

# Transforming Climate Finance Through A Black Liberation Lens

A Framework for Global Action



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# Executive Summary

## Current State of Affairs

We all know where we are. Globally, 15 national heat records have been broken since the beginning of 2024. According to recent climate data, each year breaks the previous year's heat record, with 2024 showing a particularly significant increase in global temperatures, marking the hottest year on record with several months consecutively setting new heat records. This trend is attributed to ongoing climate change. These consecutive record-breaking temperatures yield deadly heat waves across the Global South, unprecedented flooding on the African continent from Kenya to Libya, shifts in agricultural yields that dry up crops in Central and South America and in Sub Saharan Africa, catastrophic storms in North America and in the Pacific, and much more. These devastating climate impacts disproportionately affect African and Afro-descendant communities globally. The inequity is particularly stark given that African and Afro-descendant nations and communities are amongst the populations who bear the least responsibility for climate change, yet face its worst impacts.

Meanwhile efforts to enact the critical transition away from the fossil fuel economy continue to be met with resistance by industrialized nations and their industry puppet masters, leaving us far short of the emissions reduction goals that will be necessary to curb the progress of climate change.

## Climate Finance Mechanisms Fail to Meet the Magnitude of the Necessary Transition

Investments in climate finance remain grossly under-resourced and misspent on false solutions led by the very entities that are committed to maintaining the status quo. This reality has exposed the urgent need to transform climate finance. We firmly assert that this transformation must be through a lens of Black Liberation. This is because of the disproportionate impact on Indigenous nations and communities as well as African and Afro Descendant nations and communities, but also because these communities and cultures have long held resonant relationships with the earth and the land. These relationships model how to thrive in harmony with the regenerative abundance the ecosystem offers us, versus our current path of extraction and harm, which the earth is actively resisting—as manifested by climate change.

The moral and practical imperative for transforming climate finance is clear: those most responsible for the climate crisis must resource both adaptation efforts and the transition to a new energy economy in the communities and nations facing its greatest impacts.

## Reimagining Climate Finance

We call for a fundamental reimagination of how climate finance operates. In this paper, we present a comprehensive framework for transformation, building on successful models from across the African diaspora while offering practical pathways for implementation that can be advanced during these negotiations and beyond.

Our analysis reveals that while traditional climate finance continues to reproduce colonial patterns of extraction and exclusion, innovative approaches are emerging across the African diaspora that combine traditional wisdom with modern innovation. Existing initiatives

demonstrate that alternative approaches are not only possible but already developing. From community-controlled [green banks in Ghana](#), to [agroecological projects in Brazil's Quilombola communities](#) that protect forests while strengthening traditional land rights, these real examples show how centering Black Liberation in climate finance creates pathways to a more just and sustainable future.

To illustrate how these emerging approaches could be scaled and enhanced, we present several models for transformative climate finance. These include conceptual frameworks for comprehensive regional coordination, integrated technological platforms, and new institutional structures. While these models are illustrative, they build directly upon documented successes and demonstrated capabilities across the African diaspora.

Our framework builds on three core innovations. First, a hypothetical Community-Controlled Financial Architecture, exemplified by the illustrative Pan African Climate Finance Alliance model, which integrates traditional governance with modern tools while maintaining democratic control over resources and ensuring cultural preservation. Second, Cross-Border Solidarity Networks exemplified by a Pan-African Climate Finance Alliance illustrative model, which enables local autonomy with global coordination and shared resources. Third, technology, if wielded by the community and guided by principles of justice and equity, can serve liberation goals by amplifying traditional practices through digital tools, while maintaining community control over data and systems.

## From Vision to Action

Our strategic recommendations target action at multiple scales. At the international level, we call for creating direct access mechanisms for community-controlled funds and reforming governance structures to center affected communities. For national governments, we outline pathways to establish legal frameworks protecting community finance while supporting alternative financial institutions. At the local level, we detail how participatory oversight mechanisms and community-controlled projects demonstrate new possibilities.

The implementation pathway we propose begins with immediate actions, followed by medium-term development (2025-2027) scaling successful models while introducing new mechanisms and transforming policy, and long-term transformation (2027-2030) achieving systemic change. Through this coordinated approach, we aim to place at least \$1 trillion under democratic community control by 2030, establish a robust network of community-controlled climate funds across the Global South, as well as frontline communities in the Global North, and fundamentally transform the international climate finance architecture.

To achieve a vision of transformational climate finance through a Black Liberation lens, we assert the necessity of adhering to 10 critical mandates, which will serve as the framework for this paper:

- I. Fundamentally Reimagine Climate Finance Through a Black Liberation Lens
- II. Center Historical Responsibility and Reparative Justice
- III. Honor Traditional Knowledge Systems
- IV. Build Black-Led Autonomous Financial Infrastructure
- V. Protect Cultural Sovereignty
- VI. Advance Democratic and Participatory Governance
- VII. Measure Success Holistically
- VIII. Follow Global South Leadership
- IX. Transform International Climate Finance Architecture
- X. Resource Movement-Building

As recent political shifts in major economies demonstrate, including the recent U.S. presidential election, the imperative for building autonomous, community-controlled financial infrastructure is increasingly urgent. The pathways outlined in this paper offer practical steps toward this vision, maintaining unwavering commitment to Black Liberation principles.

## **A Call for Unified, Audacious Ambition and Action**

The time for transforming climate finance is now. Real opportunities for advancing this agenda exist in current UN processes and mechanisms. The Green Climate Fund's Enhanced Direct Access programs demonstrate how international climate funds can enhance community control. The Adaptation Fund's pioneering work with National Implementing Entities shows pathways for strengthening country ownership. The Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility provides tested models for getting resources directly to communities.

Building on these existing entry points, we envision more comprehensive transformation through coordinated action. Our illustrative models demonstrate how current achievements could be scaled and enhanced through new institutional forms and governance approaches. We invite stakeholders across the climate finance ecosystem to join in building upon demonstrated successes while advancing more fundamental transformation.

# Introduction: The Imperative for Black Liberation in Climate Finance

## Global Context and A Global Crisis

As the world confronts unprecedented climate challenges, the global climate crisis has laid bare the deep inequities in who bears its costs and who shapes the response. Recent events illuminate this reality:

- The 2023 and 2024 Mediterranean and Maui fires that devastated North African and North American communities
- Unprecedented flooding in Libya claiming over 11,000 lives
- Deadly heat waves in U.S. urban centers
- Sustained drought across the Sahel threatening millions
- Record-breaking heat waves disproportionately impacting urban communities across the Global South

These impacts are not merely natural disasters but the predictable outcomes of systems that have consistently sacrificed Black, Indigenous, and Global South communities in pursuit of extractive economic growth (Táíwò, 2024, p. 3; Aji, 2021, p. 230). This crisis has exposed and intensified historical patterns of extraction and exploitation that connect the experiences of African peoples across the globe. From: mineral extraction in the Democratic Republic of Congo powering the “clean energy” transition, to petrochemical corridors in Louisiana poisoning historic Black communities, to displacement of Indigenous communities for carbon offset projects in Kenya –the logic of sacrifice zones and extractive economics continues to shape who bears the costs and who reaps the benefits of climate-related financial flows.

## Frontline Community Leadership Designs the Foundation for Climate Finance

Consultative processes across the globe have resulted in guiding principles which serve as the foundation upon which to build this framework and set of recommendations. Examples include:

- Bali Principles of Climate Justice
- The Black Panther Party 10 Point Program
- Bridgetown Initiative
- Caricom Ten Point Plan for Reparative Justice
- Cochabamba People’s Agreement
- Indigenous Principles of Just Transition
- Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing
- Pan African Climate Justice Alliance—Multiple Policy Platforms
- The Principles of Environmental Justice
- Taproot Earth—Global Climate Reparations Assembly Working Statement

## Ten Core Mandates for Transformational Climate Finance Through a Black Liberation Lens

Effectively addressing the climate crisis requires fundamentally transforming how we approach climate finance through a Black Liberation lens. This is not merely about inclusion or representation—it is about recognizing that the wisdom, leadership, and self-determination of Black communities are essential to building climate resilient futures that work for everyone. This paper employs a dual methodology to envision transformation in climate finance. First, we examine documented initiatives and achievements that demonstrate successful elements of community-controlled climate finance. Then, building upon these real examples, we present illustrative models that show how these proven approaches could be scaled and enhanced into more comprehensive systems for transformation. This combination of existing evidence and aspirational vision helps us understand both what is already possible and what could be achieved through coordinated action.

Our comprehensive framework, presented as “Ten Core Mandates for Transformational Climate Finance Through a Black Liberation Lens,” calls for audacious action towards a just and equitable climate finance system. These mandates, grounded in the principles of Black Liberation, provide a roadmap for reshaping the climate finance landscape to prioritize the needs, rights, and leadership of frontline communities. By implementing these mandates, we can work towards a future where climate finance serves as a tool for empowerment, resilience, and regeneration, rather than perpetuating historical inequities and power imbalances.



**Fig 1. Traditional and Modern Climate Finance Systems: Bridging Ancestral Wisdom with Contemporary Innovation. This illustration represents the integration of traditional African economic practices with contemporary financial mechanisms, showing how ancestral wisdom guides modern innovation in climate finance.**

## Mandate I: Fundamentally Reimagine Climate Finance Through a Black Liberation Lens



**OVERVIEW:** Fundamentally reimagine climate finance through a Black Liberation lens

Reimagining climate finance through a Black Liberation lens requires a deep understanding of the historical context and future possibilities of climate action. It means recognizing that the current climate finance system is rooted in centuries of colonial exploitation, racial oppression, and economic extraction, which have disproportionately burdened Black communities while benefiting those in power. To truly transform this system, we must center the voices, experiences, and leadership of these communities, and work towards a future where their wisdom, resilience, and self-determination are valued and upheld.

This reimagining also requires connecting local struggles to global systems of oppression and resistance. The impacts of climate change are felt most acutely at the local level, but they are driven by global structures of inequality and injustice. By linking place-based solutions to transnational movements for climate justice, we can build the collective power needed to transform these structures and advance a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Finally, reimagining climate finance through a Black Liberation lens means prioritizing democratic control and collective benefit over private profit and individual gain. It means creating financial mechanisms and institutions that are accountable to the communities they serve, and that prioritize the well-being of people and planet over the accumulation of wealth. By building models of cooperative economics, community ownership, and participatory governance, we can demonstrate that another way is possible—one that values life, labor, and land as sacred, and that puts the needs of the many before the profits of the few.



These principles are deeply rooted in African economic philosophies and practices, such as Ubuntu economics, which emphasizes reciprocity and collective well-being, and Ujamaa, which promotes cooperative development and self-reliance. They are also reflected in traditional resource management systems across the continent, which have long prioritized ecological stewardship and intergenerational responsibility over short-term gain.

Expansively reimagining climate finance through a Black Liberation lens requires several tenets:

- I. Grounding in African Economic Thought
- II. Future Visioning Centered by Historical Understanding
- III. Connecting Local and Global Struggles
- IV. Prioritizing Democratic Control and Collective Benefit

Liberation-centered climate finance draws from deep traditions of African economic philosophy and practice. These traditions offer sophisticated frameworks for understanding collective wealth, ecological stewardship, and intergenerational responsibility that stand in stark contrast to extractive capitalist models.

### Principles in Action:

To demonstrate how these principles could be operationalized, we present the Pan-African Climate Finance Alliance (PACFA) as an illustrative model. This conceptual framework shows how climate finance could be fundamentally reimagined by integrating traditional African governance practices with modern financial tools. While PACFA is a hypothetical example, it draws inspiration from successful regional initiatives across Africa that demonstrate elements of this transformation. Such a model would prioritize community ownership and democratic decision-making, showing how climate finance systems could be restructured to serve liberation goals. This vision helps us understand how theoretical principles could be translated into concrete institutional forms that advance genuine transformation in climate finance.

1. **Ubuntu Economics:** The South African principle of “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” (a person is a person through other persons) provides a framework for economic relationships based on reciprocity and collective wellbeing (Ramose, 2020; Mangaliso, 2024).
2. **Ujamaa:** The Tanzanian concept of cooperative economics offers models for community-controlled development (Nyerere, 2018; Ibhawoh and Dibua, 2023).
3. **Traditional Resource Management:** West African systems of ecological stewardship demonstrate sophisticated approaches to balancing human needs with environmental protection (Diallo, 2023; Agrawal, 2024).

The climate finance landscape cannot be understood without grappling with the historical legacies that have shaped it. The extractive patterns we see today—from the mineral supply chains fueling the “clean energy” transition to the concentration of climate investment in the Global North—are direct outgrowths of colonial economies that treated Black and Indigenous communities, as well as the earth itself, as sacrificial zones.

Take, for example, the Congo Basin rainforest, which has been plundered for centuries to fuel the industrial development of Europe and North America. From rubber to timber to minerals, the wealth of the forest has been extracted at the expense of local communities and ecosystems. Today, as demand for “green” energy technologies like electric vehicles and solar panels soars, the pressure on these forests and communities is only intensifying. While supporting the new energy economy, we must be attentive to ensuring that it does not replicate the harmful practices of the fossil fuel economy.

Similarly, in the Niger Delta, the legacy of oil exploitation continues to shape the region's political economy and ecology. The fossil fuel industry has not only devastated the livelihoods and health of local communities, but has also entrenched patterns of corruption, violence, and inequality that make it difficult for these communities to access climate finance and other resources for adaptation and resilience.

