

Conference Report

EDGE Funders Alliance

2013 Just Giving Conference

May 21 — 23, Washington, D.C.

Just Giving 2013



EDGE
FUNDERS ALLIANCE

ENGAGED DONORS FOR GLOBAL EQUITY

Introduction

“What is to be done? And how do we do it?”



“What is to be done, and how do we do it?” was the theme of the 2013 annual Just Giving conference in Washington D.C. The conference, held at the beautiful, historic campus of Gallaudet University, brought together 200+ globally minded foundations, individual donors, and allies from the broader philanthropic community. Participants sought to elevate and deepen their understanding of the structural injustices of our time; and discuss how philanthropy can, and should, make an impact.

Over the course of three days, plenary sessions, workshops, and engagement labs provided a framework for understanding systemic challenges, while inspiring a more penetrating view of the social, economic, and ecological issues in our world. The gathering encouraged new ways of thinking and new connections through a convergence of activists and philanthropic leaders committed to a just transition and to the support and strengthening of its enabling conditions.

The hallways of the Kellogg Conference Center were buzzing with energy as participants made connections across sectors and generations, identified synergies, and shared the exhilarating sense that the philanthropic sector is at the crest of a wave of enthusiasm, new ideas, and critical engagement.

Just Giving offered entry points for funders interested in unconventional areas of funding such as supporting grassroots movements for long-term systemic change;

while also providing a space for already engaged funders to deepen their analysis and develop collaborative strategies.

From big-picture approaches and bold ideas, to calls for creative action, reflection, and ‘looking within,’ this year’s conference was filled with optimism and innovation.

Acknowledgments

Just Giving was organized by important members of the philanthropic community, who helped guide the thematic structure of our discussions. A great deal of thanks goes to the following individuals for the many extra hours spent on planning:

Conference Planning Committee:

Ellen Dorsey, Wallace Global Fund – Co-Chair

Tom Kruse, Rockefeller Brothers Fund – Co-Chair

Laine Alston-Romero, Ford Foundation

Holly Bartling, General Service Foundation

Rajasvini Bhansali, IDEX

Tanya Dawkins, Global-Local Links Project & CarEth Foundation

Luis Dias-Albertini, American Jewish World Service

Laurie Emrich, Tet Ansanm Fund/National Progressive Leadership Campus

Monica Enriquez-Enriquez, Astrea Foundation

Leah Hunt Hendrix, The Sister Fund

Sara Mersha, Grassroots International

Chloée Ponchelet, Fund for Global Human Rights

Aditi Vaidya, Solidago Foundation

Katrin Wilde, Channel Foundation

EDGE Funders staff:

Mark Randazzo, Lola Ibrahim, and Linda Anne Smith (consultant)

The following report, written and produced by Lola Ibrahim, summarizes the narrative and statistical data gathered from conference attendees to provide a glimpse into the content, discussions, and activities during the three days spent at Just Giving 2013.



From the Opening Remarks at Just Giving 2013

“When we launched EDGE Funders Alliance one year ago, we wanted to offer something different within social justice philanthropy. We wanted to help support fights for more equity and justice in the world, but also to help work for deeper, long-term, systemic change.

EDGE is a space in which grantmakers can explore ways to support the social and ecological transformation needed to fully reach those goals.

Philanthropy is often focused on measurable short term impacts and doesn't have much time for squishy notions like "social and ecological transformation." Here in Washington especially, primacy is given to political pragmatism, seeing the world as it really is, to achieving policy wins. Those are certainly important, as we do want to win on things that matter. But we sometimes have to wonder — at what point does political pragmatism become self-limiting? When is seeing the world as it "really" is, really just accepting the world as it currently is?

The first part of the name given to this year's Conference, *What is to be done?*, is an appeal, or at least an invitation, for us to imagine. While the other part of the conference title *And how do we do it?* evokes the steps towards what we hope will be a just transition to the deeper changes we need.”

