

Catalyst Fund



**Practical
ACTION**

The Catalyst Fund

Flexible philanthropy via the Catalyst Fund helps Practical Action to go beyond direct interventions to test, prove, and scale high-impact solutions to poverty and climate risk.

- **Why it matters** – Small, flexible investments unlock larger funding, accelerate innovation, generate influential evidence, and scale proven solutions across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- **What your support enables** – Your support helps test promising ideas, scale solutions through partnerships, shape policy with evidence, and empower locally led innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Focus areas** – Sustainable food systems; clean energy access; and climate resilience.
- **Your investment** – The Catalyst Fund is supported through philanthropic gifts of £25,000 or more.
- **Talk to us!** – Please get in touch to find out more: philanthropy@practicalaction.org.uk / +44 (0)1926 634 425.

The Challenge

Across the world, people's hard-won progress against poverty is being pushed back by environmental crises. Too many are one drought, flood, or heatwave away from losing everything.

We need change. Big change. Change that enables people to prepare and adapt, and to build resilience to the shocks coming now and in the future. Change that challenges and transforms the systems that trap communities in poverty and make them more vulnerable in this uncertain world.

Our ambition is clear: by 2030, we will reach 10 million people, with locally led action and equity at the centre.



Against this backdrop, the potential impact of catalytic philanthropy is greater than ever.

And we'd love you to be part of it.

Will you join us?

Transformative change rarely begins with major investment. It begins with flexible capital that enables promising ideas to be tested, refined, evidenced and championed for wider adoption. It gives us the freedom to learn quickly – understanding not only what works, but also what does not – and to adapt accordingly.

We are inviting a small group of strategically minded philanthropists to support innovation and evidence generation that can unlock change at scale.

A gift of £25,000 or more to the Catalyst Fund helps bring catalytic ideas to life, creating lasting change in:

- **Food systems** – produced sustainable and sold fairly
- **Clean energy access** – clean and accessible for everyone
- **Climate resilience** – that people are prepared and protected

We aim to invest at least £250,000 each year in high-potential ideas with the capacity to influence systems, policies and markets far beyond the scale of our initial investment.

Your support helps generate the robust evidence and proof points needed to advocate strongly with local Governments, global players, and communities on the ground, and to attract significant public and private investment, enabling successful approaches to reach more people and achieve greater social impact.



Our commitment to you

A donation of £25,000 or more to the Catalyst Fund allows learning and innovation that wouldn't otherwise happen, powering the insight needed to make change last and grow.

Your dedicated Philanthropy contact will keep you informed about what the Catalyst Fund has learned, unlocked, leveraged and achieved – including the insights gained from initiatives that did not deliver the expected results. You will also be invited to a range of events and receive relevant updates, stories and reflections throughout the year.

To learn more about the Catalyst Fund – or other giving opportunities aligned with your interests – please contact our team:

philanthropy@practicalaction.org.uk
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Philanthropy as a lever

The following recent examples reflect the kind of transformative work made possible by flexible, catalytic funding, to better serve communities on the front lines of poverty and climate change.

Solving Post-Harvest Loss – India, 2026

Overview

Every year, smallholder farmers lose a significant share of their harvest due to weak storage, processing, and market systems. This is a global problem effecting over 400 million smallholder farmers in low and middle-income countries. This research identifies exactly where and why those losses occur and tests practical, scalable solutions to reduce them. It questions the common assumption that costly cold storage is always the solution to reducing post-harvest loss.

Impact

This research provides farmers with practical, affordable solutions they can implement immediately to retain more value from their produce, increase food availability and increase their resilience to climate shocks. Over 50% of the 7 million smallholder farmers in Odisha are women. This research focuses on crops that have high earning potential for women: tomatoes, strawberries and mangoes. It provides Farmer Producer Organisations with evidence to support gender inclusivity in agriculture and guides investment decisions that reduce food waste and improve farmer incomes. It will help shape Government policy and programming at district and state levels in India, with the potential for replication across Odisha and beyond.

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By working directly with Farmer Producer Organisations and local governments at block and district level, we are ensuring that this research feeds directly into real investment decisions.”

Ayan Banerjee, Asia Regional Director



Gendered Power Gaps - Kenya, 2025

Overview

Research to uncover the hidden power dynamics and systemic barriers shaping women's access to renewable energy in agriculture; a critical blind spot for millions of women farmers.

Women entrepreneurs face unique challenges in using and benefiting from electricity, distinct from those faced by men. We must acknowledge these differences and barriers to ensure that women benefit from the boom in renewable energy technology as much as men.

The research was conducted as part of Women in Energy Enterprises in Kenya (WEEK), a Practical Action project implemented in central Kenya. Over the last decade, the WEEK project has strengthened women's capacity to effectively participate in energy markets as last-mile entrepreneurs of clean cooking and household lighting technologies and piloted engagement with entrepreneurs utilizing renewable energy in agriculture. To date, the initiative has reached over **1 million people** with clean energy products and services and trained **120 youth** for work in renewable energy companies.