Yet amidst this painful history, Black communities have long cultivated alternative visions and practices of economies that center collective wellbeing, ecological stewardship, and cultural thriving. From the pre-colonial West African trading networks that facilitated mutually beneficial exchange, to the cooperative traditions that enabled Black communities to build wealth and power amidst systematic exclusion, these lineages offer a rich source of wisdom for reimagining climate finance.

In Jackson, Mississippi, for example, [Cooperation Jackson](#) is drawing on the legacy of the state's Black freedom struggle and cooperative history to build a network of community-owned enterprises and institutions. Grounded in the philosophy of the Jackson-Kush Plan, which calls for "building power from the ground up through people's assemblies and mass action," Cooperation Jackson is developing a local ecosystem of worker-owned farms, factories, and financial institutions that can serve as a model for community-controlled climate resilience.

By centering these histories and visions, we spotlight new possibilities for climate finance as a vehicle for reparation, regeneration, and self-determination. This requires more than simply tweaking existing mechanisms. It demands a fundamental reorientation around the priorities and leadership of Black communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis and on the forefront of building liberatory alternatives based on traditions such as:

- Collective ownership and democratic control
- Integration of economic and ecological health
- Cultural preservation and revitalization
- Intergenerational wealth building
- Mutual aid and solidarity economics

The fight for climate justice requires grappling with transnational deeply entrenched, monied forces, from the transnational flows of capital that perpetuate fossil fuel extraction, to the international policy frameworks that shape government responses. At the same time, some of the most promising and innovative responses to the crisis are emerging from the place-based struggles and solutions of frontline communities. Examples of local movements such as Indigenous water protectors resisting pipeline construction in North America, and agroecology practitioners regenerating soils and sovereignty in Africa, model how to build resilience and resistance in the face of global threats.

Linking local struggles and solutions across borders is essential for building the collective power needed to transform climate finance at a systemic level. This is where global solidarity networks and transnational movements come in. By connecting frontline communities across the African diaspora and beyond, these networks are creating new spaces for knowledge-sharing, resource-pooling, and joint advocacy.

For example, the [Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance](#) brings together over 1000 organizations from 48 African countries to advance a common agenda for climate justice and sustainable development. Through its work on issues like debt cancellation, loss and damage, and community-led renewable energy, the Alliance is helping to build a unified voice and strategy for the continent in global climate negotiations.

Similarly, the [It Takes Roots](#) coalition in the United States brings together frontline communities across the country to advance a vision of a “just transition” away from fossil fuels and towards a regenerative economy. By linking local struggles against pipelines, refineries, and other fossil fuel infrastructure, the coalition is building a multi-scalar movement that challenges the power of the fossil fuel industry and its financiers.

A liberation-centered approach to climate finance must connect these local and global scales of action. This means building mechanisms for place-based innovations to be shared, adapted, and scaled across contexts. It means forging strategic alliances that leverage the power of transnational solidarities. And it means developing new structures of climate governance and accountability that prioritize the voices and visions of those most impacted.

The People’s Climate March in 2014 offered a glimpse of what this local-to-global ecosystem of movements could look like. In the lead-up to the march, frontline communities from across the U.S. and around the world convened the Climate Justice Alliance’s Our Power Convening to share strategies and solutions emerging from grassroots struggles. The convening laid the groundwork for the 400,000-strong march, which centered frontline leadership under the banner of “People Over Profits.” In the aftermath, the relationships and alignments forged through the process continued to shape and escalate climate justice organizing at multiple scales.

As we seek to transform climate finance, we can learn from and build on these models of local-to-global movement building. Lessons from these successful models yield multiple components to pathways to just climate finance programming:

- ***Creating participatory grantmaking structures*** that put decision-making power directly in the hands of frontline communities, while providing a platform for cross-regional learning and collaboration.
- ***Developing metrics and evaluation frameworks*** that value and elevate grassroots knowledge and expertise, rather than defaulting to technocratic “solutions” disconnected from local realities.
- ***Building transnational advocacy campaigns*** that target the policies and power structures upholding the fossil fuel economy, with leadership from communities most impacted.

By connecting the local and global in this way, we can build a climate finance ecosystem that is responsive to the needs and innovations of frontline communities, while building the collective power necessary to tackle the systemic drivers of the crisis.

Coordinating across geographies to collectively advance systems change towards just climate finance and more requires the following mechanisms of coordination to be successful:

#### Knowledge Exchange and Innovation

- Sharing successful models of community-controlled finance
- Adapting traditional practices to new challenges
- Developing cross-regional support networks
- Building shared analysis and strategy

## Resource Mobilization and Control

- Creating new mechanisms for direct access to climate funds
- Developing alternative financing structures
- Building collective bargaining power
- Establishing accountability mechanisms

## Movement Building and Solidarity

- Strengthening connections between African and diaspora communities
- Coordinating advocacy across regions
- Supporting mutual aid and resource sharing
- Building collective power for systemic change

As detailed above, the concerted action necessary to build a global movement comprised of local communities and organizations, led by Global South nations and frontline communities, necessitates deliberate examination of successful models and requires intentional mechanisms for learning, resourcing, and coordinated power building.

At its core, the climate crisis is a crisis of democracy. The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a small number of corporations and individuals has enabled the relentless extraction of resources and labor from Black, Indigenous, and Global South communities and from the earth itself. This has not only fueled the carbon economy but also undermined the ability of frontline communities to shape the decisions that affect their lives and lands.

Transforming climate finance requires a fundamental shift towards democratic control and collective benefit. This means more than token inclusion or limited “participation” within existing structures. It means building new institutions and mechanisms that enable communities to exercise real self-determination over the resources and decisions that shape their futures.

At the institutional level, one powerful example of this approach is the [Southern Reparations Loan Fund](#), a community-controlled financial institution that emerged out of the Southern Grassroots Economies Project. The fund is governed by an assembly of grassroots organizations and community leaders from across the U.S. South, with a mission to “build a transformative economy by and for frontline communities.” Through a participatory grantmaking process, the fund distributes zero-interest loans to support cooperative and community-owned enterprises rooted in ecological and cultural regeneration.

What sets the Southern Reparations Loan Fund apart is not just its community-led grantmaking process, but its broader vision of reparations and repair. By framing access to capital as a form of reparations for historical and ongoing harms, the fund highlights the need for climate finance to address legacies of injustice and extraction. And by prioritizing collective and cooperative ownership models, the fund points towards an economy where wealth is rooted in community and tied to ecological health.

As we reimagine climate finance, we can draw inspiration and insight from models like the Southern Reparations Loan Fund. Some key principles and practices to highlight include:

- **Democratic and Participatory Governance structures** that center frontline leadership and expertise, such as community assemblies and advisory councils with real decision-making power.
- **Grantmaking criteria and processes that prioritize community ownership**, ecological regeneration, and cultural resilience, rather than just short-term carbon reductions.
- **Reparative frameworks** that acknowledge and address the historical harms and inequities that have shaped current vulnerabilities and disparities.
- **Collective benefit structures and ownership models**, such as cooperatives and community land trusts, that build community wealth and power.

By embracing these principles and practices, we can build a climate finance ecosystem that not only channels resources to frontline communities, but fundamentally shifts power to enable self-determination and collective flourishing.

#### Illustrative Model: Pan-African Climate Finance Alliance

The Pan-African Climate Finance Alliance (PACFA) represents a fundamental reimagining of climate finance through African economic philosophies and liberation principles. While this model is illustrative, it demonstrates how traditional African economic systems could transform international climate finance beyond surface-level reforms to create genuinely liberatory financial structures.

The model builds upon Ubuntu economics, already demonstrated in successful community-based climate initiatives across the continent. For example, Tanzania's community conservation funds operate on principles of collective decision-making and shared prosperity, showing how traditional values can shape modern financial mechanisms. South Africa's Solidarity Fund demonstrates how mutual aid principles can be scaled to manage substantial resources while maintaining community accountability.

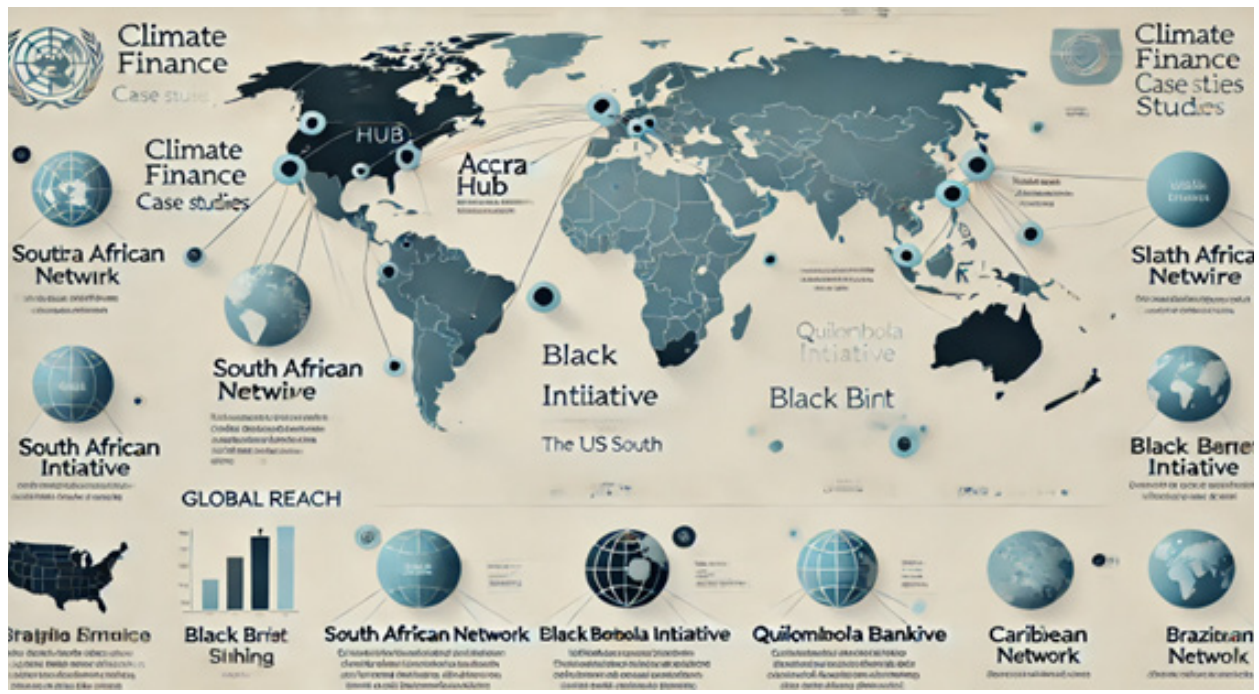
PACFA would deepen these approaches by explicitly centering African economic thought in its governance structure. The African Development Bank's adaptation programming has shown how indigenous knowledge can improve project outcomes when genuinely centered rather than merely consulted. Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy Facility demonstrates how national institutions can integrate traditional resource management principles into climate finance decisions.

The transformation PACFA envisions goes beyond existing regional coordination to fundamentally reshape how climate finance operates. Rwanda's National Fund for Environment and Climate Change (FONERWA) has pioneered approaches to participatory governance that could be expanded. Kenya's County Climate Change Funds show how decentralized structures can enhance community sovereignty over resources. These examples demonstrate the potential for climate finance systems truly grounded in African economic principles.

Drawing from philosophies of Ujamaa, PACFA would establish cooperative economic structures at multiple scales. The Southern African Development Community's Climate Finance Facility shows how regional institutions can support community-controlled development. Ghana's experience with direct access to climate funds demonstrates how national entities can maintain cultural integrity while meeting international standards.

Most importantly, PACFA would challenge the extractive logic of conventional climate finance by centering collective benefit and ecological stewardship. Mali's decentralized climate funds have shown how traditional ecological knowledge can guide investment decisions. Senegal's adaptation programming demonstrates how community priorities can reshape how success is measured and evaluated.

While PACFA remains an illustrative model, these examples show how African economic principles could transform climate finance from a tool of extraction into a vehicle for liberation. By building upon proven approaches while maintaining unwavering commitment to African philosophical frameworks and community self-determination, PACFA represents an achievable vision for fundamental transformation rather than incremental reform.



**Fig 2. Global Networks of Community-Controlled Climate Finance Initiatives. Interconnected hubs of the Pan-African Climate Finance Alliance (PACFA) demonstrate the potential of local autonomy with global coordination across Africa and the diaspora.**

As we reimagine climate finance through a Black Liberation lens, it is crucial to recognize and address the historical inequities and injustices that have shaped the current climate crisis. This leads us to our second mandate: centering historical responsibility and reparative justice in climate finance.

## Mandate II: Center Historical Responsibility and Reparative Justice



### OVERVIEW: Historical Responsibility and Restorative Justice

The countries and communities that have contributed the least to the climate crisis are facing its most severe impacts, while those most responsible for historical emissions continue to benefit from an unjust system. Centering historical responsibility and reparative justice in climate finance means ensuring that those who have contributed the most to the problem are held accountable and provide the necessary resources for adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage. This mandate is grounded in the principles of climate justice and equity and is essential for building a more just and sustainable future.

