



Green Screen:

Digital Rights and Climate Justice - An Event Report

October 2022



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1. Introduction

We are living in a climate crisis. The science is clear: We need to change rapidly to a more just and sustainable society. This includes investing in sustainable internet infrastructures, the world's largest coal-powered machine to date. To do so, we need to examine how we can work towards sustainable and climate-supportive infrastructures and see where the internet aligns with the movements for climate and environmental justice—and where it works against them.

Environment and internet governance processes share much in common; both are global in scope, linked to the exercise and erosion of human rights, and require international cooperation and coordination for their successful continuance. Initial research commissioned by the Ford Foundation, Mozilla Foundation, and Ariadne Network has highlighted disputes on water rights between data centres and local residents, rampant greenwashing misinformation by fossil fuel companies, and the internet's ecological impact as some of the many complex problems at the intersection of climate justice and technology.

To take initial funder conversations at the intersection forward, and to contribute to building a coherent and impactful strategy for a sustainable and equitable internet, the Ford Foundation, Mozilla Foundation, Ariadne Network, Stiftung Mercator and the Internet Society Foundation hosted a two-day, in-person event in Berlin in October 2022, following the Bits und Bäume conference.

The event brought together around 50 people, representing digital rights and environmental communities, grassroots and indigenous movements, as well as philanthropic funders, as thought partners on this complex and pressing intersection. The aim was to nurture a coalition with the goal to deepen the understanding of the overlap between the different spaces, and to create a shared action agenda on four key topic areas in the research. This report offers a snapshot of the discussions in Berlin and emerging agendas addressing the intersection of climate justice and digital rights.



Distilled from the research, the conversations at the Berlin event were centred on the four deep-dive tracks: policy and advocacy, climate mis- and disinformation, open practices, and standards and governance. The deep-dive conversations took place over the two days, with the goal to deepen a collective understanding of the issue's context and co-create a shared action-oriented agenda. The first day focused on mapping key issues in the deep dive, the current state of play, and lessons learned from civic interventions on similar topics. The second day focused on developing an agenda and future visions in each of the thematic areas, with an eye towards actions, commitments and experimentation in the near future.

This report presents a summary of the discussions for each deep dive. Each section frames the issue's context, provides an overview of the key discussion points, and presents the priority areas of the group, opportunities and next steps. The report will end with a reflection of where the coalition and network intend to go from here. We hope that through this report, we can bring others into the conversation who are interested in the environmental and climate implications of technology and spark more meaningful collaboration across movements.

The conversations in Berlin have already sparked new collaborations and new avenues for research, convening and experimentation. These include but are not limited to:

- **Advocacy and campaigning:** Interest in continuing to build a common understanding of the issues at stake, counter-map extractive practice and document the harms from the perspective of impacted communities, and provide support to local initiatives and connect them with others.
- **Standards and internet governance:** Co-create shared principles and theory of change that can travel across governance spaces, test these principles with communities and different governance spaces, and build a global and cross-regional governance movement.
- **Open practices:** Grow the community, organise a convening to create an actionable roadmap that ensures that open practices will be justly applied to climate justice. This includes setting principles and developing frameworks at the intersection of open practices and climate justice.



- **Climate mis- and disinformation:** Global mapping of climate mis- and disinformation actors and issues with a focus on the Global South.¹ Build a global coalition and rapid-response network between researchers, movements, and corporations that tie local needs to global stages. Collect alternative stories and invest in a healthy information system.
- **Cross-learning and collaboration:** Insights from The Engine Room report are being translated into policy briefs to influence policy debates. Participants are reaching out to each other to work on joint projects. Existing projects are expanding their scope to include voices, experiences, and knowledge from those communities and territories most impacted. Existing work, discussions and insights that emerged at the Berlin meeting are travelling to European, Latin American, and international governance bodies.
- **Others:** Participants have expressed interest in sharing the discussion and insights from the Berlin meeting to their community, and adapting it to bring to the global debate the voices, priorities and approaches of local communities impacted by the supply chain of internet and digital technologies.

We use the terms climate justice and digital rights in a broad and holistic sense. By climate justice we mean actors and activities that centre communities most impacted by the climate crisis, pollution, environmental mismanagement, and harmful industry practices in their work to create an equitable and sustainable world. They advocate for environmental and climate change solutions that benefit those most impacted and result in better outcomes for them.

By digital rights we mean actors and activities that focus on ‘digital technologies’ in their work to create an equitable and sustainable world. This ranges from, but is not limited to, advocacy and campaigning on data protection and AI legislation, influencing debates and institutions that govern the internet to include human rights principles in their operations, researching and raising awareness on data harms, developing public interest technology, and supporting activists and human rights defenders with their digital security challenges.

