



# Building Coalitions for Climate Justice: A Funders Roundtable

September 2017 | External Report





## Contents

- 1 Summary
- 2 Framing and Defining the Concept of Climate Justice
- 3 The Stark Realities of Climate Change Impacts
- 4 Building a Shared Understanding and Narrative
- 7 The Landscape of Opportunities for Collaboration
- 8 Annex 1 | Principles of Climate Justice
- 9 Annex 2 | Perspectives of Front Line Climate Justice Leaders: Detailed Comments

## Summary

In September 2017, four organizations convened a Climate Justice Funders Roundtable to explore opportunities to collaborate in support of rights-based, community-driven activities to address climate change. This event encouraged funders to explore intersections and begin to identify ways the philanthropic sector can have a transformative impact for those who face significant climate change impacts in their daily lives.

Climate justice is a framework for climate action that respects and protects human rights. Climate justice principles help ensure that climate policy development is transparent, participatory, and accountable, respects and protects human rights, and is gender sensitive. Moreover, climate change is a global development issue, and climate justice embodies both parts of a moral argument to act on climate change: being on the side of those who are suffering most, while also ensuring that they do not suffer again as the world takes action on climate change. Selina Neirok Leem from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Austin Ahmasuk from the Kingigin Inupiaq tribe in Alaska, and Agnes Leina from the Samburu community of Kenya each spoke poignantly about the severe impacts of climate change on their communities, and how they are responding as leaders using a climate justice approach. Several points raised in the meeting illustrated how people who are in the most vulnerable situations could be left behind as we transition to low-carbon economies.

Climate-related funding has historically been segmented into mitigation and adaptation. Climate justice represents a frame with the potential to integrate adaptation and mitigation, link them to other sustainable development issues, and bring in a critical element—the human rights element—that is often missing from both. The event considered the role of private donors in this space: how can

we best support community leaders and translate climate justice principles into grantmaking practice? Improvements include more concerted efforts to work across sectors, race, cultures, and class, and put the well-being of people and communities at the center of efforts. Participants also learned how the UN and other intergovernmental actors are increasingly understanding the importance of supporting communities to find their own solutions to environmental degradation, and reconciling conservation and growth.

Each funder shared their own programmatic areas that had existing or potential links to the concept of climate justice. These included Human Rights and Clean Energy; work on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Water and Food Security; Land and Resource Rights; Gender Issues and Women's Leadership; Climate Finance; Climate-Forced Displacement; and Voice, Empowerment, and Storytelling. The latter category comprises crucial cross-cutting areas of support that arose several times during the discussion.

The meeting ended by identifying upcoming moments when funders could gather again to continue the conversation in ways that foster building a community of practice. These include the California Climate Summit in September 2018, the Skoll World Forum in Oxford in April 2018, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April 2018, the UN High Level Political Forum in July in New York, the EDGE Funders Conference in April 2018 in New Orleans, and the upcoming UNFCCC meetings.

# Framing and Defining the Concept of Climate Justice

Heather McGray, Director of the Climate Justice Resilience Fund, led the dialogue by describing Climate Justice as an emerging field of practice within philanthropy. It intersects with many activities and areas, from the rights of indigenous peoples and women, to water, energy and community development, as well as a range of other issues and topics. This event was designed to explore these intersections together, and begin to identify ways the philanthropic sector can have a transformative impact for those who face climate change impacts day to day.

One of the main goals of the Climate Justice Resilience Fund, recently launched by the Oak Foundation, is raising awareness of the human dimensions of climate change and giving new resources to those on the front lines of climate change impacts. The new fund also seeks to link the main principles of climate justice—a human-centered approach, linking human rights and development to climate—with key concepts of climate resilience:

- A system's capacity to retain its function in the face of climate shocks and stressors,
- A community's ability to manage climate shocks, rebound, and continue on a path to sustainable development, and
- The ability to manage and adapt to long-term, "slow-onset" hazards, such as loss of ice or sea level rise.

