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structures  
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social justice

**Philanthropic**  
*Initiative for*  
**Racial**  
**Equity**

# CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM

## Moving Forward on Racial Justice Philanthropy

VOLUME 5 • JUNE 2014

## Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity

**Lori Villarosa**  
Executive Director

### Advisory Board

**Ron Chisom**  
The People's Institute for Survival  
and Beyond

**Richard Healey**  
Grassroots Policy Project

**Kalpana Krishnamurthy**  
Forward Together

**Keith Lawrence**  
Aspen Institute Roundtable on  
Community Change

**Kien Lee**  
Community Science

**Martha McCoy**  
The Paul J. Aicher Foundation /  
Everyday Democracy

**Gihan Perera**  
Florida New Majority

**John a. Powell**  
University of California – Berkeley,  
Haas Institute for a Fair and  
Inclusive Society

**Julie Quiroz**  
Movement Strategy Center

**Rinku Sen**  
Race Forward: Center for  
Racial Justice Innovation /  
ColorLines.com

**Makani Themba**  
The Praxis Project

Organizational affiliations listed for  
identification purposes only

## PRE Critical Issues Forum, Volume 5

**Lori Villarosa**, Project Director  
**Maggie Potapchuk**, Project Manager  
**Sarita Ahuja**, Editor  
**Rick Cohen**, Senior Editor, Critical Issues Forum series  
**Julie Quiroz** and **Lisa McGill**, Content Team  
**Viviane Oh** and **Philip Kim**, Copy Editing  
**Isabelle Blanco**, **Jessie Gallogly**, **Ilyssa Parker** and **Claudia Triana**, Copy and  
Project Support

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# Has There Been Progress on Racial Justice in Philanthropy?

by Lori Villarosa

“Have you seen any progress?” This is a question most of us are asked in our work toward social change. It is asked of ourselves, asked by our funders or boards or others. And when we focus that question on racial justice, a source of ongoing discourse where one’s answer can signify our level of awareness and be taken as a testament of our own righteousness, it’s an even more weighted question.

If we say there is no progress, are we denying huge strides? Are we invalidating reasons to keep trying? On the other hand, if we say there has been great progress, do we risk a self-congratulatory invitation to complacency?

As with most social justice work, the reality of moving a racial justice approach within philanthropy has been a mix of progress and setbacks. It is important to examine where has there been more or less progress, what has contributed to it and what may have diverted us. Some questions we might ask ourselves: Where has there been backlash? Could or should we have predicted it, so that perhaps in our future efforts we can be better prepared to pre-empt it or respond more effectively? Were there approaches that had important potential, but were ahead of their time? Or conversely, are we caught in a cycle of too many in power re-creating the wheel in the absence of a historical awareness – slowing overall progress?

As the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) marked our 10th anniversary last year, we were faced with these questions even more sharply than ever. When PRE received its initial support from the C.S. Mott Foundation in September 2002 through the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund,<sup>1</sup> it was led by a board primarily comprised of racial justice experts who had a nuanced understanding of philanthropy, joined by philanthropic leaders who had a strong racial justice lens. From the start, we made an intentional decision not to become a funder affinity group, believing in the value of an external perspective in philanthropic reform and of partnering with the many existing funder networks whose missions would be strengthened by greater exposure to racial justice frameworks.

In addition to conducting countless conference sessions in partnership with these membership associations and other nonprofit colleagues, PRE produced a number of publications, such as our *Critical Issues Forum* series. We also partnered on other resources, such as the *Guide to*

*Grantmaking with a Racial Equity Lens*, co-produced with GrantCraft, and *Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from The Racial Justice Grantmaking Assessment*, with Race Forward (then called Applied Research Center). Later, when several funders sought to establish a dedicated space for grantmakers with a racial justice portfolio rather than only working through other affinity groups, we agreed to convene the PRE Racial Justice Funder Roundtable to help them learn from one another, sharpen their strategies and strengthen their leadership on these issues among other peers.

In 2007, PRE became a project of the Tides Center, continuing this work and in some cases convening affinity group partners as well as funders to strategize collectively and strengthen racial justice funding. But at the same time as we began engaging more funders in applying a structural racialization lens, it was also clear that those who had recognized the value of the analysis were seeking even greater skills-building to operationalize it in their grantmaking and throughout their foundations. As the need to deepen this work became more evident, PRE added another programmatic layer – the Racial Justice Funders Labs, which allowed teams of grantmakers and some board members to delve into strategy development and implementation more intensively over two days.

Throughout our first decade, PRE has engaged with hundreds of funders from all parts of the country and of all different sizes and types. We recognize real advancement in the sophistication of some of these funders’ understanding of the issues we address. On another level, progress can be measured by the number of funders in the room who are at the earliest stage of learning about structural racism, because it means we have effectively reached “beyond the choir.”

When we considered this retrospective publication, rather than solely focus on the past decade of our existence, we wanted to reference the work that PRE has grown out of and continued to work on in close partnership with racial justice leaders both inside and outside philanthropy. First and foremost for PRE, that reference point is the work of the activists who are at the heart of our change model. But we also recognize the leadership and appreciate the many opportunities to have partnered with the racial and ethnic identity-based affinity groups that were the earliest champions of racial justice efforts within philanthropy, and

PRE invited former and current board members to reflect on the past two decades of philanthropy and racial justice work. We asked what progress have they seen, and what they think we should collectively focus on going forward. These are just a few of their thoughts:

### Why Reflect?

***Given the tremendous amount of transition in philanthropy, looking back at trends over time is not only important - it is absolutely necessary. I am proud of PRE's efforts to look back on some of the important milestones in racial justice philanthropy and its importance, impact and implications for the work today. We at PRE know there are some important discussions to be had about this history, and lessons to be learned and shared.***

– Makani Themba, Executive Director, The Praxis Project

***It is useful to look at what foundations have done in the past to learn from both mistakes and impactful actions within racial justice grantmaking. For example, approaching the 2010 Census and redistricting cycle, foundations took an early proactive approach to fund outreach and invest in capacity for organizations to engage in what we knew would be a challenging redistricting process. We saw good outcomes in terms of Census promotion and participation in redistricting, but little to actually influence how the 2010 Census was conducted. We need to reflect on lessons such as these and recognize that more transformational changes require even earlier intervention and support, such as now, when we could still impact a major restructuring of the race and ethnic origin questions for 2020.***

– Arturo Vargas Executive Director, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund (and PRE Board Member 2003-2013)

the other identity-based groups that later joined together as the Joint Affinity Groups.<sup>2</sup>

PRE has also appreciated the leadership among many issue-based affinity groups and geographically-based funder networks with which we have partnered closely, or that have independently advanced racial justice efforts. Our model of being more of an outside player with inside knowledge sought to modestly mirror some important dynamics of the National Committee on Responsive Philanthropy's early work. In more recent years, the Diversity in Philanthropy project and its later incarnation D5, has brought a new internal focus to efforts of diversity, inclusion and equity within philanthropy. The growth of such efforts and the continuing interest within parts of the foundation world to engage in them are marks of progress in the broader struggle.

During the past decade, the field of philanthropy has evolved in its understanding and willingness to tackle structural racialization in multiple ways. It has funded vibrant movements to reform the criminal justice system, the workplace and immigration policy. It has supported philanthropic leaders of color. It has learned about and debated implicit bias. It has funded some critical early experimentation on framing and communications related to racial equity projects, giving us deeper insight into the question of progress.

As we think about raising the bar going forward in philanthropy's understanding of a structural racialization lens in grantmaking, there is an ongoing need to experiment with effective framing and messaging. While the positions of PRE and its allies regarding the importance of being explicit around racial analysis – particularly in communications – are still contested, we have witnessed wins. For example, Race Forward's "Drop the I-Word" campaign has been successful in prompting numerous media venues to stop using the phrase "illegal immigrants." Also of note is Color of Change's efforts to get more than 69 corporations to drop their support for the conservative American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) by making more explicit its ties to the racial impacts of the Stand Your Ground laws following the killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. In addition to providing the core support that allowed for such campaigns, funders' intentional racial justice media strategies have helped lift an unprecedented number of leaders of color with strong structural racialization lenses onto media platforms like MSNBC, CNN and Huffington Post Live.

Just as we are making progress in reaching greater numbers of funders engaging in this analysis, we are now met with a new set of challenges. In our research for this publication, many activists expressed concerns about reduced support for the community organizing needed to build the power necessary to tackle structural racism. Others worried that some funders are actually moving away from a race focus completely. The grantmaking data is unclear. In part, it may be that there has been such significant growth in racial justice and organizing work that the available funding may not match their increased scale and need as they take on larger targets and operate in a more relational and sophisticated manner to tackle structural change.



**PRE Executive Director and Advisory Board, December 2013**

*Front Row (L to R):*  
Lori Villarosa, Kalpana Krishnamurthy, Makani Themba, Martha McCoy and Rinku Sen

*Back Row (L to R):*  
Keith Lawrence, John Powell, Ron Chisom, Maya Wiley and Gihan Perera

*Missing:*  
Richard Healey, Kien Lee and Julie Quiroz



Photos above:  
**PRE Racial Justice Funders Lab faculty John Powell and Richard Healey engaging with participants, Chicago, 2012**

Photo at right:  
**Rinku Sen presenting at PRE Racial Justice Funders Lab, New York 2013**



## Has There Been Progress?

*When we were seeking funding from others in the early '90s, they'd say 'Looks like great stuff, but it's not timely – we finished the race problem.' It's amazing that people thought that 'if you had started this in the 1970s, that would have been great, but 1990? We're done with race.' And most foundations don't believe that anymore. They actually understand race more, they understand that race is much more complex. They don't always understand what the complexity is. We've moved at least substantially, but not entirely, from personal prejudice, from intergroup relationships, away from just diversity, still not enough, but at least we are having a more complicated conversation and more complicated funding around structural racialization, around the mind sciences and implicit bias. I think the full implications haven't been realized yet, but we actually have moved.*

–John Powell, Executive Director, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, University of California Berkeley

*There have been many shifts over the past two decades in the ways structural racism manifests in U.S. society -- with progress on some fronts and further entrenchment of racial inequities in others. In light of this, racial justice grantmaking has been critical to analyzing structural racism across policy and community arenas and to assessing philanthropic approaches to addressing and flipping these destructive power arrangements.*

–Martha McCoy, Executive Director, Everyday Democracy and President, The Paul J. Aicher Foundation

*While it is certainly comforting to know that PRE exists and there is a level of effort and focus on the issues funding racial equity and justice, I think the philanthropic community has a very long way to go. We still are not comfortable dealing with issues that are racial. Our comfort level with looking at class versus race is considerably higher. Both issues of race and class are significant impediments in this country to economic progress, but they are separate issues. I hope PRE will encourage more of us to think seriously about funding racial equity and justice as an issue area.*

–Terri Lee Freeman, Executive Director, Community Foundation of National Capitol Region (and PRE Board Member 2003-2005)

Grantmaking with a structural racialization lens is complex and evolving. Within this volume, we address the concept, the dynamics of structural interventions, the challenges of measurement and the lessons that some funders and activists have gleaned. We know that there has been progress in philanthropy and that we must leverage the increased will to ask the right questions where it exists. Whether grantmaking with a structural racialization lens has increased in ways we can identify is an important next stage question as experts help to codify indicators that could be measured. The very nature of a structural approach requires understanding the relationships between issues and interventions. While we may be able to devise some appropriate markers to identify whether some proportion of funders have moved to this approach or not, at the moment there are no such proxies to measure. The fact that we must base our sense of progress on more qualitative measures at this stage does not indicate less rigor; on the contrary, qualitative analysis is an ongoing part of PRE's efforts to strengthen the discourse.

Even as we seek greater rigor, we also recognize that potentially transformative work has great value *even if it fails*. Our task is to identify what would make it more impactful, more structural and more apt to have long-term effects. This is difficult, complex work and we are up against hundreds of years of history as well as significant current interests that benefit from the status quo.

At PRE, we also try to remember to give those within the field, who may still be feeling their way to a path toward racial justice, the benefit of the doubt and opportunities to engage with our analysis. One of our board members, John Powell, often says “be soft on individuals, hard on structures.” While he and other PRE board members recognize there are certainly times when individuals in leadership roles must be challenged and held accountable, in general we find this is a useful sentiment to keep in mind. It pushes us out of the notion that the goal is to root out individual racists, and more importantly puts our focus on the broader structures that are at play within systems regardless of personal intent. Still, that does not mean there is no role for individual action. For those change agents within philanthropy, understanding the systems they themselves operate within and the broader systems their support can influence is critical. We appreciate the depth of passion and desire to deepen this understanding that is evident among so many funders, even when the progress overall might feel slower than many would like.

Very few of us enter into the nonprofit sector or philanthropy without wanting to do the right thing. While it is work we are very privileged to do, it is also challenging. Our struggle is finding the balance between holding ourselves and one another accountable, while also not being overly self-righteous to the point of shutting down others' learning. As a powerful quote from Malcom X reminds us,

“Don't be in a hurry to condemn because he doesn't do what you do or think as you think or as fast. There was a time when you didn't know what you know today.”

Over the course of my own 20 years in philanthropy focused on advancing a racial justice lens, I've witnessed acts of courage, leadership and struggle. I've also seen missteps (of my own as well as colleagues) and understand the frustration that we heard from many in the field in the course of the past year as we have conducted focus groups, a webinar and our writers have done interviews to get a sense of both funders' and activists' perspectives on progress for the articles in this volume. And yet, through case studies of particular foundations and essays about structural racism, intersectionality and media justice, we're able to share real progress even as each piece recognizes there is still much more to be done.

As with each volume of PRE's Critical Issues Forum, we offer these articles with the hope of sparking deeper discourse and greater learning in the field. Even more so than in the past, we hope that publishing the volume online creates a shared space for others to weigh in. We invite you to join in the dialogue as we reflect and continue building on the work of so many before us, and create new bridges for the many who are taking up this work now and after us.



**Lori Villarosa** is the executive director of Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE), which is intended to increase the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at combating institutional and structural racism in communities through capacity building, education, and convening of grantmakers and grantseekers. For further information about PRE, including links to many

related resources and organizations, please visit our website, [www.racialequity.org](http://www.racialequity.org).

## Endnotes

- 1 Now called the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Education Fund
- 2 The Joint Affinity Group partners historically included Association of Black Foundation Executives, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Disability Funders Network, Funders for LGBTQ Issues, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Native Americans in Philanthropy, Women's Funding Network and Women & Philanthropy. In recent years, Disabilities Funders Network and Women & Philanthropy have left the coalition or disbanded, and Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy has joined.

## Going forward

*There are a lot of steps that philanthropy can take to deepen and broaden support of racial justice movement building. Some of the most obvious – name race explicitly in the problem and strategies of the foundation, evaluate and change the culture of foundations to make them more accessible to communities of color, look at the grantmaking program and the assets to ensure alignment with racial justice – remain the most elusive for many grantmakers. Demanding that grantees change without doing critical work within philanthropic institutions is hypocritical and will not result in the kind of structural change we all seek. I hope in the future that foundations will measure their impact not only by evaluating their grantmaking, but also in looking at how well their own institution walks the walk.*

–Kalpana Krishnamurthy, Policy Director, Forward Together

*What foundations could do is begin to use an anti-racist analysis in their policymaking, grantmaking, and decision making. Foundations can also push the grantees to develop an anti-racist analysis when they request funding. They could ask both internally to the foundation, and externally to the grantees how they are institutionalizing anti-racist analysis with the people and in the communities they serve. When interviewing the grantees they can ask them, "Why are people poor?" Foundations can begin to incorporate an anti-racist analysis in their mission and vision statements.*

*If we at PRE want to become more effective reaching foundations to deal with racial equity then we must also be more humanistic and more accountable, giving technical assistance with principles guiding our work. Those principles being: undo racism; understand, share and celebrate culture; re-examine and learn from history; analyze the manifestations of racism; undo internalized racial oppression; develop leadership; maintain accountability; network; and reshape gatekeeping. I see these principles as also helping to measure our progress and helping PRE to be more effective.*

–Ronald Chisom, Executive Director, People's Institute for Survival and Beyond

*Building on the important work of Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, as we look to the future we need to recognize that racial justice philanthropy will need to explore the full breadth of the intersections between racial justice and environmental, economic, social and gender justice globally. Furthermore, it will be critical that philanthropy stops simply tinkering incrementally around the edges of service delivery rather than addressing systemic change and tackling the root causes of problems.*

– Kumi Naidoo, Executive Director, Greenpeace International (and PRE Board Member 2003- 2010)



# Timeline of Race, Racism, Resistance and Philanthropy 1992-2014

By Larry Raphael Salomon, Julie Quiroz, Maggie Potapchuk and Lori Villarosa

This historical timeline attempts to capture, in one place, many significant moments, events, controversies and victories that have defined the racial landscape since the turbulent days following the LAPD/Rodney King beating verdict over two decades ago. When communities in Los Angeles rebelled, “race riots” exploded the commonly held myth that our nation had progressed from the explicitly unjust conditions that had defined earlier generations. And in the decades since, the history chronicled in this timeline belies the notion that the U.S. is a “post-racial” society.

For funders seeking to understand and provide resources in support of racial justice work, this timeline also includes some of the key events in philanthropy that were shaped by the incidents, policies and cultural manifestations of race and racism during these years.

Though this timeline starts in 1992, it is important to recognize that obviously there was significant pioneering work for many decades around racial justice and philanthropy before this starting point – including before and during major movements such as the civil rights movement and the Chicano workers movement. In addition, all the current racial identity-based affinity groups (Association of Black Foundation Executives, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Native Americans in Philanthropy and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy) formed before 1992. In fact, the Association of Black Foundation Executives was formed in 1971 to protest the lack of any African Americans on the board slate of the Council on Foundations, and became the first of any formal affinity group to be established in philanthropy. Additionally, more than 100 “population-focused funds” were founded before 1992. There has been significant growth in the two decades since, with more than 400 now – too many to include here.

Our intent in creating this timeline is to highlight significant developments over the past two decades that have created momentum in philanthropy towards advancing racial justice.<sup>1</sup> We also want to ensure that the lessons learned, even in relatively recent times such as these, are not lost – particularly in a field such as philanthropy where the ability of funders to resource their own ideas with little challenge can lead to reinventing the wheel.



The timeline is strictly focused on the U.S., with only rare references to cross-border issues, though we are keenly aware that there have been numerous international events tied to race that were significant here as well as globally. We considered including global events that resonated and impacted racial activism within the U.S., such as the first democratic elections in South Africa that brought Nelson Mandela into the presidency in 1994. In the end, with limited time and space in this publication, we realized it was not possible to do a serious treatment of the many racialized issues around the world in the past 20 years, such as extreme cases of genocide and ethnic cleansing; ongoing discrimination of Roma in Europe, and xenophobia globally; as well as the many global examples of critical resistance such as anti-apartheid efforts, Afro-Brazilian anti-racism campaigns, or advocacy efforts to counter Islamophobia in Europe. While admitting the geographic limitations of this timeline, it should in no way feed possible misperceptions within philanthropy that racialized struggle and resistance are strictly U.S. phenomena. PRE has and continues to engage with colleagues seeking to strengthen their approach and understanding of structural racialization in other countries, including past work with the European Foundation Centre’s Diversity, Migration and Integration Interest Group.

It is our hope that thinking critically about the relationship between the history of racism and resistance, and the history of racial justice funding, will generate productive questions and discussion. To that end, we offer this set of questions as we reflect on the past and consider the philanthropic field’s actions and strategies for the present and into the future.



**“It’s so critical to be able to take a clear-eyed look at past decades of racial justice and philanthropy, for the lessons, for the accounting of contributions and shortfalls, and for the inspiration. In this past decade alone, the U.S. elected its first President of color, started to take apart racist drug policies and saw the rise of grave new threats like Stand Your Ground laws and mass deportation. We did a lot; there is more to do.”**

– Rinku Sen, Race Forward & Colorlines.com

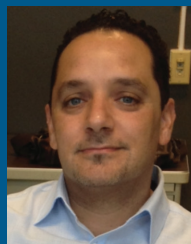
1. How did particular moments contribute to an understanding of race and racial justice? How did foundations learn and shift? How did they communicate that learning and shifting? How did foundations’ responses make grantees more able or less able to respond to critical crisis and opportunity?
2. What dimensions of structural racism were present in a given moment or situation? Did foundations help elevate the structural dimensions and potential responses? How can they do so today?
3. How embedded was a racial justice commitment in the strategy and program of foundations as moments and situations arose? How did this readiness, or lack thereof, impact foundations’ ability to respond effectively? What lessons could help inform future actions?
4. How was a particular funding approach or strategy informed directly by racial justice groups deeply engaged in the issue? What are some practices that worked well and could be replicated? What are the lessons?
5. Did funding strategies include conducting a structural power analysis? Have grantmaking practices been reviewed to assure they are not contributing to inequity or unintentionally having a racialized impact? Who is defining success?
6. How did the media shape interpretation of particular moments and situations? What racial justice media efforts have foundations supported that help shape meaning at a given time? Did the messages communicated by foundations provide structural context of the issue?
7. How could foundations have collaborated or leveraged resources in a given moment or situation? What were the barriers to the funders’ collaboration (e.g., branding, turf issues) that might need to be addressed in the future?

Despite the many limitations of this timeline, our purpose in recounting history is to place current U.S. racial justice work in context. It is to remind us of the myriad connections between and among communities, and how

actors from different spheres have come together and fought for racial justice. From Native American protests at the Super Bowl to the Million Man March, to the struggle of home health care workers in Wisconsin and Missouri, the history of racism and resistance – and the work of foundations on these issues – is rich. From the tragic and dramatic murders at the hands of those sworn to protect, the equally high-profile court trials and verdicts, to the less visible local struggles against environmental racism and immigrant detention, there is both racism and resistance, a necessary balance to counter the other side of the false post-racial narrative – the post-movement narrative. While we pay deep respect and homage to countless men and women who struggled, won or even died to advance us to this point, we are heartened that today’s movement work is more varied, more creative than ever.

We invite funders and activists to reflect upon some of this history to perhaps learn more about work that might have taken time to take hold, or perhaps recognize missed opportunities that nevertheless might still inspire future work for racial justice. We look forward to you sharing them with us. “The great force of history,” James Baldwin wrote, “comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do.”

This history remains present with us. Here is our attempt to remember it.



**Larry Salomon** has been teaching at the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University since 1994. Among other courses, he teaches Grassroots Organizing in Communities of Color, in the Race and Resistance Studies program. Salomon also has a 20-year association with the Center for Third World Organizing, and is a long-tenured member of its board

of directors. He is the author of *Roots of Justice: Stories of Organizing in Communities of Color*.

Julie Quiroz, Bio on p. 47  
Maggie Potapchuk, Bio on p. 69  
Lori Villarosa, Bio on p. 7



# Timeline of Race, Racism, Resistance and Philanthropy 1992-2014

## 1992

A day before the Los Angeles police/Rodney King case verdicts, gang leaders from the Bloods and Crips meet publicly with South Central community activists to announce a cease-fire and gang truce.

On April 29, four White LAPD officers are acquitted of the 1991 beating of Rodney King, triggering five days of civil unrest leaving more than 50 people dead and more than 2,000 injured.



A series of widely publicized incidents at Denny's restaurants across the country leads to a class-action lawsuit filed by thousands of Black customers who had been refused service, and were forced to wait longer and pay more than White customers.

Presidential candidate Bill Clinton's widely replayed critical comments of rapper Sister Souljah appears to be a calculated move to attract White voters back to the Democratic Party, signaling a new direction in mainstream Democratic Party politics.

During a month of heated protest, nine UCLA students and a professor launch a dramatic 14-day hunger strike, galvanizing widespread attention to the underfunding of Chicano Studies and resulting in the establishment of the Cesar Chavez Chicano Studies Center.

Asian Immigrant Women Advocates organizes a multiyear campaign of boycotts, picket lines and ad campaigns against Jessica McClintock Inc. in support of seamstresses who were laid off and owed back wages. Their eventual victory helps rewrite industry standards.

Spike Lee's film "Malcolm X" is released to theaters across the country after more than a year of controversy over its production. The movie grosses over \$50 million and is nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards.

New community formations such as Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives (AGENDA) rise up in response to the Los Angeles civil unrest, waging successful campaigns for jobs, police accountability, public safety, and quality health care in South Los Angeles.

A half dozen national foundations begin to develop more intentional programs around race and diversity. A larger number of funders at the community level are supporting individual projects aimed at improving local race relations.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation launches the African American Men and Boys Initiative, led by Dr. Bobby Austin, to repair the breach between Black males and the rest of society.

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) holds its first conference and briefs funders on refugee issues.

Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) publishes "Invisible and in Need: Philanthropic Giving to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders," an influential report that tackles the "model minority" myth and also shows that less than 0.2% of all philanthropic giving goes to these communities.

## 1993

A joint "Apology Resolution" (Public law 103-105) regarding Hawaii is passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, marking the first time in American history that the United States government officially apologizes for overthrowing the legitimate government of a sovereign nation.

A study by the National Science Foundation finds that 51% of White respondents have racist attitudes toward African Americans, regardless of political affiliation.

The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) forms to inject an Asian-Pacific Islander (API) perspective into the environmental justice movement and work in API communities.

The Farmworker Network for Economic and Environmental Justice forms to support the struggle of 50,000 workers in nine independent farmworker organizations.

The Northeast Environmental Justice Network forms after the West Harlem Environmental Action leads the fight over the North River Sewage Treatment Plant, drawing in activists across 12 northeastern states.

The Joint Affinity Groups (JAG) is founded as a coalition of grantmaker associations that engages the field of philanthropy to reach its full potential by supporting diversity, inclusiveness and the principles of social justice through a more equitable distribution of resources.

The Ford Foundation launches its Diversity Initiative for Community Foundations.

GCIR releases its first publication, *Newcomers in America*, which frames immigration issues for funders.

The Council on Foundations (COF) creates the Taskforce on Inclusiveness.

*"A critical part of the L.A. experience was the early efforts of a set of small-scale yet committed and visionary funders who were willing to place bets on new experiments in organizing – and were also willing to educate larger funders as the experiments began to work out and change lives for the better."*

– Manuel Pastor & Michelle Prichard, *L.A. Rising: The 1992 Civil Unrest, the Arc of Social Justice Organizing, and the Lessons for Today's Movement Building*

"Americans may celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day, but there is no large-scale effort to register incarcerated citizens to vote. Black, Brown and Asian communities are seen as a threat to the current power structure. It is no coincidence that California saw both Proposition 187 ... and Proposition 184 ("three strikes and you're out") in 1994."

– Dorsey Nunn, executive director, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children

## 1994

The Bus Riders Union leads popular protests against a massive fare hike and increases its organizing capacity to represent the civil rights of 400,000 daily bus riders in Los Angeles County – the majority of whom are people of color and low-income women.

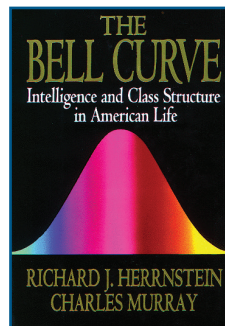
The University of Massachusetts issues a study funded by Waste Management Inc. that challenges citing demographics, triggering the first wave of attacks on the environmental justice movement.

Amendments to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act guarantee protection of religious rights and sacred sites for American Indians.

In Baltimore, alliances among labor unions, community organizations and faith leaders lead to the first of many successful living wage organizing campaigns. Similar alliances spread across the country.

The U.S. Border Patrol signals a massive increase in spending on immigration enforcement as it implements Operation Gatekeeper, essentially militarizing the San Diego-Tijuana border crossing. Within a decade, thousands of deaths are discovered in the desert region between San Diego and Nogales.

Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein co-author the controversial book *The Bell Curve*, which argues in part that racial differences in IQ scores are not necessarily the result of environmental factors alone.



By a wide margin, California voters pass Proposition 184 (popularly known as "three strikes, you're out"), the nation's toughest mandatory sentencing law.

California voters also pass Proposition 187, which denies undocumented immigrants public services like education and health care. A week before the vote, organizers across California mobilize 70,000 people in Los Angeles to march against the proposed law.

Republicans win a majority of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and push their "Contract with America," a series of reactionary measures designed to make tax increases difficult to pass into law, creates massive cuts in social spending, while increasing spending on law enforcement.

Multiracial organization Pushback Network forms to secure social, economic and racial justice for women of color and low-income families in the state of New York through new models of political engagement.

The Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the C.S. Mott Foundation develop fatherhood initiatives focused particularly on African-American families.

COF develops its *Statement of Inclusiveness* requiring a commitment to inclusiveness and diversity as a fundamental operating principle.

## 1995

The U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission concludes that Asian Americans are paid less than Whites in almost every job category, even when they share identical educational levels and other variables.

The terrorist bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City kills 160 people. The convicted bombers are later identified as having extreme anti-government political views and are linked with White supremacist groups.

O.J. Simpson is found not guilty of double murder. Widely reported opinion polls indicate tremendous differences in the reactions to the verdict between Whites and African Americans.



The Million Man March gathers in Washington, D.C., answering the call "to unite in self-help and self-defense against economic and social ills plaguing the African-American community."

American Indian Movement activists protest the Cleveland Indians and Atlanta Braves at the 1995 World Series for both clubs' continued use of offensive mascots and other imagery.

The Environmental Justice Fund is founded by six networks to promote the creation of alternative funding strategies to support grassroots environmental justice organizing.

AAPIP, GCIR and Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) co-publish *Reweaving Our Social Fabric: Challenges to the Grantmaking Community after Proposition 187*, which focuses on funding for immigrant communities.

The COF annual conference includes the session "Sustaining Diversity in the Workplace."

## 1996

The U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals rules in *Hopwood v. Texas* that the University of Texas law school's use of affirmative action in their admission process is invalid.

In White Pine, Michigan, Ojibwe activists at the Bad River Reservation blockade railroad tracks and stop the transportation of chemicals used in mining that pollute tribal food sources.

Living up to his pledge to "end welfare as we know it," President Clinton signs into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, which dramatically cuts welfare payments and sets time limits for recipients.

Under sponsorship of the Seventh Generation Fund, with Indigenous Environmental Network and affiliate support, the Indigenous Anti-Nuclear Summit brings together a network of indigenous peoples from North America and the Pacific.

The Orwellian-named California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209) is passed into law by California voters – ending the use of affirmative action in public higher education, employment and contracting.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports the Emerging Funds in Communities of Color, and Cultures of Giving.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation establishes The National Task Force on African-American Men and Boys, and releases the publication *Repairing the Breach: Key Ways to Support Family Life, Reclaim Our Streets, and Rebuild Civil Society in America's Communities*.

A co-sponsored luncheon "Affirmative Action, What's At Stake" by Women and Philanthropy, with JAG, at the COF annual conference draws a broad audience.

Mary Francis Winter's book *Include Me! Making the Case for Inclusiveness for Private and Family Foundations* is published by COF.

## 1997

A decade into SEIU's "Justice for Janitors" campaigns, 4,000 janitors organize in Washington, D.C. Contracts follow in Denver, Philadelphia and New Jersey, representing a reinvigorated labor movement.



Seeking to promote a "national conversation" on issues related to race and racism, President Bill Clinton announces the Initiative on Race during an address to graduating students at University of California, San Diego.

African-American farmers file a lawsuit charging the USDA with discrimination in access to loans and subsidies.

Activists call for demonstrations after Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant, is beaten and sodomized with a broom handle by New York City police after being arrested outside a nightclub in Brooklyn.

Teamsters organize successful strikes against United Parcel Service (UPS) tackling issues and demands of part-time workers, a growing majority of whom are people of color.

One year after the passage of the welfare reform law, nine out of ten New York City soup kitchens and food pantries report an increased demand for services. Other major cities report similar increases, even as the national economy remained relatively strong.

The Providence-based Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE) organizes and wins the "Home Daycare Justice" campaign, making Rhode Island the first and only state to provide insurance for day care providers.

The minor league Canton-Akron Indians rename themselves the Akron Aeros and boost their merchandise sales from \$60,000 to \$1.2 million, the largest merchandise income of any minor league team.



The W.K. Kellogg Foundation fully funds the Center for Living Democracy's effort to catalogue a number of interracial dialogue groups around the country and produce a directory entitled *Bridging the Racial Divide*.

The C.S. Mott Foundation Board approves a \$2 million annual grantmaking objective "aimed at addressing the institutional and societal causes of racism, and improving understanding and appreciation of racial and ethnic diversity."

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation launches the Village Foundation, the first foundation focused solely on the needs of Black boys and men.

Hawaiian sovereignty; Native American, Native Hawaiian and Asian-Pacific Islander issues; and the "Myth of the Multiracial Paradise," which addressed issues of institutional racism within Hawaii, are featured sessions at the COF annual conference in Honolulu.

## 1998

Congress reauthorizes a modified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program as part of President Clinton's "mend it, don't end it" approach to affirmative action.

Four months after its formation, the New York Taxi Workers Alliance (NYTWA) organizes nearly 40,000 taxi drivers to strike for 24 hours in a protest against new regulations that would dramatically increase insurance costs and fines.

California voters pass Proposition 227 ("English for the children") effectively banning bilingual education programs in public schools.

African-American James Byrd Jr. is chained to the back of a pickup truck and dragged for three miles in a brutal murder by White supremacists. His lynching leads to the passage of new hate crimes legislation in the state of Texas.

The Black Radical Congress is formed in Chicago, bringing together over 2,000 participants.

California Gov. Pete Wilson vetoes the "Driving while Black or Brown" bill, which would have required law enforcement to document demographic information on the race of motorists pulled over by police. The issue is also debated in state houses from New Jersey to Illinois.

Promoted by African-American businessman Ward Connerly and conservative entrepreneur Tim Eyman, Washington state voters pass anti-affirmative action Initiative 200, modeled after California's Proposition 209.

*Changing Communities, Changing Foundations: The Story of Diversity Efforts at Twenty Foundations* documents a four-year initiative (1993-96) by the Ford Foundation to fund community foundations to become more inclusive, reflecting the communities they serve.

The C.S. Mott Foundation and the Ford Foundation join forces with five community foundations and one local foundation to launch the Community Foundations/Intergroup Relations Program.

*"Almost from its inception in June 1997, the body, formally the Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race, was plagued by a lack of organization, a youthful staff with few policy experts, a lack of political experience and continued interference by White House officials who feared the political consequences of its work."*

– Clinton Panel on Race Urges Variety of Modest Measures, by Stephen A. Holmes

"Historically and continuing into the modern era, the Indian policies of the federal government have been aimed either at dismantling tribal governments and assimilating Native people or at paternalistically isolating tribes to misappropriate their assets. By all accounts, these mixed and often misguided efforts resulted in the devastating social conditions found on many reservation communities today."

—Sherry Salway Black, National Congress of American Indians

Supported by the Ford Foundation, the National Conference for Community and Justice publishes *Intergroup Relations in the United States*, a series of three reports that examine key issues in the field.

Rainbow Research releases *Changing Communities, Changing Foundations*, documenting the most promising practices in the work of community foundations.

Funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund's *Building One Nation* reports on race relations efforts within neighborhoods, schools and the workplace.

## 1999

"Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex" is launched as a national campaign at a conference and strategy session at University of California, Berkeley.

Plainclothes NYPD shoot at Guinean immigrant Amadou Diallo 41 times, killing him. The criminal trial for the officers is moved to Albany where they are acquitted, leading to demonstrations that call attention to police violence and racial profiling.

African-American farmers win a class action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for racial discrimination in its allocation of farm loans and assistance.

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reports to the President, "[The U.S. government's] failure to recognize and eliminate [racial] differences in health care delivery, financing and research presents a discriminatory barrier that creates and perpetuates differences in health status."

The first annual White Privilege Conference is launched by Dr. Eddie Moore Jr. at Cornell College in Iowa.

Southeast Asian community members in the Bronx challenge New York City's failed welfare-to-workfare programs. Their efforts are chronicled the next year in the documentary "Eating Welfare."

A group of civil rights attorneys launch The Advancement Project, an innovative racial justice organization working to strengthen grassroots efforts to eradicate structural inequities.

COF publishes the study *Cultures of Caring*, which describes the philanthropic interests and traditions of donors in communities of color.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation provides major startup funding for the Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity (NABRE), a project of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

"Beyond Identity" (multi-issue organizing) conference sessions take place at several venues: the COF annual conference, the National Network of Grantmakers (NNG) conference and the COF community foundations conference.

## 2000

In a dramatic reversal of its past policy, the AFL-CIO calls for an immediate amnesty for undocumented immigrants, and an end to sanctions on employers who hire them.

California voters pass Proposition 21, the Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act, deciding to treat juvenile offenders as adults. The new law expands criminal penalties for youth, extends the legal definition of gang affiliation, and lowers the age to 14 by which youth can be charged and prosecuted as adults.

With California's draconian Proposition 21 legislation, a new generation of youth leaders and organizations emerge, initiating a new wave of racial justice organizing.

South Carolina is the last state in the U.S. to make Martin Luther King Jr. Day a paid holiday for all state employees.

The Navajo Nation organizing group Dine' CARE leads a national organizing effort with a multiracial and multistate coalition to amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act legislation.

The Applied Research Center (ARC) conducts a "conceptual mapping" of the variety of approaches emerging to address racism, funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation. The resulting report, *Confronting the New Racisms: Anti-Racist Organizing in the Post-Civil Rights Era*, provides in-depth case studies of six different programs.

The Colorado Trust launches the Supporting Refugees and Immigrant Families Initiative that would grant a total of \$11 million over seven years.

HIP launches the Funders' Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities after a three-year planning process, bringing together local and national funders to build the capacity of small- to mid-sized Latino nonprofits through grants and technical assistance.

COF publishes *Opening Doors: Pathways to Diverse Donors*, giving nonprofit organizations resources and strategies to understand the philanthropic traditions of diverse communities and to build effective outreach efforts.

## 2001

Welfare rights activists disrupt Charles Murray, conservative author of *The Bell Curve*, during his speech at the "New World of Welfare" conference held in Washington D.C. The foundation-sponsored conference is targeted because it fails to include a single welfare recipient or grassroots advocate.

The city of Cincinnati convulses with four days of civil unrest following the fatal shooting of Timothy Thomas, a 19-year-old Black male, by White police officer Steven Roach. It is the largest urban rebellion in the United States since the Los Angeles riots in 1992.

