Five Agendas to Transform Philanthropy in Latin America and the Caribbean

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The Resource Foundation | Dalberg
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Prologue

I arrived at The Rockefeller Foundation during the very weeks when international cooperation began to decline. That moment revealed a fragility we had accepted for far too long: the idea that our development agendas could be sustained with external funding, without building our own solid, local base.

For me, the news was both an urgent call—and an opportunity—to redefine the role of philanthropy in the region, to look inward and ask ourselves how we want to begin shaping our own transformation.

I took on the role of Vice President at The Rockefeller Foundation with a clear conviction: in LAC we have what it takes to bring about a real transformation in the way we work. We have talent, capital, creativity, and an impressive capacity to innovate. We have proven it many times: with social models that are now replicated in other parts of the world, and with communities that, when faced with enormous crises, do not break but reinvent themselves.

That is why it was clear that the first step in the Foundation's return to our region should not focus on designing new strategies or launching projects, but on listening. Truly listening: with humility, without predefined scripts, without the urgency to have all the answers. Because transformations are not born from preconceived ideas, but from deeply understanding the context and the people who live it.

Over these past months, we have listened extensively. We heard clear desires for collaboration, but also calls for more humility; we heard legitimate frustrations with models that do not fit local realities. And above all, we heard a longing for philanthropy to stop being reactive and become a transformative force. One that can take risks, support long-term processes, and build legitimacy from the local level.

After these few months of dialogue, these voices are now reflected in five tangible agendas. They are not "The Rockefeller Foundation's agendas"; they are the result of a collective aspiration. And for us, they are also the starting point of our return to a region where part of the Foundation's history and legacy began.

We hope to be catalysts, not protagonists. We want to take risks alongside others and amplify the innovations that are already driving change.

The conversation we want to activate with this document is simple but profound. Can Latin America and the Caribbean transform its philanthropy into a collective, sustained, and transformative force?

We are optimistic and convinced that it can.

Lyana Latorre

Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean, The Rockefeller Foundation

Introduction

What is the strategic opportunity for philanthropy in Latin America and the Caribbean?

From environmental disasters to social unrest, recent crises have tested philanthropy across Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), revealing both its ability to respond and its limits. Organizations mobilized quickly to support marginalized communities, yet these emergencies also exposed the constraints of current models and raised important questions: **Is philanthropy changing systems, or merely responding to isolated crises? Are the public, private, and social sectors combining their strengths or operating in silos?** The sector now faces a choice: continue working with traditional approaches or pursue a deep transformation.

Over the past two decades, the region has achieved meaningful progress and shown a remarkable capacity to adapt to growing challenges. Citizen movements have driven legislative progress on Indigenous rights and gender equality. Digital connectivity has reached rural communities, while vibrant ecosystems of social innovation and entrepreneurship are giving rise to new models of development. In response to climate change, the region has also made significant strides in conservation, protecting more than 24% of its land and 17% of its marine areas.

Yet the underlying problems remain, and in some cases, have worsened. For more than three decades, LAC has been the most unequal region in the world. The richest 10% earn twelve times more than the poorest 10%. Around 200 million people live in poverty and 70 million in extreme poverty. Violence continues to exceed global averages, eroding social cohesion. Eight countries now sit in the global "red zone" for climate risk.

Philanthropy has played a crucial role. It has directed resources toward marginalized communities and neglected agendas, while helping to build stronger local organizations. Examples are vast. In Guatemala, philanthropy has supported bilingual and intercultural education programs that preserve Mayan languages and improve learning outcomes. In Mexico, it has helped expand primary healthcare and maternal–child services in underserved regions. In Brazil, it has empowered quilombola communities to integrate ancestral knowledge into territorial management. Across the Caribbean, it has bolstered community resilience in the face of climate change.

These efforts reflect a philanthropic ecosystem with both strengths and challenges. More than half of the philanthropic organizations in the region were established after 2000. The sector's roots lie with the Catholic Church, which, since colonial times, has promoted values of solidarity and community service, though often with a focus on charity. Corporate foundations dominate the landscape, especially in Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. In addition, historical dependence on international cooperation reduced the pressure to diversify resources.

Today, the urgency of the region's challenges creates favorable conditions to accelerate the evolution of philanthropy. Despite declining international aid, rising political polarization, and a slowing global economy, a new generation of leaders is determined to rethink philanthropy. Our conversations across the sector made this clear: the way philanthropy operates must change. As one foundation leader put it, **"this transformation is not about following trends or fashionable causes, it is about responding seriously to the challenges that threaten the region's future."**

Seizing this moment requires more than rhetoric. The voices we heard pointed to five interconnected transformation agendas. Each is essential to the sector's future and has not yet been implemented in a coordinated or consistent way:

- **Collaborate for real:** Connections abound, but collaboration that truly shifts systems is still rare in the region. Moving from coordination to collective action means embracing radical collaboration: sharing power and risk and learning to place systemic change above institutional logos.
- **Mobilize more capital:** Lack of capital is not the problem in the region; the real challenge lies in activating and deploying it toward impact. Mobilizing more capital means unlocking pathways for citizens, families, companies, and global donors, and aligning their motivations and strategic roles to turn latent resources into sustained commitments.
- **Finance better:** Philanthropy's impact depends not just on how much is given but also on how resources are structured and managed. Shifting from short-term charity to long-term social investment can drive systemic change, with funding that is sustainable, adaptable, accessible, and coordinated across sectors.
- **Localize philanthropy:** Treating communities as beneficiaries limits impact; recognizing them as co-creators unlocks it. Real change happens when communities shape priorities, define impact, and co-design solutions, making transformation locally led and locally owned.
- **Raise the sector's standard:** Philanthropy cannot rise to the region's challenges without investing in itself. Strengthening the infrastructure requires professionalizing the sector, building shared data and measurement systems, and investing more in the actors that connect the ecosystem.

Purpose of this document

This document is a call to action for the diverse range of actors that make up the philanthropic ecosystem of LAC. It does not intend to be an exhaustive diagnosis of the sector; many reports already examine the sector in depth. Nor does it outline a roadmap for the region. Instead, it aims to:

- Present a set of agendas that, according to the many voices consulted, represent the sector's most critical leverage points for achieving systemic transformation;
- Surface both the emerging consensus and the tensions within the ecosystem, recognizing that both are necessary to move forward;
- Foster bold conversations, informed decisions, and ambitious alliances among actors that have historically operated in silos; and
- Open doors, build bridges, and nurture emerging agendas, acknowledging that the future of philanthropy in the region will be built through diversity and experimentation, not uniformity or rigidity.

How this report was built

This document is the result of a collaborative effort between The Rockefeller Foundation, Dalberg, and The Resource Foundation. It reflects an extensive listening process designed to capture the diversity and complexity of the region's philanthropic ecosystem. Acknowledging that no single voice can capture the full picture, we conducted a consultation process aimed at including the broadest possible range of experiences and perspectives.

In total, more than 70 leaders from across the region shared their insights through interviews and focus groups, including philanthropic organizations, businesses, civil society groups, and local actors. The process sought to reflect subregional trajectories, strengths, and differences.