¹ In this report, we use the term Global South to refer to those communities, locations, countries and regions that are disproportionately impacted by environmental and climate harms that result from extractive industries, colonial practices, and oppressive policies that originate from and profit a few located in the Global North. As authors we acknowledge that the term is contested, and others are referring to Global Majority, Majority World, or Larger World.



The coalition of the Ford Foundation, Mozilla Foundation, Ariadne Network, Stiftung Mercator and Internet Society Foundation is committed to supporting this work moving forward. In 2023 and 2024 the coalition will continue to strengthen these initial discussions and be a catalyst in co-creating a shared agenda and critical work at the intersection² of climate justice and digital rights. We are looking to grow this coalition of like-minded philanthropic organisations who would like to act as bridge-builders and supporters of this under-resourced intersection. We are committed to include and amplify voices that offer plural, critical, and alternative narratives into the digitisation debates to strengthen a people- and planet-oriented approach to the policy and governance agendas.

² For more information on initiatives and action, please see 7.2



2. Deep Dive #1: Advocacy and Campaigning

Co-facilitated by Lea Wulf and Paz Peña

Digital rights and climate justice are governance issues that are global in scope, yet have drastically different impacts on local levels. How can we approach these issues in a coordinated and holistic way, acknowledging the diverse injustices and the need for urgent action? And which new approaches for advocacy and campaigning can emerge out of this understanding? The aim of this deep dive was to explore more comprehensive approaches to digital rights and climate justice by building networks of solidarity, identify existing narratives, and develop alternative narratives that would inform advocacy work, governance, and campaigning going forward.

Key Discussion Points & Priority Areas

The intersection of digital rights and climate justice is characterised by a dramatic power imbalance between actors who make influential decisions and those impacted. Often, the environmental impact of digital technologies predominantly affects the Global South, while the decision-making power is firmly rooted in the Global North.

The production of hardware is a good example: harms related to extraction of raw materials and pollution in the manufacturing process impact local communities and environments, while profits concentrate in the hands of a small group of companies and shareholders who are far removed from this suffering. This isn't a new dynamic but reflects lasting legacies of colonialism and extraction that existed long before computing technologies were developed.

A key insight of the deep dive was that **advocacy and campaigning actors need to take both local and global levels into consideration**. This can be a difficult task because as the hardware example shows, the social and environmental impact of digital technologies affect communities around the world differently. But it can also be an opportunity for mutual learning between grassroots movements and global actors with influence in key decision-making spaces.



More substantial connections between global and local impacts can lead to a more holistic understanding of the issues at stake. A holistic approach to digital rights and climate justice is needed: one that acknowledges the different local struggles, doesn't flatten the complexity of the issues at hand, and sees the greater gains made when working at both scales simultaneously.

Supporting actors facing different challenges within their local communities around the world also requires **networks of solidarity and care**: alliances between digital rights and climate justice communities within each region, or trust between local and global initiatives. Trust takes time to take root, but some of the seeds have already been sown. These networks can be built and maintained by creating common spaces where communities can meet, sharing common experiences and struggles, and embracing the complexity of the issues. In order to build trust, we need a shared understanding of the political frameworks that guide the work and build an understanding of the shared digital rights and climate justice lexicons.

“It’s really important to create these moments of common language and common understanding. Through this, we can build trust and find a common ground.”

- Lea Wulf, Stiftung Mercator

Creating a common language can help to **debunk misleading narratives³ and misleading climate solutions, and create alternative narratives⁴** – a third key insight of this deep dive. Predominant false narratives rest on technological solutionism, embrace greenwashing, or reduce key decisions to questions of efficiency over justice. Alternative narratives would name the ways proposed solutions exacerbate existing social and environmental conflicts and reinforce colonialist structures. These new narratives would show how our current global approach encourages more extractivism and consolidates economic power, making these systems visible, trackable, and understandable. Creating these shared talking points between different movements would ultimately allow for more coordinated action.

³ An example for misleading narratives is the notion of ‘carbon footprint’, which was coined by BP to blame individuals and diminish the responsibility of Big Oil in causing the climate crisis

⁴ There has been an ongoing conversation on how to define these narratives: misleading, harmful, dangerous – or false? We have decided to use ‘misleading’ as the most fitting term. We decided against using ‘false’, because this would be a binary claim to ‘true or false’ that we do not want to necessarily engage in. However, the conversation on using the right terminology for the issue at stake is still ongoing.



