

Call for Proposal

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly Symposium on

Climate Change and the Voluntary Sector

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Climate change is a defining issue of our times. The threat of its effects to humanity's welfare is widely understood on a scientific level, even if not yet accepted by all members of the general public. Some of these affected humans will turn to help from nonprofit and non-governmental organizations. Injuries or other immediate human needs create demands for short-term help, such as the role played by hundreds of nonprofit and faith-based "voluntary organizations active in disaster". As extreme weather increases in frequency, demands on these organizations are already increasing.

Long-term assistance normally provided by nonprofits and NGOs will be in greater demand, such as in climate refugee relocation, job training, immigration assistance, education, and food assistance. Taking just healthcare as an example, a major employer of the U.S. nonprofit workforce, climate change will impact public health capacity over the long term through predicted increases in extreme heat, water and insect-borne infectious disease, wildfires, air pollution, injuries, and mental health needs.

In light of the shrinking of the public sphere and a vigorous discussion about governmental policy and market solutions to climate change, we do not hear much about civil society solutions, from the community-based to the cross-national, and how they might aid or impede other solutions. Given the structural and state-centered focus of most Climate discussions, it is not surprising that neither the Green New Deal nor President-Elect Biden's Climate Plans clearly outline the role of the nonprofit sector to address the climate crisis.

There is an extensive but disparate literature on the role of the voluntary sector on environmental issues, addressing advocacy and social movement organizations, conservation organizations, nonprofits providing public and club goods such as parks foundations and mountaineering clubs, the social and racial justice elements of climate impact, and nonprofits addressing the effects of climate change through disaster response. This *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* symposium seeks to address these topics collectively, in terms of **how climate change impacts civil society organizations or how civil society organizations respond to climate change**. Climate change in the "voluntaristics" literature is almost entirely used as a general framing device, without focused attention to its nature and impact on nonprofits.

This symposium will be organized around questions such as:

1. Among nonprofits dedicated to sustainability, conservation, and climate change mitigation,
 - a. what are these organizations achieving, and what knowledge can be generated about their strategies and capacity needs?
 - b. what are nonprofits providing in the nature of climate public goods through activities such as planting trees or advocating no-till farming?
 - c. how is climate advocacy organized in different jurisdictions?
 - d. to what extent have environmental organizations repurposed themselves as climate organizations?
 - e. what strategies seem to work for climate advocacy?
 - f. to what extent have climate movement mimicked the civil rights movement or the broader environmental movement in terms of its strategies, venue choices, and resource mobilization?
 - g. under what conditions do climate organizations work across sectors, such as with business groups, on climate issues?
 - h. What is the role of social media in promoting or impeding voluntary action on the climate front?
 - i. What is the role of climate counter-movements in the policy process? To what extent populist movements have coopted climate issues on their agendas?
 - j. The Sunrise Movement, Greta Thunberg, and the Juliana case reveal the vital contributions of youth-led initiatives. Does this type of youth activism have parallels in other nonprofit issue areas?
2. Religious and faith-based nonprofits have played an important role in many social movements.
 - a. To what extent are religious organizations contributing to climate movements?
 - b. Progressive religious and faith-based organizations have publicly recognized their moral responsibility to call for action on global warming. Other religious organizations have vigorously denied the fact of climate change. How have any of these advocacy efforts fared?
3. How have philanthropic foundations structured the climate field?
 - a. What is the nature and scope of their philanthropy (planning, mitigation, preparedness, response)?
 - b. What unmet needs should be recognized?
 - c. What lessons about philanthropic capacity have been learned in the wake of several unprecedented hurricane/typhoon seasons?
4. In the face of climate change, are nonprofit service providers planning differently?
 - a. What communication methods might encourage nonprofit organizations to embrace mitigation?
 - b. What is the relationship between the geographic location of a community's social safety net charitable organizations vis-à-vis natural hazards risks?

- c. The vast network of nonprofit organizations serving vulnerable people, such as the elderly or those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is well known for its careful approach to emergency planning. Is it planning for the greater impacts and unpredictability of natural disasters that climate change brings?
 - d. Has the unpredictability of climate change caused international development NGOs to rethink the scope of their missions, infrastructure, and services in the face of new disasters for which they are unprepared?
 - e. Cities and urban areas may be at the forefront of climate change adaptation planning, but do their planning efforts include local nonprofits?
 - f. Has climate change caused nonprofits to think differently about collective impact, collaboration, and networked behavior?
5. How do dominant civil society theories, such as three-failures theory, apply to climate change response? What new theories must be considered?
 6. We also invite proposals for comprehensive “review articles” using appropriate methodologies. The symposium will include one such article.

TimeLine

1. March 1, 2021
Extended Abstracts (500-700 words) outlining research questions, data, empirical strategy, theoretical and empirical contributions. Please email: bgazley@indiana.edu and aseem@uw.edu
2. April 1, 2021
Abstracts Reviewed by Guest Editors, online conference papers invited
3. April 2- August 1, 2021
Invited authors produce full conference papers
4. August 1, 2021
Online Conference
5. September 30, 2021
Revised papers submitted for NVSQ review
6. January 30, 2022
First External Review completed by NVSQ
7. March 15, 2022
Revisions turned in
8. June 1, 2022
Second review completed by NVSQ
9. June 30, 2022
Guest editor recommendations submitted to journal editors