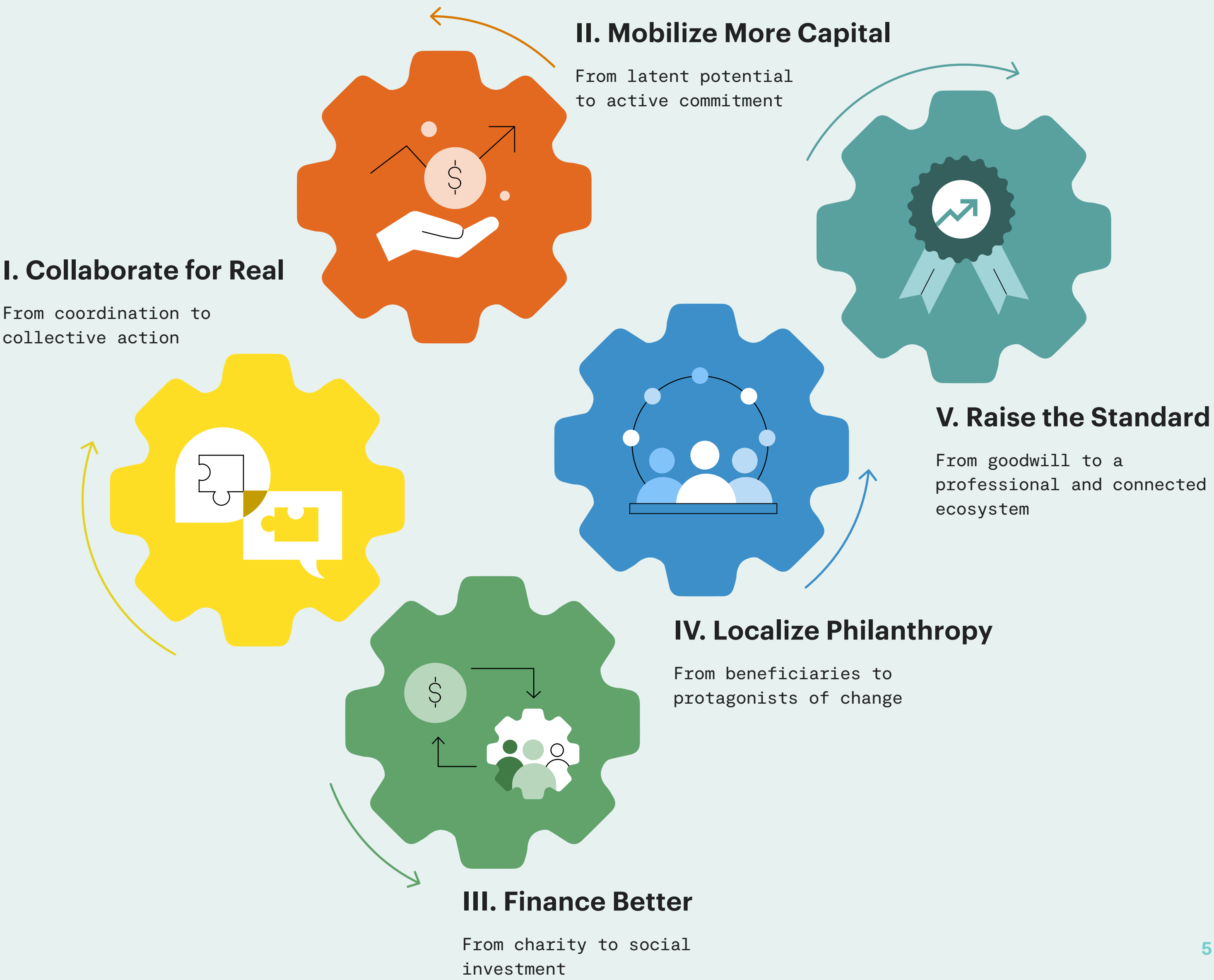
We also reviewed more than 40 reports and studies, organized into three categories: (1) diagnostics and trends in philanthropy across the region; (2) publications on impact investing, international cooperation, and financing; and (3) thematic papers and frameworks to strengthen institutional capacity. This review—complemented by case studies from several countries—helped ground the findings in a solid and diverse evidence base.

We are deeply grateful to all the organizations and individuals who shared their time, experiences, and insights. Their voices are the driving force behind the redefinition of philanthropy that this document seeks to accelerate.

Five Agendas to Transform Philanthropy

Across LAC, philanthropic leaders increasingly recognize five priority agendas to drive transformation. These are not distant aspirations but tangible opportunities within reach, rooted in experience, informed by lessons learned, and illustrated by proven examples of success. Each agenda has the potential to shift philanthropy, but their real strength lies in their interdependence. When pursued together, these agendas reinforce one another, unlocking the possibility of more ambitious and lasting impact across the ecosystem.

In the following pages, each agenda explores where the sector stands today and the opportunities ahead, highlighting examples that can inspire action and offer concrete ways forward for sector leaders.



I. Collaborate for Real: From Coordination to Collective action

Philanthropy in Latin America and the Caribbean has never been more connected, but genuine collaboration remains rare, often emerging only in moments of crisis or around short-term projects. Coordination alone is not enough. Only radical collaboration, grounded in co-creation and a genuine willingness to share power, risk, and learning, can turn diversity into a true source of strength.

Where we stand

No single actor, no matter how influential or well-resourced, can tackle the region's most critical challenges alone. In the face of social, economic, and environmental crises, collaboration is essential to achieve impact at scale, drive systemic change, and build trust.

Over the past decades, the region has built a more connected philanthropic sector. Spaces for dialogue and coordination have multiplied, widening the number and diversity of actors involved. Global networks with regional reach, such as WINGS and regional platforms like RedEAmérica, help link foundations, companies, community organizations, and international funders to share lessons, promote joint investments, and influence global agendas. In the region, key examples of networks include GIFE and ABONG in Brazil, CEMEFI in Mexico, AFE in Colombia, CEFIS in Chile, and the Caribbean Philanthropic Alliance in the Caribbean.

Despite these examples, most philanthropic collaborations in the region remain superficial, focused on information exchange or coordinating isolated projects. Few involve shared diagnostics, joint planning, or collective governance, and almost none include mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the collaboration itself.

> "In our society, collaboration is considered a virtue. But in philanthropy, individualism still prevails"

– National Association of Foundations leader

Existing incentives often work against collaboration. The pressure to deliver short-term results and the pursuit of institutional recognition, especially for corporate foundations, often undermine commitment to collective processes. Distrust and lack of investment in the collaboration itself further limit progress. Overcoming these barriers requires a normative shift, one that asks: **What do we need to achieve together? How can my strengths contribute? And how do we maximize value for all?**

Way forward

The sector often talks about collaboration, but still operates in silos. Only partnerships grounded in clear commitments, shared power, and aligned incentives can break that inertia. The alliances that have delivered lasting change are those built on four key pillars: 1) A shared and co-created purpose; 2) Investment in the collaboration itself; 3) Purposeful complementarity; and 4) Formal governance structures.

1. Collaborating Around a Shared and Co-created Purpose

Collaborating around a shared purpose begins by defining the problem before debating solutions. It's not enough to declare an intent to close the education or health gap; actors must jointly understand why these gaps persist. This process requires negotiating priorities, sharing control and visibility, and translating agreements into measurable goals. As one national foundation association director put it: **"Often, organizations don't share a purpose—they share a project. True collaboration should begin with a common problem, not just the pooling of funds."**

We learn how to collaborate by collaborating. Co-creation helps align expectations, distribute responsibilities, and prevent conflicts.

