



The 2020 Media Impact Forum

Earth to World: Cool It.

A series of online discussions on philanthropy's role in amplifying media's efforts to address the world's most urgent crisis.

[#MIForum](#) | [@MediaFunders](#)



Rationale & Context

A lot of people are talking about what a new normal will look like in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whatever we do moving forward, our decisions need to be centered around protecting our planet and its natural resources. This is a wake-up call. It invites us to understand more deeply that we have to align our actions and policies to reflect the imperatives of the natural world.

Media can illuminate that relationship and the need to protect the environment.

The effects of climate change are becoming ever more real and dangerous, hence the image of the melting earth on the cover of this program. Though the challenges are great and seemingly insurmountable, we also need to acknowledge that we still have the opportunity to make the right decisions about the future of our natural world. But those decisions need to be determined by evidence-based communications, informed by science.

The media, for its part, has an opportunity to give global warming more prominence in political debates in a critical election year, and beyond. And funders, for their part, are recognizing the need for more and better news coverage of our changing planet, and the role of storytelling in moving audiences to action.

This is an important opportunity for us to convene, and not solely because of the urgency of the challenge that lies before us. The Media Impact Forum, which MIF has been hosting since 2013, offers funders of journalism, documentary film and other media—who seldom cross paths in their everyday work—the chance to come together, deepen learning, and spark innovation and collaboration.

Our sessions throughout the month will focus on global reporting collaborations, environmental justice, the latest data in environmental media grantmaking, civic science, the relationship between health and the environment, and much more. And each program will feature inspiring and informative presentations, as well as plenty of time for funders to engage with speakers and offer their own illuminating observations.

We are grateful for your continued support of the field and of our work. We hope to see you all in person again sometime soon. In the meantime, be well.

—The team at Media Impact Funders



Resources & Links

We want to make sure you have everything you need to fully experience our event from the comfort of your desk. Below you'll find links to speaker bios, the attendee list, our Twitter handle, and our survey. And throughout this program, speakers' names are linked to their Twitter handles for easy reference.

**Click here
for speaker
bios**

**Follow us
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#MIForum**

**How did
we do?
Take our
survey**

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Climate Now!

June 9

1 p.m.
ET

Our first session will tackle climate activism, philanthropy's role in supporting climate media, and global threats to civil society. Award-winning journalist Amy Goodman of Democracy Now! will interview marine biologist, policy expert and strategist Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson about her work to protect the oceans and efforts to help communities to find climate change solutions. We'll then hear from Academy Award and Emmy-winning actress and activist Jane Fonda about her perspective on the importance of media in climate activism. Goodman will then take the role of interviewee in a dialogue with Alex Jakana, former BBC journalist and current program officer of Global Media Partnerships at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Ellen Dorsey, executive director of the Wallace Global Fund. Our speakers will discuss the growing threat of extractive industries in bolstering the rise of authoritarian regimes, even as they degrade the environment.

Speakers:



Amy Goodman
@democracynow
Journalist & co-host of
Democracy Now!



Alex Jakana
@Alex_Jakana
Program Officer, Global Media
Partnerships, Bill & Melinda Gates



Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson
@ayanaeliza
Founder and CEO, Ocean
Collectiv & Founder, Urban
Ocean Lab



Ellen Dorsey
@EllenD35
Executive Director,
Wallace Global Fund



Jane Fonda
@janefonda
Academy Award-winning actress,
producer, author and activist



David Rousseau
@KFF
Vice President,
Media and Technology, Kaiser
Family Foundation; Chairman
of the Board of Directors, Media
Impact Funders



June 11

1 p.m.
ET

Stories From the Front Lines

Support & security for activists, indigenous communities & journalists

In this session, we'll hear about how the Ford Foundation and the National Geographic Society co-created a grant program for journalists and indigenous storytellers in the Global South highlighting ecosystem-scale stories and solutions-oriented attempts to mitigate or reverse human impact on rainforests. Indigenous storyteller Michael McGarrell, a grantee of the new program, will share details about the work he's producing on the Guyana Rainforest. We'll also hear about the growing threats facing environmental journalists, filmmakers and activists, and what several organizations—Doc Society, Global Press Institute and WITNESS—are doing to keep them safe.