The ruling in *South Camden Citizens in Action v. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection* states that compliance with environmental laws does not equal compliance with civil rights laws, and determines that New Jersey has violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is the first environmental justice case to prevail under this theory, but the decision is later overturned.

Organizers form Human Solidarity in Long Island, New York, in response to the attempted murders of two day laborers. They fight for workplace justice and battle the racist harassment of workers by citizens in the suburban town of Farmingville.

The increase in hate crimes and other acts of harassment targeting immigrant workers prompts the formation of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network.



On 9/11, Al Qaeda terrorists aboard four hijacked passenger planes carried out attacks against the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and a thwarted crash in Pennsylvania, killing nearly 3000 on the ground and in the air.

In Durban, South Africa, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance attracts racial justice activists and organizers from around the world in September. The U.S. and Israeli government delegations walk out over a draft resolution that criticizes Israel and equates Zionism with racism.

Reports surface of acts of violence and harassment against Muslim and Arab Americans days after the Sept. 11 attacks. Four days after 9/11, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh gas station owner in Mesa, Arizona, is shot and killed by Frank Rocque.

The ACLU of Northern California creates the Racial Justice Project, which focuses on racial profiling by law enforcement. Originally established to focus on affirmative action, the project shifts its attention after input from racial justice leaders.

With very little debate, Congress passes the USA PATRIOT Act, expanding the powers of law enforcement. This leads to an increase in racial profiling, immigrant detentions and deportations.

The Bush Administration implements the "No Child Left Behind" policy, which financially penalizes schools that underperform based on standardized testing standards.

In the wake of 9/11, comprehensive immigration reform, which seemed likely to pass in Congress, stalls and is eventually abandoned.

The Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers publishes *Engaging Diverse Communities for and through Philanthropy*, a handbook for organizations interested in reaching out to diverse donors.

Rainbow Research publishes *Improving Race Relations and Undoing Racism: Roles and Strategies for Community Foundations*, funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation.

*Diversity Practices in Philanthropy: Findings from a National Study* is the release of a preliminary JAG-sponsored report and session presentation at the COF annual conference.

*Building on a Better Foundation: A Toolkit for Creating an Inclusive Grantmaking Organization* is produced by the Donors Forum of Chicago, the Minnesota Council on Foundations, the Northern California Grantmakers and the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers.

Penda Hair, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, publishes *Louder than Words: Lawyers, Communities and the Struggle for Justice*, an important report on innovative civil rights strategies.

## 2002

California voters pass Proposition 40, the largest resource bond in United States history. It provides \$2.6 billion for parks, clean water and clean air with an unprecedented level of support among communities of color and low-income communities.

The first North American Indigenous Mining Summit is held. Working groups develop action plans to address coal, uranium and metallic mining activities on Native American lands.

The Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY) is founded after the Windows on the World restaurant was destroyed in the World Trade Center attacks. The center wins back wages and new jobs for displaced "back-of-the-house" workers and others. ROC quickly grows into a national organization with over 10,000 worker-members in over two dozen locations.

Three key national organizations with strong racial justice lenses – the Praxis Project, the Center for Social Inclusion and the Opportunity Agenda – are all officially launched with a variety of research, technical assistance and communications tools.

The newly created Department of Homeland Security requires thousands of immigrant men from countries with large Muslim populations to report to federal authorities under a special registration program. The ensuing practice leads to a major wave of detentions and deportations.

Japanese-American community leaders, many of whom had been held as prisoners with their families during World War II, organize rallies and teach-ins to draw parallels between the history of internment and the racist treatment of Muslims, South Asians and Arabs in the wake of Sept. 11.

JAG sponsors a comprehensive national study that provides practical recommendations for foundations to address the growing diversity of the communities they serve: *The Meaning and Impact of Board and Staff Diversity in the Philanthropic Field: Findings from a National Study*.

The C.S. Mott Foundation launches the "Leading by Example" program, which works with four community foundations on racial equity and inclusion issues.

Public Interest Projects (PIP) launches The Racial Justice Collaborative, a partnership of 25 foundations and individual donors that support innovative racial justice advocacy and makes grants to collaborations between lawyers and community organizations using legal and non-legal tools to combat structural exclusion.

The Dellums Commission, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and chaired by Congressman Ron Dellums, is formed to research conditions faced by young men of color and produce policy recommendations for reducing disparities.

"Is Philanthropy Keeping Pace with our Diverse Communities?" takes place at all three COF conferences, including the annual conference, and conferences for community foundations and family foundations.

Institute of Medicine's (IOM) landmark study, *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care*, is published. The study helps broaden the base of health philanthropy to consider racial and ethnic disparities in quality of health services.

The Funding Exchange adopts "Principles of Unity," including a renewed commitment to be anti-racist organizations and work for racial justice.

*"Those who are racially marginalized are like the miner's canary: their distress is the first sign of danger that threatens us all. It is easy enough to think that when we sacrifice this canary, the only harm is to communities of color. Yet others ignore problems that converge around racial minorities at their own peril, for these problems are symptoms warning us that we all are at risk."*  
 – Lani Guinier & Gerald Torres, *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy*

COF hires a director of Affinity Groups and Inclusive Practices, and the internal staff task force is reinstated.

Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres publish *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy*, with support from The Ford Foundation and the C.S. Mott Foundation. It discusses how to diagnose systemic injustice and organize to resist it.

AAPIP launches the Asian-American Women's Project with support from the Ford Foundation, including a national book tour for *Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns and Responsive Human and Civil Rights Advocacy* by Lora Jo Foo.

## 2003

The largest coordinated protests in recorded history converge on cities all over the world as people express outrage at the imminent U.S. invasion of Iraq. Reports of racist harassment and other hate crimes increase sharply in the weeks leading up to the invasion.

Racial justice activists circulate *An Open Letter to Activists Concerning Racism in the Anti-War Movement*.

Both *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger* concerning the University of Michigan's affirmative action admissions policy reach the Supreme Court. In the first case, the court upholds the law school's admissions policy, while it rules in the second against the university's undergraduate admissions policy.

The Color Lines Conference sponsored by Harvard University's Civil Rights Project gathers over 1,100 academics and activists to discuss segregation and resegregation of the U.S.

Proposition 54, The Racial Privacy Initiative, is rejected by California voters. The proposed law would restrict state and local governments from collecting or using information on a person's race, ethnicity, color or national origin for the purposes of public education, public contracting, public employment and other government operations.

Joining the ranks of other newspapers that have also adopted similar guidelines, the Nebraska Journal Star newspaper amends its style, and along with other related changes, will no longer print the "redskin" racial slur.

The Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) is officially launched in January with the goal of increasing resources aimed at addressing institutional and structural racism.

Developed by the Mid-South Commission to Build Philanthropy, with initial Ford Foundation support, *Where Hope and History Rhyme: Reflections and Findings* provides a set of philanthropic recommendations for advancing racial and social equity in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The Funding Exchange raises funds for a national "Peace and Racial Justice" grantmaking initiative to support anti-racial profiling and anti-Islamophobia actions.

The Schott Foundation for Public Education begins its Black Boys Initiative with the goal of creating a movement to improve the educational experiences of Black boys, and to ensure that they graduate high school with confidence to become successful members of society.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation supports the American Psychological Association's initiative Valuing Diversity Project, with the Association for the Study and Development of Community (now Community Science). The study seeks to enhance the capacity of professional psychology to promote and support community efforts that value diversity.

The COF community foundations conference includes "Affinity Group Collaborations with Community Foundations in Diverse Communities."

GCIR convenes a communications strategy meeting to discuss concerns over the connections between immigration and terrorism. Programs look at African refugees; Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians; farm workers; and immigration in new gateway states.

The Four Freedoms Fund is founded by PIP to secure the full integration of immigrants as active participants in our democracy, and provides over \$31 million in grants to 81 organizations in 29 states in its first seven years.

## 2004

President Bush announces a new temporary "guest worker" plan that would allow undocumented immigrants working in the U.S. to apply for temporary status.

The box office hit "Crash" wins the Academy Award for Best Picture. The film highlights racial and social tensions in Los Angeles.

In wide-ranging remarks about the U.S. presence in Iraq, President Bush says, "People whose skins ... are a different color than White can self-govern."

The Center for Third World Organizing celebrates the 20th year of its signature organizer-training program for people of color. Since 1984, the Movement Activist Apprenticeship Program (MAAP) has graduated several hundred interns.

The Bush Administration announces new rules that allow U.S. Border Patrol agents the ability to deport undocumented immigrants without a hearing before an immigration judge.

The first-ever national African-American summit on AIDS is held. "Shedding Light in the AIDS Blackout" considers the record numbers of African Americans contracting the disease.

The American Indian Forum on Racism in Sports and Media is held at Black Bear Crossing, St. Paul, Minnesota.

A group of scholars and practitioners form the Structural Racism Caucus to emphasize the role of structural analysis in the battle against racial hierarchies and social, economic and political inequities.



*Short Changed: Foundation Giving and Communities of Color* is published by Will Pittz and Rinku Sen. This study uses Foundation Center data to track foundation giving to racial justice issues and to communities of color, including minority-led organizations, noting a steady decrease in giving to communities of color post 2001.

PRE publishes *Changing the Rules of the Game: Youth Development & Structural Racism*, co-authored by Julie Quiroz-Martínez, Daniel HoSang and Lori Villarosa.

The *Race Matters Toolkit* is developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This toolkit is designed to help decision makers, advocates and elected officials get better results in their work by providing equitable opportunities for all.

PIP manages the Fulfilling the Dream Fund, a grantmaking collaborative catalyzed by Ford to defend, support and expand affirmative action and other efforts to promote full inclusion of people of color and women.

The COF Family Foundations Conference includes the session "Can Family Foundations Become Leaders on Diversity and Inclusiveness?"

The COF Annual Conference and the NNG conference both include the session "Intersectionality: Diversity at a Crossroad."

GCIR and AAPIP release a joint report *Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) Communities in the Bay Area: An Introduction for Grantmakers*, highlighting some of the issues, challenges and concerns facing these communities post 9/11.

## 2005

Border activists organize against the anti-immigration Minuteman Project as a "citizen's neighborhood watch program on the border." The organization is denounced as a vigilante force, but nonetheless attracts support from anti-immigrant forces including many White supremacist groups.

Hurricane Katrina devastates New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region in the deadliest natural disaster in American history, claiming over 1,800 lives. Institutional racism and the neglect of poor communities become central issues as low-income African Americans are among the most affected.



By 2005, four states in the U.S. have a majority-minority population: California, Texas, New Mexico and Hawaii. Mid-census data projects that the U.S. will have a majority of people of color within the next forty years.

Sponsored by Rep. James Sensenbrenner, HR 4437, "The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act," passes in the House of Representatives. The controversial bill, which would have made criminal felonies of immigration violations, ultimately fails in the U.S. Senate but galvanizes the immigrant rights movement.

The African American Leadership Project outlines the *Citizen Bill of Rights* to guide the rebuilding, reconstruction and recovery process in New Orleans, and presents it at the Congressional Black Caucus 2005 Annual Legislative Conference.

*Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building* is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The monograph focuses on community and foundation partnerships, analyzing community building through the lens of White privilege and racism.

The Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities release *Signs of Promise: Stories of Philanthropic Leadership in Advancing Regional and Neighborhood Equity*.

AAPIP launches the National Gender & Equity Campaign to leverage, mobilize, and activate philanthropic and community resources towards achieving more justice and equity for communities.

The COF annual conference includes "Lessons Learned: Adopting a Human Rights Framework for Domestic Grantmaking."

*Race, Culture, Power and Inclusion in Foundations: A Report Conducted for the Annie E. Casey Foundation* is produced by Marga Inc., scanning a range of practices in philanthropy with respect to race, ethnicity and various forms of diversity.

Jiannbin Lee Shiao writes *Identifying Talent, Institutionalizing Diversity: Race and Philanthropy in Post-Civil Rights America*.

The Minnesota Council on Foundations releases the report *Working Towards Diversity III*, a progress report on strategies for inclusiveness among Minnesota grantmakers.

Berkeley-based Greenlining Institute generates a "diversity report card," *Fairness in Philanthropy*, examining the 2002 grantmaking of 49 foundations to minority-led organizations.

## 2006

Millions participate in protests that contribute to the defeat of anti-immigrant legislation. Hundreds of thousands mobilize in Chicago and Los Angeles. Marches take place simultaneously in 102 cities across the country.



After a five-year campaign in Oakland, California, APEN and the Stop Chinatown Evictions Committee successfully save 50 units of affordable housing while securing funds to build 50 additional low-income senior apartment rental units.

A historic coalition of community, labor and faith organizations in Oakland, California, wins a landmark Community Benefits Agreement issued from the city to ensure stringent environmental cleanup of a brown-fill site, resulting in 465 new units of affordable housing and open space for surrounding communities and its residents.

*"Instead of prioritizing efforts led by people who are from the communities most affected, we have seen millions of dollars that was advertised as dedicated towards Gulf Coast residents either remain unspent, or shuttled to well-placed outsiders with at best a cursory knowledge of the realities faced by people here. "*

*– Letter from the People of New Orleans to Our Friends and Allies, by New Orleans-based activists*



A coalition of more than 70 environmental justice, social justice, public health, human rights and workers' rights groups launches the National Environmental Justice for All Tour to highlight the devastating impact of toxic contamination on people of color and in poor communities across the United States.

Plainclothes and undercover NYPD cops shoot at three African American men a total of 50 times, injuring two and killing Sean Bell on the day before his wedding. The trial of the officers results in not guilty verdicts.

The Indigenous World Uranium Summit drafts and approves a declaration calling for a ban on uranium mining, weapons testing and deployment, and nuclear waste dumping on indigenous lands.

In Jena, Louisiana, six Black high school students are arrested after a school fight and charged with attempted murder and conspiracy to commit attempted murder. The fight took place not long after nooses were found hanging on a tree in the schoolyard where White students typically sat after a Black student had sat there.

Forum for Regional Associations of Grantmakers publishes *Racial, Ethnic and Tribal Philanthropy: A Scan of the Landscape*.

HIP launches its transnational program in 2006. It was a combination of two major initiatives: Promoting Diaspora and Local Support for Productive Initiatives; and Building Transnational Bridges, Remittances, Diaspora and Opportunities in Mexico.

The Twenty-First Century Foundation develops the 2025 Network for Black Men and Boys, a national network of advocates for Black men and boys.

The "Catalyzing Our Resources for Equity" program is launched, seeking to expand Resource Generation's constituency to include more young people of color with wealth and to promote racial equity within the field of philanthropy.

AAPIP and other San Francisco Bay Area foundations establish the Civic Engagement Fund for AMEMSA communities, the first organized funding mechanism to support and empower local communities most affected by post 9/11 backlash.

## 2007

Right to the City emerges as a national alliance of community organizations responding to escalating gentrification and the displacement of low-income people, people of color, marginalized LGBTQ communities and youth of color from their historic urban neighborhoods.

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act is sponsored by Sens. Ted Kennedy and John McCain. The bill would have provided legal status and a path to legalization for an estimated 15 million undocumented immigrants, but it dies before the national election cycle takes over.

Thousands of activists gather at the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, Georgia, under the banner "Another World is Possible".

The National Domestic Workers Alliance is founded to fight for the rights of domestic workers and succeeds in passing a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in New York.

Decisions in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*, along with *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, prohibit assigning students to public schools solely for the purpose of achieving racial integration and declines to recognize racial balancing as a compelling state interest.

Approximately 20,000 people march in Jena, Louisiana, to protest the arrest and zealous attempts to convict six African-American teenagers of attempted murder in the alleged 2006 assault on a White, fellow student at their high school. The case of the "Jena 6" gains widespread attention.



The subprime lending crisis escalates.

*Grantmaking with a Racial Equity Lens* is published by PRE and GrantCraft. It includes tools to help grantmakers deepen their understanding and actions regarding race, ethnicity and racial equity.

*Profiles in Foundation Giving to Communities of Color* is produced by the Race and Equity in Philanthropy Group, and Marga, Inc. The report profiles efforts by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and The California Endowment.

The Diversity in Philanthropy Project is launched as a three-year initiative. The project seeks to expand diversity, equity and inclusion in board and staff representation, grantmaking, and contracting.

Greenlining Institute publishes *Funding the New Majority*, examining grant giving to minority-led organizations in 2005 by the 25 largest independent foundations and the 10 largest California foundations.

200 participants attend the JAG Unity Summit, the first national gathering of members of the various identity-based organizations independent of the COF conference.

The Ford Foundation publishes *Why We Can't Wait*, which indicates that 75 percent of the effective and promising organizations profiled by the Urban Institute in 1995 no longer serve Black males.

The Association of Black Foundation Executives, the Casey Family Programs, the Ford Foundation and Open Society Foundations host the National Funders' Dialogue on Black Males to discuss how to generate more explicit grantmaking strategies for Black males.

*Philanthropy in a Changing Society: Achieving Effectiveness through Diversity* is published by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, which was awarded a grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation to conduct a field scan of programs primarily focused on staff and board composition.

## 2008

Presidential candidate Barack Obama delivers his "A More Perfect Union" speech in Philadelphia. The address touches on themes ranging from Black resentment to institutional racism.

Fifty Chicago ministers led by Sen. James Meeks call for a boycott of the first days of school to protest long-standing funding inequities.

As the larger economy slips into a major recession, the effects of the subprime mortgage scandal are felt disproportionately by new Black and Latino homeowners who see their small share of total wealth relative to Whites shrink even further.

"Today's institutions no longer need to intend discrimination in order to create inequality — they are programmed to reproduce and reinforce historical patterns. Those of us crafting solutions, however, must be deliberate about the racial impact because the role of institutions and policies in perpetuating the racial divide is hidden from the gaze of most Americans."

— Letter to the Editor in the Chronicle of Philanthropy, by the Structural Racism Caucus

Near the end of the Bush Administration, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency pilots a new program called Secure Communities. The program is designed to promote cooperation between federal immigration authorities and local law enforcement in the arrest, detention and deportation of "dangerous criminal aliens."

Barack Obama is elected 44th President of the United States of America.

Colorado is the first state to defeat Ward Connerly's anti-affirmative action initiative through legal advocacy and electoral organizing.



Environmental Health Coalition celebrates the conclusion of the historic, binational toxic site cleanup at Metales y Derivados, an abandoned battery recycler in Tijuana.

PRE publishes *Critical Issues Forum, Volume 1; Measuring What We Value*, a critique of California Assembly Bill 624, which calls for foundations to report racial and ethnic composition, including foundations' responses.

The Council on Michigan Foundations launches Transforming Michigan Philanthropy through Diversity & Inclusion (TMP), a six-year initiative designed to increase the effectiveness of organized philanthropy in Michigan.

The California Endowment publishes the *Foundation Diversity Policies and Practices Toolkit*.

William Schambra of the Conservative Bradley Center writes the article, "Philanthropy's Jeremiah Wright Problem" in the Chronicle of Philanthropy, questioning specific foundations' funding to "advance a structural racism critique of America" — stating that addressing racism was a racist act. This letter drew a barrage of critical responses from foundations and advocacy organizations.

Funders for LGBTQ Issues publishes the *Racial Equity Report Card* and launch a multiyear racial equity campaign to increase giving to LGBTQ communities of color and to advocate for a stronger structural racism lens in grantmaking strategies.

*Unlocking the Promise: Transformational Grantmaking*, focusing on the intersection of race and class, is produced by the People, Opportunity and Place (POP) Working Group, of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities.

The Bay Area Social Justice Infrastructure Group (now the Bay Area Justice Funders Network) is formed as an alliance of funders working to strengthen grantmaking for social justice movements in the Bay Area and beyond.

## 2009

Oscar Grant is shot and killed by a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police officer on New Year's morning, leading to massive demonstrations in Oakland. The protests renew the spotlight on police violence against people of color and result in the arrest of the transit officer who was later convicted.

African-American residents of Mossville, Louisiana, win a hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on charges that the U.S. government had violated their rights to privacy and racial equality by allowing local chemical plants to pollute.

President Obama proposes allotting \$1.25 billion in the fiscal year 2010 budget to settle discrimination lawsuits by thousands of Black farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Former Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper says the war on drugs has been "an abysmal failure ... and the most destructive and damning social policy since slavery."

Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr., one of the nation's pre-eminent African-American scholars, is arrested at his own home by Cambridge police investigating a possible break-in.

Judge Sonia Sotomayor becomes the first Latina on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Following unprecedented national voter engagement efforts and success in 2008, conservative attacks and manufactured scandals against the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) end in the demise of the 40-year-old organization.



President Barack Obama signs the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

The North Carolina Racial Justice Act passes, requiring that courts enter a life sentence for any death row defendants who are able to prove that race was a factor in the imposition of their sentences. Later in 2013, Gov. Pat McCrory repeals the landmark legislation.

Under intense pressure from organizations like Presente.org and its "BastaDobbs" campaign, CNN's anchor and leading anti-immigration voice Lou Dobbs is forced to resign.

PRE publishes *Critical Issues Forum, Volume 2; Whose Capacity Needs Building?*, a critique of the deal made to drop California Assembly Bill 624, which called for racial and ethnic composition reporting by foundations.

PRE and ARC publish *Catalytic Change: Lessons Learned from the Racial Justice Grantmaking Assessment*, which describes the process in piloting ARC's assessment tool by the two foundations.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) releases *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact* by Niki Jagpal.

Funders for LGBTQ Issues launch the *Racial Equity Online Toolkit* and host a retreat on racial equity to identify the opportunities, barriers and avenues for increasing funding support for LGBTQ communities of color.

The Proteus Fund creates the Security and Rights Collaborative to build the national security and human rights field in response to a dramatic increase in profiling, discrimination and surveillance of Muslim and South Asian communities.

Funders for LGBTQ Issues launch its Racial Equity Regranting Initiative to enhance the grantmaking practice of community funders to support LGBTQ communities of color.

## 2010

The Obama Administration denies BART \$70M in stimulus funds, citing civil rights failures. Title VI violations were found in the investigation spearheaded by civil rights, transportation and environmental advocates.

Home health care workers in Wisconsin and Missouri, most of whom are immigrants and women of color, join workers in 10 other states to organize a union.

Arizona Senate Bill 1070 is passed into law, making it the broadest and strictest immigration measure in the country. Officially titled The Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, the bill is seen as legally sanctioned racial profiling.



Boycotts of Arizona are introduced in the wake of Arizona SB 1070. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants, families, activists and allies nationwide demand that President Obama tackle immigration reform immediately.

Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signs into law House Bill 2281, effectively banning the teaching of ethnic studies in public school classrooms. Conservative state officials contend the Mexican-American Studies curriculum in Tucson high schools teaches racial resentment and the overthrow of the government.

Shirley Sherrod is pressured to resign from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and immediately thereafter receives an apology when it is discovered she was inaccurately accused of being racist towards White Americans.

Volunteers with No More Deaths, an organization that seeks to prevent deaths of people crossing the border, are fined for littering. The organization left one-gallon jugs of water in various Sonoran Desert locations.

Multyear campaigning by organizations such as the Sentencing Project win passage of the Fair Sentencing Act, a bill that reduces the disparities in sentencing for crack and powder cocaine offenses.

PRE publishes *Critical Issues Forum, Volume 3; Marking Progress: Movement Toward Racial Justice*, which synthesizes the ways evaluation can be most effective when measuring the progress being made towards achieving racial justice as defined by the field.

The Akonadi Foundation publishes *From the Roots: Building the Power of Communities of Color to Challenge Structural Racism*.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation implements a \$75 million, five-year "America Healing" initiative to combat structural racism and heal the wounds of racism.

NCRP launches the Philanthropy's Promise project, celebrating funders that apply two high impact strategies in their grantmaking: target grant dollars to address the needs of underserved communities; and empower those populations by funding advocacy, organizing and civic engagement.

AAPIP and Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) celebrate their 20th anniversaries, including a joint site session in Denver.

The American Values Institute, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and Open Society Foundations host the "Black Male Re-imagined" conference to encourage the media industry to transform how Black males are portrayed in popular culture and public discourse.

AAPIP launches the Queer Justice Fund after research and outreach with LGBTQ AAPI groups and leaders in 2009.

## 2011

High school students in Tucson, Arizona, organize to defend the popular Mexican-American Studies program after Arizona politicians vote to ban ethnic studies.

Millions view UCLA student Alexandra Wallace's YouTube video where she mimics an Asian accent and rants against the "hordes of Asians" at the university who "don't use American manners."

The first and only universal health care law is passed in Vermont after organizers take a proactive and uncompromising stand against racist divide-and-conquer tactics, and build partnerships between low-income organizing groups and Latino immigrant organizations.

Alabama legislators pass House Bill 56, the Beason-Hammond Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, which criminalizes undocumented immigrants. It is viewed as even more punitive and far-reaching than Arizona's SB 1070.

Following an Associated Press series revealing undercover police surveillance tactics in New York City's Muslim communities, Muslim leaders hold teach-ins to help members of the community diagnose the problem and understand their rights.

A federal jury convicts five New Orleans police officers of charges related to the cover-up and deprivation of civil rights related to the shooting of unarmed African Americans on the Danziger Bridge in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Nationwide organizing contributes to the blocking of a proposed merger between AT&T and T-Mobile. The campaign calls attention to the merger's disproportionate negative impact on communities of color.

*"SB 1070 has become synonymous with anti-immigrant fervor, with racial profiling, with being brown, with being Latino – with being "the other" – as a crime in a demographically changing America. The law has also galvanized the growing immigrants rights community like nothing else before it. ... The case before the high court may be titled "United States v. Arizona." But more accurately, it's really "United States v. United States" because what's at stake is American identity itself – how we define American."*

– Jose Antonio Vargas, founder, Define American

A federal judge approves a \$1.25 billion settlement in the Pigford class-action lawsuit filed against the U.S. Department of Agriculture by thousands of Black farmers. Plaintiffs successfully argue that they suffered widespread racial bias.

Generations Ahead releases the report *Forensic DNA Database Expansion: Growing Racial Inequities, Eroding Civil Liberties and Diminishing Returns*, outlining the practice of DNA collection in 50 states and by the federal government, and its impact on communities of color.

After years of organizing and information gathering by immigrant and human rights groups, the U.S. Department of Justice accuses the Maricopa County (Arizona) Sheriff's Office of engaging in a pattern or practice of unconstitutional policing, including racial profiling in traffic stops, immigration operations, and discrimination against Spanish speakers in the county jails.

D5 Coalition's first *State of the Work* report, an effort to map philanthropy's work on diversity, equity and inclusion, is published.

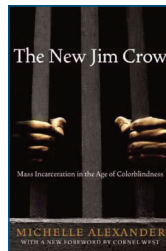
Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu launch "Cities United" to eliminate violence-related deaths of Black males. Partners include the Casey Family Programs, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and Open Society Foundations.

With support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, HIP launches the Latino Age Wave Initiative, which strengthens Latino aging programs and advocacy efforts in key states where the Latino older adult population is large and growing.

## 2012

Four states – Hawaii, California, New Mexico and Texas – as well as the District of Columbia, have populations that exceed 50 percent residents of color.

Law professor and social justice advocate Michelle Alexander publishes *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, energizing a growing movement to confront the war on drugs and the crime policies that have had devastating racial impacts.



17-year-old teenager Trayvon Martin is shot and killed by neighborhood-watch volunteer George Zimmerman in Sanford, Florida. Zimmerman is not charged in the shooting until national outrage forces city leaders to arrest him.

Over 100 civil rights, faith, community and advocacy groups sign a letter urging the Department of Justice to commence a prompt investigation into the NYPD's surveillance of Muslim Americans in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Undocumented youth (DREAMers) take over President Obama's Denver campaign office and initiate a hunger strike, the first of a series of actions at Democratic campaign offices across the country. Organizers win a huge victory as President Obama announces a deportation relief program for young undocumented immigrants.

The Obama Administration implements Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, allowing people who immigrated to the U.S. without papers before they were 16 years of age to request two years to avoid deportation. Upon approval, they would then be eligible for work authorization.

Several thousand people march from Harlem to the Upper East Side townhouse of Mayor Michael Bloomberg to protest New York City's notorious "stop-and-frisk" police procedure, which almost exclusively targets young Black and Latino males.

U.S. Army veteran and avowed White supremacist Wade Michael Page shoots and kills six people and wounds several others at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

Barack Obama is elected to his second term as president.

Lawsuits and community-based pressure challenge a host of voter ID laws and other efforts, by Republican-controlled statehouses across the country, to curtail registration and voting in the upcoming elections.

PRE publishes *Critical Issues Forum, Volume 4; Marking Progress: Mobilizing Community Power to Address Structural Racism*, which discusses the supports that are needed to strengthen the integration of community organizing with a structural racism analysis to improve outcomes for all.

D5 Coalition releases *State of the Work 2012: The Road to Greater Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Philanthropy*.

Open Society Foundations, in partnership with Root Cause and PolicyLink, launches the Leadership and Sustainability Institute, a national network ensuring the growth, sustainability and impact of leaders and organizations working to improve life outcomes and create systemic change for Black men and boys.

Funders for LGBTQ Issues holds national funder briefings on "Pushing Back against Push-outs, Pipelines, and Profiling: Grantmaking for Impact among Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Men & Boys of Color."

## 2013

A report by the Asian Law Caucus and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center finds the number of Asian-Americans living below the poverty line in California increased 50 percent. While Asian-Americans are broadly thought to be high achieving, high earning and highly educated, Hmong-, Cambodian-, Laotian-, Vietnamese- and Fijian-Americans face significant barriers to education and have some of the lowest college attendance rates in the country.

After more than 10 years, the "Drop the 'I' Word" campaign achieves success as the Associated Press eliminates the term "illegal immigrant" from its widely influential style guide.



*"Racial fear creates a kind of exclusion that is life threatening for Black men and boys. ... Rational laws that recognize that we need police and laws that protect us all, including Black men and boys, could help create a new optimism in this country for what we all want it to be – a fair one where we all have a chance to grow up and thrive. Then, we can rejoice."*

– Maya Wiley, former executive director, Center for Social Inclusion

*"Bold, courageous, inspired investments in racial justice will be a game changer for every issue on the progressive agenda because – try as we may – we can't have real justice without racial justice. It is a critical building block, an essential element of democratic architecture for a world that truly works for everyone."*

– Makani Themba, executive director, The Praxis Project

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, president of the state chapter of the NAACP, leads 100 people in protest against the demolition of voting rights, in North Carolina senate chambers. "Moral Mondays" has now grown to tens of thousands in towns across the state; and has been replicated in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Alabama in response to Republican legislation regarding Medicaid, gun control and immigrant rights.

In response to years of youth-of-color organizing, Los Angeles Unified School District votes to eliminate "willful defiance" policies that have resulted in disproportionate expulsion of boys and men of color.

The U.S. Supreme Court invalidates a key section of the 1965 Voting Rights Act allowing several (mostly Southern) states to modify their election laws without federal approval.

The U.S. Supreme Court reverses a key part of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, allowing the adoption of a young girl to White parents in South Carolina, away from her Cherokee father in Oklahoma.

George Zimmerman is found not guilty of the murder of teenager Trayvon Martin.

Protests spread through more than 100 cities across the country in support of the family of Trayvon Martin after Zimmerman's not guilty verdict. Student activists, the Dream Defenders, drew national attention for the longest sit-in demonstration at the Florida capitol. Gov. Rick Scott rejected their demand for a special session on the "stand your ground" law.



90,000 individuals and organizations take part in the "Campaign for Prison Phone Justice," a nationwide effort that succeeds in ending price-gouging of families who accept phone calls from incarcerated loved ones.

Activists with the Arizona DREAM Act Coalition stop an ICE bus in Phoenix. Six protesters sit in front of the bus for more than two hours. Similar actions in California show immigrant rights activism taking on a more direct-action strategy.

Building on public outrage over the Trayvon Martin killing, Color of Change and allies mount a campaign that eventually gets more than 69 corporations to withdraw membership and support from the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), the conservative public policy group that engineered "stand your ground" gun laws and sweeping voter ID requirements that effectively disenfranchise minority voters.

In New York, a broad coalition of diverse grassroots groups wins major police accountability reforms. A federal court rules that the NYPD's practice of "stop and frisk" is unconstitutional, and the City Council overrides a mayoral veto to establish an inspector general for the NYPD.

NAP and the Common Counsel Foundation launch Native Voices to support organizing and advocacy in American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities.

Leaders of 26 foundations gather in Chicago and pledge to form a national alliance addressing issues facing boys and men of color.

AAPIP releases the report *Widening the Lens on Boys and Men of Color: California AAPI and AMEMSA Perspectives*, and holds funder briefings in Oakland and Los Angeles.

## 2014

A mistrial is declared on the count of murder in the shooting death of 17-year-old African-American Jordan Davis by Michael Dunn, a 45-year-old White male, at a gas station in Jacksonville, Florida. The jury fails to reach a unanimous verdict even after Dunn admits to shooting Davis during an argument about loud music coming from the car Davis and his friends were in.



Three U.S. presidents commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act at the LBJ Presidential Library. That same day, Pro Publica previews the findings of a yearlong investigation concluding that public schools have resegregated – and disparities between Black and White students have widened.

Former Black Panther Party leader Marshall "Eddie" Conway, one of the longest-held political prisoners in U.S. history, is released from prison. His is one of over 500 cases that were challenged in Maryland due to flawed instructions given to juries.

The U.S. Justice Department launches the National Center for Building Community Trust and Justice to collect and analyze data on racial profiling in order to reduce racial bias in the criminal justice system.

The Supreme Court turns back the clock on hard-won civil rights by upholding the University of Michigan's ban on considering race as a factor in university admissions. In her powerful dissenting opinion, Justice Sonia Sotomayer wrote, "This refusal to accept the stark reality that race matters is regrettable ... We ought not sit back and wish away, rather than confront, the racial inequality that exists in our society."

Protests held in 62 cities to urge President Obama to stop the deportation of undocumented immigrants. The Obama administration reached its two millionth deportation in April. The New York Times reports two-thirds deported had committed minor infractions, such as traffic violations, or no criminal record at all.

HIP releases *The Right to Dream: Promising Practices Improve Odds for Latino Men and Boys*.

President Obama launches My Brother's Keeper, an initiative aimed at improving life outcomes and expanding opportunities for boys and young men of color. Ten foundations announce investments totaling \$200 million over the next five years.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation releases a comprehensive report, *Race for Results*, which goes beyond the broad racial groupings and examines children's opportunities by region, tribe or family's country of descent.

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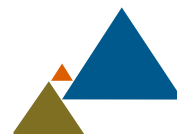
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# The Structural Racism Concept and Its Impact on Philanthropy

by Daniel Martinez HoSang

In the mid-1990s, public policies to promote racial justice faced a new round of attacks. In California, the bluest of blue states, voters approved ballot measures eliminating public affirmative action and bilingual education programs – ending public education and health care for many immigrants, and expanding the state’s already massive and deeply racialized prison system. Affirmative action programs soon fell in six other states, and the rise of “colorblind” rhetoric among liberals and conservatives alike seemed to signal a decisive transformation in public attitudes about civil rights and racial justice.<sup>1</sup>

Critics argued that as the nation grew more tolerant and diverse, attention to race in public policy had become divisive and outdated. They contended that race-conscious remedies such as affirmative action and school desegregation were themselves racist. If individual racial hostility was declining (as public opinion surveys suggested), and racially discriminatory laws were illegal, an explicit focus on race within public policy was unjustified. The era of *post-racialism* had arrived.<sup>2</sup>

## The Emergence of Structural Racism Analysis

Within this political context, a network of racial justice policy groups, academics, activists and think tanks developed new theories explaining the enduring impact of racial hierarchies across a broad range of issues – even in the absence of intentional animus. Rather than emphasizing the individual dimensions of bigotry and prejudice, their analysis highlighted the systemic nature of racism and its interactive and cumulative impact across multiple institutions.

Out of these explorations, the concept of “structural racism” gained currency in the national discourse on race in the late 1990s. The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, which convened a series of meetings on the concept and authored several related publications, defines structural

racism as “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with ‘whiteness’ and disadvantages associated with ‘color’ to endure and adapt over time.”<sup>3</sup>

The term “structure,” by definition, refers to relationships between entities or parts within a broader system. In contrast to prevailing conceptions of racism that focused on individual prejudice or incidents of discriminatory conduct, the structural racism framework explains (1) how multiple institutions interact to reinforce and reproduce inequities between racial groups; and (2) how on a cultural level, “common sense” explanations for racial group differences minimize the impact of ongoing and historic state-sanctioned racism. Racialized disparities in outcomes – as in the areas of incarceration, health, education or income – became the lingua franca of the structural racism framework. These disparate outcomes demonstrate the impact of structural racism on individual life chances, even in the absence of intentional discrimination.

In many ways, the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) was a product of this groundswell of research and analysis on why racism persists. PRE was formed to educate and engage funders about the importance of incorporating a racial equity and structural racism analysis within their grantmaking. In 2004, PRE helped convene a Structural Racism Caucus to link practitioners and academics to further develop and popularize a structural racism analysis. The group included representatives from the Aspen Roundtable, Applied Research Center (now called Race Forward), the Center for Social Inclusion, and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University. Over several years, caucus members discussed opportunities to link academics, funders and practitioners around a structural racism analysis, and to disseminate research, communications strategy and analysis.<sup>4</sup>

**“The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change defines structural racism as “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with ‘whiteness’ and disadvantages associated with ‘color’ to endure and adapt over time.”**

Program officers at several foundations – including the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation – lent critical support to these early meetings and publications. They became interested in the ways that a structural racism analysis could be brought to bear on diverse areas of grantmaking such as public education, youth development, public health and criminal justice. Funders supporting place-based strategies centered in a particular locality or city used the framework to consider the interaction of different institutions (i.e., public schools, criminal justice and public health) and their impact on racialized outcomes.