ALAC: a shared purpose that transcends projects

In Cajamarca, Peru, the Asociación Los Andes de Cajamarca (ALAC) shows how a shared purpose can sustain lasting partnerships. Born out of collaboration between the private sector, government, and civil society, ALAC brings together diverse actors to improve the quality of life across the region.

With more than 80 initiatives benefiting thousands of people—from reading programs to providing potable water access for 180,000 residents—its greatest strength lies in weaving a collaborative network that evolves with new needs while staying true to its original purpose.

2. Investing in the collaboration process

Deep collaboration requires resources that few actors are willing to invest. Working together is neither spontaneous nor free; demands time, teams, and shared management. Foundations and donors often allocate substantial resources to projects without setting aside funds to build the conditions for working together. Investing in the incubation of collaboration is a strategic bet: it helps integrate perspectives, manage tensions, and lay a strong foundation for collective work.

Catalytic and orchestrating actors play a critical role. Given their experience and position within the ecosystem, these organizations can convene partners, align efforts, and sustain collective momentum. Their contribution goes far beyond initial funding—they help design initiatives, connect sectors, and align visions around a common cause.

GOYN: the catalytic role in collaboration

The Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN) works to expand education and employment opportunities for vulnerable youth. From the start, GOYN focused on building the groundwork for collaboration at the local level. Backed by New Markets Partners, an international donor willing to invest in the process rather than just in the immediate results, the initiative was able to mobilize resources, establish common rules of engagement, and strengthen local coalitions rooted in community legitimacy.

Today, GOYN operates in Bogotá, Barranquilla, Mexico City, and São Paulo, in partnership with Fundación Corona, YouthBuild México, and United Way Brasil. Together, they connect over 630,000 young people across 17 communities.

3. Complementarity as an organizing principle

The most effective alliances turn differences into strengths. Impact grows when each actor contributes what they do best: financing, technical expertise, community networks, or implementation capacity. Roles may evolve over time, remaining flexible to the needs of each stage and leveraging each actor's comparative advantage to maximize collective impact.

A clear example is Brazil's Gestão da Alfabetização program, which seeks to improve literacy in public education by strengthening pedagogical management. Led by Instituto Ayrton Senna and Instituto Fefig, with support from GIFE, the initiative brings together local governments, school networks, and technical teams. Instituto Fefig leads pedagogical design, Instituto Ayrton Senna contributes education management methodologies, municipalities implement, and GIFE connects partners and elevates the initiative's visibility. In 2024, it reached more than 80,000 students across six states, demonstrating how technical and political complementarity can generate sustained impact.

4. Formal structures and shared governance

Effective and lasting collaborations require formal governance structures. These structures define how each actor participates and translate collective intent into a sustainable operating model. As a regional foundation leader noted, **"It's critical to clarify expectations, roles, and contributions from the start. This reduces friction and enables more transparent and adaptive partnerships."** Beyond coordinating implementation, strong governance offers stability amid uncertainty by setting clear decision-making rules, conflict-resolution processes, and shared performance metrics.

GDFE: clear commitments through formal governance

In Argentina, the Grupo de Fundaciones y Empresas (GDFE) stands out for its ability to drive collective action through a solid governance model. Its structure minimizes individual protagonism—achievements are communicated collectively, and visibility centers on shared impact. As the group notes, **"It's not about showcasing what each member does, but about what we are transforming together."**

In 2022, 85% of GDFE's members invested a combined USD 33.7 million in education, employment, and social inclusion. By 2024, GDFE launched its Education Advocacy Roundtable, a public–private innovation lab active in 18 cities, along with new financial innovation tools.

Beyond these pillars, trust is the bedrock of collaboration. Across the region, the absence of trust is often seen as the single greatest barrier to forming effective partnerships. But trust doesn't appear on its own; it's earned through consistent action, transparency, and by keeping one's commitments.

Early actions to build momentum:

Donors

Fund collaboration infrastructure: Dedicate specific resources to develop governance frameworks and shared management systems.

Encourage joint applications: Provide incentives for funding to flow toward collaborative projects rather than isolated initiatives.

Local organizations

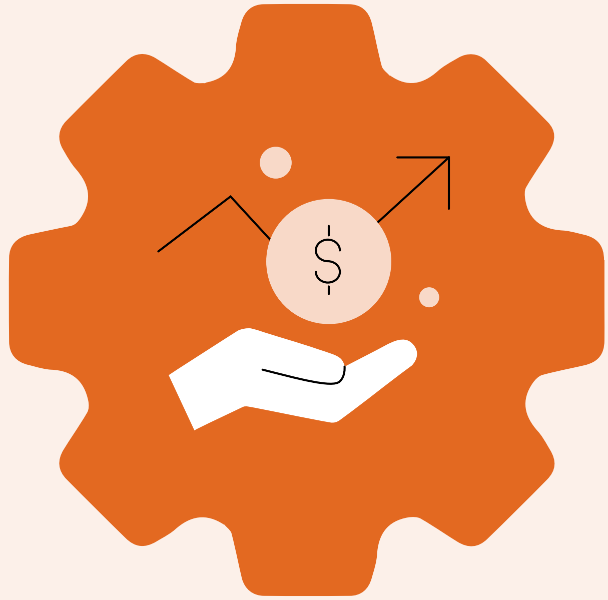
Explore complementarities: Forge partnerships that blend complementary strengths and unlock new opportunities for funding and impact.

Philanthropic networks and associations

Enable tangible collaboration: Create collaborative funds, coordinated calls for proposals, or co-financed shared initiatives, moving beyond coordination and convenings.

Philanthropic organizations

Champion high-level co-creation spaces: Support platforms that foster and accelerate collaborative initiatives with strong local ownership.



II. Mobilize More Capital: From Latent Potential to Active Commitment

Philanthropy's resource gap across the region is not due to a lack of wealth, but to a failure to activate it. The region holds substantial local capital, yet few mechanisms exist to channel it consistently or strategically. At the same time, LAC has long remained a blind spot for global philanthropy. The task ahead is dual: to turn family wealth, corporate resources, and citizen generosity into sustained, long-term commitments; and to position the region as a credible, high-impact destination for international philanthropic investment.

Where we stand

The philanthropic sector has great potential to drive change, yet it continues to operate at a scale far smaller than the region's resources and challenges demand. Average private giving represents only 0.2–0.3% of GDP, compared with 1.5% in the United States, 1% in Canada, and 0.96% in the United Kingdom and roughly half the level of comparable economies such as Indonesia or South Africa (around 0.4%). LAC also consistently ranks near the bottom of the World Giving Index, which measures generosity through donations, volunteering, and help toward strangers.

This low level of giving contrasts sharply with the sustained growth of private wealth in the region. According to Oxfam, as of January 2024, LAC were home to 98 billionaires holding USD 480.8 billion, roughly equivalent to the combined GDP of Chile and Ecuador. Since 2000, these fortunes have grown 368%, nearly six times faster than the regional economy. The richest 1% controls 43.5% of all wealth, while the poorest half owns barely 0.8%. This surge in wealth has not translated into a proportional rise in philanthropic engagement.

