

2020

Impaci Report







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## A Letter from our Founder



In 2012, I was living in my van, and for the first time ever I was earning more money than I needed. I was climbing constantly, doing exactly what I wanted to almost every day. As I traveled for expeditions—to Chad, Oman, and Borneo—I was more and more worried about climate change, and felt an obligation to do something useful for the world, even though it was at a modest scale. So I started giving away a third of my income to various solar energy projects. I hoped that if nothing else it would give me a reason to talk about environmental issues during interviews instead of fear and death, which was (and often still is) the usual line of questioning.

In the past eight years, the Honnold Foundation has grown more than I could have imagined. And time after time, I've seen solar energy provide elegant, win-win solutions to both environmental and humanitarian problems. A few years ago we named this explicitly in our mission statement: the Honnold Foundation supports solar energy for a more equitable world.

This year has marked several notable highlights for the Honnold Foundation. We issued our first open call for grant applications, soliciting the best ideas from around the world and supporting as many as we could. With skilled staff and clear selection criteria, we're able to evaluate hundreds of applications and choose the best ones—which felt particularly exciting for me, since I used to look for grantees on my laptop with Google. We also gave away just under one million dollars in grants, which would have been hard to imagine from the back of my van.

The Honnold Foundation has come of age. We now have a full time staff, a board of directors, a team of global partners and grantees, and many more supporters, which allows us to support more solar projects at a bigger scale.

And as we've grown, the work that we support is as important as ever. The climate is changing, we need to decarbonize our society, and there remain almost a billion people on earth without access to power. At the Honnold Foundation, we're committed to making sure that no one is left behind as the world transitions to renewables. I'm very grateful that we're able to make a growing contribution to the solutions that our world needs, and I'm grateful to you for your support.

Thank you,



## Solar energy for everyone

The Honnold Foundation promotes solar energy for a more equitable world. We fund solar because we know it's uniquely positioned to improve peoples' lives, reduce environmental impact, and empower communities to meet their own needs and address their own challenges.

We've come a long way from our humble beginnings in Alex Honnold's van, but the Honnold Foundation's values remain the same—we believe that small, deliberate steps can help us achieve audacious goals, and we're here to build a brighter and more equitable world for everyone.

#### **OUR THEORY OF CHANGE**

At the Honnold Foundation, we know that in our rapidly changing climate, solar energy access can reduce environmental impact and improve peoples' lives. We fund and partner with community-based organizations that provide solar energy to underserved communities, so we can ensure that people don't get left behind as we transition to a world powered by renewable energy.







#### **Core Grants Fund**

Large, unrestricted, multi-year grants for grassroots nonprofits doing solar energy access work worldwide.

## **Community Grants Fund**

Solar installs for BIPOC-led nonprofits in the most polluted regions in the United States.

#### **Microgrid Program**

Cooperatively-managed, locally owned solar microgrids serving communities especially impacted by the effects of climate change.

In 2020, the Honnold Foundation launched our first **Core Fund** open call, soliciting applications from solar nonprofits and initiatives all over the world. We received over 700 applications, and after an exceptionally competitive review process, awarded over \$600,000 in grants to eight innovative, community-driven solar initiatives.

The Community Fund is the Honnold Foundation's newest grant program, with a specific focus on environmental justice. The Community Fund provides solar installs for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color- led nonprofits in the most polluted regions in the United States. Community Fund grants are mission agnostic—if the nonprofit is meeting essential needs in the community (from arts education to food security services), it's eligible for a solar install from the Community Fund.

The Honnold Foundation's **Microgrid Program** is a flagship initiative that develops community- owned solar microgrids in places especially susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Our inaugural project is the Adjuntas Microgrid, a 220 kW photovoltaic system powering 17 businesses in a small town in Puerto Rico.

#### BY THE NUMBERS: 2020 GLOBAL IMPACT

#### **PROGRAMS FUNDS AWARDED:**

\$993K

**COMMUNITIES REACHED:** 

32

**PARTNERS SUPPORTED:** 

17

**NEW GRANT PROGRAMS LAUNCHED:** 

2





In 2020, the Honnold Foundation funded and collaborated with partners in 13 different countries and territories. From creating batteries with upcycled waste, to building community-owned solar microgrids, our partners are empowering communities through solar energy access all over the world.