From the mid-2000s on, more foundations began supporting efforts to build a knowledge base on structural racism – including the Akonadi Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Open Society Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation. Others were exploring how to apply the structural racism lens to their grantmaking across different issue areas, such as the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, the Surdna Foundation and The California Endowment. Beginning in the late 1990s, the Annie E. Casey Foundation incorporated a racial equity framework across many of its initiatives and publications with an explicit focus on ending racial and ethnic disparities

**“To be sure, many organizing groups and networks working in issues such as immigrant rights, public education, LGBTQ issues, reproductive justice, access to financial services, mass incarceration and workers’ rights have incorporated a racial justice analysis in their campaigns. But few of these groups have explicitly drawn from a structural racism framework, or reference or incorporate the term in their work.”**

in child welfare and other systems. More recently, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s “America Healing” initiative included an explicit program area focusing on racial equity.<sup>5</sup>

To be sure, the impact of efforts to popularize a structural racism analysis can be seen across a number of issues and sectors. In the last decade, some funders have gained new awareness of systems and structures that are racialized, such as the school-to-prison pipeline, that cut across conventional grantmaking areas. There is also more attention to racial disparities in household wealth, health outcomes, graduation rates, criminal prosecutions and sentencing. Some public entities, including city governments (most notably the the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative), school boards, public health agencies and child welfare agencies, have also sought to incorporate the analysis into their work and to more explicitly address the racial inequities they identify.<sup>6</sup> Advocacy coalitions in several states, including Washington, Oregon and Iowa, regularly publish racial equity report cards to publicize the voting record of legislators on specified racial equity issues.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as public recognition of racial disparities

has grown, these examples suggest that there is a growing counterbalance to the notion of colorblindness.

## Challenges: Translating Structural Racism Analysis to Action

While a structural racism analysis has certainly been adopted in some sectors of philanthropy and in a number of policymaking circles, this approach has also faced important challenges.

First, relatively few issue-based grassroots organizing groups have directly taken up the language of structural racism, if not the framework. For example, a recent report by the Ear to the Ground Project to identify promising new directions for community organizing and movement building interviewed 150 organizers in 30 communities, many of whom work on racial justice issues and organize within communities of color. Yet the report makes no mention of the structural racism framework.<sup>8</sup> Peruse the websites and publications of the leading community organizing networks and intermediaries nationally, including the Center for Popular Democracy, the Industrial Areas Foundation, the Center for Community Change and others, and you will find a similar pattern; those working on racial justice issues do not generally reference structural racism.

To be sure, many organizing groups and networks working on issues such as immigrant rights, public education, LGBTQ issues, reproductive justice, access to financial services, mass incarceration and workers’ rights have incorporated a racial justice analysis in their campaigns. But few of these groups have explicitly drawn from a structural racism framework, or reference or incorporate the term in their work. It may be that these organizations are using different language and terms for the same concepts; or that as issue-based efforts, their public attention remains focused on particular institutions rather than on broad structures of racial power. For these or perhaps other reasons, few grassroots community organizations make use of the structural racism concept in their organizing campaigns.

Community-based organizations and leaders did not generally play an active role in developing the structural racism concept or analysis at the outset, which perhaps explains some of this gap. But another limitation may simply be that organizations or advocacy groups attempting to win measurable and concrete reforms in accordance with their



mission statements in specific issue areas (such as public education or housing) find it difficult to advance policy reforms involving multiple institutions and their interaction. To put it another way, while a structural racism framework has had some impact as a useful *descriptive* tool – helping to name or define outcomes by race – it may have less impact as a *prescriptive* tool to generate concrete policy-reform solutions and strategies.

What would deeper incorporation of a structural racism framework look like in community organizing? We might see fundamental innovations in organizing campaigns and advocacy efforts: new policy demands, research directions, communication tactics, recruitment methods and broader strategic directions. These new organizing strategies would explicitly link disparate racialized outcomes to novel issue frames, explanations and narratives. In short, organizers and advocates would use the framework to demonstrate the role race plays in reproducing and naturalizing the relations of power, exploitation and hierarchy of the issues they address.

Second, the emphasis of the structural racism analysis on correcting racial disparities as the primary measure of racial justice has been subject to some debate. As scholar and activist John A. Powell has recently explained, “While disparities may be an expression of structural inequalities, the absence of disparities does not mean a racially just society.”<sup>9</sup>

By way of example, if the elimination of disparities alone indicated the presence of racial justice, the closing of swimming pools in the South in response to desegregation could be described as a move towards racial equity. Using another example, a prison system that incarcerates millions of people would be considered “racially just” as long as the racial percentages of prisoners mirrored their groups’ share of the general population. The same could be said for rates of poverty, unemployment, homelessness or exposure to environmental toxins.

A focus on racial disparities alone, Powell continues, also “presumes that the baseline position of the dominant, higher-performing group is the appropriate goal for reducing or eliminating the disparity.” That is, it risks naturalizing or presuming a “White norm” that should be the standard policy goal to measure racial justice (for example White rates of wealth, income, graduation, home ownership, etc.) rather than rethinking the ways such systems must be more fundamentally transformed.<sup>10</sup>

Scholars Adolph Reed Jr. and Merlin Chowkwanyun have argued that race-disparity discourse often describes inequitable outcomes by race without offering any systematic or nuanced analysis and explanation of the underlying causes. That is, we may know that African-American and Latino households lost a higher proportion of their wealth during the recent financial crisis as compared

to White households. But reporting that disparity, in and of itself, may not give us any new insight into the broader causes of household debt over the last 30 years, or its contribution to historic levels of income inequality. As they explain: “Repetitiously noting the existence of segregated neighborhoods and how they decrease property value (real and perceived) and increase the likelihood of subprime mortgage is to identify a result, albeit one that is surely repellent. It does not tell us with much exactitude what institutions, policies, actuarial models and systems of valuation produce those results.”<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, in some cases, political groups with diametrically opposed interests might cite the same racial disparity data to justify their policy agendas. For example in *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning*, conservative scholars Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom use race-disparity data to argue for heightened enforcement of “zero tolerance” school discipline policies, an end to tenure for teachers, increased use of high stakes testing, and expansion of charter schools. Others use the same data to justify their opposition to these very same policies.

For Powell, Reed and Chowkwanyun, a structural racism analysis must be tied to a political analysis and vision of social transformation. Describing or criticizing disparities alone is not sufficient. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., for example, explicitly linked his vision of racial justice in the U.S. to the broad eradication of poverty and the end of militarism. For Dr. King, the goal was not simply to correct disparities within particular systems (like employment or health care), but to profoundly transform the orientation of those systems and the relations of power that they naturalize.<sup>12</sup>

To be sure, the application of a structural racism framework need not be reduced to an analysis of racial disparities alone, and this was not the intention of the original proponents of the framework. But perhaps because disparities are relatively easy to document and communicate, they often stand in for the entirety of a structural racism analysis.

## Moving Forward

In retrospect, the structural racism framework has made an important contribution to discussions among funders, academics and some policymakers about the continued importance of race in structuring a broad range of social, economic and political problems in the country today. At a moment when a growing number of commentators declared that the nation was somehow “beyond race,” this work bolstered arguments that racism and racial hierarchies continue to matter in important ways.

Yet the very benefits of such a broad framework also reveal some of its limitations. As others have argued, to acknowledge the presence and injustice of racial disparities represents the start – rather than the conclusion – of a

transformative political analysis and strategy. How might a structural racism analysis offer novel explanations (rather than just descriptions) of important social crises? How can we ensure that a structural racism framework remains dynamic, sensitive to important variations across time and place? What new political alignments and policy transformations can a structural racism framework help to produce?

Funders, scholars, policy advocates and other practitioners must engage these questions, and demonstrate the ways that a structural racism framework can, not only describe the world, but also transform it.

One example of such transformation is the growing number of school districts that have eliminated or dramatically reduced their reliance on “zero tolerance” school discipline policies. Zero tolerance policies first came under scrutiny because of evidence of dramatic racial disparities in their application. But rather than simply call for “equity” in the application of such policies (or even their heightened enforcement, as Thernstrom and Thernstrom advocated), youth organizers and other advocates called for a broad overhaul of the foundations of school discipline policy, emphasizing every student’s right to learn, the value of alternative dispute resolution models such as restorative justice, and the long-term consequences of pushing students into the criminal justice system. After more than a decade of organizing, these alternative principles have finally received national attention including a recent endorsement by President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder.<sup>13</sup> This work has explicitly challenged the racialized basis of such policies, while also pursuing solutions that push beyond the framework of equity alone.


To support and develop similar models and examples, funders should keep in mind that the success of any effort to dismantle structural racism will depend on accurate analysis of a specific context. This requires a nuanced account of the histories, politics and conflicts that have produced the conditions that need to be changed. A structural racism

framework is best conceptualized as a template that organizations and analysts can use to engage and explain the issues they address – it cannot be applied in the abstract. It is a question as much as an answer.

Philanthropic support could assist grantees in deepening the application of a structural racism analysis to their work with the goal of creating more robust organizing and advocacy approaches. Moving beyond merely reporting racial disparities to explain the ideological, cultural and institutional mechanisms that underlie such conditions framework requires groups to engage in a process, in partnership with local allies, intermediaries and academics. While much of the contemporary culture of philanthropy emphasizes short-term deliverables and returns, funders committed to ending structural racism must be prepared to afford groups the time, space and resources that this type of analysis requires. The impact could be transformative.

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**Daniel Martinez HoSang** is an associate professor of Ethnic Studies and Political Science at the University of Oregon. He is the author of “Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California,” which explores the history of organizing campaigns around racialized ballot measures in California since 1945. Before graduate school, HoSang worked as a community organizer and trainer for 10 years in the San Francisco Bay Area. He currently serves on the boards of directors of several social justice organizations, including Forward Together, the Alliance for a Just Society, and the Partnership for Safety and Justice.



# Reflections from the Inside: Philanthropic Leaders on Racial Justice and Grantmaking

by Rick Cohen

## Editor's Note

*This retrospective look at the past two decades of philanthropy's approaches to race was primarily based on interviews with 21 racial justice and equity leaders in the field. This article shares their stories, experiences and reflections on how the sector has changed and evolved in addressing race over the past 20 years and into the present. In some cases, they found themselves responding to factors outside of their institutions – incidents and dynamics in which nuances of race beyond the easily observable manifestations of racial animus propelled them to sharpen or deepen their understandings. In others, the impetus came internally, from the intersection of the quality and composition of foundation leadership with the foundations' social justice missions. This led to grantmaking that wasn't simply "designated" for specific racial or ethnic groups, but aimed at addressing and rectifying racial disparities that result from complex dynamics.*

*We offer this mix of reflections recognizing that there was progress made in earlier stages of the field that can easily be forgotten and yet still holds lessons – in spite of being too soon lost in the collective discourse, or buried in reports on foundation shelves. We know it is not comprehensive, and many key moments and actors are still missing, but we believe it helps share a slice of the path of this work.*

*Though philanthropy may have too great a tendency for self-congratulation, it is important to acknowledge progress where it has been made, and lift up possible guideposts for those coming into the work more recently either as new grantmakers or perhaps those moving at a different pace. Yet as critical as the needs are in the communities we aim to serve, we similarly must continue to push for deeper impacts and greater progress. We share these funders' perspectives – all of whom have seen both struggle and progress, and offered examples of each – as a way to help consider where we have been and to encourage us to go further.*

## Philanthropic Approaches to Racial Justice: A Brief Overview of Historical Markers

Among foundations that have incorporated a racial equity or justice lens into their grantmaking, the evolution has not been a straight line over the years. Conversations with grantmakers – both current executives and program officers at foundations as well as people who have left philanthropy – suggest that foundations' paths toward a more intentional racial equity focus have been as varied as the foundations themselves.

### Civil Rights and Anti-Poverty Frames

A good starting place for reviewing modern philanthropy's progress along this path is foundations' support, beginning in the late 1950s, of traditional civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Congress of Racial Equality, the National Urban League, and the National Council of Negro Women. Among the larger supporters of these civil rights movement organizations were the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Some smaller but also critically important foundations active in the civil rights arena were the Taconic Foundation, the Field Foundation, and the Stern Family Fund. Other foundations such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the

New World Foundation and the Norman Foundation funded voter registration efforts. Doing so was not without risk – foundations found themselves heavily criticized by some members of Congress for their support of civil rights organizations and campaigns.

The civil rights and equality framework characterized much of the grantmaking by foundations interested in race for the next 20 years. But the promise of equality presaged by the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954 and the Civil Rights Act of 1965 was not borne out, with persistent racial inequities continuing in education, employment and health indicators.

Following the civil rights victories and with growing numbers of people of color working in philanthropy, interviewees with a longer historical view of foundation activity in this arena described the emergence of complacency on race within philanthropy – a belief that the nation had moved beyond racism. Many foundations from the 1970s through the 1990s were focused on tackling symptoms of poverty – and while often recognizing people of color as key "target populations," still approached strategy without incorporating a strong analysis of the role racism plays in economic and educational disparities between people of color and Whites.

As Gladys Washington, program director at the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, reflects, "'Black' was code for 'poor,' and philanthropy was more charitable in nature.

The approach was simply to deal with the symptoms of poverty, but often did not engage the people impacted in developing solutions or strategies.”

“Racism was often treated as a backdrop or a historical remnant, but not central in grantmaking strategy,” explains Lori Villarosa, executive director of the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, who was previously on the program staff at the C.S. Mott Foundation through most of the 1990s until 2002. This era also gave rise to policy proposals focused on rectifying the individual behaviors of the “underclass” and to increasing right-wing attacks on civil rights remedies such as affirmative action. While in some cases the attacks reinvigorated more traditional civil rights funding, the political climate further diminished the inclination of some anti-poverty funders to tackle issues of racism head on. “Even in liberal philanthropy, regressive dynamics were at play, such as Saul Alinsky-style arguments that race and identity politics were divisive,” explains Villarosa.

**“Racism was often treated as a backdrop or a historical remnant, but not central in grantmaking strategy.”**

Alvin Starks, who worked as a racial justice grantmaker at Open Society Foundations, the Arcus Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation during the past decade, shared his perspective on this period preceding his entry to philanthropy. “The pre-structural racism era was primarily understood as civil rights advocacy, which is a good thing. We created legal conditions to build inclusion for people of color communities, but those communities couldn’t move through those doors [on their own] ... More needed to be done to move things forward.” The limitations of otherwise laudatory civil rights funding, with widening disparities in social conditions despite the support of the civil rights movement, would later lead to explorations of the deeper nuances of structural racism and how foundations might address those concerns.

### **Emergent Approaches in the 90s: Institutionalized Racism, Racial Justice and Diversity**

In the 1990s some foundations began moving beyond civil rights and older anti-poverty frames to focus on institutional racism and race relations. For example, in 1991, the Levi Strauss Foundation (the corporate foundation of Levi Strauss & Co.) was the first national foundation during this period to explicitly name “institutional racism” as the focus of its grantmaking. Its Project Change experimented with community task forces to address racial prejudice and institutional racism in four communities where the company had plants – Valdosta, Georgia; El Paso, Texas; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Knoxville, Tennessee.

Shaking the nation out of a sense of racial complacency, the civil unrest in the South Central area of Los Angeles in 1992 following the Rodney King verdict revealed racial fissures that went far beyond issues of diversity and changed how many foundations approached race. As in the aftermath of previous civil disturbances, there was an increase in funding for programs aimed at improving race relations and valuing diversity following what happened in South Central. But some foundations, particularly those with people of color on staff, began to move beyond the civil rights and equality frame to a more explicit racial justice approach in grantmaking. They responded by supporting the creation or expansion of new organizations in Los Angeles that emphasized grassroots organizing led by people of color – signaling a growing recognition in philanthropy that what happened in South Central wasn’t simply a riot, but in many ways a rebellion against ongoing racial injustice. Los Angeles in particular saw increased investment in community organizing groups across race from both national and regional funders, growing and strengthening

a new infrastructure of people of color-led institutions that are among the most effective racial justice organizing groups in the country.

The foundation grantmaking that evolved in the wake of South Central is still evident today in new organizations that emerged “from the ashes” like the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Association, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE), Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives (AGENDA), and the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy. And pre-existing organizations like the Community Coalition and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center were strengthened in this period as they responded to the civil unrest and built cross-racial alliances. Some of the growth of these organizations can be attributed to Liberty Hill Foundation’s Fund for a New Los Angeles, established in 1993 to provide larger and longer-term grants to new community-based activist groups and to anchor institutions.

The role of Liberty Hill in the wake of South Central points out another dimension of foundations developing a more conscious, reflective and analytical approach to grantmaking for racial justice. Liberty Hill was an early member of a collection of progressive public foundations associated with young donors that joined together under the umbrella of the Funding Exchange. A Territory Resource in Seattle (now Social Justice Fund Northwest) and FEX members such as the Fund for Southern Communities in Atlanta, the Chinook Fund in Colorado, the Vanguard Public Foundation in the San Francisco Bay Area and the

**“They responded by supporting the creation or expansion of new organizations in Los Angeles that emphasized grassroots organizing led by people of color – signaling a growing recognition in philanthropy that what happened in South Central wasn’t simply a riot, but in many ways a rebellion against ongoing racial injustice.”**

Haymarket People’s Fund in Massachusetts all engaged in grantmaking with degrees of attention to the challenge of institutional racism. As part of their grantmaking models, they often invited those from the communities they served to play significant roles in the determination and distribution of grants. Like these public foundations, a number of smaller family foundations such as the Needmor Fund in Toledo, the Norman Foundation in New York City, the McKay Foundation in San Francisco, and at that time the Public Welfare Foundation in Washington, D.C. made institutional racism a theme, if not the focus, of their grantmaking.

While many foundation efforts were primarily focused on how communities could move from cross-racial dialogue to local action on common concerns, these smaller progressive funders and public foundations like FEX members increasingly supported a new breed of organizing group that challenged the historical, non-racial Alinsky model and advanced more explicit multiracial organizing<sup>1</sup> – such as the Center for Third World Organizing.

Many of the antecedents of today’s work on structural racism were seeded in this post-L.A. phase when the growing recognition of the need for deeper transformation was running up against the limitations of traditional civil rights and community development work. During this era, in addition to the efforts noted above, a number of national foundations also began exploring new program areas tackling the issue of institutional racism much more explicitly.

From 1994-1996, the C.S. Mott Foundation undertook an exploratory phase of grantmaking directly tackling “institutional racism” and “improving race relations.” In 1997, the board doubled the budget of its U.S. Race and Ethnic Relations Program and adopted a new program objective: combating root causes of institutional and societal racism, and building understanding and appreciation of racial diversity, primarily through support of dialogue leading to transformative action at the local, regional and national levels.<sup>2,3</sup>

Also during this period, in 1996, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched its Capitalizing on Diversity grantmaking focus to “promote, facilitate and assist efforts that seek reconciliations and consensus building across racial, cultural and ethnic barriers so as to strengthen democracies.” Kellogg also engaged VISIONS Inc. to provide anti-racism training sessions for staff, board and grantees.<sup>4</sup>

While the Rockefeller Foundation had a long history of funding civil rights, community development and education, among other issues, in the late 1990s it launched a more explicitly race-focused three-year initiative called National Conversations that led to two funding portfolios: Race, Policy & Democracy, and Racial Justice Innovations.<sup>5</sup>

Also in the late 1990s, in partnership with national funders such as Ford, Kellogg, Mott, and The California Endowment, some community foundations were also engaging in more intentional work addressing diversity and increasingly considering aspects of institutional racism. In 1999, the consulting firm Rainbow Research convened 60 community foundations in peer learning retreats to discuss how to reduce racism in their communities. While there were major variations in how explicitly and intentionally the community foundations were practicing this work, as evidenced by baseline data reported from 116 foundations, the report reflects momentum in the discourse among often otherwise less risk-prone community foundations.

### **Post 9/11: A Shifting Context**

Like the South Central civil disturbances, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 shook some in philanthropy again to rethink how they approached questions of race in their grantmaking. The 9/11 attacks unleashed a wave of racial, ethnic and religious backlash against Muslims, along with discriminatory local and national security policies and practices. Not only Muslims and those perceived to be Muslims, but immigrants of many nationalities have been deeply impacted by increased government and community scrutiny since 9/11. In the first decade of the 21st century, these developments motivated a small number of foundations toward a greater awareness of issues of race and ethnicity, moving from concerns about explicit racial animosity to recognition of the disproportionate racial and ethnic impacts of post 9/11 national security and immigration policies and practices. Funders in this arena such as Atlantic Philanthropies, Open Society Foundations, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, some community foundations, and smaller progressive and family foundations have supported the emergence of new racial justice leadership in largely immigrant communities and populations.

Also adding to something of a conservative backlash was an event just days before 9/11. The NGO Forum, parallel to the U.N. World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, received the support of a number of large

U.S. foundations, including \$10 million from the Ford Foundation. The NGO Forum issued a controversial declaration that described Israel as a “racist, apartheid state” responsible for “racist crimes including war crimes, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing.” Although the NGO Forum blowback was largely directed against Ford, it shook many in philanthropy and led to retrenchments that were only exacerbated by the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Reflecting on other trends of this period, Villarosa notes, “We had been seeing a small but growing number of peer funders focusing more explicitly on racial justice within philanthropy during the 1990s. However, the conflation of political backlash, immediately followed by the economic crisis when the high tech bubble burst, led to scaling back at many foundations and some of these emerging more direct racial programs were more vulnerable.” With initial support from Mott, she and a board of racial justice advocates – the majority of whose organizations had been funded by the Mott Foundation during the 1990s – launched the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) in January 2003 to “increase the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at addressing institutional and structural racism.”

The first decade of the new millennium witnessed a number of changes in society occurring in rapid fashion that moved foundations to act on issues of race. As the 2000s progressed, for example, census data showed dramatic demographic shifts taking place in the country. States like California and Texas were rapidly becoming “majority-minority,” and demographers predicted that by 2040 the nation as a whole would no longer be majority-White. Foundations committed to working on race could be seen shifting their analysis and strategies to take into account structural, systemic underpinnings of racial inequities, and the capacities needed to support change efforts led by those most affected by racism. Of particular note, at the Council on Foundations conference in 2004, Susan Berresford (then president of the Ford Foundation) committed a \$10 million match to the Fulfilling the Dream Fund managed by Public Interest Projects aimed at continuing the battle to preserve affirmative action.<sup>6</sup> Through the five years of the fund, 38 foundations and three individual donors joined.

### Sharpening Focus on Structural Racism

In terms of societal events, the devastation of much of New Orleans and surrounding areas as a result of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 again revealed racial fissures and structural issues for foundations to confront. As the aftermath of

Katrina evolved, the disproportionate and severe impacts of the storm on Black communities, particularly in the Lower Ninth Ward, revealed historic and continuing inequities as Black residents frequently found themselves displaced and scattered throughout the region – with little help from the Federal Emergency Management Administration and other major disaster relief nonprofits. Foundations with more of a structural analysis of the impact of Katrina devoted resources to community organizing, though others tried to deracialize their responses and supported community-wide planning initiatives that often went nowhere. Of significant interest in the Katrina response was the capitalization of a new foundation, the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, accompanied by grantmaking of some foundations with a consciousness of the racial justice dimensions of what occurred there – notably the Foundation for the Mid-South, the Kellogg Foundation and the Marguerite Casey Foundation.

Along with historical markers like Katrina, there were emerging issues that captured the attention of more astute grantmakers who could discern the differences between providing resources targeting racial minorities and developing grantmaking agendas that attacked the roots of structural racism. For example, Lori Bezahler of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation and Sherry Magill of the Jessie Ball Dupont Foundation discuss issues in public education (or the privatization of public education) and the inadequacies of education reform solutions such as charter schools, vouchers and high-stakes testing that may actually perpetuate and exacerbate racial inequities. Formerly with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Neighborhood Funders Group, Garland Yates notes the powerful impact of the nation’s foreclosure crisis, which sucked a tremendous amount of wealth out of Black and Latino communities. Yates implies that foundations that were addressing the foreclosure crisis, such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation, also had to address structural issues, because it was not possible to cogently analyze and respond to the pattern of subprime lending and mortgage foreclosure without using a structural lens. In a way, as Yates suggests, the inadequacy of traditional responses to a societal phenomenon such as massive foreclosures across the nation brings a structural analysis into sharp relief.

The same applies to the crisis of many cities. Kimberly Roberson, program director at the C.S. Mott Foundation, describes the foundation’s attention to the economic woes of the city of Flint. Describing Flint’s troubles, Roberson

**“Foundations committed to working on race could be seen shifting their analysis and strategies to take into account structural, systemic underpinnings of racial inequities, and the capacities needed to support change efforts led by those most affected by racism.”**

observes that “we can’t go with the rising tides that are lifting all boats, because all boats are not being lifted.” This is an important appreciation of why foundations have to think in targeted and structural terms, because across-the-board improvements don’t necessarily undo systemic gaps and inequities. A similar dynamic is evident in the bankruptcy of Detroit, a majority African-American city, whose financial circumstances constitute a case study of structural inequities with a strong racial component. For foundations engaged in Detroit such as Skillman, Kresge, Kellogg and Ford, targeted responses are warranted because, as in Flint, solutions aimed at lifting all boats in Detroit would simply reinforce and perpetuate historical imbalances.

For foundations today, the structural dimensions of race in the U.S. are all-encompassing, no matter what the issue. The structural dimensions emerge in discussions of the efforts of states, particularly but not only in the South, to enact restrictive laws on voting rights all but explicitly aimed at suppressing turnout in communities of color; in controversies around laws and cases such as “stand your ground” statutes and the “castle doctrine” that feed into negative stereotypes and make Black people particularly vulnerable to violence and homicide; in efforts of foundations joined by President Obama to address the problems of education, criminal justice, employment and income associated with Black men and boys; and in the struggle to move the nation toward comprehensive immigration reform. In these and other arenas, the foundations that appreciate the analytical power of a structural racism lens are reshaping their grantmaking in creative ways.

## Changing the Frame: How Foundations Talk About Race

In interviews conducted for this article, leaders in philanthropy often noted how difficult it is for foundations to have conversations about race.

### Moving the Conversation Beyond Diversity

Gail Christopher, vice president at W.K. Kellogg Foundation, shares that “it’s much more comfortable to say ‘diversity and inclusion,’ but not ‘race.’ To actually be explicit, that’s recent. We’ve made progress but we have a long way to go. Boards need to be more diverse; and once they are diverse, they need to learn how to deal with it and the conscious and unconscious biases they are going to bring. The model of philanthropy is not one that lends itself easily to equity, or racial equity.”

Reflecting back on her 10 years as a program officer at the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation, Kolu Zigbi makes a similar observation that the language of the racial conversation was “one of two things ... colorblind or diversity, and the diversity conversation was just about diversity in the philanthropic community.”

For Angela Glover Blackwell, founder and president of PolicyLink and former senior vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation, the lack of racial justice and equity analysis in grantmaking was a sector-wide issue in philanthropy. Reflecting on her time at Rockefeller, she recalls, “The fact that these foundations were doing work that was touching racial justice in America, but without a racial justice lens, really said to us that we needed to focus not just on one foundation, but to find people in other foundations who were coming to similar conclusions – and see if we couldn’t lift up racial practice and heighten sensitivity to it throughout philanthropy.”

### Racial Equity as Distinct from Equality

Lauren Casteel, vice president at the Denver Foundation, recalls the environment in which the racial equity lens developed in philanthropy. “I think the shift was really working in partnership and growing more comfortable in calling out the issues of power and privilege between funders and grantees; and similarly beginning to recognize that it’s necessary to link those issues of power and privilege to issues of racial, ethnic and income distinctions,” she says. “And also literally over time people began to understand the demographics ... Part of this shift was explicitly working to figure out how to have a respectful dialogue with grantees, if in fact one wants to affect change with communities of color.”

For Casteel, “the field has begun to articulate the difference between equality and equity,” which she believes is a crucial factor in appreciating the difference between problems in race relations and structural racism.

Some funders shared concern that the diversity dialogue might actually be used in some circumstances as a diversion. According to Starks, “The diversity framework is really operating as a muzzle toward racial justice advocacy, in which changes in the composition of foundation staffing get substituted for substantive changes in foundation grantmaking.” He adds, “It takes a lot of courage to do race, as well as historical and political insight. It’s easier to have a race relations discussion rather than challenging the structures.”

Zigbi reflects on why it is important for foundations to shift from individual to structural understandings of racism. “We have a long history of racism in this country,” she says, “but most people don’t know how it’s been embedded in such important legal structures that seem to be colorblind. When you raise the question of structural racism in the food system, for example, people are only able to speak to the anecdotal, to the symptoms of structural racism. Even in a simplistic way they cannot articulate it ... And I think funders can play an important role – it’s basic information and communication – but we are very far from that.”

## Language: Naming Race

Nonetheless, the conversation remains difficult and one that many foundations with a commitment to addressing race still try to avoid in explicit terms. Former Marguerite Casey Foundation director of programs and evaluation, Cynthia Renfro, observes that the preference in philanthropy to keep the conversation focused on diversity is maintained in part by the feeling of some people that the nation is now a “post-racial society,” and that difficult conversations about race are somewhat passé. Even in progressive circles, many view racial justice work as a subset of economic justice work. Focusing on economic disparities in a social justice framework, they believe, achieves the objectives of racial justice without the divisiveness of pitting people of color versus Whites—or worse, people of color against each other. Renfro doesn’t see it that way. “If it’s not stipulated explicitly,” she says, “you lose the issue of race.”

At the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, one of the first in the South to address the debilitating effects of racial inequities, Gladys Washington describes the foundation’s shift in nomenclature from “program officers” to “network officers,” reflecting their functional roles of trying to be “inclusive of those voices” in Black communities. For foundations coming to grips with the systemic, structural dimensions of race in the South, Washington says, “it changes the foundation’s leadership; it changes the way decisions get made.”

It is a mistake, however, to talk about philanthropy, even progressive foundations, as though the issues and reception are relatively similar around the nation. Compared to many, foundations in the Deep South have had a different experience to contend with. The southern foundations that went into racial justice grantmaking – Mary Reynolds Babcock in North Carolina, the Lyndhurst Foundation in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Jessie Ball Dupont in Jacksonville, Florida – were by and large led by White southerners who had grown up in segregated school systems, with motivations bred by the experience of watching the societally debilitating effects of intentional, official racial segregation. Recently, Grantmakers for Southern Progress released a report, *As the South Goes: Philanthropy and Social Justice in the US South*, based on interviews showing that “traditional Southern funders” (as GSP categorized them) “have discomfort with both the language and the underlying concept of social justice. These funders see social justice as an outdated term with negative connotations of the civil rights movement and as being too confrontational and divisive.”<sup>7</sup> While GSP did not ask specifically about race, those funders labeled as social change or social justice funders gave a mixed response about the viability of explicitly addressing race in their work.

## Seeding and Sustaining Structural Racism Work

Susan Batten, currently the president and CEO of the Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE) and formerly with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, calls for “more direct investments to support organizing for policy and systems change.” She is concerned about the future of racial justice grantmaking work. “We have stuff to ride on now,” she contends, “but the issue for us is how to sustain this work, how do we ensure that there is a point of view that is steeped around racial justice, an analysis of what’s driving the disparities today ... We have real work to do on the sustainability front.”

Peggy Saika, president of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP), suggests that what is needed is a democratization or socialization of philanthropic capital. In the absence of that kind of change, Saika suggests that the measure of progress regarding racial justice is “Are we more powerful on the ground and have we made changes on the ground?” She believes that “there has been progress [on issues of race], but not because of philanthropic investments.” Saika’s challenge is implicitly that there are limitations to what foundations can and cannot achieve with their grantmaking, given that the beneficiaries of most foundations’ racial justice grantmaking are hardly in control of the decision-making. To draw this point out, how effective can philanthropic grantmaking be when philanthropic capital is generated and often still controlled by socioeconomic classes and corporate institutions that in some ways benefit from institutional and structural racism?

Far from defeatism, these observations are pragmatic reflections of the difficulty of addressing structural racism in this society. They reflect the limitations of what can and cannot be achieved through foundations and how difficult it is to fashion programs that don’t fall prey to an unintended focus on individual behavioral changes. While conceding that foundations “don’t have to work the same way or intervene the same way because of their different missions and focuses,” former Ford Foundation vice president Maya Harris argues that “having a shared framework for understanding racial justice, shared definitions of structural racism within an institution, is really important.” To this point, the foundation sector as a whole should be engaged in debate regarding what constitutes grantmaking that addresses conditions of structural racism in our society.

Funders who were interviewed recognized a range of intermediaries including identity-based affinity groups such as ABFE, AAPIP, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Native Americans in Philanthropy, and Funders for LGBTQ Issues; organizations such as PRE, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, and D5; consultants such as VISIONS and Marga Incorporated; and many well-known national racial justice experts such as John A. Powell of



**“Twenty-five years ago, we had people who made big bets ... today, philanthropy hires people not to make waves, not to be as challenging of the status quo.”**

the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, Maya Wiley, formerly of Center for Social Inclusion, and others as advancing analysis around issues of structural racism.

Christopher of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation adds, “It’s all about having different players and hearing different voices. If you are the privileged group, you never have to know that it exists; but when you are invited and required to work with people that shift your understanding, you hear different perspectives and come up with different solutions.”

Roberson notes that “PRE and others have helped foundations develop and access tools that help their program officers understand how race plays out in the institutions and structures of our society. Many funders have predominantly been thinking about access to services and not about the systems that people bump into even if they gain access to those services.”

Sherry Salway Black, former senior vice president of First Nations Development Institute and Eagle Staff Fund, notes importantly that while there are foundations that she and others have worked with specifically focusing on better understanding the needs and dynamics of Native American communities, given the constant turnover within philanthropy, “there can be a continual need for education.”

### **Change from the Inside and Outside**

Institutions, whether philanthropic or not, by and large change not of their own volition – except in unusual circumstances of visionary leadership. Rather, they function within society, amongst their peers, and tend toward limited change unless prompted and pushed. Gara LaMarche tells the story of what happened at Atlantic Philanthropies when he stepped down as CEO. Concerned about the continuation of Atlantic’s role as a leading funder of social movements, some 50 to 60 civic leaders signed a letter to the Atlantic board of trustees that he believes had some impact. “I think the trustees really were taken by the fact that there was an audience that expected things of them and demanded things of them,” LaMarche recalls. “I’ve always wondered and lamented that there isn’t more concerted action aimed at individual foundations.”

The sector needs leadership with vision in order to make substantial progress. “Philanthropy has lost its vision to think and act big,” contends Silicon Valley Community Foundation CEO Emmett Carson. “Twenty-five years ago, we had people who made big bets, they had big visions of what they wanted the country to look like, and they were willing to put their own reputations on the line.” Echoing

LaMarche, Carson says that “today, philanthropy hires people not to make waves, not to be as challenging of the status quo.” In fact, he sees foundations writ large as resisting change. “Foundations like operating as a private club, like Augusta for golfing, without public scrutiny,” says Carson. “We used to have membership [association] leaders who challenged us, [but] now we have membership organizations that say, ‘Tell us what you want us to do and we’re here to satisfy your needs.’” If they challenge foundations on issues of race at all, “they challenge on the margin.”

## **Moving the Needle on Structural Racism Analysis in Foundations**

What might it take to move philanthropy further – even the foundations that are already using a framework of structural racism – toward actions that appreciably advance the cause?

### **Intentional Focus on Racial Equity in Grantmaking**

For Harris, a grantmaking portfolio explicitly dedicated to racial justice is crucial. “[It is] really important to have an explicit commitment, to have a dedicated set of philanthropic resources for advancing racial justice, so that you’re conscious and deliberate, so that you can develop expertise across issues and constituencies,” she argues.

Others also offer perspectives on how and why they deeply embed a structural racism lens within issue-focused work. Lori Bezahler, president of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, offers a powerful perspective based on her foundation’s intensive focus on education. “If we look at education as an obvious example, because there has been so much attention, if you really look at the interventions and hoped-for outcomes of popular educational reforms, they are not at all structural, instead they are highly individuated,” Bezahler contends. “They ignore the impact of related systems on educational success, yet they expect outcomes to be different.” She suggests that the reformers rely on “a very narrowly defined economic model, which is not a structural analysis.” While “in a very varied landscape, the language of equity permeates philanthropy,” she says, “the devil is in the details as it always is, how words come to mean different things for different people in different institutions.” She explains that how change happens in education is often “uninterrogated ideology,” and as such, bypasses a structural analysis that captures the need for systems change to achieve racial justice.

In contrast to Harris’s argument for an explicit racial justice grantmaking portfolio, Ray Colmenar sees a pro and con



## The Importance of Internal Leadership

While external forces, both indirectly and through direct engagement, have pushed and shaped the path of philanthropy, one consistent thread heard in the interviews was the importance of philanthropic leaders making racial justice a priority. In particular, many recognized critical moments where the leadership of people of color pushed for or allowed for greater change.

### The Changing Faces of Philanthropic Leadership

Lauren Casteel, now a vice president with the Denver Foundation but previously with the Hunt Alternative Foundation and other philanthropic institutions, noted that the era of the 1970s characterized by Jim Joseph's leadership at the Council on Foundations and the creation of ABFE countered a general philanthropic attitude on race that was "not intentional and just beginning to focus on diversity."

From the 1970s into the early 1990s, people of color in foundations started affinity groups based on racial and ethnic identities to advocate for more inclusion in philanthropy and for more grant dollars dedicated to communities of color. The first COF affinity group was ABFE, founded in 1971 in protest of the lack of African Americans on the council's board slate. It was followed by Hispanics in Philanthropy, founded in 1984; Asian Americans in Philanthropy, founded in 1990; and Native Americans in Philanthropy, founded in 1993. In 1993, the race-based affinity groups – along with Women & Philanthropy, the Women's Funding Network, Disability Funders Network, and Funders for LGBTQ Issues – joined together to form a coalition called Joint Affinity Groups to educate grantmakers about the value of inclusion and equity in foundations, increase understanding of the interrelatedness of multiple identities and issues, and advocate for greater equity in the distribution of philanthropic resources.

Reflecting on his experience at the Ford Foundation in the 1990s, Silicon Valley Community Foundation's Emmett Carson recalls a "golden age" of philanthropy leadership by people of color. To Carson, the institutional commitments of foundations in that era were strongly linked to the presence of Black philanthropic leaders, such as Franklin Thomas at the helm of the Ford Foundation, Anna Faith Jones, the head of the Boston Foundation and the first African-American woman to ever lead a major U.S. foundation,

and James Joseph as the head of COF, as well as program officers like Jim Burton at the Rockefeller Foundation, Lynn Walker Huntley at Ford, and Jackie Burton at the Lilly Endowment.

