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# THE PRICE OF CLIMATE ACTION

Philanthropic  
Foundations in the  
International  
Climate Debate

**Edouard Morena**



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Climate Debate

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*To Anabella and Inès*



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# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Philanthropic Foundations and the International Climate Regime</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>A Strategic Approach to Climate Philanthropy</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Foundations in Copenhagen</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>The International Policies and Politics Initiative</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>125</b>
	<b>Index</b>	<b>137</b>



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGGG	Advisory Group on Greenhouse Gases
CAN	Climate Action Network
CAT	Climate Action Tracker
CBS	Climate Briefing Service
CCCM	Climate change counter-movement
CCPAN	Climate Change Philanthropy Action Network
CCS	Carbon Capture and Storage
CD	Cartagena Dialogue
CEA	California Environmental Associates
CEFG	Climate and Energy Funders Group
CFE	Centre Français des Fonds et Fondations
CGBD	Consultative Group on Biological Diversity
CIFF	Children's Investment Fund Foundation
CJN	Climate Justice Now!
CLEW	Clean Energy Wire
CLUA	Climate and Land Use Alliance
CPI	Climate Policy Initiative
DDPP	Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project
E3G	Third Generation Environmentalism
ECF	European Climate Foundation
ECIU	Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit
EDF	Environmental Defense Fund
EF	Energy Foundation
EFC	European Foundation Centre
EGA	Environmental Grantmakers Association
ESC	Energy Strategy Center

EU	European Union
FNTG	Funders Network on Trade and Globalization
FOE	Friends of the Earth
GCCA	Global Call for Climate Action
GCEC	Global Commission on the Economy and Climate
GSCC	Global Strategic Communications Council
IDDDRI	Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPPI	International Policies and Politics Initiative
LARCI	Latin America Regional Climate Initiative
LDC	Least Developed Countries
NRDC	Natural Resources Defense Council
OCN	Open Climate Network
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OWINFS	Our World Is Not For Sale
PC	Project Catalyst
RBF	Rockefeller Brothers Fund
RFF	Resources for the Future
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WRI	World Resources Institute
WSF	World Social Forum

## Introduction

**Abstract** Following a brief presentation of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) outcome and reactions to it, the chapter introduces some of the core theoretical debates associated with the study of philanthropic foundations' involvement in the international climate debate. It looks at how the existence of underlying agendas in foundations raises important legitimacy and accountability concerns. The chapter also analyses philanthropic foundations' broader societal functions—and in particular their role as field-builders. In a final section, it presents the main issues raised by the book—to what extent and how did foundations shape and orientate the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and international climate regime more broadly? And correspondingly, what influence did foundations wield on the Paris outcome?—and offers an overview of the different chapters.

**Keywords** Climate philanthropy • Social movement funding • Philanthrocapitalism • Venture philanthropy • Strategic philanthropy

On the Monday that followed the adoption of the Paris climate agreement, a majority of the world's newspapers were unequivocal in their celebrations of a “historic pact,” a “historic deal,” a “landmark climate deal,” “a ground-breaking climate accord,” a “chance to save the

world.”<sup>1</sup> A few hours earlier on the evening of December 12, 2015 at 7.23 pm, the packed assembly hall in Le Bourget was engulfed with an overwhelming sense of euphoria as Laurent Fabius, the French foreign minister, brought down the gavel to officially mark the agreement’s adoption. Images of Fabius with tear-filled eyes and of delegates cheering, clapping and embracing each other were broadcast live around the world. After four years of arduous negotiations, 195 countries had finally agreed to a deal that committed them to collectively limit global warming to “well below” 2 °C over pre-Industrial Revolution levels, to peak climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions “as soon as possible” and to review national mitigation targets every five years beginning in 2023. For UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) agreement marked the world’s entry into “a new era of global cooperation on one of the most complex issues ever to confront humanity. For the first time, every country in the world has pledged to curb emissions, strengthen resilience and join in common cause to take common climate action” (UNFCCC 2015). As he then added, “this is a resounding success for multilateralism” (UNFCCC 2015). Echoing most of the World’s leaders, François Hollande, French president, praised the agreement as a “major act for humanity” (RFI 2015).

On the side of the numerous non-state actors campaigning for climate action, reactions to the agreement were far less unanimous. While Greenpeace International hailed the fact that “today the human race has joined in a common cause,” Avaaz labelled the agreement “a turning point in history” and CARE International welcomed the fact that “all countries promise not to leave the poor behind,” others were less enthusiastic (Voorhaar 2015). At a press conference on December 12, convened by representatives from the climate justice community—Third World Network, LDC Watch, Friends of the Earth USA, Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development—Asad Rehman from Friends of the Earth International described a “Titanic scenario” where the “ship is sinking and the band plays on to the warm applause of our political leaders [...] and the poor are being denied a place in the lifeboats” (Friends of the Earth International 2015). For Kate Lappin of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, “this deal does not deliver climate justice: Justice requires accountability, responsibility, remedies and action by the perpetrators. Polluters got another unwarranted good behaviour bond and more opportunities to profit from climate change” (Carbon Pulse 2015). Outside of the negotiation space, a number of grassroots

organizations also expressed strong reservations towards what they saw as an unjust and inadequate agreement.

In between these two positions were a number of more nuanced reactions. While welcoming the deal's global character and its ambitious target, many pointed to its vagueness when it comes to securing the means of implementing and reaching its stated goals. Others criticized the fact that developed countries were not doing their fair share of efforts through the deal. For Harjeet Singh, global lead on climate change with Actionaid International, "what we needed out of Paris was a deal which put the world's poorest people first [...]. Yet what we have been presented with doesn't go far enough to improve the fragile existence of millions around the world. Despite disappointment, the Paris agreement provides an important hook on which people can hang their demands" (Voorhaar 2015).

Within the climate community gravitating around the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) space, one group in particular was especially satisfied with the Paris outcome. The members of this group were not just satisfied with the agreement but with themselves. They were convinced that *they* had played a pivotal role in the Paris success. Cutting across a variety of organizations and interests, this group of activists, consultants, business representatives, policy analysts, public figures, climate experts, communications and media specialists, and data analysts worked together—and often in collaboration with the UNFCCC and Parties to the negotiation—in the months and years leading up to COP21 to create the conditions for a "successful" Paris outcome. Late into the evening of December 12, at the Climate Action Network (CAN) International celebratory event in central Paris, members of this highly qualified and experienced network of individuals were celebrating not only the agreement but also *their* contribution to its realization. As they sang along to Queen's "We are the Champions!" they had themselves in mind. This was their moment. This was their agreement.

Three main characteristics set this group apart from other actors and groups of actors involved in and around the UNFCCC process. First of all, the group's specificity stems from the heterogeneity of its members and the fact that it breaks pre-existing, non-state actor typologies in the climate field. Drawing on Peter Newell's typology of groups in the climate debate and their strategies, we can say that the group in question combines elements of the "inside-insider," "inside-outsider" and "outside-outsider" categories (Newell 2005, 114).<sup>2</sup> While its members are formally part of the Observer<sup>3</sup> category, many of them have developed close working



relations with UNFCCC officials, national delegates and government representatives. Whereas Newell broadly associates each group with a given strategy and ideology, in the group at hand, members tactically align their respective action repertoires for the purpose of an overarching and mutually agreed objective. Through their interactions and shared meaning systems, they form an organizational field that brings a number of different actors “into routine contact with one another under a common frame of reference, in pursuit of an at least partially shared project” (Bartley 2007, 233; Minkoff and McCarthy 2005). In addition to forming an organizational field, they constitute an informal community of individuals; individuals who, in different capacities, have a long experience of monitoring and engaging in the UNFCCC process (negotiators, non-governmental organization [NGO] representatives). In other words, while keeping with their organizational specificities, they devise ways of collectively working towards a pre-determined outcome in Paris. In some cases, this involves finding ways of getting their respective organizations to adjust their strategies in accordance with the overall group strategy.

Members of this group were bound by a common yardstick for measuring success in the Paris climate negotiations. Broadly speaking, this included three items—that would ultimately be included in the final Paris agreement: a long-term goal, a mechanism to regularly review and ratchet up national mitigation and financial commitments and, finally, a global framework to ensure transparency (Morgan 2015). These criteria confirm the international climate regime’s shift away from a top-down, multilateral and legally binding approach to international climate governance to a more bottom-up approach centred on national commitments.

The second major characteristic of this group is its participants’ shared “roadmap” for success. This involves, as was previously suggested, coordinating actions at multiple levels and locations, as well as engaging with a wide range of actors in order to not only generate the conditions for an agreement but also ensure that it is suitably interpreted in the media and society at large. It also means getting their respective organizations and constituencies to buy into the strategy—or at least not get in the way. By focusing on not just the content but the interpretations of the agreement, the belief is that an optimistic and galvanizing message leading up to and coming out of Paris will catalyse ambitious action on behalf of state and non-state actors. Hence, the need for Paris to send “unambiguous signals that the world will shift its economic and social activity toward more climate-friendly and sustainable pathways”

(Oberthür et al. 2015, 1). The signals become just as important as the substance of the agreement. As Laurence Tubiana, lead negotiator for France and chair of the European Climate Foundation, candidly explains in a post-COP interview for *Libération*: “We had to anticipate the interpretation of the agreement. Words contribute as much to change as the agreement itself: it is what I call the convergence of rational anticipations.” As she adds, “the agreement has to be a self-realizing prophecy” (Losson 2015).

A third and final characteristic of this group is that most of its members were either directly involved in or associated with the International Policies and Politics Initiative (IPPI). Set up in 2013 by five philanthropic foundations—European Climate Foundation (ECF), ClimateWorks Foundation, Oak Foundation, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and the Mercator Foundation, IPPI is presented as “a new platform for philanthropic cooperation to catalyse greater ambition on climate through activities and processes taking place at an international level” (ECF 2014, 26). It is “designed to help philanthropy identify opportunities for international collaboration, develop joint strategies, and pool and align grant making to achieve greater overall impact.”<sup>4</sup>, <sup>5</sup> It acts as a platform where foundations and grantees meet to strategize on how international political and policy levers can catalyse more ambitious policies at the domestic level.<sup>6</sup> As Jennifer Morgan (World Resources Institute [WRI]), who coordinated the IPPI platform in the run-up to and during the Paris COP, explains “IPPI is focused on using the ‘Paris moment’ to increase the scale and pace of change” (Cox 2015, 21).

Launched in 2013, IPPI is not the only case of foundation involvement in the international climate debate. As we will see, there were other foundation initiatives before it and in parallel. However, IPPI is without doubt the most elaborate and possibly, given the Paris “success,” the most effective. Given its influential role in pushing for a certain outcome and organizing non-state actors in the run-up to and during Paris, IPPI sheds light on an understudied actor in the international climate regime: the philanthropic foundation. A rapid overview of funding sources shows that a significant share of non-state actors involved in and around the UNFCCC process is either partially or totally reliant on foundation support. As we will see, the source, the nature and the level of foundation support for climate-related activities vary greatly from one organization to the next, and over time.

The reliance of so many non-state actors on foundation funding partly has to do with the high entry costs for those who want to adequately

monitor and hopefully influence the international climate process—especially in a global context marked by an overall drop in public funding towards NGOs (Dryzek and Stevenson 2014, 131). More generally, it has to do with the fact that, as Lipschutz and McKendry explain, “although civil society groups are assumed to be normatively motivated [...] they are nonetheless embedded in a global capitalist economy and have quite specific material requirements that must be fulfilled in order to operate successfully” (Lipschutz and McKendry 2011, 373). As they go on to explain, “to be successful, an organization must survive and, in a market-based environment, this means finding ways to generate the funds necessary to sustain operations” (Lipschutz and McKendry 2011, 373). Funds are required to both finance participation and facilitate lobbying activities—through joint initiatives, platforms, dialogues, reports, campaigns, outreach activities, and the creation and upholding of informal relationships of trust between NGOs and the UNFCCC secretariat and/or members of government delegations (Caniglia et al. 2015, 241; Caniglia 2001; Dodds and Strauss 2004).

Funding sources and their influence constitute an important dimension of NGO participation in the global climate regime. And yet, this aspect is largely absent from the academic literature on climate governance (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2015; Dietz and Garrelts 2014). The available academic literature focuses almost exclusively on collective and individual discourses and framings, as well as modes of action—also called repertoires of action in the social movement studies literature—and opportunity structures. It pays relatively little attention to the resources—and especially the financial resources—required to engage these actions, let alone those needed to secure institutional continuity. This leads many observers to either ignore or underestimate the level and forms of philanthropic involvement in the international climate debate.

In the vast body of predominantly North American literature on philanthropy, relatively little has been written on climate philanthropy—and even less on international climate philanthropy. While the climate issue is sometimes referred to in *passim* in the broader body of work on environmental philanthropy, the specificities of climate philanthropy—and not to mention international climate philanthropy—are seldom mentioned or analysed (Brulle and Jenkins, Foundations and the Environmental Movement: Priorities, Strategies, and Impact 2005; Faber and McCarthy 2001; Dowie 2001).<sup>7</sup> The few academic studies that specifically deal with philanthropy’s involvement in the climate field largely focus on

conservative or corporate foundations' support towards climate denialists (Plehwé 2014). In his analysis of the financial resource mobilization of the US “climate change counter-movement” (CCCM), for instance, Brulle shows how conservative foundations helped develop “an active campaign to manipulate and mislead the public over the nature of climate science and the threat posed by climate change” (Brulle 2013).

In line with these analyses, NGOs and media outlets have highlighted the links between conservative foundations and climate denialist groups. In 2010, for example, Greenpeace USA published a report entitled “Koch Industries secretly funding the climate denial machine” in which it shows how Koch Industries and its affiliated foundations—Claude R. Lambe Foundation, Charles G. Koch Foundation, David H. Koch Foundation— “[have] become a financial kingpin of climate science denial and clean energy opposition” (Greenpeace USA 2010, 6). According to Greenpeace, an estimated USD 25 million was allocated to climate opposition groups by Koch foundations between 2005 and 2008 (the total rises up to USD 48.5 million for the period stretching from 1997 to 2008). More recently, in February 2013, *The Guardian* published a paper on the Donors Trust and Donors Capital, two donor-directed foundations that allow individuals to discretely channel funds to conservative causes,<sup>8</sup> and their “secret funding [that] helped build [a] vast network of climate denial think-tanks” in the USA (Goldenberg 2013). In both cases, the idea was to publicly expose the links between denialist campaigns and front groups, and notorious climate sceptics whose philanthropic activities are in many cases associated with fortunes amassed through polluting industries (such is the case of the Koch family whose name is associated with Koch Industries).

There are two likely explanations for this relatively limited interest in foundations' involvement in the climate field—and in particular the climate movement as opposed to the CCCM. First of all, climate philanthropy is both a recent and a fairly peripheral phenomenon. As we will see in Chap. 2, it was only in the mid to late 1980s that a handful of foundations began to seriously take up the climate issue. While the field of climate philanthropy would grow and organize itself—through informal and formal networks of climate funders (most notably the Climate Funders Table)—it remains a relatively marginal area in the broader foundation landscape. It is dominated by a small group of well-endowed and predominantly US-based foundations—foundations that share a common approach to grant-making and, given the scarce overall resources available and scale of the problem, regularly join forces in order to leverage their investments.

The second reason is directly related to the first. The fact that only a handful of foundations are actively involved in the climate field and that their overall resources are limited is conducive to power imbalances between grant-makers and grantees. Given their reliance on a small number of foundations (see below), climate NGOs are reluctant to openly express their views on the ins and outs of philanthropic giving in the climate field. This, as we will see, favours a “one-track approach” to climate philanthropy, which, in turn, further inhibits critique. As Kimball and Kopell explain, “the power imbalance in the grantor-grantee relationship makes it hard for grantees to challenge funders’ plans and breeds a belief among funders that they know best” (Kimball and Kopell 2011, 40).

Ironically, the only ones who explicitly draw attention to and question private foundations’ support for the climate movement are the groups that form part of the CCCM and benefit from conservative foundation largesse. Their criticisms form part of a broader assault on the environmental movement, which they present as a threat to freedom of enterprise and, in the USA, the American way of life. Ron Arnold, for instance, accuses “an interlocking triangle of agenda-driven federal employees, grant-driven environmental organizations, and prescriptive funders in private foundations” of unduly influencing US government decisions in the environmental field (Arnold 1999, 1).<sup>9</sup> In the UK, certain news outlets associated with the conservative right made similar sorts of accusations. The conservative newspaper, *Daily Mail*, for instance, featured an article on the “green blob financed by a shadowy group of hugely wealthy foreign donors,” which, according to its author, is “driving Britain towards economically ruinous eco targets” (Rose 2014). More recently, just a few weeks before the Paris COP, EURACOAL—the European Association for Coal and Lignite—published a report entitled “NGOs for sale: How the US super-rich influence EU climate and energy policy.” In it, the coal industry lobbying group accuses the European Climate Foundation (ECF) of “[creating] the illusion of a grass-roots, climate-action movement” when, in fact, “their call comes from well-paid professional agents who act on behalf of the super-rich, many from the US” (EURACOAL 2015).

It is interesting to see that as with Greenpeace USA and *The Guardian*, the *Daily Mail*, Ron Arnold and EURACOAL focus on foundations’ supposed lack of legitimacy and accountability in order to undermine the CCCM and environmental/climate movement, respectively. In other words, while their underlying motivations are diametrically different, each group draws on similar sorts of arguments to undermine the opposing side’s legitimacy (Fleishman 2009, 222).

## WHAT IS A FOUNDATION?

Questions related to foundations' legitimacy and accountability reflect enduring and complex debates on the societal functions of philanthropy and charity. Philanthropy can be broadly defined as the “voluntary use of private assets for the benefit of specific public causes” (Anheier and Daly 2004, 159). While the terms “philanthropy” and “charity” are often used interchangeably, “philanthropy” is generally associated with long-term and systemic approaches aimed at tackling the root causes of a given social problem. “Charity,” on the contrary, is usually associated with more direct, hands-on and short-term solutions. As the philanthropist John D. Rockefeller wrote, “the best philanthropy is constantly in search of the finalities—search for cause, an attempt to cure evils at their source” (Clotfelter and Ehrlich 2001, 43).

The word “philanthropy” is generally associated with the organizations that identify social problems, and that find and implement solutions to address them, namely, philanthropic foundations. The modern foundation is largely a US invention dating back to the early twentieth century (Anheier and Daly 2004, 160). Unsurprisingly, the USA is home to the largest and most well-endowed foundations. According to the Foundation Center, the USA was home to 86,192 foundations in 2012, with total assets of close to USD 715 billion. In 2012, US foundations made a staggering USD 52 billion worth of grants.<sup>10</sup> Despite the slump caused by the financial crisis of 2008, the top three US philanthropic foundations had an asset market value of over USD 64 billion in 2013—the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation alone made up USD 41.3 billion of those USD 64 billion.<sup>11</sup> In terms of actual grantmaking, the latest available data reveal that the total giving of the top ten US foundations over the last available fiscal year amounted to over USD 9.4 billion.<sup>12</sup> By comparison, in the UK, which, like the USA, has a long history of philanthropy and charity, the 300 largest foundations had a pool of assets of approximately EUR 73 billion in 2014 and a total expenditure of approximately EUR 3.5 billion.<sup>13</sup>

The level and quality of available data on foundation involvement in the climate field—and in any field for that matter—vary greatly from one country and region to the next. Based on the available data, it is fair to say that the USA and, to a lesser extent, Europe are the two regions that concentrate the highest levels of climate or climate-related giving by foundations. In a study of 62 foundations, the European Foundation Centre (EFC) estimated that, in 2011, foundations made EUR 110 million in grants for work in the field of “energy, transport, climate and atmosphere”

(26.3 % of the total value of grants made by the 62 foundations studied).<sup>14</sup> In comparison, the US-based Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA) estimated that, in 2013, the climate/energy/transportation issue group received USD 330 million in funding (EGA 2015).

The EGA study found that a large fraction—around 55 %—of the funds went to “advocacy/organizing/movement building” or “public policy” strategies. One-third of the funds went to projects outside of the USA, and approximately 50 % went to the federal level (EGA 2015). While in absolute terms, the dollars spent in the climate and climate-related fields represent large sums of money, in relative terms they only represent a small fraction of total philanthropic grantmaking. As Larry Kramer and Carol Larson, presidents of two of the largest and most active foundations involved in climate philanthropy, lamented in an opinion piece published in the run-up to the Paris COP, “currently less than 2 per cent of all philanthropic dollars are being spent in the fight against climate change” (Kramer and Larson 2015).

In addition to this, the field of climate philanthropy regroups a fairly small number of large players. In a 2010 study for the Foundation Center on US foundation responses to climate change, Steven Laurence shows how, in 2008, 25 foundations accounted for over 90 % of all climate change funding (Laurence 2010, 2). More recent data from the Foundation Center show how six foundations—Oak, Packard, Hewlett, Sea Change, Energy, Rockefeller—accounted for approximately 70 % of climate change mitigation funding in 2012 (Fern et al. 2015, 11).<sup>15</sup> As we will see, most of these foundations continue to be actively involved in the climate field. What the Laurence study does not show is how many of these foundations share a common approach to grantmaking and collaborate with one another in the climate field. If we focus on the international level, the amounts of funding and the number of active foundations shrink substantially.

Foundations share a set of core characteristics. They are private, asset-based, self-governing and non-profit distributing organizations that serve a public purpose (Anheier and Daly 2004, 161). Furthermore, in order to achieve their objectives, foundations usually—although not systematically—make grants to third-party operators who act on their behalf. These common characteristics notwithstanding, the influence, organization, goals and prerogatives of philanthropic foundations vary greatly from one

country and historical epoch to the next. A first distinction that can be made is between corporate foundations—whose resources and interventions derive from a private corporation—and private or independent foundations (an additional type of foundation is the community foundation). In the USA, over 90 % of foundations are of the independent/private type.

Within the private foundation category, there are also significant differences between “family” foundations—in which endowing families are in charge—and “professional” foundations—governed by a board of directors who are not the source of the wealth, even though they may have close ties with the endowing family. In some cases, foundation boards combine family and non-family members. When it comes to their decision-making and grant-making processes, we have cases of foundations where it is the board that makes all the decisions. In other instances, the foundation staff—and in particular the programme officers—manage the programme and grant allocation with minimal board oversight.

Other important differences relate to foundations’ theories of change. By theory of change, we are referring to the ways in which foundations map out and fulfil their activities and interventions in order to achieve a desired outcome. In other words, foundations, through their activities—and most noticeably their grantmaking—pursue specific agendas that “provide the frame for their operations and grant-making” (Anheier and Daly 2004, 161). Each foundation has its preferred issue areas, target constituencies and geographical areas of intervention. They often reflect the personal beliefs and priorities of the board members or trustees; beliefs and priorities that are, in turn, shaped by interactions with the “outside world.” As Behrooz Morvaridi explains, “philanthropic activities are consciously driven by specific identified goals and strategies, shaped by personal character and qualities in the social field and through its external relations with other fields, such as business, politics, religion, as well as grounding in the class system” (Morvaridi 2015, 4). Depending on their theories of change, foundations, at least in the USA, are categorized as either progressive, conservative or liberal. As we shall also see, each theory of change is usually associated with a set of grantmaking principles (they can be relative to grantmaker–grantee relations, the level of grantmaker involvement etc.).



## LEGITIMACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The existence of an underlying agenda raises the question of foundations' legitimacy and accountability. Given the fact that the act of giving is discretionary, many people refrain from questioning the philanthropic system and assume that an act of charity is necessarily beneficial for society (G. Jenkins 2011, 758). Others, as we saw with Greenpeace or EURACOAL, accuse certain foundations of illegitimately influencing public debates. Throughout their history, charity and philanthropy—and more recently foundations—have regularly been accused of being both unaccountable and illegitimate.

These accusations relate to the fact that foundations have no legal obligation to justify their actions to any given stakeholder. A foundation's priorities are more often than not those of an individual or small group of individuals who are accountable to no one. As Curtis White explains, "like the system of patronage that served the arts and charity from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century, private foundations have the rarest privilege of all: they do not have to explain themselves. They do not have to justify the origins of their wealth, or how they use that wealth, or what the real benefit of their largesse is" (White 2012). As Fleishman explains, "foundation staffs are accountable to their trustees, but the trustees are self-perpetuating and fundamentally unaccountable to anyone else. Having been funded by an individual or family at a particular point in time, most foundations need not solicit funds and therefore are not accountable to current or potential donors" (Fleishman 2009, 220). In other words, while its effects are public, philanthropic decision-making remains a largely private affair (Cunningham 2015, 26).

As Steven Heydemann and Stefan Toepler point out, assessments of a foundation's right to exist and to act in society vary, depending on one's understanding of the word "legitimacy." These understandings vary from one country to the next, depending on the legal framework, history and culture. Does legitimacy, they ask, "derive from the freedom of foundations to define their own priorities and procedures within the limits of donor intent, or from their responsiveness to the public service obligations they accept in exchange for their non-profit, tax-exempt status?" (Heydemann and Toepler 2006, 5).

For some, foundations' lack of legitimacy and accountability is actually a good thing. James Joseph, for instance, a former president of the Council on Foundations, writes that a foundation's insulation from public

opinion and political constituencies allows them “to fund innovative programs and work on the frontlines of social problems without concern for popular opinion or building political mandates” (Roelofs 2003, 12). They can take risks and support projects that are either politically controversial or economically risky or unviable (Frumkin 1995, 594).

The debate on foundation legitimacy and accountability is often framed in terms of foundations’ broader functions under capitalism. Do foundations—and charity and philanthropy more generally—serve or hamper capitalist development and the interests of capitalist elites? Throughout history, charity and philanthropy have regularly been presented as irrational acts of altruism with detrimental effects on society as a whole. In the late fifteenth century, charity for poor relief was accused of obstructing the development of market forces “by [encouraging] dependency and idleness and [sapping] the springs of industry” (Cunningham 2015, 19). Over the years, and given capitalism’s tendency to accentuate wealth disparities, charity and philanthropy have increasingly been presented as necessary evils to “save capitalism from itself” (White 2015, 210). According to Robert Arnove, large private foundations like Carnegie, Rockefeller or Ford “serve as ‘cooling-out’ agencies, delaying and preventing more radical, structural change. They help maintain an economic and political order, international in scope, which benefits the ruling-class interests of philanthropists” (Arnove 1980). For Peter Frumkin, the act of giving serves as a tool to legitimate capitalism by “[projecting] private values and commitments into the public sphere” (Frumkin 2006, 72).

Linked to these disparities of wealth are disparities of power. Some, like Pierre Bourdieu, argue that the act of giving, in addition to upholding the capitalist system, also “obligates one to reciprocate, and to reciprocate beyond the original gifts” (Bourdieu 1998, 94). Behrooz Morvaridi and Nicolas Guilhot have also shown how the act of giving contributes to legitimate oneself within elite circles (Morvaridi 2015; Guilhot 2006). Only recently, with the rise of “philanthrocapitalism,” have philanthropists begun to explicitly acknowledge and even celebrate philanthropy’s self-serving nature. As Linsey McGoey writes, “not only is it no longer necessary to ‘disguise’ or minimize self-interest, self-interest is championed as the best rationale for helping others. It is seen not as coexisting in tension with altruism, but as a prerequisite *for* altruism” (McGoey 2015, 20).

## FOUNDATIONS AS FIELD-BUILDERS

Connected to these central questions of philanthropy's broader societal functions is the question of how foundations—as instruments of philanthropy—engage with the rest of society. While questions can (and should) be raised about philanthropy's underlying functions, many of the groups and campaigns trying to address the challenges facing our contemporary societies are dependent on foundation support. As was previously highlighted, foundations do not constitute a monolithic block. They differ in terms of their objectives, approaches and theories of change, as well as their openness to dialogue and criticism. These differences are particularly visible when looking at foundations' grantmaking strategies and the funder–grantee relations that derive from them.

A recurring issue in the academic literature has been to evaluate the extent to which foundations shape and orientate the groups and movements that they support. This has been a major source of debate among those who study progressive mobilizations in the USA. In his 1969 book, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, Robert L. Allen, for example, shows how the Ford Foundation, through its selective support of Black civil rights groups, contributed to shift the movement's emphasis away from more revolutionary demands and towards more moderate ones (Allen 1969). Joan Roelofs has shown how large private foundations have deliberately used their financial muscle to shift group strategies away from more mass-based grassroots organizations to more professionalized policy and legal reform-based approaches (1960s–1970s) (Roelofs 2003, 2007). Another body of research has focused on foundations' channelling effect on social movements through their subtle encouragement of more moderate tactics and objectives (C.J. Jenkins 1998).

Some have argued against this idea of an essentially one-way, top-down relationship between grant-maker and grantee by highlighting the fact that donors also depend on recipients “for the moral and normative and perhaps social meaning of their existence” (Ostrander and Schervish 1990). This idea fits in well with the point made earlier regarding how the act of giving serves a social purpose for philanthropists by publicly acknowledging and strengthening their elite social status. Philanthropy can, to a certain extent, be regarded as a social relation—albeit an unequal one—“of giving and getting between donors and recipients” (Ostrander and Schervish 1990, 68). In order to be well respected, philanthropists need to prove to their peers that they are experts in their chosen area

of action. This requires them to involve and draw on recipients' first-hand knowledge throughout the entire process (Ostrander and Schervish 1990, 67).<sup>16</sup> To borrow Ostrander and Schervish's terminology, the question then becomes of evaluating the degrees of "donor ascendancy" and "recipient influence."

These interactions between grant-makers and grantees form part of a broader field construction and consolidation exercise (Bartley 2007, 231).<sup>17</sup> Foundations act as field-builders and stewards by providing the vital resources to evaluate field potential, map prospective participants, build collaboration and consensus, encourage public participation, mobilize other foundations and, where necessary, launch new organizations to fill an identified gap. In doing so, Tim Bartley explains, they also act as "institutional entrepreneurs" "that champion a particular model of social order" (Bartley 2007, 231).

