



PhiLab

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CANADIAN PHILANTHROPY
PARTNERSHIP RESEARCH NETWORK

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Foundations and Climate Action Exploratory Research

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PhiLab

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Foundations and Climate Action

Exploratory research

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**In partnership with Environmental Funders Canada
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the crisis of climate change deepens, many grant-making foundations and actors in the philanthropy sector on a global scale have identified climate change as an immediate priority requiring bold action. However, climate change continues to be one of the least funded issues by foundations in Canada and abroad.

PhiLab (Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network) at the Université de Québec a Montreal (UQAM) convened a meeting with several philanthropic sector partners to explore a research agenda and initiatives that could advance the role of foundations and philanthropic donors in supporting climate action and climate justice. PhiLab is working in partnership with several Canadian grant-making foundations in this first phase of a series of research projects and knowledge mobilization efforts to explore the landscape of climate change efforts in philanthropy.

Grant-making foundations vary greatly in how they approach and address climate change, however, collaborate efforts and coordination across Canada and internationally persist. **This report aims to capture these diverse frames and strategies for change among grant-making foundations to advance and make explicit the narratives and practical actions that foundations can take to address climate change.**

The research report findings combine a review of nine case examples of foundations addressing climate action, relevant literature and several key informant interviews. Their work exists along a spectrum of approaches, roles and strategies with **a focus on the foundations that have made explicit their commitments to addressing climate change.**

How to Engage with this Report

This report can assist a range of grant-making foundation program administrators, developers and decision-makers in identifying their stake in climate change efforts, and the range of strategies and options for investments and programming in climate action moving forward. The intertwined sections provide the beginnings of a map for foundations to identify how they fit in the ecosystem of Philanthropy and climate change.

The report is structured into three main sections that each feed into each other. Depending on the level of engagement with climate efforts and the social and ecological goals of the foundations, readers can begin with exploring the range of narratives that foundations use to define the problem of climate change in their work. These narratives underpin the range of strategies for change and the roles that foundations take in climate action presented in the second section. We then showcase common solutions – internal and external tactics used by foundations to address the problem of climate change and advance strategies for change. Nine concrete examples of foundations nationally and internationally are presented to show how these narratives and solutions occur in practice.

Below we present a summary of the findings that is a step toward mapping the climate philanthropy landscape. We then describe key insights that emerged from the findings, highlighting ongoing challenges and potential ways forward.

Mapping your foundations positioning in climate philanthropy

This is a moment in time where the impacts of climate change and the demand for climate action and justice are undeniable, but there can be a struggle to clearly identify, prioritize and

collaborate on the strategies and options to get there. Foundations may position themselves differently on various social and ecological goals, such as uplifting marginalized voices or scaling low-carbon innovations, but there is a broad understanding that foundations and the philanthropic sector are questioning the status quo and desire concrete steps to address climate change. In identifying a climate action agenda and in shifting to a climate justice framework that engages with grassroots solutions to climate change, foundations often struggle with narratives around innovation, scale and spread, metrics and measurabilities, capacity and geographic reach (Mease, 2018).

A subset of foundations locally, nationally and abroad have been building practices, collaborative efforts and bold strategies to push forward the climate action agenda. The framework below intends to capture these visions and practices based on the findings from our research.

How it all comes together

Foundations can use the framework below to begin mapping out the potential position they can take in their current work when it comes to climate action or in planning for their role in tackling climate change. One foundation likely addresses multiple framings of the problem, strategies for change and tactics at the same time.

I. Framing the Problem

Individual

- *Individual Consumption and Behaviours*

Practice & Organizational

- *Lack of Public Support, Engagement & Mobilization*
- *Lack of Engagement with Peoples Most Impacted by the Issues*
- *Lack of Strategic Coordination, Collaboration and Investments*

Systems

- *Colonization and Exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, Lands and Waters*
- *GHG Emissions from Human Activity in Specific Sectors and Regions*
- *Reliance on Extractive and Carbon-Intensive Industries*
- *Lack of Policy Frameworks and Implementation*

II. The Role of Foundations: A Range of Strategies for Change

- *Include bold visions for climate action, climate justice and just transition in missions, visions, values, programming and policies*
- *Challenge power dynamics and the status quo*
- *Engage strategically with a wide range of stakeholders*
- *Engage with issues interconnectedly and across borders*
- *Aim for long-term solutions and flexible funding*
- *Support those most impacted by climate change*
- *Invest in relationships and partnerships*

III. Solutions: Internal and External Tactics

Individual

- *Attitudes and behavioural change*

Practice & Organizational

- *Public engagement and public opinion*
- *Collaboration and convening*
- *Communication and advocacy*
- *Business innovation*

Policy & Systems

- *Policy change*
- *Movements and grassroots community-building*
- *Research and evaluation*
- *Technical and scientific expertise*

Throughout these problem frames and strategies, various foundations are identified to help give a picture of what it looks like in practice. For example, Trottier Foundation addresses multiple problems at the practice and organizational and policies and systems level. Their strategies at these levels include building from and scaling transformative innovations, engaging in cross-sector collaborations and taking risks that are not possible for others. Their tactics involve a combination of internal and external tactics that engages with policy, research and mobilization. They have a specific environment program, have impact investment and divestments policies, spearhead and participate in several collaborations and address barriers faced by smaller community groups in accessing funding. Foundations can similarly map their involvement or potential engagement with climate change by seeing the links with these categories, strategies, tactics and problem frames. From these case examples, interviews and relevant literature, several ongoing challenges and possible ways forward were identified.

Summary of Ongoing Challenges & Ways Forward

The following overarching themes and sub-themes identify the ongoing challenges identified throughout this research project and potential ways forward to respond. These are expanded on in the conclusion.

Recognize, mobilize and collaborate on diverse and multi-faceted approaches

- The interrelated problems of climate change require that foundations engage in multi-faceted approaches with mobilization and collaboration within the philanthropy sector and across different sectors.
- Stemming from framing the problems, foundations can take action on climate change with different approaches guiding their strategies for change, such as strategy or programming.
- These strategies for change go hand-in-hand and should not be considered in silo. These connected strategies can be viewed from an ecosystem perspective: the individual level of

shifting attitudes and behaviours, to public mobilization, engagement and grassroots efforts, to the broader level of policy and systems change.

- Collaborative efforts are key. The relatively small number of foundations in Canada that engage in climate action have been building momentum in collaborative efforts, showing the possibilities of peer learning, strategic coordination and building from existing practices and policies.

Share and uplift champions of bold action, innovations and systemic change

- There is a shift happening to support climate action through bold action, policy influence, grassroots mobilization and community solutions but this shift is lagging behind the real need for deep systemic change.
- Is the sector ready to not only talk about bold action, but make the shift to challenge and dismantle historical power dynamics between philanthropic funders and grassroots communities? How can the sector measure and evaluate programs that are more grassroots and community-oriented which may not fit within the common theories of change?
- How do we prioritize the experiences and voices of those most impacted by the consequences of climate change? Often these are communities who experience poverty, are people of colour, working class, are women and Indigenous peoples.
- Leveraging existing approaches and champions of change in their investments and grant-making has been building, and can be an immediate step to scale and collaborate more effectively on climate action goals.

Analyse internal and external options and strategies for climate action

- A climate approach can be embedded in internal policies and processes, such as impact investments, while applying the external tactics from contributing to shifting the narrative of climate action to business innovation.
- Foundations can continue finding innovative and creative ways to overcome barriers that limit the allocations and structure of funds and investments. Foundations' funding restrictions can create barriers to climate initiatives, especially grassroots movements and community initiatives.

Moving forward from this exploratory research project, PhiLab will continue to identify action steps and priority areas of the project partners and in conversation with others in the philanthropic sector.

The climate crisis is embedded in a larger ecological crisis, which is in turn inextricably linked to parallel crises within our political and economic systems. Communities of color and working class communities are on the front lines of these crises, and they are already experiencing disproportionate impacts.

To respond to these crises, we must reclaim our democracy and move from the extractive economy to one that is restorative of people, place, and

planet. The economic alternatives we require are already possible, but they are unsung and under-resourced.

- Chorus Foundation

1.0 INTRODUCTION - SETTING THE CONTEXT

With current and impending climate catastrophes, growing inequalities and historic rises in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (World Meteorological Organization, 2019), the climate crisis can be named as an existential threat to our species and the planet. Climate change is a pressing issue being addressed by foundations that shows global, yet disproportionate impacts on communities (ClimateWorks Foundation, 2020).

Foundations and philanthropy play an essential role in mitigating climate change and the challenges facing communities on a global scale (Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network [CEGN] renamed Environmental Funders Canada [EFC], 2018; ClimateWorks Foundation, 2020; Dorsey, 2020; Dunsky Energy Consulting, 2015). They have crucial connections, resources, power and money to influence the deep systemic social, economic and political changes needed to curb the devastating impacts of climate change (Dorsey, 2020; Nardone & Krupp, 2020).

A grantmaking foundation in Canada is a “registered charity that makes grants to other Canadian charities and to those organizations recognized by the federal government as ‘qualified donees.’ A foundation must annually disburse at least 3.5% of its investment assets (averaged over two years). Most grantmaking foundations set up an endowment and invest the funds to generate an annual income from which they make grants (Philanthropic Foundations of Canada, n.d.). As of 2015, there were 10, 743 foundations in Canada with \$69.7 billion in assets and \$5.6 billion in total giving (Philanthropic Foundations of Canada, 2017).

Among the top Canadian grantmaking foundations, the environment receives about 3% of all funding (Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2017). Climate change issues and action receive an even smaller percentage of grant-making foundation dollars, while much of the environment funding being directed toward conservation, otherwise framed as nature-based solutions.

Accelerating action on climate change in philanthropy through pooling resources and collective efforts toward a new kind of economy is cited as a necessity to preserve the environment (Dunsky Energy Consulting, 2015 – an update of this report funded by Trottier Foundation is forthcoming in Summer, 2020). While many actors in the philanthropy sector agree that change is needed, those wishing to move forward with this agenda struggle with the *how*.

One piece of the puzzle is that there are many tensions and differences in the narratives that influence how we understand the challenges we are facing today with climate change. These various narratives represent underlying assumptions and worldviews which play an important part in influencing the approaches of philanthropy in addressing climate issues (Mease, 2018).

Narratives are reflected in the very diverse examples of the theories of change and subsequent strategies that foundations use to mobilize and facilitate this work. These strategies range from systemic transformation through grassroots movement-building to divestments in fossil fuels to market-based incentives through economic and policy change. Grassroots movements, for

example, have an underlying narrative that change requires a shift in leadership towards: “one that is feminist, interdependent, human-centred, community-rooted, multigenerational, and grounded in social and environmental justice” (Fraser & Kerr, 2019).

Lindley Mease of the Climate Leaders in Movement Action (CLIMA) Fund writes about the five narrative frames coming from embedded assumptions that influence the ways funders approach climate philanthropy. She synthesizes pointed questions, challenges and contradictions that the philanthropy sector faces in light of global climate change and inequalities facing communities most burdened by the impacts. These narratives have been identified as some of the most challenging to contend with in shifting toward justice frameworks (Mease, 2018). These five narrative frames can be used by foundations to assess their positioning with environmental and climate change narratives:

- 1) *Innovation*: We need creative and novel ideas to respond to this existential threat. Yet there are many disagreements in who the innovators are, what innovation is and where innovation is coming from.
- 2) *Scale & Speed*: The sector is looking for fast-tracked solutions that reach a global scale yet a question that remains is: at what cost and for whom must we dramatically reduce emissions to end future suffering of the Earth’s species?
- 3) *Metrics & Measurability*: Challenges arise in the practice of being able to fund what is measurable, defining what is important to measure over what time frame, who has access to data and the different approaches required to meet various goals.
- 4) *Capacity*: There is a funnel problem, in that the largest environmental organizations in the United States with budgets over \$5 million receive the majority of philanthropic funding, while many of the largest funders can only give a minimum in the millions at a time. This problem limits the distribution of funding to nonprofits with the largest budgets. What are ways to build bridges between those with financial resources and less structural capacity to handle those funds? What does capacity mean in cultural, intellectual and spiritual knowledge?
- 5) *Geographic Reach*: Funders often give to what they know and where they live, but how do we deal with issues with spread and focus to encourage a view of our global interdependence in our ecological and social systems?

