Impact Report 2021
Promoting solar energy for a more equitable world.
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A Letter from our Founder

Thank you so much for supporting the Honnold Foundation and believing in our work. This year marks both our ten year anniversary and a 50x growth in fundraising since when we started, which makes me feel both incredibly grateful and a little old.

Two weeks away from the birth of my first child, I can’t help but find myself a bit reflective. By the time she’s graduating high school, humanity needs to be well on our way to net zero carbon emissions if we have any chance at avoiding the worst effects of climate change. That’s a daunting challenge, but one that we are slowly starting to face.

When I started the Honnold Foundation in 2012, it wasn’t entirely clear that society would make the transition to renewable energy. Ten years later, that transition is an inevitability. The Energy Information Administration estimates that half the new electrical generating capacity installed this year in the US will be solar, and as the price continues to drop that percentage will only increase. By the time my daughter is enrolling in elementary school, it’s reasonable to expect that renewables will account for the entirety of new capacity each year.

This energy transition only underscores the importance of the human side of our work. Utility shareholders are already making money off of renewables. It’s important that everyone else benefits as well. That’s why our work at the Honnold Foundation is about more than putting panels on roofs. It’s not enough to generate clean power if it’s not helping those with the most need: the projects we support always have a human side.

This year, we’ll be funding two different grant cycles and, as our team sifts through over 800 applications from 88 different countries, I couldn’t be more proud to see how far the Honnold Foundation has come. I used to scour the internet for a few good ideas that inspired me. Now, we have to carefully select the best projects out of hundreds of applications from around the world. It’s been humbling to see our work outgrow my original vision, and, as the need for solar energy access in communities around the world only grows, our work at HF feels more vital than ever. I’m grateful for your support in meeting this challenge, head on.

Thank you,

Alex Honnold, Founder
Empowering Partners Worldwide

The Honnold Foundation approaches all aspects of our work with our partners front and center. From ensuring an equitable grant-making process to telling collaborative, empowering stories, we are committed to amplifying and honoring our partner organizations’ work and voices. Our grantmaking process was developed to reflect our values as an organization, and consequently, is based on the following core principles:

Community-Driven Solutions

We believe that the most sustainable solutions are led by the people who know the community best – community members themselves. We support solutions that are created by communities, for communities. Our Partners’ projects are designed with and for the communities where they work.

Catalytic Change

Equitable access to energy can do a lot more than turn on the lights. Whether it’s food sovereignty, education, or healthcare, our partners use solar energy to catalyze holistic sustainable change in their communities, improving social and economic equity while reducing their environmental impact.

Forever Partnerships

We know that creating real change takes long-term commitment. That’s why we approach our grant partnerships with a “once a partner, always a partner” mentality. That means that even after projects are finished, we continue to support partners through capacity building, mentorship, and storytelling, ensuring that our partners get the support they need to create long-term, sustainable change.
BY THE NUMBERS: OUR GROWING IMPACT

PROGRAM FUNDS DISBURSED IN 2021:
$1,104,025

PARTNERS SUPPORTED: 20
COMMUNITIES REACHED: 44
Since 2019, we’ve funded and collaborated with **34 Partners** in **20 different countries and territories**. Around the world, our partners use solar energy to build equity—on their terms.
GRID North Valley | California, United States
Solar home systems and battery storage for low-income residents impacted by recent wildfires in Northern California

Casa Pueblo | Puerto Rico, United States
First-of-its-kind community-owned solar microgrid offering a new form of energy independence and resilience to climate change for 14 businesses

GRID Tribal | United States
Residential solar and job training for Tribal Nations across eleven states

Native Renewables | Hopi and Navajo Nations, United States
Off-grid solar installations, workforce training, and a pilot financing program for Hopi and Navajo families

Ceibo Alliance | Ecuadorian Amazon
Solar energy for remote indigenous communities fighting to protect their ancestral ways of life in some of the most biodiverse rainforests on the planet

Asociacion Fenix | Nicaragua
Creating solar-powered food systems and sustainable production models, and powering 30 homes with solar for families in rural Nicaragua

Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera (CDPC) | Philippines
Transitioning an Indigenous farmer-owned agro-ecology demonstration farm to solar and shifting the village’s diesel-powered squash noodle production to solar

Navikarana | India
Solar water pumping system for a remote community on the frontline of climate change in the Indian Himalaya

Hilltop Schools | Liberia
A rooftop solar array powering an all-girls tuition-free school in Liberia

350.org | Fiji
Supporting youth-led energy resilience campaigns and a solar-powered emergency response program in the South Pacific

Mee Panyar | Myanmar
Replacing rural diesel consumption in Myanmar with a community-owned solar mini-grid

Tusobola Women’s Initiative Network (TWIN) | Uganda
Solar systems to power lights, vaccine refrigeration, and laboratories in seven rural Ugandan hospitals

Borderlands Restoration Network | Mexico
Building a solar-powered water pump and energy grid in collaboration with the Seri Indian community of Desemboque

Memphis Rox | Tennessee, United States
A rooftop solar array for a community center disguised as a climbing gym in South Memphis

Congress of Communities | Michigan, United States
Rooftop solar array for a youth-driven and resident-led organizing and advocacy organization in Southwest Detroit
Solar-Powered Independence

**Partner:** Native Renewables

**Location:** Navajo and Hopi Nations

**Impact:**
- Solar energy installs for 6 families
- Job training program for 4 solar Fellows
- 100% Hopi and Navajo installation team
Despite the powerful sunshine on the Hopi and Navajo Nations, around 15,000 families here survive without power. Tribal nations across the U.S. have been subject to a long history of energy exploitation and extraction, while simultaneously facing limited access to running water or electricity.

In 2016, Suzanne Singer and Wahleah Johns came together with a vision to provide solar power for thousands of homes on the Hopi and Navajo nations. For Singer and Johns, both members of the Navajo (Dine) Nation, energy independence is a key part of tribal sustainability. Being able to maintain these systems autonomously is vital to making this project truly renewable.

Deb Tewa, a member of the Hopi Nation, has been helping tribal members install off-grid solar since the 1980’s. Now, as the Workforce Manager at Native Renewables, she recalls the stories behind each of these installs vividly. Regarding a recent install, Tewa shares: “the elder who speaks very little English relies on a wheelchair to move about in her house. [This project] was able to ‘revive’ her PV system by replacing her non-functioning batteries. She was very pleased to have solar energy again to minimize the use of a generator.”

“We are piloting a financing program that allows families to make monthly contributions to solar power ownership and energy independence.”
—Suzanne Singer, Co-Founder of Native Renewables
Over the past year, Native Renewables equipped six homes with solar energy, and trained four Fellows to install and maintain solar systems across the Navajo and Hopi nations. Meanwhile, they’ve launched new, inclusive financing options to ensure that solar is affordable for anyone who needs it. “We are piloting a financing program that allows families to make monthly contributions to solar power ownership and energy independence,” said Suzanne Singer. “This program is a first step to removing economic barriers to affordable power for families living without electricity.”

For Native Renewables, this work is about more than putting solar panels on roofs. Their programs are designed to be scaled by and for the Navajo and Hopi Nations, and their model offers direct investment and affordable financing options that catalyze long-term investment in their communities.
Solar-Powered Healthcare

**Partner:** Tusobola Women Initiatives Network (TWIN)

**Location:** Rural Uganda, Luuka and Iganda Districts

**Impact:**
- Solar energy installs for 7 rural hospitals
- Healthcare improvements for over 20k people in the region
- Technician training for over 20 people
"We can" is the rallying cry of the Tusobola Women Initiatives Network (TWIN), and it’s also the meaning behind this Ugandan, women-led NGO’s name. Established in 2017, TWIN’s mission is to empower women and girls in Uganda to achieve their full potential, starting with supporting women’s independence and access to resources.

In Uganda, access to healthcare is a major barrier to women’s economic independence. Uganda’s maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world—336 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births per year—and much of this can be attributed to a healthcare system that’s short on resources.

