



WOMEN INVESTED TO SAVE EARTH

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## THE WISE FUND

WISE LEADERS PROFILE

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## MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

Our planet is one huge, interconnected ecosystem. An escalation of environmental crises worldwide threatens the natural resources that sustain life and our markets. Humanity is at a critical crossroads. We must move beyond the status quo, scaling and accelerating solutions.

Fortunately, there are promising leaders of all backgrounds throughout the USA and around the world poised to solve our greatest social and environmental challenges. But all people with scalable solutions need an equal chance for funding and support to make a difference.

The Women Invested to Save Earth Fund (WISE) identifies and provides intensive support to diverse founders to scale promising technologies and other novel strategies to heal the planet. WISE also promotes funding equity, environmental and social justice in marginalized communities with education and advocacy.

Our WISE leaders are modernizing Indigenous fire management technologies to control wildfires; creating water out of thin air for the billions of people worldwide who will be without water by 2025; creating novel smart energy infrastructure in urban America; bringing light and internet to disconnected, poor communities; recycling the plastic waste polluting Africa into bricks for affordable housing; making solar energy accessible to all; and creating markets for organic agricultural products with clean energy.

## MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

Their technologies and strategies are independently tested, effective, and poised for replication. WISE Leaders are saving our natural environment but also creating jobs, economic security, and better public health for women and their communities. They have the talent, drive, and character for success. Now they just need the financial resources to scale.

The WISE Fund invites you to help us fund the amazing cadre of WISE Leaders, making equity real for diverse innovators and climate change heroes. See below to learn more about these amazing leaders and their work. Together, we can create the future we want for our children and future generations. Thank you for your support.

Dr. Jackie Bouvier Copeland, Founder  
Women Invested to Save Earth Fund

## ABOUT THE WISE FUND

The Women Invested to Save Earth (WISE) is an innovation and equity fund that supports underrepresented founders and strengthens women's organizations addressing environmental and social decline. The WISE Fund blends philanthropy and social investment to support some of the world's most promising but underfunded organizations working in environmentally distressed, low-income communities of Africa, Australia, Brazil, the Caribbean, India and the USA.

WISE Leaders are Black and Indigenous women of color-led or benefitting eco-tech organizations with scalable innovations that empower women's economic security and community wellness while saving the planet. We believe that equitable funding is a social and economic justice issue and necessary to address the urgent challenges facing the USA and the world.

In September 2020, WISE made its first round of grants to nonprofits and businesses with game-changing technologies or other strategies addressing climate change. Now we are expanding our network, adding new WISE Leaders, whom we hope to fund in the 2021-2022 cycle.

## ABOUT THE WISE FUND

In addition to unrestricted grants to these organizations, WISE has created an impact investing product, The People's Impact Fund, for our largest, most commercially viable leaders. In addition to funding provided by donors and investors, WISE has a network of professional advisors providing legal services for international patents and other issues; insurance; financial management and fundraising; as well as manufacturing, research, and HR issues.

We are proud to share this profile of our inaugural and future WISE Leaders. For more on The WISE Fund, visit [theWISEfund.org](http://theWISEfund.org) where [donations](#) are gratefully accepted to support our work. Also see our organizational overview [here](#).

Contact us at [info@theWISEfund.org](mailto:info@theWISEfund.org), if you are interested in [becoming an investor](#). Thank you for helping us change the world for good.

## CURRENT WISE LEADERS

*Organizations that have received WISE Philanthropy grants and are eligible for People's Impact Fund (PIF) funding. Those also eligible for PIF funding are marked with an asterisk.*



### BETH KOIGI

Co-founder & CEO, [Majik Water](#)\*  
Kenya

[Beth Koigi](#), during a university research project in eastern Kenya, learning that 56% of the population do not have access to clean water, that 80% of all diagnosed diseases are waterborne, and that access to clean water was impossible for many women in Kenyan communities, Beth felt compelled to bring her education, passion, and skills to bear and started Aqua Clean Initiative. An organization that provided under-served communities in Kenya with affordable filters. Initially, finding that while filters were available, they were far too expensive for most people in Kenya to afford, Beth developed a filter costing less than a third of others available and provided many families with clean water. Funded by Google as a participant in the Global Solutions program in Silicon Valley, Majik Water was born in 2017.

