



# At an Inflection Point: TAI Funders for Participatory Governance in 2025

ANNUAL REPORT



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# Who we are

The Trust, Accountability, and Inclusion Collaborative - Funders for Participatory Governance (TAI) is a platform for donor learning and action. Our members seek to strengthen trust, accountability, and inclusion in societies around the globe (and in their own funding practices) as building blocks for a more just world where democracy, economy, and planet thrive.

TAI **connects and leverages** the deep expertise and leadership of those who fund programming related to trust, accountability, and inclusion. We provide a space for them to **learn from each other and build new thinking and action**. Our members come together to strategize, evolve funder practices, and expand the funder ecosystem. TAI helps members serve disadvantaged communities and support their inclusive grantmaking, further enhancing the impact of their efforts.

TAI also **acts as a bridge with the field**, assuring flows of knowledge and exchange on evidence, funding trends, and pain points in the funder ecosystem.

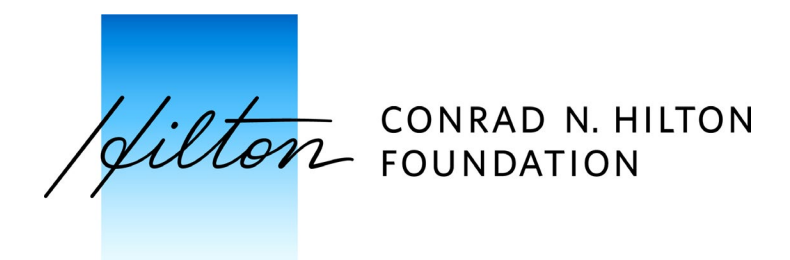
➔ For more about how TAI operates and our strategy, see our [website](#).

We are grateful to count among our members some of the most influential and dedicated international grantmaking organizations working in the governance sector and at the intersection with economic, social and climate justice:

**Ford Foundation**



**OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS**



# The Context We're Operating In

For TAI members and their mission, two trends stood out as especially relevant in 2025: **the dramatic cuts in overseas development aid**, especially for programming related to TAI priorities, and the **deepening of autocratization and emboldening of opponents of democracy, rights, and good governance**. (For more details on these trends, see this [presentation](#) prepared as an input for our mid-year Steering Committee discussions.)

The [Global Democracy Coalition](#) (GDC) reports that in 2025, nearly 70% of U.S. government-funded democracy, human rights, governance, and peacebuilding (DRGP) awards—worth over \$14 billion—were terminated, impacting 129 countries in every region. The dismantling of USAID was followed by cuts by other government donors. [OECD data](#) suggests that only the humanitarian sector will face deeper cuts than those for democracy and civil society-related issues between 2023 and 2025.

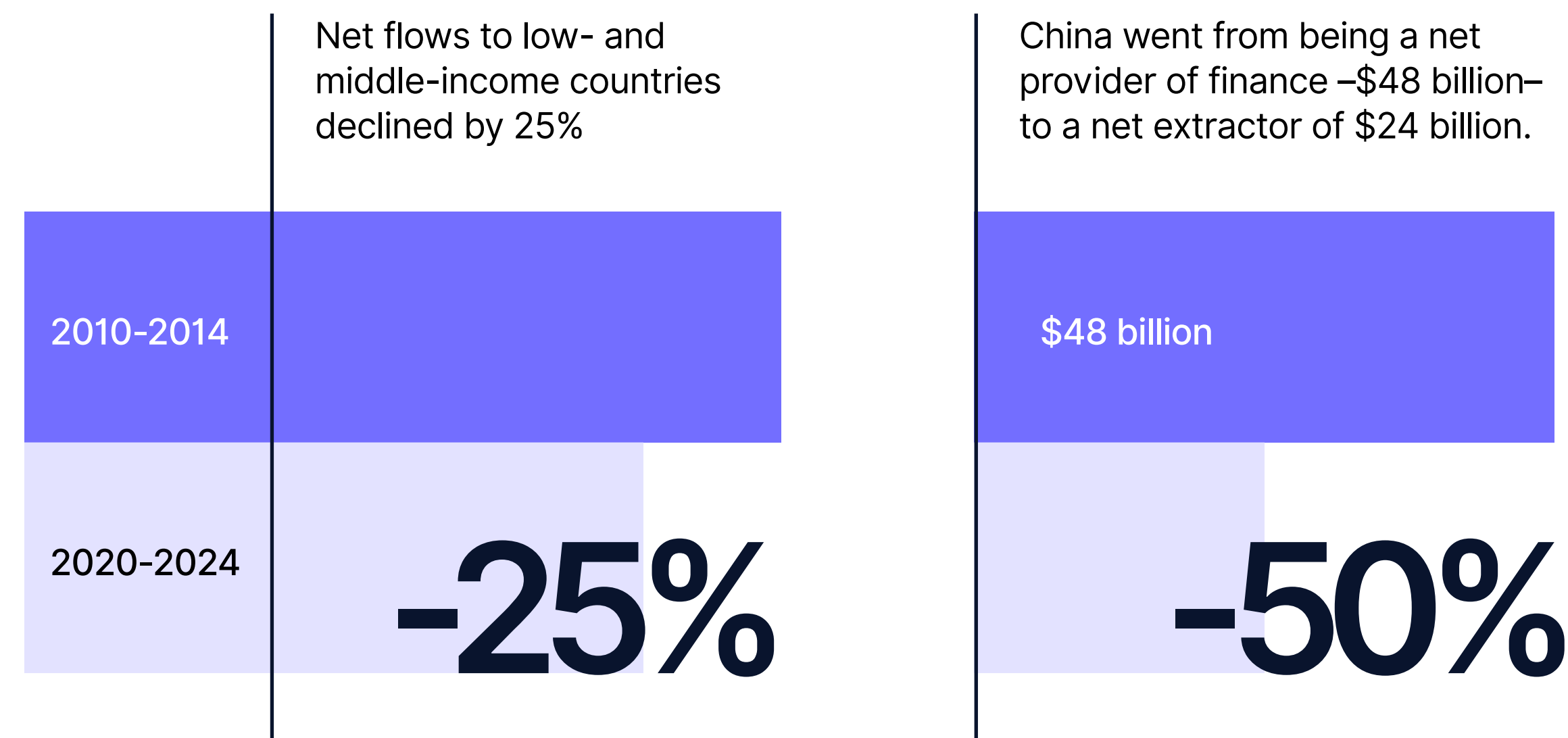


The impact is widespread, but local partners in low-income countries have been hit especially hard. Surveys of civil society groups worldwide such as [The International Foundation for Electoral Systems](#), [International IDEA/GDC](#) or the [Global Aid Freeze Tracker](#) (led by Accountability Lab, Humentum and Global Voices), consistently suggest that a majority of organizations reported a loss of more than half of their overall budget, which has forced them to cut programming and staff levels, and few are finding alternative funding sources. Many groups have shut their doors or are facing closure, although we have also seen resiliency and creativity in partner responses, including consideration of mergers and new partnership models. It has been encouraging to see TAI members providing resource support for such adaptations.

