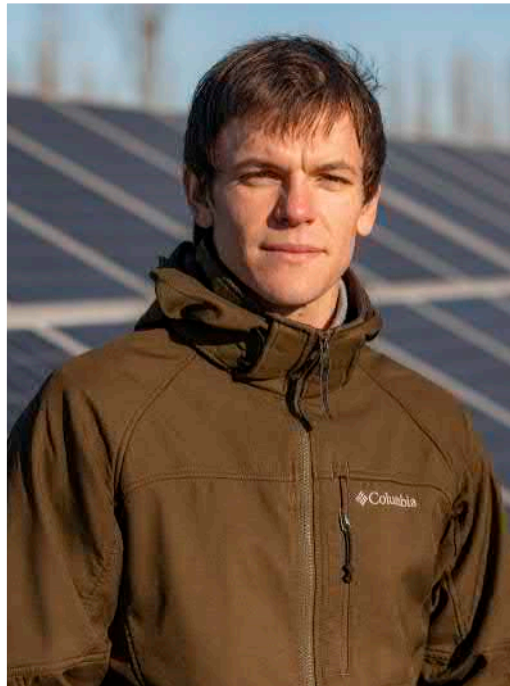


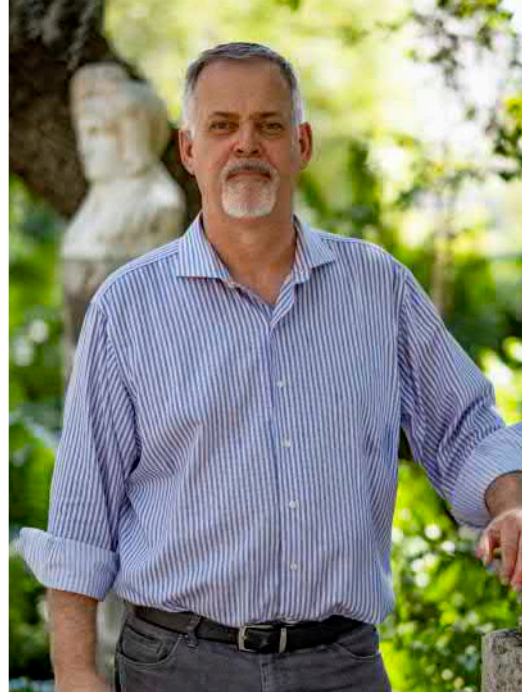


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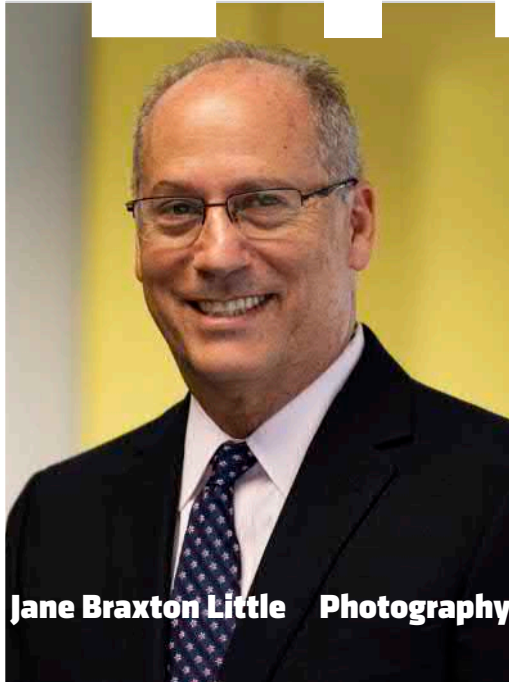


