

MANY HANDS, MORE IMPACT

Philanthropy's Role in
Supporting Movements

Scaling What Works

A LEARNING INITIATIVE OF



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Grantmakers for Effective Organizations is a community of more than 440 grantmakers who are challenging the status quo in their field to help grantees achieve more. Understanding that grantmakers are successful only to the extent that their grantees achieve meaningful results, GEO promotes strategies and practices that contribute to grantee success. More information about GEO and resources for grantmakers are available at www.geofunders.org.

Launched in 2010, **Scaling What Works** is a multiyear learning initiative of GEO to expand the number of grantmakers and public sector funders who are working together to broaden the impact of high-performing nonprofits. Through the initiative, GEO offers training, networking opportunities and a host of tools and resources to better equip grantmakers to help the nonprofit organizations they support to plan, adapt and grow their impact in creating sustainable benefits for people, their communities and our planet. For more about *Scaling What Works*, visit www.scalingwhatworks.org.

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INTRODUCTION

“The arc of the moral universe may bend towards justice, but it doesn’t bend on its own.”

— President Barack Obama, Aug. 28, 2013

The year 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington, a visible tipping point for the civil rights movement and a moment in time, some say, which led to the election of our country’s first African-American president. In the midst of today’s efforts to address continuing disparities, we often forget that the march and the outcomes that followed were not the work of a sole visionary leader or a handful of people but a network of nonprofit organizations, churches, labor unions and civic leaders pushing from multiple angles for economic justice and civil rights for all. As in the 1960s, when a window of social-change opportunity mobilized people across issues, identities, races, genders and economic statuses, we are in a similar period of rapid shifts. The international democratic movements and unprecedented gains in LGBT and immigrant rights that dominate the news tell us we are experiencing another “movement moment.”

Today, many grantmakers recognize the role of social movements in advancing opportunity, well-being and justice for all people and are making a shift from solely supporting individual organizations and programs to supporting the multiple organizations and intersecting networks that make up movements. The people most affected by the issues drive movements, but the resources and partnerships of philanthropy provide important fuel for their work.

Since 2010, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations has facilitated a conversation about growing impact through its *Scaling What Works* initiative. The initiative seeks to help grantmakers understand and support the variety of ways nonprofits are creating more value for communities and making progress on social challenges. GEO’s collaborative project and publication, *Pathways to Grow Impact*, revealed four key grantmaker practices that are helpful in the journey to grow impact:

1. Provide flexible funding in appropriate amounts over the long term.
2. Fund data and performance management capabilities.
3. Support capacity building and leadership development appropriate to the context.
4. **Support movements.**

Building on our publications and programming about catalyzing networks and engaging in strategic co-funding, GEO’s November 2013 *Supporting Movements* conference and this complementary publication take an in-depth look at the fourth practice as a way funders can help expand social impact. Supporting movements is a key way grantmakers can collaborate with others and facilitate grantee collaboration to tackle pressing social problems.

This publication synthesizes thought leadership and research on the role of philanthropy in supporting movements and shares the experiences (both positive and challenging) of grantmakers engaged in movement building as a strategy to grow impact. It also offers an orientation to some of the inherent opportunities of and potential barriers to supporting movements in order to inspire grantmakers to explore collaborative efforts for social change, whatever form they may take.

MOVEMENTS AND MOVEMENT BUILDING

Background

Social movements are relatively new phenomena, often attributed to the greater education and economic independence, and therefore empowerment, of people that were outcomes of industrialization starting in the mid-19th century. The related urbanization created proximity between individuals with similar concerns that allowed them to gather and organize. Historians and sociologists also connect the early growth of movements such as labor and socialism to the development of new political parties, like communism, and the democratic and proletarian changes sweeping much of Western Europe in the late 18th century.¹

From earlier movements like abolitionism to the movements of today, including immigrant, LGBT, reproductive and gender rights, environmental justice and overseas democratic movements, this form of collective action is designed to produce sweeping change, often of society's fundamental norms, values and institutions. But social movements take many forms and exhibit a great range of characteristics. For example, a movement's scope might be reform-oriented (e.g., workers' rights) or radical (e.g., equality for all Americans no matter their color); its methods may be peaceful or violent; it may target society or the individual; and it may seek innovative change or conservation of existing values and practices (the New Right that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s is often seen as a successful conservative movement).²

The literature on social movements, even within the context of philanthropy, offers many different definitions of a "movement."³ A movement is generally understood as collective action with a common frame and long-term vision for social change, characterized by grassroots mobilization that works to address a power imbalance. Much of the literature also describes transformational social movements as multisector, multiracial, multi-identity and multi-issue. There is general agreement that movements are sustained, not episodic; are constituency based rather than intermediary driven; and are focused on an end goal of transforming people's lives rather than on changing specific policies or industries, though such activities are usually critical elements of the movement.⁴

1 Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768 – 2004* (London: Paradigm Publisher, 2004), 6-8, 26-27.

2 See Jean Hardisty and Deepak Bhargava, "Wrong About the Right," *The Nation*, November 2005, and Jeff Krehely, Meaghan House and Emily Kernan, "Axis of Ideology: Conservative Foundations and Public Policy," National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2004.