- Brazil
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Cambodia
- Ecuador
- Guatemala
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Malawi

- Mexico
- Puerto Rico
- Solomon Islands
- USA (West Virginia, Michigan, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, California, South Dakota, Washington, New Mexico)
- Zambia









#### **2020 PARTNERS**

#### **CORE PARTNERS**

#### Associação dos Trabalhadores Agroextrativistas da Ilha das Cinzas (Brazil)

Solar home systems for riverbank families in the Brazilian Amazon

#### Asociación MAIA (Guatemala)

Rooftop solar array and STEM education at Central America's first school for indigenous girls

#### Borderlands 501(c)3 (Mexico)

Solar-powered water pump and home solar systems for the Seri Indian community in Northern Mexico

#### **Bluevolt** (Solomon Islands)

Cyclone-proof solar array for a community ecotourism lodge that supports the economic livelihood of Savo Island

#### Casa Pueblo (Puerto Rico)

First-of-its-kind community-owned solar microgrid offering a new form of energy independence and self-determination

Coalfield Development Corp. (West Virginia, USA) Rooftop solar for a microenterprise development center, creating job opportunities for former coal miners and their families

#### **Global Greengrants Fund (Global)**

Micro grants for community-driven solar projects around the world

#### **GRID Alternatives Tribal Program** (USA)

Residential solar and job training for Tribal Nations

**GRID Alternatives North Valley** (California, USA) Solar home systems and battery storage for low-income residents in Northern California impacted by recent wildfires

#### Kara Solar (Ecuador)

Solar powered canoes for the Achuar Nation in the Ecuadorian Amazon

#### **KOPPESDA** (Indonesia)

Solar systems for homes and community clinics in rural Indonesia using a pay-as-you-go model that accepts cash and non-cash payments

#### North End Woodward Community Coalition

(Michigan, USA)

Residential solar for homes owned by Detroit's first community land trust

#### SolarAid (Malawi & Zambia)

Solar lantern libraries for rural communities in Malawi and Zambia

#### The Lake Clinic (Cambodia)

Solar to power floating medical clinics serving nine communities on Tonle Sap Lake which would otherwise have no other access to healthcare

**Solarna Pecka** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) Rooftop solar array for a community and sustainable tourism resource center

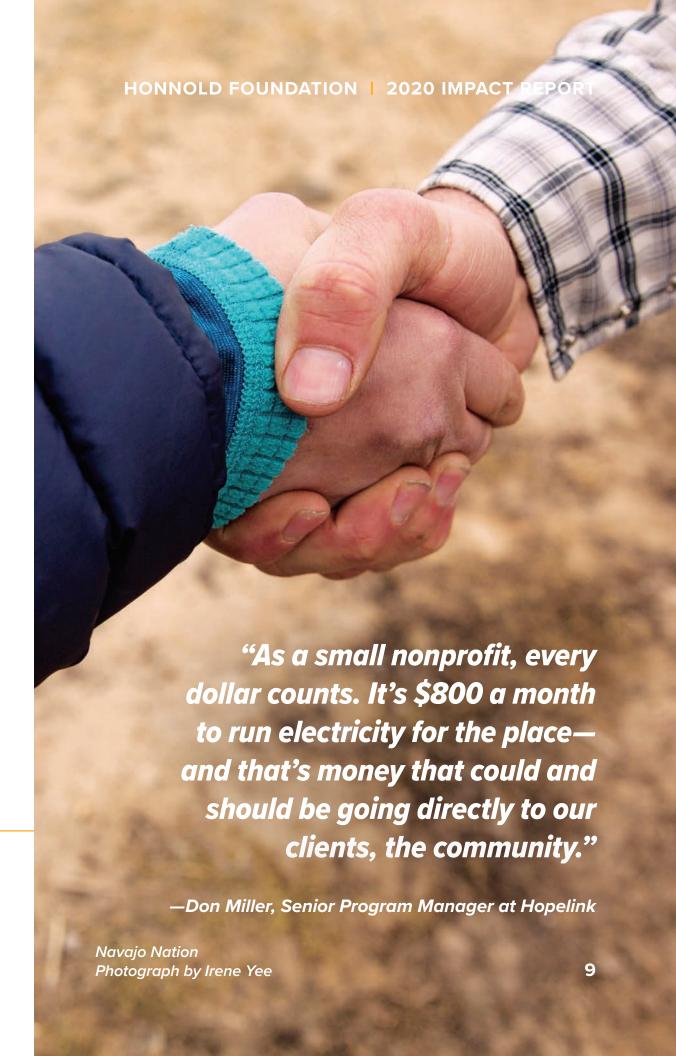
#### **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**GivCommunities** (Utah)

