

Grassroots Fundraising Journal

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Growing Donor Organizers Through Giving Projects

Reciprocity: A Time Banking Project of the Womanist Working Collective

Sustaining Grassroots Social Justice Organizations in California's Latinx Communities

Choosing the Right Fundraising Strategy for Your Donors

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The Native Youth Leadership Alliance is a collective of indigenous youth leaders and elder supporters creating culturally-based community change in Tribal communities. NYLA members value the power of higher education as an important resource in

modern leadership and are predominantly students or graduates of Tribal Colleges. Over the last eight years, NYLA has grown and evolved as a safe space and vibrant hub of Native youth innovation, creativity and healing for visionary young leaders of our time. NYLA received a 2017 Momentum Giving Project's Native Led Organizing grant through Social Justice Fund.

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Recovering From Year-End Fundraising Season

THE HOLIDAY SEASON CAN BE HARD ON US FUNDRAISERS—feeling the stress of watching donations slowly trickle in, unsure how we'll end the year financially. Constantly refreshing the call list to see if our team members have been reaching out to their donors. That feeling that you're the only one still working, while everyone else has put on their email auto-responders and is sitting around a fire drinking hot cocoa.

The end of 2017 brought added anxiety about the new tax law and its implications for charitable giving. All while community needs continue to grow as government safety nets keep shrinking.

So, even if it didn't feel possible to take time off in December, I hope now that we're well into the first month of 2018, you've taken some time away from bearing the burden of resourcing this work. Time to relax, refresh and reboot for the new year.

The challenges before us call for an increased investment in transforming systems to better serve our communities. This issue of the *Journal* includes two examples of groups who are doing just that. First, Zeke Spier and Allison Johnson Heist share the latest about the Giving Projects model and how it democratizes philanthropy by engaging diverse cohorts of local leaders in driving the fundraising and grantmaking process. Next, LaTierra Piphus breaks down how time banking divests from harmful and exploitative beliefs and practices at the core of capitalism.

We're also excited to share the executive summary of a report (made possible with support from the California Endowment) detailing how California Latinx social justice groups are rising up to the challenge of sustaining their organizing work. We close out the issue with a piece by Judy Levine, who offers practical tips for aligning our asks to maximize the chances of getting a "Yes!"

Last but not least—be sure to sign up by March 15 to qualify for the early bird rate of the 2018 Money for Our Movements conference happening July 27-29 in Atlanta. Join hundreds of fundraiser organizers and resource mobilizers from around the country for an inspiring weekend of skill building, networking and strategizing to sustain our movements for the long-haul. And if you have ideas for how we can resource and sustain our work and movements in ways that energize us, strengthen our organizing, and build community power, we invite you to submit a workshop proposal. You can register and submit your workshop proposal at grassrootsfundraising.org/mfom.

We can't wait to see you there!



NAOMI ISHISAKA

Giving Project facilitators discuss best practices at our gathering in Seattle.

Growing Donor Organizers Through Giving Projects: Four Years Later

By Zeke Spier and Allison Johnson Heist

“Everyone needs community (Common Unity). The Giving Project Learning Community provides Headwaters Foundation for Justice a place of learning, leadership and an environment of transformation. We are stronger together.”

~David Nicholson, Headwaters Foundation

IN AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THIS JOURNAL four years ago, we shared our excitement about a new model of fundraising and grantmaking we call “Giving Projects.” Created by Social Justice Fund Northwest (SJF) in Seattle, Giving Projects engage about 20 people in a deep process of community building, learning, developing analysis, and action. Participants give, engage in grassroots fundraising, and use a consensus-based process to fund grassroots, social justice organizations. So far, this model has raised more than \$5 million from 8,000 people.

When the article was published in 2014, Giving Projects had already transformed SJF. Since then, the model has continued

to fuel growth and sustainability within the organization. Even more exciting, five other aligned funds across the country have now launched their own Giving Projects. Through this process of replication, we’ve learned a lot about the model, about replicating models in different organizations, and about what it takes to build a successful national collaboration—all of which we touch on in this article.

Working together as six organizations has dramatically expanded our capacity to learn about what exactly makes a project successful. This is part of why we decided to call our collaboration a “Learning Community” rather than a partnership, alliance, com-

mittee, etc. Allison, one of the coauthors of this article, was able to do some focused research on a question key to the success of Giving Projects, as well as to the success of all grassroots fundraising efforts: how to best engage and support donors of color. We will be sharing the results of that research here as well.

The Model

Building a shared definition of a Giving Project was important early in our collaboration to clarify what level of alignment was necessary to join the Learning Community, differentiating ourselves from the many organizations that run giving circles or other collective giving processes. We were clear that this definition helped us focus in on a particular strategy, not to make a claim about what strategies are best in general or politically valuable. We wanted to err on the side of being focused rather than inclusive, with clear internal and external messaging that many strategies beyond ours are exciting and useful as well.

We developed these seven necessary components of what constitutes a Giving Project:

1. Each participant makes a personally meaningful financial contribution, with no set minimum amount.
2. The group is cross-class and cross-race (with an openness to explore people of color-only projects).
3. Each participant fundraises using a grassroots fundraising/ donor organizing framework.
4. A social justice and movement building analysis is at the core of the process and grantmaking.
5. The process contains a strong political education component, including a workshop on race and class.
6. Money raised is distributed through a democratic grantmaking process.
7. A value and practice of community building is held throughout the project.