In her opening remarks, Mary Robinson, Founder and President of the Mary Robinson Foundation Climate Justice, noted that she began her own climate justice journey over 10 years ago. Put simply, climate justice is a framework for climate action that respects and protects human rights. (MRFJ's Principles of Climate Justice are described more fully in Annex 1.) The concept of climate justice was developed with the support of experts in the fields of ethics, law, human rights, and development, and it is informed by climate and environmental science. Climate justice principles help ensure that climate policy development is transparent, participatory, and accountable, respects and protects human rights, and demonstrates

gender sensitivity. Following them will ensure that we share the burdens of climate change equitably, along with the benefits of the transition to a world powered by renewable energy.

As an example of the linkages, food security is being undermined by extreme weather events, which also threaten livelihoods and undermine people's abilities to live their lives securely. Climate change is a global development issue. It is now undermining, and risks reversing, hard-won development gains.

Climate justice embodies both parts of a moral argument to act on climate change: being on the side of those who are suffering most, while also ensuring that they do not suffer again as the world takes action on climate change. Put bluntly, we must all be alert to the real possibility that the people who are in the most vulnerable situations could be left behind as we transition to a low-carbon economy. On the flip side, a transition to zero carbon has multiple opportunities for people in developed and developing countries in terms of energy security, job creation, and greater resilience, if that transition is fair and respects human rights obligations.

The 1948 adoption of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights created shared values as an international community that bind us together and hold us accountable to each other. The transformational vision spelled out in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides us with a real opportunity to redouble this global normative approach. These agreements call for a collective journey shared by all the nations of the world to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. This new agenda envisages a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. Working together on climate justice allows us to build on what we have achieved to date, and forge a bright future for generations to come.

# The Stark Realities of Climate Change Impacts

Three individuals living on the frontlines of climate change oriented the rest of the participants to what they face on a daily basis, as well as what they are able to achieve using their own resources and support from funders.

**Selina Neirok Leem** is from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, located halfway between Hawaii and Australia in the Pacific. Until she was 16 and moved to Germany to attend high school, she spent her entire life on her home atoll, Majuro, the capital of the country. She grew up in a large family, influenced greatly by her grandparents who would tell her Marshallese stories and legends. After coming to Germany, Selina took on the role of climate change advocate for her country. Now a high school graduate, she continues actively in this role. She shared her perspectives through a very moving poem that will soon be published. A video of Selina reading her poem is available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1sYv5B\\_L7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1sYv5B_L7A)

**Austin Ahmasuk** is an advocate for the environment and for tribes in the Bering Strait region. He is a Kingigin Inupiaq from Nome, Alaska who works through the marine program at Kawerak.<sup>2</sup> Austin described the rapid pace of ice melt in his community: ice in all its forms is disappearing, and the permafrost is melting. Communities like Austin's depend upon the land and sea for their food, including birds, marine mammals, fish, and berries. The dramatic changes from temperature increase are affecting migratory species, and there is an increased threat from oil spills as vessel traffic increases. Climactic changes on the land mean new species like moose and beaver have appeared; in this traditionally treeless part of the world, willows and other trees are moving westward; in the ocean, fish, marine mammals, and other species are moving northward. To deal with such dramatic changes, strengthening communities, and expanding collaboration with indigenous groups, is crucial.

Austin's community characterizes today's rapid changes as disasters, but there are very limited resources to deal with them, and very few communities who have the capacity

to manage a climate justice resilience program. In the 1970s, with the discovery of oil and changes in laws and policies, Alaskan natives living in Alaska, with the exception of one reservation in the southeast, lost all of their rights due to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. With few rights, advocates like Austin face burnout—they are tasked with so much that it's difficult to enjoy a positive working relationship with state or federal agencies. These are challenges for climate change funders to consider in helping small communities, where a handful of people working in leadership roles get flooded with a whole range of responsibilities and issues.