## FOUNDATIONS AND THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE DEBATE

Given their field-building functions and their underlying agendas, the question becomes of assessing philanthropic foundations' contribution to the international climate debate. In particular, to what extent and how did foundations shape and orientate the UNFCCC, and international climate regime more broadly? And correspondingly, what influence did foundations wield on the Paris outcome? In the international climate field, it is particularly difficult to establish causal relations between foundations' actions and policy change. Unlike more localized or targeted climate campaigns, the impact of a foundation or group of foundations' actions in the climate policy field—and moreover in the international climate field—is difficult to establish and measure. As Hemphill explains, "the goals in climate campaigning are multiple, ranging from the number of tons of greenhouse gases that a given clean-power project prevents, to the new grassroots leaders empowered by this campaign, and how they will contribute to the climate movement over time" (Hemphill 2013, 12). As we will see, this major constraint influences the level and nature of foundation participation in the climate debate. Foundations have different ways of coping with the climate issue's unpredictability and convoluted nature. Foundations constantly adapt their strategies and experiment new ones so as to maximize their impact.

In order to better appreciate these evolving strategies, we will begin by retracing the origins of philanthropic involvement in the climate debate

(Chap. 2). As we will see, liberal US foundations have historically dominated the field of climate philanthropy. In the 1980s and 1990s, through their grantmaking and convening activities, they helped to popularize the climate question in the USA and lay the basis for the international climate regime. In the early years, foundation involvement in the climate debate was facilitated by the fact that the international climate community's priority was less about policy action than about crafting an international framework for policy action (UNFCCC, IPCC). Once the framework was in place, foundations were left with the (daunting) task of getting countries—and in particular the USA—to commit to ambitious and binding action.

As we will see in Chap. 3, the US government's reluctance to act on climate change—and the environment in general—and the threat posed by climate change sceptics, led certain climate funders to adopt a more focused and strategic approach. While staying true to the core principles of liberal philanthropy, this new approach combined collaborative, proactive, outcome-oriented and evaluation-driven grantmaking methods with a pro-business, market-focused and bottom-up approach to social change. While initially constrained to the USA, by the mid-2000s its core elements would form the basis of a new approach to international climate philanthropy and bolster foundation engagement in the international climate arena. A number of foundations subsequently aligned their strategies and concomitantly pooled resources through joint initiatives and projects. As we will see, the ClimateWorks Foundation and Network was without doubt the most noteworthy of these initiatives.

In Chap. 4 we will see how this new approach formed the basis for foundation involvement in the run-up to and during the Copenhagen climate conference in December 2009 (COP15). As we will see, the COP15 experience would expose some of the core limitations of the strategic approach—and in particular, its reluctance to engage in the politics of climate change. Drawing lessons from the failed COP15 experience, foundations, in collaboration with other actors in the climate debate, came up with a new strategy for philanthropic involvement in the climate field. The International Policies and Politics Initiative (IPPI) came to embody this strategy (Chap. 5).

Throughout our analysis, we will look at the interactions between the international climate regime and the field of climate philanthropy. We are not implying that climate philanthropy alone was responsible for shaping the climate regime but rather that it shepherded and facilitated its evolution. As we will show in the concluding chapter, the changing

nature of climate funders' involvement in the international climate debate raises a lot of questions. In particular, while presenting itself as non-political, liberal climate philanthropy pursues an ideologically grounded agenda. In the field of international climate negotiations, large liberal foundations have consistently promoted market- and technology-based solutions to the climate problem. Given these foundations' dominant position and aligned strategies—as the IPPI example indicates—members of the international climate community who depend on them are increasingly forced to conform with their approach, jeopardizing, in the process, the diversity and independence of the international non-state climate community.

## NOTES

1. “Historic pact to curb emissions is approved” (*The Washington Post*), “195 countries reach historic deal to combat climate change” (*Boston Sunday Globe*), “Nations approve landmark climate deal” (*The New York Times*), “A major leap for mankind: world leaders hail Paris deal on climate” (*The Observer*), “195 nations sign groundbreaking climate accord to cut fossil fuel use” (*Haaretz*), “Climate deal offers chance to save world” (*Gulf News*).
2. As Newell writes, “more conservative ‘inside-insider’ groups [...] employ traditional patterns of lobbying and interest representation, [...] ‘inside-outsider’ groups [...] are involved in the formal policy process but adopt more confrontational strategies to influence it, reflecting different ideologies regarding market mechanisms and the role of the private sector, for example. The final category identified is ‘oustide-outsiders’, which covers the position and strategy of those groups that are not involved in the formal policy negotiations on climate change, but rather seek to draw attention to the impacts of the problem on existing patterns of inequality and social injustice through a variety of campaigning tools and technologies of protest” (Newell 2005, 99–100).
3. The UNFCCC distinguishes between “three categories of participants at meetings and conferences in the UNFCCC process: representatives of Parties to the Convention and Observer States, members of the press and media, and representatives of observer organizations. Observer organizations are further categorized into three types: the United Nations System and its Specialized Agencies, intergovern-

- mental organizations (IGOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). IGOs and NGOs can register delegates once they have received observer status, i.e. once they are admitted as observer organizations by the Conference of the Parties (COP).” [http://unfccc.int/parties\\_and\\_observers/items/2704.php](http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/items/2704.php) (accessed 10 April 2016).
4. <http://www.centre-francais-fondations.org/events/towards-the-2015-climate-agreement-how-ambitious-will-country-contributions-be> (accessed 4 April 2016).
  5. <http://europeanclimate.org/home/what-we-do/international-policies-politics/> (accessed 5 September 2015).
  6. <http://www.wwf-jugend.de/leben/praktika-und-jobs/gruene-praktika-und-jobs;6022> (accessed 14 February 2016).
  7. The US bias of foundation literature is understandable given their overall importance in the USA and their role in fostering and shaping the US environmental movement.
  8. It is interesting to see that this replicates funds like Tides.
  9. Interestingly, the CDFE received funding from a number of corporations and foundations that are renowned for their anti-environmental stance (According to its 2003 *Corporate Giving Report*, ExxonMobil, for instance, donated USD 40,000 to CDFE in 2003 for “global climate change issues”).
  10. <http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/key-facts2014/foundation-focus.html> (accessed 9 October 2015).
  11. <http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/topfunders/top100assets.html> (accessed 9 October 2015).
  12. <http://foundationcenter.org/findfunders/topfunders/top100giving.html> (accessed 9 October 2015).
  13. [http://www.efc.be/country\\_profile/united-kingdom/](http://www.efc.be/country_profile/united-kingdom/) (accessed 12 October 2015).
  14. The EGA brings together around 200 predominantly US foundations engaged in environmental grantmaking.
  15. Hewlett Foundation (30 %), Packard Foundation (18 %), Sea Change Foundation (11 %), Oak Foundation (5 %), Energy Foundation (5 %), Rockefeller Foundation (4%), National Postcode Lottery, Netherlands (3 %).
  16. This more active involvement of grantees can take the shape of Grantee Perception Reports (GPR) that offer grant recipients the

- possibility to share their experiences in working with a foundation (Fleishman 2009, 42).
17. Examples include policy (conflict resolution) and academic fields (area studies, public administration, molecular biology).

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## Philanthropic Foundations and the International Climate Regime

**Abstract** Chapter 2 looks at the origins of philanthropic involvement in the climate debate. It shows how liberal US foundations have historically dominated the field of climate philanthropy. In the 1980s and 1990s, through their grantmaking and convening activities, they helped to popularize the climate question in the USA and to lay the basis for the international climate regime. In the early years, foundation involvement in the climate debate was facilitated by the fact that it was less about policy action than about crafting an international framework for policy action (UNFCCC, IPCC). Once the framework was in place, foundations were left with the (daunting) task of getting countries—and in particular the USA—to commit to ambitious and binding action.

**Keywords** Liberal environmentalism • Liberal philanthropy • Climate regime • UNFCCC

### FOUNDATIONS IN PARIS

The COP21 to the Climate convention in Paris (December 2015) was regularly presented as a historic last chance to set the world on a course that prevents catastrophic climate change. As an international mega event

of historic proportions, the COP21 and its host city drew global attention and attracted many of the most prominent and active players in the international climate regime. By bringing together negotiators, political figures, scientists, the media as well as climate experts and activists from around the world, it also constituted a privileged vantage point—an “emblematic instance”—for the study of global environmental governance “in the making” (Foyer and Morena 2015). Yet, one group of actors went largely unnoticed: philanthropic foundations. When there was media coverage of foundations and individual philanthropists, it was usually to highlight initiatives related to climate change but not directly related to the international climate negotiations. This was, for instance, the case of Bill Gates, who, at the start of the conference on December 1, officially launched, along with 27 fellow billionaire philanthropists, the “Breakthrough Energy Coalition” to catalyse investment in transformative energy solutions.

On closer scrutiny, however, philanthropic foundations were well represented throughout the two weeks of the Paris COP. According to one French foundation representative, at least 300 predominantly US foundation representatives (staff members, trustees, board members) were present in Paris. During the COP, members of the foundation community were able to showcase their climate-related work and to exchange ideas and views with fellow philanthropists and participants in the Conference. More generally, through their presence in Paris, foundations could get a clearer sense of the current state of play in international climate governance.

The Paris COP was as much about what was going on inside the Le Bourget conference hall as what was going on around it. For two weeks, Paris was the “climate capital” of the world, staging countless conferences, seminars, exhibits and rallies. Foundations were involved in and hosted a number of these events. These included showcasing projects or initiatives that had benefited from foundation support. Examples include the Climate Summit for Local Leaders whose partners included the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and Bloomberg Philanthropies (who are both funders of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group).

There were also events specifically tailored towards the foundation community. The COP21 Funders Initiative, a group of foundations and foundation networks set up in mid-2015 “to help funders communicate, coordinate, and collaborate on the path to COP21,” played a central role in informing foundations and coordinating foundation activities during the COP (Randazzo et al. 2015). In the run-up to the COP, the Initiative

organized a series of invitation-only conference calls to share and identify strategic information, updates and needs, and to support logistics around COP21.<sup>1</sup> During the Paris Conference, and with support from the Centre Français des Fonds et Fondations (CFF), the Initiative co-hosted various climate-related events. This included a series of usually “funders only” seminars on climate and health, women and environment, divest/invest, climate and food, and climate and refugees. Daily breakfast briefings were also organized to inform foundation representatives on the current state of play in the negotiations. External actors—NGO and business representatives, climate experts—were regularly invited to share their views. Throughout the duration of the COP, the COP21 Funders Initiative also hosted social events such as dinners and receptions with national and international personalities (Al Gore, Christiana Figueres<sup>2</sup> and others).<sup>3</sup>

Foundation representatives were also present inside of the negotiation space. In their capacity as officially recognized observer organizations, a number of philanthropic foundations sent delegations to the Paris talks.<sup>4</sup> This was the case of the US-based Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Packard, Joyce, Rockefeller, Gordon and Betty Moore, ClimateWorks and UN foundations, the India-based Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation, the Latin American Avina Foundation and the ECF. Representing “foundation executives and trustees who make environmental grants,” the Consultative Group on Biological Diversity (CGBD) also sent a delegation to the Paris COP.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to these foundation delegations, a handful of foundation representatives attended the negotiations through other observer organizations—both inter- and non-governmental. This was, for instance, the case of two representatives from the KR Foundation who attended the conference through the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and CAN-Europe delegations. Additionally, the climate lead at the UK-based CIFF attended the talks through the SouthSouthNorth (SSN) Project Africa delegation. Finally, it is also interesting to note that certain ECF staff members attended the conference through other delegations than the ECF delegation. This was, for instance, the case of the ECF’s International Communications Director who attended the conference through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC; World Meteorological Organization [WMO])/United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] delegation.

While some foundation representatives, as we will show, were actively involved in the negotiations, others went to Le Bourget to meet grantees and partners, speak at or attend one of the many side events or simply

soak up the atmosphere. Larry Kramer, the President of the Hewlett Foundation, for instance, spoke at a side event on “Growth, the Driver of Climate Change Action.”<sup>6</sup> Yet, a foundation’s presence in or absence from the negotiation space says very little about the nature of its involvement in the international climate regime. What is more, and given the fact that foundations are not a recognized Major Group (MG) and act—at least in appearance—through their grantees, evaluating foundation influence in Paris requires us to look at the projects, initiatives and organizations that they supported and how they supported them. In their capacity as field-builders (see Introduction), foundations’ actions—or dare I say activism—can be assessed through *what* they fund and *how* they fund as well as through their convening and supporting roles.

While unquestionably signalling an interest for climate-related questions, capturing foundation involvement in international climate negotiations requires us to look beyond their physical presence in and around climate conferences. It requires us to identify the foundations, to examine their underlying objectives and to understand the funding strategies and patterns that derive from them. To this end, we will begin by retracing the origins and evolution of international climate philanthropy. Given the fact that the USA is home to the most active and well-endowed climate funders, its history largely coincides with the history of US climate philanthropy. This, as we shall see, lends itself to international funding strategies that reflect a US-centred approach to the climate debate. In other words, shifts in the US debate on climate change impact on the levels and nature of international climate philanthropy.

### THE “LIBERAL ENVIRONMENTALIST” ROOTS OF US CLIMATE PHILANTHROPY

Any discussion of contemporary international climate philanthropy requires us to look at the history of environmental philanthropy—and more specifically US environmental philanthropy. As Joan E. Spero explains, “foundations’ concern about global warming grew out of a long-standing commitment to environmental protection” (Spero 2010, 19). The origins of philanthropic engagement in the environmental field can be traced back to the origins of liberal philanthropy in the USA. Liberal philanthropy is generally characterized by its approach and underlying agenda. In terms of its approach, it is often credited with using science and reason to address the root causes of a given social problem. When it comes

to its underlying agenda, it is usually associated with the liberal political tradition in the USA—a tradition that combines, to varying degrees, ideas of individual liberty (of speech, of religion), civil rights, pluralistic democratic systems, support for government activism but opposition to more radical reforms (Faber and McCarthy 2005, 15). In the early twentieth century and drawing on a “progressive” approach to social change, wealthy liberal philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford and George Eastman helped establish a variety of groups and funds, mainly in the field of conservation and preservation (Brulle and Jenkins 2005, 151). Following in their footsteps, various foundations promoted a “rational use of nature through scientific management of natural resources” (Johnson and Frickel 2011, 307).

In the late 1950s, conservationist and preservationist approaches were supplemented by more population-centred and therefore “political” approaches to environmentalism. The publication of books like John Kenneth Galbraith’s *The Affluent Society* (1958), Vance Packard’s *The Waste Makers* (1960) or Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) contributed to focus public attention on the human origins and impacts of environmental degradation, linking it to wider concerns such as mass consumerism or industrialization (Galbraith 1958, Packard 1960, Carson 1962). According to Robert J. Brulle, the 1962–1975 period was one of “the most active periods of ecological politics in the United States” (Brulle 2000, 238). Nixon’s passing of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) in January 1970 paved the way for a decade of proactive environmental legislation—around 30 laws were passed until 1980. The Earth Day celebrations of April 1970, in which over 20 million US citizens participated, sparked a decade of grass-roots environmental mobilizations. At a time of rising New Left politics, the period witnessed the development of grass-roots environmental groups whose strategies and ideological grounding, through their combination of environmental and social concerns, marked a fundamental departure from the larger mainstream conservationist groups that had hitherto dominated the US environmental landscape.

Through their grantmaking, only a handful of large liberal foundations—representing the bulk of philanthropic giving in the USA—were prepared to support this increasingly diverse and politically engaged environmental movement. According to Mark Dowie, “most foundation trustees see environmental groups as too adversarial, too confrontational to rank alongside family, neighbourhood, church, and palliative charities



as legitimate institutions of civil society” (Dowie 2001, 89). As Edward Ames points out, “in the mid-1970s, of the more than 2000 foundations which were members of the Council on Foundations, fewer than 100 were actively engaged in environmental grant-making” (Ames 1981, 10). Liberal foundations’ reluctance to support environmental movements was accentuated by the right’s escalating attacks against their supposedly “political” agenda (a serious critique given the fact that foundations are legally barred from engaging in political activities). According to Brulle and Jenkins, 20 grants were made to the environmental movement in 1970, totalling a mere USD 750,000 (approximately USD 1.33 million in 2000 USD) (Brulle and Jenkins 2005, 157). Very few foundations were willing to dedicate staff time and dollars to environmental causes. The Ford, Andrew Mellon and Rockefeller foundations were among the few foundations to actively engage in environmental grantmaking, launching environmental programmes as early as 1965 and 1969 (the Ford foundation terminated its programme in 1980) (Ames 1981, 9; Barker 2008, 24). As liberal foundations, they generally promoted a reformist agenda grounded on the idea that, given the right policies, environmental protection and a thriving corporate-driven economy could go hand in hand. In the Cold War context, it was as much about protecting the environment as saving capitalism from itself. Given their limited number, these liberal foundations exerted a disproportionate influence on the US environmental movement.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of their environmental funding went to large, reform-oriented, Washington-based and predominantly conservationist organizations such as Resources for the Future (RFF), the Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) or the Nature Conservancy. Some of these “big greens” were actually the creations of foundations themselves. RFF, for instance, was launched in 1952, thanks to a Ford Foundation grant. Ford would later go on to provide start-up grants for the EDF, NRDC and Sierra Club Legal Defence Fund. As Barker points out, these groups and the Scientists Institute for Public Education accounted for over 65 % of the Ford Foundation’s environmental grantmaking in 1970 (Barker 2008, 25). By concentrating their funding among a limited number of players, large liberal foundations contributed to the association of US environmentalism with a handful of politically moderate national groups, which, in turn, contributed to marginalize grass-roots environmental activism. While far greater in num-

ber, it was harder for grass-roots organizations to draw national attention given the fact that only a small number of foundations were willing to fund them. As we will see, trends in climate funding would largely mirror those in the broader environmental field.

### THE RISE OF US CLIMATE PHILANTHROPY

Just as they had played a major role in shaping US environmentalism in the post-war period, a handful of foundations actively contributed to mobilize the US environmental community around the climate issue. Their actions were complicated by the fact that, unlike many other developed nations—and in particular those of Europe—the US environmentalist community had to—and still has to—deal with a persistent lack of federal leadership in the climate policy field, and this despite growing scientific consensus and public recognition of the reality of the problem. This federal inertia was buoyed by a highly effective climate countermovement that arose and grew out of the 1980s neoconservative counteroffensive. Over the course of the 1990s, the movement—spearheaded by a group of well-funded think tanks—effectively challenged the climate science and climate change’s legitimacy as a social problem. It also played an active role in getting the US Senate to pass a bill that buried any hopes of a US ratification of the Kyoto Protocol (McCright and Dunlap 2003).

As we will see, this challenge contributed to shape and orientate US foundations’ efforts in the climate field—and consequently the environmental community’s overall approach to global warming. Given their growing faith in the benefits of a strong global civil society, some liberal foundations focused their efforts on the international level by actively supporting the establishment of a global climate regime centred around the IPCC and UNFCCC. As we will see in the following pages, a handful of US foundations played a decisive role in nurturing a global climate regime. Others focused their efforts on national awareness-raising campaigns and support for scientific research. Given the circumstances, foundations generally refrained from directly engaging in policy work at the federal level.

Throughout the 1985–1997 period, philanthropic foundations, in their grantmaking and convening capacities, simultaneously contributed to turn global warming into a legitimate social problem in the USA and to forge an international climate governance regime (Hemphill 2013, 10). Internationally, foundations funded research, raising awareness and support for the international discussions leading to the establish-

ment of the UNFCCC. Prior to this period, foundations had, on occasion, funded climate-related initiatives. However, these were few and far between and did not form part of a consolidated strategy. In 1974 and 1975, for instance, the Rockefeller Foundation organized a seminar and a conference on climate change for its staff and programme officers. In 1978 and 1979, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) made grants to the International Federation of Institutes for Advance Study to coordinate and conduct research on different issues including “climate modification.”

It was only in the early to mid-1980s that foundations began to more resolutely take up the climate change issue. Their growing interest for global warming coincided with the framing of environmental degradation as a global problem and concomitant deployment of an international environmental regime (1972 Stockholm Conference, launch of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 1987 Brundtland Report). Throughout this period, liberal foundations contributed to the deployment and mainstreaming of what Steven Bernstein terms the “compromise of liberal environmentalism” whereby international environmental protection and a liberal economic order are presented as mutually reinforcing (Bernstein 2002, 1). The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (also known as Rio92) marked a high point for liberal environmentalism through its deployment of concepts like “sustainable development.”

Given its global character, climate change naturally came to occupy a central position within this new regime. It was during this period that a number of foundations initiated *global* environmental programmes. Having contributed to launch the WRI in 1982, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation went on to launch its World Environment and Resources Program in 1986 (or 1988) (Kohler 2007, 179). Other large US foundations, some of which had a long track record of environmental grantmaking, also adopted a more global outlook to their environmental grantmaking. The RBF and Rockefeller Foundation, for example, set up their “One world: sustainable resource use” programme in 1983 and “Global Environment” programme in 1989, respectively. In the latter case, the programme was intended “to support work promoting the skills, attitudes, relationships, and institutions necessary for environmentally sound international development” (Rockefeller Foundation 1990). Through their programmes and keeping with the liberal philanthropic tradition, foundations actively supported the establishment of new global environmental institutions and processes, as well as the advent of a global

environmental “civil society” (Parmar 2012, 6). It was through these global environmental programmes that many foundations began to more systematically take on the climate issue. As part of its “One world: sustainable resource use” programme, RBF dedicated staff time and financial resources to “international discussions on climate change and biodiversity preservation.”

Through their grants, foundations enthusiastically supported the shaping of a global climate regime. This involved grants to support climate research, stakeholder participation and dialogue and the formation of a global climate NGO community. In the research domain, RBF made grants to the World Commission on Environment and Development for research on “the major causes and likely impacts of the gradual warming trend of the earth’s atmosphere” and the production of “a five-year action agenda for examining policy options” (1985). In 1989, it gave USD 90,000 to the Tata Energy Research Institute in India “toward its establishment of an Information and Research Centre on global warming and climate change” (Rockefeller Foundation 1990). Other foundations made similar sorts of grants. In 1990, the Rockefeller Foundation made a grant to the African Centre for Technology Studies for the organization of a conference on “Global warming and climate change: perspectives from Africa.” In 1991, the Rockefeller Foundation made a grant to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to organize a series of conferences on the economics of global warming and the transition to an international climate regime.

Throughout the agenda-setting and negotiations period that preceded the establishment of the UNFCCC in 1992, a relatively small group of foundations funded the participation of NGO representatives and/or national delegates—especially from the Global South—in international meetings and conferences. Through their funding, they contributed to break the international climate debate’s “Northern-centred” image. In 1990, for instance, the Rockefeller Foundation made a grant to the WMO “to cover the travel expenses of developing-country participants in upcoming meetings of the IPCC” (Rockefeller Foundation 1991). Substantial amounts of foundation money also went towards the organization of large international conferences and meetings. That same year, the Rockefeller Foundation made a USD 490,000 grant to the UN Conference on Environment and Development “to strengthen selected activities that advance the interests of developing countries in the preparatory work of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development” (Rockefeller Foundation

1991). The MacArthur Foundation also made a substantial contribution to the 1992 Conference (Kohler 2007, 179). From 1988 to 1990, the RBF and Rockefeller Foundation made regular grants to the Woods Hole Research Center to convene regional meetings to support developing nations in international discussions on greenhouse gas emissions and to produce a model international protocol for restricting emissions of all greenhouse gases (with special attention to the developing countries) (Rockefeller Foundation 1989; Rockefeller Brothers Fund 1989).

A handful of foundations actively supported efforts to secure and coordinate civil society involvement in the international climate debate. They funded, among others, large mainstream environmental NGOs and think tanks such as the WorldWatch Institute, WWF, NRDC, IUCN, WRI, Environmental Defense Fund, Conservation International as well as research institutes such as the International Stockholm Environment Institute or IIED. As the RBF explains in its 1993 annual review, these “global preachers” “played a central role beginning in the early days of the climate change debate” (Rockefeller Brothers Fund 1994). In 1989, with foundation backing, the EDF, WWF and Greenpeace International launched the Climate Action Network (CAN) to coordinate actions around climate change in Hanover, Germany.<sup>7</sup> Foundations also funded CAN’s regional entities. The RBF, for instance, made grants to Climate Network Europe (CNE, which would become CAN-Europe).

### FOUNDATIONS AS CONVENERS

In their field-building capacity, foundations not only funded groups but also played a convening role by hosting a series of climate-related events and meetings. By facilitating international stakeholder dialogue, they contributed to the formation of a global climate regime. In 1987, the RBF, the Rockefeller Foundation and the W. Alton Jones Foundation co-sponsored two workshops (under the auspices of the Advisory Group on Greenhouse Gases (AGGG) and the Stockholm-based Beijer Institute) in Villach, Austria, and Bellagio, Italy, that led to the creation of the IPCC (Agrawala 1998). Bringing together 24 participants—including representatives of WRI, EDF, WHRC, Institute for Research on Public Policy—the second workshop focused on future policy steps and the institutional arrangements that would be needed for their implementation (Jaeger 1988). It was hosted in the Bellagio study and conference centre, which is owned and run by the Rockefeller Foundation (since 1959)—and which

has a long history of hosting important international events. A third workshop in Woods Hole in 1988 laid the groundwork for the future climate convention. A further meeting “of national delegates from the global climate-change negotiations, academicians, members of nongovernmental organizations, and UN officials” was funded and convened in Bellagio by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1992 in the run-up to the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio (Rockefeller Foundation 1993).

It is interesting to note that the inaugural conference of the RBF’s Pocantico Center in April 1994 (6–8) was devoted to global warming (conference title: ‘Turning up the heat: next steps on climate change’). From that point on, Pocantico served as a meeting place for a variety of stakeholders involved in the climate debate. Bringing together representatives of businesses, multilateral institutions, governments, scientific and conservation communities from the USA, Europe, Asia and Africa, the April 1994 conference’s stated purpose was “to help develop strategies for mitigating climate change and for advancing international consideration of these issues” (von Moltke 1995).

So far, we have shown how, over the course of the 1980s, a group of US foundations, in their grantmaking and convening capacities, actively contributed to shape the international climate regime. The establishment of the UNFCCC in 1992 opened up a period of international climate negotiations that ultimately gave rise to the Kyoto Protocol. As we will see in the following section, over the course of the 1992–1997 period, having established the UNFCCC, a number of US foundations directed their efforts towards the domestic level in an attempt to get the USA to agree to an ambitious international agreement. Faced with the US government’s reluctance to act, certain foundations ultimately chose to leave the international and national levels and focus their efforts on “winnable battles” at the sub-national or sectorial level, laying the groundwork for a new “strategic” approach to philanthropy (see Chap. 3).

## FOCUS ON THE USA

A number of foundations rapidly realized that given their contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions there would be no meaningful progress at the international level unless the USA played a more proactive role. While there was broad international consensus on the seriousness of global warming and the need to address it, the US environmental community was still struggling to impose climate change as a legitimate social

problem domestically. Under the Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, there was no comprehensive attempt to tackle directly the growth in greenhouse gas emissions (it should be noted that Bush did sign and ratify the UN Climate Convention in 1992). As was previously noted, in support of government inaction were well-organized and well-funded conservative efforts to undermine the climate science. Conservative think tanks, front groups and media outlets collectively waged a “war of ideas” aimed at casting doubt on the science and stalling federal action on climate change (Covington 2005, 89).<sup>8</sup> The origins of the neoconservative climate denial machine date back to late 1980s and the collapse of international communism and concomitant rise of environmentalism as a new perceived global threat. Replicating the environmentalist movement and in an attempt to undermine efforts to regulate the environment, conservative groups generated vast quantities of data aimed at casting doubt on the climate science.

In an attempt to counter the denialists and generate momentum for greater federal action and US stewardship at the international level, various foundations funded awareness-raising<sup>9</sup> and policy research activities. Foundations such as the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation and the Wallace Global Fund commissioned organizations like the Union of Concerned Scientists or the Tellus Institute to produce reports on the feasibility and potential of US action to curb global warming. In 1985, Ted Turner—who would later go on to create the Turner Foundation in 1991—initiated a foundation named The Better World Society to fund documentaries on global warming (as well as nuclear arms control, overpopulation, global poverty, disease, malnutrition). Recognizing that “strong public support would be critical to the US government’s willingness to play a leadership role in international climate negotiations,” the RBF and other foundations present at the 1994 Pocantico meeting (see above) decided to launch a domestic constituency building initiative on climate change, involving various environmental groups and climate coalitions—among them, the Environmental Information Center, Environmental Media Services, US Climate Action Network, Union of Concerned Scientists, Sierra Club Foundation, NRDC and EDF. This, according to RBF, was the first concerted attempt, over the course of 1995 and 1996, at “educating the American public about the science of global warming [and] the consensus that exists among scientists regarding the reality of climate change, its danger, and the role of human activity [...] in its acceleration or mitigation.”

Coinciding with the launch of the UNFCCC, the 1992 Democratic presidential victory, while sending a positive signal, fell short when it came to delivering the required climate policies and leadership. Shortly before the start of negotiations on a legally binding international climate deal, the Republicans' mid-term election victory slashed any hopes of stringent climate policy at the Congressional level. These difficulties to generate momentum on the climate issue at the federal level coincided with the reevaluation by many foundations of their environmental programmes. Some foundations disengaged from the environmental field altogether, while others reassessed and readjusted their environmental grantmaking tactics and portfolios (Dowie 1996, 176). Certain foundations—including large foundations such as Pew, the Rockefeller Family Fund and MacArthur—questioned the tendency among grantees “to expand the thematic agenda to a point where one organization is dealing with 30 or 40 problems at the same time. Staffs are highly diversified and spread out over a wide terrain” (Dowie 1996, 249). They subsequently proceeded to drastically withdraw support towards ineffective or redundant programmes. In a parallel move, they “began signing new strategies and tactics and offering national organizations money to carry them out” (Dowie 2001, 96). In the climate field, these new strategies and tactics were of three different orders.

