

IPASA Webinar Series on Climate Change: *Futureproofing philanthropy against climate change: a toolkit for understanding and responding to the climate crisis*

The first webinar, with the theme “*Why? – Driving Home Risk and Urgency – An introduction to climate change, local and global trends in philanthropy and what it means to adopt a climate lens*” took place on 4 June 2021.

This webinar was co-hosted by the Independent Philanthropy Association of South Africa (IPASA) and the African Climate Foundation (ACF), with financial support from the Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust and the Lewis Foundation.



Summary of the 1st Climate Change Webinar on 4 June 2021

This was the first of three webinars that will focus on futureproofing philanthropy against climate change. The three webinars will culminate in a resource pack that will provide a range of useful and accessible sources of information on climate change: why it is so urgent, how it impacts other charitable causes, what are the solutions, and how funders – whether through grant making, operations or investments – can make a difference.

Sarah Rennie (Chairperson of IPASA) and Saliem Fakir (Executive Director of ACF) opened the event, noting that the focus of Webinar 1 was on understanding WHY the Climate Crisis is such an urgent issue. (The next two webinars will focus on HOW and WHAT.) Both stressed the need to urgently apply a climate change lens across South African philanthropic giving.

Presentations

Presentations by a climate expert and two philanthropists built a common understanding of the climate crisis from a philanthropic perspective. Links to their presentations are in the text below, and a [recording](#) of the webinar can be found here. Readers are encouraged to engage separately with the rich content of each presentation. At the end of this report are two annexures with resources to support conversations for South African philanthropists as they begin or move forward on their climate journey.

Presentation 1 – Prof Coleen Vogel, Wits: “[A Climate of Change: Implications for Action!](#)”

Coleen’s presentation took a hard scientific look at climate change, how it affects different groups, and the urgency to act. Her presentation demonstrated how the choices we make right now can create different outcomes; that Africa may well warm up at about twice the rate of the rest of the world; that we already have more droughts and floods; and that we need immediate change. She included an in-depth look at her work with the City of Johannesburg (CoJ) towards its Climate Action Plan (CAP), and her work with youth and coalitions.

Her work has a deeply interdisciplinary approach, using an expansive learning process methodology to frame the agenda with a broad range of CoJ role players and stakeholders. Her presentation highlighted that while climate change is a natural process, its direct impact on people’s lives is a structural question. Philanthropists,

climate scientists, civil society, development specialists and governments are grappling with devising tangible and practical responses to the array of impacts of climate change on society. Building climate resilience therefore requires a thorough awareness of intersectionality. It was clear that there is a need to layer climate expertise on traditional developmental and social justice questions, and this presents a host of opportunities for philanthropists.

Through her work with CoJ she noted the importance of focusing on the “fecund middle ground” (those involved in culture and art, religions and spiritualities), as an example of building awareness and empowering people to engage with problems and devise responses. She stressed the importance of involving youth in processes that provide access to decision and policy makers, such the Climate Justice Charter. She highlighted work with youth who have developed a Climate Justice Charter and a National Climate Action Plan.

In closing Coleen noted the need to bring experts and stakeholders with diverse skill sets and knowledge into discussions; and to find and use leverage points for intervention and action. The intersections between “heart ware” (seen as internal motivation for long term collective action), hardware (technological solutions) and software (policy, institutions, arts, social media) means that philanthropists need to work with all three simultaneously.

Presentation 2 – Sonia Medina, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF): [“Applying a climate lens to philanthropy and global trends in climate philanthropy.”](#)

Sonia’s presentation focused on why philanthropy needs to engage with climate change, and how to start your own climate journey. In 2010 CIFF identified climate change as the single biggest threat to children, impacting every aspect of their lives – food, water, air, communities’ lives and livelihoods, and the natural world and resources. She proposed that any effort to address children living in poverty requires a move beyond social justice to tackle climate change. Today more than 50% of CIFF’s USD600 million annual spend is on climate related initiatives.

CIFF believes in localisation and collaboration. They found that creating new institutions, firmly rooted in the issue or the region where they operate, is the best way to grow the philanthropic pie, and also to create a sense of community among civil society groups operating in the climate space. For many philanthropies based in Africa, the confluence of contracting budgets and expanding challenges makes the options of cross-cutting approaches particularly practical and attractive. It enables applying a climate lens across existing philanthropic portfolios, and co-funding with other climate funders.