Majik Water was founded with a vision to increase access to clean drinking water in water-stressed regions starting with Kenya. Majik Water won the EDF Pulse Award Africa in 2017. Beth was also awarded the Young Water Fellowship in 2018 and was a finalist for the Royal Academy of Engineering Africa prize 2019. Beth is also currently a Grant Advisor for The Pollination Project.



Harvesting the elements from thin air, Majik Water is increasing access to clean drinking water in water-stressed regions starting with Kenya. With an estimated 1.8 billion people living without water by 2025, Majik's technology shows if you have air, you can have drinking water.

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### NKANYISO MADLALA

Founder & CEO, [Energy Efficiency](#)\*  
South Africa

[Nkanyiso Madlala](#) is an energy efficiency & intelligent lighting connoisseur with five years experience having worked alongside government, municipalities, climate change adaptation & mitigation aficionados. He has been selected to innovate Durban and is a participant of the prestigious Redbull Amaphiko Academy | 2019/20 | Redbull Amaphiko is a global programme that champions social entrepreneurs driving positive change in their corner of the world.

He was also selected to take part in the world renowned Climate Launchpad Sa, the world's largest green business ideas competition located in the Netherlands which tackles climate change & works with innovators across the world.



Energy Efficiency uses solar-powered light points to light up communities in South Africa and around the world. They design and deploy their technologies to include WiFi access in off-grid communities, democratizing connectivity while decreasing crime and carbon footprints.

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### THELMA EKIYOR

Founder & Chairperson, [Afrigrants](#)  
Nigeria

Ms. [Thelma Ekiyor](#) has over 20 years experience working in the development sector, as an Impact Investor, donor, philanthropic advisor, and social entrepreneur. She has experience working in 22 African countries. Ms. Ekiyor is the Managing Partner SME.NG – Nigeria's Impact Investment Platform, which has set up two impact funds for women entrepreneurs.

She is the Co-Founder & Chairperson of Afrigrants Resources and also served as its pioneering CEO. At Afrigrants, she led the establishment of "Market Women's Quick Cash" – A financial inclusion solution to provide micro-loans to women in disadvantaged communities. She also led the conceptualization of "The Ebi Fund" – an impact fund for women entrepreneurs. Ms. Ekiyor is also is Founder & Co-Convener of The Funding Space – a mentoring and access to finance platform for social entrepreneurs in Africa.

Prior to establishing Afrigrants, Ms. Ekiyor was the pioneer CEO of TY Danjuma Foundation, and grew an endowment of \$100 million. Before that, She served as the Pioneering Executive Director of the West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI), which was established by the George Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute for West Africa.

Ms. Ekiyor holds an MBA (Entrepreneurship & Innovation) from Imperial College London, UK; a Law Degree (LLB Honours) from University of Buckingham, UK. She is also a Fellow of Stanford University, USA.



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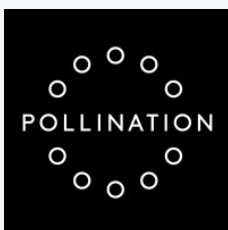


### ARIADNE GORRINGTON

Executive Director, [Pollination Foundation](#)  
ISFMI Learning and Knowledge Exchange Team Lead  
Australia

[Ariadne Gorrington](#) is passionate about place based economies and Indigenous led conservation. Working with the Kimberley Land Council (an Indigenous community based land rights organisation) for over 20 years, she co-designed a cultural economy model to increase the flow of finance into the Kimberley Indigenous Ranger Network. This included registration of the North Kimberley Savanna Fire Carbon Projects – the first in Australia to be registered on native title lands.

She has engaged with national and international networks to promote best practice models of Indigenous led conservation and was a Committee Member, World Indigenous Network Conference in Darwin; and Presenter at World Parks Congress, Sydney, and United Nations Climate Change Conference, Paris. She's an Atlantic Fellow for Social Equity Melbourne University; recipient of The Nature Conservancy's Barbara Thomas Fellowship in Conservation Financing and core member of the International Savanna Fire Management Initiative team.



