10 Building Climate Resilience

The Role of Philanthropy in Advancing Conservation and Nature-Based Solutions in Latin America and the Caribbean

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INTRODUCTION

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), a region renowned for its rich biodiversity and acute vulnerability to climate change, stands at a pivotal moment on its journey toward sustainable development. As highlighted in the 2019 report *Getting to Net-Zero Emissions: Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean*,[1] the region faces complex challenges but also holds significant opportunities to build a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future – one that balances economic growth with environmental preservation. The report underscores the urgent need for bold climate action, emphasizing that to limit global warming to between 1.5°C and 2°C above preindustrial levels – aligned with the Paris Agreement – net-zero CO_2 emissions must be achieved by 2050, with significant reductions required by 2030. Although LAC countries have pledged to adhere to the prescriptions of the Agreement, their current nationally determined contributions (NDCs) fall short of achieving the established targets.

At the core of this issue lies the Amazon – the world's largest tropical rainforest and biological carbon reservoir and home to 10 percent of the world's biodiversity[2] – which spreads across nine Latin

[1] Inter-American Development Bank. (2019). *Getting to Net-Zero Emissions: Lessons from Latin America and the Caribbean*, p. 11. General note: for full bibliographic listings of all sources, please see the References section at the end of the chapter.

[2] Latimpacto. (2020). *Towards a Comprehensive Climate Action and Conservation Strategy: Recommendations and Opportunities for Impact Capital.*

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American countries and represents the largest stake in the fight against environmental destruction in the region.[3] Home to more than 16,000 tree species and 390 billion individual trees, this region represents an ecological treasure and a vital resource for socioeconomic development. However, it is yet to be recognized as such by many, even as it faces critical existential threats from rampant deforestation and accelerating species extinction.

At Latimpacto, our mission is rooted in enabling the growth of impact funding and increasing the flow of human and intellectual resources toward climate action. As a network of capital providers, we unite our diverse members through dialogue and peer learning to strengthen the community of impact organizations. Together, we aim to incubate, pilot, and scale nature-based solutions that protect this invaluable natural asset by empowering sector actors to engage across the full spectrum of capital – from venture philanthropy to large-scale impact investing – in co-creating and executing systemic, long-term solutions.

To date, efforts to safeguard the Amazon have been hindered by a lack of cross-border coordination, significant logistical challenges (such as access and distance), chronic underfunding, and insufficient local capacity building. Addressing this last challenge is critical to attracting sustained, long-term investment. Here, philanthropy, amplified by the strength of our sector network, can play a transformative role.

Philanthropic capital embraces risk, making it well suited for incubating comprehensive nature-based solutions and then levering in additional sources of capital to scale. Public-sector action and regulations have often proven insufficient in dampening the negative externalities of the private sector. Indeed, the most recent *State of Finance for Nature* report highlights that, despite various

[3] The Amazon spans nine countries (Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana), covers around 40% of the South American continent, and approximately 70% of South America's GDP is produced in areas that receive rainfall or water from the Amazon.

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international climate commitments, governments continue to finance activities that exacerbate the planetary crisis and bear a net-negative impact on natural capital. According to the report, some $7 trillion in public and private capital flows accrue annually to nature-negative activities such as fossil fuels, intensive agriculture, and urban development, while only $200 billion are allocated to nature-based solutions.[4]

In this chapter, we examine the role of philanthropy in addressing this imbalance by acting as a catalyst, not only increasing available funding but also providing seed capital to test and validate innovative solutions to climate change. We will highlight new approaches to building climate resilience being developed by our member organizations. The examples included will illustrate how empowered local organizations can successfully design financially viable and scalable business models that hold potential for replication across the region. We demonstrate how philanthropy can contribute to building biodiversity resilience, advancing locally driven climate resilience, and fostering cross-border peer-learning opportunities. Additionally, we will show how philanthropic capital can serve as a foundation for forming partnerships that amplify impact.