This gap is largely due to informal giving and low institutional trust. Much of the region's generosity flows through direct support to individuals or communities, what many call "invisible philanthropy." As one wealth advisor observed, **"Many of these contributions are not recognized as philanthropy—by those who give or those who receive—but that's what they are."** These forms of giving strengthen social bonds but rarely lead to systemic change. At the same time, limited trust in local organizations discourages donors from using formal channels, reducing the reach and impact of organized philanthropy. According to Latinobarómetro 2024, only 27% of Latin Americans trust NGOs.

Additionally, the region has long been a blind spot for international philanthropy. Between 2018 and 2020, the region received roughly USD 400 million per year in private philanthropic funding, concentrated in only a few countries. By contrast, Africa and Asia received USD 2.9 billion and USD 1.4 billion annually, respectively, over the same period. This imbalance stems in part from the persistent narrative that LAC is a "middle-income region," a label that obscures its deep inequalities. Even when global funders look toward the region, many calls for proposals go unanswered because local organizations face ongoing barriers to access.

The recent withdrawal of international cooperation has deepened the challenge. The closure of USAID programs alone meant a loss of more than USD 2.3 billion, with strong impacts in Guatemala, Honduras, and Colombia. Other donors, including Germany and the United Kingdom, have also scaled back their support.

In this context, two questions are unavoidable: **How can philanthropy in the region live up to its real potential? And how can it attract more global philanthropic capital by proving itself a reliable, high-impact place to invest in social change?**

Way forward

Unlocking more resources requires progress on two fronts: activating local capital and attracting international flows. The first entails converting fragmented or inactive resources, ranging from large family fortunes to individual donations, into steady, long-term funding. The second means positioning the region as a trusted and high-impact destination for global philanthropy.

The potential is extraordinary. Mobilizing just 1% of Latin America's ultra-rich wealth could generate around USD 5 billion annually—a figure close to the region's total volume of international aid, estimated at approximately USD 6 billion. Among citizens, the willingness to give exists, particularly among younger generations. According to the 2024 Culture of Giving study in Argentina, while 76% of young people consider themselves altruistic and more than half believe they can influence social and political issues, only one in ten donate monthly, and eight in ten cannot name a philanthropic organization, revealing a gap between intention and action.

Each group of actors—citizens, families, companies, and international funders—has its own motivations, faces distinct barriers, and brings unique value. Understanding them better will allow for the design of better mechanisms.

Citizens:

Formal and recurring citizen donations can be a powerful driver of change. Most of these contributions go to causes close to home: helping a neighbor pay medical bills or buying school uniforms for local children. Yet their impact remains limited as donors frequently do not know of trustworthy organizations or how their money is used, and they often face complex donation processes. As one digital philanthropy leader observed, **"Philanthropy is still designed for big**

institutional donors, not for citizens, and that's a missed opportunity. There's huge potential if people are offered an easy, reliable way to participate."

Digital platforms like Donar Online and GoFundMe illustrate how clarity of purpose and powerful storytelling can draw new people into giving. Matching funds and giving circles amplify the impact of individual contributions by pooling collective resources or matching donations. Campaigns like Teletón show what is possible when accessibility, media attention, and shared purpose align.

Donar Online: replicable model of democratic, digital philanthropy

The case of Donar Online illustrates how digital platforms can democratize giving by making fundraising easier and positioning citizens as active agents of social change. With a network of more than 1,500 organizations and millions of donations processed, the platform proves that small, individual contributions can rival the scale of major philanthropic gifts. Models like this show how technology can help reimagine philanthropy as a more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable endeavor.

Families and high net worth individuals:

Family philanthropy seeks to create social impact, pass values across generations, and build a shared family legacy. As one business leader explained,

> "Philanthropy gives us the chance to give back to the communities where we operate, supporting causes that reflect what our family truly cares about."

This segment has the potential to mobilize significant resources, yet it lacks safe spaces for peer exchange and reliable information on which organizations to support. Tools such as philanthropy barometers and simple donation mechanisms could help expand their participation.

Generational change represents a major opportunity. To harness this moment, it's essential to connect new generations with meaningful causes, showcase successful local models, and support them in designing impactful projects. Equally important is fostering a more strategic vision of family philanthropy—one that moves beyond a charitable mindset toward long-term, transformative engagement.

Companies:

Across the region, many companies channel their philanthropic resources and engage with communities through corporate foundations. Some of these foundations preserve a family legacy, while others operate independently. In both cases, they seek public recognition and alignment with their social responsibility agendas, driven by the understanding that thriving communities create stronger markets, more productive employees, and more stable operating environments.

However, many corporate foundations operate on annual cycles, which limits their ability to make long-term commitments. The pressure to deliver short-term results often pushes them to focus on being "good neighbors," supporting only the communities where they operate instead of addressing root causes. Overcoming this challenge requires shifting toward long-term social investment structures. Some existing mechanisms already point in that direction. In Brazil, the "Business Leaders for 1%" initiative commits executives to allocate at least 1% of profits to social causes. In Argentina, GDFE's Literacy Commitment Seal turns recognition into an aspirational goal.

International philanthropy:

Positioning the region as a priority destination for international capital requires demonstrating credibility, impact, and a strong social return on investment. This means communicating results transparently, sharing success stories, showing effective collaboration, and aligning with global priorities.

Beyond improving its reputation, the region needs concrete investable proposals. Local organizations can partner with national donors on joint initiatives, while global philanthropy can amplify these efforts and attract new international partners.

Attracting local and international donors is only the first step; the real challenge lies in sustaining and deepening their engagement over time. Recipient organizations must accompany donors throughout their journey (donor journey), from the initial approach to the consolidation of a long-term relationship.

Further, the legal, fiscal, and administrative environment has become increasingly restrictive, affecting smaller organizations most. Addressing this challenge requires collective action from the sector to influence public policy and create a more enabling framework.

Early actions to build momentum:

Corporate donors

Mobilize commitments: Launch or support private-sector pledges to dedicate a percentage of annual profits to social investment (e.g., Brazil's "1% Commitment").

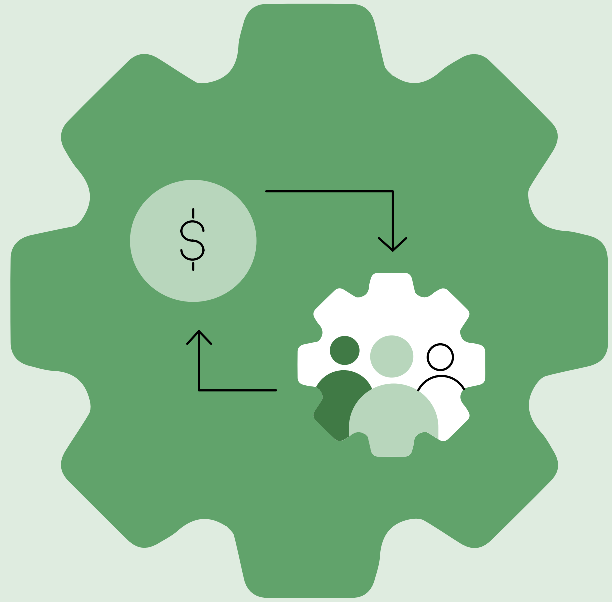
Philanthropic networks and associations

Facilitate tangible collaborations: Organize joint campaigns and thematic funds that channel large-scale local resources toward issues such as water access and climate resilience.

