



Funding at the Intersection of Race and Gender

by Kalpana Krishnamurthy

Intersectionality is a term that comes up a lot in social justice work. It comes up when community groups are trying to describe how policies affect multiple people's identities. It comes up when organizers are trying to push back on messaging that tries to simplify a policy fight to one aspect. It comes up when advocates are describing their political analysis. And it comes up in questions: What exactly is intersectionality? And why is it important for funders to understand it?

For feminists and LGBTQ people of color, having a theoretical framework like intersectionality to analyze how oppression is simultaneous and compounding has been key. This essay discusses the evolution of social change approaches that simultaneously address gender and race, or sexuality and race, and incorporates analysis of funding trends with insights from people of color who work on these issues in philanthropy. It also provides examples of how intersectional efforts can lead to stronger base-building and to policy victories over time, and recommendations to funders.

Intersectionality: An Introduction

Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, of the UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School, was one of the first academics to develop a theoretical framework for intersectionality. Her work was grounded in the lived experiences of women of color. In her article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex*, Crenshaw looked at court cases around discrimination, specifically focusing on how these laws weren't protecting women of color. Analyzing three cases litigating the Civil Rights Act of 1965, she critiqued the courts' contention that discrimination was not happening because Black men and White women were being hired. In these cases, Crenshaw argued that the court negated the experience of Black women because of its inability to see that racial and sex discrimination could occur simultaneously. Concurrently, outside of academia, writers like Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldua and Cherie Moraga – all lesbians of color – were building a canon of critical feminist theory that spoke about their lived experiences with intersectional identities.

Intersectionality: An analytic tool that helps us to see how various identities interact with different systems of oppression. This approach examines the intersections of multiple identities and the blurring of the boundaries between essentialist categories.¹

An example of intersectionality at work is the Uniting Communities program developed by Western States Center to help organizations of color engage in intersectional conversations about LGBTQ equality within communities of color. We started the program because the intersections of oppression and identity play out so vividly and clearly in the lives of queer and transgender people of color. For example, it's a reality that children living in either undocumented households or LGBTQ households are more likely to live in poverty than children living in households headed by opposite-sex, U.S. citizen parents.² LGBTQ people of color are more likely to be low-income than their White counterparts, and transgender women of color face extraordinary amounts of violence. When our policy organizing and advocacy don't take these realities into account, we end up with solutions that don't meet the full needs of the community, that reinforce existing disparities and render marginalized populations invisible all over again. It's clear that a nuanced understanding of intersectionality – in this case, how multiple forms of discrimination play out in the lives of people of color – is necessary for effective social change work in the field and among funder allies.

A closer look at gender in philanthropy

Over the past 24 years, the share of grant dollars targeted to women and girls has ranged from 5 percent in 1990 to a high of 7.4 percent in 2003.³ The National Center for Responsive Philanthropy's analysis of 2011 grantmaking shows that only 5.8 percent of grant dollars were dedicated to programs that serve women and girls, and 22 percent of that came from a single funder, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.⁴ Funding on issues of gender remains largely tied to issues of reproduction⁵ – and while a critical area of women's lives – this approach cannot fully address the uneven outcomes we see for women and girls (let alone transgender individuals or men) in multiple areas of their lives.

The low funding levels for programs serving women and girls became a focus for some funders at the start of the new millennium. Barbara Phillips, a program officer at the Ford Foundation from 1999 to 2005, shares, "The Ford Foundation was one of the only large private foundations that even had a women's rights program officer. But looking internally at Ford, it was painfully obvious that even our leadership in the field had focused almost entirely on getting money to White women-led organizations, to the severe neglect of institutions led by women of color. When I started at Ford, the women's

portfolio had made no grants to organizations led by Asian or Pacific Islander women, Latinas, or Native American women.” Phillips set out to change this, and made some of Ford’s first grants over \$100,000 to women of color-led organizations like National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum. These planning grants led to significant investment from the Ford Foundation over the next few years, transforming the women’s portfolio at the foundation.