3 Barbara Masters and Torie Osborn, "Social Movements and Philanthropy: How Foundations Can Support Movement Building," *The Foundation Review* vol. 2, no. 2, (2010); see also the resource list at the end of this publication.

4 Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz, "Making Change: How Social Movements Work and How to Support Them," University of Southern California, 2009, 1.



Movements are fluid and evolve differently based on political, economic and social circumstances. After they emerge, movements generally coalesce around an identity and vision, and then sometimes they are formalized through public awareness campaigns and network development.⁵ Over time, movements achieve successes and suffer setbacks, might face countermovements or generate new movements, and produce a variety of outcomes, including institutionalization, dissipation, repression, or abeyance until future periods of mobilization.

Throughout the movement life cycle, particularly during emergence and coalescence, activists and their organizations require many skills and abilities to be effective. Funders can support movement building by helping build grantees' capacity to:

- organize a base;
- research, frame and communicate critical issues;
- assess progress toward goals and the progress of the networks in which they participate;
- strategically assess power;
- manage large and growing organizations;
- engage and network with others;
- continually refresh leadership, vision and tactics; and
- operate within a decentralized environment.⁶



5 Jonathan Christiansen, "Four Stages of Social Movements," EBSCO Research Starters, 2009.

6 Pastor and Ortiz, "Making Change," 38 – 43.

Movement Principles

It is not necessary for the field to agree on one specific definition of a *movement* in order to perceive the potential of movements for achieving greater impact. What is important for grantmakers to understand before devoting financial, social and human capital to movement building are the practice and paradigm shifts that supporting such efforts will require of philanthropy:

- **Movements endorse values.** Participants in movement building articulate a set of beliefs, values and convictions about who they are, what they stand for and what kind of world they are trying to create.
- **Movements confront power.** Movement building involves efforts to understand, confront and change power structures.
- **Movements are grassroots.** The people most affected drive movements, and messages are rooted in the voices and experiences of communities served.
- **Movements have scale.** Movement building involves mobilization and partnership at all levels — local, state, national and global — and across issues and geographies, and all are important.
- **Movements take time.** The time horizon for building and supporting movements is long term, and all partners must right size their expectations accordingly.
- **Movements are messy.** The intersecting work of multiple networks inevitably responds to political and social events outside their control. This is simply the effect of a living network that contracts, expands and evolves over time.

Definitions, stages and principles aside, movements ultimately seek to right a perceived social imbalance or ill (for conservatives, this might mean the loss of traditional “family values,” for example) and ensure that all people are living the “best life,” however that is defined by movement participants. Philanthropy essentially shares this goal, and more grantmakers are diving into greater engagement with, support of, and learning from movement organizations and networks. Their engagement moves well beyond traditional funding to include the multiple roles and associated activities detailed in the next section.

GRANTMAKER ROLES IN SUPPORTING MOVEMENTS — A DEEPER DIVE

Grantmakers support movements in diverse and often interconnecting ways, from providing decades-long general operating grants to conducting public opinion research to offering community leadership development fellowships. Most of these important activities occupy one of five roles:⁷

1. **Investor**
2. **Broker**
3. **Connector**
4. **Learner**
5. **Influencer**

Movement-Building Role	Select Grantmaker Activities
Investor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give flexible grants and in-kind support • Offer technical assistance • Develop leaders • Support evaluation
Broker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage other funding • Participate in funding collaboratives
Connector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain movement clusters • Help build trust and relationships • Host or support convenings
Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct or support original research and identify trends • Support research on strategic communications and public opinion • Focus on organizational learning
Influencer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund or conduct policy advocacy • Influence peers • Model movement principles

⁷ With thanks to Linda Wood of the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, who, in an interview, framed the first three roles.

1. Investor

Philanthropy's traditional role as a one-directional source of funding should transition into that of an investor, one who commits financial resources not only to program support but also to build the infrastructure of critical movement institutions and the knowledge and skills of leaders who drive movements. Far from being a mechanistic series of predictable inputs and outputs, however, this investment requires funders to embrace a level of risk familiar to conventional financial investment.

Give flexible grants and in-kind support

Perhaps more than anything, movement organizations need flexible funding. This usually translates to general operating grants for multiyear periods, but it also means deep and responsive relationships with grantees, as well as a flexibility that acknowledges the complex nature of movement building. The Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund offers a triple layer of support to nearly all of its core social change grantees, including general operating or program grants, separate funding for leadership development, and help brokering funding from other sources.

Aware that their grantees' needs do not remain constant during movement building, experienced funders remain as flexible and as focused on the long-term vision as possible. "So much about movement building depends on circumstances beyond organizations' control, like elections and indictments," said Vic De Luca, president of the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation, which embraces a movement approach to addressing the issues of environmental justice, sustainable agriculture and food systems, reproductive rights, and a sustainable New York City. So when mobilization efforts hit snags, the foundation's program officers help grantees focus on next steps. "Most of the foundation's staff are former activists and have been there themselves," De Luca said.