Developing a common language around climate change and just transition in climate philanthropy can begin from understanding and unpacking these narratives on the framing of the issues and the solutions. The diverse frames and the questions that arise in addressing climate efforts in philanthropy provides a backdrop for foundations to understand where they locate themselves in their role in climate action and the multiple strategies for change.

Clearly, foundations have capacities and power to influence investments, resources and support on urgent issues such as the climate crisis making them an important player in how society and its institutions respond to climate change. While strategic coordination is essential to have the far-reaching and deep change needed, approaches can be disjointed, fragmented and face many political and structural barriers to implementation (Dunsky Energy Consulting, 2015). However, with collaborative efforts being made in recent years through initiatives such as the Clean Economy Fund and the Low-Carbon Funders Group this gap in coordination has been narrowing.

In the face of a global climate crisis and engagement among various philanthropic partners, PhiLab convened a meeting with several foundations (see 1.3 Methodology) interested in exploring a research agenda and initiatives that could advance the role of foundations and

philanthropic donors in supporting climate action and climate action. These conversations were intertwined with a discussion of the meaning of *just transition*, or as some partners preferred to call it, *the transition to a future good for people, planet and place*.

PhiLab is working in partnership with these groups through different phases of research and knowledge mobilization with the aim to:

- Make foundations' options for climate action strategies more explicit
- Increase awareness and contribute to a common language about the role of philanthropy in climate action and a just transition

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. **What are examples of foundations and philanthropic funders taking action through different strategies?**
2. **How do philanthropic funders define the problems, the solutions, and the role of philanthropy in climate action and the transition to a future good for people, planet and place?**

1.2 SCOPE

This project highlights grantmaking foundations that fund projects, initiatives and programs focused on climate action, climate justice, climate change or environmental toward mitigating climate change. The emphasis was placed on foundations actively and explicitly supporting climate action and a just transition. Relevant resources (i.e. governmental, organizational, and foundation documentation, reports, newsletters, and websites) and selected foundations are included from the local (city), regional (province or geographic area within a country), national (Canada-wide), and international levels (outside of Canada). However, the background literature and the aim of the project is focused on the Canadian context of grantmaking foundations and philanthropy.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This project is the first phase in a collaborative series of initiatives focused on the role of the philanthropic sector in addressing climate change and advancing a just transition, or a transition to a future good for people, planet and place. In November 2019, PhiLab convened key players in the Canadian philanthropic ecosystem to discuss how to move the sector forward related to climate action, climate justice and a just transition. These partners helped define the scope of the current research project, identified leads and resources (literature, organizations, reports), and provided regular feedback on the project outputs:

- PhiLab
- Environmental Funders Canada

- The Circle on Philanthropy and Indigenous Peoples
- Community Foundations of Canada
- EDGE Funders Alliance North American Steering Committee
- Philanthropic Foundations Canada
- McConnell Foundation

A Research Assistant, Jacqueline Colting-Stol (PhD Student, School of Social Work, McGill University), Jean-Marc Fontan, Researcher and Co-Director of PhiLab and Juniper Glass, Lumiere Consulting, selected a shortlist of foundations as case examples to explore philanthropic narratives and strategies related to climate action. After an initial review of the scope, approaches and activities of 18 foundations and initiatives that reflected the spectrum of climate action supporters or non-supporters, nine grantmaking foundations were selected for inclusion in this report, with feedback from the partners. Key informant interviews with selected foundations and individuals with expertise in climate action in the philanthropy sector were conducted to accompany the review of relevant literature and case example findings. The case study analysis included a review of the content available on foundations' websites focusing specifically on their climate change or environmental programs. Resources used included Annual Reports, Program Theories of Change, Research Reports and other documents describing their approaches and strategies that would respond to our research questions.

Selected case examples:

- Canada
 - McConnell Foundation
 - Trottier Foundation
 - Tides Canada
 - Catherine Donnelly Foundation
 - Ivey Foundation
- International
 - ClimateWorks Foundation
 - Thousand Currents
 - Chorus Foundation

Key informant interviews, in addition to partner feedback:

- Dr. Edouard Morena, University of London Institute in Paris
- Lindley Mease, Climate Leaders in Movement Action (CLIMA) Fund Project Director, Thousand Currents
- Joanna Kerr, President and CEO, Tides Canada
- Eric St-Pierre, Executive Director, Trottier Family Foundation
- Anne Mark, Program Officer, The Catherine Donnelly Foundation
- Dr. Louise Comeau, University of New Brunswick
- Bruce Lourie, President, Ivey Foundation
- Cuong P. Hoang, Director of Programs, Chorus Foundation
- Inès Chaâlala, Director Learning & Partnerships, Philanthropic Foundations Canada

1.4 COVID-19 AND FOUNDATIONS IN CLIMATE CHANGE EFFORTS

This research was undertaken during the months before the COVID-19 pandemic led to enhanced public health and emergency orders across Canada. Toward the end of report-writing,

the research team held discussions with project partners about knowledge mobilization including the impacts of COVID-19 on climate action by foundations. Therefore, the findings of this report do not include the context of foundations in response to COVID-19. The calls to action around climate change issues continues to be a priority with several foundations spear-heading these conversations in the midst of the global pandemic. Here is a list of recent stories about philanthropy and COVID-19 and latest initiatives taken to combat the current crisis:

<https://philab.uqam.ca/en/home-blog/philanthropie-et-la-covid-19/>

2.0 FINDINGS: DEFINING THE PROBLEM, ROLES OF FOUNDATIONS & SOLUTIONS

“Supporting grassroots climate solutions **IS** climate action... Women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples living and working closest to the problems are the source of innovative solutions”

- Thousand Currents

In this section, we provide a more in-depth look at how foundations define the problem of climate change, the roles of foundations and possible solutions. We explore the narratives and approaches of grant-making foundations that we have categorized into overarching themes. The themes draw from the foundations taking action to mitigate climate change and advance climate justice.

The structures and power of foundations have important implications for the climate change agenda. Their unique position in society as funders of social and public goods with capacities to be more flexible and invest in challenging and complex issues has made them essential players in the climate crisis debate.

Both large and small foundations distribute private assets in a donor-driven and tax-benefitting structure which gives them public power to contribute to equality in a democratic society (Reich, 2016). Modern foundations have features that place them outside the usual institutional suspects (such as non-governmental organizations or public institutions) through their differences in having more flexible legal structures and frameworks that focus on transparency and accountability (Reich, 2016). These structures can give them more individual liberty and decision-making power over the issues they prioritize and how the activities are conducted. They can fill gaps in the creation of public goods and decentralize state funding toward those that are not produced, controversial or under-produced, and they can take on long-term operations, risk-taking and experimentation to spur innovation (Reich, 2016). These qualities allow for foundations to have a primary role in the building of innovations, debate and investments in climate change.

The ClimateWorks Foundation provides a theory of change that visualizes how policies and markets produce a feedback loop to strengthen the impact of philanthropy in climate change (see Appendix A, Figure 1). At the centre of the theory of change, they have the three key actions for driving climate action: Philanthropy influences **policy**, inspires **the private sector** and **strengthens public support**. Their feedback loop includes that policy shapes markets and industries and reduces global warming pollution, and as the markets evolve and public support grows, the prospects for further gains improve.

In Canada, [Environment Funders Canada \(EFC; previously Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network\)](#) (CEGN) is a key change-maker when it comes to advancing the collaborative work of foundations on addressing climate change. Its 2016 [assessment of environmental philanthropy in Canada](#) from 105 organizations from the year 2016 provides a picture of the geographies, issues and strategies to help give an understanding of how Canadian foundations invest in environmental issues.

It categorizes their 15 issues into five groups, with data showing that Land (36%; terrestrial ecosystems and land use, and biodiversity and species preservation) replaced Water (29%; coastal and marine ecosystems, and freshwater/ inland water ecosystems) as the most funded issue

groups. The other groups included Energy and Climate (16%; climate and atmosphere, energy and transportation), Health and Justice (4%; environmental and health, environment and justice, and toxics) and Systems (15%; sustainable agriculture and food systems, sustainable production and consumption, sustainable cities and communities and trade and finance). Biodiversity and species preservation continue to be the most funded issue (21%) when the findings are broken down more into the primary issue categories.

The strategies that grantmakers use in 2016, categorized into six groups, included Direct Activity (35%), Education/ Youth Organizing (16%), Research (14%; scientific/ environmental), Public Education/ Awareness (12%), Capacity Building (11%), and Others (11%).

A highlight in these findings is that since EFC and several of their members and partners signed the [Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action](#) (The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, 2015) to support Indigenous communities as a part of the Truth and Reconciliation hearings in 2015, they have seen a 54% increase in grants that are in support of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. However, the findings do not show the nature of the support or whether the initiatives are Indigenous led. While the amount of grants in support have increased, the number of funders slightly decreased from 38 in 2014 to 36 in 2016.

In 2015, [Dunsky Consulting worked with CEGN \(now EFN\) to develop a framework](#) with policy change at the centre of the key levers to support Canadian grantmaking foundations in identifying their roles, priorities, opportunities and barriers toward a low-carbon economy. All of the levers require action with relevant initiatives and funding on a few key areas: advocacy and communication, capacity building and coordination and in some cases research and analysis. The key levers can be used to help guide and identify initiatives, priorities and challenges for grantmaking foundations:

Promoting low-carbon solutions

- 1) Pricing carbon
- 2) Decarbonizing our transportation
- 3) Scaling up renewables
- 4) Greening our cities and building

Leaving carbon in the ground

- 5) Limiting oil and gas emissions
- 6) Shifting our investments

Grantmakers should scale up, pool and focus climate grants, collectively structure their efforts and become vocal role models (Dunsky Consulting, 2015). Similar to ClimateWorks Foundation at the international level, they identify how grantmakers in Canada can take a role in climate efforts by focusing on the areas in which GHG emission comes from, including oil and gas (25%), transportation (24%), electricity (12%), buildings (11%), emissions intensive and trade-exposed industries (11%).

In the following three subsections we summarize the findings combining the worldviews and strategies of the selected cases with the literature and the interviews conducted with several key informants from the foundations and from the sector more generally.

These problem frames and solutions are organized to reflect how they interact at the individual level (individual attitudes and behaviours), practice/organizational level (foundations' organizational structures and direct support to communities and the public) and systems/ policy

levels (broader structures such as economic and government policies or carbon industries). Mapping the themes in this way allows foundations to see how their work can fit in understanding the issues and how they might draw from each of these levels to have a role in climate action.

2.1 How are Foundations Framing the Problem?

Foundations interpret the challenge of climate change in many different ways. The following are the most prominent - often these narratives are used together, woven together in the foundation's rationale for its climate-related work, in the program framework, theories of change, missions and visions.

Individual

Individual Consumption and Behaviours

The lack of individual attitudes and behaviours that understand and support climate change efforts was identified in a few cases as an important part of the problem. While individualized narratives were less prominent as a cause of climate change, consumer behaviours were identified as a missing priority for foundations.

Practice & Organizational

Lack of Public Support, Engagement & Mobilization

There can be a lack of public awareness, engagement and support on climate change which could otherwise mobilize the public to act individually and collectively. Public support can include a lack of awareness and individual behaviours that engage with climate justice or climate action, such as individual consumption, or it can include the support in research, civic engagement or other areas in which the public may invest their time, money and other resources.

There is also a lack of supporting civic engagement for people to understand their roles in advocating for and protecting the environment and human rights. A lack of democracy has been cited as an important issue to address in order to advance a just transition and fairness. Inequitable access to resources exacerbates abilities to contribute to and be a part of healthy climates. Chorus Foundation demonstrates the need to engage with marginalized groups who are at the frontlines of the climate crisis to have access to their rights in a democratic society.

Lack of Engagement with Peoples Most Impacted by the Issues

Political and organizational decision-makers often do not engage appropriately and respectfully with people who are living closest to the issues and most impacted by climate change, such as Indigenous peoples, farmers, low-income workers and women. This was identified prominently in the interviews and in a few of the cases that engage at the grassroots level. Several foundations identify disproportionate impacts of climate change on countries and groups who often hold knowledge and skills to contribute to the solution. In particular, foundations and other decision-makers can exclude the voices and experiences of those most impacted by the climate crisis. Foundations such as Thousand Currents and Chorus Foundation explicitly name the exclusion of groups such as Indigenous peoples, women, working class and those living in poverty as essential to the solutions, but often not engaged with in dominant discourses, policies and decisions.