Nearly 3 out of 4 people in the world now live in autocracies (the highest number since 1978). According to the [2025 CIVICUS Monitor](#), civic space continues to shrink worldwide:

- ➔ 73% of the global population now lives in repressed or closed environments, including almost 31% in fully closed contexts.
- ➔ Only 7.2% live in countries with open or narrowed civic space, a 7.5 point drop from 2024, highlighting an accelerating global decline.

Essential freedoms are under attack in a growing list of countries, while anti-rights groups are increasingly well-networked and resourced. Levels of state capture are on the rise, which further threatens hopes for a healthy economy, democracy, and planet. Debt burdens continue to mount for many countries (amplified by tariff impacts), creating a fiscal crunch and raising risks of measures that only deepen inequality. A report by [ONE Data](#) finds that between the periods of 2010-2014 and 2020-2024, the total net flows to low- and middle-income countries declined by 25% as rising debt service payments consumed an ever-larger share of gross inflows. Over the same period, China went from being a net provider of finance—transferring \$48 billion to low- and lower-middle-income countries—to a net extractor of \$24 billion.



Any presumed exceptionalism of rich countries is increasingly hard to justify, and demand is growing for cross-country learning on how to respond to challenges, such as democratic decline. The siloing of domestic and international programming in Global North-based funders makes less sense in today's context of shared challenges.

The ecosystem of actors championing trust, accountability, and inclusion is being undermined just as there is a growing need for those with expertise in governance and accountability. For example, artificial intelligence (AI) technology is advancing ahead of regulatory capacity and agreed governance frameworks. There is growing recognition that hopes for a just energy transition are at risk in part due to accountability gaps, but mobilizing funding for accountability remains difficult.

More encouragingly, there are signs that multilateralism is far from dead. For example, when the U.S. walked out of negotiations for the United Nations (UN) Convention on International Tax Cooperation, no other countries followed. The UN-guided [Financing for Development \(FfD\) process still led to an agreement that retains some ambition and signaled broad consensus](#). With growing talk of “middle powers,” there are some new opportunities to leverage the interests of such countries to champion democracy and governance-related issues (while recognizing not all are willing to play that role). Several Global South countries have taken on leadership roles and formed effective blocs for reform, including on issues of domestic resource mobilization and debt that have gained more prominence.

Conversations about rethinking development paradigms are proliferating, and there is growing recognition of the need for more inclusive spaces to “reimagine” as well as the importance of country ownership and accountability as bedrocks of what comes next.

At the national level, people continue to find ways to make their voices heard. The power of popular anger at corruption continued to be felt with demonstrations continuing to rock governments from Serbia to Mongolia to Ukraine to Nepal. Demands to curb corruption remains the largest driver of regime change (even as funding for fighting corruption has declined). Similarly, demands for fiscal fairness are growing in rich and poor countries alike. However, discontent is also fueling the appeal of far-right parties, especially in Europe, or even the appeal of military rule, as seen in the Sahel region.

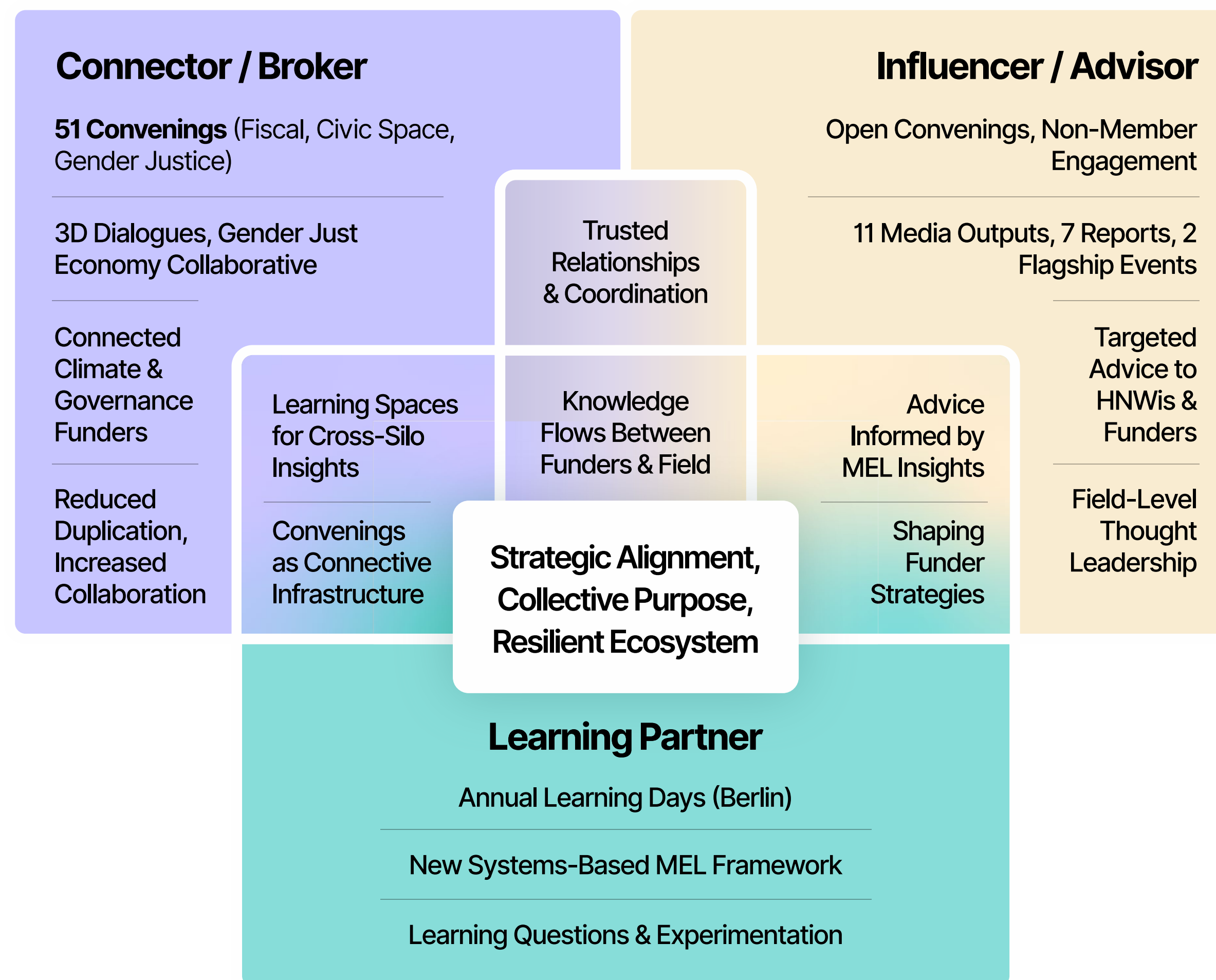
This was the first year TAI operated under our new [2025-2029 Strategic Framework](#), and it is already serving us well. The Framework was deliberately designed for flexibility and proved a very useful attribute amid so much international uncertainty. In parallel, TAI developed the first collective [work plan](#) to operationalize our shared vision of a just world where trust, accountability, and inclusion are embedded in governance systems. We defined four priority areas for the coming two years:

- **Reinvigorating Democratic and Civic Space**
- **Building Fiscal Funding Infrastructure**
- **Strengthening Climate Accountability**
- **Resourcing Civil Society**

To support this agenda, we also introduced a new systems approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning, which will guide TAI's learning activities for the next four years (see more on that below).

