Call for Proposals
Member-led Sessions

Montreal, Canada • 28–30 September 2026

ACT (Activate • Collaborate • Transcend)

Member-led sessions: At a glance

WINGS invites all member organisations to propose breakout sessions for WINGSForum 2026 in Montreal (28–30 September).

We are calling for interactive, member-led sessions that set a focus on moving philanthropy from intention to action.

- **Deadline to apply:** 23 April 2026
- **Information about session status**: by 1 June 2026.
- **Session length:** 60–75 minutes; Session rooms can accommodate between 50-100 people in a roundtable format
- **Three tracks:** Activate • Collaborate • Transcend

Other important info:

- Collaborative proposals between members are strongly encouraged.
- WINGS members must lead, but non-members can partner and support.

Submit your proposal → https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WForum

Questions: Contact WINGS at **wingsforum@wingsweb.org**

📌 *This document includes: (1) background and tracks, (2) submission guidelines, (3) evaluation criteria, (4) session formats, (5) timelines, and (6) the submission form questions.*

About WINGSForum 2026

From 28–30 September 2026, over 400 leaders from across the global philanthropy community will gather in Montreal for the eighth edition of WINGSForum. This year's WINGSForum focuses on how philanthropy moves from intention to practical action.

WINGSForum 2026 will explore how philanthropy can pursue coordinated, courageous, and practical action—addressing root causes and shifting how power and resources are built, held, and shared. Through plenaries, workshops, learning labs, a garden of experimentation, and member-led sessions, the programme will create opportunities for open discussion, creative exchange, and meaningful connection.

The programme will support participants in identifying levers for individual and collective action, and in reclaiming their own agency and power to transform organisations, worldviews, practices, and ecosystems towards the change we want to see in the world. You can read more about the Theme and Tracks here.

Shape the agenda for WINGSForum 2026 – Submit a member-led session proposal!

WINGSForum 2026 belongs to its members and participants. This Call for Proposals is your invitation to bring the ideas that may not usually surface. The experiments that didn't go to plan. The tensions philanthropy avoids confronting.

- Member-led sessions surface the knowledge, tensions, and lived experiences that exist within our community, spark honest dialogue, and create the conditions for real collaboration. Sessions should engage in and address messy, contested, and politically complex realities and show how to act.
- They are designed to dive deep into 'how' action happens—less the why, more what it takes in practice. This includes sharing what worked, what didn't, and what you would do differently using real-world examples.
- Each session should enable participants to leave with clear actions, decisions, commitments, tools, frameworks, or collaborations they can take forward.

We want courageous ideas. We want sessions that challenge us, connect us, and help us act. We are especially interested in sessions that surface tensions, challenge assumptions, or invite disagreement—and that create space for honest, sometimes uncomfortable conversations.

Submit your proposal here by 23 April 2026. Questions? Contact wingsforum@wingsweb.org.

The three tracks: Which one fits your idea?

Session proposals must align with one of the three 'ACT' tracks below. We are looking for sessions that are:

- Grounded in real-world challenges and models of collective action that respond to issues such as the climate crisis, AI, tech and power, closing civic space and democracy, inequality and economic systems.
- Focus on the 'how' of action, less the why, more on what it takes in practice.
- Practical and real-life examples exploring what worked, what failed, and what you learned the hard way.
- Actionable, leaving participants with tools, approaches, frameworks and insights.
- Create a decision or action moment. What will participants do differently? Even more importantly, what will participants stop doing? What will they commit to changing immediately?
- Bring diverse perspectives and actors together.

To help you choose, here are some questions that may be relevant. The three tracks are interconnected, and there is no one-size-fits-all model. If your session bridges tracks, select a primary and an optional secondary track.

Track 1 — Activate

Awakening collective will to act

Focus: What does it take to move from intention to impact—individually and collectively?

This track is about overcoming barriers to action: risk aversion, fragmentation, and pull towards neutrality. It explores how philanthropy can act with courage alongside others and shape the conditions for change.

Guiding questions:
- What is stopping us from acting (risks, political will), and how do we overcome it?
- How do we move beyond neutrality in contested contexts?
- What does courageous, responsible and accountable action look like in practice?
- What are we afraid of, and what would it take to act anyway?
- How is philanthropy stepping into its role in shaping policy?

Example sessions in this track might address:
- Translating values into sustained practice;
- Moving to flexible, trust-based funding;
- Navigating AI, climate or civic space pressures;
- Advocacy strategies to influence the field and others;

- Decision-making under uncertainty;
- Protecting civic space for long-term systems transformation;
- Practices that shift power, accountability, and trust—what this looks like in reality, not just in principle.

Track 2 — Collaborate

Moving from alignment to joint action

Focus: How do we actually work with others—across sectors, organisations, and communities—as genuine equals?

This track highlights practical approaches to cross-sector collaboration—bringing together different sectors, types of organisations, and communities as equal partners. It asks how philanthropy can engage alongside others without lowering its ambitions.

Guiding questions:

- What makes collaboration actually work in practice, and what doesn't, so people can learn and not reinvent the wheel?
- What models enable joint ownership, power sharing and accountability?
- How do we align incentives across sectors to move from ideas to action?
- How do we collaborate without lowering ambition or avoiding difficult conversations?