However, Carson also observed that philanthropic attention to racial issues dissipated rather than grew with inevitable staff transitions. When Joseph left COF, Carson believes that that institution's attention to race waned. "We were on the cusp of a breakthrough, having more people of color in every part of philanthropy," Carson recalls. "But if you look today, we have fewer people in leadership and in board positions than we've ever had."<sup>8</sup> From his perspective, the golden era was the first wave: "We patted ourselves on the back and said mission accomplished; but the first wave is never mission accomplished. The first wave is just the beachhead – you build on that or you don't."

### Accountability and Transparency

Nevertheless, there was ongoing attention to these issues in various parts of the philanthropic sector from the 1990s through today. Equity work continued through the identity-based affinity groups, with several reports together and individually recognizing the still disproportionately small numbers of both leadership of color and grantmaking to communities of color. Progressive organizations like the National Network of Grantmakers, and particularly its People of Color Caucus, were actively pushing a racial justice agenda within their work. And, as previously noted, there were changes occurring within the philanthropic dialogue on the importance of racial justice issues through the work of those intermediaries and others, such as NCRP, PRE and more. Even within mainstream philanthropy, there were numerous efforts as evidenced by countless reports cited in a 70-plus page compendium on diversity in philanthropy by the Foundation Center in 2008.<sup>9</sup>

In this contested space marked by feelings of frustration and dwindling progress on issues of equity within philanthropy, along with continued efforts by some to move the needle, the Greenlining Institute issued a report that led to legislation introduced in California in 2006 to mandate disclosure of California foundations' data on diversity and inclusion. This tactic brought a renewed level of focus to the issue of leadership in foundations, and their attentiveness to issues of race and racial justice. Assembly Bill

624, introduced by Assemblymember Joe Coto, created a politicized dynamic regarding diversity issues in philanthropy – with the sector organizing nationally against potential government scrutiny of foundations' records on diversity and equitable grantmaking.

Some in philanthropy called for voluntary alternatives, leading in 2007 to the Diversity in Philanthropy Project, a time-limited campaign by 50 foundations and allied leaders to expand diversity in the field. Its work focused on three areas: promoting voluntary diversity and inclusion initiatives; advocating for a national system of data collection, analysis and accountability; and supporting the advancement, organization and distribution of knowledge resources.<sup>10</sup> The D5 Coalition was the culmination of this effort, a five-year initiative led by COF, The Foundation Center, various regional associations of grantmakers, members of JAG, and the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. Now in its last year, D5 brought together an unprecedented array of leaders committed to supporting diversity and inclusion in the philanthropic sector and society.

### **Diversity and Inclusion: To What End?**

While modifying the composition of a foundation's staffing and governance is no guarantee that it will better address structural racism, at some level the content of racial justice grantmaking cannot be divorced from empowering people of color in foundation leadership positions – people who have the passion and expertise to bring new perspectives and experiences to crafting foundations' grantmaking. From her experience as a consultant to other foundations, her work at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and now leading ABFE, Susan Batten attributes the movement within philanthropy towards a stronger racial justice perspective to “select leaders, foundation leaders of color, positioned in the field who see this as a personal mission – and they push it.” As an example, Batten cites the group of foundations and foundation leaders, including a large number of African Americans in visible leadership roles, who have pledged to support efforts aimed at improving the life chances of Black males.

Speaking of The California Endowment's shift toward racial equity grantmaking, Ray Colmenar cites both the leadership of Robert K. Ross, its African-American CEO, and supportive board members. “One advantage of The Endowment is certainly Bob Ross,” he says. “But you also had board members who were activists and equity advocates. The board cared about equity as a

process, and participation of communities and communities of color – that was key.”

Maya Harris, a former vice president at the Ford Foundation, underscores the importance of leadership from the top, which she describes as a “leadership mandate” for racial justice. The latitude and endorsement of the foundation's leadership plays a huge role in a foundation's evolution from a commitment to racial issues to incorporation of a racial justice or structural racism lens in grantmaking.

Adrienne Mansanares at the Denver Foundation echoes Harris' observation, suggesting that where racial justice grantmaking thrives, it is “because we have people in power setting the framework for these portfolios.”

But others noted that such leadership for change can occur at all levels within the foundation, as evidenced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's internal affinity group, RESPECT, started 15 years ago by staff. The group initially convened as an informal place for staff concerned with issues of racial equity, class and power to exchange ideas and discuss challenges. “Foundation staff recognized that as discomfiting as it may be, dialogue about race is necessary if we are to grow as individuals, organizations and communities.”<sup>11</sup> Another effort seeded by Annie E. Casey, Kellogg, The California Endowment, and Atlantic Philanthropies was the Race and Equity in Philanthropy Group, coordinated by Marga Incorporated Consulting, with a primary focus on sharing lessons on internal issues of inclusion and equity.

Notwithstanding frustrations about philanthropy writ large, evolving leadership, particularly among people of color, has led to growing dialogue around issues of racial justice embedded within foundation grantmaking. The importance of leadership inside – and outside – foundations cannot be dismissed. As these observations from philanthropic leaders demonstrate, the leadership that is needed isn't just about titles, or who gets to be included in the club of foundation CEOs and trustees. Rather, leadership is exhibited and demonstrated by foundation CEOs and program officers when they demonstrate the courage of their convictions to address structural racism, when they move beyond passive “diversity thinking,” and when they push for dialogue and debate that goes beyond most foundations' comfort levels.

to the idea of a specific racial justice grantmaking portfolio. “For the purposes of sustainability and resource investment, it’s better to integrate racial justice as a core value and principle across an entire organization,” he notes, “[but] the risk could be that it gets lost or the risk that it gets too diffused.”

With decades of foundation experience to draw upon, Yates expresses a bottom-line concern. “Relatively speaking, in spite of some shifts in the landscape to be more favorable to supporting racial equity strategies, there are still far too little resources going to those strategies, and particularly to organizations founded and guided by people of color. ... And, in that context, a stark reality is my belief that strategies with indigenous origins tend to lag behind in garnering mainstream philanthropic support as well.”

### Paths to Change in Foundations

For some foundations, the direction of change went from top staff to the board, often revealing the necessity of changing the board structure to fit the evolving nature of the foundation’s grantmaking and the communities it served. As Sherry Magill at the Jessie Ball Dupont Foundation explains, it was an increasing awareness of the composition of the community served by the foundation that compelled her and her colleagues to expand the board of trustees in order to add racial diversity. With Dupont, it took a court case addressing issues in the donor’s will to ensure that the foundation could be restructured to include African-American members.

Zigbi shares how voluntary board shifts by family leadership led to more equitable grantmaking at the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation. As the family opened and expanded their board to non-family members in an effort to gain more diverse leadership, the board discussions evolved to include questions such as “Who are we funding? What’s the racial make-up of their leadership and governance? What do we consider to be a people of color-led organization?” Program officers, she says, began to report on the numbers of people of color-led organizations and discovered an imbalance. In her portfolio, sustainable agriculture, the grantees were the least racially diverse. “It created an opportunity for me,” Zigbi recalls. “I had been interested in trying to bring more diversity into the portfolio. This enabled us to do some new grantmaking, and significantly increased the percentage of POC-led organizations in the portfolio.” The foundation also reports this grantmaking information on its website in an effort to be more transparent.

Supporting organizations led by people of color is key to

the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s approach to racial justice grantmaking, which according to Christopher seeks to “develop a national community of practice within the framework of racial healing.” Christopher explains that the challenge is “How do you create a culture that is based on healing and an understanding of unconscious bias?” She acknowledges that as a foundation, Kellogg’s credibility and impact in this arena depends on its grantmaking. “We can’t step into this area without funding those who got us to this place like the NAACP, the Urban League, and the National Congress of American Indians. We have to fund all those civil rights groups, otherwise we’re not real,” Christopher adds. “We did fund such a network of anchor institutions. Part of the healing was to get them to work together and see themselves as part of a larger whole.” The components of building a community of practice, in Christopher’s experience at Kellogg, involve “funding groups that bring a structural inequity lens to change the public discussion ... [then building] greater capacity at the community level to do the work.” For the latter, Kellogg issued an RFP expecting to generate 500 responses, but received double that number, from every state except Wyoming, and funded 120.

Black shares some of the qualities of racial justice grantmaking related more to the process of the foundation’s approach than a particular stream of funding. “You have a commitment from top to bottom, where it isn’t just three years, it’s intended to be systemic,” she explains. “It is really looking across society, looking for places where there can be structural change, and providing the support that is capable of doing that. You can often tell if it’s not for show, because the foundations are interested in learning too.”

### Showing Impact

While sharing others’ belief in the importance of philanthropic leadership around racial justice, Blackwell echoes Yates and Saika’s concerns about supporting groups in communities doing the real work. “The racial justice outcomes that we seek will require capacity that goes beyond that of philanthropy,” says Blackwell. “It is most important to get philanthropic resources to those directly working to achieve racial equity in the world. And the best insights about what to do will likely emerge from the ground. Philanthropy is an important partner; but partnering with activists, advocates, practitioners and community will be essential for authentic, lasting change.”

These conversations about the potential for more impactful foundation investments need to permeate foundation leadership at the highest level. “Trustees need to have a conversation on how racial equity relates to their mission,”

**“It is really looking across society, looking for places where there can be structural change, and providing the support that is capable of doing that.”**

says Zigbi. “What needs to happen is an understanding of how it builds power for your mission. Until trustees really get that, the range of good practices are not going to make a difference. There needs to be an understanding of how the organizational self-interest around their mission is served by really understanding and incorporating racial equity as a core piece.”

For some funders, the most important concern is being able to show how structural solutions produce the change they and their communities are seeking; and many have found that the concept of “targeted universalism” can reach their goals. “I think the thing that can move funders is seeing demonstrated results of how really thinking these things through has changed outcomes,” notes Roberson. She offers a recent example shared from Montgomery County, Maryland, which has the some of the highest graduation rates for African-American males. “One of the things they did was shift resources from some of their high-achieving schools to some of the low-achieving schools. The higher-achieving kids did not suffer; the lower-achieving kids did better. The successes are very real – and who doesn’t want high educational outcomes for all kids, with particular emphasis on the groups who don’t do as well?”

Carson adds, “My prescription for philanthropy is very simple: Do what your mission says to do, and follow where the facts lead. At the bottom line, foundations exist to ask tough questions and try difficult things, and help people put a frame on their world. We’ve had significant social changes for the better, but individual success does not equate to collective success.”

Well-meaning foundation CEOs, staff and trustees aside, moving and changing foundations requires advocacy, oversight, and watchdogs both inside and outside the foundation world so that philanthropy achieves what Carson envisions it is capable of doing. It is an agenda for the advocates of racial justice grantmaking and for the recipients of racial justice grants – or else the conversation about structural racism devolves into one-off “racial portfolio” grants little different from the more comfortable diversity conversations that have preceded this point. As long as it has the self-awareness and understanding that it’s not their role to create or define the movement, philanthropy is uniquely situated to support racial equity work with a long view.

In Bezahler’s words, “We want deep sustained change that is structural. Philanthropy is the only sector that can run the risk of being as aspirational as we want.”

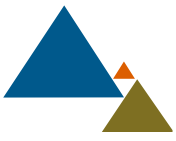


**Rick Cohen** is the national correspondent of *Nonprofit Quarterly* magazine. Prior to joining NPQ, he was executive director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, a national nonprofit philanthropic watchdog organization. He is a former member of the PRE advisory board.

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\* Sarita Ahuja contributed to this article.



# Data Snapshot on Racial Justice Grantmaking

By Rick Cohen

As we noted earlier in this publication, PRE recognizes there is no simple category for grantmaking with a structural racialization lens. Grants that could be included in a portfolio using a structural racialization approach might include research, media, organizing, advocacy or other categories. They might include grants focused on housing, education, health, economic, environment or other sectors. They may or may not be people of color-led and serving. What would make them part of a structural strategy would not necessarily be evident or measurable at the individual grant level – just as one cannot fully understand a system by looking at a single part.

While all grants that apply a structural racialization lens would be considered “racial justice grants,” many in the field would consider some grants to be “racial justice grants” that may not be at all structural. For the purpose of its 2009 report tracking social justice grantmaking, the Foundation Center defined social justice philanthropy as “the granting of philanthropic contributions to nonprofit organizations based in the United States and other countries that work for structural change in order to increase the opportunity of those who are the least well off politically, economically, and socially.”<sup>1</sup> However, knowing there is still wide variation in interpretation of what in fact constitutes working for structural change, we recognize for some this may require approaches that clearly involve organizing, advocacy or intentional system change policy work, but others have made the case for targeted service delivery and outreach as contributing to structural change given certain scale.

The data below are not proxies for understanding progress around a structural racialization approach, but can provide some sense of the trajectory of the field’s commitment to broader racial justice issues. We share this both as some measure of progress, as well as to fostering further discussion and commitment to the kind of data collection that will more effectively guide future advocacy or investments. –Lori Villarosa

Drawing from analysis of grant data prepared by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, in 2004 the Applied Research Center (ARC, now called Race Forward) circulated a report on the available data on giving to communities of color and to civil rights and social action organizations. ARC’s Short Changed report<sup>2</sup> generated discussion within philanthropic circles about what institutional philanthropy was accomplishing in its grantmaking directed toward communities of color. Then, as now, ARC faced the challenges of working with official collections of foundation grantmaking information, relying on Foundation Center tabulations that track giving to populations of color. These tabulations are subject to definitional and coding programs that ARC acknowledged could result in over-counting grants in some areas while undercounting grants in others. ARC pointed out that grantmaking to communities of color might not equate to racial justice grantmaking, and that grants for other categories of recipients, such as the Foundation Center’s category of grants for “civil rights and social action,” could intersect with racial justice funding but together presented only a partial picture.

Nonetheless, the statistics on foundation grantmaking addressing communities of color is important context for understanding contemporary discussions of racial justice grantmaking. Even allowing for differences among foundations regarding how they describe and code their grantmaking, the proportion of grant dollars of the largest foundations compiled annually by the Foundation Center shows relatively small amounts dedicated to specific racial or ethnic groups:

Designated domestic population group	Grantmaking Year													
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Ethnic/racial	9.9	7.9	7.7	7.0	8.1	8.0	7.6	8.2	7.4	6.9	6.8	8.9	9.5	8.8
General	4.4	3.9	4.4	3.7	3.7	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.5	3.4	3.8	5.6	5.3	4.9
Asian-American	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
African-American/Black	3.8	1.9	1.4	1.4	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.5
Hispanic/Latino	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.4	1.2
Native American	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4
Indigenous									0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Other									0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
Immigrants/Refugees	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.1

Source: Foundation Center

While there is no guarantee that organizations led by people of color are automatically pursuing racial justice work, grants that “target” or “benefit” racial and ethnic community-based groups are a commonly-used measure of the philanthropic sector’s commitment to racial justice.

For example, a 2008 report from the Foundation Center titled *Embracing Diversity: Foundation Giving Benefiting Communities of Color*<sup>3</sup> initiated by the foundation community in response to reports from the Greenlining Institute earlier in the decade, steered clear of broaching the question of giving to organizations that not only benefit communities of color, but are led by people of color. A similar Foundation Center study two years later, *Grantmaking to Communities of Color in Oregon*,<sup>4</sup> emphasized grants “reaching” communities of color, perhaps an implicit acknowledgement that a grant made to a community of color might not necessarily benefit that community.

The reality of the composition of the nonprofit sector is that it is largely White – proportionally much more White than the population of the country and even more than the population of the “communities of color” identified in these foundation grantmaking studies. One report indicates that 84 percent of nonprofits are led by Whites, and even within organizations where people of color are in relatively senior positions they are more likely to be deputy directors (15 percent) than executive directors (10 percent).<sup>5</sup>

Grantmaking that is more aligned with a racial justice analysis is more likely to go directly to organizations led by people of color that are both located in and serve communities of color. Despite the reluctance of many kinds of nonprofits to report on their governance and leadership by race, the gap between the ratio of people of color in the population and people of color leading nonprofit organizations is significant and shows little sign of closing.

Various studies identify this gap in several localities and states. For example, the Urban Institute’s 2009 demographic assessment of California’s nonprofit sector revealed that people of color, while accounting for 57 percent of the state’s population, comprised only 24.8 percent of nonprofit sector executive directors—with the gap most extreme for Latinos who comprised 35.8 percent of the state’s population but only 6.5 percent of nonprofit CEOs.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding nonprofit boards in California, the proportion of people of color differed little from the CEO proportion—just under 28 percent of board members. Nearly a third of nonprofit boards in the state—31 percent—were 100 percent non-Latino white.

References to grantmaking to organizations specifically led by people of color are few. A study by Philanthropy New York<sup>7</sup> surveyed over 500 New York-based nonprofits, of which nearly 199 self-identified as minority-led. Of those minority-led nonprofits, 37 percent did not have a person of color serving as executive director, and generally justified their self-descriptions because their staff were made up predominantly of people of color on (and in a few cases, simply because they served communities of color). Based on those self-descriptions, smaller New York-based POC-led nonprofits (budgets of less than \$1 million) reported little difference from non-POC-led nonprofits regarding levels of foundation support, but the number of nonprofits studied with larger budgets was too small to make a determination regarding the comparability of foundation support.

Overall, in the only nationally representative survey of nonprofit board governance, the Urban Institute found in 2005 that 86 percent of nonprofit board members were white while only seven percent were black and 3.5 percent Latino.<sup>8</sup> Even more striking, more than half of all nonprofit boards were 100 percent non-Latino White.

In any review of foundation grantmaking, some organizations repeatedly receive foundation grants with purposes clearly articulating “racial justice.” In a search of foundation grants with “racial justice” as a keyword, organizations consistently receiving those grants include the Advancement Project, Applied Research Center (recently renamed Race Forward), the Organizing Apprenticeship Project, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and the Western States Center, just to name a few. How foundations describe their grants and how Foundation Center staff code them makes comparison of foundations by racial justice grantmaking size and volume somewhat difficult, but a number of foundations show up repeatedly with racial justice in their grant descriptions. These include the Arcus Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Marguerite Casey Foundation, the Otto Bremer Foundation, the Public Welfare Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the Fund for New Jersey.

In its analysis of the grantmaking of roughly the 1,000 largest foundations in the U.S., the Foundation Center counts grants loosely termed as “civil rights and social action.” Like other categories, this is a subjective category within the broader grantmaking arena of what the Foundation Center describes as “public and societal benefit.” As a picture of one of the elements of foundation grantmaking that may intersect with potential grantmaking for racial justice purposes, the trends over the years look to be as follows:

Year	Number of grants for civil rights and social action	Dollar value of grants for civil rights and social action (in \$millions)	Percentage of all grants in the Foundation Center's top 1,000 grantmakers
2004	2115	\$193.4	1.29%
2005	2142	\$220.5	1.32%
2006	2206	\$228.6	1.19%
2007	2219	\$274.4	1.18%
2008	2481	\$322.7	1.33%
2009	2199	\$316.2	1.40%
2010	2491	\$347.7	1.59%
2011	2470	\$340.9	1.39%

Source: Foundation Center

Racial justice as a description of a grant recipient's purpose is not an "official" grantmaking category in the Foundation Center's Online Directory of grants, however, among U.S.-based recipients, the most frequent grant recipients by number of grants under the "civil/human rights minorities" category of grants in the online database were as follows per year:

Top Minority Civil Rights Recipients of Foundation Grants (by Number of Grants)					
2006 (n=881)	2007 (n=743)	2008 (n=738)	2009 (n=733)	2010 (n=810)	2011 (n=752)
NAACP (77)	NAACP (78)	NAACP (74)	NAACP (68)	NAACP (69)	NAACP (63)
National Council of La Raza (41)	National Council of La Raza (46)	National Council of La Raza (52)	National Council of La Raza (56)	National Council of La Raza (39)	National Council of La Raza (47)
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (35)	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (33)	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (28)	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (28)	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (32)	Advancement Project (32)
Focus: HOPE (26)	Focus: HOPE (32)	Advancement Project (23)	Advancement Project (21)	Advancement Project (29)	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (28)
Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (25)	Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (18)	Focus: HOPE (21)	Focus: HOPE (21)	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (29)	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (28)
Advancement Project (24)	Washington DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation (18)	Washington DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation (21)	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (21)	Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (24)	Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (16)
Chicanos Por La Causa (22)	Advancement Project (16)	Chicanos Por La Causa (20)	Applied Research Center (20)	Focus: HOPE (24)	Chicanos Por La Causa (14)
Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development (21)	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (15)	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (20)	Chicanos Por La Causa (19)	Applied Research Center (20)	Focus: HOPE (14)
Applied Research Center (19)	Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development (15)	National Civil Rights Museum (17)	Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (14)	National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund (17)	Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development (14)
Washington DC Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation (17)	Applied Research Center (14)	Applied Research Center (13)	Chinese Progressive Association (14)	Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (14)	Asian Law Caucus (13)



The real challenge in exploring these grants is to get beyond the largest organizations to determine which foundations are making small- and medium-sized grants that might reach organizations that are working more at the grassroots level and with a potential structural racism framework. For the period of grants from 2006 through 2011, the top grantmakers making civil rights grants by size were as follows:

Top Foundation Grantmakers to Minority Civil Rights Organizations (by Size of Grants)					
\$1,000 to \$4,999 (788)	\$5,000 to \$9,999 (528)	\$10,000 to \$49,999 (1605)	\$50,000 to \$249,999 (1267)	\$250,000 to \$999,999 (408)	\$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999 (61)
Wells Fargo Foundation (36)	Wells Fargo Foundation (24)	Verizon Foundation (51)	Foundation to Promote Open Society (61)	Ford Foundation (100)	Ford Foundation (15)
San Francisco Foundation, The (29)	New York Community Trust, The (21)	Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc., The (50)	Ford Foundation (53)	California Endowment, The (23)	Kellogg Foundation, W. K. (8)
New York Community Trust, The (21)	San Francisco Foundation, The (18)	San Francisco Foundation, The (48)	Open Society Institute (52)	Kellogg Foundation, W. K. (20)	Gates Foundation, Bill & Melinda (5)
Boston Foundation, Inc. (18)	Verizon Foundation (15)	Comcast Foundation, The (39)	Haas, Jr. Fund, Evelyn and Walter (41)	Gates Foundation, Bill & Melinda (18)	Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc., The (3)
Oregon Community Foundation, The (15)	UPS Foundation, The (12)	California Endowment, The (30)	California Endowment, The (35)	Foundation to Promote Open Society (15)	Coulter Foundation, Wallace H. (3)
Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, The (14)	Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc., The (11)	New York Community Trust, The (30)	Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc., The (32)	Verizon Foundation (14)	Knight Foundation, John S. and James L. (3)
Tides Foundation (14)	Macy's Foundation (11)	Tides Foundation (30)	Casey Foundation, Annie E., The (32)	Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Inc., The (12)	Mott Foundation, Charles Stewart (3)
Gill Foundation, The (13)	Weingart Foundation (11)	Wells Fargo Foundation (28)	Casey Foundation, Marguerite (29)	Casey Foundation, Marguerite (11)	PepsiCo Foundation, Inc., The (3)
New York Foundation (13)	California Community Foundation (8)	Casey Foundation, Annie E., The (27)	Kellogg Foundation, W. K. (29)	Johnson Foundation, Robert Wood, The (9)	BP Foundation, Inc. (2)
JPMorgan Chase Foundation, The (12)	Casey Foundation, Annie E., The (8)	Citi Foundation (22)	Ford Motor Company Fund (27)	UPS Foundation, The (9)	California Endowment, The (2)

Within these grantmakers' listings, one might debate the consistency of their commitment to racial justice – particularly the corporate grantmaking arms of Bank of America and Citicorp, banks that were among the prime perpetrators of the predatory lending crises that deprived so many people of color of their homes due to rampant mortgage foreclosures; the grantmaking arm of BP, a corporation responsible for an environmental disaster of immense proportions in the region previously devastated by Hurricane Katrina; and perhaps more established foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which has been a primary funder of private schools and all-but-private charter schools that redirect resources from struggling public school systems.

For a more current reflection of the range of funders with a focus on racial justice, one might look to the group of funders engaged in grantmaking around issues of Black male achievement (BMA) and/or boys and men of color. But depending on the approaches actually supported by funders, distinctions must be made regarding whether such efforts are simply addressing individual racialized outcomes, or seeking to combat the systemic racism underlying the disparities. While both kinds of approaches have been included among some of the grantmaking, such distinctions are not measured by the available grant data. The Leadership and Sustainability Institute of Black Male Achievement and [bmafunders.org](http://bmafunders.org) – a project of the Open Society Foundations and the Foundation Center, have tabulated more than 2,700 foundation grants for Black men and boys programs between 2008 and early 2014. Our tabulation of the grants in this database for 2012 and 2013, though the 2013 data may not be complete found 330 grants (larger than \$10,000) totaling \$45.8 million, with an average grant size of over \$138,000 and a median grant size of \$50,000.

\$12.8 million of that total—29 percent—is accounted for by grants from The California Endowment; another \$7.7 million comes from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, \$4.23 million from the Ford Foundation, and grant totals exceeding \$1 million from the Coca-Cola Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, the California Wellness Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation. Among the largest individual recipients of boys and men of color grants are two nonprofits advising both private funders and President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" initiative—PolicyLink (which received \$2.6 million) and Root Cause (which received \$1.2 million). Morehouse College, one of the nation's most prominent Historically Black Colleges and Universities, received \$2.5 million in this grant tabulation. With an emphasis on mentoring, the funders awarded over \$2 million to affiliates of the Boys & Girls Club network and over \$1 million to Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations.

Analysis of the [bmafunders.org](http://bmafunders.org) database indicates a concentration of grantmaking by health care-oriented funders (118, almost one-third of the grants were focused on health care or health organizations). Almost as many grants (96) focused on education (with a strong component with emphasizing mentoring), and a tiny proportion focused on employment issues (only seven).

Foundation engagement in racial justice grantmaking is still evolving, even within an arena such as support of Black men and boys that many funders hope to see addressing structural or systematic barriers. There are noteworthy efforts by foundations to support civil rights organizations, multiracial community organizing efforts, and media and culture work shifting public perceptions around race—as well as efforts to increase grantmaking to people of color-led organizations and specific populations. But the content of racial justice grantmaking remains a subject warranting discussion and debate among foundations committed to progress in this country.

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# Walking Forward: Racial Justice Funding Lessons from the Field

by Julie Quiroz

Fifty years after the major victories of the civil rights movement, racial justice activists share a sense of bitter dismay at what Judith Browne Dianis, director of Advancement Project, calls a “new normal” of racial injustice that is actually painfully old.

“Like the civil rights placard ‘I am a man,’” says Taj James, pointing to the campaign by San Francisco group POWER following George Zimmerman’s acquittal, “we needed to declare again that Black lives matter.” According to James, who began his racial justice work as a Black youth organizer two decades ago and now heads the Movement Strategy Center, “It can feel like we walked back in time to a moment we never left.”

To some, there are disconcerting signs that the focus on race is eroding in philanthropy, ironically at a moment when many funders are keen to leverage the changing demographics of the U.S. electorate for policy change on a wide range of issues. Eva Paterson, president of the Equal Justice Society, observes that foundations appear to be leaving race behind. “I’m seeing disturbing trends in some national foundations,” says Paterson, “a pulling away from race where they seem to be adopting the notion of post-racial America. What is going on?”

The data in trends on actual foundation giving to work on racial justice is mixed and often challenging to document

**“The structural racism framework has put pressure and expectation on groups that didn’t really have the infrastructure in the first place. These groups were then expected to overthrow structural racism with \$25,000 grants.”**

accurately – both due to differences of definition, and the limitations of coding and reporting. The concerns and questions raised in this essay are based on perspectives offered by several racial justice activists with breadths and depths of experience, sharing views that have been mirrored by many in the field in other recent reports. In this time of great challenge, we asked, how can foundations support the field of racial justice organizing to walk forward? What wisdom can foundations draw from the past in order to move more effectively toward the future? What, if anything, has worked?

In conversations with other racial justice organizers and activists,<sup>1</sup> several lessons for funders stood out.

## 1. Adequately and consistently fund base-building as the center of a change model.

Funders often do not prioritize the day-to-day work of community organizing, or base-building, in their funding strategies. “There’s a lack of an effective change model,” says Makani Themba, executive director of The Praxis Project and longtime activist who also has experience in the funder role. “Funders lack a clear understanding of where base-building fits in.”

Scot Nakagawa of ChangeLab, who has held leadership positions in organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, the Western Prison Project and in foundations, agrees. “Funders are concentrating on ‘funding to scale,’ on larger organizations and less on smaller groups,” he says. “But policy is the end of the discussion and not the beginning. The beginning is the work of smaller community-based groups who deal with the most directly impacted.”

“There’s no sense of how a national organization goes to scale,” maintains Dianis, whose national racial justice organization, Advancement Project, is based in Washington, D.C. “A national organization goes to scale because of local organizations.”

Maria Poblet, director of Causa Justa/Just Cause, a multiracial grassroots group organizing on housing and immigrant rights issues in San Francisco and Oakland, believes that while there’s been some progress with foundations seeking to address structural racism, the results have been undermined by the lack of support for organizing in communities of color. “The structural racism framework has put pressure and expectation on groups that didn’t really have the infrastructure in the first place. These groups were then expected to overthrow structural racism with \$25,000 grants,” says Poblet. “When they didn’t, investment shifted away, with funders concentrating on bigger groups that they think can produce something. No one wants to fund the

infrastructure of organizing. That's one of the core ways that racial inequity plays out in the world.”

Xochi Bervera, a co-director of Racial Justice Action Center in Atlanta, who previously as director of Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children worked on survival and justice issues following Hurricane Katrina, echoes Poblet. “There are projects to advance the theory of racial justice,” observes Bervera, “but not support for the grassroots work needed to do it.”

Research by University of Southern California economist and sociologist Manuel Pastor confirms the funding challenges organizing groups face. Pastor writes, “In interviews of over 100 grassroots leaders across the country ... they constantly say that day-to-day base-building work is their bread-and-butter and that funding it is a constant battle.”<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Provide racial justice organizing groups with long-term general support funding.**

Many organizers and activists identify the short-term approach of funders as a major obstacle to strong racial justice organizing. “A variety of different sectors within philanthropy have tried to move more resources to organizations of color, in particular to reproductive justice,” recalls Kalpana Krishnamurthy, policy director at the reproductive justice organization Forward Together. “But the funding pattern is short. How do you get to structural change if you are only getting a few years of funding?”

In philanthropy, the prevalence of short-term and project funding as opposed to general support funding has been well-documented.<sup>3</sup> “Funders get stuck in one-time funding mode,” says Dianis. “Dealing with racial voter suppression in 2012, we did a communications program on how to talk about the issue and motivate people. That work was important but it was one-time funding.”

Many in the field also describe the need for ongoing – not episodic – investment in electoral work. “In Latino communities,” says Arturo Vargas, director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, “the number of voters is increasing but not the rate of participation. There is little investment in those not participating. But it's not apathy; it's that people have given up.” Confirming Vargas's point, 2012 election data shows that the turnout of Latinos was higher than ever, while the Latino voter participation rate actually declined compared to 2008.<sup>4</sup>

“Organizing groups need funding between major election cycles,” he continues, “in order to continue engaging and educating new voters through issue-based organizing, and

building leaders and constituencies to activate on future campaigns.” Some examples of these efforts exist, such as the California Civic Participation Funders, which has provided regional support by aligning a set of funders around needs defined by organizing groups.<sup>5</sup>

Many believe support for grassroots organizing has declined, resulting in less support for the core strategy of advancing racial justice. For example, James observed a recent shift away from grassroots organizing among several large foundations that once provided a large proportion of funding. Recent examples include Surdna Foundation's elimination of its civic engagement program, Atlantic Philanthropies' shift away from social justice funding, the closing of the education-organizing funder collaborative Communities for Public Education Reform, and the end of the Ford Foundation's environmental justice program and shift toward large grants within specific issue areas.

## **3. Examine ongoing racialized practices within philanthropy.**

The way foundations design and conduct grantmaking often reinforces racial inequities, and favors organizations that have benefited from White privilege through a history of White leadership. “As a country, the less White we get, the more decision-makers distrust democracy,” argues James. “This plays out in philanthropy where we can now hear conversations like ‘Is democracy good or bad in Detroit?’” Like the country as a whole, philanthropy is turning away from democracy and toward a technocratic approach that reflects and reproduces structural racism.

Bervera agrees, “People say they can't fund in the South because there is no infrastructure. How we define infrastructure is racialized. There is grassroots local work led by people of color, and powerful networks and connections. They just have less formal institutional resources.”

Another activist who commented to Steve Williams and NTanya Lee for the Ear to the Ground project report<sup>6</sup> raised a critical overarching concern that “foundations are not structurally accountable to our communities, yet have tremendous influence over our collective future by dictating which organizations, issues and/or strategies will be funded.” This is ultimately racialized given that the majority of power within philanthropy is still White, wealthy and insulated.

## **4. Support accurate and compelling storytelling of racial justice work.**

There is a growing recognition among organizers and activists that it is not only important to do good work, but also to build a “bigger we” of people who understand the work in the context of the change model, feel connected to

**“The dominant theme is that explicit work on racial justice is hard to do and can be divisive. But we are winning talking about race and racial justice.”**

it, and speak and stand up for it. “We need to tell our stories of the strengths of the racial justice movement,” says Dianis. “We are sometimes too busy doing the work to tell the story. It can be hard for funders who may not get the process of the work. We need them to understand what it takes to get to wins. We need to tell the story so that funders can understand the process.”

Themba makes a similar point. “The dominant theme is that explicit work on racial justice is hard to do and can be divisive. But we are winning talking about race and racial justice,” she says. “We need to be clear about what we mean by winning. It would be good to have a pool of resources to allow people to step back and write, like the Ear to the Ground project.”

Ruben Lizardo of Policy Link, a national social and economic equity organization, emphasized the importance of communicating the universal significance of racial justice. “What we used to see as solutions for people of color are solutions for everyone,” maintains Lizardo. His assertion is echoed in the recommendations of a 2009 report on addressing racial equity in foundations. “By seeing foundation programs in relation to racial equity,” the report asserts, “the depth of analysis on root causes is strengthened. This rigor assists thinking about the range of factors affecting program areas.”<sup>7</sup>

James also underscores the power of storytelling in funding. “The framing and story about the work shapes whether there are resources or not,” he argues. “Valuable and successful work can be going on but not getting resources. The same work can have a new story and frame, and the resources come back.”

## **5. Continue progress on funding intersectional issues and strategies.**

Many in the field believe that racial justice work has become stronger when understood in dynamic relationship to gender, sexuality, class and migration. Organizers and activists observed a positive trend toward more intersectional strategies in the field, as well as support for intersectional approaches among funders.

“Success is happening where an intersectional approach is being supported alongside a racial justice movement,” says Cathi Tactaquin, executive director of the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. “The presence of marginalized workers at the 2013 AFL-CIO convention is an example of this growing success.” James agrees, while pushing for even greater attention to intersectional approach across issues. “It’s crucial now for gender and ecology to be infused in racial justice,” he asserts.

Themba notes there has been progress on this front. “A small but growing group of funders are working to integrate support for explicit racial justice work into their issue-based portfolios,” she says. Cautions were raised, however, about not diminishing the significance of racial justice. As Themba explains, “We need a ‘both/and’ approach that doesn’t marginalize racial justice.” She points to the Edward W. Hazen Foundation’s work on education justice as a good example of a funder taking a “both/and” approach.

In spite of progress with some funders, some noted a failure to understand the racial justice dimensions across certain issues that are clearly racialized. For example, Vargas believes “there’s no conversation of immigration reform as a racial issue. We’re willing to let 11 million people live in the shadows because they are not White.”

Several practitioners described the role of funders in weakening the connections between race and immigration. “Fifteen years ago we were receiving funding from large foundations for developing and disseminating curriculum connecting racial justice and immigrant rights,” recalls Tactaquin. “But we saw a big decline with the 2007 recession when foundations switched to a narrow ‘no risk’ focus. Our racial/immigration justice work stalled and we had to let go of plans for further development of educational tools, community engagement and human rights documentation.”

Echoing Tactaquin, Taj James describes an increasing philanthropic focus on “specific policies and issues and solutions that have been defined by ‘experts’ disconnected from the experiences of communities of color.” The result is, according to Monami Maulik of Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM), a shift away from racial justice. “We’re in the world of dealing with funders on immigration, national

**“Except for growing race/class framing in policing and youth criminalization funding, I’m hearing the same message now that I heard in the post 9/11 era: that we should not be talking about race. It pretty explicitly happened in immigration funding.”**

**“Racial justice has been strengthened when individuals in foundations took a chance on movement building.”**

security and policing, and profiling,” says Maulik. “Except for growing race/class framing in policing and youth criminalization funding, I’m hearing the same message now that I heard in the post 9/11 era: that we should not be talking about race. It pretty explicitly happened in immigration funding.”

## **6. Increase support for the network building and movement building needed to strengthen power across racial lines.**

“Racial justice has been strengthened when individuals in foundations took a chance on movement building,” says Gihan Perera, executive director of Florida New Majority and former executive director of Miami Workers Center. “Right now people are impressed with FNM as a multi-issue, multi-ethnic statewide power that wins campaigns,” he continues. “But none of this would be happening without the decades of experience we spent building racial justice unity on the ground.”

Perera points to one key shift as an example: “While Black/Brown unity is now accepted as an important approach in organizing, 10 or 15 years ago we couldn’t talk to funders about it. We couldn’t talk to funders about the real work – the political education, the leadership development, the relationship building – that multiracial unity involves.”

Sharing lessons from their field experience, racial justice advocates have demonstrated the importance of such formations, and how foundations could support them. For example, in a 2003 report, the Center for Social Inclusion’s founder and former President Maya Wiley asserted that foundations need to support multiracial coalitions by identifying and supporting “community leaders with a vision for multiracial work, its importance and who understand the context of the communities for which the coalition would work ... [who] have credibility within their communities,” as well as supporting “institutions created by and for constituent communities, and run by community leaders.”<sup>8</sup>

Perera gives credit to the handful of funders who saw the value in naming the tensions and potential between Black and Latino communities, invested resources in this work, and provided thoughtful leadership that legitimized multiracial organizing to other funders. Perera observes that small foundations like the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock and medium-sized foundations like

the Public Welfare Foundation “seeded cutting edge work and invested appropriately for their institutions.” He also believes large foundations such as Ford made a difference by supporting organizing infrastructure and signaling the value of the work to other foundations.

