

2026

our
20th
year

CENTER FOR HIGH IMPACT PHILANTHROPY

HIGH IMPACT GIVING TOOLKIT



The Center for
High Impact Philanthropy
School of Social Policy & Practice
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

IN THIS GUIDE



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ABOUT US

Center for High Impact Philanthropy (CHIP)

The Center for High Impact Philanthropy (CHIP) is the premier source of knowledge and education on how philanthropy can do more good. Founded collaboratively by the School of Social Policy & Practice and alumni of the Wharton School, it is the only university-based center with a singular focus on philanthropy for social impact.

University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice

Our home school, Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2), is dedicated to the passionate pursuit of social innovation, social impact, and social good. For more than 110 years, SP2 has been a powerful force in the world, working towards social good and social change through research and practice.

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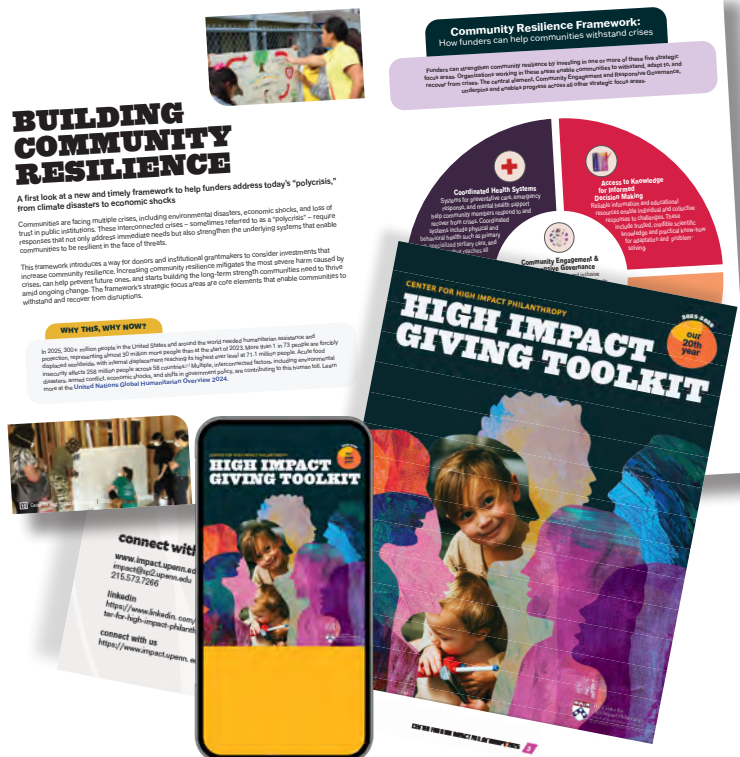
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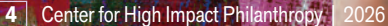
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2026



These are uncertain times, as many face economic struggles, health crises, natural disasters, and a growing mistrust of public institutions. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed, even paralyzed. This guide is about the opposite: deciding how you can help.

You'll find concrete examples, best practices, and decision-making frameworks to help you understand how to make a bigger difference with your charitable giving. The guide is a companion to our web-based High Impact Giving Toolkit, a free public resource that we update annually, thanks to the generosity of our funders and sponsors.

Philanthropy alone can't solve all the world's problems. But it can help meet basic needs, strengthen systems, support better policy, and seed the kind of groundbreaking ideas that lead to more resilient communities.

The term "philanthropy" comes from the Greek word "love of humanity." Whether you have \$10 or \$1 million to give, we hope this guide and the resources in the digital toolkit help you turn your concern for others into real-world impact.

Katherina M. Rosqueta
Founding Executive Director



FIND MORE ONLINE

On the 2026 High Impact Giving Toolkit website, you'll find additional resources to help you achieve greater social impact:

- ✿ Related guidance and more nonprofits for each of the impact areas featured in this toolkit
- ✿ Guidance on effective crisis grantmaking, which is critical given the increase in natural and human-made disasters
- ✿ Additional resources for practicing high impact philanthropy and finding and researching nonprofits

Visit <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/giving-toolkit/>

WHAT IS

HIGH IMPACT PHILANTHROPY

High impact philanthropy is the practice of intentionally using private resources to serve the public good. In other words, it's philanthropy for social impact.

Not all gifts and grants are intended to maximize social impact. For example, you may round up your bill at checkout to donate to a store's charity, sponsor a friend participating in a race that benefits her favorite cause, or give to your church or temple as part of your obligation as a member. These acts are part of many donors' "philanthropic portfolio," which can include multiple issues and giving strategies (see Four Philanthropic Plays on p. 8).

Whether you have \$10 or \$1 million, high impact philanthropy is the part of your portfolio where you ask, "How can I do more good in the world?" Here's how.

■ Focus on social impact

There are many worthy causes and many communities that could use your support. To practice high impact philanthropy, you first need to choose how you want to make a difference. It could be by reducing hunger, ensuring all kids learn, alleviating poverty, improving health and well-being, or any number of other worthy causes. Personal experiences often lead donors to commit to a particular community or issue. It is fine to let your heart choose the goal — you can practice high impact philanthropy for any issue or community. Once you choose the goal, your head can help you find the programs and organizations that are well-positioned to reach that goal.

Learn more online:

[Incorporate Impact Thinking Into Your Philanthropy](#)

■ Use the best available evidence

For every cause, there is experience, knowledge, and information that can help you avoid reinventing the wheel or making the same mistakes others have already made. Evidence is information that helps you understand the nature of the problem you're trying to solve, how promising a nonprofit's overall approach is, and whether the conditions are ripe for success. Evidence comes from three sources: the field (e.g., beneficiary and practitioner perspectives), research, and informed opinion. Different programs and nonprofits will have different types and amounts of evidence available. But when multiple sources of evidence point in the same direction, you've found a great opportunity for impact.

Learn more online:

[What Is Evidence? Rethinking the E Word](#)

■ Link impact and cost ("bang for buck")

No one has an unlimited budget. To create greater social impact, you'll need to consider how far your money can go. When you practice high impact philanthropy, you want to understand what a nonprofit can achieve given everything it spends. That's "bang for buck" thinking, where the "bang" is the social impact, and the "buck" is the money spent to achieve that impact.

There are many ways to link impact and cost. You could take results (e.g., number of participants earning a living wage, tons of CO2 emissions averted) and compare those results to the money required to achieve those results. You could also compare costs to societal benefits, like when \$1 spent on a home visitation program yields \$5 in societal benefits from lower social welfare costs and increased tax revenue because participating children are healthier and stay in school longer. It's not about overhead ratios, which simply compare what a nonprofit spends in one accounting category to what it spends in another. Instead, when you link impact and cost, you begin to understand what it takes to create social impact and recognize opportunities where money might go even farther.

Learn more online:

[Linking Impact and Cost](#)



■ Assess, learn, and improve

Philanthropy is not a perfect science. The issues that donors tackle are among the toughest society faces. You'll make mistakes, and your donation may not achieve your intended social impact goals. But the more you assess, learn, and apply what you learn, the more you'll improve, and the more social impact you'll achieve.