Sessions in this track might address:

- Multi-stakeholder and cross-sector partnerships on specific themes—what worked and what didn't;
- Designing pooled funds, blended finance, collaborative financing models, centring people and communities;
- Partnership and financing models that support joint ownership;
- Managing tension, incentives, conflict and accountability in partnerships;
- Collaborating with the government and/or the private sector in sensitive or complex environments.

Track 3 — Transcend

Building the ecosystems to ACT

Focus: What infrastructure, actors and relationships does philanthropy need, to shift the flow of money and power to change systems?

This track focuses on the connective tissue of the philanthropic ecosystem—the support organisations, networks, and knowledge systems that make effective action possible over the long term. It explores how we move beyond silos toward true ecosystem thinking, rooted in reciprocity, local accountability, and holistic impact, and what it takes to sustain these shifts over time. It looks beyond improving existing systems to exploring where philanthropy is already being reimagined in practice.

Guiding questions:

- What does a transformative and impactful philanthropy ecosystem look like in practice? What ecosystem structures are missing right now?
- How can philanthropy strengthen relationships built on reciprocity, trust and local accountability? How do we move from isolated initiatives to coordinated system-level action?
- How, and through whom, do we influence the flow of money, and what new models are emerging to shift power and decision-making?
- What kinds of systems do we need to centre lived experience, Indigenous and community-led approaches?
- What capabilities, capacities and skills do we need for the future?

Sessions in this track might address:

- Indigenous, grassroots and community-led models sharing systems change perspectives;
- Where innovation is already happening, and what it will take to scale, connect, or sustain it;
- Emerging or experimental approaches to resourcing civil society that move beyond traditional funding models;
- Building and funding philanthropy support ecosystems: networks, data systems, and capacity at country, regional and global levels;
- Shifting from attribution to contribution, and from project funding to ecosystems funding strategies;
- Strengthening the enabling environment for giving and civic space;
- Shifting how resources and decision-making power flow, and for what purpose.

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Submission guidelines for member-led sessions

Eligibility

- Each session proposal must include at least one WINGS member.
- Each WINGS member may submit up to two proposals as the lead applicant and can join other proposals.
- Non-member organisations may partner on proposals, provided a WINGS member is in the lead and submits the proposal.

Session design requirements

Sessions should be:

- Dynamic, interactive, and participatory;
- Include practical tools, experiments, or practices you are actively testing;
- Create a clear decision or action moment – what will participants do differently;
- Not focus primarily on promoting a single organisation, project, or initiative;
- Creative, courageous, and thought-provoking;
- Include a simple way to capture key insights.

Collaboration is strongly encouraged.

The Selection Committee will give priority to proposals developed collaboratively across members, organisational types, and regions.

Session duration

- Sessions should be 60–75 minutes in length.
- Final session timing will be determined as part of the overall programme design, in coordination with selected applicants and the WINGS team.

Selection process

The Selection Committee (comprising WINGS Staff members and Member Representatives) will review proposals based on the criteria below and aim for diversity of thought, themes, geographies, and organisational types across the programme.

Submission of a proposal does not guarantee inclusion in the programme. A limited number of proposals will be selected based on the criteria below and available programme slots.

Based on recommendations from the Selection Committee, applicants may be asked to merge similar proposals, creating opportunities for cross-continental collaboration in some cases.

Evaluation criteria

1. **Alignment with the ACT theme, tracks, and action-orientation**
   a. Does the session clearly address at least one of the three tracks?
   b. Does it move participants from reflection to action?
2. **Relevance, practicality and application**
   a. Is the session grounded in real-world challenges and contexts?
   b. Does the session focus on the 'how' of action?
   c. Are there tools, framework and/or approaches participants can walk away with and apply?
3. **Use of engaging, interactive, and action-oriented formats**
   a. Does the format actively engage participants?
   b. Does it enable peer learning, dialogue and exchange?
4. **Creating space for personal reflection that leads to action**
   a. Does the session create space for personal and/or organisational reflection?
5. **Encouraging collaboration among members**
   a. Does the session bring members together to share knowledge and ACT collectively?
   b. Is the session collaboratively developed?

Key dates and timelines

Milestone	Date
Call for proposals opens	26 March 2026
Information sessions for applicants	8 April (08:00 UTC): Register here 9 April (17:00 UTC): Register here
Submission deadline	23 April 2026
Status of the submission communicated by	1 June 2026
WINGSForum 2026	28–30 September 2026, Montreal

Suggested interactive session formats

Proposed sessions should create opportunities for active participation. The formats below are suggestions, and the proposals are not limited to them. Brief definitions are also included in the application form to support your thinking.
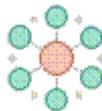
Action learning

Participants address real-world challenges using collective knowledge. Facilitators guide the process through clarifying questions, reflective listening, and joint exploration of solutions.

Campfire sessions

A short (15–20 min) input by a speaker is followed by participant-led discussion. The presenter serves as a facilitator, inviting audience members to ask questions, share comments, and share experiences.

