

Collective Action Fund

Empowering emergent, community-led projects for systemic change

Synergos' Collective Action Fund is a new tool for funders to directly support high-leverage projects co-created within Synergos' network of communities, and the collaborative process from which they emerge. Unlike traditional philanthropy, which typically funds one organization tackling one issue at a time, the Fund pools resources to support projects shaped by local leaders, philanthropists, and practitioners working across sectors, developed through Synergos' Bridging Leadership methodology. And unlike a donor-advised fund, where you direct each grant individually, the Collective Action Fund lets you back an entire community's priorities in one gift, shaped by the local leaders closest to the work.

The Fund will grow and develop alongside Synergos communities, reflecting in real time where opportunities for action emerge. The Shifting Food Systems community leads Phase 1, and the Fund will ultimately work across Synergos' programming priorities, from agriculture and health to education, wellbeing, and regenerative communities, reflecting our focus on systemic change and integrated approaches.



Advantages of giving through the Fund

Earned relationships. You get access to work Synergos and its network have already spent years earning: trusted relationships with the local leaders, government partners, and practitioners closest to the problem.

A vetted portfolio. Rather than sourcing and vetting projects on your own, your gift backs a portfolio the community itself has already identified, designed, and put its own trust behind – a shortcut to impact you could not build alone.

This is Bridging Leadership in Action

1 Build the community

2 Co-create the work

3 Act at scale

The biggest challenges of our time can't be solved by any one actor alone. It takes people from every sector — funders, farmers, practitioners, and local leaders — co-creating solutions together instead of working in parallel.

The Collective Action Fund puts real money behind projects that emerge when communities, not funders, decide what's needed.

Underpinning every stage of the process: Flexible capital that sustains community engagement, project development, and action alike.

Phase 1: Shifting Food Systems leading the way

Transforming how food is grown, distributed, and valued can address poverty, advance social justice, and respond to climate change, simultaneously. The Shifting Food Systems community — our global network of smallholder farmers, Indigenous leaders, philanthropists, and practitioners — has worked together for more than two years, moving food systems from extractive, fragmented models toward regenerative, community-led ones. As that community moved from shared learning into shared action, its members and funders sought a way to put capital behind the opportunities they were designing.

Levers of change

Through its Bridging Leadership process, the Shifting Food Systems community identified three leverage points where coordinated capital and expertise can shift outcomes across the whole system:

- **Catalytic capital and enterprising models**, starting with a learning series featuring architects of catalytic financing that will support the transition toward long-term integrated landscape management and restoration.
- **Elevating solutions grounded in Indigenous wisdom**, developing a framework for collaborators interested in, or already working with, Indigenous communities, developed and articulated by Indigenous communities themselves.
- **Youth employment in agrisystems**, developing a youth-led enterprise piloted in Nigeria as an alternative to subsistence farming, including youth-led assessment and data collection, regenerative agriculture using indigenous seeds, technology to improve post-harvest management, and market strategy and storytelling.

Project spotlight: Farming the Future

Farming the Future is a 24-month youth entrepreneurship pilot in Kaduna State, Nigeria, co-designed by Synergos, the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), and Nigerian stakeholders. It draws on the local expertise and trusted relationships Synergos has built in Nigeria over the past decade, and combines Synergos' Bridging Leadership and systems-thinking expertise with SAN's regenerative agriculture capabilities.

The pilot trains extension workers, prioritizing women and youth, as agriculture advisors; integrates regenerative farming into existing youth agripreneurship programs; and connects verified organic soybean production with domestic and international buyers seeking more sustainable, traceable supply. Support has already been established with the Kaduna State Government, extension stakeholders, producer organizations, women and youth, market actors, and certification bodies.

Join us

The Collective Action Fund is Synergos' answer to a question many of our members and partners have asked: how can we resource the bold and creative ideas that emerge from our network? The Fund is anchored in Phase 1 in Shifting Food Systems, but as it grows, we will expand to other Synergos communities, including Education and the Whole Child and Care Economies.

We invite philanthropists and institutions to join as an early partner. As Synergos approaches its 40th anniversary in 2027, this Fund is one of the clearest examples of what four decades of trust-based, community-led work and inclusive partnership can become when it moves from framework to funded action.

Phase 1 at a glance

- **Target:** \$2,500,000
- **Raised to date:** \$150,000
- **Close date:** March 1, 2027
- **Deployment:** grants on a rolling basis, Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2027

To learn more and get involved, please contact:

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