FROM CLIMATE CHANGE TO SYSTEM CHANGE

Much has been made of the dearth of philanthropic investments in climate change solutions. The Climate Works Foundation notes that climate-oriented giving accounts for less than 2 percent overall philanthropic contributions, with health and education remaining the largest recipients.[5] Even where the environmental crisis is addressed in the philanthropic sector, it is often approached through a "climate change lens" that aims to minimize carbon footprint rather than build systemic solutions. However, this trend overlooks the efforts of civil

[4] United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (2023). *State of Finance for Nature: The Big Nature Turnaround*, p. 8.

[5] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2021). *Private Philanthropy for Development – Second Edition*, p. 20.

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society in the LAC region, which recognizes the importance of nature-based solutions and is actively collaborating to develop innovative approaches for conserving biomes and protecting regional assets.

As the *State of Finance for Nature* report notes, "The triple planetary crisis—climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste—is causing nature to atrophy, and with it our chances of ending poverty, hunger and inequity through the UN Sustainable Development Goals."[6] The magnitude of the current crisis points to a critical need for additional financial resources: clearly, philanthropic capital alone cannot fill the gap. Current philanthropic investments in nature-based solutions in LAC account for some $100 million of investment – a drop in the ocean compared to the $1.7 trillion of public funding flowing each year to environmentally harmful subsidies.[7]

Philanthropic and broader financial resources remain disproportionately focused on decarbonization and sustainable solutions in the Global North while neglecting the urgent need for ecosystem restoration in the countries of the Global South, particularly in critical regions like the Amazon, where direct action could yield immense impact. Moreover, philanthropic investments in climate change mitigation are heavily concentrated in clean energy – primarily electricity – while largely overlooking or disregarding hard-to-decarbonize sectors.

There is cause for hope. According to Convergence's latest *State of Blended Finance* report, since 2018, philanthropic investors have contributed approximately $400 million to climate blended finance initiatives.[8] They are the only investor class with a balanced focus on both climate mitigation and adaptation, with more than 60 percent of their investments supporting adaptation and cross-cutting measures. The report notes that philanthropic investors primarily allocate their resources to climate funds (49 percent from 2018 to 2023), followed by

[6] UNEP. *State of Finance for Nature*, p. 9. [7] Ibid., p. 12.
[8] Convergence. (2024). *State of Blended Finance 2024.*

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direct investments in companies (31 percent). They target mainly lower- and middle-income countries (71 percent), particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (51 percent) and LAC (31 percent), with upper- and middle-income countries comprising 31 percent of investments.[9]

One such initiative is the Catalytic Green Fund, a collaboration between Latimpacto and IDB Lab, the innovation laboratory of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Designed to accelerate decarbonization and climate resilience, the fund strengthens entrepreneurial support organizations that promote nature-based solutions such as reforestation, regenerative agriculture, circular economies, and sustainable waste management. By providing both financial and technical support, the fund fosters an innovation ecosystem where climate-focused business models can scale effectively, with a particular focus on vulnerable regions like the Amazon basin. As a blended finance mechanism, the Catalytic Green Fund exemplifies how philanthropy can de-risk climate investments and catalyze a more systemic approach to environmental and economic sustainability.

This chapter explores three case studies that further highlight philanthropy's impact in LAC. We begin with the Arapyaú Institute, a Brazilian philanthropic organization that leads networks such as the Amazon Concertación, focused on rainforest regeneration and preservation. Arapyaú also engages in blended finance mechanisms in partnership with Tabôa Fortalecimento Comunitario, promoting inclusive, low-carbon development in Brazil. In Paraguay, we highlight the Moisés Bertoni Foundation, which advances equitable and inclusive development by integrating conservation and sustainable livelihoods. Finally, we examine Grupo Argos Foundation in Colombia, which is leading territorial conservation efforts by protecting strategic ecosystems like the Andean Forest and working closely with local communities to foster long-term sustainability.

Through these case studies, this chapter demonstrates that philanthropy can play a transformative role in building climate

[9] Ibid., p. 61.

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resilience, conservation, and nature-based solutions. We highlight how philanthropic organizations leverage their proximity to local communities, collaborating with civil society networks, public institutions, and private-sector actors to develop trust-based, integrated approaches to adaptation and sustainability.