Around the world, local

**champions are tackling a global
the climate crisis**



ALLIES



By Jane Braxton Little Photography by Jason Houston

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PREVIOUS SPREAD

1 Yoca Arditi-Rocha, executive director, CLEO Institute; 2 Ezequiel Tecco, member of CREA; 3 Veronica Geese, secretary of energy, Santa Fe, Argentina; 4 Kenichi Ishida, managing officer, Sekisui House, Tokyo; 5 Monica Fein, mayor, Rosario, Santa Fe; 6 Remko Jansonius, deputy director of collections and curatorial affairs, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, Miami; 7 Reverend Yasushi Hori, head monk, Kougenji monastery; 8 Miwa Haishima, co-owner of a zero-energy home; 9 Sergio Graf, Minister of Environment from the State of Jalisco, Mexico; 10 Susanne Torriente, chief resilience officer, Miami Beach; 11 Enrique Miles, cattle and agricultural producer, Argentina; 12 Ryogo Takemoto, monk and co-founder of Tera Energy, Hiroshima; 13 Mr. Suzuki from Suzuhiro Kamaboko; 14 Gustavo Airasca, technical coordinator, Armstrong Cooperative; 15 Erika Abiko, owner of the eco-conscious Hummingbird Cafe; 16 Roberto Bisso, sub-secretary of renewable energy, Santa Fe; 17 Dan Gelber, mayor, Miami Beach; 18 Jacqueline Murcia, organizer of a climate protest in Miami.

THIS SPREAD

Clockwise from top left: Japan, the US, Argentina, and Mexico are leading the way in forming Alliances for Climate Action, inspiring other countries to do the same.





Alliances for Climate Action

Today, there is a major gap between the main goal of the Paris Agreement—limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C—and the commitments countries have put forward to meet that goal. Action by businesses and local leaders around the globe has the potential to cut this gap in half.

Through Alliances for Climate Action (ACA), WWF, six global partners—C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, CDP, the Climate Action Network, Fundación Avina, The Climate Group, and the We Mean Business coalition—and leading national organizations are connecting and supporting national coalitions of actors who pledge to collaborate with one another to reduce their own carbon footprints and to help their national governments deliver on and enhance their climate pledges. Coalitions include businesses, investors, state and local governments, universities, cultural institutions, and civil society.

ACAs have been established in Argentina, Japan, Mexico, and the United States. Vietnam and South Africa joined most recently, in August and September 2019, respectively, and more countries are taking steps toward forming their own domestic alliances.

ACA and its member alliances have received support from funders including Bloomberg Philanthropies, the ClimateWorks Foundation, the Hollomon Price Foundation, the Jeremy and Hannelore Grantham Environmental Trust, NextGen, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. ACA also works in close partnership with the Stanley Foundation.

Learn more about Alliances for Climate Action and its member alliances at alliancesforclimateaction.com.

YASUSHI HORI, PRIEST AT Kougenji Temple near Hiroshima, begins his morning meditation at a low, lacquered dais surrounded by Buddhist icons. His clear, tenor voice lifts in ritual chant, filling the 370-year-old worship hall with tones steeped in incense and tradition. As it resonates among the gilded tables, three monks join in from the base of the altar. Their incantation flows outside, to the steep conifer-covered mountains, in a chorus that includes bush warblers, crows, and the occasional frog. It is an ancient prayer for awakening to the deep connection among all living beings.

Today this invocation embraces an urgent call to action—a modern message for a world in crisis. After experiencing first-hand the terrifying effects of landslides and torrential flooding, these Buddhists have become unlikely leaders in a grassroots movement to build a climate-resilient society.

The monks meditating with Hori this morning are founders of Tera Energy, a start-up providing the electricity from renewable sources that powers Kougenji Temple. Tera means temple in Japanese, and alludes to both land and terabytes. The company's logo is a light bulb enclosing a lotus blossom, a Buddhist symbol of purity.

Ryogo Takemoto, head minister of another temple and one of Tera's founders, says he wanted to create a real-world connection between his Buddhist faith and his community. "It is part of my challenge to make society a better place," he says.

Still small, with around 50 customers in the Hiroshima area as of August, Tera plans to supply 200 temples by the end of this year. And it aims to provide a model for climate action:

TODAY, THERE IS A MAJOR GAP BETWEEN THE MAIN GOAL OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THE COMMITMENTS COUNTRIES HAVE PUT FORWARD TO MEET THAT GOAL.

