



Collaborating to BUILD Transformational Change

Introduction

Philanthropy finds itself at a critical juncture. Systems of power remain entrenched in the hands of a few – and those hands often belong to affluent white men. To realize a transformational shift in the systems of power, we know the basics of the roadmap before us. We, as funders, must relinquish the decision-making power to grantees themselves. We must actively collaborate with one another rather than creating individual, disjointed strategies. We must embrace novel and innovative strategies both on the tactical and strategic levels.

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Honoring Kathy Reich

Panel Discussion

This energizing discussion touched on topics including the importance of cross-collaboration among organizations, incorporating the Global South in decision-making processes, and even the funeral for an iceberg. The following summary encapsulates the main takeaways from Grady's questions to the panel.

How do we shift philanthropy from charity to solidarity?

There was a consensus that philanthropy needs to develop a stronger sense of trust with its grantees and cede power to those closest to the communities it seeks to serve. Redistribution of power is critical to pulling the levers of transformative change. However, the panel underscored that it is an easy recommendation to make, yet extremely difficult in practice. In that vein, it is crucial all stakeholders be involved in these complicated shifts. The decision-making table cannot only have chairs for major donors; it must also include all stakeholders, big and small, young and old.

To achieve solidarity with grantees, one panelist said, philanthropy must not be constrained by the political and operational cultures of government and business. While the world is flooded

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to harness the power of arts and culture almost guarantees we will fail. We need the arts to help imagine futures that are yet born.

Furthermore, arts and culture emerge as a powerful vehicle for generations to express outrage, mourning, and anxiety about the current climate crisis. Today's younger generations are deeply afflicted by a mental health crisis partly spurred by the compounding effects of climate change. The arts offer a way to build community and to keep a sense of optimism because, as one panelist said, "Pessimism is not a luxury our society can afford now."

What are some of the most promising practices in people-centered partnerships we must adapt to change systems?

One panelist answered this question by positing that we, as a global society, are moving away from racial justice and equity by suggesting the complex problems of the world should be solved by "others" of a different race or nationality instead of all of us. In reality, the global crisis (is)6.te-14.3 (2241e (

the technology industry. Unsurprisingly, there exists a hesitation to regulate oneself, so funding in this area is low.

Table Five: Applying the Lessons of BUILD

This table focused on one crucial question: What would be helpful to you? One participant said the world's youth have a strong entrepreneurial spirit but lack the necessary transactional support. They need more mentorship, funding, and opportunities to network so they can align with the broader philanthropic sector. Another participant suggested the philanthropic sector needs more ecosystem incubators. The issue here is not a lack of funding but, rather, a lack of access due to a lack of trust. Geopolitics is also increasingly entangled in funding decisions. Funders often give grantees an insufficient and unrealistic timeline to create real impact.

Table Six: From Awareness to Action: The Influence of News Media in Shaping a Transition to a Green Economy

success is by pivoting away from funding individual projects to funding greater systemic change. A collaborative, co-governance model between grantors and grantees is ideal here.

Table Nine: Transformation Through a Global Movement of Activism

A lack of funding is the main obstacle to creating more spaces for activism. Art has the potential to affect people internally that other mediums lack. It is crucial to invest in this kind of storytelling with the potential to change not only minds but, also, hearts. Recent years have seen an increase in funding for activism as the world begins to see its possibilities. Even with this relative increase, a majority of the funding is still going to the Global North. One of the lingering issues in increasing funding for activism is the lack of reliable, consistent evaluation methods. Art is difficult to measure (dik.6 (h)2i)13.6 (o)21.6 (n m)37.7 (et)4.4 dh1eis artii ulivisi cccm isese

Closing Thoughts and Calls to Action

Philanthropy has moved past merely defining systems change. It is now time to act in shifting what and how systems operate. Through candid panel and table discussions, workshop participants paved the roadmap ahead.

The philanthropic community has largely acknowledged the need to move toward long-term, unrestricted funding. It is now time for the community to act. Shifting to this practice – as Reich demonstrated is possible in her recounting of her tenure at the BUILD initiative – will require creativity, imagination, and courage on behalf of board members and organizational leadership. Philanthropy is naturally a risk-averse field, but the anecdotal evidence of trusting grantees to make the best decisions with their funding is now overwhelming.

If philanthropy is to successfully shift systems, it must embrace the power of collaboration. For far too long, individual actors have done phenomenal work – but in silos. This independent-minded form of success and strategy cannibalizes limited resources and duplicates efforts. To be most effective in shifting systems of power, philanthropic organizations must work together to alter and improve different parts of a system simultaneously.

The changes philanthropy advocates for today are so that future generations can reap the rewards of more equitable systems tomorrow. To do so most effectively, philanthropy must involve this NextGen leadership in its decision-making. If changes are viewed as being done “to” a generation, it is less effective than being done “with” a generation actively involved.

Finally, the arts and culture have an immense potential to change both hearts and minds. Art has a unique ability to appeal to a society’s emotions, and it will be a crucial tool in how this industry continues its work forward. There is hesitation to funding arts-based systems-change work because of an aversion to risk and lack of empirical analyses. Art is difficult to standardize, and its impact is often not designed to measure. This is where the power of imagination enters. Evaluation models must become more imaginative and creative. If we cannot imagine changing some of our practices, how then can we expect to imagine the more equitable world we speak of?

Panel Speaker Biographies

Kathy Reich, Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD), Director
Reich leads the Ford Foundation's BUILD initiative in the United States and in the foundation's 10 global regions. BUILD is a 12-year, \$2 billion initiative to strengthen key institutions around the world that fight inequality. Reich manages a team of 10 people, guiding Ford's efforts to support the vitality and effectiveness of institutions and networks that serve as pillars of broader social movements. To date, the BUILD program has supported more than 450 organizations in 38 countries; about half of the organizations are based in the United States.

Before joining Ford in 2016, Reich worked for 15 years at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, most recently as Organizational Effectiveness and Philanthropy Director, where she led a cross-cutting program to help grantees around the world strengthen their strategy, leadership, and impact. Prior to that, she was policy director of a nonprofit, served as a legislative assistant on Capitol Hill, and worked for state and local elected officials in California.

Reich is a Senior Fellow of the Schusterman Family Philanthropies, and she has served on several nonprofit boards. She is currently on the board of Repair the World. Reich is a frequent writer and speaker on issues related to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. She holds a bachelor's

About the Shifting Systems Initiative

The Shifting Systems Initiative was launched in 2016 by a number of philanthropic organizations and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, and a Steering Group that over time has included the Skoll Foundation, Ford Foundation, Porticus, Chandler Foundation, Draper Richards Kaplan