THE ARAPYAÚ INSTITUTE

The Arapyaú Institute, founded in 2008, is a Brazilian philanthropic network dedicated to fostering sustainable development through fair, inclusive, low-carbon projects.[10] Deeply rooted in the ecosystems it seeks to protect, the Institute leverages grassroots action and scientific expertise to maximize its impact. It embraces a holistic approach to sustainable development that integrates natural, social, and economic dimensions and recognizes the Amazon rainforest as a central factor in addressing regional conservation challenges. Preserving this vital natural asset entails not only operational and financial hurdles but also profound philosophical and intellectual dilemmas. Balancing the complex ecological threats facing the "lungs of the world" with the need for economic and social development in LAC nations demands an institutional mindset that is both adaptable and resilient, capable of evolving with shifting challenges.

In line with this vision, the Arapyaú Institute prioritizes scientific research in forest restoration, aiming to develop systemic solutions that safeguard natural ecosystems and capital. Reshaping perceptions to position natural capital as both a valuable asset and a finite resource, deserving thoughtful stewardship, is central to its mission. By advocating for its inclusion in Brazil's standard economic indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP), the Institute seeks to elevate environmental preservation as a core strategy for economic and social progress rather than a peripheral concern. This approach

[10] For more information about Arapyaú Institute, please visit https://arapyau.org.br/en/home/

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positions Brazil among global leaders who recognize the interdependence of environmental health and economic vitality.

As Roberto Waack, Chair of the Arapyaú Board, notes, "global climate challenges require coordinated action as well as space to decant and mature new ideas that can lead to effective transformation."[11] The Institute's role, therefore, extends beyond sharing knowledge and expertise. In a rapidly changing world, it strives to provide clarity and direction amid competing narratives, leveraging networks and partnerships to incubate and co-create innovative, network-based solutions.[12] This collaborative approach underpins the Institute's belief that philanthropic capital – through its resources and capacity for innovation – can catalyze Brazil's transition to a nature-based economy.

In 2008, the Institute launched a sustainable credit program to support small agroforestry cocoa producers in the South of Bahia, aiming to support the region's economic development by reinforcing and boosting the cocoa and chocolate chain. Their work, in partnership with Tabôa Fortalecimento Comunitario, contributed to developing scalable blended finance mechanisms to match private and concessional funding with technical assistance. This initiative has secured assisted credit for more than 200 small producers in Bahia, previously working at the margins of the financial system and lacking access to technical assistance. It contributed to increasing the income for producers by an average of 40 percent, with a default rate close to zero, encouraging social entrepreneurship through the offer of "financial services, training and support for socioenvironmental projects."[13]

The program's success in achieving a low default rate can be attributed to its comprehensive and tailored approach, which combined financial assistance with technical support and training designed specifically for small agroforestry cocoa producers.

[11] Instituto Arapyaú. (2023). *Annual Report*, p. 5.
[12] Networks merit a dedicated section in this book's predecessor, *Reimagining Philanthropy in the Global South from Analysis to Action in a Post-COVID World*.
[13] Instituto Arapyaú. *Annual Report*, p. 7.

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By addressing both the financial and technical barriers these producers faced, the initiative ensured that participants not only had access to much-needed funds but also possessed the knowledge and skills required to use them effectively. This targeted design, focused on individuals working at the margins of the financial system, met the unique needs of the local community, empowering borrowers who were motivated to improve their livelihoods but previously lacked the means to do so. Based on the outcomes, the program is currently being expanded to the state of Para, with the support of both public and private providers such as Solidaridad Network and the Brazilian National Development Bank, with an upcoming third phase on an even larger scale.

