Responsive Philanthropy

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IN THIS ISSUE

Voters during a get-out-the-vote voting rally in Calhoun County, Georgia, one of stops of "The South Is Rising" bus tour. The tour, which visited various small towns and cities in the South, was organized by Black Voters Matter Fund, a 501(c)(4) organization co-founded by former director of Grantmakers for Southern Progress, LaTosha Brown, and Cliff Albright. Photo courtesy of LaTosha Brown/BVMF.

Philanthropy: Perilous times call for bold measures

By Tory Gavito

A national collaborative of funders and organizers is asking foundations and donors to meet the challenges of our time by responsive grantmaking, breaking silos and going local.

Hunger drove the parents of Jakelin Amei Rosemary Caal Maquin to take her on the journey north. On December 7, Jakelin died of dehydration in U.S. Border Patrol custody. Climate, migration, incarceration, jobs and democracy are center stage in the politics propelling both the autocratic and democratic movements.

Those closest to the pain must influence the policy decisions that will affect their futures. Democratic movements built by local organizing will get people their seat at the table and undermine autocratic movements. Philanthropy must evolve to meet the scale of the challenges and opportunities that lie before us.

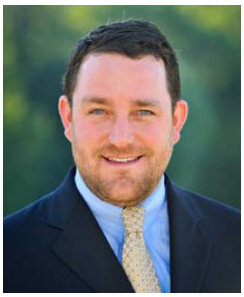
We can achieve that by increasing the speed and size of grants, removing silos between donors and organizers, and focusing locally to create the groundswell of organized people, ideas and resources required to change the trajectory of history.

THE STATUS QUO IS RISKIER THAN TAKING RISKS

According to the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we have 12 years to mitigate climate change catastrophe[1] as a rise of global fascism erodes democracy.[2]

The concurrent rise of these threats will have the most impact on poor people of color. (*continued on page 11*)

A message from the President and CEO



Dear Colleagues,

I've been on the road early in 2019 meeting with NCRP members and allies all over the country, and I look forward to connecting with many more of you in the next few months.

One thing has struck me from my conversations: There are many in philanthropy who are absolutely committed to ensuring that foundations and wealthy donors do everything in their power to defend democracy and build a more just society. Their passion and courage give me hope.

This edition of *Responsive Philanthropy* features learnings and reflections from our colleagues to serve as inspiration for ways that we in philanthropy can be more responsive, effective and impactful in these challenging times.

In "Philanthropy: Perilous times call for bold measures," Tory Gavito, president and CEO of Way to Win, urges grantmakers to take risks and transform its practices. She offers 3 specific recommendations: increase the size of grantmaking, break silos and support local efforts.

For Farhad Ebrahimi, president of Chorus Foundation, exploring the relationship between political, economic and cultural power was transformative for his foundation. In "How to think about power (especially if you have some)," he shares how understanding this ecosystem of power is informing the foundation's holistic approach to climate justice philanthropy.

In "Lessons for foundations on rapid-response support at the front lines of democracy," Shireen Zaman and Melissa Spatz, program directors at Proteus Fund, share 5 tips to make rapid response support effective. They invite other grantmakers to join their efforts to ensure that community-led organizations have the resources they need "as they lead the fight for our democracy."

And in "What does Amazon's HQ2 tax-grab mean for U.S. cities?" Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First, and Ryan Schlegel, research director of NCRP, identify 4 concrete ways that funders can join community-led efforts to ensure that HQ2 benefits "the 99% as much as it benefits Bezos."

Thank you for being a part of our efforts to ensure that grantmakers and donors contribute meaningfully to a just and equitable world. Let us know how we're doing and what stories you'd like us to cover. Email community@ncrp.org.

Sincerely,

Aaron Dorfman
President and CEO

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How to think about power (especially if you have some)

By Farhad Ebrahimi

For the Chorus Foundation, exploring the relationships between economic, political and cultural power has been a game-changer for their climate philanthropy.

In the social change world, we tend to use the word "power" a lot. But it's not always clear what we're referring to. Even when it *is* clear, what's often *even clearer* is that we're not referring to the same thing.

I've come to the conclusion that what we're collectively referring to is an *ecosystem* of power – one in which there are different forms of power that behave and interact with each other in different ways.

An ecosystem, of course, is not just a list of things but rather the web of relationships among those things. And, while it can certainly make sense to focus on a particular part of an ecosystem, that focus is always going to be most effective when made in the context of the whole.

