

# Action steps for donors and civil society organisations to increase support for climate activists

Climate activists are facing a wide range of risks and challenges that threaten their security, wellbeing, and the effectiveness of their activism. In response, international civil society organisations and donors have implemented strategies to help these activists address these grave risks and challenges; however, there are gaps between climate activists and the organisations that could provide much-needed protection services and other types of support. These fissures limit the efforts to protect fundamental freedoms of climate activists and the civic space needed by everyone working to defend a healthy planet and combat injustice.

This document presents **concrete steps that donors and international civil society organisations can take to strengthen support for climate activists.**

## 1. Increase outreach and enhance communication

**Proactively join climate activists' online and offline spaces**, at both the international and national level, to **increase the visibility** of available funding, calls for proposals, or training opportunities – make efforts to find spaces that are oriented toward climate activists and movements.

**Intentionally build bridges** between climate activists and support organisations and other human rights defenders, including through meetings, social media campaigns, sharing online resources, and other networking exercises to foster knowledge exchange and peer-learning.

**Design outreach materials specifically oriented to the needs of climate activists.** Ensure the way climate activism is defined and the type of support offered is described in a way that will resonate with those who may not define themselves as activists or defenders. Ensure materials are translated into as many languages as possible and shared with climate networks and platforms.



## 2. Increase accessibility of support to climate activists and groups that work on behalf of indigenous, rural, and more marginalised communities

**Emphasise the need to attend to well-being and psychosocial support**, in order to sustain climate activism in hostile environments; ensure that well-being is included as a critical component of holistic security. Identify resources that can provide this support:

- Actively engage with psychosocial and mental healthcare organisations by raising awareness about the pressing needs of climate activists, particularly youth and child activists.

- Work with schools and academic institutions to raise awareness of the particular needs of student activists, including by building capacities in teachers and trainers to identify early signs of mental health issues.

**Revisit and simplify application procedures** and provide application materials in multiple languages. Facilitate application procedures by allowing flexibility in the required documents and shortening application forms. **Translate documents into local languages.**

**Simplify key advocacy documents**, including on human rights instruments and mechanisms, projects with environmental impact, decision-making processes, and access to support.

**Revise stringent eligibility requirements** and verification processes to make them consistent with the context of climate activists, especially to enable youth and indigenous peoples to apply. **Revise minimum age requirements** that directly or indirectly limit access to support.



## 3. Build bridges and coordinate action with other civil society organisations and donors

Establish **effective referral pathways so that organisations supporting climate activists can more easily access the protection support** through emergency grants and technical support that mainstream human rights NGOs can provide.

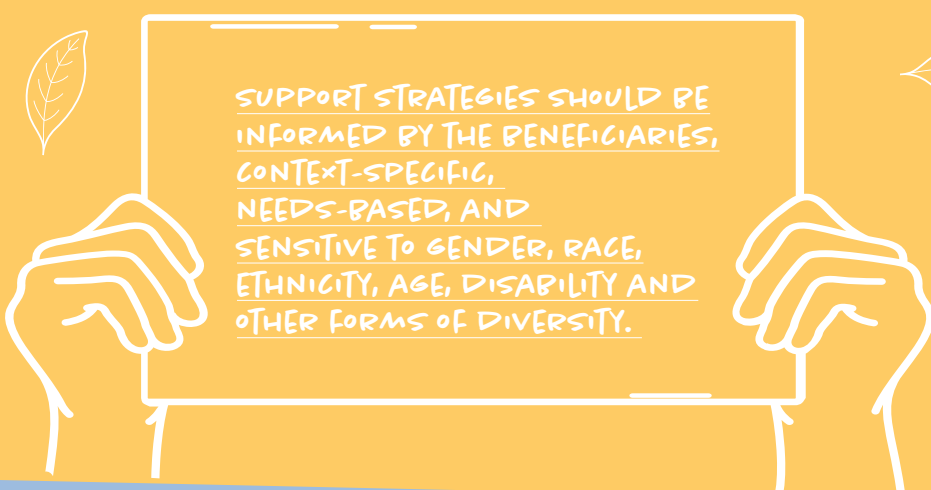
**Broaden trust networks** to expand the type and number of organisations that can refer activists. Identify a core group of actors that want to connect through **regular and secure channels of communication.**

**Work jointly to identify local organisations engaged with climate activists that can function as intermediaries** to bridge the gap between international supporters and local grassroots activists, particularly those from indigenous and rural communities. **Invest in capacity-building** and **provide core funding** to help them act as intermediaries.

**Re-orient from a reactive to a preventative approach.**

Reach out to other support organisations that offer particular expertise and are **not yet supporting climate activists** to bring them on board. Identify potential allies and spaces that, despite not being focused or intended to support climate activism, can offer valuable support (i.e., digital security, narrative change work, etc.) to climate activists.

**Reach out to organisations and individuals working to develop positive narratives** around human rights, climate action, and environmental protection—for example, freedom of expression and journalism networks, among others—and with each of them explore opportunities for joint action, especially for **raising the visibility of the support needs** of climate activists.



For more information, read the report *'Understanding and responding to the protection needs of climate activists and movements: A guide for support organisations.'*