Movement-supporting funders are also willing to make grants for capacity building in many forms — from sophisticated communications and cultural sensitivity training to basic equipment and technology — and they understand the need for patience with the pace of the capacity building. In some cases, however, the most helpful funding is *fast* funding. Early in their environmental justice work, the Noyes Foundation staff identified a need for quick turnaround grants for building capacity in the new (and underfunded) activist organizations springing up in the Southeast region of the country. The foundation established the Special Assistance Grants program, which allowed it to make grants of up to \$7,500 without board approval, sometimes within a few days of a request. Special Assistance Grants have paid for hotel conference rooms, office equipment and travel support for potential movement partners.

Grantmakers in this space feel comfortable providing unrestricted funding because they trust the movement organizations they support to know how and when to deploy grant funds.

"We are funding leaders, not programs, and we trust our grantees to know what needs to be done."

— Anne Summers,
The Brico Fund, LLC



“We are funding leaders, not programs, and we trust our grantees to know what needs to be done,” said Anne Summers of the Brico Fund, which supports systemic change efforts focusing on democracy, food, water and art. The Brico Fund operates with an unusual degree of flexibility and speed because its donor, Lynde Uihlein, established the fund as a limited liability company (LLC) rather than a foundation to enable quick and holistic funding to 501(c)(3)s. In addition, Uihlein funds (c)(4)s and 527 groups working toward her social change goals.

Funders involved with movements almost universally support not just single nonprofits but also networks of organizations and the collaborations and coordination between those multiple entities. Some grantmakers’ portfolios include large, well-established institutions, small grassroots organizations, coalitions that draw on the strengths of all partners, onetime convenings, and long-term partnerships. In many regions across the country there is a dearth of activists, organizers, advocates and social change agents. As Regan Gruber Moffitt, senior associate of public policy at the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in Arkansas, described it, many regions do not have the “luxury of large, established social change organizations” working on a policy agenda to help construct real solutions to their communities’ challenges. For that reason, Winthrop Rockefeller provides what it dubs “incubator” grants to emerging groups that fill important gaps in services and supports. Gruber Moffitt said that when very few groups were organizing the immigrant community effectively, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation stepped in to provide a small incubator grant to an emerging group through a fiscal agent. This incubator grant led to a larger, multiyear grant to help the group become more established.

Funders also provide significant in-kind support to movement organizations, including space for in-person meetings and technology for virtual convenings or information sharing. Some funders serve as incubators for individual activists, new organizations or collectives without 501(c)(3) status or connect them to intermediaries willing to serve as fiscal agents.

Offer technical assistance

Funders working with movement organizations prioritize investment of their time and expertise, as well as of their grant money. They report helping grantees with everything from writing grant applications and developing strategic communications plans to identifying the best technology platforms for facilitating intranet work planning.

This kind of direct help is clearly needed. According to the Center for Effective Philanthropy’s research, two-thirds of the respondents who say using technology increases their effectiveness — a given for movement organizations — want more direct assistance from funders. One leader requested that funders “provide technological tools and resources for capacity-building such as skilled volunteers in addition to funding.”⁸

8 Ellie Buteau, Andrea Brock, and Mark Chaffin, “Nonprofit Challenges: What Foundations Can Do,” The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2013, 10.

The Brico Fund uses its RFP process to assess grantees' organizational health and start a conversation with them about how the Brico Fund can help improve it, if necessary. The Brico Fund works to be transparent about its grantmaking process and strives to be an honest thought partner with grantees. "We used to ask about staff salaries, and people thought we were asking because we assumed the salaries were too high," Summers said. "But really we thought they might be too low [to attract and retain the talent needed]. This is all part of having an open conversation with nonprofits."

The Seattle Foundation's Neighbor to Neighbor Small Grants Program — which awards grants of up to \$5,000 to primarily new projects in three area communities significantly affected by economic and racial disparities — offers several kinds of technical assistance. The staff make an effort not to overwhelm community activists with too much process. "We help them make the grant application (for many, it's the first application they've ever done), but also connect grantees to other funders, convene them with other like-minded organizations, and encourage them to participate in regional initiatives that relate to their issues," said Judy de Barros, a consultant who directs the Neighbor to Neighbor Small Grants Program. "But we work to just get them started, let them do their work, and let them learn as they go."

Movement funders are uniquely sensitive about balancing internal capacity building with the development of outward-facing strategies that build a movement. "We ask ourselves 'capacity building for what?'" de Barros said. "You can spend a lot of time on board development, but if grantees don't have time to go out and organize their communities, they're not going to reach their goal."

Develop leaders

Since leadership is critical for social movements, directing investment to leadership development is an important role for funders. To advance its social change goals, the Haas, Jr. Fund makes explicit investments in the leadership of the organizations that play strategic roles in the movements it supports. "We want our grantees' hard work and programs to succeed, and we know they can't succeed unless the leadership is strong and effective at every level of the organization," said Linda Wood, senior director, Haas Leadership Initiative. Through the foundation's Flexible Leadership Award program, grantees create customized leadership plans, and Haas awards between \$35,000 and \$50,000 annually for the plans' implementation.

The awarding of, reporting on and communication with foundation staff about the leadership grants is done via different channels than those used for project or general operating grants for two reasons. First, it helps create a "safe space" where grantees can have more authentic conversations about their leadership and capacity-building challenges without undue concern of jeopardizing their funding. And second, because, "the field of leadership development takes different skills and experience than the programmatic work," Wood said.

