If it is to play a meaningful part in tackling the climate crisis, philanthropy needs to change – at speed and scale.
If it is to play its part in tackling climate change, philanthropy itself needs to change – and it needs to do so immediately.

Climate change has emerged as the greatest challenge of our time. Its impacts are clearly visible, with more frequent extreme weather events and their effects around the world. The National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) reported a record 22 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters across the US in 2020. In 2019, Mozambique and neighbouring countries were devastated by cyclone Idai, and again by tropical storm Chalane in late 2020.

It is estimated that Kenya will experience mean temperature increases of up to 1.5 degrees by 2030, exacerbating the droughts and floods from which the country is already suffering, escalating food insecurity and causing loss of life, livestock and biodiversity. Sea-level rise is also an ever-present concern in Kenya, forcing people further inland while at the same time escalating scarcity of potable water as a result of saltwater intrusion into fresh water sources.

The Covid-19 pandemic has hardest hit many of the communities that were already affected by climate change, with lockdowns and restrictions of movement and their subsequent consequences for people’s livelihoods. This has brought calls for action to increase the focus on climate justice and amplify a green post-Covid-19 recovery – to ‘build back better’. Last year’s estimated 7 per cent fall in global emissions created by Covid restrictions is set to be short-lived, and according to some sources they have already more than rebounded.

The pandemic has shown us very clearly that we need to re-think how we live, work, eat, move and produce energy and that climate action has to be integrated into a wider response to disasters be they health or climate-induced. To date, we are nowhere near on track to keep global warming within the 1.5°C agreed in the 2015 Paris Climate Accord. In fact, current policies by national governments would lead to a global mean temperature increase of at least 2.93°C by 2100,1 making our present form of life impossible.

2.93°C
Estimate of minimum global mean temperature increase by 2100 under current government policies

Philanthropy’s response – must do better
Despite the starkness of this situation, addressing the climate crisis is not yet a priority among philanthropists. In 2019, less than 2 per cent of philanthropic giving was spent on tackling the climate crisis. Clearly, this needs to change and this issue of Alliance highlights some of the ways in which funders are setting examples others might follow. As Sandrine Dixson-Declève points out in her article on page 61, the Covid pandemic has highlighted the convergence of environmental and human health tipping points. In order to ‘emerge’ from this emergency, as she puts it, ‘with a new holistic vision for building resilience to future shocks and enhancing human well-being, speed and scale are key’.

Funders could play an important role in designing this transformational change, as Dixson-Declève notes, and 2021 provides many opportunities for action, from the Conference on Biodiversity (COP15) in China to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November. Isaiah Toroitich in his article on page 59 points out the climate justice movements’ important role of ‘building a comprehensive understanding of climate change’, thus such movements need to be more deliberately financed.

Although it is late in the day, as Richard Black argues on page 60, solving climate change is still within reach. It needs relatively few people in key positions, he suggests, but we need to tell ‘the right stories to the right people’, and make accelerating decarbonisation part of the political narrative in enough countries. Philanthropy, Black emphasises, has supported this kind of strategic communication in the past, and has been successful notably in...
making the UK embrace the national net zero target a lot more ambitiously.

The power of creating a new narrative, of connecting with the climate crisis in more visceral ways is also underlined by acclaimed artist Olafur Eliasson. Eliasson describes how art and its power to create new narratives and visuals can resonate with us and create visions of a future that lead to action. He shows us that to tackle the climate crisis, we need to connect hearts, hands and minds. This and other vignettes on pages 38-39 from the front-lines of climate change in the Arctic and Antarctica demonstrate that connecting to climate on a deep personal level can create a mindshift that moves us to act – if only we are willing to listen and to be touched.

Philanthropy’s way forward

We suggest that these three considerations are key to shaping philanthropy’s response:

1. The climate crisis can no longer be treated as separate from other funding areas. Neglecting climate risks might undermine the success of your giving elsewhere. As Sonia Medina discusses on page 46, funders such as the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, which started off with a focus on improving the lives of children in developing countries and have added climate change to their portfolio, exemplify how some funders have started to re-think their work in light of the climate crisis.

2. Even if a foundation finds it difficult to include a climate angle in its philanthropy, it can reduce emissions by changing how it operates, especially by looking at its investment portfolio. As Nando van Kleeff from the IKEA Foundation shows in his article on page 53, integrating climate risks into investment portfolios can be a powerful way for funders to help combat the climate crisis.

3. We cannot leave the task of acting on climate to the handful of big donors who have been instrumental in establishing the field of climate philanthropy. Every contribution counts, no matter which topic or which approach is being supported. The most important step is to get started. As Nigel Topping, the UK’s High-Level Champion for Climate Action, points out on pages 48-52, there are many opportunities to build on existing knowledge, expertise and infrastructure.

Supporting the levers of change

As a climate philanthropist, you can focus on specific sectors, such as energy and transport, manufacturing, construction or farming and food production. Another approach is a regional one, funding projects in regions that are hit particularly hard by the climate crisis – such as coastal areas facing increased flooding or regions affected by ever more intense heatwaves, with resulting crop failures and knock-on effects like ill-health, hunger, poverty and migration.

Another area for potential support is specific sectors, such as energy and transport, manufacturing, construction or farming and food production. Another approach is a regional one, funding projects in regions that are hit particularly hard by the climate crisis – such as coastal areas facing increased flooding or regions affected by ever more intense heatwaves, with resulting crop failures and knock-on effects like ill-health, hunger, poverty and migration.
Philanthropy must become more change have access to resources, capacity and technology to cope with the impacts, we need a new form of collaboration. Philanthropy must become more participatory, more inclusive and more driven by the communities it is trying to support. Tackling the climate emergency is a task that involves nothing less than reinventing the way we live and the way we work. For the young generation this process has sometimes started with an experience of grief and loss, the concept of solastalgia, has sometimes started with an experience of grief and loss, the concept of solastalgia, or homesickness in a dying world, that has been described by the Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht. However, it is also expected that countries will translate commitments contained in their updated national climate plans, the nationally determined contributions or NDCs, into action. But with finance playing a key role in forming the needed transformation a reality, COP26 needs to see more commitments not just from governments but also from the philanthropic world, like the Funder Commitment on Climate Change, launched in the UK at the end of 2019 (see page 40).

