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San Francisco, Monday, September 15, 2025 — Global philanthropy [Climate Breakthrough](https://ClimateBreakthrough.org) is proud to announce the 2025 cohort of its prestigious Climate Breakthrough Award program. The 2025 Climate Breakthrough Awardees are **Alessandra Orofino**, **Gavin McCormick**, **Liming Qiao**, **Ramón Méndez Galain**, and a team of three: **Giuliana Furci**, **Merlin Sheldrake**, and **Toby Kiers**.

The five Awardees will develop, launch, and scale their boldest new initiatives for large-scale policy, economic, and social transformation to address the climate crisis. Climate Breakthrough provides them with \$4 million—the largest climate award for individuals—in multiyear, flexible, non-directive funding.

*"I'm constantly amazed by the caliber of our Awardees, and the 2025 cohort is no exception," said **Savanna Ferguson**, Executive Director of Climate Breakthrough. "At a time when global uncertainties and challenges threaten climate action, what we've seen with all our Awardees shows that when you give capable people the resources and freedom to pursue their boldest ideas, they can create the transformation the world needs."*

Former US Vice President **Al Gore**, who has previously collaborated with some of the 2025 Awardees, offered his congratulations: *"To solve the climate crisis, we need leaders who are thinking big to help reshape policy, economic, and social systems in order to create a sustainable world."* He added, *"This is a moment of full potential, and I cannot wait to see how these 2025 Awardees will rise to the occasion."*

This year's cohort, the largest since the program launched in 2016, now joins an outstanding [list of Awardees](#) whose Climate Breakthrough initiatives have had major impact and achieved critical recognition from their peers and the press. Among others, they include Alex Doukas (the Polluter Pays Project), Jane Kleeb (the Energy Builders Project), John Hepburn (Insure Our Future), Mohamed Adow (Power Shift Africa), Tessa Khan (Uplift), Tzeporah Berman (the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty), and Sebastián Kind (RELP).

Details on the 2025 Awardees and their bold plans follow below.

The program

The Climate Breakthrough Award program supports visionary social change leaders to develop, launch, and scale high-ambition, high-gain initiatives that, if successful, could significantly reduce global annual greenhouse gas emissions, affect entire industries or regions of the world, and materially change the lives of tens of millions within ten years of launch.

Through the multiyear program, Awardees have launched and scaled a wide range of approaches that span from accelerating clean energy adoption to fostering grassroots activism that mobilizes thousands of communities. Many of the strategies were emerging or underdeveloped and had yet to receive substantial philanthropic support.

The award consists of \$3.5 million as a grant, with the remainder dedicated to comprehensive wraparound services and tailored Impact and Learning tools. Awardees also get support through connections to broader funding networks, heightened visibility among key stakeholders, and a lifetime invitation to our annual retreats.

With the new cohort, Climate Breakthrough has now awarded or committed multimillion-dollar funding to 26 individuals and two teams of Awardees. As of the end of last year, Awardees have collectively secured over \$236 million in additional support from more than 90 funders to advance

their Climate Breakthrough Award work. Combined, their initiatives have the potential to reduce global annual greenhouse gas emissions by more than 5.3 gigatons by 2030.

2025 Awardees

The founder of Peri Productions, **Alessandra Orofino (Brazil)** is a visionary cultural strategist and narrative producer. Through the program, Alessandra wants to develop a communications initiative that aims to scale cultural change and galvanize public commitment across Brazil to protecting the Amazon. This is an ambitious approach to Amazon conservation because, ultimately, fostering deep cultural change can stop deforestation and help enshrine durable policy protections for the Amazon. [Full profile.](#)

Gavin McCormick (United States) is a pioneering climate technology leader who cofounded WattTime, developing real-time emission reduction technology now built into over one billion devices sold by major companies, and Climate TRACE, recognized as Fast Company's #5 most innovative company worldwide. Through the program, Gavin wants to revolutionize carbon accounting rules for emerging green industries that, without proper oversight, could inadvertently increase pollution by gigatons. If successful, this can ensure that governments and private sector actors make decisions that decrease emissions in reality, not just on paper. [Full profile.](#)

Liming Qiao (Singapore) is a pioneering strategist in Asia's energy transition with over two decades of experience in everything from climate negotiations to renewable energy deployment. Through the program, Liming is creating the first coalition targeting grid flexibility and energy storage bottlenecks in the renewable energy transition across the ASEAN region, the world's fourth-largest energy consumer. [Full profile.](#)

Ramón Méndez Galain (Uruguay) shaped Uruguay's transformation to 98% renewable electricity. He now serves as Executive Director of Ivy, an environmental NGO that advises governments across Latin America. Through the program, he will scale Ivy's demonstrated approach and partner with countries across the Global South to address systemic barriers that have prevented them from replicating Uruguay's success. [Full profile.](#)

Giuliana Furci (Chile), Merlin Sheldrake (United Kingdom), and Toby Kiers (Netherlands) represent an unprecedented collaboration bringing together fungi conservation advocacy, science communication, and cutting-edge research. Giuliana founded the world's first fungi-focused nonprofit [Fungi Foundation](#) and successfully advocated for Chile to become the first country including fungi in environmental law. Merlin authored the million-copy bestseller

"[Entangled Life](#)," bringing fungi into public consciousness. Toby co-founded [SPUN](#) and uses innovative research combining robotics and imaging to map underground fungal networks.

Through the program, the team spotlights a massive blind spot in climate strategy: fungi. They want to establish the legal, regulatory, and scientific groundwork to integrate fungi into global climate agendas and on-the-ground restoration efforts with significant carbon sequestration potential. [Full profile](#).

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