Philanthropic organizations

Attract new peers to the region (in collaboration with local actors): Host delegations, learning visits, and high-level convenings to bring new international donors into the region.

Partner with digital giving platforms: Expand the reach and visibility of digital giving platforms to boost citizen participation and recurring donations.



III. Finance Better: From Charity to Social Investment

When given as charity, philanthropy falls short — when deployed as social investment, it can drive long-lasting results. The potential of philanthropy in Latin America and the Caribbean lies not only in how much capital it mobilizes, but in how that capital is structured and managed. The opportunity ahead is to build financing that is sustainable, adaptable, accessible, and coordinated across different sources of capital.

Where we stand

The impact of philanthropy depends not only on the amount of resources deployed, but also on how effectively they are put to work. As one community foundation leader put it: **"Much of the funding remains short-term, reactive, or overly conditioned. Under those terms, it's impossible to sustain real change. What we really need is flexibility, adaptability, and support for institutional capacity."**

Most philanthropic funding in the region is disbursed with short timeframes and heavy restrictions. A persistent lack of trust in recipient organizations leads many donors to retain tight control, limit flexibility, and shy away from collaboration. Added to this is the scarcity of long-term financing mechanisms that provide autonomy: only one in three philanthropic institutions has an endowment, and most of those hold less than USD 1 million.

Despite these challenges, signs of change are beginning to emerge. Sector leaders highlighted a growing willingness to experiment with new financial vehicles. Co-investment mechanisms, thematic funds, and hybrid models are gaining momentum, particularly in areas such as education, health, and climate action. Between 2019 and 2022, the number of impact investing actors in Latin America grew by 66%, with steady increases in Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil. In the Caribbean, at least a dozen impact funds are now operating actively in countries such as the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica. Meanwhile, platforms like ALIVE bring together more than 50 funds and intermediaries that blend financial returns with measurable social impact.

The challenge is to achieve a structural shift in philanthropic financing by answering: **How can the sector move from fragmented support to long-term investment? How can funding become more flexible and responsive to changing contexts without losing effectiveness? And how can the trust needed to align and amplify dispersed efforts be built and sustained?**

Way forward

Transforming philanthropic finance requires rethinking how resources are allocated and deployed. The region needs instruments that ensure continuity, adapt to changing contexts and align different capital flows around shared goals. Achieving this requires progress in four key areas: making resources more sustainable, more adaptable, more accessible, and better integrated across funding sources.

More sustainable: financing long-term processes

The region's greatest challenges—such as education gaps, gender-based violence, and deforestation—cannot be solved in the short term. Without continuity, efforts only address the symptoms and not the causes.

> "A long-term perspective is essential. Philanthropic strategies must reflect a cultural shift toward sustained, long-term commitment—moving away from short-term projects that end without follow-through."
>
> **– Foundation leader**

This shift involves moving from short-term philanthropy to a social investment mindset. While short-term grants can expand access to services or meet immediate needs, social investment aims to tackle root causes and sustain long-term change.

To achieve this, donors must be supported in designing long-term instruments that bring stability and predictability. A foundation without stable resources can't offer stable support to others. The challenge, therefore, is not only to secure long-term funding but to deploy it effectively. As one foundation president in Chile put it: **"The region lacks a true 'endowment industry.' Building one would create patient capital for structural causes such as climate change and racial or gender equity."**

The challenge is not necessarily to give more, but to structure it differently: the same amount planned over three to five years provides organizations with much-needed certainty. That long-term commitment, in turn, requires grantees to demonstrate management capacity and tangible results, helping build more balanced relationships.

Several examples in Latin America show how this works when the right financial instruments are in place. In Chile, Fundación Olivo leverages its endowment by allocating 5% of its trust to social impact initiatives, including loans to civil society organizations. Its Ciclo Olivo program provides up to five years of financing and technical assistance, giving local partners the stability they need to plan and grow. In Colombia, Fondo Acción channels multi-year funding into climate adaptation programs with Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities. And in Central America, VIVA Trust—a regional endowment created in 2003 from the dividends of Grupo Nueva, an industrial company committed to sustainability—has become a model for patient capital in the region, ensuring steady resources and enabling co-investment even in shifting contexts.

More adaptable: enabling flexibility, innovation, and collaboration

Adaptable financing enables organizations to respond to change while staying on course. It's not about providing unrestricted funds, but about balancing autonomy with accountability, offering flexible funding with clear expectations and appropriate oversight. The pandemic made this evident: relaxing restrictions allowed funds to be redirected toward urgent needs without halting long-term structural work. This approach turns financing into a mechanism for learning and social innovation, one that encourages testing, adaptation, and pivoting to strengthen the collective capacity to respond. The Central American Women's Fund exemplifies this model by providing multi-year, unrestricted funding that enables women-led organizations to adapt their activities to evolving contexts.

Flexibility requires both operational and cultural change. Operationally, it means designing mechanisms for rapid realignment and agile resource mobilization when circumstances shift. Culturally, it calls for a redistribution of power and control over resources, recognizing that decisions and priorities must be shared with those closest to the action. This approach acknowledges that solutions are never fully defined from the start and reframes the donor's role as a strategic ally rather than a distant funder.

More accessible: redesigning the rules of access

More accessible financing adapts requirements to the capacities and contexts of organizations. Yet in practice, funding requirements tend to be uniform. Lengthy applications, specialized reports, and complex legal structures often exclude community-based organizations, reducing both the diversity and reach of philanthropy.

Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca: a model for democratizing philanthropic finance

Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca (FCO) channels resources to local collectives and community projects, including those without formal structures or legal registration. Its work demonstrates that funding can be opened to local actors without compromising rigor or accountability. The foundation tailors its model by simplifying requirements, adjusting grant sizes and timelines to fit each project, and combining quantitative evidence with community testimonials.

FCO shows how a trusted local intermediary can expand who gets to participate in philanthropy, ensuring that solutions emerge from those who live the challenges firsthand.

Improving access doesn't mean lowering standards. For small organizations, spending months on a complex application with no guarantee of success diverts critical time and resources away from their mission. Alternatives include scaling grant amounts, timelines, and requirements to fit different capacities, simplifying administrative processes, and, where possible, standardizing applications or recognizing due diligence conducted by other donors. Focus Central America demonstrates that it is possible to channel resources with both trust and transparency, combining simplified processes with strong accountability.

The challenge is even greater when it comes to accessing international funding. As one U.S. donor admitted, **"We launch calls for proposals, but local organizations rarely apply."** Barriers include applications published in English, limited outreach, and overly demanding requirements. Overcoming these challenges requires simpler, bilingual or multilingual applications, stronger dissemination, and the support of regional intermediaries.

More coordinated: integrating different sources of capital

When philanthropic, impact, private, and public capital come together, their collective power multiplies. Philanthropy takes on early risks and builds capacity. Impact investing aligns financial returns with social outcomes. Private capital brings innovation, efficiency, and scale. And the public sector institutionalizes solutions and ensures their long-term sustainability.