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Jr. Fund

The Haas, Jr. Fund's outcome evaluation of this leadership work indicates that this not only is a cost-effective way to build leadership effectiveness but also is producing real progress toward its goals.⁹

Indeed, many funders have learned that, despite the importance of general operating funds, specifying project grants for leadership training and development is actually an effective way to overcome the guilt of nonprofit leaders, whose organizations might be strapped for funding and who might agonize about using general operating funds for staff development.

Movement leaders and network weavers have different development needs than leaders of individual organizations, so some funders take nontraditional approaches to supporting them. For example, sabbatical programs and training and mentoring opportunities can allow movement leaders to focus on managing the power dynamics of different coalitions and communicating across different priorities. The Brico Fund observed that the leader of one of its grantee organizations is such a strong role model that it is buying some of her time from the organization to enable her to formally mentor other emerging leaders. Demonstrating the flexibility of a movement funder, the Brico Fund is considering establishing a full fellowship program based on the results of this individual mentoring effort.

Support evaluation

Building movements requires a tremendous amount of flexibility on the part of grantmakers, but it can also involve the introduction of greater rigor as grantees develop capacity for measuring the impact of their work. The Noyes Foundation had to course-correct with its reporting and evaluation requirements when it discovered from conversations with grantees that the requirements were so loose — in the interest of allowing grantees to focus primarily on their organizing work — that the grantees were having trouble getting funding from other, less nimble grantmakers. Noyes Foundation staff and board members also were not learning as much from their grantees' work as they had hoped. So the Noyes Foundation established more structured reporting requirements and simultaneously helped grantees build their evaluation capacity. The outcome: grantees were able to better assess and communicate their progress, not only to potential funders but also to other important stakeholders like policymakers and partner organizations. In turn, the Noyes Foundation and its grantees were able to use what they were learning about their approach with other partners in the environmental justice movement.

Another vital area for funder investment is in developing evaluation models that both advance understanding of the movement-building process itself and help assess movement outcomes. And in many cases, a movement's advancement toward major change, made possible by the efforts of many different organizations and networks working both together and alone, can be assessed only through a third-party evaluation over the long term. This is an expensive but critical form of movement building for grantmakers.

9 William P. Ryan, "5-Year Evaluation of the Flexible Leadership Awards," Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, 2013.



Funders should be careful, however, not to seek campaign metrics (for example, the number of people registered for the new insurance exchanges as part of the Affordable Care Act) when movement metrics (the number of leaders developed through mobilization around health care as a human right) are most appropriate.

Experienced grantmakers know that movement building is slower and that outcomes can be less obvious and harder to measure than those of direct service programs. Gruber Moffitt noted that Winthrop Rockefeller adjusts expectations of movement grantees, in terms of both the pace of outcomes and the results of their evaluations: “With direct service, you can say, ‘I funded X and Y happened,’ but movement building isn’t linear. Funders have to understand the end goal while staying flexible,” she said. Indeed, funders should understand that most social change goals may take many years to achieve.

2. Broker

Movement-supporting grantmakers serve as brokers by leveraging other resources for their grantees’ work, including the creation of and participation in strategic co-funding efforts.

Leverage other funding

The Noyes Foundation helps attract additional funding for its grantees by telling their stories as far and wide as possible. The Seattle Foundation has integrated the Neighbor to Neighbor grantees — small community groups that might otherwise not connect to individual donors — into its GiveBIG event, the foundation’s online day of giving. The Brico Fund leverages new project and funding opportunities for its grantees by stepping in when the nonprofit has no entry point or the situation is politically tricky. For example, Summers described the Brico Fund’s initiation of a conversation with the local police force about allocating resources for sexual assault training for officers, who were handling such crimes poorly.

Participate in funding collaboratives

The reality is that money attracts money, but grantmakers should participate in funding collaboratives not just to leverage more money for their grantees but also to leverage more efficient money — that is, funding characterized by streamlined application and reporting processes and learning shared among many partners.¹⁰

Since most movement grantmakers fund both individual organizations and the networks advancing the movement, serving as brokers for additional funding or participating in collaboratives takes on greater import for them. “Movement building, networks and coalitions take joint funding. You have to fund the individual players and you have to fund the collective,” De Luca said.

“With direct service, you can say, ‘I funded X and Y happened,’ but movement building isn’t linear. Funders have to understand the end goal while staying flexible.”

—Regan Gruber Moffitt, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

10 Cynthia Gair, *Strategic Co-Funding: An Approach for Expanded Impact* (Washington, D.C.: Grantmakers for Effective Organizations and REDF, 2012), 1-2. Available at www.geofunders.org.

But many funders are frustrated with the challenges of forming collaboratives and the time it takes to get all partners aligned. “Funders are moving at a pace that’s incongruent with community change and need,” de Barros said. “There should be a quick way to respond to need when we see it. We have to keep up and keep working on the relationships.” Despite the frustration, the potential successes that can be achieved when funders align their dollars and strategies make it worth the resources and time invested. Plus, funders should model what they are asking of grantees: increase partnership and coordination in service of a shared mission.