The Women in Fire Initiative (WiFi) through the Pollination Foundation supports place-based indigenous communities of Australia and worldwide to use indigenous solutions especially cultural prescribed fire to manage the biodiversity of the land.

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### LENKA VANDERBOOM

Indigenous Learning & Network Facilitator, [Women in Fire Initiative \(WiFi\)](#), Australia

[Lenka Vanderboom](#) is a Yawuru woman who grew up on her ancestral homelands in North West Australia. She is an advocate for community led solutions and has more than 15 years' experience in community development working as a facilitator, educator and strategic networker. Lenka is passionate about native bush foods, traditional medicines and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

She currently works at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Victoria communicating First Nations' perspectives and conservation and land management strategies. With peak health organisation Emerging Minds Australia she coordinated First Nations' artists and scriptwriters to codesign digital stories for the frameworks to understand Aboriginal approaches to health. Lenka is a Producer and Ensemble Member of Melbourne Playback Theatre Company and has worked as a Teaching Artist and Coordinator of Melbourne Theatre Company's First Peoples Young Artist's Program and Phunktional Theatre's Yumpla Project. Lenka is a Director of Magabala Books, Australia's leading Indigenous publishing house.



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### MARGO ROBBINS

Executive Director, [Cultural Fire Management Council](#)  
USA

[Margo Robbins](#) is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Cultural Fire Management Council (CFMC). A co-lead and advisor for the Indigenous People's Burn Network, she is one of the key planners and organizers of the Cultural Burn Training Exchange (TREX) that takes place on the Yurok Reservation twice a year. She is also the Indian Education Director for the Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School district, a mom, and a grandma.

Margo comes from the traditional Yurok village of Morek, and is an enrolled member of the Yurok Tribe. She gathers and prepares traditional food and medicine, is a basket weaver and regalia maker.



Cultural Fire Management Council of the Yurok Nation in Northern California is adapting ancient fire technology to a modern context. Using fire stick technology they are mitigating wild fires and restoring the lands in their own communities and worldwide.

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### JESSICA O. MATTHEWS

Founder & CEO, [Uncharted Power](#)  
USA

[Jessica O. Matthews](#) is the Founder & CEO of Uncharted Power. At the age of 19, Jessica invented the SOCKET ball, an energy generating soccer ball that provides off-grid power for the developing world. At the age of 22, she founded Uncharted Power (previously Uncharted Play), a global full-service power technology company that builds, owns, and operates renewable power infrastructure.

Jessica was invited by President Barack Obama to the White House to represent small companies for the signing of the America Invents Act in 2012, and previously served as an Ambassador of Entrepreneurship for Nigeria. In 2016, she was selected to ring the NASDAQ opening ceremony bell, representing all Forbes 30 Under 30 alumna.

She is currently listed on 12 patents and patents pending covering developments in energy generation, transmission, and storage. A dual citizen of Nigeria & the U.S., Jessica has a degree in Psychology and Economics from Harvard University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. Her list of accolades includes the Ford Freedom Award, Fortune's Most Promising Women Entrepreneurs, Forbes 30 under 30, Black Enterprise's Innovator of the Year, and Scientist of the Year by the Harvard Foundation.

Uncharted Power is building smart systems providing communities with clean & low-cost energy. The Uncharted System converts the ground we walk on into a connected platform that integrates critical infrastructure -- from power grids and broadband to sidewalks and water pipes.

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### GABRIELA AGUSTINI

Founder & Director, [Olabi](#)  
Brazil

[Gabriela Agustini](#) is founder and director of Olabi, a social enterprise focus on encouraging the use of new (and old) technologies for social change. Based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, she has traveled more than 20 countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa, Oceania working on projects or speaking at events related to innovation.

She is currently Professor of Culture and Technology at Candido Mendes University, Visiting Professor of Entrepreneurship at Fundação Getúlio Vargas, both in Rio. And also co-organizer and co-author of "De baixo para Cima"("Bottom-up"), a book of articles about digital culture, new economy and peripheries in Brazil.