Firstly, foundations proceeded to deepen cooperation in the climate philanthropy field. Given their limited overall resources—when compared to other fields of philanthropy, the idea was to combine forces through collaborative projects and aligned grantmaking strategies. As Hemphill explains, “in the American climate movement, philanthropists are extremely well networked: funders make it their mission to have a finger on the pulse of who’s moving what initiative, how money and expertise can be leveraged together, and how disparate pieces of the movement should be kept connected” (Hemphill 2013, 11). Cooperation was facilitated by the emergence of specialized philanthropic networks such as the Environmental Grantmakers Association (EGA)—launched in 1987 with help from the Rockefeller Family Fund. Through such networks, foundations could collectively engage in “trend spotting” exercises, exchange and align strategies and regroup around specific sub-fields such as climate change.

This heightened level of cooperation among foundations contributed to the spread of a more proactive approach to grantmaking that involved the pooling of large amounts of money to launch targeted projects. As



we will see in the following chapter, the climate and energy debate acted as a testing ground for new strategic/results-oriented/outcome-oriented forms of philanthropy. While the notion of strategic philanthropy is not new per se, the 1990s and 2000s saw its renewal through the integration of new grantmaking methodologies—market analysis, target setting, evaluation—largely inspired by and imported from the business community. A significant number of those who contributed to the theorization and spread of this approach were directly or indirectly associated with a new brand of philanthropists—sometimes dubbed as venture philanthropists or philanthrocapitalists—born out of the financial and technology boom of the 1980s and 1990s.

Secondly, and given the difficulties to get the US federal government—despite growing public acknowledgement of the climate issue—to act decisively on climate change at either the international or domestic level, various foundations chose to enhance their efforts towards the business community. It was a matter of countering the prevailing idea—promoted by climate denialists—that tackling global warming did not make economic sense. Rather than mobilizing the public or directly pushing for federal action, it was increasingly about getting businesses to take up the “green growth” approach and invest in clean energy solutions. It hinged on the idea that if the business community showed leadership, the federal government would be more inclined to legislate. This marks a clear shift away from foundations’ earlier focus on climate science and awareness-raising as levers for US climate action.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a number of national “big greens” proceeded, with foundation backing, to break with the environmental movement’s anti-corporate image and nurture close working relationships with “progressive” members of the business community. Instead of calling for more stringent regulation, they now enthusiastically embraced business—and market-centred solutions to global warming—and environmental degradation more generally (Dowie 1996, 107). As Jay Hair of the National Wildlife Federation explains, “our arguments must translate into profits, earnings, productivity, and economic incentives for industry” (Dowie 1996, 107). In the climate field, one of the most notable examples is the Pew Charitable Trusts’ Pew Center on Global Climate Change (launched in 1998). Spearheaded by a Business Environmental Leadership Council (BELC) composed of around 40 of the largest US corporations,<sup>10</sup> its stated purpose was to foster “a new cooperative debate on climate change” within the business community through the production of

reports, and the facilitation of dialogue (Spero 2010, 20). As we will see, at the international level, this pro-business approach that focuses on the economic benefits of climate action was consolidated in the wake of the Copenhagen collapse (see Chap. 5).

Thirdly, and once again largely in response to the lack of federal leadership, certain foundations directed their efforts towards the regional and state levels. The idea was to target states where the populations, businesses and local authorities were more willing to address the climate issue. Launched in 1990, the Pew Charitable Trusts' groundbreaking climate programme, for instance, targeted states with the greatest potential for climate action—California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont (Kohler 2007, 204). Foundations pursued this approach throughout the decade, and well into the new millennium. This was, for instance, the case of the Oak Foundation, which, in the late 1990s, focused its US efforts on the Northeast and Midwest. As we will show in the next chapter, many of the foundations that had opted for a more explicitly pro-business approach also targeted state regulators and administrations in order to foster climate-friendly business investments.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter we have shown how the concomitant emergence of an international climate regime and development of a climate philanthropy community coincided with liberal environmentalism's global deployment. Through their dual function as conveners and grantmakers, foundations nurtured the development of a heterogeneous global climate community composed of environmental NGOs, UN representatives, businesses, climate scientists and experts, country negotiators and diplomats.<sup>11</sup> Following in the footsteps of their liberal forefathers, these foundations firmly believed that, given adequate resources and information, members of the international community would rationally cooperate to solve the climate crisis.

We also saw how, given their US origins, foundations' strategies and approaches to climate change have historically been influenced by or responded to the US context. The evolution of the field of climate philanthropy mirrors that of the US political context—and most notably the threat posed by neoconservative attacks against climate action. This was especially evident from the moment that the UNFCCC was in place and

that discussions began to focus on countries' historic responsibilities and required emissions reduction efforts. Some foundations attempted to get the USA to play a leadership role in international negotiations—by funding awareness-raising campaigns, research, policy work. In the process, they contributed to the spread of a US-centred worldview of what can and cannot be achieved in international climate negotiations.

Limited progress on climate change at the US federal level and mounting attacks from climate denialists (funded by conservative foundations) led a group of prominent climate funders to collectively reevaluate their grantmaking strategies. Instead of questioning the limits of the “liberal environmentalist” approach, they sought ways of perfecting and streamlining their respective grantmaking approaches. As we will see in the following chapter, the development of strategic or focused approaches to philanthropy subsequently contributed to a restructuring of the international climate philanthropy field—and more widely the international climate community.

## NOTES

1. As we will see in Chap. 5, this was an important part of the IPPI strategy.
2. Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC.
3. <http://www.centre-francais-fondations.org/cercles-themes/themes-1/climat/cop-21/cop-21-en> (accessed 5 April 2016).
4. Within the UNFCCC system, observer organizations include representatives of United Nations secretariat units and bodies (UNDP, UNEP, UNCTAD), specialized agencies (such as GEF, WMO/UNEP IPCC) and intergovernmental (IGOs) such as the OECD, the International Energy Agency (IEA). The vast majority of observer organizations are NGOs (there are over 1880 NGOs and 100 IGOs). Foundations fall into this observer sub-category. However, and interestingly, they are not recognized—and, to my knowledge, have never requested—to be recognized as a distinct MG.
5. The delegation included the CGBD programme manager, three foundation representatives—Energy Foundation, Global GreenGrants Fund—and a foundation consultant on climate and energy issues.
6. <http://climatepolicyinitiative.org/event/cop21-side-event-growth-the-driver-of-climate-change-action/> (accessed 7 February 2016).

7. The RBF, for instance, helped to launch CAN International's *Eco* newsletter through funding in 1993.
8. As Arнове and Pinede point out, "funds available to conservative think tanks were disproportionately greater than those for progressive think tanks" (Arнове and Pinede 2007, 394).
9. In 1986 it was estimated that over 50 % of the American public had never heard about the greenhouse effect (Block 2008).
10. Whose members included, among others, American Electric Power, Boeing, BP America, Enron, Intercontinental Energy Corporation, Lockheed, 3M, Toyota, The Sun Company...
11. As we will see in the following chapters, many within this small and close-knit community would continue to be active in 2015 during the Paris COP.

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## A Strategic Approach to Climate Philanthropy

**Abstract** The chapter looks at how, over the course of the 1990s and in response to a shifting political context, a group of prominent climate funders adopted a more focused and strategic approach to grantmaking. While staying true to the core principles of liberal philanthropy, this new approach combined collaborative, proactive, outcome-oriented and evaluation-driven grantmaking methods with a pro-business, market-centred and bottom-up understanding of social change. By the mid-2000s, its core elements came to form the basis of a new approach to international climate philanthropy, bolstering foundation involvement in the international climate arena in the process. On the back of the *Design to Win* report (2007), a group of large liberal foundations proceeded to align their strategies and pool resources through common initiatives and projects, and most notable the creation of the ClimateWorks Foundation.

**Keywords** Energy • Foundation • Strategic philanthropy • Philanthrocapitalism • Climate philanthropy

The fact that global warming is on so many governments' and businesses' agendas today is due in no small part to the Pew Charitable Trusts, the

Energy Foundation, and a handful of other philanthropies that began addressing the issue in the early 1990s.

—Paul Brest and Hal Harvey

*Money well spent: A strategic plan for smart philanthropy*

## INTRODUCTION: THE (RE)BIRTH OF STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY

The early 1990s saw a new phase in climate philanthropy’s short history. In response to the lack of progress at the US level, a group of well-endowed liberal foundations began exploring and experimenting new ways of achieving more substantial results in the climate domain. The priority was to make climate philanthropy more effective. In doing so, they sought to address climate-related philanthropy’s structural limitations. Firstly, they had to deal with the comparatively limited foundation assets devoted to the climate question (see data in Chap. 1). According to the Childrens Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), philanthropy represents less than 0.1 % of total climate finance, and the large climate philanthropies—regrouped in the ClimateWorks Foundation funders table—add<sup>1</sup> up to USD 0.3 billion (Medina 2015). Secondly, they had to come to terms with the scale of the problem. Unlike other areas of philanthropic engagement—education, healthcare—where, given the right amount of funding, foundations can make a difference, no amount of philanthropic funding can, by itself, solve the climate problem. The idea was to draw on philanthropy’s comparative advantage when compared to the private sector or governments. As Sonia Medina from CIFF goes on to explain, philanthropists “can test innovative approaches, take risks, be nimble and react quickly to windows of opportunity, and is an honest broker that is not politically driven” (Medina 2015). As she goes on to explain, “philanthropy can therefore use its relatively small resources to play a catalytic role to create transformational change by: opening pools of capital, being a catalyst to climate policy, helping to speed up innovation, motivating finance ministers” (Medina 2015). Climate change therefore requires foundations to invest in the levers of change, rather than change itself. Given the origins of most Greenhouse Gas emissions, it means creating a regulatory framework and economic environment more conducive to low-carbon business models and greater investments in clean technologies.

Drawing inspiration from corporate practices, a group of foundation leaders—including Rebecca Rimel (Pew), Hal Harvey (Energy), Paul

Brest (Hewlett), Adele Simmons (MacArthur)—set about promoting a “strategic,” “mission-driven,” “effective” or “venture” approach to climate philanthropy. Given the scale of the problem and the limited aggregate resources available to address it, they felt that by adopting a more collaborative, evidence-based and results-oriented approach, foundations could achieve better results. Strategic leverage becomes essential “because the philanthropic sector is tiny compared with the issues it confronts. Its grant dollars are miniscule compared with spending by the government and transactions in the private sector” (Brest and Harvey 2008, 6). As a result, as Rebecca Rimel of the Pew Charitable Trusts explains, a growing number of foundations “have begun to move beyond [their] traditional, relatively passive role as grant givers to become catalysts, brokers, information resources, and civic entrepreneurs through strategic investments” (Rimel 1999, 230). Like “traditional” liberal philanthropy, strategic philanthropy seeks to address the root causes of a given social problem rather than just its symptoms. The “newness” of this “new and improved” philanthropy (supposedly) lies in foundations’ grantmaking methods, interactions with grantees and greater grant oversight (Katz 2005, 123).

These pioneers were rapidly joined by a new generation of “successful-entrepreneurs-turned-philanthropists” who, in drawing on their personal experience, felt that they were in a position to solve “big problems” “through the application of their business acumen, ambition, and ‘strategic’ mindset” (G. Jenkins 2011, 756). The assets of this new brand of philanthrocapitalists typically derived from the tech industry—Gordon Moore (Intel)—the Internet—Jeff Skoll (eBay), Eric Schmidt (Google)—or the financial sector—Nathaniel Simons, Chris Hohn. Many went on to establish their own foundations in the late 1990s and 2000s.<sup>2</sup> Given its concentration of high-technology and Internet companies, the San Francisco Bay area became a global centre for strategic giving in the climate domain.<sup>3</sup> As we will see throughout this chapter, many of these individuals and foundations actively collaborated on joint climate-related projects and initiatives. As Brest and Harvey explain, “since philanthropists are essentially investors, their most fundamental form of collaboration is the aggregation of dollars to make things happen on a scale beyond what any single funder could accomplish” (Brest and Harvey 2008, 91).

A central and cross-cutting characteristic of this new brand of philanthropy is its effort to apply business or entrepreneurial principles to all the levels of philanthropic activity, “from first ideas to final evaluations.” As Helmut K. Anheier and Regina A. List explain, strategic philanthropy



“refers to both the working philosophy and the programme strategies of foundations and other philanthropic institutions” (Anheier and List 2005, 250–251). This sets “strategic philanthropy” apart from “strategic giving.” In his review of a selection of books devoted to the subject, Charles H. Hamilton writes that “more than simply strategic grantmaking or narrow strategic planning, ‘strategic philanthropy’ comes to embrace the whole organization and everything it does” (Hamilton 2011, 112). These business principles generally translate into a higher degree of foundation oversight. Grant proposals are judged on the basis of their ability to provide a clearly defined and ambitious goal, an evidence-based roadmap or business plan, achievable scenarios, plans for long-term financial sustainability and proof of their competitive advantage over other similar organizations and projects. As Hal Harvey explains, grantees are expected to:

explicitly describe the problem to be addressed, define the solution and be specific about it, name the people and the institutions that must be changed and discuss what is likely to change them, show how your program will accomplish change, and demonstrate the long-term commitment required for real change. Then subject the whole thing to peer review and clean it up as necessary. This approach will, more often than not, reap gratifying and even extra-ordinary rewards. (Harvey, *The importance of focus in effective philanthropy* 1999, 25–26)

From the moment that foundations treat their grants as investments with expected social returns, they logically tend to adopt a more proactive approach to grantmaking (Rimel 1999, 230). Instead of holding a backseat position, foundations actively contribute to the various stages of the project—from its drafting to its realization—by offering grantees with expertise, consultation, insights and direction. As Jamie Cooper-Hohn of the CIFF explains, foundations help potential grantees to “think ambitiously and draw up a credible business plan” (Bishop and Green 2008, 85). Throughout the project lifecycle, foundations and grantees are expected to measure real outcomes and impact. As Paul Brest, former president of the Hewlett Foundation, explains, “both parties monitor progress toward outcomes and assess their success in achieving them in order to make appropriate course corrections” (Brest 2012, 42).

In return for their efforts, grantees can expect long-term partnerships with the grantmaking foundations—in particular, through core or general operating support (rather than just project funding). As Paul Brest

explains, “the goals of achieving long-term impact and improving the institutions that make positive contributions to society are, on the whole, complementary and imply a presumption in favour of providing those institutions with general operating support” (Brest 2002). They can also hope to develop their capacities, infrastructures and organizational ability along the way.

One foundation-backed and climate-related initiative is particularly suggestive of this new brand of strategic philanthropy: the Energy Foundation (EF). As we will see over the course of this chapter, its core principles and approaches to grantmaking formed the basis for the renewal of liberal philanthropic engagement in the climate domain and its subsequent expansion to the international field in the mid- to late 2000s.

## THE ENERGY FOUNDATION

Dubbed “the biggest foundation you’ve never heard of,” the San Francisco-based EF is a noteworthy attempt at translating the principles of strategic philanthropy into action (Wei-Skiller 2012). According to Hal Harvey, its founder and president from 1991 to 2002, the EF’s ambition was “to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy as a path toward a sustainable energy future” (Harvey 1999, 18). The idea came from three recently appointed foundation presidents—Peter Goldmark (Rockefeller Foundation), Rebecca Rimel (Pew Charitable Trusts) and Adele Simmons (MacArthur Foundation). As was highlighted in the previous chapter (Chap. 2), all three foundations have a long track record of involvement in the climate field—and environmental field more broadly. Over the course of the 1980s, they spent large sums of money on climate-related projects and launched, in certain cases collaboratively, special programmes and initiatives to address different aspects of the global environmental problem. Given their involvement and cumulated experience and understanding of the field, they increasingly felt that there was both a need and an opportunity to achieve tangible results by collectively and strategically investing in the energy field. Hal Harvey, a recognized expert in the field and advocate of strategic philanthropy, consulted with a number of energy specialists and practitioners and commissioned feasibility studies over the course of 1990 (Seldon et al. 2013, 48). Having validated the business plan, the three foundations proceeded to officially launch the EF in 1991 through a combined promissory grant of USD 20 million. By 1998, contributions to the EF were in excess of USD 100 million.

Various reasons led them to focus the new Foundation's efforts on energy efficiency and renewables. According to Peter C. Goldmark, these include:

the finding that there were proven methodologies of energy efficiency ready to be adopted. The 'changes' in question had to be replicated and propagated, not invented; the assessment that this would be a long-term job lasting a decade or more; the conclusion that there was no existing national funding organization that had energy efficiency as its primary focus; and the judgement that identifying the names of the three foundations with the new organization, as well as pooling funds through a single structure, would underline the seriousness of the undertaking and increase its ability to influence others. (The Rockefeller Foundation 1991)

Given the growing domestic interest and receptiveness towards energy-related issues among certain utility companies, state energy regulators, environmentalists and policy makers—especially in the context of the Gulf War—the three foundations felt that the time was right to push for a transformation of the US energy sector through a combined focus on renewables and energy efficiency. As Peter C. Goldmark Jr., president of the Rockefeller Foundation, stated at a press conference organized to launch the foundation, “it is time to conceive of energy efficiency as a source of energy just like oil in Alaska or coal in Montana” (Teltsch 1991). By framing the climate issue through the very concrete energy lens, the three foundations felt that they could successfully mobilize the wider public by emphasizing the tangible benefits for consumers and businesses. This approach made even more sense given the fact that climate denialists drew on economic arguments to justify climate inaction (Kimble 2012, 8). As Goldmark explains, “no reasonable person, it seems to those of us who became converted to the cause of improved energy practices, can fail to appreciate the considerable opportunity that lies ahead.” In other words, the idea was not only to highlight the risks of climate change but also to emphasize the economic opportunities and benefits of action. As he goes on to write:

The opportunity can be seized upon for reasons of a cleaner, healthier environment, for reasons of economic competitiveness and growth, for reasons of strengthened international security, or for reasons of global citizenship. Whatever the preferred reason—and the foundations believe all four matter—it defies logic, common sense, and self-interest for the United States to

persist in its wasteful energy practices and to drive into the next century as if fossil fuels are limitless and benign. (The Rockefeller Foundation 1991)

A core characteristic of the EF—in line with the noticeable trend in the environmental movement—is its overall promotion of a pro-business and pro-market agenda. As Dowie explains, the Foundation’s grantmaking “reveals a strong bias toward lawyers, free market economics, shareholders of fossil fuel corporations, public utilities, and the investment bankers who underwrite utility securities” (Dowie 2001, 144–145). This translates into a grantee portfolio almost entirely composed of large mainstream Washington-based NGOs—such as the NRDC, the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) and the EDF.

## APPROACH

Apart from its chosen area of action and agenda, the EF’s originality lies in its underlying approach to philanthropic giving and, as we will see, to its role in shaping future trends in international climate philanthropy. Through its coordination, networking and selection of participants, it helps to create and consolidate alliances and consensus among organizations active in the field. The Foundation and its grantees constantly evaluate one another and themselves so as to learn the lessons from their successes and failures and thereby improve and refine future strategies and investments. The EF develops an entrepreneurial approach to philanthropy that places particular emphasis on market analysis and risk assessments, cost-benefit ratios and returns on investment. This marks a clear departure from earlier foundation approaches to the climate issue. Whereas, before, climate philanthropy was about pushing the climate issue into the public agenda and supporting national and international advocacy work, it is now about promoting given policy options to the climate change issue through a strategic grantmaking approach. And finally, it is about promoting a new discourse that stresses the economic benefits of climate action—a discourse that came to dominate the international climate and development agenda in the post-Copenhagen period. From a more auxiliary role, foundations now contribute to both frame the climate issue and shape the solutions.

The strategic approach builds on the belief that through greater collaboration and proactive and targeted grantmaking strategies, foundations generate momentous results. The EF’s regranteeing status did not prevent it from engaging in energy policy work of its own. Quite to the contrary,

staff members were expected to regularly monitor progress and provide advice to grantees. As Mark Dowie explains, while the foundation regrants over 90 % of the money that it receives, it also spends a “portion of the annual cash flow on seminars, conferences, and independent research [and] promotes a number of specific national policies its director believes will lead to sustainable energy production” (Dowie 2001, 142).

By privileging a sub-national approach, the EF contributed to shape and push through state standards in the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency in utilities, appliances, vehicles and construction (most notably in California). An independent evaluation of the Foundation, released in May 1998, concluded that through its regional campaigns to promote energy efficiency and renewable energies, it had been “highly successful” in pursuing its goal of “a sustainable energy future” (Kohler 2007, 214). It should be noted that some observers are far less enthusiastic when it comes to assessing the EF’s work. Mark Dowie, for instance, argues that the EF played a counterproductive role in energy restructuring (Dowie 2001, 164).

By pooling their funds and channelling them through a single organization staffed by energy specialists, the three foundations believed that they could achieve greater overall impact (Energy Foundation 2001). As Hal Harvey and Paul Brest explain, “the Energy Foundation’s staff serve as virtual program officers for its funders, providing a degree of expertise that would be difficult and expensive even for large foundations to replicate” (Brest and Harvey 2008, 92). Instead of spreading their bets, the plan was to channel funds through a single organization whose task was to make more targeted and therefore more effective investments. As a regranteeing or “pass-through” foundation, the EF “[specializes] as a strategic intermediary, to get the money working in the field” (Energy Foundation 2001).

By demonstrating the tangible benefits of such a collective endeavour, the idea was to get other foundations to either channel funds through EF or align their grantmaking to the EF strategy. In the years since its creation, the original donors were joined by a host of other core funders, including the David and Lucile Packard (1999), William and Flora Hewlett (2001),<sup>4</sup> Joyce Mertz-Gilmore (1996) and McKnight (1998) foundations.<sup>5</sup> It was a way for these foundations to not duplicate their individual efforts while simultaneously investing in an organization that had the resources—both financial and human—to adequately tackle a very complex issue. In other words, they could outsource all or part of their

energy activities to the EF. As Mark Dowie puts it, “it is undeniable that the Energy Foundation has saved scarce resources that would otherwise have been wasted on redundant bureaucracies” (Dowie 2001, 143). As Susan Bell, vice president of the Hewlett Foundation until 2012, explains, “if we wanted to make a difference on the issue, we would have had to staff up to do that, and the Energy Foundation allowed us not to. They served as our program staff and could navigate among existing organizations that needed funding” (Seldon et al. 2013, 48–49). From a prospective grantee perspective, having one single foundation specializing in energy issues simplified the task of grant seeking. As Dowie goes on to write, having the “ability to shop at one source—rather than making the same pitch three or more times—is a blessing” (Dowie 2001, 143). As we will see, this approach—pooling funds and strategies, setting up new specialized foundations—would be exported to the field of international climate negotiations.

However, by delegating the expertise and decision-making to, and channelling a large proportion of available energy funding through, one single foundation, there was a risk of concentrating the power in one single organization and towards one single strategy. EF became the de facto reference point and, given its domineering position, a tough one to challenge. In his book, *The Last Energy War: The Battle Over Utility Deregulation*, Harvey Wasserman quotes an activist as saying that “the Energy Foundation launders utility influence through the foundation system. Under that cover, they use NRDC and their fellow high-rollers to buy green credibility for utility bailouts, while starving the grassroots organizations that really speak for the public” (Wasserman 1999, 59). According to Eugene Coyle, who once worked for a Bay Area group called TURN (Toward Utility Rate Normalization), “the Energy Foundation has threatened to strip funding from groups that have opposed its deal-making with the utilities” (St. Clair and Cockburn 1997). In other words, the flipside to this approach is that the EF contributes to marginalize more activist groups and initiatives and hush “opposition to their chosen course of action” (Dowie 2001, 145).

Regardless of whether or not this is true, what is certain is that the EF’s objectives and strategy were clearly based on the idea that real progress in the energy field is possible through dialogue, cooperation and compromise between those it identifies as the key economic and regulatory players. This approach to policy change was far from unique to the EF. In 2001, for instance, the Better World Fund (created in 1998 by entrepreneur

and philanthropist Ted Turner) helped create the Energy Future Coalition whose ambition was to identify and promote clean and sustainable energy policy options by bringing together representatives from the business, environmental and labour fields.

By the mid-2000s, the shifting political context and rising national and global momentum around climate change encouraged foundations involved in the climate field to scale up their actions by reengaging in the national and international climate debates (Kimble 2012, 11–12). At the US level, the Democratic victory in the 2006 Congressional elections significantly improved the prospects of reasonable climate policy. At the international level, 2007 saw the designation of a new UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, who placed climate change as a top priority for the international community. That same year, the IPCC published its *Fourth Assessment Report* whose two headline findings were that global warming was “unequivocal” and that it was very likely due to “anthropogenic greenhouse concentrations,” thus further generating a sense of urgency. Mirroring existing foundation efforts in the USA, climate change was also increasingly being framed in terms of its economic opportunities. The publication in late 2006 of the influential *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* highlighted the economic challenges posed by global warming as well as the benefits—both environmental and economic—of early action. Finally, the adoption by Parties of the Bali roadmap at the COP13 in December 2007 generated new hope on the possibility of reaching a legally binding international climate agreement for the post-2012 period.

### DESIGN TO WIN

Given the renewed momentum for international action on climate change, a group of largely US foundations—the Hewlett, Packard, Oak, Doris Duke, Joyce and EFs—commissioned California Environmental Associates (CEA), a specialized consultancy firm, to draft a strategy for foundations to address the climate change problem. Like the IPCC’s *Fourth Assessment Report* for climate scientists and the *Stern Review* for the business community, climate funders wanted a landmark report of their own. After having consulted over 150 energy and climate experts, and analysed the available scientific literature—including “the Stern Review, the Vattenfall climate abatement map prepared by McKinsey & Company and reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change”—California

Environmental Associates published the *Design to Win: Philanthropy's Role in the Fight Against Global Warming* report in 2007 (California Environmental Associates 2007). As Nisbet explains, the report “was intended as a blueprint to guide the investment strategies of the sponsoring foundations as well as the broader philanthropic community” (Nisbet 2011, 33). For Petra Bartosiewicz and Marissa Miley, it “served as a catalyst for an unprecedented outpouring of funding on energy and climate issues” (Bartosiewicz and Miley 2013, 30).

In their report, the authors insist on the comparative advantage of foundations over politicians who “are fixated on the next election” and CEOs who “are focused on next quarters’ numbers.” Philanthropists, they explain, are perfectly suited to address the climate challenge. They “have longer time horizons and can tolerate more risk.” As they go on to write, philanthropists also “have a strong tradition of filling gaps, spurring step-changes in technology and pursuing programming that transcends both national boundaries and economic sectors. Such capacities, they write, are exactly what are needed to tackle global warming” (California Environmental Associates 2007, 5). As George Polk, former technology entrepreneur, Senior Advisor to McKinsey and active player in the climate philanthropy field (he was a key player in the creation of the European Climate Foundation), points out, “one advantage foundations have in the policy arena is being shielded both from the political cycles that interrupt policy continuity and coherence and from the market barriers that get in the way of readily available solutions like energy efficiency upgrades in buildings. This means that foundations can often build bridges over tricky waters that governments and firms hesitate to cross” (Polk and Heller 2009).

In addition to highlighting foundations’ comparative advantages, the report also set out a clear objective and identifies a series of priorities for philanthropic engagement. The suggested target was a 30 gigaton reduction in emissions by 2030. In order to reach this objective, the authors suggested concentrating philanthropic efforts on the regions with the highest mitigation potential: the USA, the European Union (EU), China and India. The USA and EU, responsible for over one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, should “take the lead and pioneer new technologies.” India and China must be targeted while “there is still time to influence energy investments and the shape of booming mega-cities, where the greatest mitigation potential lies” (California Environmental Associates 2007, 6). In all regions, the authors call for the establishment of cap and trade systems, which, they believe, “will help spark innovation



and the clean technology markets needed to prevail in the long term” (California Environmental Associates 2007, 6).

The authors also encouraged foundations to focus their efforts on a limited number of sectors: power—through the development of solar, wind and carbon capture and storage (CCS)—industry, buildings/construction, transportation—through new standards, technologies—and forestry—through an international market for carbon offsets (California Environmental Associates 2007, 7).<sup>6</sup> As they explain, in order to reach the 30 gigatons target, “we must *simultaneously* search for mitigation opportunities in each of these sectors” (California Environmental Associates 2007, 8). They estimate that in addition to the USD 200 million already invested by foundations in the climate field, an extra USD 600 million are required annually to achieve the 2030 target. As with the EF, the priority, in order to effectively mobilize these grants, is to mobilize philanthropic foundations and foster cooperation among them.

For these carefully selected sectors and regions, the authors recommend a “three-part menu of investments”: “[supporting] existing NGOs with deep knowledge of local conditions and needed strategies; cultivate new organizations where necessary”; “[creating] nation-specific expertise to facilitate grant making. Organizations that have the local capacity and expertise are needed to oversee highly leveraged, strategic interventions”; and “[building] International Best Practice Centers for critical ‘don’t lose’ sectors to accelerate the diffusion of knowledge and innovation, either by establishing new institutions or linking existing organizations in loose networks” (California Environmental Associates 2007, 8–9). In line with this mathematical framing of the climate problem was a mathematical approach to philanthropic grantmaking mirroring the EF’s strategic approach. The report promotes an approach that involves identifying the problem and those best suited to address it, a high degree of flexibility on behalf of foundations and a willingness to engage large amounts of money for potentially long periods and the setting of quantifiable targets and well-crafted strategies to achieve them.