"Accessing renewable energy in the rural health centers can reduce the high rate of infant and maternal mortality rates and improve healthcare service delivery," says TWIN Executive Director Monic Kawuma. The power derived from rooftop solar and battery storage will allow these health centers to not only refrigerate vital medicines and power medical devices, but also to respond to emergencies at night with adequate lighting. Now, healthcare providers can care for mothers delivering at night and power life-saving equipment.

Agnes, a midwife at the Busowobi Health Centre III in Uganda, a community of over 16,000 people, has seen how solar power has translated directly to providing more patient care. “Now we can work 24 hours a day,” she said, “and the number of mothers that deliver at our health center has risen.” She explained that giving immunizations to young children was also difficult without refrigeration, but now their services have expanded and families can access a higher level of care closer to home.

TWIN’s new solar-powered clinics have dramatically improved healthcare access for over 20,000 people in Uganda. Meanwhile, more than twenty members of the community have been trained on solar installation and maintenance, increasing community independence and sustainability while helping drive Ugandans’ solar adoption for years to come.
Solar-Powered Amazon

Partner: Associação Dos Trabalhadores Agroextrativistas Da Ilha Das Cinzas (ATAIC)

Location: Ilha das Cinzas, Amazon River Estuary, Brazil

Impact:
- Repair of 10 damaged home solar systems
- Installation of 40 new solar home systems and agricultural systems for village families
- Solar rooftop system for the town community center, powering refrigeration and açai processors for an entire community
The Ilha Das Cinzas Agricultural Workers Association (ATAIC) was founded in 2000 by the women leaders of Ilha das Cinzas in order to improve the living conditions of their community. When COVID-19 hit, frontline communities around the world felt the onslaught of the pandemic the hardest—and their small community of 68 families was no exception. COVID spread rapidly, and solar installations came to a halt.

Ilha das Cinzas is an island located in the Brazilian Amazon River estuary in the State of Amapá and is accessible only via a network of rivers. With few avenues to receive direct aid from the outside world, ATAIC shifted its focus to providing what its community needed most: food, water, and hygiene products to help families stay safe.

Now, thanks in large part to ATAIC’s efforts, nearly all of Ilha das Cinzas is fully vaccinated, and they’re ready to pick up where they left off. With support from the Honnold Foundation, ATAIC has been able to repair 10 solar systems installed years ago—and install 40 more.

These 50 systems provide families with solar power at home, and they’ll also replace the diesel generators powering their current agricultural systems. Soon, ATAIC plans to expand solar access to a community center where families can gather, process açai, and refrigerate fish.

Açai is an important subsistence crop for families on Ilha Das Cinzas, and as the food has become more popular all over the world, it has also become a major source of income. By replacing the local açai industry’s diesel systems with solar power, the community can continue to expand its production to meet higher demand.

ATAIC knows that being able to repair and maintain their solar systems is critical to their community’s independence, so they’re also running a scholarship-based technical training program that focuses on women and youth. More opportunity means less migration; since introducing solar, ATAIC has observed more young people staying on the island, a product of the new investments in their communities and expanding agricultural opportunities.
Partner: Navikarana
Location: Pishu Village, Province of Zanskar, Ladakh, India
Impact:
- Solar powered irrigation and drinking water for 150 families
- Building climate resilience in a community on the cusp of migration
- Passive solar greenhouses to increase agricultural opportunity
For the people of the Indian Himalaya, in the Zanskar region, the threat of climate migration is here, now. The village of Pishu is home to 150 families, and they’re facing the impacts of climate change head-on. Surrounded by receding glaciers and increasingly erratic rainfall, this agricultural community’s ways of life are increasingly untenable.

2018 was a particularly hard year. Without reliable water, this small community could not grow crops and they were forced to reduce their cattle holdings. For this indigenous community that has for so long relied on agriculture, the lack of water threatens their ability to be self-sustainable.

Navikarana is a trust that uses clean energy and irrigation technology to create water supplies throughout the Himalaya, and they partnered with us to do just that for Pishu. By working with the community to identify sustainable, long-term solutions, Navikarana and the Honnold Foundation were able to build solar-powered water pumps that will bring water from a nearby river to the village. This will provide water to irrigation systems that had previously dried up in addition to water directly to 30 homes.

