



BUSINESS AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF CLIMATE ACTION

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CLIMATE CHANGE IS AFFECTING US ALL, BUT THE MOST SEVERE IMPACTS ARE BEING FELT BY THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE. EXISTING INEQUITIES – DUE TO FACTORS SUCH AS GENDER, RACE AND INCOME – EXACERBATE THE RISKS TO PEOPLE’S LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS. INEQUITY ALSO AFFECTS PEOPLE’S CAPACITY AND OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY. CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE DEFINING ISSUE OF OUR TIME. HOW WE RESPOND CAN ENHANCE OR UNDERMINE THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD.

CONTEXT

While attention has understandably been on the mitigation actions needed to tackle global warming – including getting to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 – there is a growing understanding of the social equity and adaptation dimensions of climate change; and that the need to ensure the transition to a green economy is also a just one.

According to a recent IPCC report from the UN, 40 per cent of the world’s population, or 3.6 billion people, is highly vulnerable to climate-change-related hazards. The World Bank estimates climate change could push up to 132 million people into poverty by 2030. While governments must take the lead, business and civil society organisations have a crucial role to play in supporting climate justice.

“There is no going back. No matter what we do now, it is too late to avoid climate change and the poorest, the most vulnerable, those with the least security, are now certain to suffer.”

David Attenborough, Naturalist¹

“The Global South is not on the front page, but it is on the front line.”

Vanessa Nakate, Climate Activist²

WHY THIS PAPER?

This paper sets out a **Business and Climate Justice Action Framework** to enable businesses to support fairness in climate action.

Visualised as a 3x7 matrix, the framework encourages companies to consider how they can contribute to the 7 principles of climate justice³ using their 3 spheres of influence:

1. **core business** capabilities and operations;
2. **philanthropy** and social investments; and
3. **engagement in policy** dialogue and strengthening institutions.

It is intended to spark a conversation about the actions companies can take individually and in partnership with peers, governments and civil society.

This paper builds on and updates a previous version [published in May 2021](#).

“With increasing warming, millions will be displaced, millions more will be impoverished and trillions will be lost due to the impacts of climate change ... There is no time for dithering and no time for posturing – this is our last chance to get the world on a 1.5°C compatible trajectory.”

Carlos Fuller, Lead Climate Negotiator, The Alliance of Small Island States⁴

TRENDS

WE PUBLISH THIS PAPER IN THE CONTEXT OF A NUMBER OF TRANSFORMATIONAL TRENDS:

1st **the world is still battling COVID-19 and its after-effects,** which has highlighted and exacerbated a number of deep inequities and vulnerabilities, just as climate change does.⁵ The global pandemic also highlighted our interconnectedness and galvanised large-scale and rapid collective action to respond, recover and rebuild better for people and planet. All this comes at the start of the Decade of Delivery for the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 13 on climate change and its impacts.⁶

2nd **political momentum** is building on climate justice. U.S. President Biden has placed tackling racial and economic disparities at the heart of his plan to tackle climate change.⁷ In 2021 the German supreme court ruled that the government’s climate policies were insufficient to protect future generations. And governments agreed via the UN Human Rights Council, to formally recognise, for the first time, people’s right to a clean and healthy environment.

Civil society is mobilising too. In the U.S., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is campaigning for more to be done to recognise the disproportionate impact of climate change on communities of colour and low-income communities.⁸ Globally, the Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) campaigns on the disproportionate impact of climate change on women.⁹ The NGO Trocaire supports people in low-income countries “who have done the least to cause this crisis [and] are suffering the most”.¹⁰ The Human Rights and Climate Change Working Group brings together civil society organisations focused on the human rights dimension of climate change and feeds into the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Human Rights Council.¹¹

3rd businesses are increasingly being expected to step up and take action.

The 2022 [Edelman Trust Barometer](#)¹² found that business outscores government by 53 points on competency and 26 points on ethics. With this trust comes responsibility – because 52 per cent of respondents feel business can and should be doing more to address climate change, inequality and workforce reskilling. Investors are also paying close attention to the material risks and opportunities posed by climate change. In his 2022 Annual Letter to CEOs, [Larry Fink highlighted](#)¹³ that sustainable investments have now reached \$4 trillion and that this is just the beginning.