Climate leadership, climate justice
Ultimately, climate leadership is about climate justice. With this special feature, we seek to raise awareness, to inspire, and to provide guidance on how funders can make climate justice central to their efforts, and in doing so fulfill their role as stewards of the future. In order to ensure that those who are disproportionately affected by climate change have access to resources, capacity and technology to cope with the impacts, we need a new form of collaboration. Philanthropy must become more

What’s at stake at COP26?
And so to Glasgow. One of the key areas for deliberation at COP26, which would also significantly advance climate justice, is the issue of ‘loss and damage’. This is a topic whose progress has for years been hampered by fears of liability claims and compensation by developed countries and thus no agreement on its funding has been reached. The climate justice question remains: how do we ensure that communities already being affected by loss and damage are able to be resettled or compensated? And how do we handle the increasing phenomenon of climate refugees arising from loss and damage?

According to a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC AR5), some small islands and low-lying areas in the Pacific, Asia, Africa and elsewhere will be completely submerged by the end of the 21st century.1 The world cannot continue to ignore this, especially as the small island states have contributed least to climate change. Efforts to address resilience have come in the form of the race to resilience initiative in which the philanthropic world and other non-state actors are taking leading roles. Yet it is imperative that governments step up, since this is an issue which requires resources beyond the reach of non-state actors alone. It is also expected that countries will translate commitments contained in their updated national climate plans, the nationally determined contributions or NDCs, into action. But with finance playing a key role in making the needed transformation a reality, COP26 needs to see more commitments not just from governments but also from the philanthropic world, like the Funder Commitment on Climate Change, launched in the UK at the end of 2019 (see page 40).

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We are not the first generation to have realised what’s at stake, but the last one to be able to provide a tomorrow that is resilient, just and peaceful.

Above: Low-lying islands such as Fiji are facing the full force of climate change.

Climate Philanthropy 2030
Since January 2020, Alliance magazine has been providing you with free, weekly and unique content on climate philanthropy. This is part of our ClimatePhilanthropy2030 initiative, and it means that Alliance will be putting this defining issue at the heart of our coverage until 2030.

Our Contributing Partners:

We're not alone in our pledge. With the support of our contributing partners, Alliance will continue to bring you news, analysis, interviews and more on the latest developments in climate philanthropy. We’re proud to be bringing you this issue on Climate philanthropy before COP26. If you want to learn more about this initiative, we encourage you to visit alliancemagazine.org/climate

1 tinyurl.com/cat-temperature-increase
2 civicus.org/youth-playbook/
3 tinyurl.com/ipcc-report-sea-level-rise
In Profile

Shrinking beneath our feet

Four first-hand accounts give powerful testament to the impact of climate change on the polar ice sheets

The scientist

By Julienne Stroeve, research chair in Climate Forcing of Sea Ice at the University of Manitoba

During winter 2019-20 I had my first opportunity to experience the Arctic during the polar winter. I was part of the MOSAiC year-long Arctic drift expedition, drifting with the sea ice during the dark period. I arrived at Polarstern, excited to start collecting valuable data that would help us improve our ability to map sea ice thickness and better understand the drivers and implications of rapid climate change in the Arctic Ocean.

The first step out on the ice was surreal... it felt as if I was walking on the moon. The bitter cold snow crunched loudly under the weight of my footsteps, and the only light was that which my headlights crunched. The weight of the ice was... every time we had to break up, it was so alive! I arrived at Polarstern, excited to start collecting valuable data that would help us improve our ability to map sea ice thickness and better understand the drivers and implications of rapid climate change in the Arctic Ocean.

The artist

By Olafur Eliasson, founder of Little Sun, and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador for Climate Action and Sustainable Energy

In 1999, I flew over a number of Iceland’s glaciers to photograph them from the air. Twenty years later I went back to photograph them again. In the resulting photographic pairs which form The glacier melt series 1999/2019, it is shocking to see the difference. All have shrunk considerably.

I see great potential in working with narratives and visuals that motivate the action to mould a tomorrow of liveable and peaceful lives. To do this, we must listen not only to ourselves, but to the voices of the younger generation, who will be the ones to shape the future of our planet – to shape the future of the world.

The architect

By Giulia Foscari, architect, researcher and writer

Envision sailing across the Southern Ocean towards the Antarctic, and picture yourself standing on the bow of a ship, overlooking a white wall of ice which has accumulated for millions of years. Equivalent to around 70 per cent of the freshwater on our planet, the ice shelf you are staring at is not only our largest repository of scientific data crucial to inform future environmental policies but represents the greatest menace to global coastal settlements and, in turn, of our planet.

The sky is blue, the silence absolute, no person in sight. Suddenly, the thundering begins. Yet the humboldt soundscape does not come from above, it emanates from the mass that lies below. The alarming detonations produced at each rupture of the ice sheet at a pace which is accelerated due to anthropogenic climate change, were my first encounters with the continent and resonated as a call for action.

Upon my return to my daily life as an architect, I founded UNLESS and launched Antarctic Resolution, a multidisciplinary collective platform in which citizens are invited to engage in a coordinated and unanimous effort – independent of nation – to shape the future of Antarctica, and, in turn, of our planet.

The philanthropist

By Laura Viegener, CEO of the ALV Foundation

In May 2019 I joined a trip to Greenland organised by Active Philanthropy – an educational adventure on climate change, with world-leading climate scientists and inspiring participants. The sky is blue, the silence absolute, no person in sight. Suddenly, the thundering begins. Yet the humboldt soundscape does not come from above, it emanates from the mass that lies below. The alarming detonations produced at each rupture of the ice sheet at a pace which is accelerated due to anthropogenic climate change, were my first encounters with the continent and resonated as a call for action.

Above: Buried cross-section of Helley Hansen research station revealed by calving of the Antarctic ice barrier.

Right: Travelling by boat through the pack ice.

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Taking the climate philanthropy pledge

Just 2 per cent of philanthropy goes to tackling climate change. With Glasgow COP26 as a stimulus, a new set of commitments by European philanthropy networks aims to galvanise the sector to get more involved.
The ecosystem of climate philanthropy

A number of platforms, networks and pooled funds have emerged in recent years to enable funders to combine their efforts in the battle against climate change. A selection are profiled below:

**The ClimateWorks Foundation** is a California-based organization with an annual budget of approximately $100 million. The foundation, registered as a 501c3 charity rather than a private foundation, brings together funders and researchers to amplify the contribution of philanthropy to combating the climate crisis. Since its establishment in 2008, it has provided over $1 billion in grants to over 500 organizations across the world. A long list of funders includes the Hewlett, Packard, Oak Foundation, Bezos Earth Fund, Norway’s International Climate and Forest Initiative, and the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation. ClimateWorks also hosts the Alliance-climateworks.  