Impact

Women represent 80% of smallholder farmers yet often lack access to energy for irrigation, processing, and food preservation. By studying how women actually engage with energy markets, it provides a framework for empowering women entrepreneurs in agriculture, making the sector more inclusive and influencing national and global policies. The research plays a key role in the development of future work and is helping to leverage funds for a new phase of Practical Action's *Women Energy Entrepreneurs in Kenya* project. This has the potential to increase the incomes of thousands of women farmers and ensure women are included in the renewable energy boom in Kenya and beyond.

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I thank Practical Action's WEEK3 project which has empowered me to be a great entrepreneur and being financially independent. I can feed my family and educate my kids. It's proof to society that disability is not inability”

Jecinta, entrepreneur, Embu County, Kenya



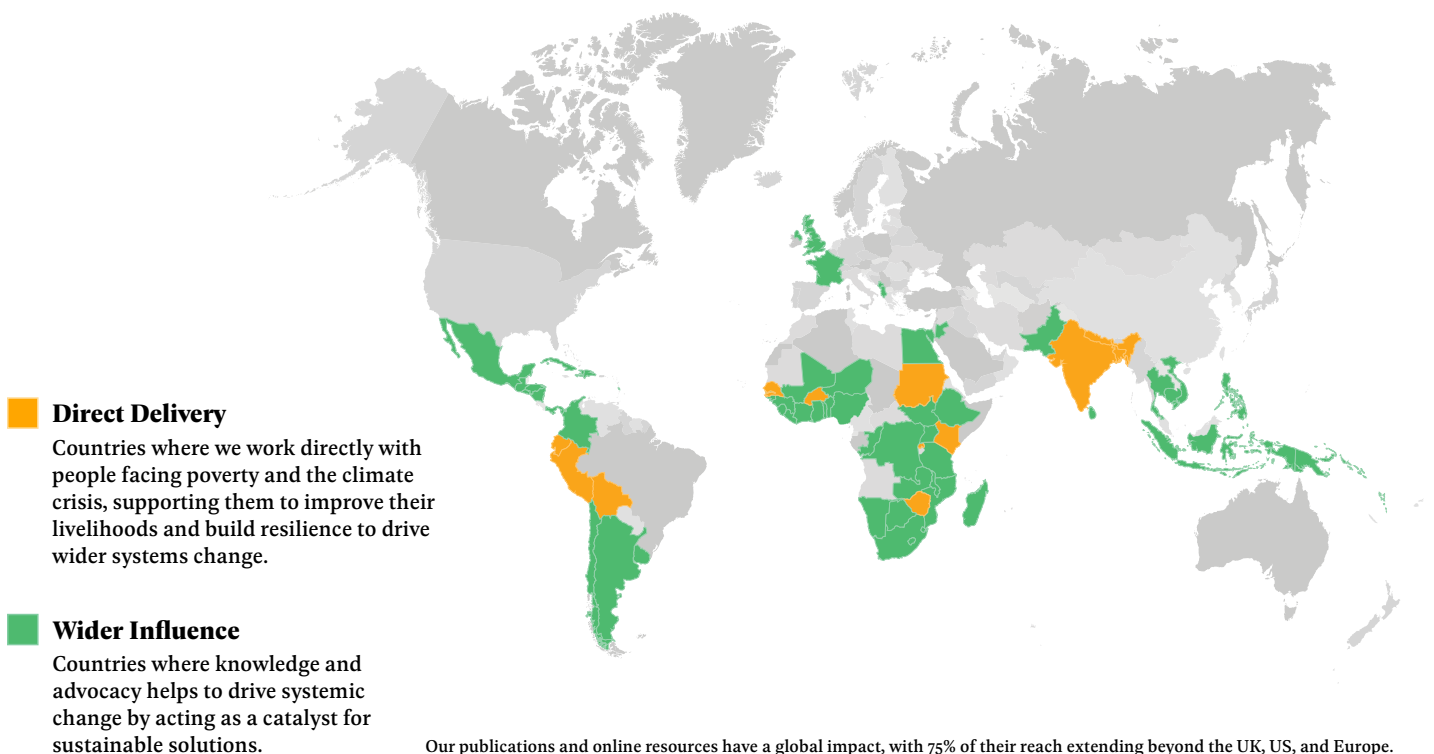
An investment in the Catalyst Fund enables experimentation, generates robust evidence, and helps unlock larger flows of capital to scale up effective approaches.

Why Practical Action?

Big change starts with practical action. For 60 years, we've worked alongside communities and local partners to turn local knowledge into practical solutions people can use and rely on. We've always been an organisation of problem-solvers. People who get things done. Now we're upping our ambitions, because the stakes are higher. We are tackling complex and connected challenges with joined-up solutions that turn practical action into big change. And we'd love you to be part of it.

In 2021-25, **six million people** experienced improvements in their lives through our projects across Latin America, Africa, and South Asia; **13 million people** were reached through our projects and wider partnerships; and **33 million people** were reached through systemic changes in policy and markets. You can read more about our impact [here](#).

Where we work



Get in touch

Will you join us to test high-potential ideas?

Your investment enables experimentation, generates robust evidence, and helps unlock larger flows of capital to scale effective approaches.

To explore an investment in the Catalyst Fund, please contact our Philanthropy team:
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