Current climate finance flows reveal persistent colonial patterns:

- Only 19% of climate adaptation finance reaches Least Developed Countries (UNEP, 2024, p. 12; Climate Policy Initiative, 2024, p. 34)
- Less than 10% of climate funds reach local communities (International Institute for Environment and Development & UNDP, 2024, p. 8)
- African nations receive less than 3% of global climate investment despite bearing 17% of climate impacts (African Development Bank, 2024, p. 45)

These disparities reflect a fundamental injustice: the Global North, responsible for approximately 92% of excess historical emissions (Global Carbon Project, 2024), continues to control and direct climate finance flows while the Global South, contributing minimally to the crisis, bears devastating climate impacts estimated at \$290-580 billion annually (UNEP, 2024). This reality demands not just reform but reparative action.

## Cross-Continental Innovation: Transformative Regional Climate Finance Coordination

The power of liberation-centered climate finance comes alive through the experiences of communities putting these principles into practice. Their stories demonstrate not just what is possible, but what is already being achieved—they demonstrate how Black communities across the globe are reimagining and restructuring climate finance to serve genuine liberation. These initiatives emerge from specific historical contexts while offering broadly applicable lessons for transforming climate finance at multiple scales.

### Illustrative Model: West African Climate Finance Network

The West African Climate Finance Network (WACFN) represents an ambitious vision for regional climate finance coordination that builds upon existing successful initiatives while imagining more transformative approaches to community control and regional collaboration. While this model is illustrative, it draws directly from proven approaches across West Africa that demonstrate the potential for scaled regional action.

The foundations for this transformed regional coordination already exist. The West African Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance has established crucial building blocks by bringing together stakeholders from 16 countries to strengthen climate finance readiness. Their work providing technical support for national planning and direct access to international funds demonstrates how regional cooperation can enhance local capacity. Similarly, ECOWAS's Regional Climate Change Strategy has created frameworks for coordinated action that could be deepened and expanded.

The transformation WACFN envisions builds upon notable achievements in community-controlled finance across the region. Ghana's successful implementation of direct access to the Adaptation Fund shows how national institutions can effectively manage climate resources. Senegal's decentralized climate fund experience demonstrates the feasibility of community-led adaptation, with local committees successfully managing over \$4 million in climate investments across multiple regions. In Mali, the Climate Fund's integration of traditional village committees into resource governance provides a model for combining modern and traditional systems.

Drawing from these experiences, WACFN would establish permanent institutional infrastructure for regional coordination. The Economic Community of West African States' Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency demonstrates how dedicated regional facilities can accelerate transformation. The West African Development Bank's climate finance tracking system shows how shared platforms can enhance transparency and accountability.

The model envisions expanding successful elements of existing programs while adding crucial innovations in community control. Nigeria's sovereign green bond program, which has mobilized over \$30 million for sustainable infrastructure, demonstrates the potential for scaled climate finance. Burkina Faso's successful integration of traditional knowledge into adaptation planning through its National Adaptation Plan process shows how cultural wisdom can inform financial decisions.

This coordinated approach could potentially mobilize €75 million in community-controlled investments by 2030, building on current growth rates in regional climate finance flows. The West African Alliance's success in supporting direct access accreditation for national institutions suggests that with proper support, the region could significantly expand community control over climate resources.



While WACFN remains an illustrative model, West Africa's demonstrated leadership in climate finance innovation provides concrete evidence that such transformation is possible. The achievements highlighted here show not just what could be done, but what is already emerging through determined regional cooperation. By building upon these foundations while maintaining unwavering commitment to community control and cultural integrity, WACFN represents an achievable vision for transforming how climate finance serves frontline communities.

Through this enhanced coordination, the region could establish new paradigms for climate finance that center community needs and traditional wisdom while operating at the scale needed to address the climate crisis. The model demonstrates how existing regional strengths could be amplified through new institutional forms that advance genuine transformation rather than merely improving current systems.

### Mandate III: Honor Traditional Knowledge Systems



#### OVERVIEW: Honor Traditional Knowledge Systems

The search for climate solutions often leads to market-based approaches that extract value from communities while failing to address root causes. However, across the African diaspora, communities are demonstrating how climate solutions grounded in traditional knowledge and collective ownership can create lasting transformation. These initiatives emerge from centuries of experience in sustainable resource management and community resilience, with contemporary research confirming their effectiveness (Agrawal & Bhandari, 2024).

Traditional knowledge systems have been developed over generations to sustainably manage resources and build resilient communities. However, these systems have been marginalized and eroded by colonialism, capitalism, and the imposition of Western values and models of

development. Honoring traditional knowledge systems in climate finance means recognizing the value and validity of these practices and ensuring that communities have the power and resources to maintain and evolve them in the face of new challenges. This is not only essential for effective climate adaptation and mitigation, but also for preserving cultural identity and promoting self-determination.

A powerful counter-narrative is emerging. The very communities facing the worst climate impacts are developing some of the most promising solutions. Today, we see these traditional principles being powerfully adapted to address contemporary challenges. Black communities across the globe are not merely surviving but innovating, developing sophisticated financial and organizational structures that demonstrate how climate finance can serve genuine liberation and ecological restoration. These innovations draw on deep traditions of collective economics, mutual aid, and ecological wisdom that have sustained African and Afro-descendant communities through centuries of exploitation and displacement.

- In Ghana, community-controlled green banks are financing renewable energy projects while building collective wealth.
- In Brazil, Quilombola communities are pioneering community-controlled forest protection initiatives that strengthen traditional land rights while building collective wealth.
- In the U.S. South, Black-led cooperatives are creating new models of climate-resilient agriculture and community-owned solar.
- In Senegal, village-based federations are managing coastal restoration projects that combine traditional fishing practices with mangrove regeneration.
- In South Africa, township-based energy cooperatives are developing micro-grid systems that ensure community ownership of renewable infrastructure.
- In the Caribbean, local women's collectives are leading ecosystem-based adaptation projects that integrate traditional agricultural knowledge with climate resilience.

These initiatives demonstrate how centering Black Liberation and Indigenous knowledge and leadership in climate finance creates pathways to a more just and sustainable future for all communities.

The integration of traditional ecological knowledge proves crucial for effective climate adaptation. The IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Traditional Knowledge Systems (2024) demonstrates that projects incorporating Indigenous knowledge achieve 35% better outcomes in climate resilience metrics. Examples include:

- Elder-led ecological monitoring systems that combine traditional indicators with modern data collection (UNESCO, 2024).
- Intergenerational transfer of sustainable agricultural practices that increase crop resilience while maintaining cultural continuity (IUCN & UNEP-WCMC, 2024).
- Indigenous weather prediction and climate adaptation strategies that outperform conventional forecasting in local contexts (International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, 2024).

#### Case Study: Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Adaptation in Ethiopian Water Management

The integration of traditional water management practices with modern climate adaptation approaches in Ethiopia's highlands demonstrates both the challenges and possibilities of centering Indigenous knowledge in climate finance. While we present an illustrative model for comprehensive knowledge integration, it builds upon documented traditional practices and successful initiatives in the region.

Ethiopia's highland communities have developed sophisticated water management systems over centuries that remain vital for climate resilience today. The Konso people's terracing networks, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, integrate physical infrastructure with social governance systems that ensure equitable water distribution. These traditional practices demonstrate how cultural and technical knowledge can be effectively combined to build lasting resilience.

Drawing from these established systems, we envision a comprehensive program that would systematically integrate Indigenous knowledge into climate adaptation planning and implementation. This model builds upon successful elements of Ethiopia's Sustainable Land Management Program, which has already shown how traditional practices can enhance modern watershed management approaches.

The proposed integration framework would expand existing successful approaches. For instance, the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research's work with traditional farmers has documented significant improvements in water availability where indigenous soil and water conservation practices are maintained and enhanced. Areas using integrated traditional-modern approaches have seen water availability increase by 15-40% and crop yields improve by 20-60%.

This vision for knowledge integration draws particular inspiration from Ethiopia's existing achievements in community-based watershed management. The Ethiopian Meteorological Agency has successfully integrated traditional weather forecasting methods with meteorological data, improving seasonal forecasts' accuracy and local relevance. Programs in Tigray have demonstrated how traditional governance systems can effectively oversee modern conservation techniques.

While this comprehensive integration model remains illustrative, Ethiopia's experience provides concrete evidence that centering Indigenous knowledge in climate adaptation is both possible and essential. The documented success of traditional practices, combined with promising results from existing integration efforts, suggests that expanding these approaches could significantly enhance climate resilience while strengthening cultural sovereignty.

## Mandate IV: Build Black-Led Autonomous Financial Infrastructure

### OVERVIEW: Build Black-Led Autonomous Financial Infrastructure

To build resilient and equitable communities in the face of climate change, we must develop financial infrastructure that is autonomous, democratic, and accountable to the needs and priorities of Black communities. This means creating community-controlled institutions and networks that can mobilize and manage resources for adaptation and mitigation, while also building wealth and power for marginalized communities. Black-led autonomous financial infrastructure is essential for breaking the cycle of dependence on extractive and exploitative systems, and for creating a more just and sustainable economy.



To bring the vision of a transformed climate finance system to life, we need to build the underlying infrastructure to sustain and scale community-driven solutions over the long haul. This means investing in the physical, technological, and social systems that can enable frontline communities to exercise real control over the resources and decisions that shape their lives. As we think about scaling climate finance for frontline communities, we need to invest in building this kind of democratic, community-controlled infrastructure. This could look like:

- ***Creating regional and local climate justice hubs*** that are designed and governed by frontline communities, with a mandate to support and amplify local solutions.

These physical spaces can serve as centers of gathering, learning, and coordination for frontline communities. These hubs would be designed and governed by grassroots organizations and community leaders, with a mandate to support and amplify local climate solutions.

Imagine a climate justice hub in the Caribbean, anchored by a network of community-based organizations across the islands. The hub would include spaces for trainings and workshops on topics like community-owned renewable energy, agroecology, and participatory budgeting. It would have a media lab where grassroots journalists and storytellers could document and disseminate local climate solutions. And it would have a flexible meeting space where organizers and advocates could come together to strategize and coordinate campaigns.

- ***Building digital platforms and tools*** that enable peer-to-peer learning, collaboration, and resource-sharing across frontline communities, with an emphasis on community ownership and control of data and intellectual property. These platforms would be designed and managed by communities themselves, with a focus on protecting data sovereignty and ensuring equitable access.

The [Indigenous Environmental Network](#) has created a digital toolkit for community-based monitoring and reporting of environmental and human rights abuses related to fossil fuel projects. The toolkit includes a mobile app for documenting incidents, a web platform for visualizing and analyzing data, and a training program for community monitors. By putting these tools in the hands of frontline communities, the Network is helping to build a powerful evidence base for advocacy and resistance.

- ***Developing participatory grantmaking and investment funds*** that are accountable to grassroots stakeholders, with decision-making power in the hands of those most impacted by the climate crisis.

The [Frontline Justice Fund](#) in the United States is an environmental grantmaking initiative that equips communities impacted by climate environmental hazards with the critical resources they need to take on big polluters in the courtroom and beyond. The Fund directly supports organizations pushing back against the fallout from climate disasters and protecting their communities from the looming threat of new and expanding oil pipelines, mines, and other dangerous and destructive projects. Decision making is done by a multistakeholder group comprised primarily of frontline leaders and others in the philanthropy sector.

- ***Investing in the capacity of grassroots organizations and movements*** to lead and govern these infrastructure projects, through training, technical assistance, and flexible core support.

The [Swedish International Development Corporation](#) has provided millions of dollars in flexible core support to the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance. This has enabled PACJA to execute extensive training and technical assistance to thousands of communities from scores of nations in Sub Saharan Africa and beyond. This training includes the annual Climate Justice Summer School and the African Journalist workshops, each of which supports hundreds of people to build capacity to lead and govern.

Three core principles will guide this institutional infrastructure development:

### **Democratic Governance and Community Control**

Traditional African governance systems offer sophisticated models for ensuring accountability to community needs. Modern climate finance institutions must embed these principles throughout their operations. The African Alliance of Community Finance demonstrates this approach through:

- Elder councils providing cultural guidance and strategic direction
- Regular community assemblies making key investment decisions
- Youth councils ensuring long-term vision and innovation
- Technical committees supporting rather than supplanting community wisdom

### **Cultural Grounding and Evolution**

Our institutions must be expressions of Black cultural values, not just technical financial entities. This requires:

- Integration of traditional knowledge in all operations
- Recognition of cultural assets as forms of wealth
- Protection of sacred practices and places
- Space for cultural evolution and innovation

### **Technical Capacity Serving Community Goals**

While our institutions must leverage modern tools to operate at scale, technology must serve rather than dictate community priorities. This means:

- Digital systems enhancing traditional decision-making processes
- Risk assessment frameworks incorporating Indigenous knowledge
- Monitoring tools measuring what matters to communities
- Security systems protecting community assets and data

By building this kind of transformative infrastructure, guided by these principles, we can create the conditions for a new kind of climate finance system to emerge—one that is rooted in the leadership and visions of frontline communities, and that is capable of mobilizing resources at the speed and scale that the crisis demands.

#### Case Study: Caribbean Climate Network

The [Caribbean Climate Network](#) (CCN) is a powerful example of how Black-led autonomous financial infrastructure can drive transformative change in the face of the climate crisis.

Launched in 2023, the network brings together over 50 community-based organizations, cooperatives, and social enterprises across the Caribbean region, with the aim of building resilience, self-determination, and collective power.

The CCN was born out of a recognition that addressing the region's legacy of colonial exploitation, economic dependence, and external debt—which has limited the ability to invest in adaptation and resilience—would require a fundamental shift in how financial resources are mobilized and deployed. Rather than relying on external aid or private investment, which often come with strings attached and prioritize the interests of donors over communities, the network set out to create a new model of autonomous, community-controlled finance.