~Mark Randazzo, Executive Director, EDGE Funders Alliance

The Plenaries

TOWARDS SOCIAL CHANGE IN A CHANGING WORLD

The opening plenary of the 2013 Just Giving conference challenged us to deepen our collective understanding of what needs to be done, and expand our imagination on how we might do it. Far from the usual plenary, this interactive format included thought-provoking, art-movement exercises led by Dr. Omi Jones, Associate Professor at the University of Texas Austin; and a discussion of the ‘Three Circle Strategy,’ by Gopal Dayaneni of Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project—inviting participants to envision strategies that can impel the social justice agenda into a politically realistic space. The plenary challenged us to look within ourselves for new, creative solutions for achieving far-reaching systemic transformation in our work, and in our world.



“Dr. Omi and Gopal presented a great session which was interactive, engaging, and informative. I think all plenaries should follow this model.”

MIGRATION, GLOBAL MOBILITY, & THE FUTURE OF WORK

The second plenary asked: how can we as funders be better positioned to respond to the complex nature of migration, and to the changing nature of work? Moderated by Laine Romero-Alston (Ford Foundation) the session offered a critical assessment of the massive shifts in the global economy and their impact on climate, trade policy, and the nature of work itself. Presenters spoke powerfully about the difficult conditions forcing migrants to consistently occupy the bottom rung of the labor market, and discussed new strategies, partnerships and frameworks that are intervening to address those challenges. (On the panel: Ana Avendaño (AFL-CIO), Alejandra Ancheita, (Project on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights), Colin Rajah (Global Coalition on Migration), and Anannya Bhattacharjee, (Garment and Allied Workers Union, Delhi, India.)



“We must start building a transnational vision of workers' rights as human rights.” ~Colin Rajah, Global Coalition on Migration

DIALING UP DEMOCRACY/DIALING BACK CORPORATE POWER

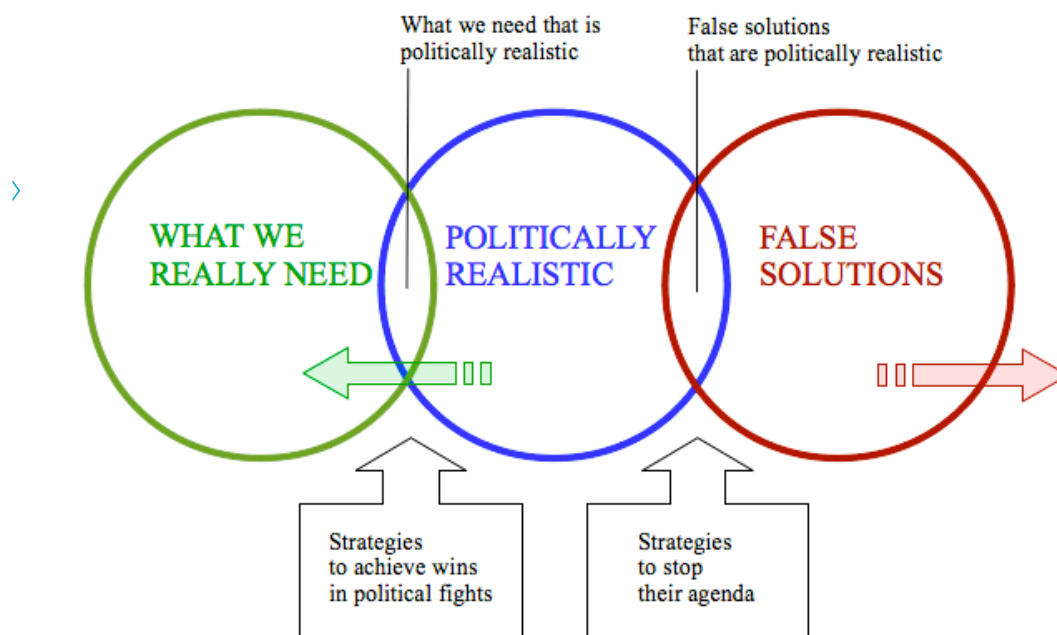
The third plenary laid out the dimensions, scope and scale of the problem of excessive corporate power; the threats it poses to democracy; and the need for deep and transformative change. Facilitated by Ellen Dorsey (Wallace Global Fund) the panel provided a rousing call to arms for funders to engage with the issue of corporate power. Damon Silvers (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) left the room buzzing with a riveting analysis of the state of corporate power and the systematic hijacking of political and economic policy throughout the world. The session responded to the ‘how do we do it’ refrain of the conference by offering various entry points for funders to engage with the issue through existing partnerships and initiatives. (On the panel: Lyda Fernanda (Transnational Institute/Dismantling Corporate Power Campaign), Sarah Anderson (Institute for Policy Studies), Amol Mehra (International Corporate Accountability Roundtable), Taren Stinebrickner-Kauffman (Sumofus.org) and Damon Silvers (AFL-CIO.)