The Arapyaú Institute mobilizes diverse sectors of society and influences decision-makers to foster policies that reconcile economic growth with environmental conservation. It played a key role in developing the Amazon Concertacion, a network of more than 800 leaders – mainly from the private sector – focused on transforming dialogue into actionable proposals for sustainable regional development. Arapyaú's support for Conexao Povos da Floresta (Forest People Connection) facilitated rapid internet access for more than 550 indigenous, quilombola, and extractivist communities in the Brazilian Amazon, connecting more than a million people across 5,000 communities.[14] This unprecedented connectivity initiative has enabled telemedicine, distance learning, financial integration, and regenerative economic practices while promoting low-carbon development. The Institute also aided Concertacion in advocating for the inclusion of their "proposals for integrated development"[15] in the government's Environmental Working Group report, securing the adoption of eleven out of fourteen proposals, five of which were formally embraced by President Luiz Inácio da Silva's new administration.

[14] Instituto Arapyaú. (2024). *Conexão Povos da Floresta Leva Internet a Mil Comunidades da Amazônia*.

[15] Amazon Concertation. (2023). *Proposals for the Amazônias: An Integrated Approach*.

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These proposals were incorporated into the *revogaço* ("massive cancelation), a set of fifty-two decrees and four provisional measures aimed at reversing environmental damage – the most extensive legislative action taken within the first forty-eight hours of a new government in Brazil.

The Arapyaú Institute's collaborative approach, particularly its engagement with the public sector, underscores the importance of systemic alignment in addressing climate and environmental challenges. By working with public institutions, the Institute helps create robust policy frameworks that provide the foundation for long-term, sustainable action. Public-sector involvement ensures that initiatives like the Itinerarios Amazônicos program gain legitimacy, scalability, and alignment with regional development goals. This collaboration allowed the Institute to embed environmental knowledge into public education systems across eight states in the Legal Amazon region, emphasizing the Amazon's significance not just as an ecological asset but as an integral part of students' academic and civic education. Training educators and developing tailored curricula ensured that the program would have a lasting impact by fostering a generation of environmentally aware citizens equipped to address regional and global challenges.

Simultaneously, the Institute supports private-sector action by encouraging education, learning, and innovation. Its partnership with Agni to develop the science, technology, and innovation agenda for the forest-based bioeconomy highlights its commitment to fostering market-based solutions rooted in ecological preservation. By integrating scientific research with local economic opportunities, this agenda creates pathways for a sustainable bioeconomy, addressing economic development and conservation in tandem. The synergy between public policy, private-sector engagement, and education amplifies the Institute's ability to address environmental issues holistically, ensuring that its efforts resonate across multiple societal levels and sectors.

Despite Arapyaú's successes, the Institute acknowledges that building an ecosystem-wide, community-led approach is a formidable

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task that requires method, systematic processes, and robust governance. The lack of relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence gaps create transaction costs and hinder facts-based decision-making, but Arapyaú endeavors to distill institutional learning and share best practices across relevant networks. Building lasting change requires a balance between national and local action, with a blend of public sector impact to devise policies that support sustainable development and of private-sector philanthropic action to target marginalized communities and build collective resilience. Change does not arise from isolated efforts, and promoting linkages between grassroot civil society networks, academia, governments, and the private sector is key to creating spaces for the exchange of knowledge, experience, and resources.

The Institute firmly believes that Brazil has the potential to catalyze a natural capital-based economy, capable of improving well-being for its populations while preserving its environmental heritage. However, the road ahead is long, and lasting change will require continuous advocacy and considerable investment. Although the Amazon rainforest covers 60 percent of Brazilian territory, accommodating around 13 percent of its population, and contributes some 9 percent of GDP, it receives less than 3 percent of national funding toward scientific research and technological innovation.[16] Collective efforts led by Arapyaú and its partners risk being curtailed if nature-based solutions are not consolidated and made central to this new development trajectory, thus reducing the potential for systemic change.

THE MOISÉS BERTONI FOUNDATION

The Moisés Bertoni Foundation, a private nonprofit organization based in Paraguay, advances sustainable development by conserving biodiversity and protecting the environment.[17] Its mission, akin to

[16] Instituto Arapyaú. (2024). *Annual Report 2023*.

[17] For more information about the Moisés Bertoni Foundation, please visit https://mbertoni.org.py/.