REALITY CHECK

Fifteen years ago, I was what you might call a "single-issue" guy, and my issue was climate change. I would tell you why it was the most important thing for me to be working on. I might have even told you why it was the most important thing for *you* to be working on. I was super fun at parties.

For the past 12 years, however, I've been running the Chorus Foundation. And as I've shared in the past, we've learned a tremendous amount from our grantees from over a decade of climate funding.[1] Most importantly, we've learned that the fundamental challenge of climate change isn't identifying the best policy or the most promising technology or the scariest science. It's generating the political will to enact the best policy, adopt the most promising technology and heed the scariest science.

This realization led us to take a closer look at the landscape of power:

- The lack of organized **political power** on the part of the U.S. climate movement.
- The entrenched **economic power** of the fossil fuel industry.
- The deep **cultural power** of doing "business as usual" in places where that business has historically been done (e.g., the cultural footprint of the coal industry in Appalachia).

It's all about power now and no longer just about climate change.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT POWER

What we've learned from our grantees over the years has had a tremendous impact on how we think about our work. It's all about power now and no longer just about climate change. As a result, our mission statement now hinges on the following:

> *We support communities on the front lines of the old, extractive economy to build new bases of political, economic and cultural power for systemic change.*

For us, political power is the ability to influence or control collective decision-making. When folks say "power" without any kind of qualifier, this is usually what they're referring to.

We define economic power as the ability to produce, distribute, trade or consume goods and services. Economic power is most commonly recognized by some of its sources, e.g. the control of capital, the ability to organize labor or access to natural resources.

And cultural power is the ability to influence or control how we perceive and what we believe about the world around

Ongoing work of grantee partners, such as Communities for a Better Environment's organizing to hold Chevron accountable for environmental justice impacts in Richmond, California, continue to inform the work of Chorus Foundation. Photo by David Gilbert, Amazon Watch.

us. It's a trick of our current system to misrepresent culture as simply a product; culture sets the parameters for what we believe is possible – not to mention what we believe is right or wrong.

Each of these 3 forms of power constitutes an ecosystem unto itself. For example, while some political donors may think of political power strictly in terms of elections, they are but 1 component of the overall ecosystem. Not all forms of political power need to work through established channels – nor should they, given the ways in which existing systems can marginalize or exclude certain voices. There is also people power: the ability to influence collective decision-making through protest, direct action and nonviolent civil resistance.

And each of these forms of power can be leveraged to build the others. Economic power can provide the necessary financial resources to build political or cultural power. Further, political power can enact policies that either expand or contract the opportunities to build economic or cultural power. But we must do more to highlight the profound effect that culture has on our sense of what "politics" or "economy" are in the first place. Our culture – which is to say, our perceptions, beliefs, values and norms – undergirds literally every political or economic endeavor we might pursue.

THIS UNDERSTANDING OF POWER AFFECTS OUR WORK IN 4 WAYS

1. We need to situate ourselves in the larger ecosystem of power.

As funders, we fundamentally hold economic power. Chorus believes that this is the result of an economic system that is inherently extractive and exploitative. Private philanthropy requires wealth inequality, and wealth inequality requires the extraction and consolidation of wealth. We must reckon with the fact that our very existence is the byproduct of systemic injustice and inequity. (See, I'm still super fun at parties!)

With this in mind, it behooves those of us in philanthropy to check our desires to build or leverage political and cultural power for ourselves. Political donors, I'm looking at you right now. But let's be honest, it's not like institutional philanthropy is entirely innocent, either.

2. We need to be explicit about who we're supporting to build power and to what ends.

At Chorus, we support organizations that build power in communities that have historically had power used against them, e.g., communities of color, Indigenous communities and working-class communities. We believe that asking these communities to turn out for things that are "in their best interest" without also building power in their favor is at best insufficient and at worst deeply problematic.

Our mission statement refers to building power for "systemic change," but what we're really talking about here is building power for a just transition.[2] Systemic change, when taken by itself, is actually not all that remarkable; systems change all the time. In fact, we might say that change – or transition – is inevitable. But justice is not.

One of things we've learned about climate change is that a clean energy transition is not necessarily a just one; if you're getting thrown under the bus, it doesn't really matter if it's solar-powered. We need to be clear on what we're saying NO to, what we're saying YES to, and how we get from NO to YES in a way that respects the dignity and meets the needs of everyone involved.