The *Design to Win* report included elements of both continuity and change with previous liberal philanthropic incursions into the climate domain. It perpetuated—and even heightened—liberal philanthropy’s Promethean faith in scientific knowledge and technocratic expertise’s ability to overcome political differences. As Nisbet explains, “the report did not recommend partisan activity, nor did it call for direct lobbying on specific legislation. However, playing within the established rules of

philanthropy, the call for a coordinated investment in a specific policy agenda was clear” (Nisbet 2011, 32). By focusing on sectors and regions on the basis of quantifiable carbon abatement potential, climate change was framed as a rational problem requiring rational solutions. For Hal Harvey, who represented the Hewlett Foundation on the *Design to Win* funders steering committee,<sup>7</sup> “climate change, unlike a lot of large-scale problems, is actually one that is solvable. [...] [It] is also one where we know what we need to do” (Paddock 2009). As he goes on to explain, “sometimes I get accused of being too much of an engineer [...] but sometimes with social problems, it’s good to subject them to math” (Paddock 2009). Climate change is presented as “a physical threat that only required science and economics to solve, a technocratic view reflective of an expert advisory committee composed predominantly of scientists, engineers and economists” (Nisbet 2011, 33).

The authors felt that it was simply a matter of “speaking truth to power” by providing policy makers with a blueprint for action: which sectors should be targeted, which policies should be implemented. As George Polk explains,

government officials are over-worked, under-resourced, and often unaware of the best practices in other jurisdictions; simply sponsoring research and providing access to experts can often change how standards and regulations get crafted. Officials are also under pressure from vested interests that oppose good climate policy, so funding organizations that speak in favour of climate action strengthen the hand of the regulator. Finally, many climate solutions—new international grids, sending capital to save the rain forests, etc—are beyond the reach of any one government, and philanthropy can provide the resources to convene experts and drive through necessary compromises. (Polk and Heller 2009)

As he concludes,

if we fail to support the evolution and implementation of excellent policies, we are sunk. As a venture capitalist said to me recently, ‘Go big or go home’. Policy work gives us the leverage to do that. (Polk and Heller 2009)

Implicit to the report is the idea that the “market knows best” and that the role of regulators is to create the conditions and send the right signals for a transition to a low-carbon economy.

## MOBILIZING FUNDERS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ALIGNING THEIR STRATEGIES

What was the impact of the *Design to Win* report? Drawing on an analysis of 1246 grants, Nisbet shows how several of the wealthiest and most active environmental foundations, namely the Packard, Sea Change, Hewlett, Kresge, Doris Duke Charitable, McKnight, Oak, and EFs, “relied heavily on the *Design to Win* report’s definition of the problem and its specific recommendations to guide their investments” (Nisbet 2011, 34). As previously noted, these foundations add up to approximately 70 % of overall grants in the area of climate mitigation (Fern et al. 2015). This does not mean to say that they had not already adopted many of the approaches and framings of the *Report* prior to its publication. In fact, most were already actively involved in and/or promoting strategic grantmaking in the climate field.

The launch of the report coincided with a series of related foundation initiatives in the climate domain. In March 2007, for instance, shortly after launching a four-year, USD 32 million Climate Change Initiative, the Hewlett Foundation published a brochure entitled *Taking Action on Climate Change* in an attempt to catalyse philanthropic engagement in the climate field—by drawing on the EF experience and the *Stern Review* (The Hewlett Foundation 2007). In 2007, a group of foundations helped set up the Climate and Energy Funders Group (CEFG) in 2007, a working group within the CGBD, “to expand the field of climate and energy philanthropy, and to promote collaborative, strategic grantmaking among its members” (CBD 2009). That same year, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation launched its Climate Change Initiative, a five-year, USD 100 million initiative aimed at designing and accelerating the development of new energy-saving technologies. Their priority was “to fund the design of specific policies to promote clean-energy technology” (NYRAG 2008). In the field of climate policy, Nisbet credits the report for having “helped solidify the focus of national environmental groups on cap and trade legislation as the central policy approach to climate change while also recruiting groups to work on other sector-specific mitigation actions” (Nisbet 2011, 45).

The report’s impact was not limited to foundations active in the USA. A notable example was the launch by the Khemka Foundation of a Climate Change Philanthropy Action Network (CCPAN). The network was launched during the Iceland Climate Change Action Summit in October

2006—a summit that brought together representatives from the environmental taskforce of the Young Global Leaders (YGLs), climate change experts and philanthropy actors to discuss possible actions to address the climate change problem. CCPAN’s purpose was to regularly convene philanthropists in different parts of the world to share experiences and discuss potential collaboration. As Uday Khemka explains, “the idea is to get critical mass among institutions with very similar agendas who don’t feel alone any more and suddenly have expanded resources to tackle the bigger challenges. So the key now is to take this initial awareness to a huge critical mass” (Alliance Magazine 2007). Over the course of 2007, CCPAN organized two meetings—the first in London (July) and the second in Taiwan (September). In April 2008, CCPAN organized—with support from Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors—an event *Philanthropy’s Role in the Climate Crisis: Transforming Interest into Impact* that brought together over 180 individual donors and senior grantmakers.

### THE CLIMATEWORKS FOUNDATION AND NETWORK

In addition to encouraging foundations to take up the climate change issue and align their strategies, the *Design to Win* report inspired a group of funders to launch a new regranting foundation in 2008 to coordinate and implement the global strategy laid out in the report: the ClimateWorks Foundation. Drawing on the EF model, the idea was to establish a new specialized foundation to coordinate actions and redistribute funds towards global climate action. The initial funds were provided by the Hewlett, Packard and McKnight foundations. According to the Foundation Center, the ClimateWorks Foundation received USD 515 million in 2008, out of an estimated USD 900 million in foundation grant dollars, to address global warming that same year (Lawrence 2010, 4). As Petra Bartosiewicz and Marissa Miley explain, “Hewlett alone pledged \$500 million over five years to the new foundation, the single largest grant in its history” (Bartosiewicz and Miley 2013, 30). Hal Harvey, former Energy Foundation CEO and Hewlett Environment program Director, was nominated as its CEO. As with EF, he played a central role in designing the new foundation’s strategy.

In line with the recommendations contained in the *Design to Win* report, ClimateWorks Foundation set itself a global target and timeframe. Its stated objective was to “limit annual global greenhouse gas emissions to 44 billion metric tons by the year 2020 [...] and 35 billion metric tons by the

year 2030” (ClimateWorks 2010, ii). Presenting itself as “a catalyst for collective impact,” its mission was to strategically support and direct philanthropic efforts towards the geographic regions and economic sectors with the highest mitigation potential. Within these regions and sectors, ClimateWorks Foundation identified and backed “the policy initiatives with the highest probability of success” (ClimateWorks 2010, 31).<sup>8</sup>

Having earmarked the most promising sectors and regions (through the *Design to Win* report), ClimateWorks Foundation went on to fund and help coordinate a series of regional/national and sector-specific organizations and initiatives in order to attain its global objective (Spero 2010, 21). Gravitating around the ClimateWorks Foundation, the associated network’s purpose was to jointly “develop strategies, facilitate larger networks, and deploy philanthropic resources at the level of granularity required to achieve policy outcomes and other strategic objectives.”<sup>9</sup> Bringing together policy experts and analysts, the sector-specific organizations, also known as “best practice networks,” focused “on the technical details of smart policies.” Their role was to assist regulators and legislators with the design and implementation of “cost-effective rules that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while encouraging innovation, job creation, and economic growth” (ClimateWorks 2012, 12).<sup>10</sup> In other words, and in collaboration with the ClimateWorks Foundation, their role was to both compile existing best policy options and promote them in high-potential regions and sectors.<sup>11</sup>

The original ClimateWorks Foundation regional network was made up of the ECF (launched in 2008), the EF and the Energy Foundation China (created in 1999). They all acted as regranting and operating foundations, carrying out a range of activities (awareness raising, capacity building, convening, lobbying and research). In 2009, the network was expanded to include the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) and the India-based Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation. A Latin America Regional Climate Initiative (LARCI) was launched in 2012. As ClimateWorks Foundation regranting bodies, each of these foundations or initiatives receives core funding from the ClimateWorks Foundation and various allied foundations and redistributes all or part of the funds to local or regional NGOs and projects.<sup>12</sup> The overwhelming majority of regional foundations’ core funders form part of the same group of strategic and focused foundations that support the ClimateWorks Foundation and/or adopt the *Design to Win* approach. During the network’s early years, the bulk of funding to regional initiatives was channelled through the ClimateWorks Foundation. This is largely reflected in the fact that, at the

time, ClimateWorks Foundation actively monitored their progress, making sure that they adapted their strategies and efforts accordingly. As one ClimateWorks Foundation representative told me, “ClimateWorks acted as the organizer, the headquarters of the system.”<sup>13</sup>

### EXTENDING THE ENERGY FOUNDATION’S STRATEGIC MODEL ON A GLOBAL SCALE

The ClimateWorks Foundation and Network can be seen as an attempt to export and extend the EF’s strategic model on a global scale. In this respect, it shares a lot in common with the EF’s own approach to liberal philanthropy—this is unsurprising given the fact that the former EF founder, Hal Harvey, was designated as ClimateWorks Foundation CEO.

In terms of its approach to grantmaking, ClimateWorks Foundation replicated many of the methods and techniques laid out by its strategic predecessors. This is particularly visible in Hal Harvey’s account of how the ClimateWorks Foundation selects its grantees:

it starts out with a very simple pair of questions. The first is ‘how many tons of carbon dioxide emissions or global warming pollution would this strategy avoid if you are successful?’ Give us a number. Don’t give me a heartbreaking case about it. Just give me a number. One number. And second, what’s the probability that the political leaders—because these are all policy changes—that the political leaders in charge of this, what’s the probability that they are going to enact this policy if you spend the money and work hard on this thing? And then we ask them to expound a little bit on the probability question and make their case. Again, what’s the venue? Why do you think you are going to be relevant? Why should they listen to you? What are the economics of the case? Who is against it? How badly are they going to beat you up? This is not a long and complicated thing but it has to be done very well in order to succeed. Connected with all of this is an evaluation component. And at twelve-month clock everybody who has done one of these also has to go back and say ‘how’s it going?’ Did we win? That’s terrific! Usually you don’t win in one year. What kind of progress has been made and how have you made it? And what you do not get to put in there is ‘we held this many meetings and we published this many things on the web and we walked the block and so on.’ We’re not interested in that at all unless... What we are interested in is ‘was the decision-maker influenced?’ If so, how do you know? How is he or she influenced? And what did you have to do with it? And given that, what’s the next iteration for you? So I think, the first part of evaluation is stating the case clearly. If the case I

make is ‘I’m really worried about this problem’ then evaluation is impossible because you’re still worried a year later I guess—that’s your proof of success. (Commonwealth Club of California 2009)

In order to leverage its “investments” and achieve the highest possible impact, ClimateWorks Foundation and its partners do not directly fund research and development but assist stakeholders in their design of policies that support private-sector innovations (ClimateWorks 2010, 15). They do so through the provision of technical and analytical assistance to a carefully selected group of regulators and decision-makers. They also provide grants to a few well-connected groups—and little in the way of grass-roots organizing. As with the EF, ClimateWorks Foundation promotes a market-friendly approach to climate policy. Policy makers are expected to:

set performance standards or emissions limits and let the market find the cheapest way to meet those goals. The best policies, it argues, leave technology risk, market risk, price risk, and performance risk in the hands of the private sector. (ClimateWorks 2009, 11)

As Hal Harvey, the ClimateWorks Foundation CEO, explains,

The world spends \$5 trillion per year on energy globally. That’s a very big number. Total philanthropy in this space is about \$300 million or \$400 million per year—nobody knows exactly what the number is. That’s a 17,000-to-1 ratio, right? We think we’re powerful, and we command these vast resources in our philanthropies, but look at how big that gap is. With that unfavorable cash flow ratio, I would argue that philanthropy must work in the policy realm. We have to steer the cash flow of the big energy spenders, such as PG&E from brown to green choices. We have to steer the cash flow from the oil companies. We have to steer the cash flow from governments and from refrigerator appliances to ever-greener choices. If we don’t steer that \$5 trillion, we’re not in the game. We cannot replace it with little projects. So, you’re in the policy space if you want to cause policy change. (Global Philanthropy Forum 2010)

As he then adds,

In the United States, we’re used to advocacy, and I think people who work on policy change would agree with me that it’s about 10 percent thinking

and 90 percent bashing your head against a political brick wall. It's not the same everywhere else. There are fantastic opportunities in other countries. Good policy change requires brilliant politics, but it also requires brilliant technical assistance, and there are many places and many ways in which you get to flip those ratios, where 90 percent of what you do actually goes directly into change and 10 percent you're bashing your head against the wall. (Global Philanthropy Forum 2010)

ClimateWorks Foundation's focus on policy should not be confused with a focus on politics. In keeping with the liberal philanthropic tradition, ClimateWorks Foundation—and the EF before it—essentially believed that policy change happens by providing political and policy elites with evidence-based research and a set of ready-made, rational solutions. It was therefore not about engaging in politics but rather of targeting those who supposedly had the power to wield transformational change. It reflects a very elitist approach to social change—one that largely overlooks the broader political context and set of actors associated with it (the media, NGOs, etc.).

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, ClimateWorks Foundation was the extension of the EF's strategic approach to the international climate field. In this sense—and like the EF before it—rather than signalling an entirely new approach to climate philanthropy, it marked a deepening of the liberal philanthropic approach and its adjustment to the specificities of the climate issue. According to the proponents of strategic or focused philanthropy, this required foundations to coordinate their efforts, improve and streamline their grantmaking strategies and focus their efforts on a limited number of high-impact targets. They believe that if foundations pool their resources, hire the right people and evaluate risks, opportunities and potential returns on investment, they can solve one of the world's most pressing and daunting problems.

Given its global outlook and focused approach, as well as its levels of funding and the fact that it is supported by some of the most well-endowed liberal foundations involved in climate-related activities, the ClimateWorks Foundation and Network had a major impact on the field of climate philanthropy and through this the climate debate and community. In other words, by concentrating and channelling large amounts of funding in a poorly resourced field—climate change—ClimateWorks Foundation, its



regional regranters and the foundations that are associated with it, rapidly came to occupy a central and yet surprisingly understudied place in the global climate regime.<sup>14</sup>

As we will see in the following chapter, the ClimateWorks Foundation would go on to apply the strategic/focused principles to the international climate negotiations in the run-up to and during the 2009 Copenhagen climate conference. However, instead of marking the triumph of liberal philanthropy, the Copenhagen conference highlighted the deficiencies of the rational approach, however strategic or focused it may be. In particular, it pointed to the limits of traditional liberal approaches to policy change. By only targeting policy and business elites, ClimateWorks Foundation, and the large liberal foundations that were associated with it, underestimated the importance of other factors in the international climate debate—symbolic politics, the media, public opinion or NGOs.

## NOTES

1. Foundations associated with the ClimateWorks Foundation funders table include: Bloomberg Philanthropies, CIFF, ClimateWorks Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Oak Foundation, Packard Foundation, Mercator Foundation, Sea Change Foundation, Tilia Fund and Kann Rasmussen Foundation.
2. Skoll Foundation (1999), Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (2000), Children's Investment Fund Foundation (2002), Sea Change Foundation (2005), Schmidt Family Foundation (2006), MacCall MacBain Foundation (2007).
3. Hewlett Foundation, Packard Foundation, Sea Change Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Skoll Foundation, Schmidt Family Foundation and as we will see in this chapter, the Energy Foundation and ClimateWorks Foundation.
4. The Hewlett Foundation had a long history of environmental grant-making, especially in the field of environmental policy.
5. Current Energy Foundation funders include the ClimateWorks Foundation, the CIFF, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Grantham Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Lakeshore Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the Pisces Foundation, the Robertson Foundation, the Tilia Fund, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Yellow Chair Foundation.

6. The approach developed in the report largely echoes the seminal research by a group of Princeton University academics on “wedges” for CO<sub>2</sub> reduction (commonly referred to as the Princeton wedges) (Socolow et al. 2004).
7. Hal Harvey went on to join the Hewlett Foundation as Environment Program Director in 2002.
8. To graphically present their analysis, ClimateWorks Foundation, and in particular Hal Harvey, developed a “ClimateWorks Sudoku.”
9. [http://pdfs.citizenaudit.org/2014\\_12\\_EO/26-2303250\\_990\\_201312.pdf](http://pdfs.citizenaudit.org/2014_12_EO/26-2303250_990_201312.pdf) (accessed 4 September 2015).
10. These include the Regulatory Assistance Project (RAP), the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), the Collaborative Labelling and Appliance Standards Project (CLASP), the Institute for Industrial Productivity (IIP), the Buildings Performance Institute Europe and the Global Buildings Performance Network (GBPN) (ClimateWorks 2012).
11. These include vehicle performance standards, fuel and vehicle levies, energy efficiency standards and labels, clean energy supply policies, utility-scale energy efficiency programmes, industrial energy efficiency programmes, building codes, economic incentives, smart urban design, support for R&D and innovation. For a detailed analysis of these policy options, see the report *Policies that work: How to build a low-emissions economy* (Harvey and Segafredo 2011).
12. LARCI, for instance, receives core funding from the ClimateWorks Foundation—which, as we have seen, is itself a reganter—the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Oak Foundation, and the CIFF. Energy Foundation China’s current core funders are the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the ClimateWorks Foundation, CIFF, the Oak Foundation and the Stiftung Mercator Foundation. Both examples illustrate that some or all of the foundations that support the ClimateWorks Foundation also provide core or project funding to the organizations in the regional network.
13. Interview with author.
14. In 2010, the ClimateWorks Foundation alone awarded grants totaling more than USD 120.5 million (2009: USD 92.7 million; 2011: USD 128 million).

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## Foundations in Copenhagen

**Abstract** The chapter looks at how the strategic approach presented in Chap. 3 shaped foundations' involvement in the international climate debate leading up to and during the Copenhagen climate summit in December 2009 (COP15). In particular, it analyses two distinct initiatives whose main funders were closely associated with the *Design to Win* strategy and ClimateWorks Foundation Network: the Global Call for Climate Action (GCCA) and Project Catalyst.

**Keywords** Project Catalyst • GCCA • ClimateWorks Foundation • COP15 • Climate philanthropy

### INTRODUCTION

The launch of the ClimateWorks Foundation and Network in 2008 coincided with a growing belief that countries should and could reach a legally binding agreement at the upcoming COP15 planned for December 2009 in Copenhagen. Various factors contributed to this renewed sense of optimism in the international climate regime. Firstly, the publication of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) in 2007 contributed to generate a sense of urgency. As Rajendra Pachauri, IPCC chair, explained:

“what we do in the next two to three years will determine our future. This is the defining moment” (Rosenthal 2007). That same year, the COP13 negotiations in Bali (2007), while highlighting major differences between the global North and South, were nevertheless successful in launching a two-year negotiation process with the objective of delivering a new global climate agreement in 2009 to replace the Kyoto Protocol that was expiring in 2012. The victory of Barack Obama in the 2008 Presidential race was interpreted as signalling the US’s renewed commitment to international climate diplomacy and its willingness to “seal the deal.” In June 2009, the US House of Representatives’ vote in favour of the American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Act was seen as an encouraging sign in the run-up to Copenhagen.<sup>1</sup> A number of other key countries or blocks of high emitters—including the EU, China and Brazil—were also sending positive signals by unilaterally committing to ambitious emissions reductions. A very diverse set of non-state actors was also pushing for an ambitious Copenhagen outcome.

This shared desire to reach an agreement in Copenhagen concealed deep-rooted differences in terms of what the agreement should look like. In particular, the USA opposed a treaty that sets emissions reductions targets for individual countries, a deadline to reach those targets or emission caps reflecting historic responsibilities, current capacities and equity issues (Aykut and Dahan 2015, 328). Their preference went to a bottom-up, “pledge and review” approach consisting in nationally determined commitments and policies, albeit within a broad international framework. As one Southern delegate reportedly stated: “the Obama administration isn’t the Bush administration, that is true, but the United States is still the United States” (Meilstrup 2010).

The growing belief that a global deal could be struck in Copenhagen generated renewed foundation interest in the international climate regime. Despite a substantial drop in overall foundation grants due to the financial crisis, 2009 saw a sizeable increase in climate-related grants. According to the EGA, foundations made over USD 150 million in 2009, representing a 100% increase in giving when compared to 2007 (approximately USD 72 million) (EGA 2009, 3; 2011, 4).

It should, however, be noted that while the prospect of success in Copenhagen encouraged foundations to reengage in the international climate field, a significant amount of funding went to US-based projects and campaigns, and in particular to activities surrounding the ACES Act. Over the course of 2009, two campaigns in particular—the Clean Energy Works

(CEW) and the US Climate Action Partnership (USCAP)—received considerable levels of foundation support. These national campaigns were generally operated by DC-based “big greens” such as the EDF, the NRDC, the Nature Conservancy or the Audubon Society that privileged a bipartisan approach and alliance building with “green” businesses. Among the main financial backers of these groups and campaigns were foundations involved in or inspired by the *Design to Win* strategy. These included regranteeing foundations like the ClimateWorks and Energy foundations and large independent foundations like the Packard, Sea Change, Hewlett and Doris Duke Charitable foundations that had historically been in favour of cap-and-trade policies (Bartosiewicz and Miley 2013). As has previously been noted, these organizations were used to working together. In particular, the California-based Sea Change, Packard, Hewlett, Energy and ClimateWorks foundations “formed a group of grant makers whose geographical proximity [in the San Francisco Bay area] underscored their close funding relationships” (Bartosiewicz and Miley 2013).

If we refer back to the international level, the months leading up to the Copenhagen conference witnessed a scaling up of foundation support towards advocacy and mobilization efforts. Mirroring trends in domestic grantmaking, the more substantial grants usually went to the larger, more established and mainstream groups, and towards policy research and analysis rather than grass-roots mobilizing. Nevertheless, the launch of Climate Justice Now (CJN) in Bali (COP13) and greater involvement by social and development movements in the international climate debate—many of these groups having previously been active in the trade debates—brought with it a diversification of funding sources. The progressive Charles Steward Mott Foundation, for instance, made a USD 200,000 grant to the Third World Network to “provide important capacity-building activities for developing country nongovernmental organizations as well as country negotiators working on the international climate agreement.”<sup>2</sup> The Global Greengrants Fund made a series of smaller grants—between USD 3000 and USD 5000—to cover the travel costs of representatives from the Global South in order to attend the Copenhagen conference.<sup>3</sup> Bringing together various progressive funders, the Funders Network on Trade and Globalization (FNTG) sent large progressive funders delegations to the Bali and Copenhagen climate conferences.

In some cases, the diversification of sources occurred at the individual foundation level. Within the RBF, for instance, the “democratic practice” and “sustainable development” programmes each have distinctive



grantmaking strategies. Traditionally, the “sustainable development” programme funded the RBF’s climate-related activities. In the run-up to Copenhagen, and with the spread of climate justice narratives, the “democratic practice” programme also began to actively engage in climate-related funding. The “democratic practice” programme had a long history of support towards Southern-based or Southern-focused groups and movements engaged in the international debates on equity and social justice (in particular through debates on trade). Subsequently, and depending on the programme, RBF grants to Copenhagen-related projects either went to more grass-roots, equity-centred and usually Southern-focused groups (International Forum on Globalization, Third World Network, Friends of the Earth) or more mainstream and established projects and organizations (CAN, International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI), WRI).

The pre-Copenhagen period was also characterized by the launch of two large-scale, foundation-backed initiatives: the GCCA and Project Catalyst (PC). As we will see, while both were backed by foundations involved in or inspired by the *Design to Win* report, they promoted very different theories of change. Whereas the GCCA focused its efforts on building up the capacities of non-state actors—through communications—in order to generate political will for an ambitious deal, PC’s efforts were almost exclusively targeted at policy—diplomats, governments—and business elites. This is not surprising given the fact that PC was a ClimateWorks Foundation initiative. Furthermore, while the GCCA pushed for a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement, PC pushed for a far more bottom-up approach to international climate governance—an approach that was far more in line with the US position.

### MAKING THE “COPENHAGEN MOMENT”

Many of those involved in the international climate debate felt that success in Copenhagen hinged on civil society’s ability to collectively come up with and voice a powerful message. A lot of foundation support in the run-up to Copenhagen went towards generating public awareness of the issues at stake around the Conference. A number of governments—and most noticeably the Danish government—also put a lot of resources and money in support of civil society participation. Foundations made grants to individual organizations and networks (such as Climate Action Network International and its regional organizations, CJN, Climate Justice Action) to support their advocacy, monitoring, awareness-raising, communica-

tions and media activities. Through their grants, foundations also funded the participation of non-state actors in the numerous fora, days of action and negotiation sessions organized before and during the COP—mirroring their work in the 1980s and 1990s.

With an overall budget of USD 6.8 million—over 95 % of which came from foundation funding—the GCCA was undoubtedly the most well-funded global climate campaign of 2009. Launched in the run-up to Copenhagen (2008), the GCCA’s goal was to “mobilize citizens and galvanize public opinion in support of urgent climate action.”<sup>4</sup> In 2009, its core funders were the Oak Foundation, the Sea Change Foundation, the Turner-affiliated Better World Fund, the Prince Albert II Foundation of Monaco and the Government of Québec. With a total contribution of USD 5 million in 2009, the Oak Foundation was by far the GCCA’s main donor (the Sea Change Foundation coming second with USD 1.5 million).

The Oak Foundation, whose offices are in Geneva, Switzerland, is without doubt the most active European-based foundation in the climate field. Having also funded projects in the USA, it has the characteristic of being well connected within both European and the North American funder circles. As we saw in the preceding chapter, it formed part of the group of foundations that co-funded the *Design to Win* report in 2006. Although it did not form part of the founding ClimateWorks Foundation funders, Oak was involved in launching some of the network’s regional foundations. Given its strong presence in Europe, it played a major role in setting up the ECF in 2008. In view of the other core funders’ limited experience in the European climate scene, Oak acted as a “knowledge foundation for less experienced partners” (Hughes 2008, 42). In 2009, it also supported the ClimateWorks Foundation’s work in India, which would eventually give rise to the Shakti Foundation.

Beyond its support for decentralized and regionally embedded climate action, the Oak Foundation also believes in the need to build up legitimate voices in order to effect momentous change. In other words, Oak values both policy work *and* capacity building. Capacity building—especially through support to NGOs—is regarded as essential to create the necessary political momentum. This clearly sets it apart from Hal Harvey’s (ClimateWorks Foundation CEO)—and hence the ClimateWorks Foundation’s—more focused and policy-centred outlook. When asked to describe her foundation’s approach to philanthropy, Kathleen Cravero, president of Oak, explains that “we always thought that being strategic meant being open, collaborative and aware of the big picture. We never bought into metric-

driven, treat-it-like-a-business, solve-it-like-a-math-problem approaches to philanthropy” (Cravero 2014). As we shall see, Oak’s more “holistic” approach to policy change had a major influence on the ClimateWorks Foundation strategy in the post-Copenhagen period and helped create the conditions for the International Policies and Politics Initiative (see Chap. 5).

The Oak Foundation’s underlying agenda was very similar to that of ClimateWorks Foundation. As was noted in the previous chapter, it had formed part of the group of foundations that commissioned the *Design to Win* report. Its objectives fall in line with the liberal environmentalist discourse (described in Chap. 2). Like the ClimateWorks Foundation and other partner foundations, Oak strongly believed in the need to put a price on carbon (OAK Foundation 2011). However, during the pre-Copenhagen period, Oak differed from ClimateWorks Foundation in terms of its approach towards the international climate process. This is especially evident when looking at the GCCA, which it actively supported.

## THE GLOBAL CALL FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Officially launched in 2008, the GCCA’s origins date back to April 2006 when representatives from some of the largest environmental and developmental groups—Oxfam, Greenpeace International, Greenpeace Brazil, WWF International, WWF India, the World Council of Churches, Friends of the Earth and the Union of Concerned Scientists—convened in Woltersdorf (Germany) to discuss the possibility of developing a common platform to mobilize the wider public and thereby bolster the climate negotiations. According to one observer, “two things came out of this meeting. First the admission that NGOs did not have the adequate resources to talk to the wider public. And second, that NGOs needed to better coordinate their political intelligence. They needed a dashboard view with delivery capacity.”<sup>5</sup>

The Woltersdorf group’s acknowledgement of the need to collectively develop more innovative and effectual communication campaigns partly echoes a new brand of Internet-based campaigns that was emerging in the USA at the time. Examples include [MoveOn.org](#) (which would give rise to Avaaz) or 1Sky. 1Sky is especially relevant when studying the international climate debate. Launched in 2007, its purpose was to bring together a wide array of groups and/or individuals—including businesses—around a “scientific bottom line” and a coordinated communications and field campaign. Its objective was to get the USA to match European commit-

ments on climate change, which, at the time, was regarded as ambitious. The goal was to “create irresistible public demand for a clear, simple, specific national policy platform that would set America on the road to real solutions” (ISky 2009). ISky did not see itself as an organization but as a collaborative campaign: “the movement will never fly a single flag, or narrow itself to a single brand or institution, nor should it. Unity, not uniformity, is our goal.”<sup>6</sup>

In 2008, especially through the efforts of Jennifer Morgan, Global Climate Change Director at E3G<sup>7</sup> at the time and long-time participant in the UNFCCC process, the group officially launched the GCCA, with financial backing from the Provincial Government of Québec (an operating grant of USD 42,116). The GCCA saw its role as “[connecting] organizations from across the globe to build their individual and collective capacity to communicate the urgency of climate change, campaign on the solutions before us and to mobilize the public in support of strong, equitable government action at the national and international levels.” The idea was to build up “a mass movement of groups and individuals concerned about climate change, unite their demands, and create an unstoppable momentum that would climax in Copenhagen” (B. Cox 2011, 27). To this end, the GCCA sought to unite as many groups and individuals as possible—not just environmental groups—around a broad communications and outreach campaign. It was about “[connecting] the intelligence gathering and sophisticated advocacy provided by numerous NGOS in order to target and maximize the collective impact of groups on every continent” (GCCA 2009).