“Water is a very basic need for all forms of life to survive. Using solar energy to meet the water needs of such remote communities is our first step towards creating an impact in the lives of such communities,” said Pishu resident Sushant Guleria.

Navikarana will build passive solar greenhouses that can provide support to Pishu’s agricultural possibilities. Extending the growing season is just one more way that the village will be able to sustain itself in an ever-changing climate.

“These indigenous communities are at the forefront of climate change, if we don’t act now, we would lose everything that was pure, raw and immensely beautiful—to oblivion. Solar energy holds the key to true empowerment.”

—Nishit Sangomla, Co-Founder of Navikarana
PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: ASOCIACIÓN FÉNIX

Solar-Powered Agriculture

Partner: Asociación Fénix
Location: Isla Zapatera, Nicaragua
Impact:
• Solar power for 30 homes
• Solar pump that provides clean, filtered drinking water to the community
• Solar-powered irrigation system that will facilitate the shift from subsistence fishing to agriculture
Nicaragua’s lakes have a pollution problem. Lake Nicaragua, one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world, is best known for the beauty of its volcanic islands. Thanks to their tourism potential, each island is a protected national park. But the islands’ communities have not received the same protections, and years of sewage mismanagement have caused Lake Nicaragua to become one of the most polluted lakes in the world. The people of Las Cañas, the historic residents of Isla Zapatera, are caught in the crosshairs of government mismanagement and climate change.

Las Cañas relies heavily on fishing, and the stress of pollution combined with the island’s lack of electricity (and thereby refrigeration) puts their livelihoods in jeopardy. In the absence of government investment, Nicaraguan nonprofit Asociación Fénix collaborates with communities throughout rural Nicaragua to build sustainable food and water systems, increase gender equity, and provide access to electricity.

Following close collaboration between the community and Fénix to determine a project proposal, the solution was clear. “Solar energy is the only hope to improve the lives of our people on Zapatera island,” said Encarnación Sandoval, a Las Cañas community leader.

In partnership with the Honnold Foundation, Asociación Fénix has installed solar power for 30 homes. A solar water pump now provides clean, filtered drinking water for the community, and local leaders are working alongside Asociación Fénix to establish a well site and design a distribution system that will reach every family. Additionally, a solar-powered irrigation system will soon be complete, helping Las Cañas bolster their agricultural output while they make the shift away from subsistence fishing.

It’s vital that isolated communities like Las Cañas can maintain their solar systems independently, so Asociación Fénix is working within the community to establish a committee of elected officials who will manage their solar installations. Made up of five men and four women, the committee ensures the community’s participation and serves as the connection between the organization and local families.

“Solar energy is the only hope to improve the lives of our people on Zapatera island.”
—Encarnacion Sandoval, a Las Cañas Community Leader
Solar-Powered Energy Justice

**Partner:** Memphis Rox  
**Location:** Memphis, TN  
**Impact:**

- Rooftop solar installation for one of the most polluted zip codes in the country
- Policy campaign to relieve energy burden for local families
- 21% reduction in energy bills for a 32,000 square foot climbing and community center
I didn’t want to start a rock climbing gym. We all wanted to start a revolution”, says Tom Shadyac, co-founder of Memphis Rox. The leadership team at Memphis Rox likes to call their home a community center disguised as a climbing gym. It’s exactly what Tom, a Memphian native known for directing movies like “Bruce Almighty”, and “Ace Ventura”, and Chris Dean, a Memphian who turned down an offer to work with President Barack Obama in the White House in favor of staying and serving in Memphis, envisioned when they opened up a commercial-sized, nonprofit gym in the heart of Soulsville.

Unlike most climbing gyms, Memphis Rox doesn’t turn anyone away, regardless of their ability to pay. Instead, they ask their patrons how they would like to pay. Some choose to volunteer, while others give beyond their suggested monthly membership dues. While Shadyac first came up with the mantra “We’re not for profit, we’re for people”, the ethos is repeated, and lived, by the entire community.

For the people of Memphis, the gym is more than a place to exercise; it’s a vital resource hub where people from all walks of life come together for food, education, mentorship, careers, shelter, free counseling, and personal growth. All are welcome in Rox’s supportive, diverse community.