Just transition is clearly a critical demand from an equity perspective. But it's also the right strategy for multi-

issue work: It identifies root causes, it connects multiple issues and it weaves multiple strategies into something much bigger than the sum of its parts. I can think of no better framework in which to animate a place-based power-building strategy for systemic change.

3. It's critical that we support organizations to build all 3 forms of power in the broadest strategic sense.
To do this, we'll need to use all the tools in the toolbox because building multiple forms of power requires multiple kinds of resources. At Chorus, we started as a 501(c)(3), but we've since added a sister 501(c)(4) to support organizations that participate explicitly in electoral politics, as well as an aligned investment portfolio – all as coordinated pieces of the same strategy.[3]

This means that our investments must be held to the same criteria: Not only do we ask for beneficial social or environmental impacts, we ask how our investments might build or leverage economic power for the same communities that we support with our grantmaking.

4. We need to be clear on which decisions are appropriate for us to make.
We have a tendency in philanthropy to determine the "best" policy outcome on our own and then shop around for grantees as if they were nothing more than service providers to achieve that outcome. We also tend to impose our own issue silos on our grantees as if compartmentalization were somehow an effective approach to systemic change.

These practices need to stop.

If our grantees are going to be successful in building durable, lasting, multi-issue progressive power, then we need to give them the ability to navigate the entire ecosystem of power themselves. One of the easiest ways to do this is to provide long-term, general-operating support. At Chorus, we've organized our entire grantmaking strategy around such support.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR US

Our journey continues in the following ways.

We're continuing our line of inquiry around decision-making.
We're working with our grantees to explore radically democratic approaches such as activist-led grantmaking and participatory budgeting, and we're learning from folks such as the Boston Ujima Project. If being mindful of power dynamics is a first step, then our ultimate goal is to share decision-making power with our grantees and the communities that they're accountable to – if not hand it over entirely.

We're challenging the assumption that we should be the ones to see any return on investment.
We're supporting cooperative, nonextractive loan funds that are owned and controlled by the very communities they serve. We have been deeply inspired by The Working World in particular. A grant is ultimately a consumptive unit of economic power; you use it, and then it's gone. A truly just transition will require that we learn how to hand over productive units of economic power as well.

We're pushing ourselves to study the implications of cultural power more deeply.
This applies both to our own grantmaking as well as to the landscape of cultural power within philanthropy itself. What are the unspoken assumptions in our sector? What could it look like to challenge those assumptions?

Ultimately, we're interested in a just transition for the philanthropic sector.
If our goal is to support truly transformative work, then it stands to reason that we ourselves will need to transform.

If these ideas resonate with you, then we'd love to talk. In the meantime, please check out NCRP's "Power Moves" toolkit, which helps funders determine how well the can build, share and wield power for equitable outcomes; as well as Justice Funders, a partner and guide for philanthropic transformation. ■

What are the unspoken assumptions in our sector? What could it look like to challenge those assumptions?

Farhad Ebrahimi (@Yahktoe) is president of the Chorus Foundation (@ChorusFund).

Notes

1. Farhad Ebrahimi, "What we've learned after a decade of climate funding, and what we're doing instead," Medium, November 30, 2015, https://medium.com/chorus-foundation/what-we-ve-learned-after-a-decade-of-climate-funding-and-what-we-re-doing-instead-e29c945c8ce0.
2. Learn more at https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/.
3. To learn more about 501(c)(4)s, read this primer by the California Association of Nonprofits: https://calnonprofits.org/publications/article-archive/616-what-should-nonprofits-know-about-501-c-4-organizations-especially-in-an-election-year.

Lessons for foundations on rapid-response support at the front lines of democracy

By Shireen Zaman and Melissa Spatz

What makes rapid-response support effective? Zaman and Spatz share 5 tips from their work at Proteus Fund.

Even before the results of the 2016 election, it was clear to us, along with the organizations, communities and movements that we support, that we were operating under a new playbook.

In these tumultuous times, it's especially critical that grantmakers use rapid response effectively and strategically.

Over the last 2 years, the Piper Fund and the RISE Together Fund (formerly known as Security & Rights Collaborative) have experimented, stepped out of our comfort zones and found success in deploying rapid response funds. We learned 5 critical lessons along the way.

A HISTORY OF SUPPORTING THE FRONT LINES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

For 10 years, RISE Together has provided strategic support to America's Muslim, Arab and South Asian (MASA) communities to protect rights, advance policy reform and enhance coordination of the field.

Over the last 3 years in particular, we saw a dramatic rise in hate violence and toxic political rhetoric targeting MASA communities, which was quickly translated into regressive policies and executive orders under the new administration.

