Responsive Philanthropy

NCRP'S QUARTERLY JOURNAL

MAY 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

Students and their supporters, like these demonstrators in Washington, D.C., were among the 1 million plus who attended a March for Our Lives rally across the country. Photo by Flickr.com/Phil Roeder, CC BY 2.0.

Funders can help secure the next generation of activists, voters and grassroots movement leaders

By Austin Belali

A grassroots movement of young people, led by students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, captured the nation's attention with gun control activism following the tragic shooting at the school. Their efforts culminated in a nationwide march to end gun violence that drew thousands of students calling for sensible gun laws.

In the days since the mobilizations began, youth and students are reportedly looking for opportunities to connect with nonpartisan youth-centered civic engagement strategies that bridge reforming our nation's gun laws after the tragedy in Stoneman Douglas High School to broader concerns about the health of U.S. democracy.

Their demonstrations, along with recent mobilizations, call for a concerted national-level effort around capacity-building for youth civic participation.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OF TODAY

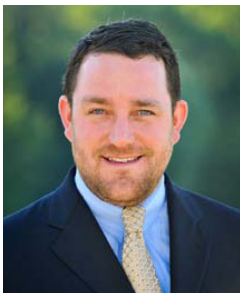
Youth have always been at the forefront of grassroots mobilizations for change from the fights against gender and racial discrimination to economic inclusion. But, in the past, older generations have been more likely to participate as voters and active voices in formal democratic processes.

There are hopeful signs that there is increasing interest among younger generations to access levels of governmental power. This is important because large-scale system changes in a democratic society happen nonviolently, primarily through active participation in formal democratic processes and institutions.

As foundation leaders and individual donors consider placing big bets on strategies that lead toward lasting systemic change, fostering a culture of formal democratic (*continued on page 13*)

ncrp
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
challenging grantmakers to strengthen communities

A message from the President and CEO



Dear Colleagues,

Something exciting is happening in our nation. Over the past few years, increasing numbers of us are taking action with our dollars and our voices. From #BlackLivesMatter to #MeToo and #NeverAgain, we're seeing a spike in civic engagement that makes me hopeful for the future of our country.

We must capitalize on this moment and turn increased activism into lasting change. The articles in this edition of *Responsive Philanthropy* offer actionable insights for funders to take advantage of a more politically engaged public to support efforts that lead a positive enduring impact on issues and communities we care about.

In "**From whispers to roars: The conversation movement**," Mike Perry, co-founder, and Kathleen Perry, senior analyst, of public opinion research firm PerryUndem, write about the top issues that a majority of the public cares about and wants addressed. They offer four key takeaways for funders to leverage what they call the "conversation movement."

Austin Belali, director of the Youth Engagement Fund, reminds us of the urgent need to build the capacity of youth civic participation especially among youth of color, those from rural areas and other underserved communities. In "**Funders can help secure the next generation of activists, voters and grassroots movement leaders**," he offers important considerations for donors to ensure that they are helping long-term engagement of young people that leads to lasting positive change.

Funders for Civic Participation and Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement are seeing firsthand a growing interest in supporting civic participation. In "**Helping grantmakers navigate civic engagement funding**," Eric Marshall and Kristen Campbell, executive directors of FCCP and PACE respectively, share the common concerns they're hearing from members and the ways their organizations are providing space for learning, collaboration and action.

In "**Strength in numbers: Rethinking the power of funder collaboration**," TCC Group's Melinda Fine, Molly Schultz Hafid and Steven Lawrence identify the six most common questions that funders are asking themselves in response to today's social and political moment. They share findings from a recent report that illustrates the important role that affinity groups, regional associations and other "philanthropy serving organizations" are playing to address these concerns.

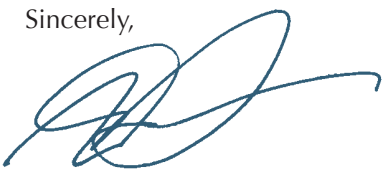
And in our Member Spotlight, **The Colorado Health Foundation** shares how it has embraced community engagement in their efforts to advance good health and health equity for all Coloradans.

Thank you to all contributors to this and past issues of the journal as you share the many ways that grantmakers can help address inequity and injustice.

For funders who are struggling to find their path forward, I hope these stories offer inspiring possibilities for your organizations. I also invite you to a bold examination of how you are fully leveraging your power and privilege through the new ***Power Moves*** **self-assessment guide** as your essential next step towards true and lasting positive impact.

Thank you for being a part of NCRP's community.

Sincerely,



Aaron Dorfman
President and CEO

Responsive Philanthropy is the quarterly journal of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

2018, Issue No. 2
ISBN: 1065-0008

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
1900 L Street NW, Suite 825
Washington, DC 20036
Phone 202.387.9177
Fax 202.332.5084
E-mail: info@ncrp.org

From whispers to roars: The conversation movement

By Michael Perry and Kathleen Perry

The easy story to tell in politics today is that of a divided and disconnected public: red versus blue, urban versus rural, men versus women. It is easy to feel discouraged in an environment dominated by divisiveness. But that is not the whole picture.

Amidst the rhetoric of a divided public has emerged a movement of people driven by a need to connect, to understand and to be reassured that they are not alone. And the message to grantmakers is clear: People care about issues like gender and racial equity, and they think more needs to be done; the time is now for funders to tap into this movement.

THE BIRTH OF A "CONVERSATION MOVEMENT"

Our studies in the past year and a half have shown that people are increasingly driven by a desire to connect and engage with one another. They are talking – more than ever – about public issues with family, friends, strangers and anyone who will listen.

And they are connecting. We see this in surveys[1] with majorities – across age, gender and party affiliation – reporting discussions with friends or families in the past year about issues like women's equality. We see this in focus groups,[2] with participants continuing conversations amongst themselves long after the groups are over.

As researchers, we have heard whispers of a movement for years, where focus group participants increasingly mention issues like "women's rights" and "racial inequality" as top concerns in their lives. Those whispers turned to roars after the 2016 election.

Since then, we are seeing people take action – big and small – in a way they were not doing before. More are informal political action, primarily involving conversations.