**The European Climate Foundation** (ECF) was founded in 2008 as a collaborative of philanthropic funders to develop solutions and mobilize public and political engagement on climate change, aiming in particular to create a net zero greenhouse gas emissions society. It has since become a network of over 250 organizations. ECF is also part of a global network to stimulate climate-related policy work. Spending in 2019 on programmes and operations was €36.3 million, and principal areas of focus include low-carbon power generation and clean transportation as well as influencing work at the highest levels of government. (europeancclimate.org)

**Energy Foundation China**, actually registered in the US, has been working in China since 1999 on the country’s sustainable energy development with a mission to achieve greenhouse gas emissions neutrality, good air quality, energy access and green growth. Working as a regranting agency, facilitator and adviser, the foundation operates across seven fields: power, industry, transportation, cities, environmental management, low-carbon economic growth, and strategic communications. By the end of 2019 it had contributed funding worth over $330 million spread over 2,893 projects. (efchina.org)

**India Climate Collaborative** (ICC) marks the first collective response by Indian philanthropy to the climate crisis. It consists of a core group of 20 private and corporate foundations, mainly from India but also a few international bodies, among which feature some of the foremost names in Indian philanthropy, including Ratan Tata, Anand Mahindra, Rohini Nilekani, Nadir Godrej, Aditi and Rishad Premji, Vidhya Shah and Hemendra Kothari, and a wider network of affiliates drawn from donors, impact investors and governmental agencies which now spans over 100 organizations. During its first year of operation, it has launched campaigns on air quality along with Sesame Street Workshop India, the Tata Trusts and the Clean Air Fund and has co-hosted four ‘climate adjacency’ workshops. (indiaclimatcheclaborative.org)

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**Active Philanthropy**, an advisory and knowledge hub founded in 2008, decided in 2018 to refocus its activities on climate change and its impacts. Arguing that the climate crisis intersects with all other areas of giving, the organisation calls for a rethinking of philanthropy’s role in tackling the crisis. Through awareness raising and knowledge sharing, workshops and expeditions, co-funding and peer-learning opportunities, as well as tailored grant services, Active Philanthropy helps funders from all sectors to integrate a climate perspective into existing and new portfolios. Partners include foundations, philanthropic intermediaries and scientific institutions. (activephilanthropy.org)

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**Clean Air Fund**

A group of foundations working to transform food systems actors, and stimulate action for transformational change. Rather than a funder in its own right, it is a platform for developing ideas and collaboration among its members, who are principally drawn from Europe and the US, but also include the Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (India) and Instituto Ibirapitanga (Brazil).

(www.futureoffood.org)
A UK-based group of foundations, family offices and individual donors supporting environmental causes, the Environmental Funders Network’s aim is to amplify the effects of environmental philanthropy by building relationships and sharing intelligence between funders, as well as producing research, such as a recent publication which highlights success stories in climate philanthropy. Since it was set up in 2003 with support from the Goldsmith Foundation, 170 trusts and foundations have been involved in its work, each asked for a membership contribution graduated according to the scale of its environmental grantmaking. Though not primarily a grantmaker, it nevertheless administers a rapid response fund, under which applicants can receive up to £25,000 to enable them to respond to an unexpected opportunity or crisis.

greenfunders.org

1 tinyurl.com/efn-stories-to-inspire

To raise awareness of the climate crisis among companies and the general public (though its focus is particularly on business), business leaders and environmentalists set up the China Champions for Climate Action, or C Team, in 2017. C Team supports Chinese entrepreneurs to be leaders in addressing climate change, promoting green innovation, the transition to a green and low-carbon and sustainable and eco-friendly development. C Team holds seminars and training workshops, compiles climate action guidelines for industry, collects corporate climate action cases, and organises entrepreneur delegations to participate in the UN Climate Change Conference.

cteam.org

One of a number of funds which pools funds for a specific cause, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) was launched in September last year by the Prince Albert of Monaco Foundation and the Paul G Allen Family Foundation during the UN General Assembly. A blended finance mechanism, it will attempt to raise $500 million over ten years to increase resilience of the world’s coral reefs and the communities that depend on them. The fund is accepting contributions from UN member states, foundations and corporate donors. As the blended finance label suggests, it wants to attract both grants and investment and has set a target of raising $125 million in grants ahead of COP26.

globalfundcoralreefs.org

Promoting collaboration and exchange between the women’s rights and environmental justice movements, the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) is an initiative led by the Central American Women’s Fund, Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres in cooperation with Mama Cash and Both ENDS, an environmental justice organisation based in the Netherlands. Launched in 2016, the initiative involves funds and organisations in more than 30 countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe, and aims to induce development aid donors, foundations and the private sector to increase the funding they provide for work at the nexus of women’s rights and environmental justice.

gaggaalliance.org

Key climate terms

UNFCCC: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. One of three UN conventions launched at the Rio ‘Earth Summit’ in 1992, whose objective is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the climate system. It has 197 signatory countries.

COP: Conference of Parties. The decision-making body of the UNFCCC which meets yearly to assess progress on the conventions. The 26th meeting of this body (COP26) is scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November this year.

NDCs: Nationally determined contributions which governments undertook to prepare and monitor under the Paris Agreement signed in 2016 on what they would achieve in terms of climate action.

1.5°C: The commitment made under the Paris Agreement to hold the global average temperature increase to ‘well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels’.

NET ZERO: The target impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the global climate by mid-century in order to keep the mean temperature increase to within 1.5°C as agreed in the 2015 Paris Climate Accord.
What has been achieved in 25 years of climate philanthropy and how far do we still have to go?

Through the 2000s, the movement gained momentum via events like the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009, with thousands of rallies held around the world to call for a global agreement on climate, which sadly fell short of the mark.

Looking back, one might argue that the movement was too focused on the environment and lacked diversity, being invariably urban, white, middle-class and based in the Global North.

CIFF started its climate change programme in 2010, having realised that if you really want to make a difference for children and people living in poverty you have to tackle climate change. Alongside other large funders like the Oak, Hewlett, Packard and Sea Change Foundations, we came together in the Funders Table to share ideas, learn from each other and align resources around priority climate mitigation strategies.

We galvanised civil society efforts in the run-up to Paris in 2015 and the historic agreement that set the world on a better path to decarbonisation. Last year, in spite of the pandemic, we saw big commitments with the EU, Japan and South Korea pledging to reach net zero by 2050 and China before 2060.

Philanthropy supported the strategies and funding that was needed to push for these things to happen.

However, there is simply not enough money going to the fight against climate change. Less than 2 per cent of global philanthropy goes to mitigating climate change and while it isn’t the only source of funding, we know that it can play an essential role in catalysing the trillions of dollars of public and private funds that are needed to transition to a low-carbon future.