Moving from "Politically Realistic" Towards "What We Really Need"

The focus within much of philanthropy on short term transactional goals and measurable outcomes can be at odds with strategies promoting system change over the long term.

Movement Generation's presentation of its Three Circles Strategy provided a key frame at Just Giving, identifying overlapping spheres - what "we really need;" what is "politically realistic" today and what are "the false solutions being put forth by forces with an interest in maintaining the current system."

Using these and other tools can help reorient and even embolden our thinking and strategies and help advance a collective, progressive agenda. Working collaboratively as well as within our own philanthropic institutions and spaces, we can perhaps constitute the "leading edge" of grantmaking efforts to align what really needs to be done with what is realistic, and to build a movement within philanthropy supportive of efforts aimed at grassroots-led system change.



Three Circles Strategy Chart

Source: Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project
www.movementgeneration.org



“How are social movements tackling the seemingly insurmountable power of today’s global corporation? And are our funding levels commensurate with the scale of the problem?” ~Ellen Dorsey, Wallace Global Fund

Conference Program

Pre-conference Institutes

- Cross-border Grantmaking: Essential Skills Every Foundation Needs
- Inequities, Identities, and Power

Working Group Meetings

- Gender Caucus
- Africa Grantmakers Working Group
- Latin America and Caribbean Funders Working Group

Breakout Workshops

- A Just Transition: Weaving equity and ecology to create the transformation we need
- Land and Water Grabs: Resisting the New Resource Wars, Transitioning to Economically and Ecologically Just Societies
- 8 Ways to Map Your Foundation’s Transformational Movement-Building Where Hast Thou Been, Occupy?
- Fighting Corruption: Citizens are succeeding in their efforts to combat corruption, secure greater transparency and claim their human rights
- Just and Sustainable Cities: Implementing Urban Development and Citizen Participation Strategies to Reduce Poverty and Expand Economic Opportunity in Global South Cities
- Sex Work is Work: Exploring creative strategies for promoting the economic rights of sex workers.
- Women Hold the Solutions! Women forging solutions to build community resilience and environmentally sustainable solutions
- Our Growing Edge: Young People Moving Money to Social Change
- Beyond Charity: Disability Inclusion in Practice. Perspectives from the gender, development and indigenous rights fields
- Building and Using a Donor Network: Learn. Collaborate. Act!
- An Emerging Transnational Crisis: funding strategies to prevent migrants’ deaths
- But for real, How DO we save the planet? Grassroots strategies to address climate change

- Strategies for change in insular and oppressive countries: Working toward democracy and human rights in Burma, Iran and Zimbabwe
- Women on the Front Line: Sustaining Feminist Movement-Building
- Strategies for Resourcing Social Justice & Movement Building
- Powering Change through Native Movement Building
- Eroding Global Justice: Uniting to Fight the Next Generation of Trade Pacts
- Building a New Economy: Necessary, Possible and Coming Soon to a Neighborhood Near You!
- Laws or Lives?: The Road from Legal Rights to Justice

Ad hoc Sessions

- Learning and Evaluation for Social Change
- Getting Across a Story and Inspiring Others to Action
- New Working Group on Human Rights Defenders
- Made in Bangladesh: Moving New Accountability in Manufacturing
- Funding Human Rights: Where is the Money Going and Where Do We Go from Here?