But Perera believes the key lesson for funders – that creating space for multiracial constituencies to come together toward a common agenda – has gone largely unlearned. “The breakthrough in understanding has not resulted in real shifts in funding,” asserts Perera.

## **7. Deepen relationships and alignment among racial justice leaders both in the field and in philanthropy.**

The growth in philanthropic leadership on racial justice is widely viewed as a sign of progress. Says Lizardo, “There has been progress. We now have structural racism leaders within philanthropy.”

James agrees. “A core cadre has emerged of individual program officers and donors committed to racial justice. They have the potential to have broader influence on the field of philanthropy overall.”

Malkia Cyril, director of the Center for Media Justice, comments on the importance of alignment among organizers and advocates in shaping philanthropy. “We need more peer-to-peer conversations on how money moves, what outcomes we want.”

Vargas sees the value of leadership development in the field as key to all aspects of racial justice. “We need to create a pipeline of people in philanthropy who understand racial justice and use that lens.”

## **Conclusion**

There are many effective ways to support progress toward racial justice, starting with large and steady resources for real change grounded in the experience and leadership of communities of color. Philanthropy can make a difference by lifting up stories of racial justice success, by recognizing the impact of race across all areas of social justice, by supporting the powerful work of building deep networks within and across communities, and by organizing itself as a sector with the knowledge and people needed to play its crucial role.

At a time when race continues to shape every aspect of our lives –from access to healthy food, treatment within schools, safety from violence, to our very recognition as human beings, all of us, including philanthropy, have a responsibility to step boldly forward.



**Julie Quiroz** is a senior fellow at the Movement Strategy Center, where she is the editor of "Let's Talk," a blog focused on transformative organizing and movement building. Quiroz recently collaborated on *Echoing Justice: Communications Strategies for Community Organizing in the 21st Century* (Center for Media Justice), and has authored publications such as *From the Roots: Building the Power of Communities of Color to Challenge Structural Racism* (Akonadi Foundation) and *Guide to Grantmaking with a Racial Equity Lens* (GrantCraft). She is a member of the PRE advisory board.

## Endnotes

- 1 These quotes came from direct interviews, as well as from two separate events hosted by the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity: a focus group at Movement Strategy Center's offices in March 2013 with 11 locally based activists; and a webinar titled "Funding Racial Justice in the Moment and the Long Haul: What do Foundations need to hear?" held in September 2013. Presenters included Makani Themba, executive director of The Praxis Project; Scot Nakagawa, senior partner at Change Lab; and Judith Browne Dianis, co-director of Advancement Project.
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# Paths Along the Way to Racial Justice: Four Foundation Case Studies

When the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity (PRE) began its work in 2003, many foundations had long histories of supporting varied efforts to improve the lives of people of color, address civil rights or tackle various systemic issues. But at that time, far fewer specifically named structural racism or structural racialization as a frame for their grantmaking. As structural racism analysis and concepts have evolved over the past 20 years, forward-thinking foundations have increasingly taken intentional steps to address the root causes of racism and disparities through grantmaking.

This retrospective publication provides PRE with an opportunity to highlight some of the principles, lessons and challenges of this work as experienced by different types of foundations. More than 30 foundations have been represented at PRE's Racial Justice Funders Labs, which are invitation-only workshops geared toward funders who already have a stated commitment to addressing structural racism. Any one of them would have made an excellent case study, as would many other foundations that are taking steps to advance racial justice.

To select the subjects of the four case studies in this volume, we sought out institutions that have engaged in intentional practices to strengthen racial justice grantmaking. We deliberately selected a diverse group of private foundations that are at different stages of integrating structural racism analysis in their work, so that both small and large funders could relate and learn from their experience. Another important criteria was that the selected foundations were willing to openly share their journeys from the perspectives of not only staff and board, but also grantees.

We are extremely grateful that Woods Fund Chicago, The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, The California Endowment and the Akonadi Foundation all generously agreed to invest significant time in interviews and share internal material with us. And perhaps most refreshingly, we thank them for working with us to review and improve the case study drafts without attempting to reshape our telling of the stories we heard.

Prior to selecting these foundations to highlight as case studies, PRE had been fortunate to work with all of them in different ways. Staff from each foundation has participated in PRE's Racial Justice Funders Labs in the past two years. With The California Endowment, PRE helped coordinate and facilitate a two-day Racial Justice Training Institute for more than 100 staff and grantees of the Building Healthy Communities initiative. Akonadi and Woods Fund Chicago representatives have participated in PRE's Racial Justice Funders Roundtable and other convenings, sharing critical lessons with peers along the way informally and through their own communications. Staff of The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, including former President Tom Ross, participated in some of PRE's very first funder gatherings. Ross also was notable as one of the first White foundation presidents from the South willing to talk about issues of structural racism and privilege in ways that made it seem more possible for others to also name and tackle.

One of the most important criteria for PRE in selecting these four foundations for case studies was their willingness to share challenges and missteps along the way. These experiences are often the most valuable learning moments for funder peers and grantees. While we did not engage in as comprehensive a research process as we would have for an assessment or consultation, we reviewed key documents and interviewed a sampling of players from the various roles mentioned. We have tried to capture different perspectives on these foundations' efforts to address structural racism, including critiques when interviewees have felt comfortable to share them (some anonymously). Yet we recognize that despite the offer of anonymity, power differentials within foundations, and between foundations and their grantees, may impact the interviewees' ability to be candid. Understanding that this dynamic exists, we hope that the case studies invite further discussion and exploration.

The foundations that so generously shared their histories with us are at various stages of development as racial justice grantmakers. We thank them for letting us walk with them for a moment on their journeys.





## Four Foundation Case Studies

### Woods Fund Chicago



Woods Fund Chicago recently named racial equity as the core principle

guiding its work. In the case study, the Woods Fund shares some lessons about moving from principle to practice. One of its first steps was to ask questions about organization's racial analysis in the application process, which proved to be necessary to change the dynamic in a community organizing culture that treated race issues as implicit, rather than an intentional focus. While managing board and staff transitions, Woods Fund Chicago examined grantmaking data to inform their approach to racial equity, and will continue to experiment and deepen its strategic approach.

### The California Endowment



The 16th largest foundation in the country, The California

Endowment is in the fourth year of a 10-year commitment, the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative. A place-based grantmaking initiative in 14 California communities, BHC has been described as a different type of grantmaking for TCE – an integration of activities, a greater coordination with community sites on policy advocacy, and a process of applying a structural racialization framework. PRE's case study on BHC provides an opportunity to share this foundation's story about its learning at an early implementation stage.

### Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation



The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation has a long history of tackling the impacts

of racism in the South. It recently began shifting from an embedded, implicit value of racial equity to an explicit goal with which the foundation is increasingly and publicly identified. Amidst North Carolina's civil rights history and current racial justice efforts, the foundation has been working to put some teeth in its equity goals while maneuvering political challenges, building capacity of grantees and creating a dialogue on race and social justice throughout the state.

### Akonadi Foundation



Akonadi Foundation is one of the very few foundations in the U.S. that

has explicitly integrated a racial justice framework into its grantmaking from the start. It has a 14-year history that holds many lessons for funders looking to make the greatest impact on deeply rooted issues of racism. The foundation's ecosystem approach to grantmaking, investment in movement building and prioritization of shifting cultural norms demonstrates the "how" of applying a structural racism framework to local grantmaking in Oakland, California. At the center of Akonadi's work is a relationship-based approach to strategic partnerships with community groups.



## CASE STUDY

# Woods Fund Chicago

## Adopting Racial Equity as a Core Principle

by Lisa McGill

<b>Leadership</b>	Grace Hou, president and CEO; and Patrick Sheahan, board chair
<b>Year Founded</b>	1994
<b>Mission</b>	Woods Fund Chicago seeks to help create a society where people of all racial and ethnic groups across all levels of social and economic status are empowered and have a voice to influence policies that impact their lives and where all communities are free of poverty and racism.
<b>Current Program Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community organizing</li> <li>• Public policy</li> <li>• Arts and Social Justice (by invitation only)</li> <li>• The intersection of community organizing and public policy</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Size</b>	6
<b>Endowment Size</b>	\$68 million
<b>Average Grant Size</b>	\$35,000
<b>Geographic Area</b>	Chicagoland Area



One evening in March 2010, in a crowded room at the Art Institute of Chicago, Deborah Harrington approached the podium to a chorus of applause. The outgoing president of Woods Fund Chicago, Harrington was about to receive the Handy L. Lindsey Award, an honor named for one of the Chicago area’s most distinguished champions of diversity and inclusiveness in philanthropy awarded annually by Chicago African Americans in Philanthropy.

In her speech that night, Harrington took the opportunity to challenge her peers to look beyond diversity. Standing before many of Chicago’s most influential philanthropic leaders, she declared that while diversity and inclusiveness were critical commitments for any foundation, they were “ultimately not powerful enough to drive the changes to ensure advancements toward racial equity<sup>1</sup>.”

Harrington spoke of a racially equitable world – one in which the distribution of resources, opportunities and burdens is not determined or predicted by race, and in which structural racism no longer guides policies that limit opportunities among people of color. A commitment to a racially equitable world, she said, is implicit in much of the grantmaking done by Chicago’s progressive foundation community. But what would happen if foundations made ending structural racism their explicit goal? What if racial equity became the unambiguous principle by which their organizations operated?

With her speech, Harrington hoped to inspire the audience to adopt a new way of tackling social injustices that are seemingly intractable. In essence, she was proposing a sea change in the way most foundations and grantmakers approach racial inequity – challenging them to address the roots of structural racism as the direct target of their grantmaking rather than its downstream effects, or hoping that reducing racial inequities would somehow be a byproduct of boosting diversity within their organizations.

Like many metropolitan centers, Chicago is certainly in need of a new approach to tackling structural racism. Despite considerable investments by foundations and others over the last five decades, Chicago remains a deeply segregated city. Metropolitan Chicago’s neighborhoods and schools are almost as racially segregated as they were in 1963, when Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech<sup>2</sup>. Two-thirds of the city’s nearly 1 million African Americans live in communities that are at least 80 percent black. The median income of African-American households in Chicago is \$29,371 – roughly half that of White households<sup>3</sup>. The median income of Latino households in Chicago is less than two-thirds the median income of White households; that median dropped 13 percent between 1999 and 2008, compared with a decrease of only 8 percent for White Chicagoans<sup>4</sup>. Latinos also rank at or near the bottom among Chicago workers in terms of education and wages.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, racial gaps in academic achievement have been increasing for decades, with Chicago’s African-American students falling behind all other groups at an accelerated rate.<sup>6</sup>

Real transformation, argued Harrington, will require wide adoption of a racial equity lens to bring into focus the ways in which race and ethnicity shape experiences with power, access to opportunity, treatment and outcomes. And it will require a new level of activism among foundations themselves. “Individually and collectively, from the front lines to board rooms, to affinity groups of color and beyond,” Harrington said, “we must advocate for racial equity.” In fact, she was already doing just that. The year before, under her leadership, Woods Fund Chicago had become one of the few grantmaking institutions to name racial equity as the core principle guiding its work.

## Making a Statement

Woods Fund Chicago’s roots date back to 1941 when Frank Woods, a prominent Nebraska-based lawyer and telephone company executive, incorporated a foundation called the Woods Charitable Fund. One of his sons, Frank Woods Jr., eventually relocated to Chicago where he created a local office for the Fund and became a nationally recognized leader in philanthropy. Known for his risk-taking and his commitment to increasing opportunities for disadvantaged people by changing the conditions and systems that affect them, Woods Jr. was instrumental in making community organizing the foundation’s core grantmaking strategy. He was also a noted supporter of equal opportunity initiatives before the civil rights era<sup>7</sup>.

In 1993, four years after Frank Woods Jr.’s death, the foundation formally split into two entities: the Woods Charitable Fund in Lincoln, Nebraska, and Woods Fund Chicago. Since then, Woods Fund Chicago has become a nationally recognized leader for its social justice grantmaking – focusing on four core program areas:

- ▲ **Community organizing**, supporting grassroots organizations that shape public policy through activism
- ▲ **Public policy**, supporting policies that address poverty and help low-income people attain higher living standards
- ▲ **The intersection of community organizing and public policy**, strengthening both community organizing and public policy advocacy through an integrated approach
- ▲ **Arts and social justice**, supporting endeavors that combine artistic pursuits with local activism

As its story suggests, Woods Fund Chicago has a long history of funding organizations and initiatives working to combat structural, societal barriers that bar individuals in Chicago’s less-advantaged neighborhoods from equal access to opportunities and advancement. “They have always supported community organizing in Chicago’s low-income communities, making sure that people of color who are most disenfranchised are at the forefront of driving change,” says Jenny Arwade, executive director of the Albany Park Neighborhood Council.

For added historical context, it may be worth noting that the dominant Chicago organizing community used to be hostile to the notion of highlighting race explicitly – it was shunned as divisive, unwinnable and ideological, and derided as “identity politics.” At the same time, Chicago’s philanthropic community (not unlike in other places), with few exceptions, has been virtually silent on race. In recent years, Chicago’s persistent racial inequities, residential segregation, growing economic stratification, political power imbalances and changing racial demographics have prompted more openness to, and interest in, finding new strategies to address racial disparities.

In 2008 the conversation at Woods Fund Chicago about how best to achieve these longstanding goals started to shift for several reasons. First, there was the data. A 1995 independent evaluation of the Woods Fund’s grantmaking found that only a small percentage of its grants were going to minority-led nonprofits, especially those in the city’s predominantly African-American neighborhoods. After Ricardo Millett, who is Afro-Latino of Caribbean descent, took the helm in 2001, and being Afro-Latino of Caribbean descent was the first person of color to serve as president of Woods Fund Chicago, a similar staff-led analysis found that very few of its community organizing grants were going to Chicago’s South Side – which includes the city’s lowest-income communities. In 2004 Woods Fund Chicago created the South Side Initiative, a special grantmaking program designed to increase organizing capacity in those communities. Through this initiative, the foundation awarded \$222,000 in grants to eight South Side organizations over two years. At least four of those groups were so successful in their work that they were later awarded grants in the foundation’s regular funding pool for community organizing. Yet there was a growing sense among the Woods Fund’s staff that one-off efforts of this sort were not enough.

Second, there was the reality check of the 2008 economic recession – which had an immediate and disproportionate impact on Chicago’s low-income communities of color. The systemic barriers that had long limited opportunities and options in these communities quickly became even more blatant. Meanwhile, the election of Barack Obama<sup>8</sup>, the first Black U.S. president, was seen by some as signaling the end of racial barriers for Black Americans – ushering in a period in which the term “post-racial” gained greater currency. But the notion of a post-racial America was sharply at odds with what Woods Fund Chicago’s grantees were experiencing in their communities.

At about the same time, the Woods Fund’s staff realized that while having a diversity checklist on its grant applications helped ensure that its grantees’ leadership and boards reflected the communities they served, meeting those diversity goals did not necessarily track with racial equity outcomes. Indeed, questions about the kinds of work

grantees were doing to promote racial equity weren't part of the application process at all. "On the application, it was all about the [diversity] numbers," says Lori Clark, executive director of the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, a Woods Fund Chicago grantee organization working to preserve and create affordable housing for Chicago-area seniors. "But there weren't questions like what are you doing, and how are you thinking about racial justice? How are you trying to implement that?"

Another realization was that nearly all the issues the Woods Fund's grantmaking aimed to combat – violence, poverty, lack of access to education and affordable housing – could be traced back to the systemic racism that created those inequities in the first place and now allowed them to continue. "The things we have funded for years are all imbedded in it," says Woods Fund Chicago board chair Patrick Sheahan. "The cumulative effect of institutional racism over time has generated policies that have created constriction on the lives of people," adds Jay Travis, a program officer at Woods from 2012 to 2013, who was also a former grantee. "This has limited their ability to reach their full potential and fully participate in society. Woods Fund Chicago wanted to bring that to the forefront of the conversation."

While it was the Wood Fund's staff who created the initial

structural racism into all aspects of their operations.

Woods Fund Chicago is committed to raising awareness in the philanthropic community to support this work.

With this statement, Woods Fund also signaled its intention to lead by example: what it would soon require of grantees it would also require of itself.

Most Chicago area foundations were not particularly surprised by the announcement, given Woods Fund's long history of work at the intersection of race and poverty and its commitment to grassroots change. Neither were the foundation's grantees. "The reality was that it was a natural and welcome progression of what they had already been supporting," says Arwade. But the statement did open up new opportunities for grantees as well. Several grantees commented that they found it refreshing that at least one grantmaker was allowing them to discuss the "elephant in the room" – and, moreover, was willing to fund work in this area. "To have a foundation that not only supports community organizing but supports it in a way that promotes racial justice? We thought – those are people we want to work with," says Katelyn Johnson, executive director of the Action Now Institute. Adds Alie Kabba, executive director and founder of the United African Organization: "Finally, someone was saying we could talk about this. Many foundations don't want to address it. Now, we could finally

**“The Woods Fund Chicago believes that structural racism is a root cause of many challenges facing less-advantaged communities and people, and serves as a significant barrier to enabling work and eradicating poverty. The Woods Fund encourages and supports organizations, initiatives and policy efforts that lead to eliminating structural racism.”**

push toward an explicit stance on racial equity, most of the board agreed with the shift in direction as they began to understand its importance to the overall success of the work. In 2009, the foundation publicly released its new "Racial Equity Core Principle":

The Woods Fund Chicago believes that structural racism is a root cause of many challenges facing less-advantaged communities and people, and serves as a significant barrier to enabling work and eradicating poverty. The Woods Fund encourages and supports organizations, initiatives and policy efforts that lead to eliminating structural racism. Success in this area will be evident when there is equal distribution of privileges and burdens among all races and ethnic groups, and when a person's race or ethnicity does not determine his or her life outcomes. Woods Fund will support organizations that pay disciplined attention to race and ethnicity while they analyze problems, look for solutions, and define and document success. Ideally, these organizations will incorporate an analysis of

say 'racial equity' in a proposal."

## Moving from Principle to Practice

Having made a public commitment to racial equity, Woods Fund then needed to figure out how to operationalize its new core value. How exactly would the foundation infuse racial equity into its overall strategy? And what would the foundation's new racial equity focus mean for its grantmaking?

Almost immediately, the implementation process was slowed by significant staff and board transitions. In March 2010, Deborah Harrington left the foundation, kicking off a transition period that lasted until February 2012, when current president Grace Hou took the reins. During this same period the foundation's board was experiencing natural turnover, with seven new members joining the board between 2010 and 2013.

The arrival of each new board member prompted questions about what the racial equity core principle would look like

in practice. “Every time a new person came onboard, they looked at the statement and asked, ‘What does this really mean, and how do we interpret it?’” recalls Sheahan.

Part of the confusion stemmed from the fact that there are many ways to interpret the term “racial equity” – and not everyone at Woods Fund shared the same understanding. “We realized quickly that the term itself could get in the way if it wasn’t clearly defined,” says Sheahan. “We knew that we needed to define what it meant for the foundation – and particularly what it meant for our grantmaking – so that we could be transparent about how and what and why we would interpret something the way we might, and so that we could ask the same questions in a fair manner of all grantees.” The foundation’s consensus on basic definitions for racial equity, racial justice and structural racism – all terms that have overlapping but subtly distinct meanings – were just recently shared publicly with the larger community.

**Woods Fund Chicago uses the following definitions<sup>9</sup> of structural racism and racial equity:**

**Structural racism** is the cumulative impact of past and present policies and practices. Racial divisions, disinvestment, disenfranchisement and discriminatory policies have produced and exacerbated income inequality and disparate access to resources and opportunities for generations of Chicagoans. This is evidenced by deep racial segregation across communities and severe disparities across nearly every quality-of-life indicator – from education and health to incarceration and jobs.

**Racial equity** is a multi-issue framework that confronts racial disparities to produce fair outcomes and opportunities for all communities. It provides proactive tools, synergistic strategies and more effective policy to address structural problems. The racial equity framework provides new tools to explicitly address the racialization of policy debates that criminalize communities and limit organizing potential. Racial equity strategies connect leaders and organizations across communities and bring solutions to scale. Racial equity creates crucial spaces for those most impacted by inequities to build power and lead through collective practice and collective voice.

Woods Fund Chicago also made the decision to consider “diversity” and “racial equity” separately within their due diligence process. They look at diversity as part of assessing a grantee’s governance and use a racial equity lens when evaluating program or strategy. Before that distinction was made, conversations about one were mixed up with the other. “It was actually very clarifying,” says board member Josina Morita. “Diversity is something that we value as

good operations of any organization, which is different and separate from whether they are doing racial equity work in terms of their values or explicitly in their organizing and policy work. We still emphasize diversity, but now it’s part of the overall evaluation of good operations of our grantees.”

With its racial equity definitions beginning to take shape and a new leadership team in place, Woods Fund Chicago began to focus its attention on creating a new strategic plan that would carry the organization forward in its declared direction. A key part of that plan would be figuring out how to shift grantmaking strategy so that all of the Woods Fund’s programs and initiatives were in line with its new racial equity focus in order to bring about a new level of impact in Chicago’s communities of color.

## Making Headway: The Racial Justice Mini-Grant Initiative

When Grace Hou took over as president in February 2012, one of her first acts was to convene a series of “listening sessions” with clusters of grantees across Chicago. As a former Woods Fund grantee herself, Hou was familiar with the organizing and policy work of many of the grantees in Woods’ portfolio. But now, she wanted their input on how the foundation could operationalize its new core principle – particularly through its grantmaking. “We thought that the sessions would help us, as a grantmaker, to see how our grantees look at this issue and what resources they needed in order to advance racial equity more specifically in their work,” explains Hou.

“They brought us together to lay out what it means for an organization to have a racial equity focus,” says Arwade. “There was a candidness to the conversation, and they did a lot of listening to grantees. They also were very clear that they were evolving as a foundation, thinking about who they were supporting and how they were providing that support.”

Ultimately, more than 70 percent of the foundation’s grantees participated in the Spring 2012 sessions. Several grantees suggested that Woods Fund Chicago start by providing small grants designed to help grantees explore what applying a racial equity lens would mean concretely for their organizations.

Hou and the Woods Fund board agreed. In August 2012, they launched the Racial Justice Mini-Grant Initiative, offering small grants (averaging \$8,000) to existing grantees who wanted to build their capacity to incorporate racial equity analysis into their work. Woods Fund Chicago offered grants (on a six-month cycle) in three categories:

- ▲ Training grants to help grantees develop a shared understanding of racial equity issues and how to apply racial equity analysis to their work
- ▲ Research grants to help them identify the root causes of racial injustice and use that information to inform their



Photo by: Sarah Jane Rhee, [www.loveandstrugglephotos.com](http://www.loveandstrugglephotos.com)

community organizing and policy work

- ▲ Communications grants to help them explore how to create effective messaging strategies that could shift public discourse around racial equity issues

The mini-grants signaled the Woods Fund’s first opportunity to put resources behind its racial equity values – and the response among grantees was immediate. “It’s a struggle to get funders to fund this type of work,” says Clark. “There were a lot more of us interested in the racial justice work than they realized there would be.”

Woods Fund Chicago received roughly 35 proposals, ultimately offering small grants to 11 organizations through two rounds of funding.

The Action Now Institute, which focuses on racial justice in the teaching profession, used its mini-grant as an opportunity to carry out additional research in support of its efforts to increase the percentage of teachers of color in the greater Chicago area. The Albany Park Neighborhood Council engaged the Western States Center to run a two-day training – with follow-up consultations – designed to help its leaders and staff further develop their shared capacity for implementing a racial justice framework. The Jane Addams Senior Caucus used its grant – supplemented by additional funding raised by leveraging the Woods grant – to train staff and deeply explore how it might use racial equity analysis in its work.

The Woods Fund’s mini-grant initiative sent a clear message to both grantees and the broader philanthropic community about its commitment to making headway on this issue alongside its grantees – even as it was still figuring out

its own big picture strategy. But learning was by far the foundation’s biggest intention with the mini-grants program. “We presented the mini-grants as a pilot so that people realized we were looking at this as a learning experience, not just for grantees but for us as well,” says Travis, the program officer who oversaw the initiative. “Ultimately, we wanted to use their experience and input to inform our grantmaking.”

To that end, one requirement attached to the grant was that each recipient organization would participate in at least one gathering at the end of the grant period to share their learning with Woods Fund Chicago and with one another. Those sessions generated constructive feedback. Most grantees suggested that a yearlong grant – or longer – would have given them more time to accomplish their work and build out their organizational capacity. Grantees also agreed that coming together at the front end of the grant period would have been extremely useful, so that they could share with one another not just their projects, but also the resources (including the training institutes) they planned to utilize along the way. Several grantees, as documented in a 2013 internal update on the initiative, shared how much they appreciated the authentic dialogue that was emerging around these issues.

“Coming out of the mini-grant, we changed our mission, values and vision statement,” says Clark. She reports that the Jane Addams Senior Caucus’ board recruitment process and staff hiring choices have also changed dramatically. Additionally, the Caucus formed a racial justice leadership team within its membership and even created a new staff position – racial justice organizer – to help ensure that a commitment to racial equity will remain a core part of its identity. “In all our grants now, there is a clear racial justice component, no matter what the grant is,” says Clark. “There is not a funder that does not know we are doing this work.”

## Lessons Learned

### There is no perfect way to start this work.

Would it have been better for Woods Fund to have had an implementation plan in place before publicly declaring racial equity as a core value? It’s impossible to know, says Woods Fund Chicago president Grace Hou. But she thinks that leading with the announcement helped hold the foundation accountable to it during the period of major leadership transition that followed. Also, announcing its intention first – then figuring out how to translate it into practice – was consistent with Woods Fund’s desire to invite

**“Taking on racial equity as a core principle means committing to a living process in which the foundation is in constant learning mode. That principle also needs to influence every aspect of a foundation’s work – from the way it invests its funds and how it conducts and prioritizes grantmaking, to its hiring choices and training for new board members and staff.”**

**“Still, the Woods Fund’s leadership is quick to clarify that charting the path of racial equity work will remain a generative and iterative process. “We’ve made progress structurally but we’re still in the development phase,” explains Morita.**

others into the conversation. “If an organization does not want lots of input, it might be better to have a plan in place first,” says Hou. But the most important thing is to start the conversation, keeping in mind that “there is no direct path to get there.”

### **Adopting a racial equity lens means that everything will change – not just your mission statement.**

“You can’t adopt this mission and not change anything else,” says Morita. Taking on racial equity as a core principle means committing to a living process in which the foundation is in constant learning mode. That principle also needs to influence every aspect of a foundation’s work – from the way it invests its funds and how it conducts and prioritizes grantmaking, to its hiring choices and training for new board members and staff. “It should be explicit to new board members and staff that “this is part of who we are,” she says. “It should be built into discussions about everything.”

### **Define what you mean by racial equity work.**

Sheahan advises doing a thorough literature review, as well as developing an understanding of what has worked for other foundations and what hasn’t, and what is practical in a grantmaking sense. Others on the board add that in defining what racial equity work is, foundations must also decide what it is not. They must grapple with how to get board members on the same page, discover points of contention, and take the time to work through a mutual understanding of the work as it relates to the foundation’s goals. “Working in a community where a majority of people are of color is not racial equity work,” explains Morita. “Health work is not automatically racial equity work without an explicit frame.”

### **Foundations should leverage grantmaking data to build a case about the need for a racial equity lens.**

Woods Fund Chicago had to acknowledge (and address) its own failures of equitable grant distribution in some of the hardest hit (primarily African-American) communities in the Chicago metropolitan area. An independent evaluation of its grantmaking in 1995 showed that only a small percentage of its grants went to minority-led nonprofits, especially those in low-income neighborhoods on the South and West sides. When foundation staff members did a similar analysis in 2003, the dearth of grants in the South Side, in particular, was still glaring. The foundation was faced with its own reality check: How can we say racial

equity is a core value when we don’t empower communities of color to organize and solve their own problems? That data across its grantmaking portfolio became a powerful tool for the Woods Fund’s leadership to develop a structural response to how it needed to change its grantmaking and partner with its grantees to move a racial equity agenda forward.

### **Announcing a racial equity lens is one thing, operationalizing it is another.**

Woods Fund Chicago has a lot more learning and work to do to figure out how to advance racial equity and systems change. As Hou observes, “Through its work and grantmaking, Woods Fund Chicago is trying to play a part in the dismantling of structural racism as it is the root cause of many challenges facing communities. In approaching this work, it has been and will continue to be a learning and evolutionary process – but we intend to have specific and bold next steps soon.”

Most foundations are faced with the same challenge. In addition to becoming clear on what it means by racial equity, there’s still a lot to learn about how to move from organizational change to external impact in partnership with grantees. For Woods Fund Chicago, this will require further collective learning, more experimentation, and more substantive and long-term investments in equitable systems change strategies. It will also require the development of new skills and the creation of more supports to sustain success – as well as more evaluation, documentation and dissemination of lessons, failures and successes. Woods Fund Chicago has laid some important and impressive groundwork, fostering and sharing leadership and learning. With continued support and focus, more strategies and solutions for closing racial gaps can emerge.

## **The Journey Continues**

The listening sessions and mini-grants were just a few of many inputs that helped shape Woods Fund Chicago’s new three-year strategic plan so that it more fully reflects the foundation’s racial equity goals. Finalized by the board in 2012, the new plan highlights six priority areas – financial strength, grantmaking, an engaged board of directors, relationship building, evaluation and institutional culture – and identifies a series of goals and objectives for each area. Not surprisingly, Woods Fund’s commitment to racial equity is most strongly represented in the grantmaking piece of its strategy, where “incorporating racial equity as a priority framework in WFC’s grantmaking” is explicitly named as a key objective.

Still, the Woods Fund's leadership is quick to clarify that charting the path of racial equity work will remain a generative and iterative process. "We've made progress structurally but we're still in the development phase," explains Morita. "It's still an ongoing process to define what it means for us as a foundation." But the foundation has committed to continuing to help grantees explore how to incorporate racial equity analysis into their work through convenings and trainings. It has also revised its grant application process to explicitly ask prospective grantees how racial equity informs their work.

Grantmaking is not the only area that will continue to be reexamined by the foundation. For example, creating an investment policy that reflects Woods Fund's values, notably around the racial equity framework, is part of the new strategic plan. The board recently included language in its investment policy that sets targets for socially responsible investing and investing with fund managers of color. The foundation has also integrated racial equity into its operations – including using racial equity principles in human resources practices and staff evaluations. In October 2012, the staff participated in a racial equity training retreat – another first for the organization.

"We view all of these activities as opportunities to integrate racial equity into all aspects of our work, not just our grantmaking," explains Morita. "It's been a great time to look at how to become a racial equity organization from the inside out."

Woods Fund Chicago plans to extend the kinds of conversations they're having internally and with their grantees to the wider philanthropic community – including other local and national funders – so that a much broader set of organizations begin to examine more explicitly the deep and suppressive role that structural racism plays in so many communities across the United States.

Ultimately, Woods Fund hopes that the next few years and beyond will bring real transformation in that regard, and that the foundation and its grantees are able to demonstrate that sustainable change is possible if racial equity is the central principle guiding one's work. "We want to demonstrate to the field of philanthropy that racial equity is an effective model for grantmaking that gets to the structural inequities that exist in our society and actually changes the equation of what's possible," says Morita. Adds Sheahan, "The only way we're going to get there is keep having the discussion, keep engaging our grantees in that process, and keep learning. We're now on the journey."



**Lisa McGill** is the principal of LM Strategies Consulting, a firm that works with philanthropies to help them advance relationships and sustain impact in underresourced communities. McGill has consulted on projects for a variety of foundations, including the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Charles S. Mott Foundation, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, and the Kresge Foundation. She has content expertise in youth-to-adulthood transitions. McGill is the author of *Constructing Black Selves: Caribbean American Narratives and the Second Generation* (NYU Press) and the co-author of several publications in the philanthropic sector.

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## CASE STUDY

# Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

## Advancing Racial Equity in the New South

by Lisa McGill

<b>Leadership</b>	David L. Neal, President, Board of Trustees; and Leslie Winner, Executive Director
<b>Year Founded</b>	1936
<b>Mission</b>	To improve the quality of life for all North Carolinians.
<b>Current Program Area</b>	Community Economic Development, Environment, Public Education, Social Justice and Equity and Strengthening Democracy
<b>Staff Size</b>	16
<b>Endowment Size</b>	Value of trust as of December 31, 2013 is \$429 Million.
<b>Average Grant Size</b>	\$52,500
<b>Geographic Area</b>	State of North Carolina



In 1963, North Carolina's then-Governor Terry Sanford launched a bold plan to address the entrenched and rising poverty that was threatening to overtake the state. At the time, 37 percent of North Carolina residents had incomes below the federal poverty line, a quarter of the state's adults over age 25 were illiterate, unemployment was rampant, economic growth was stagnant, and racial tensions were flaring.<sup>1</sup>

To address these mounting problems, Sanford created a first-of-its-kind statewide anti-poverty initiative called the North Carolina Fund. The Fund, which had both Black and White leadership by design, was a massive experiment in mobilizing the poor through increased grassroots community activism, civic engagement and economic development. In its five years of operation, the Fund created a flurry of new education, health, job training, housing and community development programs designed to empower low-income communities across the state – and across class and color lines – to lift themselves out of poverty.

Some, including a few ambitious politicians running for Congress in North Carolina, opposed the work of the Fund. First, it encouraged disadvantaged citizens to become civically active and enter the decision-making processes of their communities – which was antithetical to the paternalistic views of how to treat the poor at the time. For the old conservative guard, a group of newly engaged North Carolinians portended an emerging voting bloc that might not swing its way. Second, it was the height of the civil rights struggle, and a large percentage of the North Carolinians helped by the Fund's program were African-American. Anti-poverty workers were accused of sparking civil unrest, and Fund leaders were accused of “meddling in politics.”<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, the initiative brought about bold new changes across the state and went on to become the model and inspiration for President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

The North Carolina Fund had several major private funders, chief among them the Ford Foundation. Also at the table, along with the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, was the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, a small North Carolina-based family foundation that was just beginning to flex its philanthropic voice. Despite fielding warning calls from across the state urging it to cease funding a project so “radical,” ZSR did not back down. Mary Mountcastle, a current ZSR family-member trustee, recalls, “I've heard stories from family members that it was definitely controversial. But they did not back away in supporting what they believed in.” As it happened, participating in the North Carolina Fund proved a formative moment for the growing foundation, accelerating its journey down the path of understanding the complexities of race and inequality, and how to tackle these issues head-on in North Carolina.

ZSR was established in 1936 in honor of Z. Smith Reynolds – the youngest child of tobacco magnate R.J. Reynolds – who mysteriously died at his home in Winston-Salem when he was just 20 years old. Created by his siblings as a family foundation to benefit the people of North Carolina, it is now the largest general purpose foundation in the state and ranks among the 100 largest philanthropies in the country. It is also widely considered one of the most progressive funders in North Carolina.

Currently, ZSR's grantmaking has five focus areas: community economic development, strengthening democracy, environment, public education, and social justice and equity. Each includes a set of strategies around racial and ethnic issues. “Injustice is the living legacy of our

state's history of racial exclusion and segregation," explains David Neal, ZSR's president. "We cannot make progress without addressing the plain truth that opportunities and outcomes in nearly every area – be it health, education, environment or any other indicator – follow racial lines." He adds, "Foundations and nonprofits alone cannot end these disparities, but we take seriously our responsibility to make progress where we can."<sup>4</sup>

## Putting Race on the Table

ZSR's move to embrace racial equity as a core value has evolved over time. But its commitment to putting (and keeping) race on the table has remained constant.

The foundation has long been willing to name race as a priority issue that must be addressed in North Carolina. But like many other well-meaning organizations in the late 60s and 70s, it found itself advocating for the inclusion of racial minorities in decision making without leading by example. For decades, ZSR's board was made up of family members, all of them White. But around the time that the North Carolina Fund closed its doors, the board opened up to include non-family members, inviting the first African American, Dr. Joseph Gordon, to join in 1970. The board also made the proactive choice to hire Tom Lambeth, a native North Carolinian, in 1978 as its first full-time executive director. Previously a grantmaker at the Smith Richardson Foundation and assistant to Governor Sanford, Lambeth was well-respected among progressive leaders in North Carolina for his commitment to civil rights and education. Lambeth, in turn, hired ZSR's first staff, which included an African-American woman.

In the 1980s, with Lambeth at the helm, ZSR's majority-family board decided to draw in even more diverse perspectives by creating an advisory panel – a rotating group of 15 diverse individuals from regions and sectors across the state – to help expand the breadth and depth of its thinking. Over the years, the advisory panel has included journalists, legislators, industry heads and others who have brought a

broad range of social, ideological and political viewpoints to foundation discussions. While this advisory panel has no grantmaking power, it has proved a rich sounding board.

The advisory panel's influence was evident in changes to the foundation's grantmaking in the 1980s and 1990s, especially. As the philanthropic community across the country began to think more strategically about nonprofit capacity building, and public and private partnerships, ZSR, under the guidance of the advisory panel, paid special attention to grantees and partners who could help support these types of efforts in minority communities. During that time, the foundation was the first to provide seed funding for visionary projects, such as the Child Care Lending Initiative of the Self-Help Credit Union in North Carolina, a collaborative that advocates for communities of color and others left out of the banking mainstream, supporting research on financing opportunities for child care providers. Lending to home-based and center child care providers is an integral part of its portfolio today. The foundation also helped support the launch of the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development (now NCIMED) with a seed grant to diversify North Carolina's business community. NCIMED remains the only organization of its kind in the country that focuses on business diversity as an economic driver for states. These types of grants were accompanied by startup support for statewide infrastructure and technical assistance groups, such as the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits, to champion the evolving and diverse needs of nonprofits in North Carolina.

"We started the advisory panel to help us think about what the foundation should be doing that we weren't doing," says Tom Lambeth.

Indeed, it was a proposal developed by the advisory panel that prompted the foundation in 2000 to launch an initiative that made its focus on race even more overt. "The Race Will Not Divide Us" initiative was a one-year, \$1 million effort to bring attention to race issues and create cross-racial dialogue throughout North Carolina.



