

Beyond 2%

**From climate philanthropy
to climate justice philanthropy**





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Foreword



I would like to begin by extending my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to this report, to all the funders and social movement leaders that shared their time and wisdom with us through interviews and who participated in EDGE Funders Alliance's COP26 Working Group. Special thanks to its author Edouard Morena, and to the Working Group's Co-chairs Asad Rehman and Alejandra Martin, for their leadership and brilliance and without whom this report would not exist. Thank you also to Dunja Krause and UNRISD for their partnership.

We realize that, even though philanthropy has long been involved in the climate space, there is a need to reflect on the role it has played and, more importantly, on the role it needs to play in light of the multiple crises we are currently facing. We invite those funders who have been working for a long time in this space to think differently about their portfolios and approach; and for those who do not define themselves as climate funders, to see new connections and identify how to support the climate justice movement.

There is space and opportunity for everyone to take action, and action is needed now. Philanthropy can play a critical role in supporting a just transition towards alternative systems that support people and planet, but to do this, the sector needs to challenge itself and shift its approach. We hope this report sparks conversations that will ignite our collective power for change so together we can stand for climate justice everywhere.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Arroyo'.

Sofia Arroyo
Executive Director
EDGE Funders Alliance

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The need for a qualitative shift



IT IS 15 YEARS SINCE THE PUBLICATION of the landmark report *Design to Win: Philanthropy's Role in the Fight Against Global Warming* (California Environmental Associates 2007). Sponsored by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Energy Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Oak Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the report spurred an unprecedented level of philanthropic funding towards climate change and helped lay the foundations for contemporary philanthropic efforts in the climate field. Intended as the philanthropic sector equivalent of the 2007 Stern Review on the economics of climate change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Fourth Assessment Report, *Design to Win* identified priority policies, sectors and geographies for stabilizing global emissions at 2°C. It acted “as a blueprint to guide the investment strategies of the sponsoring foundations as well as the broader

philanthropic community” (Nisbet 2011:33) and was “a catalyst for an unprecedented outpouring of funding on energy and climate issues” (Bartosiewicz and Miley 2013:30). The report directly inspired the launch of new specialized foundations and philanthropic initiatives, most notably the ClimateWorks foundation (in 2008) that continues to occupy a key position in the contemporary climate philanthropy landscape.

We argue that only focusing on the amount of funding distracts us from important questions relating to the quality of climate philanthropy.

In addition to highlighting foundations' comparative advantages when compared to governments and businesses, the report set out a clear ambition—to reduce annual emissions by 30 gigatons by 2030—and laid out a strategy to get us there. Most notably, it identified a series of high-potential sectors (power, industry, buildings, transport, forests) and regions (United States, China, India, Europe, and Latin America) in which to focus philanthropic efforts for greatest impact. Particular attention was given to energy efficiency and renewable energies, as well as more controversial options such as carbon capture and storage (CCS). In all regions, the authors called for the establishment of cap and trade systems, which, they believed, would “help spark innovation and the clean technology markets needed to prevail in the long term” (California Environmental Associates 2007:6).



The *Design to Win* report was significant in that it laid out a clear and ambitious plan of action for foundations to leverage their comparatively limited resources and meaningfully contribute to climate change mitigation. While significant in terms of its scope and ambition as well as its influence on the culture

of climate philanthropy, the report was neither the first nor the last attempt by philanthropic actors to engage in the climate debate (Morena 2021). Nor were its prescriptions set in stone. In fact, its strategy was subsequently amended to account for contextual changes relating to science, emissions trajectories, technology, and the shifting politics of climate change. Following the failure of the Waxman-Markey bill (American Clean Energy and Security Act, 2009) in the United States and the

climate action were regarded as essential in order to get policy makers, businesses and investors to raise their levels of ambition (Aykut et al. 2020).

While more philanthropic dollars went to strategic communications and awareness-raising campaigns (including some, albeit moderate, support to movement-building efforts), the overarching theory of change and worldview remained the same (Morena 2016). The idea was not to empower social actors but to strategically use them to exert outside pressure on political leaders, businesses and investors in the hope that they would (finally) take the appropriate action. To this day, a significant portion of philanthropic foundations continues to prioritize an elitist, supply-side, market-centred, technocratic and technofriendly approach to climate action that celebrates corporate and policy “leaders” as the key drivers of the low-carbon transition. As one foundation representative put it, “if we are going to win this fight it is because of a small band of committed individuals” (interview with former foundation executive, July 2015).

What impact?

15 years later, what did the climate philanthropy movement born out of the *Design To Win* strategy actually achieve? According to Larry Kramer (Hewlett Foundation), contemporary climate philanthropy is “one of the most successful philanthropic movements in history”. As he explains, “in 2007, the globe was on track for say 5 to 6 degrees of warming by the end of the century which is civilization ending. We are now, between what has been done and pledged, on track for 2.7 to 3.2 [degrees]” (Climate One 2019, 07:40). On the back of the 2015 Paris Climate Change Conference, the European Climate Foundation (ECF) was also convinced of climate philanthropy’s central role in securing a global deal.

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