Many funders articulate that a gender lens or analysis can help examine whether and how programs, policies and even organizational culture affects men, women and transgender individuals and helps surface the different experiences of these individuals and groups. And a gender lens can help organizations and grantmakers uncover how solutions and strategies need to be shifted to ensure equitable outcomes across the gender spectrum. But, to be clear, having a gender lens isn’t inherently intersectional. While a gender lens is invaluable – and deeply underutilized in philanthropy – intersectionality allows us to combine gender and other key factors like race, immigration status or sexual orientation. With this critical data, we can better understand how these multiple identities impact outcomes and create solutions that address structural barriers.

Addressing the intersection of gender and race in philanthropy has been slow-going – in part because most philanthropic institutions don’t bring a gender lens to their work. Lani Shaw, executive director of the General Service Foundation, shares, “The way philanthropy is structured to fund issues makes it difficult to incorporate gender across issues. For example, even within the context of General Service Foundation – we had a reproductive rights program for years. Obviously, a gender lens has been central in this portfolio, and we intentionally began to include a racial justice lens about 15 years ago. The inclusion of a race and gender lens led us to focus our portfolio on reproductive justice groups led by women of color. At the same time, we have an Economic Justice program and a Civic Engagement program where we’ve slowly brought a race analysis, but it wasn’t necessarily where they started and now we’re trying to integrate a gender perspective into them.”

Similar to raising issues of race, being explicit about gender can actually make it harder for program officers to move money. Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation program officer Wilma Montañez says, “As funders we try to fit things into boxes to sell it to our boards, which is a good thing because we want to get the money out there; but in the long haul it’s hard to come up with useful, powerful analyses that will have a deeper impact. And I think that’s what some of us are struggling with around gender – how do we really include it?” Shaw further reflects, “Each shift has taken time, partnering with groups on the ground, and encouraging the board to support these new directions.”

Reproductive Justice: A Growing Movement and Its Impact on Philanthropy

Reproductive justice work began emerging in the mid-1990s as women of color became interested in addressing how poverty and racism limited the choices and opportunities of families of color. “The concept of reproductive justice began to take shape when members of a women of color delegation returned from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt,” shares Loretta Ross, one of the founding members of SisterSong. “Shortly after, a group of African-American women caucused at a conference in Chicago, eventually forming Women of African Descent for Reproductive Justice. They decided to devise a strategy to challenge the proposed health care reform campaign by the Clinton Administration that did not include guaranteeing access to abortion. Not wanting to use the language of ‘choice’ because they represented communities with few real choices, they integrated the concepts of reproductive rights, social justice and human rights to launch the term ‘reproductive justice.’”

Groups like the National Black Women’s Health Project (founded in 1984), National Latina Health Organization, African American Women Evolving (Chicago), Native American Women’s Health Education Resource Center (Yankton Sioux Reservation, South Dakota), Asians and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health (Oakland), and more emerged throughout the 1990s – connected by a common analysis about how reproductive oppression affected their communities, and an explicit focus on gender and race. Many of these groups collaborated to form SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective in 1997. Beyond SisterSong, groups continued to emerge through the early 2000s, as local leaders and activists gravitated toward reproductive justice.

In 2005, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, now known as Forward Together, put forth *A New Vision for Advancing Our Movement for Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights, and Reproductive Justice*. By laying out the differences between reproductive health, rights and justice – ACRJ’s paper showed the complimentary ways these strategies work together, but also the difference in emphasis between these approaches to change. While the reproductive health framework addresses inequalities in health services by advocating for the provision of services to historically underserved communities, the reproductive rights framework emphasizes the protection of an individual woman’s legal right to reproductive health services – focusing on increasing access to contraception and keeping abortion legal. In contrast to both of these approaches, the reproductive justice framework utilizes an intersectional analysis of women’s experiences, and focuses on changing the structural inequalities that affect women’s reproductive health and their ability to control their reproductive lives.