"I hope other temples in other places will connect with this wild idea and start their own companies," says Takemoto, a robust man with a twinkle in his eye.

However small its beginnings, every effort helps to reduce carbon emissions, says Kougenji's Hori: "Each of us should do whatever we can. We have to start!"

LOW-KEY AND LOCAL, the Tera Energy entrepreneurs are members of the Japan Climate Initiative (JCI), an eclectic coalition committed to bringing distinctively Japanese solutions to the challenge of global climate change. Launched in July 2018 with support from WWF and other partners, this new face of Japanese climate action includes the multinational corporations Sony and Sumitomo Chemical, the megacities of Tokyo and Kyoto, and a forest conservation group founded by a musician—a total of 391 members as of August.

Together, they have pledged to achieve a decarbonized society by limiting their own carbon-generating activities. Several have committed to filling all of their energy needs with 100% renewable sources by 2050 or sooner. JCI members work to increase public awareness about the urgency and opportunity of climate action; inspire more companies,

cities, and others to lead by example; and call for progressive public policies.

JCI is representative of a global groundswell of responses to climate change known as Alliances for Climate Action (ACA). The ACA initiative was formed by WWF and partners to support and connect an international network of domestic coalitions committed to accelerating the transition to a zero-carbon future. Japan joins Argentina, Mexico, and the We Are Still In coalition in the United States in bringing together diverse stakeholders to champion that transition from the bottom up, and to bring more local voices to the global dialogue on addressing climate change (see sidebars for more details).

JCI's engagement cannot come soon enough. Japan, the world's third-largest economy, is the world's fifth-largest emitter of carbon dioxide generated by fossil fuels, which drive nearly 88% of its energy economy. Its greenhouse gas emissions account for 3.3% of the world's total.

Like the other ACA countries, Japan is one of 195 signers of the 2015 Paris Agreement; the national government committed to reducing its carbon emissions to 26% below 2013 levels by 2030. While the agreement offers hope for addressing the climate crisis by limiting the increase in global average temperature to 1.5°C, achieving that will require cutting current levels of emissions in half in the next 11 years. Japan is not yet on track to hit that mark, and building a critical mass of cities, companies, and others committed to the Paris goals will be crucial to delivering the required scale of emissions reductions.

The Paris Agreement requires all parties to submit climate targets and strategies to move the world in the direction that is urgently needed. Yet recent announcements by Japan are not encouraging. In June, the government submitted a long-term strategy to the United Nations that specifies neither a target

“IN JOINING JCI, WE ARE PROUDLY COLLABORATING WITH COMPANIES, CITIZEN GROUPS, AND OTHERS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ACTIONS THAT YOKOHAMA RESIDENTS ARE TAKING TO ADDRESS IT. WE WILL USE UPCOMING EVENTS SUCH AS THE TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS TO INSPIRE FURTHER GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION.”

— Shuhei Okuno, Deputy Director General, Climate Change Policy Headquarters, Yokohama City

for increasing renewable energy nor a timeline for phasing out coal. With a carbon emissions reduction target of 80% by 2050, the strategy falls far short of the net-zero goals set by a growing number of countries. “It is very unfortunate that Japan's commitment is not commensurate with rapid climate change and its impact,” says Takejiro Sueyoshi, a representative of JCI.

JCI members can make a contribution toward closing the gap between the government's goals and its accomplishments—and can work together to educate the public and engage the national government to advocate for stronger policies that can create the right enabling conditions for



JAPAN

Rank in terms of global carbon emissions: 5th

% of global carbon emissions: 3.3%

Climate pledge: Reduce carbon emissions to 26% below 2013 levels by 2030

Japan Climate Initiative

Launched: July 2018

Representing: 30% of Japan's greenhouse gas emissions

The Japan Climate Initiative (JCI) is committed to supporting Japanese companies, municipalities, research institutions, and organizations that are dedicated to realizing a carbon-free society by expanding renewable energy and promoting energy efficiency. Launched with the support of WWF-Japan, the Renewable Energy Institute, and CDP Worldwide-Japan, the group includes the cities of Tokyo and Yokohama, small businesses, and major companies such as Sony and Panasonic.