From the handful of groups represented in Woltersdorf, the number of GCCA partners rapidly grew to over 270 organizations, including large development and environmental NGOs and networks,<sup>8</sup> trade unions, indigenous, youth, women and faith groups from the global North and South. While the GCCA did promote the notion of climate justice (in particular through its campaign “time for climate justice”), there were very few “climate justice” groups, especially linked to CJN, in the GCCA. Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), which was represented at Woltersdorf, did not join GCCA but chose to actively participate in CJN. Notable and influential GCCA partners include web-based campaign groups like 350.org<sup>9</sup> (whose founder Bill McKibben had also been active in ISky) and Avaaz. Both groups helped plan and stage a series of “key global moments” in the run-up to and during the Copenhagen conference.

The GCCA adopted a “flotilla approach” to campaigning. The idea was to get GCCA partners to coordinate their actions around a broad set of shared principles, top line messages (“The World Wants a Real Deal,” “Fair Ambitious and Binding,” “Global Wake Up Call”) and open-source brand—TckTckTck.<sup>10</sup> As Christian Teriete, former GCCA communications director, explains, “everybody [has] this little addition flag on the top mast that [has] the [coalition identity]. So, in a way, we are all different groups, but we are all united. We are coordinated. And we are showing the same flag in addition to our own colors” (Kylander and Stone 2011, 9). While partners could maintain their individual brands and messaging, they were nevertheless also expected to use the TckTckTck brand in their outreach and communication activities.

In terms of demands for Copenhagen, GCCA partners called for a fair—to reduce developed countries’ emissions by at least 40 % by 2020 and to provide financial and technological support to poor countries—, ambitious—to peak greenhouse emissions no later than 2017—and “legally binding international agreement that can be verified and enforced” (GCCA 2010, 7).

The role of the GCCA team and secretariat was to coordinate actions and to empower partners by providing them with the required communications material and media opportunities. To this end, the GCCA set up a “nerve centre,” a strategic forum “where partner organizations shared intelligence, provide intelligence on political strategies and guidance to campaigns on rapid response strategies” as well as a “campaign and communications team” (GCCA 2009, 17). As one observer explains, “it acted like a volunteer fire department. It allowed for efficient feedback between political intelligence and action.”<sup>11</sup> The GCCA made over USD 3 million worth of grants to partner organizations in support of their communications and campaigning activities. As they explain in their 2009 Annual Report, “most grants were awarded to support national and regional campaigning (including for rapid response actions and national hubs), with the remaining funds for global campaign and communication actions” (GCCA 2010, 23). In other words, the GCCA, while not a foundation per se, acted as a *de facto* regranting organization, selectively distributing funds to push through a common message.

What is more, GCCA grants had a leveraging effect by enabling partners to mobilize further funding—both internally and externally—for GCCA-related activities. According to its 2009 Annual Report, “partners

reported a further total of more than eight million in funds leveraged from their own organisations plus additional sources for activities carried out with financial support from the GCCA” (GCCA 2010, 23). As we will see in the next chapter, the GCCA experience would have a major impact on the communications strategies of non-state actors in and around the Paris COP in December 2015—and particularly the IPPI.

The GCCA and the TckTckTck campaign offer a potent example of how foundation funds—and most significantly those of the Oak Foundation—were mobilized for capacity building purposes in the run-up to Copenhagen. It marks a clear attempt by the NGOs involved and the foundations that supported it to influence the overall Copenhagen outcome by strengthening NGOs’ capacities and raising public awareness on the climate crisis and the need for urgent action to address it.

### TARGETING GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS ELITES

The GCCA and related TckTckTck campaign represent a major foundation-backed attempt at generating public momentum by mobilizing CSOs around a common communications strategy. It was grounded on the idea that by joining forces around a well-oiled communications strategy and generating public pressure, non-state actors could get decision-makers to reach a fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement on climate change. This was not the only noteworthy foundation-backed strategy to surface during the months and weeks leading up to COP15. As we will see in the following pages, a diametrically different foundation-backed approach also took root during that period. Rather than focusing on communications, outreach and mobilization, the alternative strategy described below rests on a far more elitist approach to policy change—one that extends the strategic approach described in Chap. 3 to the international climate negotiations arena. It is grounded on the idea that the climate crisis can be solved if you assemble the right people in the same room—essentially business and government leaders—and convince them to cooperate by providing data and analytics on the combined benefits of climate action. The priority thereby becomes of building up momentum towards the UN climate summit by demonstrating the economic benefits of climate action and, in particular, by highlighting the promises of clean technologies and innovative financial instruments.

This approach was carried by a relatively small but very well-connected group of individuals and organizations, and supported by US and

European foundations and philanthropists whose approach is consistent with the strategic philanthropy of Hal Harvey and Paul Brest (see Chap. 3). Examples include the Carbon War Room, a global philanthropic initiative launched in 2009 by Richard Branson; its founding funders include the Dutch National Postcode Lottery and Villum Foundation. Through its *Breaking the Climate Deadlock* project, the UK-based The Climate Group also fits into this category (its funders include the DOEN Foundation, the Dutch National Postcode Lottery, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Swedish Postcode Lottery).<sup>12</sup> A third related initiative, the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI), was launched in the second half of 2009, with support from financier and philanthropist George Soros (he committed USD 10 million a year for 10 years). Launched by the Ted Turner-affiliated UN Foundation in 2006, in association with the Club of Rome, the Global Leadership for Climate Action (GLCA) offers another example of this elitist approach. Bringing together former heads of state and government as well as business and civil society leaders from around the world, the GLCA produced a report, *Framework for a Post-2012 Agreement on Climate Change* in 2007, listing 11 recommendations for a comprehensive climate agreement in Copenhagen (GLCA 2007).<sup>13</sup>

In addition to being grounded on similar theories of change—elitist, pro-business—, these different entities were all closely connected, through their boards, members, associated experts and, of course, funders. Among the names that are regularly referred to in the meeting reports and publications of the aforementioned and other organizations and initiatives is PC, a ClimateWorks Foundation initiative launched in the run-up to COP15 and largely operated by the McKinsey & Company consultancy firm. McKinsey, ClimateWorks Foundation and Tom Heller (PC, and future head of the CPI), for instance, acted as advisors to the Carbon War Room. The PC team provided comments and data to The Climate Group for its “Doing the Deal: Key Elements for a Copenhagen Climate Agreement” report (The Climate Group 2009). Representatives from PC spoke at the launch event of the CPI. They also provided analytical support for the UN Foundation’s “Meeting the Climate Challenge Report: Core Elements of an Effective Response to Climate Change” (UN Foundation and Center for American Progress 2009). As this suggests and as we will see, PC—and through it the ClimateWorks Foundation and European Climate Foundation—played a very active role in the Copenhagen process.

## PROJECT CATALYST

Shortly after its creation in 2008, the ClimateWorks Foundation was rapidly faced with the task of seeing whether and if so how it should take part in the upcoming COP in Copenhagen. As an international “best practices” network focusing on the promotion of smart energy policies in regions and sectors with the most abatement potential, the ClimateWorks Foundation network was initially intended to direct its efforts towards the regional and national levels—through its network of regional foundations. As one former PC member explains, “Hal [Harvey] was more into domestic policy. And so it was not as much Hal’s mission to influence global negotiations.”<sup>14</sup> Within the ClimateWorks Foundation team it was Andreas Merkl, the director of Global Initiatives (until 2010), who was very much in favour of getting involved in the UNFCCC process. As the same former PC member goes on to explain, “if you look at the global perspective, Andreas was very much more of the advocate for global negotiations. We convinced Hal to put money in this at the expense of efforts that we were doing on domestic issues.”<sup>15</sup>

While acknowledging the importance of regional and national policies, Merkl also believed that in order to get countries to make the required efforts, it was necessary to set a global objective and timeline. As he explained, “there’s no combination of domestic and bilateral agreements that could enable this to happen. It requires a global agreement” (Hewlett Foundation 2009). His belief in the combined benefits of a global agreement and domestic commitments has been referred to as a “building blocks” approach that consists in “[developing] different elements of climate governance in an incremental fashion and [embedding] them in an international political framework” (Falkner et al. 2010, 253). In other words, while promoting a bottom-up approach to mitigation, it still values the idea of building a global architecture for climate action—through a long-term goal and mechanisms to evaluate progress, for example (Falkner et al. 2010, 258). Their approach, as we will see, would eventually form the basis for the Paris agreement and associated climate regime.

As was previously highlighted, the ClimateWorks Foundation’s contribution to the international climate negotiations took the form of an initiative, “Project Catalyst.” Officially launched in May 2008, PC’s stated purpose was “to provide analytical and policy support for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations on a post-Kyoto international climate agreement” (Project Catalyst 2009a). On its website, PC presented itself as “a neutral advisor to all



parties involved in climate negotiations” and as not being “affiliated with any country, country grouping, company, political party or view, government,” as not “suggesting one simple solution for climate related problems, nor proposing which actions a country should take” and, finally, as not “trying to influence policy, or the outcome of climate negotiations” (Project Catalyst 2009). PC was intended to act as a platform for leading climate change specialists, advocates, negotiators, envoys and ministers from around the world “to identify and estimate the costs of country-specific carbon abatement programs and to develop a financial framework for the carbon trading mechanism that would be used to cover some of the costs of these programs” (Hewlett Foundation 2009).

Although it was presented as a ClimateWorks Foundation initiative, the original PC idea allegedly surfaced during a dinner in Frankfurt attended by “a bunch of McKinsey<sup>16</sup> alumni and current McKinsey members.”<sup>17</sup> According to one attendee, they felt that climate change was the most pressing global issue and that addressing it would require them to “get the brainpower and financial muscle to assemble around the table. What came out of that was Project Catalyst.”<sup>18</sup> At the time, McKinsey & Company was particularly active in the climate change domain. In the run-up to Copenhagen, the consultancy firm developed a new version of its Global GHG Abatement Cost Curve (the first version was launched in February 2007), a tool that provides a quantitative basis for discussions about the abatement potential of actions to deliver emissions reductions, as well as their predicted cost.<sup>19</sup> The *Design to Win* report and ClimateWorks Foundation extensively drew on McKinsey’s research. The ClimateWorks Foundation came up with its own “cost curves that show the carbon abatement potential for specific regions and countries” in order to “offer a roadmap of what’s possible using proven interventions that are economically viable” (ClimateWorks Foundation 2009a).

Within PC, McKinsey’s role was to provide the “hard analytics,” the research and expertise and to feed these into the climate discussions. A several-person-strong McKinsey team produced the analytics, drafted reports and took care of most of the logistics (such as organizing meetings). For its services, ClimateWorks Foundation paid USD 17.4 million to McKinsey in 2009 (ClimateWorks Foundation 2010b). In addition to funding to McKinsey, ClimateWorks Foundation funding earmarked for PC—originating from the Hewlett, Packard and McKnight foundations—also included USD 2.3 million in grants to a selection of think tanks, research institutes and NGOs (ClimateWorks Foundation 2010a). They were commissioned

to produce research, analysis and outreach directed to state and non-state actors (in particular, business). Grantees included the ClimateWorks Foundation-affiliated ECF, the WRI, the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), the Sustainability Institute, the Institute for International Economics, the Bank Information Center and the Global Humanitarian Forum (ClimateWorks Foundation 2010a).

Formally headed by Andreas Merkl (ClimateWorks Foundation), PC was coordinated by a small group of well-connected individuals with robust experience and expertise in the climate field. They included Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of the ECF at the time and former “McKinsyite,” Bert Metz, member of the ECF advisory council and former co-chair of the IPCC Working Group on Mitigation, Jörg Haas, programme director for EU climate diplomacy at ECF and Thomas Heller, professor at Stanford University and contributing lead author for the IPCC’s third and fourth assessment reports. Two representatives from McKinsey formed part of the coordination team: Jeremy Oppenheim and Eric Beinhocker. They were joined by Delia Villagrasa and Tom Brookes, respectively, senior advisor and managing director of the Energy Strategy Centre, the ECF’s strategic communications arm. As the coordinating group affiliations indicate, ECF “took a leading role in the execution. Several of the core team members were ECF staff. But at the same time Project Catalyst had much a life of its own, so the rest of ECF was not much involved.”<sup>20</sup> The coordination team held regular phone meetings to steer the overall work.

As one former member of the PC team recalls, before COP15 there was both a lack of data demonstrating that climate action makes economic sense and a lack of interaction among key players. PC strove to fill these gaps by (a) getting key players—or at least players identified as key by PC—together to discuss the core elements of a future agreement; and (b) making a strong case for ambitious action through the provision of analytics and research to those same players—including a number of business representatives. Businesses are presented as engines of the transition towards a low-carbon future, hinting to PC’s pro-market approach. According to one long-time climate expert I interviewed, “the nickname for Project Catalyst was ‘project capitalist’. It was very neoliberal.”<sup>21</sup> In order to get businesses to back a strong agreement, PC emphasized the economic benefits of climate action. As Erik Rasmussen, CEO of the Copenhagen Climate Council explains, “Project Catalyst’s analyses demonstrate that with a timely and focused effort and the correct political incentives and conditions, climate action can be turned into good busi-

ness for both the business world in particular and humanity in general” (ClimateWorks Foundation 2009).

In line with other existing initiatives at the time (see above), PC clearly promotes an elitist approach to global climate politics. Its strategy is grounded on the assumption that change happens through “global leaders” who have the economic and political power and influence to bring about change. It largely echoes that of the ClimateWorks Foundation and Energy Foundation. As one member of the PC explains, “the unique part of PC and the reason why McKinsey played such an extraordinary role, all revolves around Margaret Mead’s favourite quote that ‘a small group of committed individuals can change the world.’” As he goes on to explain, “if we are going to win this fight it is because of a small band of committed individuals.”<sup>22</sup>

Building on this approach, the PC team set up an informal network of approximately 150 climate negotiators, senior government officials, representatives from multilateral institutions, business executives and leading experts from over 30 countries. They were divided up into six working groups: abatement, adaptation, technology, forestry, climate-compatible growth plans and finance. McKinsey provided analytical support to each of the working groups. Through these working groups and PC more generally, the overall idea was “to provide a forum where key participants in the global discussions can informally interact, conduct analyses, jointly problem solve, and contribute ideas and proposals to the formal UNFCCC process” (ClimateWorks Foundation 2009).

On March 4–5, 2009, PC organized a symposium in Washington “to integrate our collective insights into a picture of what a successful global solution to climate change could look like, and to define three or four practical steps for Project Catalyst to take to support that solution” (Project Catalyst 2009). Over the course of the two-day event, parallel breakout sessions were organized on adaptation, forestry, technology, mitigation and finance. Each breakout group was expected to come up with proposals for elements of an agreement (many of these proposals were then published). Attendees at the Symposium included representatives from governments,<sup>23</sup> think tanks and independent research organizations,<sup>24</sup> intergovernmental organizations (World Bank, OECD, UNEP, etc.), the UNFCCC Secretariat, the business world,<sup>25</sup> the finance and banking sector,<sup>26</sup> academia,<sup>27</sup> large environmental NGOs and think tanks<sup>28</sup> and, of course, foundations.<sup>29</sup>

On the back of the Symposium, PC produced various thematic papers and a synthesis briefing paper offering elements of a potential agreement

(Project Catalyst 2009). In line with the “building blocks” approach, the synthesis paper clearly stresses the need for policies to “create the necessary incentives and mandates” for the private sector to shift towards a low carbon economy. According to the PC, the agreement’s primary function should be to “help sustain action and ratchet up ambition over time and through political cycles” (Project Catalyst 2009, 7). Largely echoing the work of groups like the GLCA or The Climate Group, PC felt that a successful Copenhagen agreement hinged on six core elements: A long-term goal of limiting global emissions to 20 gigatonnes (or less) by 2050, developed country commitments to reduce emissions to 25 %–40 % below 1990 levels by 2020, developing country commitments to enact “climate-compatible growth plans,” technology innovation and deployment through various policy incentives, a dramatic scaling up of the finance and the carbon market system in order to fund adaptation and mitigation efforts and, finally, an enduring, yet flexible, institutional architecture.<sup>30</sup>

So as to highlight the economic benefits of decarbonization and entice developing countries into reducing their emissions, PC actively promoted national Low Carbon Growth Plans (LCGP). The idea was to develop a method for low carbon growth planning by drawing on existing developing and developed country policies. It also involved assisting—through PC or McKinsey—various developing countries in their growth planning activities prior to the Copenhagen COP.<sup>31</sup> This involved identifying national development priorities and helping countries to plan their mitigation and adaptation efforts accordingly. To encourage developing countries to contribute to the overall mitigation efforts, PC developed national marginal abatement cost curves and assessments of economic impacts in order to guide national policy choices and highlight the potential benefits of low-carbon development (Cox and Benioff 2011, 10).

On the eve of the Copenhagen conference, PC produced a briefing paper in which it analysed the emissions implied by the existing reduction proposals from all countries (Project Catalyst 2009). Given their inadequacy, PC called for the Copenhagen agreement to include a “review and ratchet” mechanism whereby, following an independent technical review of progress on mitigation, countries are “strongly encouraged to ratchet-up their mitigation commitments to close any gaps between committed actions and what is necessitated by a 2°C pathway” (Project Catalyst 2009, 6). The PC suggested organizing a first “review and ratchet” round in 2015 on the back of the IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report.

During the negotiations in Copenhagen, PC continued to be active through public events and behind-the-scenes activities. Members of the PC team organized and took part in various side events and meetings. The fact that they were not registered as observers, but through national delegations (these included Papua New Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Netherlands and Ghana), meant that they had privileged access to negotiators and government officials.

When it comes to evaluating PC's work in the run-up to and during the COP, it would appear that those involved did exert a certain level of influence on the negotiation process. As one participant in PC explains,

there are lots and lots of ideas that emerged out of the Project Catalyst process that you could put your finger on and say that is where Project Catalyst came up with this idea—ideas shared with negotiators, with the Danish Presidency. The 100 billion [financial package], low-carbon growth plans, the ratchet mechanism... There are a number of others... The deep understanding that we could only get there if we got developing countries to carry the bulk of the mitigation challenge. Project Catalyst supported the Danish government in creating the famous Danish text.<sup>32</sup>

According to another former PC team member,

Project Catalyst created a set of analytics that was pretty influential, generating a bit of 'shared understanding' especially of a core 'deal' around mitigation and finance. Especially the climate finance work influenced the Copenhagen outcome and post-Copenhagen finance decisions (100 billion number, creating a Green Climate Fund).<sup>33</sup>

## THE COPENHAGEN COLLAPSE

Despite their actions in support of an ambitious agreement, the PC, the GCCA and other non-state actors engaged in the international climate debate were unable to avert the ultimate collapse of the Copenhagen talks. The publication of the "secret" Danish text—a PC-backed draft proposal for a treaty decision—on the second day of the COP provoked a series of very negative reactions on behalf of developing countries, through the G77 plus China, who accused Denmark of side-tracking the rules of the Convention by negotiating behind the scenes. The document itself was seen as a provocation since it no longer clearly distinguished between the

UNFCCC's Annex 1 (developed) and non-Annex 1 (developing) countries. While there had been a certain level of dialogue and expressions of goodwill in the run-up to Copenhagen, the leaked document contributed to polarize positions between developing and developed countries. Within the G77 plus China, the most vulnerable countries were unwilling to accept a weak outcome. The large, polluting developing countries—China, India, South Africa, Brazil—wanted developed countries to show more ambition while at the same time hesitating to agree to a long-term goal that would necessarily imply efforts on their behalf, efforts which they felt could potentially hamper their economic growth.

Faced with growing opposition from parties—including developed countries that had initially supported and even contributed to the Danish initiative in the months preceding the COP—the Danish Presidency abstained from presenting its text. Without a workable text and in a last-ditch attempt to avert a total deadlock, a group of 26 leaders—including China and the USA—proceeded to draft a new text behind closed doors. After hours of high diplomatic drama, Obama finally struck a deal with Wen Jiabao (China), Lula (Brazil), Jacob Zuma (South Africa) and Manmohan Singh (India). The result was an accord that certain developing countries considered “illegal” in view of the fact that it had been negotiated in “secret.” Given this lack of consensus, the closing Copenhagen plenary agreed to take note of the accord, and parties were invited to report national CO<sub>2</sub> targets to the UNFCCC on a voluntary basis.

In terms of substance, the accord did not live up to even the lowest expectations of many non-state actors. As an accord—and not a protocol or agreement—, the Copenhagen document is not legally binding. While recognizing that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and calling on parties to “enhance [their] long-term cooperative action” to avert a global temperature increase of more than 2 °C, the accord did not set a timescale for action. Furthermore, while the accord officially, and for the first time, took note of the fact that all countries, not just developed countries, agree to reduce their emissions, the text does not contain any quantified and binding targets or instruments to verify them. As Yvo De Boer, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, noted at a press conference on December 20, “it is fair to say that Copenhagen did not produce the full agreement the world needs to address the collective climate challenge. [The Accord] represents a political letter of intent that offers to reduce national emissions and sets a global temperature rise limit of two degrees centigrade” (UNFCCC 2010).

## CONCLUSION

The COP15's end result came as a major shock to those who were involved in the international climate process. The disappointing result of Copenhagen led to a massive withdrawal of foundation grants in the climate field. As one former foundation staff member explained, "when Copenhagen did not result in a global deal, [foundations] disinvested from international climate work quite heavily."<sup>34</sup> Foundations' withdrawal from the climate debate was not restricted to the international arena. In the USA, the collapse of the American Clean Energy and Security Act (which after being approved by the House of Representatives in June 2009 was never brought to the floor of the Senate) further deterred many US foundations from engaging in climate policy work. The EGA estimates that the levels of climate funding in 2010 fell back to their 2007 level (approximately USD 70 million) (EGA 2015, 5). When they did not entirely abandon the climate field, many foundations chose to redirect their efforts towards sub-national initiatives and projects. As one observer recalls, "when [the international negotiation process] all came tumbling down, in evaluating their failure, [many of those involved in PC] moved away from messy international negotiations towards more of a bottom up approach focusing on key countries."<sup>35</sup>

For the foundations that supported the GCCA and PC, the post-COP period led to a profound reassessment of their respective and collective climate funding strategies. Yet, as we will see in the next chapter, rather than abandoning the international negotiations space altogether, they would draw on the lessons learnt in order to come up with a new strategy. The post-COP15 period, particularly through renewed efforts from the Oak Foundation and ECF, led to a growing realization of the need to adopt a more holistic approach towards the climate negotiations. Most significantly, this implied updating the liberal philanthropic framework by paying closer attention to the politics of climate change rather than just focusing on the climate science and policy proposals. Consequently, the post-COP15 period rapidly gave rise to a new strategy that drew on elements from PC and GCCA, updated them to correct past mistakes and moulded them together to produce the IPPI. The IPPI combined PC's focus on analytics and policy support and the GCCA's innovative communications approach—dropping the idea of a shared brand (TckTckTck) and replacing it with an unbranded approach to communications.

## NOTES

1. The Bill would be ultimately scrapped given the Senate's hostility towards it.
2. [http://www.mott.org/sitecore/content/Globals/Grants/2009/200900671\\_Capacity%20Building%20in%20the%20South%20on%20Climate%20Change%20and%20Sustainable%20Development.aspx](http://www.mott.org/sitecore/content/Globals/Grants/2009/200900671_Capacity%20Building%20in%20the%20South%20on%20Climate%20Change%20and%20Sustainable%20Development.aspx) (accessed 10 October 2015).
3. <https://www.greengrants.org/programs/search/?advanced=true> (accessed 25 November 2015).
4. <http://tcktck.org/about/> (accessed 4 February 2016).
5. Interview with author.
6. <http://www.1sky.org/about/our-story> (accessed 2 March 2016). One of 1Sky's major backers was the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (in 2008, it made a USD 1 million grant to the campaign).
7. She would go on to become Director of the Climate and Energy Program at the World Resources Institute in August 2009. Before E3G, she was the Director of the WWF Global Climate Change Program and US CAN.
8. WWF, Greenpeace, Oxfam International, ActionAid International, ChristianAid, CAN International.
9. Through its funding, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund helped the Sustainable Markets Foundation (SMF) launch the [350.org](#) campaign (USD 100,000 in 2008 and USD 175,000 in 2009). The Sustainable Markets Foundation also received funds from the Rockefeller Family Fund (USD 40,000 in 2008).
10. TckTckTck was originally created by a strategic partnership between Kofi Annan's Global Humanitarian Forum (GHF) and Havas Worldwide/EuroRSCG.
11. Interview with author.
12. According to Matthew Hoffman, "Michael Northrup [program director, Sustainable Development] of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund approached Steve Howard, the now CEO of The Climate Group, to develop an organization that would not only get these stories told, but put reducers in contact with one another" (Hoffman 2011).
13. Senior advisors to the GLCA included Herman Mulder (senior advisor to the UN Global Compact and World Business Council for Sustainable Development), R.K. Pachauri (chairman of the IPCC), Laurence Tubiana (Director of IDDRI).



14. Interview with author.
15. Interview with author.
16. This is referring to the McKinsey and Co. consultancy firm.
17. Interview with author.
18. Interview with author.
19. It would play an influential role in the run-up to the Copenhagen COP and also be subject to a number of critiques by academics and NGOs (Greenpeace International 2011; Rainforest Foundation UK 2010; Ekins et al. 2011).
20. Email exchange with author.
21. Interview with author.
22. Interview with author.
23. Ghana, Brazil, Japan, Australia, Ireland, Denmark, Korea, Norway, Mexico, the UK, Spain, Guyana, China, France, Poland, the European Commission, Russia, the USA, Tanzania.
24. The Brookings Institution, The Climate Group, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Pew Center on Climate Change, Stockholm Environmental Institute, E3G, IIED.
25. Toyota, SunEdison, Shell, Tata BP Solar, Rio Tinto, WBCSD, World Economic Forum.
26. Deutsche Bank, C-Quest Capital, Merrill Lynch, International Finance Corporation.
27. Renmin University, Cornell University, Tsinghua University, LSE.
28. NRDC, WWF, The Nature Conservancy, WRI.
29. ClimateWorks Foundation, European Climate Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Packard Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Energy Foundation, Summit Foundation.
30. The paper was presented on June 6, at a side-event organized at the Bonn climate negotiations. Speakers included Professor Tom Heller (Stanford University, ex-IPCC co-chair) and Dr. Bert Metz (Fellow at the European Climate Foundation and ex-co-chair of the IPCC).
31. Brazil, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico and Papua New Guinea.
32. The interviewee is referring here to an initiative by the Danish government to produce a proposal for the outcome of COP15 “on the basis of which the presidency could engage in bilateral negotiations at the level of heads of state.” The text was circulated throughout the

autumn with the tacit support of Ban Ki-moon. A series of bilateral consultations were organized. “Most of the meetings were held with close allies from the EU, the US and countries like Australia and Canada, but leaders from the Maldives, Africa, Mexico, Brazil, China, India and other leading developing nations were also consulted. The proposal, continuously revised on the basis of input from meetings, was for a long time shaped as a one text-agreement, thus replacing the two track process (LCA and the KP). This was not well received by the developing countries, who were working to see the Kyoto commitments being prolonged. For the Prime Minister’s Office, getting Barack Obama on board was a high priority” (Meilstrup 2010, 124–125).

33. Email exchange with author.
34. Interview with author.
35. Interview with author.

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## The International Policies and Politics Initiative

**Abstract** The Copenhagen collapse exposed some of the core limitations of the strategic approach to philanthropy—in particular, its reluctance to engage in the politics of climate change. Drawing the lessons from their involvement in the COP15, a group of foundations, in collaboration with other members of the international climate community, developed a new approach to philanthropic involvement in the international climate debate: the IPPI. Combining and updating elements from the GCCA and PC initiatives (presented in Chap. 4), IPPI represents a highly sophisticated attempt at reaching a positive outcome at the Paris climate conference (COP21).

**Keywords** COP21 • IPPI • Climate funders • Climate philanthropy • Climate negotiations • Climate politics

Believing that the world's philanthropic foundations, given the scale of their endowments, hold the power to trigger a survival reflex in society, so greatly helping those negotiating the climate treaty;  
[...] We, 160 winners of the world's environmental prizes, call on foundations and philanthropists everywhere to deploy their endowments urgently in the effort to save civilization.

*An appeal to the world's foundations and philanthropists by the world's environmental prize winners*

Monday, September 15, 2014, *International New York Times*<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

As was previously highlighted, the Copenhagen collapse and derailing of the US cap-and-trade bill led many foundations to reassess their involvement in the climate field, and particularly in the international climate field. Copenhagen was, as the Oak Foundation puts it in its 2010 Annual report, a “reality check” for foundations and NGOs (Oak Foundation 2011). When they did not purely and simply abandon the climate field, many foundations drastically downsized their climate portfolios and programmes, and, in certain cases, reallocated their grants to specific and less risky projects at the subnational or sectorial levels. This strategy mirrored that of numerous NGOs working on the climate issue who abandoned international policy work for more localized and “winnable” battles.

Following an initial period of disillusionment and despair, some within the international climate community, including foundations, tried to make sense of *what* had happened and *why* it had happened the way it had. Having done this, a group of foundations proceeded to devise new strategies to secure a new climate regime for the post-2020 period. The 2011–2015 period witnessed renewed engagement on behalf of the foundation community along new lines. As we will see, a large proportion of the funds for international climate activities were channelled through or in support of a single platform and attendant strategy: the International Policies and Politics Initiative (IPPI). Originating in the ECF, the IPPI combined and updated elements of the GCCA and PC and mobilized many of the individuals and foundations that had been involved in both initiatives. This is not surprising given ECF’s close ties to the Oak and ClimateWorks foundations. As its name suggests, IPPI’s originality also lay in its focus on the politics of climate change.