**Agnes Leina** is the Founder and Executive Director of Il'laramatak Community Concerns, whose main objective is to restore dignity among indigenous peoples, with special emphasis on girls and women. Agnes is from Samburu County in northern Kenya. The Samburu community is a subset of the Maasai peoples who are mainly pastoralists and very traditional in their way of life. Agnes' family and community share a past in which, despite a lack of education, they never knew poverty; they had sufficient land, and knew where to find land where rain had fallen; and they could care for the sick. Climate change has brought on many hardships across these social and economic dimensions.

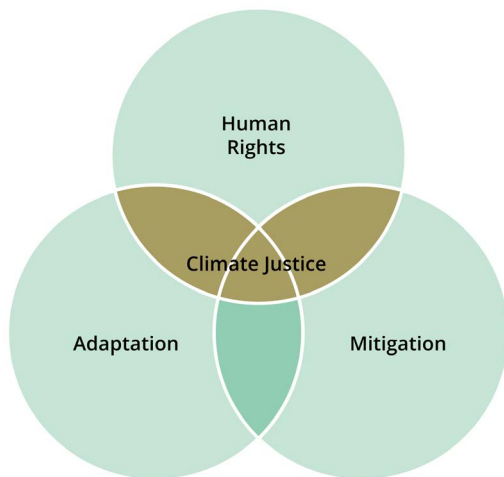
Agnes started her organization to address these issues. Land is being lost to mega-infrastructure projects planned under the African Union's Vision 2063 for Africa, the SDGs, and Kenya's Vision 2030, many of which were created to provide clean energy. But these take huge amounts of land, and communities are not informed in advance about how their movement will be curtailed. Environmental Impact Assessments are inadequate, and impacts on communities and animals are unknown. Il'laramatak Community Concerns has sensitized communities to their human rights and land rights—that's where climate justice comes in for them. They concentrate on community land rights, because people do not know they have rights to community land, and they build the capacity of the community to claim them. They have started their process in Kenya with the help of funders and the UN, and the next challenge is implementing this policy for work that extends from Kenya to Uganda and Ethiopia—demonstrating that their communities have the answers and the solutions. Agnes also appreciated “passing the baton from Mary to Selina—intergenerational knowledge. It's very powerful and very important for the continuity of the work that we are doing.”

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2. [www.kawerak.org/marine.html](http://www.kawerak.org/marine.html)

## Building a Shared Understanding and Narrative

Climate-related funding has historically been segmented into strict categories. At the broadest level, funders and grantees refer to mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (adjusting to the impacts of climate change). Both have included policy influencing, campaigning, and public awareness, as well as technical interventions. On the mitigation side this includes the development of renewable energy sources; on the adaptation side it includes climate-responsive agriculture and water projects. Climate justice represents a frame with the potential to integrate adaptation and mitigation, link them to other sustainable development issues, and bring in a critical element—the human rights element—that is often missing from both.



**Anne Henshaw, Program Officer – Environment Program/Marine Conservation, Arctic and North Pacific of the Oak Foundation** noted that the experiences of the speakers from highly-affected communities who joined this event beg the question of what the role of private donors is in this space. How can we best ensure that the community leaders whose perspectives inform this meeting are supported in ways that recognize and respect their contributions to addressing the climate crisis and

copied with the changes that confront them and their communities? How do we begin to translate the guiding principles that Mary Robinson has laid out into grantmaking practice?

Anne shared why the Oak Foundation decided to invest in the field of climate justice for both internal (how it aligns with their mission) and external reasons. Oak's investment strategy on climate change has been centered on the development of climate-progressive policies aimed at curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Yet as a foundation largely known for its work on social justice, the trustees increasingly recognized the importance of meeting the current and future needs of people most negatively affected by the impacts of climate change today. So beginning in 2014, the foundation developed a vision and a strategy for a more people-centered, rights-based approach to climate change aligned with much of the work across the foundation. Their vision and definition for climate justice recognizes that climate change has a disproportionate impact on certain key constituencies important to different programs of Oak, so one of the main goals of the initiative is to bring greater attention to the plight of such communities—in particular, youth, women, and indigenous peoples.