Engagement Labs

- Expanding Donor Support for Agro-ecology
- Putting Money on the Table for Sex Workers' Rights
- Corporate Power and a New Economy
- In Support of Grassroots Solutions to the Climate Crisis

Featured Speakers



Katie Redford: Human rights lawyer and activist. Co-founder of EarthRights International. Conference session: "Strategies for Change in Insular and Oppressive Countries."



Pablo Solon: Activist, former Ambassador to the United Nations. Executive Director of Focus on the Global South. Conference session: "But for Real, How DO We Save the Planet?"



Farhad Ebrahimi: Movement organizer and activist. Founder and Trustee Chair of the Chorus Foundation. Conference session: "Where Hast Thou Been, Occupy?"

Summary of Evaluation Findings

Based on conference evaluations, most agreed the conference objectives—to enhance understanding of grassroots and transnational initiatives addressing structural injustice, and explore opportunities for funder collaboration—had been successfully met.

Most appreciated the thematic scope of the conference, and the vitality and content of the breakout sessions—steeped as they were in the role of grassroots and social movements. Respondents felt EDGE provided a significant and important space within philanthropy for progressive funders interested in a long-term transformational approach to social change.

Participants appreciated the historic charm and convenience of the conference venue—praising the warm, convivial atmosphere of the Kellogg Hotel and the beautiful Victorian-style campus of Gallaudet University. The conference also received high praise for its geographic and generational diversity. Participants enjoyed the vibrant, cross-sectoral mix of NGOs, movement allies, thought leaders, activists, and philanthropic actors. As one participant noted, “Just Giving provides opportunities for grantmakers to interact with activists and NGO allies—reminding us why we’re in this field to begin with.”

Evaluations provided helpful commentary as to how EDGE can continue to improve future conferences, including the need for more emphasis on grantmaking practice, and fewer workshops to allow for expanded networking opportunities. Overall however, the various learning spaces and overarching themes of the conference were met with great enthusiasm—as were such quintessential Just Giving traditions as Film Night, the EDGE dance party, acupuncture services, dine-arounds, and a number of other unique elements that make Just Giving an exciting and important annual event for the funder community.

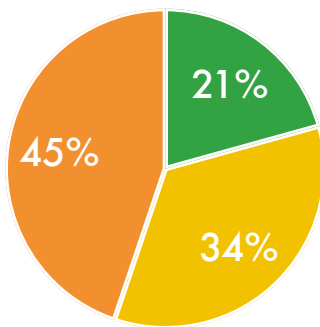
“EDGE provided a very concrete, safe environment to process the challenges of working in the philanthropic sector; identify upcoming trends and concerns within philanthropy; and learn who’s supporting similar networks or organizations globally.”

Evaluation Data

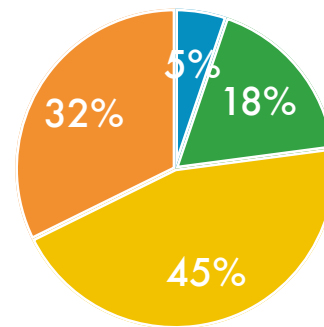
The following is a representative summary of comments made by respondents about various aspects of the conference to provide a sense of how participants assessed the conference and key component parts.