Opportunities and Next Steps

Map actors, conflicts, and issues: The group identified a need for a counter-mapping of different active conflicts at the intersection of digital rights and climate justice, the actors behind the conflicts, and the communities intervening. A counter-mapping will create a better understanding of the complex connection between industries that are predicated on models of limitless growth, global governance spaces, and state power. In addition, it should foreground who is in the vanguard of resisting extractive practices and offer avenues for the digital rights community to show up and be in solidarity with land defenders. A mapping could include case studies on local initiatives that can be shared as a learning resource amongst other similar conflicts and initiatives around the world and could be used in broader advocacy and campaigning efforts.

“We need resources to understand this planetary problem.” – Paz Peña,
terraforming.institute

Create shared understanding of the issues at stake and a common vocabulary: The complexity and the breadth of this deep dive formed a challenge for this small and diverse group. At the same time, conversations on digital rights and climate justice currently operate in silos. This is why it is necessary to work on common values, political goals, and a shared vocabulary. For example, a glossary of key concepts such as extractivism, rights, exploitation, or colonialism⁵ can be a starting point to clarify the current struggles.

It would also make conversations more accessible and understandable for new people in the space. A curated compendium of resources along with the glossary is also necessary, so different communities can learn from each other. Support for people from the different movements to travel to each other’s conferences to listen, learn, and feedback could additionally be a step forward. Creating a shared language and understanding is also a lever towards building solidarity networks and alternative narratives that challenge the status quo.

⁵ A preliminary collection for this glossary is found in the appendix.



Support local initiatives and connect them with others: A third next step is the support of local initiatives, for example through an open call for funding. These initiatives could then be connected to other initiatives around the world, to meet the challenges of the interconnectedness of the issues. For example, a local initiative against lithium mining in the Global South could be supported and connected to a local initiative for the right to repair in the Global North. This would permit the building of networks of solidarity and care amongst different movements, and would allow support on a local level while contributing to the global governance debate.



3. Deep Dive #2: Standards and Governance

Co-facilitated by Shawna Finnegan and Shayna Robinson

Decisions on how internet infrastructures are governed, and which values and priorities are included, are made by various internet governance bodies and are implemented through technical policies and standards. However, existing governance bodies often overlook the environmental dimensions of the internet and digital technologies. Additionally, these bodies reinforce structures of power because they are exclusive and difficult to navigate. This deep dive focused on two main questions: How can climate justice be baked into existing internet principles and standards? And how can new principles and standards be established that ensure a just and sustainable internet for all?

Key Discussion Points & Priority Areas

In comparison to the other deep dives, the discussion on including climate justice considerations into debates on standards and governance is still nascent. Therefore, the first step in this deep dive was to reflect on and learn from examples where people had (un)successfully brought new issues (for example, gender, human rights, privacy) into these standards and governance spaces.

The group defined governance spaces in a broad sense such as the IGF, IETF, IEEE, ICANN, ITU, RIR, the EU and their processes. The conclusion of this discussion was that **current governance processes are very exclusive, challenging to navigate for newcomers, and primarily centred around Global North perspectives.** This network needs to decide whether it is willing to invest the time and resources to influence governance spaces that are not advocating for climate justice, human rights, and digital rights. In the end, despite the exclusive nature of the standards and governance spaces, the deep-dive participants felt that it is ultimately important to invest in these spaces in order to shift industry and state politics.



Learning from past interventions, the group expressed a clear need to build coalitions of solidarity and action and **create shared values and principles that can travel across governance spaces**. A first step towards these new principles could be meetings between climate justice and digital rights communities to form common, foundational values and principles. Values could, for example, be: solidarity, anti-racism, anti-extractivism, or openness – just to name a few.

“The conversation on existing processes showed that we can’t just work on specific issues, we have to be strategic. This also means to not get frustrated about the slowness and exclusiveness of these processes.”

– Shawna Finnegan, APC

Second, the deep dive found that there is a need for more diverse voices in these governance spaces. To this end it is important to **develop frameworks and clear advocacy tools to onboard new advocates from the digital rights and climate justice communities while learning from and with them**. Support structures are necessary to help new people to navigate the politics of internet governance spaces, and would allow for more diversity and effectiveness. Additionally, it is necessary to **identify levers of change** by researching frameworks and advocacy tools that have been effective in the past. An example could be to learn from the success of the [Frank La Rue Framework](#) by APC; or to learn from governance frameworks in the energy sector or agricultural sector.