In December, with rapid-response support from the RISE Together Fund, representatives from the Council on American-Relations and prominent American-Islamic Muslim civil rights activists and religious leaders joined a procession of more than 400 individuals and interfaith leaders to protest the inhuman treatment of asylum seekers and migrants. Photo by Naaz Modan.

Our work to support policy advocacy, public education and community organizing on issues related to profiling, discrimination and hate crimes became ever more salient.

The Piper Fund, which supports advocacy, coalition-building and public education to protect and strengthen democratic institutions and norms, prioritizes grantmaking to communities that are under-represented in our democracy, particularly communities of color.

Piper saw new attacks in its primary areas of work – confronting the influence of money in politics and defending judicial independence – and also identified a disturbing new trend of unprecedented attacks on freedom of assembly, an issue central to democracy.

Since early 2017, legislatures in 31 states have introduced bills to criminalize and disincentivize protest, with laws passing in multiple states.

As programs of the Proteus Fund, a full-service philanthropy organization that brings funders and movement leaders together to create the collaborative systems and strategies needed to create and protect enduring social change, we had a strong and flexible infrastructure from which to navigate these challenging times.

And as 2 funder collaboratives with decades' long experience working on

critical issues in our democracy, we felt compelled to expand our boundaries, rise to the challenges of the time and deploy resources quickly and strategically to our fields.

5 LESSONS FOR FUNDERS

Rapid response has long been in the philanthropic toolkit, and, indeed, a core part of our collaboratives.

Below are 5 lessons we have learned from collectively deploying $900,000 over 2 years through rapid response support:

1. Rapid-response must be truly "rapid."
During a time when we saw virulent attacks against marginalized communities and the basic pillars of democracy occur almost weekly, many funders have risen to the occasion. They issued special calls for proposals to support frontline work to counter these assaults. It was inspiring to see many in philanthropy step up in this way.

However, many funders took months to approve rapid-response grants.

In contrast, Piper and RISE Together have been able to deploy rapid-response funding within 1-2 weeks. Together with Proteus' grants management, finance and senior leadership teams, we amended our sound internal program processes to get the grants out the door even more quickly.

We streamlined our proposals, asking 3-5 questions for most grants, took phone applications if the situation required it and proactively reached out to organizations in hot spots.

In Piper's case, the spate of antiprotest bills took communities by surprise, and our staff were often the first to inform state advocates of this new threat to freedom of assembly. At the same time, state legislatures were rushing to approve these laws, with no meaningful engagement.

This meant that, in multiple states, we had to move from outreach, to inviting a proposal, to approval of a grant for public education about these antidemocratic initiatives and policies, within a very short time frame.

For both funds, this ability to move grants quickly was critical for our grantees.

2. Rapid-response vehicles work best when they are known to the field.
We were able to move grants quickly because field leaders know us and we know them. Our collaboratives' program staff hold personal and professional ties to the advocates that we fund, and this has helped to facilitate the grantmaking process at many levels.

In a time when activists are rightfully wary of who is collecting information on their work, our funds have a longstanding track record of hands-on and transparent support to the field. We built this trust by being responsive to grantees' requests, supporting them beyond the grant (more on that below) and advocating for the field with other funders.

It has also meant that we knew how to quickly identify potential grantees to do the critical, urgent work at hand.

Piper, for example, funds in 21 states and has relationships with advocates in many more. As we launched a rapid-response fund to provide grants at the state level, these relationships allowed us to identify potential grantees quickly, with a clear assessment of their reach and the likely impact of their public engagement work.

RISE Together benefited from our participation in key MASA listservs, conferences and networks, which allowed us to maximize our reach to the field. We were able to get our RFPs directly into the hands of key community leaders and personally connect with organizations based on our long track record in the field.

3. There needs to be flexibility on how funds are used.
Prevailing "grantmaking best practice" is that rapid-response funds should not be used for staff time or to carry ongoing costs. The reality for our rapid-response grantees, many of whom are small organizations with budgets under $300K, however, is that a small grant can sometimes close a salary gap or allow for the immediate hire of staff for an issue campaign poised to have a critical impact.

We also learned to use multiple tools in our toolbox beyond grantmaking. For example, RISE Together was supporting rapid-response work around the Muslim ban, only to discover that there were no materials available in Somali, thus compromising outreach to those from one of the banned countries.

Rather than make a grant to an organization and slow down the process, we paid a professional directly to translate the needed materials.