Operationally, we were lucky that our staffing remained stable – an asset when faced with the need to respond nimbly to member and partner asks amid such uncertainty. The secretariat was also proactive in shifting to a new fiscal host. The significant transaction cost of that move being outweighed by the greater options the new host provides going forward.

## How TAI Adds Value in the Ecosystem (2025 - 2026)



# 2025 at a Glance: Evidence of Momentum and Member Satisfaction<sup>1</sup>

In 2025, TAI increased its total outputs across our strategic pillars from 67 in 2024 to 71 with a stronger focus on events, particularly convenings and digitally facilitated calls:



Events constituted the majority (72%) of our outputs, demonstrating TAI commitment to stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing. Media outputs accounted for 16% of activities, reflecting sustained investment in thought leadership and external visibility. Research products represented 10% of outputs, allowing TAI to strategically launch and amplify key insights to the broad field (more on this in the Communications section).

<sup>1</sup> TAI is transitioning to a new MEL system following the adoption of our new strategic framework. We will hold off doing a Member Survey until May/June, with the goal of including those findings in our Semi-Annual report covering January-June.

**PARTICIPATION IN  
TAI'S EVENTS**

Following its trend from 2024, TAI's convening power and reach continued to expand in 2025, both in terms of participation volume and diversity of audiences engaged across its programming.

Increased participation signals TAI's growing relevance and trust among diverse stakeholders in the transparency and accountability ecosystem. The sharp rise in member engagement—from 132 to 318 instances, and the doubling of non-member participation to 967 instances —demonstrates appetite for conversations around TAI prioritized issues and validates TAI's value proposition as an essential node in global trust, accountability and inclusion dialogue.

TAI's open, learning-oriented approach, particularly through funder-only calls and field mappings, has made it one of the go-to platforms for funders seeking peer learning and field-building. At a time when fragmentation, risk aversion, and geopolitical uncertainty can complicate collective action, we hope TAI's ability to sustain and expand engagement will fuel continued appetite for collective problem-solving and coordinated responses to shared challenges.

	Instances of participation	# of Organizations	Individual Participants
Members	318	11	134
Non-members	967	415	753
Practitioners	414	241	376
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1699</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>1263</b>



*My deep appreciation for the leadership, insight and coordination they [TAI] are providing to the ecosystem at this time. They have been quite excellent.*

TAI MEMBER FUNDER

# Deep Dives by Strategic Priority

The following sections offer **selected highlights from our work in 2025**, organized by strategic priority. These are not exhaustive, but illustrative examples that capture the nature and scope of our efforts. Alongside each, we share emerging insights and reflections that are shaping how we adapt and evolve our approach across the Collaborative.



## REINVIGORATING DEMOCRATIC AND CIVIC SPACE

### ● 3D Dialogues - International Funders Table on Democratic and Civic Space

TAI convened the 3D Dialogues, creating a dedicated, high-trust space for strategic reflection and alignment. The group brought together representatives from 15 foundations in a series of four focused sessions exploring narratives around democratic space, assumptions behind funder strategies, and areas of collective concern. This year's Learning Days in Berlin served as the first in-person gathering of the group, reinforcing relationships and expanding the depth of discussion. The 3D Dialogues also connected with peer efforts such as the Global Funders Roundtable on Democracy and Civic Space, scheduled for January 2026 in Stockholm.

As part of this work, TAI also supported the development and dissemination of key resources—including [\*“Changing the Rules of the Game: A Funders’ Guide to Advancing Women’s Substantive Political Participation,”\*](#) [\*“The Stories We Tell,”\*](#) [\*“Beyond Crisis Response,”\*](#) and [\*“Narratives That Win or Lose Democracy”\*](#).

## ● Protecting civic space

TAI played a convening and connective role in tracking and responding to funding cuts for independent civil society internationally combined with increased repression. We contributed to the [Global Aid Freeze surveys and resource hub](#), helping document field-level impacts and guide funder responses. In partnership with Accountability Lab and Development Gateway, we hosted a session on practical tools for nonprofit mergers and strategic partnerships—emerging adaptations to survive financial shocks. Through the Better Preparedness Initiative, TAI collaborated with peer funders to strengthen readiness and coordination for future disruptions. Additionally, TAI co-hosted a funder-only learning call with the Funders Initiative for Civil Society, sharing [findings from a survey we conducted](#) across civic space groups to surface priority needs. Financial sustainability, digital and physical security, and managing authoritarian pushback emerged as the top concerns.



### What changed / What we're learning

In moments of contraction, infrastructure actors need not only flexible funding but also support for adaptation—whether through consolidation, shared services, or new alliance models. Three key insights are emerging:

- ➔ **funders benefit from intentional space to test assumptions and explore uncomfortable questions;**
- ➔ **there is also a clear appetite among funders for early-warning tools and better pathways to collective response;**
- ➔ **that trust-based relationships are essential to overcome fragmentation.**

The role of TAI and peer funder networks as information brokers and conveners remains critical, especially as philanthropic systems face growing scrutiny and pressure.