Lack of Strategic Coordination, Collaboration and Investments

An important problem on the side of foundations was the lack of collaboration, strategic coordination and investments around climate change efforts and action. The lack of collaboration was identified by all foundations interviewed and through the literature as a key issue, as foundations can work in silos and only work on their own priority issues rather than recognizing the interconnectedness of the issues. The issue of coordination and collaboration is also tied to the small number of foundations prioritizing and investing in climate change. As shown in the literature, the amount of funding focused on the environment by the top foundations in Canada about 3%, with climate change being even lower (Philanthropic Foundations Canada, 2017). Focusing on climate change requires pooling and scaling resources through collaboration and coordination.

Policies & Systems

Colonization and Exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, Lands and Waters

Foundations identified that intergenerational trauma and exploitation of lands and waters from colonization of Indigenous peoples, their ways of life, cultures and traditions has been a main contributor to disastrous climate change. Tides Canada and Catherine Donnelly Foundation work explicitly with Indigenous peoples and identify the impacts of colonization which brought Western frameworks and erasure of Indigenous ways of life related to the lands and waters as priorities for foundations to address in partnership with Indigenous peoples. Review their cases below to see how they work in partnership with Indigenous communities and focus on healing-based frameworks and responses as a critical part of the solution.

GHG Emissions from Human Activity in Specific Sectors and Regions

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is a primary frame in the research literature and among the cases we selected as the key problem requiring action and contributing to climate change. These emissions are from human activity, are concentrated in specific sectors and in certain countries which emit more GHGs than others. Foundations may identify country or international level targets depending on their scope of work.

In Canada, under the Paris Agreement, the Government is committed to reducing its national GHG emission by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 with a goal to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (Government of Canada, 2020). The Canadian Government is committed to implementing the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#) (Government of Canada, 2019). At global levels, the targets are to stay below 2 degrees Celsius this century, while if global emissions peak after 2020 it will be harder to stay below this temperature (ClimateWorks Foundation, 2020).

As mentioned, [ClimateWorks Foundation](#) has resources that show the international level emissions coming from various industries and countries, and tracking the global targets in reductions. Canada ranks among the top in GHG emissions when combined with the United States in power, buildings and industries, transport and fuels, and in the non-CO2 related, and other category. In Canada, [EFC have also mapped out GHG emissions](#) by sector and province/ territory to help guide decision-making for investments (Dunksy Consulting, 2015). Oil and gas (25%) and transportation (24%) make up nearly half of the GHG emissions, while Alberta (36%), Ontario (24%), Quebec (11%) and Saskatchewan (11%) are the provinces with the greatest emissions. These differences show a need for regional strategies that match the contexts of each province.

The Prairie Climate Centre (2015), (Appendix A, Figure 2), similarly map out with sub-categories the sources of GHG emissions from 2015 Environment and Climate Change data, showing that nearly half of the emissions come from burning fuel for electricity and heat (45%). This category is further sub-divided with mining, oil and gas exploration (14.5%), and electricity and heat for public (11.6%) as the top in requiring fuel.

Reliance on Extractive and Carbon-Intensive Industries

As explained above, industries that produce extensive carbon emissions and rely on extraction and fossil fuels, such as mining, oil and gas exploration and transportation are major contributors to GHG emissions. Foundations may target these industries through different avenues of research, policy or movement-building at different levels of government. Extraction is also linked to colonization in relationship to the land.

Lack of Policy Frameworks and Implementation

Policy frameworks and implementation are expanding at organizational, municipal, provincial, national and international levels to reflect moves away from extractive and carbon-intensive industries and economies, but not fast enough. The industries above require transformative policies at a global level to curb GHG emissions. However, public policy that develops the incentives, investment options, standards and norms that underpin a carbon economy and market also relies on the engagement of businesses and the public (ClimateWorks, 2020).

2.2 The Role of Foundations: A Range of Strategies for Change

“A stable climate is necessary for ecosystems, economies, and societies to thrive. The scale and urgency of climate change requires action from all parts of society. Philanthropy has a critical role to play. We need to transform how we use energy, organize transportation, manage forests and agricultural land, and build the places we live”

- ClimateWorks Foundation

This section shows the roles the foundations can take through a range of strategies for change. The findings from the cases and the literature show how there are existing leaders, champions and practices that can be shared and uplifted - but that there are many differences in the scope, reach, actors, frameworks for measurement, activities and capacities of foundations with climate change or environmental causes as a part of their programs and investments.

Below we have summarized the literature, case examples and key informant interviews into seven interdependent key themes that describe the role for foundations in climate change and climate justice.

Include bold visions for climate action, climate justice and just transition in missions, visions, values, programming and policies

Approaches of foundations are very diverse and may be guided by principles that range from free markets and individual prosperity to system transformation and Indigenous sovereignty. Many foundations frame climate issues around their programs, such as programs focused on

conservation. Foundations may explicitly name climate change in the mission or have dedicated programs or grants for climate change or other environmental priorities.

Among foundations that have an explicit aim to influence climate change mitigation or climate action, there is also a range of narratives and objectives but some clear forerunners. A major framing of the goals of climate change initiatives is support for the calls for significant reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to meet national and global targets.

ClimateWorks Foundation works specifically on synthesizing research evidence for the philanthropy community on climate change and is a useful resource to understand the scientific evidence behind the missions and visions for climate action. The main challenge for climate change at a global level that requires the work of foundations according to ClimateWorks includes action on reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other GHG emissions while simultaneously addressing energy poverty. These reductions can come from clean power, clean transportation, energy efficiency, forest and land use, non-CO₂ mitigation and faster innovation and cultivation of natural carbon sinks.

However, we heard in our interviews that the shift to support climate justice through bold action, grassroots mobilization and community solutions is lagging behind the real need for deep systemic change. The goals of GHG emissions and a low-carbon economy become more complicated by funders bringing in an analysis of justice. Climate justice prioritizes issues of human rights and empowerment alongside climate change initiatives (CLIMA Fund, 2019). CLIMA Fund (2019) highlights particular overlooked solutions at the grassroots level that can incorporate justice and equity toward long-lasting change in emissions and in communities. Narratives largely focus on technology advancement, pricing and policy change from “within” which can entrench the most common patterns of marginal reform rather than the bold action needed to address climate change.

Challenge power dynamics and the status quo

Foundations that focus on systems transformation, movement-building and grassroots change tend to challenge existing power dynamics of the grantor-grantee relationship and the status quo. Decision-making power aims to be re-distributed to the people impacted by the social issues in the community.

We also heard in our interviews how more technical frameworks with potentially large scale investments could entrench the same patterns that do not move forward on the fundamental shifts needed both internally and externally among foundations to drastically impact climate change. We heard that there needs to be efforts to ensure patterns of extraction and domination over lands, resources and social capital are disrupted. Investments can be made toward the most prominent theories of change of research and policy change with more clear indicators and capacities for measurement, but this often overtakes the power of visions of change that come from bottom-up movement-building.

Engage strategically with a wide range of stakeholders

To meet the complexity and far-reaching impact of climate change, there is a need to engage with a broad range of relevant and strategic stakeholders to meet climate action goals. The diverse narrative frames represented in the mission and visions are also reflected in the diverse stakeholders across sectors and at multiple levels of government. It's clear that collaboration is critical to tackling the complexity of climate change that crosscuts borders and social, economic and political systems. *Collective Philanthropy* is an approach that works toward collective and shared resources, a guiding principle of the ClimateWorks Foundation. Depending on the missions,

foundations may prioritize private business, academic institutions, or the main partners may be local communities and non-profit organizations working in the grassroots.

Engage with issues interconnectedly and across borders

Issues within the environment encompass climate and atmosphere, biodiversity, agriculture, land and water, transportation, energy, among other issues, yet they are also interconnected and interlinked with issues of housing, health, education and poverty.

Relevant to the literature and to the cases is the ways that different issues are interconnected and require action together. ClimateWorks Foundation identifies how poverty and access to energy is linked to the need to reduce GHG emissions and should be addressed simultaneously. Poverty and climate change are often linked together, in that the poorest communities are facing disproportionate impacts of climate change.

Fundamental to ClimateWorks Foundation is a [Global View](#) on the issues of climate change, which recognizes how ecosystems are interrelated. GHG emissions and deforestation in one part of the world impacts another part. Further, GHG emissions according to different sectors, such as buildings and industry and transport and fuels, are mostly [concentrated in the same industry-heavy countries](#).

Community-led initiatives often identify who exactly are those most impacted by climate change and associated issues, who then become the key people leading the change in their own communities. The research and case examples selected for this report identify the interrelatedness of climate change across the globe. Specifically, foundations cite how the most impacted and vulnerable communities to climate change are often the ones who are the least environmentally destructive. Foundations working across Global South to Global North relations identify specific groups that should be leading the change, including women, Indigenous peoples and youth. However, national initiatives in the United States and Canada also identify women, people of colour, working class and Indigenous peoples as having primary roles in making decisions, mobilizing and facilitating climate action and justice (see Chorus Foundation, Thousand Currents and Tides Canada).

Chorus Foundation provides an example of linking economy, environment and local communities and translates these interconnected issues to their mission and their grant programs. They hope to build an economy where all people can find meaningful work, contribute to an environment where everyone has access to clean air, clean water, stable climate and ability to have a say in a democracy. Their grant programs focus on supporting organizations on the frontlines of the old extractive economy to build power in their communities in three areas: political power to offset the influence of fossil fuel and financial sectors, economic power to create alternative structures for business and finance; cultural power to provide a new narrative and vision of what is possible. Similarly, Catherine Donnelly Foundation recognizes the links between the environment, housing and education for adults, striving for collaboration across these areas.

Aim for long-term solutions and flexible funding

Foundations supporting community and grassroots work in climate action aim to reduce the barriers to the nature and complexity of these issues. Through the case examples and the interviews, we found that foundations have been challenging the usual power dynamics in grantor-grantee relationships to shift toward more participatory, grantee-led, community-focused and grassroots approaches.

McConnell Foundation is an example of striving to uproot these power dynamics, especially in their explicit work on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Some of the ways that foundations are able to respond to community-oriented solutions and to the demands of climate change is through grant-making that provides capacity for long-term solutions and flexible unrestricted funding. This need was present in the literature and is being implemented through the Chorus Foundation and Thousand Currents. Another strategy for doing community-led work involves the role of intermediaries in local contexts who have deep knowledge, capacity and relationships for bridging grantmaking foundations with work on the ground.

Support those most impacted by climate change

Foundations doing transformative climate change initiatives often explicitly aim to support those closest to the impacts of the issues, including initiatives, place-based and cross-border work with Indigenous peoples, women, the working class and those living in poverty. Healing, land and intergenerational connections were themes brought up by Foundations working explicitly in long-term relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Invest in relationships and partnerships

Foundations that lead in or conduct climate change and climate action in Canada are a small subset and are often already connected and gravitate toward pooling their resources and partnering on projects, including with communities. Indigenous communities are an important relationship to build and work alongside toward climate justice goals.

For example, strategies of healing and behaviour change are not as well-funded or able to be captured through commonly used yet restrictive evaluation frameworks. Tides Canada worked with Indigenous communities in Northern Canada to develop a [Northern Program Theory](#) as a part of their Culture and Language Resurgence Program reflecting their worldview that sustainable, resilient and vibrant communities and ecosystems depend on Indigenous leadership, stewardship and ways of being and knowing (see the case example below).

2.3 Solutions: Internal and External Tactics

In this section, we have categorized the main internal and external tactics that we found among the case examples and in the literature as potential solutions to address the problems and implement strategies for change. Of equal importance to grant-making programs is the internal policies and investments made by foundations in line with climate change mitigation. This is a part of “walking the talk” as role models in demonstrating low carbon or alternative approaches, but also in supporting systems change.

We heard in our interviews that the tactics from grantmaking foundations can tend to focus on policy, research and communications. While these activities are fundamental to the long-term solutions needed, more work needs to be done on public attitudes, mobilization and support for movement-building.

Internally, foundations such as McConnell Foundation have committed to approaches of [impact investing](#) which “are investments made into companies, organizations and funds with the intention to generate measurable and social and environmental impact alongside financial return” (McConnell Foundation, 2020). [Environment Funders Canada](#) are a key supporter to Philanthropic organizations in Canada in improving their funding impact, sharing and collectivizing environmental investments. They have ongoing learning and sharing initiatives on impact investments. Catherine Donnelly Foundation, Trottier Foundation and Tides Canada

similarly use this impact investment approach. Nevertheless, some foundations that work toward equality, human rights or social change also invest in or partner with institutions that may oppose actions toward mitigating climate change, climate justice or other environmental frameworks. [SHARE](#)'s Foundation Investing 2.0 learning program supporting trustees, board members, and staff of foundations in building capacity to engage more in impact and responsible investing.