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the Arapyaú Institute's, is rooted in preserving Paraguay's unique natural and cultural heritage, which includes rare bioregions, ecosystems, and native species. Many of these exist on private properties, beyond the reach of public conservation frameworks. This limitation highlights the need for inclusive strategies engaging diverse stakeholders – landowners, communities, and policymakers – to achieve effective conservation and sustainable development goals.

The Foundation partners with landowners and local communities to implement productive practices that align with environmental preservation, offering practical models for balancing economic activity with ecosystem protection. Private land conservation tools, such as conservation easements or payment-for-ecosystem-services programs, are central to its strategy. These tools complement state-protected areas, providing an essential layer of protection for threatened biomes. By embedding scalable, replicable private conservation models, the Foundation fosters biome regeneration and long-term ecosystem health.

This approach integrates property rights and market mechanisms to drive systemic change, linking economic incentives with environmental stewardship. For example, its efforts to promote eco-certifications for sustainably harvested goods have unlocked new markets for local producers, demonstrating how conservation can yield tangible economic benefits. The Foundation's vision aligns with global shifts toward circular economies, offering adaptive solutions to the complexities of sustainable development. Through initiatives that unite the private sector, civil society, and market forces, the Foundation demonstrates how localized efforts can contribute to global sustainability while addressing economic, social, and environmental challenges.

Since its inception in 1988, the Foundation has prioritized improving the livelihoods of marginalized communities by creating social and economic value through biodiversity preservation and equitable development models. It adopts a holistic approach, amplifying the voices of diverse stakeholders in regions marked by inequality

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and complex socio-environmental dynamics. As "articulators" of collaborative efforts, the Foundation addresses interconnected challenges, ensuring that natural resource preservation supports broader territorial development and social inclusion. By fostering linkages between local communities, private entities, and public actors, the Foundation anchors inclusive development models that resonate with on-the-ground realities. This approach is strengthened through grassroots engagement, local volunteerism, and the cultivation of community expertise, fostering advocacy and a shared sense of responsibility.

Over its thirty-five-plus years of action, the Moisés Bertoni Foundation has developed a diverse portfolio of initiatives rooted in these principles. Its proximity to the communities it serves enables a dynamic, evidence-based approach to understanding and addressing real needs, eschewing one-size-fits-all solutions. Among its key focus areas is nature tourism, which leverages the region's unique ecosystems to create sustainable livelihoods and financial opportunities. For example, in the Mbaracayú Forest Natural Reserve (RNBM)[18] in northeastern Paraguay, the Foundation promotes tourism that respects the region's natural, cultural, and social environments while generating value for local communities.

The RNBM, designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2000,[19] exemplifies the Foundation's large-scale conservation efforts. This recognition facilitated the institutionalization of conservation activities with clear community development objectives. The Reserve's management strategy incorporates training programs to equip local communities with the technical knowledge needed to combat deforestation, forest fires, and climate change. By engaging younger generations, the Foundation fosters resilience and sustainability. Complementary environmental education programs target teachers and students, emphasizing biodiversity and endangered

[18] For more information about the RNBM, please visit https://mbertoni.org.py/en/mbaracayu-forest-nature-reserve/.

[19] The first in Paraguay and the largest continuous mass of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest in the country.

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wildlife conservation. International collaborations with organizations like the World Wildlife Fund amplify these efforts. The Mbaracayú Educational Centre, a flagship initiative, has supported 448 young people in their studies, fostering a new generation of sustainability advocates.

Despite notable successes, the Foundation continues to grapple with the scale of environmental and socioeconomic challenges in its territories. To build resilience, it invests in sustainable farming practices, carbon sink preservation, and native vegetation restoration in partnership with organizations like the ProYungas Foundation and the Argentine Association of Direct Sowing Producers. These efforts reflect the Foundation's commitment to systemic change, grounded in local action.

A significant component of the Foundation's strategy is its exploration of global carbon credit markets to stabilize funding for environmental projects. This move aligns with its broader goal of advancing circular economy pathways. By engaging the private sector in reducing, reusing, and recycling raw materials, the Foundation fosters employment and economic opportunities for vulnerable communities. Its Cities Without Waste initiative exemplifies this approach by strengthening the productive and logistical capacities of small recycling associations and partnering with collection centers in Paraguay.

