

Funding Global Movement Infrastructure

The Road to Nyéléni and COP30

In 2025, there are two global convenings that are enabling climate justice movements to organize, hone collective agendas, and mobilize cross-movement infrastructure: the Nyéléni forum and COP30. The Nyéléni forum is the largest gathering of food sovereignty movements globally. Over this year, grassroots movements from around the world will align shared agendas on the road to Nyéléni, informing and influencing global climate policy at COP30. These are not isolated events; they are essential processes for movements to coordinate and amplify collective strategies and weave people-centered narratives of climate action.

Why is global movement infrastructure needed?

Global movement infrastructure is the backbone of civil society, ensuring that frontline communities—those most affected by climate impacts—can not only resist harmful policies but advance durable, systemic solutions. The most effective and sustainable climate solutions are deeply rooted in local and regional contexts. With coordinated organizing across movements and geographies, movement-led solutions for agriculture, energy systems, and the protection of biodiversity can scale and thrive. Moreover, the greatest global threats—including industrial agribusiness (which accounts for over half of global emissions) and corporate concentration of power—will remain unchecked without coordinated resistance.

The global COVID-19 pandemic forced global social movements to direct their energies towards the care of their communities, with insufficient gatherings to build shared strategy. The Nyéléni Process is helping to rebuild the organizing infrastructure lost during those years by reinvigorating regional organizing spaces that congregate hundreds of grassroots organizations, social movements, and academic allies. The power of mobilizing people around a common agenda is the backbone of regional and global initiatives to protect the rights to food and water of millions of Indigenous Peoples and other rural and urban families. While authoritarian governments and corporate actors continue to consolidate power, grassroots coalitions are defending and expanding democratic spaces to exist at local, regional, and global levels. In this context, investing in convenings like Nyéléni and COP30 is not just strategic—it is essential for ensuring movements' ability to drive change.

2. Why is the Nyeleni process and road to COP30 uniquely important for social movements this year?

The rise of authoritarianism globally is reflected in how corporate and philanthropic actors are actively shrinking civil society that has been built over decades. The so-called “Big Reset”, framed by the Davos’ Economic Forum, disparages UN processes and other global policy spaces involving grassroots organizations as “wasting time” and calls for a shift toward decision-making by heads of state and corporations. This corporate-driven agenda escalates threats to human rights and climate stability, exacerbating climate migration and forced displacement. Within this political context, expanding the political power of social movements is critical.

Organizations of peasants and family farmers, artisanal fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, landless peoples, migrants, pastoralists, forest communities, women, youth, and urban movements have been organizing for decades to build convergence around their common agenda of food sovereignty and climate justice. Movements for food sovereignty prioritize food for people (rather than solely for profit), protecting the environment, and ensuring local control of food systems from inputs to pricing.

For instance, the Landless Workers’ Movement (MST) in Brazil has reclaimed over 17 million acres of previously unproductive land, providing food and housing for more than 400,000 rural families, and is planting 100 million trees in deforested areas by 2030. MST, along with over 150 other farmers’ organizations, is part of La Via Campesina (LVC), a global network that strengthens the rights of 200 million smallholder farmers and other food producers. Each LVC member organization furthers local agricultural solutions that build climate resilience, while the global network influences public policy and resists industrial agriculture at the global level.

Yet, corporate consolidation, ecological destruction, and political authoritarianism threaten to undo decades of progress. Multi-national agribusinesses, enabled by complicit governments, are criminalizing and escalating violence against frontline defenders, particularly in Latin America. This is why the 2025 Forum and the convening of movements at COP30 are so urgent. The Nyéléni Forum offers a unique opportunity for movements to self-organize in advance of and have a more strategic role in COP. As COP becomes increasingly co-opted by corporate interests, it is more important than ever that grassroots groups coordinate their narrative and organizing strategies in advance.