Hopelink of Southern Nevada (Nevada)

**Utah Clean Energy** (Utah)





# Building a Solar-Powered Puerto Rico

**September 20, 2017:** Hurricane Maria touches down on the shores of the tiny Caribbean island of Puerto Rico.

What happens next is one of the worst disasters in Puerto Rico's history. Thousands of casualties. Close to one hundred billion US dollars in damages. Eighty-five percent of above-ground phone and internet cables are destroyed. A complete shutdown of the power grid leaves 3.4 million residents without power for months.

And yet, in a pink house with adobe walls in the small town of Adjuntas, a bright light still shines...





#### PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: CASA PUEBLO

t first glance, Adjuntas looks like many other towns in Puerto Rico. Cinder block houses with brightly-colored walls cluster in a valley surrounded by low mountains and tropical jungle. Trucks roll past playing music and announcements over stacks of foot-tall speakers, and clouds gather overhead, preparing for the predictable afternoon rain. The plaza central, or downtown square, bustles with activity as people make their way to Lucy's Pizza for lunch, the pharmacy, the bakery, the bank.

And yet, the town of Adjuntas is anything but ordinary. It's the epicenter of environmental activism in Puerto Rico, and the home of Casa Pueblo, a nonprofit organization that has been fighting (and winning) environmental battles since 1980. And for the past ten years—long before Hurricane Maria wiped out Puerto Rico's already beleaguered electrical grid—Casa Pueblo's operations have been 100% solar-powered. That includes an environmental education program, a butterfly aviary, a community radio station, and a museum that guides visitors through Casa Pueblo's history of community empowerment and advocacy.

So when Hurricane Maria hit, Adjuntas had the tools for recovery that many communities didn't. While most of Puerto Rico was cast into darkness, Casa Pueblo's lights stayed on. Their team distributed solar lanterns to 85% of the town's 20,000 residents, and small solar-powered refrigerators to the elderly and sick for storing medications. Casa Pueblo was there to take care of their own community when there was no help coming from anyone else.





#### PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: CASA PUEBLO

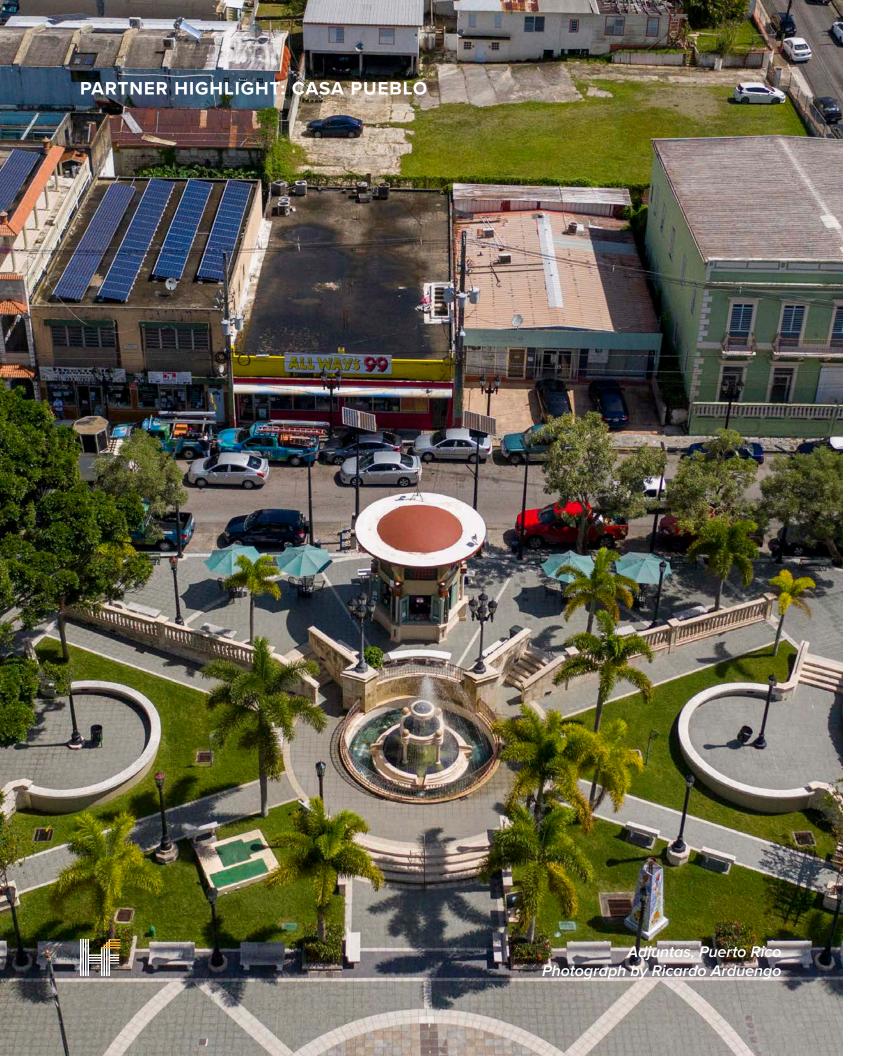
But the problems with Puerto Rico's energy grid don't start and stop with Hurricane Maria. Even before Maria, the sole energy utility on the island—PREPA—had filed for bankruptcy. Rolling blackouts are still common, and many businesses spend a third of their monthly expenses on power bills. Energy access in Puerto Rico is, in many ways, a disaster of its own.