The region already has innovative financing instruments, the challenge now is to bring them to scale. Results-based financing links public funds to measurable outcomes. Blended finance leverages philanthropic capital to attract private investment. Thematic bonds (such as blue bonds) channel capital toward public goals, and Social Impact Incentives (SIINC) reward verified results. A strong example of this is "A Fondo", led by Fundación Avina, which combines philanthropic, corporate, and international capital under shared impact rules and metrics, directing each type of capital where it creates the most value, reducing risk, and multiplying impact.

Social Impact Bonds in Colombia: results-based financing that ensures real impact

Fundación Corona, in partnership with public and private allies, spearheaded the region's first Social Impact Bonds, where investors front the capital for employment programs, and the government reimburses them if independently verified outcomes are achieved, promoting efficiency, transparency, and measurable impact.

The initiative Cali Progresa con Empleo surpassed its targets even amid the pandemic, benefiting more than 1,000 people—mostly women and Afro-descendant participants—and demonstrated the power of combining philanthropy, impact investment, and public resources to drive systemic change.

Early actions to build momentum:

Donors

Ensure adaptable financing: Include a growing percentage of flexible funding within grants each year, allowing resources to adjust and respond to changing needs.

Adopt innovative instruments: Use mechanisms such as blended finance or results-based financing.

Simplify application processes (driven by philanthropic organizations): Promote a common application format and shared due diligence systems to reduce time and administrative costs.

Adopt multi-year planning and budgeting: Commit to 3–5-year investment cycles and long-term mechanisms such as trusts and endowments to ensure stability and sustained impact.

Local organizations

Strengthen institutional capacity: Strengthen capabilities in strategic planning, impact measurement, and accountability systems to demonstrate organizational readiness and expand access to funding.

Philanthropic organizations

Build financial knowledge and skills: Support training across the ecosystem to design and implement financial instruments such as endowments, trusts, and other long-term vehicles.

Where does impact investing fit in?

While both philanthropy and impact investing share the goal of driving social change, they play distinct roles within the broader ecosystem. Philanthropy takes on early risks without expecting financial returns, whereas impact investing seeks to combine measurable impact with financial performance.

Far from existing in separate spheres, the two can be powerful allies. Philanthropy can learn from the rigor of impact investing—its emphasis on impact measurement, risk management, and scaling solutions. In turn, impact investing benefits from philanthropy's catalytic capital, its ability to fund early innovation, and its role in opening new social and environmental markets.

Bridging these two worlds, social enterprises play a pivotal role: they act as early-stage laboratories that test models, reduce uncertainty, and pave the way for scale, creating the space where philanthropic and impact capital meet. Together, they can form a virtuous cycle: philanthropy fuels experimentation and assumes initial risk, while impact investment scales those solutions, multiplying their reach.

IV. Localize Philanthropy: From Beneficiaries to Allies

Treating communities as beneficiaries fosters dependency. Despite important advances in community philanthropy across Latin America and the Caribbean, local actors remain largely in implementing roles. Transformation demands recognizing them as co-creators and joint owners of change.

Where we stand

LAC has proven that localized philanthropy is not only possible, but powerful. Since the 1990s, community philanthropy initiatives—those in which people living with the challenges play a direct role in defining and managing resources—have proven that the most enduring solutions emerge when communities help design them. Mexico offers a notable example: in just two decades, community foundations have grown to more than 30. Today, 17 of them form part of Comunalia, a network that strengthens their capacity through shared resources and support.

This model has gained traction across the region, adapting to local contexts along the way. In Costa Rica, the Network of Community Foundations channels resources toward community-led environmental conservation. In Honduras, Puerta de Esperanza mobilizes both local and international funding to support early childhood education in vulnerable areas.

Still, these models remain the exception rather than the rule. Local participation in philanthropy is limited. Donors often define both the issues and the territories to fund, frequently with unintended consequences. As one local leader mentioned,

> “This misalignment of priorities has left some territories overfunded and others neglected—drought can be just as damaging as flood.”

Across the region, foundations often implement projects directly instead of funding local organizations. In Colombia, more than 60% of social investment is implemented directly, sidelining local actors. Central America follows a similar pattern: a study by INTEGRARSE found that in Guatemala, 42% of companies implement directly, while 34% combine both approaches. Conversations with local organizations reveal that even when external funds are provided, priorities and solutions are often pre-defined by donors.

Distrust in local capacity feeds a vicious cycle. As one corporate donor admitted, **“We recognize that local organizations have legitimacy in their territories, but our boards require detailed reports they can’t always deliver.”** This mindset limits local decision-making and reinforces dependency. As a foundation director highlighted, **“Funding local action without granting decision-making power reproduces a power imbalance that weakens efforts and undermines philanthropy’s potential.”**

The use of externally defined metrics that fail to account for local context worsens the problem. In climate projects, for instance, emissions data often take precedence, while measures of progress such as local governance, social cohesion, or community resilience are not considered. In Central America and the Caribbean, standard models and decontextualized data have fueled resource disputes and weakened local ownership.

The challenge is to redefine how philanthropy relates to local contexts. The key questions are: **How can local actors be recognized as co-creators and agents of change? And how can local voices be balanced with external perspectives to ensure transformations that are both relevant and lasting?**

Way forward

Localizing philanthropy starts with recognizing communities as true partners in social change, not merely beneficiaries. It’s not enough to transfer resources; decision-making, priorities, and definitions of success must also be shared. This requires rethinking the philanthropic cycle and shifting leadership to the communities themselves.

1. Diagnosis rooted in deep listening

Assessments should not be brought to communities—they should emerge from them. Communities know their own needs: which medicines are scarce, or why young people leave school. Meanwhile, donors and experts can spot patterns, share tested solutions from similar contexts, and provide technical support. It is a co-creation process that requires listening without imposing and recognizing that technical expertise only works when it’s in dialogue with community knowledge.

Participatory assessment transforms community knowledge into concrete action plans. This approach identifies gaps, synergies, and priorities by listening to those who face the challenges; it reduces the risk of irrelevance and translates local knowledge into actionable strategies through tools such as mapping exercises, observatories, and diagnostics. It requires time, flexibility, and genuine collaboration with local organizations to ensure that resources are directed where they matter most.

Compromiso Valle: from social unrest to lasting co-creation

In the wake of the 2021 social unrest in Cali, Compromiso Valle was formed as a multisector alliance to advance the economic and social recovery of Valle del Cauca. What began as an emergency response evolved into a collective impact strategy that reshaped how businesses, foundations, and communities work together. Rather than imposing agendas, donors went to the field, listened, and co-developed a shared diagnosis. Together, they set priorities around food security, education, leadership, and employability—building trust, cohesion, and legitimacy along the way.

The results: over 77,000 people reached, 3,800 jobs created, and 730 companies mobilized.

2. Collaborative design, implementation, and monitoring

Local assessments make communities active partners in designing, implementing, and evaluating initiatives. Co-creation requires clear agreements on resources, decision-making, and responsibilities, as well as open spaces to navigate tensions. As one local leader noted, **"A partnership is only real when both sides can speak openly about what isn't working."**

Effective implementation is no longer about one actor designing and another executing—it's about shared ownership. Resource management, community engagement, and field operations can be distributed through co-implementation agreements, multi-actor partnerships, or shared financing schemes. In Brazil, for example, AB Mauri partnered with Amigos do Bem, providing funding and using its commercial distribution network to market locally produced cashew nuts. The partnership boosted efficiency by aligning complementary roles.