Third, the deep dive found that there is a need to **identify existing opportunities for climate justice and digital rights in standards and governance, and build upon them**. This could involve research that uncovers gaps in existing internet governance bodies, as seen by the recent development of a climate justice principle added to the [Feminist Principles of the Internet](#). Examples could be: adding the environmental impact to IETF’s [RFCs documents](#), just like privacy was added to them; setting up a sustainability working group at [W3C](#); and collaborating with existing processes, such as the [APC new feminist principles](#). There should also be a focus on non-internet governance spaces and their frameworks and principles. Starting points could be: the [Aarhus principles](#); the [Kyiv Protocol](#); rights of the environment; the [Right to Repair](#); or the [Ecodesign Principles](#). Here, special consideration should be given to shifting conversations from individual consumer perspectives to collective societal and environmental perspectives.



We found that we need to be equipped to onboard people, have functioning advocacy tools and share learnings more often on what's effective - and what's not." -Tara Tarakiyee, Sovereign Tech Fund

Opportunities and Next Steps

Draft demands and principles: A next step is to draft initial demands for what sustainable and just internet infrastructures and digital technologies would look like, and to share the drafts with different communities. This would allow for reflection, feedback, and the refinement of common principles. The initial demands could be: divest from extractive growth and natural extraction of the tech industry; work towards climate reparations and focus agency and access on remedy for affected communities; place a focus on agency and access in technology and climate; decentralise power, ownership, and decision-making for a resilient, people- and planet-oriented internet; no public investment in, or industry promotion of, misleading climate tech solutions; invest in slow-tech and low-tech initiatives to diversify the ecosystem.

Draft theory of change: The deep dive discussed that it is equally important to understand what it is that the network wants, what long-term change they want to see, and how they want to get there. By formulating the long-term change and mapping it against the different governance spaces, their remits, and limitations, the network can make more informed and coordinated decisions about strategy and tactics. As a next step this deep dive proposed developing a theory of change for this work by learning from others in the digital right movements, climate justice spaces and beyond, identifying gaps in existing frameworks and governance bodies, and formulating pathways for change.

Building a global and cross-regional governance movement: Part of co-developing demands and principles is to build a global and diverse network of those advocating for sustainable and just internet and digital technologies. Co-developing frameworks, values and principles through a participatory process that encourages contributors to bring these draft principles back to their communities across the world can strengthen the network and open up new governance spaces.



These meetings would enable a more focused discussion, and allow attendees to build trust and solidarity across movements. It would also allow communities to create alternative governance spaces and, through that, proactively form more radical demands. Some ideas for the focus of the conversations could be: slow tech and low tech; green transition and lithium mining; or alternative decision-making processes at the intersection of climate justice and digital rights. This would also form a necessary intersection with deep dive #1 on advocacy and campaigning to create alternative narratives and form networks of solidarity between local groups.

What is already happening?

Many participants of the event already have done successful work at the intersection of climate justice and digital rights. This is a sample of some of the attendees and their exciting initiatives.

Harriet Kingaby - From [Conscious Advertising Network](#) and [ACT Climate Labs](#), she presented CAN's game plan on breaking the economic link between advertising and harmful content. CAN proposed to [defund the disinfo economy](#) by forming coalitions between advertisers & civil society that: 1.) Develop clear definitions of key areas of misinformation, 2.) Build capacity among advertisers to change media spend patterns, 3.) Leverage advertisers' consumer power to change platform policies.

Rub Solís - An indigenous scientist and activist working closely with Yucatecan Mayan communities. They presented their research with an intersectional and gender approach to the environmental, biological, health, and social impact of climate change in the region. They also showed the work in the region on [sharing information through the local communities in their own languages](#).

Vassilis Chryssos - From [APC](#), they presented their [participatory grant-making process](#) to support activities on environmental justice and sustainability. This is part of APC's [technology, environmental justice and sustainability program](#).



Alexandra Lutz - The parliamentary Assistant for MEP [David Cormand](#), Greens/EFA. She offered insights into the green digitisation agenda of Europe and talked about current wrong premises, such as the assumption that digital is always green; or that regulation harms innovation.

Arthur Steiner - From [Hivos](#), he gave a sneak preview of the [Vertical Atlas](#), a book that brings together the insights of a diverse group of artists, scientists and technologists from different backgrounds on topics such as lithium mining, fibre-optic submarine cables, or ride-hailing platforms in China.

Michael Khoo - From UpShift Strategies. Michael is also the [co-chair of the climate disinformation coalition at Friends of the Earth](#). He presented the work of the coalition, how they organise, and some of their wins. You can learn more about their work and the topic [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Caroline Woolard - From [Open Collective](#), she presented their approach to participatory grant-making and looked for ways Open Collective could support this emerging field.

Heather Milton-Lightening - Talked about indigenous organising on climate and environmental issues at governance fora such as COP. Heather discussed where possible synergies with the digital rights community could be. They also wrote [a reflection as part of the research project](#) on the importance of understanding climate justice from the most impacted communities.