Similarly, Piper has used rapid-response funds to contract directly for messaging research that was critical for groups looking for the best ways to engage their communities, the media and others.

4. Funds are not enough.
Very quickly, we learned that just providing funding to put out fires was not enough. We needed to support our fields to be able to see and strategically analyze the full picture.

For RISE Together, this meant hiring a team of well-established field leaders as consultants to support a space called MASA Organizing.

This included the creation of a listserv for information sharing, which now has more than 400 subscribers from almost 200 organizations, regular calls and webinars to share policy analysis and field updates, along with the creation of shared resources such as a MASA civic engagement platform[1] in the lead up to the midterm elections.

We have also supported multiple convenings – around the Muslim ban and other issues – to allow advocates to build relationships, improve their skills and plan proactive campaigns.

We realized that this investment would make our grantmaking and the MASA field's response to critical policy more effective, efficient and, in the end, build more community and solidarity at a time of distress for MASA communities around the country.

This network has helped us to identify new areas of need and helped make our small grants more impactful because the field is sharing what they are doing and learning in real time.

Similarly, as the Piper Fund began to make rapid-response grants to protect freedom of assembly, we quickly recognized that state organizations needed more than just financial resources. As groups began to grapple with this new threat to democracy, they had questions about the constitutionality of the proposed laws, best practices for messaging to inform and engage their communities and lessons learned from other states. We also saw that national organizations were beginning to address the issue as best they could, but that the field was not coordinated.

In response, we hired a consultant and worked with a set of national groups to form Protect Dissent, a network we cofacilitate with Piper Action Fund that provides coordinated and strategic support to state groups seeking to protect freedom of assembly.

Bringing together organizations addressing democracy, education, environmental justice, racial justice, human rights and more, this network has made our grantmaking approach more holistic and impactful.

5. Rapid-response is no substitute for long-term funding.

While we are in the midst of a moment of ever-increasing acute crises, we did not arrive here overnight. We have witnessed a steady erosion of democratic norms and institutions, and philanthropy has failed to invest over many years as robustly as it should have to defend our democracy and ensure that it is inclusive and participatory.

For too long, philanthropy has prioritized white-led Beltway groups to anchor field work on issues of democracy and civil rights. As a result, communities of color and other frontline communities at the crosshairs of each crisis since the election have been forced to operate from a position of significant scarcity.

Without the long-term funding required to build the viability, visibility and tactical skills needed to articulate and advance their agendas, these communities will be unable to build the inclusive and participatory democracy they envision and will forever be playing defense in the face of emerging crises.

Now is the moment not only for critical rapid-response grantmaking but also for refocusing our collective vision on this long-term response.

While rapid-response grantmaking will continue to be part of our strategy, both Piper and RISE Together prioritize long-term grantmaking to communities of color that have had limited access to resources.

We will also continue to advocate in philanthropy for the transformative, long-term funding these community-led organizations need and deserve as they lead the fight for our democracy.

We invite you to join us. ■

1,000 opponents of the Line 3 pipeline project gather in St. Paul, Minnesota, to rally, march and testify against the proposed tar sands pipeline. MN350, a Piper Fund grantee, engaged their community in 2018 to defend the rights of pipeline protestors. Photo by Andy Pearson, MN350.

Shireen Zaman is program director of RISE Together Fund (@RISE2getherfund). Melissa Spatz is program director of the Piper Fund (@PiperFund). RISE Together and Piper are programs of Proteus Fund (@ProteusFund).

Notes

1. Visit https://voteandbeheard.tumblr.com/.

What does Amazon's HQ2 tax-break grab mean for U.S. cities?

By Greg LeRoy and Ryan Schlegel

Funders have an opportunity to promote a new model of economic development where communities benefit as much as corporations like Amazon.

There's nothing like an outrageous corporate tax-break money grab to bring people together.

That's our takeaway from the year-long auction Amazon.com Inc. staged for its second headquarters or "HQ2."

Amazon's transparently ham-handed quest to secure a multibillion-dollar tax-break package attracted 238 bids and led the company to choose 2 new locations: the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., and Queens, New York.

Community leaders in both cities have been quick to question the wisdom of spending billions in public money to attract the company most responsible for Seattle's ongoing affordable housing crisis to places already burdened with their own housing challenges.

The Amazon HQ2 circus has brought intense scrutiny to a corporate-dominated site-selection process, where local governments passively grant huge incentive giveaways while demanding too little in return.