Signatories pledge to “stand at the forefront of global challenges in order to realize the decarbonized society envisioned by the Paris Agreement.” They aim to demonstrate global leadership in enhancing Japan's commitments and believe that accelerating Japan's efforts will yield new opportunities for growth and development.

Top: Ryogo Takemoto (center), who cofounded Tera Energy based on Buddhist values. **Right:** The main courtyard at Kougenji monastery, which buys renewable electricity brokered by Tera Energy.



JAPAN



ARGENTINA



ARGENTINA

Rank in terms of global carbon emissions: 29th
% of global carbon emissions: 0.6%

Climate pledge: Argentina's pledge is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 18% by 2030 (relative to a business as usual emissions projection.)

Alliance for Climate Action Argentina

Launched: November 2018
Representing: More than 13 million citizens and more than 30% of the nation's economy

Alliance for Climate Action Argentina represents cities, investors, small and large businesses, universities, and civil society united in pursuing local efforts with global impact. Coalition members include the capital city of Buenos Aires and more than 190 other municipalities across the country; the province of Santa Fe; leading actors in the banking, private, and academic sectors, including Banco de Galicia, the clothing company Patagonia, the food and nutrition company Danone, and the Universidad del Salvador; and the association of 2,000 producers of agricultural commodities known as CREA.

The main purpose of the alliance is to enable Argentina to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement and create the conditions for enhancing the country's ambition. Members of the Alliance aim to strengthen climate actions within their own institutions, inspire others to act and collaborate to reach greater scale and impact.

Japan to decarbonize faster, says Mariana Panuncio-Feldman, who is senior director of international climate cooperation for WWF and global coordinator for ACA. JCI's diverse players—including businesses, academic institutions, and regional and local governments—represent Main Street, the economic and social anchors of society. “As key parts of the economy and the political process, they have the power to raise their voices, drive the broader political and policy transition, and deliver emissions reductions,” says Panuncio-Feldman.

ACA seeks to amplify those voices by helping alliances like JCI champion climate action in ways that are locally relevant. As they learn from one another and grow internationally, ACA members are becoming “the face of the new zero-carbon economy” in their respective countries, adds Panuncio-Feldman.

Each participant sets an example through its own actions, she explains, gradually shifting the conversation about climate change. In Mexico, ACA is fostering climate leadership on issues such as renewable energy, waste, and nature-based solutions for urban resilience. In the United States, We Are Still In has played a major role in shoring up international confidence in the commitment of American companies, cities, and others to addressing climate change, driving further action, and fostering collaboration.

“By working together and with their national governments,” Panuncio-Feldman says, “these alliances can be the force that speeds the change the world urgently needs.”

ON A RAIN-SOAKED SUMMER MORNING at Kougenji Temple, Hori straightens his embroidered Buddhist stole as he recounts the terror of a nearby landslide. The sound of mud and trees

“WE BELIEVE THAT PROACTIVELY PREPARING FOR CLIMATE IMPACTS AND ADJUSTING OUR PRACTICES TO REDUCE OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT WILL MAKE FOOD PRODUCTION IN ARGENTINA MORE RESILIENT AND OUR AGRICULTURE SECTOR MORE COMPETITIVE IN GLOBAL MARKETS. PRODUCERS HAVE A CRITICAL ROLE TO PLAY, BUT WE WILL BE FASTER AND MORE EFFECTIVE IF WE CHAMPION CLIMATE ACTION TOGETHER.”

— Cristian Feldkamp, Executive Director, CREA

pummeling down the mountainside haunts him at night, he says, fingering his amber prayer beads.

Flooding in Kagoshima, extreme heat in Kyoto, diminished beaches along the Pacific coast, landslides in Okayama—these are the disasters driving climate activists throughout Japan.