The Collaboration

As the Giving Project model took off at SJF, people started reaching out to learn more. Some of these calls came from aligned organizations attracted to the core values of Giving Projects, and some came from those simply looking for strategies to raise more money. Two things quickly became clear: SJF was only interested in replicating the model with organizations that were fully invested in the work (both a shared social justice analysis and willingness to put in significant organizational resources), and that if SJF was going to be working with peer organizations, they wanted to do so as partners. This meant that to the extent that the Giving Project model is “owned,” it would be owned collectively by the collaboration.

The current Giving Project Learning Community emerged organically from organizations that were willing to invest in the model, and is now made up of six partners: Social Justice Fund Northwest, Chinook Fund (Denver), Crossroads Fund (Chicago), Headwaters Foundation for Justice (Minneapolis), North Star Fund (New York), and Bread and Roses Community Foundation (Philadelphia). As part of an onboarding process, each new organization paid for some direct consulting support to get up to speed, but we now see ourselves as equal partners in the work.

The collaboration is staffed by Zeke, the other coauthor of this article. He stepped out of his role as executive director of SJF to do this work. Initially, this was entirely funded by the members

THE MODEL HAS HELPED MANY OF US DEEPEN INTERNAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE AND CLASS, AS WELL AS HELP ENGAGE A YOUNGER GENERATION OF LEADERS IN OUR WORK.

of the Learning Community, but last year we were able to receive dedicated grant funding to underwrite and expand collaboration activities.

We have now had four annual in-person convenings as well as regular remote discussions and presentations. We have built direct relationships among staff, allowing them to reach out to each other for support across geography. We’re starting to see how different organizational strengths are manifesting in the model, and the amount we’re able to learn from one another continues to increase.

As of today, all of the partners have launched their own Giving Projects to widely shared success. Outside of SJF, partners have raised more than \$1 million through this model from over 1,500 people in the last few years, in addition to the \$4 million that SJF has raised through Giving Projects. The model has helped many of us deepen internal conversations about race and class, as well as help engage a younger generation of leaders in our work. The collaboration itself continues to go smoothly, with high investment from each partner. It’s an affirming, warm space that inspires and supports each partner in doing their best work.

On a recent call, we reflected on the value of the Learning Community to our work. Some key components that we appreciate are:

- Having direct access to peers at every level of our organiza-

tions. We've built relationships ED to ED, program staff to program staff, and admin to admin.

- Lots of shared materials without having them be too prescriptive. Lots of flexibility to implement in our own way and learn from these experiments.
- Shared evaluation materials. We worked with external consultants to align all of our evaluation processes, saving each of us a lot of time and allowing ourselves to speak to our collective impact.

FOR MANY PEOPLE OF COLOR INTERVIEWED FOR THIS PROJECT, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THEY HAD BEEN ASKED TO GIVE A MONETARY DONATION TO ANY ORGANIZATION.

- Increased shared visibility from coordinated outreach and our shared website (givingprojects.org)
- Spirit of sharing—materials, mistakes, our time and energy.
- Strong and regularly articulated commitment to shared values around justice and equity.
- Ability to stay current to the movement and trends in philanthropy through our collective relationships.
- Flexibility, humility and willingness to learn from one another.

Engaging Donors of Color

Doing cross-class/cross-race organizing brings up so many challenges and issues, each of which deserves space for reflection. The collaboration has allowed us to examine some of these questions more deeply. Allison had the opportunity to engage in a yearlong process, interviewing 43 past participants across five organizations, about engaging donors of color.

The Giving Project engages people of color as fundraisers and donors in profound ways not seen in the broader philanthropic sector. Why has this model been so successful to date in capturing the attention, passion and resources of people of color? What are we doing right, and what might the rest of the field be able to glean from our experience? And because the Giving Project is explicit in naming and addressing dynamics around race and class, how might that impact donors of color and their giving?

To pursue these questions, I applied for and received a research grant from the Global Fund for Community Foundations. With the dual roles of researcher and program manager of the Giving

Project, I knew my proximity to the core questions and my experiences as a facilitator of transformative projects would position me well to meet and interview other Giving Project participants across the country. I wanted to hear firsthand from participants from all walks of life who had a shared experience of this transformative program and who had made an incredible investment of their time, money and social capital into raising dollars for social justice work in their region.

Because of the way the model has been replicated with a uniform curriculum, ongoing conversation between foundations and a spirit of openness and transparency, I was easily able to access past participants of Giving Projects for interviews with the support of my national colleagues. My research was also an added benefit to busy program staff who shared my interest in the questions at hand but didn't have time or resources to dig in with past participants on how they now saw themselves as givers and fundraisers.

Three themes emerged from these interviews with Giving Project donors who identify as people of color:

- They are deeply affected by the curriculum around race, class and money.
- They aren't comfortable using the term "philanthropist" to describe their role in the community.
- They are an underutilized resource when it comes to raising money for social movements.

Discussing Race, Class & Money

The way in which the Giving Project curriculum addresses race, racism and white supremacy in all their forms is unique and sets the stage for participants of color to bring their whole selves to the process. Having conversations about race and class with other people of color was crucial to developing a shared social justice vision across racial and ethnic lines. Many participants reported they had never been in spaces where race was discussed exclusively among people of color as it is during the caucus sessions of the Giving Project. For example, one of the questions posed to the people of color caucus is, "How might internalized racial inferiority show up in your fundraising and grantmaking?" The personal development that takes place in discussions about the intersection of race and class was cited as an important part of the Giving Project experience. Most participants identified the content and conversations around class as being unexplored territory, and connecting their race and their class to their social identity was new work. Each Giving Project provides space and coaching for participants to explore their feelings about making a personal financial gift and asking people in their social networks for money. It's in exactly these places of exploration and tension

that important conversations within the group led to successful fundraising conversations with their donors.

