

What is the funder learning community on women and the environment (FLC)?

In 2019, Global Greengrants Fund, Prospera INWF, the Ford Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation invited 25 funder allies as a peer-led group to learn about substantive ways in which environmental and gender justice intersect. Through monthly calls and other engagement opportunities, members deepen their knowledge about the lived experience of Indigenous women, young, feminist climate activists, and the ways women are designing and leading gender-just climate initiatives.

The FLC is a community of practice that brings together a diverse group of environmental, human rights, and women's rights funders who:

- Engage in deep learning to support and strengthen informed and intentional grantmaking strategy development
- Participate in exchanges between funders, activists, communities, organizations, and institutions across fields and philanthropic siloes
- Build peer-to-peer cross-institutional relationships, and trust
- Share ideas, strategies, grapple with questions, and support each other
- Foster cross-programmatic and cross-institutional collaborations
- Imagine and implement new forms of philanthropic practice

Lessons from the frontlines

Indigenous women, women environmental defenders, and young, feminist, climate activists are disrupting the dominant narratives that portray women and historically marginalized communities as victims and actors without agency. The FLC learned about ways in which women, girls, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community are leading holistic, intersectional movements and devising innovative strategies to confront climate change.

Key takeaways include the following:



- Building resilient ecosystems requires localized decision-making power and processes that account for different stakeholder perspectives.
- Context and location matter. Collaborating with partners who have contextual knowledge and local lived experience is critical.
- Successful strategies for advancing gender, environmental and climate justice require cross-sector collaboration, approaches, and analyses.
- More resources are needed for movement building. This includes funding alliances, network strengthening, and learning exchanges.
- Learning how to fund movement building and reflect on the role funders can play in facilitating networks.



Key takeaways:

1• Create mutual accountability mechanisms

Funders need to model and mirror commitments to justice and equity demanded of community partners.

2• Challenge risk

Equitable and just grantmaking requires challenging and changing traditional notions of “risk” and investing in grassroots women-led initiatives from the Global South

3• Prioritize relationships

Challenge historic power dynamics and invest time with grantee partners to cultivate trust, open communication, mutual interest, and knowledge exchange.

4• Support legal strategies

Provide training, advocacy, and litigation support for women and youth defending rights and territory. Fund efforts and support policy improvements for social and economic security.

5• Fund systemic change

Identify root causes of inequitable structures and systems: land access and control, economic resources, economic empowerment, and knowledge exchange; then support long and mid-term strategies for transformative change.

6• Change MEL reporting

Provide flexible timelines, adapt metrics that recognize different ways systemic change happens, and invest in participatory evaluation practices.

7• Foster cross-movement collaboration

Relationships across sectors, foundations, and movements within the gender and environmental justice fields is necessary to diversify leadership capacity and ensure that historically marginalized women and youth have access to decision-making spaces.

8• Incorporate approaches to end violence against women in gender and environmental justice funding

Allocate resources for self and collective care (mental, physical, childcare) and wellbeing of front-line activists, especially women environmental defenders.

Engage:

Check out the resource hub our community has developed on

www.flac-environmentgender.com

For more information, contact Ursula Miniszewski, Director of Gender and Equity, Global Greengrants Fund, ursula@greengrants.org.

Why focus on women & environment?

Less than 0.1% of all foundation funding focused explicitly on women and the environment.

Members of the FLC recognize that bridging this funding gap is a necessary step for those committed to ensuring a healthy and equitable world for all.

The FLC provides members with a space to support each other to recognize and fill gaps in knowledge, review assumptions, revise methods, and put learning into practice.

“Together, we’re challenging ourselves and our institutions to push the limits of what philanthropy can do and expand the thinking around who it can do it with”

Who is the FLC?

The FLC represents a diverse range of ages, experience-levels, and regional perspectives. What participants all have in common is a commitment to intersectional, gender-just environmental and climate grantmaking.

Both ENDS	Central American Women’s Fund
Climate Justice Resilience Fund	Climate and Land Use Alliance
Ford Foundation	Foundation for a Just Society
FRIDA	Global Greengrants Fund
Kendeda Fund	MacArthur Foundation
Margaret A Cargill Philanthropies	Open Society Foundation
Packard Foundation	Prospera INWF
Walton Family Foundation	Wellspring Philanthropic Fund