



CLIMATE ACTION PLEDGE

Expanding and Deepening Climate Philanthropy

2018 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

This past year, the first comprehensive year of activity for the Climate Action Pledge (CAP), has been an active one! We worked with many diverse actors in “traditional” climate philanthropy, food funders, climate investors and donors focused on revamping cities to be leaders in combatting global warming. CAP has participated in and/or hosted discussions from Hong Kong, to Rome, London, San Francisco and, most recently, New York.

We are focusing efforts in a few select areas to further **advance the climate conversation and action**. These include:

- expanding climate philanthropy, especially focusing on food systems;
- climate action in cities;
- deeper philanthropic engagement in climate finance;
- and, building climate literacy through public engagement and communications.

We have been considering three lenses to frame our work – **Literacy, Legacy and Leadership**. In terms of literacy, we believe that philanthropy can inform and influence how the public thinks about climate change and their own role in addressing it. Regarding legacy, climate change is a generational challenge and as such, demands a legacy response. Philanthropy is uniquely placed to undertake vision-setting and help propel new action for a healthy-climate future. Leadership is perhaps the most critical element and philanthropy can cultivate values-based, forward-thinking leaders across diverse communities. We need leadership that challenges the status quo and sets a new trajectory in order to address climate change – and that leadership can come from the sector itself.

CAP has begun working on literacy, engaging Fenton Communications to create a series of **Food Is Climate postcards and website**. This initial effort was shared with other climate and food philanthropists to advance the conversation about the increasingly central role of food in climate action, and one that can spark more public interest and stoke the demand for change to our global food systems through a climate lens. You can view and share the postcards via www.FoodIsClimate.org.

CAP also undertook a **survey of leading climate funders** in 2018, working with KPMG, and drawing on data from the Foundation Center, to scope the current state of climate philanthropy as well as emerging trends in the field. While the survey did not anticipate the exciting \$4 billion (over 5 years) climate philanthropy announcement made at the Global Climate Action Summit, it affirmed that there are important new players entering the space, that commitments are increasing, and that there is scope to do much more, including by focusing on non-traditional climate areas.

We also participated in a number of **leadership events** and convened two of our own in September – the first in San Francisco at the time of the Global Climate Action Summit and the second in New York during Climate Week. Further below is a summary of those two events.

CAP has been identifying core partners for, and working with the Foundation Center to shape, what will become the **Climate Action Pledge Platform** – a place to highlight new opportunities for climate investment, to share grant-making opportunities that have been vetted, to track and share developments in the field, and make it far easier for new donors to enter the climate philanthropy space, as well as facilitate cooperation among existing climate donors.

We are excited by what has been achieved in 2018, and are looking forward to working with friends and partners on making even more progress in 2019!

The **Climate Action Pledge (CAP)** Is an initiative of [Global Friends](#) and the [Tse Foundation](#)

CLIMATE ACTION PLEDGE

2018 EVENTS – *FOOD IS CLIMATE*

Food is Climate - that statement framed the Climate Action Pledge (CAP) events in September 2018. We convened, first, on 10 September in San Francisco (in advance of GCAS) a small group of climate and food philanthropists for an in-depth conversation about the intersection between climate and food. Two weeks later, at the beginning of Climate Week in New York City, we hosted a broader set of stakeholders to examine the expansion of climate philanthropy under the food is climate umbrella to focus on food systems change and the particular role of cities and of climate finance. The NY event came on the heels of the \$4 billion philanthropic commitment announced at the close of GCAS and instilled a new sense of energy and possibility into the deliberations. What follows is a brief summary of the key issues and proposals for ways to move forward that were discussed.



A Roadmap for Food Systems Change?

While food and food systems are garnering more attention in climate discussions, it is an area that had largely been left to the side by climate actors until recently. We know the facts about the role that the broader food system plays in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and that, as progress on energy, transport and refrigerants continues, food will be responsible for a higher percentage of GHG emissions in the coming decades if we don't make radical changes. The numbers and

projections are stark. But food is about much more than GHG emissions. As trite as it may be to state it, food is life. Food is also culture. And food is one thing that can help make clear to people that climate change is about all of us. We cannot address climate without addressing food. And the reverse is increasingly – worryingly – true. It is time to put food on the climate table.



The food system is highly complex with many vested interests that are resistant to change - - possibly through intention, or linked to 'perverse' subsidies, or simply because the complexity requires many actors to move in synch to achieve lasting change and have impact. One topic explored is what 'climate' and climate philanthropy specifically might be able to bring to the food systems change conversation to help unlock new thinking, unleash new resources and achieve deeper impact.

Speakers* (listed below) agreed that a systems approach is required and a number of key stakeholders are beginning to create a road map to achieve change, looking at various models in the climate arena that might inform the creation of a road map. But much more input, understanding and support is needed to make the process successful. And while an example was suggested of the transformation of the energy sector as an 'inspiration' if not an actual model, it was also abundantly clear that food is a much more complex challenge. There are single intervention points that will achieve transformation of the food system — multiple actions across many elements of the system need to be undertaken in concert. That said,

CLIMATE ACTION PLEDGE

2018 EVENTS – *FOOD IS CLIMATE*

there are already pieces of the “solution” that are known, have clear immediate benefits and can be scaled; for example, food waste reduction/re-purposing. Philanthropy has played an important role in supporting elements of this work, and there is room to do even more.