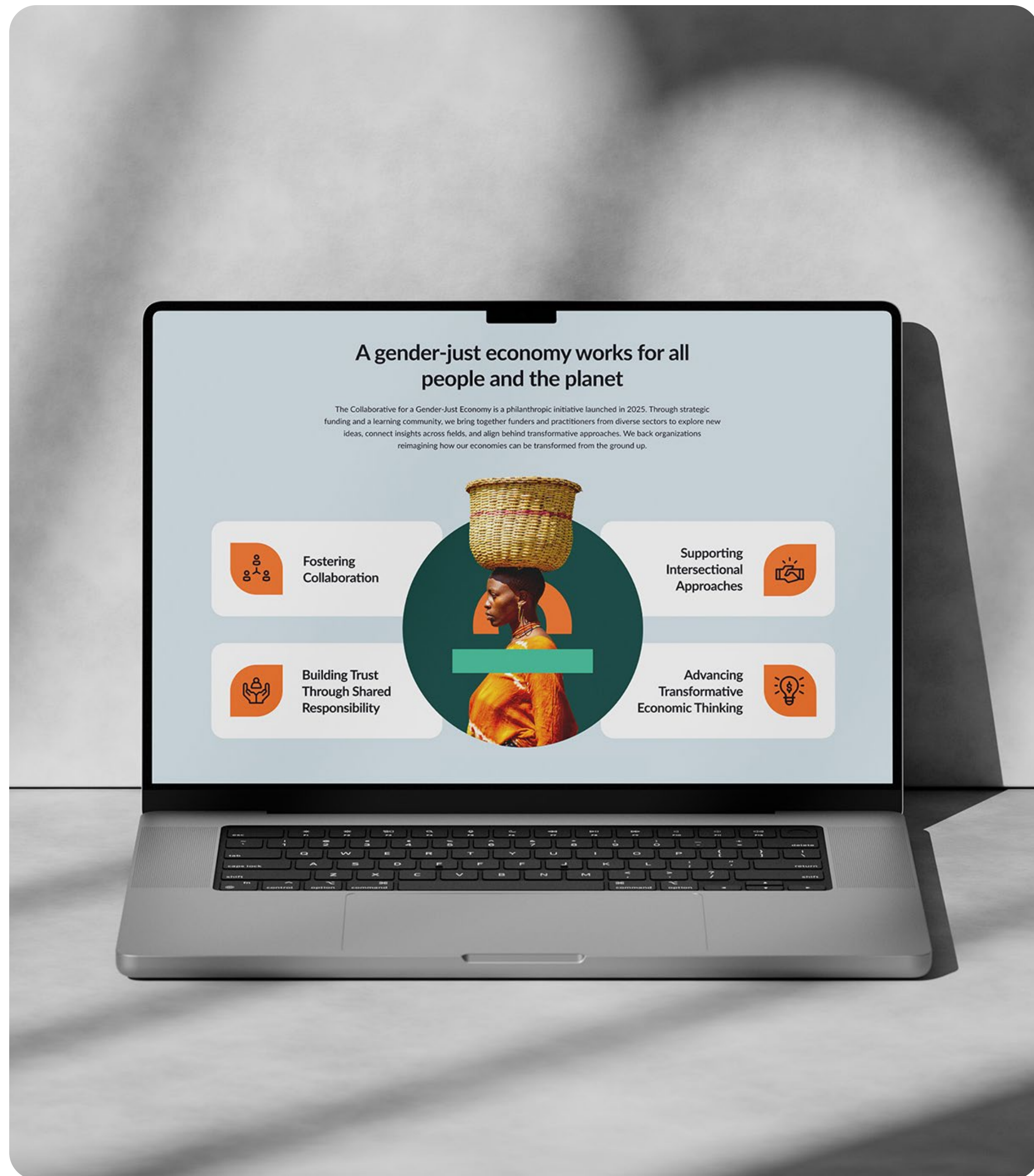
## BUILDING FISCAL FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE

### ● Raising the Profile of Fiscal Issues

TAI secretariat has been busy encouraging philanthropic attention to fiscal issues, including through dissemination and regular updates of [The Fiscal Space](#) minisite that makes the funding case. We followed our brief for philanthropy on why the [UN Tax Convention matters](#) with one on the [Financing for Development \(FfD\) process](#). July's FfD Conference marked a high point: TAI co-sponsored two official side events and hosted an offsite funder gathering, deepening ties with initiatives like the UNDP's Finance, Integrity, and Governance platform and identifying opportunities for follow-up. [Our Executive Director's interview with Devex further amplified fiscal issues in philanthropic media](#). TAI also provided direct support to individual donors.

### ● Learning calls

The debt funders calls fostered important connections, including the following examples. First, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) reported that it was expecting to work closely with the Gates Foundation and the International Budget Partnership on debt integrity and accountability in Senegal and another country. WFD credited TAI's ongoing calls as making that connection. In addition, Heinrich Böll Stiftung joined the debt call for the first time in March and discussed its work with former African leaders on debt, which several other funders then followed-up on. Calls featuring specific field innovations, such as the Government Revenue and Development Estimations – (GRADE model) – a tool to realistically estimate how increases in government revenues translate into development impacts (learn more [here](#)), had both high attendance and prompted asks for further information. Founders Pledge, an advisor to effective altruist funders, said it plans to use the model to inform its tax grant recommendations.



- **Collaborative for a Gender Just Economy**

In 2025, the Collaborative for a Gender-Just Economy was officially launched, marking the culmination of years of groundwork by its founding funders and the Executive Team. Time was spent building the Collaborative’s architecture including developing and adopting the governance structure which includes an Advisory Committee, a Theory of Change, a learning and grantmaking framework, and the initiative’s brand identity. [A website](#) was subsequently launched.

The TAI-hosted Learning Community specifically advanced its work through knowledge exchange and global engagements. Quarterly learning calls with participation from both funders and practitioners introduced the Collaborative’s work and subsequently covered subjects such as shifts in the global trading landscape and their implications for gender justice. Two kinds of newsletters supported continuous learning: a monthly digest of research, policy debates, and opportunities; and the Gender-Just Economy Quarterly, which offered deeper thematic analysis aligned with learning calls.

The community also strengthened its global presence through participation in major international and regional convenings, including the Commission on the Status of Women and 4th International Financing for Development Conference where a side event sought to reframe philanthropy as a strategic enabler of social justice beyond financing alone. At the inaugural Gender-Just Economy Festival of Ideas, the Collaborative’s flagship annual event, a diversity of funders working across care economies, workers’ rights, climate justice, fiscal and gender justice, macroeconomics, and more, co-created a shared understanding of what constitutes a gender-just economy, in theory and through practitioner insights.

- **HOSTED PROJECT: Building accountable fiscal ecosystems**

The initiative applies a [systems lens to uncover strategic pathways and coalitions that can advance fiscal accountability and equity](#). Over the year, the initiative has collaborated with local researchers in Brazil, Indonesia, and South Africa to produce in-depth case studies that track country-level progress over the last 30 years. Each study highlights not only the obstacles to fiscal accountability but also the emerging “green shoots” that hold potential for deeper reform.

These cases formed the basis for discussion at an international gathering hosted together with the Swiss government to synthesize key elements for strengthening accountable fiscal ecosystems (more below). Findings have since been presented at convenings organized by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund – an encouraging sign as we look to get traction with organizations well positioned to scale the approach. This initiative is now preparing for Phase Two.



### **What changed / What we're learning**

2025 saw a noticeable shift in funder engagement with fiscal issues, driven by convenings, strategic advising, and content that framed fiscal justice through equity, climate, and civic space lenses. TAI's work helped spark new collaborations, surface underfunded entry points and expand donor interest, including among high-net-worth individuals. We've learned that well-timed, curated engagements combined with accessible framing can demystify complex fiscal topics and increase chances of unlocking new funding flows. The next challenge is turning this momentum into long-term infrastructure and coordinated funding strategies that match the systemic nature of the issues at stake.

## STRENGTHENING CLIMATE ACCOUNTABILITY

### ● Funding for trust-based, inclusive and accountable climate finance

In June 2025, TAI partnered with 3EG in sponsoring the first-ever Climate Governance Forum that took place during London Climate Action Week – it provided a locus for bringing together governance related conversations and attracted several hundred funders, practitioners and policymakers. As part of the Forum TAI Secretariat hosted a workshop on Climate Accountability that explored ways to strengthen accountability within the design and implementation of climate projects, and broaden who has a say in allocations of broader pools of climate finance, such as from facilities hosted by international financial institutions.