CEOs, themselves, are taking notice. In October 2020, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development established new membership criteria, including requirements for its corporate members to “set an ambition to reach net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, no later than 2050, and to support the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights”.¹⁴ The UN Global Compact’s Action Platform on Climate Ambition is providing a collaborative space for companies and key stakeholders to tackle both climate mitigation and resilience building.¹⁵ In September 2020, The Business Roundtable produced a set of 11 principles to guide CEO climate change action including “minimizing social and economic costs for those least able to bear them”.¹⁶

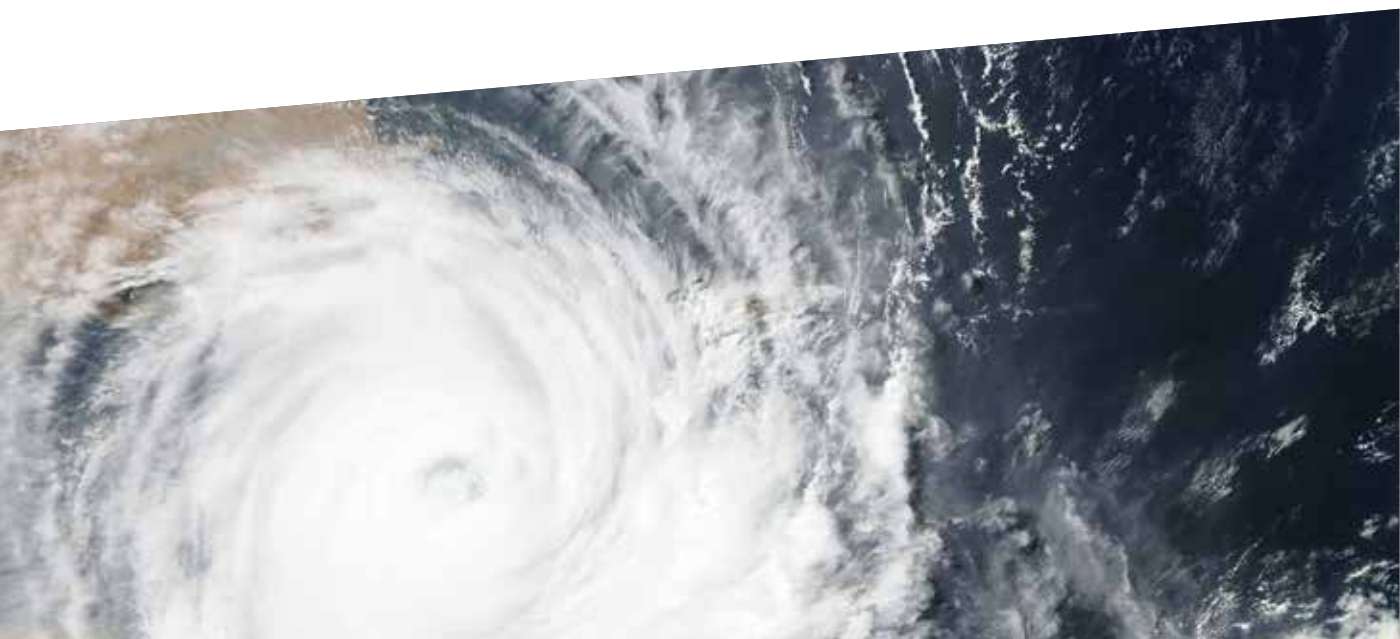
‘The next 1,000 unicorns won’t be search engines or social media companies, they’ll be sustainable, scalable innovators – startups that help the world decarbonize and make the energy transition affordable for all consumers.’

Larry Fink, CEO, BlackRock 2022 Annual Letter to CEOs¹⁷

“We need to accomplish something gigantic we have never done before, much faster than we have ever done anything similar.”

Bill Gates, from his book, “How to Avoid a Climate Disaster”¹⁸

Collective action platforms have also been established. For example, the Race to Zero which commits companies to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest; and the Race to Resilience which is aiming to build the resilience of 4 billion people by 2030.¹⁹ A number of companies have said they will go even further or faster.²⁰
How can business now build on these ambitions to ensure climate justice?



WHAT IS CLIMATE JUSTICE?

Climate justice recognises that existing inequities due to factors including gender, ethnicity, geography and income, increase the severity of the risks people face and limit their access to the opportunities of the transition to a green economy. Climate justice seeks to address these inequities and injustices by putting people at the centre of climate strategies.

“Climate change undermines the most important human rights: the right to food, water, health, education, and even life itself.”

Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland, Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights²¹

BUSINESS BENEFITS OF A CLIMATE JUSTICE LENS

Climate justice is a human-centred approach that emphasises the social impacts of climate change, as well as the social impacts of actions designed to tackle climate change. Applying a climate justice lens has three key benefits for companies:

1st it encourages a more **holistic, joined-up approach** within the company that minimises the risk of unintended negative social impacts from climate actions. In addition to crucially reducing salient risks to people, this can also lower litigation and reputation risks for the company. It recognises that building social and economic resilience is a powerful way to build climate resilience and vice versa. It incentivises working across often-siloed climate and social/human rights teams and functions, along with integrated targets and reporting, to deliver climate solutions that work for people *and* planet, as well as the company.²³ In practical terms, this might translate, for example, into greater resilience of supply chains, when viewed from a combined social and environmental perspective.