More people seem to be talking to each other, paying attention to news and speaking out in ways they would not have before. Some are joining Facebook groups with like-minded individuals, while others are surprising themselves by raising public issues in book club meetings, Bible studies, family reunions and other settings, where "politics" have traditionally been avoided.

Conversations that did not used to be political are becoming more nuanced and more informed. While many tell us they are taking traditional political actions like donating to causes and supporting candidates, many others seem to be bypassing the traditional institutions for democratic engagement. They seem to be taking action into their own hands and engaging directly with one another. This is organic action, often leaderless, usually without clear end goals, but driven by strong emotions and the desire to speak out and connect.

This "conversation movement" we see bubbling up in our focus groups and surveys may be creating a space for people to unite with others like them. We see this in the Women's March and the March for Our Lives and the organic ways these evolved. But we also see this in the white supremacists' rally in

Charlottesville and in more overt expressions of bigotry and intolerance.

Voices have been given a platform and a new medium for discourse, and people are listening more than they ever were.

TOP ISSUES: GENDER EQUALITY AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Two areas where we are seeing this informal engagement the most are in gender equality and sexual harassment. These are issues we have been digging into lately and they offer a window into this emerging activism.

Our polling suggests that there has been a shift on these issues since the infamous *Access Hollywood* tape and the election of Donald Trump. Here are some highlights from our surveys:[3]

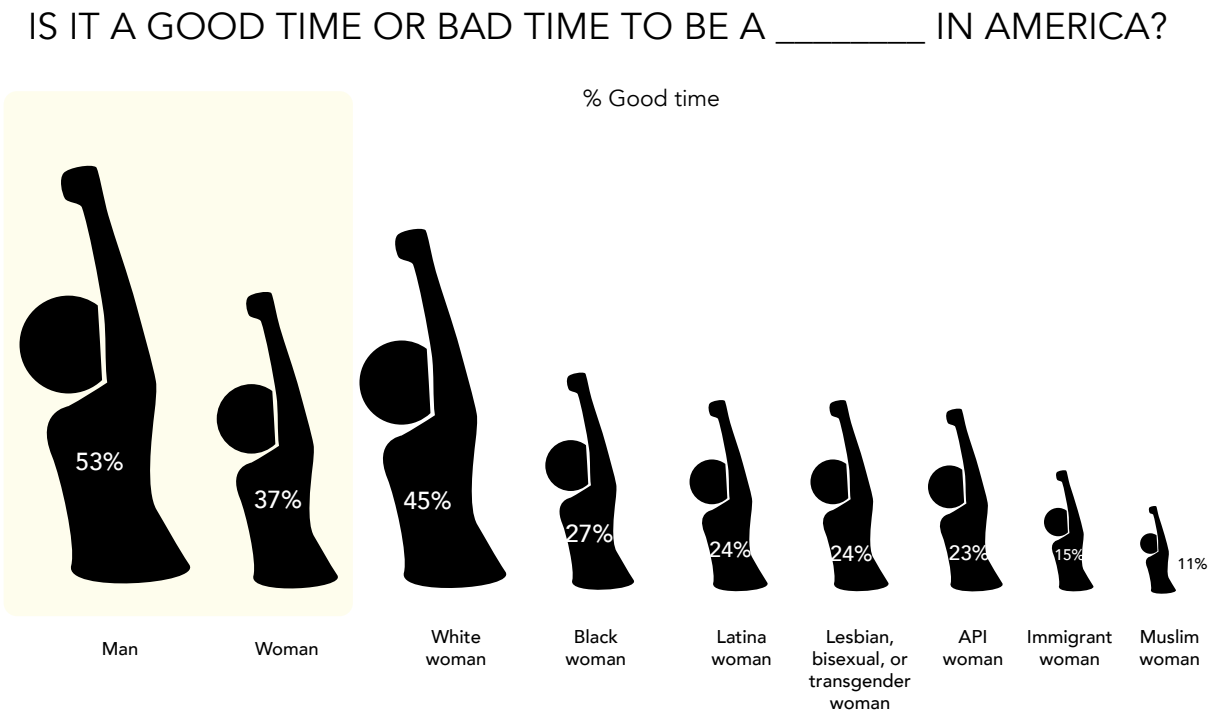
- A solid majority of voters (69 percent) now thinks the country would be better off with more women in office – up 17 points since December 2016 (52 percent).
- Sexism is a "big" problem in our society, say 44 percent of voters – up 14 points from late 2016 (30 percent).
- Seven in 10 voters (73 perecent) say the sexual harassment and assault stories have made them think more about sexism in our society. This is in addition to 40 percent of voters who said last year that the 2016 election made them think more about sexism in society.
- Many men are reflecting. Forty-three percent of male voters say the recent stories about harassment and assault have made them wonder about their own interactions with women in the past. About half of men (47 percent) do not think any of their actions in the past might have been interpreted as sexually inappropriate or harassment. The rest (53 percent) are unsure or think someone might have interpreted their actions as such.

SILENCE NO MORE

Perhaps the most important shift is that people are talking more about these issues. Seventy-two percent of voters say they have spoken with a friend or family member about issues related to gender equality in the past year – a major increase from December 2016 (49 percent).

News stories and celebrities talking about sexual harassment are also causing new conversations and actions. About 79 percent of voters say they are following these stories, and two-thirds of men (66 percent) have talked to a woman about these stories (68 percent of women have talked to a man as a result of these news stories). This all adds up to a lot of new kinds of conversations on topics that are traditionally not part of public – or even private – conversations.

This is what we saw in recent focus groups on the #MeToo movement that appeared in a *VOX* article.[4] In focus



From "The State of the Union on Gender Equality, Sexism and Women's Rights," which highlights results from a national survey conducted by PerryUndem on January 17, 2017.

groups with women of different generations, we heard, "You didn't used to talk about it. You just let it happen." What is different now?

We think the kind of space created in the year and a half since the 2016 election provided a platform for people to come forward and have a voice. The need to connect, to ask "Am I crazy? Did this happen to you?" and have people respond, "You are not crazy; it happened to me, too" is central to this movement. There is a desire to push back against the way things always were and to no longer be silent.