Assessment involves two kinds of comparisons. The first is comparing planned activities to what actually happened. The second is comparing the results of those activities to what you had hoped for. Both offer opportunities to capture lessons learned, so that your next cycle of donations can be even more effective.

Connecting with other funders can often accelerate learning; alumni of our [High Impact Philanthropy Academy](#) report that the network they gained has been one of the biggest benefits. Your local community foundation, giving circles, the due diligence of staffed

foundations, funder membership groups, and public resources like those on our website can all be sources of people and information to learn from and with.

Learn more online:

[The Assessment Cycle: How to Learn and Improve for High Impact Philanthropy](#)

High impact philanthropy is not about how much you give, but how well you give. By focusing on social impact, using the best available evidence, thinking “bang for buck,” and learning as you give, your generosity and good intentions can result in social impact year-round and in the years to come.

Learn more online:

[Four Philanthropic Plays for creating impact for any issue](#)

[Guidance by Issue Area to learn how to have impact in areas that matter to you](#)



Applications open for certificate programs in high impact philanthropy

HIGH IMPACT PHILANTHROPY ACADEMY

Unlock the power of philanthropy with High Impact Philanthropy Academy, a certificate program for individual donors, professional grantmakers, and other philanthropic leaders seeking greater impact.

Learn more and apply at: <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/academy/>

ADVISING FOR IMPACT

Elevate your philanthropic advising practice with Advising for Impact, a new certificate program for professionals who work with donors and philanthropic families, equipping you with the tools, frameworks, and confidence to help your clients maximize the impact of their giving.

Learn more and apply at: <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/advising-for-impact/>

FOUR PHILANTHROPIC PLAYS

High impact philanthropic support takes many forms. It can fund nonprofit programs that provide **services directly** to those in need; increase the **capacity of systems** so that multiple programs and organizations are collectively more effective and efficient; support **policy & advocacy** initiatives that change the environment in which nonprofits work; and fund **research & innovation** with the potential for game-changing progress.

Across the many social impact areas our team has analyzed, philanthropic support typically falls into one or more of these four categories. Like financial investment asset classes, these categories often reflect different levels of risk, timeframes for results, and social impact returns.

If you've funded only one play, consider expanding to other plays to diversify risks and rewards, or collaborate with others supporting plays that complement your chosen approach. Many organizations work in more than one play. For example, the nonprofit **Friendship Bench**, a community mental health organization in Zimbabwe featured on p. 20, and **AÇEV**, a parenting and early education nonprofit in Turkey, featured on p. 15, both train other organizations to implement their models (system capacity building) in addition to serving individuals themselves (direct service).



WHAT ARE THE FOUR PHILANTHROPIC PLAYS?



DIRECT SERVICES

provide products or services directly to individuals. Examples include food pantries, homeless shelters, and tutoring programs.



SYSTEM CAPACITY BUILDING

strengthens the ability of multiple organizations and individuals to better address a need. For example, training pediatricians to screen for mental health issues during routine wellness visits helps strengthen our system for addressing mental health.



POLICY AND/OR ADVOCACY

raise awareness and increase knowledge to influence public opinion, public policy, and/or legislation. Examples include advocating for clean energy policies and reforming the criminal justice system.



GAME-CHANGING INNOVATION

advances new knowledge and develops new solutions. Examples include development of vaccines and renewable energy technology.

Risks & Rewards

WHAT ARE THE RISKS, REWARDS, AND TRADEOFFS?

Comparing the Four Philanthropic Plays

Philanthropic Play	Timeframe for results	Risk/Reward Profile	Tradeoffs
Direct Services	0-5 years	Lower investment risk since generally less complex; often addresses an immediate need.	Outcomes can be easier to measure due to addressing an immediate need, but direct service programs don't change the underlying conditions that produce the need.
System Capacity Building	1-5+ years	Higher investment risk and increased uncertainty due to greater complexity, like multiple stakeholders with potentially competing interests. Has potential for greater scale of impact than direct services.	Progress can be harder to measure and difficult to attribute to any one funder's work.
Policy/Advocacy	1-10+ years	Higher investment risk and increased uncertainty, including reputational and political risk. Has potential for greater scale and sustainability.	Leveraging resources of other sectors (e.g., government and business) can lead to more sustainable change, but outcomes are subject to changing political and cultural shifts.
Game-Changing Innovation	5-10+ years	Highest investment risk and uncertainty. Money and time may be spent learning only what doesn't work. Can be transformative, in some cases eliminating need.	Breakthroughs are rare but can be game changing.



BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

A first look at a new and timely framework to help funders address today's “polycrisis,” from climate disasters to economic shocks

Communities are facing multiple crises, including environmental disasters, economic shocks, and loss of trust in public institutions. These interconnected crises – sometimes referred to as a “polycrisis” – require responses that not only address immediate needs but also strengthen the underlying systems that enable communities to be resilient in the face of threats.

This framework introduces a way for donors and institutional grantmakers to consider investments that increase community resilience. Increasing community resilience mitigates the most severe harm caused by crises, can help prevent future ones, and starts building the long-term strength communities need to thrive amid ongoing change. The framework's strategic focus areas are core elements that enable communities to withstand and recover from disruptions.

WHY THIS, WHY NOW?

According to the United Nations Global Humanitarian Overview 2024, in 2025, 300+ million people in the United States and around the world needed humanitarian assistance and protection, representing almost 30 million more people than at the start of 2023. More than 1 in 73 people are forcibly displaced worldwide, with internal displacement reaching its highest ever level at 71.1 million people. Acute food insecurity affects 258 million people across 58 countries. Multiple interconnected factors, including environmental disasters, armed conflict, economic shocks, and shifts in government policy, are contributing to this human toll.