Some foundations continue to use free market and market-based principles, others focus on how to build a sustainable low carbon economy while prioritizing business innovation and resource efficiency (Ivey Foundation), while others strive for similar aims of low-carbon, post-carbon or regenerative economies as a move away from extractive industries (Chorus Foundation, Thousand Currents, Tides Canada and Catherine Donnelly Foundation).

These latter foundations often prioritize community, grassroots, local or Indigenous movement-building, reclamation and sustainability. The approaches are not always distinct. For example, resource efficiency and partnering with businesses to support the livelihoods of local communities can cross-cut different objectives. Foundations vary in identifying the link between free market thinking and market-based analyses to climate action. A number of foundations that support action on climate change also support free-market thinking in allocating resources toward a low-carbon transition.

Individual

Attitudes and behavioural change

While individual patterns of consumption were not as present in the case examples, using behavioural science to support change was identified in the interviews as a missed focus and opportunity.

Practice & Organizational

Public engagement and public opinion

Gaining public support and influencing public opinion are strategies for any Foundation seeking to support or not support climate change efforts.

Collaboration and convening

Foundations have a capacity to convene a diverse and wide range of stakeholders with resources and investments in societal change. This convening power is an important tool for addressing the complexity and far-reaching impacts of climate change. Strategic coordination and collaboration across sectors and within Philanthropy is reiterated as a core driver of moving forward on the agenda ahead. Funding collaboratives can also be a tool to reach out to small grassroots groups by pooling resources and making grants that accommodate the needs of these groups.

Communication and advocacy

Communication overlaps with many of the other strategies, however, some foundations specifically work on a narrative shift or building alternative narratives in climate change, such as CLIMA Fund, Thousand Currents and Chorus Foundation. Dunsky Consulting (2015) mapped out the Canadian ecosystem of sample organizations working on transition to low-carbon economy in categories of think tanks, ENGOs, coalitions and networks, industry associations, region-specific organizations, issue-specific organizations

and others such as the private sector, local governments and First Nations communities ([Table 2: Sample list of organizations, p. 20](#)).

Specific collaborations and/or networks identified in the cases and in the interviews at different levels of local, regional, national or international levels include:

- [Arctic Funders Collaborative](#)
- [Low Carbon Funders Group](#)
- [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#)
- [Canadian Institute for Climate Choices](#)
- [The Transition Accelerator](#)
- [Institute for Sustainable Finance](#)
- [Trottier Energy Futures Project](#)
- [Trottier Institute for Sustainability](#)
- [Clean Economy Fund](#)
- [Low Carbon Cities Canada](#)
- [Ecofiscal Commission](#)
- [Efficiency Canada](#)

Business innovation

Engaging with the private sector is another primary strategy cited by many foundations. In particular, the innovation and creativity of businesses to support technologies, investments and other climate change initiatives is paramount. Through their emphasis on a collaborative process, Ivey Foundation partners with a range of strategic and specific stakeholders to advance innovations, research and expertise across sectors.

Policy & Systems

Policy change

Policy change is continuously cited as a primary and a key driver in mitigating climate change. Catherine Donnelly Foundation, for example, has collaborated with Indigenous communities and other stakeholders to target specific legislation on Indigenous rights and climate change.

Movements and grassroots community-building

Some foundations have supporting movements and community-building from the grassroots as their primary mission and strategies. Providing support to grassroots groups and movements is an emerging priority for climate action, but foundations can struggle with evaluating and implementing these initiatives. The report by EFC on the most funded activities in 2016 categorized them even further, including funds for material development or protests.

Research and evaluation

All across the spectrum of foundations whether in support of climate change or not, there are investments in academic institutions and research agendas. In particular, the Ecofiscal Commission supports building and sharing evidence focused on carbon pricing toward economic and environmental advancements.

Technical and scientific expertise

Convening content and technical experts to inform frameworks, share knowledge, and influence policy decisions is an approach to develop solutions that prioritize specialized technical and scientific knowledge and skills. Ivey Foundation is an example of bringing together specific technical and scientific expertise to develop solutions on issues of pricing, measurement and investments.

There still exists tensions and contradictions but some clearer direction in the narratives of foundations as they seek to prioritize, explore or identify climate change efforts. There is clearly work already being done in advocacy, collaboration, policy and economic change, but foundations still have divergent approaches and narratives in the underpinning assumptions of what it means and how to do support work on this global issue.

The case examples from the national to international level show how the above narratives, problem frames, strategies for change and tactics come together. They provide a picture of how the interrelated concepts above can be implemented in practice at individual, practice or organizational, and systems or policy levels through a combination of internal and external tactics.

4.0 CASE EXAMPLES

Below you will find summaries of the scope of intervention, the approaches and solutions of the nine case examples selected for this research report. The findings from the case examples are further summarized in the boxes based on the questions that we used in our key informant interviews to mirror the core components of the findings: framing the problem, the roles of foundations and the solutions.

Canada

4.1 McConnell Foundation

<https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/>

Summary

Framing the problem:

- McConnell Foundation develops and applies innovative approaches to social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges. McConnell Foundations works with diverse individuals and organizations engaging with maladaptive, rigid or fragmented social systems toward necessary change and re-designing systems. McConnell fund issue advocacy and invite diverse viewpoints and interests to co-create new solutions.

Roles of foundations:

- Foundations play a primary role in mobilizing investments and endowment funds in climate action. For example, their capital and funds can support a transition to clean energy sources. These movements of funds can set examples for others to invest toward climate action.
- Foundations can also draw from their granting and financial resources to support, sustain and maintain the broad social movements calling for action.
- Internally, foundations can lead in their daily operations by reducing their emissions, and ensuring their endowments are divested from industries such as standard oil and gas.

Solutions

- Their solutions include granting and investing, capacity building, convening, and co-creation with grantees, partners and the public. Some of the projects they contributed to include the [Transition Accelerator](#) which aims to build emissions reductions into business and social challenges, and the [Canada Climate Law Initiative](#) that analyses the legal basis for corporate directors, officers and pension fiduciaries to develop strategies around fiduciary obligations around climate change, climate-related risks, opportunities and knowledge on effective climate governance.

- Scope of intervention
 - Located in Montreal, McConnell Foundation is a private Canadian foundation that addresses social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges through developing and applying innovative solutions.
- Approach

To bring about social change at a large and necessary scale, they engage with social systems that not are working to their full potential. McConnell fund issue advocacy and invite diverse viewpoints and interests to co-create new solutions. They envision a Canada in which the economy and social systems advance the well-being of all people, and in which a natural environment is stewarded for future generations. They are committed to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and building from the resources and creativity across sectors to solve social challenges.

Solutions Finance

- Their integrated [Solutions Finance](#) approach aims to use their financial assets in support of social innovation. They invest in portfolios with strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria aligned with their mission through social impact investments.

Social Innovation Generation (SiG)

- Through Social Research and Development, policy innovation and ecosystems for systems change, the [SiG](#) aims to be a catalyst for supporting whole system change, bringing together intentional partners to engage across sectors toward a culture of continuous social innovation.

[Impact Investing](#)

- Through Mission-Related Investments (MRI) and Program-Related Investments (PRI), they make investments into companies, organizations and funds with the intention of generating measurable social and environmental impact alongside financial return.

Social Innovation Fund

The [Social Innovation Fund](#) supports organizations that seek to strengthen their capacities to scale for greater impact.

Social Labs

Their [social innovation lab](#) involves a process of bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to tackle complex social problems through research, experimentation, prototyping and testing solutions.

Social Innovation Learning Program (SILP)

The [SILP](#) supports individuals and organizations in scaling new approaches of social innovators through combination of financial support with learning experiences and building networks.

- Solutions

Funder

- McConnell Foundation provides grants to organizations and individuals focused on sustainable solutions – their Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is open to organizations that are proposing to scale up a promising solution or introduce a new business model.

Investor

- Through working together with entrepreneurs, social enterprises, foundations, governments, mainstream investors, businesses and governments on Solutions Finances,

they are aiming to expand the available solution sets, reduce and share risk, and take particular initiatives to scale when granting is not enough to effect change.

Convenor

- McConnell brings together community organizations, foundations, governments and other stakeholders to forge relationships based on shared visions and goals in order to promote and enable cross-sectoral collaboration toward extensive change at a generational scale.

Capacity Builder

- McConnell offers a variety of support, such as learning opportunities, funding organizational restructuring or providing temporary staffing support, to strengthen Canada's non-profit sector.

Advocate

- McConnell also advocates for causes and supports meaningful engagement of communities and individuals who may not be engaged in policy decisions.

Strategic Learning Partner

- To improve philanthropic practice and impact of change initiatives, McConnell asks questions, challenge assumptions and search for insights through bringing in new players and resources to invest in innovative social solutions.

4.2 Trotter Foundation

<https://www.trotterfoundation.com/>

Summary

Framing the problem:

- Located in Montreal, they work on transformative, collaborative and risk-taking initiatives focused on scientific inquiry, education, health and the environment with community and international organizations. They explicitly aim to protect the environment and mitigate climate change.

Roles of foundations:

- Philanthropy has a role in being present on climate action plans at different levels as they can take risks, build momentum, buy-in and a sense of community.
- Collaboration and "all-hands-on-deck" through pragmatic work on policy, research and mobilization are key to climate justice which makes up a very small amount of the investments and a small number of foundations.

"The movements are asking, but the foundations need to respond."

Solutions

- Trotter Foundation has a specific Environment Program and prioritizes collaboration and investments. Internally, they have implemented impact investments and have

divested from fossil fuels. They have a hybrid grantmaking approach that can be both grantmaking at a distance and more participatory.

- Trottier Foundation leads and participates in several collaborations, including having set up the [Trottier Energy Futures Project](#) in collaboration with Canadian Academy Engineers and The David Suzuki Foundation and [the Trottier Institute for Sustainability](#). They are collaborators with EFC, Low Carbon Funders Group and the [Clean Economy Fund](#). They also spearhead the [Low Carbon Cities Canada initiative](#) which sought to scale the [Toronto Atmospheric Fund](#) to other municipalities across Canada and led to a \$183M investment from the Federal government in 2019. Trottier Foundation teamed up with C40 Cities and Suzuki and 5 other foundations to help the City of Montreal develop their carbon neutral 2050 Climate Action Plan.
- Trottier Foundation strives to address barriers that smaller community groups may face, such as funding to carry out essential movement-building and mobilization. They hope to create a mobilization hub to provide knowledge transfer and mentor and coach these groups to provide solutions to the barrier of primarily registered charities accessing grants.

- Scope of intervention

- Located in Montreal, Trottier is a private Canadian charitable foundation providing support to registered charities and donees in areas of education, science, health, environment and community and international organizations.

- Approach

- Trottier aims to positively impact the world through advancing scientific inquiry, promoting education, fostering better health, protecting the environment and mitigating climate change. They build from and scale innovations that are transformative, cross sector collaborations and take risks that are not possible for others.

- Solutions

- Thousand Currents has a hybrid grantmaking approach that can be both grantmaking at a distance and more participatory. Projects are identified by accepting grant applications directly through their Grants Management Systems and go through a regular grantmaking process. The other option is that foundations seek out initiatives and activities where they see there are gaps and there is potential for meaningful impact. To find out more about the steps to apply to their grantmaking process click here: <https://www.trottierfoundation.com/granting-process>
- They also work on collaboration and on investments. They are currently working on developing an investment policy to match up with their larger mission including impact investing and divestment from fossil fuels.
- Under their pillar of the environment program, they have several projects. Find out more at this link: <https://www.trottierfoundation.com/programs-environment>:
 - The Trottier Energy Futures Project is a partnership between David Suzuki Foundation and the Canadian Academy of Engineering aimed at modelling and analysing how Canada can achieve deep emission reductions (80% reduction in Greenhouse Gasses by 2050 from 1990 levels). They also partnered with the Ecofiscal Commission aimed at addressing the discussion around carbon pricing to meet GHG targets. The Trottier Energy Institute (University of Montreal) and

Trottier Institute for Sustainability in Engineering and Design (McGill University) supports educating scientists, engineers and students in sustainability.
- Lastly, they strive for philanthropic collaboration through collaborative grantmaking through the Canadian Clean Economy Fund and the EFC.