The growing reproductive justice movement led to some important shifts in gender-focused philanthropy. The Women of Color Working Group (WOCWG) – a subgroup of women of color and White ally funders within the Funders Network on Population, Reproductive Health and Rights – began meeting in the early 2000s to discuss how to strengthen the role and leadership of women of color-led reproductive justice groups within the reproductive health and rights movement. Desiree Flores, a program officer at the Arcus Foundation, was involved in WOCWG during its startup phase while at the Ms. Foundation for Women. “It really is tremendous to look at the past 10-15 years of the Working Group. Let’s be clear, we had many, many conference calls and strategizing to get even one woman of color reproductive justice leader on a panel at the annual conference,” she recalls. “Then we worked up to a plenary focused on the leadership of women of color. And so on, until we built from a group of 10 funders to nearly half of the membership of the Funders Network.”

WOCWG also began organizing reproductive rights funders through a collaborative fund called the Catalyst Fund. The Catalyst Fund, housed at the Groundswell Fund, leveraged national foundation money and created a matching element for local women’s funds and community foundations that were committed to women of color and reproductive justice. By clearly specifying that grantees needed to have women of color leadership *and* utilize reproductive justice analysis

environments, can lead to increased exposure to toxics that have an adverse impact on reproductive health. Pollution sources in urban environments include industrial facilities, diesel bus depots and large roadways. In Los Angeles, a study found that air pollution from heavy traffic roadways led to low birth weight and preterm births.⁶ And there are literally hundreds of other examples connecting reproductive health and environmental health.

As with the rest of the field of philanthropy, reproductive justice funders have not been immune to the trend of focusing on policy outcomes. Because of pressure from boards, as well as declining grant dollars due to the economic downturn, the heightened emphasis on policy outcomes has meant that even reproductive justice funders are increasingly focused on a more limited range of issues like abortion and access to contraception. Work at the intersections – for example, policy campaigns at the county, state and federal level to end the practice of shackling women who are giving birth in prison – are seen as being too marginal and not affecting enough people.

Some see funding choices as fundamentally about racial justice. “If the desire for policy outcomes was the sole driver of funding priorities, then reproductive rights funders would be supporting the policy components of multiple reproductive issues. Instead, a whole swath of issues and

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and strategies, Catalyst became one of the largest funders of reproductive justice in the field. Between 2008 and 2013, the fund engaged 27 national foundations, 12 local foundations and 4,500 individual donors (half of whom are donors of color) to move \$12 million in new money to more than 80 women of color-led reproductive justice organizations across the U.S.

While seeking to influence reproductive health and rights funders, WOCWG also began to think about how to influence other philanthropic institutions where the intersection of reproductive justice seemed obvious: environmental justice funders or health funders. Montañez shares that talking to environmental grantees about gender has been revealing. “When I’ve asked grantees about the connection between gender and environmental justice – there’s pushback, that somehow to bring in gender would minimize the issues.” Yet the reproductive health impacts of environmental justice struggles are irrefutable. Living in neighborhoods with high traffic density, which are much more prevalent in urban

related policies are largely ignored, and the reasons are highly racialized,” says Vanessa Daniel of the Groundswell Fund. “For decades, funding priorities have been calibrated to the issue priorities of White, middle-class women – abortion and contraception – which while critically important to women of all races, have become the focus to the exclusion of other equally critical reproductive priorities for women of color.” For example, even though Black women have had maternal mortality rates four times that of White women for decades, there have been no major initiatives to fund research, education, policy change or service delivery to tackle the problem. While close to 50 percent of all funding in the field of women and girls is directed to health-related work, there have been no major initiatives to address the racial disparities in maternal mortality in the U.S. Funders concerned about reproductive health have largely ignored this issue – in fact, 2012 was the first time the Funders Network ever had a workshop session on this topic.

Funding LGBTQ rights

Another intersectional lens is gender and sexuality, which while inextricably linked, are not well-connected in philanthropy. Historically, there have been very few funders that fund both women's issues and LGBTQ rights. And LGBTQ people of color – whose health outcomes, economic opportunities and civil rights are affected by both their race and their sexual orientation or gender identity – often face significant structural and cultural barriers.