### Goals of ZSR's "Race Will Not Divide Us" Initiative were

- ▲ to stimulate new activity and innovation, particularly among groups or in geographic areas where little has been done to improve existing tensions among people of different races;
- ▲ to support and sustain pioneering race relations models to ensure that these valuable efforts do not wane for lack of support and to ensure innovation in addressing emerging challenges;
- ▲ to identify and spread the lessons of successful models of race relations work, so that the impact of these models can be increased and these efforts receive statewide attention; and
- ▲ to create a network of leaders in improving race relations to ensure that they can continue to challenge each other and learn from one another's efforts.<sup>3</sup>

**“We needed to develop strategies to help our organizations use a racial equity lens, and examine how their organizations were relevant to the greater diversity and changing demographics of North Carolina,” says program officer James Gore. “It’s not just the responsibility of organizations in communities of color to do that. It has to be a broader engagement of many organizations and interests.”**

As part of the initiative, the foundation made grants to 23 organizations throughout North Carolina to assist them in tackling issues of race in their communities. Grantees ranged from faith-based organizations, such as Neighbors in Ministry, to cross-racial community organizing groups, such as the Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network. Grants were awarded to several youth programs, including Youth Empowerment and Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and emerging nonprofits in the growing immigrant community, such as El Pueblo Inc. Projects addressing public policy issues, such as the Community Building Initiative, were also funded.

The initiative “helped us keep race in the forefront,” observed family-member trustee Jock Tate in 2001, suggesting that it increased the foundation’s determination to explore new ways to address issues of race internally, assist grantees in confronting these issues, and elevate the conversation about racial disparities as widely and broadly across the state as possible.<sup>4</sup>

## The Shift to Racial Equity

By the early 2000s, more and more of ZSR’s grantees were starting to wrestle with racial equity and how to incorporate a racial equity lens into their work – sometimes on their own, sometimes at the prodding of the foundation.

ZSR learned a great deal from the “Race Will Not Divide Us” initiative – not least of which is how hard it can be to get other organizations and foundations across the state to talk about race directly. “I remember making pitches to some organizations about why this was important,” observes Tom Ross, who joined the foundation as executive director when the initiative was winding down. “I would hear ‘Yes, we know it’s important, but we feel like we’ve tried and never been successful.’ And I remember saying, ‘Yes, but you can’t stop trying.’”

When Ross came on board as executive director after Lambeth’s retirement, he was already known as a problem solver. A former judge in North Carolina, Ross was credited with restructuring a state sentencing system that increased community-based alternatives for nonviolent offenses and was known for systems-change leadership. Ross led ZSR from 2001 to 2007, guiding the foundation through a strategic planning process that helped establish evaluation metrics and identify clear program areas for the first time, which are still in place today. The foundation also began shifting racial equity from an embedded, implicit value to an explicit goal with which it was publicly identified.

Under Ross’s tenure, ZSR began investing more heavily in minority-led nonprofits, including asset-building groups such as the African-American-managed Generations Credit Union and the Latino Credit Union. With Ross’s encouragement, it also invested in the groundbreaking Funders’ Collaborative for Strong Latino Communities, a project of Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) to build the capacity of Latino nonprofits across the United States. Leveraging a challenge grant from ZSR, 22 fledgling Latino nonprofits in North Carolina were supported in the first year of HIP’s project.

The foundation’s increased focus on racial equity was also fueled by what was happening in the larger landscape of North Carolina – including major shifts in the state’s core demographics. Since 1990, the state’s Latino population has exploded by an incredible 943 percent.<sup>5</sup> Today, 63 of the state’s 100 counties are at least 5 percent Latino, whereas 20 years ago none of them were.<sup>6</sup> North Carolina has also become a haven for many other immigrant populations, now boasting the fourth largest population of Hmong in the country.<sup>7</sup> In the last decade, North Carolina’s African-American population has increased by 17.9 percent. Even more striking is the fact that for the first time in history, the majority of the state’s youth population is non-White.<sup>9</sup>

The state’s racial and gender wealth gaps are also widening. North Carolina now has the seventh largest wealth gap between White and non-White households in the country. Seventeen percent of the state’s Whites live in asset poverty, but this figure is 47.8 percent among people of color.<sup>10</sup>

The foundation was already trying to address systemic disparities in North Carolina communities through its formal diversity accountability policy, which gives the board leeway to decline to fund nonprofits whose boards do not reflect the communities they purport to serve, or to withhold grant funds until they submit diversity plans to the foundation for executive director approval. But the foundation felt that it needed to do more. “We needed to develop strategies to help our organizations use a racial equity lens, and examine how their organizations were relevant to the greater diversity and changing demographics of North Carolina,” says program officer James Gore. “It’s not just the responsibility of organizations in communities of color to do that. It has to be a broader engagement of many organizations and interests.”

## The Racial Equity Initiative

In 2011, under the leadership of current Executive Director Leslie Winner – a former state senator, civil rights lawyer and trailblazer in her own right – ZSR launched a second statewide initiative to gain traction against the structural inequities that remained prominent in the state. The Racial Equity Initiative was a pilot program designed to move the foundation’s grantees from racial representation to true inclusion in nonprofit decision-making, and to increase their capacity to address racial equity. The goals of the Racial Equity Initiative were threefold:

- ▲ Help grantees to see the relevance of racial equity and its impact on their field
- ▲ Build capacity for grantees to be more effective in their racial equity efforts
- ▲ Build a base of shared definitions and frameworks around structural racism

This effort with grantees was coupled with internal priority-setting around the goals and objectives of each program area to include specific racial equity targets.

The initiative kicked off with a series of daylong racial equity convenings, held at different locations throughout North Carolina. The foundation invited all of its grantees to the sessions. In all, 312 people representing 209 organizations participated. Afterwards, more than 90 percent expressed interest in further trainings and additional opportunities to advance their skills in these areas. “So much of what we were hearing from grantees was, ‘We share this value and want to do this work, but we don’t know how or we don’t have the capacity,’” says Joy Vermillion Heinsohn, the foundation’s director for programs.

In response, early in 2012, the foundation put out an RFP offering targeted technical assistance grants to self-selected grantees who wanted to venture deeper into racial equity work. Ultimately, the foundation awarded eight six-month grants to 11 organizations<sup>11</sup> – an investment totaling approximately \$60,000. These grantees agreed to come together with ZSR staff for two peer-cohort convenings, one during the grant period to receive a more advanced level of racial equity training, and one after the grants ended to share learnings from their work and discuss the sustainability of their new efforts.

Grantees used their funds to pursue a wide range of capacity-building activities and implementation steps. The Asheville City School Foundation held a racial equity

retreat with its board, where participants identified racial equity objectives and revamped their board recruitment strategy. The Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) worked with three other grantees to deepen their collective understanding of systemic racism, and integrate racial equity goals into their policies and practices.

Other groups, especially mainstream organizations such as the North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF), witnessed how a small grant could go a long way to build their capacity *and networks* around a racial equity agenda. With its grant, for example, NCWF gathered 20 of its chapter leaders, staff and board members for a series of facilitated meetings designed to introduce them to the concept of racial equity, and to begin figuring out how to expand its work and presence in communities of color. But with the latter task, they quickly hit a roadblock. “We realized we don’t even know what the Hispanic- or African-American communities *think* about conservation,” says NCFW’s Canavarro. They decided to contact several of the other ZSR grantees they had met at the racial equity convening, who helped them connect with African-American and Latino community leaders across the state. The resulting in-depth interviews yielded valuable information that helped NCWF launch a new action plan.

Like other grantees, NCWF felt the capacity grant helped them make real progress in a short time and with little funding. But they all seemed to agree that the work wasn’t over. “We made good strides, but we are nowhere near where we envision being,” says Canavarro.

## Continuing the Journey

It is not yet clear whether the Racial Equity Initiative will be a time-limited program, extend into further work, or get integrated into the foundation’s overall grantmaking. But many of ZSR’s grantees are endorsing the foundation’s efforts to wade further into this area. “What I’ve seen in the last three or four years is a really important change,” says Anita Earls, executive director of the Southern Coalition for Social Justice. “I think what they’ve been trying to do is courageous, and I hope they will help us figure out how to take this work to the next level.”

The foundation is the first to acknowledge that amplifying the focus on racial equity is inherently difficult work – not just because understanding the structural bases for the disparities is challenging, but also because the social and political context in North Carolina is changing. In recent years, the state’s politics and policies have shifted to the conservative right. Statewide battles over immigration reform and the controversial passage of the state’s voter ID



law – widely viewed as racially discriminatory by nature – have set off alarm bells among progressives. And dramatic cuts to public education and social services are having a disproportionate impact on low-income communities, many of them communities of color.

The current climate in the state has again led to heightened resistance that, for many, harkens back to earlier movement protests, and the controversy that often surrounds that resistance.

A powerful network of religious and grassroots leaders in North Carolina, under the umbrella of “Moral Mondays,” has gained significant momentum protesting the rising threats to safety-net programs for underresourced communities in the state. While ZSR has not funded any of the direct work behind the protests much of which is conducted by 501c4s or individual leaders, this is a moment to consider what it means for the ongoing social and racial justice efforts of the 501c3 grantees whose long-term capacity and infrastructure ZSR has supported, and their ability to seize upon such critical moments.

“How can we and the grantee community build on possible opportunities raised by this momentum to address racial disparities in our state? It’s something we are asking ourselves,” noted Vermillion Heinsohn.

**“How does a family foundation honor its heritage and acknowledge its privilege, while staying true to the evolving values of the family’s philanthropy over generations? It’s a question that has been at the forefront of ZSR’s work, irrespective of leadership changes, political trends and economic realities in the state.”**

“Given the broad range of activists who have come together, the Moral Mondays movement has reflected a better intersectional lens recognizing how race, gender, economic concerns and environmental policies impact each other,” added Gore. “It has already affected some grantees to more strongly consider the connections of these factors.”

Still, both stressed that they and their predecessors recognize the racial and social justice work the foundation seeks to support “is long-term and bigger than any one moment, event or crisis. This work is generational in nature.”

Irrespective of what happens with the issue of the day, the foundation shows no signs of backing away from helping its grantees tackle structural racism – and from confronting it themselves as an organization. In that regard, board member Mary Mountcastle sees yet another connection between the work the foundation is doing now and the work it did through the North Carolina Fund 50 years ago. “Some people wanted the foundation to stop funding that work, but

we continued to fund it,” she says. “We need to continue to stand up for what we believe in and not back away.”

## Lessons

Although diversity is important to a foundation’s racial equity goals, it is not enough to drive systemic change. In the late 1990s, the foundation began to collect information on its grantees’ staff and board diversity. By 2009, it began to hold grantees more accountable to board and staff diversity as a precondition of funding. The foundation’s diversity policy had an impact – but it did not address two other problems that soon seemed rather glaring. First, a number of grantees were adding diversity to their boards but not truly including those new voices in the conversation. “There were some number of organizations that focused on token diversity but not inclusion, or inclusion but with structural deficits,” says program officer James Gore. Second, bringing in diverse perspectives did not in-and-of-itself guarantee that anything the organization actually *did* through its work would change.

“We were trying to look at it more as a change issue: How could we help change institutions and communities in a more systematic way?” says former executive director Tom Ross. For answers, the foundation, under the leadership of current Executive Director Leslie Winner, turned to its grantees, asking them two questions: How do you draw

upon racially diverse perspectives in your work? And, what challenges does your organization face in bringing racially diverse perspectives in your work? Thanks in part to these conversations, the foundation established racial equity targets across each of its program areas, launched its Racial Equity Initiative, and continues to create additional alignment across the foundation.

When you begin to implement a racial equity framework, you have to start at home. The reality is, the foundation’s wealth was generated by a once-thriving tobacco industry supported by the labor of low-income workers, especially racial minorities, who seldom reaped the full benefits of their enterprise. There is no getting around it. So, the question begs: How does a family foundation honor its heritage and acknowledge its privilege, while staying true to the evolving values of the family’s philanthropy over generations? It’s a question that has been at the forefront of ZSR’s work, irrespective of leadership changes, political trends and economic realities in the state.

At the height of the civil rights movement, the foundation's all-White board made the intentional decision to become more racially and culturally diverse. Internal changes were followed by the establishment of an advisory panel of diverse leaders to keep the foundation honest about race relations and other emerging issues facing the state.

The foundation then matured and delved into the structural barriers that limit opportunities, especially for people of color, across the state. This commitment began to include systematic efforts and dedicated resources for evaluating not only the progress of grantee organizations, but also the foundation's progress on racial equity targets across grant clusters and portfolios.

"This is not the kind of thing that can be a three-year initiative and then you expect to be done with it," says Joy Vermillion Heinsohn, director for programs. "Is it a part of your foundation's culture to want to push the envelope? Do you feel like you have trusted relationships with grantees to be able to engage in this type of conversation, and are you going to be willing to listen to what they say they need? You have to figure that out."

That willingness to "figure it out," as Vermillion Heinsohn suggests, continues to inform emerging work as the foundation intensifies its efforts to address widening disparities throughout the state.

Racial equity grantmaking takes courage – and the willingness to stand behind your investments. ZSR stood firm in its commitment to the North Carolina Fund, despite some of the controversy, because it believed it was the right thing to do. When the foundation decided to require its grantees' boards to reflect the diversity of the communities they served, it once again stepped out on principle – and didn't back down, despite some grantee pushback. Current family-member trustee Mary Mountcastle recalls one arts organization calling the foundation's diversity policy "overbearing." Mountcastle's response? "I asked, 'How are you going to market to and attract more diverse audiences with such a predominantly White board and staff?' I told them that their success will be affected if they don't think about how to work effectively in a multiracial and multicultural context like North Carolina is today."

And, the foundation is the first to admit that it has had its own internal struggles with how far to push that commitment. "There was some concern that this wasn't a good way to spend money because we weren't likely to get the kind of change for which we were driving," says former Executive Director Tom Ross. "And some people wanted to push harder and faster than others." Ultimately, the discussion came down to what an effective intervention would look like. In other words, says Ross, "What would matter?"

"Racial equity is an issue that scares people," adds board member Ilana Dubester – arguing that this reality makes the foundation's commitment to achieving it all the more important.

At a time when grants are scrutinized and program priorities are judged, the lesson is to stay the course, take risks, and believe that you will come out on the right side of history.



**Lisa McGill** is the principal of LM Strategies Consulting, a firm that works with philanthropies to help them advance relationships and sustain impact in underresourced communities. McGill has consulted on projects for a variety of foundations, including the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Charles S. Mott Foundation, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, and the Kresge Foundation. She has content expertise in youth-to-adulthood transitions. McGill is the author of *Constructing Black Selves: Caribbean American Narratives and the Second Generation* (NYU Press) and the co-author of several publications in the philanthropic sector.

Lisa McGill would like to thank writer Jenny Johnston for her contributions to this case study.

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Photo Credit: "To Be Rather than to Seem: Reflections on Race in North Carolina, 2001 Annual Report." Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, 2001. Web. 15 May 2014. <<http://www.zsr.org/sites/default/files/images/2001ZSRAnnualReport.pdf>>



## CASE STUDY

# The California Endowment: Racial Equity Grantmaking in a Place-Based Initiative

by Maggie Potapchuk

<b>Leadership</b>	C. Dean Germano, Chair of the Board; and Robert K. Ross, President and Chief Executive Officer
<b>Year Founded</b>	1996
<b>Mission</b>	To expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.
<b>Current Program Area</b>	<p><b>Health Happens with Prevention:</b> implementation of the federal health law by enrolling uninsured children and adults in affordable coverage and by pursuing the opportunities created by the law to expand prevention.</p> <p><b>Health Happens in Neighborhoods:</b> make changes in neighborhood conditions to promote safety, health and fitness and will pursue policy changes at the local, regional and state levels to create health-promoting environments.</p> <p><b>Health Happens in Schools:</b> change policies and practices in school districts to improve attendance and reduce suspensions/expulsions, enhance nutrition and physical activity and support the physical, social and emotional needs of young people. This includes a focus on the status of boys of color.</p>
<b>Staff Size</b>	137
<b>Endowment Size</b>	\$3,562,148,280
<b>Average Grant Size</b>	\$102,545.23
<b>Geographic Area</b>	California



Over two days in 2010, executive and senior staff of The California Endowment (TCE) shared a unique experience with representatives from each of the 14 sites in the foundation’s Building Healthy Communities Initiative. Together, foundation and community leaders read and discussed storyboards from each community depicting an unsettling history that isn’t taught in schools. Some little-known facts about the rural city of Salinas, one of the 14 sites, were shared on the storyboard:

“The land currently occupied by the city of Salinas was historically settled by Native Americans known as Ensen.”

“Large Spanish land grants for the Catholic missions gave way to Mexican land grants for smaller rancheros.”

“During the 1870s and 1880s [there] was land reclamation undertaken by Chinese labor to clear and drain the swamps.”

Each community’s storyboard became a symbolic message, validating the struggles and legacies of their elders.

This workshop on structural racialization was a departure from other foundation-led “place-based” initiatives, as it specifically addressed structural racism in the context of place. Understanding the history of each community from the perspectives of indigenous communities and different racial and ethnic groups, including their histories of resistance against injustice and exploitation, was an important starting point for foundation and community leaders as they embarked together upon an ambitious 10-year initiative to reduce health disparities.<sup>1</sup>



Power dynamics are always present when foundations participate in the civic square. An even deeper power dynamic exists when foundations invest in place-based initiatives, especially in communities of color. In recent years, place-based initiatives have received attention in philanthropic literature<sup>2</sup> – specifically, in relation to leadership, evaluation and the role of the funder. These publications sometimes discuss issues of diversity, inclusion or racial disparities. But racism, racial equity and privilege are rarely mentioned.

TCE's ambitious 10-year, \$1 billion statewide Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative stands out for its intentional efforts to integrate a racial equity framework into a place-based grantmaking approach to social change. A health conversion foundation<sup>3</sup> and the 16th largest foundation in the country, TCE launched BHC in 2010 in 14 California communities.<sup>4</sup> The initiative's goal is "to support the development of communities where kids and youth are healthy, safe and ready to learn."

This case study examines aspects of TCE's place-based initiative and its early implementation in relation to racial equity principles and grantmaking practice. Though only at the four-year mark, there are some critical observations and possible lessons for philanthropy from the BHC experience to date, which can advance discussion about place-based work in the field.

## An Evolving Analysis of the Social Determinants of Health

BHC emerged out of a reflective process at TCE. After 10 years of grantmaking focused on health access, workforce diversity and disparities, the foundation wanted to make more impact and shifted its focus to the root causes of health inequities. Dr. Robert K. Ross, TCE's president & CEO, describes the organization's changing focus. "The key contributors are what we recognize as the 'social determinants' of health: poverty, racism and hopelessness," he says. "These factors feed the heavy burden of disease and despair in low-income communities, and these disease conditions are largely preventable ... So with our eyes open, we have decided to stop dipping our feet and jump into the pool on the matter of these social determinants of health."<sup>5</sup>

After extensive research and development, the foundation designed and launched BHC in 2010 in 14 urban and rural communities throughout California. Linking policy and systems change strategies with sustained levels of community investments, the initiative in its early design sought to achieve 10 outcomes:

1. All children have health coverage.
2. Families have improved access to a health home that supports healthy behaviors.
3. Health and family-focused human services shift resources toward prevention.
4. Residents live in communities with health-promoting land use, transportation and community development.
5. Children and their families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods.
6. Communities support healthy youth development.
7. Neighborhood and school environments support improved health and healthy behaviors.
8. Community health improvements are linked to economic development.
9. Health gaps for young men and boys of color are narrowed.<sup>6</sup>
10. California has a shared vision of community health.<sup>7</sup>

The initial BHC framework did not explicitly mention race or equity, except in language focused on health gaps for men and boys of color. In interviews, staff were asked to share how they came to apply a structural racialization analysis to BHC's grantmaking. "There was not a critical moment," shares Charles Fields, regional program manager. "We have been on an evolutionary path – when you notice the significant disproportionality in health outcomes, that's based on race, gender and sexual orientation; it's based on class; it's based on geography." This reality is clear when looking at just a few of the racial disparities of health across the state:

- ▲ "Black Californians are two to three times more likely than other racial or ethnic groups to be hospitalized for preventable conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease"<sup>8</sup>
- ▲ Compared to other racial and ethnic groups, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders have some of the highest rates of diabetes; Filipinos, Vietnamese and South Asians also have diabetes rates higher than the California average, despite having a generally younger population.<sup>9</sup>

### The Three Big Campaigns within the Building Healthy Communities initiative are:

1. Health Happens with Prevention: We will take full advantage of the implementation of the federal health law by enrolling thousands of uninsured children and adults in affordable coverage and by pursuing the opportunities created by the law to expand prevention.
2. Health Happens in Neighborhoods: We will make changes in neighborhood conditions to promote safety, health and fitness in the 14 BHC sites and will pursue policy changes at the local, regional and state levels to create health-promoting environments.
3. Health Happens in Schools: We will change policies and practices in BHC school districts to improve attendance and reduce suspensions/expulsions, enhance nutrition and physical activity, and support the physical, social and emotional needs of young people. We have a particular focus in this campaign on the status of boys of color who currently suffer outrageously high rates of suspensions, expulsions and dropouts.<sup>13</sup>



- ▲ “Significant racial and ethnic disparities exist in infant mortality rates. African-American infant mortality rates were nearly three times higher than those of whites in 2008 ... Latinos who have over half of the births in California, had the highest actual number (1504) of infant deaths in 2008<sup>10</sup> ... Maternal mortality rates increase for all races/ethnicities over the last decade in California. African-American women were three to five times more likely than any other group to die from pregnancy-related causes. United States-born Latinos had the second highest mortality rate in 2008, which was nearly double their 1999 rate.”<sup>11</sup>
- ▲ “Rates of doctor-diagnosed asthma are highest in Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders (28 percent), American Indians/Alaska Natives (26 percent), and African Americans (21 percent). In addition, the rate of preventable hospitalizations for asthma in the African-American community is over three times that of any other race or ethnic group, due in part to lower quality outpatient care.”<sup>12</sup>

Today, TCE has an equity action agenda that “recognizes that race/racism and social determinants adversely affect the health and well-being of historically underserved communities in California – race and place matter. To improve health where we live, we need to focus on the structural elements that perpetuate inequity and engage in systems change.”

## Integrating Racial Equity into BHC

For TCE, part of the process of integrating a racial equity framework was establishing a common language and analysis among foundation staff and grantees. In 2011, TCE hosted a Systems Thinking and Race workshop for executive leadership, TCE staff and grantee representatives from BHC sites. It was led by Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity;<sup>14</sup> John A. Powell, at the time, the executive director of Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University;<sup>15</sup> Rinku Sen, executive director of Applied Research Center (now called Race Forward) and Colorlines; and other key racial justice leaders.<sup>16</sup> This two-day workshop was described in interviews as a turning point that provided necessary conceptual grounding for BHC. Regional sessions with grantees followed.<sup>17</sup>

Interviewees cited four elements in which TCE began applying a racial equity framework:

**“TCE has an equity action agenda that “recognizes that race/racism and social determinants adversely affect the health and well-being of historically underserved communities in California – race and place matter. To improve health where we live, we need to focus on the structural elements that perpetuate inequity and engage in systems change.”**

## Strategy

Though community organizing and public policy advocacy were always part of TCE’s grantmaking, these strategies are now core to BHC accounting for 85 percent of TCE’s grantmaking compared with 15 percent in the past.<sup>18</sup> Tia Martinez, consultant and grantee, describes TCE’s current theory of change as seeking to “build power among marginalized oppressed people and give folks the skills they need to use their power to actually change systems.” Internally, this process is described as five distinct and integrated strands of work:

- ▲ Building resident power
- ▲ Enhancing collaborative efficacy
- ▲ Fostering youth leadership
- ▲ Creating a new narrative
- ▲ Leveraging partnerships

Dr. Anthony Iton, senior vice president of Healthy Communities, communicates to staff that “we will be unsuccessful unless all five things are happening simultaneously in each of our cluster areas.”<sup>19</sup>

## Staff Development

The BHC initiative has been described as a different type of grantmaking for TCE – an integration of activities, a greater coordination with community sites on policy advocacy, and a process of applying a structural racialization framework. After a major personnel shift in 2009<sup>20</sup>, more program staff were hired who have an orientation to building community power, awareness of race, class differences, and being “comfortable” with community organizing. Dan Boggan, a former TCE board chair, shares that this transition was not easy but probably one of the most important ones for the organization – in his words, “making the change from staff telling you how to spend the money, to staff members in the communities trying to help people decide what is most important to getting things done, and building capacity in these communities so they can turn those dials toward success.”

The foundation is at an early stage of building staff members’ knowledge and skills when it comes to integrating racial equity in their work. To develop an organization-wide understanding of health equity, in the last two years TCE has focused on creating a common language and understanding of the concepts with programmatic staff during quarterly staff meetings. (It was noted that there has been limited engagement of operations staff in this process).

Dianne Yamashiro-Omi, who was TCE's director of equity and diversity during the launch of BHC, reflected on the progress made during her tenure. "As a foundation talking about addressing racial equity, diversity and inclusion, the question was are we walking our talk?" she recalls. "Those discussions led us to conduct a diversity audit ... which led us to create a diversity review committee, and we developed a process to collect data on board, staff, and grantees." According to Yamashiro-Omi, the diversity audit was a process established to ensure that such practices would outlast staff transitions, leading the foundation to assess whether its institutional policies and practices were supportive of equity and to create new performance markers for each department. One example of the impact of the organization-wide diversity audit was that TCE's board established a policy to identify and work with investment managers of color.<sup>21</sup>

### Board Commitment

One critical component of the progress TCE has made to date is the board's support of racial equity approaches. The board has been primarily people of color since TCE's inception. "The board committed to a 10-year initiative that is huge and really a bold vision," shares Jim Keddy, a current staff executive and former board member who is White. "The board already had existing sensitivity and high level awareness of these concerns, and issues [such as racism] were regularly were discussed in board conversations."

**“If we don't change power dynamics, just having those new policies is not going to make a difference ... The design shifted to a deeper investment of power building and lighter touch on prescriptive policy change.”**

### Capacity Building

TCE invested in providing a comprehensive menu of technical assistance and training programs for the 14 sites, including topics such as community organizing, power analysis, language equity and communication, racial justice training, and intergroup relations. Though innovative in the context of building communities' knowledge and skills regarding racial equity, especially for a place-based foundation initiative, the use of these technical assistance resources by grantees has been uneven. "Just thinking about our workplan, I really need a technical assistance strategic plan that is driven by community priorities," explains Rene Castro, TCE's Long Beach community hub director. "There are about 20 different examples of how we used technical assistance, but it's not maximizing and building upon the experience ... you have to understand community priorities, do an assessment; at the same you are updating a community action plan, monitoring it, etc." Next steps in this arena are integrating racial equity frameworks into the technical assistance tools that can best meet the needs within each BHC site's strategic plan, coordinating assessment of TA providers in each community, and connecting learning processes across sites.

## Organizing and Policy Advocacy with a Racial Equity Framework: School Discipline Reform

The logistics of implementing policy campaigns within a time-limited initiative like BHC can be a challenge. But the foundation has demonstrated a commitment to working on policy change in tandem with building power in communities. "To focus only on policy change is a subtly racist argument and ignores the fact of systemic devaluation of certain populations and the exclusion of those populations in the decision-making venues," says Iton. "If we don't change power dynamics, political, economic, etc., just having those new policies is not going to make a difference ... The design shifted to a deeper investment of power building and lighter touch on prescriptive policy change." Now, TCE sees policy change as a measure of change in community power.

With this approach, BHC's support has contributed to important statewide policy reforms related to school discipline. In each of the 14 communities, one of the first discussions with community members was, "What do we need so that children are healthy, safe and ready to learn?" The answer from many of the communities was addressing the overuse of school suspensions.<sup>22</sup>

This priority is underscored by a recent report from UCLA that revealed startling statistics, such as "nearly one out

of every five African-American students, one in nine American Indian students, and one in 13 Latino students in the state sample were suspended at least once in 2009-2010, compared to one in 17 White students, and one in 35 Asian-American students."<sup>23</sup> While African-American males have extremely high suspension rates, the group with the second highest rate is African-American females whose suspension rates are higher than Latino and Asian males.<sup>24</sup> The study shows that suspensions are often punishment for minor infractions, such as missing a uniform shirt or being late to school due to the bus being delayed. Yet the consequences are not minor – a suspended student not only misses learning time, but as a consequence is also "left unsupervised, and has an increased risk of dropping out and becoming involved in the juvenile justice system."<sup>25</sup> These extreme disciplinary measures are disproportionately pushing students of color out of the educational system.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, a policy brief by the Executives' Alliance to Expand Opportunity for Boys and Men of Color describes how economic and social insecurity combined with violence, limited opportunity and trauma culminate

**“We are both trying to move things in communities, but communities are as well moving us ... It is becoming a more iterative process with the external and the internal.”**

in a harsh reality for boys and young men of color. “In California, African-American children are 2.5 times and Latino children 1.3 times more likely to suffer from abuse than White children ... Studies have shown that maltreated children are more likely to be incarcerated. In California, African-American children are disproportionately represented in the foster care system by four times.”<sup>27</sup>

Beginning in the spring of 2011, a coalition emerged among residents and statewide leaders to move this issue to the legislative agenda. Through BHC, TCE invested in organizing that had been building for 15 years in Los Angeles and nationally on school discipline. Three key components of the coalition’s work were building power within communities, connecting grassroots change makers and changing the narrative. On this latter component, TCE was described as playing a key role. “Paying attention to the bully pulpit was one of the most important roles for a foundation,” reflects Marqueece Harris-Dawson, executive director of Community Coalition, a BHC grantee. “And they were able to build unity and passion and have a great turnout for the campaign.”

In 2012 a critical group, the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color, joined the coalition as preparations for the legislative session began. The Alliance’s vision is that “All Californians stand to benefit by doing everything possible to ensure that young men of color have the chance to grow up healthy, to get a good education, and to make positive contributions to their communities.”<sup>28</sup> Coordinated by PolicyLink, the Alliance is a partnership with statewide advocates, communities and TCE, and is connected with youth organizing at the BHC sites. Over a thousand young men testified at regional hearings, and within BHC sites, young leaders of color began to emerge.<sup>29</sup> Ten school discipline reform bills were introduced in the state legislature; seven passed through the committee process, and five were ultimately signed into law by California’s governor.

## **Emerging Lessons For Philanthropy from BHC and Other Place-Based Initiatives**

While many appreciate TCE’s leadership, some community leaders and grantee organizations express concerns that are often true of other foundation-led place-based initiatives, such as how to include the community’s voice in grantmaking decisions. These concerns echo some of those found in recent publications and articles that have critiqued foundations conducting place-based work. For example, in *Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives: Exploring Power and Race*, Benjamin

Butler and Rebecca Stone discuss power and race issues among stakeholders (funders, residents, technical assistance providers and managers) and share how foundation behavior sets the tone within many comprehensive community building initiatives.

“Foundation behavior can help or hinder that process, depending on to what extent the funder takes responsibilities for redirecting attention from itself and its power position over resources to the other resource sectors. Instead, foundations have begun to promote the idea of being philanthropic “partners” in community initiatives, which tends to emphasize their role as resources rather than redirecting attention away from them ... Those on the receiving end of the funds tend to point to ways in which foundations act as de facto ‘senior partners’ in these new relationships, continuing to tightly control initiative resources, to insist on approving local leadership, and to pass judgment on whether their community partners are measuring up.”<sup>30</sup>

Staff of foundations may defend this behavior because they believe that the stakes for the foundation are high. Yet the highest stakes really rest with the community residents involved, since many of the issues are life-and-death; they have to live with the risks they take in their community and the potential political fallout. Residents are also taking great risks when they trust powerful individuals and organizations – which are often mostly White – after historically being betrayed by authority figures who make policy decisions, and by leaders who may not be able to handle political pressure. They are uncertain whether their knowledge and leadership will be encouraged and supported, or if it will be a repeat of “father knows best”<sup>31</sup>

In the literature on this subject, common pitfalls of foundation-led place-based initiatives include starting the process, figuring out the foundation’s role in the context of power dynamics, and determining what strategies to invest in. Add the integration of a racial equity framework to the mix and there are additional challenges – particularly in an initiative as large-scale as BHC.

TCE is aware that there are many bumps in the road, and is putting capacity in place to learn while doing. “In seeking to create positive change in communities, we rarely experience smooth sailing,” says Jim Keddy, TCE’s chief learning officer. “We run into unanticipated opposition; we discover that our strategy is based on wrong assumptions; and we suffer sudden shifts in the environment caused by forces often outside of our control.” Fields explains that the learning process is two-way with communities: “We are both trying

to move things in communities, but communities are as well moving us ... It is becoming a more iterative process with the external and the internal.”

Preliminary lessons learned from integration of racial equity into the BHC initiative are offered below.

## Respect the Community’s Leadership to Govern, Plan and Act – Independently

When determining community outcomes based on a theory of change<sup>32</sup>, what sometimes gets lost is prioritizing the needs of the community. Junious Williams, CEO of Urban Strategies Council, describes this struggle. “When I hear foundations say ‘resident-driven initiatives,’ it’s actually more like ‘Driving Miss Daisy.’ Residents may be driving the vehicle, but they are not deciding where the vehicle is going,” shares Williams. “It is a difficult transition going to a place-based portfolio ... Grantmaking decisions don’t seem to have changed hands and are still largely in the hands of a program officer ... That is really a structural problem, and probably not unique to them [TCE] and some of the other place-based initiatives. There is a real reluctance to actively engage and align the decision-making of the local resident governance body with the grantmaking of the foundation.”

TCE entered into communities with a specific framework, inviting predominantly institutional leaders and fewer grassroots leaders to the table; and with only basic

when residents were ready for them ... I think we eventually got there; we extended the planning process in almost every site for that reason.”

Interviewees observed that BHC’s traction in the school discipline policy arena was partly due to TCE tapping into work already happening on the ground – mature movements with track records but lacking resources. This is an example of how a foundation can help build community power by resourcing existing groups doing racial equity work.

Any foundation making this level of investment will want to track outcomes at the community level. But rather than imposing a framework, evaluation process or theory of change, it is critically important to allow autonomy and support for each community to define its priorities, and create a community strategic plan through an engagement and planning process. Before launching BHC, TCE supported a planning process at every site.

## Deploy Foundations’ Credibility and Resources in Ways that Promote Racial Equity

Creating an inclusive table means having community residents and grassroots organizations as well as institutions and political leaders from each community involved. Conflicts will inevitably arise – especially when institutional policies are challenged by grassroots groups, and when there are differences regarding addressing racism and

**“When I hear foundations say ‘resident-driven initiatives,’ it’s actually more like ‘Driving Miss Daisy.’ Residents may be driving the vehicle, but they are not deciding where the vehicle is going,” shares Williams. “It is a difficult transition going to a place-based portfolio ... Grantmaking decisions don’t seem to have changed hands and are still largely in the hands of a program officer ... That is really a structural problem, and probably not unique to them [TCE] and some of the other place-based initiatives. ”**

knowledge of how this initiative sits within the history of the communities’ past efforts and racial history. “Planning was messy,” says Community Coalition’s Harris-Dawson. “At the very beginning cards were not on the table ... why certain people are here and others not. Transparency improved definitely over time, as relationships got built and expectations became clearer.”

Iton shares, in retrospect, what might have been done differently in the planning process. “Start with deep community organizing, maybe 18-24 months unscripted,” he says. “Organizing with people coming together, and focus on some early wins on areas they see as problems and issues. Just have them get used to working together as residents, and then put to them to the task of putting together a plan and facilitated opportunities for both the community-based organizations and the system players to come to the table

historical baggage between groups. In initiatives started by foundations, what is the ongoing role of the foundation when such differences and conflicts arise? Fields shared some of his observations on this question when working with institutional and grassroots leaders. “That’s another thing we have to be really transparent about – we both believe in insider and outsider strategies, and so we are going to support good system leaders,” he says. “We are going to support good partnerships with our systems leaders and with our systems, and we will also strongly support organizing and advocacy at the grassroots level.” Yet who is defining “good” or “success,” and assessing the unintended consequences of systems’ practices and policies can be persistent issues. Reflecting on TCE, Urban Strategies Council’s Williams says, “I think they are better than most foundations. Over my career there are different foundation people who resort to power dynamics, and they [TCE] have

done so less than any other foundation. They have a culture of selecting people as program officers who don't go crazy with money or power."

In another example, Ross shares how foundations can use an advocacy role in moving an equity agenda. "We have discovered, in the early years of the BHC effort, that thoughtful, surgical application of our civic standing and reputation matters to community leaders – and that they want us to spend 'it' on their behalf," says Ross. "On occasion, this requires stepping out of character on behalf of grantees, and utilizing our voice as well. Why build, preserve and protect our respective brands and reputations if we are not going to spend it? Spend that damn brand."<sup>33</sup>

Though always being aware of power dynamics in any given situation is important for foundations, it is equally important to apply a racial equity analysis to interpret the facts, define success, and assess decision-making and grantmaking processes.

## Apply a Racial Equity Framework in Evaluation Processes

There are many models of how to engage communities to collect input and data. The question is how to do it with an equitable and inclusive process that ensures community voice and leadership. Typically data is filtered through a foundation initiative's goals, rather than based on the community's interpretation and priorities. Barbara Major's article *How does White Privilege Show up in Foundation and Community Initiatives?* discusses this point. "In the White foundation model, the community is forced to do what is unnatural ... Many different types of indicators can be useful, but foundations tend to value most what they can count. We as a community have to show what has been accomplished using the foundation's way of knowing (numbers) and not necessarily our way of knowing (living it and seeing it every day)."<sup>34</sup> Part of the ongoing feedback for evaluation reporting to foundations is ensuring that grantees, along with the clients and/or community they are accountable to, are the ones in the drivers' seat defining success.

For the BHC evaluation process, local evaluators were hired for each site instead of relying on a statewide evaluation process centralized within the foundation. Though the community evaluator will be in a position to contextualize community issues, he or she will still need to translate data to track five key evaluation points:

- 1) how community and policy units are working together,
- 2) power-building among residents,
- 3) collaborative structures,
- 4) changes being realized locally and statewide, and
- 5) how TCE structures and process are adapting to community capacity needs.