3. Connector

Next to funding, perhaps the most important things a grantmaker can provide to support movements are connections that lead to meaningful relationships. In fact, grantmakers with significant movement experience say that they cannot overemphasize the importance of their role as the “glue” or “connective tissue” between organizations and networks advancing a movement’s vision. The networks have a range of needs funders can address, from building trust and developing relationships for newer coalitions to supporting peer learning, communications planning and advocacy for more mature networks.

Sustain movement clusters

The Akonadi Foundation, which uses an “ecosystem” approach to funding racial justice work and believes that “social movements are the only process powerful enough to address a large-scale power imbalance,” focuses on what it calls “inter-connected clusters of organizations.”¹¹ The foundation, like its grantmaker peers in movement funding, recognizes this in-between space as an important source of knowledge and energy for mobilization and applies funding, time and influence to sustaining it.

In the same vein, Wood of the Haas, Jr. Fund says, “As foundations, we have a bird’s-eye view of the movement, so we have an obligation to connect the dots with other funders, to support opportunities for funders and activists to work together, and to get money to the work at the right time, even during volatile moments.”

Help build trust and relationships

Funders can serve as intermediaries, thought partners and identifiers of new partners for movement networks. In the last few years, the Seattle Foundation transitioned its Neighbor to Neighbor program to be more prominent within the foundation and to better leverage internal resources. de Barros and Jennifer Martin, director of community leadership at the Seattle Foundation, found that Neighbor to Neighbor’s long-standing advisory committee, comprising community leaders and funders, needed several retreats to make the transition successful. “Building relationships and making sure everyone was on the same page took a lot of time and was really important,” Martin said.

11 Cassandra Shaylor, “Ecosystem Grantmaking,” Akonadi Foundation, 2011, 2.



Funders' leadership development efforts can go beyond funding programs or consultants to include connecting leaders to networks. Critical to movement building is also ensuring that constituencies previously excluded from leadership roles have a place at the network table, and funders have the opportunity to apply both funding and influence to that effort.

As the literature on social movements reminds us, “networks that emphasize structure are less effective than those that adeptly learn and change,”¹² and so the role of connector requires understanding of and sensitivity to the multiple relationships within networks, a willingness to adapt expectations and plans to the often-changing circumstances of a movement, and the commitment to being present as a supporter and partner, not always a leader. The Brico Fund is advised by an informal, constantly changing group of grantees, called the “changemakers,” who represent the “work out there.” This brain trust allows the Brico Fund’s three-person staff to do much beyond grantmaking and ensures that the fund remains up-to-date, connected and nimble.

Host or support convenings

Most movement leaders build the capacity to develop concrete leadership skills, think strategically, establish relationships and broaden their own movement analysis by participating in networks.¹³ Funders can convene or support convenings of networks to facilitate peer learning and long-term relationship building. In some cases, particularly as movement networks are just beginning to form or when they are undergoing transition and a level of intermediation is needed, grantmakers might not only host the convenings but also provide neutral facilitators to lead discussions and networking. The key is that convenings are not always funder initiated.

4. Learner

Grantmakers occupy a special learning role when they conduct or underwrite original research that advances social change efforts, when they fund research on strategic communications, and when they invest in their own organizational learning to inform their grantmaking and the field’s knowledge of movement building.

Conduct or support original research and identify trends

As the literature suggests, the role of research in analyzing problems and suggesting solutions has become increasingly important in contemporary social movements. This may be due to the complexity of issues we face today, but the volume of information available to the layperson and the “noise” through which organizers have to cut to gain traction with key audiences points to the need for more specialized and sophisticated research, delivered in an effective way.

“Building relationships and making sure everyone was on the same page took a lot of time and was really important.”

—Jennifer Martin,
The Seattle Foundation

12 Robin Katcher, “Unstill Waters: The Fluid Role of Networks in Social Movements,” *Nonprofit Quarterly*, Summer (2010), 57.

13 Katcher, “Unstill Waters,” 56.

Funders experienced in movement building stay informed about trends influencing the progress of social change they support, including demographic shifts and new research findings. In addition to investing in their grantees' research, communications and learning efforts, grantmakers also initiate their own research that may arm specific advocates or may enhance models of movement building generally. Much of the philanthropic field is currently learning about the power of aggregating “big data” for targeted outreach, and this is certainly the case with movement advocacy and communications. In fact, a new area of philanthropy — data philanthropy — is developing in response to the increasing importance of big data to advancing social change goals. Big data companies, such as telecommunications firms, search engines, and social networks, may donate their public use data to a data commons, and the impact on movements could be monumental. For example, the French telecommunications company France Telecom-Orange made records (rendered anonymous) of five million mobile phone users in Côte d'Ivoire available to the research community as part of the Data for Development Challenge.¹⁴

Many movement supporters rely on a type of analysis called “network mapping” to create a portrait of the various relationships, capacities and overlaps between organizations, networks and causes that might come together to advance a particular social movement goal. Mark Rosenman's Caring to Change project encourages funders to “employ broad analyses of the context in which your foundation operates to find ways to bring together people and organizations . . . to find synergies between and among program and issue areas.”¹⁵ Movement supporters also use “power mapping” to identify significant gaps and areas of leverage within those networks. Philanthropy-specific uses of mapping include analyses of giving to particular issues, campaigns, communities and movements, as well as identification of philanthropic assets and potential philanthropy across geographic regions and movement issues.