And of course, Maria is not the first hurricane to hit the island, nor will it be the last. Climate change means that hurricane season in the Caribbean is getting stronger and less predictable. So while we don't know when the next Maria will happen, we do know that more storms like it are in Puerto Rico's future. And when they do happen, there's no reason to believe that Puerto Rico will receive more assistance than they did before.

Casa Pueblo has been a key community leader before, during, and after Maria—work that has influenced tens of thousands of people, and saved vast swaths of the Puerto Rican landscape from development and destruction. But when we began talking with Casa Pueblo in early 2019, the work was far from done.







The plaza central is the beating heart of Adjuntas. It is a gathering spot, a place of commerce, the location of the church and the town hall. In many ways, the plaza central powers the community. But what powers the plaza?

In 2019, the answer to that question was PREPA—and during power outages, hurricane-influenced or otherwise, an improvised network of diesel generators. But Casa Pueblo has long been looking for a different answer. And so, in collaboration with Casa Pueblo's Associate Director, Arturo Massol-Deyá, we hatched a plan for a more sustainable future.

We took Casa Pueblo's past successes with solar energy and identified the next step—an audacious one, but something we knew we could achieve together: a 100% solar microgrid to power the plaza central. But first, we needed to make sure the owners of the businesses surrounding the plaza were on board. So together with Casa Pueblo, we went door to door and talked to those business owners, receiving enthusiastic support from the 17 business owners in key locations.

The next step was to form an Adjuntas-based nonprofit to manage the grid. It wouldn't make sense to manage it ourselves, or for Casa Pueblo to run it on the community's behalf—the goal of the project (and this is always one of our goals at the Honnold Foundation) was to empower people to take care of themselves. So with the support and guidance of Cynthia Arellano, the Honnold Foundation's dedicated project manager for this initiative, a group of Adjunteños formed the Community Solar Energy Association of Adjuntas (ACESA).

At the same time, the team was deeply engaged in the microgrid design process. While solar microgrids are a well-established energy delivery structure, the layout of the plaza and the scale of this microgrid presented unique challenges. We wanted to design it in a way that would be replicable, and it needed to fit into the broader energy policy landscape in Puerto Rico.