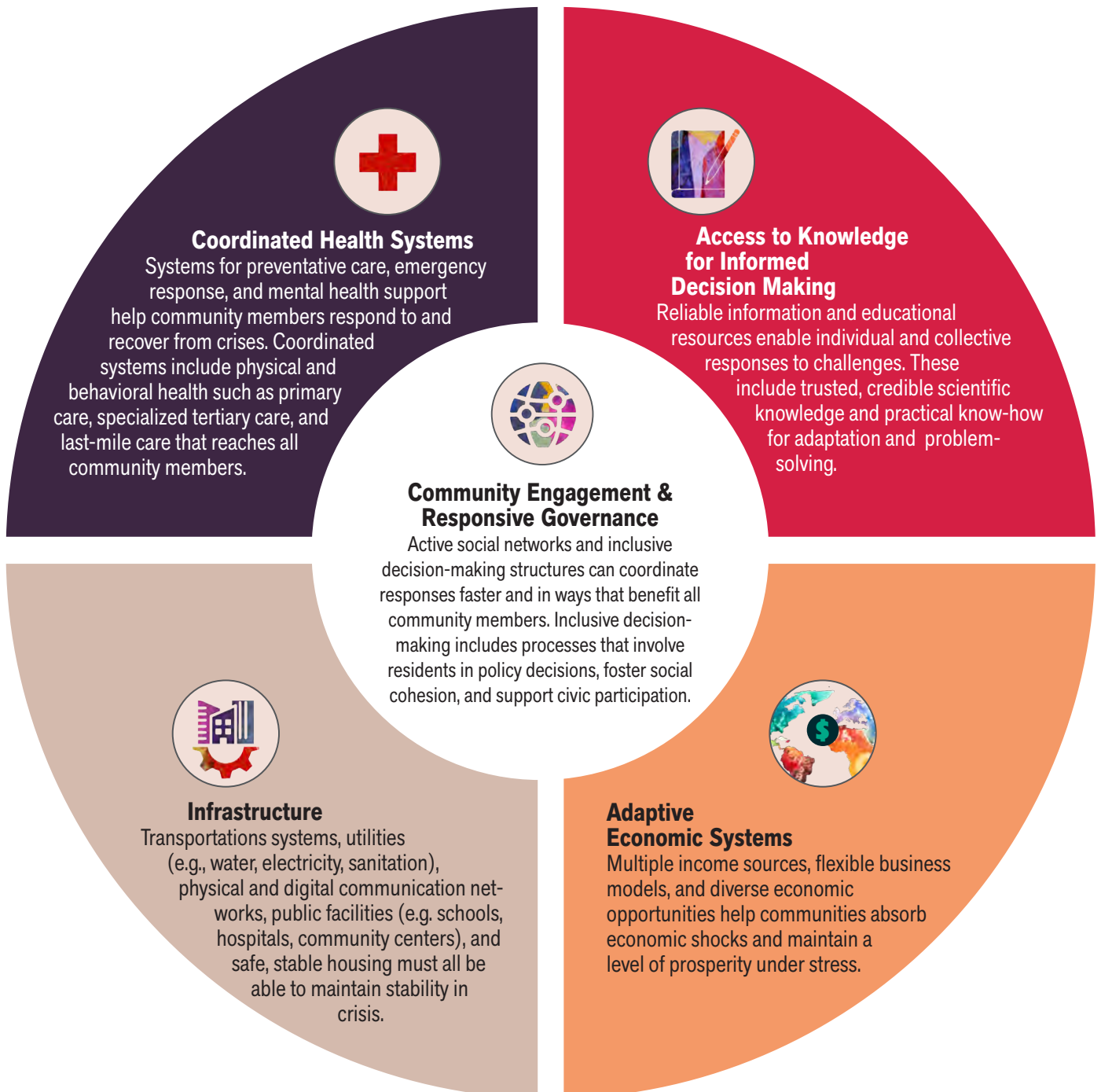
Learn more at <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/community-resilience/>.



Community Resilience Framework:

How funders can help communities withstand crises

Funders can strengthen community resilience by investing in one or more of these five strategic focus areas. Organizations working in these areas enable communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from crises. The central element, Community Engagement and Responsive Governance, underpins and enables progress across all other strategic focus areas.



HIGH IMPACT IN PRACTICE:

PROVEN STRATEGIES AND REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

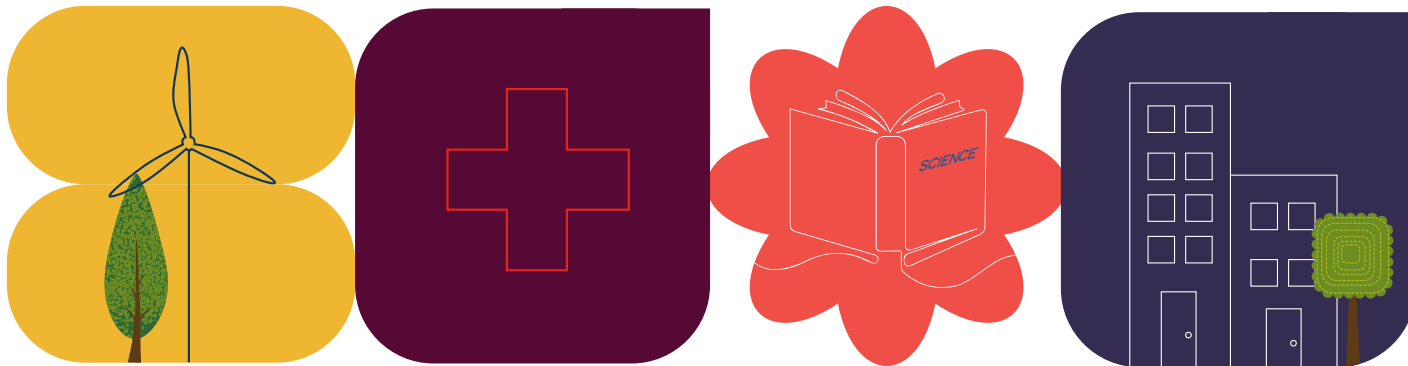
To demonstrate high impact philanthropy in practice, we spotlight evergreen areas that are foundational to people's survival: education, health, housing, and conservation and livelihoods. These are not the only issues that matter. But when resources are limited and the needs feel overwhelming, it can be helpful to focus on these foundational areas as one starting point for creating high impact.

We highlight best practices that effective nonprofits are using to meet these needs:

- **Early Learning and Education:** Provide a web of support – at home, in school, and in the towns where children live – to unlock early learning.
- **Health (mental and physical):** Bring services to people, at or near home, and then connect those services to larger, preexisting health systems.
- **Housing:** Increase access to safe and affordable housing through innovative practices in ownership models, building materials, and zoning.
- **Conservation and Livelihoods:** Align incentives so that environmental protection brings concrete economic benefits to communities directly affected.



education
health
housing
conservation
livelihoods



In the following pages, you'll find details on why and how each best practice achieves greater impact. You'll also find multiple examples of real-world nonprofits that exemplify the use of the best practice. Throughout, you'll see how community input is a common best practice across all areas and nonprofit examples.

The nonprofit examples include organizations that we have profiled in CHIP's earlier work and some that we are highlighting for the first time. We identified these organizations through our own applied research and through our partners at Lipman Family Prize, Ivory Innovations, and the Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation.

These nonprofit examples can serve multiple purposes. If you're simply looking for a high impact organization to support, they are all worthy of your consideration. If you're already supporting nonprofits working in these issue areas, or work with communities not served by these organizations, these examples offer models to guide your giving and enhance the impact of your chosen grantees.





EARLY LEARNING AND EDUCATION



Unlock early learning through a web of support at home, in school, and in the neighborhoods where children live

Nonprofits Exemplify this Practice by:

- Supporting the development of healthy parenting skills that foster positive relationships between children and the adults in their lives
- Taking a two-generation approach: combining high-quality early childhood education with programs designed to increase families' income
- Turning community members into teachers and commonly visited places into settings for learning

Young children are dependent on a web of support — parents, caregivers, community members — not only for their safety and health, but also for the daily, positive interaction that shapes their brain development and future ability to learn.

Early childhood, defined here as birth to age 8, is a key time in children's lives. During this period, their brains are developing most rapidly, establishing a foundation for all future learning.^[1]

Especially during this period, what happens in school depends on what happens at home. Children with caregivers experiencing high levels of stress, often because of low incomes or uncertain employment, have poorer educational outcomes than their peers,^[2,3] meaning that learning disparities begin before a child even enters the classroom.