Funders committed to movement building tend to support research beyond individual studies or programs. Investing in the research capacity of institutions that inform advocates and networks over the long term (as conservative movements have done) is an effective strategy. Many funders, such as Casey Family Programs and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, also serve as a bridge between academic researchers, nonprofits and policymakers, when important research can equip advocates and create buzz by the public.

But many funders emphasize the importance of not allowing a desire for “perfect” data to stall support to movement organizations. As de Barros describes the danger, “Cold feet can be caused by ‘analysis paralysis.’ If a [grant] program is public, there's sometimes a heightened sensitivity that they might not have every piece of data that will demonstrate that the programs are the right ones.”

14 See Lucy Bernholz, “How Can Data Change Philanthropy?” *Philanthropy* 2173, June 11, 2012, and United Nations Global Pulse, “Big Data for Development: Opportunities and Challenges,” 2012.

15 Mark Rosenman, “Foundations for the Common Good,” *Caring to Change*, 2010, 1, 14–15.

Support research on strategic communications and public opinion

Strategic communications research — in other words, testing the effectiveness and framing of messaging to make real advances in a movement — is both critical and expensive. This is where funders can play a significant and collaborative role. The Brico Fund integrates into its approach the “safe space to develop hypotheses about the most effective ways to organize, poll, and use data.” The Haas, Jr. Fund remembers how, in the early 2000s, the messaging in support of marriage equality was not moving public opinion, partially because there was not enough money to test it properly. Starting in 2006, Haas, Jr. Fund and other LGBT funders, such as the Civil Marriage Collaborative, decided to invest more significantly in message testing, leading to a new communications framework that made a huge difference in voter opinion on this issue.

A continuing R&D need for movements, in which many foundations like the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation invest, involves how to use existing social media platforms to mobilize and connect across organizations, causes, networks and movements. The way people receive and respond to strategic messaging is so different than it was less than a decade ago that all successful movements require access to new research and capacity building to use such media. The Levi Strauss Foundation’s Pioneers in Justice program, which supports a select group of under-40 San Francisco area social justice leaders, heavily emphasizes the promise of new technology and social media tools for movements. Along with social media policy and integration training and technical assistance from ZeroDivide, each Pioneers in Justice organization receives a social media and technology assessment plus \$5,000 to implement the resulting recommendations.

Surina Khan, director of the Ford Foundation’s Gender Rights and Equality division, supported StoryCorps to develop a series of LGBT stories that aired both on the radio and on National Public Radio’s website. The foundation is also supporting targeted opinion research among younger LGBT Americans to better understand the perceptions that shape their world view and to gain insights for future work.

Focus on organizational learning

Although formal research is an important tool for funders supporting movements, grantmakers also report that informal knowledge gathering, in the form of grantee conversations, in relationship development, and simply by keeping their eyes on the “big picture,” is just as important for being effective and flexible supporters. “There are multiple dimensions to movement building. We have to be adaptable because we are taking cues from what’s out there . . . not sitting in our offices deciding what should happen but identifying trends as part of our involvement,” De Luca said.

In addition to its significant efforts in internal cross-program learning, the Ford Foundation also looks to fellow grantmakers for the latest thinking and innovative practices. “There’s no one right way to do this work, and we should always be learning from others in the field,” said Khan. “Just like we provide opportunities to individual organizations to come together for learning and sharing, we should be seeking out others in philanthropy to share with.”

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The Haas, Jr. Fund’s Gay and Lesbian Rights program is integrating learning from past movement-building efforts into a new joint funding effort to increase protection for LGBT people at the state level. Prior funder collaborative support for marriage equality in which Haas, Jr. Fund participated underestimated both the critical importance of strategic message development early in the process and how much it would cost to “get it right.” “Because of what we learned, by investing heavily up front in strategic message development we hope to accomplish in two years what took us seven in the fight for marriage equality,” said Matt Foreman, director of the program.

Funders also report that applying a systems-change lens to their grantmaking and partnership with grantees has had a “striking effect” on board education and action. Said Gruber Moffitt from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, “Site visits to grantee communities are a great learning experience for our board and staff. You can see the ‘aha’ on the faces of board and staff members as we share experiences and learn from grantees and partners in the field.”

The Ford Foundation’s board meetings set aside time for focused, deeper discussions around particularly timely social change goals or areas of work. For example, in the wake of the recent Supreme Court decisions on marriage rights, Khan’s team and the board explored how the foundation’s grants, convening, strategic communications, and other efforts were helping to advance LGBT rights.

5. Influencer

Movements are fundamentally about changing power.¹⁶ Philanthropy should have an innate understanding of power dynamics, having been a power holder for so long, and can translate those dynamics to other movement partners or to the institutions of power. In this sense, grantmakers have not only the ability but also the responsibility to use their influence beyond grants to advance social change.