Donor Organizers Not Philanthropists

It also became clear that people of color in Giving Projects see themselves as givers, but not as philanthropists. Of the 43 people interviewed for this project, most did not self-identify with the term “philanthropist” after participating in a Giving Project, even though all reported making a financial contribution that was sig-

THE [GIVING PROJECT] PROCESS NOT ONLY SUPPORTS SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK, IT *IS* SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK.

nificant to them. Rather than using the term “philanthropist,” they preferred a broader one with less baggage that encompasses both giving and taking action. Many gravitated toward the alternative term of “donor organizer,” which has emerged among Giving Project vernacular to describe how participants act as financial resource-gatherers for social justice. In this way, people of color described what could be key to revitalizing traditional philanthropy—a commitment to both giving and acting on one’s values in community. Several interviewees talked about a radical reinterpretation of what that word means and held a desire to transform the meaning behind the term.

An Underutilized Resource

Finally, it became clear that people of color aren’t being asked enough. In a Giving Project, all participants donate from their own pockets in addition to fundraising from their networks. When participants are asked to consider a meaningful gift to the project, it often results in the largest gift they have ever given. Factors that lead to this significant contribution include being inspired to give to multiple organizations at once and seeing the value and privilege of gaining in-depth knowledge of community work through the grantmaking process. What is most striking is that for many people of color interviewed for this project, this was the first time they had been asked to give a monetary donation to any organization.

“There is work to be done on how we define centering folks of color within philanthropy, because it’s less about getting folks of

color to fit into the model philanthropy, than getting philanthropy to fit into the model of how folks of color are already doing community giving.” -Social Justice Fund participant

Lessons Learned

We want to emphasize some of the lessons we think are applicable beyond our network, starting with how to effectively engage donors of color. There is no magic formula to engaging and retaining a multiracial pool of donors to your work. Dealing with racism is complicated and requires deep and ongoing work, in society at large as well as in the nonprofit sector. That said, here are some things to consider as your organization begins to walk alongside donors of color:

Fundraising with donors of color should be a two-way street.

Organizations need to ask themselves what they will offer to donors of color in addition to what they hope to gain from engaging them. Think about ways to incorporate an analysis around class and classism in addition to race, racism and white supremacy in your programming and communications. What will you add to communities, as opposed to extract?

To begin engaging donors of color in your work, follow the lead of those most directly involved in how giving and philanthropy works in communities of color. Listen to the cultural nuances that come up when discussing giving among and between communities. For example, you may learn that making financial donations to a dominant-culture institution may be outside of cultural norms, regardless of financial privilege.

New language will need to emerge in order to be inclusive and reflective of more communities involved in the work. For example, embracing language such as “meaningful gift” encourages all to be thoughtful and recognizes that all people are making an important contribution to an overall goal. Learn to be okay with donors defining the work in their own words, which will build ownership and trust among donors and the institution.

We know that there are many different kinds of collaboration, requiring different forms of engagement. That said, we believe these lessons will be useful to anyone considering creating a learning community or replicating a program.

- Limit the scope of the collaboration to the specific activity that everyone has in common. We can learn from one another beyond that, but keeping the core content focused on a subset of our work creates efficiency and clarity.
- To build strong organizational partnerships, make sure that relationships are built at multiple levels. This means finding ways for executive staff, program staff, fundraising staff, and admin staff to participate in collaborative activities. It is the informal relationship building more than formal or-

ganizational commitment that results in trust and mutual investment.

- There is no substitute for in-person connection. Both our national convening and ongoing peer visits have been the backbone of our collaboration.
- As much as possible, create a level playing-field for each participating organization. For us, this meant that every organization made an equitable financial contribution to the collaboration, and that we've worked to ensure that each of us comes to the work as both a teacher and learner. Social Justice Fund began as a convener and leader, but has stepped back into a peer role.

When we lead Giving Projects, we share with our participants that the process not only supports social justice work, it *is* social justice work. This means we hold ourselves to strong political values, while staying action-focused and pragmatic. This balance is sometimes difficult to achieve, but the Giving Project content ensures that we are focused on both sides. We've kept this mindset for our collaboration as a whole, and are thrilled with how

it's going so far. We're proud of the thousands of donors we've engaged, as well as the more than \$4 million that has been granted out to community-led social justice organizing.

We're optimistic about the future, even as we are coming to terms with what the current political moment means for us. We are seeing greater need than ever among grassroots organizations, but also seeing increased interest from regular people who want to get involved with social justice work for the first time. Our collaboration is helping us rise to this challenge, as we strengthen our work and look towards further replication of the Giving Project model in new areas. We know we have a lot more to learn, and look forward to continuing to share our lessons. ■

Zeke Spier is the former executive director of Social Justice Fund Northwest and is working on a consulting project to expand the Giving Project model nationwide. Allison Johnson Heist is senior program officer for learning and leadership at Headwaters Foundation for Justice based in Minneapolis.



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PHOTOS BY TATYANA WELLS & AHNNA SCOTT

Womanist Working Collective members at a time banking workshop in 2017.

Reciprocity

A Time Banking Project of the Womanist Working Collective

By LaTierra Piphus

ESTABLISHED IN OCTOBER 2015 as an affinity group on Meetup, our collective began gathering as a group of like-minded Black women and femmes. Responding to our almost immediate growth and increased membership, we held our first strategic planning meeting in February 2016 following a collective-wide qualitative survey to gather vital feedback from our membership. From this data and ongoing evaluations, we began to shape and expand what was quickly evolving into an intentional Community of Practice centering the livelihood and quality of life for Black womyn, trans women, femmes, and gender variant folks. Today, we continue building around the needs and feedback from our members to achieve our ultimate goal: Black Liberation!