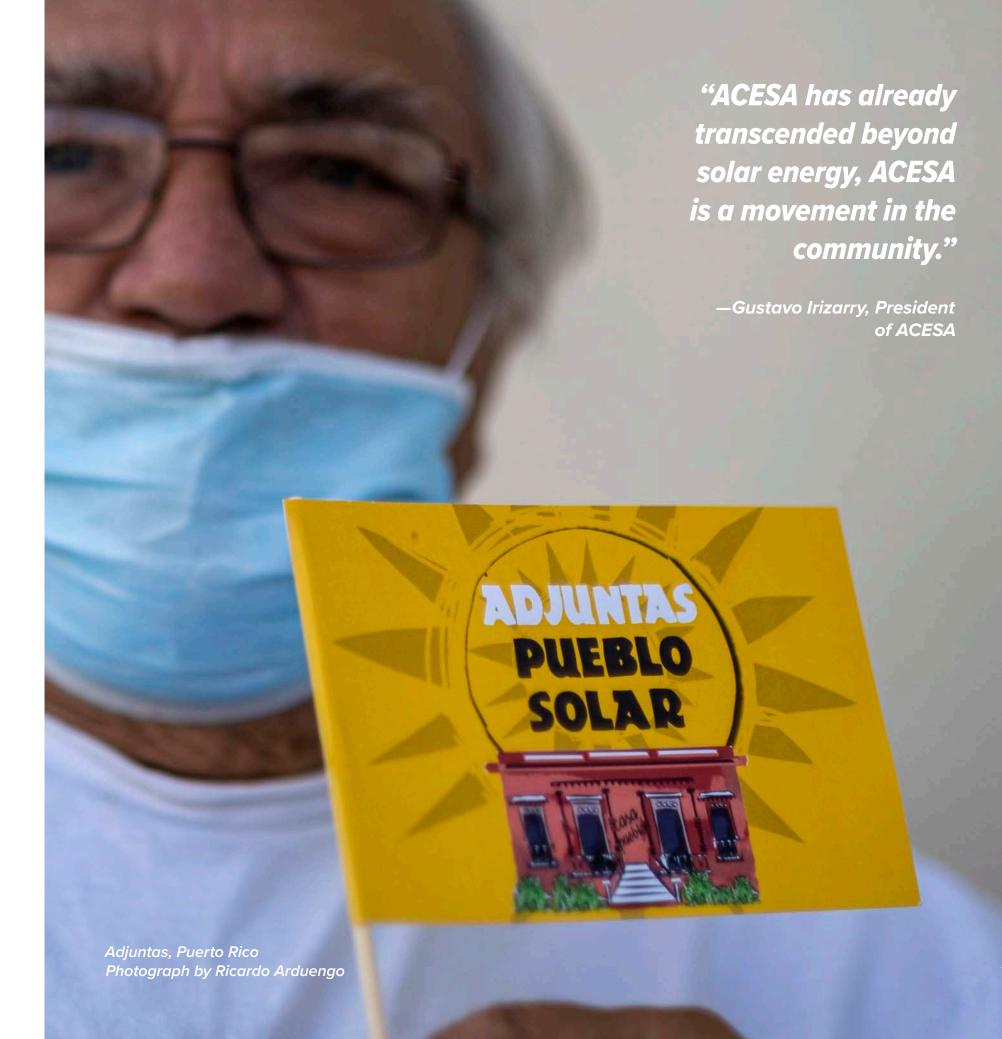
In spite of COVID, earthquakes, political unrest, and the 2020 storm cycle, the microgrid team has managed to continually keep the project moving forward. REC Group, a solar panel manufacturer and longtime Honnold Foundation partner, donated 494 solar panels, and the electric car company Rivian, another trusted HF collaborator and one of the founding partners for the microgrid, donated a megawatt of energy storage and custom designed, hurricane-proof battery housings.

#### PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: CASA PUEBLO

Just three years after Hurricane Maria, the plaza central in Adjuntas is on the brink of being powered by 100% solar energy. ACESA manages the microgrid, which will provide 220kw of power to 17 businesses in the plaza central, including up to 11 days of battery back up. The solar panels will be fully installed by the end of January 2021, with the batteries arriving soon after. And although 17 businesses are currently served by the first phase of the microgrid, there are over 70 more on the waitlist to join phase two.

This is what's possible when organizations like the Honnold Foundation and Casa Pueblo team up. The Adjuntas solar microgrid sets an example for community-led resilience in the Caribbean, and in other climate sensitive regions worldwide. We at the Honnold Foundation are proud to have partnered with Casa Pueblo to power this initiative, and to have helped them take their vision for a solar powered Puerto Rico one step closer to fruition.

But most of all, we're excited about the future. This microgrid belongs to the Adjuntas community—it's been their project from the beginning, and long after we mount the last panel, it will be the people of Adjuntas who reap the rewards. The microgrid is transforming the lives of the Adjuntas community with clean, reliable solar power. And that's exactly the result we were hoping for. •





# How Solar Boats Can Save the Rainforest

#### **PROJECT AT A GLANCE**

**Grant Award:** \$65,000

Location: Achuar Region, Ecuador

#### **Impact:**

- Two 5-passenger solar powered boats
- Two 20-passenger solar powered boats
- Job training for 4 solar technicians





#### PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: KARA SOLAR

or the roughly 6,000 Achuar people who live in the Amazon River basin along the border between Ecuador and Peru, the idea of a silent boat is the realization of a dream. "There has always been a vision of a 'fire' canoe," says Oliver Utne, General Coordinator of Kara Solar. "[A canoe] an electric fish, which would bring a new and hopeful future, one in harmony with the spirit of the jungle; a future inspired by the flow of the rivers of the rainforest, transcending mental, physical, and political boundaries."