Oak chose these constituents because they are both the most vulnerable to climate impacts and have the greatest ability to catalyze new and innovative thinking in terms of coping with impacts and creating solutions. This reflects a real shift from a charity-based model of giving to 'victims of climate change' to one that emphasizes agency, and the belief that local communities are best positioned to develop their own solutions to the problems they face. Oak believes that strategies to mitigate greenhouse gases and adapt to climate change are interlinked, and both require support.

Crucially, this mirrored a fundamental shift in climate change philanthropy generally that followed the failure to produce a framework convention at the UNFCCC meeting in Copenhagen in 2009. Funders realized that rational scientific arguments do not move people to act on climate change, and moreover that the environmental community cannot carry this issue on their own. Two important and related course corrections relevant to climate justice are 1) a more concerted effort to work across sectors, race, cultures, and class is required, and 2) the well-being of people and communities must be at the center of any argument about addressing the problem of climate change.

Private foundations could start building a robust and diverse field of climate justice philanthropy, including: leading from behind (leaving program design to local grantees who understand best), relying on the power of experimentation, convening communities of practice, mobilizing resources, and influencing large scale public financing—and many of these are present in the community of funders working on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Climate Justice Resilience Fund provides an example of a fund seeking to align, leverage, and pool resources around a common approach or set of strategies, and it is poised to grow over the next four years, offering staffing and back office due diligence support as well as an opportunity to learn by doing together as a group of committed funders around a specific set of issues and outcomes.<sup>3</sup> Clearly no one foundation can tackle the enormity of the challenges we face alone—it requires building relationships, trust, a collaborative spirit, and creating a shared vision for what can be achieved. This convening is a step towards building that trust and vision.

**Karolina Mzyk, Foundation Policy Specialist at UNDP,** presented some information illustrating ways to reinforce the climate justice agenda within the Sustainable Development Goals. She shared a video about the Kuruwitu Conservation & Welfare Association, one of the winners of this year's Equator Prize, illustrating a growing trend of communities finding their own solutions to environmental degradation and reconciling conservation and growth.<sup>4</sup> Another example is work supported by the SDG Philanthropy Platform, a collaborative led by UNDP and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.<sup>5</sup> In India, with support from the Oak Foundation, the Platform team is working with the State of Jharkhand to strengthen implementation rights to forest land by Adivasi tribal women. A third example is work UNDP has done with the Government of Morocco and a network of over 200 NGOs, the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Alliance, which institutionalized CSO-government dialogue regarding CSO participation in COP22. The dialogue focused on defining the role of civil society as a key stakeholder in transitioning to the SDGs, and supports a legal framework for civil society participation and positioning vis-à-vis the government during important national discussions related to environmental issues.

## FUNDER RESPONSES

Reflecting on the comments from speakers, each funder spoke of their own programmatic work that has some relevance to the climate justice challenges and opportunities raised so far. It was clear that the case for climate justice was compelling to most participants, but their support for related, even overlapping, efforts fall into a diverse set of program areas. The organizers and many of the participants came away perceiving that, while other funders beyond Oak may not have a program area specifically called climate justice resilience or climate justice, there are many potential intersections, and more significantly, ways that a climate justice lens could lead funders to do their work differently, and potentially enable new collaborations. Major climate justice themes and potential collaborations that arose in the discussion included:

- **Human Rights and Clean Energy:** The group discussed the Lake Turkana case raised by Agnes and other instances where renewable energy projects have been associated with violations of communities' rights. Given the early stage of this industry and its exponential growth, there is a tremendous opportunity to develop safeguards and good practices now so that they are incorporated into the industry as it grows.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Climate justice crosses many of the goals and targets, both as an input into achieving the goals and as an outcome. Collaborations can grow in this area at the global, national, and local levels.
- **Water and Food Security:** Food and water, as the most basic human needs, are arenas through which climate change impacts touch vulnerable people most directly and most profoundly. They also represent issues where foundations have large and long-standing commitments, offering opportunities for support.
- **Land and Resource Rights:** The effects of climate change on land and ecosystems are beginning to change resource use patterns and management priorities, as is the need for cleaner sources of energy. Secure community land and resource rights, which provide the foundation for effective, community-led

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3. Successful efforts using this model include the Climate Land Use Alliance and the Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Learning Fund.