The Womanist Working Collective is a social action and support collective for Black womyn (both cis & trans), femmes, and gender variant folks. Our work unapologetically centers our quality of life and livelihoods through community organizing, philanthropy and self-care.

Our goals are:

1. To become a supportive and empowering community network to move past merely surviving, but thriving; prioritizing physical, emotional, moral, and social safety;
2. To transition ourselves and our communities into an ecologically just¹ society; and
3. Black Liberation.

Standing on the Shoulders of Our Ancestors

Currently, one of our acts of self-determination is our time banking project, which is a practical tool that enables cooperation through the act of exchanging time spent on

¹ Ecological Justice is the state of balance between human communities and healthy ecosystems based on thriving, mutually beneficial relationships and participatory self-governance. We see Ecological Justice as the key frame to capture our holistic vision of a better way forward.

providing services, pooling resources or connecting folks to new networks of support.

Self-determination means developing solutions to common problems we're facing as a collective. We started our time bank to (1) incentivize membership engagement both within the collective and outside in our local neighborhoods, (2) mobilize the resources we have to meet our own needs, and (3) to divest from capitalism and reinvest in our own systems, people and collective futures.

Time banking divests from capitalism by investing in cooperation and solidarity economies. Unlike capitalism, time banking values all time and services equally: One hour of time=one hour, whether you are a doctor or a stay-at-home parent.

Capitalism has conditioned us to believe people's time is worth more based on how much money they make, how productive they are deemed in this society, and how much others value them. We must divest from this way of classist thinking and the assumption that someone with a higher income or access to more resources is better than someone with a lower income and less access to resources. We must invest in the understanding that we are all inherently valuable simply because we exist, instead of basing our value on what we produce to line the pockets of the ruling class.

In the U.S. and in many other imperialist nations, the wealth of this country was built on the backs of enslaved African and Indigenous peoples. This means the entire capitalist structure of the U.S. was developed atop the subjugation of these groups positioned securely at the bottom of class mobility. The tragic system of capitalism does not work if there are not people at the bottom to maintain the concentrated wealth and power at the top, as with any pyramid scheme.

Both during and in the aftermath of slavery, Black communities in the U.S. created ways to cooperate with the limited resources to which they had access. For example, Fannie Lou Hamer's farming cooperative; Frederick Douglass' mutual aid society; Charles and Shirley Sherrod's New Communities, Inc.; and Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign were all acts of self-determination developed for the survival and sustenance of Black communities. Black people used these strategies of mutualism as a means to center racial and economic justice as cornerstones to Black Liberation. To do this work today, we have to talk about our history and remind ourselves to always look back as it informs much of our present day: *Sankofa!*

These are our ancestors. These are the shoulders we stand on.

Fk Capitalism**

The exploitation of our bodies, labor and time continues today while systemic and cultural influences expand to support the deci-

mation of our community's sustainability.

Under capitalism, our time is stolen and exploited through both paid labor and our forced entry into the criminal (in)justice system, also known as modern day slavery.

Imagine you're locked up for a *survival crime* like stealing to feed yourself or performing sex work to shelter your family. You now have to pay with your time, fines and court fees to this system. The same capitalist system that creates the conditions in which you can't adequately support yourself or your family is now penalizing you for participating in an *alternative economy* to survive and sustain yourself.

Something clearly needs to change, but no amount of band-aids will fix this wounded beast. This is why we must divest in order to dismantle these systems; targeting the issue at its root.

Time Poverty & Community Breakdown: The Curse that Keeps on Giving

Capitalism's increasingly neoliberal demands for the working class' labor to be exploited harder and longer on unlivable wages for corporations that strategically divest from our communities and our world's overall ecology, leaves less time for us to invest in our families, friends, community, and local politics. This inevitably breeds distrust, community breakdown and increases mental health issues like depression, anxiety and isolation.

In our society, we value time and labor very differently depending on who someone is and what they do with their time. The eight hour work shift of a public school teacher is valued much less than a venture capitalist even though the labor of the teacher is for the public good versus the private good (read: greed) of the capitalist.

Income and time inequality has a corrosive effect on communities, true democracy, and the well-being of society's most economically vulnerable.

Stemming from this system are neoliberalism's disposability politics to which low-income and other marginalized groups are highly subjected. Disposability politics, coined by Henry Giroux, describes "a politics where the imperatives of the market come at the expense of public life, democracy, and responsibility toward the future."² In this society, you are disposed of if you are poor, homeless, disabled, primarily supported by the underground economy, or unable to work/have your labor exploited by this system. Folks in marginalized communities are frequently part of this disposable population as most as this system does not see them as valuable. Disposability politics is literally the opposite of ecological justice.

2 truth-out.org/opinion/item/32629-revisiting-hurricane-katrina-racist-violence-and-the-politics-of-disposability

Neoliberalism has disposed of members of our communities on a macro scale through nationwide gentrification, neoliberal policies that prioritize the market over the people, devolution of social safety nets like public health care, subsidized housing and food stamps—which are often necessary to supplement even full-time workers—targeted structural inequality and poverty. The impact is that people who are hit the hardest economically and socially are low-income and communities of color; the same populations of which our collective is composed.

Time Banking as an Exercise in Self-Determination

Time banking is an intervention into disposability politics, acting as a type of barter network that primarily uses time and acts of service as currency, which by definition values all time equally. Time banking recognizes that everyone, even those defined as disadvantaged or vulnerable, has something worthwhile to contribute. This alternative economic practice values relationships that are forged through reciprocity. As mentioned before, this method of pooling resources, funds and skills is not new to Black folks; there has been a deliberate divestment from ALL things meant to sustain us and create our own systems.