Research shows that developing the parenting skills of children's caregivers positively impacts children's brain development, educational outcomes, and health.^[4,5]

Nonprofits like **AÇEV** (page 15) work with parents in Turkey to develop healthy parenting skills, resulting in increased reading and math skills for their children.

Because childhood poverty and low levels of parental education are associated with poor early educational outcomes, providing parents with cash, job training, and assistance in pursuing

education programs can support their children's early learning.^[6]

The Bridge Project (page 16) funds the well-being of children by providing low-income mothers in the United States with unconditional payments and community resources during pregnancy and the first several years of their child's life.

Research also shows that an increase in parents' education by 1 year reduces the probability that a child repeats a grade by up to 7% and lowers the likelihood that students drop out of high school.^[7] **CAP Tulsa's** two-generation approach illustrates how (page 17).

The most effective literacy programs and organizations engage children's caregivers^[8] and happen wherever children are — in the classroom and outside of it.^[9] **Barbershop Books** (page 16) establishes reading spaces in local barbershops and collects children's reading preferences so that caregivers and teachers can personalize reading time.

What follows are more detailed profiles of these four organizations. All are real-world examples of how nonprofits implement these best practices. For more resources on supporting children, see CHIP's **Early Childhood Toolkit**, **Guaranteed Income Primer**, **Early School Success Toolkit**, and **Two-Generation Lens Guide**.



AÇEV



Support parents and caregivers to improve early learning outcomes

Location: Turkey, with replications in 16 low- and middle-income countries in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia

AÇEV offers parenting programs that promote children's social, emotional, and cognitive development at home.

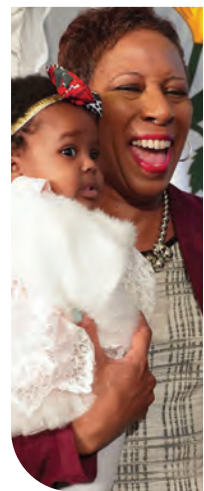
AÇEV's Mother-Child Education Program (MOCEP) consists of two programs. The Cognitive Education Program promotes school readiness and cognitive development by building children's pre-literacy and numeracy skills, language development, concept formation, and problem-solving skills. The Mother Support Program helps mothers foster positive home environments that further reinforce learning.

Children whose mothers attended MOCEP showed stronger verbal and numerical skills in first grade and read at an earlier age than children whose mothers did not attend. They also had lower secondary school drop-out rates (2.4% vs 7.4%) and higher university attainment (44% vs 27%).^[10] A cost benefit analysis found that every one Turkish lira spent on AÇEV's Mother Support Program returned nearly six lira worth of benefits in the form of increased productivity and earnings of those who participated.^[11]

The organization's Father Support Program (FSP) encourages fathers to assume increased childcare responsibilities. Fathers who participated in the Father Support Program were more involved in supporting their children's development, became more aware of their childrearing responsibilities, and showed more empathy and communication.

AÇEV makes its curriculum available digitally through its YouTube channel, free First6Years app for caregivers, and WhatsApp text line.

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.acev.org/en/homepage/>



BARBERSHOP BOOKS



Equip teachers, parents, and barbers to encourage a love of reading

Location: United States (21 states)

Barbershop Books encourages children under eight to read for fun by establishing reading spaces in barbershops, delivering early literacy programming, and providing resources to help children identify as readers. It focuses on Black boys, one of the populations with the lowest rates of reading proficiency in the United States.^[12]

The organization provides books chosen by boys to barbershops, which Black boys often visit, and trains barbers to encourage boys to read.

Their online programs include a free library with digital children's books, a summer learning program, and a tool to help educators and parents understand children's reading preferences.

The summer program, Reading So Lit Summer, is a free two-week virtual literacy program taught by male high school students of color that also provides free books for participants. Children use a reading preferences tool to build a profile summarizing their reading preferences, including favorite types of books and where and when they like to read. Caregivers then use this profile to select books and personalize instruction and story times.

Prior to Barbershop Books, more than 90% of barbers in the program reported rarely or never seeing boys read, but after six months of the program, more than 75% of barbers reported seeing boys read daily or almost every day. Following participating in Reading So Lit, 85% of caregivers report improvements in children's reading confidence and motivation, and 70% say their child is more likely to identify as a reader.

Research shows that children identifying as a reader and spending time reading outside of school predict reading comprehension,^[13] and reading for fun is positively linked to academic achievement.^[14,15]

■ **Learn more:** <https://barbershopbooks.org/>

BRIDGE PROJECT



Provide mothers with financial stability to improve the lives of their children

Location: United States, founded in New York City, with sites in New Jersey, Boston, Appalachia, Milwaukee, Connecticut, Indianapolis, Omaha, and Upstate New York

Launched in 2021, the Bridge Project provides low-income mothers with biweekly, unconditional payments and connects them to community resources during pregnancy and the first several years of their child's life. It now provides regular payments to nearly 4,000 mothers across multiple regions.

In addition to providing direct payments, the organization has worked with elected officials to advance budget proposals that drive public funding toward unconditional cash payments. In New York, the Bridge Project has catalyzed more than \$20 million in public funding for mother and infant cash programs.

A randomized control trial conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Guaranteed Income Research found that mothers receiving payments increased their savings by an average of 242%, increased their ability to access outside childcare by 63%, and showed significant improvement in home stability,^[16] all factors that contribute to a child's early learning.

Another study found that 63% of mothers living in transitional housing moved to more permanent housing, 53% saw an increase in food security, and 46% of the cash was used for baby expenses. In Milwaukee, after a year in the program, 31% of moms opted to pursue post-secondary education.^[17]

The Bridge Project is conducting further research to determine effects on child health and learning outcomes, but research elsewhere shows strong relationships between improving family income and education levels and better child health and education outcomes.^[18,19]

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.bridgeproject.org/>



CAP TULSA

 **Improve school readiness through a two-generation approach**

Location: Oklahoma, United States

CAP (Community Action Project) Tulsa prepares low-income children in Tulsa County for school through a two-generation approach, combining high-quality early childhood education with programs designed to increase family income and parenting skills.

Children ages 6 weeks through 4 years old attend full-day, year-round programs led by early childhood educators, including many bilingual staff. Children gain skills in literacy and math through play-based, developmentally appropriate learning activities. Families are also given books and learning activities to continue learning at home.

At the same time, parents receive access to free services including parenting skills workshops and English as a second language programs.

CAP Tulsa also offers a free home-based program, Learning@Home, in which experienced Parent Educators work directly with families with children from birth to age four, as well as expecting moms, through regular home visits. Parent Educators give children health screenings, connect families to resources like government benefits, and provide parents with tips to manage stress and build parenting skills.