The Cities Without Waste initiative tackles multiple dimensions of waste management and, by strengthening small-scale recycling associations, addresses systemic inefficiencies in waste collection and processing infrastructure. Many developing regions, including Paraguay, struggle with fragmented or informal recycling sectors that lack the capacity to manage waste efficiently. The initiative addresses these gaps by building organizational capacities and creating networks that facilitate better resource flows and operational efficiency. For instance, partnerships with collection centers streamline the sorting and processing of recyclables, ensuring a higher rate of material recovery and reducing environmental impact.

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The program's emphasis on private-sector engagement enhances its sustainability. By aligning the financial interests of businesses with environmental objectives, the initiative generates economic incentives for long-term participation. Companies are encouraged to adopt responsible waste management practices, invest in recycling technologies, and support the growth of circular economy markets. This creates a feedback loop in which environmental benefits translate into tangible economic gains, fostering a broader cultural shift toward sustainability.

The Cities Without Waste initiative also prioritizes the empowerment of vulnerable communities. By generating employment opportunities and supporting local entrepreneurship, it directly addresses socioeconomic disparities. Small-scale recycling workers, often operating in precarious conditions, benefit from improved infrastructure, training, and formal recognition of their contributions. This not only enhances their livelihoods but also integrates them into a more organized and equitable waste management system. The initiative's focus on capacity building ensures that these communities are equipped with the skills and resources needed to sustain their efforts independently over time. The holistic nature of the Cities Without Waste initiative – combining environmental stewardship, economic empowerment, and social inclusion – makes it highly replicable in other regions. Its integrated approach offers a scalable blueprint for tackling waste management challenges in areas with underdeveloped systems. By demonstrating the tangible benefits of targeted investment and multi-stakeholder collaboration, the initiative illustrates how local actions can drive systemic change.

THE GRUPO ARGOS FOUNDATION

Like its counterparts in Brazil and Paraguay, Colombia's Grupo Argos Foundation works to harmonize the relationship between human beings and nature, aiming to promote territorial development and sustainable resource management through education, volunteer

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actions, and linkages with civil society.[20] The Foundation aspires to become one of Colombia's "most powerful vehicles of corporate social responsibility": its efforts are focused on addressing challenges associated with forest and water conservation faced by local communities. Through a community-focused approach that emphasizes internal and external capacity building, the Foundation demonstrates agility in responding to ever-changing climate issues. The emphasis is on fast and tailored action that is responsive to individual needs. Like its regional peers, the Foundation prioritizes collective action via partnerships, working closely with more than sixty public- and private-sector organizations to enhance impact.

The Foundation's initiatives are aimed at preserving and providing access to water and biodiversity, as well as transforming territories by identifying income-generating opportunities. It has built an integrated portfolio of programs that leverage its internal expertise while also sharing lessons learned with organizations within and beyond their direct ecosystem. By fostering partnerships with academic institutions, governmental bodies, and nongovernmental organizations, the Foundation can create scalable solutions that can be replicated and adapted in different contexts. Between 2018 and 2023, the Grupo Argos Foundation contributed to restoring more than 24,800 hectares of Andean forests, tropical forests, and mangroves, pushing for conservation agreements that protect strategic ecosystems through sustainable production methods. It engaged in planting more than 5 million trees (including 124 native species) across six counties in Colombia, generating thousands of direct and indirect jobs and strengthening water management and preservation.

The Foundation's recognition of the need for locally rooted nature-based solutions is crucial for effective impact. By working closely with local communities, it ensures that solutions are co-created and culturally appropriate. This is particularly evident in its environmental education programs, which are tailored to the local

[20] For more information about Grupo Argos Foundation, please visit https://www.grupoargos.com/sostenibilidad/fundacion-grupo-argos/.