Cooperation through time banking and other types of solidarity economy practices suggests an alternative method of tapping into the abundance of human resources that meets people's needs and promotes well-being for all. It also increases resilience in individuals and communities in order to prevent needs from arising, reduces the reliance on capitalism, and safeguards resources for meeting unavoidable needs by strengthening what Edgar Cahn defines as the "Core Economy," or "Family, neighbourhood, community... [who produce] love and caring, coming to each other's rescue, democracy and social justice."

The benefits of participating in time banking are endless, but here are a few that may resonate with you:

- It's a friendship primer! Time banking teaches you how to build sustainable friendships with trust, mutuality and support. You may find that the person fulfilling your "request" for a ride to your first ultrasound appointment is also a parent and has a wealth of knowledge you can tap into.
- It ensures collaboration and resource sharing amongst community members and partnering organizations.
- It unleashes an abundance of human relationships, time, social networks, knowledge, and skills based on lived experience that are natural and semi-permanent resources.
- It creates sustainable systems of support.
- It emphasizes mutualism over rugged individualism.
- It creates a sense of membership rather than being a

beneficiary or passive consumer—you're now an active participant with vested interest and time.

- It allows reciprocity to build trust between people, which fosters mutual respect.
- It builds physical and mental well-being through strengthening relationships.

One of the biggest goals of this project and ongoing practice is to participate, regardless of how small, in the eradication of the systems of oppression. The goal is to "Starve & Stop" through divesting and dismantling capitalism. These are some of the main systems we've identified that can be directly addressed through our time banking efforts:

Divesting from:

- Neo-liberalism's Disposability Politics
- Imperialism/Colonization
- Capitalism
- Rugged Individualism
- Internalized Oppressions (i.e. Poverty-shaming)

Investing in:

- Self-determination
- Increasing collective members engagement & participation
- Financial interdependence
- Intentional community building
- Mobilizing community resources
- Promoting kindness and trust

Values

Much like the overall work of cooperatives, there are certain values to which time bankers are encouraged to adhere:

- **Assets.** We are all assets. We all have something to give.
- **Redefining Work.** Some work is beyond price. Work has to be redefined. To create "the village" that raises healthy children, builds strong families, revitalizes neighborhoods, makes democracy work, advances social justice, and even makes the planet sustainable is valuable work. It needs to be honored, recorded and rewarded.
- **Reciprocity.** Helping works better as a two-way street. The question, "How can I help you?" needs to change so we ask, "How can we help each other build the world we all will live in?"
- **Social Networks.** We need each other. People joined in shared purpose are stronger than individuals. Helping each other, we reweave communities of support, strength

and trust. Community is built upon sinking roots, building trust, creating networks. Special relationships are built on commitment.

- **Respect.** Every human being matters. Respect underlies freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and everything we value. Respect supplies the heart and soul of democracy. When respect is denied to anyone, we all are injured. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be at some future point.

How Exchanges Work

When members log on to our online platform, they're able to submit a "request" for assistance, services or items or "offer" their assistance, services or items. These exchanges are made with time credits earned by fulfilling the request of a member, community partner, or our collective. Everyone's time is equal: One hour = one hour and one hour = one hour time credit to spend or save.

Member-to-Member Exchanges

This is when members exchange time and credits with each other. For example, we have a member who is an artist and was hosting

an art exhibit, but needed help with marketing. She was connected with another member who has graphic design skills, spent a few hours making and revising a flyer for the artist, and collected three hours worth of time credits. Later that month, the member with the graphic design skills who had "banked" three hours then decided to cash in her credits with the artist for help moving into a new apartment, and they were both able to get their needs met.

Member-to-Collective Exchanges

This is when members exchange time and credits with WWC or on behalf of WWC. For example, WWC needs someone to help us with grant writing and fundraising. A member does this 10 hours per month for us and receives 10 time credits, new or honed skills for their resume, and a new professional reference.

That member can then use those credits to attend a conference or out-of-state event with us free of charge or simply cash it in for grocery, gas or bus card to stretch their budget.

Collective-to-Community Partner Exchanges

This is when members of the collective exchanges with a community partner. For example, we're currently in an ongoing exchange

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with Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA), in which we assist with communications work (making flyers, social media marketing, writing articles for their blog) in exchange for leadership and organizational development assistance.

We hope to create an effective and innovative economic alternative for folks to transition into, eventually leaving capitalism in the dust and crumbling the entire system, because once its base is gone the whole structure falls apart. In our research, we found several examples of both small-scale and city-wide successful implementation in *The New Wealth of Time: How Time Banking Helps People Build Better Services* report. This groundbreaking report has given us so much of the information we're able to share with you today and inspires us to stay-the-course even when things move slowly.

This past July was *Reciprocity: A Time Banking Project of the Womanist Working Collective's* official launch via our Time Banks USA site and some other support. Since it has only been about six months, we're still in early stages of development with getting all of our 280+ members orientated and transitioned onto our new online platform, which takes time and a lot of patience.

As advised by our local time banking mentors and online support group, we don't expect to see any real results for at least a year in terms of regular and impactful exchanges since folks seem to be most comfortable initiating exchanges in-person. However, we believe the convenience of having the process streamlined and hours tracked online could work for many of our members, especially those with barriers to physical attendance or participation with the larger collective. There are still many kinks to work out, but we have high hopes and dedication to our divesting and dismantling projects.