In the past decade, foundation funding for LGBTQ issues has risen at a staggering rate, recently reaching a new high of nearly \$125 million. Between 2003 and 2011, foundation funding of LGBTQ issues grew from \$32 million to \$123 million annually – eight times the rate of overall foundation growth.⁷ “Among the primary drivers of this exponential growth in LGBTQ funding were gay and lesbian donors themselves. Specifically, a large portion of LGBTQ grantmaking has come from private foundations established by gay men or lesbians, or from public foundations that raise their funds primarily from LGBTQ donors,” says Ben Francisco Maulbeck, president of Funders for LGBTQ issues. “This history of philanthropy is incredibly unusual – that such a large portion of philanthropy for an underserved minority community comes from within the community itself. Of the top 10 funders of LGBTQ issues, half are LGBTQ foundations. By comparison, none of the top 10 funders of Latino communities are Latino community funds or private foundations established by Hispanics.” This history has also colored the funding of LGBTQ philanthropy – or rather, might explain the “lack of color” in LGBTQ philanthropy.

Just as the Funders Network affinity group played a key role in the funding of reproductive justice, Funders for LGBTQ Issues has also taken leadership within philanthropy to address the intersections of LGBTQ rights and racial justice. In 2007, Funders for LGBTQ Issues launched its Racial Equity Campaign, a multiyear initiative to increase grantmaking to strengthen LGBTQ people of color organizations and communities. The Racial Equity campaign raised and granted \$1.4 million to eight public and community foundations around the country, produced tools and media on LGBTQ grantmaking and racial equity, and hosted a national retreat on racial equity for grantmakers working on LGBTQ issues.

This work took on new urgency in 2008 after the loss of the campaign against Proposition 8 in California, a ballot measure seeking to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. Initial analysis blamed voters of color for passing Prop 8; and while deeper analysis would reveal this wasn't true, the sense that communities of color were to blame for Prop 8 only reinforced faulty narratives that communities of color are more homophobic than White communities.

Racial justice work in the LGBTQ community encompasses three critical approaches: supporting queer and transgender

groups of color, helping White LGBTQ groups include a racial justice lens in their work, and ensuring that (primarily straight) organizations of color have an LGBTQ lens. As with other progressive movements that have attempted to address racial justice, many White LGBTQ groups have received funding to “diversify.” *Far fewer resources have been given to pursue the other two strategies – which build the capacity of organizations of color.* While domestic grants to non-LGBTQ organizations in 2012 account for nearly one-third of the total funding, the groups in this category include Center for American Progress and Planned Parenthood – very few are organizations focused on communities of color. That's why it's exciting to see grants by LGBTQ funders go to organizations like the National Council of La Raza to strengthen their work on behalf of LGBTQ immigrant communities.⁸

In reality, talking about race and sexuality is complicated. The Queer Justice Fund at Asian American Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) has supported all three strategies outlined above – while also advocating within philanthropy to increase resources. Alice Y. Hom, director of the Queer Justice Fund, shares that “it may seem like we're beyond this, but you would not believe how much education I have to do about who the Asian Pacific Islander community is with funders. It's hard to get into the nuance of API LGBTQ communities when I'm so busy addressing the model minority myth or the ‘you're too small demographically’ myth.”

Interestingly, the Queer Justice Fund emerged from AAPIP's National Gender & Equity Campaign. NGEC started in 2008 with a three-year capacity building and leadership development program to do large-scale work with API community-based organizations in Minnesota and California. “We weren't just trying to increase women's programming in API groups, or just add more women and girls to leadership of API organizations – but we hoped to support structural transformation in API groups around gender,” says Hom. As groups started conversations that moved beyond a gender-binary male/female conversation, the door was also opened to conversations about sexuality and sexual orientation. The Queer Justice Fund emerged organically from those conversations, and has regranted \$327,500 since 2009. In fact, since QJF launched, funding for API LGBTQ groups from foundations almost tripled from \$648,939 in 2009, to a high of \$1,830,414 in 2011.⁹

Emerging Opportunities

The current single-issue paradigm in philanthropy makes it difficult to fund the work of alliances and coalitions advancing intersectional gender, sexuality and racial justice work. Despite this, there are vibrant examples of effective intersectional efforts. National networks like Caring Across Generations, Right to the City, and Strong Families are influencing policies by using new cross-sector models and engaging new partners. For example,