● Poor ● Fair ● Good ● Excellent

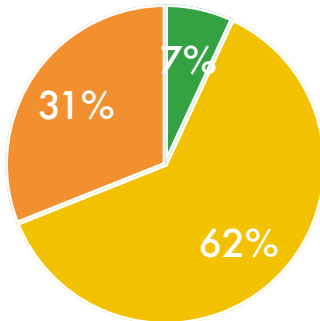
Conference Program



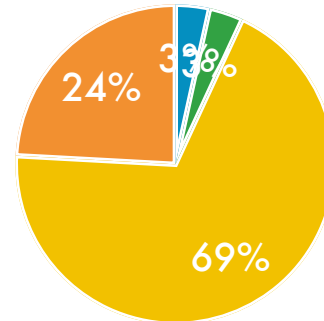
Plenaries



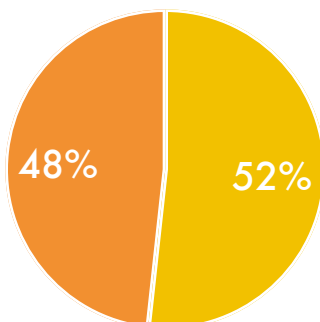
Breakout Sessions



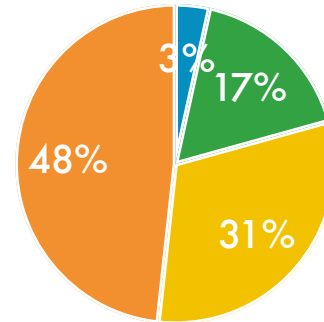
Self-Organized Activities



Registration Process



Overall Conference Experience

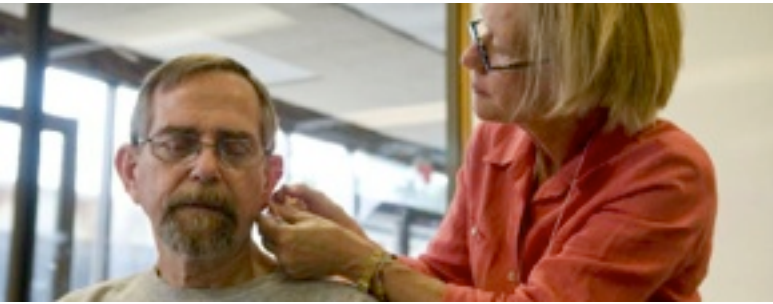


conference highlights



BUILDING COMMUNITY OVER DINNER
The evening dine-arounds provided an opportunity for funders to network with peers and participate in themed discussions over dinner.

“Dine-arounds were interactive, intimate, and informative. A real opportunity to network and build with others.”



HEALTHY CONFERENCE CENTER
“As stimulating as the conference was, it was great to have a chance to decompress with wonderful acupuncture treatments from some real pros.”
“A huge shout-out to Acupuncturists Without Borders for their treatments and for the Qi-Gong session.”

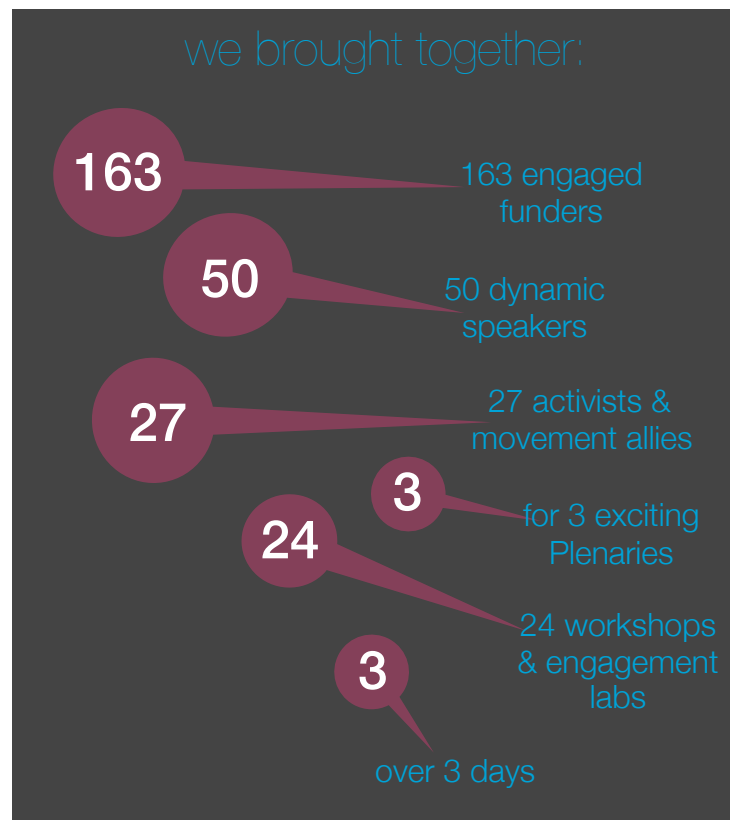
FILM AT JUST GIVING
Just Giving 2013 continued its tradition of film thanks to Kontent Films, a collective of five award-winning filmmakers. Kontent brought big vision to the opening plenary with the film, "A Generation Asks, WTF?" and curated the conference 'Film Night' which featured an inspiring line-up of socially-minded, short documentaries.