Here are three things we've learned so far during this process:

1. **Find an online platform that is also mobile-friendly, as this will likely be how most people log their hours.** We started with hOurWorld.org's online platform initially, but preferred the navigability and sleek look of TimeBanks USA's Community Weaver platform. However, if finances are an issue, hOurWorld's completely free site may be better for you.
2. **Figure out how to streamline orientations for your members and coordinators.** After facilitating two nearly three-hour long orientation sessions with fewer than five members in attendance, it was obvious we needed to reevaluate the efficiency of our training process. As a result, we've recently launched a self-serve online orientation on our website, which allows members to move through the materials at their own pace and then

sign-up after they've gotten acquainted with the concept. Additional options we're considering and may work well for you:

- a. Have webinar orientations where you walk through the training materials with your members and record it.
 - b. Have "pop-up style" orientations at different accessible places around the city which may be more convenient for folks; if possible, include daytime/morning session times for folks who work a third shift or are just available earlier.
3. **Dedicate designated time and space to your banking.** Once folks are oriented and begin exchanging, create opportunities for regular in-person interactions. Our general collective events (book club meetings, movie screenings, monthly meetings, etc.) serve as a way to put a face to a name that you may have only seen online. Once that introduction is made and the ice is broken with another member, you're more likely to sign-up for their carpool to the collective's next event.

Conclusion

The very act of participating in this divest and dismantle project is moving towards Black Liberation. Simply by reducing our dependence on this current *imperialist capitalist white supremacist cis/hetero/patriarchal* system we're using "Starve and Stop" organizing tactics. Check back with us in six months for progress updates! ■

LaTierra Piphus is a professional womanist and community organizer specializing in affinity groups for Black Queer and Trans folks and Black Women/Womyn/Womxn and Femmes. A Midwest native, she graduated from the University of Wisconsin with her B.A. in Communication, minor in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and acquired certificates in Community Based-Learning and Media Literacy.

How You Can Help

Donate by visiting WomanistWorkingCollective.org

Resources

[Book] *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Thought and Practice* by Dr. Jessica Gordon-Lembach

[Report] *The New Wealth of Time: How Time Banking Helps People Build Better Services* tinyurl.com/NewWealthOfTime

[Manual] *Just Transitions: From Banks And Tanks To Cooperation And Caring* tinyurl.com/EcologicalJusticeByMG



BEAR GUERRA, COMMUNITY WATER CENTER

Community residents marching for safe and affordable water.

Sustaining Grassroots Social Justice Organizations in California's Latinx Communities

A executive summary of a report by the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training & Research Action Design. Download the full report at grassrootsfundraising.org/comunidades.

DURING THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 2015, the research team conducted in-depth interviews by phone, video, and in-person with individuals from 21 organizations who fundraise for movement-building work in Latinx communities across California. We also interviewed two fundraising consultants who work closely with grassroots social justice organizations. We asked participants about:

- **Vision for sustainability:** How their organization was currently resourced, how they would like to see their support sources change, and what it would take to realize their vision of sustainability for their own organization and for social justice movements more broadly.
- **Fundraising approaches and capacity:** How they as individuals, and their organizations as a whole, approach and structure fundraising work. We also asked who within the organization was involved in fundraising, and what fundraising looks like in practice.

- **Money and finances:** We asked participants to share their own personal experiences with money, as well as their thoughts about their organization's current, and ideal, financial and fundraising practices.
- **Strengths, needs and challenges:** Finally, we asked participants to describe their fundraising strengths and strategies. We also asked what they need most to become more sustainable, and what challenges they face in getting there.

Key Findings

Vision and Values: Building Sustainability

- Grassroots social justice organizations strive, and often struggle, to center community accountability & autonomy in their fundraising and sustainability efforts.
- Shifts in the funding climate frequently push organizations in directions they do not feel are guided by their communities or values.

- Organizations want to know what works for their peers.
- Many organizations struggle with the question of who to ask for support, as well as who should carry out fundraising.
- The reproduction of class, race and other forms of privilege in philanthropy and nonprofits, as well as individual and community experiences of privilege and oppression, shape access to funding and affect individual and organizational experiences of fundraising.
- Some organizations work to build shared ownership, trust, accountability, sustainability, and grassroots leadership through transparency and shared decision-making around organizational finances and fundraising.

Practices and Approaches: Structuring Capacity

- Grassroots community organizations expressed that operating in a continual state of flux - driven by internal and external factors--can strain the well-being of individuals and the sustainability of the organization.
- Fundraising silos can lead to individuals feeling alone in the work and impact an organization's ability to meet programmatic goals.
- Fundraising teams and shared leadership models present viable alternatives to the quagmire of fundraising silos.
- Fundraising strategy, skills, and infrastructure are essential to building capacity for immediate organizational work and future staying power.

Tuning the Field

- The fundraising world is not reflective of communities.
- Relationships built on shared understanding, allyship, and accountability can support grassroots movements.
- Grassroots organizing and advocacy, grounded in visionary leadership, committed allies, and resources to sustain the work, has the power to transform communities.
- Rural and semi-rural organizations that work directly with or within Latinx or Latin American indigenous communities face unique sustainability challenges.
- Rural and semi-rural organizations pointed to shifts they want to see happen in their communities, that would center community knowledge and work, build local infrastructure for grassroots, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, and be responsive to the unique local circumstances and unique solutions required.
- Funding restrictions, requirements or agendas can push organizations to shift in ways they don't feel are accountable or aligned with their mission, and can also hamper their ability to do what they do best: make change.
- Reflection and dialogue on current fundraising models, strategies, and approaches that support movement building in Latinx communities is much needed.