A long-term study found that children who attended CAP Tulsa's preschool programs were 7.5% more likely to be enrolled in college than non-attendees. They were also 31% less likely to be held back a grade and 34% less likely to be chronically absent.^[20] Parents in the program also saw improvements in employment and income, increased college readiness, and better mental health outcomes.^[21]

■ **Learn more:** <https://captulsa.org/>



AÇEV



BRIDGE PROJECT



BARBERSHOP BOOKS



HEALTH

Bring health services to people at or near home, and connect those services to larger, preexisting health systems

Nonprofits Exemplify this Practice by:

- Bringing mental and physical health services close to or into people's homes
- Training and incentivizing community health workers to deliver services
- Integrating community health into larger or preexisting health systems

More than half of the world's population lacks access to essential health services.^[22] For people in low-income and rural areas, access to healthcare is a particular challenge due to unreliable transportation, language barriers, and distrust of medical professionals.^[23]

Globally, access to mental health care is severely limited, particularly in low-income countries that have very few mental health professionals.^[24] More than 70% of people with mental illness receive no professional treatment.^[25]

Community health models, which deliver health services and education at the community level, often in people's homes, are one of the most effective ways to deliver care to hard-to-reach populations.^[26]

For example, in Zimbabwe, where there are fewer than 20 psychiatrists for the country's over 15 million people,^[27] **Friendship Bench** (page 20) trains community health workers to provide talk therapy in local spaces. In the United States, where many lack access to healthcare facilities,^[28] **Changent** (page 20) provides free physical and mental health services to children and their families in their homes.

Community health programs that train community health workers (CHWs), people who provide basic health and medical care to their own communities, are most effective when they provide training, adequate supervision, and incentives (monetary

or otherwise).^[29,30,31]

For example, **BRAC's** (page 19) community health worker program trains local women embedded in their communities to be CHWs, providing primary and preventative care through home visits and referring cases to clinics as needed. Their CHWs receive regular supervision and earn income by selling health-promoting products.

Successful community health programs often build on and engage with preexisting health systems and stakeholders.^[32] Partners can include local hospitals for more complex medical cases; local or national governments to leverage preexisting public efforts; other nonprofits working in the community; and people like midwives who already provide care services outside of formal hospital settings. **Impact Global Health Alliance - Guatemala** (page 21), which builds accessible birthing centers in rural Guatemala, is an example of how to enlist and train local midwives and mothers.

What follows are more detailed profiles of these four organizations. All are real-world examples of how nonprofits implement these best practices. For more resources on supporting health, both physical and mental, see CHIP's **Community-Based Approaches to Health**, and **Health in Mind: A Philanthropic Guide to Mental Health and Addiction**.



BRAC



Improve child and maternal health outcomes and education

Location: Asia and Africa

Based in Bangladesh and operating in fifteen countries across Asia and Africa, BRAC is the largest non-governmental development organization in the world and runs some of the longest-running community health programs.

BRAC trains a network of nearly 100,000 community health workers (CHWs), mainly women, to conduct home visits where they educate households on essential health behaviors, provide basic medical care and preventative care like vaccines, and refer cases to health centers as needed. BRAC CHWs focus primarily on mothers and children, emphasizing common and often fatal diseases like diarrheal illness and tuberculosis.

CHWs also sell health-promoting products like soap, sanitary pads, and bed nets that they purchase for wholesale prices and sell to their patients, earning a small profit. This both increases the use of health-promoting products and provides CHWs with a living wage.

Community health workers are equipped with a mobile app to report on their activities and the health of their patients. BRAC then uses this data to improve how CHWs provide care.

A long-term randomized control trial evaluating BRAC's program in Uganda found that BRAC's intervention reduced child mortality in children under five by approximately 27%, children under 1-year's mortality by 33%, and under 1-month mortality by 28%. The cost-per-averted-death was approximately US \$4,000, about one-third the cost of comparable healthcare delivery methods. ^[33]

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.bracusa.org/>





CHANGENT

(Nurse-Family Partnership + Child First)



Provide physical and mental health care at home for children and their families

Location: United States

Changent operates across the United States using a community health model to provide free health services to children and their families in their homes through its two programs, Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First.

Nurse-Family Partnership trains registered nurses to provide services for first-time parents beginning in early pregnancy through a child's second birthday. During home visits, nurses assess both mothers and their children for early warning signs of illness or developmental problems during pregnancy, postpartum, infancy, and early childhood. They also connect families to resources like social services and healthcare when needed and support developing positive parenting skills.

Child First provides home-based mental health and support services for families who have experienced trauma and other adversities or whose children are experiencing emotional or behavioral challenges. Families that are either expecting a child or have a child under the age of 5 are paired with a two-person care team: a licensed mental health professional and a care coordinator. The mental health professional provides family counseling while the care coordinator connects families with services and resources that support healthy child development.

A long-term study of Child First found a 68% decrease in child language problems, a 64% decrease in maternal mental health problems, and a 40% reduction in child welfare services after the conclusion of the program.^[34] Long-term randomized control trials show that at age 6, compared to control groups, Nurse-Family Partnership children were 48% less likely to experience abuse and had 67% fewer behavioral and intellectual problems.^[35]

■ **Learn more:** <https://changent.org/>

FRIENDSHIP BENCH



Treat anxiety and depression through community health worker-led talk therapy

Location: Zimbabwe, with replications in El Salvador, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, the United States, the United Kingdom, Colombia, and Vietnam

Friendship Bench trains community health workers, typically older women whom the organization calls grandmothers, to provide talk-based therapy to underserved populations in familiar local spaces.

Grandmothers conduct 45-minute sessions on park benches in discreet locations, providing up to six free talk therapy visits per client. The grandmothers assess levels of anxiety and depression and screen for cases where a higher level of care is needed. Grandmothers refer higher-need clients to a professional mental health counselor.

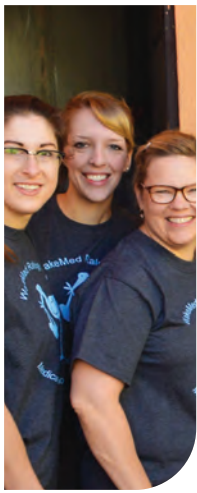
After the sessions, clients are connected to a peer-led support group of others who have sat on the Friendship Bench. In the support groups, clients are also taught income-generating skills, such as vegetable gardening.

The Friendship Bench program is currently being adapted in Botswana to train young people to provide talk therapy to adolescents living with HIV.

A randomized control trial in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, found that those who received the Friendship Bench intervention experienced significantly lower anxiety and depression symptom scores after six months compared to a control group.^[36]

Beyond mental health symptom improvement, another study found that HIV-positive individuals who received the Friendship Bench intervention were more likely to maintain an undetectable viral load, which prevents sexual transmission of the virus, compared with those who received usual care.^[37]

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.friendshipbench.org/>



IMPACT GLOBAL HEALTH ALLIANCE-GUATEMALA



Reduce maternal mortality with care that respects traditional community practices

Location: Rural Guatemala

Impact Global Health Alliance-Guatemala (IGHA-G), an alliance between the nonprofits Impact Global Health Alliance and Curamericas Global, uses a community health model to improve maternal health outcomes in Indigenous communities in rural Guatemala.