Canoes are essential to the Achuar people, and in the Amazon in general. Deep in the heart of the rainforest, boats provide the most efficient and reliable form of transportation. Travel by foot is next to impossible due to the thickness of the forest and complexity of the terrain; travel by car is problematic, because new roads mean new deforestation, which in turn fragments delicate habitats. For the Achuar—who have long been stewards of their lands, successfully warding off almost all oil development, mining, and industrial agriculture—this precludes roads as a viable option. But traditional, diesel-powered canoes aren't perfect either. They require frequent repair, leak oil into the waterways, and rely on costly imported fuel.

Fortunately, there's an alternative: solar powered canoes. Not only are solar boats quiet and clean, they also release communities like the Achuar from their dependence on expensive, imported fuel. The solar panels on the boats allow them to travel for an entire day at speeds up to 8.7 miles per hour, and the onboard battery banks provide enough energy for three to six hours of night travel, depending on conditions.







Kara Solar is currently creating a network of solar canoe ports, connecting nine communities spanning 67km of the Pastaza and Capahuari Rivers. This network provides opportunities for commerce within Achuar communities, and increases possibilities for exchange with outside communities, too. With the support of the Honnold Foundation. Kara Solar and the Achuar people are now able to expand this network even further. Their \$65,000 grant is funding two new fivepassenger solar powered boats, two new 20-passenger solar powered boats, one new solar charging station, and training and certification for four solar electricians from within the community.

"The boats are a tool in our permanent struggle to defend our territory," says Nantu Canelos, Local Coordinator & Achuar community member. Already, we have seen how true Canelos' words are. In a recent report from Kara Solar, we learned that these boats have been used to access food and farms, in search and rescue, and for transportation to urgent meetings where Achuar people continue to make plans to protect the land that's so essential to their community.  $\heartsuit$ 

Solar, Close to Home

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PHILANTHROPY IN BIPOC COMMUNITIES** 

- Only 10% of domestic philanthropic funding goes to BIPOC communities.1
- Over 1 million African Americans live less than half a mile from a natural gas facility.2
- Compared to non-Hispanic Whites, **African Americans** are 79% more likely to live in the places where industrial pollution is highest.3
- (1) Inside Philanthropy
   (2) Fumes Across the Fenceline
   (3) PBS





#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: COMMUNITY FUND

he intersection of social justice and environmental justice is the core of the Honnold Foundation's work. In the United States, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) shoulder a disproportionate burden of the worst environmental impacts.

Oil and gas production and refinement, and the traffic corridors that transport food and merchandise across the country are frequently located in and around BIPOC communities, negatively impacting residents' health and wellbeing. And all too often, the BIPOC-led nonprofits working to combat these impacts and serve the needs of their communities are underfunded, receiving 76% fewer unrestricted gifts than their white-led counterparts. The Honnold Foundation acknowledges this gap—and with the Community Fund, we're doing our part to repair it.

Bridging Communities is one of our first Community Fund grantees, and since 1980 they have worked to build a safer, more connected community in Detroit, Michigan. Located in the Southwest part of the city, and serving a majority Black and Hispanic neighborhood, Bridging Communities supports elders and their families, ensuring they have access to essential services and fighting the challenges of isolation and loneliness. Bridging Communities provides case management, helps elders with minor home repairs, and even facilitates friendly visits to connect elders to other members of the community.





Bridging Communities and the people they serve are no strangers to pollution, or its impacts on health and wellbeing. Surrounded by major freeways, the community experiences some of the highest asthma and respiratory disease rates in the state of Michigan. Their proximity to major transportation corridors even impacts the local community gardens—industrial pollution and runoff lead to high levels of soil contamination.

With the rooftop solar installation that their Community Fund grants supports, Bridging Communities expects an annual cost savings of over \$4,000—and all of that money will go right back to supporting seniors and families in Detroit. Installation is scheduled to begin in Spring of 2021. •

The Community Fund is powered by a partnership with Sunrun.