### THE REORGANIZATION OF CLIMATEWORKS FOUNDATION

Given their level of involvement in the Copenhagen process, in 2010 the ClimateWorks Foundation, its funders, regional regrantsing foundations, best practice networks and partners launched a collective evaluation of PC and their contribution to the climate debate more generally. This led to a reassessment of the ClimateWorks Foundation network’s overarching theory of change and, inter alia, the *Design To Win* strategy. At the ClimateWorks Foundation Annual Summit in October 2010, approximately 200 participants, representing the breadth of the network, shared their views and discussed the network’s objectives and strategies. On the

back of this, ClimateWorks Foundation initiated a network-wide consultation to review experiences and lessons learnt and “reshape and guide the Network’s efforts for the next 10 years” (ECF 2011c, 2).

One of the most noticeable effects was a shift in the power dynamics within the ClimateWorks Foundation network. In particular, the Oak Foundation, as network funder, came to play a more proactive and influential role within it. Among the network’s regional foundations, ECF also came to occupy a more prominent position, especially in the field of international climate diplomacy. As Foundation executive explains, “the Oak foundation played a fundamental role in reshaping ClimateWorks.”<sup>2</sup> Up to now, the foundation had limited itself to funding regional climate foundations.<sup>3</sup> As we have seen in the preceding chapter, in the run-up to Copenhagen, rather than supporting PC, Oak chose to support the advocacy and capacity building work of the GCCA. Through its heightened involvement in ClimateWorks Foundation, Oak advanced a revised version of the strategic approach that had hitherto guided the ClimateWorks Foundation’s work, and that reflected the strategic approach of large liberal US climate funders like the Hewlett Foundation (through Paul Brest and Hal Harvey).

The Oak Foundation’s greater involvement in the network signalled a shift in the relations between the ClimateWorks Foundation and its regional regranteeing partners. As one foundation representative explains, relations between the ClimateWorks Foundation and regional foundations “became far less top-down than they used to be. [It] realised that the people on the ground often have a better idea of how to influence what is happening.”<sup>4</sup> In line with Oak’s own approach to grantmaking, the ClimateWorks Foundation was encouraged to enhance its collaboration with its regional network and draw on their hands-on knowledge of national and regional dynamics and actors by conceding them greater grantmaking flexibility and strategic oversight. In other words, instead of simply realizing a pre-defined strategy, regional foundations were now expected to more actively contribute to the overall network strategy.

In addition to engaging with a more diverse set of “geographies and communities,” the ClimateWorks Foundation was also expected to “share strategies and knowledge more widely, and support more coordination among funders.”<sup>5</sup> As a ClimateWorks Foundation representative explains, “before, the model was too rigid. Organizationally it did not allow for the flexibility that was needed.”<sup>6</sup> Instead of going directly to regional regrantees, the majority of foundation funds were channelled through the ClimateWorks Foundation. The idea was now to encourage founda-

tions to align their funding but without necessarily going through the ClimateWorks Foundation. As one interviewee explained, ClimateWorks Foundation “stopped being a funnel for its foundations. Foundations could now more freely invest in the climate domain.”<sup>7</sup> The hope was of broadening the climate funders community by enabling funders to “pick and choose” their preferred projects. In addition to providing support to its regional and “best practice” networks, the ClimateWorks Foundation’s role was now to help funders to align and coordinate their grants for maximum impact by helping them to identify strategic investment opportunities. As one foundation representative explains, the ClimateWorks Foundation was “more of a coordinator rather than a direct implementer.”<sup>8</sup>

### THE EUROPEAN CLIMATE FOUNDATION AND INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE DIPLOMACY

This internal restructuring of the ClimateWorks Foundation network allowed the ECF to take the lead in the network’s international climate diplomacy activities. The ECF occupies a distinctive position in the ClimateWorks Foundation network. In particular, the ECF recognized the value of strategic communications and capacity building. From its inception, the ECF had also benefited from close relations with the Oak Foundation. The Oak Foundation had played a key role in setting up the ECF in 2008. This contributed to set the ECF apart from other ClimateWorks Foundation network regranters, which, as in the Energy Foundation case, tended to replicate the strategic and US-centric approach of their North American climate funders.

In its contribution to the ClimateWorks Foundation strategic debate, the ECF called for the creation of a “Competence Team on Global Climate Policy” and offered to act as its coordinator. As they explain, “the choice of location in ECF is justified by the significant institutional capacity in ECF, and the leading role that Europe has historically had in advancing international climate policy, building essential trust. In addition, significant knowhow has been built in finance, green growth, and communications” (ECF 2011d, 13). By securing commitment, creating a common framework with a common set of rules and accounting measures, the ECF felt that reaching an international climate agreement was essential for ambitious national climate action. The international climate regime, they argued, generates “momentum and confidence,” contributes to “lowering financial



and knowledge barriers” and enhances “transparency and accountability to domestic and international audiences” (ECF 2011d, 6). In other words, the success of domestic climate policies is contingent upon a favourable international environment (ECF 2011d, 3).

without progress, the international arena can exert strong negative influence on domestic action. Competitiveness and carbon leakage concerns continue to matter, as do arguments about the futility of individual countries’ efforts in the face of others’ inaction. Meanwhile the high risk and capital requirements of low carbon solutions act as a critical global financial barrier. (ECF 2011d, 3)

As we will see, the ECF came to play a crucial “behind the scenes” role in the run-up to and during the Paris COP. Building upon its accumulated experience at the European and international levels, through its involvement in PC and other initiatives, ECF devised a new strategy aimed at revitalizing philanthropic involvement in the international climate process. According to ECF, PC’s—and through it ClimateWorks Foundation’s—failure to secure the anticipated results derives from an excessively narrow and elitist approach to policy change. While it acknowledged PC’s contribution to the climate debate (e.g. through the production of analytics), ECF identified two core strategic errors. First of all, PC failed to harness the complexity and subtleties of international climate diplomacy. In particular, some within ECF felt that PC was “too focused on big polluters” and that “smaller countries, vulnerable countries, ones that had a voice in Copenhagen, were not sufficiently included in the consultation process.” In other words, PC’s strategy was grounded on the misguided belief that an agreement between big polluters was sufficient to finalize a global deal. Additionally, PC drew on a very superficial and narrow assessment of countries’ respective priorities and interests. As one former ECF member of the PC team explains,

[PC] did not really understand the North-South politics as the mindset was too ‘pragmatic’, thinking in terms of a deal of mitigation against money. It could not see the moral dimension, it did not understand the relevance of symbolic politics (like the firewall [division between Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries]). It was ‘Northern at its core and therefore could not cross the North-South barrier which would have been essential for success in creating a shared understanding of the deal.’<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, PC did not sufficiently account for the fact that “climate diplomacy has shifted from a relatively narrow focus on the UNFCCC process, to a more complex and wider discipline that now engages new constituencies and embraces broader geopolitical discussions” (Mabey et al. 2013, 6). As we have shown in the preceding chapter (and as evidenced by ClimateWorks Foundation’s grants portfolio), the bulk of PC’s efforts were targeted at a narrow group of “change makers.” By focusing almost exclusively on policy development and deployment,<sup>10</sup> PC underestimated the impacts of broader political factors and the role of non-state actors. The initiative failed to recognize that change happens “in rather oblique and non-linear ways” and that there is a “need to pay more attention to politics and even to the polity” (Meier 2015). As Leslie Harroun explains, “the energy system is the basis for human development. Changing that system is much more complex and difficult than simply providing regulators with good information.” According to the ECF,

applying the lessons of the last three years, and indeed the previous decades, shows that our focus on the technicalities of good policy, the rational approach to problem solving, can lead us to underestimate the influence of politics, the ultimately human, and often irrational decisions made to address any given issue. (ECF 2011c, 4)

As they go on to explain,

It is therefore vital to take into account the fact that to undertake the radical policy change that will be required [...], society as a whole, from the progressive to the conservative, right to left, engaged and disinterested, will be required to move to allow for the policy shift towards the goal of a sustainable future. (ECF 2011c, 4)

Subsequently, the ClimateWorks Foundation network must

move society as a whole along the political path to economic change across the world, acting to incentivize sustainable decisions and close-off the many diversions which will be both accidentally and consciously explored, slowing down progress and threatening our vitally important 2020 goals. (ECF 2011c, 5)

In effect, the ECF challenged the traditional liberal philanthropic idea that providing policy elites with impartial and scientifically backed evi-

dence inexorably brought about transformative change. The ECF's call for greater attention to politics does not involve—at least in appearance—taking sides but rather actively engaging in the political arena through the provision of “aspirational narratives” to “all strata of society.” It is grounded in the idea that “every effort to change public policy is political” (Teles and Schmitt 2011, 16). In many ways, the ECF replicates - albeit for diametrically opposite reasons - the methods and strategies adopted by neoconservative foundations and think tanks since the early 1980s (see Chap. 2) (Rich 2005). As with neoconservative groups, ECF sees transformative change as hinging on one's ability to successfully wage a “war of ideas.” In other words, “driving the fact of universal self-interest in a sustainable future” requires “[influencing] elite opinion, [shaping] public consciousness, [recruiting] and [training] new leaders [and mobilizing] core constituencies” (Covington 2005, 89; ECF 2011, 5). Messaging and communication subsequently become core elements of any effort to influence the policy process. Advocacy work through lobbying, public relations, coalition-building and media activities is just as important as sound evidence and targeted advice in order to generate lasting change (Teles and Schmitt 2011, 2). Adequately communicating facts and ideas becomes just as important as producing them. As we will see, the ECF's insistence on the need for “aspirational narratives” shares a lot in common with the GCCA's communications-centred and capacity-building approach (see Chap. 4).

While still declaring itself as strategic, the ECF challenges certain tenets of the strategic or focused approach to philanthropy of Hal Harvey and Paul Brest (see Chap. 3)—approach that had hitherto informed much of the ClimateWorks Foundation's activities (Meier 2015). Rather than focusing their grantmaking efforts on a carefully selected set of targets, the ECF's suggested strategy involves a “spread betting” approach to grantmaking. This means having a long-term horizon and not caring about “the success or payoff of any one grant, but the aggregate payoff of their entire portfolio of investments, relative to their costs” (Teles and Schmitt 2011, 23). As Johannes Meier, CEO of the ECF since 2011, explains,

The frequency of unforeseen changes and the interdependency of subsystems makes the task a non-linear, non-deterministic, complex problem, as opposed to a simple or complicated problem. Tackling a complex problem requires one to pursue a multitude of paths and to embrace reflexivity. We have become more wary of ‘silver bullets’, or more generally of those who claim that they know ‘the one truth’. (Meier 2015)

According to Meier, this means adopting the same rigorous methods when selecting and evaluating projects while at the same time recognizing the complexity of the problem and the fact that various routes need to be taken to reach the objective. It also means coming to terms with the fact that success in the climate field requires foundations to simultaneously invest in a variety of strategies without guaranteed or measurable outcomes.

### REENGAGING IN THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FIELD (2011–2013)

Having succinctly presented ECF's suggested approach to philanthropic engagement in the international climate field, we will now analyse its proposed plan of action for the 2011–2015 period. Firstly, it called for a series of targeted interventions in national and international arenas "that act as a powerful booster to strengthen domestic action." Through these interventions, the general idea was "to create and enhance specific virtuous circles between the international and domestic arena, whereby the international environment strengthens domestic efforts, and ambitious domestic action enhances the willingness to enter more ambitious commitments into international agreements" (ECF 2011, 6). Targeted interventions include promoting the "green growth narrative" through the advancement of best practices, stakeholder dialogue, as well as outreach and communication to "business, economic and finance players in developed and emerging economies" (ECF 2011; Bowen and Fankhauser 2011). Referring to the Institute for New Economic Thinking and the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics (LSE),<sup>11</sup> they also suggest producing an authoritative international publication in 2014 synthesizing the state of knowledge on green growth (ECF 2011, 7). Other boosters include policy research to better highlight the potential of international financial instruments as enablers of ambitious climate action, and the creation of tools to track, assess and compare mitigation and finance actions and compare these to what would be required to keep the global temperature increase below the 2 °C threshold (ECF 2011, 8). The general idea was to generate momentum for change by making countries more accountable to each other and to the rest of the international community.

Rather than starting from scratch, ECF sought to extend and enhance the work that had been initiated in the run-up to COP15 and over the

course of 2010. In February 2010, PC produced a briefing paper “Taking Stock—the emissions levels implied by the pledges to the Copenhagen Accord.”<sup>12</sup> On the back of this work, ECF teamed up with the UNEP to produce the first in a series of *Emissions Gap Reports*. The report was officially launched at the COP16 in Cancun, Mexico (2010). It offered possible scenarios as well as suggestions for international and national policy mitigation actions. In the area of scenario building, ECF also drew on its *Roadmap 2050* project and reports. Co-produced with input from think tanks and independent researchers, the *Roadmap* reports explored different pathways towards a low-carbon economy in Europe and made policy recommendations at both the EU and member state levels.<sup>13</sup> By building credible scenarios, the idea was to assist decision-makers to identify the available options and to evaluate the political trade-offs associated with them. As we will see, ECF would contribute to the development of a powerful scenario-building community, largely organized around the Climate Action Tracker (Climate Analytics, Ecofys, Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung (PIK), NewClimate Institute).<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, ECF advocated orchestrating “a strengthening of pledges in 2015 by creating momentum for a ‘global moment’” coinciding with the COP21. While the aforementioned actions to strengthen national commitments are important, the ECF considered them insufficient. By generating momentum for a “global moment,” it hoped to get countries to simultaneously raise their levels of ambition and hopefully fill the gap between existing pledges and the required emissions reductions. Late 2015 was seen as the right time to orchestrate a “global moment” given the fact that the IPCC was planning to publish its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) in 2014, that Obama would be reaching the end of his second term in office and that China would be preparing its 13th Five-Year-Plan (ECF 2011, 10).

To do so, ECF suggested arranging an effective communications strategy at both the international and national levels, and mobilizing a wide array of constituencies—from NGOs to businesses to the scientific community and the general public. The plan was to stress the urgency of the situation—by drawing on the climate science—while simultaneously fostering a renewed sense of optimism about the possibilities of reaching an ambitious global agreement and insisting on the economic benefits of a green growth pathway. There again, the idea was to build upon existing ECF efforts in the communications field. Created in the run-up to COP15, ECF’s Energy Strategy Center (ESC) was a unique effort

within the ClimateWorks Foundation network at “[providing] direction and coherence in communication on climate and energy issues to shape a narrative that reframes the debate and facilitates action” and allows a “low-carbon prosperity narrative to take hold of the public debate” (ECF 2011b, 3). From a very early stage, ECF realized that success in the international climate debate did not only depend on the production of sound research and policy options but that it also, and perhaps critically, hinged upon one’s ability to coordinate messages and develop a unified vision for the climate and energy community. The ESC organized workshops and training sessions—media and spokesperson training, opinion piece writing, e-campaigns—for ECF programme staff and grantees so as “to get the entire climate community speaking with one voice” (ECF 2013, 39; 2011a, 3; 2011b, 6).

The core strategy of the ESC, as a support unit to the ECF and the wider climate community, is to ensure that across all sectors of the economy and public life, the advantages and benefits of policy to drive mitigation are not only understood but accepted and acted upon. At every stage, we seek to rebut misinformation, and reframe the debate in terms of the economic, social and political benefits of policies that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and seek to grasp the growth and innovation opportunities offered by the low-carbon revolution. (ECF 2011b)

Thirdly and finally, ECF suggested pushing for “a strong climate regime with binding elements in the second half of the decade, to ensure accelerated and coordinated action beyond 2020” (ECF 2011, 3). In terms of the structure and content of the future agreement, the ECF’s strategy, by “fostering bottom-up action and anchoring it in top-down elements,” builds upon a number of points previously laid out by PC in the run-up to Copenhagen (ECF 2011d, 3). Drawing the lessons from PC—and in particular its excessively Northern-focused approach—ECF suggested working with and supporting the work of progressive coalitions of countries in the international negotiations, and particularly the Cartagena Dialogue for Progressive Action. Originating in the Copenhagen context, the Cartagena Dialogue (CD) is an informal forum for exchange between developed and developing countries that share a common desire to bridge the North-South divide through dialogue and trust so as to find a common, negotiated solution to climate change.<sup>15</sup> It acted as an informal discussion space for negotiators and experts representing between 30

and 40 “forward-looking” developed and developing countries that were “willing to work positively and proactively together, within and across regional groupings and traditional negotiating blocs in the UNFCCC,” in opposition to groupings like the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA) or the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), seen as too “principle-based” and as hurdles to greater USA–China cooperation (DECC 2014). The aim of the Dialogue was to enhance mutual understanding of countries’ respective interests and positions and to explore possible areas of convergence and joint action.<sup>16</sup> It has been credited with having revived the UNFCCC process and paved the way for the Paris agreement (Vogler 2016, 84). As Lau Øjford Blaxekjær and Tobias Dan Nielsen explain, the CD narrative “draws on the general green growth narrative of opportunities” (Blaxekjær and Nielsen 2014, 8). The ECF suggested assisting the CD through “a quiet and low key investment” via the ClimateWorks Foundation Latin American regional foundation to “think tanks and trusted experts, particularly in developing countries, that are close to this undertaking” (ECF 2011d, 11)

#### THE INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND POLITICS INITIATIVE

Having drummed up interest within and outside the ClimateWorks Foundation network over the course of 2011, members of ECF’s Global Climate Politics team—including Jörg Haas, Bert Metz and Delia Villagrasa who had previously been involved in PC as well as Katherine Silverstone—launched a consultation process in order to “[take] stock of how [they] might work more effectively to enhance international cooperation on climate policymaking” (ECF 2013, 34). The Durban COP’s encouraging outcome and the international community’s commitment to reach a global agreement in 2015 validated the strategy laid out by the ECF in its 2011 document. In close collaboration with E3G, the WRI, Institut du Développement Durable et des Relations Internationales (IDDRI, Emmanuel Guerin), Simon Zadek (who had been involved in PC) and Carlo Jaeger (Potsdam-Institut für Klimafolgenforschung), the team consulted with a variety of stakeholders, including negotiators, civil society representatives and members of the foundation community. According to one former contributor to the strategizing process, over 200 people were consulted.<sup>17</sup> During the Rio+20 conference in mid-2012, for instance, a stakeholder meeting was organized to identify common areas of work.

In addition to getting as many actors involved as possible, the priority was to devise an appealing strategy to reengage funders in the international climate space. As we saw in the preceding chapter, the Copenhagen outcome deterred many foundations from international climate affairs. From the outset, the ECF, given its close ties to other prominent climate funders, strove to get as many on board as possible. The Oak Foundation, Mercator Foundation and ClimateWorks Foundation were early supporters of the ECF initiative. The Mercator Foundation contributed EUR 100,000 for the production of a feasibility study on the possibilities of getting foundations to reengage in the international climate policy arena (Stiftung Mercator 2013, 23). Other ECF funders such as CIFF soon joined in. Michael Jacobs, who had recently been appointed as ECF board member to represent CIFF, actively contributed to the strategy-building exercise.<sup>18</sup> In November 2010, he had published an article entitled “Copenhagen was not a (complete) failure” in which he drew some lessons for future climate action. The document was annexed in the ECF’s 2011 strategy document (Jacobs 2010).

Given the importance of funding for the achievement of the aforementioned objectives, the priority became of providing funders with “a platform for philanthropic cooperation [...] to catalyse greater ambition on climate change by working at the intersection of national and international decision-making” (ECF 2013, 26). The platform took the name of International Policies and Politics Initiative (IPPI). Launched in April 2013 with initial support from the ECF, the ClimateWorks Foundation, the Oak Foundation, CIFF and the Mercator Foundation (all ECF funders), IPPI’s stated purpose was to “highlight opportunities for philanthropic collaboration, joint strategy development, resource pooling, and grant-making alignments in the arena of international policies and politics of climate change” (ECF 2014, 26). IPPI was far more than just a platform for foundations to devise common strategies. It served as an instrument to catalyse/orientate funding—either through a pooled IPPI fund or by aligning foundations’ grantmaking with the IPPI approach—towards a pre-determined strategy—a strategy whose core principles were laid out in the ECF document of 2011.

That being said, it is difficult to precisely determine the level of foundation funding towards the IPPI strategy. According to one former foundation representative, “IPPI’s overall budget is in the single-digit millions.”<sup>19</sup> In its 2013 and 2014 annual reports, ECF writes that it devoted EUR 2.6 million and EUR 1.2 million, respectively, to IPPI (ECF 2014, 42; 2015, 40). The ClimateWorks Foundation also channelled foundation



funds towards IPPI-related projects and activities. While not explicitly earmarked as IPPI in its online database, over USD 5 million in grants went to international climate-related activities in 2015.<sup>20</sup> To this can be added the grants made directly by aligned foundations to IPPI-related projects (including the Climate Briefing Service, Deep Decarbonization Pathways Projects and ACT2015, among others).

IPPI was initially intended as a “discrete ECF programme” whose role was to “work behind the scenes.”<sup>21</sup> While the ECF had given rise to the original idea and while it housed its dedicated staff, IPPI was very much presented as an autonomous and “unbranded” initiative (“unbranded” as in not linked to any particular organization). Jennifer Morgan from the WRI was appointed as its coordinator. As we saw in Chap. 4, she played a central role in the launch of the GCCA. According to two former contributors to the IPPI project, the choice of Jennifer Morgan had to do with her long-standing experience in the international climate arena and her WRI affiliation. As one interviewee explains, “the WRI, given its director’s links with governments and international institutions like the World Bank, was seen as a legitimate partner in the eyes of the funders.”<sup>22</sup> An IPPI steering committee was also set up. It brought together representatives from foundations, NGOs and think tanks.

As a multistakeholder platform, IPPI brought together representatives from a variety of different organizations involved in the international climate process. In mid-2013, a number of them met in a venue on the outskirts of Berlin to identify common strategic priorities and areas of collaboration. The initial “space” brought together a selection of non-state actors in the international climate arena representing a wide array of organizations—foundations, development NGOs (Oxfam), environmental NGOs (Greenpeace, WWF), campaign networks (CAN International, 350.org, GCCA, Avaaz), think tanks (E3G, WRI, UCS)—and areas of expertise—communication, analytics, mobilizing, lobbying.<sup>23</sup> Many of them had a long track record of involvement in the international climate debate and strong ties with negotiators and the UNFCCC secretariat.

IPPI’s actions over the 2013–2015 period largely consisted in the enactment of the priorities set out in the ECF’s 2011 document (see above): strengthening domestic action, building momentum for a “global moment” in 2015 and crafting a strong international climate regime for the post-2020 period. In all three cases, IPPI’s role was to coordinate actions and get foundations—and other potential funders—to buy into the overall strategy and to fund all or part of the projects that derived

from it. As one former IPPI associate explains, “every grant proposal has to fit into the overarching strategy and be approved by the core IPPI funders.”<sup>24</sup> In order to broaden the funders base, IPPI, usually in collaboration with funder collaboratives—such as the CGBD’s CEEFG, the European Foundation Centre’s European Environmental Funders Group (EEFG), the EGA or the COP21 Funders Initiative—organized a series of topical webinars in 2014 and 2015 for “funders active or interested in the international climate policy arena to learn about latest policy developments, share intelligence and identify opportunities for engagement.”<sup>25</sup> Invited speakers included NGO representatives, researchers and representatives from the UNFCCC secretariat, among others.<sup>26</sup>

### STRENGTHENING DOMESTIC ACTION AND PLEDGES

IPPI pushed through and co-funded a variety of projects with the aim of strengthening domestic action and reduction pledges. It was particularly active from the moment that Parties to the UNFCCC decided to invite countries to prepare and communicate their intended nationally determined contributions (INDC) before the COP21. In a first instance, the IPPI team commissioned (in June 2013) a group of national experts to produce a series of national political economy surveys on a selection of key countries.<sup>27</sup> The objective was to get a clearer sense of national political economies and their articulation with the international arena (seen in the broad sense as including international climate negotiations, bilaterals, cross-country initiatives and mobilization and strategic communications). Each of the authors was asked to analyse the domestic political agenda, the country’s role in the international climate arena, its domestic civil society, the media and communications. They were also asked to come up with a set of recommendations “to be used as a first input into the development of more detailed national strategies and how to best leverage the international arena in each country” (IPPI 2013, 1). Author recommendations included organizing workshops, branching out and engaging with national negotiators and key stakeholders as well as media outlets.

When it comes to tracking and assessing national mitigation and finance actions, and comparing these to what would be required to keep the global temperature increase below 2 °C, IPPI was directly or indirectly linked to a variety of modelling tools and initiatives. Their purpose was as much about evaluating current efforts and pledges as sustaining a sense of hope and momentum. It was about showing how, given

the right measures, an ambitious long-term temperature target could still be achieved (even if this meant “moving the goal-posts” along the way through “negative emissions”). From 2013 onwards, it co-funded—with the ClimateWorks Foundation, the Oak Foundation and the Government of the Netherlands—the WRI-affiliated Open Climate Network (OCN). Launched in December 2010 at COP16 (Cancun), the OCN is a network of approximately 20 partner institutes specializing in climate policy that tracks and reports on their respective countries’ progress in the climate field.<sup>28</sup> In addition to serving as a source of information on national GHG mitigation-related policies, OCN also seeks to catalyse national action “by drawing attention to the link between GHG mitigation and economic positioning” and “prepare key players, especially civil society groups, to participate actively and constructively in national debates around low-carbon growth and development.”<sup>29</sup>

In 2014, and with support from IPPI, the ClimateWorks Foundation and CIFF, the OCN (through WRI) teamed up with Climate Action Tracker (CAT; a joint project by Climate Analytics, Ecofys, PIK) to launch a joint initiative whose purpose was to encourage countries to adopt ambitious, transparent and verifiable emission reduction targets and plans of action that are in line with the 2 °C objective. Launched in 2009 with support from the ECF,<sup>30</sup> CAT tracks countries’ emission-reduction efforts and commitments, assesses them (on the basis of an Effort Sharing assessment) and offers an overview of their combined effects. As part of the joint initiative, the OCN produced an assessment of the post-2020 GHG targets of eight top-emitting countries (Brazil, China, the EU, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico and the USA) (Damassa et al. 2015). As previously highlighted, instruments like CAT were essential in order to sustain a sense of hope and trust within the international climate community. The choice of methodologies to evaluate countries’ mitigation efforts and to devise pathways that were compatible with the 2 °C target were decisive and gave rise to competing interpretations. In the context of the INDCs, for instance, there were differences when it came to appreciating the fairness of national mitigation pledges.<sup>31</sup> For example, by offering a far more negative assessment of the USA’s mitigation efforts than CAT, the *Fair Shares: A Civil Society Equity Review of INDCs* report, launched in October 2015 by a group of NGOs, was very badly received by those involved in the IPPI strategy.<sup>32</sup>

Other IPPI-backed initiatives aimed at strengthening domestic action included the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project (DDPP). Co-funded

by IPPI, the Gross Family Foundation, CIFF, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and coordinated by IDDRI and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), DDPP was officially launched in October 2013. Bringing together energy specialists from a variety of countries, its ambition was to show how various countries could transform their national energy systems in a way that secures a transition to a low-carbon economy.<sup>33</sup> The originality of DDPP lay in the fact that they adopted a backcasting approach, which consisted in starting with the 2 °C limit and working backwards to imagine the most suitable policies and technology solutions. In particular, they insist on the need for low-carbon technologies and policies that secure “directed technological change”—through coordinated efforts at the government, academic and business levels. In September 2014, the DDPP published its findings in the *Pathways to deep decarbonization* report (IDDRI and SDSN, 2014).

At around the same time as the DDPP report, the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate (GCEC), chaired by Felipe Calderon (former president of Mexico) and co-chaired by Nicholas Stern, published *Better Growth, Better Climate: The New Climate Economy Report* (GCEC 2014). Launched ahead of the UN-convened summit on global warming in New York, the report was intended as an authoritative international publication highlighting the economic benefits of emissions reductions—much in the same vein as the Stern review in 2006. Its recommendations clearly fall into the “green economy” discourse—carbon pricing, focus on climate-resilient technologies. While not funded by IPPI, the project team includes a number of familiar faces. The Global Programme Director of the New Climate Economy project is Jeremy Oppenheim from McKinsey and Company and previously involved in PC (see Chap. 4). Michael Jacobs, who as we saw was actively involved in the IPPI process, was a senior advisor to the project. And finally, Caio Koch-Weser, member of the Global Commission that oversees the initiative, is also chair of the supervisory board of the ECF.

### CREATING (RENEWED) MOMENTUM FOR A “GLOBAL MOMENT”

In an attempt to generate momentum and, in particular, to get countries to strengthen their pledges and raise their levels of ambition in the run-up to COP21, IPPI orchestrated a communications campaign aimed at creat-

ing the Paris “global moment.” Learning the lessons from Copenhagen where non-state actors and the media had played a central role in shaping public expectations and understandings, the IPPI approach involved a special focus on strategic communications. As Jennifer Morgan explains in an interview for *The Carbon Brief*,

I do worry that in order to explain things that the media will simplify things. And that I think is really dangerous. [...] So I do see a risk—definitely—in an oversimplification and therefore a politicisation of things, and I really hope that journalists take the time to learn the issues and do responsible reporting on that. Because the world’s changed since Copenhagen, and I think it’s their duty to kind of report that. (Hickman 2015)

For Nick Mabey, Liz Gallagher and Camilla Born from E3G (who were actively involved in IPPI),

Effective diplomacy is not merely about government to government or ministry to ministry engagement, but also about deploying effective communications, public mobilisation and engaging the private sector. With fast growing low carbon markets, and rising climate impacts, the capacity and resources of non-governmental actors to shape climate politics domestically and international is likely to grow. The challenge for diplomacy is how to use this energy to strengthen ambition in the formal climate regime. (Mabey et al. 2013, 62)

From its inception in 2013 to the Paris COP in December 2015, the IPPI platform relentlessly publicized the positive economic and political signals and their role in building increasing political momentum towards Paris. This communications strategy builds upon earlier communications efforts by ECF and partner organizations, and mirrors a broader evolution of climate-related messaging in the post-COP15 context. It also fits into the “liberal environmentalist” discourse that views environmental protection and economic growth as mutually reinforcing. In his study of communication strategies and activities in the run-up to and during the 2010 COP in Cancun, Manuel Adolphsen shows how many of the large NGOs and NGO coalitions adopted a more pragmatic and “positive” approach. As he explains, GCCA, CAN International and large environmental NGOs like Greenpeace “went for optimistic, empowering frames” (Adolphsen 2014, 126).