Climate justice “puts people at the centre and delivers results for the climate, for human rights, and for development.”

Declaration on Climate Justice, 2013²²

2nd it provides a **framework for consultation and dialogue** with key stakeholders, including around potential tradeoffs. This will help build trust and reinforce companies’ social license to operate. It demonstrates a commitment to people-centred climate action that balances the economic and social priorities of employees and external stakeholders with the imperative to address climate change.

3rd it will spur commercial **innovation and investment** that drives social impact and climate action as well as business competitiveness. Investment and innovation in new technologies, products, services, processes and business models also have the potential to deliver solutions that build the resilience of communities as well as the business in the face of climate and other systemic shocks.



IMPACTS

Climate change impacts all of us, but the impacts do not fall equally. Some people are particularly vulnerable due to existing inequities – due to factors including gender, race, and income – or because they live in climate-vulnerable regions or countries, like coastal zones and Small Island Developing States. The central injustice is that those least responsible for climate change, and least able to adapt and recover from its impacts, are the most affected.



“People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally or otherwise marginalized are especially vulnerable to climate change and also to some adaptation and mitigation responses.”

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)²⁴



LIVES: HEALTH AND SAFETY

Climate change threatens people's lives, health and well-being.

These impacts are not being felt equally. For instance:

- ▶ Globally, **women are 14x more likely to die** during disasters, including cyclones (UN).
- ▶ In Bangladesh **1 in 4 poor households were impacted by Cyclone Aila** in 2009, compared to 1 in 7 non-poor households.²⁵
- ▶ In the U.S., **almost half of African-Americans live in the eight South Eastern states that are most susceptible to storms, floods and sea-level rise**, leading to higher risks of death or injury.²⁶
- ▶ Studies in South Sudan and Uganda on the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on the lives of women and men **found an increase in gender-based violence associated with climate change.**²⁷

Even clean technologies can have negative consequences for the health and well-being of vulnerable people. Take for example the surge in demand for lithium and cobalt for electric vehicle batteries. Mining lithium – over half of which is under the salt flats of Argentina, Bolivia and Chile – consumes vast amounts of water and contaminates the soil, impacting indigenous farmers. Meanwhile, close to half of the world's cobalt is in the DRC, with 20 per cent mined in informal artisanal mines where 40,000 children work in dangerous conditions.²⁸



TEXAS, CLIMATE AND EQUITY

Interview with Bridgette Murray, ACTS Founder and Tides Network WE LEAD Grantee²⁹

As a retired nurse, I am passionate about the health of my local community in Pleasantville, a neighbourhood in Houston, Texas. I have seen first-hand how deep inequities impact on people's lives, including in the face of a devastating winter storm in early 2021 that led to rolling blackouts that left about 4 million people across the State without power in freezing temperatures.

Among the first and hardest hit were marginalised communities, including Pleasantville, a community of 3,000 people that is 75 per cent African-American and 25 per cent Latino. Not surprisingly, these communities were among the last to be reconnected. Given that many are low-income households, most residents could not afford to temporarily relocate during the crisis and are struggling to recover from the power and water disruption.

The unequal impact of the storm reflects historic inequities. Most families do not have private medical insurance. The closest county hospital is ten miles away; the local hospital was closed down after

flood damage during Hurricane Harvey. The proximity to several chemical and manufacturing plants has contributed to the health risks related to air pollution, with facilities releasing large amounts of pollutants when they shut down and restart.

Our focus was on assisting with food distribution since we are also in a food desert, and supplying individuals and families with water because a lot of people suffered from plumbing issues related to the freeze. That's typically not something that we see a lot of here in eastern Texas. And not everyone is recovering at the same rate.

More broadly, the organisation that I founded – Achieving Community Tasks Successfully (ACTS)³⁰ – is driving community-based solutions to the climate crisis. This includes providing education resources to underserved communities, gathering data that will reveal the vulnerabilities, and identifying the resources needed to address them.

With the support of Tides Foundation's Women's Environmental Leadership Fund (WE LEAD)³¹ - we are one of many organisations across the U.S. driving change for a new era of environmental justice and racial equity.

LIVELIHOODS: JOBS AND INCOMES

Climate change will have its most direct impact on those sectors and livelihoods that rely on natural resources, such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and tourism. Climate impacts – from storms to extreme temperatures – will affect the working conditions of many more.³²

The World Bank has recently estimated that up to 132 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty by climate change by 2030.³³ On top of this, there is an increased risk of displacement and the disruption that this causes to livelihoods.