4. <http://www.equatorinitiative.org/2017/06/28/the-kuruwitu-conservation-welfare-association/>

5. [www.sdphilanthropy.org](http://www.sdphilanthropy.org)

resource management, become critical to resilience in this context. Several funders could see points of convergence between their work and a rights-oriented, climate justice approach.

- **Gender Issues and Women's Leadership:** Women are often disproportionately affected by climate change impacts, and women in affected communities are often in leadership roles in fighting for climate justice. There are opportunities to collaborate more intentionally on climate and gender from the local to the global level.
- **Climate Finance:** Large-scale funding for climate action has begun to flow following global commitments made in 2009 and 2015, but it does not yet reach the scale of the problem. Bringing a climate justice lens to this finance would ensure additional finance is committed and deployed, and that it supports grassroots-led solutions. Collaboration within philanthropy has the potential to shape this flow of funds.
- **Climate-Forced Displacement:** Some funders have begun to consider how to ensure protection of the rights of those forced by climate change to move from their homes. This is a serious and sensitive climate justice issue with a lot of work on the horizon.
- **Voice, Empowerment, and Storytelling:** The speakers clearly articulated the value of this kind of support, and many funders focus on this as a priority or as one programmatic area. Some funders saw opportunities to bring climate justice leaders and organizations more strongly into their work.

## SPEAKER REFLECTIONS

**Selina Leem** reflected on the importance of speaking to those people one doesn't typically speak to, and approaching them with a local perspective. She suggested drawing on local religious and other community leaders—they can use their own ways of getting people to educate themselves. She also noted other downsides of renewable energy in the Marshall Islands, such as limited knowledge of solar energy battery disposal.

**Agnes Leina** remarked further on the possible problems that clean energy can pose to rural communities, and how important it is to build the capacity of, and empower, local people. This happens through dialogue to ensure that all sides benefit.

**Mary Robinson** noted that the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre<sup>6</sup> alerted her more than a year ago of an increasing number of allegations of human rights abuse are coming in to them related to clean energy projects. This is a new industry that needs guidelines as the pressure to cut emissions grows, we will have to be on alert.

**Austin Ahmasuk** reminded participants that Alaska holds 225 tribes, about half the number of tribes in the US, who tend to view environmental organizations and foundations with a lot of skepticism. It takes a lot of work to build their trust, and passion for climate change impacts and environmental issues may require different approaches. They also have found partnerships are strengthened by contractual relationships.

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6. <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/climate-justice> In recent years, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre has received 94 allegations of abuse associated with renewable energy projects.



# The Landscape of Opportunities for Collaboration

Some of the participants' comments during the event revolved around returning to colleagues back at their foundations with new questions or recommendations. Examples are:

- Discussing potential negative impacts of green energy investments on local communities' land rights
- Reflecting on the rights perspective raised at this meeting, which hasn't previously been explicit in a foundation's resilience work
- Looking at what mitigation efforts lead to resilience and back to mitigation again, like working with grantees to create a climate-resilient field where drought insurance enabled farmers to plant millions of trees—identifying what types of horizontal supports to provide so that solutions can scale further
- Exploring non-monetary resources like storytelling
- Working together on the issue of climate finance: How can we get the marketplace to pivot and be included in these conversations? How can the program side influence the investing side, and move the trillions in capital markets parked in non-performing investments to not only do no harm, but act as capital in service of climate justice?
- Doing more on the divest/invest movement, aligning investments more with programmatic areas, and thinking more deeply about the human rights issues involved in green investments. What type of resources do we need to ensure the program side is having this conversation with investment side?