Communities are organizing to ensure that HQ2 benefits the 99% as much as it benefits Jeff Bezos, Amazon's CEO and the world's richest person.

It's time that foundations and donors who care about fair housing, homelessness, local businesses and good jobs join them to change what economic development could look like.

DOES ANYONE BENEFIT FROM AMAZON BESIDES AMAZON?

People coast to coast questioned the cost-benefit analysis of HQ2 coming to their town. Amazon's voracious growth – arguably the key factor that drove cities and states to fall over themselves to court HQ2 – is undeniable.

In 2017, the company hired more new employees every quarter than Facebook employs altogether.

Yet, the potential benefits of job growth don't accrue to every community. The Economic Policy Institute found[1] that the arrival of an Amazon warehouse doesn't grow overall local employment.

This indicates that the $1.6 billion in state and local subsidies used to attract Amazon since 2000 (as Good Jobs First has documented[2]) was wasted and could have been better spent on public services.

Amazon's complicated impacts on local and regional economies are well-documented, including the company's role in gentrification and homelessness in Seattle, the poverty wages that force its warehouse workers to depend on social safety net programs and a predatory, monopolistic business model that trampled local booksellers.

According to a report[3] from the Insti-

A protest against Amazon business practices at the Seattle Art Museum on May 24, 2012. Photo from www.flickr.com/photos/Backbone_Campaign (CC by-NC-SA 2.0).

tute for Local Self Reliance, Amazon undercuts even its own third-party sellers.

Its values are suspect: Action on Race and the Economy and the Partnership for Working Families (PWF) revealed that Amazon continues to profit from selling white supremacist and Islamophobic merchandise.[4] And Mijente and others have shown that Amazon provides crucial support to ICE's efforts to track, detain and deport immigrants.[5]

COMMUNITIES IN THE FRONT LINES OF EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A surge of local organizing from the left and right (such as the Koch brothers-backed Generation Opportunity's social media campaign) is demanding that Amazon must agree to come to the table to negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) to ensure that incumbent residents in Queens and suburban Virginia will benefit from HQ2 rather than be its collateral damage.

CBAs are contracts between corporations and community coalitions that can cover a wide range of safeguards such as local hiring and procurement, affordable housing, public transit, small business development and environmental improvements.

Since the announcement of HQ2, numerous coalitions of community groups have popped up across the country to advocate for the well-being of our communities in negotiations and final selection of the new headquarters.

For example, PWF, Jobs with Justice and 130 other groups issued an open letter to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos at ourHQ2wishlist.org enumerating key community demands, including no tax dodging and a robust public engagement process.

4 WAYS FUNDERS CAN SUPPORT HQ2 COMMUNITIES

These efforts to put local voices at the center of the conversation and keep community demands front and center in the debate require philanthropic resources to counter the avalanche of expensive corporate PR campaigns that will surely come now that Amazon has selected suburban Virginia and Queens as its HQ2 locations.

The locations (where the company's growth will play out for a decade or more) will also need ongoing support for work on Amazon's wide-ranging effects in many sectors of the economy.

How can funders make a difference?

Here are 4 ways philanthropy can step up to support local organizing to combat Amazon's dominance in the economic development conversation:

1. Look beyond issue silos.
"Funders can have the most impact by funding multifaceted coalitions that represent communities and workers as a whole," Partnership for Working Families Executive Director Lauren Jacobs explains. "The fight over Amazon's new campuses is not just about jobs – it's about empowering communities to shape their own futures and preserve the rich cultures and histories that make these cities attractive to tech corporations and gentrifiers."

2. Move money to organizations in communities that are directly affected by HQ2.
It's especially important for funders to support efforts that build the power and amplify the voices of low-income people and especially Black, Latinx, Asian-American and other communities of color.

3. Identify ways your current grantmaking priorities will be impacted by Amazon's outsized influence in impacted communities.
Examples of relevant issue areas include housing affordability, food access, green development and more.

4. Wield your own power beyond grantmaking dollars as community, business and political leaders to benefit low-income people.
Use your voice to advocate polices that ensure shared prosperity and question corporate dominance of state and local policymaking.

Amazon's 2 new headquarters could become monuments to high-tech arrogance that deepen economic and racial inequality in our cities. Or, they could become economic development game-changers: a new model of corporate accountability and community power generating broadly shared benefits. The moment is ours to seize! ■

Greg LeRoy (@GregLeRoy4) is executive director of Good Jobs First (@goodjobsfirst). Ryan Schlegel (@r_j_schlegel) is the research director of NCRP (@NCRP).