To do this, the CCN has developed a range of innovative strategies and tools that leverage the strengths and assets of Caribbean communities. At the heart of the network is a **regional fund that pools resources from member organizations** and deploys them through a participatory budgeting process, ensuring that investment decisions are made by and for the communities most impacted by climate change. The fund is governed by a board of community representatives and follows a set of principles and criteria that prioritize social and environmental justice, local ownership, and democratic decision-making. This not only ensures that investments are aligned with community needs and values, but also builds trust, transparency, and accountability.

Another key element of the CCN's approach is its focus on **building local capacity and institutions**. The network invests directly in the skills, knowledge, and leadership of Caribbean communities. This includes training programs in areas such as financial management, project design, and community organizing, as well as peer-to-peer learning and exchange.

The network also supports the development of local enterprises and cooperatives that can generate sustainable livelihoods and build community wealth. For example, in Jamaica, the CCN has partnered with a local cooperative to establish a solar energy project that provides clean, affordable electricity to over 500 households, while also creating jobs and revenue for the community.

By building this kind of autonomous, community-controlled infrastructure, the CCN is not only increasing the flow of resources to frontline communities, but also challenging the power dynamics and dependencies that have long marginalized them. The network is demonstrating that Black communities have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to lead their own development and resilience strategies, and to do so in ways that prioritize their own needs and values.

To date, the CCN has mobilized over \$50 million in community-controlled investments, supporting a range of initiatives from sustainable agriculture to renewable energy to affordable housing. The network has also played a key role in advocating for policy changes at the national and regional levels, such as debt relief and climate finance reforms, that can create a more enabling environment for autonomous, community-led action. Through partnerships with allied networks and movements, the network is sharing its lessons and strategies and building solidarity with other frontline communities around the world.

Ultimately, the story of the CCN is one of resilience, creativity, and the power of collective action in the face of systemic barriers and climate chaos. By building autonomous, community-controlled financial infrastructure, and by grounding its work in the principles of Black Liberation and self-determination, the network is demonstrating that another way is possible—one that puts the needs and priorities of frontline communities at the center, and that works towards a future of shared prosperity and justice.

## Mandate V: Protect Cultural Sovereignty



### OVERVIEW: Protect Cultural Sovereignty

Cultural sovereignty stands as a fundamental pillar in reimagining climate finance systems. While financial mechanisms often focus solely on monetary transactions and carbon metrics, true transformation requires recognizing that culture—the living practices, beliefs, and ways of knowing that communities have developed over generations—must be at the heart of any sustainable solution. Communities across the African diaspora have maintained sophisticated systems for managing resources, building collective wealth, and preserving ecological balance, even in the face of systematic attempts to dismantle these cultural frameworks through colonial exploitation and market-driven development. The recent relocation of the Guna Indigenous people from Gardi Sugdub island to Isber Yala in Panama demonstrates both the challenges and possibilities of maintaining cultural sovereignty even when climate change forces physical relocation.

As climate finance evolves, protecting cultural sovereignty means more than just acknowledging these systems—it demands creating mechanisms that actively strengthen communities' ability to practice, evolve, and transmit their cultural heritage. This encompasses everything from traditional land management techniques to communal decision-making processes to spiritual relationships with the natural world. Without robust protections for cultural sovereignty, even well-intentioned climate finance initiatives risk becoming new forms of extraction, imposing external values and metrics while further eroding the very cultural systems that have historically enabled sustainable relationships with the earth.

For many frontline communities, especially Indigenous peoples, cultural sovereignty is about maintaining the deep relationships and responsibilities that connect people to their lands, waters, and non-human relatives. These cultural practices and belief systems are often inextricably linked to the sustainable management of natural resources and the resilience of communities in the face of climate change.

However, the dominant models of climate finance have often treated these cultural dimensions as secondary or irrelevant, prioritizing narrow metrics of carbon sequestration or economic efficiency over the holistic well-being of communities. This has led to the imposition of externally-defined “solutions” that disrupt local cultures and livelihoods, and that ultimately undermine the very resilience that they seek to build.

Protecting cultural sovereignty in climate finance means recognizing that communities have the right to determine their own priorities and pathways for climate action, based on their own cultural values, knowledge systems, and ways of life. It requires creating spaces and resources for communities to strengthen and evolve their cultural practices in the face of new challenges, rather than forcing them to assimilate into dominant frameworks. And it means ensuring that climate finance is accountable to the cultural protocols and decision-making processes of the communities it purports to serve.

One key aspect of protecting cultural sovereignty is safeguarding the cultural heritage and intellectual property of frontline communities. This includes not only tangible heritage such as sacred sites, artworks, and artifacts, but also intangible heritage such as languages, songs, stories, and knowledge systems.

In the context of climate finance, this means ensuring that any use or application of traditional knowledge is subject to the free, prior, and informed consent of the communities who hold that knowledge. It means creating legal and institutional frameworks that recognize and protect the collective intellectual property rights of communities over their knowledge and innovations. And it means ensuring that any benefits arising from the use of traditional knowledge are equitably shared with the communities who have developed and stewarded that knowledge over generations.

#### Case Study: The Guna Yala’s Holistic Approach to Climate Resilience

The Guna Yala, an autonomous Indigenous territory in Panama, offers a powerful example of how protecting cultural sovereignty can go hand-in-hand with building climate resilience. The Guna people have lived on their ancestral lands for centuries, developing a rich cultural heritage and deep knowledge of their marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

In recent years, however, the Guna Yala have been increasingly impacted by the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, more frequent and intense storms, and the degradation of their coral reefs and mangrove forests. In response, the Guna General Congress, the territory’s highest governing body, has developed a comprehensive climate change strategy that is grounded in Guna cultural values and knowledge systems.

At the heart of this strategy is the concept of “Bab Igar,” or the “Way of the Great Father,” which refers to the Guna’s spiritual and ethical framework for living in harmony with nature. This framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of all beings, the importance of collective decision-making, and the responsibility of humans to care for and protect their environment.



Based on these principles, the Guna have implemented a range of climate adaptation and mitigation measures that prioritize the protection of their cultural heritage and the strengthening of their traditional livelihoods. For example, they have established a network of community-managed marine protected areas that incorporate traditional fishing practices and taboos, while also using modern monitoring and enforcement tools. They have also developed a sustainable tourism program that showcases Guna culture and artisanship, while generating income for conservation and community development projects.

In addition, the Guna have been actively involved in national and international advocacy efforts to protect their cultural sovereignty and intellectual property rights in the context of climate change. They have successfully lobbied for the inclusion of Indigenous rights and traditional knowledge in Panama's national climate change policy and have participated in global forums such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to push for greater recognition of the role of Indigenous peoples in climate action.

The Guna's holistic approach to climate resilience demonstrates how protecting cultural sovereignty can be a powerful enabler of effective and equitable climate action. By centering their own cultural values, knowledge systems, and decision-making processes, the Guna have been able to develop solutions that are both locally relevant and globally significant. They have shown that Indigenous peoples are not simply victims of climate change, but also key partners in the fight against it, with valuable contributions to make in terms of both adaptation and mitigation.

At the same time, the Guna's experience also highlights the ongoing challenges and threats to cultural sovereignty in the context of climate change. Despite their successes, the Guna continue to face pressures from external actors who seek to exploit their resources and knowledge for commercial gain, often without proper consent or benefit-sharing. This underscores the urgent need for stronger legal and institutional protections for the cultural heritage and intellectual property rights of Indigenous peoples and local communities, as a key component of any just and equitable approach to climate finance.

## Mandate VI: Advance Democratic and Participatory Governance

**OVERVIEW:** Advance Democratic and Participatory Governance

Effective climate finance requires the full and meaningful participation of affected communities in decision-making processes. This means going beyond token inclusion or consultation and creating governance structures that are truly democratic and participatory. Advancing democratic and participatory governance in climate finance means investing in leadership development and capacity building for marginalized communities and creating spaces and mechanisms for them to shape and oversee the initiatives that impact their lives. This mandate is grounded in the principles of self-determination and community empowerment, and is essential for building trust, accountability, and ownership in climate finance.



Transforming climate finance is not just a technical challenge; it is a leadership challenge. It requires cultivating a new generation of leaders who are rooted in the realities and visions of frontline communities, and who have the skills and capacities to navigate complex global systems while remaining accountable to local needs and priorities.

This means investing in **leadership development programs** and initiatives that can help to identify, train, and support emerging leaders from grassroots movements and organizations. These programs should be grounded in popular education pedagogies that center the knowledge and experiences of frontline communities, while also providing exposure to technical skills and frameworks that can help leaders to engage with mainstream institutions and processes.

One example of this approach is the Climate Justice Leadership Institute, an annual training program that brings together young leaders from across the African diaspora to deepen their analysis, sharpen their skills, and build solidarity with each other. Through a curriculum that combines political education, technical training, and experiential learning, the Institute helps to cultivate a new generation of leaders who can advance a vision of climate justice that is rooted in the lived realities of their communities.

Another key strategy for building leadership capacity is through **intergenerational knowledge transfer and collaboration**. In many frontline communities, elders hold deep wisdom and experience that is essential for guiding and grounding climate justice work. At the same time, young people bring new energy, creativity, and innovation to the table. Creating spaces and platforms for elders and youth to come together, learn from each other, and collaborate on solutions is therefore critical for building a strong and sustainable movement.

The [Black Mesa Water Coalition](#), for example, has created a Youth and Elders Circle that brings together Navajo and Hopi community members to explore the connections between traditional knowledge, cultural survival, and climate resilience. Through storytelling, site visits, and collaborative projects, the Circle helps to bridge generational divides and build a shared vision for a just and sustainable future on the Colorado Plateau.

As we work to integrate frontline knowledge into climate finance decision-making, some key principles and practices to abide by include:

- Building long-term, reciprocal partnerships with grassroots organizations and movements, based on shared values and a commitment to mutual learning and accountability.
- Creating accessible, culturally relevant spaces and processes for grassroots participation, that meet people where they are and honor their ways of knowing and communicating.
- Providing resources and support for grassroots leaders and organizations to build their capacity and influence, including through training, networking, and access to information and technology.
- Developing metrics and frameworks for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of climate finance initiatives that are grounded in the priorities and perspectives of frontline communities.
- Cultivating a culture of transparency, trust, and open communication, where all stakeholders feel heard and valued, and where conflicts and challenges can be addressed in a constructive and equitable way.

By embedding these principles and practices into the DNA of our climate finance institutions and initiatives, we can begin to build a new paradigm of decision-making that is not just more inclusive and equitable, but also more effective and transformative. Ultimately, the solutions to the climate crisis will not come from boardrooms or ivory towers, but from the frontlines and the grassroots—from the communities that have been living in harmony with the Earth for generations, and who have the knowledge and resilience to lead us into a just and sustainable future.

#### Case Study: Envisioning Community-Controlled Climate Finance in Ghana - Accra Community Climate Trust Model

To illustrate how democratic and participatory governance could be fully integrated into climate finance initiatives, we present the hypothetical model of the Accra Community Climate Trust (ACCT). While the ACCT is an illustrative example, it builds upon existing participatory climate governance initiatives in Ghana and demonstrates how current successful elements could be expanded into a comprehensive community-controlled system.

Ghana already has several promising building blocks for participatory climate finance. The Africa Climate Change Fund (ACCF) has supported community-based adaptation projects in northern Ghana where local committees have direct input into project design and implementation. The Ghana Community-based Resource Management Program has demonstrated how traditional authorities and local assemblies can effectively oversee natural resource investments. Building on these real examples, the ACCT model envisions scaling up these participatory elements into a fully community-controlled climate fund.

In this illustrative model, the ACCT would be governed by a board of trustees including representatives from local community organizations, women's groups, youth associations, and traditional authorities - similar to how Ghana's successful Community Resource Management Committees operate, but with expanded scope and authority. The Greater Accra Traditional Council's current role in environmental governance provides a template for how traditional leadership could be meaningfully integrated into climate finance decision-making.

The ACCT model proposes a participatory budgeting process building on Ghana's experience with community-driven development. While Ghana's current climate fund consultation processes typically involve community input, the ACCT would go further by giving communities direct decision-making power over resource allocation. This approach draws inspiration from successful participatory budgeting programs in Ghana's local government system, while adapting them specifically for climate finance.

To demonstrate the potential impact of such an approach, we can look to real results from existing participatory programs in Ghana. Community-managed adaptation projects in the northern regions have achieved participation rates of 65-75% in target communities. The Africa Climate Change Fund's community-based projects have benefited over 50,000 residents in pilot areas. The ACCF model suggests how scaling these successful elements could potentially reach 200,000 residents through 50 community-led projects.

Key innovations this model proposes include:

- Expanding existing community management committees into full governing bodies
- Transforming consultation processes into direct democratic control
- Integrating traditional governance structures more deeply into climate finance
- Creating permanent institutional mechanisms for community oversight

While the ACCT remains a hypothetical model, Ghana's experience with participatory governance provides concrete evidence that community-controlled climate finance is both possible and effective. Real initiatives have demonstrated the basic elements - from participatory planning to traditional authority integration to community oversight. The ACCT model shows how these proven components could be combined and scaled into a comprehensive system of democratic climate finance governance.

This illustrative case helps us envision the next phase of climate finance transformation while remaining grounded in actual experience. It demonstrates how existing successful practices could be expanded into new institutional forms that center community control and decision-making power.