4.3 Tides Canada

<https://tidescanada.org/>

Summary

Framing the problem

- Tides Canada aims to support people in building on the social, economic and natural capital of their communities so they can be stewards of their environments for generations.
- They aim to build bridges within and across sectors to guide philanthropy toward innovative work that addresses difficult social and environmental challenges.

Roles of foundations

- We heard that the focus on healing, land, culture and women's relationships to the land were critical to climate protection and biodiversity among Indigenous communities and more broadly. While many narrative frames focus on conservation, foundations are more aware of the need to shift away from the extractive nature of economies and ensure that Indigenous peoples are decision-makers even before priority areas of issues are set. Supporting Indigenous resurgence, reclamation, connection to the land, land defenders and leadership are essential, yet foundations can lack processes and ways of reflecting grassroots, healing and tangible movement-building in theories of change.
- They emphasized the need to prioritize a shift to sustainable lifestyles, behaviours and consumption in dominant narratives and strategies as most frameworks and investments go toward policy and research.

Strategies

- They are currently working on five core focus areas of their seven, including Northern Well-being, Pacific Communities and Conservation, Sustainable Food Systems, Healthy Watersheds and Sector Innovation.
- In an interview with Tides Canada Foundation, an emphasis was placed on their Northern Program and the importance of models focused on the resurgence of Indigenous cultures and languages. The voices of Northerners need to be shared as they have knowledges to protect the future of the planet and they are closest to the climate change impacts. The Program model below shows how emerging Northern leaders, land and water stewardship, sustainable livelihoods and healthy culture and communities can lead to healthy outcomes for ecosystems, resilience, livelihoods and Indigenous ways of knowing.
- One strategy is to make use of intermediaries to help make the connection between what needs to happen on the ground in a good way and provide strategic support.

- Scope of intervention

- Tides Canada works toward providing “uncommon solutions for the common good” by supporting Canadians in securing a healthy environment through social equity and economic prosperity.
- Approach
 - They provide support to people in building healthy, vibrant communities that have social, economic and natural capital to be stewards of their environments for generations.
 - They use an approach of collaboration with donors and social change leaders. They aim to build bridges within and across sectors to guide philanthropy toward innovative work that addresses difficult social and environmental challenges.
 - They have seven core issue areas with current efforts focused on areas where they see themselves having the longest and most positive change:
 - 1- Clean energy and climate solutions
 - 2- Healthy oceans
 - 3- Healthy watersheds
 - 4- Protected lands and forests
 - 5- Resilient communities
 - 6- Sustainable food systems
 - 7- Sustainable livelihoods

Their current focus areas include:

- **Northern Well-being:** Approach work with an understanding that Northerners know best how to create lasting solutions to their own challenges which drives their partnerships with communities in three territories and four Inuit regions. Their priority areas include encouraging northern leadership and capacity for young Indigenous people in particular to respond to social and environmental change. Issues will also address fostering sustainable livelihoods, promoting knowledge and wise stewardship of wildlife, land, water and other natural resources, and fostering strong, healthy northern youth and families.
- **Pacific Communities and Conservation:** Their approaches intend to scale and build from a comprehensive and collaborative conservation and commercial forest management plan agreement of the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR) made between First Nations communities, the BC government, philanthropic foundations, forest companies and conservation organizations. Other priorities they have include developing formal terrestrial and marine use plans that reflect community and ecological values, building community leadership and capacity for carrying out stewardship practices and fostering economies for communities build on cultural and environmental heritage.
- **Sustainable Food Systems:** Their work intends to cultivate and support community-based local food solutions, enhance strong local food networks through knowledge sharing and skill building between individuals and groups and support rural and Indigenous food sovereignty.
- **Healthy Watersheds:** They work from local to national levels on issues of marine planning, binational coordination in the Great Lake and supporting First Nations and Inuit communities in sustainability and cultural sustenance. Their priorities include to amplify capacity, impact and inclusion of diverse groups working in this area, support capacity and collaboration for regional freshwater

conservation in B.C., the Mackenzie Basin and the Great Lakes and support actions that work across jurisdiction and sectors that influence the health of watersheds.

- **Sector Innovation:** They work in identifying gaps and obstacles to reaching impact and leveraging emerging models and technological advances to apply them to their work. They have a Change Capital program that brings together initiatives with aligned missions in impact investment and build on funds for social impact. They also have a shared platform model bringing together 40 social change initiatives across Canada.

- Solutions

They have seven different solutions to the problems:

- Advisory Services
- Strategic Programs: They work strategically through program leads to manage granting portfolios in local communities through articulation, design and implementation.
- Shared Platform: They lead a shared platform of over 60 unique and aligned projects by sharing administrative resources and expertise.
- Donor Advised Funds: Manage the administration and efficiencies of charitable giving as an alternative to starting a foundation.
- Legacy Giving: Help develop a legacy giving plan for impact and efficiency.
- Impact Investing: Host platforms and support collaboration for social and financial return.
- Collaboration and Co-creation: Engage in funder collaboratives and bring grantmakers together to pool resources and build on learning and evaluation, such as the Coalition for Action on Toxics, and Northern Manitoba Food, Culture and Community Collaborative.

4.4 Catherine Donnelly Foundation

<https://www.catherinedonnellyfoundation.org/>

Summary

Framing the problem

- With roots in a faith-based community, the Catherine Donnelly Foundation strives for social change through funding programs and projects in four priority areas: Environment, Housing Initiatives, Adult Education and Impact Investing. They promote working together and collaboration with an understanding of how these issues are interconnected and need joint action and collective efforts.
- Their environmental program focuses on advancing climate change and climate justice solutions rooted in interconnected “values of a focus on the marginalized, reconciliation with Aboriginal, First Nations and Métis peoples, recognizing an inseparable bond between nature, justice for those living with poverty, and a commitment to society, inspiring an ‘ecological conversion of heart’ where Canadians are inspired to respect the environment as a sacred gift and a desire to integrate new voices.”

- Catherine Donnelly’s worldview takes steps toward engaging with a decolonized approach. This approach prioritizes Indigenous worldviews and leadership with flexible program areas that integrate human and non-human life and aspire to a movement of reconciliation of faith and civil society.

Role of foundations

- In conversation with Catherine Donnelly Foundation, they acknowledge that foundations often take the role of funding in two areas that go in concert: (1) policy, research and advocacy; (2) engagement, public mobilization and including diverse voices in the narrative.
- Foundations can work collaboratively to pool resources, reduce competitiveness, coordinate, and listen and respond in trusting relationships with groups that are doing the work to transform transportation, food and energy.
- Foundations can work on long-term relationship building to change the future of grant-making. This approach would challenge the western and hierarchical frame of working. It would allow more trust in the process and provide flexibility even if it may take longer. These processes can be embedded in daily operations.
- Foundations should work toward supporting Indigenous-led initiatives and partnerships with communities. However, foundations often have pre-set criteria about issues to address and can be challenged by the broadness and lack of clarity on what these approaches would look like within a western frame. Some of the ways to support community leadership include recognizing interconnectedness of issues with a whole community lens, being comfortable making mistakes and re-adjusting, seeking to address the root causes of the issues and being open-minded to new ideas.

Solutions

- Their one-time project grants focus on public engagement and mobilization and their multi-year program initiatives focus on supporting a “Proactive Coalition for Policy Advocacy around Climate Change Issues.” Some highlighted collaborations include the Low Carbon Funders Group, and collective support of the Pan-Canadian Framework. They also invest in research, carbon pricing and advancing sustainable, low-carbon energy solutions.
- Internally, they have dedicated staff to implement their Impact Investment approach for financial and social and environmental return. They prioritize sharing these findings more broadly, as they produce reports analysing these investments.

Examples of Indigenous-led initiatives and partnership

- Recognizing that Indigenous-led grants are under-funded opposed to Indigenous-focused grants, and signing on to the Philanthropic Declaration of Action during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, they undertook a process of convening several Indigenous leaders to find out what areas are most needed and useful when it comes to philanthropy. The focus was overwhelmingly about healing in terms of intergenerational trauma and fostering connection between land, language and culture. Bringing an intergenerational perspective that links to the root causes of the issues was important for their environmental grants, which resulted in their “Healing through the Land” initiative.

- Scope of intervention

- The Catherine Donnelly Foundation promotes social change through funding programs and projects in four priority areas of Environment, Housing Initiatives, Adult Education and Impact Investing. Their work extends to regions across Canada but is located in Toronto.
- Approach
 - Catherine Donnelly Foundation promote joint action and networking by supporting key institutional actors through combining their efforts, and building on each other's strengths and commonalities toward social change.
 - They are committed to moving towards a decolonized approach to philanthropy which shifts the traditional grantor-recipient power dynamic by focusing on community decision-making and control over community resources. They seek to appreciate Indigenous worldviews by allowing for flexible program areas integrating interrelated aspects of human and non-human life. They seek to grow a movement of people of faith and civil society to work toward reconciliation. They acknowledge and seek to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation in Canada.
 - Environmental Initiatives: Advancing Climate Change & Climate Justice Solutions
 - They are committed to promoting climate justice and accelerating the transition to a post-carbon world. They model this action through *fossil fuel divestment and their impact investing approach*.
 - They are advocates for systemic solutions to drastically reduce emissions, including price on carbon, regulations on industrial operations, public infrastructure development, nature conservation, technology innovation and regulations/ incentives to accelerate green consumption and behavioural patterns. They also believe in a critical shift in public opinion to widespread support and demands of government and business leaders to carry out these systemic solutions at political and societal levels.
- Strategies
 - One-time Project Grants*
Catalysing Public Engagement and Mobilization in support of groups, projects and initiatives that:
 - Seek to shift public perceptions and values in support of strong climate action
 - Have broad impact, or which start regionally but are scalable or replicable
 - Use grassroots and engagement organizing to advance climate solutions
 - Advance collective and integrated approaches capable of catalysing and engaging new voices
 - Apply creative and innovative communications and engagement strategies (i.e. the arts, storytelling, engaged and investigative journalism, simulation games, cultural activities etc.)
 - Multi Year Program Partnerships*
Supporting a Proactive Coalition for Policy Advocacy around Climate Change Issues:
 - 1- Ecojustice: Recognizing our Right to a Healthy Environment
They are seeking the radical goal of having environmental rights recognized as part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
 - 2- Supporting First Nations/ Métis/ Indigenous-led Initiatives

They have actively engaged in meetings, dialogue and partnership-building with/within Indigenous communities to learn how to support the advance of their work on clean energy projects as a climate justice and economic/ social development solution. They heard that to best address community capacity, they needed to take a holistic approach, addressing root causes and rebuilding lost connections to land, language and culture:

- Focus on healing through land-based initiatives, such as the healing through the land initiative – a pooled fund led by an Indigenous Steering Committee, tasked with grant design and decision-making. The initiative seeks to integrate community leadership, cultural revitalization and control over energy and food resources as a path toward healing and reconciliation.
- Integrate and enhance the elements of community leadership, cultural revitalization, increasing efficiency and creating renewable energy sources, localizing food and protecting water across Indigenous communities in a holistic and innovative way.
- Prioritize multi-year funding for capacity building to build individuals and communities as well as longer-term relationships between funders and those who are funded based on respect and reciprocity.
- Indigenous peoples would take the lead and have full participation in all aspects of the decision-making process.

4.5 Ivey Foundation

<https://www.ivey.org/>

Summary

Framing the problem

- Located in Toronto, Ivey Foundation's current priority is focused on the Economy and Environment Program. The program aims for pragmatic solutions and collaborative efforts with diverse sectors and stakeholders toward resource efficiency, innovation and a sustainable economy.
- Ivey Foundation help provide a vision for a sustainable low carbon economy through knowledge, research, analysis and measurement tools, convening, collaboration and communication.

Role of foundations:

- Ivey focuses specifically on the environment and have seen a growth in groups receiving grants focused on climate change. More foundations in general are moving to the work of climate action. Foundations have a spectrum of roles that they take on, with many charity-focused foundations aiming to elevate the voices of disadvantaged communities.
- Ivey focuses on the role of exploring in-depth at how systems work and bringing together subject matter experts and stakeholders from different sectors, such as business and oil and gas sectors.
- Their approach of working quickly, boldly and decisively allows them to address problems that helps move toward their goals. Their theory of change involves the premise that tangible changes on the ground can show a positive narrative of solutions,

for example, their role in retrofitting hundreds of buildings helps show the tangible change that foundations can have.