- ▲ Caring Across Generations’ intentional engagement of domestic workers and the people who hire them breaks a traditionally adversarial relationship in order to find common ground and advance policy solutions that benefit everyone.
- ▲ Right to the City is changing prevailing notions of urban development by building a municipal front where tenants, homeowners, youth, women, workers, citizens and immigrants can meaningfully participate in a democratic process, shape the development plan for their city, live in a healthy environment, and have access to quality jobs and housing.
- ▲ Strong Families, a network of more than 120 groups across the country, is designed to leverage and build on the work that organizations and sector leaders are currently doing in support of low-income families to collectively change how we think, feel, act and make policy about families.

The result of the Western States Center’s Uniting Communities program described in the beginning of this article was real honest engagement by groups of color on the issues of LGBTQ people of color. Whether it was the Urban

color face. If we “problematize” certain behaviors, rather than seeing the underlying structural causes that lead to these limited “choices,” our solutions will be very limited.

A gender lens allows us to bring into focus how gender impacts everyone – men, women and transgender individuals. Because a gender lens is not sufficient by itself, grantmakers should continue to utilize lenses around racial justice, class, sexual orientation or immigration status to uncover the multiple structural barriers facing these communities.

Invest in models where the interaction between constituencies and policies is transforming the actual solutions being proposed.

Coalitions or organizations with a 10-point multi-issue platform are plentiful. Statements of principle that articulate an intersectional analysis are important – but demonstrable action is where the rubber meets the road. To help advance effective race, gender and LGBTQ justice-organizing on the ground, funders can look for work between organizations

“Statements of principle that articulate an intersectional analysis are important – but demonstrable action is where the rubber meets the road. To help advance effective race, gender and LGBTQ justice-organizing on the ground, funders can look for work between organizations that has evolved and built momentum, or groups that have a policy agenda that speaks to the issues of multiple constituencies.”

League and PFLAG-Portland Black Chapter partnering on original research and identifying policy change, or CAUSA beginning to host an LGBTQ support group for immigrant Latinos, Uniting Communities created the space for groups of color to meaningfully engage on the issues affecting LGBTQ people of color in their own communities. Fast forward three years to the ballot measure fight in Washington state on same-sex marriage, and the Center was able to use the community assets built with this long-term approach to create short-term results in communities of color that increased support for marriage. After the 2012 win on marriage, Western States Center has continued to engage Washington groups of color in the Uniting Communities program – continuing the critical conversations opened by the ballot measure.

Recommendations for funders

Avoid behavior modification strategies. Instead, address structural barriers using an intersectional analysis.

An individual choices frame – in which we try to modify the behaviors of young women around teen pregnancy or young men around gang involvement, for example – is insufficient to address the real structural barriers that young people of

that has evolved and built momentum, or groups that have a policy agenda that speaks to the issues of multiple constituencies.

Support electoral engagement by and for communities of color in ways that build durable alliances across issues and constituencies.

By 2042, the United States will be a majority people of color nation – and many states, including California, New York, New Mexico and Texas, already are. As demographics shift, we need to work to ensure that communities of color can flex their electoral muscle, especially given the ways many of these emerging populations have been historically marginalized in an electoral context. It’s clear that the Rising American Electorate (RAE) will be critical to winning elections. In fact, RAE (which includes Latinos, African Americans, young people under 30, and unmarried women) can be an increasing powerhouse on progressive issues ranging from marriage for same-sex couples to protecting the environment. Collectively, these voters made up nearly half (48 percent) of the 2012 electorate according to national exit poll estimates, up four points from 2008.¹⁰

Too often, RAE voters are seen as numbers that need to be turned out by political machinery. We already know that RAE constituencies will be most readily mobilized by trusted leaders and messengers from their own communities. However the organizations that work on the ground in these communities are not receiving the critical investments that will allow them to build year-round civic engagement strategies that move their own agendas.

Support multiyear grants to build the long-term capacity needed for effective racial and social justice movements.

