communications for climate in the U.S.

Funders include: Generation Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Pisces Foundation, Sequoia Climate Fund, and Skoll Foundation.

Strategic Litigation

Litigation is a critical tool for climate action and can be used to help shareholders hold companies accountable for their actions, help advocate for pollution controls when emissions are harming communities, or seek reimbursement for climate harms for cities navigating them.

- **The Foundation for International Law for the Environment (FILE)** is a global leader in strategic legal action for climate, working across 47 countries, with more than 100 global grantees and 200 cases funded. FILE plays a key role in supporting the enabling conditions for successful litigation and coordinating and connecting the field for amplified impact. FILE helps donors scale litigation work globally through its unique platform that funds strategic, high-profile cases; captures and disseminates useful precedent; and embeds impactful legal action within the wider political and communications ecosystem to drive national and international legal systems towards dramatic emission reduction and delivery of the global climate goals established by the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Funders include: AKO Foundation, Children's Investment Fund Foundation, Climate Imperative, High Tide Foundation, and Quadrature Climate Foundation.

CENTERING EQUITY AND ENSURING JUST TRANSITIONS



People of color, Indigenous Peoples, and low-income communities historically have borne the brunt of polluting industries and worsening climate impacts and are among the most important stakeholders of climate action—often having both the most to gain and the most to lose. Many of these individuals and communities have clear and strategic visions for responding in ways that deliver tangible and immediate benefits and build popular support and momentum. All climate solutions should include a focus on these values. These are a few of the collaboratives advancing this under-resourced area:

- **The Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund (Equity Fund)** works in the U.S. at the intersection of nonpartisan civic engagement, grassroots organizing, coalition building, and advocacy to advance climate and clean energy policy solutions in 13 states in the Southwest, Midwest, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic regions. The Equity Fund has policy expertise, including through its Policy Accelerator, which helps more than 130 U.S. grantee organizations strengthen their skills to advance equitable climate and clean energy policies in the ways important to them (e.g., around job growth, workforce development, and the health of their communities). The Equity Fund's Communications Accelerator expands capacity and campaigns that reach and support communities in combating climate disinformation.

Funders include: Bezos Earth Fund, Crankstart Foundation, Heising-Simons Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, JPB Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Libra Foundation, Loud Hound Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Packard Foundation, Sequoia Climate Fund, and Yellow Chair Foundation.

- **Climate Leaders in Movement Action (CLIMA) Fund** directs resources towards grassroots actors working globally on everything from agroecology and community-governed renewables to direct resistance to the fossil fuel industry and defending the rights of Indigenous Peoples protecting intact ecosystems. This is an incredible collaboration between Global Greengrants Fund, Grassroots International, Thousand Currents, and Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, all of whom have track records of impact. This fund offers a unique opportunity for donors to reach grassroots movements organizations in 168 countries around the world, with a focus on the global South.

Funders include: Ceiba Fund DAF, Dolby Laboratories, Inc., Hopper Dean Family Fund, Libra Foundation, Okta, Inc., Open Society Foundations, Panta Rhea Foundation, Porticus Foundation, Resourcing Justice Fund, Solidaire Network, Swift Foundation, and Women Donors Network.

DRIVING INNOVATION



Many climate solutions already exist, but we still need creative, breakthrough ideas that will address challenges in innovative ways. These ideas could focus on transforming social norms and economic markets, uncovering new sustainable technologies, as well as creating movements to change policies. Coordinated philanthropic support can function as patient, risk-tolerant capital that can fuel discovery, tackle technical and institutional barriers that may slow progress, and mobilize the visionaries, cutting-edge strategies, and new ideas that can fuel the change we need.

- **Breakthrough Energy**, established in 2015 by Bill Gates, is a network of investment vehicles, philanthropic programs, policy advocacy, and other programs that are committed to accelerate climate solutions that will lead the world to net-zero emissions by 2050. The **Breakthrough Energy Catalyst Program** brings together partners across the public and private sectors to rapidly scale emerging clean technologies using a creative, blended financing approach, with an initial focus on clean hydrogen, direct air capture, long-duration energy storage, and sustainable aviation fuel. The **Breakthrough Energy Fellows Program** identifies and supports innovators and entrepreneurs across the globe working to develop, scale, and commercialize early-stage clean technologies with high potential to reduce emissions. The **Breakthrough Energy Policy and Advocacy Programs** (U.S. and Europe) advocate for policies that will accelerate the innovation cycle of climate technology and will give new technologies a chance in the market by creating market signals and driving down the costs of clean technology.

Funders include: Bezos Earth Fund, BlackRock Foundation, Builders Vision, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, IKEA Foundation, and Open Philanthropy Project.

- **The Climate Breakthrough Project** unleashes highly capable, cutting-edge strategists with big, game-changing ideas that could have a huge impact on addressing the climate crisis and leap past business-as-usual emissions reduction targets. The project selects two to three innovative leaders (not institutions) each year and provides them with time, space, \$3 million in resources, and support to create and implement the boldest strategies they can conceive to mitigate climate change. Awardees come to the project with big ideas but don't design their strategies until after they receive the award, giving them the freedom to create without constraint.