## Mandate VII: Measure Success Holistically

Overview: Measure Success Holistically

Conventional metrics for measuring the success of climate finance initiatives often fail to capture the complex and multidimensional impacts on communities and ecosystems. Measuring success holistically means developing new frameworks and indicators that center community well-being, cultural vitality, and ecological resilience, rather than just narrow financial or technical outcomes. This mandate is grounded in the understanding that true progress towards a just and sustainable future cannot be measured by GDP growth or carbon markets alone, but must take into account the lived experiences and values of frontline communities.



To understand the potential impact of transformed climate finance systems, we can look to both existing achievements and projected outcomes. Current initiatives demonstrate concrete results: the Africa NDC Hub has mobilized over \$1 billion in climate finance; Kenya's County Climate Change Funds have enhanced local control over resources; and Ethiopia's CRGE Facility has pioneered new approaches to community oversight.

Our illustrative models suggest how these impacts could be expanded through more comprehensive transformation. While their projected outcomes – such as \$1 trillion under democratic community control by 2030 – are aspirational, they build upon demonstrated growth rates and proven capabilities. By examining both current achievements and potential futures, we can better understand the possibilities for genuine transformation.

The struggle for climate justice is, at its core, a struggle to transform how we define and measure value itself. For centuries, extractive financial systems have reduced success to narrow metrics of profit and growth, erasing the deep wisdom of African and Afro-descendant communities about measuring wealth through collective wellbeing, cultural vitality, and ecological health. In a study of community-based microfinance in Ghana, an elder is quoted as saying, “What makes our susu [informal savings] group successful is the trust and relationships we have built over time. We know each other’s families, we attend the same church, and we look out for each other (Alabi, J., Alabi, G., & Ahiawodzi, A. (2007).” This statement highlights the importance of community ownership and the wisdom inherent in community-based financial structures, recognizing that true wealth is rooted in relationships and social capital, not just financial accounts.

As we work to transform climate finance, we need to be clear about what success looks like, and how we will measure and track progress along the way. This requires developing new metrics and frameworks that can capture the complex, multi-dimensional impacts of community-driven climate solutions, from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to building local economic resilience, to strengthening cultural identity and social cohesion.

### Evaluation Framework: Redefining Value and Progress Through Liberation

Drawing from African and Afro-descendant traditions while incorporating modern evaluation methodologies, we propose an integrated framework for measuring success and impact that centers community priorities while providing clear evidence of impact to multiple stakeholders with the following key components:

- I. Community power and control
- II. Systems change indicators
- III. Institutional health and growth

The ultimate measure of success in climate finance transformation must be genuine shifts in power to communities. As one leader from the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance explains, “We don’t just want better numbers—we want real control over the decisions that shape our futures.”

Thus, one important shift is to move beyond narrow, output-oriented metrics like carbon tons reduced or dollars spent, and to embrace a more holistic, process-oriented approach to evaluation. This means looking not just at the end results of a project or program, but at the way in which it was designed, implemented, and governed, and the degree to which it reflects the priorities and leadership of frontline communities.

For example, a community-owned solar project might be evaluated not just on the basis of the clean energy it generates, but on the extent to which it builds local wealth and ownership, strengthens community decision-making power, and enhances cultural resilience and identity. This kind of evaluation requires a more participatory, qualitative approach that centers the voices and experiences of community members themselves.

The Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing offer a useful framework for thinking about this kind of process-oriented evaluation. On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the “Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade.” The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering out common

understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations. The “Jemez Principles” for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants. The principles emphasize the importance of bottom-up organizing, letting people speak for themselves, working together in solidarity and mutuality, building just relationships among ourselves, and a commitment to self-transformation.

By embedding these principles into the design and evaluation of climate finance initiatives, we can ensure that the process is as important as the outcome, and that our metrics of success are grounded in the values and priorities of frontline communities.

Embedding these principles into the design and evaluation of climate finance mechanisms requires tracking both quantifiable changes and deeper qualitative transformations:

## System Change Indicators

### Sample Quantitative Metrics

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Percentage of climate funds under direct community control<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Target: Minimum 40% of all climate finance flowing through community-controlled institutions by 2030</li><li>○ Baseline assessment required within first year</li><li>○ Annual tracking and reporting</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Scale of Community-Controlled Assets<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Total assets under community management</li><li>○ Number of new community-controlled financial institutions</li><li>○ Growth in community investment pools</li></ul></li></ul> |
|---|--|

### Sample Qualitative Indicators

- Depth of Democratic Governance
  - Regular governance assessments using tools adapted from traditional African decision-making systems
  - Documentation of community participation, measuring representation across:
    - Documentation of community participation
    - Different socioeconomic groups
    - Gender and age demographics
    - Traditional and modern leadership structures
    - Urban and rural communities
    - Various livelihood groups
  - Quality of deliberative processes
  - Integration of traditional leadership structures

True transformation requires measuring not just individual projects but systemic shifts. Each community-controlled fund becomes a seed of broader transformation, teaching us how to measure both immediate impact and long-term change.

Another key shift is to move towards a more developmental, learning-oriented approach to evaluation, rather than a punitive, compliance-oriented one. This means creating spaces for experimentation, risk-taking, and iterative learning, and recognizing that transformative change often happens through trial and error, and that “failure” can be an important source of insight and innovation.

One example of this approach is the Developmental Evaluation framework, which emphasizes the importance of real-time feedback and adaptation in complex, dynamic systems. Rather than waiting until the end of a project or program to assess its impact, developmental evaluation involves ongoing data collection and sense-making, with a focus on surfacing emergent patterns and opportunities for course-correction.

In the context of climate finance, this could mean creating feedback loops between grassroots organizations and funding institutions, so that lessons learned on the ground can inform the design and implementation of future initiatives. It could also mean investing in participatory action research and community-based monitoring systems, so that frontline communities have the tools and capacities to track and assess the impacts of climate interventions in real-time.

#### Financial Flow Transformation:

- Direction of Capital
  - Percentage of total climate finance flowing to Black-led institutions
  - Growth in community-controlled investment pools
  - Reduction in extractive financial practices

#### Ecological and Cultural Impacts:

- Environmental Restoration
  - Area of land under community-led conservation
  - Reduction in local environmental hazards
  - Improvement in air and water quality
  - Assessment using both scientific and traditional ecological knowledge indicators

Strong institutions must maintain deep accountability to liberation goals even as they grow. Success is not just about getting bigger—it is about staying true to our values while meeting our communities’ evolving needs.

#### Organizational Metrics:

Ultimately, the goal of a transformed climate finance system is to channel resources to frontline communities and to build their power and agency to shape the decisions and systems that affect their lives. This means that metrics of success must be grounded in a vision of self-determination and sovereignty, and that approaches to evaluation must reflect and support that vision.

Some key principles and practices for measuring success in a transformed climate finance system might include:

- **Participatory, community-led design and evaluation** of climate initiatives, with frontline communities setting the priorities and criteria for success.
- A focus on process metrics that capture the extent to which initiatives are building **local capacity, ownership, and decision-making power**, in addition to outcome metrics like emissions reductions or dollars leveraged.
- **Developmental, learning-oriented approaches** to evaluation that prioritize real-time feedback, adaptation, and iteration, rather than punitive, compliance-oriented ones.
- Investments in **community-based research and monitoring systems** that enable frontline communities to track and assess the impacts of climate interventions on their own terms.
- **A commitment to transparency, accountability, and power-sharing** between grassroots organizations and funding institutions, with clear feedback loops and mechanisms for course-correction.

By embracing these principles and practices, we can build a climate finance system that is not just effective at channeling resources, but transformative in its ability to build the power and agency of frontline communities to shape their own futures.



**Fig 3. Measuring Success Through Indigenous Metrics: A Framework for Evaluation. Holistic measurement system combining traditional indicators with contemporary metrics to evaluate community-controlled climate finance initiatives.**

#### Case Study: Black Belt Climate Justice Fund (U.S.)

The Black Belt Climate Justice Fund (BBCJF) is a pioneering initiative that is transforming how success is measured in climate finance initiatives. Launched in 2023, the fund aims to support community-led adaptation and resilience projects in the historically marginalized Black Belt region of the southern United States.

What sets the BBCJF apart is its holistic approach to measuring success, which goes beyond traditional metrics of carbon reductions or economic returns to encompass a wider range of social, cultural, and ecological indicators. The fund recognizes that for climate action to be truly effective and equitable, it must address the root causes of vulnerability and contribute to the overall well-being and resilience of communities.



To operationalize this approach, the BBCJF has developed a participatory evaluation framework that engages community members in defining and tracking success indicators. Through a series of workshops and dialogues, the fund has worked with local leaders and organizations to identify the outcomes that matter most to them, such as improved health, food security, cultural preservation, and social cohesion.

Based on these community-defined priorities, the BBCJF has developed a set of holistic success indicators that are tracked alongside more conventional metrics. For example, in addition to measuring the number of homes weatherized or the amount of renewable energy generated, the fund also assesses the impact of its projects on indicators such as community engagement, youth leadership development, and the revitalization of traditional agricultural practices.

This multidimensional approach to evaluation not only paints a more comprehensive picture of the fund's impact but also enables it to adapt and improve its strategies based on community feedback. By creating spaces for ongoing dialogue and reflection, the BBCJF is fostering a culture of learning and accountability that puts community needs and priorities at the center.

The results of this approach have been significant. Since its establishment, the BBCJF has supported over 30 community-led projects across the Black Belt region, benefiting over 50,000 residents. These projects have not only reduced climate vulnerabilities and enhanced resilience but also contributed to a range of other positive outcomes, such as improved mental health, increased civic engagement, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Moreover, by tracking and communicating these holistic impacts, the BBCJF has been able to attract new sources of funding and support from a wider range of stakeholders, including government agencies, private foundations, and individual donors. This diversified funding base not only enhances the fund's sustainability but also demonstrates the value and effectiveness of its approach.

As the BBCJF continues to grow and evolve, it is working to share its evaluation framework and lessons with other climate finance initiatives around the world. Through partnerships with research institutions and advocacy networks, the fund is promoting a more holistic and community-centered approach to measuring success in climate action.

Ultimately, the story of the BBCJF is one of innovation, empowerment, and the transformative potential of community-led solutions. By embracing a holistic and participatory approach to measuring success, and by grounding its work in the knowledge, values, and priorities of frontline communities, the fund is demonstrating that effective climate action must be rooted in a deep understanding of what truly matters for the well-being and resilience of people and ecosystems.

## Mandate VIII: Follow Global South Leadership



### OVERVIEW: Follow Global South Leadership

The climate finance landscape has long been dominated by the priorities and interests of Global North countries and institutions, often at the expense of the needs and voices of people who are most impacted by the crisis. To build a more just, equitable, and effective climate finance system, we must follow the leadership of Global South communities and organizations, who bring deep knowledge, experience, and solutions to the table.

One key platform for this kind of coordination is the newly launched Global Alliance for a Just Transition, which brings together governments, grassroots organizations, labor unions, and philanthropic institutions to advance a shared vision of a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels. The alliance aims to provide a space for dialogue, learning, and collaboration across sectors and geographies, with a particular focus on centering the leadership and priorities of frontline communities.

Through working groups, regional convenings, and online knowledge-sharing platforms, the alliance is creating opportunities for grassroots leaders to connect with policymakers and funders and to shape the global agenda for a just transition. For example, the alliance's "Community Solutions" working group is developing a set of principles and criteria for community-led climate initiatives, which will be used to guide investment and grantmaking decisions by member institutions.

### Illustrative Model: Southern Africa Climate Finance Network

The Southern Africa Climate Finance Network (SACFN) represents an ambitious vision for how regional coordination could transform climate finance through Global South leadership. This illustrative model demonstrates how existing regional initiatives and successful approaches could be expanded into a comprehensive framework for community-controlled climate finance.

The SACFN concept builds upon important foundations already established in Southern Africa. The Southern African Development Community's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan demonstrates the region's capacity for coordinated climate action. The Development Bank of Southern Africa's Climate Finance Facility, as the first green bank in an emerging market, shows how regional institutions can pioneer innovative approaches to climate finance.

Drawing from these achievements, SACFN would create new institutional infrastructure for climate finance coordination. The model takes inspiration from the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance's successful coordination of over 1000 organizations, while envisioning deeper integration of civil society, community groups, and social movements. The Southern African Climate Finance Partnership's proven ability to influence national policy through coordinated advocacy demonstrates the potential of regional collaboration.

The transformation SACFN envisions goes beyond current approaches to regional cooperation. Namibia's Environmental Investment Fund, which has secured over \$50 million in direct access funding, shows how innovative community engagement can enhance climate finance effectiveness. Zimbabwe's experience in developing a national climate finance strategy with strong stakeholder input provides a template for participatory approaches that could be scaled regionally.

Through permanent institutional structures, SACFN would strengthen and expand successful elements of existing programs. The SADC Climate Change Technical Centre in Namibia demonstrates the value of dedicated regional facilities. This model would establish a network of regional hubs, each specializing in critical aspects of climate finance transformation – from direct access support to traditional knowledge integration to community-led monitoring.

The network would build upon proven approaches to accountability and knowledge sharing. Malawi's community-based climate monitoring system shows how traditional knowledge can be effectively integrated with scientific data. The African Climate Change Fund's capacity building program, which has trained hundreds of practitioners across Southern Africa, provides a foundation for deeper cross-border learning and exchange.