Because government-operated facilities staff often do not speak local dialects or allow midwives, more than half of women in rural Guatemala give birth at home without skilled birth attendants. As a result, this population has higher rates of maternal and child mortality.^[38,39]

IGHA-G establishes free birthing centers, or Casas Maternas, where staff speak local languages and midwives are integrated into operations. It also trains local mothers and midwives to increase community knowledge on safe birthing practices.

Before building a Casa, IGHA-G consults the community to assess interest, moving forward if they are receptive.

Each Casa is staffed by a trained nurse and two local support staff. Midwives encourage clients to deliver in a Casa and assist in the delivery.

IGHA-G's four Casas have reduced infant mortality rates by 35% and maternal mortality by 63% in project areas. The cost of the program is US \$14.05 per beneficiary per year, significantly less than the \$26.02 per person average cost of a delivery in a government-run facility.^[40,41]

■ **Learn more:** <https://impactglobalhealthalliance.org/projects/guatemala/>



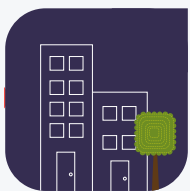
BRAC



FRIENDSHIP BENCH



CHANGENT



HOUSING

Increase access to safe and affordable housing through innovative practices in financing models, building materials, and policy

Nonprofits Exemplify this Practice by:

- Building safer, more affordable housing that reflects community needs
- Ensuring that new and existing housing is disaster resilient
- Providing better information and advocating for better housing policies

Globally, 1.6 billion people live in inadequate, unsafe housing conditions,^[42] and more than 150 million people are homeless.^[43]

Stabilizing housing gives people the ability to address other critical needs, such as preexisting mental health issues^[44] or children's academic achievement,^[45] more effectively. When people have stable housing, they spend less time in the emergency room, decrease substance use,^[46] and have fewer and less intense mental illness symptoms.^[47]

Increasing housing stability is also cost-effective. A review of programs in the United States that provided people with housing without preconditions found an average benefit-to-cost ratio of 1.8:1, meaning that for every \$1 spent on these programs, \$1.80 was returned to society due to reduced use of public services.^[48]

The current supply of affordable housing worldwide is not enough to meet demand. The United Nations estimates that to meet the demand of the world's population by 2030, 96,000 new affordable and accessible housing units must be built every day.^[49]

Nonprofit organizations can help meet this demand by building affordable housing that meets community needs. For example, **Rural Homes** (page 25) is building affordable housing for essential workers in Telluride, Colorado, a community that is facing a severe affordable housing crisis.

When housing, both newly constructed and existing, is also disaster resilient, homes stay safe and habitable for years to come. Organizations can build new housing with environmental

hazards in mind. For example, a new home in an earthquake-prone area could be built with reinforced walls. Existing housing can be repaired using more resilient materials, like stronger roofs.^[50]

Following a series of natural disasters that destroyed hundreds of thousands of houses in rural Nepal, **Build Up Nepal** (page 23) began working with local entrepreneurs to build disaster-resilient, affordable, and eco-friendly housing using bricks made of recycled stone dust. Similarly, on a reservation in Minnesota that is facing a housing shortage, **Lower Sioux Indian Community Hemp Program and Housing Project** (page 24) is building durable, affordable housing out of fire-resistant hempcrete. It also uses hempcrete to reframe dilapidated existing buildings, increasing their resilience.

Despite the need, policies and regulations around housing and land use, particularly zoning laws, severely restrict developers' and other entities' ability to build affordable housing.^[51]

Nonprofits that work to provide information and advocate for better housing policies can help increase the availability and safety of housing. For example, the **National Zoning Atlas** (page 24) creates publicly accessible online maps of zoning laws in over 33,000 jurisdictions in the United States. It then analyzes this data and works with advocates and policymakers to implement reforms.

What follows are more detailed profiles of these four organizations. All are real-world examples of how nonprofits implement these best practices.



BUILD UP NEPAL



**Build safer, eco-friendly housing
and improve economic opportunity**

Location: Nepal, training hundreds of teams internationally

Build Up Nepal works with local entrepreneurs in rural Nepal to rebuild safe and affordable housing that was lost after earthquakes.

The organization uses Compressed Stabilized Earth Bricks (CSEBs), which are made from recycled stone dust, readily available waste from stone crushers. Compared to fired brick, walls built from CSEBs produce 50%-80% less CO₂ emissions and cost 35%-50% less.

Build Up Nepal recruits people in rural communities to produce bricks and build houses, with a particular focus on underemployed populations. The organization sells CSEB-making machines at a low cost and trains purchasers to produce bricks and run a business that produces safe, cost-effective houses. Build Up Nepal provides continued training, machine maintenance, and connects entrepreneurs to work.

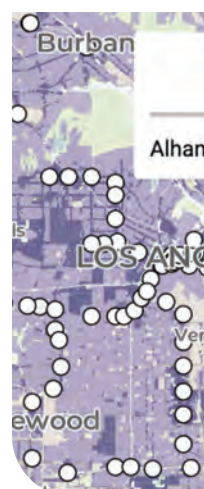
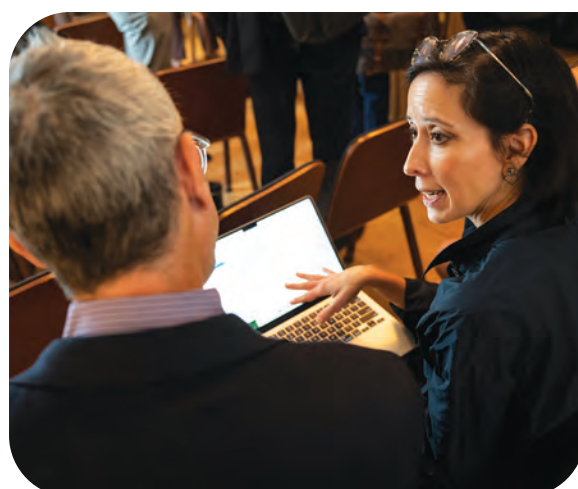
To date, Build Up Nepal has saved over 111,137 tons of CO₂ emissions through the creation of its CSEBs, as much as is produced by 24,000 cars in a year. Since the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, Build Up Nepal has trained 307 teams internationally in CSEB production, built 11,026 houses, and created 2,232 jobs.

Over half of the organization's entrepreneurs belong to disadvantaged groups, including Dalit (the lowest caste) and Indigenous people. The average salary of a CSEB brickmaker is NPR 17,856 (US \$129.10) per month, or \$4.24 a day — a 119% increase over the minimum livable income in Nepal.

Build Up Nepal estimates that more than 43,000 people benefitted from new homes. ^[52]

■ Learn more: <https://www.buildupnepal.com/>





LOWER SIOUX INDIAN COMMUNITY

Hemp Program and Housing Project



Create affordable, environmentally friendly housing that also creates jobs

Location: Minnesota, United States

The Lower Sioux Indian Community Hemp Program and Housing Project is a new tribally-led initiative that builds affordable housing and repairs existing homes with hempcrete, a building material made from industrial hemp and limestone.