SEEING THE CONNECTIONS

Another trend emerging in our studies is the "connecting of the dots," which happens when people have the space to talk about issues. This seems to be a critical step towards seeing the larger picture and what is at stake. We are noticing that, as people engage around issues like women's equality and racial justice, they do not approach these issues in isolation but instead connect the dots between them all. A broader dialogue about freedom, equality and rights emerges.

In our survey on gender equality, sexism and women's rights,[5] eight in 10 say that more work needs to be done to achieve full equality for women in work, life and politics, and three in four say that sexism is a big or somewhat big problem in our society.

Majorities recognize the impact of access to health care, racism, violence against women and opportunities in the workplace on women's rights and equality.

In our survey of Black adults on the intersections of politics, race and public policy,[6] most see inequities at the core of systems in our society – two-thirds say they think systems in our society are set up to give white people more opportunities than Black people. Majorities also think racism affects the Black community's ability to have equal opportunities in the workplace, feel safe in their neighborhoods, have access to higher education and access quality, affordable health care.

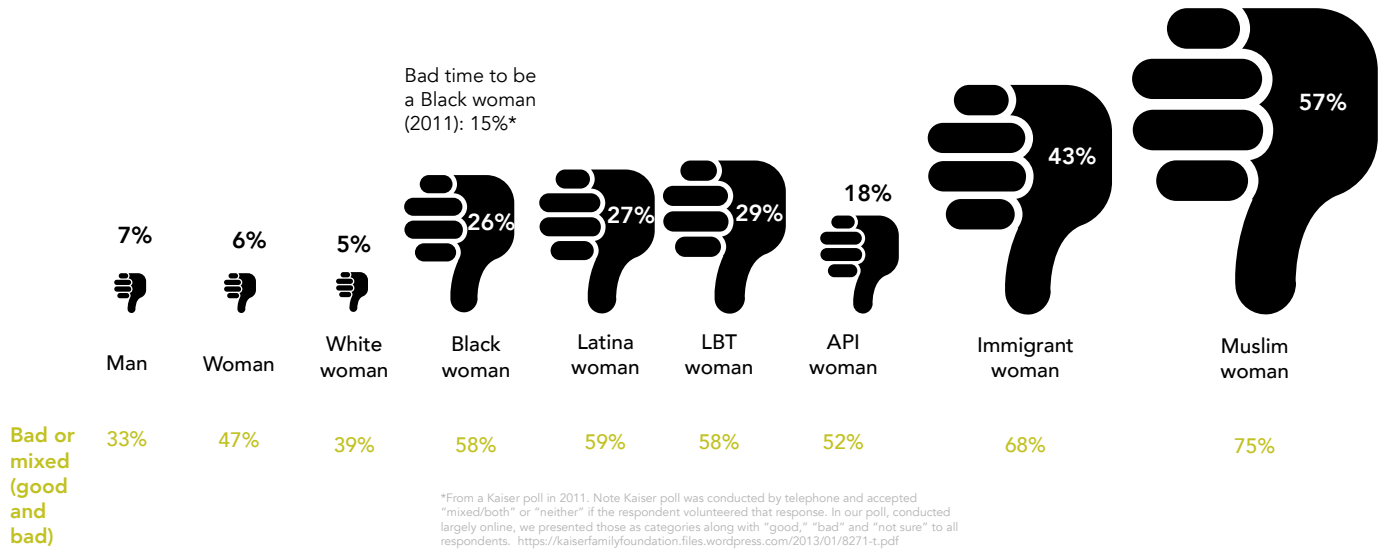
WHAT'S AHEAD

We do not see any fatigue in this conversation momentum. The participation in and sustained engagement around March for Our Lives shows that the desire to speak out, connect and push for change is still strong. This movement is continuing to manifest in less visible ways, too, as people continue to talk and take organic actions in their own lives.

So what are some key takeaways for funders that care about the same issues that people think are important, too?

1. Support ongoing efforts to continue to learn what is driving this new political landscape (other than the desire to connect) and how it will be (*continued on page 12*)

% Bad time to be a _____ in America



From a Kaiser poll in 2011. Note Kaiser poll was conducted by telephone and accepted "mixed/both" or "neither" if the respondent volunteered that response. In our poll, conducted largely online, we presented those as categories along with "good," "bad" and "not sure" to all respondents. https://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8271-t.pdf

From "The State of the Union on Gender Equality, Sexism and Women's Rights," which highlights results from a national survey conducted by PerryUndem on January 17, 2017.

Helping grantmakers navigate civic engagement funding

During the United Philanthropy Forum's annual conference in August 2017, The California Endowment's chief executive, Dr. Robert K. Ross, exhorted all funders to support civic participation efforts "in the fight for America's soul." He said, "Double it, and then supercharge it."

NCRP asked Eric Marshall, executive director of Funders' Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP), and Kristen Cambell, executive director of Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) to share what they've been seeing since the 2016 elections as they work with funders and nonprofits to strengthen civic engagement in the country.

NCRP: There has been growing interest in civic engagement among foundations after the 2016 elections. Is this true among your members? If so, what does that interest look like?

Marshall: To say there's been growing interest would be an understatement. Twenty-six members joined FCCP since the election. The increase falls into two buckets. First, foundations and program officers focused on issue or service delivery have realized that powerful participation – particularly from disenfranchised communities – and an open and equitable democracy are important to achieve the changes they seek. Second, grantmakers that set up short-term rapid response funds to support communities under attack post-inauguration now realize the importance of funding civic engagement in the long-term.

Kristen Cambell, Executive Director
Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement

Eric Marshall, Executive Director
Funders' Committee for Civic Participation

Cambell: We have definitely seen growing interest within PACE's membership (which grew 64 percent last year), which speaks to an urgency around civic engagement and democracy throughout the independent sector. While some may be inspired anew, many of our members have deeply valued these issues for a long time, and have been re-invigorated and encouraged by the interest and attention they are receiving from so many of their peers. It's a period of growing energy and excitement, and time will tell whether this shift is sustainable. In other words, whether this newer interest is a reaction to the current political moment, or a reflection of funders and practitioners claiming civic engagement and democracy as central values.