**olabi**

Her experience ranges from the public sector to small startups and private companies. She formed part of the House of Digital Culture, a collective pioneer in the discussion of new technologies in Brazil, where she worked as a curator and executive director of CulturaDigital.Br International Festival. TV Presenter of "Conexão Maker", a Brazilian reality show about emergent technologies, entrepreneurship and social change. She is also a board member of Institute of Technology and Society of Rio (ITS Rio), Institute of Technology and Equity (ITE), Coding Rights and the Berlin-based Global Innovation Gathering (GIG).

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### SILVANA BAHIA

Director, [Olabi](#)

[Silvana Bahia](#) as the executive director of Olabi, a social organization focused on innovation, technology and diversity, coordinates Pretalab, a network of Black women in technology, and other initiatives. She is a researcher at the Research Group on Policies and Economics of Information and Communication at the postgraduate program in Communication at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

She was a facilitator of the RodAda Hacker Marathon - female empowerment workshops in new technologies, co-coordinated the communication plan for the KBELA film and is a contributor to the Afroflix platform. She received the Highlights of Digital Culture: Social Innovation and Technology award, granted by the Central Cultural Bank of Brazil and the Advanced Program of Contemporary Culture at UFRJ 2017.

She holds a master's in Culture and Territorialities from the Universidade Federal Fluminense.



**olabi**

## FUTURE WISE LEADERS

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### NZAMBI MATEE

Founder, [Gjenge Makers Limited](#)  
Kenya

[Nzambi Matee](#) is the founder of Nairobi-based Gjenge Makers. It is a social enterprise that creates sustainable and affordable alternative construction materials in Kenya and the African Continent. They aggregate waste plastics and use cutting-edge technologies to create bricks and various other products to build affordably, trailblazing a new market in the manufacturing industry.

With a background in materials science and applied physics, Matee received a scholarship to study in the materials lab at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she developed a prototype for the machine that produces Gjenge bricks. She was recently named a Young Champion of the Earth 2020 Africa at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for her innovative solutions.



Gjenge Makers solves the waste pollution problem by recycling and upcycling plastic, while providing job opportunities for youth, promoting and supporting the next generation of female engineering entrepreneurs in Kenya and Africa at large.

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### NELSON BOATENG

Founder and CEO, [Nelplast Eco Ghana](#)\*  
Ghana

Nelson Boateng is the founder of Nelplast Eco Ghana, a Ghanaian company that turns waste plastic bags, water bags, plastic film and containers into pavement slabs and tiles, known as eco-bricks.

With over fifteen years of experience in the recycling industry, Nelson is the accomplished network engineer who built the extruder and other machinery used to manufacture Nelplast's eco-bricks.



In 2019 the company received the SEED Low Carbon Award for the company's innovative recycling process and provision of formal jobs and income for low-income waste collectors, especially women, in environmental-distressed areas in Ghana. Women constitute about a 98% of Nelplast's current workforce.



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### USHA DEVI VENKATACHALAM

Founder, [Krishi Janani](#)  
India

[Usha Devi Venkatachalam](#), is founder and CEO of Krishi Janani, a Delaware-incorporated farmer's network and consumer's marketplace for regenerative agroecology based in Tamil Nadu, India.

She is a technologist who has implemented software solutions and conducted capacity building trainings in over 20 countries. Her professional expertise is in architecting sustainable, culture-specific, and locally-appropriate technology solutions in resource constrained environments.

This combined with her family's agricultural roots has resulted in Janani, a unique online and offline marketplace facilitating India's farmers adopt regenerative agroecology and access high-value specialty markets, while helping socially conscious buyers (consumers & companies) source verified and traceable organic produce.



Krishi Janani is on a mission to grow this system-level solution that enriches the entire ecosystem and can be replicated in rural communities at risk for drought and food shortages due to global warming. Its vision is to expand worldwide, including providing services to U.S.-based farmers and organic produce consumers.