## A Bright Future

Our Executive Director Looks Ahead to 2021



At the end of February 2020, I stood in the rain in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, chatting with one of our project partners and imagining the solar array that would soon be mounted on the rooftops that surrounded the plaza. Just two weeks later, days after the first solar panels had been mounted, our friends and partners in Adjuntas locked down—and the Honnold Foundation team packed up our desks at our small Salt Lake City office and started settling into a new normal.

As the year comes to a close, some things have changed and some haven't. The Honnold Foundation team has stayed home; remote work suits our culture and lets us focus even more of our budget on our nonprofit partners worldwide. In Puerto Rico, the work goes on. Despite hurricane season, earthquakes, and the impacts of COVID, our partners at Casa Pueblo and ACESA have worked tirelessly to bring our shared goal to fruition. The microgrid's 220 kW of solar panels will be fully installed by early January. When the 2021 hurricane season starts, Adjuntas will be ready.

At the Honnold Foundation, we see hope and inspiration in how our partners have grown and changed through 2020. We launched two grant funds this year, and fielded applications for incredible solar projects from Brazil and Indonesia to Detroit and Anchorage. Those applications came from people—leaders deeply invested in their neighborhoods and communities. We've kept talking to community leaders in all those places, commiserating as they sat at their own dining room tables, navigating the complexities of life in quarantine. Our partners have survived and thrived through the past twelve months, and we know that with their commitment, passion, and competence, they'll continue to thrive in the year to come.

So, in a time of great uncertainty, here's what we know for sure:

**Solar energy access remains essential.** The events of 2020 (a pandemic, the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent protest movement in the United States, wildfires, earthquakes, and the worst economic downturn of our lifetimes...) highlight the inequalities and injustices that have always plagued our global systems. Energy access is fundamental, one of the first stepping stones to increased opportunity, and a world where people have the freedom to live the lives they choose. Solar energy access will matter more than ever in 2021.

Community leaders are ready to go big. Our partner network spans the globe. And from tiny islands in the Pacific Ocean, to the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia, to the Amazon River delta, community leaders know the same thing: the impacts of climate change and environmental injustice are upon us, right now. It's time to fight back. These leaders are building resilient organizations, providing essential services to their neighbors and communities, and they're ready to go solar now. These communities already have visionary leadership, strong decision-making structures, and willing and accountable networks. But they need more resources—more money, more expert advisory services, more support—to reach their goals. And that's where the Honnold Foundation comes in.

We need your help. The Honnold Foundation is powered by people like you. One hundred percent. We don't have an endowment, and we never will. Climate change is happening now, and we approach this crisis with the urgency and intensity that a challenge of this scale demands. This urgency requires all of us, giving at every level, in whatever way we can.

If you supported our work this year, thank you. If you're supporting our work in 2021, thank you. You're an essential part of this movement. It's only with your help that we can build a brighter world.

Onward.



Len Jeles

## 2019 Financial Breakdown

#### **2019 REVENUES**

Individuals \$899,927
Corporations & Foundations \$303,761
Tides Grant \* \$252,000
Interest \$542

TOTAL REVENUES \$1,456,230

#### **2019 EXPENSES**

Programs:

Grants \$379,603 Direct Program Expenses \$85,048

Supporting Services:

Development \$41,765

Administration \$39,929

TOTAL EXPENSES \$546,345

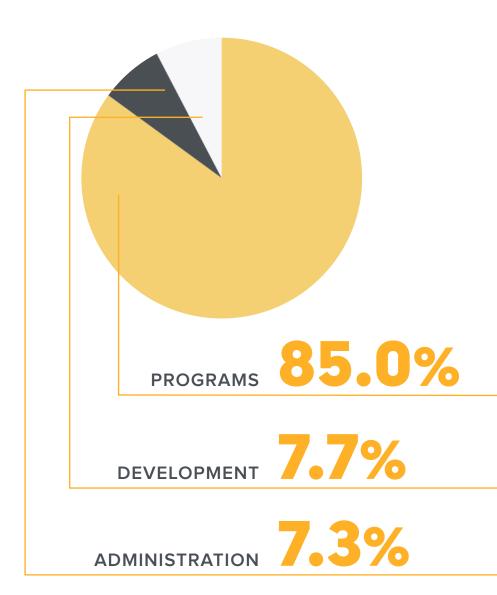
2019 CHANGE

**IN NET ASSETS** \$909,885

NET ASSETS, END OF 2019

\$1,121,597

#### **2019 SUMMARY OF EXPENSES**







\*Prior to 2019, the Honnold Foundation operated as a donor-advised fund (DAF) stewarded by Tides. When the Honnold Foundation became an independent 501(c)3, we closed our DAF at Tides and received the remaining funds as a program-restricted grant award. Of that award, \$62,569.13 was 2019 revenue; the remaining funds were accrued prior to 2019. The entirety of the Tides award was disbursed to HF Partners as grants in the 2019 calendar year.