Sonia noted that philanthropic funding for climate change is still woefully insufficient. Total philanthropic giving internationally in 2019 was USD730 billion, with a maximum of USD9 billion going to climate change mitigation. She underscored the importance of the next decade saying: *“It is the most important decade in human history. We still have an opportunity to meaningfully impact if governments, civil society and philanthropy work together to make the movement bigger and more diverse. The cost of inaction is too great.”*

It took CIFF about eight years to recognise and engage with the climate issue, and Sonia urged participants to start their climate journeys as soon as possible. Sonia stressed the importance of applying a climate lens to all portfolios, and concluded with three key things to start the journey:

1. Identify what resonates with you and get going quickly.
2. Learn from others and partner with technical experts.
3. Seek out collaboration opportunities.

Presentation 3 – Thokozile (Thoko) Madonko, Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF): [*“Lessons from the Pandemic: Rights and Survival.”*](#)

Thoko’s presentation focused on nine lessons drawn from HBF’s in-depth engagement with their partners at the end of 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. She proposed that these could provide a framework for philanthropy’s approach to applying a climate lens. Each lesson was framed as a provocation; a recommendation or call to action. The provocations:

1. Small is good
2. Intentional adaptation
3. Social innovation
4. Share the power
5. Relationships are everything
6. Resilience
7. Reflexivity
8. Build the world we want
9. Create more possibilities

She included “Principles of survival” with practical ideas for funding.

Thoko demonstrated that philanthropists, regardless of their mandates, can bring a climate lens to their work. She called on participants to spend good, solid time engaging with partners for meaningful co-creation of climate change work. She noted the importance of independent, unrestricted and innovative grant making mechanisms, especially for smaller and less resourced grantees. She said it is time for philanthropists to be flexible and visionary.

Group discussions

Participants discussed understanding the climate crisis in the context of philanthropy and beyond traditional narratives (for example, environmental concerns, increasing renewable energy deployment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions); appropriate philanthropic responses; and adopting a climate lens in their giving.

Lessons shared

1. Climate change is urgent, complex and there is no quick fix or one size fits all climate lens
 - Now is the time to act. Philanthropists should start immediately to build and support leadership and capacity in the sectors and the communities they support. Regardless of your resources or mandate, climate change responses are as diverse as the problem, and there is an opportunity to be bold and deliberate, even on a small scale or if highly localised (by sector or geography).
 - Climate change is intersectional – from food insecure households to infrastructure development in schools; from policy and litigation to carbon offsetting projects that have business benefits. Responding to climate change is a long-term project and will take time.
 - Adopting a climate lens must build on existing work and grantees. It is important to ensure that philanthropy or their grantees do not feel they must change what they do, but to equip themselves with the tools to think differently about their work.
2. Communicate and collaborate – adopting a climate lens is a shared journey
 - Philanthropists are part of a silo-ed ecosystem of diverse stakeholders. Stakeholder mapping will be useful to surface needs, synergies and shared learnings.

- It is important to facilitate more in-depth discussions with boards, grantees and communities about bringing a climate lens to philanthropy, and allowing climate change to find expression in programmatic structures and funding cycles. This could include creating and using spaces and platforms for engagement and looking beyond existing partners and sectors for guidance and support.
- Consider supporting intermediary grant makers with a footprint in communities on the ground as catalysts for grant making, or re-granters with dedicated climate change expertise (ensuring due diligence, compliance, capacity building and M&E are not compromised).

3. Responding to climate change must be people-centred

- In thinking about your role, understand, listen and respond to the very real social and economic risks that climate change poses, and to those that are most vulnerable.
- Support civic mobilisation and movement building around political processes that affect people at community level, and which must accommodate climate change.
- Advocacy, public demand and political will are key to realising impact, and this must be driven by those who are most affected. Supporting the empowerment of communities and local ownership of climate change responses is essential.

Closure and resources

In closing the following was noted:

- Some participants have boards who are already applying a climate lens, some as a deliberate strategy and others in a more ad hoc manner. Some are tackling the issue of becoming responsible investors, with environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies in place.
- There is strong work being done with Early Childhood Development, the youth, drama and arts innovations. See [Annexure 1](#) below for all resources shared by participants during the webinar.
- Philanthropists must move urgently and quickly. Philanthropists can apply a climate change lens without shifting their mandate. Philanthropists must be agile and take risks, and be part of the eco-system.

See [Annexure 2](#) below for resources shared by the Steering Committee following Webinar 1, and ahead of Webinar 2. Participants and readers are encouraged to share resources they have with IPASA.