For Teisuke Suzuki, vice president of fish cake company Suzuhiro Kamaboko, a JCI member, what began with an uneasy awareness of declining fisheries climaxed with the 2011 tsunami on Japan's northeast coast, which triggered the release of radionuclides at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear

Top: The farm crew and family on the Miles family estate are part of the CREA group, one of the founding members of ACA Argentina.

Left: The Miles family estate.

Power Plant. A dapper man with carefully combed black hair, Suzuki, who loved eating yellowtail tuna in his childhood, realized major environmental changes were occurring when the catch of yellowtail off the Odawara coast, 50 miles south of Tokyo, plummeted dramatically over the course of 50 years. But he was stunned when the Daiichi accident and closure of nuclear power plants across the country plunged his company into frequent blackouts, threatening to shut down *kamaboko* production.

“I believed we could have electricity any time. I never thought beyond the plug,” says Suzuki.

Shocked into broadening his professional focus to include energy issues, Suzuki persuaded 38 local business owners, entrepreneurs, and community organizations to contribute to a company that would provide regional renewable energy. They formed Houtoku Energy, a JCI member named for a 19th-century movement emphasizing the ethic of cooperation and mutual help.

Houtoku’s electricity comes from solar power, and it provides new energy to a company, Shonan Power, that distributes it through a group called the Energy Consortium of Hakone and Odawara. Shonan contributes 1% of its profits to local community uses that include providing solar panels to schools. Now, renewable energy and community involvement are part of what makes his *kamaboko* taste so good, says Suzuki. “The fish for *kamaboko*-making need not only healthy seas but also healthy forests and rivers to thrive,” he says. “My business connects me to the whole world.”

Despite the enormous diversity of size and purpose among JCI members, they share a deep cultural commitment to repaying debts to fellow citizens, parents, ancestors—and to nature.

Part Buddhist influence, part Shinto, this profound sense of reciprocity drives the pledges of many JCI members to reduce their carbon footprints and restore the natural resources that supply their businesses.

Take for example Sekisui House, one of Japan’s largest homebuilding companies and a leader in sustainability. The

“WE BELIEVE THAT BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE AND PROSPEROUS SOCIETY IN MEXICO THAT RUNS ON THE RENEWABLE ENERGIES OF THE FUTURE AND PROTECTS ITS CITIZENS FROM THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IS A RESPONSIBILITY THAT WE ALL SHARE.”

— Mario Silva, General Director, Metropolitan Planning Institute, Guadalajara, Mexico

care that goes into each Sekisui house reflects a culture in which people think of their house as a legacy, says Kenichi Ishida, managing officer of the Osaka-based company. Miwa Haishima and her husband own a Sekisui house in a quiet neighborhood in Saitama City, a suburb north of Tokyo. It looks like nearby two-story homes, white-walled and tidy, with an overhang for parking bicycles; inside, it is appealingly spare. What distinguishes the Haishima house is its heated floors, heavily insulated ceiling and windows, and integrated solar roof tiles, which produce almost as much



MEXICO

Rank in terms of global carbon emissions: 11th

% of global carbon emissions: 1.4%

Climate pledge: Mexico committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030 (relative to a business as usual emissions projection)