**Former Ambassador Dessina Williams of Grenada** mentioned this historic juncture that is capturing people's interest in a new way. How does philanthropy take advantage of this moment to go into climate justice and achievement of the SDGs? It's time for funders get it right, with philanthropy actors working together to support people's understanding of their rights, and identifying how this

can be spread in the future by communities using the normative SDG framework. RPA and UNDP offered to bring this work to the SDG Philanthropy Platform to spread the message. Related to this is the opportunity to work with the growing number of funders concerned with applying systems thinking and systems-level analysis and funding to consider how climate justice is an appropriate framework to adopt.

## UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

The meeting ended by identifying specific opportunities when funders can gather again with a more coordinated, climate justice-focused intent.

The **California Climate Summit** to be held on September 12-14, 2018 is an opportunity to recognize stakeholders and feature different approaches on the road to achieving the Paris Agreement goals. We could showcase the surge of action and momentum relevant to climate justice.

The **Skoll World Forum** in Oxford in April 2018 draws more than a thousand funders and social entrepreneurs and their supporters, and the Skoll team could consider hosting a funders' discussion or other session on climate justice.

The **UN High Level Political Forum** in July in New York is the annual UN gathering at which governments and other stakeholders take stock of progress on the SDGs at the national and global level. There was interest in organizing a side meeting on climate justice.

The EDGE Funders and Building Equity and Alignment for Impact (BEA-I) initiative are planning a **Just Transition Forum** in February 2018 in Jackson, Mississippi. This could be an opportunity to reach many funders with relevant programs, where labor, grassroots, "green groups", and funders can find common ground and strategize around Just Transition work, campaigns and policies.

The **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** in April 2018 will be an opportunity to connect with Indigenous leaders in Climate Justice as well as members of the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples.

## Annex 1 | Principles of Climate Justice

Climate justice links human rights and development to achieve a human-centered approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable people and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its impacts equitably and fairly. Climate justice is informed by science, responds to science and acknowledges the need for equitable stewardship of the world's resources. The draft principles were developed and discussed by the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice based on the common understanding of key principles, concepts and opportunities identified at a meeting of a small group of people from all parts of the world who have been working on climate justice issues. The meeting was supported by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in Pocantico in July 2011.

These principles are rooted in the frameworks of international and regional human rights law and do not require the breaking of any new ground on the part of

those who ought, in the name of climate justice, to be willing to take them on. They are:

- Respect and protect human rights
- Support the right to development
- Share benefits and burdens equitably
- Ensure that decisions on climate change are participatory, transparent and accountable
- Highlight gender equality and equity
- Harness the transformative power of education for climate stewardship
- Use effective partnerships to secure climate justice

More detailed descriptions of each of these dimensions of climate justice can be found at <https://www.mrfcj.org/principles-of-climate-justice/>.



## Annex 2 | Perspectives of Front Line Climate Justice Leaders: Detailed Comments

**Selina Neirok Leem** is an islander from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, located halfway between Hawaii and Australia in the Pacific. Until she was 16 and moved to Germany, where she attended high school, she spent her entire life on her home atoll, Majuro, the capital of the country. She grew up in a large family, influenced greatly by her grandparents who would tell her Marshallese stories and legends. After coming to Germany, Selina took on the role of a climate change advocate for her country, and recently graduated from high school, continues in this role. She shared her perspectives through a very moving poem that will soon be published. A video of Selina reading her poem is available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1sYv5B\\_L7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1sYv5B_L7A)

**Austin Ahmasuk** is a Marine Advocate, a Kingigin Inupiaq born and raised in Nome, Alaska. Since graduating from the University of Alaska, Austin has worked as an advocate for the environment and for tribes in the Bering Strait region. Presently working in the marine program at Kawerak ([www.kawerak.org/marine.html](http://www.kawerak.org/marine.html)), he advocates for local concerns to mitigate the potential impacts from shipping and climate change as global shipping fleets look to the Northern Sea Route and Northwest Passage. A life-long dogmusher, hunter, trapper, and fisherman, Austin draws upon his ancestral connection to land and sea for inspiration in his advocacy.