Becky Kazansky - From The Engine Room, she presented the main findings of their [landscape analysis on digital rights and climate justice](#) and shared links to easily digestible 'info sheets' and summaries raising awareness about the intersections of digital rights and climate justice.

Laurence Meyer - From Digital Freedom Fund, she presented the work she has been leading with EDRi on [decolonizing digital rights](#).



4. Deep Dive #3: Open Practices

Co-facilitated by Shannon Dosemagen and Arthur Steiner

Openness is a tool to shift power and a way to create accountability, collaboration, and direct access. It can be a lever for social innovation, and an opportunity to tackle the climate crisis. However, not enough people are working at the intersection of openness and climate. A shared understanding and a common vocabulary between movements are often missing, yet they are urgently needed to collectively tackle the complex set of issues. The focus of this deep dive was: How can the open movement work in service of climate justice? And which concrete actions can arise from this vision?

Key Discussion Points & Priority Areas

The value of open practices for climate justice movements is clear: open data can be a reliable tool to combat mis- and disinformation; open tools can support cross-movement collaboration; openness can set new governance standards; and open knowledge can help to seed alternative narratives for advocacy and campaigning. Looking at the intersection of open practices and climate justice more closely, the deep dive found that the framing of **‘open’ provides a path for proactive change because it comes with clear propositions, a bounded community, and uses existing tools.**

“Open comes with a proposition. It comes with a way forward for the future, which is where the potential lies.” – Arthur Steiner, Hivos

Open practices can serve as propositional approaches to sticky climate justice challenges – approaches that don’t only attempt to block or limit the action of bad actors but also provide tools to move towards just ecological and technological futures.

There is an evident desire from the open movement to apply their skills to support climate justice movement actors and organisations, and to build more open infrastructures that sustain their work. The open community has strong values that bridge members across disciplines and backgrounds.



However, the deep dive found that a commitment to open practices for climate justice should address the need for systemic change. The open movement, if they want to provide a pathway for change, must start discussing what decolonisation looks like for the work, and the value of indigenous knowledge and local knowledge in the open movement.

“You can’t divide open practices from the open community. This is what helps to ground us in clear conversations, and also allows us to work further on the movement itself.” – Shannon Dosemagen, Open Environmental Data

The sense of a bounded community, the existing tools, and the perspective of open as a lever of change grounded the conversations in this deep dive. It enabled participants to get clear on who is accountable for change, what can be done, and when it should happen. What emerged is a table that **applies openness to climate through a now, next, and then framework**. This framework establishes a view on what would transform in the next ten years when the open movement works in tandem with climate justice. Guiding questions for the exercise included: Which open infrastructures do we need in ten years to best serve climate justice and climate action? What should we do now in order to get there? This framing was powerful, because it provided clear priorities, topic areas (such as narratives, community, education, labour), and concrete actions. An excerpt of the table can be found [here](#):



What?	Now (1-2)	Next (2-5 years)	Then (5-10 years)
<i>Systemic change</i>	'Decolonise open' conversation with whose knowledge	Motivation of open source is systemic	Local informs regional informs global
<i>Community</i>	Open climate convening	Climate justice & digital rights communities practise in the open	
		Needs of environmental activists (privacy, accessibility, security) are met by open projects	
<i>framing agenda</i>	Build a place/hub to follow open, projects & policy	Open movement has clear offerings for climate organisers	
	A shared narrative why, how, and what the open community is doing for climate justice	Open movement has tools at hand to demand governmental action on climate	Open movement has a renewed narrative on systemic change
<i>narratives</i>	Inspiring stories how open data is used in action	Open source environmental pledges are in use	
	Open climate talks across		
<i>Education/Training Accessibility</i>	Youth climate/open camps	A larger body of scientific and social research informs action	

Opportunities and Next Steps

Grow the community: At this stage, there are still people from the open movement missing in conversations on climate justice. This is why there should be further conversations and working sessions with open practitioners on climate to create a strong foundation and clear offering to climate communities.

Convene open and climate communities: Additional work needs to be done between open and climate communities. A next priority should be to host an open convening with different people from both climate and open movements to continue work on these issues, to start cross-collaboration, and to create shared interests and resources across these movements.

Build frameworks and principles: A new goal of the open movement should be systems change. A next clear step is to set principles and develop frameworks for the intersection of open practices and climate justice. These principles and frameworks would support others to navigate across movements and can also create a shared vocabulary and understanding along the way.