However, TCE's data parameters are not explicitly focused on racial equity. Maya Wiley, former executive director of the Center for Social Inclusion, has argued that evaluation should not be race neutral. "The core elements require an understanding of racialized nature of dynamics in relationships, biases and capacities," says Wiley. "We have to use a matrix that includes intended and unintended consequences, attitudes and biases, and capacities related to making the restructuring we seek informed by how race operates, not just what race is."<sup>35</sup> Though TCE has begun addressing power issues through evaluation, bringing a racial equity framework to the evaluation process would be a good next step.

## Conclusion

Four years after BHC began, The California Endowment is working deeply in places, connecting policy change with community needs and "spending its brand" by communicating a strong message for equity. Though still early in the BHC timeframe, TCE is committed to strategic developmental learning processes – observing and reflecting on the new territory of integrating racial equity into foundation grantmaking and internal operations. The jury is still out on the actual impacts of this initiative across the 14 communities. Nonetheless, there is much to learn from TCE's BHC Initiative at this point, especially with regard to the foundation's role in working with communities with a structural racialization analysis. Hopefully many other foundations will be inspired and welcome a reflective gaze on their work as well.



**Maggie Potapchuk**, principal of MP Associates, focuses on building the capacity of organizations to effectively address structural racism and White privilege. She co-authored *Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege* in *The Foundation Review*. She co-developed the site, [www.racialequitytools.org](http://www.racialequitytools.org).

Potapchuk was previously the senior program associate at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies for the Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity. She serves on the leadership teams of Within Our Lifetime Network and Baltimore Racial Justice Action, and on the editorial board of the *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege* journal.

## Endnotes

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Picture is from The California Endowment's website. <http://www.tce.org/>



## CASE STUDY

# Akonadi Foundation:

## Movement Building – Locally with a Structural Racism Analysis

by Maggie Potapchuk

<b>Leadership</b>	Quinn Delaney, founder and president of the board
<b>Year Founded</b>	2000
<b>Mission</b>	To support the development of powerful social change movements to eliminate structural racism and create a racially just society.
<b>Current Program Area</b>	<p><b>Arc Toward Justice Fund</b> – a vision of equity for youth of color in Oakland, with grants that work to end the patterns of harm and injustice generated by structural racism; and to advance solutions and opportunities that allow youth of color and their communities to thrive.</p> <p><b>Beloved Community Fund</b> – supports events that reclaim public space in Oakland, in order to affirm and celebrate the collective memory, shared histories, social identities and cultures of communities of color living in the city, as well as events that provide a platform to discuss pressing issues and struggles.</p>
<b>Staff Size</b>	5
<b>Endowment Size</b>	\$25 million
<b>Average Grant Size</b>	Arc Toward Justice: \$85,000 Beloved Community Fund: \$5,000
<b>Geographic Area</b>	Oakland, California



After eight years of giving to social change work anonymously through the Tides Foundation, Quinn

Delaney and her husband Wayne Jordan realized that anonymity might be hindering the way they wanted to work with grantees and what they were hoping to achieve. “Doing site visits got us super hungry for a different connection,” reflects Delaney. “It was really a desire to be closer to the ground, more engaged with the organizations and the leaders, seeing what they’re doing and what we may contribute.”

This recognition of the importance of relationships was a catalyst and then programmatically intrinsic to many key turning points along the way for the Akonadi Foundation,<sup>1</sup> established in Oakland, California, in 2000 with a \$2 million initial investment. Delaney, who is White, continues, “When we were thinking about starting the foundation, we were moved by all the things we had just seen and heard from all these leaders around the issues of race. And of course, my husband being African-American ... we all have had different experiences with race, he in a different way than I, that was part of the personal coming into what is the prime lens and issue that is at the heart of what needs to be changed in our society.”

Melanie Cervantes, who was the foundation’s first staff member and is now a program officer, provides additional context for the foundation’s initial focus on race. “Akonadi grew out of the experience our board had intentionally supporting youth of color organizing that was using a race lens in powerful and innovative ways,” she recalls. This was in 2000 when young people were leading the fight against Proposition 21 [the Juvenile Crime Initiative<sup>2</sup>] in California, which was seeking to criminalize youth of color.” What was most noteworthy about the opposition to this draconian legislation was that young people of color became politically engaged in this campaign to a degree that has not been seen since.<sup>3</sup>

Witnessing how the youth of color protesting used the race lens in powerful and innovative ways, Delaney and Jordan were convinced that the new Akonadi Foundation<sup>4</sup> should focus explicitly on racial justice. Beth Rosales, who staffed their anonymous donor-advised fund, expresses her reaction to the mission: “Quinn and Wayne’s decision to focus on racial justice blew my mind and everyone else’s minds. It was an incredible leap politically, especially for the philanthropic field. They wanted to acknowledge and recognize the racial justice work that many grantees were engaged in – hoping to lift a very important issue that warranted expanded discourse around the nation and funding in philanthropic circles.”

Knowing they did not have all the answers, Delaney and Jordan launched Akonadi with a series of brown bag lunches to begin an open discussion with the field. They simply started the conversation with no predetermined framework; as Delaney puts it, “We are starting a foundation on racial justice and we aren’t really sure of our direction – please tell us your ideas.” From the beginning, they welcomed ideas, lessons and directions from community leaders and grassroots activists about what was necessary to support their work in the Bay Area. The centrality of this relationship-based approach is reflected in the foundation’s original mission, which was to “work with others to eliminate racism, with a particular focus on structural and institutional racism. It has sought partners who work within an analytical framework that defines and addresses the underpinnings of institutional racism.” These partners included not only grantees and colleagues, but also movement-building organizations nationally and locally, as well as issue-based organizations working on structural change.

In the 14 years since its birth, Akonadi Foundation has emerged as one of the very few foundations in the U.S. that explicitly integrates a racial justice framework into its grantmaking. Rooted in this focus on race and relationships, Akonadi Foundation has a unique story to tell and lessons to share.

## Akonadi’s Journey

Delaney and Jordan’s understanding of how to best address racism has evolved through their grantmaking experiences in communities of color. By the time Akonadi was formed, their analysis was explicitly centered on an understanding that racism is institutionalized; and they were committed to advancing racial justice approaches. As the organization’s only board members, Delaney and Jordan wrestled with the challenge of using an institutional racism framework – struggling with the question, “How can a small family foundation effectively address a complex insidious issue with a relatively small investment?” As Delaney says, “We were clear we were not focused on diversity training, and it wasn’t about people across races getting along with each other. But it wasn’t structural racism either.” Delaney was exposed to the concept of structural racism through her interactions with John A. Powell who, at the time, was director of the Kirwan Institute on Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University and a fellow Tides Foundation board member.

Akonadi made a deep investment in learning about structural racism throughout its early years. In 2003, Akonadi engaged a consultant to discuss definitions of structural racism with thought leaders from labor, faith organizations and nonprofits, and to advise the foundation on grant strategy.<sup>5</sup> Also, around 2005, a book club was started – first internally and then later with peer funders

– as a space to explore ideas about structural racism. Though somewhat theoretical, the meetings helped increase participants’ comfort levels in talking about the concept of structural racism and deepened their understanding of how it manifests locally and nationally. Cervantes shares that the book club “played a critical role in developing our analysis and refining our practice around grantmaking to impact structural racism.” This institutional learning process led to shifts in Akonadi’s framework for grantmaking. These shifts emphasizing social movements as the primary vehicle for addressing structural racism are reflected in Akonadi’s revised mission statement adopted in 2007 to “support the development of powerful social change movements to eliminate structural racism and create a racially just society.”

The Akonadi movement-building framework consists of:

- ▲ making racial justice an explicit and direct focus;
- ▲ providing long-term investments in organizations that are developing or advancing an analysis of structural racism and that are committed to proactive racial justice action;
- ▲ encouraging local innovation and success;
- ▲ helping people come together to share how they think, talk and strategize about racial justice;
- ▲ supporting the interconnected strategies of building power, shaping policy and transforming culture; and
- ▲ nurturing cross-generational leadership.<sup>6</sup>

This framework broadened the scope of Akonadi’s funding and clarified the purposes of local and national grantmaking. To put the movement-building framework into practice, three new funds were designed: Building a Movement (BAM), Race and Place (RAP), and Strategic Opportunity Support<sup>7</sup>(SOS)<sup>8</sup>.

Through the RAP Fund, Akonadi played a convening role, bringing together local grantees in Oakland to think, talk and strategize about racial justice. The fact that Delaney and Cervantes knew the organizational landscape from their own backgrounds in community organizing, cultural work and progressive political campaigns was a great advantage. As Roger Kim, former director of Asian Pacific Environmental Network, shares, “One of key strengths of the foundation, Quinn and Melanie in particular, is their intimate knowledge of their grantees and the work, as well as the political and economic context in which the work that



takes place – they know who the players are, the issues, the organizations and the ecosystem. They know movement-building players and issues we faced, as well as the political context and obstacles that we confronted.”

## Building Movement Capacity for Structural Change

Akonadi puts community-organizing groups at the heart of its movement-building framework not only because organizing is an effective strategy, but also because organizing groups value and involve those most impacted by racism. Around 2008, Akonadi began exploring what supports needed to be in place for community organizing to be robust and sustained. Capacity-building funding and ecosystem grantmaking emerged as two key strategies that would strengthen and sustain both racial justice organizations and the movements they supported.

### Capacity-building Funding

Building grantees’ capacity to work on structural racism has been core to advancing Akonadi’s movement-building framework. With support from The California Endowment, Akonadi invested \$875,000 in capacity building between 2010 and 2012. Fifteen RAP grantees received an average of \$15,000 each for a capacity-building project of their choice, and they participated in six facilitated, learning-community meetings<sup>9</sup>. The funded projects ranged from communications messaging work, to fund development, to evaluation and strategic planning.

Nikki Fortunato Bas, executive director of East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE), received one of the early grants. She explains how it helped EBASE deepen its racial justice commitment and integrate it more explicitly in all operations of the organization; it was “developing protocols to put racial justice into practice and institutionalize it within our organization.”

In 2012, Akonadi established the Race and Place capacity-building fund’s movement-building grants to build social-movement capacity by nurturing alliance-building and addressing systemic issues. Seed money was provided for multiple organizations to come together to jointly develop strategy and create a space for learning, exchange and mutual support. For example, Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) wanted to incorporate grassroots organizing into its efforts to reduce the prison population. With a capacity-building grant from Akonadi, CURB joined forces with A New Way of Life, an organization of formerly incarcerated people, and Critical Resistance, a membership organization with a mix of formerly incarcerated adults and other activists. The three organizations built a statewide collaboration that included sharing best practices, connecting with other sectors like public education teachers, and developing a shared strategic communications plan, which included online advocacy.

## Ecosystem Grantmaking

With its movement-building framework, Akonadi funds grantees by using a variety of strategies, including policy advocacy, research, cultural work and training. To build capacity at the movement level, the first step, as Cervantes shared, was “shifting the board’s conversation from only evaluating each grantee organization’s achievement on particular outcomes, to evaluating the organizations and the portfolio as a whole with a filter on how the grantees’ work is connected and working toward collective impact.” The key strategic questions then became “What is needed to build a movement?” and “What role could the foundation play in supporting it?” The board and staff began discussing these questions in 2008. Delaney realized what had been missing, as they reviewed their grantmaking portfolio with a movement-building lens: “the interrelatedness of both issues and approaches ... Understanding how, for example, education issues are tied to housing issues, and are tied to transportation issues, and are tied to jobs. Which is all obvious; but when we were doing our grantmaking, we weren’t thinking of it in that way.”

Based on their experience applying these questions in Akonadi’s grantmaking, in 2011 the foundation adopted a definition of “ecosystem grantmaking”:

Understanding the importance of the diverse web of relationships among communities, organizations and political formations that Akonadi supports. Much like a healthy ecosystem in nature, successful movement building requires a range of intersecting approaches through a set of distinct stages over a sustained period of time. Three of the most salient aspects of an ecosystem are diversity, interconnectedness and relationship to the larger environment.<sup>10</sup>

Julie Quiroz, a former Akonadi consultant, explains the framework further. “Ecosystem grantmaking is not like traditional grantmaking that focuses narrowly on providing individual support to organizations,” says Quiroz. “Rather, it is an understanding of the landscape you and your partners are operating in, and how you are collectively making an impact.” Building upon the core strategy of community organizing, an ecosystem grantmaker then identifies complementary organizations that are aligned and supportive of the organizing campaign. Funding an ecosystem of strategies with support for organizing at the core helps consolidate power in the community while also connecting grantees to emerging regional and national infrastructure. This approach may also align local organizing campaigns with a broader strategy or national campaign.

Ecosystem grantmaking differs from what is commonly referred to in philanthropy as “strategic grantmaking.” Whereas “strategic grantmaking” is driven by a set of outcomes predetermined by a funder, ecosystem grantmaking is informed by community-level strategies

and motivated by a long-term vision to build movements that can achieve long-term social change. In ecosystem grantmaking, community organizing is the core strategy to develop traction and infrastructure to lead to transformational change.

## Bringing It Home to Oakland

In early 2012, as Akonadi embarked on a new strategic-planning process, Delaney recalls her frustration at that time with the ongoing entrenched and systemic racism in Oakland: “We had been working on funding national alliances, and work here in Oakland, and patting ourselves on the back for working on structural racism while at the same time communities in Oakland were suffering,”

shares Delaney. “The amount of violence in communities of color was huge; police intervention was forceful and traumatic; the expulsion rate of students of color was astronomical. We felt a great dissonance between our supposed great work and the reality of people’s lives in our own community. We felt called to work in our own city to address the very real and overwhelming issues of racial injustice right here.”

The statistics were appalling. Homicides in Oakland were on the rise with most of the victims being Black males. From 2002-2007, 557 people were murdered in Oakland, the state’s second highest homicide rate after Compton.<sup>11</sup> And while Black youth comprised only 29.3 percent of the total Oakland school-aged youth population, they made up 78.6 percent of the total arrests for low-level offenses.<sup>12</sup> Also, East Oakland’s high school dropout rate hovers at 40 percent, and 44 percent of adults over 25 don’t have a high school diploma.<sup>13</sup>

Reflecting on this state of affairs and conscious of their small size and reach, in 2012 Akonadi embarked on a new phase of grantmaking that is much more locally focused. Described by one interviewee as “figuring out how to come



home,” Akonadi redefined its grantmaking to solely focus “time, energy and resources on making the promise of racial justice a reality for young people of color in Oakland.”<sup>14</sup> In the new theory of change, the foundation’s commitment to Oakland is reframed with a vision of structural and cultural transformation that includes changing the perception of youth of color and the policies that target them.

Two new grant portfolios launched in September 2013 reflect this intent. The Arc Toward Justice Fund was created to “achieve equity for youth of color in Oakland ... which will include deep shifts in the perception of youth of color, and the policies and practices that impact them.” The Beloved Community Fund was established to “affirm and celebrate the collective memory, shared histories, social identities and cultures of communities of color living in Oakland.”<sup>15</sup>

Akonadi Foundation is now focusing all its funding and capacity building support to achieve racial equity for youth of color specifically at the intersection of criminal justice and education. A sampling of the current grant portfolio provides examples of how Akonadi is putting its new priorities into practice, including grants that

- ▲ advocate for equitable implementation of a new Local Control Funding Formula to create more equitable funding for school districts.
- ▲ develop intergenerational dialogues to support low-income Asian youth to heal from personal trauma, and campaign for change in Oakland Unified School District.
- ▲ create opportunities at school sites to shift attitudes of adults, and create new cultural norms built on restorative justice practices.
- ▲ engage young men in media production as part of organizing against policy proposals that criminalize youth, such as youth curfews.<sup>16</sup>

Having evolved as a funder in tandem with the youth of color community organizing field, Akonadi now has a better understanding of what it may take to transform policies, practices and culture. Jackie Byers, director of the Black Organizing Project, observes that Akonadi’s “process is consistent with their vision, from the questions they ask during the application to the explicit focus on racial justice and movement building. They are willing to put real

**“The amount of violence in communities of color was huge; police intervention was forceful and traumatic; the expulsion rate of students of color was astronomical. We felt a great dissonance between our supposed great work and the reality of people’s lives in our own community.”**

investment into community organizing, which speaks to their ongoing commitment to leadership coming from those most impacted by the systems we are trying to change.”

## Lessons Learned

Akonadi Foundation’s 14-year history holds many lessons for funders looking to make the greatest impact on eliminating structural racism with limited dollars. Some of those lessons are offered here.

### Be explicit about structural racism analysis – starting with the application process.

Grantees may not always use the language of structural racism, even though they may indeed be employing strategies to address root causes. Akonadi is interested in analysis that is shaped by people most impacted by racism rather than using a funder-created framework to steer the due diligence process. For this reason, the foundation added questions to its grant application to help grantees articulate their structural racism analyses, such as “How does your organization think about/talk about structural racism and racial justice movement-building? (i.e., How do you see racism structuring resources/policies? How do the structures of racism engage/impact different race/ethnic groups differently?)”

**“One of things I love is they came out to one of our community meetings; they were not just taking in our interpretation of the community. They participated in small-group sessions with parents and students, which showed their commitment to hear from people most impacted and do it in a way that is respectful.”**

Grantees are also asked questions when their grants end, such as

- ▲ What were your organization’s racial justice movement-building goals, and what was your progress toward them?
- ▲ Did your organization make any changes to your internal structure, processes or practices that helped it to better reflect your racial justice analysis?
- ▲ Please provide at least one example of how your organization used a structural racism analysis and/or a racial justice movement-building approach in an effective or enlightening way.

Asking these questions sets in motion a process for grantees to have internal discussions if needed, to better define their structural racism analysis and how it plays out in their work. As Mari Ryonon, former Mobilize the Immigrant Vote (MIV) coordinating director, describes, “I remember Akonadi asking explicit questions for grantees to break down their racial justice theory. This was one of the most positive things, especially for a POC [people of color] racial justice organization like MIV which clearly comes with

an analysis of racism but may not have broken down all aspects of our theory. This process helped us tighten our way of talking about structural racism in our daily work.” Akonadi continues to develop its questions for grantees in the application process and site visits.

### Integrate processes for the foundation to intentionally learn from the community, specifically on how the foundation can add value.

When supporting movement-building work, it is crucial to be well-informed, especially to ensure that the foundation is meeting community needs, and listening for how it can be a catalyst or strengthen the work happening in the community.

In the Akonadi Foundation’s first strategic-planning process, the interviews and focus groups included the usual suspects: organizational leaders, academics and current grantees. In the second one, they expanded and deepened their process – conducting more than 90 conversations with individual leaders and organizations to learn the trends and potential opportunities. The process informed whether their theory of change reflected what was happening on the ground. This engagement process also included strategic-thinking sessions with grantees, community and system leaders

to provide feedback on initial drafts of their plan. Jackie Byers, director of the Black Organizing Project and current grantee, shares her experience with the process: “They spent time not only in one-on-one interviews, they pulled us together in spaces to give ideas and critique their ideas. That process, in and of itself, was significant. One of things I love is they came out to one of our community meetings; they were not just taking in our interpretation of the community. They participated in small-group sessions with parents and students, which showed their commitment to hear from people most impacted and do it in a way that is respectful.”

The principle of listening closely to the community extends into Akonadi’s developing approach to evaluation. In its new grantmaking program, Arc Toward Justice Fund, Akonadi is working with grantees to collectively identify baseline data to track, such as graduation rates, decreases in violence, and decreases in contact with police and the juvenile justice system. Delaney shares an important realization for her regarding the evaluation process. “The biggest aha for me was realizing what to evaluate, and the importance of relationship between and among organizations and leaders

as being a very important thing to evaluate,” she shares. “I’m a really linear outcomes-based thinker so thinking of something as relationships has taken awhile to take hold ... If an organization on education is partly dependent on tax policy, they have to work together and it is a long-term effort.”

While Akonadi’s grantmaking has benefited greatly from these inclusive planning processes, it should be pointed out that with a two-person board, the foundation does not have an ongoing mechanism for community engagement and feedback within its organizational structure. “We don’t have an advisory committee to the board now,” Delaney observes. “During the last strategic plan, we brought in groups of people, but it’s not ongoing.” One of the questions for the foundation is “What will make sense, based on current capacity, to consistently integrate community perspectives and voices in its strategy and decision-making on a continuing basis?”

### **Cultural work is transformational, and a critical element of racial equity work.**

As Akonadi’s structural racism analysis evolved, so has its understanding of the role of cultural work.

Akonadi’s new strategic plan notes, “This comprehensive approach will require the shifting of public and private resources from punitive strategies to new systems and ladders of opportunity, as well as resourcing the forms of cultural expression, and individual and collective healing work needed to address the acute and accumulated impacts of trauma experienced by youth of color in Oakland.”<sup>17</sup> In addition, Akonadi’s theory of change now includes as an indicator of success, “shifting the cultural norms and narrative about race.” Culture plays a role, as Cervantes says, in “where we can make a difference in how the organization progresses. The cultural work really impacts and pushes forward the policy and practice piece so there is sustainability and greater depth.”

Taj James, executive director of Movement Strategy Center and one of the consultants in the foundation’s recent strategic planning process, observes: “People will resist focusing on structural issues if they don’t have a cultural understanding of racism within and how it plays out in systems. Akonadi recognizes how culture shapes the perception of young people of color. They are asking ‘What are the strategies to shift the perceptions that influence how voters perceive youth of color? How policymakers, police officers, teachers behave toward youth of color?’” James also notes the importance of Akonadi intentionally including art, culture, and creativity for identity development, resistance and self-representation in communities of color as a specific grantmaking component.

### **For a foundation implementing racial justice grantmaking, it is important to align policies and practices with the organization’s racial equity values.**

While Akonadi’s structure of a two-member board is not considered a best practice, having a small board and staff has allowed this foundation the latitude to adopt a structural racism analysis without facing the resistance to examining the complex dynamics of racism that is more common in larger foundations. Because Akonadi has been focused on equity issues since its formation, the question of aligning policies and practices with a racial equity framework never specifically came up for the foundation. For example, the foundation always had staff of color. In 2005, Akonadi also changed its investing firm to one that is socially responsible, diverse in investment approach and aligned with the organization’s values.

Nevertheless, organizational values are sometimes easier to implement outside the walls of an institution than internally, especially when it comes to racial equity. For Akonadi, their decision-making process is evolving from hierarchical or positional power decision-making to more of a consensus decision-making model. Recently there has been growing recognition within the foundation that the decision-making process must be assessed in the context of the board and staff racial demographics – a White woman president and staff who are women of color.

Delaney offers some thoughtful reflections on these internal dynamics. “We were able to approach some of the assumptions and culture in a way we were all able to see it and understand it,” she shares. “Prior to this [most recent strategic planning] process, I’m not sure we lived our values as an institution. We had a diverse workforce, but that is not at all the same thing. It was a White professional culture in the office ... I don’t know that we were truly, until very recently, walking our talk.” Though it is slow-going, the board and staff are now more aware of each other’s differences, and this recent work has led to more transparency and thoughtfulness on how the team works together.

## **Conclusion**

The experience of Akonadi suggests that foundations can be most effective when they know how to balance the changing roles required of them in movement building – when to be a catalyst, supporter, messenger or silent partner. Akonadi continues to figure out that balance, which requires thoughtfulness and respect for grantees, as well as being well-informed by stakeholders.

As a small foundation with limited resources, the vision that the Akonadi Foundation and its grantees share can

“The experience of Akonadi suggests that foundations can be most effective when they know how to balance the changing roles required of them in movement building – when to be a catalyst, supporter, messenger or silent partner.”

only be achieved if more foundations develop a systemic, intersectional and root-cause analysis of racism in grantmaking. Beyond its own grantmaking, Akonadi Foundation has played an important leadership role with funders locally by helping establish the Bay Area Justice Funders Network in 2008. Akonadi provided the initial staffing, office space and seed money to support this network. There are now more than 125 people attending meetings, with an active programmatic schedule.

Speaking to the field of philanthropy, Cervantes points out, “We need to create deep partnerships with folks on the ground, to hear what they see as necessary to support their work. This practice of deep listening is a tool that informs our actions and is something that we as a field are underutilizing – particularly because we all want to have deep impact in the world.” From Akonadi’s perspective, funders are not just along for the ride – their actions and roles need to be thoughtful and aligned in order to support long-term change on complex issues. Says Delaney, “I think it requires the realization around what it can take for real change and realizing that one campaign alone is not going to change everything, partly because everything is structural and interwoven.”



**Maggie Potapchuk**, principal of MP Associates, focuses on building the capacity of organizations to effectively address structural racism and White privilege. She co-authored *Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege in The Foundation Review*. She co-developed the site, [www.racialequitytools.org](http://www.racialequitytools.org).

Potapchuk was previously the senior program associate at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies for the Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity. She serves on the leadership teams of Within Our Lifetime Network and Baltimore Racial Justice Action, and on the editorial board of the *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege* journal.

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- 7 In 2009, the Akonadi Foundation responds to the killing of Oscar Grant by a BART police officer in Oakland by creating the Oscar Grant Fund. The Oscar Grant Fund supports urgent local organizing and addresses an immediate need to tell stories about structural racism; educate the media; and challenge the prevailing narrative, one that was far more focused on property damage during protests rather than violence against people of color.
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Photo Credit:

The Akonadi website image is a stacked compilation of poster designs from various artists. First image: “Nicaragua” by Rene Castro. Second and third image: “Yo Vengo de Otro Lado,” and “Untitled,” by Malaquias Montoya, 1981. Fourth image: “West Oakland for the People” by Favianna Rodriguez.



# The Leadership We Need: How People of Color Are Leading the #CultureSHIFT for Racial Equity

by Malkia Amala Cyril

In May 2012, Marissa Alexander, a Black woman in Florida, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for firing a warning shot in the air in an effort to scare off her abusive boyfriend. In July 2013, George Zimmerman, who was originally identified as White but whose mother is Peruvian, was acquitted of the murder of Black teenager Trayvon Martin despite evidence that Zimmerman stalked Martin with a concealed weapon and shot him to death. Both court cases occurred in the context of a media debate on now-infamous “stand your ground” laws that was charged by racial stereotypes and resulted in verdicts many believe reflect widespread, systemic racial bias.

Social justice sectors and academia widely acknowledge the causal relationship between media misrepresentations of race and racial inequity in public policy and institutional practice. Yet few acknowledge the cause-and-effect relationship between the visible framing contests on race we read, watch or listen to, and the back-end racial inequities in media structure and policy that produce racial bias in media content. Together these forces drive racial inequity in public policy, create cumulative harms for people of color, and weaken progressive strategies for change.

**“The successes of media justice movement-building are highlighted as a targeted approach to resourcing racial equity leadership within and beyond fights for progressive policy reform.”**

This essay examines the centrality of strategies for media rights, access and representation as part of a comprehensive strategy for racial equity; and the role of philanthropy in ensuring the racial justice leadership to transform structural racism in the media. The successes of media justice movement-building are highlighted as a targeted approach to resourcing racial equity leadership within and beyond fights for progressive policy reform.

## Structural Racism in the U.S. Media

Research supports what foundation and movement leaders already know – that at the aggregate level, shifts in public opinion lead to congruent shifts in public policy.<sup>1</sup> Research on stereotyping in the United States reveals persistent beliefs among Whites of Black criminality, and that a racially charged public debate heavily reliant on negative racial

stereotypes reflects a pattern of racial bias. Media coverage of Black life in America mirrors trends that are statistically similar in coverage of Latinos,<sup>2</sup> Indigenous, Arab and Muslim communities<sup>3</sup> in the United States. Coverage of Asians in America remains minimal, lacking depth, and is heavily reliant on post-race, colorblind and “model minority” frames.<sup>4</sup> One poll found that more than 50 percent of Americans still want all or most undocumented immigrants deported,<sup>5</sup> while a 2012 Associated Press poll found that 51 percent of Americans still hold explicitly anti-Black views.<sup>6</sup>

Widespread racial bias in the media is reinforced by the framing of race in schools and universities, by think tanks, and within faith-based institutions and popular culture. While the U.S. media system is a critical component of this larger superstructure, it works in concert with other institutions to shape national culture and political power structures. Commonly called the “fourth estate” because of their influence on political behavior, media institutions produce the official stories that shape values and beliefs about race. They are therefore central to organizing for racial equity, and require dedicated strategies for change. While movements for social justice tend to focus on the

explicit and visible symptoms of racial bias in the media, misrepresentations of race made visible in racially wedged media debates are the result of implicit racial bias within the media structure.

While some blame journalists, research shows that American journalism is increasingly a platform for elite voices with 86 percent of television news directors and 91.3 percent of radio news directors being White. In the words of Dori Maynard, president of the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, “The news media and the nation are moving in two different directions. News media is getting whiter as the country is getting browner.” In an effort to bypass historic racial and economic barriers to representation, racial equity organizations and networks have turned to the internet as a platform for movement building and campaigning. Yet the United States remains

**“The news media and the nation are moving in two different directions. News media is getting whiter as the country is getting browner.”**

a nation divided between those with the power to stay connected, access information and influence change online, and those without it – threatening the promise of digital movement-building for racial justice. Today, *more than 100 million Americans* live without equal access to the internet. The vast majority of those with limited or no internet access are Black, Latino, Native American, or households with incomes less than \$50,000.

Gaining representation online for communities of color is additionally threatened by ongoing efforts to eliminate open internet protections (network neutrality) and the expansion of digital surveillance as a tool for policing. Introduced in 2010, net neutrality rules ensured that internet users could access any website, service or application of their choice without blocking or discrimination by internet service providers. Instead of establishing rules of the digital road that would prevent discrimination, regulators have proposed unenforceable rules that would punish content discrimination or blocking by ISPs after the fact. At the same time, a White House review on big data found that information on communities of color is being collected without their knowledge or consent at an unprecedented rate, supercharging the potential for greater racial and economic discrimination by big companies and law enforcement agencies already plagued by racial disparities. That’s why more than 10 U.S. states enacted privacy laws in 2013.<sup>7</sup> Without policies to keep the internet open for voices of color, and protect those voices from undue surveillance as they organize for change, the efforts of racial equity groups to use the internet to bypass structural racism in the U.S. media fall short.

At a time when Black voters have lost the protections enshrined in the 1965 Voting Rights Act, millions of immigrants face detention or deportation,<sup>8</sup> the racial wealth gap has widened,<sup>9</sup> and people of color are incarcerated at rates higher than in 1960 when racial segregation was the law of the land<sup>10</sup> – the need for racial justice movements to tackle not only explicit media misrepresentations of race, but also the implicit biases embedded in the media structure itself, is of utmost importance.

## **Snapshot: A Movement for Media Justice is Born**

Following a decade of intense media stereotypes that drove the passage of racially discriminatory policies including mandatory minimums, welfare reform and the 1996 rewrite of the Telecommunications Act, frustration with short-term, race-blind and D.C.-centric approaches to both media strategies and policies reached a tipping point. As racial

justice organizers entered the 21st century, many argued that U.S. progressive movements lacked the sufficient power and will to consistently prioritize racial equity strategies and bring them to scale. Gary Delgado, founder and former executive director of the Center for Third World Organizing and also Applied Research Center (now Race Forward), says, “It wasn’t that racial equity leadership and strategies didn’t exist; we faced inequities in funding and skepticism about the importance of a racial analysis from a largely White-led progressive movement.”

A growing movement for media justice sought to change those dynamics and inject racial equity leadership and strategies into the movement for media reform. As reported in the *Colorlines Magazine* in 2003, “Drawing inspiration from the environmental justice movement, media justice proponents are developing race-, class- and gender-conscious visions for changing media content and structure.”<sup>11</sup> In contrast to media reform efforts that sought to resist corporate media consolidation while preserving a Jeffersonian vision of democracy, the long-term goals of the media justice movement intended to repair a racially divided political and economic system through a radically transformed media. The movement, as envisioned, was broad – seeking to transform not only the framing of race and structural racism in media content, but also the media economy and structure on which these beliefs were built.

Born, as many movements for racial justice were, in the rural South, the movement for media justice in the United States got its name during a 2002 gathering at the Highlander Center in Tennessee. “We were a disparate group of media organizers, gathered on the hallowed grounds of the Highlander Center to examine what was then a growing divide between ‘mainstream’ media reform efforts and the emergence of local media activism to fight racism and poverty,” says Makani Themba, executive director of the Praxis Project. Steeped in songs and strategy sessions, Highlander Gathering attendees concluded that media and technology should serve all the people with a movement powered by the grassroots leadership of organizations based in communities of color. Radicalized by a diverse cross-section of social movements, including the DIY (do it yourself) independent media movement, the growth of a global movement for human rights, and domestic campaigns to counter the criminalization of people of color, a growing set of local organizations emerged in the early 2000s. These organizations were intent on transforming the double-bind of racial inequity and opportunity embedded in mainstream media, movements for media change, and the philanthropic strategies for both.

The movement for media justice had a hard beginning. There were no explicit funding streams for strategies focused on racial and economic equity within media reform. Philanthropic resources for media reform instead targeted White-led organizations based in the Washington D.C. beltway.<sup>12</sup> Until the Highlander Gathering in 2002, racial equity leaders working on media content, ownership and structure were disparate, disconnected, and rarely invited to shape national strategies for media reform. With strategic support from the Ford Foundation, early network formations like the Media Justice Network were established alongside early foundations like the Media Justice Fund of the Funding Exchange, and the Media Democracy Fund. The leadership of all three organizations sparked a new focus on racial equity within media reform.

Building off this work and a new era of racial justice leadership ushered in by the Applied Research Center, the Center for Third World Organizing and others, the now-defunct We Interrupt This Message launched the Youth Media Council – the first project to explicitly develop the leadership of youth of color in California to counter systemic racism in the media. The Youth Media Council quickly grew from local to national scope, gaining coverage in outlets such as Essence Magazine and the Village Voice, garnering book chapters – and ultimately bringing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to Oakland, a historic Black community, for the first time in history. Changing its name in 2008, YMC was reborn as the Center for Media Justice.

The Allied Media Projects (AMP) in Detroit and the Media Mobilizing Project (MPP) in Philadelphia also emerged as powerhouse local groups with a growing national reach. From AMP's Allied Media Conference, an annual gathering of some of the nation's most innovative leaders in media, technology and social change, to MMP's emerging CAP Comcast Campaign, a Philadelphia-based fight to counter the power of the telecommunications industry in local communities through fair franchising – these and hundreds of other community groups emerged on the scene intent on disrupting the status quo with creative approaches that brought together community organizing, media, and arts and culture through the lens of racial and economic equity.

As these equity-driven organizations began to invest in both local and national strategies for media-based social change, sharp inequities in funding presented a barrier to national engagement. In response to a growing call for racial equity leadership within the movement for media reform, a handful of thoughtful foundation partners launched new funding streams and strategies intended specifically to diversify a base of leaders, and strategies for progressive communications and media infrastructure.

## Foundations at the Frontline

One of the first to take on this challenge was the Media Democracy Fund. Founded by Helen Brunner in 2004, the Media Democracy Fund (MDF) mobilizes a global orientation with grants that protect the public's rights in a digital age. With a focus on free speech, equal opportunity, open access and diverse voices, MDF connects digital rights to larger movements for racial equity, economic justice and human rights. As a national collaborative of foundations, MDF partners with dozens of philanthropic organizations and individual donors to ensure that as the world moves online, human rights and racial equity does too. MDF's unique model of funder collaboration ensured the existence of infrastructure for grassroots collaboration, and that foundations that prioritize racial equity and human rights have a viable vehicle through which to counter structural racism in the media.

One key contributor to the Media Democracy Fund, and by far the largest investor in media rights and movement building in the United States, is the Ford Foundation. An explicitly social justice-oriented foundation, the Ford Foundation mobilizes a cross-cutting approach to cultural change – supporting communications infrastructure, art, digital movement building, and media reform strategies both domestically and internationally. As a key investor in the Civil Rights and Media Justice Table established in 2011, the Ford Foundation provided key infrastructure for collaboration amongst racial equity and public interest groups concerned with media reform. Ford is joined in this commitment by Open Society Foundations with its targeted focus on engaging racial equity sectors, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation with grantmaking that connects the leadership and breakthrough strategies of artists of color to key fights on media and cultural policy issues. Along with The California Endowment, the Compton Foundation and others, these foundations have expanded the pool of resources for media and cultural strategies led by communities of color.

As a result of these targeted investments, media reform organizations launched by almost universally White leadership and staff have seen their teams diversified; while local media organizations led by or based in communities of color have seen extraordinary growth. Organizations like the Media Literacy Project in Albuquerque, the Rural Strategies Center, Native Public Media, and the Utility Reform Network are all examples of targeted investments turning into powerful leaders with the capacity to diversify and expand the base for media reform, and to mobilize racial equity strategies within what was once a discrete and reactive social justice sector.





## The Campaign for Prison Phone Justice: A Success Story

In 2007, African-American grandmother Mrs. Martha Wright amended a 2003 petition to the Federal Communications Commission to establish benchmark rates for long-distance inmate prison-calling services on behalf of her grandson. According to a report<sup>13</sup> published by the Prison Policy Initiative,<sup>14</sup> exorbitant calling rates make the prison phone industry one of the most lucrative businesses in the United States today. The report provides a compelling description of how the prison telephone market is structured to be exploitative because it grants monopolies to producers, and because the consumers have no comparable alternative means of communication. Exorbitant prison phone rates threaten the potential for organizing within prisons, weaken strategies to counter mass incarceration and racial disparities within the criminal justice system, and fly in the face of research that clearly links inmate phone access to reduced recidivism. Contrary to popular belief, the high price of calling home for prisoners is not a discrete issue affecting only a percentage of the population. In fact, it affects the entire population of roughly 2.4 million people incarcerated in the U.S.<sup>15</sup> and the additional millions of family members forced to pay the costs. These predatory rates disproportionately harm families of color, as people of color comprise more than 60 percent of those incarcerated,<sup>16</sup> and an even greater percentage of those jailed more than 100 miles from home.

In 2003, the emerging movement for media reform didn't have an explicit vision for racial or economic equity. There were few funding streams dedicated to the cause of building progressive media infrastructure or leadership within racial justice sectors, and even fewer media reform organizations led by people of color. Without racial equity leadership, strategy or capacity, the movement for media reform was ill-equipped to confront racial inequity within media rights, access or representation.