TAI also cohosted a funder session on corporate accountability in the energy transition during New York Climate Week that brought together over fifteen different philanthropic funders and confirmed a gap in financing to date for accountability dimensions. Among the follow ups, TAI has commissioned a note to reassess approaches to sharing of local benefits and costs of mineral production in the context of the energy transition. We also advised on a review of mineral governance funding that will be the basis for funder reflection and discussion in early 2026.

### ● Strengthening an intersectional approach to funding for climate and economic justice

The TAI secretariat and members continue to look for ways to pinpoint and share lessons from democracy, rights, and governance programming to those working on climate mitigation and adaptation. This included commissioning think pieces, such as on the potential of “[Fast Accountability](#)” applications in the energy transition, inviting guest blogs, and providing input to other funder efforts, such as the identification of investment opportunities to strengthen responsible political engagement by companies in relation to climate. TAI also joined an effort to bridge the worlds of fiscal issues and forests and land rights that has now solidified into the Transformations in Economies for Rights and Resources Alliance (TIERRA). TAI co-hosted a call featuring TIERRA’s work and advocacy, leading to connections with several funders.



## What changed / What we're learning

TAI's work in 2025 advanced the integration of governance insights into climate and economic justice funding. By commissioning thought pieces, elevating practitioner voices through blogs, and advising peer funders on responsible political engagement, TAI helped spotlight entry points for applying rights-based and participatory frameworks in climate contexts. We're learning that funders increasingly seek tools and language to bridge thematic silos—and that building cross-programmatic learning infrastructure remains essential for unlocking more strategic, justice-oriented climate funding.

## RESOURCING CIVIL SOCIETY

### ● Government and Philanthropy

The [TAI Funder Series on philanthropy's engagement with government](#) continued in 2025 with three dedicated sessions. The first session explored the opportunities and risks of direct philanthropic engagement with governments, sharing insights from an *On Think Tank* (OTT) study and OSF's experience advising on economic policy. The second session highlighted the *Chandler Foundation's evolving partnership with the Government of Malawi* to support good governance reforms. The third session presented different approaches of philanthropy engagement with the government of Indonesia to advance climate justice.

### ● Influencing Peer funders

TAI's *Influencing Peer Funders Working Group* advanced its work through a series of focused learning sessions. We examined strategies to engage High-Net-Worth Individuals around social justice, democracy, and taxation, and previewed key insights from *Bridgespan's "At Common Cause report"* on philanthropy's collaboration with bilateral and multilateral agencies in Africa. Additionally, practical workshops equipped funders with tools and approaches to develop effective strategies for influencing both foundations and high-net-worth individuals.

- **Community of Practice on Resourcing Civil Society**

Building on TAI's research on [Global South intermediaries](#), in 2025 TAI launched a funders community of practice dedicated to strengthening the infrastructure for resourcing civil society globally. This includes intermediaries, fiscal sponsors, and other mechanisms critical to civil society's reinvention and long-term resilience. The community offers a trusted space for funder exchange, reflection, and peer learning.

- **HOSTED PROJECT: Funder Roundtable on the Future of Development**

In 2025, TAI was requested to serve as the secretariat of the Funder Roundtable on the Future of Development, an initiative convened by a subset of TAI membership - the Hilton Foundation, Humanity United, and the Packard Foundation. The initiative was launched with a dialogue and leadership conversation at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in the autumn of 2025.

First steps have included co-creating a Four Shifts Framework to make sense of what we mean by international development, regular staff and CEO level calls to deep dive on the four shifts and mapping the proliferation of initiatives related to "reimagining development" to help identify gaps, synergies and areas for new investment. One emerging priority is to encourage more proactive listening to diverse voices and amplifying locally-led development principles to underpin what comes next.



### **What changed / What we're learning**

In 2025, momentum grew around transforming how civil society is resourced—both structurally and relationally. Peer learning efforts—whether focused on government engagement, Global South intermediaries, or influencing high-net-worth individuals—surfaced that funders are eager to move beyond transactional grantmaking toward more strategic, equitable, and collaborative approaches.

However, doing so requires:

- ➔ **dedicated space for experimentation,**
- ➔ **systems thinking**
- ➔ **learning across traditional silos.**

# Flagship Moments That Defined the Year

## LAUNCH OF THE FUNDERS' ROUNDTABLE ON THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT (UNGA 2025)

On 22 September 2025, on the sidelines of the opening of UNGA in New York, TAI supported the launch of the **Funders' Roundtable on the Future of Development**—a new high-trust, action-oriented space for philanthropic leaders committed to reimagining international development. Convened with the support of the Hilton Foundation, Humanity United, and the Packard Foundation, the launch brought together over fifty senior leaders from major foundations, philanthropy support organizations, multilateral institutions, and advisory bodies to reflect on a moment of profound global realignment.

Discussions at the launch focused on the opportunity for philanthropy to help catalyze a new era of development, one that centers local agency, addresses structural power imbalances, and supports prosperity, dignity, and wellbeing on a livable planet. Participants explored the value the Roundtable can add as a trusted space for shared sense-making and coordination, including the need for information sharing and building “opportunity intelligence” to inform future funding.

## FISCAL ECOSYSTEM GLOBAL DIALOGUE

In September 2025, TAI (with SECO, Gates Foundation, and Ford Foundation) organized the **Global Dialogue “Strengthening Fiscal Ecosystems for Accountability and Equity”**, which convened 38 key stakeholders from across the fiscal system – parliaments, SAIs, civil society, media, finance ministries, and international organizations – to explore the potential contribution of an ecosystems approach to enhancing fiscal accountability and equity. The event launched a global learning and action coalition focused on innovation, evidence, and impactful strategies.

## FROM MAZE TO MANDALA: ANNUAL LEARNING DAYS 2025, BERLIN

[This year's Learning Days](#) also represented the first in-person gathering of the 3D Dialogues, a learning community bringing together funders working to strengthen democratic and civic space. In a fair continuation of previous Learning days, we explored how philanthropy and civil society actors can fuel democratic renewal, strengthen civic space, and spark new ideas for participatory governance even in times of constraint.

Around 58 participants (funders and practitioners) from diverse geographies and entry points qualified the event's value as a "thoughtfully curated, inclusive, and trust-building convening" that fostered meaningful exchange, new relationships, and strategic momentum. Attendees consistently highlighted the quality of facilitation, content, and logistics, as well as the opportunity to connect with a diverse set of funders and practitioners.