5. Deep Dive #4: Climate Mis- and Disinformation

Co-facilitated by Harriet Kingaby and Lori Regattieri

A healthy information environment is crucial to addressing the climate crisis, yet climate mis- and disinformation are flourishing across the globe. Whether it is paid speech by the fossil fuel industry, PR campaigns, greenwashing, climate scepticism, distraction, chaos strategies⁶, or the targeted harassment of climate activists – the list of issues is long and complex, yet the time to tackle them is becoming shorter. Underlying many of the challenges is an emphasis on profit above all else, a lack of sound policies and regulation, and strict definitions to guide accountability systems. There is a flood of readily available disinformation, while reliable scientific information is underfunded or kept behind closed doors. What is clear is that climate mis- and disinformation delays climate action, and that real solutions are urgently needed. The goal of this deep dive was to analyse the status quo of global climate mis- and disinformation actors, and to proactively identify pathways towards healthy media environments.

Climate mis- and disinformation environments are very complex: They involve many different actors such as advertisers, platforms, and politicians; their content travels across different languages, geographies, and cultures; and they have an impact on people and the planet both individually and systemically. This deep dive found that in order to respond effectively, universal definitions of climate mis- and disinformation that can travel across governance spaces need to be set. Precise definitions are a powerful tool, because they can be used by different actors, be fed into platform policies, and can help actors intervene when greenwashing and misleading technological solutions are proposed. They would also help counter the current weaponization of the term ‘disinformation’ by right-wing politicians and media. Precise definitions could be used to coordinate and collaborate across diverse movements, regions, and fields as they tackle climate mis- and disinformation.

⁶ Often, fossil fuel companies cultivate an environment of scepticism, a strategy that comes from the tobacco industry. Creating scepticism and chaos is a way to distract from narratives that can bring actual change.



Communities in the Global South are confronted with direct and severe consequences of climate mis- and disinformation. This is why **storytelling and narrative change around differential impacts of mis- and disinformation in the Global South are needed**. In many regions in the Global South, mis- and disinformation directly incites violence against environmental land defenders and indigenous leaders resisting mega-projects and other forms of planetary harm. Platform policies and political promotion of mis- and disinformation do not curtail but rather allow these direct harms to thrive. They are further exacerbated by existing inequities due to the lack of resources for non-English content moderation and the proliferation of climate information solely in the English language. Lack of access to the platform's support staff further disadvantages communities, causing significant delays in emergency response, if any platform support is provided at all. The ability to fight the plurality of climate mis- and disinformation attacks and change industry practices is made difficult by the fact that existing research, response networks and policy discussions are biased towards English content.

There is a need to **invest in non-anglocentric research to build an evidence base to inform policy and governance**. This would build a better understanding of how mis- and disinformation operates outside of Global North anglocentric environments, and this should feed into global definitions and demands. A deeper evidence base from around the world, one that accurately depicts long-term and short-term harms, can inform policy and governance standards. It would also build a **global, multilingual prediction, detection and response network to combat climate mis- and disinformation**.

“We cannot fight climate mis- and disinformation with good information alone. We need more groundbreaking approaches to tackle mis- and disinformation around the globe.” -Harriet Kingaby, Conscious Advertising Network



“Critical disinformation studies propose grounding their approach in history, society, culture, and politics, positioning race, gender, class, and territorial analysis to understand how these signifiers shape the dynamics of disinformation, investigate how institutional power and economic, social, cultural, and technological structures shape disinformation, and reflect on community communication practices, mobilisation through radio, hacking technologies, local solutions to be strengthened with those impacted by the violence of disinformation. Especially in the Pan-Amazon and other countries where tropical forests stand, indigenous peoples and local communities are the ones at the frontline of these struggles.” -Lori Regattieri, Senior Fellow, Trustworthy AI Mozilla Foundation

Another insight of this deep dive was the need to **interrogate the role of business in climate mis- and disinformation**. Currently, tech companies enable climate mis- and disinformation because their business models are built around profit and virality, and because they don't have clear platform policies to differentiate between healthy debates around climate interventions and disinformation. Advertisers fund it inadvertently because they often do not have the technologies and systems in place to help them avoid appearing next to it. However, advertisers in particular and various advocacy groups working on climate mis- and disinformation can also be part of the solution. To influence businesses, the group discussed the need to develop a good business case for maintaining healthy information environments, and to create or scale tools to help businesses take action on mis- and disinformation. Other levers of influence include sharpening tools for corporate advocacy, meeting with trust and safety teams of large social media companies, and building coalitions between businesses and advocacy groups to maximise the global pressure on tech platforms and ad-tech companies⁷. According to BSR, tech companies are uncomfortable with taking on the role of 'ultimate arbiters of truth'. This can be an opportunity for civil society to step in and become independent and reliable sources of information that can guide internal policy. In the fight against climate mis- and disinformation, there are major gains to be made targeting tech companies, leveraging the consumer power of advertisers, and combining this with insights from civil society.