Monitoring evolves from a control mechanism into a collective process of learning and adaptation. Stakeholders define together what to measure, and how to interpret and use the data. In practice, this translates into jointly developed indicators, participatory evaluations, and real-time course corrections. The NGO-IDEAs Project, implemented across nine countries, illustrates this approach by complementing traditional indicators with measures of empowerment, participation, and organizational strength.

Proyecto TICCA Ecuador: empowering communities through co-implementation

The TICCA Project is an initiative designed to recognize and strengthen the role of Indigenous peoples and local communities as stewards of biodiversity, promoting territorial governance models grounded in autonomy and sustainable management. It acknowledges these communities as guardians of conservation, reinforcing their autonomy through technical, legal, and financial support.

Operating under a multi-stakeholder model, communities define priorities and manage their territories, while partners such as Fundación ALDEA provide specialized assistance and flexible resources. The project now spans eight territories across the coast, highlands, and Amazon regions and has contributed to conserving more than 1.1 million hectares.

3. Strengthening local capacity and leadership for a lasting transition

Localized philanthropy proves its value when its impact endures. Social challenges take time to address, but initiatives should be temporary by nature, designed to equip local organizations to sustain progress on their own. As one local leader put it, **"The true legacy isn't finished projects, but strong local organizations capable of transforming their communities without external support."**

Strengthening local organizations to mobilize resources and sustain change is a strategic investment. The private sector can be a key ally by sharing best-practice models and fostering greater transparency through the promotion of clear impact plans and stronger governance structures. In a context of declining international cooperation, ensuring the operational sustainability of local organizations is more urgent than ever.

Recognizing the value of this approach does not mean ignoring its risks. Sharing power is rarely linear. Some initiatives fail, organizations do not always progress as expected, and tensions can surface in more horizontal spaces. Building trust takes time and requires tolerance for trial and error. Embracing this complexity makes the commitment to local action more grounded and realistic.

Early actions to build momentum:

Donors

Develop participation standards: Ensure funded initiatives include community committees or co-design approaches for diagnosis, planning, and evaluation.

Design sustainability plans (in collaboration with local organizations): Develop plans that strengthen capacities, secure resources, and gradually transfer decision-making power so local actors can continue operating independently.

Local organizations

Develop organizational growth plans: Build leadership, financial management, and accountability systems to qualify for larger and longer-term funding opportunities.

Philanthropic networks and associations

Provide shared guidelines, best practices, and peer learning spaces: Share models of community participation and facilitate exchanges to design, test, and refine locally driven approaches.

V. Raise the Standard: From Goodwill to a Professional and Connected Ecosystem

Strengthening the ecosystem is not overhead. Philanthropy in Latin America and the Caribbean must invest in itself—developing and professionalizing its people, turning scattered data into actionable, shared evidence, and building coordination mechanisms that foster trust.

Where we stand

Across the region, philanthropy channels substantial resources into individual projects but invests very little in the systems and capacities that would make them sustainable and scalable. The result is successful pilots that rarely translate into systemic change. Behind this lie three structural gaps:

First, the sector operates with weaker standards than other professional fields. Companies with sophisticated management systems often set up foundations based on goodwill rather than strategy, blurring the line between philanthropy and charity, and normalizing a lack of professional rigor. Many organizations still lack clear theories of change or talent management structures. Chronic turnover, low pay, and overstretched teams keep much of the sector in a state of permanent crisis. As one social leader put it,

> "Burnout isn't personal—it's systemic. We keep asking for sustained heroism instead of building sustainable organizations."

Second, the sector still lacks a solid information infrastructure to inform strategic decisions. Fundamental questions remain unanswered: How much funding goes to each issue area? Which models deliver the best value for money? Where are the most critical gaps? While valuable studies exist—from CAF, WINGS, GIFE, CEMEFI, AFE, and others—they remain scattered, with no shared system to consolidate or disseminate insights. Impact evaluation is equally limited: only 32% of organizations across five countries report having proper tools, and most measure only outputs like beneficiaries reached or funds disbursed. Success stories rarely include data on cost efficiency, achievement, or persistence rates, and lessons learned too often stay siloed.

Third, coordination mechanisms are still too limited to turn dialogue into action. Few actors have the capacity to design fundable projects, synthesize shared diagnostics, or sustain long-term collaboration. Networks and convening spaces have helped foster relationships, but they rarely evolve into true platforms for joint execution.

For philanthropy to achieve lasting and scalable impact, it must invest in strengthening its own ecosystem, seeing itself as an interconnected field, not just a set of fragmented efforts. The question is: **What mechanisms and incentives could make that shift real?**

Way forward

Philanthropy in LAC cannot respond to the region's greatest challenges unless it invests in itself. Investing in structures, knowledge, and people does not divert resources from impact; it makes it possible.

1. Professionalizing the sector

The philanthropic sector must recognize itself as a professional field. Clear indicators, accountability mechanisms, and long-term strategies are essential. For local organizations, this also means moving beyond the scarcity mindset associated with planning project by project, to a sustained institutional vision that attracts long-term donors. International cooperation has already made this shift, evolving from charity to a structured system with common standards and professional career paths. If philanthropy embraces a similar approach and collaborates with businesses and universities, it can accelerate learning and foster a culture of excellence.

Professionalizing the sector also means investing in its people: attracting top talent, fostering professional growth, and developing the next generation of leaders. Programs like the HIP Líderes Fellowship show that strong teams create sustained impact. Investing in people is a strategic imperative and the foundation of a sector capable of driving lasting change.

2. Information, knowledge, and evidence as shared assets

Philanthropy needs a solid foundation of shared information to make better decisions and coordinate efforts. This foundation rests on three pillars:

First, mapping the social and philanthropic ecosystem. Understanding who does what, where, and with what resources helps uncover overlaps, synergies, and critical gaps. Initiatives like Inversión Social en Acción's interactive dashboard and El Directorio Guatemala, a platform that connects organizations across Guatemala through its online directory, networking events, and professional development opportunities, are important steps forward, but they require sustained support and regional coordination to achieve scale.

Foundation Maps: consolidating data to strengthen legitimacy across the sector

Developed by Candid, a leading organization in philanthropic data, Foundation Maps has become one of the most trusted platforms in the United States for visualizing where philanthropic funding goes. It compiles data dating back to 2006, showing who funds what, where, and with how much—covering grants to more than 180 countries.

By centralizing reliable information from multiple sources, the platform brings transparency to the field and establishes Candid as a neutral and credible actor, offering a replicable model for strengthening legitimacy across the philanthropic ecosystem.

Second, building evaluation and learning systems. The absence of rigorous impact measurement reveals that the challenge goes beyond tools or data, it reflects deeper gaps in incentives and institutional capabilities. The sector needs a stronger culture of transparency, learning, and continuous improvement, backed by donors willing to invest in it. Accessible tools already exist: Fundación Paraguaya's Poverty Stoplight, replicated in over 60 countries, demonstrates that participatory approaches can turn measurement into a driver of practical, scalable learning.