Recommendations

For Organizations

- Use fundraising and sustainability efforts to strengthen grassroots leadership and movements.
- Reflect with your constituents on fundraising roles and strategy, and work to lessen your dependence on foundation support.
- Experiment with grassroots strategies and structures for fundraising work that can sustain the organization and are sustainable for all involved. Explore partnerships in fundraising efforts.
- Provide flexible scheduling for capacity building trainings and support.
- Co-create multilingual spaces and information that link communities in the struggle for social change.
- Tailor capacity building to be specific to staff and member desires and needs for acquiring fundraising skills.
- Break down silos between fundraising and other organizational work.
- Create practices of open dialogue and transparency around organizational finances, financial decision-making and fundraising work.

For Funders

- Prioritize self-determination, community accountability and long-term sustainability in grantmaking by providing general operating support, multiyear grants, larger grants, minimal or no grant restrictions, and forms of capacity building that organizations seek. Invest in structural change grantmaking with an intersectional lens to understand interlinked struggles and support multi-issue work.
- Be a connector and peer educator to link organizations and their members to potential donors and other sources of aligned, long-term support.
- Explore and invest in new models of accountable grantmaking such as transparent, participatory grantmaking that prioritizes the leadership of communities directly impacted by social inequalities.
- Honor the time, experiences, knowledge and vision that individuals and organizations share with funders by recognizing their work and expertise, compensating them for their time, and respecting their lives and stories.
- Deepen understanding of the circumstances around and demands upon organizations' capacity and take responsibility for building relationships.
- Make an intentional effort to reach out to and connect with organizations and community members, including traveling to meet them where they live and work.
- Challenge the reproduction of intersectional privilege by prioritizing the leadership of persons of color in philanthropy and fundraising to reflect the communities with whom you partner. ■



BREUKELLEN RIESGO

Executive Director Chitra Aiyar addressing the crowd at Sadie Nash Leadership Project's 2014 Garden Party.

It's Not About The Stuff

Choosing the Right Fundraising Strategy for Your Donors

By Judy Levine

THE GAVEL COMES DOWN—on every auction organizer's nightmare.

An exclusive back-stage tour of Hamilton is going for \$500—and the donor is going to be mad.

Expecting it would raise at least \$5,000, the donor is sitting in the back of the room wondering why this jewel, which is clearly worth so much more, is going for so low a price.

The answer is a mismatch between the item and the people in the room.

How did this nonprofit get to this juncture?

Too much focus on the fundraising activity and not enough thought about who potential donors really are—and what will inspire them to give.

But it's not just at events where the match between donor interests and "asks" can go wrong.

Successful fundraising has famously been described as "the right person asking the right prospect for the right amount of the right

thing for the right project at the right time in the right way." This article details common examples of these "rights" gone wrong—and what can be done to prevent those expensive mistakes.

The Right Person Asking

We all have examples of the wrong person being sent out to make the ask. Janet Rodriguez is known to care about community gardens, so Cynthia, who's met her once or twice, is dispatched to ask Janet to visit La Raices Community Garden, in the hopes that she'll be receptive to an ask once she sees the abundant kids' vegetable patch. But surprise, surprise—Janet doesn't respond to Cynthia's emails or voice messages, and the approach goes nowhere. Well, why should Janet respond to Cynthia? Janet might truly not have noticed Cynthia's outreach (or thought it was spam), or she might have triaged it to the bottom of her to-dos, but either way she's made a decision that La Raices is not a cause that's high on her priority list. And the choice of messenger is partly why.

Peers give to peers. However you define peers—fellow kindergarten parents, law school classmates (who didn't go into public interest law), community garden members—the choice of asker is key in gaining a donor's attention, and getting a “yes.”

Another mistake nonprofits make is not casting a wide enough net for askers. What about tasking a committee of donors with reaching into their networks to expand your donor pool? Establishing a council of community elders to mine their lifelong connections on your behalf? Don't limit yourself to just board and staff building your network.

The Right Prospect

When fundraisers chase after money—going for perceived wealth over linkage or interest in the cause—the resulting gift is the minimum a prospect can offer and still remain socially credible. Many times, if the linkage to the asker is not strong, that amount is zero.

ANOTHER MISTAKE NONPROFITS MAKE IS NOT CASTING A WIDE ENOUGH NET FOR ASKERS.

Take the case of Rodolfo, owner of a local tech manufacturing firm. He's got the resources, sure—but is he really interested in your youth debate team? What's in it for him, and how does it tie to his company's enlightened self-interest? While an ask for a workforce tech retraining program might have resonance, a debate team is not likely to be as successful.

Make sure the prospect has some modicum of interest in your cause, or the types of causes your organization espouses. Otherwise you'll get a surefire “no,” or the lowest amount a donor can give to honor their relationship with the asker. We want more!

The Right Amount

Ahh...the shoals of picking ask amounts. Ask for too much (really too much) and the prospect feels unseen, dismissed and undervalued. If you're asking me for \$25,000 and I can afford to give \$500, I'm going to feel silly offering that up. But on the other hand if you're asking for \$500 and \$10,000 is more like my usual gift, I'm likely to happily under-give and call it a day. Either way, a wildly off-target ask amount is a signal to the donor that you don't know them, didn't care enough about them to do your research, and/or you're delusional and who wants to put good money after bad?

Sometimes timing can be at issue here. If you're sending everyone your annual appeal, try taking your major donor prospects off that list. Otherwise you run the danger that they'll check off the \$500 box and then when you come calling they'll proudly tell you not to bother, they're already made their gift (without your ever having to meet with them to make a truly compelling ask). Ouch!