Real examples demonstrate the potential impact of enhanced regional coordination. The Africa NDC Hub has already mobilized over \$250 million through regional cooperation. The Southern African Alliance for Climate Change has successfully influenced adaptation planning across multiple countries. Building on these achievements, SACFN could potentially mobilize \$500 million in new community-controlled climate finance across the region.

Mozambique's community climate resilience program, working through local climate committees in 45 districts, shows how community leadership can be effectively integrated into climate finance governance. Botswana's successful incorporation of traditional knowledge into climate planning demonstrates how indigenous wisdom can inform financial decisions. South Africa's pioneering work on just transition finance provides models for ensuring climate resources serve community needs.

While SACFN remains an illustrative model, Southern Africa's experience with regional climate cooperation provides concrete evidence that transformative approaches are possible. The achievements highlighted here demonstrate not just the potential for regional coordination, but the existing capacity for Global South leadership in climate finance. By building upon these foundations while maintaining unwavering commitment to community control and cultural integrity, SACFN represents an achievable vision for transforming how climate finance serves frontline communities.

Through this coordinated approach, the region could establish new paradigms for climate finance that center community needs and traditional wisdom while operating at the scale needed to address the climate crisis. The model shows how existing regional strengths could be amplified through new institutional forms that advance genuine transformation rather than merely improving current systems.

## Mandate IX: Transform International Climate Finance Architecture



### OVERVIEW: Transform International Climate Finance Architecture

The current international climate finance architecture is dominated by Global North governments and institutions, which often fail to prioritize the needs and priorities of Global South communities. Following Global South leadership and transforming this architecture means creating new spaces and mechanisms for frontline communities to shape the policies, practices, and flows of climate finance at all levels. This includes reforming existing institutions to be more accountable and responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable, as well as creating new, decentralized, and community-driven models of climate finance. These mandates are grounded in the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, and self-determination, and are essential for building a more equitable and effective global response to the climate crisis.

The current international climate finance architecture, including multilateral funds, development banks, and bilateral initiatives, is fragmented, complex, and often unresponsive to the needs of the most vulnerable communities at best and actively contributes to the oppression and disenfranchisement of these communities through structural adjustment programs, at worst. Transforming this architecture requires fundamental reforms to the policies, practices, and governance structures of these institutions, to enhance access, ownership, and accountability for Global South countries and communities.

The international climate finance architecture remains deeply shaped by colonial patterns and power relations. Major climate funds, development banks, and financial institutions continue to operate in ways that privilege Northern institutions and technical approaches while marginalizing Southern communities and traditional knowledge. The current architecture fails to acknowledge the fundamental obligation of historically high-emitting nations to fund both adaptation and economic transformation in communities facing disproportionate impacts. This is not merely about aid or assistance, but about responsibility and reparation for ongoing harm.

Key challenges in the current system include:

- High-emitting nations contributing minimally to reformative climate finance flows
- Centralized control by multilateral institutions that lack accountability to affected communities
- Complex access requirements that create insurmountable barriers for community-based organizations
- Limited recognition of traditional knowledge and cultural approaches to resource management
- Inadequate accountability mechanisms that fail to ensure benefits reach frontline communities

## International Policy Reform

Transforming the international climate finance architecture requires a multi-pronged approach that addresses the policies, practices, and power dynamics of key institutions and processes. Some of the critical areas for reform include:

1. **Enhancing Direct Access:** Advocate for the expansion of direct access modalities across all multilateral climate funds, to enable national and sub-national entities in developing countries to directly access and manage resources for locally-led climate actions.
2. **Reforming Accreditation:** Push for simplified, tiered, and differentiated accreditation processes that recognize the diverse capacities and contexts of developing countries, and that prioritize the participation of local organizations and communities.
3. **Strengthening Country Ownership:** Promote the integration of country ownership principles and practices across all climate finance institutions, to ensure that funding aligns with national and local priorities, and that decision-making power rests with recipient countries and communities.
4. **Improving Transparency and Accountability:** Advocate for enhanced transparency and accountability mechanisms within climate finance institutions, including through the establishment of independent complaint and redress mechanisms, and the regular reporting and disclosure of funding flows and impacts.
5. **Increasing Adaptation and Resilience Finance:** Push for a significant increase in the quantity and quality of finance for adaptation and resilience, particularly for the most vulnerable countries and communities, and for the integration of adaptation considerations across all funding windows and instruments.

These reforms are critical for building a more equitable, effective, and transformative climate finance architecture that can deliver on the needs and priorities of Global South countries and communities. By advocating for these changes through platforms such as the UNFCCC, the GCF, and other key institutions and processes, we can help to shift the balance of power and resources towards those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

## Case Study: Direct Access Policy Working Group

The Direct Access Policy Working Group (DAPWG) represents an ambitious vision for transforming how Global South countries and communities access international climate finance. This illustrative model demonstrates how coordinated policy advocacy and technical cooperation could fundamentally reshape the global climate finance architecture to better serve frontline communities.

The DAPWG concept builds upon the demonstrated success of Global South coalitions in influencing international climate policy. The Least Developed Countries Group and Alliance of Small Island States have shown how coordinated advocacy can secure meaningful policy changes, such as commitments to double adaptation finance at COP26. Similarly, the Climate Vulnerable Forum's sustained diplomatic engagement has elevated Global South priorities in international climate finance discussions.

Drawing from these achievements, DAPWG would establish a comprehensive framework for advancing direct access to climate finance. The model envisions expanding proven approaches like the Green Climate Fund's Enhanced Direct Access pilot, which has enabled Pacific Island nations to streamline approval processes for community-led projects. It would build upon successes like Senegal's Centre de Suivi Ecologique, which demonstrates how national institutions can effectively manage international climate funds.

The transformation DAPWG envisions goes beyond merely improving existing mechanisms. Rwanda's pioneering work as one of Africa's first Direct Access Entities shows how reformed accreditation procedures could recognize diverse institutional capacities while maintaining high standards. Bangladesh's Local Government Initiative on Climate Change fund demonstrates the effectiveness of devolved decision-making in ensuring resources reach frontline communities. Ethiopia's CRGE Facility proves that national systems can successfully manage climate finance while maintaining strong accountability.

Through coordinated advocacy and technical support, DAPWG would work to institutionalize these successful approaches across the international climate finance architecture. The model draws inspiration from Costa Rica's National Climate Change Financing Strategy and Indonesia's Environmental Fund Management Agency, which have created comprehensive frameworks for direct access. Similarly, Namibia's Environmental Investment Fund shows how national institutions can meet international standards while maintaining deep community connections.

This transformation would require sustained engagement at multiple levels. The South African National Biodiversity Institute's effective management of adaptation projects demonstrates the technical capacity that exists within Global South institutions. Jamaica's climate finance strategy provides a template for systematic approaches to accessing international funds. By connecting and amplifying these capacities, DAPWG would work to reshape the fundamental structure of climate finance flows.

The potential impact of such coordinated action is significant. Analysis of current direct access achievements suggests that a comprehensive policy framework could mobilize over \$500 million in new community-controlled climate finance. More importantly, it would establish permanent pathways for frontline communities to access and manage climate resources through their own institutions.

While DAPWG remains an illustrative model, it represents an achievable vision for transforming international climate finance. By building upon proven approaches and successful initiatives, while maintaining unwavering commitment to community leadership and control, such coordinated policy advocacy could help create the enabling conditions for truly transformative climate finance. The examples highlighted here demonstrate not just what is possible, but what is already emerging through the determined efforts of Global South institutions and communities.

## Mandate X: Resource Movement-Building



### OVERVIEW: Resource Movement-Building

Transforming climate finance and building a just and sustainable future requires a strong and vibrant movement of frontline communities and allied organizations working together for systemic change. Resourcing movement building means providing the financial, technical, and human resources needed to support grassroots organizing, capacity building, and coalition building at all levels. This includes investing in the leadership development of young people, women, and other marginalized groups, as well as creating spaces for cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration and solidarity. This mandate is grounded in the understanding that social movements are the driving force behind transformative change, and that they require sustained and flexible support to achieve their goals.

The challenge of building movement power for climate finance transformation is uniquely complex. We must bridge diverse constituencies – from rural farmers to urban organizers, from traditional leaders to technical experts – while maintaining coherence and shared purpose. Most importantly, we must build power that is both deep enough to create lasting change and nimble enough to seize immediate opportunities.

Ultimately, the success of any effort to transform climate finance will depend on the strength and resilience of the social movements and grassroots organizations that are leading the charge. This means that, in addition to building the technical and institutional capacities needed to access and manage climate finance, we also need to invest in the leadership, strategy, and collective power of frontline communities and their allies.

One key aspect of this work is supporting the development of new and emerging leaders from frontline communities, especially from historically marginalized groups like women, youth, and Indigenous peoples. This means creating opportunities for these leaders to build their skills, knowledge, and networks, and to take on increasing levels of responsibility and decision-making power within their organizations and movements.

It also means investing in the long-term, core capacities of grassroots organizations and movements, rather than just project-specific or issue-based support. This includes things like:

- Providing flexible, multi-year funding that enables organizations to invest in their own strategic priorities and organizational development, rather than just chasing short-term grants or contracts.
- Supporting the development of movement-wide infrastructure and coordination mechanisms, such as regional alliances, learning networks, and shared communications and advocacy platforms.
- Investing in the healing, resilience, and regenerative practices that enable frontline communities to sustain their work over the long haul, in the face of ongoing trauma, oppression, and burnout.

Another key aspect of movement building is cultivating a shared analysis and narrative that can unite different sectors and communities around a common vision and strategy for just and equitable climate action. This means creating spaces for dialogue, learning, and collaboration across different social movements and sectors, and building alliances and coalitions that can mobilize broad-based support for transformative change.

For example, in the United States, the proposed [Green New Deal](#) has emerged as a powerful framework for uniting climate, economic, and social justice movements around a shared vision of a just and sustainable future. By calling for a massive public investment in clean energy, green jobs, and community resilience, alongside a commitment to racial and economic justice, the Green New Deal has helped to build new alliances and coalitions across labor, environmental, and community organizations.

At the global level, the [People's Demands for Climate Justice](#), developed through a participatory process led by grassroots organizations and social movements from around the world, offer a similar framework for uniting diverse struggles around a common agenda. The demands call for a range of transformative measures, from the respect for Indigenous rights and sovereignty to the equitable sharing of global resources, and have been endorsed by over 150 organizations and movements from more than 60 countries.



As we look to build the kind of broad-based, intersectional movements that can drive transformative change in climate finance and beyond, we should be guided by a set of key principles and practices, such as:

- Centering the leadership and priorities of frontline communities and historically marginalized groups in the design and implementation of climate action, and ensuring that they have meaningful decision-making power and ownership over the process.
- Developing shared narratives and frameworks that can unite different sectors and communities around a common vision and strategy for just and equitable climate action, while also honoring the diversity and autonomy of different struggles and contexts.
- Building the long-term, core capacities of grassroots organizations and movements, and investing in the leadership development and regenerative practices that can sustain their work over the long haul.
- Cultivating a culture of solidarity, mutual aid, and collective care within and between social movements, and creating spaces for healing, learning, and collaboration across different sectors and communities.

Through incorporating these principles and practices into our movements and organizations, we can build the kind of resilient, adaptive, and transformative social infrastructure that is needed to drive systemic change in climate finance and beyond. And by doing so, we can help to create a world in which all people and communities have the power, resources, and support they need to thrive in the face of the climate crisis and other global challenges.

Three key dimensions of movement-building emerge from successful efforts across the diaspora: 1) Build global networks with local roots; 2) Deepen local power; and 3) Connect technical and movement strategy.

Global coordination for climate finance transformation requires a fundamentally different approach than previous efforts. Rather than prioritizing technical alignment or centralized control, we must build networks that strengthen rather than weaken local power. This means creating infrastructure for coordination that reflects our values and serves our liberation goals.

Key Elements of Effective Networks:

- Regional coordination hubs that honor local leadership while enabling collaboration
- Cross-border learning exchanges that build lasting relationships while sharing knowledge
- Shared advocacy platforms that amplify community voices while maintaining distinct identities
- Resource pooling mechanisms that build collective power while protecting local autonomy

The West African Climate Finance Hub in Accra demonstrates this approach in practice, connecting traditional leaders, youth activists, and technical experts across six countries while ensuring each community maintains control over its resources and decisions.

While global coordination is crucial, lasting transformation must be rooted in strong local organizing. Our approach to community organizing reflects sophisticated understanding of how to build power from the ground up:

## Core Strategies:

- Base building that develops leadership within affected communities
- Technical capacity development that maintains community control
- Campaign support that enables rapid response to local opportunities
- Infrastructure building that ensures long-term sustainability

The Southern Africa Climate Finance Network shows how this approach enables communities to:

- Influence national policy while maintaining local accountability
- Build new institutions while strengthening existing ones
- Coordinate regionally while preserving autonomy
- Develop technical expertise while protecting cultural wisdom

The transformation of climate finance requires us to bridge technical expertise with movement power in new ways. Rather than treating these as separate domains, we must develop approaches that integrate technical and movement strategy:

## Integration Approaches:

- Technical training programs that build movement consciousness.
- Policy development processes that center community wisdom.
- Research and analysis that serves movement goals.
- Innovation that strengthens rather than weakens collective power.

This integration of technical and movement strategy becomes particularly crucial as we engage with rapidly evolving technologies. While technology offers powerful tools for transformation, we must ensure it serves rather than supplants our liberation goals.