NCRP: How does this interest respond to or coincide with what you're hearing from nonprofits?

Cambell: I think the interest and momentum within the funding community and the nonprofit community are inspired by the same concern for finding both individual well-being and common good, especially in light of today's rapidly shifting social and political challenges. Ultimately, we're seeing and hearing that people are moved by the desire to engage across differences, look out for their neighbors, and be a part of creating the communities we want to live in.

People are also understanding the rights and responsibilities of living in a self-governing society and are stepping into that role in ways that have enlivened and re-invigorated the public square. They are looking for new ways to engage; the challenge for us is how to sustain this energy and attention. The turmoil and uncertainty we face today didn't happen overnight, so healing our democracy will take sustained commitment and resources.

Marshall: We've seen nonprofits and foundations recognize that long-term and sustained investments, particularly

in people-of-color-led organizations rooted in underserved communities, are vital. Short-term investments focused on elections, defending democratic institutions and advancing reforms are critical. But we also need long-term funding outside of election cycles to build power, develop leaders, drive cultural and narrative change, restore and advance the tenets of an equitable democracy, and break down structural racism.

FCCP launched a Power Impact Team comprised of grantees and grantmakers to consider how new research and approaches to building power can inform field and funder practice and theories of change. Our members envision a society where marginalized communities have the power to make a difference on issues that have an impact on their lives. And in this moment, it is critical for foundations to be comfortable adding more risk to their portfolios, so nonprofits doing innovative work have the resources to experiment and lead. FCCP will help funders on this journey.

NCRP: What kinds of concerns are you hearing from new and old members as they try to navigate in the current environment? How are you addressing those concerns?

Marshall: Some of the concerns we've heard include:

- A need to better understand what is and isn't working.
- Not enough funding for the needs.
- Lack of balance between investing in short-term threats and opportunities versus long-term needs.
- How can we restore democratic norms when elected leaders are ignoring them or are hostile toward democratic ideals?
- How can we more effectively invest at the local level in a long-term, sustainable way?

Addressing these concerns is central to the mission of FCCP. We are innovating with deeper levels of programming that both serve as a catalyst to support more effective grantmaking as well as creating spaces for stronger coordination and collaboration among funders.

We are piloting a neutral coordinating and learning space at the state level called the State Funding Circles. We are researching which states would most benefit from increased funder coordination in 2018 and 2019, matching that to available capacity and resources, and will be choosing two to three states to work in starting near the end of April 2018.

Cambell: One of the more persistent questions we've been receiving has been around what it means and looks like for an organization to "get political" and/or to find pragmatic or nonpolitical outlets for engagement and civic contribution. For many, the question is something like: I feel compelled to do something, but I don't identify as a political funder – how can I respond to this moment in a way that's meaningful and constructive? How do I support the democratic process in a way that doesn't necessarily take sides or prescribe outcomes but allows for the complexity and nuance within my community to emerge?

For some organizations, taking a political stance and/or getting involved in direct advocacy work can make sense and evolve organically from their mission. For others, the response is more nuanced, focused on reforming democracy and holding space for the democratic process itself.

At PACE, we believe there's room (and need) for all approaches to this work and we support our members in responding to this moment in various ways – from direct action within specific communities, to a focus on broader democratic systems like Congress or journalism, and priorities such as investments in dialogue and cross-partisan cooperation that aim to bring people together across lines of difference.

NCRP: Tell us about an exciting opportunity that's emerged from your work.

Cambell: One of our streams of work that has received a great deal of resonance this year is civic learning: The spectrum of experiences that prepare people for informed and engaged participation in civic life and the democratic process. Last September, PACE

Panelists during the "Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity and Opportunity" session hosted by PACE and National Conference on Citizenship during the latter's annual conference in October 2017. (L-R) Robert Sainz (City of Los Angeles), Maya Branch (student), Kristen Cambell (PACE), Rebecca Burgess (American Enterprise Institute), Decker Ngongang (PACE), Keesha Gaskins-Nathan (Rockefeller Brothers Fund), and Verdis Robinson (The Democracy Commitment). Photo courtesy of PACE.

FCCP deputy director, Alexis Anderson-Reed, introduces the "Our Future Atlanta" session at their 2017 convening with Suzanne Burnes from Collective Wisdom, Judy Adler from the Turner Foundation, Tamieka Atkins from ProGeorgia, Rohit Malhotra from Center for Civic Innovation, and Dwayne Patterson from the Partnership for Southern Equity.

was represented on the steering committee of the Democracy at a Crossroads Summit[1] in Washington, D.C., an event with the core belief that strengthening civic learning can make the difference in creating a bright future – not just for our nation's young people but for our nation as a whole.

Further, in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), PACE has led a series of convenings to explore how civic learning can be a pathway to equity and opportunity. Our approach is rooted in an understanding that there is a direct correlation between civic education and civic participation, and that inequities in access to education deepen the social inequities we face today. Young people from lower-income families have fewer civic learning opportunities and, as a result, experience diminished levels of participation in civic life, which in turn reinforces the inequitable systems. *How do we break that cycle?* A discussion paper shares some recommendations from these convenings.[2]

Marshall: YVote is an effort to harness the power of young voters of color to reshape the future of California. It began as a learning community in 2015 supported by The James Irvine Foundation and grew to a network in 2016 as funders understood the need to develop strategies that better engage young people. YVote is now not only part of the statewide civic participation table but is also leading the table's effort to increase its young adult voting by 5 percent across California in 2018.

NCRP: For funders who are still hesitant to support civic engagement, why is now an opportune time to dive in?

Marshall: We are in an environment of unprecedented threats and incredible opportunity. There has been a sustained, decades-long effort to undermine all aspects of a functioning democracy, sow racial division and depress participation in our elections. There are also many nonprofits implementing innovative strategies to combat those threats. Their success hinges on robust, sustained and aligned investments from the grantmaking community.