“Memphis’s natural beauty is in its people— the community. We train people to climb mountains, then to climb the mountains within. Everyone’s a part of our family at Memphis Rox. Exercise, food, shelter? That’s all part of our love language.”

—Chris Dean, Co-Founder and Director of Community Outreach at Memphis Rox
When he first looked to purchase a warehouse on the south side of the city, Shadyac was warned that there could be some issues with frequent power outages. But, after the gym opened, summer storms quickly made it clear that intermittent power would be an ongoing issue. Meanwhile, having grown up in South Memphis, Dean knew that Memphis’s power problems extended beyond Rox’s doors.

Residents pay some of the highest utility bills in the nation; for many, up to a quarter of their monthly income goes towards their electricity bill. Meanwhile, aging infrastructure has caused increasingly frequent rolling blackouts. Whether it’s a windy day, ice storms, or just “bad luck,” the blackouts shut down the city’s low-income neighborhoods, including Memphis Rox, on a monthly basis.

With an average of 218 sunny days per year, Memphis is an obvious choice for solar power. Sustainable, reliable energy could and should replace existing infrastructure, safeguarding the community against blackouts and providing a far cheaper energy alternative.

Yet, in Memphis, and in many cities around the United States, it’s not quite that simple. State-level antiquated energy policies enforced by municipal utility governances, like anti-net metering measures, ensure that solar adoption is slow and essentially unaffordable for the communities that could otherwise benefit the most. The Honnold Foundation’s original goal was to install a massive rooftop solar system that could offset 100% of Memphis Rox’s energy bill. There’s certainly space for it, since Memphis Rox stands at 32,000 square feet. But, in order to comply with the energy policies established by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), our engineering team had to scale down the original plans.
A larger system wouldn’t have benefited Memphis Rox or the surrounding community. Instead, most of the power generated by extra panels would have been distributed back to the grid, without any financial benefits. Ultimately, we funded a 20 kW rooftop solar array that reduces Rox’s energy bills by over 20 percent, the maximum amount allowed by the TVA. This reduction still allows Memphis Rox to free up funding to focus on what matters most— their work.

Meanwhile, the Honnold Foundation is committed to telling the story of Memphis’s energy burden. No family should have to make the choice between keeping their lights on or buying their next set of groceries. Accessible, affordable solar energy would lower Memphians’ energy bills, address infrastructure needs, and represent an investment in a community that’s faced decades of disenfranchisement.

We are committed to funding a larger install at Memphis Rox as soon as regulations allow. For now, we’ll continue advocating for policy change to ensure that the future of Memphis is solar-powered.
I joined the Honnold Foundation in the fall of 2021, after spending the previous 15 years supporting community-led efforts to advance gender equity around the world. After devoting so much time to advancing girls’ and women’s leadership, it was an exhilarating leap of faith to join the movement for solar energy access. But why make such a dramatic career shift?

A few years ago, I helped bring a delegation of gender activists from the Global South to one of the biggest women’s conferences in the world. There were thousands of attendees, and hundreds of panels, covering topics ranging from microfinance to reproductive health. But as I looked through the program, I realized that not even one event focused on climate change or renewable energy.

Evidence has long shown that girls and young women face the greatest burdens from global warming. The women who I was working with lived on the frontlines of the climate crisis, and their communities had too much to lose for us to remain on the sidelines. In that moment, I knew I had to do everything I could to bridge the gap between the urgency of climate change and the need to empower historically disinvested communities. And I’m truly grateful that this led me to the Honnold Foundation, where we see solar energy as one of the brightest paths to a thriving and sustainable world.

As we look back over HF’s first 10 years, this anniversary is a moment for celebration, and a call to action. We’ve worked with over 40 partners in 25 countries since 2012. And yet, only six months into my tenure at HF, the scale of the unmet need for our work is already crystal clear. Over the past three years, we’ve received nearly 2000 grant applications from organizations in 130 different countries. Collectively, prospective grantees have asked for over $80 million dollars to support community-led solar projects.