In 2019, 24.9 million people were displaced by disasters such as landslides, hurricanes and drought. That is three times the number of displacements caused by conflict and violence.³⁴

Climate change has particularly significant impacts on agriculture and associated livelihoods. Rising temperatures and disrupted rainfall patterns affect crop yields, increasing the risk of harvest loss and pushing up food prices. Agriculture represents 65 per cent of African employment.³⁵ In most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, around 80 per cent of farms are small,³⁶ and the majority of small-

scale farmers are women: 78 per cent in Zambia, for instance.³⁷ In India, 80 per cent of economically active women work in agriculture.³⁸ Many smallholder farmers in Central America farm on steep lands with thin soils and crops that are sensitive to unstable rainfall and high temperatures.³⁹

Coastal-based tourism makes up between 20 and 50 per cent of the GDP of Small Island Developing States. Combined with the relatively small size of their economies and populations, hurricanes can be devastating. In 2017, the damage associated with Hurricane Maria was equivalent to over 225 per cent of Dominica's annual GDP.

At the same time, strategies to tackle climate change will negatively affect the livelihoods of those people working in carbon-intensive industries. While it is predicted that the shift to a green economy could have a net positive effect on employment, such as by studies in the European Union⁴⁰, the impacts will be uneven.⁴¹ Some sectors will see growth, such as the manufacturing of renewable technologies or services related to the circular economy, for instance, but fossil

fuel-related industries will be severely impacted. In the UK, for example, the dismantling of the coal industry in the 1980s devastated towns and communities.⁴²

Given the inequity of impacts, many place particular focus on ensuring a "just transition" – a shift to a low-carbon economy that does not leave these workers and their communities behind. A just transition focuses on securing the future livelihoods of workers by engaging them in meaningful discussions about the interventions needed to support them, and ensuring they have access to education and training for new skills and technologies.⁴³

Other strategies to tackle climate change can have negative impacts on livelihoods, too. For instance, policies that push up energy prices to reflect their environmental costs can exacerbate energy poverty; competition between crops and biofuels can push up food prices, and renewable energy projects can impact the land rights of local communities where there is inadequate community consultation.⁴⁴



SMALLHOLDER RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE SHOCKS IN KENYA

Interview with Dr Esther Ngumbi, Assistant Professor of Entomology and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I grew up in Kenya in a farming family. I noticed at an early age that halfway through the season, insects and drought would destroy over half of our crops – meaning we would go hungry. This was a recurring issue in our community and, as I later learnt, for many across the developing world.

What are some of the critical challenges that women smallholder farmers face? Critically, women lack access to land ownership which in turn affects their ability to access the financial services needed

to invest in improving crop productivity. They have limited access to knowledge about technological innovations and to profitable markets. Further, women lack access to improved agricultural inputs, such as climate-smart seeds that are more drought-, flood- or insect-tolerant. They also lack reliable access to water; many African women smallholder farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture and are vulnerable to the impact of climate change on rainfall patterns.

I have a strong passion for ensuring that women, who work so hard, who are on the frontline of agriculture, have what they need to make it. Because when they make it, their families make it, communities make it and nations will make it.

LEARNING: EDUCATION AND SKILLS

The transition to a green economy will fundamentally reshape labour demand and the skills, knowledge and competencies required – whether related to the greening of existing industries or the emergence of new green jobs and sectors.⁴⁵ People from disadvantaged communities have unequal access to the education, training and skills development needed to secure these opportunities, putting them at risk of being left behind.

China is a leader in renewable energy, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the global jobs in the sector in 2019. One study estimates a total of 2.2 million renewable energy jobs will have been created in the country by 2020. A key challenge will be absorbing older and less skilled workers among the 1.8 million who are set to lose their fossil-fuel-related jobs, many in China's North East.

In the U.S., Black workers fill less than 10 per cent of the jobs in clean energy production and energy efficiency sectors, while less than 20 per cent of workers in these sectors are women.⁴⁶ Women make up only a third of global wind and solar power jobs.⁴⁷ One factor that employers point to is the difficulty in finding people with the relevant training, experience, and technical skills.⁴⁸

However, there are also deeper systemic challenges. Girls are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, reflecting deep-seated unequal gender norms.⁴⁹ Blacks and Hispanics in STEM jobs in the U.S. highlight a lack of access to quality education and discrimination in recruitment as key barriers.⁵⁰