FCCP is hosting dynamic and thought-provoking conversations while creating a space for like-minded funders to learn from each other and deepen partnerships. If you're ready to get into the game, or step up your game, we're the home for you.[3]

Cambell: One thing we've heard consistently – especially from newer members and partners – is a recognition that civic engagement and democracy simply aren't "bonus" streams of work that happen alongside other more "necessary" programming. They *are* necessary, as the enabling conditions for the issues we care about – without them, the rest of the work falters.

And if that's not enough to inspire your commitment, or you need a resource to share with your board, we created this video[4] to help paint a picture of the civic engagement field: "The House that Civic Engagement Built." The moral of the story is: There's a place for everyone, and you're not alone – organizations like PACE[5] and FCCP are here to help orient and support you on this journey and find your place in the house.

NCRP: Any tips for funders that are about to embark or just began their journey in supporting civic engagement efforts?

Cambell: We're so glad you asked. To start, our Civic Engagement Primer,[6] responds to questions we've been receiving from funders new to this space: What exactly *is* civic engagement? How might it relate to my work? And how can I get started? The tool also includes accompanying pieces like the Civic Engagement Spectrum,[7] which illustrates the range of activities that can fall under the umbrella of civic engagement. Also, learning from and being in relationship with others that seek to advance the values and practice of civic engagement is a great place to start.

Something else that feels important to frame here is that, in order to do this work externally, it can also be important to think about what it means to do it internally. We've been hearing from members, particularly those who are newer to this work, that conversations about investing in civic engagement have led to internal conversations around themes such as leadership, listening, power, and decision-making. Ultimately, their internal work created the culture and values that enabled them to do the external work.

Marshall: I urge funders to:

- Learn. Find tools and resources that can help you understand the environment and strategies. FCCP is a great space for that – our robust census listserv[8] is just one example – but there are many spaces at the state and national levels.
- Talk with your grantees to understand the totality of their work. Many of them are most likely engaging in civic engagement efforts, even if you aren't funding those programs. Find out more about their work and how your grants to them can support the totality of their engagement efforts.
- Follow the lead of people rooted in the communities you are looking to serve. They are best positioned to understand the strategies and needs of their communities.
- Find great leaders and organizations and trust them. That means funding longer-term, giving more flexible general support grants and limiting the amount of reporting so they can be the best versions of themselves. ■

Follow @FCCPTweets and @PACEfunders on Twitter.

Notes

1. Learn more at http://www.civxsummit.org/.
2. "Recommendations for Exploring Civic Learning as a Pathway to Equity and Opportunity" (National Conference on Citizenship and PACE, April 2018) https://www.ncoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Recommendations-Paper-Exploring-Civic-Learning-as-a-Pathway-to-Equity-and-Opportunity-011718.pdf.
3. To join FCCP, visit https://funderscommittee.org/join/.
4. View the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lNvm1UQAhVU&t=2s.
5. To join PACE, visit http://pacefunders.org/membership.
6. Learn more at http://pacefunders.org/primer.
7. View the civic engagement chart at http://www.pacefunders.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Civic-Engagement-Chart.pdf.
8. Learn more at https://funderscommittee.org/working-group/4/.

Strength in numbers: Rethinking the power of funder collaboration

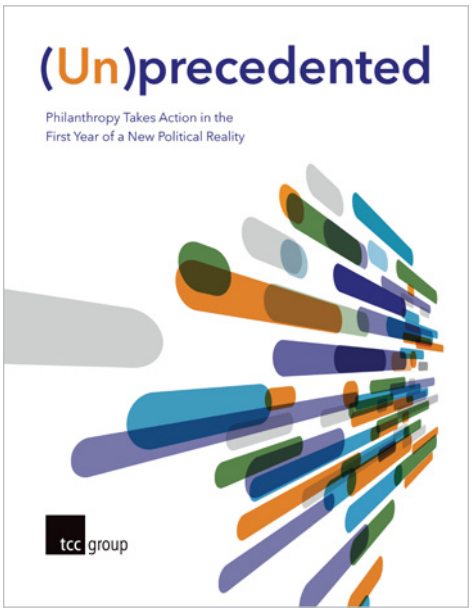
By Melinda Fine, Steven Lawrence and Molly Schultz Hafid

The first 100 days of the new administration. The first year. High-profile state elections in Alabama, New Jersey, Virginia and Pennsylvania. The rapidly approaching midterm elections.

With the second year of the administration proving to be as unprecedented and unpredictable as the first, foundations of varying size, reach, structure and issue priority are asking:

- How might collective action with peer funders strengthen our work going forward?
- What additional giving strategies, roles or leveraging opportunities might we seize to amplify our impact?
- How can we more effectively support vulnerable populations in the communities we serve?
- How can we support our own staff who might be directly affected in this moment, strengthening our institutional culture and climate?
- How can we manage potential differences in perspective among our staff and board?
- What is our appropriate leadership voice?

Our recently released report *(Un)precedented: Philanthropy Takes Action in the First Year of a New Political Reality* shows that many of these questions are being answered by foundations acting in partnership with one another through funder collaboratives and philanthropy-serving organizations (PSOs). And they're coming together in very specific ways in response to the dramatic scope of the challenges faced by communities fighting for justice.



JOINING FORCES TO PROTECT VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AND LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

Policies being proposed and implemented by the new presidential administration have immediately affected immigrants, refugees and other vulnerable populations and presage long-term challenges in areas ranging from health care to education to the environment.

Funder peers are the single most trusted source of practical knowledge for grantmakers,[1] and PSOs and funder collaboratives consistently provided funders with opportunities to support, learn from and coordinate with each other. In the post-election environment, this role became especially critical.

Most of the nearly 30 PSOs and funder collaborative leaders interviewed for our research began coordinating calls, webinars and other ways for funders to connect with each other immediately after the election. For example, Human Rights Funders Network organized a strategy-sharing call one week after the election and had nearly 150 participants, compared with a usual average of 30 call participants. "Members felt blindsided and unclear about what to do and needed a place to share," noted Mona Chun of Human Rights Funders Network.

PSOs and funder collaboratives provide readymade structures for grantmakers to convene, communicate and coordinate in ways that may not be possible for foundations acting on their own. They can also help to bring along donors not currently engaged in institutional philanthropy. "This political moment has also activated people who are in the next ring of giving – individuals who do not call themselves 'philanthropy' but who want to invest to make a difference," noted Cora Mirikitani of Asian American and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy. "We must help support and lift up these resources that have not been activated in the traditional philanthropic space before."