2021 is a crucial year as we look towards COP26 in Glasgow in November, the first meeting in a five-year cycle where governments will be asked to report on progress and ‘ratchet’ up ambition, with clear, specific and measurable 2030 targets to meet the 2050 goal to keep the planet below 1.5°C. Climate philanthropists can support work to make this happen and help the climate community to collaborate strategically. For example, we would be happy to discuss our support to the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group (CECG) which has been created to enable funders to collectively leverage key international moments in the global response to the climate emergency. CIFF is currently working with CECG and others to incubate a Global Recovery Network. That network will improve campaigning in important pilot countries such as Brazil, Australia and South Africa to help drive green and just recoveries, stimulate climate action and help neutralise opposition to ambitious outcomes from COP26.

Philanthropy can help to build the necessary infrastructure. Alongside other global climate funders, CIFF has invested in regional climate foundations like the European Climate Foundation, ICs in Brazil, ICM in Mexico, Tara in South East Asia and the African Climate Foundation, and to thematic re-granters such as the Clean Air Fund and the File Foundation. Such re-granters provide deep geographic, cultural, or issue-specific knowledge and connections and ensure that civil society leaders across a range of issues can be part of constructive climate conversations. This will create the holistic approach we need to succeed.

Over the next 25 years, it is critical that climate is not seen as just an environmental issue. A changing climate cuts across all social and economic issues from gender to poverty. In the coming years funders will need to tackle the root causes of climate change and create the pressure for action by bringing in new and important voices – particularly from the Global South and young people who will inherit the planet. This will make the climate movement bigger, more sophisticated and more compelling.

If you are a funder looking to get involved, I would encourage you to do so as quickly as possible. There is no one approach and the opportunities are vast. Identify what resonates with you and how you can have an impact. Match your ambition to the scale of the problem and commit for the long term. The IPCC has said we have roughly ten years to limit the worst effects of climate change. Organisations like Active Philanthropy and the Climate Leadership Initiative have been set up to help you.

In another 25 years we will be four years away from the 2050 deadline that the world is focused on. Let’s hope that we’re not looking back and asking why we didn’t do more when we could.!
One of the problems we have is the search for silver bullets, which tends to lead to fragmented and short-term funding.

Nigel Topping has the world’s climate in his hands. As the UK’s High-Level Climate Action Champion Nigel Topping is responsible for driving the actions of non-state actors – basically anyone and anything not controlled by government – to a fossil free future as the world heads towards the pivotal climate summit taking place in Glasgow in November.

With a background in industry and support from some of the world’s leading philanthropies, Topping discusses the prospects for progress at the COP26 meeting with Alliance guest editors Felicitas von Peter and Winnie Asiti and where he sees the need for urgent action.

FvP: You’re the Climate Action Champion for the Conference of Parties? What does that involve?

NT: There’s been a realisation that a new form of multilateralism is needed. You can’t solve global problems with countries alone because so much power is in the hands of investors, businesses, cities and so on. I spent the first part of my career in industry and then I’d been working on the nexus of business and climate change. A year before Paris, I was asked to lead the We Mean Business coalition to ramp up the positive voice of business on climate change. Soon after the UK took over the presidency, I was asked by the UK government if I would take on this role which recognises the crucial role of ‘non-state actors’.

FvP: What’s been the biggest surprise in preparing COP26?

NT: Despite Covid-19 being an obvious distraction – distraction is a serious understatement – we’ve seen a massive increase in the commitment to get to zero greenhouse gas emissions. In March, we had a huge breakthrough of going from nine trillion to 32 trillion dollars of assets under management being committed to getting to net zero. That’s over a third of the world’s net assets. We’re seeing that in every sector and it’s going faster and faster. That’s been the biggest surprise.

FvP: Do you see the same take-up with the race to resilience?

NT: My personal blind spot coming to this role was the Global South and resilience. We announced in March the first 21 initiatives which we’re including in the race to resilience. There’s a lot of great work happening on resilience so we’re not trying to start anything new, we’re trying to create a much bigger platform. The real challenge is how to bridge the big scaling vectors of governments, businesses and major capital and the local human level.

FvP: Foundations fund your role. What do they get in return?

NT: We’ve got a range of foundations supporting us, some of the ones that you’d expect: IKEA Foundation, ClimateWorks, European Climate Foundation, CIFF. We’ve also had some support from the UK government’s COP26 budget and pro bono secondments from the private sector. That mixed model is the one we need because one of our objectives is that future champions have this support infrastructure to enable us to maintain the momentum when I step down at the end of 2022. (See list of funders below)

FvP: What do you think are the effective levers for funders to use ahead of COP and subsequently?

NT: My advice to new funders looking at this space would be to pile into something that others who have been doing it for years are already doing. One of the problems we have is the search for silver bullets, which tends to lead to fragmented and short-term funding. My advice would be to support one of the platforms – the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group, We Mean Business, ClimateWorks and so on. Do that and learn for two or three years before trying to branch out.

FvP: What do you see as the main problem for funders to get involved in climate?

NT: One challenge is that a lot of the levers are now in the private sector and quite a lot of philanthropy is allergic to investing in anything associated with the private sector. But the logic that we need to invest philanthropy in changing policy but not in business or investors doesn’t stand up to scrutiny. I would really encourage them to look at initiatives which are working to transform business, or investors like Share Action, or the Climate Group or Climate Disclosure Project; they’re doing amazing work but...
Every foundation concerned about climate change should be completely transparent about its portfolio, for two reasons. One is authenticity, the other is learning.

are not as well-resourced as some of the conservation types.

FvP: Foundations collectively hold many billions of dollars in endowments. Do you see a need for greater disclosure on where that money's invested?

NT: Absolutely. I think every foundation concerned about climate change should be completely transparent about its portfolio, for two reasons. One is authenticity, the other is learning. It’s hard to pivot a whole sector if you’ve got an endowment being managed for returns only. Seriously engaging in how the endowment affects the system which you’re trying to change is a huge opportunity for funders to really learn what it takes to change. People who thought that they could hold onto oil because it was still going to give them good dividends have lost a lot of money. So just on pure economic grounds, there’s a real benefit to being aligned. Then there’s aligning your portfolio with what you believe in, and there’s a very strong case for divestment of egregious, non-engaged firms, not just in the hydrocarbon sector but also steel, cement, automotive, other sectors that are huge drivers of emissions. There is a grey area though. If you look at the kind of attributable companies will need to build offshore wind farms. For example – offshore experience, risk management appetite, complicated project engineering – those are the kind of skills that oil companies have so I think there is a case to be made for engagement in order to try and get those companies to be part of the transition.

WA: Do you think the COP presidency is doing enough to ensure that the voices of young people and those that are more affected around the world are at the heart of the process?