Fund or conduct policy advocacy

Movement-supporting foundations can use their own advocacy capacity to help advance grantees’ movement goals. They can also support grantees’ efforts to build their advocacy capacity and, in the process, learn from their outcomes. The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation brings research and learning directly to policymakers at appropriate times. “If grantees or community leaders are positioned to use their voice the foundation stands back,” Gruber Moffitt said. But it does not shy away from engaging with policy issues when it has something unique to say, as with a recent state proposal for enhanced higher education. The foundation testified before the state legislature, drawing on research it had previously funded, and, ultimately, influenced the creation of a commission that will study and recommend ways to increase the number of Arkansans with college degrees.

16 Masters and Osborn, “Social Movements and Philanthropy,” 19.

Many resources — such as those from the Alliance for Justice, Learn Foundation Law and GrantCraft — can help guide foundations on funding advocacy and legally and strategically conducting their own advocacy activities.

The people closest to the problem always need to be part of the conversation, so the Ford Foundation works to ensure that grantees and movement partners have the skills and expertise to identify and then address policy priorities. “We do this through supporting various training programs, and by convening advocates to ensure they are working and learning together. We learn from them too,” Khan said.

Influence peers

Since movement-supporting funders tend to invest dollars and staff and trustee time understanding the broader context of movements, many consider it an obligation to communicate this context to and encourage participation from other grantmakers who might join them in building movements, even if they are not seeking the exact same social change goals. The act of supporting movements may in fact be one of the greatest applications of philanthropy’s influence, since funders are some of the key players in a power structure that movements seek to address.

Sometimes occupying this role of influencer means navigating uncomfortable differences with movement partners who espouse a more radical approach to confronting power. Sometimes it means convincing peers in the power structure to acknowledge how race, power and privilege may be affecting progress toward key movement goals. Summers describes the opportunity to have the “difficult but necessary” conversations with other funders and community partners as a risk that they should all be taking for the good of social change. “Being in the room [for these conversations] sends a signal.”

Model movement principles

Although it may not seem as integral to supporting movements as funding or convening, aligning a foundation’s internal practices and culture with the principles of the movements it supports can be powerful. Grantmakers report that “being the change they want to see” creates an authenticity that staff, trustees, community partners and even the public notice. Some apply the frames of diversity and equity to all internal processes at the foundation — including hiring, board and leadership development, grantmaking, reporting and transparency — particularly if the foundation supports equality-building movements. And some realign their investment practices and instruments to ensure that the other 95 percent of the foundation’s assets are supporting (or are at least not actively working against) the social change to which their grantees aspire.



Funders report another, sometimes unintentional shift within their organizations when they begin working closely with movement organizations and networks — they become more internally networked and agile as grantmakers. As Neighbor to Neighbor becomes fully integrated into the Seattle Foundation’s programs, where it was originally an independent side project housed under the foundation’s roof, the program’s “systems approach is actually changing the foundation, a much larger institution, itself,” Martin said.

It is equally important for grantmakers to model collaboration with their peers, through activities such as joint funding, participation in coalitions, and information sharing. “If you’re in the business of movement building, you have to develop relationships with other funders, even if they aren’t aligned with you strategically,” said the Brico Fund’s Summers, whose work is not governed by a board, often a critical source of feedback for grantmakers. “Simply having another funder who’s willing to serve as your sounding board is important.”



THINKING AHEAD, STICKING WITH IT

Without question, funders involved in movement building are optimistic about the future and about the potential of their efforts to make a major difference. And they are staying focused on the investing, connecting and learning they must continue to do in order for their grantees, partners, trustees and staff to be ready. “If you think about how public opinion and policy have shifted so much and so quickly on gay marriage and immigrant rights, it’s astonishing,” said Foreman of the Haas, Jr. Fund. “How can we make similar progress on other issues? How can funders be ready when the ball starts rolling?”

Options abound for philanthropy’s involvement in building and supporting movements. Such roles are complex, ever shifting, long term, ego subsuming and not the right fit for all grantmakers. But the potential for serving as *investors*, *connectors*, *brokers*, *learners* and *influencers* to accelerate the pace at which we move toward a better future certainly tempts funders of all sizes and interests. Noted Haas, Jr. Fund’s Wood about keeping both expectations and forbearance high: “In social movements, progress inevitably involves both exhilarating highs and crushing setbacks. As funders, we have to have the fortitude to hang in there because the end goal of a more just and sustainable society is so important.”



SELECT RESOURCES

For additional resources, visit www.scalingwhatworks.org.

Supporting Movements

1. [Building Organizations in a Movement Moment](#)

By Beth Zemsky and David Mann

Social Policy, Spring-Summer, 2008

Discusses the context in which social movement organizations are currently doing their work, challenges they encounter and suggestions regarding how to engage in a different kind of strategic development for this moment.

2. [Ecosystem Grantmaking: A Systemic Approach to Supporting Movement Building](#)

By Cassandra Shaylor

Akonadi Foundation, 2011

Discusses the “how” and “why” of the ecosystem grantmaking approach and invites a further dialogue among funders about the best ways to support the movement-building work of racial justice organizations.

3. [Funding Social Movements: The New World Foundation Perspective](#)

New World Foundation, 2003

Informed by New World Foundation’s 50-year history of funding movement building, this piece explains why movements are critical to social change, outlines the movement-building process and offers a checklist for social movement grantmaking.