⁷ The CAAD coalition is a first example of such a common effort where research, consultancy, and advocacy intersect.



Finally, the group discussed **the potential role of advertising tools themselves to inoculate the public against climate mis- and disinformation.** The targeted nature of advertising allows it to be used to reach persuadable groups, who may be vulnerable to misinformation. It can be a powerful tool in changing narratives, improving climate literacy and spreading inoculation messaging, particularly in countries where the press is ‘captured’ by climate deniers. Civil society groups often do not invest much in advertising except as a tool to fundraise, but it is being harnessed by the opposition to spread misinformation and adversarial narratives.

Opportunities and Next Steps:

Global mapping of climate mis- and disinformation actors: One important step is to map key actors driving climate mis- and disinformation and showcase both local and global harms of climate mis- and disinformation. This mapping would create a better understanding of how mis- and disinformation travels across languages and geographies, and how disinformation ecosystems intersect. Following this, actors and movements fighting against climate mis- and disinformation across the world could be mapped.

This research should be produced in different languages, and employ indigenous and decolonial lenses. It could build the foundation of a hub that tracks climate mis- and disinformation actors, as well as forming a platform for a global coalition.

“We also need to critically assess PR strategies in the Global South,⁸ especially those of agribusinesses. These strategies often present false solutions, or promote false choices and invisibilise indigenous, local communities.” – Lori Regattieri, Mozilla

Build a global coalition and rapid-response network between researchers, movements, and corporations: Currently, monitoring of existing climate mis- and disinformation receives more funding, while proactive responses against climate mis- and disinformation are often underfunded.

⁸ PR Strategies could, for example, be conservation efforts or carbon-offsetting initiatives. These initiatives are a new form of “climate solutions colonialism”, and promote mechanisms to financialise nature. Human Rights Watch is doing work on carbon offsets as human rights abuses.



Funding for both proactive and reactive responses is urgently needed. A rapid-response network should prioritise decolonial, pan-amazonian, intersectional, and indigenous approaches, which are sorely missing from global dialogues on climate justice. The network should proactively establish radical, forward-thinking, and systemic alternative approaches. This could include work on demonetising climate mis- and disinformation with the support of advertisers, upskilling journalists, advertising projects, or working with tech companies on deplatforming mechanisms⁹. A coalition should provide space for collaboration, particularly across the Global North and Global South, allow for networking, and ensure accessibility for different groups. Another opportunity could be to develop a trusted pool of climate researchers and experts that can be tapped to respond to mis- and disinformation campaigns when they happen, coordinated and in collaboration with groups like CAAD, among others.

Upskill business: Businesses themselves may have little knowledge of mis- and disinformation, but are increasingly alert to the threats posed by it. Leveraging existing trusted relationships between businesses and partners such as BSR and The Conscious Advertising Network to upskill business leaders on how to prevent or respond to mis- and disinformation could both address its funding model and lead to more positive communications from businesses about issues under attack.

Build alternative stories and invest in a positive information system: Besides mapping actors and building coalitions, there is also a need to invest in the proliferation of a more diverse media system and in alternative knowledge-making. For example, more nuanced journalism is needed – one that prioritises deeper and longer relationships between media and communities and civil society; and one that prioritises high-quality investigative journalism and long, slow reads. This kind of journalism could also develop stories that drive action and showcase the true harms of the climate crisis. Also, alternative knowledge making, for example from feminist or decolonial or queer communities, should be prioritised. A way to approach this would be to work with open media and technology that reflect these values. This would create bodies of open knowledge to discuss the spectrum of perspectives, instead of the false binary of ‘truth versus lies’.

⁹ An example is [Climate Action Against Disinformation](#), but this coalition should be internationalised or reproduced in local groups.



6. Outro: Where from here?

To the prompt “what did you learn in the last two days?”, attendees answered:

“I learned to choose big battles.” Vesna Manojlovic, RIPE

“I learned that we have a more concrete agenda than I expected, and lots of next steps and actions.” Anonymous

“I learned about the organising principles of feminism, anti-capitalism and anarchy.” Anonymous

“I learned that planetary and individual extractivism are common enemies.”
Livio Liechti, Hivos

The urgency of the climate crisis requires a rapid shift to a more just and sustainable society. This means working towards climate-supportive internet infrastructures and digital technologies. While the internet was not built with sustainability as a core value (resiliency was), there was a shared sense of urgency at the event to be the change we want to see. In this outro, the report offers a meta-analysis of where to go from here.