Funders include: Good Energies Foundation, IKEA Foundation, JPB Foundation, Oak Foundation, Packard Foundation, and Quadrature Climate Foundation.

GEOGRAPHICAL APPROACHES

Half of the world's emissions now come from four economies — China, the U.S., the European Union, and India. Alongside Africa, Southeast Asia, and Brazil, these seven geographies represent nearly 80 percent of possible emissions reductions. Philanthropic investments in these regions can result in outsized climate impact. Emerging economies and developing countries, especially in Africa and South Asia, need a path to prosperity that is not based on fossil fuels. To ensure approaches that address the specific challenges and opportunities in key regions, experienced climate donors have created regional climate foundations, a specialized and highly successful collaborative model with deep place-based expertise. Regional climate foundations, highlighted on the map below, are exceptional partners for those seeking collective giving opportunities that are geographically focused and employ strategies with local leadership and program experts.



NOTES

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

² <https://drawdown.org/drawdown-framework>

³ <https://www.climateworks.org/report/funding-trends-2021-climate-change-mitigation-philanthropy/>

Appendix

The following collaborative organizations have been endorsed by the Climate Leadership Initiative (CLI). CLI can make connections to peer donors as well as experts who hold deep knowledge of these groups. This list is regularly updated by CLI. If you know of an organization that should be added to this list, or if you'd like more details on any of these organizations, please reach out to let us know at info@climatelead.org.

Decarbonizing Economic Sectors

- Clean Air Fund
- Clean Cooling Collaborative
- Climate Imperative
- Climate Maritime Shipping Program
- ClimateWorks Carbon Dioxide Removal Fund
- ClimateWorks Industry Program
- Drive Electric Campaign
- Energy Transition Fund
- Plastic Solutions Fund
- Pooled Fund for International Energy
- Global Methane Hub
- Global Energy Just Transition Facility

Protecting Nature and Improving Land Use

- AgroEcology Fund
- Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA)
- Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative (CLARIFI)
- Colorado Plateau Foundation
- Forests for People and Climate Initiative (FPCI)
- Land is Life
- Legacy Landscapes Fund
- Oceans 5
- Platform for Agricultural Transformation (PACT)
- Rainforest Foundation
- Samdhana Institute
- Tenure Facility

Pulling Levers to Influence and Compel Change

- Climate Emergency Collaboration Group (CECG)
- Communicating Our Power
- Digital Climate Coalition
- Environmental Defenders Collaborative
- Fondo de Accion Urgente de America Latina
- Foundation for International Law for the Environment (FILE)
- Global Strategic Communications Council (GSCC)
- The Equation Campaign
- Urban Movement Innovation Fund (UMIF)

Centering Equity and Ensuring Just Transitions

- Climate and Clean Energy Equity Fund
- Climate Justice Resilience Fund
- Climate Leaders in Movement Action (CLIMA) Fund
- Coast Funds
- Environmental Justice Fund
- FRIDA Fund
- Frontline Funds Accelerator
- Global Greengrants Fund
- Hive Fund for Climate and Gender Justice
- Indian Land Tenure Foundation
- Just Transition Fund
- Kivulini Trust
- Manushya Foundation
- Na'ah Illahee Fund
- NDN Collective
- Native Voices rising
- Pawanka Fund
- Resilient Democracy Fund
- The Solutions Project
- True Costs Initiative

Driving Innovation

- Breakthrough Catalyst Program
- Breakthrough Energy Fellows Program
- Breakthrough Energy U.S. Policy & Advocacy Program
- Breakthrough Energy Europe
- Climate Breakthrough Project

Geographical Approaches

- African Climate Foundation
- Energy Foundation
- Energy Foundation China
- European Climate Foundation
- India Climate Collaborative
- Iniciativa Climática de México
- Instituto Clima e Sociedade
- Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (India)
- The Sustainability, Equity, and Diversity Fund (India)
- Tara Fund (East, Southeast, and South Asia, excluding India and China)

To Learn More

This overview offers a starting place for philanthropists to explore the wide spectrum of collaborative solutions ready for funding. The Climate Leadership Initiative (CLI) is available to provide more information on any of the collaboratives featured here or in the Appendix, and help connect philanthropists to the leaders of each collaborative.

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For more on collaborative giving platforms advancing progress on other complex social issues, please reach out to the Philanthropic Partnerships team at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. The foundation's Philanthropic Partnerships team seeds and supports collaborative giving platforms that make it easier for donors to channel large philanthropic investments to advance equity.

The Climate Leadership Initiative's mission is to rapidly and exponentially increase climate philanthropy by connecting donors with the peers, experts, and high-impact solutions working to restore our planet and build a healthy and equitable future for all.