Similarly, Kristen Cambell of Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) noted that, "We've started inviting funders who are not members to come into the room and share in the learning, which is a mutual win because it opens new ideas and possibilities for engagement for them, and for our members and us as well."

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees' Daranee Pet-

sod shared that "even foundations in conservative areas recognize that the attacks on immigrants and refugees are about people, not politics. We've seen conservative foundations that won't join GCIR provide support to local immigrant organizations, in one case without being asked to do so."

During this time of political uncertainty, PSOs and funder collaboratives have helped greater numbers of funders to move from learning to increasing impact through partnerships with peers. For example, NEO Philanthropy's Michelle Lord remarked, "We've seen new large and small funders join the State Infrastructure Fund and the Four Freedoms Fund because collaborative funds are an easy way to enter a field they don't know much about." These funds can also support 501(c)4 organizations and lobbying.

Adriana Rocha of the Neighborhood Funders Group observed that, "There's been an urgency for coordinated action. For example, Funders for Justice and Grantmakers for Girls of Color brought 130 funders together to talk about addressing community safety and justice and the impact of political changes on Black and brown communities. We've mobilized $10.4 million in new money to support community safety and justice for these populations."

Eric Braxton of the Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing added, "We had been planning to launch a learning and exchange fund and added a component to include funds for organizations that are adapting their strategies to respond to the changing political environment. [Because of heightened funder member support], we ended up being able to give out twice as much funding as we had anticipated."

Funder collaboratives have been some of the more valuable, immediate resources for both vulnerable communities and funders looking to have a real-time, responsive impact in their funding.

"We had already shifted strategy from national organizations to regional and local organizations," remarked Shireen Zaman of the Security & Rights Collaborative. "But it's ended up now being more relevant for getting traction" with a wider range of funders looking to increase their support of Muslim, Arab and South Asian communities. However, whether this increased engagement in collaborative funding will translate into the engagement of pooled funding in grantmakers' long-standing areas of focus remains uncertain.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

With the constant barrage of new communities under attack, many within philanthropic institutions are more directly feeling the impact of new policies and political debates. This can deepen divides and slow down progress on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives within foundations.

To address the potential for a loss of focus on racial equity as the evolving political environment places new urgent priorities in front of funders, CHANGE Philanthropy is partnering with PSOs across issues and identity communities to embed DEI into their practice. "If we can get their funder members to understand that racial equity is best practice and it's normalized through them," noted its director, Carly Hare, "it will reach more funders" and keep funders focused on this priority.

Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy reoriented its entire strategy around DEI. "For EPIP, the time to focus on equity is now," stated the organization's leader, Tamir Novotny. "This is deeply personal for our members, many of whom hail from marginalized communities. They want to have confidence that their organizations are taking equity issues seriously and pursuing real change inside and out."

Foundation staff and boards are not immune to the divisive tenor of the political discourse. At least a couple of PSOs have initiated training and support focused on how grantmaker staff with differing political views can engage.

EMBRACING A LEADERSHIP VOICE

The perennial question of when and how to leverage an institutional voice has gained greater attention in the current political environment.

"People are struggling with how much they should be the opposition … and how much they should be the bridge builder, community builder, adult in the room," observed the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy's Aaron Dorfman.

Soon after the new administration took office, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO) issued a statement conveying a clear point of view that the organization understood may not have been shared by all of its members. Committed to its big tent, GEO coupled its public release with a statement indicating that "all people are welcomed in the GEO community," hosting a series of open calls to solicit members' reactions and perspectives. Its chief executive, Kathleen Enright, noted that some member participants were enthusiastic, arguing that "we are the resistance, and this shows how we are backing our grantees." Others felt that "what foundations need to be doing is investing in pluralism" rather than taking an explicit stand. The space created by GEO provided an opportunity for open discussion across perspectives rather than isolated, institution-specific deliberation.

PSOs and funder collaboratives provide readymade structures for grantmakers to convene, communicate and coordinate …

Early in the new administration, GCIR experimented with crafting a joint statement that expressed a clear positon on immigrant and refugee-related concerns. By using their voice as a PSO, GCIR provided an umbrella for over 200 foundations to sign on to this public statement – two-thirds of which were not members of GCIR itself.

LEVERAGING PSOS AND FUNDER COLLABORATIVES FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

In responding to a rapidly changing political environment, the philanthropic sector has demonstrated flexibility, nimbleness and a willingness to collaborate that can serve as a model of creative adaptation for the field going forward. Critical to the responsiveness of the sector during this time has been the existence of a sometimes underappreciated and underfunded array of PSOs and funder collaboratives – backbone entities for philanthropy always at the ready to support funder learning, networking and grantmaking.

"There's been a question among some funders about whether there are too many PSOs," remarked Cambell. "But PSOs really help funders deepen their understanding and investment, which necessitates there being multiple organizations and focus areas."

"People feel like something has to change if we can find ourselves where we are now," concluded Chun. "Program officers and others at all levels are feeling the imperative that everyone needs to rally around a new way of doing things and are motivated to think collectively about what this might look like."

PSOs and funder collaboratives are the spaces in which this collective thinking has already begun to happen. ■

Melinda Fine is director of philanthropy & strategic partnership, Steven Lawrence is a associate director and Molly Schultz Hafid is senior philanthropy consultant at TCC Group. Schultz Hafid also serves on NCRP's board of directors. Follow @TCCGroup on Twitter.

Notes

1. Harder+Co Community Research and Edge Research, *Peer to Peer: At the Heart of Influencing More Effective Philanthropy: A Field Scan of How Foundations Use and Access Knowledge*, Prepared for the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, February 2017, available at https://www.hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Hewlett-Field-Scan-Report.pdf.