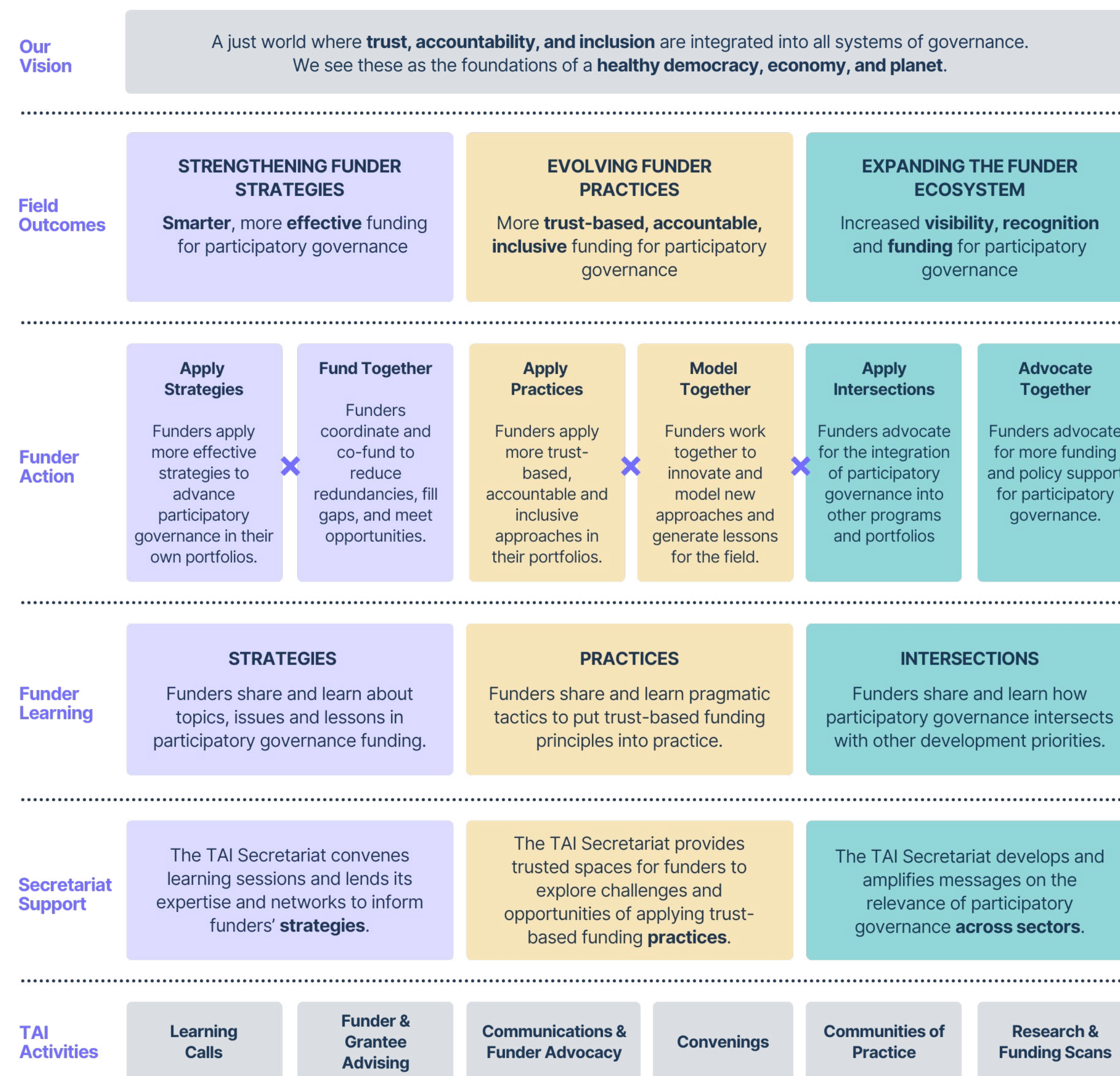


*A huge thank you for a brilliant, eye opening, inspiring two days. I thought the facilitators were excellent and I met so many new orgs, leaders, other funders ... I am so pleased we are part of the network.*

NON MEMBER FUNDER

# What we're testing, and what early evidence suggests

In 2025, TAI revamped its theory of change and developed a new systems approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). Beyond tracking progress, the new MEL framework aims to proactively test the assumptions that underpin our theory of change. Through structured learning, Secretariat support, and collective funder action, TAI wants to contribute to stronger funder strategies, more equitable grantmaking practices, and a broader, more connected funding ecosystem.



Having identified the assumptions that are most critical to delivering TAI's strategy, members and secretariat agree on learning questions to actively interrogate those assumptions and adapt our strategy accordingly. We will attempt to answer questions within a one to two year time frame and then choose new ones.

The two learning questions guiding TAI's experimentation in 2025-2026 are:

**1.** What would it take for TAI to **attract and influence new funders** to engage on participatory governance issues in the current political context?

**2.** What would it take for **funders to act collectively** during this time of instability, and how can TAI best **support** this collective action?

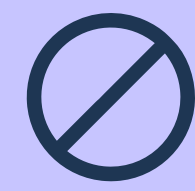
In addition, within each priority theme TAI will also identify some critical assumptions and set learning questions to actively interrogate and adapt the work accordingly. The following are a couple of sampling of learning questions driving TAI's four priority themes in 2026.

- How can we ensure that **philanthropy's influence** on democratic and civic space is not unduly constrained or compromised by the forces behind **rising authoritarianism**?
- What will it take for funders participating in COPs to **translate learning to action** (coordinate, apply the lessons in their portfolios, align and co-fund with others)?
- How can we ensure that the current geopolitical environment does not close spaces for international philanthropy on sensitive issues like tax and debt?
- What **practical tools** do funders need – and will they actually use – to guide their work on climate accountability?
- What will it take to keep funders focused on funding **local actors** in equitable and inclusive ways?

**While we've shared key insights under each strategic priority above, several broader learnings are emerging from our collective work as a funder community in 2025:**



**Learning and coordination spaces matter more amid uncertainty.** In a rapidly shifting context, safe spaces for funder peer learning and coordination become even more essential to enable honest conversations about more effective and equitable ways of resourcing civil society. We saw this in how TAI members drew on the experiences shared by peers to encourage their own institutions to act more quickly and/or boldly in response to aid cuts and an increasingly risky operating environment. As a convener and facilitator, TAI plays a key role in centering Global South perspectives within these discussions. A trusted space is helpful to thematic program staff who welcome peer advice and points of comparison to help navigate growing scrutiny and risk management demands.



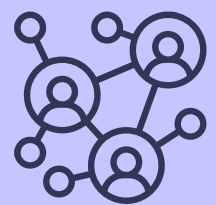
**Varying risk appetites can undermine collective action prospects in the current political context.** Amid more scrutiny of philanthropies in the United States especially, variation in risk tolerance across funders - no bad thing in itself - becomes more visible and can undermine comfort in being associated collectively. This can weaken prospects for joint action at a time when the fields that TAI members support are under severe strain.



**Grantmaking practices can evolve quickly in response to a shift in context.** The past year has revealed how funders can change often long-standing practice when circumstances sufficiently demand it - for example, shifting to more gifts in place of grants, or further simplifying or voiding reporting requirements. Again, collective spaces to gain inspiration and encouragement from peer funders can help speed adaptation.