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### GLORIA JONATHAN

Co-CEO, [Barefoot College](#)  
India

[Gloria Jonathan](#) is the Co-CEO of Barefoot College, an organization that increases economic mobility by making vocational and educational opportunities accessible to women and girls from the most marginalized communities around the world.

Gloria's seamless management experience in solar operations over the past five years could not have been possible without her uncanny, holistic comprehension of the multiple facets of Barefoot College. She has facilitated Tilonia (Rajasthan, India) community meetings, speaks five languages, and was mentored by Guru Ji, head of Barefoot College's Solar Department.

She has hosted numerous high-profile representatives of government and CSR, as well as liaised with ground partners across the subcontinent.



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### JACQUELINE GILYARD JONES

Founder and CEO, [EcoFocused](#)  
USA

[Ms. Jacqueline Gilyard Jones](#) as the Founder and CEO of Eco Focused LLC, leads a cleantech start-up company in execution of research, new product design and development, financial analysis, fundraising, marketing, and personnel management. Ms. Jones offers more than 20 years of strategic planning, project management, and financial analysis experience within the energy sector. She was a leading integration strategist for solar, energy efficiency, and demand response resources. She also developed local initiatives to mitigate the need for new fossil fueled electric generators.

A specialist in leveraging technology and identifying non-traditional methods to solve issues, Ms. Jones is passionate about improving the world around her. After learning that food waste in landfills is collectively the third largest manmade source of greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change, she designed the ANDI – a household sized anaerobic digester and EcoFocused's flagship product. It decomposes food waste on site, diverting it from landfills and transforming it into fertilizer and a burnable gas. When used by a family of 4, the device has equivalent greenhouse gas savings to an electric car and can potentially enable the US to reach the UN's 50% reduction target for food waste in landfills.



Ms. Jones has a Material's Engineering degree from Georgia Institute of Technology and held a certification as a Project Management Professional (PMP) from the Project Management Institute (PMI).

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### KRISTAL HANSLEY

Founder and CEO, [WeSolar](#)\*  
USA

[Kristal Hansley](#) is the Founder & CEO of WeSolar, Inc and is the first Black woman CEO in the community solar industry in the United States. Before founding WeSolar, Kristal was the Director of Government and Community Relations for Neighborhood Sun, a leading Community solar energy enterprise in Maryland. In this role, Kristal helped thousands of low-to-moderate-income families save hundreds annually on their electricity bills.

Before transitioning to the sustainability industry, Kristal was a Capitol Hill staffer. She is the former Community Affairs Liason for U.S. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton and former Program Manager for the Senate Democratic Diversity Initiative at the Office of the Majority Leader Harry Reid.

Under Kristal's leadership, WeSolar's mission is to bring under-resourced communities affordable access to local community solar and to assist commercial properties with energy efficiency. Kristal and her team are disrupters advocating that communities of color and low-income communities be included in the green transition for a healthy environment in the future.



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### SUZANNE SINGER, PhD

Co-Founder and Executive Director, [Native Renewables\\*](#)  
USA

[Suzanne Singer, PhD](#), is a member of the Navajo (Dine) tribe and grew up in Flagstaff, Arizona. Her mechanical engineering and energy analysis background provides the technical foundation to develop tribal energy independence.

The company helps Native American families achieve energy independence by growing renewable energy capacity and affordable access to off-grid power. They currently provide solar power to homes on the Navajo and Hopi reservations, and also educate Native communities about solar and renewable energy.

Prior to founding Native Renewables, Singer was a staff engineer and post-doctoral fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and an intern with Sandia National Laboratories' Tribal Energy Program. Singer is the winner of the 2019 U.S. Clean Energy Education and Empowerment (C3E) Entrepreneurship Award. She earned a PhD and MS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, and a BS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Arizona.





Learn more with resources below:

[WISE Leaders Speak](#)  
[Black Funding Equity Pledge](#)  
[Support the WISE Fund](#)

Please contact us at [info@theWISEfund.org](mailto:info@theWISEfund.org) with any questions. Thanks for making a difference in the US and worldwide with WISE. Together we can save our environment for today and future generations.