CONFERENCE APP
“The conference app was amazing. A great way to navigate the conference, connect with others, follow social media, and find the best local places to eat.”



DANCING ON THE EDGE
“I loved the sense of community, spirit, and energy at the Just Giving dance party. After a long day of intense, thought-proving workshops and conversations, it was a great way to let loose and meet new friends.”





“The incorporation of movement-based activities in the opening plenary with (Towards Social Change in a Changing World) helped connect mind and body.”

“The closing plenary with Damon Silvers offered a provocative, compelling, sobering, and fascinating analysis of corporate power in the United States.”



Critiques

Too many breakout sessions—“I felt like I was missing out on breakout sessions that also sounded amazing. Really wish I could have attended more.” “Breakout sessions all happening at the same time meant some were under-attended.”

More down-time—“Lunch needs to function as down time. Consider not having any activities over lunch.” “There was a small window of time to eat, and not enough time for rest.”

More networking—“Have more opportunities for funders to meet, and provide more time in between sessions.” “We weren’t forced to get to know each other better. Set aside some time or funders and donors to meet through explicit ice-breaker activities.”

Plenary format—“The opening plenary was creative and thoughtful, but would have functioned better as as a small group exercise.” “Make the plenaries less issue-specific and more process-oriented and interactive.” “The moderator format on the plenaries took away from the opportunity to hear more in-depth stories and analysis.”

Scheduling & Timing—“Acupuncture times were difficult to get to because they overlapped so much with the sessions.” “The evening dine-arounds were scheduled a bit close to the film night so many of us ended up missing one or the other.”

Kudos

People, venue, & atmosphere—“Great people, interesting location. And the food at the hotel was great.” “The film night, dance, and acupuncture were very nice touches.” “The overall tone was so welcoming, largely due to EDGE staff.” “The funders who came were great and it was nice to have time to get to know each other.” “More dancing! The social spaces you created to both let off steam and connect with others were really great.” “The campus was beautiful and everything at the hotel was seamless.”

Plenaries & Speakers—“The closing session with Damon Silvers was excellent.” “I appreciated the effort to insert creative new strategies via movement-art and mind-body exercises.” “I really appreciated hearing from the president of Gallaudet. It really speaks to the experiential value of creating an inclusive space.” “I loved Gopal’s presentation on how we shift policy and plan to use and adapt it in my own work.”

Diversity—“I enjoyed being around activists. Other grantmaker conferences are so “funder” focused.” “I was impressed by the diversity of folks in the room.” “I loved the combination of funders and people working on the ground — there should be more opportunities for us to collaborate and connect.”

Innovative Sessions—“The ‘sex work’ session was very thought-provoking and outside-the-box.” “The programming was really interesting and I enjoyed the conversational format (as opposed to the lecture format) of most of the sessions.” ““The Identities and Inequalities session was very compelling.”

Conference perks—“Great services...the conference app was incredible!” “Conference program, instructions, signage, and services were all impeccable.” “Acupuncturists without Borders were fantastic—the treatments and the Qi Gong session.”

Networking opportunities—“Meeting peers and networking during meals and other down-time was the best part of the conference!” “The evening activities were great for building relationships.” “I appreciated opportunities to concretely identify others working with similar issues/regional areas.”