Austin described the rapid pace of ice melt in his community: ice in all of its forms is disappearing, whether it is permafrost, river ice, ocean ice, or lake ice. Austin's people have been witnessing global warming since the 1950s. The permafrost is melting, and in this traditionally treeless part of the world, willows and other trees are newly moving westward into his homelands. Climactic changes on the land mean new species like moose and beaver; on the ocean front it has brought pelagic species northward. The Northern Bering Sea, where Austin comes from, is probably going to be transitioning to a pelagic system by 2030 or 2040. In early June this year, at the latitude of approximately 60 degrees north, their researchers measured ocean temperatures in excess of 12 degrees

Celsius—a staggering temperature for that time of year when there is still ice in the water. They are seeing very dramatic changes.

Austin was very thankful to hear the comments earlier about strengthening communities and extending the collaboration with indigenous communities throughout the world, and noted his very positive experiences in the US and internationally working with foundations on climate change—and very thankful that people are taking it seriously.

Where Austin comes from the notion of climate change goes a long way back, and is even present in historical legends. They remember times long gone when there was the land bridge [between Alaska and Russia]; and their language has a word for mammoth, as an animal that existed in their lexicon. But they characterize today's rapid changes as disasters, particularly for communities in the western part of Alaska where sea level rise is causing communities to move and uproot.

Before the 1950s their communities comprised about 4 million nomadic peoples. Since then, with compulsory education, schools and post offices were established in very small communities. But the political reality is very limited resources. Very few communities have the capacity to manage a climate justice resilience program. For the 20 tribes in Austin's region, responsibility for federal or tribal trust services is vested in Austin's travel consortium organization, which was founded in the 1960s. They place a high importance on being advocates for their people, and Austin has worked as a tribal environmental advocate in his region since 1997. During that time, he has proposed thousands of ideas to improve the life of their communities, but sadly only a couple have been implemented, which is the sad reality of advocacy work in rural Alaska.

In the 1970s, when the realities of oil discovery were being litigated and put into law, all Alaskan natives living in Alaska, with the exception of one reservation in the southeast, lost all of their rights due to the Alaska Native

Claims Settlement Act—so Alaskan natives live with no rights essentially, which makes things very difficult. It means people like Austin have a short timeframe in this field of advocacy, because of burnout—a challenge for funders to consider in small communities of, say, 200 people, when we talk about climate change. In these small communities, a handful of people work in leadership roles and get flooded with a whole range of responsibilities and issues. They are tasked with so much that it's difficult to enjoy a positive working relationship with state or federal agencies.

This August the Arctic Ocean ice dropped to the second lowest level on record. Given the summer's dramatic warming of the water, these signal the likely disappearance of Arctic Ocean ice by 2050. But before that will be dramatic change in the ocean environment. Communities like Austin's depend upon the land and sea for their food, including birds, marine mammals, fish, and berries. The dramatic changes come from temperature increase as well as oil spills, and toxins from pelagic systems moving northwards. These changes are not represented in their lexicon or cultural history—they don't know a time when there were no polar bears or walrus, or it was dramatically warmer. Given these challenges, Austin expressed thanks at being invited to join this event, for the words that he heard, and the invitation to such a diverse group of people to talk about this issue—and he was hopeful that the funders would take to heart what he, Agnes and Selina have to say.

**Agnes Leina** is the Founder and Executive Director of Il'laramatak Community Concerns, an organization whose name denotes caregivers, or pastoralists. It is an Indigenous People's Organization whose main objective is to restore dignity among indigenous peoples, with special emphasis on girls and women, and that envisions a society of Indigenous Peoples of Kenya that is free from all forms of discrimination. She is also the Gender Coordinator of IPACC, the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee, and serves on the Advisory Committee of FIMI, a global indigenous women's network. Agnes comes from Northern part of Kenya, Samburu County, inhabited mainly by the Samburu community, a subset of the Maasai peoples of Kenya, who are also mainly pastoralists and very traditional in their way of life.