## 2020 Financial Breakdown

#### **2020 REVENUES**

Individuals \$933,164

Corporations & Foundations \$353,688

Interest \$2,217

Paycheck Protection Plan Loan \$33,700

Investment Gains \$6,339

TOTAL REVENUES \$1,329,108

#### **2020 EXPENSES**

**TOTAL EXPENSES** 

#### Programs:

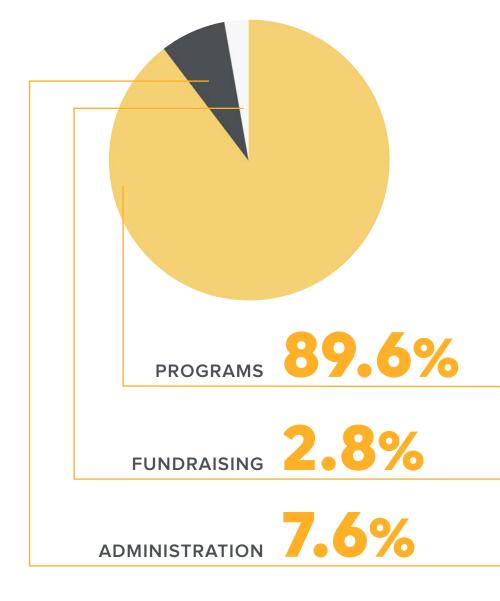
Grants \$971,005
Direct Program Expenses \$22,920
Supporting Services:
Development \$35,498
Administration \$97,507
Programs \$155,864

\$1,282,794

**2020 CHANGE IN NET ASSETS** \$46,314

**NET ASSETS, END OF 2020** \$1,167,912

#### **2020 SUMMARY OF EXPENSES**









### Our Team

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Maury Birdwell, Board Chair

Brady Robinson, Vice-chair

Nancy Feagin, Treasurer

**Brittany Gibbons,** Secretary

Alex Honnold, Founder

**Peter Martin** 

Len Necefer, Ph.D.

**Dirk Tyler** 

#### GRANTS AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Michiel Zuidweg,** former COO & Director of Commercial Projects at Puget Sound Solar

Jose Alfaro, Ph.D., Professor of Environmental Practice in the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan

**Sachiko Graber**, Climate Policy Associate at The Nature Conservancy

**Tommy Jones, Ph.D.**, Energy Analyst / Project Monitor with Boston Government Services for the Department of Energy Office of Indian Energy

**Toby Schmidt**, co-owner of Creative Energies

#### **STAFF TEAM**

**Dory Trimble,** *Executive Director* 

**Kate Trujillo,** *Director of Programs* 

Cynthia Arellano, Project Manager

Peter Walle, Communications Coordinator

#### LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

**Peter Levine,** *General Partner, Andreessen Horowitz* 

**Michael Green,** CEO & Principal, Michael Green Architecture

## Corporate Partners

The Honnold Foundation's global impact is enabled by the **generous support and deep commitment** of our corporate partners and donors worldwide.

**Rivian** 

**REC** 

**Black Diamond** 

Sunrun

**3M** 

**Maxim Ropes** 







SUNTUN







## Supporters

#### **DONOR COMMUNITY**

We'd also like to extend our deepest gratitude to our donor community, which includes people all over the world. For our solar energy access partners fighting for increased social equity and reduced environmental impact in their communities, every dollar counts. Thank you for supporting solar energy for a more equitable world. Thank you for supporting the Honnold Foundation.

#### **CREATIVE COMMUNITY**

A special thanks to the talented artists, photographers, and creatives who donate their time and expertise to telling the stories at the core of our work.

Ben Moon

**Dougald MacDonald** 

Irene Yee

**Jimmy Chin** 

Rubén Salgado

**Escudero** 

**Samuel Crossley** 

**Shawn Corrigan** 

## You make our work possible.



