

Go Big

A concept note bought to you by
The Collective

Overview and situation analysis

Unequal access to resources remains one of the most entrenched barriers to systemic change. Despite decades of innovation, reform, and good practice, capital and decision-making power remain overwhelmingly concentrated in the Global North, while grassroots leaders and communities most affected by injustice continue to operate with short-term, restricted, and precarious funding. Across civil society, the reality is still too often about keeping the lights on.

This moment is uniquely urgent. Climate breakdown, rising authoritarianism, shrinking civic space, and increasingly hostile operating environments are accelerating at the same time as traditional aid and philanthropic systems are under strain. Fragmentation slows impact; resources are not flowing fast enough or far enough; and even progressive funding practices struggle to meet the scale and pace this moment demands. At the same time, communities and grassroots organisations have been remarkably consistent in what they are asking for: long-term, core, sustainable funding delivered at scale and pace, with power shifted meaningfully into their hands. The message is clear — incremental reform is not enough.

Go Big is The Collective's second pillar of change. It responds directly to this reality by launching The People's Fund — a radical yet practical global funding mechanism and platform designed to democratise wealth, redistribute power, and move resources rapidly and ethically to grassroots movements worldwide. This is not a replacement for existing efforts, but a catapult: pulling together, amplifying, and accelerating what already works across the resourcing ecosystem.

The Outcome We Seek

Wealth and power are redistributed rapidly and at scale to grassroots movements, enabling long-term autonomy, resilience, and people-led solutions to injustice.

Through Go Big and The People's Fund, philanthropy is reimagined as infrastructure for justice rather than charity. Capital flows faster and further to the frontline. Communities gain long-term financial autonomy through endowments and unrestricted funding. Decision-making power shifts to those with lived experience of injustice. The result is a funding system capable of supporting durable change, not perpetual crisis response.

The People's Fund

Our Approach

Our approach is participatory, ethical, and scalable, grounded in humility and deep respect for the extraordinary work already underway across the ecosystem. Go Big builds on the leadership and expertise of grassroots specialist funds, participatory grantmakers, and decolonial funding reform efforts — including organisations such as ADD International, Guerrilla Foundation, Thousand Currents, Shake the Table, Mama Cash, Proximate Fund, Peace Direct, Grassroots International, and many others. We will take the following eight key actions:

1. Catalyse System Reform

Convene philanthropy networks, grassroots funders, and social investors to co-design decolonial, redistributive funding models, co-identify systemic barriers, Take collective, time-bound action to remove them — adding value through coordination rather than duplication.

2. Build and Scale the People's Fund

Develop and grow a community-governed, ethically invested global fund — by the people, for the people — channelling resources to human rights defenders, grassroots movements, and civic actors through trusted specialist intermediaries.

3. Embed Participatory Governance

Ensure governance is led by people with lived experience of injustice, with diverse geographic representation and deep expertise in participatory grant making, accountability, and community decision-making.

4. Create a Transparent Funding Ecosystem

Build on existing best practice to ensure integrity, trust, and shared ownership through open data, accessible reporting, and community oversight — strengthening confidence across funders and movements alike.

5. Recognise and Match Informal Giving

Quantify and elevate informal and community-based giving as the real foundation of survival and solidarity, and develop mechanisms to match it with institutional capital.

6. Enable Direct Giving

Develop digital platforms that allow donors and individuals to connect directly with Southern organisations, increasing transparency, trust, and agency while complementing intermediary models.

7. Unlock Spend-Down and Warehoused Capital

Position The People's Fund as a natural, ethical home for spend-down funds, donor-advised funds, and dormant charitable assets — enabling direct transfer of wealth to communities at a pivotal moment.

8. Build a Global Endowment for Justice

Launch a major fundraising campaign to build a large, ethically invested global endowment, alongside immediate capital flows routed through trusted grassroots funders, providing both urgent liquidity and long-term lifeblood.



Proposed Timeline

How It Works

The People’s Fund operates as a global funding platform designed to democratise wealth and move toward reparative justice by:

- Maintaining a large, ethically invested global endowment
- Supporting community-controlled endowments for self-determination
- Routing immediate funds through specialist grassroots intermediaries
- Serving as a high-trust release valve for stalled philanthropic capital
- Combining percentage contributions from foundations with large anchor investments

This model delivers both speed and sustainability, ensuring funds flow now while building lasting financial autonomy for communities.

Timeline

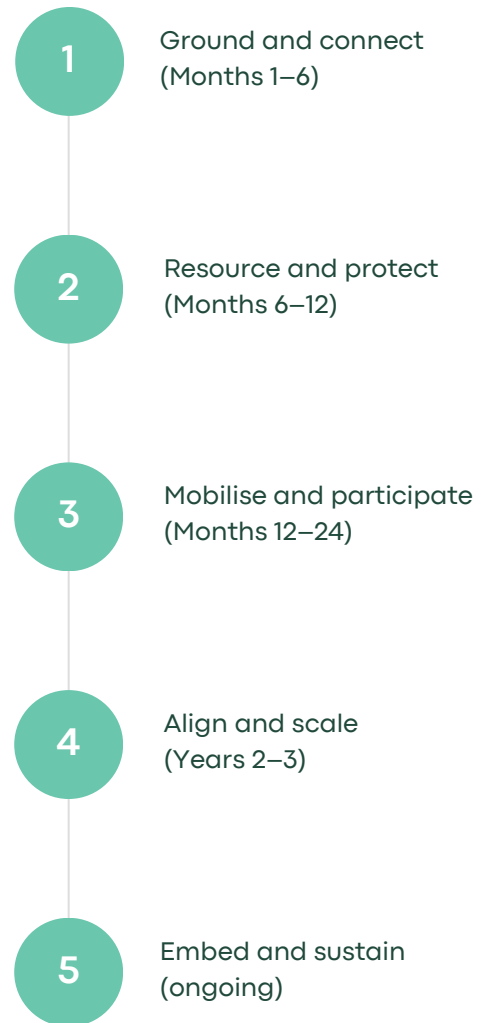
Phase 1: Convene core partners, establish participatory governance, map existing funds and gaps, and initiate early capital flows through trusted grassroots intermediaries.

Phase 2: Launch the People’s Fund platform, begin matching informal and institutional giving, and activate spend-down and DAF engagement.

Phase 3: Scale fundraising for the global endowment, deepen coordination across funds, and expand direct-giving mechanisms.

Phase 4: Embed learning, transparency, and community oversight; grow community endowments; and demonstrate system-level shifts in funding flows.

Phase 5: Sustain and evolve the Fund as long-term infrastructure for justice, resilience, and people-led systems change.



Budget and Investment

To catalyse Go Big and launch The People’s Fund, we are seeking \$500,000–\$1bn+ over time, with an initial focus on:

- Seed funding: \$5,000,000
- Full-scale support: \$1 billion upwards - long term target \$10b

A full budget breakdown is available on request. Early investment enables governance design, coordination, platform development, and immediate capital flows to the grassroots, while unlocking significantly larger downstream contributions.

Call to Action

Go Big is a pivotal opportunity to unlock one of the greatest barriers to systemic change by moving wealth and power at the scale this moment demands. This is not about replacing what exists, but amplifying it — building The People’s Fund as shared infrastructure for justice that places resources and decision-making in the hands of communities shaping their own futures.

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