Alliance for Climate Action Guadalajara

Launched: August 2018

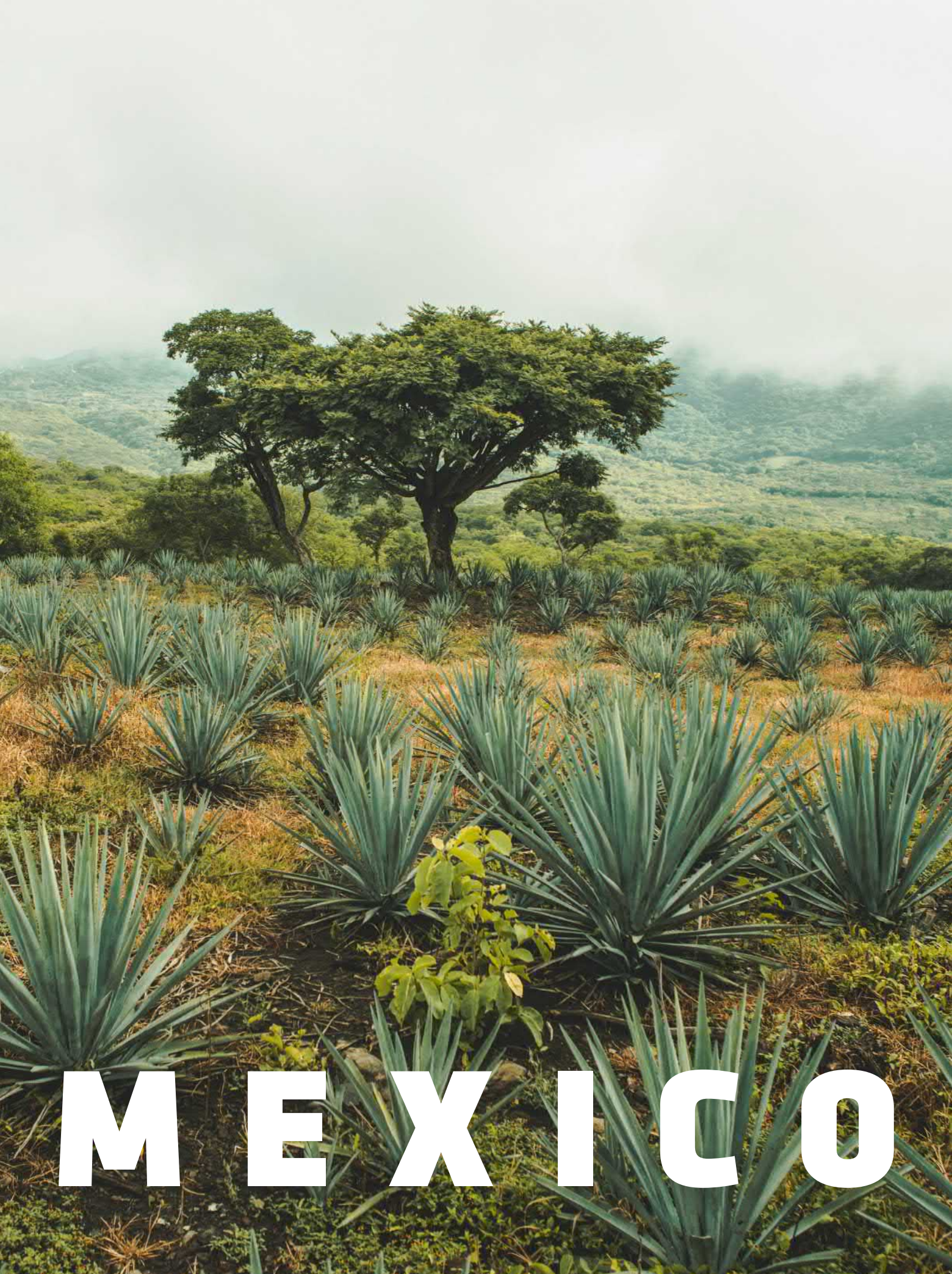
Representing: More than 5 million people

Based in Mexico’s second-largest metropolitan area, Alliance for Climate Action Guadalajara unites local and state governments, academia, businesses, and civil society in advancing the country’s climate goals. Members include the University of Guadalajara, the local government of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, the government of the state of Jalisco, and large companies from the waste management and energy sectors, including solar company Fortius.

Alliance members aim to demonstrate real commitment to climate action, beginning within their own institutions and companies, and working with all sectors of the economy to help accelerate the fulfillment and enhance the ambition of Mexico’s contribution under the Paris Agreement.



People from across Mexico, including in cities like Guadalajara (pictured above) have joined forces to fight climate change—and protect their signature landscapes.