Funders have a **new sensitivity to the risks they may create for partners** (typically, the risk dynamic had been more the other way round). A funder's visibility and reputation can attract unwanted scrutiny in a context of heightened politicization when agendas such as democracy or inclusion are under open attack. Past commitments to principles of donor transparency, or even participatory approaches to grantmaking, are now in greater tension with the need to protect partners and the ability to continue to resource their work. Funder collaboratives have to adapt in turn, encouraging discussion of what is most important to prioritize and reviewing any risks that a collaborative's public presence might exacerbate.



**Stay networked and relevant and offer tailored advising to prospective funders for TAI member priority issues.**

To take one example, under the Fund Fiscal project, we were able to provide tailored advising and introductions to several high net worth individuals. Introductions were made by both civil society and other funders, showing that staying networked and relevant can lead to referrals. In two of the cases, we can confirm that new grants were made, including one to TAI itself.



**Allow space for trial and error and anticipate lags in engagement, leading to new investment.** Through Fund Fiscal and our climate accountability work, TAI engaged extensively with climate funders and regranters, including raising issues related to transparency and accountability. We are aware of several new grants made with origins in the connections made at TAI-supported events. However, despite their interest in doing more on these issues and working with TAI on convenings and mapping opportunities, the climate regranters have thus far been unable to raise significant additional funds to deploy on these issues. Nonetheless, we think the effort was still worth it: a broader range of funders in the climate space are now aware of these issues and the actors involved.



**Broker connections where you can.** In the sovereign debt space, there are numerous initiatives related to debt relief, international architecture, collective bargaining, and transparency and accountability. Most debt funders support one or two. Rather than assume they can all be brought together, we have focused on brokering and strengthening specific funder-to-funder connections around points of alignment. We have examples of how that has avoided duplication of efforts (e.g., avoiding repeat scopings), and encouraged some funders to rally behind what is already in play rather than start up yet another initiative on their own. Sometimes TAI makes connections across different units within the same funding organization, circumventing what can be an internal culture that avoids wanting to be seen to influence a colleague's portfolio.

# Communications and Field Influence

In 2025, TAI's communications further consolidated its role as a trusted connector and knowledge hub for funders working on participatory governance. Our [Weekly newsletter](#) surpassed 5,000 subscribers, marking a key milestone in audience growth. Across 45 editions, the newsletter brought together timely research, analysis, field developments, and updates from TAI members, helping readers stay oriented in a fast-changing governance landscape.

TAI published [23 blog posts](#) in 2025, bringing together a diverse range of authors and perspectives. These pieces engaged with some of the most urgent questions shaping democracy, governance, and economic justice today.

TAI significantly expanded its visibility in global and sector-specific media, positioning the Collaborative as a credible voice on fiscal justice, climate accountability, and the future of aid. Executive Director Michael Jarvis and other collaborators were featured or quoted in over a dozen high-profile outlets, including *CNBC*, *Bloomberg*, *Financial Times*, *Devex*, *Accounting Today*, and *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. Topics ranged from the implications of USAID cuts and shifts in climate finance to the evolving role of billionaire donors and multilateral cooperation. Op-eds, interviews, and podcast appearances helped elevate TAI's thought leadership and introduced our work to broader philanthropic and policy audiences. See a full breakdown of our media presence [here](#).

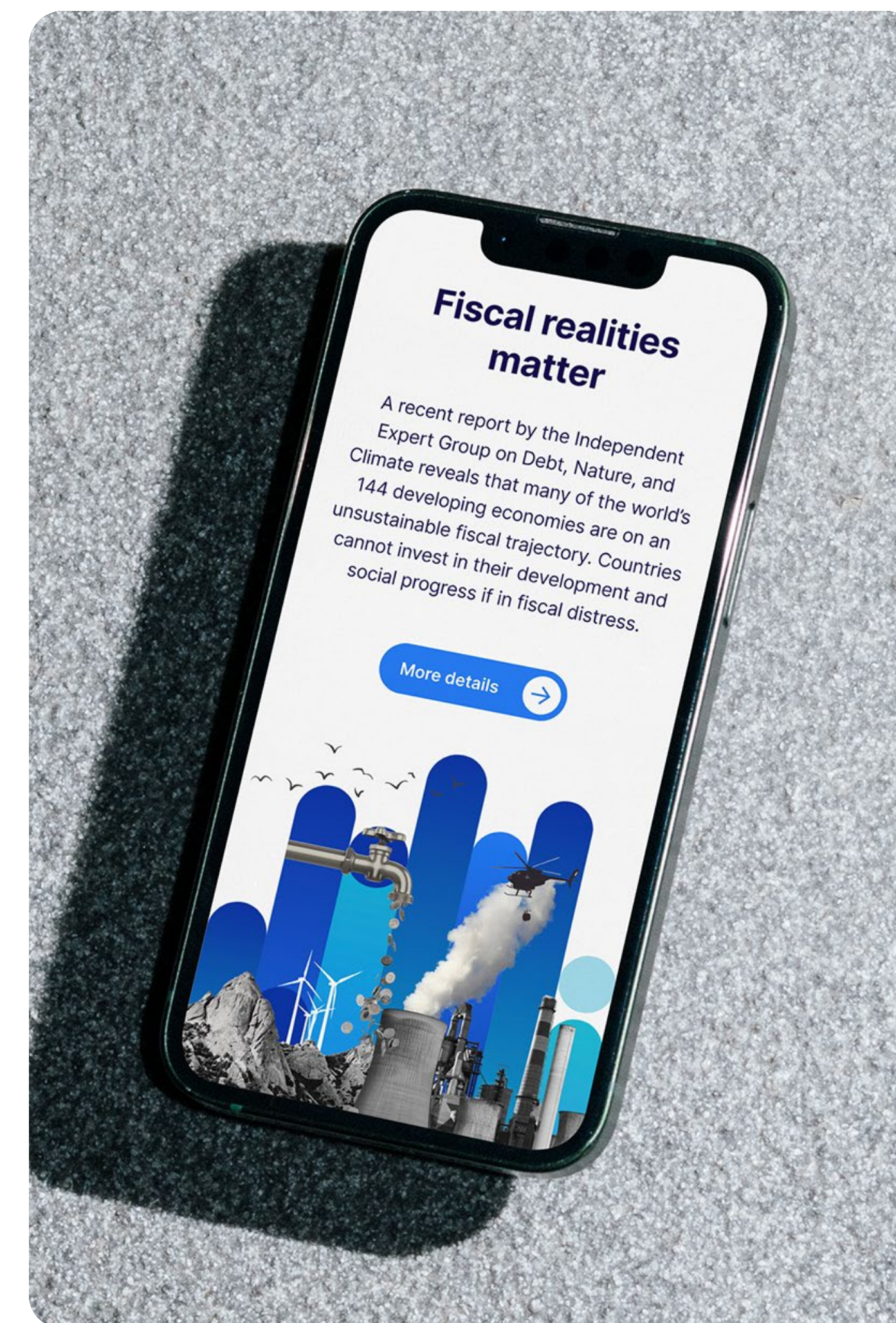
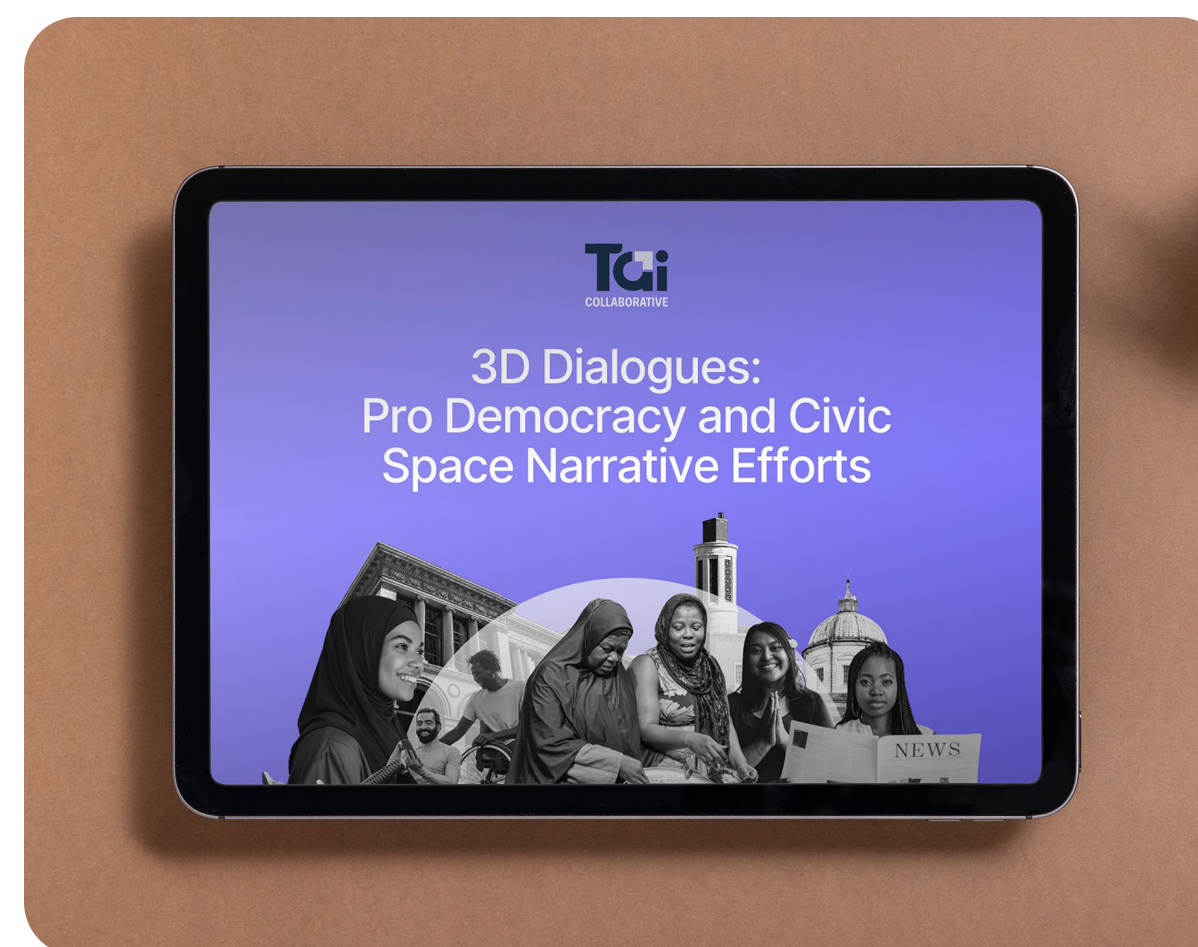
Over the course of the year, TAI published [10 reports](#) addressing critical policy and governance challenges. These publications covered a wide spectrum of debates, including how funders and civil society actors can develop and share narratives that strengthen legitimacy, bridge divisions, and push back against authoritarian pressures, as well as the governance implications of fiscal digital public infrastructure.