Hempcrete homes are durable, highly fire-resistant, quick to build, carbon negative, and zero waste. Such homes are also much cheaper to heat and cool, given hempcrete's very high thermal mass.^[53]

The Hempcrete Program grows and processes hemp, trains community members in construction, and builds and repairs homes on the reservation. This model keeps costs low, avoids reliance on external contractors, creates jobs, and generates revenue for the community.

By selling hemp construction products and offering hempcrete consulting services, the organization generates income that it uses to fund its programs.

It has completed six homes since 2023, including a duplex completed in 21 days and a four-bedroom home completed in 6 weeks, and is now building a school. Early results show a 70% reduction in heating costs compared to traditional materials.

Construction of the homes has also been much less expensive than traditional construction. For example, a duplex was completed at a cost of \$171 per square foot, well below the regional average of \$250–\$340 per square foot for conventional housing.^[54]

■ **Learn more:** <https://lowersioux.com/hemp-program-and-housing-project/>

NATIONAL ZONING ATLAS



Make land use data accessible to increase the supply of affordable housing

Location: United States

Across much of the United States, zoning laws — the regulations that dictate what can be built and how land can be used — only allow for single-family homes, preventing the development of denser housing like apartment buildings. This dramatically decreases the amount of housing available and increases home prices and rent.^[55,56]

Despite zoning's importance, information on zoning policies is largely inaccessible to the public.

The National Zoning Atlas (NZA), a project of the nonprofit Land Use Atlas, creates tools for advocates and policymakers. Its interactive map, which aims to cover over 33,000 jurisdictions in the United States, allows users to see their local zoning laws and statewide regulations.

To ensure data is actionable, the NZA publishes insights from their analysis and works with advocates to support local outreach.

The NZA recently released a report^[57] showing that New York City could lose almost 20,000 units of housing due to flooding and needs to double the current zoning capacity to meet housing demands as a result.

In Montana, a bipartisan coalition used NZA tools to convince the state legislature to pass reforms to increase the supply of multifamily housing units and thus increase affordable housing.

In Texas, advocates used NZA data to pass statewide legislation expanding zoning for manufactured housing, one of the most affordable housing types.

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.zoningatlas.org/>



RURAL HOMES



Strengthen communities by building affordable housing for essential workers

Location: Colorado, United States

Founded in 2021, Rural Homes builds and sells homes in rural Colorado to essential workers, including teachers, nurses, and firefighters, who aren't eligible for traditional, subsidized affordable housing but make far less than what is needed to buy from the existing housing stock.

The organization partners with philanthropic funders and local government entities to secure donated land for development. It then uses low-interest program-related investments (PRIs) from philanthropic organizations as construction loans to build new homes.

Once homes are sold, the revenue generated replenishes the fund, which finances the next round of construction in another community.

Rural Homes uses a cost-effective modular home construction process, incorporating energy-efficient features that reduce long-term costs for homeowners and ensure the homes are environmentally friendly.

All Rural Homes units are deed-restricted, meaning that all future owners of the homes meet Rural Homes' eligibility requirements, and the homes stay affordable for years to come.

The organization has built 59 homes in rural Colorado. Home prices range from \$225,000 to \$445,000, typically less than half the price of the average home in the area.

In the town of Norwood, new houses created a 6% increase in total property tax revenue, which the town plans to use to improve its water infrastructure.^[58] Rural Homes estimates that their Norwood and Ridgway neighborhoods have generated about \$6,400,000 each in economic impact for the surrounding communities through construction jobs and sourcing materials from local businesses.

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.ruralhomes.co/>



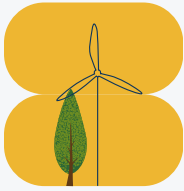
RURAL HOMES



LOWER SIOUX
INDIAN COMMUNITY



BUILD UP NEPAL



CONSERVATION AND LIVELIHOODS

Align incentives so that environmental protection brings concrete economic benefits to the communities directly affected

Nonprofits Exemplify this Practice by:

- Creating and preserving livelihoods through conservation efforts
- Providing eco-friendly, cost-effective alternatives to destructive practices
- Tapping into community knowledge on the natural environment and local behavior

Human actions shape and often harm the environment, while environmental issues such as droughts, floods, and storms harm communities, creating interconnected challenges.^[59] Protecting natural resources requires understanding and engaging with both sides of this relationship — how human activities affect our environment, and how the environment affects human well-being.

Traditional environmental conservation efforts can displace local communities and restrict their access to resources, rather than create solutions that protect the environment for future generations without threatening livelihoods.^[60] When people benefit socioeconomically, environmental initiatives are more effective because they increase community buy-in and long-term program success.^[61]

For example, **Seacology** (page 29) protects island ecosystems by funding community priorities, such as schools or materials for income-generating activities, in exchange for conservation commitments, like protecting forests.

Similarly, practices that are harmful to the environment, like burning trash or using fuel that worsens air quality, persist when they are the least expensive option. To change behavior, successful interventions must provide alternatives that are lower cost.

For example, **BleagLee** (page 28), an organization that fights pollution in Cameroon by collecting and repurposing waste, prices their clean-burning fuel blocks cheaper than charcoal, leading to widespread adoption and reduced air pollution.

In Madagascar, **ADES** (page 27) sells inexpensive eco-friendly cookstoves that require less or no fuel to operate, making them more cost-effective than wood- or charcoal-burning stoves that contribute to air pollution and deforestation.

Involving community members in planning processes means they feel a sense of ownership and are more likely to continue an intervention long-term, even when an organization is no longer directly involved.^[62]

For example, **EcoRise** (page 28), supports students in designing projects to improve the sustainability of their schools. Because students design and implement the projects themselves, projects often continue even after EcoRise involvement ends.

What follows are more detailed profiles of these four organizations. All are real-world examples of how to implement these practices.



ADES



Protect the environment while benefiting livelihoods through cookstoves

Location: Madagascar

Association pour le Développement de l'Energie Solaire Suisse (ADES) works in Madagascar to provide environmentally friendly cookstoves while also alleviating the extreme poverty of the communities they work in.

ADES worked with Malagasy households to design the cookstoves to ensure that the stoves are not just better for the environment, but also useful. The fuel-efficient cookstoves reduce fuel consumption by 50% to 70% while its solar cookstoves eliminate the need for fuel completely.

In addition to reducing demand for wood fuel, ADES has planted 1,300,000 firewood, timber, and fruit trees since 2014, restoring 544 hectares of forest. ADES works with village leaders to determine a mix of trees that provide nutrition and value during reforestation.

ADES estimates that its solar and fuel-efficient cookstoves have saved over 3 million tons of wood and prevented the emission of over 4 million tons of CO₂.

Beyond their environmental impacts, ADES stoves save their owners money and create jobs. Using an ADES stove saves its owners at least 50% of the cost of fuel and allows them to spend less time collecting firewood for fuel, which they can use for income generation and other activities.^[63]

The organization directly employs 250 people who receive health benefits and tuition fees for their children. ADES has also trained another 233 people as independent resellers, 70% of whom are women who live in rural villages with few job opportunities.