NT: Just to clarify, I don’t work for the UK government though I work very closely with the team there. I have absolutely no doubt about (COP president) Alok Sharma’s personal commitment to issues like diversity, youth engagement and making sure the voice of the most vulnerable is more prevalent. At the end of March, he held a climate and development summit which was specifically about trying to elevate the voice of countries who see themselves as climate-vulnerable. He’s also instigating a civil society council and a youth council.

In terms of what my Chilean counterpart Gonzalo Muñoz and I are doing, one thing we talked about earlier is the race to resilience. It’s a global campaign particularly focused on those communities for whom resilience is the biggest challenge. We’ve made sure that we’ve got advisers from the Global South who are much more familiar with that agenda than we are, people like Sheela Patel who runs Slum Dwellers International and Saleemul Huq from Bangladesh who’s one of the leading resilience thinkers. We also launched a youth fellowship programme. We’ve got five youth fellows in our team, four of them from the Global South and I’ve been consciously engaging with things like the youth COP.

WA: The UK is trying to position itself as a climate champion, yet it continues to support fossil fuels within its borders even though it has now made a commitment not to support them overseas. Does this make your work difficult?

NT: This is a very complicated transition for any politician. The UK’s got a legal commitment to net zero by 2050 and the work of policymaking is ongoing now. You mentioned the ending of export credit finance on fossil fuels. I think that will probably lead to a similar commitment by all developed countries. Regarding the local decision in Cumbria to allow the opening of a metallurgical coal mine, the government has decided to hold an enquiry. I don’t think that mine will ever happen. But I also understand that if you’re a politician in Cumbria, and someone comes up with a project that will create 500 jobs, it’s very appealing in a time when there’s increased unemployment because of Covid.

The UK recently also issued its new guidance on oil and gas industries in the North Sea and some of it’s been frankly mis-reported. It doesn’t say that the UK’s going to issue more licences for exploration for North Sea oil and gas. Rather, it says there will be a review before any other licences are issued to make sure that anything done is in line with the commitment to net zero. I read that as there’ll never be any more licences, but there’s politics at work because there are 40,000 jobs involved.

WA: There’s been a push by some oil companies to put funding into some of the COP26-related activities. What is your take on this?

NT: Any organisation must make robust credible commitments to net zero as a UK government requirement for any partners for the COP. I think they’ve got seven major partners, and none of those are oil companies. Many people want to have a seat at the COP or to influence, but you’re either in the race to zero or you’re not at the table.

FvP: On that question of influence, how influential is philanthropy?

NT: Philanthropy’s incredibly influential because a lot of the most informed voices on climate change are in philanthropy. People like Laurence Tubiana at the European Climate Foundation and Kate Hampton at the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation are people who I think both the president and other ministers in the UK government call on for advice. They have been able to support me to go much faster and they’re able to support all sorts of policy thinking and engagement in different countries and sectors. And I think they share some of the highest levels of ambition. Like me they’re all on fire for getting this done as quickly as possible.

FvP: How can philanthropy maintain its level of energy post-COP26, especially the shift towards resilience in the Global South? Where do you see funders playing a role post-COP26?

NT: I’m going to make a shameless pitch for what I’m trying to do here. My role lasts beyond COP for another year working with an African champion who is appointed by an African presidency. Driving the sectoral transformation is the next phase of the work and it needs some glue, so we’re particularly looking to establish a small team in Africa and a couple of other teams in Asia and Latin America. Our aim is to establish those teams on a five-year securely funded footing by the end of this year. And as I said earlier, long-term support for platforms...
Earth 2020. Mattee, global winner factory in Nairobi with a plastics recycling campaign structure for the next decade.

NT: subsequent work and how can philanthropy not just as climate champion but in your WA: You’re trying to create these the game. not changing the system, you’re playing programmes to make them look new so that long-term systemic change thinking from South and what on mitigation in the north? NT: If you had one billion to spend on the Global climate over the next ten years, what percentage would you spend on the Global South, and that’s going to be about leveraging private finance. I hope that we’ve changed the narrative on resilience from one which feels like it’s about helpless victims asking for money to one which is based on proud, dignified, incredibly resilient communities who are part of an act of global solidarity. My hope is that we can look back on this as the decade in which we came to terms with the climate emergency and that we can actually start to feel confident that we’ll tackle the problem overall.

Six steps towards greener investments

Funding the COP’s Climate Action Champion

- Climate Emergency Collaboration Group
- Generation Foundation
- Bloomberg
- We Mean Business
- CIFF
- European Climate Foundation
- ClimateWorks
- COP26
- IKEA
- Margaret Hayman
- KR Foundation

The amount of philanthropic funding currently going towards the world’s gravest problem is clearly inadequate. But while we cannot expect every foundation to focus their grantmaking on climate action, foundations can contribute by reducing the emissions financed through their investment portfolios. Let’s imagine that an investor holds a position in a fossil fuel company. Should the investor simply divest? The problem is that this does not change the company’s emissions performance, because other investors may step in to fill the gap. Another approach is to begin a dialogue with the company and push for a strategy aligned with the 2015 Paris Agreement. For a foundation, using its influence to change a company for the better seems a natural extension of its mission. If it decides to go down this route, the board should discuss whether to approach climate risk from an ethical angle (fossil fuels are bad!) or a financial angle (risk versus reward).

In my view, this means a foundation can remain invested if it uses its influence to push the company for change via an engagement process, preferably a foundation should collaborate with an initiative such as Climate Action 100+ or instruct its investment manager or a specialised engagement service provider to do this on its behalf. If the speed or direction of change is insufficient, voting rights should be used. But if the company fails to show progress, divestment should be considered. Beyond this, I believe foundations can start greening their investments following this six-step guide for foundation boards.

Step 1: Board-level agreement

Before a foundation goes into the marketplace, it should agree at board level how climate change relates to its investment beliefs. For example, if an investor believes that investments can only provide good returns in a stable economy and society, it is willing to accept that climate change poses a major risk to that stability? The UN-backed Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) has some great resources to help with this discussion.

Step 2: Governance

Who will be responsible for climate performance? Is it the chief investment officer or the CEO of the foundation? If an investor believes its sustainability performance is as important as its financial performance, then CEO-level responsibility sends a powerful signal both within and outside the foundation. The World Economic Forum provides some good guidance on this.

Step 3: Framework

Boards should consider what type of framework they would like to use to address the impact of climate change on the portfolio. Where are the climate risks? Where are the opportunities? And how do you quantify them? The Taskforce for Climate Related Financial Disclosure offers a good framework to do this.

Step 4: Baseline assessment

If the intention is to decrease emissions in the real economy, it is important to be able to track the quantum of emissions financed by investments made over time. The Global Standard advocated by the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials provides tools to measure an investment portfolio’s carbon footprint in a given time period.

