
EDGE FUNDERS ALLIANCE EUROPE



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Director

Addressing climate change as a systemic question

Founded in the US in 2012, EDGE (Engaged Donors for Global Equity) Funders Alliance is a global network of foundations and individual philanthropists with more than 50 members each in Europe and the US as well as additional members around the globe. EDGE Funders Alliance Europe was founded in 2015.

At EDGE we believe that equity and justice are critical to advancing sustainable, global wellbeing. We therefore work to increase awareness and understanding of the interconnected economic, environmental and social crises threatening our future, and to mobilise resources for systemic alternatives that support justice, equity and the wellbeing of the planet. We are united by the belief that it is necessary for all organisations to leave their topic-focused silos and to inspire each other to build a community that develops and promotes a just transition for systemic change. Only through collaboration can we transform current extractive systems and effectively tackle the climate crisis.

Our approach stems from the anti-globalisation movement which in the 1990s opposed neoliberal economic integration, and grassroots supporting organizations. In Europe it gained momentum in the context of the 2015 COP21 in Paris where we formed a European alliance of foundations, today EDGE Funders Alliance Europe.

EDGE Funders Alliance works closely with social movements and activists to ensure that no one is left behind. We believe that we can manage a just transition only if we give a voice to people on the ground and enable them to be part of the discussion – usually, those who must implement solutions will understand them best.

One initiative we are very proud of is FundAction. This highly participative fund is managed completely by activists and members of social movements. The only representative of a foundation in the fund's "facilitation group" is not even entitled to vote – and the system works well.

To advance awareness around climate change among other funders, EDGE Europe has been involved in the discussion around the Association of Charitable Foundation's Climate Pledge.

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It is also supporting efforts to launch a climate initiative through the PEX (Philanthropy Europe Networks) Community, formed in January 2020 by leaders and experts from national, regional and European philanthropy networks. We at EDGE Europe feel that funders can no longer ignore issues of justice including climate change.

Recommendations for funders

- Regardless of your purpose, a good way for foundations and philanthropists to start engaging with climate change is to look at your investments. Divesting from fossil fuels and carbon-intensive industries and investing in sustainable, climate-friendly solutions can have a huge impact.
 - Climate change cannot be discussed solely from a technical perspective since it is rooted in our social and democratic systems. Helping to link climate change with economic and social issues could make a valuable contribution to preparing for a sustainable future.
 - The danger and opportunities of climate change need to be understood throughout society. Grassroots movements have access to individuals, so supporting them can play a crucial role in promoting a change in mindset around climate.
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