
Facilitator toolkit

You can use the key takeaways and discussion questions from the end of each chapter to facilitate reflective dialogue among foundation staff and donor peers. For ease of use in retreats and meetings, this Facilitator's Toolkit aggregates all of the takeaways and reflection questions into a single document.

1 Climate justice: An overview

Key takeaways

- Although there is no standard or universally agreed-upon definition of *climate justice*, at its core, climate justice focuses on the systemic root causes of the climate crisis through an intersectional lens, centering frontline communities and grassroots movements.
- A climate justice perspective centers the populations and places most likely to experience the adverse effects of the climate crisis. Consider local context in how people are framing the issues.
- Only a small portion of philanthropic support for climate goes to justice-oriented efforts focused on root causes.
- Philanthropic support for climate work is undermined by its fixation on “Big Greens” and technical solutions as well as its standard operating practices, which limit access to funding for smaller, grassroots organizations.
- Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution. Directly impacted communities are generating transformative, innovative solutions, borne out of their lived experience. These solutions are making an impact locally, regionally, and globally.

Reflection questions

- To what extent does our foundation's climate work integrate a justice or equity lens?
- Are we being intentional about which populations or geographies we are centering in our work?
- How are we engaging those most directly impacted in our climate work?
- What is the origin story of current and potential grantee organizations doing this work? Who is making decisions, and where does accountability lie?

2 Common barriers to incorporating climate justice in grantmaking portfolios

Key takeaways

- Technical solutions are often called “false solutions” by climate justice leaders because of their tendency to favor the symptoms of the climate crisis over its root causes and reflection of corporate and industry interests.
- Climate funders’ focus on scale and speed undermines the value of grassroots solutions in addressing the climate crisis. Focus on local strategies generated by those most impacted to ensure that solutions address local cultures and conditions, recognizing that successful local solutions can scale in other contexts through translocal organizing.
- Entrenched power imbalances and inequitable grantmaking practices mean that good ideas are left out of the conversation, especially those from directly impacted communities.
- To aid in your grantmaking process, ask who is telling the story, who makes the decisions, who benefits, what else it will impact, and how it will shift power. Pay attention to unintended consequences that might exacerbate existing inequities

Reflection questions

- What are some of the factors/dynamics getting in the way of integrating climate into our grantmaking portfolio? What is getting in the way of adopting a justice or equity lens to our climate work?
- As we develop our strategy, how does it account for the root causes of the climate crisis? What are the potential unintended consequences of our approach for impacted communities?
- Are we building a diverse portfolio and supporting a range of actors that advance a climate justice approach? Are some of these organizations led by the key constituencies most impacted by the climate crisis?
- What is our analysis of how change occurs? What implicit assumptions undergird this analysis? Do any of these assumptions need to be re-examined?
- Have we sought out critical friends and directly impacted communities to weigh in on our work?

3 How foundations are integrating climate justice into their work

Key takeaways

- Foundations that thoughtfully and intentionally align their practices with their values will be more likely to develop deep and trusting relationships with grantee partners, resulting in a sharper focus on equity and justice within their climate portfolios.

- It is crucial to take an intersectional lens to climate justice funding that considers the nuanced impact that gender, age, ability, race/ethnicity, and other identities have on how different groups experience the climate crisis.
- The often-siloed nature of foundation portfolios can lead to missed opportunities to achieve bigger and sustainable impacts. Consider taking a more holistic approach to grantmaking or setting aside a portion of your grantmaking budget to invest in promising organizations/projects that might fall outside your strategy.
- Foundations can incorporate climate justice into their work beyond grantmaking—consider how the totality of your work, not just grantmaking, can become more equity and justice focused.
- To support a strong ecosystem of grantee partners, ask your current partners who is doing good work in the field. This approach will strengthen existing relationships and help build movement infrastructure, instead of creating a portfolio of partners who may lack alignment and connection.

Reflection questions

- In what ways are our core values reflected in our climate work? In what ways are equity and justice being integrated into our climate work?
- To what extent are we making connections across our grantmaking portfolios to take a holistic and integrated approach to the climate crisis? Where do opportunities to break down silos exist? How are our current grantees responding to the climate crisis?
- What is our analysis of how different populations are impacted by the crisis, and how are we co-creating strategies that address the realities of lived experience?
- Are we building a diverse portfolio and supporting a range of actors that advance a climate justice approach? Are some of these organizations led by the key constituencies most impacted by the climate crisis?
- How are we thinking about equity and climate impacts across our foundation operations and investments?

4 The critical role of intermediaries

Key takeaways

- By engaging with intermediary organizations, funders can build and deepen their understanding of climate justice. Seek out workshops, trainings, peer-to-peer learning, publications, or other resources that offered by intermediaries.
- Intermediaries' leadership and staff often come from movements or organizing background and hold deep relationships with grassroots organizations.
- For global grantmaking, certain intermediaries have deep knowledge of the local political context and the various players as well as capacity to meet international regulatory and legal requirements.

- Intermediaries can build relationships with grassroots organizations, move funds, and reach geographic areas or populations in ways that larger foundations might not be able to.
- Intermediaries are often better equipped to bring impacted communities to the decision-making table and thus able to ensure greater accountability to community priorities.
- Intermediaries provide a variety of supports beyond grants to grassroots organizations. Such support is often critical to grassroots organizations that are thinly staffed and may not have resources for professional development.
- Intermediaries are creating and strengthening connections within the climate justice movement, countering the one-off nature of funding that can occur within larger foundation portfolios and that can ultimately have limited impact.

Reflection questions

- What are our learning needs? Are there practitioners or intermediaries that can support our learning journey?
- Can we work through intermediaries to reach organizations, geographic areas, or populations we cannot connect with through our internal grantmaking channels?
- Whom would we like to be in relationship with that we currently are not? Are there intermediaries that can catalyze those connections?
- How can we support the full staffing and resource needs of intermediary organizations to ensure they are able to do the time-intensive work of grantmaking, relationship building, and capacity building?

5 Moving forward: Gaps and opportunities

Reflection questions

- What level of commitment do we have for climate justice funding among our leadership and board?
- Can any of our grantees or applicants be supported to impact other communities and networks through a translocal approach?
- Does the way we think about risk have built-in biases that disadvantage smaller groups?
- How can we support movements for climate justice?
- How can we re-imagine assessment to go beyond purely quantitative metrics?