

CLEAN AIR FUND LAUNCHED TO ADDRESS GLOBAL AIR POLLUTION CRISIS

New initiative aims to triple amount of funding in the field: launch coincides with new report detailing lack of philanthropic support for tackling air pollution

CLEAN AIR FUND

NEW YORK, NY September 23, 2019

The Clean Air Fund, a new philanthropic initiative, has launched to address the global outdoor air pollution crisis that is responsible for 4.2 million deaths worldwide – more than from malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/Aids combined. Announced at the United Nations Climate Change Summit, the Clean Air Fund has \$50 million in initial funding – nearly doubling the \$30 million in current global philanthropic air pollution funding in all of the last year – with a goal of raising a total of \$100 million. Donations for the Fund have come from philanthropic foundations with a range of focus areas, including health, climate, mobility, and children.

As part of the launch, which was supported by The Wellcome Trust, the Clean Air Fund released a new report that details the historical lack of philanthropic support to tackle outdoor air pollution and summarizes the trends in global philanthropic foundation funding on outdoor air quality over the past four years.

“With 90% of all human beings breathing unhealthy air and 4.2 million deaths – including 300,000 children – attributable to outdoor air pollution, this constitutes a public health and environmental crisis. The time to act is now. Without aggressive intervention, the number of outdoor air pollution deaths is on track to increase by more than 50% by 2050. The Clean Air Fund is focused on ensuring that philanthropy steps up to the challenge,” said Jane Burston, Executive Director of the Clean Air Fund. “Tackling air pollution will not just save millions of lives but brings multiple benefits to issues including climate change, children’s development, and equity all across the globe.”

“Our aim at the IKEA Foundation is to create a better everyday life for families, and fight and cope with climate change. Air pollution affects everyone’s health, especially young children’s, and has the same underlying causes as those of climate change. The Clean Air Fund tackles both issues: improving air quality and accelerating climate action,” said Per Heggnes, CEO of the IKEA Foundation.

“Air pollution impacts all of us but hurts children the most,” said Kate Hampton, CEO of the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), “The negative effects of air pollution are then exacerbated when communities have limited access to healthcare. Solving clean air is of the highest priority for the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation. By tackling air pollution, we start to tackle climate change and make the world a better place for our children. With our support to the Clean Air Fund, we are pooling our resources and sharing our knowledge with a wider ecosystem of funders, researchers, and experts to solve this global public health crisis.”

“Currently, half of the world’s population is living in cities, exposing them to high concentrations of pollutants from vehicles, industry, and energy production. Of them, more than 300 million are children who live in areas where that pollution exceeds international guidelines by at least six times. This has a terrible impact on their health, potentially leaving them with a lifetime dogged

by respiratory, cardiac, and even developmental issues as a result of this exposure. Vehicles are a major contributor to this problem, and too little is being done to address their impact. The movement of people must be prioritised over the movement of vehicles in our cities, or the health risks of urban air pollution will continue to cast a terrible blight, particularly on our children,” said Sheila Watson, Deputy Director of the FIA Foundation. “A targeted fund to address the causes of air pollution and its impact has never been more vital for our health and our children’s future. FIA Foundation is delighted to be one of the first funders of this new and welcome Clean Air Fund, and we will support it as it works on these issues across the world.”

“We’ve been working towards a good start for all children for more than half a century. We’ve chosen to make our first-ever ‘environmental investment’ in the Clean Air Fund because the evidence is absolutely clear: breathing dirty air does not support a good start in life. Babies and toddlers are more exposed, more vulnerable, and have their entire lives to suffer the health consequences,” said Patrin Watanatada, Knowledge for Policy Director at the Bernard van Leer Foundation. “That’s why we’re excited and determined to support the Clean Air Fund to scale up and accelerate ways to dramatically reduce emissions and limit exposure, especially for the most vulnerable. Everyone has a right to clean air – starting with the first breath.”

The Clean Air Fund will:

- Increase the scale of funding currently targeted towards this issue, by tying together resources from funders interested in climate change, children, and health.
- Share best practice and connect partners to ensure the best local solutions are rapidly scaled up and replicated.
- Lead a collective strategy to ensure interventions can have the most significant impact in reducing the numbers of premature deaths and the incidence of pollution-related diseases such as asthma, lung cancer, pneumonia, and heart disease.

As part of their launch, the Clean Air Fund released “Clearing the Air: The State of Global Philanthropy.” The report found that while foundation funding targeted at achieving clean air is increasing – leading foundations have increased funding on outdoor air quality from approximately \$9m in 2015 to just under \$30m in 2018 – the total amount of funding remains small in comparison to the health impacts and in comparison to the funding dedicated to other health issues. As a comparative example, in 2017 \$800 was spent by foundations for every HIV related death; in 2018, \$7 was spent by foundations for every death related to outdoor air pollution. The report also found that more than three quarters of foundation funding for outdoor air quality was going to projects in just three countries: China, India, and the USA. In terms of the type of project, two-thirds of the money went to communications and policy-related activities.

ABOUT THE CLEAN AIR FUND

The Clean Air Fund is a global philanthropic initiative that supports organisations around the world working to combat air pollution, improve human health and accelerate decarbonisation. The Fund works with a coalition of philanthropic foundation partners who have interests in health, children, mobility, climate change and equity, bringing them together to strengthen their collective investment, voice and impact. Funding partners include IKEA Foundation, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, Bernard van Leer Foundation, Oak Foundation, Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity and the FIA Foundation.

To find out more about the Clean Air Fund please contact info@cleanairfund.org or visit www.cleanairfund.org