From whispers to roars

(continued from page 5)

sustained, and to understand how information access and the constant bombardment from different news sources will affect these trends.
2. When sponsoring research, include methods that allow people to talk with each other and weigh different opinions. This is what is happening organically in people's life and could be a better way to measure opinions than using quantitative methods (e.g., surveys) alone.
3. Tap into the momentum from the "conversation movement" by supporting targeted civic engagement as part of an overall strategy.
4. Foster projects that help people "connect the dots" so that they see the larger isues beneath the specific issue you care about. This allows for new solutions and ideas.

People are voicing their opinions, connecting with others and taking action. Grantmakers interested in making an impact in the communities they serve ought to sieze the opportunity and do the same. ■

Michael Perry is co-founder, and Kathleen Perry is senior analyst at PerryUndem, a nonpartisan public opinion research firm.

Notes

1. Read PerryUndem's "What a difference a year makes" (December 6, 2017) for results of their comprehensive study on voters' attitudes toward sexism, gender equality and the 2016 presidential election on https://www.scribd.com/document/366406592/PerryUndem-Report-on-Sexism-Harassment-Culture-And-Equality-compressed.
2. Anna North, "You just accepted it: why older women kept silent about sexual harassment – and younger ones are speaking out," *Vox*, March 20, 2018, https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/17116086/me-too-movement-sexual-harassment-workplace-millennials.
3. PerryUndem, op cit.
4. Anna North, "Why women are worried about #MeToo," *Vox*, April 5, 2018, https://www.vox.com/2018/4/5/17157240/me-too-movement-sexual-harassment-aziz-ansari-accusation.
5. See https://www.scribd.com/document/336804316/PerryUndem-Gender-Equality-Report.
6. See https://www.scribd.com/document/367291049/PerryUndem-Research-Communication-Black-American-Survey-Report.

Funders can help secure the next generation of activists, voters and grassroots movement leaders

(continued from page 1)

participation among generation z and millennials will be critical to the success of those strategies. However, the question remains whether or not these efforts will reach young people hit hardest by poverty, racial discrimination and lack of opportunity.

A CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC AMONG THE COUNTRY'S YOUTH

Newer generations are now more racially diverse than any previous generation since the foundation of the republic. The much-discussed growth in the eligible "New American Majority" voting populations is largely driven by young people of color turning 18, especially among Latino, African-American and Native populations.

Few public schools or candidates running for office have established on-ramps for racially diverse and immigrant youth into avenues for formal democratic participation. The same is true for rural white communities in the midst of a seismic opioid addiction crisis and rapidly declining living standards.

Data and evidence indicate that civic participation between the ages of 16 and 24 is especially habit-forming. When young people vote and stand up as civic leaders consistently, they are likely to continue doing so throughout the course of their lifetime. According to a study in *The New York Times*, political events that happen at the age of 18 are three times as powerful as events at the age of 40, but many existing civic engagement efforts are potentially missing tens of millions of young adults coming of age in an era of rising regional and social inequality.[1]

TIPS FOR TAPPING INTO THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Scale matters in youth-focused civic engagement and so does depth. There is a menu of successful youth-focused nonprofit organizations for donors to choose from and support: some are local community-based organizations, others are national networks, but, due to a lack of investments, most have nowhere near the capacity or talent they need to engage millions of potential young civic leaders and voters through face-to-face conversations year-round.

The "browner," more rural or financially insecure the communities young people live in, the more difficult efforts are to successfully engage them. To be most effective, checks written for youth-focused civic engagement must take into account these three considerations:

1. Gauge whether or not funding approaches account for disadvantages according to race and identity, region and class.
2. Quantify the impact of their funding in ways that account for measured increases in traditional indicators of civic engagement such as voting rates or leaders trained.
3. Request demographic data about the youth populations reached and make deliberate efforts to reach underserved and marginalized youth.

The "browner," more rural or financially insecure the communities young people live in, the more difficult efforts are to successfully engage them.

BEYOND THE CHECK: FUNDER ENGAGEMENT IN YOUTH CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Carnegie Corporation of New York, Open Society Foundations, Wallace Global Fund and Rockefeller Brothers Fund have been major supporters of youth-focused civic engagement efforts across the country in the past. In more recent years, Ford Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation and others have joined the list of major foundations backing youth-focused civic engagement as a priority of their institutions. Individual donors such as Tom Steyer, Ian Simmons and Reid Hoffman have also entered the scene with major commitments to foster increased youth voting.

These efforts have been critical, and yet wider philanthropic engagement is necessary for the coming months and years ahead. There are three particular ways that funders can effectively boost youth engagement.

First, many civic engagement funders choose for various reasons to fund efforts that are issue agnostic and focused on voting as a moral imperative. On the other hand, progressive issue funders view civic engagement as a strategy to advance peoples' rights or protect the environment. The reality is that future partnerships between issue agnostic funders and progressive issue funders to build permanent civic engagement infrastructure will be critical.

Research clearly demonstrates that issue engagement is an important aspect of youth-focused civic engagement. Research also demonstrates that forming a social identity as a "voter" sustains participation over the long haul. Unfortunately, more right-leaning donors have aligned themselves against expanding the electorate and making it easier for people to vote.

New and Renewing Members

Amy Mandel and Katrina Rodis Fund
Asian Pacific Community in Action
The California Wellness Foundation
Center for Effective Philanthropy
Center for Heirs' Property Preservation
Center for Medicare Advocacy
Deaconess Foundation
Define American
Dyson Foundation
Eugene & Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
Faith in Action
Faith in Florida
Family and Youth Counseling Agency
Ford Foundation
Georgia Appleseed
The Kresge Foundation
Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
MEDA
Mizrahi Family Foundation
The Nellie Mae Education Foundation
New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice
Northwest Area
Rural Forward North Carolina
South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development
Seattle Foundation
South Carolina Community Loan Fund
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network
Southern California Grantmakers
Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition
United We Dream
Wallace Global Fund
Weissberg Foundation
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
William Penn Foundation

The most effective donor collaborations should clarify differences about the meaning of civic participation: increasing voting rates, successful advocacy for specific public policy reforms or simply growing the civic capacity and leadership of young people in general.

Different donors will ultimately decide to prioritize different things; there is no reason why these activities can't be aligned toward longer-term objectives.