Step 5: Targets

Once the foundation has established a baseline, it can discuss what targets it would like to set to decrease its emissions. The Science Based Targets Initiative guidance to financial institutions provides a framework suggesting how investors can set such targets and align their lending and investment activities with the Paris Agreement.

Step 6: Role of investors

The transition to a net zero future can only happen with unprecedented collaboration. At the end of the day, when financiers themselves set goals about taking climate action, companies in every other industry have no choice but to follow.
Peer dialogue

The front-line generation

Guest editor Winnie Asiti talks with climate activists Nisreen Elsaim in Sudan and Kassim Gawusu-Toure in Ghana about the journey to climate justice being driven by the younger generation

Nisreen Elsaim

WA: Nisreen, could you introduce yourself and tell us a little about your work?
NE: I am currently a junior negotiator with the African Group of Negotiators, I’m also the chair of Sudan Youth Organisation on Climate Change, and chair of UN secretary-general’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. My main mission is to bridge the gap between young people and different groups: private sector, government officials, policymakers, international donors, and so forth. So all of my roles are connecting people. We cannot achieve what we want to achieve if we keep staying away from each other.

WA: Why is it important for young people’s voices to be heard, especially at this time when we are faced with the Covid-19 pandemic and increasing climate disasters across the globe?
NE: Three main reasons. Number one is that young people are most vulnerable and the poorest. Second is that we are moving forward technologically, and it requires a lot of flexibility to exploit that, which previous generations are resistant to. And the third reason is that many people lose their passion as they get older and these times require a lot of passion. The work involves sacrifice and if you don’t have passion, then you can’t sacrifice.

WA: What gains do you think young people have made in climate justice?
NE: Recognition. The international community, UN agencies and even governments and policymakers have started to recognise the efforts of young people towards climate change. The second gain is that numbers are increasing. I think by 2023 or 2024, the whole population will be climate advocates, because we have made a lot of breakthroughs even with older generations, not only young people.

WA: What are young people doing ahead of COP26?
NE: COP26 is a milestone, but it’s not the end of the road and we should be strategising our way of thinking. What we can achieve in the few months before then is to build momentum for the next years and particularly ahead of next year when COP will be held in Africa.

WA: As a negotiator, what outcomes are you looking to see from COP26?
NE: Finance is always an issue in every COP, mainly because we don’t have a strict definition for climate finance. That’s a huge agenda item that I expect to see advance in COP26, because 2020 brought disasters in many countries and the governments of those countries, especially the developing ones, need conversations about it. The market and non-market mechanism is still a hard issue and we still don’t have a clear design of how things would happen there either. Both market and non-market mechanisms are failing, so I think there will be a lot of discussion of article 6 of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement.

WA: And what do these areas mean for young people?
NE: Actually, article 12, which is the action for climate empowerment, is one of the most important topics for young people, because the six items talk about training, education, public access to information, public participation, equality, it means that the weakest, the most vulnerable, the poorest, would get more, and the most privileged less. Inter-generational equity doesn’t mean we need the same resources that previous generations had, but it means that we need the same opportunities, or the same hope. In terms of climate change, it means that we can develop ourselves and our communities in a healthy environment, like the previous generations did.

WA: What do you think young people will be able to achieve before COP26?
NE: I think by 2023 or 2024, the whole population will be climate advocates, because we have made a lot of breakthroughs even with older generations, not only young people.
international co-operation and it has the spirit of young people and the spirit of the Paris Agreement itself. The other thing is the increasing number of youth delegations. We have been pushing for youth inclusion through all of 2020 and this year, so I think more countries will have youth delegations in their representation and youth participation in different areas.

**WA:** What do you want to see from philanthropy?

**NE:** Walk the talk. We need to stop hearing promises and see action. We need to see more funding and support going to youth climate movements. For example, a leading company in the oil industry cannot say, ‘Well, we will earn billions of dollars from oil and fossil fuels, and then we will donate $1 million to an organisation’, it can’t happen like this. And the UK government are asking leading companies from the oil industry to help co-ordinate the COP arrangements which is a huge issue.

**WA:** If we have this conversation again in 2030, what do you hope we will be discussing?

**NE:** I hope that in 2030 we will be discussing for example how we can have more forests and fewer cities and I hope that we reach a common timeframe. And the UK government are asking leading companies from the oil industry to help co-ordinate the COP arrangements which is a huge issue.

**WA:** Why do you think it’s important for the voice of young people to be heard especially now?

**KGT:** Young people are very much hit by Covid-19 in terms of economic, social and health impacts; this is not totally different from what we see with climate change so it is very important that we address climate change and all the development and health issues related to it.

**WA:** What sort of gains do you think young people have made in climate justice at the national and regional levels?

**KGT:** As well as being a key part of the UNFCCC processes, young people have contributed significantly to promoting awareness about climate change. Many people have told me they got to know about climate change because of the international movement led by Greta Thunberg, for example. At a regional level, the AYICC is using innovative approaches, including online and social media platforms to reach out to, and mobilise, young people to make sure they are not left out of the decision-making processes. We have held three Africa Youth Conferences on Climate Change which provides a platform for young people to collaborate and exchange ideas and knowledge. At national level, we have young people implementing climate related actions on the ground – pioneering climate-friendly agriculture, clean cooling stoves to ensure that emissions are curtailed and planting trees and restoring mangroves, for example.

**WA:** What does intergenerational equity mean to you?

**KGT:** It means that resources we are utilising today should be used in such a way that future generations will also have the opportunity to benefit and that individuals and countries should contribute to this effort within the limits of their capacities.

**WA:** As an African Youth Initiative on Climate Change co-ordinator, what are you people doing ahead of COP26?

**KGT:** AYICC is going to produce a continent-wide position paper. We are hoping that we’ll be able to bring people together ahead of COP26, because this is going to strengthen our voices as young people from the continent. We have also learned from Covid how to take advantage of online opportunities, so we are now providing capacity for young people who have set up online initiatives to build online marketing skills so that they can sell online. With the support of the Open Society Initiative for Africa, we have initiated the Open Society initiatives in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and also in Sudan.

**WA:** As one of the Africa Group of Negotiators, what are some of the key outcomes you want from COP26?

The critical output that I would expect from Glasgow includes the completion of negotiations on article 6. This has serious implications on Africa because we have the opportunity to trade our carbon with other countries. I also hope that the levy on the emissions trading to be agreed will significantly increase the portfolio of the Adaptation Fund. I am also closely following the negotiation on common timeframes. Some countries are using five-year, others are using ten-year timeframes for their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). The Paris Agreement stipulated a common timeframe, and we need one because it has implications for transparency as well as tracking progress on the NDCs. Besides that, I expect that there will be an enhanced ambition, not only on mitigation and adaptation goals, but in terms of inclusion, providing spaces for young people to engage and making sure that young people acquire the needed skills, knowledge and resources from COP26 to help them implement concrete actions on the ground. That would make so much difference in terms of achieving the mitigation and adaptation goals.