## Case Study: West African Climate Finance Academy

The West African Climate Finance Academy (WACFA) represents an ambitious vision for how investment in movement building could catalyze transformative change in climate finance. This illustrative model demonstrates how existing capacity building initiatives could be expanded into a comprehensive program for developing grassroots climate finance leadership.

The WACFA concept builds upon successful regional training initiatives already established in West Africa. The Pan African Climate Justice Alliance's Climate Justice Summer School has demonstrated the effectiveness of combining technical training with movement building, having trained over 1,000 community leaders across Africa. Similarly, the West African Alliance on Carbon Markets and Climate Finance provides targeted capacity building that strengthens regional expertise in climate finance.

Drawing from these achievements, WACFA envisions a more comprehensive approach to developing climate finance leadership. The model takes inspiration from the Economic Community of West African States' pioneering work in regional coordination, while imagining deeper integration of grassroots organizations and community leaders. The success of programs like Ghana's Climate Innovation Center, which has supported hundreds of community enterprises, shows the potential for scaled capacity building.

The transformation WACFA envisions goes beyond traditional technical training. Senegal's successful experience with direct access to the Adaptation Fund demonstrates how building local technical capacity can enhance community control over climate resources. Nigeria's work on green bonds and sustainable finance provides templates for innovative approaches that could be shared across the region.

Through a combination of workshops, mentoring, and peer learning, WACFA would strengthen community leadership while building technical expertise. The Africa Climate Change Fund's success in supporting community-based adaptation projects shows how local knowledge can be effectively combined with climate finance mechanisms. The West African Civil Society Forum's advocacy training programs demonstrate effective approaches to building movement power.

This model draws particular inspiration from successful grassroots climate initiatives in the region. Mali's decentralized climate funds show how community institutions can effectively manage climate resources when given proper support. Burkina Faso's integration of traditional knowledge into climate planning provides lessons for culturally-grounded approaches to capacity building.

While WACFA remains an illustrative example, West Africa's experience with climate finance capacity building provides concrete evidence that transformative approaches are possible. The regional achievements highlighted here demonstrate not just the need for expanded training and support, but the existing foundation of expertise and leadership upon which more comprehensive programs could build.

Through this coordinated approach to movement building and technical training, the region could develop new generations of climate finance leaders deeply rooted in community needs and priorities. The model shows how existing capacity building successes could be amplified through new institutional forms that advance genuine transformation rather than merely improving current systems.

## The Way Forward

### Future Directions and Enabling Conditions

The 10 mandates provide a comprehensive framework for transforming climate finance through a Black Liberation lens. However, realizing these mandates in practice will require a concerted effort to create the enabling conditions—the political, economic, social, and technological ecosystems—that can support and sustain this transformation over the long term.

These recommendations draw from two complementary sources. First, we examine lessons from existing initiatives that demonstrate successful approaches to community-controlled climate finance. Second, we consider insights from our illustrative models, which show how these proven approaches could be enhanced and scaled. This combination of practical experience and aspirational vision helps us chart achievable pathways to transformation.



Real progress in transforming climate finance is evident in specific achievements: the Africa NDC Hub's mobilization of \$1 billion, Kenya's County Climate Change Funds' successful community governance models, and Ethiopia's integration of traditional knowledge in climate planning. Building on these foundations, our illustrative models suggest pathways to expand impact, such as PACFA's vision for regional coordination and WACFN's approach to capacity building.

Enabling conditions—from technology and innovation to cultural preservation to strategic pathways for change—are not separate from or additional to the mandates, but rather integral to their successful implementation. They represent the critical infrastructures, capacities, and environments needed to translate the vision and values of the mandates into tangible, lasting impact.

For example, the mandate to build Black-led autonomous financial infrastructure (Mandate 4) cannot be fully realized without the development of new technologies and platforms that enable community ownership, transparency, and accountability (Technology and Innovation). Similarly, the mandate to honor traditional knowledge systems (Mandate 3) requires the creation of legal, cultural, and educational frameworks that can protect and promote this knowledge, while also allowing for its dynamic evolution and application (Cultural Preservation and Evolution).

At the same time, the enabling conditions are not just about supporting individual mandates in isolation, but about creating a holistic, integrated environment for transformative change. The strategic pathways and timelines outlined in this section provide a roadmap for how the different pieces of this ecosystem can come together over time, leveraging near-term opportunities and building towards longer-term, systemic transformation.

For instance, the immediate actions proposed for 2025-2026, such as launching a global Black climate finance network and establishing regional training centers, lay the groundwork for the kind of coordination, collaboration, and capacity building needed to advance all 10 mandates. Meanwhile, the medium-term developments envisioned for 2027-2028, such as scaling community-controlled funds and advocating for policy reforms, build on this foundation to create a more enabling environment for the mandates to take root and flourish.

Ultimately, the future directions and enabling conditions are about creating a world in which the mandates are not just possible, but inevitable. They are about building the power, resilience, and creativity of Black communities to shape their own destinies, and to lead the way towards a more just, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

This is not a linear or predetermined path, but one that will require ongoing experimentation, adaptation, and course-correction. It will require us to be attentive to the changing political, economic, and ecological landscapes, and to be nimble and responsive in our strategies and tactics. And it will require us to stay grounded in the values and relationships that animate this work - the deep love, trust, and solidarity that bind us together as a movement.

By embracing these enabling conditions as an integral part of our vision and strategy, we can create the conditions for the mandates to take flight, and for a new era of climate finance to emerge: one that is grounded in the wisdom, resilience, and innovation of Black communities across the diaspora. One that honors the sacredness and abundance of the living world that sustains us all. And one that brings us closer to the liberated future we all deserve.

As we work to transform climate finance, we must harness the power of new technologies and innovations in ways that prioritize the needs, leadership, and wisdom of frontline communities.

While technological “advances” have often served as instruments of extraction and oppression, our communities have consistently demonstrated remarkable creativity in repurposing and reimagining technologies to serve liberation goals. As traditional climate finance channels face potential disruption, it becomes even more crucial to develop approaches that ensure technology strengthens community control and cultural wisdom.

#### Key Principles and Practices:

To effectively navigate the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging technologies in the context of climate finance, we must be guided by a set of core principles and practices that center the needs, rights, and agency of frontline communities.

- **Community Ownership and Control:** Frontline communities must have meaningful ownership, control, and decision-making power over the design, development, and deployment of new technologies and financial innovations. This is essential for ensuring that these tools serve the interests of communities rather than perpetuating extractive or oppressive dynamics.
- **Openness, Transparency, and Accessibility:** Prioritize technologies and innovations that are open, transparent, and accessible, enabling greater decentralization, democratization, and community ownership of data and resources. This helps to level the playing field and reduce dependencies on external actors or proprietary systems.
- **Capacity Building:** Build the technical and institutional capacities of frontline communities and their organizations to engage with and shape new technologies and financial innovations, rather than relying on external experts or intermediaries. This empowers communities to be active participants and decision-makers in the development and deployment of these tools.
- **Safeguards and Accountability:** Develop robust safeguards, accountability mechanisms, and redress procedures to mitigate potential risks and harms, ensuring that technologies and innovations align with the rights, needs, and priorities of frontline communities. This is crucial for preventing unintended consequences and ensuring that these tools are used in service of liberation and justice. By grounding our approach in these principles and practices, we can work to ensure that the technologies and innovations we deploy are not only effective and scalable but also equitable, accountable, and transformative in their impact.

#### Technology Supporting Policy Implementation:

To effectively implement the recommended policy recommendations and frameworks, it is crucial to develop and deploy technologies that can support and enable community-controlled climate finance. Community-controlled technology can play a key role in operationalizing policies and practices related to: 1) direct access; 2) knowledge sovereignty; and 3) financial autonomy.

#### **Principle in Action: Envisioning Transformative Technology for Community-Controlled Finance**

The Pan-African Digital Commons (PADC) represents an ambitious vision for how digital technology could transform community-controlled climate finance. This illustrative model demonstrates how emerging technologies could be adapted to strengthen rather than undermine traditional governance systems and community control.

The PADC concept builds upon significant digital innovations already emerging across Africa. Kenya's M-AKIBA platform pioneered mobile-only government bonds, demonstrating how digital tools can democratize financial access. Rwanda's environmental services payment system shows how technology can reinforce community institutions. Ethiopia's Digital ID program has expanded financial inclusion while protecting privacy rights. Together, these innovations suggest the potential for a comprehensive digital infrastructure that could enable communities to pool and manage climate finance resources while maintaining local sovereignty.

The model envisions expanding these proven approaches through several key innovations: digital voting systems that mirror traditional assembly practices, transparent fund tracking that respects cultural protocols while meeting compliance standards, and decentralized resource-sharing platforms that strengthen local autonomy. While PADC remains illustrative, Africa's demonstrated leadership in digital financial innovation provides concrete evidence that such transformative approaches are both possible and necessary for community-controlled climate finance.

#### Direct Access Mechanisms:

- **Digital identity systems** that recognize traditional governance structures can help to ensure that climate finance flows are accountable to and aligned with community decision-making processes.
- **Automated compliance tools** that simplify access while maintaining accountability can help to reduce barriers to entry for frontline communities while still ensuring responsible use of funds.
- **Smart contract systems that enforce community benefit** requirements can help to ensure that climate finance investments deliver tangible outcomes for communities.
- **Integrated impact tracking** that combines traditional and conventional metrics can provide a more holistic and culturally-grounded approach to measuring and evaluating the success of climate finance initiatives.

#### Knowledge Sovereignty Protection:

- **Distributed databases protecting traditional knowledge** while enabling controlled sharing can help to ensure that frontline communities maintain ownership and control over their cultural heritage and intellectual property.
- **Digital rights management systems ensuring community control** over intellectual property can help to prevent the misappropriation or exploitation of traditional knowledge by external actors.
- **Blockchain-based verification of traditional practices** and their outcomes can help to validate and valorize Indigenous and local knowledge systems.
- **Secure platforms for cross-community knowledge exchange** can facilitate the sharing and scaling of best practices and innovations across different contexts.

### Financial Autonomy Tools:

- **Community-controlled digital banking platforms** can provide access to financial services and resources that are tailored to the needs and priorities of frontline communities.
- **Peer-to-peer lending systems based on traditional mutual aid** practices can help to strengthen community resilience and reduce dependencies on external financial institutions.
- **Digital cooperative ownership structures** can enable collective ownership and governance of community assets and enterprises.
- **Cross-border payment systems** independent of traditional banking can facilitate the flow of resources and support across different communities and contexts.

By developing and deploying these kinds of technologies in service of policy implementation, we can help to create the enabling conditions for community-controlled climate finance to thrive and scale.

### Indigenous Innovation Systems:

Indigenous and frontline communities have long been at the forefront of innovation, developing sophisticated knowledge systems and practices for managing and adapting to complex social-ecological challenges. As we work to transform climate finance, it is crucial to recognize, valorize, and build upon these Indigenous innovation systems, rather than treating them as merely historical or marginal.

Our communities are actively adapting and evolving these systems to address contemporary climate challenges. For example:

#### Ethiopian Water Management Innovation:

- Traditional highland water systems digitally mapped and monitored, demonstrating how Indigenous knowledge can be integrated with modern technologies to support climate adaptation and resilience.
- Community governance practices encoded in smart contracts, showing how traditional decision-making processes can be formalized and automated to ensure accountability and transparency.
- Indigenous ecological knowledge integrated into prediction models, illustrating how local and scientific knowledge systems can be braided together to improve the accuracy and relevance of climate forecasting.
- Real-time impact tracking combining scientific and traditional metrics, demonstrating how Indigenous ways of knowing and evaluating success can be valorized alongside conventional approaches.

#### West African Agricultural Systems:

- Traditional farming practices validated through distributed ledger technology, showing how Indigenous agroecological knowledge can be verified and valorized using emerging technologies.
- Communal land management rights secured through digital registries, illustrating how traditional tenure systems can be formalized and protected using digital tools.

- Indigenous seed preservation knowledge protected through encrypted databases, demonstrating how traditional knowledge can be safeguarded and shared using secure digital platforms.
- Community-controlled ecological monitoring and verification systems, showing how Indigenous communities can lead and shape the development of environmental monitoring technologies and practices.

These examples demonstrate how Indigenous innovation systems are not relics of the past, but rather living, evolving bodies of knowledge and practice that have immense relevance and value for addressing contemporary climate challenges. By centering and supporting these systems, we can help to ensure that climate finance transformation is grounded in the wisdom, agency, and self-determination of frontline communities.

#### Risks and Safeguards:

While technology offers immense potential for transforming climate finance, it also poses significant risks that must be carefully navigated, such as data privacy violations, algorithmic bias and discrimination, surveillance, and monopolization by powerful actors.

To mitigate these risks, we must develop robust safeguards and accountability mechanisms that prioritize the rights and interests of frontline communities, such as:

- Establishing clear protocols for data ownership, access, and control;
- Creating participatory governance structures that give communities a real say in how their data is collected, used, and shared;
- Adopting principles like OCAP (ownership, control, access, and possession) for Indigenous data sovereignty; and
- Implementing guidelines for equitable and inclusive AI that prioritize the needs and voices of marginalized communities and ensure transparency, accountability, and redress mechanisms.

By following these principles and practices, we can ensure that the technologies and innovations deployed to transform climate finance are effective, scalable, equitable, accountable, and transformative in their impact, ultimately strengthening community control and cultural wisdom.