Flexible long-term funding means groups can respond to crises and opportunities, build capacity and focus on leadership development, maintain staff continuity and organizational leadership, and have the organizational capacity to overcome unforeseeable challenges and improve planning.¹¹ For women of color-led groups, or queer and transgender people-of-color groups, multiyear funding is a critical element to success. Because these groups have been chronically underresourced and often struggle with a boom-or-bust cycle of funding, their capacity to build over the long run, invest in leadership development, build civic engagement capacity, or simply hire and retain staff, have been compromised.

Since 2004, only one-tenth of foundations report any multiyear grantmaking, according to NCRP. In 2011, fully 89 percent of 1,121 sampled funders reported no multiyear grants.¹² Multiyear funding is critical to groups' sustainability, impact and development – and creates the space for groups to deepen existing programs or explore new opportunities that emerge organically within their work.

Conclusion

Integrating an intersectional frame in grantmaking requires an understanding of how multiple structural barriers interact and compound one another. Using a single-issue lens around race, gender, class, or other kinds of identities that result in systemic, unequal outcomes in our society will result in partial solutions, at best. At worst, as Dr. Crenshaw reminds us, “When we don’t pay attention to the margins, when we don’t acknowledge the intersection, where the places of power overlap, we not only fail to see the women who fall between our movements, sometimes we pit our movements against each other.”¹³

The alternative, including a gender lens in racial justice policy-change efforts, is clearly effective. From case studies created by the Groundswell Fund, to the Western States Center’s work in the Pacific Northwest, to wins at the ballot box on both marriage for same-sex couples and immigration fights, we know that bridging gender, race and other identities in our organizing work not only makes for smarter policy solutions – it also helps us win.

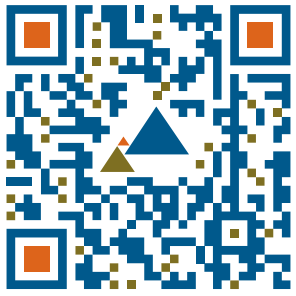


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Endnotes

- 1 Definition provided here is influenced by academics like Judith Butler and Kimberlé Crenshaw, as well as women of color social justice groups.
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- 9 “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Grantmaking by U.S. Foundations.” *lgbtfunders.org*. Funders for LGBTQ Issues, Dec. 2012. Web. 15 May 2014. <<http://www.lgbtfunders.org/files/2011LGBTQGrantmakingReport.pdf>>
- 10 “The Role of the Rising Electorate in the 2012 Election.” *Democracy Corps*, 14 Nov. 2012.
- 11 Jagpal, Niki, and Kevin Laskowski. “The State of Multi-Year Funding 2011.” *ncrp.org*. National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, May 2013. <<http://www.ncrp.org/files/publications/PhilanthropicLandscape-StateofMultiYearFunding2011.pdf>>
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. *feminist.com Special Section, Women & Peace*. *feminist.com*, n.d. Web. 15 May 2014. <http://www.feminist.com/resources/kimberly_crenshaw.html>

Lani Shaw, Executive Director of the General Service Foundation, passed away unexpectedly on June 1, 2014. Her commitment to issues of gender justice, her leadership in the field of reproductive justice, and her work to support organizing for structural change made her a leader in the field of philanthropy. A colleague and friend, I enjoyed reconnecting with her for this article in the PRE 10th Anniversary retrospective. She shared her wisdom & candor in hope of stimulating more discourse & greater change, and we are so saddened by this sudden loss. She will be greatly missed.
-Kalpana Krishnamurthy



Moving Forward on Racial Justice Philanthropy: Highlights

This article can be found in Volume 5 of PRE's Critical Issues Forum. The full volume and individual articles and case studies are available to download at www.racialequity.org or use the QR code to access the full PDF on your digital device.

Articles in the Full Volume

Has There Been Progress on Racial Justice in Philanthropy?