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biodiversity and community needs. The preservation of key species such as the Andean bear, an "umbrella species" vital for seed dispersal, highlights the Foundation's focus on protecting critical ecosystems. This species' role in regenerating ecosystems through seed dispersal illustrates the importance of biodiversity in maintaining ecological balance. The Foundation's educational programs have a wide reach, targeting more than 90,000 students, 3,500 teachers, and 350 schools in 38 municipalities across Colombia. Through these programs, the Foundation fosters environmental literacy and practical engagement with sustainability issues.

Moreover, the Foundation collaborates with various partners to share knowledge and experiences, building scalable models for nature-based solutions. Their participatory ecological restoration program Sembrando Futuro was selected by global climate technology provider Terraformation for its Forest Carbon Accelerator. This partnership aims to offset emissions and accelerate restoration processes in the South-West of Antioquia, planting 2.3 million trees and capturing an expected 372,000 tons of CO_2 over 30 years. This initiative not only integrates the project into the global voluntary carbon credit market but also opens up funding opportunities from institutional investors and corporations. This makes Sembrando Futuro an international reference in reforestation and highlights the Foundation's commitment to creating scalable, replicable solutions to climate change.

The Foundation's iterative approach to nature-based solutions is key to its success. By working hand in hand with other actors to test and pilot new approaches, the Foundation demonstrates flexibility and adaptability. This approach involves developing water management strategies, biodiversity conservation methodologies, and engaging local communities to co-create solutions. Through these partnerships, the Foundation enhances not only its own capacity but also that of local organizations and communities to sustain efforts beyond the initial project phases. The Foundation's focus on education, community building, and leadership development is critical for empowering local stakeholders and ensuring long-term impact. By providing access to education, job opportunities, and environmental stewardship roles,

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the Foundation helps break the cycle of dependency and enables local communities to become self-sufficient in their sustainability efforts.

The success of the Grupo Argos Foundation can be attributed to its commitment to integrating diverse stakeholders into its interventions, from local communities to global climate partners. This multilevel strategy ensures a holistic focus on sustainability, considering ecological, social, and economic factors. By promoting collective action, the Foundation builds a network of support that amplifies its impact across regions. The Foundation's focus on sustainable development aligns with global goals, particularly those related to biodiversity conservation, climate action, and water sustainability. This alignment not only enhances its credibility but also ensures that the solutions it advocates for are relevant on a global scale.

A key component of the Foundation's strategy is its educational initiatives, which not only raise awareness but also provide practical skills and knowledge. The Verde Vivo program, targeting more than 90,000 students, integrates lessons on biodiversity preservation with real-world applications, such as waste management and water monitoring. This holistic approach ensures that students understand the interconnectedness of environmental and social issues and equips them to contribute to solutions. Additionally, the Foundation's scholarship programs like the Territorial Development Program provide financial support and mentorship to students from underserved communities, empowering the next generation of environmental leaders. This investment in human capital is critical for sustaining long-term change.

The Grupo Argos Foundation's approach to partnership also illustrates a sophisticated understanding of the challenges and opportunities in sustainability. By working with more than sixty public- and private-sector organizations, it can leverage diverse expertise and resources. This network approach enables the Foundation to pilot innovative solutions and scale successful ones across different regions. The partnerships with Terraformation and other global organizations not only enhance the Foundation's impact but also position it as a thought leader in sustainable development. The integration of

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these partnerships into local projects allows the Foundation to adapt solutions to specific environmental and social contexts, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of its interventions.

The Grupo Argos Foundation's success as a model of corporate social responsibility and sustainable development can be attributed to its integrated, multi-stakeholder approach. By focusing on nature-based solutions, education, and local partnerships, the Foundation can address complex environmental challenges in a way that is both scalable and replicable. Its focus on creating value for both people and the planet, while fostering collective action, sets it apart as a leader in its field. The Foundation's success in areas such as reforestation, water preservation, and community empowerment provide a road map for other organizations seeking to implement sustainable development practices in their own regions. Through its continued efforts to innovate and adapt, Grupo Argos Foundation is paving the way for a sustainable future in Colombia and beyond.