Case clinic

A case giver presents a challenge; a small group of peers (5–7) acts as consultants, offering diverse perspectives and insights to support learning and reflection.

Debates

Two or more expert speakers explore opposing sides of a clearly defined question. Encourages critical thinking, dialogue, and audience engagement.

Design sprint

A fast-paced, structured process where small groups work through a challenge to prototype ideas or solutions—from problem framing to actionable concepts.

Fireside chat

An informal, moderated conversation with one or more speakers. The moderator opens with guiding questions and invites audience participation throughout.

Fishbowl

A small group (4–5) discusses a topic in an inner circle while the wider audience listens. Participants may join the discussion to ensure dynamic, inclusive dialogue.

Peer coaching pods

Small groups support one another on real leadership or organisational challenges through structured peer coaching, focused on listening, questioning, and next-step actions.

Role reversal

Participants step into roles different from their own (e.g. funder, grantee, community leader) to explore power dynamics, assumptions, and alternative perspectives.
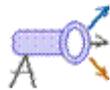
Scenario lab / Futures lab

Participants explore plausible future scenarios for philanthropy and test how strategies, values, and decisions might unfold under different conditions.

Workshops

Hands-on, participatory sessions that support skill-building and practical learning. Participants engage with tools, methods, or approaches led by peers or practitioners.

World café

Participants rotate between small, facilitated table conversations to explore different aspects of a topic. Insights from each round are shared and synthesised in a plenary.

Images generated by Claude 3.5 Sonnet, 13 March 2026

Costs and participation

- Speakers and participants for selected proposals/sessions are responsible for their own registration fees, travel, and accommodation.
- WINGS will cover costs only for participants from the Global South/Majority World who are awarded Travel Financial Support, through a separate process (deadline of **17 April 2026)**. Information can be found here.

Support from WINGS

- Applicants will receive an automatic confirmation email upon submission. Information about the status of submitted proposals will be communicated by **1 June 2026**.
- Each selected session will be paired with a WINGS team member before the WINGSForum, who will help you prepare your session in alignment with WINGSForum 2026 guidelines and style.

For further questions, please contact us at wingsforum@wingsweb.org.

Expression of interest | Member-led sessions for WINGSForum 2026: Preparing Your Proposal

Submit the completed Expression of Interest form (link here) by **23 April 2026**. Below are all the questions so you can prepare your answers before filling them out online.

Fields marked * are required. Word/character limits are indicated where applicable.

Section A: Lead Organiser (required)

- Organisation *
- Are you a WINGS member organisation? * ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Name of applicant (you) *
- Position
- Email *

Section B: Collaborating Organisation(s)

- Do you have co-organiser(s) for this proposal? * ☐ Yes ☐ No
- (If No, skip to Section C.)
- If Yes, please list all collaborating organisations and indicate whether their participation is confirmed or proposed:

Collaborator 1:

- Organisation name:
- Is this organisation a WINGS member? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Name of collaborator (contact person at that organisation):
- Position:
- Email:
- Participation status: ☐ Confirmed to be a collaborator ☐ Proposed to be a collaborator

Collaborator 2:

- Organisation name:
- Is this organisation a WINGS member? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Name of collaborator (contact person at that organisation):
- Position:
- Email:
- Participation status: ☐ Confirmed to be a collaborator ☐ Proposed to be a collaborator
- If you have additional collaborators, please list the names of the organisation(s).

Section C: Session Details

- Proposed session title *
- Session summary * (max. 2 sentences / 50 words)

Provide a brief, clear description of your session for the WINGSForum programme. What real-world challenge is your session addressing?

- Track selection *

Primary track *: ☐ Activate ☐ Collaborate ☐ Transcend

Secondary track (optional): ☐ Activate ☐ Collaborate ☐ Transcend

- How does your session align with the Forum theme (ACT) and your chosen track(s)? * (max. 150 words)
- How will your session help participants to ACT or make decisions — what commitments, tools, experiments, decisions, or next steps will it generate? * (max. 150 words)
- Session flow * (max. 200 words)

Provide a brief agenda-style description: what happens, in what order?

- How will the participants actively engage? Session format *

  ☐ Action Learning ☐ Campfire ☐ Case Clinic ☐ Debate ☐ Design Sprint

  ☐ Fireside Chat ☐ Fishbowl ☐ Peer Coaching Pods ☐ Role Reversal

  ☐ Scenario Lab / Futures Lab ☐ Workshop ☐ World Café ☐ Other (specify):

- Based on the format you selected, describe how you plan to run the session and how you will make it interactive and engaging for participants. * (max. 800 characters)
- What will participants take away, and how can they apply it in their work or organisations? * (max. 300 words)
- Please list all confirmed or proposed speakers and facilitators. Include name, organisation, title, and a bio link where possible. Note their status (Confirmed / Proposed).
- Will any speakers or facilitators likely need visa support documentation (e.g. invitation letter)? (optional) ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
- Estimated duration of the session (between 60-75 minutes):
- Is there anything else you would like the Selection Committee to know about your proposal? (optional, max. 150 words)

For further questions, please contact us at wingsforum@wingsweb.org