Solutions:

- Ivey Foundation strives to develop tangible and pragmatic solutions on concrete climate outcomes with an emphasis on economic and policy levers. A particular expertise of the Ivey Foundation is creating new organizational and institutional capacity to fill research and policy gaps in Canada.
- The Economy and Environment Program Framework is based on three main outcomes that guide their grant-making decisions and their collaborations: pricing, investing and measuring.
- Their collaborative process of working with a range of subject matter experts and sectors helps them provide tools directly to governments and decision-makers, such as designing carbon pricing policies (Ecofiscal Commission) or supporting building efficiency retrofit solutions (Efficiency Canada). Some of their collaborations have included the creation of the [Canadian Institute for Climate Choices](#) with academics from across the country, [the Transition Accelerator](#) focused on solving specific problems from a systems transition perspective (building a hydrogen economy or massive scale electrification and retrofitting), and the [Institute for Sustainable Finance](#) bringing together Canada's top finance academics to address sustainability.
- Specifically, the foundation supports “information gathering and rigorous analysis, organizational capacity for policy research, the creation of solution-based collaborative networks and public communication methods to advance practical outcomes at scale”

- Scope of intervention
 - Ivey Foundation focuses on their Economy and Environment Program in the Canadian context and is located in Toronto. They are active in philanthropic and expert networks in the US the UK and Australia.
- Approach
 - The mission of the Ivey Foundation is to help develop a shared vision for Canada's future by integrating the economy and the environment, working toward resource efficiency, innovation and investment for a sustainable economy. They are striving to build broad business and public engagement to move from *why* a sustainable economy is essential to *how* to achieve wide-scale sustainability through pragmatic solutions. They collaborate beyond their specific granting initiatives, building relationships with diverse sectors and stakeholders to scale their results.
 - They have four program objectives:
 - 1- Paint a compelling, credible vision for a sustainable low carbon economy through collaboration and convening.
 - 2- Build a roadmap to this vision by supporting knowledge, research, analysis and measurement tools.
 - 3- Engage and support champions and new collaborative networks to be messengers.
 - 4- Communicate widely and promote positive solutions and success stories.
- Solutions

- The Program Framework for the Economy and Environment Program explains the Foundations priorities and focus in three program outcome areas as a tool for grant-making decisions, and to help others externally understand how their work may align:
 - 1- Pricing: The program hopes to enhance the understanding and adoption of this primary objective as a mechanism to deal with internal spending on environment across the economy. They hope to help put an accurate pricing on environmental externalities so that different stakeholders can become more sustainable.
 - 2- Investing: This outcome is about encouraging the creation of resource efficient and innovative business and infrastructure by aligning mainstream finance systems with sustainability outcomes.
 - 3- Measuring: This outcome focuses on the systemic change drivers combining the pricing and investing to create a more sustainable and efficient economy.
- Click on this link to read the Program Framework in detail <http://www.ivey.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IVEY-Economy-Environment-Program-Framework-2016.pdf>

International

4.6 ClimateWorks Foundation

<https://www.climateworks.org/>

Summary

Framing the problem & role of foundations

- ClimateWorks is a non-governmental organization global in scope that brings together researchers, strategists, collaborators and grant-makers to address climate action and collective philanthropy.
- Their main perspective is that a stable climate sustains healthy ecosystems, economies and societies. They believe that we need to transform “how we use energy, organize transportation, manage forests and agricultural land, and build the places we live... the scale and urgency of the climate challenge require action from all parts of society.” To them, philanthropy plays a critical role.

Solutions

- To strive for goals of large scale GHG emission reductions and transformations in energy, transportation, forest management, agriculture and building cities, they provide research and insights, support collaboration and convening, manage Philanthropic Investment Portfolios focused on GHG emissions and fund climate change initiatives. They provide a backdrop and strategic guidance to support foundations in building their climate change mitigation capacities through research evidence and investments.
- Their [Global View Portfolio](#) provides foundations with a holistic perspective of the impacts of climate change.
- The [Carbon Transparency Initiative](#) helps track the progress toward a low-carbon future based on benchmarks and sectoral or regional comparisons.

- Scope of intervention
 - ClimateWorks is a non-governmental organization that works on a global scale. They are a team of researchers, strategists, collaborators and grant-makers committed to climate action and collective philanthropy. They have a Global View portfolio that acknowledges how climate change is a global issue with greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation “from one part of the world impacting people and ecosystems everywhere.”

- Approach
 - Their main perspective is that a stable climate sustains healthy ecosystems, economies and societies.
 - The Foundation follows the international goal of keeping the increase in the global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and at the same time making efforts to limit the increase in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius. They follow the path to a total of 35 billion metric tons by 2030 and then cut net-emission to zero.
 - They are striving toward building a prosperous low-carbon world that would come from their ability to reduce global emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases largely stemming from products of fossil fuel use. Increasing access to energy is another priority requiring dual approaches to deal with energy poverty and climate change together by getting sustainable, affordable and low-carbon sources of energy. Most often, the poorest communities are the most impacted by the effects of climate change. Striving for a low carbon future would entail effective public policy, business innovation and public support.
 - This work requires global, systemic transformations, and urgent action and determination. You can find detailed graphics of the challenges of greenhouse gas emissions and areas for reductions here: <https://www.climateworks.org/challenges/>.

- Solutions
 - Find out more about their responses to the challenges of climate change here: <https://www.climateworks.org/response/>
 - To tackle global climate change, their services support funders in five areas:
 - 1- Provide Research & Insights
They provide aggregated and synthesized data and analyses to assist funders in prioritizing, strategizing, adapting and tracking progress for climate philanthropy.
 - 2- Develop Strategies & Portfolios of Philanthropic Investments
Through collaboration, they design portfolios to aim for large-scale greenhouse gas emissions reductions and continue to do assessments to learn and improve. Find out more about their Portfolios here: <https://www.climateworks.org/portfolios/>
 - 3- Facilitate Funder Collaboration & Coordination
One example of this is the Funders Table which brings together informally non-profit foundations to work better together, share and collaborate on climate mitigation opportunities to support grantee communities.
 - 4- Fund Climate Change Initiatives
Their strategic grants support particular transnational initiatives and organizations in important areas across the globe.
 - 5- Marshal Philanthropic Resources

They seek to increase the number of foundations, philanthropic investments and opportunities to enhance investments and connections for working on climate change.

- Read more about their Global View Portfolio which helps provide funders and partners with a holistic view, high impact opportunities and social and economic benefits of climate action and greenhouse gas emissions: <https://www.climateworks.org/global-view/>
- The Carbon Transparency Initiative helps track the progress toward a low-carbon future based on benchmarks and sectoral or regional comparisons: <https://cti.climateworks.org/>
- **Grants database**
(<https://www.climateworks.org/portfolios/grants-database/>)
ClimateWorks strategically provides two types of grants including *core support* through their network of regional partners and *project support* focused on emerging, experimental or developed opportunities. Their grantmaking follows their portfolio priorities and values and are based on regional programs in China, Indonesia, Europe, Latin America and the United States with an emphasis on global and transnational initiatives.

4.7 Thousand Currents

<https://thousandcurrents.org/>

Summary

Framing the problem

- Thousand Currents envisions a world where humanity thrives as a creative force that is in a reciprocal and interdependent relationship with nature and creates loving, equitable, and just societies.
- Mission: Thousand Currents leverages relationships, and financial and intellectual resources worldwide with and in support of grassroots groups and social movements building loving, equitable, and just futures.
- Theory of Change: When grassroots groups and social movements have the relationships and financial and intellectual resources they desire, they are strengthened to transform the world by changing cultures, systems, and institutions towards self-determination, justice and equity around the world.

Role of foundations

- The global climate crisis calls for systemic transformation with many foundations supporting transformative demands for action. However, there continues to be gaps and structural barriers in moving forward on more transformative strategies which require more creative solutions. Relationship-building, in-person support and reaching movements with deep front-line connections to grassroots communities is essential.

Solutions

- Thousand Currents funds grassroots groups and movements led by women, youth and Indigenous peoples in the Global South, believing that those living and working closest to problems have “Grassroots brilliance” to solve the shared and urgent global

challenges. The three main areas of funding are food sovereignty, alternative economic practices and climate justice.

- Thousand Currents uses a long-term and flexible grassroots partnership approach funding efforts in policy advocacy, narrative shift, and community organizing and mobilizing. As a primary focus, Thousand Currents funds intersectional and autonomous grassroots solutions and practices.
- They have three levels of partnership: catalyst, regular long term, and senior partners (see below)

- Scope of intervention:
 - Thousand Currents' grant programs fund grassroots groups and movements led by women, youth and Indigenous peoples in the Global South, including countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America: Brazil, Colombia, Fiji, Guatemala, India, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.
- Approach
 - Thousand Currents champions the visions of grassroots leaders and groups to forge solutions to shared and urgent global challenges. They fund local solutions by those living and working closest to the problems through long-term, flexible funding partnerships.
 - Thousand Currents believes that while women, youth and Indigenous peoples contribute least to the large-scale, global problems like climate change, they are the most impacted by issues of inequality, poverty and fragmented food systems. Their overall goal is to effect systemic change through grassroots movements in the Global South who have the wisdom and the strength to develop holistic and sustainable solutions to our shared global challenges. Rather than solutions that are top-down, "imported" and one-size-fits-all, Thousand Currents strives to change the unequal power dynamics in grantmaking and facilitate learning between the Global North and the Global South through their philanthropic advocacy program.

Thousand Currents' Learning and Evaluation Systems:

Over 35 years Thousand Currents' learning, monitoring, and evaluation practice has captured the nuance and complexity of their partners' work. Thousand Currents' participatory and bottom-up process ensures that their Indigenous and feminist partners shape and measure change appropriate to their context. Their partners implement rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods, including conducting needs assessments and impact mapping to capture behavior changes towards gender equity, women's access to decision-making spaces, policy successes, movement milestones, and agroecology innovations. Thousand Currents' Program Directors gather partners' progress, assessments, and evaluation results through regular communications, in-person partner visits, reports, annual and long-term strategic plans, and quarterly check-in calls. Thousand Currents' evaluation process informs their strategy and allows them to build an aggregate impact metric to share the story of change. As they expand grassroots partnerships, Thousand Currents has built a new Learning and

Innovation team to deepen their commitment to capturing impact robustly.

Thousand Currents is revising its 2014 Theory of Change (See link for older theory of change: <https://thousandcurrents.org/about/#toc>) and will release their new learning and evaluation system later this year.

- Solutions

- The partners of Thousand Currents are funded in three main areas considered the solutions to injustice and inequities (<https://thousandcurrents.org/solutions/>): food sovereignty, reimaging wealth and climate justice.

Grant-making practice

Thousand Currents uses a grassroots partnership and “movement ecosystem” approach in its grantmaking, working in long-term partnerships with local grassroots groups and social movements. Thousand Currents’ partners are part of movement ecosystems, which include and gather more and more individual citizens, campaigners, formal and informal groups, policy analysts, advocacy and litigation groups, civil society organizations, media makers, artists and cultural workers, etc. – taking coordinated steps. As part of larger national, regional, and international community-led movements, Thousand Currents’ partners build momentum in response to specific needs or social conditions and are accountable to the communities that comprise them. Thousand Currents’ partners move systems, structures and institutions toward justice and equity. Efforts may include policy advocacy, narrative shift and community organizing and mobilizing.

Thousand Currents’ partners work across seven subcontinents on food sovereignty, alternative economies, and climate justice. Thousand Currents builds intentionally diversified grantmaking portfolios that represent movement actors of many types, sizes, and strategies, as well as existing capacities. They share insights from our partners to inform wider philanthropic practices.

Partnership model

The partnership model of Thousand Currents is based on three main components:

Long term support: Thousand Currents believes that responsibly supporting partners requires long-term, core, flexible funding financial and non-financial support with mutually established goals and outcomes and a non-prescriptive timeline.

Flexible, core funding: They provide general operating support without conditions or limitations attached to them.

Walk the talk: They strive to be driven by their [values](#) and approach their partnerships with respect, learning, and curiosity. Check out this blog post expanding on nine ways that they “walk the talk”:

<https://thousandcurrents.org/does-thousand-currents-walk-the-talk/>.

Thousand Currents acquires partners through research, referrals and site visits, following a diligent process to select partners that demonstrate accountability, financial soundness and transparency.