Notes

1. Janelle Jones and Ben Zipperer, "Unfilled Promises," Economic Policy Institute, February 1, 2018, https://www.epi.org/publication/unfulfilled-promises-amazon-warehouses-do-not-generate-broad-based-employment-growth/.
2. Visit https://www.goodjobsfirst.org/amazon-tracker.
3. Olivia LaVecchia and Stacy Mitchell, *Amazon's Stranglehold*, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (Minneapolis, Portland and Washington, D.C.: November 2016), https://ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ILSR_AmazonReport_final.pdf.
4. Partnership for Working Families and Action Center on Race & the Economy, *Delivering Hate*, July 2018, https://www.acrecampaigns.org/amazon.
5. Visit https://mijente.net/notechforice/.

Philanthropy: Perilous times call for bold measures

(continued from page 1)

We see that impact now. In Central America, where 1/3 of employment is based on agriculture, the region is experiencing a multi-year drought.[3]

We have to ask: Is philanthropy up to the task?

Currently, philanthropy has adopted neoliberal[4] models of assigning risk to grantmaking, particularly for grants to communities most affected by systemic inequality.[5]

But, given the perils we face as a nation and as global citizens, the risk of maintaining the status quo outweighs the risk of experimentation in funding new leadership and ideas.

Way to Win, a coalition of funders and organizers, was co-founded by Leah Hunt-Hendrix, Jenifer Fernandez Ancona and myself in 2017 in response to this moment.

Our mission is to work in partnership with those most affected by injustice to improve lives and to achieve a representative democracy that works for all.

The 2016 election cycle was a wake-up call. In postelection debriefs, Way to Win heard 2 recurrent themes:

1. There is a broken feedback loop between organizers educating unlikely voters and donors who believe in expanding the electorate.[6]
2. There is little funding that connects civic engagement during election season with community organizing every other day of the year.

As members of Women Donors Network (WDN) and Solidaire, we started Way to Win based on lessons from state-based donor networks that craved partnership with community organizers building democracy from the ground up, year-round.

3 STEPS TOWARD TRANSFORMATION

For us, "organizing" entails "[d]evelop[ing] the agency of individuals and communities … to act purposefully on the issues they care about … enabl[ing] them to become leaders with the motivation, skills and capacities needed to make the changes they want."[7]

Organizing fueled Florida's successful 2018 Amendment 4 campaign, a statewide constitutional amendment restoring voting rights to more than 1.4 million formerly incarcerated citizens, undoing a vestige of slavery that disenfranchised about 1 in 4 Black Floridians.

Organizers built the leadership of formerly incarcerated people, giving them the skills they needed to frame the debate through sharing their stories in the media and at the doors.[8]

These leaders had the motivation and skills to make the change they wanted. And sustained organizing, keeping a broad base of support for the amendment, will be the only way to hold the victory as the governor-elect subverts its implementation.[9]

Our charge as grantmakers is to scale, replicate and iterate organizing efforts by taking 3 steps:

1. Increase the speed and size of grantmaking.

Donors need to recognize that to make big change organizers need big investments.

In a recent example of how not to proceed, a foundation required its grantees to participate in a months-long collaborative process to develop a joint proposal.

After the proposal was prepared, the organizations learned that the grant, after being split among grantees, was a small fraction of each organization's monthly operating budget. The process was a net drain on the capacity of these organizations.

Two models stand out as examples of the right way to increase the speed and scale of dollars moving to the ground and increase the likelihood of achieving their desired outcomes:

- **Invest in and with donor collaboratives with strategies tied to specific policy shifts.**

  Donor collaboratives are pooled funds that allow smaller funder dollars to be leveraged so that the ultimate grants are more sizable and thereby have more impact than if the funder acted alone.

  One example is Four Freedoms Fund (FFF), whose mission is to shift immigration policy and to achieve full integration of immigrants in democracy.[10] FFF staff and consultants work deeply and collaboratively in the states where they invest to advance their grantees' strategies. FFF also educates national and state funders to mobilize more resources for these local strategies.

  By investing in trusted collaboratives like FFF, program officers bypass months of landscaping that they would otherwise conduct on their own.

The risk of maintaining the status quo outweighs the risk of experimentation in funding new leadership and ideas.