Second, I believe that funding for youth-focused civic engagement efforts should be directed at the state level. Since the 2016 elections, youth and emerging leaders have been more engaged in actions directed toward the federal government. This engagement has filtered down into the states.

Justice Louis Brandeis said, "It is one of those happy incidents of the federal system that a single courageous state may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country."[2] In states such as Arizona, Florida, New Mexico and Ohio, young people are the crucial ingredient to expand the electorate, particularly in communities of color. National organizations can be a powerful partner, but youth-focused institutions, embedded in local communities, require the bulk of direct funding support from donors and donor intermediaries.

Lastly, there is a sustainability problem in youth-focused civic engagement. Sometimes a flood of nonpartisan dollars flow in election years or during issue education campaigns, but consistent and reliable sources of funding are scarce.

Donors need to put greater emphasis on leadership sustainability and development. This funding must focus on investing in deep leadership development for sustainable programs for individuals and organizations. Long-term leadership development and capacity building are vital to the success of youth-focused civic engagement programming.

The area where modest foundation investments can have the biggest impact is in supporting cohort-based skills training, networking and paid civic engagement fellowships or internships for young people in vulnerable communities. A breakthrough increase in civic participation without concurrent improvement in financial support and opportunities for career advancement to support young people in financially unstable situations is unsustainable.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF YOUTH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR LONG-TERM CHANGE

A pool of resources is necessary to equip youth-focused civic engagement organizations with the tools, technology and strategy development they need to convert tens of millions of potential young civic leaders into active voices for democratic change.

After the school shooting in Parkland and student-led mobilizations in response, there is a need for more collaborative funding approaches to ensure that student-led protests lead to lasting change. The bridge is youth-focused civic participation. ■

Austin Belali is director of the Youth Engagement Fund.

Notes

1. Amanda Cox, "How Birth Year Influences Political Views," *The New York Times*, July 7, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/07/08/upshot/how-the-year-you-were-born-influences-your-politics.html#.
2. Justice Louis Brandeis dissent in *New State Ice Co. v. Liebmann*, https://biotech.law.lsu.edu/cases/pp/new_state_ice.htm.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The Colorado Health Foundation

The Colorado Health Foundation™

Denver, CO
coloradohealth.org
@COHealthFDN

The Colorado Health Foundation's chief executive Karen McNeil-Miller high-fives a child in Yuma, Colorado, during a statewide listening tour in 2016. Photo credit: Cailey McDermott

NCRP: How is the Colorado Health Foundation evolving to meet the needs of underserved Coloradans?

CHF: The Colorado Health Foundation is a private foundation that funds across the state. As one of the largest health foundations in the country, our work is centered on ensuring health is in reach for a person, family or a community. We believe health is a basic human right, and that health status shouldn't be dependent on where you live, how much money you make or the color of your skin.

We recently redefined our organizational vision and strategic direction to focus on achieving health equity in all communities across Colorado. Our cornerstones (upon which our work and that of our partners is based) ensure that we reach Coloradans who are low income and those who have historically had less power or privilege, that everything we do is with the intent of creating equity and that we are informed by the community and those we exist to serve.

NCRP: How did Colorado's various communities inform the development and implementation of your updated strategic framework?

CHF: More than two years ago, our chief executive Karen McNeil-Miller was new in her role. During a whirlwind listening tour, we went to every corner of the state to learn about what being healthy means to Coloradans. What we heard changed us.

Then, and now, in every community – and in every conversation we have as staff – we hear one thing over and over: That having good health within reach means something different for every Coloradan because not all of us have the same opportunities to be healthy. That is the problem that our strategy is focused on solving.

Today, community engagement and input remain critical to our success. It's both an outcome we strive for and a process we orient our staff and work around. Every decision and action we take must be community-informed, and we expect that of our partners, too.

Our program officers now are guided by an engagement model designed to ensure that we can continually understand community perspectives, dynamics and trends. We want to meet communities where they are.

Recently, several of our program officers gathered together to discuss how their experiences on the ground are taking shape. One shared: "This work is challenging but it is also a relief. It used to feel like I didn't have the full picture. The model has created an opportunity for me to do my work with a much better understanding of the community so that I can make better, more informed decisions."

NCRP: Why is it important to build the capacity of individuals and organizations advocating for health equity in the state?

CHF: For equity to be a reality, voices must be heard and skills such as strong leadership and civic engagement must be developed to promote fair opportunities for all Coloradans to be healthy.

There is strength in numbers, and we know that Coloradans have the power to drive lasting policy change that reflects their interests and priorities. Building the collaboration and leadership skills needed to address health inequities and essentially work together to solve health challenges will only strengthen our communities.

NCRP: What makes your cross-cutting, locally focused work different from "traditional grantmaking"?

CHF: There are a number of differences in how we approach our locally focused work, which we have begun in four communities:

- We are committing resources and time well beyond grant funding to include policy advocacy and strategic communications in specific communities for the long term.
- Our program officers show up in these communities regularly to listen, learn and find ways to invest at the right time and in ways that truly promote a community's resilience based on its needs.
- We intend to help community members build local capacity around important skills such as leadership and how to engage in advocacy. We also hope to cultivate networks or foster those already in place so that community solutions to promote better health can become a reality over time. ■

www.ncrp.org

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
1900 L Street NW • Suite 825 • Washington, DC 20036

Select Publications

Power Moves: Your essential philanthropy assessment guide for equity and justice
by Lisa Ranghelli — May 2018

The only self-assessment toolkit centered on the role of power and privilege in advancing equity, *Power Moves* helps funders examine how well their practices and strategies build, share and wield power for lasting impact.

As the South Grows: Bearing Fruit
by Ryan Schlegel and Stephanie Peng — February 2018

The fourth report in this series explores how Southern cities like Metro Atlanta present opportunities to learn how to confront and break down structural barriers that will have reverberating effects on the rest of the country.

As the South Grows: Weathering the Storm
by Ryan Schlegel and Stephanie Peng — November 2017

The third report in this series tells how donors can help the South's poor communities and communities of color on the front lines of the climate crisis while protecting the environment.

visit: www.ncrp.org/publications

NCRP Board of Directors