MEXICO



UNITED STATES



UNITED STATES

Rank in terms of global carbon emissions: 2nd

% of global carbon emissions: 14.6%

Climate pledge: Before announcing plans to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the United States had pledged to reduce carbon emissions to 26%–28% below 2005 levels by 2025

We Are Still In

Launched: June 2017

Representing: Nearly half the US population—some 120 million Americans across all 50 states—and \$6.2 trillion, or almost half the US economy

When President Donald Trump announced on June 1, 2017, that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, mayors, governors, and business leaders came together to form We Are Still In. What began as a statement signaling support for the Paris Agreement has evolved into a platform for action and collaboration among tribes, faith groups, cultural institutions, colleges and universities, businesses and investors, health care institutions, and state, county, and city governments.

The bipartisan coalition now includes more than 3,500 representatives, from Anchorage, Alaska, to West Palm Beach, Florida, and from Connecticut to Hawaii. Signatories include household names like Amazon, Google, Nike, and Target. Organization leaders include Governor Kate Brown of Oregon, representatives from Microsoft and Walmart, and President Fawn Sharp of the Quinault Indian Nation. We Are Still In supporting organizations are united in pursuing ambitious climate goals; their commitments are showcased at wearestillin.com.

Youth gather outside Miami's City Hall (pictured above) each Friday to protest the city's position on the climate crisis, demanding that a climate emergency be declared and action be taken. Six feet above sea level and built on porous limestone, Miami faces regular flooding when sewers back up and the sea runs over the seawalls during high tide. Rising sea levels exacerbate the problem.

energy as the house consumes. Haishima uses a handheld online control panel to monitor energy usage room-by-room, often gleaned clues about which son is playing video games upstairs.

Today 79% of Sekisui's newly built houses are zero-net energy. "Japan needs more efforts—and more action from its government—when it comes to climate change," says Ishida. "We cannot rely just on the goodwill and efforts of people."

Whether in Japan, Argentina, Mexico, or the US, climate activists agree that national governments must enact policies to help mainstream progressive measures at the scale and speed that are needed.

It's a hopeful sign that more and more Japanese companies are pledging to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources, says Shin Furuno, Asia finance senior campaigner with the environmental organization 350.org. Still, their efforts so far are short of the ambitious measures needed. "What is missing now," Furuno says, "is not the financial or technical capability, but political will."

LIKE ALL ALLIANCES FOR CLIMATE ACTION, JCI aims to muster a collective voice loud enough to reach the national politicians who signed the Paris Agreement. While the coalition is too new to show results from its members' efforts, its combination of market-driven business savvy and community commitment is promising, says WWF's Panuncio-Feldman. "We're in an extraordinary cultural moment, and these coalitions are doing something unprecedented," she says.

Erika Abiko, owner of Hachidori-sha (Hummingbird) Café, has joined the call for a climate-safe future as well. Her second-floor restaurant is a short walk from the Atomic Bomb (Genbaku) Dome memorializing the 1945 nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, and Abiko, a self-described "action maker," uses the space to invite conversations about war, peace, and the environment. During one such recent conversation

"IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INSISTS ON ABDICATING LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE, IT WILL BE UP TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO STEP FORWARD—AND IN VIRGINIA WE ARE DOING JUST THAT."

— Former Governor Terry McAuliffe of Virginia

she learned about Tera Energy and signed up immediately; renewable energy now powers her air conditioner and refrigerators.

Abiko says she chose the name of her café from an allegorical story about a hummingbird trying to put out a forest fire by carrying one drop of water at a time. Mocked by other animals, the tiny bird replied that it was doing what it could.

"What I do is not a lot either," she says, "but it's what I can do."

This sense of optimism and shared responsibility is the spirit that inspires Alliances for Climate Action around the world. As JCI members embark on the challenge of building a zero-carbon, climate-resilient world, their promise to support one another is carrying the Buddhist monks' chorus across Japan and beyond, one chant at a time. 🌱