Catalyst partners (<https://thousandcurrents.org/catalyst-partners/>)

The beginning of a relationship occurs through a catalyst grant program. This initial grant of collaboration over a short term period helps determine whether the partner will be invited for a long-term partnership. They provide about \$10,000 of unrestricted funding for six to 12 months.

Senior partners (<https://thousandcurrents.org/senior-partners/>)

Partners become eligible for this next phase when they have either met their objectives, outgrown their initial support due to greater size or budget and made strategic shifts where the work is outside of the solution areas. At this stage, the partners support no longer depends on funding but can be defined by referrals to other funding, continued learning exchange and contributions to the broader movement. Learn more about senior partners here:

<https://thousandcurrents.org/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-thousand-currents-senior-partner/>

4.8 Chorus Foundation

<https://chorusfoundation.org/>

Summary

Framing the problem

- The Chorus Foundation supports communities on the front lines of the old, extractive economy toward a just transition and regenerative economy. The framework of just transition includes climate justice as an integrated component.
- Chorus Foundation believes in supporting frontline communities most impacted by climate change using a bottom-up change approach. These communities are the experts on the issues they are facing and the solutions to address them – the people and the communities define and own the process.

Role of foundations

- Foundations have the capacity to address the ecosystem surrounding a just transition, and then understanding how climate justice fits into this transition through philanthropy.
- Foundations have roles in providing funding and investing through a solution-oriented perspective to a just transition and climate change. Funding and investment decisions show a narrative in which foundations have a strong role in demonstrating who they believe has solutions and what types of actions other actors in society can play, such as investing in the divestment movement from fossil fuels. Internally, foundations can implement practices that address the impact of their work on climate change.
- Chorus Foundation has the focus of building power in communities through philanthropy in three areas:
 - political power to offset the influence of fossil fuel and financial sectors
 - economic power to create alternative structures for business and finance

- cultural power to provide a new narrative and vision of what is possible.

Solutions

- Participatory grant-making processes and movement-building at the community level are becoming a greater focus for foundations. Chorus Foundation uses this model to help direct their work, which involves understanding and supporting specific communities on the frontlines who have the expertise to decide where funds should be allocated. Their approach involves understanding who benefits from resource decision-making and allocations and exploring who is making the decisions, and what else is impacted by these decisions. However, building relationships and investing in strengthening networks among grantees can take a large amount of time, and it can be challenging to communicate the value of the work beyond the organization and the grantees.
- They have committed to working with specific areas closest to the issues, known as *Focus Communities* to fully use their funding by 2024. These Focus Communities include Eastern Kentucky, Alaska, Buffalo, New York, and Richmond, California. Focus communities have ownership over their own grant-making process with decisions being made at the community level, and mediation and support from the foundation.
- The foundation seeks to support grantees in fostering a sense of community across locations and recognizing their place in movements across the globe. They support them in building trans-local relationships through site visits, trainings and collaboration.
- The operations of their activities and their grant-making processes are flexible and include a wide range of options based on what needs to be supported in the communities. Anchor Organizations within the Focus Communities receive long-term, unrestricted funding commitments. They also fund a small number of movement organizations who contribute to a national movement.
- Internally, they use a Mission-Related Investments approach. They apply their social change mission to their financial investments by ensuring they are free of any fossil fuel investments and prioritize investments in local communities.

- Scope of intervention:
 - The Chorus Foundation supports communities on the front lines of the old, extractive economy who support a just transition to a regenerative economy in the United States. The communities on the front lines are building “new bases of political, economic, and cultural power for systemic change.”
- Approach
 - They hope to build an economy where all people can find meaningful work, contribute to an environment where everyone has access to clean air, clean water, stable climate and ability to have a say in a democracy.
 - They have four main beliefs that guide their work:
 - 1- The climate crisis is embedded in a larger ecological crisis, which is linked within other political and economic systems. Communities of colour and working class communities are the ones on the front lines of the crises and are already experiencing disproportionate impacts.
 - 2- In response, we must reclaim our democracy and move from an extractive economy to one that is restorative for people, place and plant. The economic

alternatives required are already possible, but they are unsung and under-resourced.

3- Eliminating the fossil fuel industry and its impact on democracy is an essential step in the process. This includes accelerating the end of extraction, export and the use of fossil fuels. While this transition is inevitable, it is hard work and should be timely and just.

4- Addressing the climate crisis requires a broad-based social movement that demands deep systemic change. The leadership of local communities across the country is essential to a collective future that everyone wants to see.

- Solutions

- Their grant programs focus on supporting organizations on the frontlines of the old extractive economy to build power in their communities in three areas: political power to offset the influence of fossil fuel and financial sectors, economic power to create alternative structures for business and finance; cultural power to provide a new narrative and vision of what is possible.
- The Foundation has already committed to working with specific areas closest to the issues, known as *Focus Communities* to fully use their funding by 2024. These Focus Communities include Eastern Kentucky; Alaska; Buffalo, New York; and Richmond, California.
- Anchor Organizations within the Focus Communities receive long-term, unrestricted funding commitments that are focused on the principles of shared economic prosperity, democratic governance and ownership and climate and environmental justice.
- They also fund a small number of movement support organizations and networks, including Climate Justice Alliance and Movement Generation who contribute to a national movement.

Mission-Related Investments Approach:

- They have decided to apply their social change mission to their financial investments by ensuring they are free of any fossil fuel investments, and prioritizing investments in local communities. They strive to invest in clean alternatives that benefit many people over industries that generate wealth for the few. They prioritize social returns that are sustainable over endless financial growth, which has included 4\$ million in solar and clean energy, and a small number of companies toward a new economy, such as Ethical Electric, Seventh Generation and the Working World.

CONCLUSION: INSIGHTS AND QUESTIONS RAISED

In this first phase in a series of research projects, PhiLab, with feedback from philanthropic partners, present the findings of an exploratory analysis of nine case examples, relevant literature and key informant interviews to contribute to a national conversation around climate change efforts and highlight key practical strategies among grantmaking foundations.

The report aims to assist grantmaking foundations, whether they are already explicitly working on climate change or are exploring how to frame the issue in their work, in identifying *why* and *how* they may prioritize and take action on climate change.

Foundations have capacities to make large investments in public and private goods and services, provide significant funding to a wide range of social and environmental issues, and have flexible accountability toward public policy, research, business, innovation and community organizations (Reich, 2016).

Dialogue, collaboration and acceptance of a need for change has already been happening, with some foundations having decades of experience working on these issues (e.g. Thousand Currents and McConnell Foundation). While the talk of deep, transformative change and bold action is there, “walking the talk” is another story. Foundations that have been mobilizing and collaborating more deeply in recent years have a role to play in sharing these practices and pushing the agenda forward for climate action and a just transition.

Approaches of foundations are very diverse and may be guided by visions that range from free markets and individual prosperity to system transformation and Indigenous sovereignty. Many foundations frame climate issues around their programs, such as programs focused on conservation or nature-based solutions. Foundations may explicitly name climate change in the mission or have dedicated programs or grants for climate change or other environmental priorities.

However, the shift to support climate justice through bold action, policy influence, grassroots mobilization and community solutions is lagging behind the real need for deep systemic change. Narratives largely focus on technology advancement, pricing and policy change from “within” the institutions, rather than the community and grassroots change.

This report provides a starting point for foundations to explore how they see their work in the narratives of framing the problem of climate change, the strategies for change and the solutions. These interrelated frames and possibilities for climate action can be mapped from the individual to practice/ organizational to the broader systems and policy levels. The main insights and questions raised below summarize these narratives and provide steps forward for foundations to contribute to the conversation around climate change and philanthropy and take a role in the strategies for change.

Recognize, mobilize and collaborate on diverse and multi-faceted approaches

- **The interrelated problems of climate change require that foundations engage in multi-faceted approaches (strategies?) with mobilization and collaboration within the philanthropy sector and across different sectors.** It is clear that framing the problem, strategies for change and tactics of foundations in climate action are very diverse. The framing of the problem of climate change ranges from individual behaviours to the most common framing of GHG emissions from human activity that can be linked to specific sectors. Many foundations frame climate issues around their programs, such as programs focused on conservation or nature-based solutions.
- **Stemming from framing the problems, foundations can take action on climate change with different approaches guiding their strategies for change, such as strategy or programming.** These approaches may be guided by visions that range from free markets and individual prosperity to system transformation and Indigenous sovereignty. Foundations may explicitly name climate change in the mission or have dedicated programs or grants for climate change or other environmental priorities. There is an ongoing challenge to navigate and prioritize the scale, innovations, capacities,

geographic reach, and measurability of these approaches. However, foundations such as ClimateWorks and Environment Funders Canada (EFC) provide support and evidence to strategize and collaborate on climate change goals.

- **These strategies for change go hand-in-hand and should not be considered in silo.** These connected strategies can be viewed from an ecosystem perspective: the individual level of shifting attitudes and behaviours, to public mobilization, engagement and grassroots efforts, to the broader level of policy and systems change. These strategies for change inform a wide range of programming and investment options coming from internal and external tactics.
- **Collaborative efforts are key.** The relatively small number of foundations in Canada that engage in climate action have been building momentum in collaborative efforts, showing the possibilities of peer learning, strategic coordination and building from existing practices and policies. For example, foundations can identify and upscale innovative low-carbon and other economic solutions, following examples such as the [Low Carbon Cities Canada Initiative](#) spearheaded by Trotter Foundation.

Share and uplift champions of bold action, innovations and systemic change

- **There is a shift happening to support climate action through bold action, policy influence, grassroots mobilization and community solutions but this shift is lagging behind the real need for deep systemic change.** There is a call by many stakeholders to support grassroots movements and community infrastructure to resist and transform the systems that support climate change and create sustainable alternatives. Narratives largely focus on technology advancement, pricing and policy change from “within” the institutions, rather than community and grassroots change. While foundations can have a role through various strategies and levels of change, most narratives are still centred on marginal reform rather than making the leap to transformation and systems change with active support. Investing in deep, flexible, barrier-free and long-term relationships with these grassroots movements, and those most impacted by climate change, is identified as an emergent priority and area of growth for climate philanthropy.
- **Is the sector ready to not only talk about bold action, but make the shift to challenge and dismantle historical power dynamics between philanthropic funders and grassroots communities?** How can the sector measure and evaluate programs that are more grassroots and community-oriented which may not fit within the common theories of change? There are foundations directly partnering and collaborating with grassroots groups showing the capacities to engage and co-create these frameworks, such as [Tides Canada’s Northern Program](#). [Coast Funds](#), a regional collaboration between government, industries and First Nations communities in the Great Bear Rainforest and Haida Gwaii areas of British Columbia shows the possibilities of funding for a conservation economy directly for and by First Nation communities based on their communities’ cultural, social and economic well-being outcomes.
- **How do we prioritize the experiences and voices of those most impacted by the consequences of climate change?** Often these are communities who experience poverty, are people of colour, working class, are women and Indigenous peoples. How do we build from their strengths, resurgence and self-determination in protecting the lands and waters, and reclaiming their community power and cultures? Several formal

initiatives and examples of embedding these missions and frameworks exist such as [McConnell Foundations Reconciliation Initiative](#) which aims for a reconciliation economy toward closing the gap in socio-economic outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

- **Leveraging existing approaches and champions of change in their investments and grant-making has been building, and can be an immediate step to scale and collaborate more effectively on climate action goals.** For example, Trottier Foundation teamed up with C40 Cities and Suzuki and 5 other foundations to help the City of Montreal develop their carbon neutral 2050 Climate Action Plan. Trottier Foundation strives to address barriers that smaller community groups may face, such as funding to carry out essential movement-building and mobilization. They hope to create a mobilization hub to provide knowledge transfer and mentor and coach these groups to provide solutions to the barrier of primarily registered charities accessing grants.