New and Renewing Members

Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice
Amalgamated Charitable Foundation
American Jewish World Service
Annenberg Foundation
Blandin Foundation
Brooklyn Community Foundation
Bush Foundation
Community Foundation of Tompkins County
Community West Foundation
Conant Family Foundation
Consumer Health Foundation
Field Foundation
Foundation for Child Development
Garment Workers Center
General Service Foundation
Hyams Foundation
Incourage Community Foundation
Libra Foundation
Lumina Foundation
Mendelsohn Family Fund
Mentes Puertorriquenas en Accion, Inc.
Metro IAF
National Community Reinvestment Coalition
National Guestworkers Alliance
Ohio Voice
Organize Florida
Poik Bros. Founation
Race Forward
Racial Justice NOW!
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Rosenberg Foundation
Sandler Foundation
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Southwest Organizing Project
Tarbell Family Foundation
Tecovas Foundation
Tennessee Justice Center
The California Endowment
The David Rockefeller Fund
The Lawrence Foundation
The Melville Charitable Trust
The Whitman Institute
Walton Family Foundation
Weingart Foundation
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

- **Invest in and with donor advising networks with strategies tied to building power for specific communities.**
  Like Way to Win, WDN stands out as a donor-advising hub whose members move in concert with strategic urgency.

  WDN's strategy includes advancing reflective democracy via data and grantmaking, and supporting women's leadership in the Black freedom movement.[11] Through other WDN projects, members fund voter justice in the South, fight for women in the workplace and elevate women in the climate movement.

  Listening deeply to leaders and movements most affected by injustice, WDN holds a long-term vision while moving resources quickly and nimbly.

2. Remove silos between donors and organizers.
Grantmakers and grantees must overcome the walls that separate us. We need more communication and trust to take on innovative campaigns.

The walls only serve to confuse who has the power and expertise to accomplish a goal. The degree-holding expert in Manhattan, for example, does not have the power to rewrite right-to-work laws in the South, thereby raising economic conditions for the middle class across the country. But organized communities have the requisite influence and motivation to change policies that personally affect them.

By listening to organizers, Way to Win developed a new set of metrics to gauge power building beyond the outcomes of a single election cycle (check out our Signals of Success).

Bringing down the walls is also more efficient. Organizers shouldn't have to read tea leaves. A free exchange of information can more quickly move big resources and identify discreet needs that can be easily filled.

For example, Way to Win's leaders listened to and trusted local organizers like LaTosha Brown, co-founder of Black Voters Matter and former project director for Grantmakers for Southern Progress.

She had a big idea about renting a bus through the election cycle to recreate the energy of the Freedom Rides. Way to Win co-founder Jenifer Fernandez Ancona and Brown knew that for news about the bus to reach more than just those at community bus stops, the organizers needed professional media content to distribute digitally.

Way to Win and others funded the bus and a trusted documentarian to follow the bus through the Southern Black Belt.

The images and stories they gathered became one of the key progressive narratives that broke through the national news cycle during the election.

Moreover, Brown became a national spokesperson on voter suppression in Georgia. Because the media drew attention to Georgia, more Georgians knew how to contact organizers and lawyers to seek redress if they had trouble casting a ballot, and we now have the national imperative to reform voting rights.

3. Decentralize philanthropy.
The change we seek will arise when more communities are organized to demand change. Because most foundation program officers are removed from local efforts, they often trust national brands over local entities for their grantmaking.

When the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder*,[12] foundations increased gifts to national groups like the Brennan Center for Justice and the American Civil Liberties Union, both incredibly worthy endeavors.

But foundations did not match their national giving with support for local voting rights work developed with organizers mobilizing electorates impacted by the Supreme Court ruling.

The Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) works with a cohort of movement leaders in Texas behind a multi-year strategy to improve reflective democracy in the state.

TCRP lawyers were called when organizers at the Texas Organizing Project (TOP) arrived at closed polling locations at 7:00 a.m. on Election Day in Harris County, a county as large as Louisiana. The lawyers filed suit immediately and by noon had a judicial ruling to keep polling locations open 2 extra hours that evening.

And those same TOP organizers then maximized the impact of the court order by deploying field teams to alert the community that polling location hours were extended.

National organizations cannot replicate that kind of impact unless they have permanent staff in the states collaborating with local organizers' efforts.

COMING TOGETHER

We have the capacity to ensure that all communities have a seat at the table and the freedom to thrive. To achieve our progressive vision, we need organized communities and organized funders. We need strategic donor collaboratives and networks – such as Way to Win – that move member resources toward shared goals, maximizing the scale and impact of their grantmaking. ■

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Notes

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