Speakers:



Tracy Rector
@TracyRector
Managing Director,
Storytelling, Nia Tero



Molly Bingham
@4GJournalist
Molly Bingham, founder
and Board Chair, Orb Media



Rachael Strecher
@InsideNatGeo
Storytelling Grants, Programs
and Fellowships at National
Geographic



Laxmi Parthasarathy
@laxmisarathy
Chief Operating Officer,
Global Press Institute



Marc Climaco
@MarcClimaco
Strategic Communications
Officer, Ford Foundation



Priscila Neri
@witnessorg
Associate Director, Programs,
WITNESS



Michael McGarrell
National Geographic Explorer



Prash Naik
@TheDocSociety
General Counsel, Doc Society,
Principal at Prash Naik Consulting

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June 16

1 p.m.
ET

The Daily Planet

Environmental journalism around the world

Environmental journalism can make a lasting impact on every level—local, regional, national and international. We'll be hearing about a range of local and regional projects, including Code Red: Baltimore's Climate Divide, as well as Covering Climate Now, a global coalition of media outlets sharing climate-related content among more than 400 members, including pioneers such as The Guardian. We'll also hear from Climate Central, a powerful news network that connects scientists and journalists, bringing the latest climate science to a vast audience.

Speakers:



Norris West
@NorrisWest

Director of Strategic Communications, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Media Impact Funders Board Member



Rachel White
@rachelwhiteDC

Executive Vice President of Philanthropic and Strategic Partnerships, Guardian News & Media



Rafael Lorente
@ProfLorente

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland



Jane Spencer
@janebspencer

Deputy Editor and Head of Strategy, The Guardian



Joseph Lichterman
@ylichterman

Manager of editorial and digital strategy, Lenfest Institute for Journalism



Mark Hertsgaard
@markhertsgaard

Executive Director, Covering Climate Now



Melissa Davis

Vice President of Strategic Communications & Informed Communities, Gates Family Foundation



Al Roker
@alroker

Weather and Feature Anchor, "TODAY"; Co-Host of 3rd Hour, "TODAY"



Vince Stehle
@VinceDaily

Executive Director, Media Impact Funders



Ben Strauss
@ben_strauss

President and CEO, Climate Central



June 18

1 p.m.
ET

Environmental Media Grantmaking

The latest data from Media Impact Funders

Media Impact Funders is publishing a new report highlighting trends in environmental media grantmaking. The report's findings show that funders are increasing their investments in environmental work more broadly, and media focused on the environment, specifically. MIF's Communications Director Nina Sachdev and research consultant Sarah Armour-Jones will share the top-level findings of the report, which also features essays from colleagues in the field about their support for environmental media. We'll hear from those funders and engage in a dialogue with them about their work and what they're seeing in the field.

Speakers:



Nina Sachdev
@ninasachdev
Communications Director,
Media Impact Funders



Andrew Simon
@andrew25simon
Director of Leadership Programming,
Grist



Sarah Armour-Jones
@snarkyjones
Research Consultant,
Media Impact Funders



Devon Terrill
@devonterrill
Program Officer, Journalism and Media,
Stanley Center for Peace and Security



Christie George
@christiegeorge
Senior Advisor, New Media
Ventures, Board Member of
Media Impact Funders



Meaghan Calcari Campbell
@MooreFound
Program Officer, Marine Conservation
Initiative, Gordon and Betty Moore
Foundation



Diane Ives
@kendedafund
Fund Advisor, People, Place
and Planet, Kendeda Fund



Joya Banerjee
Program Director,
S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation



Angie Chen
@thelibrafound
Senior Program Officer,
The Libra Foundation



June 23

1 p.m.
ET

Taken for Granted

Looking at our relationship with the planet

In this session, National Geographic photographer, researcher and explorer Pete Muller will share stories around the concept of solastalgia, a sense of emotional distress people feel when they lose their home environment. Building on that premise, we'll then turn to a conversation with climate activists and storytellers Michael Premo and Vic Barrett on the devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy and how it ignited their activism. Lastly, Kaitlin Yarnall, National Geographic's Chief Storytelling Officer, and Tim Isgitt, Managing Director of Humanity United—both members of the Board of Directors of Media Impact Funders—will talk with investigative journalist Ian Urbina about his book “The Outlaw Ocean” and the multi-platform media strategies associated with the book. The Outlaw Ocean Project is a journalistic exploration of lawlessness at sea around the world, a part of the environment that has been greatly disrupted by the impacts of climate change.

Speakers:



Kaitlin Yarnall
@kaityarnall
Chief Storytelling Officer,
National Geographic Society;
Board Member, Media Impact
Funders



Vic Barrett
@vict_barrett
Democracy Organizer,
Alliance for Climate Education



Pete Muller
@pkmuller
Photographer,
National Geographic Society



Tim Isgitt
@tisgitt
Managing Director, Humanity United;
Board Member, Media Impact Funders



Michael Premo
@michaelpremo
Executive Producer,
Storyline



Ian Urbina
@ian_urbina
Investigative Reporter;
Author, “Outlaw Ocean”

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June 25

1 p.m.
ET

Civic Science

Lessons from research and implications for our learning agenda

We'll hear about the importance of supporting evidence-based media to illuminate the impact of climate change and the ways in which a science-informed public can help to make better policy choices. We'll hear from three academic researchers on effective communication strategies that can move the public to take action. And the award-winning film production team at Exposure Labs will share details on a collaborative initiative called Climate Story Lab, which works with storytellers to share climate action stories rooted in effective communications strategies.

Speakers:



Elizabeth Christopherson
President & CEO, Rita Allen Foundation; Vice Chair, Board of Directors, Media Impact Funders



Gordon Kraft-Todd
@GordonKraftTodd
Postdoctoral Fellow, Boston College



Karen Andrade, Ph.D
@SciPhilOrg
Civic Science Fellow, Science Philanthropy Alliance



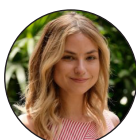
Katherine Dale, Ph.D
@FSUCCI
Assistant Professor, Florida State University



Kishore Hari
@sciencequiche
Strategic Partnerships, Communications and Engagement, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative



Davin Phoenix
@Davin_Phoenix
Associate Professor, University of California, Irvine



Annie Neimand, Ph.D
@annieneimand
Director of Research, Center for Public Interest Communications, College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida



Megha Agrawal-Sood
@megha_a
Program Director, Exposure Labs



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About Media Impact Funders

Media Impact Funders traces its roots back to the Council on Foundations, a longtime philanthropy-serving organization.

In 1990, just as the word “Internet” was being introduced for the first time, an affinity group for funders interested in the power of film to highlight social issues of importance to funders was gaining momentum. Grantmakers in Film, Video & Television began on a volunteer basis in 1984; reflecting changes in technology and media behavior over the past decade, it was renamed Grantmakers in Film & Electronic Media (GFEM) and formally incorporated in 2008 to advance the field of media arts and public interest media funding. It had 45 members and was headed by former MacArthur Foundation Program Officer Alyce Myatt. GFEM was renamed Media Impact Funders in 2012 and has since expanded its strategy to include a broad range media funding interests such as journalism, immersive technologies, media policy and more.

Today, MIF has grown to more than 80 organizational members representing some of the largest foundations, and holds more than 40 in-person and online events yearly.

**Click Here
to Learn
More About
Our Work**

**Click Here
to Learn
More About
Membership**

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