One area where philanthropy could take more leadership is in helping to support the demand side of change, formulating new narratives and supporting public education/engagement campaigns that encourage consumers to adopt a climate-positive diet. Messages around food, in particular, can be formulated to help raise awareness and shift public attitudes. And this process of education, engagement, and new visioning can be implemented across age cohorts, including through school partnerships to reach children. Another action referenced is to promote the adoption of a circular economy approach and, more specifically, to promote true cost accounting, spotlighting where subsidies and/or incentives persist that have adverse or perverse effects. A third area discussed is in investing in innovation and changes that can have far reaching impacts across the system. Currently, the financial ecosystem isn’t designed to support alternatives, but philanthropy can provide vital risk capital and also work with partners to create a more stable financing pipeline for proven or promising interventions.



The Power of Cities – Changing the Game

Cities have an outsized impact on climate change in comparison to the land mass they occupy. They also have an increasing amount of political influence and decision-making power. We are still collecting hard data on the multitude of city-level climate initiatives and the impact they are having on limiting emissions, but it is clear that cities will be key to reversing global warming. There is highly encouraging work happening at city level with city leaders working across sectors to set ambitious GHG reduction targets and improving resilience. There are cities that are ready not just to improve on current standards, but to actually “change the game”, taking new approaches and engaging their populaces to recreate their cities for the 21st Century.

Food plays an important role within city sustainability and GHG reduction options and plans at city level. Cities are looking at food waste reduction, sustainable and local sourcing, and promoting climate-friendly and health-promoting food choices. Participants heard about a number of high-impact initiatives and focused on mechanisms that can further expand climate action within cities as well as transfer successful efforts to more cities. There are models that can be shared and adapted to fit the particular needs and assets of diverse cities, but these need to be better supported — through tools, training, political leadership and finance. Philanthropy can provide strategic support across this spectrum of activity.

Leveraging Finance – Divest and Invest

Throughout the discussions, the role of finance was raised multiple times as a critical lever for change. Although climate finance is generally thought of as the purview of governments and multilateral agencies, there is a role for philanthropy in financing climate action whether through endowment and/or

CLIMATE ACTION PLEDGE

2018 EVENTS – *FOOD IS CLIMATE*



impact/mission-related investing. The discussion focused in part on the divest-invest movement, which can be a powerful mechanism for

moving funds away from fossil-fuel-intensive industries and using them to combat climate change. To this point, however, the intentional re-investing of funds that have been divested from fossil fuels has not been as organized as the divesting side of the process, and has not been as focused on identifying climate positive alternatives. This is an area where philanthropy could do much more in terms of cooperation and collaboration, within and beyond the sector, especially through creating and sharing knowledge and investment opportunities.

The financial power of the philanthropic sector, while modest in comparison to governments and corporations, is still significant, especially when endowments and individual investments are part of the calculation (totaling well over \$1trillion). Philanthropy could be using more of its financial weight to strategically support climate action. Even as the sector supports the creation of new financial instruments, it could also more significantly invest in and through those instruments.

The philanthropic sector can also use its ‘voice’ to advocate for change and highlight their own divest-invest strategies, leading by action. Voice is also pivotal to shifting the climate finance narrative from one that is largely about reducing risk to one that focuses on creating an ‘opportunity narrative’.

CAP Action

The CAP remains committed to deepening and expanding climate philanthropy. One avenue for doing so is to continue to elevate the

intersecting issues and challenges encapsulated in climate, food, cities, and finance, and make connections across otherwise siloed areas. The CAP will work with others in the climate space to keep pressure on the system while simultaneously promoting a new narrative, offering a positive vision for a sustainable future that will draw – all of us - in a new direction, changing the current understanding of progress and putting us on a new trajectory. Philanthropy is well-placed to balance this push and pull.

There is considerable vital and exciting work coming from and supported by philanthropy - from private foundations, to family funds, and the broader ecosystem of philanthropic actors - as witnessed by the new commitments announced at GCAS totaling \$4billion over five years. We know there is more than can be done by cooperating more closely and engaging more actors in climate philanthropy.

The CAP has worked with KPMG and the Foundation Center on mapping climate philanthropy and will continue and update this effort with a view to better understanding the new commitments announced at GCAS as well as situating them within the larger field. CAP is also developing a climate action directory to help guide donors new to the space who are looking for proven grant-making and/or investment opportunities, as well as to assist and promote greater cooperation across the sector. Perhaps most importantly, CAP is committed to working toward a positive future for all of us and will continue to elevate, connect and expand the climate philanthropy space, through multi-sector convenings and peer-to-peer outreach, as well as strategic messaging and public engagement.

CAP is enthusiastic about what is happening and what more is possible, especially working together.



CLIMATE ACTION PLEDGE

Expanding and Deepening Climate Philanthropy

2018 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

*2018 Event Speakers

Michael Berkowitz, Rockefeller Foundation/100 Resilient Cities

Barbara Buchner, Climate Policy Initiative

Chad Frischmann, Project Drawdown

Bernice Lee, Chatham House

Joanna Messing, Growald Family Fund

Jens Nielsen, World Climate Ltd

Urvashi Rangan, GRACE Communications Foundation

Rod Richardson, Grace Richardson Foundation

Andrea Reimer, Vancouver City Council

Laura Turner Seydel, philanthropist

Sudhvir Singh, EAT Foundation

Nancy Smith, Climate Action Pledge

Ivan Tse, Tse Foundation / Global Friends

Amy Weinfurter, Yale Data-Driven Environmental Solutions Group