A unique space—“EDGE is the only place that explicitly talks about global context, but links to the diversity of issues at all levels (domestic and international).” “In a field where it’s often difficult to find truly kindred spirits, I feel that I found so many at EDGE!” “This conference keeps me informed of the bigger picture issues, and movements happening globally. It has shown the tremendous power movements can have.”

“I really appreciated the ad hoc session on the garment industry in Bangladesh. I thought it was really timely and very informative.”



“I enjoyed the ability to connect with other individuals and organizations doing similar work. I was able to learn from what they were doing, find out about about potential partnerships, and learn how we can improve our own grantmaking.”



“The breakout sessions on land/water grabs and young people in philanthropy were relevant, current, and really well-presented.”

Who Comes to Just Giving?

Here follows a partial list of those institutions and networks who attended the 2013 JustGiving Conference.

Foundations and Funds

American Jewish World Service *
Ansara Family Fund *
Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice *
Ben & Jerry's Foundation *
Bridge Fund
Careth Foundation *
Center Lambi Fund of Haiti
Channel Foundation *
Chino Cienega Foundation *
Communitas Charitable Fund
CS Fund *
Disability Rights Fund
Diverse City Fund
Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres
Ford Foundation *
Fund for Global Human Rights *
General Service Foundation *
Global Greengrants Fund Global*
Grassroots International *
Groundswell Fund
Hill-Snowdon Foundation
IDEX *
Inter-American Foundation *
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation *
KAT Foundation
Kenoli Foundation *
King Baudouin Foundation *
Lawson Valentine Foundation *
Linked Fate Fund for Justice
Mama Cash
Marguerite Casey Foundation
Mary's Pence *
Mott Philanthropic
New Field Foundation *
Norman Foundation *
Open Society Foundations
Overbrook Foundation
Oxfam Novib *
Partnership for Transparency Fund
Ploughshares Fund

Red Umbrella Fund
Rockefeller Brothers Fund *
Sister Fund *
Social Justice Fund
Solidago Foundation *
The 11th Hour Project of the Schmidt Family Foundation
The Boston Foundation
The Chorus Foundation *
The Christensen Fund*
The Development Fund
The Hovde Foundation *
The Karibu Foundation
The Summit Foundation
Urgent Action Fund For Women's Human Rights *
USA for Africa *
UU Veatch Program at Shelter Rock *
Wallace Global Fund *

** indicates formal membership in EDGE Funders Alliance*

Philanthropic Networks and Institutions

Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group
Bay Area Justice Funders Network
Bolder Giving
Brazil Grantmakers Network
Council on Foundations
Funders Committee on Civic Participation's Money in Politics Working Group
Grantmakers for Southern Progress
Institute for Philanthropy
International Human Rights Funders Group
Mediterranean Women's Fund
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
Native Americans In Philanthropy
Neighborhood Funders Group's Labor and Community Relations Working Group
Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network
Resource Generation
Sustainability Funders
The Philanthropic Initiative (TPI)
Zimbabwe Alliance

Civil Society Organizations and Networks

Alliance for Justice Alternatives
Americans for Indian Opportunity
Anti Corruption Coaliton Uganda
Asia Floor Wage Alliance
Association for Women's Rights in Development
Avina Americas
Black Mesa Water Coalition
CooperAccion
Earthrights International
Focus on the Global South
Global Coalition on Migration
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
Indigenous Environmental Network
Institute for Policy Studies
International Corporate Accountability Roundtable
Just Associates
Labor Community Strategy Center
Labrys Lwala Community Alliance
Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project
National Progressive Leadership Campus
Native American Voters Alliance Education Project
New York Students Rising
Occupy Our Homes
ORAM - Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration
Other Worlds
Pima County Missing Migrant Project
Project for Economic Social and Cultural Rights
Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch
Semillas
Sierra Club Canada
Streetwise and Safe
SumOfUs.org
Taller de Comunicación Mujer
The Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras
The Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union
The Wildfire Project
The Working World Transnational Institute
United for Iran
US Campaign for Burma
Women Thrive Worldwide
Women's Earth and Climate Caucus
Women's Learning Partnership