**WA:** How would a greater focus on youth in climate philanthropy circles make a difference?

**KGT:**Philanthropic support for young people has tended to be about providing support for young people to hold meetings, to organise themselves etc. We need more focus on supporting action on the ground. When we talk about climate conservation, agriculture, ecological restoration, these are very critical in addressing climate change, and also provide opportunities for young people to find employment and purpose, and that is what I think philanthropy should be tailored towards.

**Kassim Gawusu-Toure**

**WA:** Kassim, could you introduce yourself and tell us what you do on climate change?

**KGT:** I’m a climate change activist, a conservationist, and a youth advocate for sustainable development. In Ghana, I run a youth-led NGO called Greener Impact International. We provide a space for young people to understand climate change and how they can take action to address it, support biodiversity laws and promote a food security that has no adverse effects on climate. I am also the executive co-ordinator of the African Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC) and I am proud you are also a founding member of this network which provides a space for young people across the continent to engage on the issue of climate change. We have about 45 national chapters and over 20,000 memberships.

**WA:** What do you want to see from philanthropy?

**KGT:** I hope that in 2030 we will be discussing for example how we can have more forests and fewer cities and I hope that we reach a common timeframe. And the UK government are asking leading companies from the oil industry to help co-ordinate the COP arrangements which is a huge issue.

**WA:** If we have this conversation again in 2030, what do you hope we will be talking about?

**NE:** I hope that in 2030 we will be discussing for example how we can have more forests and fewer cities and I hope that we reach a point where we are restoring the balance between the two. The last thing I want to say is that we need climate justice and we need it now.

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**Walk the talk. We need to stop hearing promises and see action. We need to see more funding and support going to youth climate movements.**

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**Resources we are utilising today should be used in such a way that future generations will also have the opportunity to benefit.**

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Young people are very much hit by Covid-19 in terms of economic, social and health impacts; this is not totally different from what we see with climate change.

WA: What would be the question you would like to ask COP president, Alok Sharma?

KGT: We have seen over the years that any time COP processes are held in Europe, there are barriers that prevent young people from engaging, so I’d expect conscious efforts to be made to ensure that young people from Africa are included in these processes. I’ll just mention three barriers: one is access to accreditation, because young people in Africa do not have the social connections to get that. The second is about funding. We need funding for our members to participate in the action. Third, there should be spaces for young people, and particularly African youth, to showcase our actions to the general participants.

WA: If we have this conversation again in 2030, what do you hope we’ll be talking about?

KGT: Both the SDGs and the Paris Agreement have 2030 as their target year, so in 2030, my hope it would not be a conversation about 2030 as their target year, so in 2030, my hope it would not be a conversation about those two global action plans have achieved and impacts they have made in the lives of young people.

Paras Agreement Article 6: Highlights the role of international cooperation in combating climate change and achieving a low-carbon future through market and non-market mechanisms. However, the complicated nature of the issues (and interests) involved has resulted in slowed down progress (further compounded by Covid-19).

Paras Agreement Article 12: ‘Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognising the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.’

Time to give the climate justice movement its due

The climate justice movement has a vital role in achieving delivery of the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 – but it’s not always seen that way.

They come in different shapes, sizes and colours. Some are radical in their message, calling for civic rebellion and industry boycott while others use culture, song, dance and art to mobilise support for climate action. All have one thing in common – they are part of the ever-growing global climate justice movement. This term is an inaccurate, but convenient shorthand. What the world has seen over the past several years is more than just one movement. In fact, the climate justice movement is more of a heterogeneous movement of movements.

That the climate justice movement has contributed to our collective understanding of climate change and the global momentum towards action cannot be disputed. This is particularly true since the 2000s when the environmental, political and diplomatic communities were deeming a successor to the soon to ‘expire’ Kyoto Protocol.

One important contribution of the climate justice movement is building a comprehensive understanding of climate change – expanding it from an exclusively environmental matter to cover a broad range of socio-economic and political fields. Suddenly, climate change was no longer only about carbon concentration in the atmosphere. It was about food, water, economic growth, human rights, poverty, gender, good governance and the existential threat to the planet.

Organisations such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) chose to contribute to the climate justice movement using their own unique faith and spiritual approach. The mobilising power of LWF and other faith-inspired climate justice networks has been in drawing on actions such as calls for global prayers and fasting for the climate.

Lukewarm response: The mission of the climate justice movement to create awareness and frame the changing climate as a crisis and an issue of justice remains valid. But in spite of its efforts, the actions of governments and industry to address the climate crisis with the ambition and the urgency it deserves have remained at best lukewarm. In fact, the movement has received a great deal of pushback from different quarters. Over the years, the concept of a ‘climate gravy-train’ has taken root in climate-denier circles and is used to discredit not only climate scientists but also climate justice movements, seeing them as people who make money or obtain influence through scaremongering and ignoring the fact that a great majority of the climate justice movement participants are people whose lives and livelihoods are threatened by the climate crisis.

The bold entry of children and young people like Greta Thunberg has re-energised the climate justice movement and inspired a global reawakening of sorts, but it has not stopped the climate deniers from attacking them.

The climate justice movement is fragile. The slow pace and temperamental nature of climate change politics has led to activism fatigue. This was particularly true after the failure of the Copenhagen climate change summit to deliver a new climate change deal. Many in the movement were disillusioned by the inability of governments to come to an agreement on such an existential matter. Moreover, the movement depends almost entirely on volunteers and donation support. While many of the organisations and networks in the climate justice movement implement community-based programmes, the climate finance system does not give them due consideration. Governments and donors need to recognise the climate justice movement as a conduit for climate action and a key part of the delivery of the goals of the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030.

Now, the demands of the Covid-19 pandemic threaten to distract attention from the climate crisis, while the UN has issued a red alert following the release of the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) synthesis report, which found that the world is nowhere near the level of action required to fight global warming. The next Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP26, must ensure that the world is back on track.
Solving climate change is possible, but we have to tell the right stories to the right people – and we have to do it now. I believe that this is the lens through which philanthropy should approach climate change – accelerating decarbonisation now, with strategic communications as the principal tool. Driving progress through changing the narrative. Identifying the right story. Politicians are fundamentally driven by stories. Every political party has a narrative it tells itself about the world: ‘we are the party of business’, ‘we stand up for the little people’, ‘we represent the soul of our nation’. So the essential question is how to make accelerating decarbonisation part of the story of the ruling party in enough nations to make a difference.