The Right Thing

Asking for the right thing is not just a question of asking for the right amount of money. Sometimes it's best not to ask for money at the start. Consider asking for an in-kind gift—it gets your relationship started, it costs the donor a lot less to provide than if you had to purchase it on the open market, and it puts you and the donor on the same side of the table—now you're both putting resources towards ending child trafficking, for example.

Some easy first asks? Printing, professional services, meeting space, products, even design. Once you've gotten this relationship-opening support, you can go back to the donor and show how their in-kind contribution was used to provide kids with a healthier future. Then it's an easy segue to asking for cash to help the cause further.

But don't get your askers too revved up asking for in-kind contributions, no matter how much easier an ask it is. Volunteers love to ask for silent auction items, for example, experiencing the thrill of victory when a particularly alluring service or hot restaurant says “yes.” It can be all too easy for your event committee members to focus small, spending their energies on walking around the block garnering \$25 gift certificates while ignoring the need for table-buyers and event sponsors.

An auction is not successful just because it's got the right items—it only works when the alignment between bidders and items is high. Auctions, and silent auctions especially, tend to be the tail that wags the dog of fundraising events (in other words, volunteers focus on procuring things, not people). But the bidders have to be in the room for an auction to be successful. If no one in the room is interested in sports, a signed baseball from Aaron Judge is going to languish on the shelf. If no one's got kids, an overflowing basket of art supplies coupled with a semester-long kid's crafts course won't move for more than the minimum. Both interests and budget must align for real profit to occur.

To avoid the empty-bidder-cards syndrome, charge the event committee not just with securing items, but with filling the room. Put a rule in place that every time someone on the committee gets a donation, they need to sell a ticket to two people who would be likely to go for that item in a big way.

Finally, those attending have to be primed to bid. Sitting back on one's hands does not make a good table guest. Attendees need

to be reminded, both before and during the event, that all bidding benefits a charity that provides real good in the world. Bidders shouldn't be looking for bargains; they should be focused on supporting an important cause—while getting a cool item at the same time. That awareness will change the tenor of the room, resulting in more profit (from all those items your volunteers ended up acquiring anyways).

The Right Project

Here's where many asks flounder, getting a tepid "yes," or worse, a "come back later" (i.e., never) response.

Know thy prospect. Know what makes them sit forward in their chair. Does this person need the social promise of an event to get them to loosen their purse-strings, or are they turned on by your program impact and is that the better ask? Are they in-

ULTIMATELY, YOU WANT TO ASK FOR SUPPORT IN A WAY THAT THE DONOR RECOGNIZES THEMSELVES IN THE EQUATION.

terested in leaving their mark on the future (a capital or organizational capacity pitch) or is the here-and-now of primary concern? Do they need to know all the program details to feel comfortable enough to make a commitment, or are they the type of person who is more inspired by mission and larger social vision? Might sponsoring your GED program in their mother's name be the most meaningful ask for them, since their mom always regretted not having the chance to finish high school?

The all-important donor cultivation phase of the asking process will tell you what the right project is. One experienced asker talks about waiting till the prospect's eyebrows go up to inform her how to focus her ask. Of all the ways to package your agency's needs, what is the bundling that will most excite this donor?

The Right Time

Given all these rights, it's imperative to take the time to cultivate prospects appropriately—both to get to know their proclivities and passions, but also to enable them to get to know you and your organization and to build trust. If you ask too soon, as the saying goes, you get a "no" or "go away" money (here's \$100 and don't come back, as opposed to the \$1,000 gift you were hoping for).

Sometimes, you also need to wait to get a donor's attention. If you find out through the cultivation process that their mother is ill, or their child is a senior in high school, to mention two high life-stressors, delay approaching them for a gift. No matter how much you may need the money now, you won't get a thoughtful, considered gift.

The Right Way

Some people love golf outings. They get to spend a day exercising outdoors, and raise money for a cause they care about (or honor an individual they care about who asked them). But for those for whom this is not an attraction, a golf outing sounds like an invitation from Mars.

There are also many subtler mismatches between the ask vehicle and donor. Sometimes the mismatch is with the agency's mission, as in events involving alcohol benefitting a teenager recovery program. Even though their parents might enjoy it, is that strengthening your mission's message or undercutting it? Watch your event partners carefully, too. Touting a prominent sponsorship that undercuts your organization's values—or just distracts from them—is a real danger. Sometimes even partnering with another nonprofit on an event can obscure the community value you provide.

Ultimately, you want to ask for support in a way that the donor recognizes themselves in the equation. When a donor says to themselves: "That responds to me, my interests, my web of social connections, my social values" during the pregnant pause between pitch and answer, that's when you'll get a gift that matches their true capacity.

But when you don't get that click of recognition, while most of these lost opportunities don't involve great outlays of cash (with the exception of special events), they're expensive in that they've lost you potential donors. And prospects who don't feel heard don't return for a second chance.

Take the time to suss out who's in the room—whether an actual room, as in a special event or one-to-one meeting, or a virtual room, as in eAppeals and letters—to make sure your ask is going to ring a bell. You want donors to be sitting forward in their seats, eager to make an impact, instead of leaning back, puzzled as to why this appeal is coming to them. ■

Judy Levine is executive director of Cause Effective (causeeffective.org), a NYC-based capacity-building organization that over 35 years has helped more than 6,000 nonprofits build engaged communities of supporters. Cause Effective transforms people, culture and systems by coaching nonprofits to learn, carry out and sustain new approaches to fundraising and board leadership.

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