For those impacted by climate change – not least smallholder farmers in the Global South – there is a need to deepen knowledge and skills to better manage climate variability and build resilience as part of a shift towards “climate-smart” agriculture.⁵¹ Timely climate information – that blends the latest scientific research and indigenous knowledge – is key to enabling farmers to plan and adapt.⁵² One study in Ghana found that over 25 per cent of farmers were not receiving any climate information.⁵³



At a deeper level, access to education, skills and information are key to building the voice of those most affected by climate change and climate change policies so that they are able to participate in a meaningful way. Decision-making that is participatory, transparent and accountable is a key principle of climate justice.⁵⁴

The Escazú Agreement, for example, aims to ensure across Latin America and the Caribbean “the right of all persons to have access to information in a timely and appropriate manner, to participate significantly in making the decisions that affect their lives and their environment, and to access justice when those rights have been infringed.”⁵⁵



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GREEN ENERGY

Interview with Monique Ntumngia, Founder, Green Girls Organisation

I believe that clean energy is an important driver of social impact and a lever for empowering women. First, clean energy is key to increasing energy access for rural communities in Africa – with direct benefits for women's lives. African rural women and girls are the most impacted by a lack of access to energy, and our research shows that COVID-19 has made this situation worse.

Second, clean energy provides opportunities for women entrepreneurs – building and selling solar lamps, installing and maintaining solar panels, and constructing and operating biodigesters to produce biogas for cooking and organic fertiliser. This can help build their economic resilience and break barriers by placing women at the forefront of innovative

technology and sustainable energy, working to close the gender gap in STEM and ensuring women in rural communities are included in the green economy.

This is why I founded Green Girls. We train rural women and girls in clean energy technology, empowering them to provide renewable energy to rural communities and at the same time to become financially independent and sustain their households. We have trained over 4,500 women and girls across 48 communities in West Africa.

We use our work to raise awareness of climate change. Through 48 Green Girls Clubs, we have trained women and girls to act as peer educators to others in their community.

Skilling women and girls in clean energy technology makes their lives safer, healthier and more secure. More than this, it helps them unlock their potential through education and employment.

TOOLS FOR ACTION:

A CLIMATE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK AND DIAGNOSTIC FOR BUSINESS.

Businesses have an important role to play in addressing the impacts of climate injustice. The Business and Climate Justice Action Framework aims to help companies identify where and how they can take action across the value chain. It can be visualised as a three-by-seven matrix.

On one axis are the 7 Principles of Climate Justice defined by the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice. These are the 'key ingredients' for a just approach and have been adapted for a business audience. Across the other axis sit the 3 spheres of influence where a company can take action, defined by Jane Nelson, Director of the Corporate Responsibility Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School. No single 'principle' or area of business activity is inherently better than another – rather, it is the combination of activity and the intent behind it that determines whether, as the diagnostic tool shows, you are a Beginner, Learner or Leader.

3X7 CLIMATE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK



CORE BUSINESS:

Harness core capabilities

and operations. Identify vulnerable stakeholders in the company's operations, value chain, and communities. Identify the most salient human rights, environmental, and economic risks they face, and develop plans to address these through enhanced policies, processes, products, services, technologies, financing mechanisms, and business models.