The recent transformation in the UK, in which I played a small role as director of the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU), shows how this can happen. The 2010-15 Coalition government approached decarbonisation cautiously. ‘The UK should cut emissions in step with the rest of Europe but no faster.’ Yet just a few years later, we see that a prime minister with a taste for populist rhetoric is making decarbonisation a central plank of his political identity – trumpeting the national net zero target, promising to make the UK ‘the Saudi Arabia of wind energy’ and preparing to host the crucial COP26 UN Climate Summit. This change came about essentially because Conservative ministers found a story about climate change that they liked and which the public, business and most of the party’s own members supported.

Creating an effective voice. None of this could have happened without philanthropy. The sums involved were, relatively speaking, tiny; the money was simply used smartly.

Over time, grantees had built constructive, trust-based and effective relationships with politicians on the Right. They created the capacity to develop narratives that Conservative leaders could embrace. Other grantees had developed an understanding of UK journalism and a capacity to engage with it effectively. Trust-based links with statutory advisers, the business community and academics meant their voices could be brought into the public domain in a constructive way.

While philanthropy also helped create a voice for climate action in sectors such as health. None of these grantees had been funded specifically to create a net zero target, yet they were given rein to initiate bold ideas.

So, grantees drove the electric car – but philanthropy built the car in the first place. Spotting the opportunity, keeping things consensual, helping Right-leaning champions make their case with accessible scientific, economic and social evidence; because the time was right and the architecture in place, it took little more than that.

Politics always trumps policy, and politics is fundamentally about values, identities and stories. Getting the world on track this year to net zero emissions by mid-century means getting the thousands of stories right above all for governments, but also sub-nationalities, business chiefs and investors. You can show them why you should, you can try to force them; but the surest approach of all is to get them to want to.

From growth to well-being. Funds to support the radical transformational economic, and societal shift we need remain elusive. Yet, there is cause for optimism. After nearly 50 years of advocating for systems change, the Club of Rome finally resonates with a broad audience. A new generation of political leaders has embraced new economic models that shift from growth to well-being. The Limits to Growth is no longer just a story for systems change, the ‘Limits to Growth’ thinking of the Club of Rome finally resonates with a broad audience. A new generation of political leaders has embraced new economic models that shift from growth to well-being.

Philanthropy must expand partnerships with other sectors to bring about the radical transformation the world needs. The Covid pandemic has brought the climate crisis to the forefront of the international agenda and highlighted the convergence of the environmental and human health tipping points. In order to ‘emerge from this planetary emergency with a new holistic vision to build resilience to future shocks and enhancing human well-being, speed and scale are key.

From growth to well-being. Funds to support the radical transformational economic, and societal shift we need remain elusive. Yet, there is cause for optimism. After nearly 50 years of advocating for systems change, the Club of Rome finally resonates with a broad audience. A new generation of political leaders has embraced new economic models that shift from growth to well-being.

Philanthropy must expand partnerships with other sectors to bring about the radical transformation the world needs.
Applying the lessons to climate change

The Foundations Platform F20 offers philanthropic organisations an opportunity to combine forces to do this. Partners of the Foundations Platform F20 call for common action towards a zero-carbon economy and successful implementation of the SDGs. This support for climate action from a peer group of foundations and philanthropists is a powerful sign for governments and other stakeholders. F20 therefore aims to influence multilateral platforms such as the G20. We closely follow the G20 tracks and working groups, issue regular briefings and scientific reports and provide concrete lists of actionable recommendations. We also seek to team up with other engagement groups - such as those representing business, think-tanks, labour organisations or NGOs - and to establish an open dialogue between philanthropy and governments of the G20 countries.

Climate Solutions Week in September 2020 is a good insight into our work: linking the financial, climate and sustainability agenda with the G20 and its priorities, and convening decisionmakers from different backgrounds to jointly identify ways forward. The F20 platform also seeks to encourage and enable peer exchange among foundations on subjects related to sustainable finance, the climate-biodiversity-food-water nexus and the energy transition. Helping to leverage the political momentum for climate action and a global zero-emission target by national commitments is at the heart of the mission of F20. We hope to play our part in transforming the ‘global vulnerability experience’ of the Covid-19 crisis into a ‘race to resilience’. In 2021, this means using the opportunities emerging from an EU Green Deal, UK COP presidency and the G20 in Italy.

Headquartered in Hamburg, the Foundations Platform F20 is a network of more than 60 foundations and philanthropic organisations whose focus is on sustainable and inclusive economic activity based on decarbonisation and energy efficiency.

The ‘European’ year 2021 is hugely important for the political agenda. A bold climate commitment by the G7 and G20 countries is within reach including zero-emission development. Second, foundations should encourage their peers and partners to do the same. Partners of the Foundations Platform F20 call for common action towards a zero-carbon economy and successful implementation of the SDGs. This support for climate action from a peer group of foundations and philanthropists is a powerful sign for governments and other stakeholders. F20 therefore aims to influence multilateral platforms such as the G20. We closely follow the G20 tracks and working groups, issue regular briefings and scientific reports and provide concrete lists of actionable recommendations. We also seek to team up with other engagement groups - such as those representing business, think-tanks, labour organisations or NGOs - and to establish an open dialogue between philanthropy and governments of the G20 countries.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Climate-19 is a global vulnerability experience. The F20 platform can help philanthropy play its part in applying the lessons to climate change while governments are currently trying to prepare for the worst impacts of the pandemic by agreeing stimulus packages and recovery programmes, one of the most important lessons from the Covid-19 crisis is that it is an unprecedented global vulnerability experience. Dealing with it is closely related to how we treat nature and the environment. The key to resilience lies not in trying to artificially sustain a destructive system, but in stabilising the environment, reducing pollution, and moving to regenerative agriculture and renewable energy.

Multilateral forums such as the G20 and the UN provide important frameworks for this transformation. That’s why it’s important that foundations play a big role in holding governments accountable and ensuring they keep their word. The ‘European’ year 2021 is hugely important for the political agenda. A bold climate commitment by the G7 and G20 countries is within reach including zero-emission development. Second, foundations should encourage their peers and partners to do the same. Partners of the Foundations Platform F20 call for common action towards a zero-carbon economy and successful implementation of the SDGs. This support for climate action from a peer group of foundations and philanthropists is a powerful sign for governments and other stakeholders. F20 therefore aims to influence multilateral platforms such as the G20. We closely follow the G20 tracks and working groups, issue regular briefings and scientific reports and provide concrete lists of actionable recommendations. We also seek to team up with other engagement groups - such as those representing business, think-tanks, labour organisations or NGOs - and to establish an open dialogue between philanthropy and governments of the G20 countries.

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