4. [Making Change: How Social Movements Work and How to Support Them](#)

By Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz

Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, University of Southern California, 2009

Details the characteristics of a successful social movement, the organizational and leadership capacities movement groups and leaders need to develop, and how grantmakers can best support the individuals, organizations and networks driving today’s movements.

5. [Social Movements and Philanthropy: How Foundations Can Support Movement Building](#)

By Barbara Masters and Torie Osborn

The Foundation Review vol. 2, no. 2, 2010

Describes the core elements of movement building and offers recommendations for foundation support of movement activities, including a framework for evaluating movement building that can help foundations and their grantees identify measurable outcomes and track progress throughout a movement’s various stages.

6. [Transactions – Transformations – Translations: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements](#)

By Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito and Rachel Rosner

Program for Environmental and Regional Equity, University of Southern California, 2011

Provides a framework and key milestones to gauge movement building, along with recommendations for grantmakers and a set of evaluative measures designed to foster learning and shared accountability rather than create more onerous requirements.

7. [Vision for Change: A New Wave of Social Justice Leadership](#)

By Helen Kim and Frances Kunreuther

Building Movement Project’s Generations Series, 2012

Details the findings of a study of a diverse group of American social justice leaders under 40. The report focuses on how these younger leaders committed to large-scale change do their jobs and how funders can support their visions while helping to build a stronger progressive infrastructure for all stakeholders.

The Grantmaker’s Role in Fostering Change

8. [American Foundations: Roles and Contributions](#)

Edited by Helmut K. Anheier and David Hammack

Brookings Institution Press, 2010

Through a series of papers alternating between historical perspective and policy analysis, this publication provides a comprehensive look at the impact of large U.S. foundations on major social issues, many of which have been influenced by movements, including education, health care, social welfare, religion and movement building itself.

9. [Caring to Change: Foundations for the Common Good](#)

By Mark Rosenman

Caring to Change, 2010

Based on an extensive series of interviews with younger people, people of color, and others in philanthropy and nonprofits who are not normally involved in setting foundation strategy, this article outlines how foundations might apply the lens of explicitly advancing the common good to their work, including grounding their grantmaking in fundamental values, focusing greater attention on diversity and equal opportunity and breaking down barriers to authentic connections with grantees and community partners.

10. *Do Nothing About Me Without Me: An Action Guide for Engaging Stakeholders*
By J. Courtney Bourns
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations and Interaction Institute for Social Change, 2010

Argues the value of engaging diverse stakeholders, highlights grantmakers who are bringing stakeholders into the center of their work and offers a variety of tools to help grantmakers better engage grantees, community members and other partners.

11. *Pathways to Grow Impact: Philanthropy's Role in the Journey*
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2013

Contains many relevant recommendations about funding nonprofits to grow their impact, including providing flexible funding; supporting the collection, aggregation, and ongoing use of data for course correction; investing in leadership and advocacy; and supporting networks and movements.

12. *Real Results: Why Strategic Philanthropy Is Social Justice Philanthropy*
By Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2013

Part of NCRP's High Impact Strategies for Philanthropy series, this publication examines the role that social justice philanthropy can and should play in various issue areas. The core theme is that when strategic philanthropy and social justice philanthropy are at their best, they are in fact one and the same.

Engaging in Advocacy

13. *Advocacy Funding: The Philanthropy of Changing Minds*
By Tony Proscio
GrantCraft, 2005

A guide offering best practices and legal advice for funders interested in funding advocacy. Featured grantmakers discuss how advocacy activities have advanced their programmatic goals or amplified their grantmaking, as well as the resources needed to pursue this work effectively.

14. *Advocacy and Lobbying Rules for Private Foundations*
Sasha Abrams, Meghan Hanson, Liz Karlin, Elizabeth Peters and Mary Anne Rodgers
Learn Foundation Law, 2010

A free online training course, available at www.learnfoundationlaw.org, created by legal staff from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. The course covers the basic legal rules that apply to advocacy activities that private foundations are allowed to fund and engage in.

15. *Investing in Change: A Funder's Guide to Supporting Advocacy*
Alliance for Justice, 2004

Explains the various roles foundations can legally play in the advocacy process, including engaging in advocacy, navigating the tax code, developing grant agreements for advocacy activity and evaluating advocacy.

The Network Mindset

16. *Catalyzing Networks for Social Change: A Funder's Guide*
By Diana Searce
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations and Monitor Institute, 2011

Explores what it takes for grantmakers to cultivate a network mindset and offers recommendations for how funders can effectively build the capacity of networks and share what they're learning with the broader field.

17. *Cracking the Network Code: Four Principles for Grantmakers*
By Jane Wei-Skillern, Nora Silver and Eric Heitz
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2013

Outlines four principles that comprise the network mindset, illustrates the principles with a range of examples of networks that have achieved real results and offers practical questions and recommendations to help grantmakers achieve the benefits and avoid common pitfalls of working through networks.

18. *Unstill Waters: The Fluid Role of Networks in Social Movements*
By Robin Katcher
The Nonprofit Quarterly, Summer 2010

Uncovers how movement-oriented networks function effectively and how funders and other partners can build and invest in them.