Throughout 2013 and 2014, IPPI worked closely with the ECF's strategic communications team—and in particular, the ESC. As was previously mentioned, the ESC's role was to “shift the public narrative around the low-carbon transition from costs and barriers to challenges and opportunities” (ECF 2014). As part of the IPPI effort, ESC communications experts organized collective and personalized media training sessions to assist various stakeholders in their media-related activities. The ECF also set up a global communications network, the Global Strategic Communications Council (GSCC), whose purpose is to plan and deliver strategic communications in the climate and energy fields at both the international and national levels. The network brings together communications specialists from around the world, each focusing on a particular country or region.<sup>34</sup> They collaborate with and assist a wide range of actors: corporate, government, institutional, media, NGO, think tanks. Part of their work involves identifying high-potential campaigns and individuals, and helping them to plan their actions, target the right audiences and formulate their baseline messages, making sure along the way that each campaign bolsters an overarching narrative.

Over the course of 2013 and 2014, part of IPPI's and the ESC's work consisted in simultaneously generating a sense of hope by highlighting state and non-state efforts to ramp up ambition and urgency by communicating on the mounting scientific evidence surrounding climate change. During the COP19 in Warsaw (2013), for instance, IPPI orchestrated “a joint statement from 27 leading scientists arguing for no new unabated coal and hosted a press conference with the authors at the same time activists were protesting the International Coal and Climate Summit” (ECF 2014, 27). IPPI also supported Polish NGOs, media and public figures to raise awareness on the importance of climate change. Beyond COP19, IPPI also engaged a series of small-scale partnerships at the local level to mobilize public support for climate action. In 2013, for instance, it funded a conference on energy in Asia (organized by the Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice) and the Fossil Free UK project. In September 2014, IPPI was also involved in the preparations for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's Climate Summit.

That same year, the ECF, in collaboration with other foundations, helped set up the London-based Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit (ECIU)<sup>35</sup>—headed by former BBC Environment Correspondent Richard Black—and the Berlin-based Clean Energy Wire (CLEW)<sup>36</sup> (co-funded with Mercator). The purpose of both organizations was to make informed

contributions to debates on energy and climate change developments in the UK and Germany by supplying journalists and communicators with a regular stream of topical briefings. The ECF, and in particular the ESC, had a history of supporting communications services for journalists, communicators and the broader climate community. In 2011, it had launched The Carbon Brief website whose sole purpose was to provide briefings, analysis, press reviews, fact checks and science explainers in the areas of climate science, climate policy and energy policy.<sup>37</sup> Through the combination of behind-the-scenes (GSCC) and public communications activities, the ESC sought to shape the public debate around climate change.

### MOBILIZING THE PUBLIC

For IPPI, the purpose of popular mobilizations, whether outside or inside the negotiation hall, was to strengthen their overall strategy. While initially cautious about public mobilizations, the IPPI team soon realized that, if properly managed and oriented, they could act as a powerful “booster” in the run-up to Paris. On the margins of the official negotiation process, the resounding success of the People’s Climate March in New York City in September 2014 further encouraged IPPI to support popular mobilizations, especially during the Paris COP. Whereas, for the climate justice movement, the COP marked an opportunity to build up an autonomous global climate movement, irrespective of the climate negotiations, IPPI viewed popular mobilizations as a means of pressuring world leaders to act and seal the deal. In other words, popular mobilizations, and in particular their coverage by the media, were not detached from the climate negotiations and fell into IPPI’s wide-ranging approach to international climate diplomacy.

This explains why campaign groups like [Avaaz.org](http://Avaaz.org)—whose campaign director Iain Keith was very active in IPPI—pushed for the organization of an international day of action at the start of the COP (on November 29) rather than at the end (December 12). Whereas members of the climate justice movement pushed for the December 12 so as to have the “last word,” [Avaaz.org](http://Avaaz.org) wanted to mobilize the public in support of the negotiations taking place inside the Le Bourget conference centre. This logically meant mobilizing at the start of the COP. The November terrorist attacks had a major impact on the initial mobilization plans for Paris. [Avaaz.org](http://Avaaz.org) and others were nevertheless able to stage an event in Paris on November 29 and to support a wide range of marches and public events

across the globe. Its campaign focused on a combination of quite specific and fairly consensual demands such as “100 % clean energy by 2050” (targeting the fossil fuel industry) and very generic calls for leaders to “show ambition.” The latter took the form of a full-page advertisement in the *International New York Times* on December 11 where five heads of state—Angela Merkel, Barack Obama, Dilma Rousseff, Narendra Modi, Xi Jinping—were disguised as Star Wars characters under the title “Do. There is no try” and the slogan “Climate Deal: 100 % clean. Choose you must.” Mobilizations were to play a supportive role, not an empowering one. Unlike their climate justice counterparts, for groups like Avaaz that were associated with the IPPI strategy, mobilizations were intended to play a supportive role rather than an empowering one. It was less about “cultivating the grass-roots” than mobilizing the public in support of the ongoing negotiations (Hansen 2012).

As part of this strategy, IPPI and its associated funders made a series of grants to NGOs active inside and on the margins of the international climate negotiations space. It made grants to international networks—GCCA, 350.org, CAN International—and Southern or Southern-focused networks—Jubilee South Asia Pacific Movement, ChristianAid, Oxfam America, Vasudha Foundation. Funded activities included media coverage support, organizing, NGO participation and coordination, outreach and education.

### MOBILIZING SCIENCE FOR AN “AMBITIOUS AGREEMENT”

Translating scientific data into actionable information was a priority for those involved in IPPI. As Nick Mabey, Liz Gallagher and Camilla Born explain, “understanding the constraints from the scientific community and developing effective communications strategies which deploy a wide range of actors will be essential to demonstrate the material impacts of climate change upon everyday lives” (Mabey et al. 2013, 56). In 2014, with the publication of the IPCC’s AR5, the ESC produced “digestible summaries,” briefing notes and “rebuttal lines,” developed a communications strategy for the Working Group 1 report and coordinated press interviews following the official IPCC press conference in Stockholm. According to the ESC, “this work led to more than 12,400 stories worldwide in the first three days following the launch” (ECF 2014). The issue for the IPPI team was of making sure that the scientific community not only highlighted the dangers of unmitigated climate change but also did not undermine their efforts to promote an optimistic discourse on the feasibility of a 1.5 °C–2 °C target.



During the Paris COP and from the moment that scientists decided to talk to the media, communication experts associated with IPPI rapidly stepped in so as to make sure that they did not undermine the ongoing negotiations. On December 11, for instance, when members of the scientific community staged a press conference to express their views on the agreement and in particular the 1.5 °C long-term temperature goal, communications experts and members of the IPPI team overtly tried to prevent critical voices from speaking at the event. One of the rare climate scientists to openly voice his concerns about the agreement and feasibility of a 1.5 °C target (given the current level of commitments) was Kevin Anderson, deputy director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research. Worried by the potential impact of his press conference intervention, attempts were made to dissuade the organizers from allowing him to speak. Looking back at the Paris Conference, Kevin Anderson gives us a sense of this outside pressure on the scientific community when he writes that:

there was a real sense of unease among many scientists present. The almost euphoric atmosphere that accompanied the circulation of the various drafts could not be squared with their content. Desperate to maintain order, a club of senior figures and influential handlers briefed against those who dared to say so—just look at some of the Twitter discussions! (Anderson 2015a, 437)

This episode signals a growing subordination of climate science to climate politics—or, at least, a certain form and approach to climate politics. Whereas in the past, climate science—in particular through the IPCC—was expected to present the facts and expose the problem, it was now increasingly being pressured to abandon its ivory tower and contribute to securing a “positive outcome” in Paris, at the risk of downplaying certain “inconvenient truths.” Climate scientists, like NGOs and other sections of the climate community, were pressured to contribute to creating the “Paris moment” by “sending positive signals” even if this meant losing sight of the scientific evidence. Beyond the moral case for the promotion of a “positive outcome” lies a “fear of reprisals and reduced funding” (Anderson 2015b).

### CLIMATE BRIEFING SERVICE

So as to more efficiently “shape the ‘realm of discourse’” and better coordinate the actions and messages of a wider range of climate actors, rather than just the ECF grantees, the IPPI team—in particular through the

efforts of Jennifer Morgan and Liz Gallagher—launched the Climate Briefing Service (CBS) in late 2014 (Mabey 2014). With support from CIFF, ClimateWorks Foundation, the Villum Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the Oak Foundation and Avaaz, CBS’s purpose was to both provide real-time and ready-to-use information to selected members of the climate community and “[coordinate] voices at national and international levels to help shape the national offers as they are being drafted and the thinking around the international agreement.”<sup>38</sup> As we will see in the following paragraphs, it also acted as a global political and communications hub in support of the overall IPPI strategy.

CBS’s emphasis on information sharing and coordination between stakeholders mirrors the GCCA’s own capacity-building approach (see Chap. 4). The fact that Jennifer Morgan, who had played an instrumental role in launching the GCCA, was now in charge of IPPI and was actively involved in the CBS project supports this idea. A number of those who were active in CBS had also been involved in the GCCA. Like the GCCA’s nerve centre, the CBS’s “global team” brought together members of the international climate community representing a wide array of both insider and outsider organizations—environmental and development NGOs, climate networks, campaign groups, think tanks and research organizations, as well as foundations.<sup>39</sup> While some NGOs were initially reluctant to join, arguing that there was a risk of overlap between their activities and those of CBS, the global team ultimately brought together representatives from the most prominent and active organizations in the international climate arena. As with the GCCA, among those who were not represented were groups associated with the climate justice movement. Members of the “global team” regularly took part in conference calls, strategy sessions, workshops and conferences to share views, information and intelligence on policy-related issues, and collectively establish strategic priorities. Government representatives and delegates attended some of the meetings. Representatives from the ECF’s Energy Strategy Center (ESC) and GSCC were also actively involved in CBS activities.

These elements of continuity notwithstanding, three important aspects distinguish CBS from GCCA. First of all, CBS’s underlying agenda and expectations for the COP21 are fundamentally different from those of GCCA in the run-up to Copenhagen. Whereas the GCCA called for a top-down, legally binding agreement, CBS, in stark contrast, supports a bottom-up approach involving voluntary, nationally determined mitigation commitments, an overarching long-term goal and framework to

track progress. In this respect, and unsurprisingly given IPPI's origins, CBS's position is quite similar to that of PC in the run-up to Copenhagen. Secondly, whereas the GCCA pushed its partners to adopt, publicize and rally behind a common brand—TckTckTck—CBS and IPPI adopted a behind-the-scenes, unbranded approach, supplying partners with information and suggested key messaging but without ever appearing as the source of that information and messaging.<sup>40</sup> CBS briefing recipients were systematically reminded that they were “confidential and not for public circulation.” Furthermore, there was no way for them to know exactly who else receives the briefings. According to one foundation representative, the adoption of this low-key approach responded to the GCCA's failure in 2009 to take account of the fact that NGOs—especially the larger, more established ones like Greenpeace or WWF—were unwilling to abandon, even partially, their respective brand identities.<sup>41</sup> In this sense, it was far more in line with the GSCC's “behind-the-scenes” approach to strategic communications. Thirdly, and finally, unlike the GCCA's open approach, CBS is an “invitation-only” platform where individuals were asked to join on the basis of their potential contribution to the overarching strategy.

Like IPPI, CBS did not have a legal status but acted as a loose platform. Its dedicated staff was based in the WRI's Washington and E3G's London offices.<sup>42</sup> E3G housed a team of diplomatic writers whose function was to compile and synthesize climate-related intelligence and information and to draft “digestible” communications and briefing products for selected “CBS customers”—journalists, bloggers, representatives from NGOs, businesses, governments, intergovernmental organizations. In this respect, its activities were very similar to those of ECIU, albeit at a global level. Briefings were sent on a regular basis via email to “CBS customers.”<sup>43</sup> These included campaigners, bloggers, journalists, climate policy and communications experts from NGOs, think tanks as well as national and international institutions. General briefings offered updates on the negotiation process, the progress on INDCs, information on past or upcoming multilateral or bilateral meetings, ‘stories of the week’ on public or private initiatives to ramp up ambition. They also included updates on the current status of key issues through a system of indicators and colour codes (incremental, dynamic, upwards), highlighting where further work was required, as well as links to reports and publications—usually by CBS global team members—and relevant news articles.<sup>44</sup>

More targeted, event-related or issue-specific briefings were also produced and circulated. Examples include a CBS briefing aimed at aligning

“CBS partners’ strategic interventions around the operationalization of the long-term goal.” The briefing offered factual information on what is meant by a long-term goal, who supports it and who opposes it, and suggested core messages—and, on occasion, suggested tweets—for CBS partners to use (public interventions, meetings with ministers). During the Paris COP, CBS issued briefings on a twice-daily basis. The messages were tailored to targeted communities (corporate community, investor community, cities community, climate community, security/foreign affairs community). The underlying idea was to “nurture and engage influential constituencies (industry alliances, ambassadors, foreign affairs think tanks, mayors, states and regions, security officials, humanitarian organisations) with a view of aligning organisations around political interventions as agreed with the relevant national communications capacity of the region.”<sup>45</sup> At the national and regional levels, this required identifying key narratives and spokespeople. To do this, CBS built up a team of country leads or “relationship managers.” There again, there was an overlap between CBS, the GSCC and other associated communications outfits (Climate Nexus, ECIU, etc.).

In order to ramp up ambition in the run-up to Paris, the CBS global team focused much of its efforts on key political moments, reaching out to and mobilizing stakeholders, and orchestrating a communications plan. Among the identified moments were the US–China bilateral meeting (September 2015), the G7 Elmau Summit (June 2015) and the US Secretary General’s informal lunch for leaders (September 2015). As CBS writes in one of its briefings, “all of these moments were prompted by COP21, thus demonstrating the value of a multilateral agreement that creates a global moment where countries stepping forward together, can provide each other with political cover domestically; increasing the probability of a more ambitious outcome than would otherwise happen unilaterally.”<sup>46</sup>

## THE UNFCCC PROCESS

While effective communications and campaigning fit into IPPI’s holistic approach to climate diplomacy, IPPI was also actively involved in the formal UNFCCC process. As with its communications strategy, there were certain elements of continuity between IPPI and earlier initiatives in the run-up to COP15. In the negotiations field, the IPPI team drew on the lessons learnt from PC in order to secure a positive outcome in Paris. This

implied developing a more accurate assessment of respective countries' positions and interests in the UNFCCC space instead of simply focusing on the "finance for mitigation" approach. It also meant reaching out to and involving all parties rather than just the "big polluters."

As with PC, IPPI benefited from close working relations with negotiators from key countries (especially since many of those involved or associated with IPPI had been active in 2009 and had contributed to PC's work). In an attempt to address the "Northern bias" of 2009, IPPI sought to better account for Southern positions and involve representatives from the global South. As previously noted, in 2013, IPPI consulted with "Latin American think tanks, governments, civil society, and business to gather recommendations on what the philanthropic community could do to support a positive outcome" (ECF 2014). It funded and facilitated the launch of Southern-based think tanks, with the aim of mobilizing developing country actors and offering a "Southern perspective" on the climate question. In 2013, for instance, IPPI funded the creation of the Costa Rica-based Nivelá. Headed by Monica Araya, a former climate negotiator for Costa Rica (2010–2013) and senior associate at E3G (2009–2011), Nivelá's mission is to "challenge conventional wisdom on development using multidisciplinary analysis and reflections from the ground to spur changes in how environmental, climate and socio-economic goals are integrated in [developing countries'] pursuit of prosperity."<sup>47</sup> Other members of the Nivelá strategy team include Ana Toni (ICS, Brazil) and Tony La Viña (Ateneo School of Government, Philippines), who were both involved in IPPI-related projects.

Within the IPPI network—and consequently the CBS global team—there were individuals with close working relations with Southern negotiators and governments. Bill Hare, former lead author for the IPCC and current CEO and founder of Climate Analytics, was in close contact with delegates from small island states (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs). As director of the SURVIVE Project, in collaboration with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), he provided policy, scientific, analytical and strategic support, capacity building and advice for SIDS and LDC delegations in the run-up and during the Paris climate talks.<sup>48</sup> Farhana Yamin, climate and development law and policy expert, former special advisor to Connie Hedegaard (European Commissioner for climate action) and former portfolio manager at the CIFF, actively contributed, in the post-COP15 context, to the development of progressive coalitions in international negotiations, and in particular the CD for

Progressive Action. Representatives from the CD regularly interacted with the IPPI platform in order to coordinate activities and align positions.

Throughout 2015 and during the Paris Conference itself, IPPI made a series of grants to support the participation of developing countries'—Peru, South Africa, among others—and developing country groupings'—LDCs, Association of Latin America and the Caribbean—participation in the climate negotiations.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, ClimateWorks Foundation made a \$175,000 grant to Independent Diplomat, a non-profit diplomatic advisory group, to assist the Republic of Marshall Islands in developing its strategy and communications in the negotiations.<sup>50</sup> During the Paris Conference, the Marshall Islands spearheaded the “High Ambition Coalition,” a loose grouping of Northern and Southern countries that successfully pushed through the Paris agreement (Goodell 2016).

Far from holding a neutral stance towards the agreement, IPPI was actively involved in shaping the future international climate deal and related regime. Its desired outcome was reflected in the work of the Agreement on Climate Transformation 2015 (ACT2015) consortium.<sup>51</sup> Launched in early 2014 and coordinated by the WRI, ACT2015 presents itself as “a consortium of the world’s top climate experts from developing and developed countries that has joined together to catalyse discussion and build momentum toward reaching a global climate agreement at the forthcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) summit in December 2015.”<sup>52</sup> ACT2015 partners include a number of organizations and individuals associated with the IPPI platform.<sup>53</sup> Among them, Ecofys and the New Climate Institute are involved in the CAT, E3G is actively involved in the CBS, Energeia’s Jose Alberto Garibaldi was part of the early contributors to the IPPI platform in 2013 and Tony La Vina (Ateneo School of Government) was also involved in Nivelá.

The ACT2015 consortium shares many similarities with PC (Chap. 4). Like PC, it convened a series of meetings and workshops with experts and negotiators to discuss the possible form and content of the 2015 Agreement. A total of 17 meetings were organized in Africa, Europe, North and South America and Asia.<sup>54</sup> The Consortium also hosted side-events during COPs and Bonn negotiations. In October 2014, for instance, the Consortium presented a draft paper, “Elements and Ideas for the 2015 Paris Agreement” to governments and other stakeholder representatives at the UNFCCC intersessional meeting (Morgan et al. 2014). Drawing on the comments and responses to this first draft, the consortium would later go on to publish a final version of the document.

In terms of the suggested elements for a future agreement, ACT2015's proposals fell in line with the overarching trend in international climate negotiations. The consortium produced a document detailing the “must-haves” of a future agreement in Paris (Morgan et al. 2014). It called for the inclusion of two long-term goals: one for mitigation and one for adaptation. Beyond committing countries, the long-term goal on mitigation “[sends] a clear signal to policy makers, businesses, investors, and the public that the low-carbon climate-resilient economy is inevitable” (Morgan et al. 2014, 2). In line with the “bottom-up” approach centered on national “commitments” rather than agreed international targets, the Consortium calls for the inclusion of a provision to regularly update commitments through five-year improvement cycles in three policy areas: mitigation, adaptation and support (capacity building, finance, technology transfer and cooperation). And finally, they call for a set of robust transparency and accountability provisions “so that governments, companies, and the public have a clear understanding of what countries are doing to shift their economies, build resilience, and, in the case of developed countries, provide support to poorer countries” (Morgan et al. 2014, 5). This proposal accounts for the USA's position and those of large developing country emitters—in particular China—that wished to avoid being forced into inequitable legal obligations that could potentially jeopardize their economic development.

## CONCLUSION

By focusing on the politics of climate change through its combined actions at various levels and in multiple geographies, the IPPI strategy and those associated with it can be credited with having contributed to the final Paris outcome. As was noted in the Introduction, on the evening of December 12, those who were involved in IPPI clearly felt that their efforts had paid off. By and large, the final agreement reflects many of the ideas suggested by IPPI: five-year cycles to ratchet up commitments, a long-term temperature goal, a framework for reporting, no binding emissions targets. This does not mean that IPPI should solely be credited with the Paris outcome but rather that through its highly sophisticated strategy and efforts—both within and outside the negotiation space—it contributed to make it happen. Interpretations of the agreement in the media were largely positive, there again mirroring IPPI's efforts in the area of communications. The same can be said about the generally positive reactions from inside the cli-

mate community—experts, NGOs, business leaders. While these reactions were for the most part genuine, IPPI—in particular through CBS—still made sure that they were harmonized and properly articulated.

More generally, IPPI signals a major evolution of the liberal climate philanthropy field when compared to its early years in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Chap. 2). It also demonstrates how foundations, far from limiting themselves to an auxiliary role, have become fully fledged stakeholders in the international climate regime. In other words, whether directly or through regranteeing organizations or initiatives, foundations have played a proactive role, using their assets and networks to shape and orientate the debate. Through their combination of grantmaking and advocacy activities, specialized entities such as the ECF and initiatives such as IPPI have tended to distort and belittle the actual levels of philanthropic involvement. This may partially explain why so few—if any?—academic studies analyse foundations’ role in the international climate debate. This lack of academic interest also applies to more “visible” groups or initiatives such as ClimateWorks Foundation, ECF, PC or IPPI.<sup>55</sup>

## NOTES

1. [http://www.cgbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Declaration\\_Environmental-Laureates\\_Monday-15-Sept-2014.pdf](http://www.cgbd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Declaration_Environmental-Laureates_Monday-15-Sept-2014.pdf) (accessed 15 October 2015).
2. Interview with author.
3. It helped launch the European Climate Foundation. 2011: \$3,750,000 to ClimateWorks Foundation “to create a climate foundation in Latin America that funds policy and advocacy work for significant greenhouse gas reduction.” 2010: \$2,000,000 to ClimateWorks Foundation “to fund the organisation’s partner in India, the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation.” 2009: \$1,000,000 to ClimateWorks Foundation for the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation. 2008: \$600,000 “to engage and support Indian civil institutions in promoting and implementing greener energy and transportation policies with a view to reducing India’s carbon emissions trajectory.”
4. Interview with author.
5. <http://www.climateworks.org/about-us/our-history/> (accessed 3 November 2015).
6. Interview with author.



7. Interview with author.
8. Interview with author.
9. Email exchange with author.
10. By targeting the regulators and policy elites who are responsible for setting the rules for industry, transport, appliances, building and natural resource use.
11. Nicholas Stern, author of the *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*, is chair of the LSE's Grantham Institute.
12. PC followed it up with a second briefing paper on fast start finance to developing countries for adaptation and mitigation. In it, it evaluated the levels of pledges and compared them to the estimated needs, providing options on how to better use the funds along the way.
13. The analysis was produced by McKinsey & Company, KEMA, Energy Futures Lab at Imperial College London, Oxford Economics and ECF. The policy recommendations were produced by E3G, Energy Research Centre of the Netherlands (ECN), RAP and ECF.
14. In April 2010 a side-event and off-site meeting were organized in Bonn (during the UNFCCC negotiations) by ECF. UNEP, Climate Analytics, Ecofys, Potsdam/PIK, WRI, Climate Strategies, Climate Interactive, McKinsey to discuss the technicalities for measuring emissions reductions pledges (Jones 2010).
15. Launched in Cartagena, Colombia, in March 2010, the CD is generally recognized as having played a proactive and constructive role in the run-up to Cancun by rebuilding a sense of trust among parties.
16. Represented countries include Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Burundi, Chile, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, European Commission, France, Germany, Guatemala, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Maldives, Marshall Islands, México, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Rwanda, Samoa, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, the UK.
17. Phone interview with author.
18. From 2004 to 2010, he had been as Special Adviser to former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.
19. Interview with author.
20. <http://www.climateworks.org/portfolios/grants-database/> (accessed 4 April 2016).

21. Interview with author.
22. Interview with author.
23. People associated with this space include Tom Brookes (ECF), Ana Toni, Monica Araya (Nivela), Stephen Hale (Oxfam international), Kit Vaughan (CARE International), Jasper Inventor (Greenpeace), Athena Ronquillo-Ballesteros (WRI), May Boeve ([350.org](http://350.org)), Alden Meyer (UCS), Kelly Rigg (GCCA), Farhana Yamin (Track0), Christoph Bals (Germanwatch), Thomas Spencer (IDDRI), Laurence Tubiana (IDDRI), Michael Jacobs (Grantham LSE), Karen Suassuna, Jose Garibaldi (ECF and then Carbon Tracker Initiative), Martin Kaiser (Greenpeace), Tasneem Essop (WWF), Nick Mabey (E3G), Liz Gallagher (E3G), Camilla Born (E3G), Srinivas Krishnaswamy (Vasudha Foundation), Lina Li (Ecofys and Adelphi), Ailun Yang (WRI), Wael Hmaidan (CAN International), Bill Ca, Mark Kenber (The Climate Group), Damian Ryan (The Climate Group), David Waskow (WRI), Iaian Keith (Avaaz), Hunter Cutting (Climate Nexus), Bert Metz (ECF), Joerg Haas (formerly ECF), Delia Villagrasa (formerly ECF).
24. Interview with author.
25. Interview with author.
26. Examples of webinars include: July 28, 2014, “Towards the 2015 Climate Agreement” (Speakers : Taryn Fransen, OCN; Michel Schaeffer, CAT; Emmanuel Guérin, IDDRI & UN SDSN); January 14, 2015, “After Lima and Before Paris: The architecture and landscape of climate finance” (Speakers: Athena Ronquillo-Ballesteros, WRI; Laetitia De Marez, Climate Analytics); February 13, 2015, “The role of China in the International Climate Talks” (Speakers: Ailun Yang, WRI; Li Shuo, Greenpeace China; Fuqiang Yang, NRDC China Program; Lynn Price, University of Wisconsin-Madison); July 1, 2015, “Divest: invest Philanthropy : a way towards ending fossil fuels?”
27. Brazil (Ana Toni), China (Ailun Wang), France (Euros/Agency), India (Seema Paul, ClimateWorks Foundation), Poland (Olgierd Annusewicz), the UK (E3G), and the USA (Katherine Silverstone).
28. Its partners and advisors include: The Climate Institute (Australia), Fundação Getulio Vargas (Brazil), Instituto Centro de Vida (Brazil), Pembina Institute (Canada), Renmin University of China (China),

- Tsinghua University (China), Concito (Denmark), IDDRI (France), Oeko Institute (Germany & EU), IFMR Centre for Development Finance (India), TERI (India), Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (Japan), CEMDA (Mexico), Zero Emission Resource Organisation (Norway), Committee on Climate Change (UK), Overseas Development Institute (UK), World Resources Institute (USA), Ecofys, Heinrich Boell Foundation, PIK (Potsdam).
29. <http://www.wri.org/our-work/project/open-climate-network/about-open-climate-network>.
  30. CAT is currently supported by the ClimateWorks Foundation and CIFF.
  31. This was particularly evident in the case of the USA. While the IPPI-supported CAT offered a fairly encouraging evaluation of the USA's efforts, groups associated with the *Fair Shares: A Civil Society Equity Review of INDCs*—drawing on analysis by the Climate Equity Reference Project (CERP)—offered a far less rosy picture.
  32. The report was supported by ActionAid International, Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development, Climate Action Network South Asia, CARE International, Center for International Environmental Law, ChristianAid, CIDSE, Climate Action Network Latin America, EcoEquity, Friends of the Earth International, International Trade Union Confederation, LDC Watch International, Oxfam, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, SUSWATCH Latin America, Third World Network, What Next Forum, WWF International.
  33. The selected case studies were: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, UK, USA.
  34. Countries with GSCC-affiliated experts include the UK, Australia (where the GSCC global director is based), Poland, China, India, Brazil, France, Germany.
  35. In its financial year 2014–15, ECIU received £210,000 from ECF, \$200,000 from the Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment and £50,000 from the Tellus Mater Foundation.
  36. CLEW received funding from the ECF and Mercator Foundation.
  37. The ECF continues to be The Carbon Brief's sole funder. For the financial year 2014/15, it received a £330,778 grant from ECF.

38. <https://ciff.org/grant-portfolio/climate-briefing-service/> (accessed 9 September 2015).
39. CBS participants include among others Iain Keith (Avaaz), Jamie Henn (350), Camilla Born (E3G), Liz Gallagher (E3G), Mohamed Adow (ChristianAid), Monica Araya, Martin Kaiser (Greenpeace Germany), Farhana Yamin (TrackO), Wael Hmaidan (CAN International), Bill Hare (Climate Analytics), Pascal Canfin (WRI), Michael Jacobs (Grantham), Alden Meyer (UCS), Tim Nuthall (ECF), Alix Mazounie (RAC-France).
40. One only needs to go on the CBS website to get a sense of its unbranded communications approach. [www.cbs-climate.org/](http://www.cbs-climate.org/)
41. Interview with author.
42. On E3G's website, CBS is presented as "a joint E3G-WRI Platform providing political analysis and intelligence to a wide range of actors in the run up to the Paris 2015 climate change negotiations" (<http://e3g.org/people/victoria-harris>).
43. Each email briefing began with the following words: "This briefing is confidential and not for public circulation. You have received it due to your relationships with CBS members and networks."
44. Key issues included: "shifts in the national interest debate," "the international context," "progress in the real-economy" and "progress in the international climate regime."
45. <http://politjobs.eu/jobs/european-climate-foundation-seeks-european-relationship-manager/> (accessed 8 February 2016).
46. CBS, 24 November 2015.
47. <http://www.nivela.org/updates/a-brief-introduction-to-nivela/en> (accessed 9 February 2016).
48. <http://climateanalytics.org/about-us/team/bill-hare>.
49. <http://www.climateworks.org/portfolios/grants-database/>.
50. <http://www.climateworks.org/portfolios/grants-database/> (accessed 4 April 2016).
51. The consortium received an operational grant of EUR 1.5 million from the European Commission (DG for Development and Cooperation—EuropeAid) and further support from IPPI and the Prospect Hill foundation. ACT2015 published research on a series of agreement-related issues (legal architecture, improving transparency and accountability, options for adaptation and loss and damage, finance).