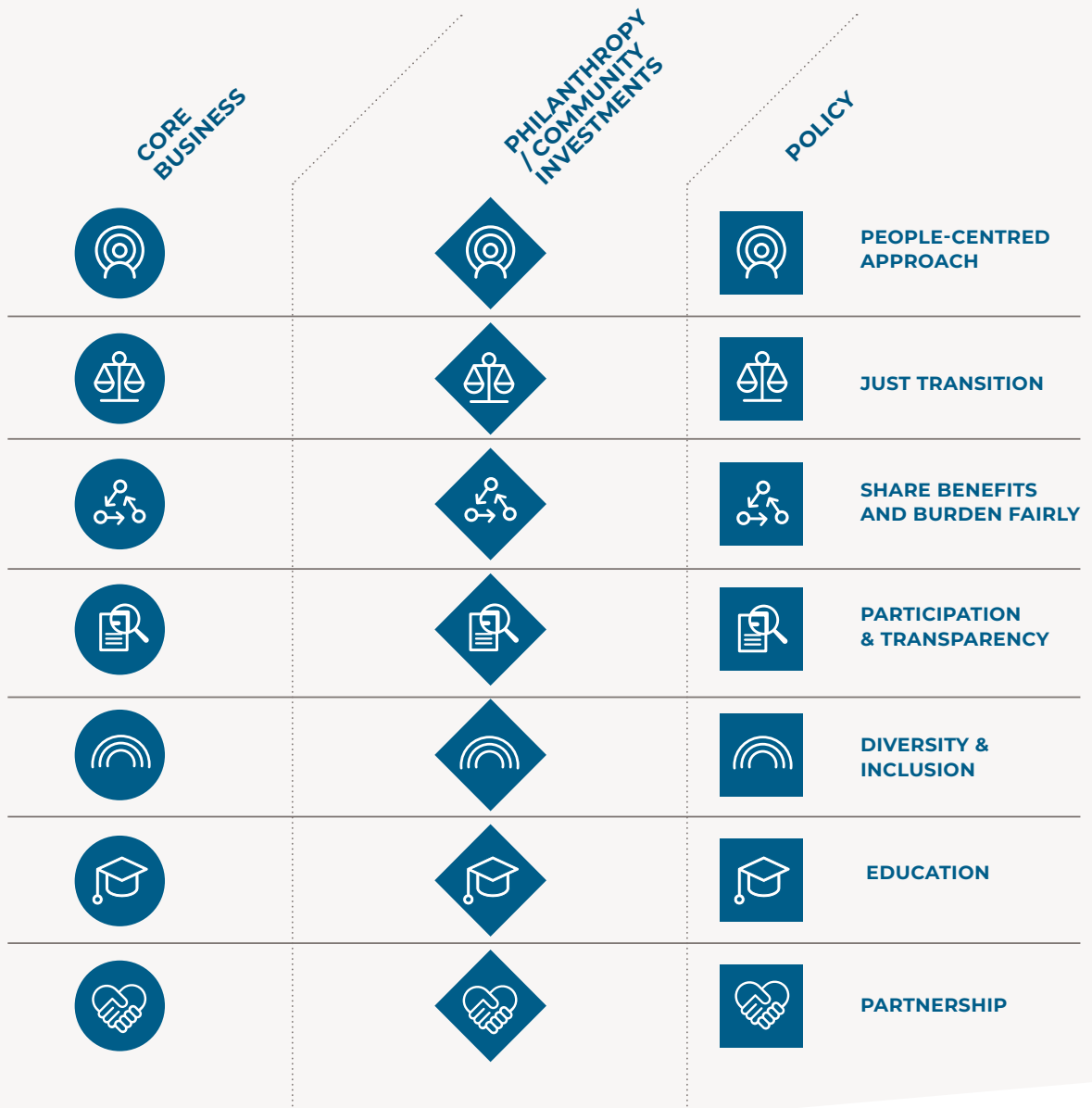
PHILANTHROPY/ COMMUNITY INVESTMENT:

Explore ways to leverage corporate philanthropy, social investment, and employee engagement to support those facing vulnerabilities and ensure that community voices are heard.



POLICY:

Engage in policy dialogue, coalition building, and institution-strengthening partnerships to support those who are most vulnerable. Build awareness and harness marketing and brand tools to influence policies and behaviours.



THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF CLIMATE JUSTICE*



1 People-centred approach: Are commitments to human rights connected to the company's commitment to climate action/ the environment? E.g. rights and labour standards in supply chains, including hardware circularity and transition minerals (e.g. copper).



2 Just transition: Are company net zero transition plans considerate of jobs lost or created for people most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change? Are employees involved in planning the company's transition away from carbon and toward resilience? Are employees protected and enabled to cope with the transition? How is the company levelling the playing field (e.g. providing equal access to technology and skills) in impacted communities?



3 Share burdens and benefits fairly: Are company commitments to using renewable energy/water conservation also able to reach impacted communities? Are carbon credits schemes reaching the most vulnerable and is there oversight? Are there co-benefit practices being implemented in communities within supply chains? Are steps being taken to minimise the costs of climate action on those with the least ability to pay?



4 Participation, transparency, and accountability: How are the company's policies and products informed by the needs of people most affected by climate change? How can products enable greater participation in finding solutions for those most impacted and how are the company's users that are causing harm being held to account? How are commitments and actions made transparent to customers, clients, suppliers, etc.?



5 Diversity and inclusion: Are people's different vulnerabilities to climate change recognised (employees, suppliers, communities)? Can you reach more diverse and climate-vulnerable suppliers, consumers, and employees? – e.g. can you use procurement policies to reach more diverse and climate-impacted groups?



6 Education and skills: How is the company educating employees, users or consumers and communities about climate change, equity and rights? How is it investing in ensuring employees and suppliers have the skills needed for the just transition?