CONCLUSION

The case studies presented in this chapter exemplify the transformative potential of philanthropic capital in advancing nature-based solutions to combat climate change and environmental degradation. These cases illustrate how nonprofit organizations act as catalysts for sustainable development, leveraging multiple channels – including advocacy and philanthropic funding – to address pressing environmental challenges. From Brazil's Arapyaú Institute fostering sustainable territorial development to Paraguay's FMB bridging communities and governments and Grupo Argos in Colombia integrating reforestation into carbon credit markets, these initiatives highlight how philanthropic funding delivers measurable impact while mitigating risks for future investments. They lay the groundwork for systemic change, offering scalable and replicable solutions that, with additional resources, could be expanded to new contexts. This underscores philanthropy's capacity to reconcile urgent environmental needs with economic growth and social development by bridging concessional and commercial capital.

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As demonstrated, philanthropic capital enables innovative, community-led solutions that transcend national borders to benefit both people and the planet. These initiatives are rooted in local knowledge, blending the creativity and resilience of communities with technical expertise and partnerships. Philanthropy, therefore, transcends traditional funding, serving as a dynamic catalyst for co-creating scalable, long-term solutions.

However, while promising, these examples underscore the need for a cohesive global investment community to integrate country-specific initiatives and foster collective learning for regional scale-up. In LAC, impact funds often operate in isolation from broader philanthropic efforts, missing opportunities for collaboration. Networks like Latimpacto play a pivotal role in addressing this gap by offering platforms for knowledge sharing, cross-border partnerships, and coordinated public–private action to enable the pooling of expertise and the creation of evidence-based, scalable solutions that drive impactful regional initiatives.

The urgency of this work cannot be overstated. CO_2 emissions in LAC are projected to rise from 1,660 million tons (Mt) in 2022 to 1,690 Mt by 2030,[21] driven by urban expansion, reindustrialization, and population growth. With the regional population expected to reach 750 million by 2050 and economic activities expanding, the pressure on natural ecosystems is intensifying. Scalable nature-based solutions are essential to alter this trajectory. Initiatives like reforestation, mangrove restoration, and soil conservation not only capture carbon but also enhance climate resilience, preserve biodiversity, and foster community development. By strategically investing in these solutions, LAC countries can reduce emissions while fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

LAC philanthropy has a unique opportunity to position the region as a global leader in climate action by funding, de-risking, and connecting critical initiatives. To unlock this potential, philanthropy

[21] International Energy Agency. (2023). *Latin America Energy Outlook 2023 – Analysis*. IEA.

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must focus on supporting long-term institutional resilience and delivering lasting impact: investing in governance, operational capacity, and human capital. This is particularly vital for nature-based solutions and environmental progress, which often take decades to materialize. Restoring forests, rebuilding ecosystems, and fostering sustainable community practices require enduring investments, which must also withstand uncertainties like shifting climate patterns and evolving policy environments.

The true power of philanthropic capital lies in its ability to bridge sectors, foster collaboration, and adopt a long-term perspective. By acting as a connector between the third sector, concessional investors, and commercial players, philanthropy can unify efforts to tackle shared challenges. This involves not only demonstrating the potential of nature-based solutions but also advancing shared strategies, such as blended finance models. Blended finance allows philanthropic investments to de-risk projects, attract private-sector funding, and catalyze greater flows of capital into high-impact environmental solutions. When paired with policy advocacy and public-sector engagement, this cross-sectoral approach amplifies the reach and effectiveness of nature-based solutions, enabling them to scale at the pace needed to confront the global climate crisis. Together with a collaborative framework, philanthropy can transform into a driving force for sustainable, systemic change.

The future of climate action in the LAC region lies in collaboration, connectivity, and co-creation. By leveraging philanthropic capital to seed, scale, and sustain transformative initiatives, the region can inspire a greener, more equitable global transition. These efforts offer hope not only for reversing environmental degradation but also for reimagining economic systems that prioritize resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability. Through strategic partnerships and a commitment to patient capital, we can unlock the full potential of nature-based solutions, empowering communities and ecosystems to thrive in harmony. This shared vision, rooted in action and innovation, is the foundation for a more sustainable future.

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