52. About ACT 2015.pdf.
53. ACT2015 partners: Ateneo School of Government (the Philippines), E3G (the Kingdom), Ecofys (Germany), Energeia, Institute for European Studies—Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), New Climate Institute, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (The Netherlands), Tsinghua University (China), Youba Sokona.
54. In May 2015, for instance, a workshop was organized in Beijing to discuss the 2015 agreement and its implications for China. <http://www.wri.org.cn/en/event/road-paris%E2%80%94act-2015-climate-workshop>
55. The only academic publication I found devoted to ECF was a very complacent paper by Thomas Scheuerle from the University of Heidelberg (Scheuerle 2015). The lack of academic interest may also have to do with the challenges associated with the study of philanthropic foundations. In my own research for this book, a number of foundation and NGO representatives either declined my requests for an interview or accepted on the condition that their names did not appear in the book.

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## Conclusion

**Abstract** Learning the lessons from Copenhagen, IPPI signals large climate funders' acknowledgment of the need to adopt a more holistic approach to the international climate debate. Yet, while recognizing the importance and complexity of climate politics, IPPI continued, by and large, to favour a technocratic approach. In other words, it was about *leveraging* politics—right and left—for the purposes of a pre-determined objective rather than *engaging in* politics—by overtly taking position in the debate. Climate change was framed as an apolitical, solvable problem. Yet, while presenting itself as non-political, IPPI's approach masks a distinctly political agenda. Moreover, IPPI's domineering position in the climate funders' landscape contributed to align the climate community with the dominant discourse in the negotiations—especially given the relative absence of progressive funders.

**Keywords** Progressive funders • Climate philanthropy • Liberal environmentalism • Climate politics • COP21

### FOUNDATIONS AND THE PARIS OUTCOME

In a short report published after the Paris COP, the ECF writes that “although we should be careful not to overstate our role, it is important to recognize that the climate philanthropy community’s activities prior



to and at the COP helped to lay the basis for the outcome” (ECF 2016, 2). While, as we saw in the introductory chapter, it is difficult to measure the impact of philanthropic foundations—especially in the climate policy field—many of the most active climate funders expressed their satisfaction with the agreement and honestly believed that through their actions they had contributed to its realization. Given the Paris agreement’s content—it largely reflected their views and aspirations—and the history and nature of their involvement in the international climate debate, it is fair to say that the foundations studied in this book did facilitate the final outcome.

IPPI, by far the largest and the most active foundation-related initiative linked to the Paris process, is particularly illustrative of foundations’ commitment to securing an “ambitious” agreement. While it was launched in 2013, IPPI was by no means an ad hoc creation. It was the sophisticated end-result of almost three decades of trial and error by a small but committed group of liberal and largely US-based foundations. Its distant origins can be traced back to the early years of the international climate regime, a regime that foundations—in their field-building and grantmaking capacities—had actively contributed to launch and shape, as they had done with other international processes (Chap. 2).

Climate funders have continuously sought to adapt and refine their strategies. These efforts were in response to the constraints in the climate philanthropy field—very few active foundations, limited overall resources—and challenges linked to changes in their economic and political environments. In particular, climate philanthropy’s liberal roots in the USA had a major impact on the evolution of the international climate funders’ field. As James Smith explains in *The Idea Brokers*, mainstream liberal funders in the USA are generally characterized by their references to scientific reason and logic rather than ideology or values (Smith 1993). They tend to promote the idea that social problems can be addressed through research on the root causes and workable solutions, and educating the public and elites until the appropriate reforms are enacted. Climate funders are no exception to the rule. While their approaches evolved over time, liberal foundations have, by and large, unremittingly treated climate change as a “solvable problem” requiring pragmatic, non-ideological, bipartisan and/or scientifically grounded solutions.

As we have shown, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, an influential group of climate funders began to shift their approaches. Given the nature and scale of the climate problem and in response to conservative forces, which, instead of developing specific policy solutions, “focused on

advancing core beliefs about human nature and how society should best be organized,” they proceeded to reevaluate their approaches towards climate philanthropy (Callahan 2014). However, instead of imitating their right-wing conservative counterparts by explicitly adopting a value-driven, ideological and therefore political approach, many of the large climate funders focused their efforts on refining the liberal approach by making it even more “focused” and “strategic.” This basically took the shape of a very targeted, results-driven and metrics-based approach to philanthropy, an approach that some critics describe as reflecting “a linear, excessively technocratic view of social change” (Preston 2012). The Hewlett and Energy foundations in particular—through Hal Harvey and Paul Brest—played a key role in developing and promoting this approach and adapting it to the climate field. As we saw in Chap. 3, this involved combining and aligning philanthropic efforts and, where deemed appropriate, channelling funds and resources through new specialized regranting foundations (Energy Foundation, ClimateWorks Foundation, European Climate Foundation etc.).

In Chap. 4 we saw how the ClimateWorks Foundation, through the PC initiative, attempted to transfer this approach to the international climate negotiations. Through its elite-centred approach, PC provided negotiators and governments—especially those representing the big emitters—as well as business circles, with suggestions for the Copenhagen agreement as well as analytics and actionable data demonstrating the economic and environmental benefits of climate action. PC also acted as a forum for “climate elites” to exchange and collaborate. The Copenhagen COP’s failure to deliver a new agreement highlighted the limits of this approach and, in particular, its failure to fully capture the importance and scope of politics and communications in international climate diplomacy.

The launch of IPPI in 2013 marked a new phase—and possibly a culmination—in this evolution. Learning the lessons from Copenhagen, IPPI signals large climate funders’ acknowledgment of the need to adopt a more holistic approach to international climate politics. Yet, while recognizing the importance and complexity of climate politics, IPPI continued, by and large, to adopt a technocratic approach towards it. In other words, it was about *leveraging* politics—right and left—for the purposes of a pre-determined objective rather than *engaging in* politics—by overtly taking position in the debate. Climate change was framed as an apolitical, solvable problem. There was neither a left-wing or right-wing approach to it, but one, common sense and rational solution—a “liberal environmentalist”

solution that was carried by a number of key countries in the international climate negotiations. According to IPPI, the only genuine—and as we will see acceptable—dividing line was the one separating those who believed the climate science and those who didn't. In this sense, the IPPI strategy does not mark a fundamental break with the liberal philanthropic tradition but rather a factoring in of politics through the advancement of a rational approach towards it.

### A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING?

While presenting itself as non-political, this “liberal environmentalist” approach to climate philanthropy masks a distinctly political agenda. Foundations such as the Hewlett foundation, for instance, rarely provide a clear normative statement on the role of the market or such matters as collective versus individual responsibility. And yet, as we have seen, the solutions they promote and grantees they support tend, behind their “realist” and “common sense” veneer, to embrace market-based, bottom-up solutions to the climate crisis (Bernstein 2002). Hewlett and other large climate funders’ “win-win” approaches to the international climate debate “reflect the view that environmental protection and the preservation of ecosystems, economic growth, and a liberal international economy are compatible, even necessarily linked” (Bernstein and Cashore 2001, 214). States and regulators are expected to facilitate change, while investors and businesses are expected to actually carry it out.

As we saw in Chaps. 4 and 5, ever since Copenhagen, the ClimateWorks Foundation network and aligned foundations called for an agreement that delivered “bottom-up action [anchored] in top-down elements” through individual country commitments—rather than legally binding reductions obligations—a long-term goal, financial and technology support and an institutional architecture to monitor and review these commitments (ECF 2011). The large climate funders involved in or aligned to initiatives like IPPI promoted market- (cap-and-trade) and technology-based solutions (including carbon capture and storage). In other words, their support for a bottom-up agreement was not only motivated by the fact that it was the only plausible option given the existing state of play in international relations<sup>1</sup> but was also—and primarily?—grounded in the philanthropist belief that investors and markets, and behind them, capitalism, knows best.

Critical reactions to the agreement further highlight IPPI's—and the foundations behind it—ideologically biased character. In particular, various groups, usually associated with the climate justice community, criticized the agreement's unfair distribution of the overall burden between developed and developing countries. Those most responsible for the problem, they argued, were largely left off the hook. They also criticized the weak wording of the agreement, the lack of guarantees when it comes to the levels of climate finance and the ways of delivering it.

Within the scientific community (as we saw in Chap. 5), a few isolated voices also criticized the agreement, stressing its ideological character in the process. In a short article published in *Nature* a few days after the Conference, Kevin Anderson (Tyndall Centre) writes that while the agreement shows that the international community acknowledges the seriousness of climate change and sets an ambitious long-term temperature target, it relies inter alia on the use of highly contentious negative-emissions technologies on an industrial scale. As he explains, it “rests on the assumption that the world will successfully suck the carbon pollution it produces back from the atmosphere in the longer term. A few years ago, he writes, these exotic Dr Strangelove options were discussed only as last-ditch contingencies. Now they are Plan A” (Anderson 2015, 437). These techno-utopias, he writes, divert peoples' attention from more profound political, economic and social questions, “questions that undermine a decade of mathematically nebulous green-growth and win-win rhetoric, and questions that the politicians have decided cannot be asked” (Anderson 2015, 437).

### IPPI'S DOMINEERING POSITION

The flipside of IPPI's domineering position—as main source of funding, expertise and information—is that it contributed to homogenize the climate community and align it to the dominant discourse in the negotiations which, as we have shown, it contributed to forge. Unlike earlier attempts at pushing through the “liberal environmentalist” agenda in international climate negotiations, IPPI did not limit itself to promoting a (questionably) non-political and pragmatic approach towards the climate problem but also used its resources, expertise and networks to get actors both inside and outside the negotiations space to adopt its approach. By channelling a large share of foundation funds and acting as de facto reference point for most of the foundations active in and around Paris, IPPI was able to exert considerable

influence on the various non-state actors—NGOs, scientists, experts—active in and around the negotiations. As one environmental NGO representative explains, “by monopolising the funding streams, IPPI makes it very difficult for those who have different ideas to get funding.”<sup>2</sup> For another NGO representative, IPPI “sucked the aim out of NGOs and civil society.”<sup>3</sup> This is particularly visible in its choice of grantees and the types of projects it funded. Comparatively little funding went towards mobilizing. As another NGO representative told me, “IPPI is 5 % mobilizing, 95 % policy.”<sup>4</sup> This marks a substantial drop in funding for mobilization when compared to the funding levels for COP15.

These critiques echo earlier ones made against strategic philanthropy. Grantees, some observers have argued, are reduced to the role of sub-contractors, executing their funders’ grand visions or masterplans without being able to pursue their own ideas and goals (Dorfman 2008; Jenkins 2011). Sheela Patel, founder of Shack Dwellers International, expresses this idea well when she says that “foundations today are increasingly treating organizations like ours as contractors in the delivery of their own visions... They make us contractors, not innovators” (Berresford 2009, 18). As Jigar Shah explains, grantees “work toward a preordained policy solution rather than coming up with ideas of their own” (Bartosiewicz and Miley 2013, 36–37).

Beyond its privileged position as intermediary between non-state actors and large climate funders, IPPI was also able to attract a wide array of groups towards it by playing on the sense of urgency and on the Paris conference’s significance—not only in terms of the agreement per se but also the “signals” that it sends. This was particularly true of the numerous groups that did not actively monitor the negotiations process but wanted to contribute to securing a positive outcome. Indeed, given the complexity of the climate issue and negotiations process, a number of non-state actors involved in and around the Paris conference had neither the resources nor the eagerness to actively monitor the negotiations. Groups associated with the IPPI strategy could use their accumulated experience and privileged access to delegates and members of the UNFCCC secretariat to influence these groups by selectively providing them with information on what was happening inside the negotiations space (this was particularly the case with the CBS briefings). In other words, in addition to channelling funds, IPPI also channelled information from within the negotiation space to the rest of the climate community.

## THE ABSENCE OF PROGRESSIVE FUNDERS INSIDE THE NEGOTIATION SPACE

The absence of alternative sources of funding has contributed to further accentuate IPPPI's dominant position in the international climate space. While the foundations and initiatives analysed in this book are by no means representative of all forms of climate philanthropy, they are certainly the most active in the international climate space. As was highlighted on various occasions, other foundations were also involved in the climate debate. Many, while not adhering to the IPPPI strategy, are of the liberal type. Others adopt a far more transformational and "systemic" approach to climate philanthropy, calling for greater attention to social justice and equity concerns and adopting a more critical approach towards market- and technology-based solutions to the climate crisis. Unlike their liberal counterparts, these "progressive" foundations support more activist and explicitly ideological groups and networks. In stark contrast to the strategic approach of liberal foundations studied in this book, they also tend to embrace a more horizontal and cooperative approach to grantmaking.

Bringing together various "social change philanthropists"—sometimes referred to as social movement or social justice philanthropists—the Engaged Donors for Global Equity (EDGE) Funders Alliance offers a good example of this progressive approach to climate philanthropy. Born out of the fusion between the Funders Network on Trade and Globalization (FNTG)<sup>5</sup> and Grantmakers without Borders,<sup>6</sup> EDGE acts as a discussion space for progressive funders that share a common commitment to global social justice concerns. FNTG began engaging with the COP process from a climate justice perspective in 2007, when it helped organize a delegation of some 50 funders to the Bali COP (COP13) in December 2007. On its website, the Alliance presents itself as valuing "the experience and perspectives of local communities" and "the importance of networking and organizing between grassroots groups and their civil society allies." Rather than bringing about change by targeting elites, the Alliance believes in the value of community empowerment. More generally, as one EDGE representative explains, "EDGE provides a space for funders who support efforts aimed at increasing equity and sustainable practice today, within a context of exploring ways to support the deeper systemic changes needed to truly bring about just and sustainable societies over the long term."<sup>7</sup> Its members consist in large part of small independent or family foundations

along with some of the larger liberal foundations, such as Rockefeller, RBF, Ford and Open Society Foundations (OSF), represented by more progressive programme officers. While most of its members are US-based, the Alliance also boasts a handful of European foundations. It recently launched an EDGE Funders Alliance Europe to consolidate its position in Europe.

EDGE members' spending in the climate field adds up to a small fraction of the money spent by larger foundations associated with IPPI. The same can be said of progressive funders more generally. Moreover, progressive funders' involvement in the international climate debate is far more recent than that of their liberal counterparts. It roughly coincides with the arrival of social justice groups—a number of which were involved in the anti-globalization movement—in the climate arena, and the establishment of a climate justice discourse and movement in the run-up to the Copenhagen conference—and in particular the Bali COP in 2007 that gave birth to Climate Justice Now (CJN!). Unsurprisingly, many of their grantees had a history of involvement in the international trade debate (and in particular discussions related to the WTO) as well as in activist arenas such as the World Social Forum (WSF) or Our World Is Not For Sale (OWINFS), arenas that benefited from progressive foundation support. In 2009, representatives from the FNTG and its associated foundations were involved in and around the 2009 Copenhagen Conference (2009). At the time, their priority and that of their grantees was to get as many social forces as possible to participate in the international climate discussions and “help shape the solutions nationally and internationally” (Bullard and Dayaneni 2009).

While the EDGE Alliance and its members were involved in the COP21 Funders Initiative—in collaboration with IPPI, EGA, CGBD, EFC/EEFG<sup>8</sup> (see Chap. 2)—very few of them actively monitored or were active in the climate negotiations space. Like the climate justice groups that they support, most progressive funders distanced themselves from the climate negotiations and focused their efforts on movement-building activities outside of the negotiations. In the process, they have largely abandoned the negotiation space to the mainstream liberal funders associated with the IPPI strategy. This has, in turn, contributed to strengthen the liberal environmentalist discourse and further marginalize the handful of climate justice groups that continued to be active within negotiation space (e.g. Friends of the Earth, LDC Watch, Third World Network). This was particularly evident in Paris, especially from the moment that climate justice

activists on the outside were prevented from protesting given the security situation following the November terrorist attacks. IPPI's dominant position was further consolidated by the fact that most progressive funders refrained from openly questioning its strategy. Just as grantees refrain from openly criticizing funders, members of the philanthropic community generally abstain from openly criticizing the strategies or worldviews of their fellow grantmakers.

### A NEW DIVIDING LINE WITHIN THE CLIMATE COMMUNITY

For those involved in IPPI, the existence of critical voices was seen as threatening the entire IPPI edifice and the success of its strategy in the run-up to Paris. It was therefore essential for IPPI to not only get as many climate actors as possible to rally behind it but also isolate groups with dissonant opinions and strategies. In addition to hampering their access to foundation funding, it involved dividing the climate community by highlighting their ideological or partisan character—as opposed to IPPI's supposedly neutral and rational approach—and presenting them as potential threats to the Paris success. Real diversity within the climate camp was not an option. It was no longer viewed as an asset—as was the case in the late 1980s and early 1990s—but as a direct threat to the Paris COP process. While IPPI's unbranded approach upheld the illusion of diversity by bringing together a wide range of insider and outsider groups, it masked a profoundly uniform approach to the international climate process. The role of Avaaz is particularly revealing in this respect (see Chap. 5). In other words, it was not a case of promoting one approach among many but of making sure that the IPPI approach was the *only* approach while maintaining a false sense of pluralism both inside and on the margins of the climate negotiations.

Core contributors to the IPPI strategy went to extraordinary lengths to prevent fellow non-state actors from “getting in the way” of a positive diplomatic outcome in Paris. At the Warsaw COP in 2013, for instance, they (unsuccessfully) tried to prevent civil society groups from staging a “walk out” to express their anger at the slow progress of the talks. As we saw in Chap. 5, attempts were also made to prevent Kevin Anderson from speaking at a press conference organized by the scientific community during the Paris conference. This episode in particular goes to show how the



promotion of a supposedly rational approach to politics can have irrational consequences, and most tellingly for the group that typifies rationality: climate scientists. The pressure exerted on the scientific community to praise the final agreement despite its questionable scientific foundations is emblematic of IPPI's—and through it, liberal philanthropy's—attempts to rationalize the irrational—politics—even if this means “irrationalizing” the rational—science. Their attacks continued after the COP when it was time to assess the Paris agreement. A few days after Paris, Nick Mabey from E3G, for instance, tweeted that “climate sceptics attacking Paris as being too weak” were on “the wrong side of history” (December 14, 2015).

What Nick Mabey's tweet reveals is a new partitioning of the climate community. This was even more explicit in a CBS briefing distributed a few days prior to the Paris conference. In it, CBS identifies three categories of actors, which it sees as potentially undermining the success of the Paris conference: “climate deniers,” “climate realists”—“predominantly fossil fuel companies and many of the sceptical economic and foreign policy elite” who “will attempt to downplay the agreement in Paris”—and, more surprisingly, “climate idealists”—“a mixture of state and non-state actors” “frustrated with the progress made to date on climate change in light of the necessary emissions reductions required and in some cases they expect Paris to take responsibility and address other development priorities such as access to energy and poverty alleviation” (Climate Briefing Service 2015). By “climate idealists,” CBS was essentially referring to groups that were committed to combatting climate change but that disagreed with the technology- and market-based solutions that were being offered. The grouping together of “climate idealists” and “climate deniers” is suggestive of a profound shift in the international climate community, a shift that was encouraged by IPPI and its allies. Acknowledging the climate problem and devising ways of addressing it were not enough to be on the right side of history. It was also compulsory to abide by IPPI's “one size fits all” approach.<sup>9</sup>

By putting committed climate activists on a par with climate denialists, IPPI and the foundations that support it contribute to rid the international climate community—and, in particular, the negotiations space—of its diversity, a diversity that is essential considering that while the climate science is categorical, solutions to the climate problem aren't. While promoting a bottom-up approach to the agreement, they simultaneously employ top-down methods to not just align groups' strategies but influ-

ence and shape them as well. This, as Sarah Hansen points out, signals a failure to recognize that “significant change usually comes about when a critical mass of ordinary people engages directly with decision-makers, voices its concerns and pushes for changes that elites would not otherwise have made” (Hansen 2012, 5).

## NOTES

1. And in particular given the USA’s and large developing country emitters’ refusal to commit to a legally binding agreement.
2. Interview with author.
3. Interview with author.
4. Interview with author.
5. Network that included smaller—FACT, Solidago—and larger funders—Rockefeller, RBF, Ford, CS Mott—set up in the midst of the 1999 Seattle WTO meeting.
6. A network of North American grantmakers bringing together family foundations and individual donors intent on getting more funding to initiatives in the Global South (particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America).
7. Email exchange with author.
8. The European Foundation Center’s (EFC) European Environmental Funders Group.
9. My own research on the topic was directly affected by this state of affairs. Within the climate community—especially NGOs—a number of the people I contacted either politely declined to discuss the subject or explicitly asked me to not mention their names.

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# INDEX

## A

Agreement on Climate Transformation  
2015 (ACT2015), 114  
American Clean Energy and Security  
Act (ACES), 66  
Andrew Mellon foundation, 28  
Araya, Monica, 113  
Avaaz.org, 107, 110  
Avina Foundation, 25

## B

Better World Society, 34  
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 9  
Bloomberg Philanthropies, 24  
Born, Camilla, 105  
Brest, Paul, 42–4  
Brundtland Report, 30

## C

Calderon, Felipe, 104  
California Environmental Associates, 50  
Carbon War Room, 74

Cartagena Dialogue for Progressive  
Action, 98, 113–14  
C40 Cities Climate Leadership  
Group, 24  
Centre Français des Fonds et  
Fondations (CFF), 25  
Children’s Investment Fund  
Foundation (CIFF), 5, 24, 25,  
42, 44, 104, 110  
and IPPI, 100  
Civil Society Organisations (CSO)  
funding, 6  
Clean Energy Wire (CLEW), 106  
Clean Energy Works (CEW), 66–7  
Climate Action Network (CAN), 68,  
101, 105, 108  
Climate Action Tracker (CAT), 97,  
103, 114  
Climate Analytics, 97  
Climate and Energy Funders Group  
(CEFG), 54  
and IPPI, 102  
Climate and Land Use Alliance  
(CLUA), 56

Climate Briefing Service (CBS), 110  
 comparison with Global Call for  
 Climate Action's (GCCA), 110  
 climate change counter-movement  
 (CCCM), 7  
 Climate Change Philanthropy Action  
 Network (CCPAN), 54  
 climate deniers, 134  
 climate finance, 96  
 climate governance, 66  
 Climate Group (The), 74  
 climate idealists, 134  
 Climate Justice Now (CJN), 67, 132  
 Climate Policy Initiative (CPI), 74  
 climate realists, 134  
 ClimateWorks Foundation, 5, 17, 25,  
 55–7  
 after Copenhagen, 90–2  
 and IPPI, 100  
 regional network, 56  
 communication, 72, 95, 105  
 Consultative Group on Biological  
 Diversity (CGBD), 25  
 CEFG, 54  
 COP15, 16  
 outcome, 80–1  
 COP16, 97  
 COP19, 106  
 COP21  
 closing ceremony, 2  
 Copenhagen COP. *See* COP15  
 COP21 Funders Initiative, 24, 102

**D**

Deep Decarbonization Pathways  
 Project (DDPP), 103  
 Design to Win report, 50–3  
 and liberal philanthropy, 52  
 strategy, 67  
 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale  
 Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), 104

DOEN Foundation, 74  
 Doris Duke Charitable Foundation,  
 50, 54

**E**

Earth Day, 27  
 Ecofys, 97  
 E3G, 101, 114  
 Emissions Gap Report, 97  
 Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit  
 (ECIU), 106  
 Energy Foundation, 38, 45–7, 50, 67  
 approach to philanthropy, 47–53  
 and ClimateWorks, 56  
 critique of, 49  
 and Design to Win, 54  
 Energy Foundation China, 56  
 Energy Strategy Center (ESC), 110  
 Engaged Donors for Global Equity  
 (EDGE), 131  
 Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), 28  
 Environmental Grantmakers  
 Association (EGA), 35, 102  
 environmentalism  
 grassroots, 27  
 liberal, 26–9  
 European Climate Foundation (ECF),  
 5, 25, 56  
 Energy Strategy Center (ESC), 97  
 Global Strategic Communications  
 Council (GSCC), 106  
 international climate diplomacy,  
 92–6  
 support from Oak Foundation, 69  
 European Environmental Funders  
 Group (EEFG), 102

**F**

Fabius, Laurent, 2  
 Ford foundation, 28

foundation. *See also* philanthropy  
 capitalism, 13  
 core characteristics, 10  
 as field-builder, 32–3  
 field-builders, 14–15  
 legitimacy, 12–13  
 liberal, 11  
 theory of change, 11  
 US climate, 26–9  
 US environmental, 26

Friends of the Earth, 38

Funders Network on Trade and  
 Globalisation (FNTG), 67, 131

## G

Gallagher, Liz, 105, 110

Gates, Bill, 24

Global Call for Climate Action  
 (GCCA), 69–73  
 flotilla approach, 72

Global Commission on the Economy  
 and Climate (GCEC), 104

Global Greengrants Fund, 38, 67

Global Leadership for Climate Action  
 (GLCA), 74

Gordon and Betty Moore  
 Foundation, 25

Grantmakers without Borders, 131  
 grassroots environmentalism.

*See* environmentalism

green growth, 96

Greenpeace, 105  
 and IPPI, 101

Gross Family Foundation, 104

## H

Hare, Bill, 113

Harvey, Hal, 42, 45, 53  
 and climate philanthropy, 57

Hewlett Foundation, 26, 48, 50, 54,  
 67, 110  
 and ClimateWorks, 55  
 High Ambition Coalition, 114

## I

Institut du Développement Durable et  
 des Relations Internationales  
 (IDDRI), 99, 104

intended nationally determined  
 contributions (INDC), 102

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate  
 Change (IPCC), 32  
 Fifth Assessment Report, 97, 108  
 Fourth Assessment Report, 50, 65

International Forum on  
 Globalization, 68

International Policies and Politics  
 Initiative (IPPI), 5, 16, 70, 73  
 funding for, 101  
 origins of, 99–102  
 and UNFCCC process, 112–15

## J

Jacobs, Michael, 100, 104  
 Joyce Foundation, 25, 50

## K

Kortenhorst, Jules, 77  
 Kresge Foundation, 54  
 Kyoto Protocol, 29

## L

Latin America Regional Climate  
 Initiative (LARCI), 56  
 liberal environmentalism, 128  
 liberal foundation. *See* foundation

**M**

Mabey, Nick, 134  
 MacArthur Foundation, 32, 35  
 McKinsey & Company, 50  
   and Project Catalyst, 76  
 McKnight Foundation, 48, 54  
   and ClimateWorks, 55  
 Meier, Johannes, 95  
 Mercator Foundation, 5, 100  
 Merkl, Andreas, 75  
 Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, 48  
 Metz, Bert, 77  
 Morgan, Jennifer, 71, 101, 105, 110

**N**

National Postcode Lottery (Dutch), 74  
 Natural Resources Defense Council  
   (NRDC), 28, 34  
 Nature Conservancy, 28  
 NewClimate Institute, 97  
 North South politics, 93

**O**

Oak Foundation, 5, 37, 50, 54,  
   69, 110  
   after Copenhagen, 91  
   funding for GCCA, 69  
   grantmaking approach, 69  
   and IPPI, 100  
 Oppenheim, Jeremy, 77, 104  
 Oxfam, 101

**P**

Packard Foundation, 25, 48, 50,  
   54, 67  
   and ClimateWorks, 55  
 People's Climate March, 107  
 Pew Charitable Trusts, 35, 36, 43, 45  
 philanthrocapitalism, 24, 43

philanthropy, 9  
   after Copenhagen, 94  
   climate, 6 (*see also* foundation)  
   European climate, 9  
   liberal, 126  
   strategic, 43  
   United States climate, 10  
   US climate (*see* foundation)  
 Potsdam-Institut für  
   Klimafolgenforschung (PIK), 97,  
   99  
 Project Catalyst, 74, 98  
   approach of, 75  
   origin of, 76

**R**

Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), 30,  
   32, 67  
 Rockefeller Family Fund, 35  
 Rockefeller Foundation, 25, 28, 30–2,  
   45, 74

**S**

Sea Change Foundation, 54, 67  
   funding for GCCA, 69  
 Shakti Sustainable Energy  
   Foundation, 25, 56  
 Sierra Club, 28, 34  
 Stern Review on the Economics of  
   Climate Change, 50  
 Sustainable Development Solutions  
   Network (SDSN), 104  
 Swedish Postcode Lottery, 74

**T**

theory of change. *See* foundation  
 Third World Network, 68  
 350.org  
   and IPPI, 101

Tubiana, Laurence, 5  
Turner, Ted, 34  
Tyndall Centre for Climate Change  
Research, 109

**U**

UN Foundation, 25, 74  
UN Framework Convention on  
Climate Change (UNFCCC),  
29, 30, 33  
Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS),  
34, 101  
United Nations Environment  
Programme (UNEP), 30, 31, 97  
US Climate Action Partnership  
(USCAP), 67

**V**

Villum Foundation, 74, 110  
V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation, 34

**W**

Wallace Global Fund, 34  
W. Alton Jones Foundation, 32, 34  
Woltersdorf meeting, 70  
World Meteorological Organisation  
(WMO), 31  
World Resources Institute (WRI),  
30, 32, 68, 99, 114  
and IPPI, 101  
Open Climate Network (OCN), 103  
WWF, 101

**Y**

Yamin, Farhana, 113