7 Partnership: What partnerships are in place to advance climate justice? (CSR, supply chain, NGOs, employee groups, communities)

* Adapted from the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice Principles

BENCHMARKING DIAGNOSTIC

	BEGINNER	LEARNER	LEADER
BUSINESS APPROACH	Action is only focused on philanthropic investments , not core business or influencing policy.	Action is focused on one or more area of core business, philanthropy, and policy .	Action is mostly focused around the organisation's core business and on influencing policymakers (incl. behaviour change through brands/products).
REACH	Company is predominantly supporting communities (impacted by its operations or identified as vulnerable to climate change) but not assessing its potential to impact employees, suppliers, users/consumers.	Action is focused on communities and suppliers but not users/consumers and employees.	Action includes tackling impacts of climate change on consumers/users, suppliers, employees, and communities .
PRINCIPLES	Company is not aware of the 7 climate justice principles . It is inadvertently spreading the burdens of climate change unevenly (e.g. job losses due to restructuring disproportionately affecting people of colour or women) and not focusing on its own operations.	Action is taking place across several of the climate justice principles, but by chance rather than by design . There is not yet clarity on how to link the company's human rights and climate goals.	A company is exploring its ' value add ' to the 7 climate justice principles. (Which one(s) are we focused on and why?) A company is equally committed to human rights and climate action and making the connection between the two.
STRATEGY	Company has not identified how climate justice is material to their core business. A company takes a reactive approach (ad hoc investments, lack of internal process/strategy, not exploring opportunities to innovate across the business).	Company is experimenting with how climate justice could be material to their core business. It is reflecting on how to tackle climate justice by initiating internal processes across teams, seeking external support, assessing internal buy-in).	Company has recognised, at a senior level, that climate justice is of material importance to their core business. A company is participatory in designing its approach (includes views of staff, seeks external support/challenge, has a reporting process in place).

SOME EXAMPLES OF COMPANY ACTION ON THE 7 PRINCIPLES*



1 People-centred approach:

Throughout the Global South the extraction of natural resources can cause severe environmental damage and social harm, particularly to indigenous and rural communities.

Ford Foundation has the goal to foster agency among rural communities, helping them secure land rights and have their say in the planning of projects.



2 Just transition: Enel, an Italian electricity company operating in more than 30 countries, committed to decarbonising its energy mix by 2050. Enel established a global framework agreement with international and Italian unions which included apprenticeships to transfer knowledge from elderly to young workers, and a commitment to retention, retraining and redeployment.



3 Share burdens and benefits fairly:

Natura works with over 30 different communities in the Amazon to source ingredients. It participates in 'Benefit Sharing', a legal mechanism from Brazil's environmental ministry that requires companies to share the economic benefits with local communities if their products or materials are made with access to genetic heritage or traditional knowledge.



4 Participation, transparency, and accountability:

Action Works by **Patagonia** is an activist as well as a grant-making platform, connecting individuals with local grassroots initiatives focused on climate and environmental justice.



5 Diversity and inclusion: Starbucks

leverages employee resource groups such as Partners for Sustainability, the Black Partner Network and the Indigenous Partner Network to provide opportunities to learn about climate justice through the voices of frontline workers, NGOs, and government leaders.



6 Education and skills: Wipro

works with water-stressed communities and regions near its operations. The company brings a science-based understanding of the challenge to manage local water resources and provide equitable access. Wipro provides capacity building to traditional well diggers and farmers and runs the largest environmental education programme in India, engaging a wide range of stakeholders.



7 Partnership: Verizon

launched a Climate Resilience Prize in partnership with GreenBiz and the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Climate Resilience Center. The prize awarded \$500,000 to help scale proven, in-market solutions that are focused on mitigating the disproportionate impacts of climate change in vulnerable communities.

* Adapted from the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice Principles

GET INVOLVED

This paper is intended to support a process of rapid shared learning and co-creation. We hope that it will provide a useful framing for practical conversations with peers, stakeholders and policymakers, and will inform coalition-building and local action.

The paper forms one part of a wider programme that Business Fights Poverty and its partners are convening to crowdsource and share best-practice examples and insights from a variety of companies, industry sectors and countries. It is accompanied by a series of online events and virtual peer group convenings.

We are working with an international coalition of partners, businesses and business networks. We invite other individuals, businesses, civil society organisations, government agencies and networks to get involved to scale this collective effort to drive global learning and local action.

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RESOURCES

[Toolkit: The Climate Justice Playbook for Business](#)

A practical guide for social enterprises and purpose-driven businesses by B Lab, the COP26 Climate Champions Team, Provoc, and the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at the University of Oxford.

[Yale Experts Explain Environmental Justice](#)

Researchers from Yale University discuss the link between social justice and environmental health, and how we cannot move forward without addressing both. They explain environmental justice, list some of the main causes and consequences of environmental injustice, and what people and organisations can do to help tackle these issues.