In forging a shared agenda for systemic change, these convenings will lay the groundwork for concrete action: mobilizations against land grabbing and corporate control, advocating for transformative food policies, and strengthening of governance systems that serve people over profit.

3. I'm a climate funder, why should I care about food?

The climate crisis cannot be solved without transforming the global food system. Our dominant food system relies on industrial agriculture, which is one of the largest drivers of greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and biodiversity loss, accounting for about half of human-produced greenhouse gas emissions. Small-scale farmers, on the other hand, are the primary food providers to more than 70% of the world's population, while using less than 25% of agricultural resources. Instead of funding reactive, short-term food aid, climate funders can invest in systemic, movement-led solutions that build resilience:

- Food sovereignty strengthens local food systems, ensuring communities can withstand climate and political shocks.
- Reducing dependence on volatile, profit-driven global supply chains enhances local food autonomy.
- These movements center grassroots feminisms, advancing economic and political autonomy for women and gender-oppressed people.
- Unlike a charity model reliant on INGOs, food sovereignty builds lasting, people-powered infrastructure that protects ecosystems and livelihoods.

Nearly 30 years ago, the vision of Food Sovereignty was launched by LVC at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome. In 2007, the Nyéléni Forum in Mali solidified the vision for a just and sustainable food system at its 1st Global Forum. In 2015, the 2nd Nyéléni Global Forum built convergence around Agroecology as the pathway towards food sovereignty. Since then, these movements have had historic wins, securing key international agreements such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP), the Land Tenure Guidelines (VGGT), and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Each of these agreements has been a critical enabling condition for a wide range of climate solutions. The vision for food systems transformation has set a North Star for governments, civil society, and private actors taking action on climate globally.

4. Why are policy wins insufficient to win on climate and how are movements enabling food system transformations?

Policy change is necessary but insufficient. Even when climate or food policies are won, they are often underfunded, poorly enforced, or co-opted by corporate interests. Grassroots movements do more than advocate for policy shifts—they ensure real accountability, implement solutions, and push for systemic change that goes beyond legislation.

- Expanding community control over food production and land use to mitigate deforestation and emissions.
- Advancing agroecology policies that restore soil health, biodiversity, and water cycles while reducing dependence on fossil-fuel-based inputs.
- Strengthening legal frameworks to hold agribusiness corporations accountable for environmental destruction and human rights violations.

5. What role can philanthropy play?

Funders and donors have a role in funding this global movement infrastructure, The Nyéléni process needs \$420,000 to cover remaining expenses in travel. Grassroots groups need an estimated \$1M for travel and programming at COP30. In coordination with our allies, we aim to raise **\$1.5M to support the organizing of the Nyéléni Process and grassroots-led processes at COP30**. Please reach out to the CLIMA Fund if you can fund these critical processes (community@climasolutions.org).

Here are some general principles for stepping into our roles as funders:

- 1. Fund and accompany movements.** First and foremost, fund grassroots-led movements with a systems approach to the climate crisis. And, our work does not stop with grantmaking. Building relationships over time fosters trust and strategic alignment.
- 2. Support movement infrastructure.** Invest in collective organizing across movements over the long term. Movements are more effective and powerful when they have the spaces to coordinate at local, regional and national levels.
- 3. Do your homework.** Understand the context of social movements and map trends in philanthropy. Movements are interconnected and, as funders, we can work to understand and offer funding in support of those connections.
- 4. Share knowledge, as power.** We can be generous in sharing insights of trends in philanthropy with social movement groups. This directly supports their strategies.
- 5. Organize each other.** It is our task to build community and power in philanthropy to break down silos and expand strategic support for movements.
- 6. Step up.** In the vacuum of government protecting human rights, philanthropy can work to buffer civil society. With relatively more structural power, we have a role in holding the line on civil liberties.
- 7. Follow those with accountability.** We can listen and preference perspectives that are directly accountable to those most impacted and with the greatest stake in effective, systemic solutions.