The conversations on climate justice and digital rights demonstrate a strong desire to move from despair to repair. Current conditions might seem bleak – industrial and political leaders are blocking any meaningful response to environmental degradation and climate crisis resulting from our extractive economies – but it is important to find hope and inspiration even in the darkest places. There was an agreement that the digital rights movements need to shift from reactive to proactive approaches, from responding to existing industrial practices and legal frameworks towards demands about what we want our futures and future infrastructures and digital technologies to look like.



Practically, there is a keen interest to bridge the climate justice and digital rights movements even further. Across deep dives, participants expressed a need to do more research, mobilise, and build broader coalitions. This includes investing in ways to grow trust and connections between digital rights and climate justice networks. This could look like:

- support local communities, climate justice advocates and digital rights people to attend each other's events.
- create space and supporting nascent work at this intersection, be it research, prototyping, storytelling, or community building.
- shift power and ideologies by divesting from fossil fuel strategies and investing in sustainability and equity.
- debunk misleading climate solutions and reframe the narrative.
- include different perspectives in the debate, from feminist practices, intersectionality, and decolonial approaches

As mentioned in the introduction, the coalition of the Ford Foundation, Mozilla Foundation, Ariadne Network, Stiftung Mercator and the Internet Society Foundation is committed to supporting this work moving forward. To be a catalyst and support the critical work at the intersection of climate justice and digital rights, we plan to:

- support the initial steps that emerged from the Berlin meeting;
- raise funds for a temporary grant mechanism that will allow small local and global initiatives to grow;
- continue to reach out to and strengthen the relationships with climate and environmental funders and practitioners;
- bring in new voices and increase the diversity of actors in the network;
- and host another event in the Global South to continue to deepen the trust and collaborative work of the network.



We want to conclude this report by emphasising that people at the meeting, in the network, and those we have spoken to in the last two years are all still learning about the environmental implications of the internet and digital technologies – and are exploring pathways for a just and sustainable future. What became clear is that we need more space for radical expansive imagination, to help us to re-define what an internet looks like that places people, planet, and justice at the centre.

If you are interested in working on climate justice and digital rights, learning in the open movement, and building sustainable digital futures, you can join our community by subscribing to [this mailing list](#). This is a place to share ideas, interesting reads, and upcoming events. We have a monthly newsletter in which we inform people about the work of the coalition, announce upcoming work and events, and share information about interesting initiatives.



7. Appendix

7.1 Glossary

A key insight that emerged at the event was the need to work on a glossary for digital rights and climate justice communities. This glossary would allow us to initiate discussions, make cross-conversations more easily accessible, create a common understanding, and build a shared vocabulary across movements. A first iteration of the glossary could be used for a working session at the next convening. An initial, non-exhaustive collection of terms for the glossary is: ‘Digital Rights’, ‘Climate Justice’, ‘Environmental Justice’, ‘Extractivism’, ‘Feminism’, ‘Colonialism’, ‘Reparations’, ‘Climate Mis- and Disinformation’, ‘Openness’, ‘Sustainability’, ‘Shared language’

7.2 Further Initiatives

Climate Action Against Disinformation	Branch Magazine	Tech Policy Tracker	Intervozes Collective Brasil
Appropedia Open Climate Calls	Territorios Livres Brasil	Open Environmental Data	Open Collective
Green Latinos	New Tactics	Bits & Bäume	Privacy Camp
Check My Ads	Stop Funding Hate	Green Software Foundation	Acid Clouds
Climate Action Against Disinformation	W3C	Open Earth Foundation	Yale Climate Communication
Sustainable Digital Infrastructure Alliance	RightsCon	Green Web Fellowship	Green Web Syllabus
All For Climate Earth	IRTF / Gaia	17 Principles of Environmental Justice	Sustainable Web Manifesto
Hoodwinked in the Hot House			



7.3 Literature

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7.4 List of Participating Organisations

Appropedia, Association for Progressive Communications (APC), Ariadne, BSR, Beyond the Green, Center for the Cultivation of Technology, Clua, Conscious Ad Network, Data Justice Lab, Digital Freedom Fund, EDRi, Environmental Law Institute, European AI Fund, European Parliament Green party, Ford Foundation, Green Web Foundation, Hivos, Human Rights Watch, Independent, Internet Society Foundation, ITUJ, Mamamess, Mercator Foundation, Mercator Foundation Switzerland, Mozilla Foundation, Open Environmental Data Project, Open Climate, Open Collective, Open Knowledge Foundation, RIPE, Sovereign Tech Fund, Terraforming.institute, The Engine Room, and Wikimedistas de Uruguay.



Colophon

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