In 2025, TAI expanded and reorganized its digital presence to improve access to knowledge and resources. Our website attracted nearly 10,000 new users over the year. We launched the [3D Dialogue](#) section of our website, bringing together more than 50 resources on democracy and civic space. As part of our work on funding fiscal infrastructure, we also introduced the new [Fiscal Space](#) and [Fiscal Ecosystem](#) websites.

On LinkedIn, TAI surpassed 10,000 followers. Engagement was driven by thought leadership content, event promotion, and the launch of new publications. A [detailed social media tracker](#) is available for further reference.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All TAI publications are released under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). All publicly shareable work is published on our website and made freely accessible. To support the reach and uptake of our work, TAI maintains an active social media presence and works closely with partners to disseminate publications widely.





*I want to note that the TAI regular newsletter is, for me, the best philanthropy network newsletter out there (and I say this in full knowledge we produce one!). I regularly keep the TAI one in my inbox for a couple of weeks, as there are so many interesting reads in it that I go through it two or three times. I find 2-3 reports every single edition that make me think, or that I forward on for the attention of our members. Thank you.*

PEER FUNDER GROUP



# Living By Our Values

TAI remains committed to embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion in both our internal operations and external engagements. Our team and extended network of consultants are based across four regions of the world, bringing lived experience and contextual understanding that enrich our work and challenge dominant paradigms. In 2025, we continued to prioritize collaboration with Global South-based consultants, researchers, and facilitators—ensuring our programming is informed by diverse perspectives and grounded in the realities of those closest to the issues we aim to address.

Our members have likewise deepened their focus on inclusion as a strategic priority. Whether through efforts to strengthen participatory grantmaking, shift power in funding relationships, or elevate marginalized voices in global policy spaces, TAI's funders are exploring practical pathways toward more equitable philanthropy. Through our convenings, advisory support, and learning platforms, we are helping surface emerging practices, question assumptions, and build the connective tissue that makes inclusion not just a principle—but a practice shaping how funders show up in the world.

# Looking Ahead: Where We're Placing Our Bets



Deepening spaces for strategic funder exchange and amplifying shared learning across the ecosystem. Strengthening platforms like the 3D Dialogues to foster trust. Translate complexity into actionable insight and ensure TAI's voice resonates in the conversations that shape policy, funding, and collective action.

**Yery**



The interconnection between efforts to strengthen the infrastructure for resourcing civil society and the protection of civic space provides an opportunity for funders to learn and strategize on more creative approaches to support civil society, while making the case for why civic space matters and how it intersects with other priority issues.

**Cris**



Sustaining a strong and reliable operational backbone that enables TAI's programs, partnerships, and collaboration to thrive, while remaining agile and responsive to shifting geopolitical, institutional, and funding contexts.

**Ale**



Remaining frank about the context in which our members and their partners are operating, not ducking the conversations that need to happen and offering TAI as a platform wherever useful.

**Michael**



Cultivating inspiration by deepening the impact of the events and conversations TAI hosts and engages in by meaningfully connecting with diverse stakeholders, translating ideas into action, identifying shared values and common ground with a broader base of funders, and creating even more safe, trusted spaces for learning, dialogue, and collective imagination.

**Eszter**