[Just Transition: A Business Guide](#)

This guidance from the B Team contains operational advice and tactics, several case studies and an analysis of the risks and opportunities of climate action on a company's workforce. It provides ways for companies to engage with workers, unions and governments on building a clean energy economy that benefits all.

[Just Transitions for All: Business, Human Rights, and Climate Action](#)

This paper by the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) explores the implications that climate change has for human rights, and argues that integrated approaches can strengthen human rights protections, climate justice, and sustainable development.

[Climate and the Just Transition](#)

This report by BSR examines the concept of the "just transition" to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.

[Women and the Net Zero Economy](#)

A toolkit on how companies can transition to a net-zero economy at the same time as economically empowering the many vulnerable women working upstream in global value chains. With the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Work and Opportunities for Women Programme, PwC and the Corporate Responsibility Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School.

RESOURCES

[Why Climate Change and Human Rights are a Business Issue](#)

This report by the UN Global Compact highlights the central role businesses play in determining whether or not global temperature increases can be limited to 1.5°C by 2050, and identifies key issues that businesses should consider when assessing climate change and human rights.

[Understanding Human Rights and Climate Change](#)

Submission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This document provides a good overview of the impact of climate change on human rights, including the rights to life, self-determination, development, food, health, water, sanitation and housing.

[Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment](#)

This report by John H. Knox, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, sets out the main human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

[Linking Health Justice, Social Justice, and Climate Justice](#)

Researchers at the Lancet describe how individuals who are the hardest hit by the climate crisis are also the ones who suffer the most from social inequity and vulnerability. The authors stress the interconnectedness between health, social, and climate justice.

[Human Rights and Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessments](#)

This guide by the Danish Institute for Human Rights provides advice on integrating human rights into environmental, social and health impact assessments. It was developed in collaboration with the global oil and gas industry association for environmental and social issues (IPIECA).

[How Can Businesses Deliver a More Inclusive Economy on the Road to Net Zero?](#)

Companies face a challenge to ensure that their commitments around building back better – to align their cultures and strategies with fighting climate change and social injustice – remain after the pandemic, and that these commitments move from ambition to action.

[The Road to Net Zero Finance](#)

The report, produced by a panel of experts from world-leading financial institutions, critically assesses the United Kingdom's financial system's ability to deliver a 2050 net zero target. The report comprises key advice to the Climate Change Committee to accompany its Sixth Carbon Budget.

[The People's Transition: Community-led Development for Climate Justice](#)

This guide from Foundation for European Progressive Studies and the Think Tank for Action on Social Change proposes a participative decision-making model for climate action. It includes a case study focused on rural communities in Ireland.

[Gender-Based Violence and Environment Linkages: The Violence of Inequality](#)

This report establishes that gender-based violence can be observed across environmental contexts and that it affects the security and well-being of nations, communities and individuals while also risking the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs).

[Video: Doughnut Economics](#)

An analysis by economist, Kate Raworth, of the social and planetary boundaries we need to navigate, and a compass for human progress. In this discussion at *Business Fights Poverty Oxford 2017*, Kate describes her idea.

[Transforming How Business Impacts People: Unlocking the Collective Power of Five Distinct Narratives](#)

When it comes to conversations about how people are affected by business conduct and the global economy, a number of distinct narratives are influencing decision-makers today. This working paper proposes that the narrative of business and human rights – grounded in global normative standards and a focus on those people most at risk of harm from business practices – can be of central relevance in bringing these narratives together, and helping them achieve a goal they all share: a world in which business gets done with respect for the basic dignity and equality of everyone.

ENDNOTES

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- 3 The 7 principles were developed by the Mary Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice and have been adapted for a business audience.
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- 5 The impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable people was the focus of the Business and COVID-19 programme led by Business Fights Poverty, in partnership with the Corporate Responsibility Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School, and launched on 12 March 2020: <https://businessfightspoverty.org/covid-19-response-centre/>
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- 18 Gates, B. (2021). How to Avoid a Climate Disaster, p.51
- 19 <https://racetozero.unfccc.int/race-to-resilience/>
- 20 For example, the B Corp Climate Collective is a group of Certified B Corporations working together to take action on the climate emergency. A number of B Corps (including Business Fights Poverty) have committed to net zero by 2030. For more information, visit <https://www.bcorpclimatecollective.org/net-zero-2030>.
- 21 Speech on 4 February 2020 at Edie Sustainability Leaders Forum <https://www.edie.net/news/7/WATCH--Mary-Robinson-on-net-zero--climate-justice-and-being--prisoners-of-hope-/>
- 22 Statement by the High Level Advisory Committee to the Climate Justice Dialogue, an initiative of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice and the World Resources Institute: <https://www.mrfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Declaration-on-Climate-Justice.pdf>
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ENDNOTES

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