
SCHÖPFLIN STIFTUNG



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Integrating climate change into our work to create a vibrant democracy

Interview with, and TFounded in 2001 and based in Lörrach, Schöpflin Stiftung's overarching goal is to help create a vibrant democracy. Although climate change is not an explicit funding area, since last year we have been increasingly addressing the issue. In 2019 climate change was the topic of our annual "Forum for the Future". This is a one-day conference bringing together people from different walks of life in order to strengthen the culture of participation and civil society involvement in Lörrach. The forum resulted in various climate-related projects. In cooperation with the city of Lörrach, we have also established a roundtable on climate change to coordinate civic projects and public activities in the field and initiated climate projects in schools.

We are currently considering how we can integrate climate change more closely into our work without compromising our overall objective. As a first step we analysed our grant portfolio and learned that about a third of our current grantees are already addressing climate issues. For example, Kiron Higher Education (www.kiron.ngo) is addressing climate migration, and the non-profit newsroom CORRECTIV has established an editorial office on climate issues (www.correctiv.org). We are now consulting with our program officers to see which of our funding areas and programmes could address climate change more.

At the same time we are considering integrating food systems, with a focus on agriculture and nutrition, as a funding topic, and getting more involved in the Omega Resilience Funders Network. This is a group of European and US funders looking for systemic answers to global challenges affecting people's and planetary health and wellbeing. We are also working towards becoming carbon-neutral in our own operations by the end of 2020.

The Fridays For Future movement certainly triggered our involvement in climate issues. We supported the movement at an early stage as it fits well

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with the way we work as a foundation. We strongly believe in the power of bottom-up people's movements to initiate change.

A lot of work remains to be done, of course. We need to communicate through our website our ambitions for the future. One challenge with climate change is that we must get active before we directly feel the impacts. To date most of us are addressing only those problems that are clearly visible. Furthermore, climate change has long been considered an issue of science. To get more funders involved, we need to focus more on the social aspects and appeal to people's emotions.

Recommendations for funders

- An internal portfolio analysis is a helpful first step to detect interconnections between climate change and other issues and where these can be strengthened.
- Support civic movements: we are convinced that change only happens bottom up, when the citizens of a society put pressure on the government.
- Help to make the urgency of tackling climate change more tangible by connecting the scientific facts to pictures and emotions. Learning journeys to places where climate change can already be seen and felt are a good tool because pictures and emotions move people, facts do not.