

# 'Big ideas' conference steps up funding for 'audacious' projects

12 April 2018, by Glenn Chapman



A globe of the world hangs above the entrance to the big-vision TED Conference in Vancouver as people arrive on April 11, 2018

The big-idea TED Conference is now backing up its talk on world-changing innovations with big money.

The organizers of the conference known for deep thinking discussions announced Wednesday it has raised \$400 million for projects with "the potential to create massive, global change."

The new initiative known as the Audacious Project will replace the annual \$1 million TED prize awards which have been allocated since 2005, with a hefty bump in funding.

TED organizers say the project will fund "collaborative philanthropy for bold ideas" and announced the first awards to organizations working on innovative ideas for health care, justice, agriculture and the environment.

"In some ways, it's the most ambitious thing TED has ever been involved with," TED curator Chris

Anderson said before taking to the stage to announce the project in Vancouver.

"It's like trying to recreate what an IPO does, but instead of investing in shares to make money we are investing in dreams to make change."

Inside TED, they coined the acronym "APO," for Audacious Project Offering.

Anderson has encouraged TED's influential community to act on big ideas that win their hearts or minds at annual conferences.

Each year, the project will identify up to five ideas that stand out as "thrillingly bold" with a credible path to execution.

Laurene Powell Jobs, the widow of legendary Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, took to the TED stage to help unveil the project, saying it could change millions of lives for the better by turning bold ideas for good into action.

"We must dream alongside and amplify those voices," she told the TED audience.

TED said pledges for the project came from Skoll Foundation, Virgin Unite, Dalio Foundation, The Bridgespan Group and others.

## Oceans to heavens

The slate of those being backed by the [project](#) consisted of The Environmental Defense Fund; The Bail Project; GirlTrek; Sightsavers, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.



Laurene Powell Jobs, widow of late Apple founder and CEO Steve Jobs, welcomed the new "Audacious Project" funding innovative ideas announced at the TED Conference

US-based Bail Project will manage a nationwide fund to help people post bond to get out of jail while their guilt or innocence is determined.

The Environmental Defense fund wants to track methane pollution from space with a network of satellites.

"Cutting methane emissions from the global oil and gas industry is the fastest thing we can do right now to put the brakes on climate change," said EDF president Fred Krupp.

The Woods Hole institution plans to uncover the secrets of a mysterious layer of ocean some 200 to 1,000 meters (600 to 3,000 feet) deep considered integral to the marine food ecosystem and the earth's climate.

GirlTrek in the US will train activists to improve the health of black women by getting them walking more.

Sightsavers aims to eliminate trachoma, a treatable disease that can blind people and remains a bane in low-income communities.

"We are in a moment where humans more than ever want to change the future," Anderson said.

"The money is out there; people want to spend it on good ideas."

### **Daring to dream**

Anyone in the world is free to pitch their dreams online at an [audaciousproject.org](http://audaciousproject.org) website with a handful picked annually, according to TED.

"We are looking for projects that are capable of impacting at least millions of lives in some way, or at a planetary scale," Anderson said.

"Almost the single biggest hope is that this process unlocks dreams that entrepreneurs never dared put forward before."

Since starting as an intimate gathering on the California coast 34 years ago, TED has grown into a global media platform with a stated devotion to "ideas worth spreading."

TED has a massive following for its trademark presentations in which speakers strive to give "the talk of their lives" in 18 minutes.

The theme of the annual Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) conference this week in Vancouver is "Age of Amazement," but with a keen eye on unintended consequences.

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