■ Learn more at <https://ades-solaire.org/en/>





BLEAGLEE



Fight pollution by converting waste into useful, affordable products

Location: Cameroon

In Cameroon, in 2021 alone there was 600,000 tons of plastic waste, and less than 20% was recycled.^[64] When left unaddressed, uncollected waste leads to disease outbreaks and deadly air pollution from trash burning.^[65]

BleagLee collaborates with local governments to improve waste collection, convert waste into clean fuel, and provide employment opportunities.

Operating in Cameroon's five largest cities, BleagLee uses drones and artificial intelligence to map illegal dumpsites and provides this data to local governments, which then ensure that waste gets collected. BleagLee repurposes collected waste into useful products like fuel blocks that produce less pollution than charcoal and firewood.

These fuel blocks are then sold to the public and priced 30% cheaper than charcoal, making the eco-friendly option more economical. Over 75% of Cameroonian households now use these blocks, reducing their household air pollution by 60–80%.^[66]

BleagLee trains and employs young people and women, some of the most underemployed groups in the region, in artificial intelligence, mapping technology, and electronics repair, creating over 530 jobs.

Between 2021 and 2023, the organization processed over 44,620 tons of waste, achieving a 2023 recycling rate of 63% in areas in which it operated. Areas in which BleagLee operates are also cleaner, seeing a 35% reduction in respiratory diseases and a 40% decrease in water contamination incidents, suggesting that BleagLee's efforts, alongside other public health interventions, have been effective in improving health.

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.bleaglee.org/>

ECORISE



Save schools money while equipping students to tackle real-world environmental challenges

Location: United States and Global, in 39 other countries

EcoRise integrates environmental education and project-based learning into K-12 curricula, equipping students with the skills to implement solutions to real-world environmental challenges and pursue related careers following graduation.

The organization's sustainability curriculum gives teachers more than 200 free lessons on themes like water, waste, food, energy, and air. EcoRise also provides professional development training for teachers to ensure the quality of the curriculum's delivery.

Students participating in the program use the organization's Eco-Audit tools to evaluate their schools' environmental impact and identify solutions that make their schools more sustainable while saving their schools money. Past projects have included changing fluorescent bulbs to energy-saving ones, which decreased a school's energy bill by about 10%, and replacing single-use plastic cutlery with reusable flatware.

Since 2015, projects have diverted 1.09 million pounds of waste, saved 2.3 million gallons of water and 43.9 million kilowatt-hours of energy, and improved 2.4 million square feet of green space. In 2024, EcoRise student projects saved schools \$209,333 in resource costs.^[67]

EcoRise also has a curriculum for high school students that focuses on preparing them for careers in environmental sustainability. The curriculum trains students to earn the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Green Associate credential, a highly sought-after professional certification.

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.ecorise.org/>



SEACOLOGY

Protect island communities by conserving ecosystems and improving livelihoods

Location: Globally, across 400+ project sites

Seacology protects island ecosystems by supporting conservation projects that benefit both the local island community and their surrounding natural ecosystem.

The organization funds communities' high-priority projects, like schools, clinics, and tools for income-generation, in exchange for conservation commitments, ensuring biodiversity while improving island residents' quality of life.

Each year, Seacology selects 25 to 30 projects and collaborates with a partner to implement them. For example, in Quenac Island in Chile, the organization has funded the purchase of machines that recycle plastic into objects local women can sell, like phone cases and buttons. In exchange, the community gathers plastic trash generated from the fishing industry and distributes materials on the effects of plastic waste.

Due to the diverse nature of its over 400 projects, the environmental and community benefits of each individual project are unique to the island community it serves.

For example, recognizing the vital role of mangroves in sequestering carbon and providing protection from extreme weather events, Seacology partnered with the Sri Lankan government to launch a mangrove conservation project. That project protects 21,782 acres of mangrove forests with 7,900 women and youth trained in their conservation.

Because mangrove roots provide a habitat for shrimp, preserving the mangroves also positively affects the millions of people who depend on shrimp farming for their livelihoods and food security.

■ **Learn more:** <https://www.seacology.org/>



ADES



SEACOLOGY



ECORISE

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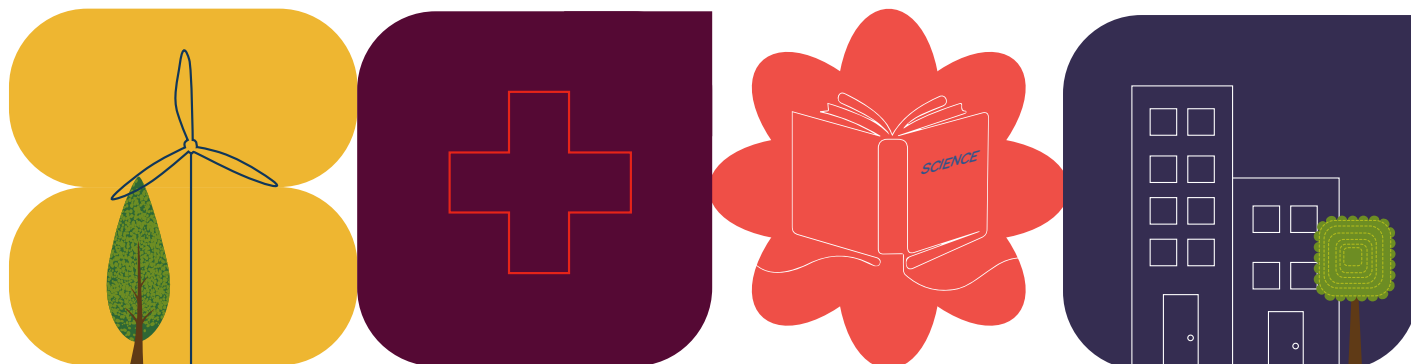
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The nonprofit examples included in this toolkit were sourced from CHIP guidance and organizational partners. Our partners bring rich networks and share our team's commitment to ensuring philanthropic funds create greater social impact. Before requesting any additional information from the nonprofits we profiled, our team leveraged the extensive due diligence already conducted by these partner organizations, along with relevant publicly available information.



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The Barry & Marie Lipman Family Prize is an annual global prize that celebrates leadership and innovation in the social sector with an emphasis on impact and transferability of practices. Administered by the Wharton School on behalf of the University of Pennsylvania, the Prize is committed to resourcing and connecting change-makers to bring innovative ideas to new places and problems around the world. <https://lipmanfamilyprize.wharton.upenn.edu/>



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Ivory Innovations is a nonprofit whose mission is to catalyze innovation in housing affordability. Established in 2017, the organization was created in response to the escalating challenges within the housing industry. Fueled by a commitment to address these issues, Ivory Innovations devotes its time, talent, and resources to champion innovation and provide unwavering support to companies striving to alleviate the housing affordability crisis. <https://ivoryinnovations.org/>



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The Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation is a mission-driven grantmaking foundation that seeks innovative, sustainable solutions for human and environmental challenges.

The foundation works as an engine of change in both policy and practice in Texas, supporting high-impact projects and practices at the nexus of environmental protection, social equity, and economic vibrancy. <https://cgmf.org/>

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