As we work to transform climate finance, we must also grapple with the deep cultural and spiritual dimensions of the climate crisis, and the ways in which our responses to it are shaped by our values, worldviews, and ways of being in relationship to the Earth and each other.

For many frontline communities, especially Indigenous peoples, the climate crisis is not just a technical or economic challenge, but an existential threat to their cultures, languages, and ways of life. The extractive, exploitative logic of the fossil fuel economy is not just destroying the planet's ecosystems and atmosphere, but also eroding the cultural and spiritual foundations that have sustained these communities for generations.

At the same time, frontline communities are also drawing on their cultural heritage and ancestral knowledge to develop new, regenerative solutions to the climate crisis. From agroecology and community forestry to renewable energy and solidarity economies, these solutions are rooted in a deep understanding of the interdependence and reciprocity between humans and nature, and a commitment to protecting and revitalizing the cultural and spiritual practices that have enabled these communities to thrive in the face of adversity.



As we work to transform climate finance, we must therefore find ways to support and amplify these community-led solutions, and to create spaces for cultural preservation, expression, and evolution. This means:

- Recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and other frontline communities to self-determination, cultural heritage, and free, prior, and informed consent in all climate finance policies and projects.
- Prioritizing funding and support for community-led initiatives that are grounded in traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and spiritual values, and that contribute to the revitalization and resilience of these cultures.
- Creating spaces and platforms for cultural exchange, learning, and collaboration among frontline communities, and for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and practices.
- Supporting the documentation, archiving, and sharing of cultural heritage and ancestral knowledge related to climate resilience and adaptation, using appropriate technologies and protocols that respect community ownership

Creating alternative financial systems therefore requires more than technical innovation – it demands cultural transformation that honors our traditions while enabling their evolution to meet contemporary challenges.

Traditional financial practices across the African diaspora offer sophisticated models for managing collective resources, sharing risk, and building intergenerational wealth. These practices aren't historical artifacts but living traditions that continue to evolve and adapt:

Key Systems and Their Modern Applications:

- West African susu systems informing new cooperative banking models
- Traditional land management practices guiding climate investment criteria
- Indigenous risk-sharing approaches shaping community insurance programs

The Global Black Cultural Finance Registry demonstrates how to protect and evolve these practices:

- Documentation systems that maintain community control over knowledge
- Protocols for appropriate sharing across communities
- Frameworks for adapting traditions to new contexts
- Standards for measuring cultural impact of financial innovations

The challenge is supporting the healthy evolution of tradition to meet contemporary dilemmas.

Two initiatives demonstrate successful approaches:

Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (IPACC):

- Brings together traditional leaders and climate experts
- Integrates indigenous weather forecasting into climate planning
- Created standards for cultural preservation in adaptation projects
- Built regional frameworks for measuring indigenous knowledge impact

Africa Climate Change Fund Community Projects:

- Partners traditional authorities with technical implementation teams
- Developed financing models blending cultural governance with modern tools
- Created metrics combining traditional and conventional success measures
- Established intergenerational knowledge transfer systems in Ghana and Senegal

Traditional metrics fail to capture the cultural dimensions of financial transformation. Our approach includes:

Cultural Vitality Indicators:

- Strength of traditional decision-making processes
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer
- Community control over cultural resources
- Cultural innovation and adaptation

This cultural foundation provides the basis for long-term transformation. As we look toward the future, we must ensure our strategies maintain this deep connection to cultural wisdom while building new systems at scale.

Strategic Pathways to Transformation

The transformation of climate finance through a Black Liberation lens requires coordinated action across multiple timeframes. Current initiatives demonstrate important progress: Ghana's direct access programs show how national institutions can effectively manage climate resources; Senegal's decentralized climate funds prove that communities can successfully oversee adaptation investments; and regional networks across Africa demonstrate the power of coordinated advocacy.

Building upon these achievements, we envision more comprehensive approaches to transformation. The illustrative models presented in this paper – from regional coordination networks to integrated digital platforms – show how existing successes could be scaled and enhanced. While these models are conceptual, they are grounded in demonstrated capabilities and proven approaches.

Several factors shape our strategic context:

- Accelerating climate impacts requiring rapid response;
- Evolving financial landscapes creating new opportunities;
- Growing movement power building momentum for change; and
- Persistent systemic resistance demanding sustained effort.

## Immediate Actions (2025-2026): Building Foundations for Transformation

This phase focuses on establishing crucial infrastructure, building on existing achievements like Ghana's direct access programs, while introducing new coordination mechanisms and demonstrating proof of concept. With major climate funds being deployed globally and new financial structures emerging, we must act decisively while building thoughtfully. The next two years present critical opportunities to establish infrastructure and demonstrate proof of concept for liberation-centered climate finance. With major climate funds being deployed globally and new financial structures emerging, we must act decisively while building thoughtfully.

### Global Coordination

- **Launch Global Black Climate Finance Network:** Building on existing relationships, we will formally establish a network connecting Black-led financial institutions, movement organizations, and technical experts across the diaspora. This network will serve as both a practical resource-sharing platform and a collective voice in international climate finance debates.
- **Establish regional coordination hubs:** Starting with centers in West Africa, the Caribbean, and the U.S. South, these hubs will provide physical and virtual spaces for communities to collaborate, share knowledge, and build collective power. Each hub will be rooted in local cultural contexts while connected to global movement infrastructure.

### Local Building

- **Strengthen existing institutions:** Provide technical assistance and capacity support to Black-led credit unions, community development financial institutions, and cooperative financial networks to help them access and deploy climate finance effectively. This includes developing new climate-focused financial products and governance models.
- **Create demonstration projects:** Launch at least ten community-controlled climate finance initiatives across different contexts—from urban renewable energy projects to rural adaptation funds—that can serve as learning laboratories and models for scaling.

## Medium-Term Development (2027-2028)

The 2027-2030 projections draw from proven approaches but represent aspirational targets, which focus on growing successful models while building systems for broader transformation. As initial projects demonstrate success, we'll focus on replication and adaptation across contexts.

### Systems Building

- **Scale successful models:** Take lessons from initial demonstration projects to develop replicable frameworks that can be adapted across contexts. Support at least 50 new community-controlled climate finance initiatives using these models..
- **Develop new institutions:** Establish specialized institutions needed for scale, including a Black-led climate investment bank, regional technical assistance providers, and training centers for financial leadership.
- **Create support infrastructure:** Establish regional technical assistance hubs, knowledge sharing platforms, and capacity building programs that enable communities to effectively manage and deploy climate finance.
- **Build movement power:** Strengthen networks of community-controlled financial institutions while developing shared advocacy platforms for systemic change.

## Transform Policy

- **Advance regulatory changes:** Building on early successes, advocate for policy changes that enable community-controlled finance to flourish, from local ordinances to international frameworks. Focus on removing barriers to community control while creating supportive infrastructure.
- **Create enabling environments:** Develop policy frameworks that recognize and protect traditional financial systems while supporting their evolution and growth.
- **Build new frameworks:** Establish regulatory structures that center community control and cultural preservation in climate finance.
- **Establish standards:** Create community-defined metrics and accountability systems for measuring success in climate finance transformation.

## Long-Term Vision (2028-2031): Building Lasting Transformation

The long-term transformation of climate finance requires more than just scaling current alternatives—it demands fundamental shifts in how financial systems operate. This phase of work focuses on converting initial successes and learned experiences into lasting systemic change.

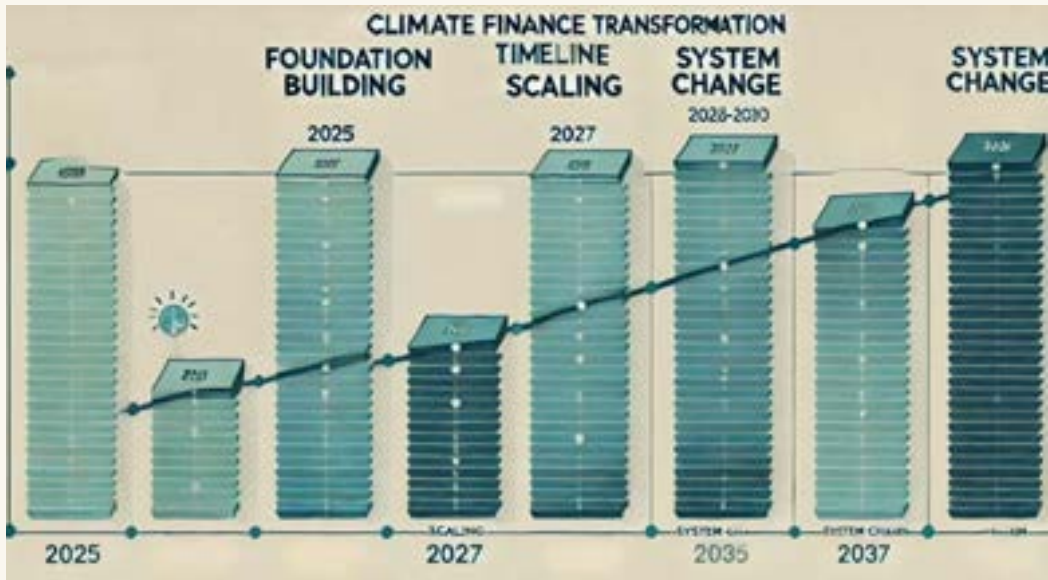
### Systemic Change - Moving from Alternative Models to New Systems:

- **Transform financial systems:** Move from creating alternatives within existing systems to fundamentally reshaping how climate finance operates. This includes establishing new international financial architecture that centers community control and ecological wisdom.
- **Create alternative models:** Demonstrate that community-controlled climate finance can operate at scale, offering real alternatives to extractive models. By 2030, aim to have at least \$1trillion under democratic community control through these new structures.

## Movement Power

- **Strengthen global networks:** Build robust movement infrastructure that can sustain long-term transformation while responding to immediate needs and opportunities. This includes training thousands of new leaders and establishing permanent movement institutions.
- **Deepen local control:** Ensure that growth in scale strengthens rather than diminishes community control, with clear accountability mechanisms and participatory governance at all levels.

As we advance this agenda, success depends not just on what we do but on how we do it. Every action must strengthen rather than weaken community control, build rather than deplete cultural wisdom, and advance rather than impede broader liberation goals. Through coordinated action and unwavering commitment to these principles, we can build financial systems that serve life, honor culture, and ensure a thriving future for generations to come.



**Fig 4. Implementation Pathways: From Local Innovation to Global Transformation. Strategic roadmap showing progression from local innovation to systemic transformation while maintaining community control and cultural integrity.**

## In Conclusion

### From Vision to Action— Building a Black Liberation-Centered Climate Finance Future

The 10 mandates provide a comprehensive framework for transforming climate finance through a Black Liberation lens. From reimagining the very purpose and logic of climate finance, to building autonomous, Black-led financial institutions, to measuring success holistically, these mandates chart a path towards a more just, equitable, and effective climate finance system that can meet the urgent challenges of our time.



As we stand at this critical juncture in human history, the transformation of climate finance through a Black Liberation lens offers more than a pathway to addressing climate change—it presents an opportunity to fundamentally reimagine and rebuild the financial systems that shape our world. The illustrative innovations emerging from Black communities worldwide, such as the Pan-African Climate Finance Alliance and the real-world successes of the Black Belt to Sahel Initiative, demonstrate that alternative futures are not just possible but already emerging. Our communities are building new models of finance that serve life rather than extraction, that build collective wealth rather than individual accumulation, that restore rather than deplete.

Realizing this vision will require bold action and sustained commitment from all sectors of society. International climate finance institutions must fundamentally reshape how resources flow, transforming governance structures to center affected communities, recognizing traditional knowledge systems, and building new accountability mechanisms. National governments have the power and responsibility to create enabling environments for community-controlled finance by establishing legal frameworks, creating dedicated climate funds, and supporting cross-border collaboration. Local and regional bodies stand at the crucial intersection between community innovation and broader transformation and can help ground international climate finance in community wisdom and control through participatory governance mechanisms, demonstration projects, and knowledge exchange platforms.

For the climate justice movement, this moment calls for deepened solidarity and coordinated action. By connecting community innovations, building shared advocacy platforms, and strengthening movement infrastructure, we can ensure that climate finance serves liberation goals. The growing network of Black-led climate finance institutions shows how we can build power at multiple scales while maintaining cultural integrity.

The path ahead will not be easy. We face entrenched interests, systemic barriers, and the urgency of the climate timeline. But we also carry the strength of generations of resistance and innovation, the power of global Black solidarity, and the creativity of communities in motion. The solutions we need already exist, rooted in the wisdom, resilience, and innovation of Black communities around the world.

Our task now is to learn from, amplify, and invest in these solutions, and to build the political will and people power needed to make them the norm rather than the exception. Specific opportunities for engagement include participating in regional climate finance working groups, supporting local demonstration projects, and contributing to movement knowledge exchange.

Our analysis and conclusions serve as an invitation and a provocation to join the growing movement for Black Liberation and climate justice, and to put our collective resources and energy towards building a world where all people and communities can thrive. The time for incremental reform has long passed. The intersecting crises we face demand a radical and urgent transformation of our economic and financial systems.

By embracing the mandates and strategies we've put forth, and by centering the leadership and vision of Black communities across the diaspora, we can chart a new course towards a more just, equitable, and sustainable future for all. Let us rise to the challenge with the courage, creativity, and determination it demands, and let us do so with the fierce urgency of now.

Join us in building this future. The time is now.

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