Agnes began by sharing how when listening to the youngest speaker, Selina, her heart was broken. The speakers

today are from diverse communities and backgrounds, ones that Agnes had not known much about. They all have rich experiences, and climate change is facing them across many dimensions. Agnes shared that her mother has said that, in their pastoralist family's experience, they didn't face droughts, and despite a lack of education, they never knew poverty. Her father had cows and grain, and they knew where rain had fallen, they had sufficient land. She noted that cows are everything for her community of pastoralists. The forest provided them with medicines. They could care for the sick. But new diseases like cancer have come with the new water and the new food. Things have changed dramatically, and most of it is related to climate change. Rainy seasons between droughts have become shorter. Land available to them is diminishing.

Agnes started her organization to address these issues. She created a timeline asking the community to go back 150 years and say what has changed: what was it like then, what is it like now? And then they ask—what will happen next? "All of them tell us, we will die. Pastoralist communities will be no more because land has gone. Land is diminishing in Africa because of mega projects; land is going because of PIDAs (Projects for the Infrastructure Development in Africa), stemming from the African Union's Vision 2063 for Africa, the SDGs, and Kenya's Vision 2030." With PIDA come major projects to provide water for all of Africa, provide roads that connect the whole of Africa, and provide clean energy for the whole of Africa. The biggest clean energy project is in Kenya, the Lake Turkana Wind Project, in the heartland where Agnes comes from. With a size of 40,000 acres (162km<sup>2</sup>), it has taken about 7,000 acres of land from her community. Agnes reported that people were not informed in advance that land was to be taken from them, no required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was done, and therefore no one knows what it will do to the community, and how the people and animals will suffer from this. For their community, the livestock is their livelihood, and if land is taken away, and a place for animals to roam is taken away, their livelihood is taken away. "And so you want us to die. You want to wipe us off the face of the earth like we exist no more, and we become history, and you get all the money you need because of your business: the wind project is installed."

Agnes' organization has sensitized the communities, telling them to wake up and learn about their human rights and land rights—that's where climate justice comes in for them. They concentrate on community land rights,

because people do not know they have rights to community land. A lawsuit has been brought due to lack of information-sharing. Grazing land is fenced off; project managers don't want animals to interfere. At the same time, communities are left without jobs, land, water, electricity, and internet connections. And there is erosion of their culture with alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs, while pastoralist communities are confined in a village that never used to be there. Agnes' organization wants to build the capacity of the community, for example, what if they leased that land rather than giving it away free of charge? That could mean real poverty eradication because the company will actually pay the community—that is what community land rights say. And then they will benefit—build schools and get water, do something that will bring some wealth creation for them as a community. The companies are talking about concessions, but not a word about the community. The president will be briefed, the project will be launched in a beautiful manner, and the community will be told it's good for us as Kenya. Kenya will be the first to have a clean energy, but at the same time, Kenya will be the first one to shelve the rights of its own people. That's where the problem comes in. What will be told to their children about clean energy? "Once upon a time we were here and we were told to move? This monster came in and we don't even know what it is?"

They have started their process in Kenya through the help of UNDP, which provided funds for FPIC (Free Prior and Informed Consent) that helps with creating good policy on paper. The next challenge is implementing this policy for work that extends from Kenya to Uganda up to Ethiopia. In their constitution as a tribe they do not harm animals, from zebras to cows. They have a wealth of information and wealth of traditional knowledge that needs to be documented. They are thankful for the Paris Agreement and its inclusion of women and indigenous people's knowledge, the work that Mary Robinson does, and UN agencies including now UNDP. They have the United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous Peoples, and they want to implement it. These are the kinds of things they take back to their communities—they have the answers to the implementation of all this, and the solutions. Agnes also appreciated the way, "we are passing the baton from Mary to us to Selina—intergenerational knowledge. It's very powerful and very important for the continuity of the work that we are doing."