Lori Villarosa

This introduction poses questions of how we collectively measure progress toward advancing racial justice in philanthropy. It also considers the more specific question of progress toward the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity's goal over the past decade, of increasing the amount and effectiveness of resources aimed at addressing institutional and structural racism. It recognizes the importance of taking stock even amidst challenging times, not to invite self-congratulations or frustration, but to help cull lessons learned in an effort to raise the bar going forward.

The Structural Racism Concept and Its Impact on Philanthropy

Daniel Martinez HoSang

While a structural racism analysis has certainly been adopted in some sectors of philanthropy and in a number of policymaking circles, this approach has also faced important challenges. Perhaps because disparities are relatively easy to document and communicate, they often stand in for the entirety of a structural racism analysis. While much of the contemporary culture of philanthropy emphasizes short-term deliverables and returns, funders committed to ending structural racism must be prepared to afford groups the time, space and resources that this type of analysis requires. This article argues that philanthropic support could assist grantees in deepening the application of a structural racism analysis to their work with the goal of creating more robust organizing and advocacy approaches.

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

Rick Cohen

Based largely on interviews with 21 racial justice and equity leaders in the field, this article shares stories, experiences and reflections on how the sector has changed and evolved in addressing race over the past 20 years and into the present. It is important to acknowledge progress where it has been made and to lift up possible guideposts for those coming into the work more recently either as new grantmakers, or perhaps those moving at a different pace. As critical as the needs are in the communities we aim to serve, the field of philanthropy must continue to push for deeper impacts and greater progress in addressing racial inequities. Varied perspectives of funders and others in the field of philanthropy – all of whom have seen both struggle and progress – are shared as a way to help consider where we have been and encourage us to go further.

Walking Forward: Racial Justice Funding Lessons from the Field

Julie Quiroz

Fifty years after the major victories of the civil rights movement, racial justice activists share a sense of bitter dismay at what Judith Browne Dianis, director of Advancement Project, calls a “new normal” of racial injustice that is actually painfully old. The concerns and questions raised in this essay are based on perspectives offered by several racial justice activists with breadth and depth of experience, sharing views echoing other leaders in the field in recent reports. In this time of great challenge, we asked, how can foundations support the field of racial justice organizing to walk forward? What wisdom can foundations draw from the past in order to move more effectively toward the future? What, if anything, has worked? This article shares critical lessons from the field with funders.

The Leadership We Need: How People of Color Are Leading the #CultureSHIFT for Racial Equity

Malkia Amala Cyril

Social justice sectors and academia widely acknowledge the causal relationship between media misrepresentations of race and racial inequity in public policy and institutional practice. Yet few acknowledge the cause-and-effect relationship between the visible framing contests on race and racial inequities in media structure and policy that produce racial bias in media content. This essay examines the centrality of strategies for media rights, access and representation as part of a comprehensive strategy for racial equity; and the role of philanthropy in ensuring the racial justice leadership transforms structural racism in the media.

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

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

This historical timeline attempts to capture, in one place, many significant moments, events, controversies and victories that have defined the racial landscape since the turbulent days following the LAPD/Rodney King beating verdict over two decades ago. It invites reflection aimed to understand the past and help us be more strategic moving ahead. How did particular moments contribute to an understanding of race and racial justice? How did foundations learn and shift? How did foundations' responses make grantees more able or less able to respond to critical crisis and opportunity? What dimensions of structural racism were present in a given moment or situation? Did foundations help elevate the structural dimensions and potential responses? How can they do so today?

Case Studies in the Full Volume

Woods Fund Chicago: Adopting Racial Equity as a Core Principle

Lisa McGill

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

Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation: Advancing Racial Equity in the New South

Lisa McGill

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

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

Maggie Potapchuk

The 16th largest foundation in the country, The California Endowment is in the fourth year of a 10-year commitment, the Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative. A place-based grantmaking initiative in 14 California communities, BHC has been described as a different type of grantmaking for TCE – an integration of activities, a greater coordination with community sites on policy advocacy, and a process of applying a structural racialization framework. PRE's case study on BHC provides an opportunity to share this foundation's story about its learning at an early implementation stage.

Akonadi Foundation: Movement Building – Locally with a Structural Racism Analysis

Maggie Potapchuk

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

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