Third, opening real pathways for knowledge sharing. Data on investment, impact, and good practices must be made accessible through observatories, surveys, and open databases. Other sectors show the way: education, through the Latin American Laboratory for the Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE), and health, through the Pan American Health Organization's observatories (OPS). Philanthropy can learn from these examples, fostering South-South knowledge exchanges that adapt proven solutions to local realities.

Each actor has a role to play. Networks can gather and share data; foundations can publish insights and results; and high-net-worth families can fund and reward learning. Technology and AI can help connect these efforts, turning scattered information into a shared foundation.

3. Mechanisms and actors to strengthen the philanthropic ecosystem

For philanthropy to reach its potential, it needs mechanisms and actors that can connect the ecosystem and move capital effectively. Overcoming these barriers requires three major shifts:

First, developing investable projects. Capital is not the issue; readiness is. Too few initiatives are investment-ready. Designing projects from scratch is expensive. The sector needs intermediaries that can translate diagnostics into fundable proposals with clear budgets, measurable goals, and implementation pathways that make scaling possible.

Second, building trust among actors. Convenings and conferences alone won't do it. The region needs intentional coordination, supported by vision, resources, and dedicated spaces for each kind of actor: networks that strengthen local organizations, platforms that connect universities and their evidence, and safe spaces where high-net-worth donors can align priorities. As one wealth advisor put it, "These actors need spaces to build trust and alignment before they can make financial commitments." Some initiatives have begun to fill this gap, but efforts remain scattered.

Third, reducing fragmentation through thematic and functional structures. Thematic structures align priorities around shared issues—education, health, climate—while functional ones enable collaboration through shared data and standards. Climate action illustrates the challenge: multiple, uncoordinated metrics often fragment impact. The solution lies in unified platforms that harmonize approaches and encourage joint action.

Investing in coordination mechanisms and the actors that sustain them is essential. Philanthropy must invest in stable teams, build their capacities, and commit to long-term collaboration so that networks evolve from spaces of dialogue into true engines of collective change.

Early actions to build momentum:

Donors

Fund ecosystem builders: Support networks, platforms, data systems, and talent development, and institutionalize this support as a core part of philanthropic strategy.

Share learnings about how and why change happens (in collaboration with local organizations): Publish accessible information not just on what worked, but on how and why change happened, under what conditions, and what factors enabled or hindered success, so others can apply these insights to their own contexts rather than simply replicating programs.

Philanthropic networks and associations

Coordinate mapping and data-sharing efforts (championed by philanthropic organizations): Develop platforms and tools that identify key actors, resources, and impacts, reducing duplication and enabling joint planning.

Philanthropic organizations

Create peer-learning spaces for high-net-worth families: Convene forums where wealthy families can exchange practices, understand local challenges, and make collective commitments.

Promote South-South learning: Facilitate exchanges between local organizations and peers in Africa and Asia to identify and adapt proven solutions across contexts.

All actors in the ecosystem

Leverage technology, especially artificial intelligence (led by philanthropic organizations): Use digital and AI tools to streamline diagnostics, improve data sharing, and accelerate collective learning cycles.

Climate Philanthropy in LAC: An Urgent Call for Transformation

LAC sits at the heart of the global climate crisis due to the disproportionate toll they bear. The region contributes less than 10% of global greenhouse gases yet stands to lose up to 12% of its GDP by 2050 from climate impacts. Its natural assets are vital to global stability, but they are reaching a breaking point: the Amazon now emits more carbon than it absorbs, and the Caribbean has already lost 80% of its coral cover.

Current climate finance falls drastically short. In the region, it represents just 0.5% of GDP — far below the estimated 3.7–4.9% required. Moreover, around 90% of available funds come from multilateral institutions and green bonds, leaving little room for flexible, community-based approaches. In 2020, global climate philanthropy totaled US $23 billion, yet LAC received less than 20% of those funds, compared with 60% directed to the United States and Europe.

Way forward: early progress, much more to do

The region has promising initiatives that demonstrate the potential of climate philanthropy, but these efforts must multiply and scale. Key examples include:

- **Strengthening regional cooperation:** Climate-Smart Agriculture Platform brings together 11 countries, and the NDC Partnership has supported 29 countries with over US $16 million to implement their climate commitments. Yet both efforts require political and financial continuity to endure.
- **Scaling local and international capital:** Inter-American Foundation has invested US $945 million in 6,000 organizations. Debt-for-climate swaps have freed up over US $2 billion since 2020, but total volumes remain limited.
- **Supporting long-term resilience:** GEF Small Grants Programme shows that even US$50,000 grants can mobilize an additional US $1.36 per dollar invested. The challenge is expanding such models into decade-long commitments.
- **Developing community leadership:** Mesoamerican Alliance manages 50 million hectares under Indigenous and community stewardship, proving that local governance achieves stronger conservation outcomes, a model ripe for replication elsewhere.
- **Building institutional capacity for lasting impact:** Initiatives like Climate-KIC/IDB Lab, which strengthened 26 organizations in 11 countries, and the Regional Climate Change Platform, which convenes 26 finance ministries, show progress. Yet more is needed to translate these gains into replicable public policies.

The region stands at a tipping point. The next five years will determine whether the Amazon survives as a functional ecosystem, the Caribbean remains livable, and Central America secures its food systems. Philanthropy can play a pivotal role in this transformation: providing patient capital, supporting community leadership, and turning fragmented projects into long-term alliances for systemic change.

Closing reflections

This document is a collective call to action: the moment has come for philanthropy in Latin America and the Caribbean to redefine itself and to amplify its impact.

What has been achieved so far is meaningful, but not nearly enough to match the scale of the region's challenges. Incremental improvements no longer suffice. The status quo carries high opportunity costs: scattered resources, decisions made far from the ground, and efforts that fail to deliver lasting change. Philanthropy must evolve, shifting its focus to structural causes, adopting a long-term social investment mindset, professionalizing its practice, and operating as an interconnected system grounded in trust.

Philanthropy has a unique advantage. Unlike public capital, which is constrained by political cycles, or private capital, which seeks financial returns, philanthropic capital can take risks, incubate innovation, and sustain long-term solutions. That unique characteristic comes with responsibility: to act boldly where others cannot. When philanthropy simply replicates existing models, it loses relevance; when it embraces its transformative potential, it becomes indispensable.

The five agendas presented here are not separate initiatives but interlocking parts of one system. Without collaboration, resources are fragmented. Without local ownership, collaboration cannot endure. Local action requires strong capacities, yet strengthening only a few actors limits the system's overall impact. Trust is the connective tissue that holds it all together.

Transformation is built through sustained effort and shared commitment. Collaboration is learned by collaborating. Trust is forged through consistency. Innovation advances only when there is room for failure. Every actor has a role to play: families and citizens by giving; foundations by adopting new models; local organizations by diversifying their funding and leadership; and companies and corporate foundations by making long-term commitments.

The invitation is clear: think boldly and act decisively. Philanthropy must take risks and help design a shared architecture that enables and sustains change. This document aims to contribute to that endeavor—to strengthen capabilities, connect efforts, and accelerate a collective momentum for transformation across the region.

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