By 2012, conditions had changed. Over almost a decade, a steady infusion of targeted resources from key foundations working in partnership with leaders in the field had expanded the base of people of color working for media and technology access and rights. These resources helped launch new alliances like the Media Action Grassroots Network in 2004 and the Civil Rights and Media Justice Table in 2011, and

strengthened a host of local organizations with an explicit commitment to media reform for racial equity, including criminal justice organizations Working Narratives and Prison Legal News. After 10 years of inaction by the FCC and the movement for media reform, these organizations partnered to launch the Campaign for Prison Phone Justice.

The campaign successfully leveraged the progressive media infrastructure of Spitfire Strategies and Anzalone Consulting; the artist leadership of film production company Participant Media and award-winning Black filmmaker Ava DuVernay; the multilevel partnership of organizations like the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Free Press, Public Knowledge and others; and a pipeline of grassroots social justice leadership coordinated by MAG-Net. Together – along with Prison Policy Initiative, Sum of Us, CREDO, ColorofChange, the United Church of Christ and more – the issue gained bipartisan congressional support and widespread media coverage, ultimately winning the historic passage of an FCC ruling to cap the cost of interstate phone calls from prison in 2012.

The potential to achieve racial equity within the arena of media rights and representation is no different than the potential to achieve it within movements for immigrant rights, worker rights, environmental justice and the larger fight for human rights in the U.S. Through the Campaign for Prison Phone Justice, reform and civil rights organizations partnered with allied foundations to invest in grassroots leadership of color. Together, they framed, mobilized and won. This could not have happened without a cadre of frontline leaders of color with the capacity and resources to bring racial equity goals to bear and leverage partnerships across diverse arenas of political practice within a traditionally White-led reform sector.

This victory was not inevitable. As is true in sectors of a largely White-led progressive movement, strategies for racial equity required strategic funding. With foundation leadership, a racial equity fight that could not have gained traction in 2003 won big in 2012, and strengthened both the movements for media reform and for racial equity in the process.

An additional key outcome of strategic investment was the decision by the Media Democracy Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, Open Society Foundations, the Frances Fund and others to focus an intentional strategy on building infrastructure for cross-sector and multiregional collaboration for media representation and rights. The Media Democracy Coalition, the Civil Rights and Media Justice Table, and the Media Action Grassroots Network emerged from this strategy. Adopted by the Center for Media Justice in 2008, MAG-Net now represents the largest multi-issue action network for media justice in the country with over 175 affiliate members nationwide. In partnership with the Civil Rights and Media Justice Table, hundreds of racial equity groups are now positioned to insert a powerful racial equity voice in policy and media debates on mass surveillance and digital privacy. Building off initial investments in grassroots leadership and collaboration, these foundations helped grow intermediary infrastructure and supported communications agencies, artists, filmmakers, legal intermediaries, public interest advocacy groups, research and academic strategies, technologists and the strategies of the global South.

Together, these targeted investments made possible the successful representation of low-income families in the digital television transition, helped block the merger of AT&T and T-Mobile, supported the passage of the first rules for net neutrality in the United States, helped reform interstate prison phone rates, and supported the advancement of civil rights principles for digital privacy in the era of big data. Each of these supported campaigns engaged explicit strategies for racial equity previously unseen in the movement for media reform. While all of these victories for media infrastructure and rights expanded the media rights, access and representation of communities of color, the greatest victory of targeted philanthropic investment was the comprehensive and cross-cutting movement that was built. Together with field leaders, frontline foundation partners boldly targeted resources to fill gaps in sector leadership – strategy and collaboration that brought racial equity from the margins of media reform to its core.

## **Funding the #CultureSHIFT for Racial Equity: Opportunities for Change**

Research shows that at the aggregate level, shifts in public opinion lead to congruent shifts in public policy.<sup>17</sup> A 2008 study *On Message* echoed the need for this approach.<sup>18</sup> This study, a partnership between the Association of Black Foundation Executives and Hispanics in Philanthropy, found that the three most common barriers to campaign victory for social change groups in Black and Latino communities were the lack of dedicated resources for strategic communications by community organizing groups, corporate media ownership, and a history of media bias. This assessment was further underscored in a 2012

report *Echoing Justice* that proposed recommendations to funders on how to seed the success of a broad range of communications, media, arts and technology activities for racial and economic justice.<sup>19</sup>

With a shared understanding of the full spectrum of the ways public opinion is generated, grantmaking for cultural change – especially for racial justice outcomes – has the potential to make unprecedented change. Three key approaches could make all the difference.

### **Prioritize progressive media infrastructure and strategy as a critical arena for increased funding as part of philanthropic investments in racial equity.**

According to the 2011 report by Media Impact Funders (formerly Grantmakers in Film and Electronic Media), *Why Fund Media*, the top four barriers to funding media strategies are sticker shock; concerns about powerful media gatekeepers and the influence on distribution; risks associated with funding individual practitioners, producers and consultants; and a lack of clarity about the value of diverse media strategies in amplifying grantee impacts.<sup>20</sup>

Data in the report *Foundation Support For Media in the United States* that tracked investments from 2009-2011 revealed that foundations are increasingly supporting media-related work across multiple areas including journalism, news and information, media access and policy, media applications and tools, media platforms, telecommunications infrastructure, and public broadcasting.<sup>21</sup> This trend should be built upon and leveraged to support specific strategies for racial equity.

### **Invest in relationships, networks, and leadership of color within and distinct from reform sectors.**

According to the report *Pathways to Progress*, foundations can contribute to increasing racial equity by funding activities that strengthen relationships, networks and leadership of color.<sup>22</sup> Examples of critical investments that strengthen relationships within and across sectors include funding strategic convenings like Opportunity Agenda's annual Creative Change gathering,<sup>23</sup> targeted sector support from Rockwood Leadership, and supporting the Allied Media Conference.

### **Make targeted investments that support explicit campaigns and strategies for racial equity across diverse movements and sectors.**

The conservative right has followed a 40-year strategy of building and maintaining its own media infrastructure to leverage a war of ideas through cultural battles that engage everything from Hollywood to think tanks to schools

and news media. These culture wars rely on widely and deeply felt racial stereotypes to discredit the effectiveness of government, while shoring up support for corporate control of civil infrastructure. Conversely, U.S. progressive movements have only recently begun to lead powerful and connected strategies for controlling public debate. From frontline movements for immigrant rights and low-wage worker protections, to movements reforming a racially discriminatory criminal justice and educational system – powerful strategies for cultural change are emerging. These emergent strategies are led by the canaries in the coal mine – those who are not only the first to experience the harms of structural racism and its manifestations in American culture, but also the first to see freedom's light and strategies to guide the way out of the darkness.

While foundations should never guide the way, they can provide a powerful wind that can strengthen the wings of these canaries and give them the visibility, resources and partners to lead us all home.



**Malkia Amala Cyril** is the founder and executive director of the Center for Media Justice, launched in 2008 to strengthen the media activism and communications capacity of grassroots social justice movements. Cyril's award-winning work has empowered social justice leaders and organizations with the skills and strategies they need to navigate the media environment of the 21st century. Appearances include "News for All the People: the Epic Story of Race and the American Media," "The New York Times," "Politico," "The Huffington Post," "Media Matters," "Democracy Now," "Essence Magazine," the "Village Voice," "The Advocate," and documentaries including "Outfoxed," "Broadcast Blues," and "MissRepresentation."

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# Funding at the Intersection of Race and Gender

by Kalpana Krishnamurthy

Intersectionality is a term that comes up a lot in social justice work. It comes up when community groups are trying to describe how policies affect multiple people's identities. It comes up when organizers are trying to push back on messaging that tries to simplify a policy fight to one aspect. It comes up when advocates are describing their political analysis. And it comes up in questions: What exactly is intersectionality? And why is it important for funders to understand it?

For feminists and LGBTQ people of color, having a theoretical framework like intersectionality to analyze how oppression is simultaneous and compounding has been key. This essay discusses the evolution of social change approaches that simultaneously address gender and race, or sexuality and race, and incorporates analysis of funding trends with insights from people of color who work on these issues in philanthropy. It also provides examples of how intersectional efforts can lead to stronger base-building and to policy victories over time, and recommendations to funders.

## Intersectionality: An Introduction

Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, of the UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School, was one of the first academics to develop a theoretical framework for intersectionality. Her work was grounded in the lived experiences of women of color. In her article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*, Crenshaw looked at court cases around discrimination, specifically focusing on how these laws weren't protecting women of color. Analyzing three cases litigating the Civil Rights Act of 1965, she critiqued the courts' contention that discrimination was not happening because Black men and White women were being hired. In these cases, Crenshaw argued that the court negated the experience of Black women because of its inability to see that racial and sex discrimination could occur simultaneously. Concurrently, outside of academia, writers like Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherie Moraga – all lesbians of color – were building a canon of critical feminist theory that spoke about their lived experiences with intersectional identities.

**Intersectionality:** An analytic tool that helps us to see how various identities interact with different systems of oppression. This approach examines the intersections of multiple identities and the blurring of the boundaries between essentialist categories.<sup>1</sup>

An example of intersectionality at work is the Uniting Communities program developed by Western States Center to help organizations of color engage in intersectional conversations about LGBTQ equality within communities of color. We started the program because the intersections of oppression and identity play out so vividly and clearly in the lives of queer and transgender people of color. For example, it's a reality that children living in either undocumented households or LGBTQ households are more likely to live in poverty than children living in households headed by opposite-sex, U.S. citizen parents.<sup>2</sup> LGBTQ people of color are more likely to be low-income than their White counterparts, and transgender women of color face extraordinary amounts of violence. When our policy organizing and advocacy don't take these realities into account, we end up with solutions that don't meet the full needs of the community, that reinforce existing disparities and render marginalized populations invisible all over again. It's clear that a nuanced understanding of intersectionality – in this case, how multiple forms of discrimination play out in the lives of people of color – is necessary for effective social change work in the field and among funder allies.

## A closer look at gender in philanthropy

Over the past 24 years, the share of grant dollars targeted to women and girls has ranged from 5 percent in 1990 to a high of 7.4 percent in 2003.<sup>3</sup> The National Center for Responsive Philanthropy's analysis of 2011 grantmaking shows that only 5.8 percent of grant dollars were dedicated to programs that serve women and girls, and 22 percent of that came from a single funder, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.<sup>4</sup> Funding on issues of gender remains largely tied to issues of reproduction<sup>5</sup> – and while a critical area of women's lives – this approach cannot fully address the uneven outcomes we see for women and girls (let alone transgender individuals or men) in multiple areas of their lives.

The low funding levels for programs serving women and girls became a focus for some funders at the start of the new millennium. Barbara Phillips, a program officer at the Ford Foundation from 1999 to 2005, shares, "The Ford Foundation was one of the only large private foundations that even had a women's rights program officer. But looking internally at Ford, it was painfully obvious that even our leadership in the field had focused almost entirely on getting money to White women-led organizations, to the severe neglect of institutions led by women of color. When I started at Ford, the women's

portfolio had made no grants to organizations led by Asian or Pacific Islander women, Latinas, or Native American women.” Phillips set out to change this, and made some of Ford’s first grants over \$100,000 to women of color-led organizations like National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum. These planning grants led to significant investment from the Ford Foundation over the next few years, transforming the women’s portfolio at the foundation.

Many funders articulate that a gender lens or analysis can help examine whether and how programs, policies and even organizational culture affects men, women and transgender individuals and helps surface the different experiences of these individuals and groups. And a gender lens can help organizations and grantmakers uncover how solutions and strategies need to be shifted to ensure equitable outcomes across the gender spectrum. But, to be clear, having a gender lens isn’t inherently intersectional. While a gender lens is invaluable – and deeply underutilized in philanthropy – intersectionality allows us to combine gender and other key factors like race, immigration status or sexual orientation. With this critical data, we can better understand how these multiple identities impact outcomes and create solutions that address structural barriers.

Addressing the intersection of gender and race in philanthropy has been slow-going – in part because most philanthropic institutions don’t bring a gender lens to their work. Lani Shaw, executive director of the General Service Foundation, shares, “The way philanthropy is structured to fund issues makes it difficult to incorporate gender across issues. For example, even within the context of General Service Foundation – we had a reproductive rights program for years. Obviously, a gender lens has been central in this portfolio, and we intentionally began to include a racial justice lens about 15 years ago. The inclusion of a race and gender lens led us to focus our portfolio on reproductive justice groups led by women of color. At the same time, we have an Economic Justice program and a Civic Engagement program where we’ve slowly brought a race analysis, but it wasn’t necessarily where they started and now we’re trying to integrate a gender perspective into them.”

Similar to raising issues of race, being explicit about gender can actually make it harder for program officers to move money. Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation program officer Wilma Montañez says, “As funders we try to fit things into boxes to sell it to our boards, which is a good thing because we want to get the money out there; but in the long haul it’s hard to come up with useful, powerful analyses that will have a deeper impact. And I think that’s what some of us are struggling with around gender – how do we really include it?” Shaw further reflects, “Each shift has taken time, partnering with groups on the ground, and encouraging the board to support these new directions.”

## Reproductive Justice: A Growing Movement and Its Impact on Philanthropy

Reproductive justice work began emerging in the mid-1990s as women of color became interested in addressing how poverty and racism limited the choices and opportunities of families of color. “The concept of reproductive justice began to take shape when members of a women of color delegation returned from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt,” shares Loretta Ross, one of the founding members of SisterSong. “Shortly after, a group of African-American women caucused at a conference in Chicago, eventually forming Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice. They decided to devise a strategy to challenge the proposed health care reform campaign by the Clinton Administration that did not include guaranteeing access to abortion. Not wanting to use the language of ‘choice’ because they represented communities with few real choices, they integrated the concepts of reproductive rights, social justice and human rights to launch the term ‘reproductive justice.’”

Groups like the National Black Women’s Health Project (founded in 1984), National Latina Health Organization, African American Women Evolving (Chicago), Native American Women’s Health Education Resource Center (Yankton Sioux Reservation, South Dakota), Asians and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health (Oakland), and more emerged throughout the 1990s – connected by a common analysis about how reproductive oppression affected their communities, and an explicit focus on gender and race. Many of these groups collaborated to form SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective in 1997. Beyond SisterSong, groups continued to emerge through the early 2000s, as local leaders and activists gravitated toward reproductive justice.

In 2005, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, now known as Forward Together, put forth *A New Vision for Advancing Our Movement for Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights, and Reproductive Justice*. By laying out the differences between reproductive health, rights and justice – ACRJ’s paper showed the complimentary ways these strategies work together, but also the difference in emphasis between these approaches to change. While the reproductive health framework addresses inequalities in health services by advocating for the provision of services to historically underserved communities, the reproductive rights framework emphasizes the protection of an individual woman’s legal right to reproductive health services – focusing on increasing access to contraception and keeping abortion legal. In contrast to both of these approaches, the reproductive justice framework utilizes an intersectional analysis of women’s experiences, and focuses on changing the structural inequalities that affect women’s reproductive health and their ability to control their reproductive lives.

The growing reproductive justice movement led to some important shifts in gender-focused philanthropy. The Women of Color Working Group (WOCWG) – a subgroup of women of color and White ally funders within the Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health and Rights – began meeting in the early 2000s to discuss how to strengthen the role and leadership of women of color-led reproductive justice groups within the reproductive health and rights movement. Desiree Flores, a program officer at the Arcus Foundation, was involved in WOCWG during its startup phase while at the Ms. Foundation for Women. “It really is tremendous to look at the past 10-15 years of the Working Group. Let’s be clear, we had many, many conference calls and strategizing to get even one woman of color reproductive justice leader on a panel at the annual conference,” she recalls. “Then we worked up to a plenary focused on the leadership of women of color. And so on, until we built from a group of 10 funders to nearly half of the membership of the Funders Network.”

WOCWG also began organizing reproductive rights funders through a collaborative fund called the Catalyst Fund. The Catalyst Fund, housed at the Groundswell Fund, leveraged national foundation money and created a matching element for local women’s funds and community foundations that were committed to women of color and reproductive justice. By clearly specifying that grantees needed to have women of color leadership *and* utilize reproductive justice analysis

**“For decades, funding priorities have been calibrated to the issue priorities of White, middle-class women – abortion and contraception – which while critically important to women of all races, have become the focus to the exclusion of other equally critical reproductive priorities for women of color.”**

and strategies, Catalyst became one of the largest funders of reproductive justice in the field. Between 2008 and 2013, the fund engaged 27 national foundations, 12 local foundations and 4,500 individual donors (half of whom are donors of color) to move \$12 million in new money to more than 80 women of color-led reproductive justice organizations across the U.S.

While seeking to influence reproductive health and rights funders, WOCWG also began to think about how to influence other philanthropic institutions where the intersection of reproductive justice seemed obvious: environmental justice funders or health funders. Montañez shares that talking to environmental grantees about gender has been revealing. “When I’ve asked grantees about the connection between gender and environmental justice – there’s pushback, that somehow to bring in gender would minimize the issues.” Yet the reproductive health impacts of environmental justice struggles are irrefutable. Living in neighborhoods with high traffic density, which are much more prevalent in urban

environments, can lead to increased exposure to toxics that have an adverse impact on reproductive health. Pollution sources in urban environments include industrial facilities, diesel bus depots and large roadways. In Los Angeles, a study found that air pollution from heavy traffic roadways led to low birth weight and preterm births.<sup>6</sup> And there are literally hundreds of other examples connecting reproductive health and environmental health.

As with the rest of the field of philanthropy, reproductive justice funders have not been immune to the trend of focusing on policy outcomes. Because of pressure from boards, as well as declining grant dollars due to the economic downturn, the heightened emphasis on policy outcomes has meant that even reproductive justice funders are increasingly focused on a more limited range of issues like abortion and access to contraception. Work at the intersections – for example, policy campaigns at the county, state and federal level to end the practice of shackling women who are giving birth in prison – are seen as being too marginal and not affecting enough people.

Some see funding choices as fundamentally about racial justice. “If the desire for policy outcomes was the sole driver of funding priorities, then reproductive rights funders would be supporting the policy components of multiple reproductive issues. Instead, a whole swath of issues and

related policies are largely ignored, and the reasons are highly racialized,” says Vanessa Daniel of the Groundswell Fund. “For decades, funding priorities have been calibrated to the issue priorities of White, middle-class women – abortion and contraception – which while critically important to women of all races, have become the focus to the exclusion of other equally critical reproductive priorities for women of color.” For example, even though Black women have had maternal mortality rates four times that of White women for decades, there have been no major initiatives to fund research, education, policy change or service delivery to tackle the problem. While close to 50 percent of all funding in the field of women and girls is directed to health-related work, there have been no major initiatives to address the racial disparities in maternal mortality in the U.S. Funders concerned about reproductive health have largely ignored this issue – in fact, 2012 was the first time the Funders Network ever had a workshop session on this topic.

## Funding LGBTQ rights

Another intersectional lens is gender and sexuality, which while inextricably linked, are not well-connected in philanthropy. Historically, there have been very few funders that fund both women's issues and LGBTQ rights. And LGBTQ people of color – whose health outcomes, economic opportunities and civil rights are affected by both their race and their sexual orientation or gender identity – often face significant structural and cultural barriers.

In the past decade, foundation funding for LGBTQ issues has risen at a staggering rate, recently reaching a new high of nearly \$125 million. Between 2003 and 2011, foundation funding of LGBTQ issues grew from \$32 million to \$123 million annually – eight times the rate of overall foundation growth.<sup>7</sup> “Among the primary drivers of this exponential growth in LGBTQ funding were gay and lesbian donors themselves. Specifically, a large portion of LGBTQ grantmaking has come from private foundations established by gay men or lesbians, or from public foundations that raise their funds primarily from LGBTQ donors,” says Ben Francisco Maulbeck, president of Funders for LGBTQ issues. “This history of philanthropy is incredibly unusual – that such a large portion of philanthropy for an underserved minority community comes from within the community itself. Of the top 10 funders of LGBTQ issues, half are LGBTQ foundations. By comparison, none of the top 10 funders of Latino communities are Latino community funds or private foundations established by Hispanics.” This history has also colored the funding of LGBTQ philanthropy – or rather, might explain the “lack of color” in LGBTQ philanthropy.

Just as the Funders Network affinity group played a key role in the funding of reproductive justice, Funders for LGBTQ Issues has also taken leadership within philanthropy to address the intersections of LGBTQ rights and racial justice. In 2007, Funders for LGBTQ Issues launched its Racial Equity Campaign, a multiyear initiative to increase grantmaking to strengthen LGBTQ people of color organizations and communities. The Racial Equity campaign raised and granted \$1.4 million to eight public and community foundations around the country, produced tools and media on LGBTQ grantmaking and racial equity, and hosted a national retreat on racial equity for grantmakers working on LGBTQ issues.

This work took on new urgency in 2008 after the loss of the campaign against Proposition 8 in California, a ballot measure seeking to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. Initial analysis blamed voters of color for passing Prop 8; and while deeper analysis would reveal this wasn't true, the sense that communities of color were to blame for Prop 8 only reinforced faulty narratives that communities of color are more homophobic than White communities.

Racial justice work in the LGBTQ community encompasses three critical approaches: supporting queer and transgender

groups of color, helping White LGBTQ groups include a racial justice lens in their work, and ensuring that (primarily straight) organizations of color have an LGBTQ lens. As with other progressive movements that have attempted to address racial justice, many White LGBTQ groups have received funding to “diversify.” *Far fewer resources have been given to pursue the other two strategies – which build the capacity of organizations of color.* While domestic grants to non-LGBTQ organizations in 2012 account for nearly one-third of the total funding, the groups in this category include Center for American Progress and Planned Parenthood – very few are organizations focused on communities of color. That's why it's exciting to see grants by LGBTQ funders go to organizations like the National Council of La Raza to strengthen their work on behalf of LGBTQ immigrant communities.<sup>8</sup>

In reality, talking about race and sexuality is complicated. The Queer Justice Fund at Asian American Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) has supported all three strategies outlined above – while also advocating within philanthropy to increase resources. Alice Y. Hom, director of the Queer Justice Fund, shares that “it may seem like we're beyond this, but you would not believe how much education I have to do about who the Asian Pacific Islander community is with funders. It's hard to get into the nuance of API LGBTQ communities when I'm so busy addressing the model minority myth or the ‘you're too small demographically’ myth.”

Interestingly, the Queer Justice Fund emerged from AAPIP's National Gender & Equity Campaign. NGEN started in 2008 with a three-year capacity building and leadership development program to do large-scale work with API community-based organizations in Minnesota and California. “We weren't just trying to increase women's programming in API groups, or just add more women and girls to leadership of API organizations – but we hoped to support structural transformation in API groups around gender,” says Hom. As groups started conversations that moved beyond a gender-binary male/female conversation, the door was also opened to conversations about sexuality and sexual orientation. The Queer Justice Fund emerged organically from those conversations, and has regranted \$327,500 since 2009. In fact, since QJF launched, funding for API LGBTQ groups from foundations almost tripled from \$648,939 in 2009, to a high of \$1,830,414 in 2011.<sup>9</sup>

## Emerging Opportunities

The current single-issue paradigm in philanthropy makes it difficult to fund the work of alliances and coalitions advancing intersectional gender, sexuality and racial justice work. Despite this, there are vibrant examples of effective intersectional efforts. National networks like Caring Across Generations, Right to the City, and Strong Families are influencing policies by using new cross-sector models and engaging new partners. For example,

- ▲ Caring Across Generations’ intentional engagement of domestic workers and the people who hire them breaks a traditionally adversarial relationship in order to find common ground and advance policy solutions that benefit everyone.
- ▲ Right to the City is changing prevailing notions of urban development by building a municipal front where tenants, homeowners, youth, women, workers, citizens and immigrants can meaningfully participate in a democratic process, shape the development plan for their city, live in a healthy environment, and have access to quality jobs and housing.
- ▲ Strong Families, a network of more than 120 groups across the country, is designed to leverage and build on the work that organizations and sector leaders are currently doing in support of low-income families to collectively change how we think, feel, act and make policy about families.

The result of the Western States Center’s Uniting Communities program described in the beginning of this article was real honest engagement by groups of color on the issues of LGBTQ people of color. Whether it was the Urban

color face. If we “problematize” certain behaviors, rather than seeing the underlying structural causes that lead to these limited “choices,” our solutions will be very limited.

A gender lens allows us to bring into focus how gender impacts everyone – men, women and transgender individuals. Because a gender lens is not sufficient by itself, grantmakers should continue to utilize lenses around racial justice, class, sexual orientation or immigration status to uncover the multiple structural barriers facing these communities.

**Invest in models where the interaction between constituencies and policies is transforming the actual solutions being proposed.**

Coalitions or organizations with a 10-point multi-issue platform are plentiful. Statements of principle that articulate an intersectional analysis are important – but demonstrable action is where the rubber meets the road. To help advance effective race, gender and LGBTQ justice-organizing on the ground, funders can look for work between organizations

**“Statements of principle that articulate an intersectional analysis are important – but demonstrable action is where the rubber meets the road. To help advance effective race, gender and LGBTQ justice-organizing on the ground, funders can look for work between organizations that has evolved and built momentum, or groups that have a policy agenda that speaks to the issues of multiple constituencies.”**

League and PFLAG-Portland Black Chapter partnering on original research and identifying policy change, or CAUSA beginning to host an LGBTQ support group for immigrant Latinos, Uniting Communities created the space for groups of color to meaningfully engage on the issues affecting LGBTQ people of color in their own communities. Fast forward three years to the ballot measure fight in Washington state on same-sex marriage, and the Center was able to use the community assets built with this long-term approach to create short-term results in communities of color that increased support for marriage. After the 2012 win on marriage, Western States Center has continued to engage Washington groups of color in the Uniting Communities program – continuing the critical conversations opened by the ballot measure.

**Recommendations for funders**

**Avoid behavior modification strategies. Instead, address structural barriers using an intersectional analysis.**

An individual choices frame – in which we try to modify the behaviors of young women around teen pregnancy or young men around gang involvement, for example – is insufficient to address the real structural barriers that young people of

that has evolved and built momentum, or groups that have a policy agenda that speaks to the issues of multiple constituencies.

**Support electoral engagement by and for communities of color in ways that build durable alliances across issues and constituencies.**

By 2042, the United States will be a majority people of color nation – and many states, including California, New York, New Mexico and Texas, already are. As demographics shift, we need to work to ensure that communities of color can flex their electoral muscle, especially given the ways many of these emerging populations have been historically marginalized in an electoral context. It’s clear that the Rising American Electorate (RAE) will be critical to winning elections. In fact, RAE (which includes Latinos, African Americans, young people under 30, and unmarried women) can be an increasing powerhouse on progressive issues ranging from marriage for same-sex couples to protecting the environment. Collectively, these voters made up nearly half (48 percent) of the 2012 electorate according to national exit poll estimates, up four points from 2008.<sup>10</sup>



Too often, RAE voters are seen as numbers that need to be turned out by political machinery. We already know that RAE constituencies will be most readily mobilized by trusted leaders and messengers from their own communities. However the organizations that work on the ground in these communities are not receiving the critical investments that will allow them to build year-round civic engagement strategies that move their own agendas.

### Support multiyear grants to build the long-term capacity needed for effective racial and social justice movements.

Flexible long-term funding means groups can respond to crises and opportunities, build capacity and focus on leadership development, maintain staff continuity and organizational leadership, and have the organizational capacity to overcome unforeseeable challenges and improve planning.<sup>11</sup> For women of color-led groups, or queer and transgender people-of-color groups, multiyear funding is a critical element to success. Because these groups have been chronically underresourced and often struggle with a boom-or-bust cycle of funding, their capacity to build over the long run, invest in leadership development, build civic engagement capacity, or simply hire and retain staff, have been compromised.

Since 2004, only one-tenth of foundations report any multiyear grantmaking, according to NCRP. In 2011, fully 89 percent of 1,121 sampled funders reported no multiyear grants.<sup>12</sup> Multiyear funding is critical to group's sustainability, impact and development – and creates the space for groups to deepen existing programs or explore new opportunities that emerge organically within their work.

## Conclusion

Integrating an intersectional frame in grantmaking requires an understanding of how multiple structural barriers interact and compound one another. Using a single-issue lens around race, gender, class, or other kinds of identities that result in systemic, unequal outcomes in our society will result in partial solutions, at best. At worst, as Dr. Crenshaw reminds us, “When we don’t pay attention to the margins, when we don’t acknowledge the intersection, where the places of power overlap, we not only fail to see the women who fall between our movements, sometimes we pit our movements against each other.”<sup>13</sup>

The alternative, including a gender lens in racial justice policy-change efforts, is clearly effective. From case studies created by the Groundswell Fund, to the Western States Center’s work in the Pacific Northwest, to wins at the ballot box on both marriage for same-sex couples and immigration fights, we know that bridging gender, race and other identities in our organizing work not only makes for smarter policy solutions – it also helps us win.



**Kalpana Krishnamurthy** is the policy director at Forward Together, a national multiracial organization that works with community leaders and organizations to transform culture and policy to catalyze social change. She helps staff Forward Together’s Strong Families program, a multisector initiative to change how we think, feel, act and make policies around families. Prior to Forward Together, Krishnamurthy was the RACE and Gender Justice Program director at Western States Center for eight years. She has served on the advisory board of the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity since 2005, and on the Groundswell Fund board of advisors from 2010-2012.

## Endnotes

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# Acknowledgements

## Interviewees:

### Akonadi Foundation

Kelly Brown, D5 Coalition  
Jackie Byers, Black Organizing Project  
Melanie Cervantes, Akonadi Foundation  
Vivian Chang, Green for All (formerly)  
Quinn Delaney, Akonadi Foundation  
Nikki Fortunato Bas, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy  
Connie Cagampang Heller, Linked Fate for Justice  
Taj James, Movement Strategy Center  
Roger Kim, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (formerly)  
Gerald Lenoir, Black Alliance for Just Immigration  
\*Julie Quiroz, Movement Strategy Center  
Beth Rosales, The Lia Fund  
Mari Ryono, Mobilize the Immigrant Voice (formerly)  
Shiree Teng, Roadmap Consulting

### The California Endowment

Dan Boggan, The California Endowment (former board chair)  
Jackie Byers, Black Organizing Project  
Rene Castro, Building Healthy Communities – Long Beach  
Charles Fields, The California Endowment  
Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Community Coalition  
Dr. Anthony Iton, The California Endowment  
Mona Jhawar, The California Endowment  
Jim Keddy, The California Endowment (former board member)  
Tia Martinez, independent consultant  
Beatriz Solis, The California Endowment  
Junious Williams, Urban Strategies Council  
Sandra Witt, The California Endowment  
Dianne Yamashiro-Omi, The California Endowment (formerly)

### Woods Fund Chicago

Jenny Arwade, Albany Park Neighborhood Council  
Kara Bender, Jane Addams Senior Caucus  
Lori Clark, Jane Addams Senior Caucus  
Deborah Harrington, Woods Fund Chicago  
Grace Hou, Woods Fund Chicago  
Katelyn Johnson, Action Now Institute  
Alie Kabba, United African Organization  
Josina Morita, Woods Fund Chicago (board member)  
Eric Rodriguez, Latino Union  
Patrick Sheahan, Woods Fund Chicago  
Jay Travis, Woods Fund Chicago (formerly)

### Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

Dom Canavaro, North Carolina Wildlife Federation  
Ilana Dubester, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (trustee)  
Anita Earls, Southern Coalition for Social Justice  
Jenn Frye, Democracy North Carolina  
Tim Gestwicki, North Carolina Wildlife Federation  
James Gore, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation  
Gita Gulati-Partee, OpenSource Leadership Strategies  
Althea Gonzalez, Hispanics in Philanthropy

Tom Lambeth, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation  
Mary Mountcastle, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (trustee)  
David Neal, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (trustee president)  
Tom Ross, University of North Carolina (former Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation staff)  
Mikki Sager, The Conservation Fund  
Virgil Smith, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation (trustee)  
Hawley Traux, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation  
Joy Vermillion Heinsohn, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

### Walking Forward: Racial Justice Funding Lessons from the Field

*(The following people were interviewed, participated in a focus group, and/or were presenters at PRE webinar.)*

Xochi Bervera, Racial Justice Action Center  
Judith Browne Dianis, Advancement Project  
Malkia Cyril, Center for Media Justice  
Taj James, Movement Strategy Center  
\*Kalpana Krishnamurthy, Forward Together  
Ruben Lizardo, PolicyLink  
Monami Maulik, Desis Rising Up & Moving  
Scot Nakagawa, ChangeLab  
\*Gihan Perera, Florida New Majority  
\*Eva Paterson, Equal Justice Society  
Maria Poblet, Causa Justa/Just Cause  
Catherine Tactaquin, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
\*Makani Themba, The Praxis Project  
\*Arturo Vargas, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund

### Reflections from the Inside: Philanthropic Leaders on Racial Justice and Grantmaking

Susan Batten, Association of Black Foundation Executives  
Emmett Carson, Silicon Valley Community Foundation  
Lauren Casteel, Denver Foundation  
Gail Christopher, W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
Ray Colmenar, The California Endowment  
Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink  
Maya Harris, Center for American Progress, formerly Ford Foundation  
Gara LaMarche, Democracy Alliance  
Sherry Magill, Jessie Ball Dupont Foundation  
Adrienne Mansaneres, Denver Foundation  
Cynthia Renfro, Civis Consulting, LLC  
Kimberly Roberson, C.S. Mott Foundation  
Peggy Saika, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy  
Sherry Salway Black, National Congress of American Indians  
Alvin Starks, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture  
Luz Vega Marquis, Marguerite Casey Foundation  
Lori Villarosa, Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity  
Gladys Washington, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation  
Garland Yates, Neighborhood Funders Group (formerly)  
Sylvia Yee, Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund  
Kolu Zigby, Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

### Article reviewers:

Lori Bezahler, Hazen Foundation  
Sheri Brady, Forum for Community Solutions, The Aspen Institute  
Angela Brown, Hyams Foundation  
Vanessa Daniel, Groundswell Fund  
Ellen Gurzinsky, Windowbox Consulting  
\*Richard Healey, Grassroots Policy Project  
Yolanda Hippensteele, Media Democracy Fund  
Terry Keleher, Race Forward  
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Stefan Lanfer, Barr Foundation  
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Yanique Redwood, Consumer Health Foundation  
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Jocelyn Sargent, W. K. Kellogg Foundation  
\*Rinku Sen, Race Forward/ColorLines  
Carmen Siberon, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund  
Jill Williams, independent consultant  
Luna Yasui, Ford Foundation  
Garland Yates, Neighborhood Funders Group

### Timeline reviewers:

Wendall Chin, Center for Third World Organizing  
Jason Ferreira, San Francisco State University  
Ellen Gurzinsky, Windowbox Consulting  
David Harris, Iowa West Foundation  
\*Richard Healey, Grassroots Policy Project  
Dan Petergosky, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy  
Alvin Starks, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture  
Ron White, Utopia Consulting

### Focus group with activists at the Movement Strategy Center, March 5, 2013:

Malkia Cyril, Center for Media Justice  
Juliet Ellis, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
Judy Hatcher, Pesticide Action Network  
Taj James, Movement Strategy Center  
\*Kalpana Krishnamurthy, Forward Together  
Ruben Lizardo, PolicyLink  
María Poblet, Causa Justa/Just Cause  
\*Eva Paterson, Equal Justice Society  
\*Julie Quiroz, Movement Strategy Center

### Focus group with funders at the Movement Strategy Center, March 5, 2013:

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Hedy Nai-Lin Chang, Attendance Works (formerly the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund)  
Raymond Colmenar, The California Endowment  
Quinn Delaney, Akonadi Foundation  
\*Richard Healey, Grassroots Policy Project  
James Head, The San Francisco Foundation  
Gara LaMarche, Wagner School of Public Service, New York University  
\*Martha McCoy, The Paul J. Aicher Foundation / Everyday Democracy  
Dianne Yamashiro-Omi, independent consultant (formerly The California Endowment)

### Funding Racial Justice in this Moment and the Long Haul: What Do Foundations Need to Hear? webinar, September 12, 2013:

Speakers  
\*Makani Themba, The Praxis Project  
Scot Nakagawa, ChangeLab  
Judith Browne Dianis, The Advancement Project

*\* Indicates current or former PRE Advisory Board*

## Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity

### Former PRE Advisory Board Members

*We would like to acknowledge our appreciation for the wisdom and guidance we have received from prior advisory board members who have generously committed time and leadership since our launch in 2003:*

#### Barbara Arnwine

*Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law*

#### Lucy Bernholz

*Blueprint Research and Design Inc.*

#### Jacqueline Berrien

*NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund*

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*Southeast Council on Foundations*

#### Rick Cohen

*National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy*

#### Terri Lee Freeman

*The Community Foundation for the National Capitol Region*

#### Kumi Naidoo

*CIVICUS (through 2009), Greenpeace International*

#### Eva J. Paterson

*Equal Justice Society*

#### Tarso Ramos

*Western States Center*

#### Laurie Regelbrugge

*Unocal Corporation*

#### Robert Sherman

*Surdna Foundation*

#### Arturo Vargas

*National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund*

#### Maya Wiley

*Center for Social Inclusion*

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## Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity

The Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity is intended to build the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at combating institutional and structural racism in communities through capacity building, education and convening of grantmakers and grantseekers. We do this primarily through the following strategies:

- ▲ Providing opportunities for grantmakers to learn and strategize about cutting-edge racial equity issues and how they apply to their work within various fields;
- ▲ Increasing grantmakers' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different racial equity efforts, and assisting them in assessing their own grantmaking;
- ▲ Engaging in internal assessments of foundations' institutional needs around racial equity, and coordinating or adapting tools to most effectively meet their needs;
- ▲ Consulting with cornerstone nonprofits that explicitly address issues of racism to strengthen their capacity, increase coordination and impact; and
- ▲ Assisting local community leaders and funders on how to choose and sustain effective approaches to achieve racial equity, including identifying appropriate indicators of success.

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### *Building Resources to End Racism*

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[www.racialequity.org](http://www.racialequity.org) | [info@racialequity.org](mailto:info@racialequity.org)

### **PRE Critical Issues Forum, Volume 5**

Design: Center for Educational Design and Communication, [www.cedc.org](http://www.cedc.org)

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