Analyse internal and external options and strategies for climate action

- **A climate approach can be embedded in internal policies and processes, such as impact investments, while applying the external tactics from contributing to shifting the narrative of climate action to business innovation.** Foundations may be explicitly working for environmental and social change but have a range of investments in institutions or sectors that actively deny or work against climate justice and action. Impact investment and socially responsible investments are a few frameworks designed to mitigate these challenges with collaboratives such as [SHARE](#)'s Foundation Investing 2.0 learning program supporting trustees, board members, and staff of foundations in building capacity to engage more in impact and responsible investing.
- **Foundations can continue finding innovative and creative ways to overcome barriers that limit the allocations and structure of funds and investments.** Foundations' funding restrictions can create barriers to climate initiatives, especially grassroots movements and community initiatives. Providing funding to only registered charities or qualified donees based on financial or infrastructure capacity is a major identified barrier. Foundations partner with intermediaries who can deliver the support directly within their own communities, such as 'Thousand Currents' strategy of having grassroots initiatives lead and partner on the most relevant local climate issues.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Figures

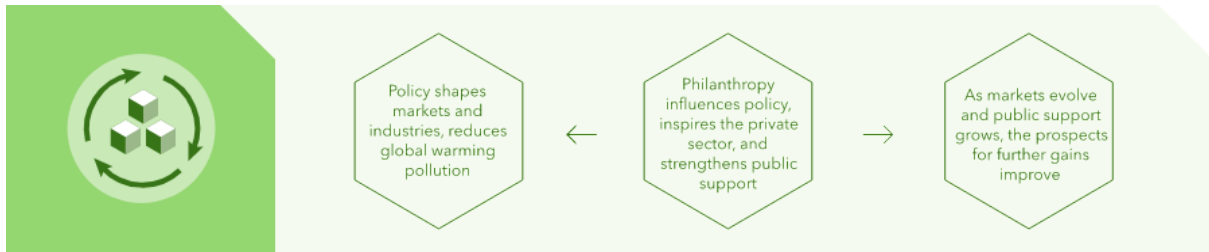


Figure 1: ClimateWorks Foundation Theory of Change. Source: ClimateWorks Foundation (2020)

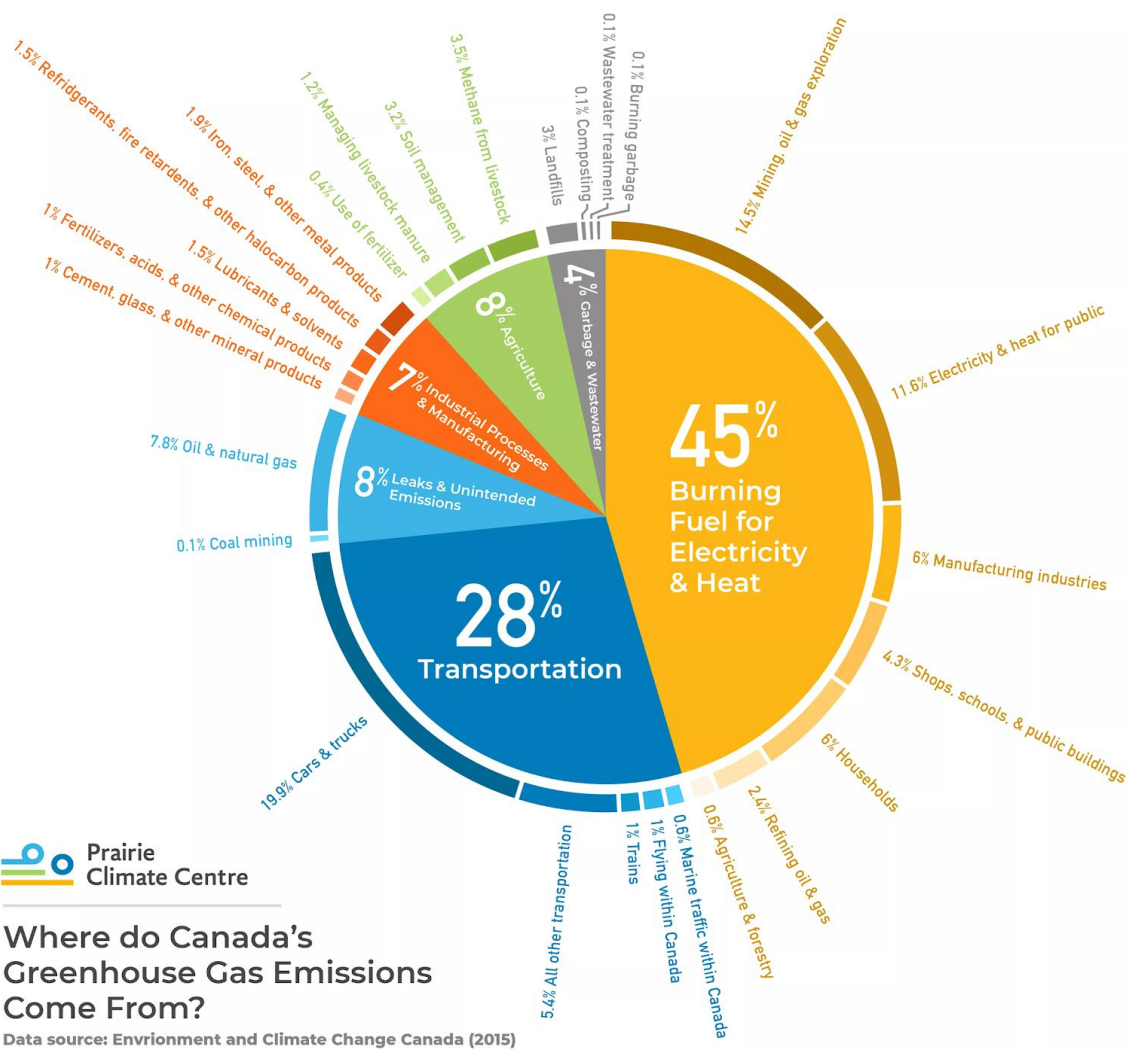


Figure 2: Where do Canada's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Come From? Source: Prairie Climate Centre (2020)

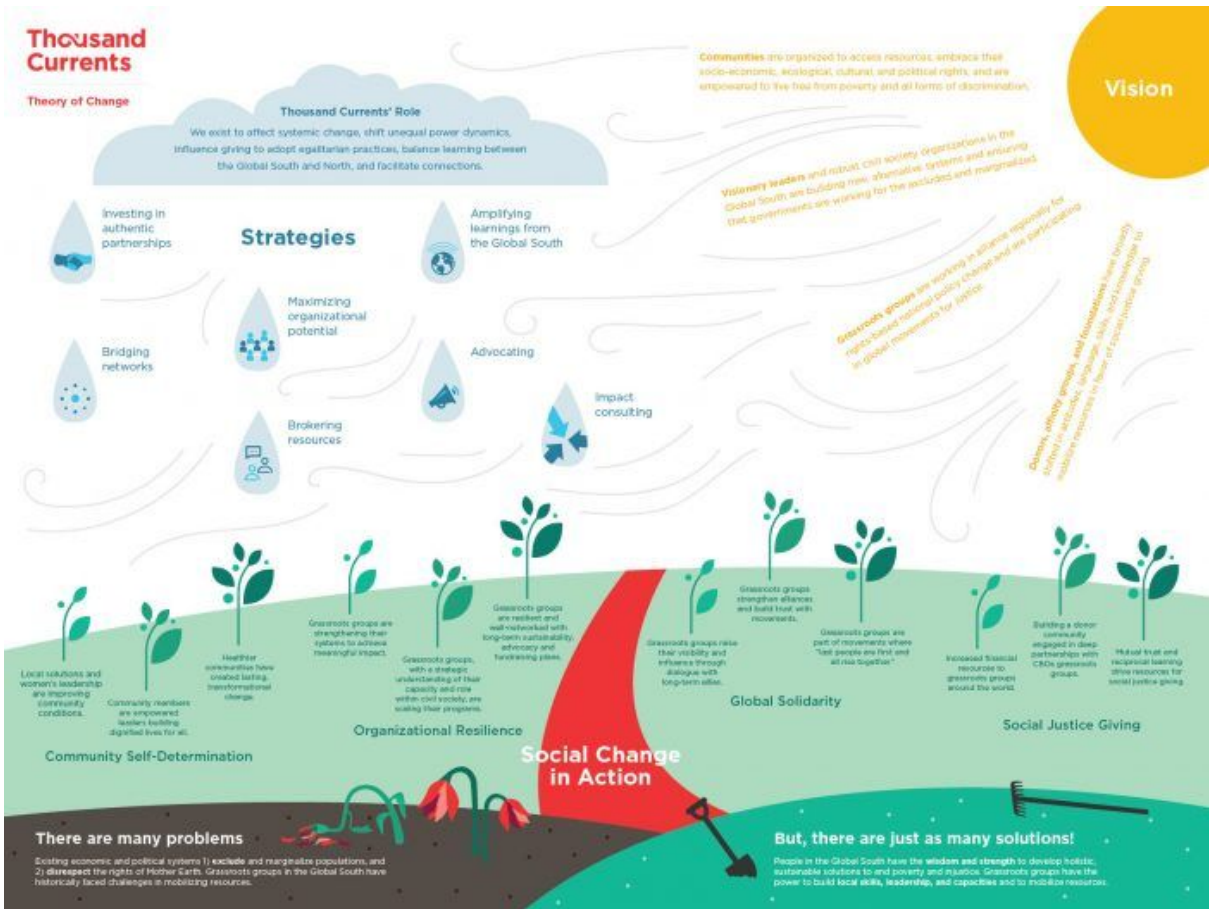


Figure 3: Thousand Currents Theory of Change. Source: Thousand Currents (2020)

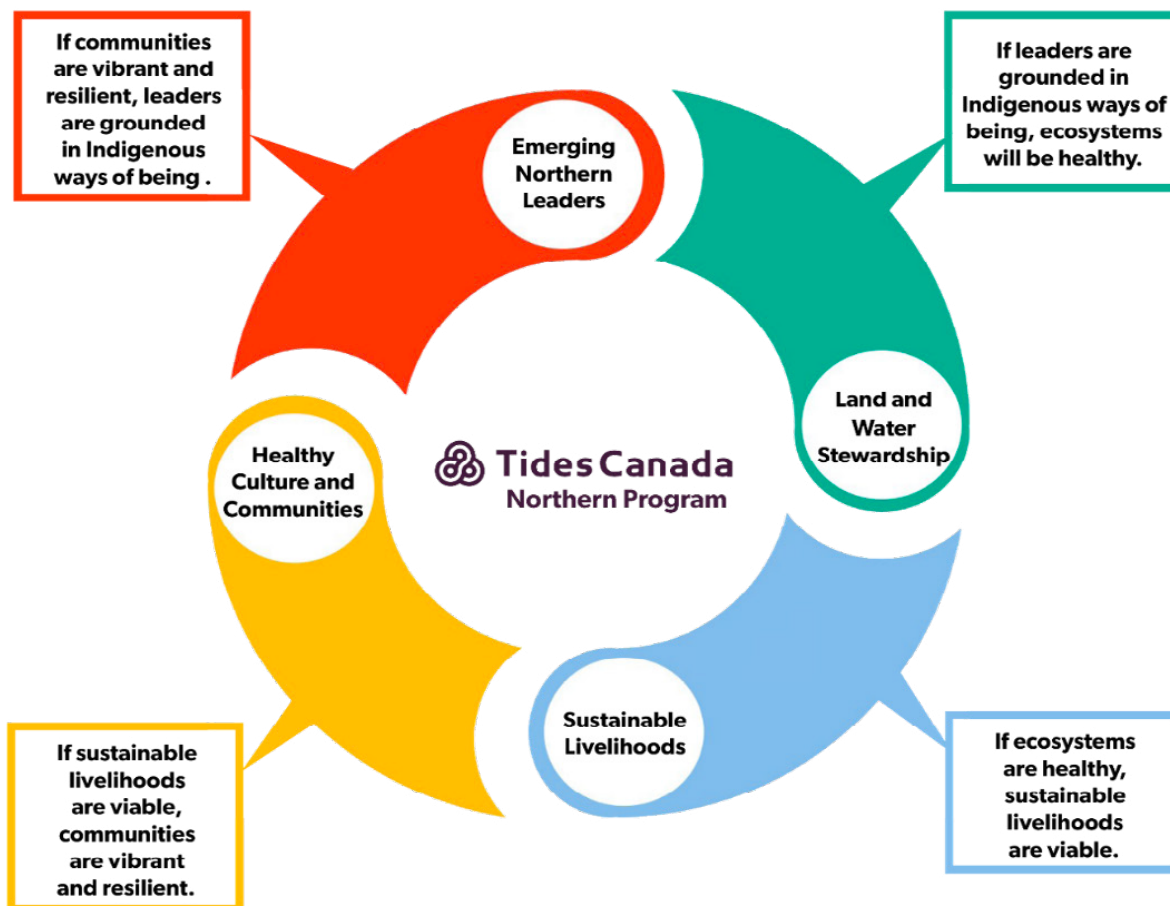


Figure 4: Northern Program Theory diagram. Source: Tides Canada. (n.d.).