To help us fulfill this staggering demand, in December we launched the Innovation Fund, a new campaign dedicated to catalyzing creative solutions to the challenge of solar energy access. The Fund is focused on identifying, strengthening, and scaling solar energy projects that leverage clean energy to address urgent social and economic issues facing marginalized communities. In 2021 alone, we ensured solar-powered healthcare for over 20,000 people in Uganda, improved access to education for marginalized girls in Guatemala and Liberia, advanced energy independence on the Navajo Nation, and supported conservation in the Amazon basin.

In 2022 we will honor our 10th anniversary by going big: with the support of the HF community, we will double our grantmaking and deliver $2 million in funding to organizations around the world. We’ll collaborate with award-winning filmmakers to amplify the stories of our partners, from Memphis to Ecuador. We’ll share new ways to engage with our work, from Impact Advising to carbon offsets.

And while HF will continue to evolve over the coming year and throughout the next decade as we expand solar energy access, we’ll remain steadfastly committed to ensuring that marginalized voices and community-led solutions are at the heart of everything we do. It’s going to take all of us, working together, to solve the climate crisis. Thank you for joining us on this journey to a brighter future!

Emily Teitsworth, Executive Director
### 2021 Financials

- **2021 Revenue**
  - Individuals: $2,002,628
  - Corporations & Foundations: $485,732
  - Interest: $1,008
  - Non-Cash Contributions: $53,397
  - **Total Revenues:** $2,542,764

- **2021 Expenses**
  - Programs:
    - Grants: $900,834
    - Direct Program Expenses: $203,190
  - Supporting Services:
    - Development: $77,994
    - Administration: $155,093
    - Programs: $187,110
  - **Total Expenses:** $1,524,222

- **2021 Change in Net Assets:** $1,018,542

- **Net Assets, End of 2021:** $2,203,207

**Financials Breakdown:**
- **Programs:** 85.1%
- **Administration:** 9.6%
- **Fundraising:** 5.3%
Our Team

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alex Honnold, Founder
Peter Martin, Board Chair
Brady Robinson, Vice Chair
Nancy Feagin, Treasurer
Len Necefer, Ph.D, Secretary
Armando Cordoves, Legal Counsel
Maury Birdwell
Dirk Tyler
Lina Ha-Stone
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Tim Brooks

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Michiel Zuidweg, Principal, MZ Solar Consulting
Daniel Tittmann, Service Manager, Positive Energy Solar
Scott Ely, President, Sunsense Solar Inc
Toby Schmidt, co-owner of Creative Energies Solar

STAFF

Emily Teitsworth, Executive Director
Kate Trujillo, Director of Programs
Cynthia Arellano, Project Manager
Peter Walle, Development and Communications Manager

The Honnold Foundation thanks Dory Trimble, our Executive Director from 2018-2021, for her years of service to our mission. Her steadfast belief in this work and her vision for what HF could be have been integral to our continuing growth and impact.
Honnold Foundation Corporate Partners are values-aligned, mission-driven organizations who share our deep commitment to people and the planet.

Like us, our Corporate Partners know that solar energy can catalyze communities’ self-determination and capacity to weather climate change, and, ultimately, scalable, sustainable innovation. Together, we empower Grantee Partners’ visions to create a brighter, more equitable world.

**CORPORATE PARTNERS**

- REC Solar
- Sunrun
- FTX
- Omaze
- Black Diamond
- 3M
- Orix
- RXR Sports
- Rivian
- Struggle Climbing Podcast
- Ramble
- Circular WY

Circular Wyoming
Thank you, supporters.

Our impact is growing, and we couldn’t do it without the support of our community. Our donors share our commitment to using solar energy to transform communities around the world, and in 2021, supporters showed up like never before. To all those around the world who believe in and support this mission: thank you.

You help us power communities worldwide.

CREATIVE COMMUNITY

A special thanks to the talented artists, photographers, and creatives who donate their time and expertise to help us tell compelling stories.

Duct Tape Then Beer
Encompass Films
Samuel Crossley
Jimmy Chin

Rubén Salgado Escudero
Isabela Zawistowska
Finletter Creative
Waltronic