Join us for the remaining two Webinars

Webinar 2 on 3 August 2021, 09:00 – 11:30. *“HOW? From Principles to Practice: The practicalities of operationalising a climate lens.”*

Webinar 3 will take place in September, and will focus on content (*WHAT?*).

The final output following Webinar 3 will be a toolkit bringing together resources shared in the webinars and elsewhere for South African philanthropists to carry out their work in their foundations and on the ground.

All philanthropists and their boards are invited to these webinars.

Annexures

Annexure 1: Resources shared by participants during Webinar 1

1. African Climate Foundation's strategic framework launched last week covers three areas: energy transitions, agricultural opportunities in regenerative agriculture and urban transitions:
<https://africanclimatefoundation.org/strategic-framework-2021-2025/>
2. Organisations:
 - a. Say on Climate (www.sayonclimate.org): campaign with partners recently launched with support of CIFF
 - b. Climate Leadership Initiative (www.climatelead.org): free service set up to help bring new philanthropies into climate (primary focus is on US funders)
 - c. Active Philanthropy (www.activephilanthropy.org): free service set up to help bring new philanthropies into climate (primary focus is on European funders)
 - d. Issue focused re-granters started/supported by CIFF: For example, e.g., on air quality and climate (Clean Air Fund) or Strategic Litigation (Foundation for International Law for the Environment).
<https://www.weadapt.org/organisation/foundation-for-international-environmental-law-and-development>
 - e. Climate change and ECD in South Africa: The Birches Pre-Primary School, KZN
<https://www.thebirchespp.co.za/>
 - f. Youth-led projects
 - i. South African Youth Climate Change Coalition (SAYCCO)
 - ii. The Collective Movement
 - iii. Nguvu Ya Fahari
 - iv. African Climate Alliance
 - v. South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
3. Empathy Theatre is a wonderful awareness creation tool incorporating all stakeholders:
<https://www.empatheatre.com/newpage>
4. Young people doing climate change work in South Africa:
https://www.boell.de/index.php/en/2021/02/19/wir-koennen-keine-eurozentristische-perspektive-auf-afrikanische-probleme-einnehmen?dimension1=division_af
5. Children learning about the environment: <http://nature-network.co.za/>
6. Humanity Rising: daily webinar run by Ubiquity University (covers range of topics and themes) – led by Jim Garrison <https://humanityrising.solutions/>
7. Resource persons
 - a. Louise Driver (IPASA) Louise@ipa-sa.org.za
 - b. Alan Wallis (ACF) alan@africanclimatefoundation.org

Annexure 2: Resources shared by the Steering Committee following Webinar 1

These are considered *critical resources* for starting the climate change journey as a philanthropist. You are encouraged to read and listen, and share.

You are also encouraged to share with IPASA good resources you already have. Send to Fia@ipa-sa.org.za

These and other resources will find expression in the toolkit that will be made available in the 4th quarter of 2021 (at the end of the webinar series).

Readings

Funding the Future: How the climate crisis intersects with your giving

An 84-page critical read for philanthropists. It is Active Philanthropy's climate philanthropy guide.

[https://www.activephilanthropy.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Intersections_guide/Funding the Future - How the climate crisis intersects with your giving final.pdf](https://www.activephilanthropy.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Intersections_guide/Funding_the_Future_-_How_the_climate_crisis_intersects_with_your_giving_final.pdf)

Alliance Magazine Climate edition (June 2021)

Packed full of useful articles ranging from "How philanthropy can join the race to zero", "The ecosystem of climate philanthropy", and "Six steps towards greener investments".

<https://www.alliancemagazine.org/magazine/issue/june-2021/>

Videos

Having the conversation about climate change

A 13:20 minute TEDxNMU talk by Jes Thomson about changing the way we talk about climate change. Helpful hints. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXOu-dezdKo>

Active Philanthropy: Funding the Future – How the climate crisis intersects with your giving

A 2:52 minute video of Dr Felicitas van Peter introducing Active Philanthropy's *climate philanthropy guide* (see above – first reading). <https://www.activephilanthropy.org/what-we-do/climate-guide>

Climate and clean energy: the role of philanthropy in powering our future, Oct 2018

5:04 minute video on climate change as the defining issue of our generation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkBDISdoNuA>

Websites of major climate change funders

[Children's Investment Fund Foundation \(CIFF\)](#)

[Climate Lead Initiative \(CLI\)](#)

[ClimateWorks Foundation \(ClimateWorks\)](#)

[Oak Foundation](#)