

## Episode 5 – “In Community, By Community, For Community”

**Chitra:** You've got to trust us. At some point, people wouldn't ask me to come and run a tech company. Cause that's not my background. And yet. So many people from the business sector will often second, guess how we're doing our work.

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[00:00:21] **Grace:** Welcome to giving done right, a podcast on everything you need to know to make an impact with your charitable giving. I'm grace Nicolette

[00:00:27] **Phil:** and I'm Phil Buchanan. Hey grace.

[00:00:29] **Grace:** Hey Phil.

[00:00:30] **Phil:** So, we're talking today about something that's really important if you're going to be effective with your philanthropy, which is understanding nonprofits. And that's not so easy because the nonprofit sector is unbelievably vast and diverse.

[00:00:44] **Grace:** Yeah. And I recall that you often say nonprofits run the gamut from Harvard to the homeless shelter. And so there's an incredible diversity around the kinds of nonprofits that exist. And also, I think there's a lot of misunderstanding that donors and everyday people have about nonprofits and then the way that they run.

[00:01:00] **Phil:** I've heard a lot of, sort of negative stereotypes that I think have almost no basis in fact, or reality. Like nonprofit staff and leaders don't really care about whether they're making an impact. They're not disciplined. They're not hard working. There's a lot of bloat that pays too high. Like, none of these things as generalizations are accurate.

[00:01:22] And you know, sometimes I get these calls from people I went to business school with and they're like, "Hey, Phil, you know, I've been so successful and now I want to downshift and I figure I'd be able to have better work-life balance in the nonprofit sector." And, you know, my attitude is always like, what are you talking about? Because so many nonprofits are actually working on the toughest challenges, the ones that have defied market solutions or, or government intervention, often working with folks who face incredible disadvantage, vulnerable populations. So it's just a complete myth to think that that work is anything but incredibly challenging, or to think that it doesn't require incredible skill as a leader.

[00:02:01] And so I'm excited that today we're going to talk with an exceptional leader who works in a community-rooted organization.

[00:02:09] **Grace:** I'm excited to introduce to Chitra Hanstad, executive director of World Relief Seattle. World Relief Seattle is a Christian nonprofit, and it's the largest refugee resettlement and services agency in Washington state.

[00:02:21] Prior to being at world relief, she spent time in India consulting for an anti-human trafficking organization called Justice Ventures International, and she spent a few years as a philanthropic advisor for the Seattle Foundation.

[00:02:33] **Phil:** Chitra is an amazing leader and one of the things that we're going to talk to her about is why the rooting in a community of a hundred particular nonprofit matters so much. Why the trust that is built between staff and those they serve is so important. And what it takes to run an organization that is working in her case with immigrants, refugees, asylees, folks who face a lot of challenges.

[00:03:01] What it's like to run an organization like that in general? And then during a crisis, like the one we're in right now in this country.

[00:03:07] **Grace:** Chitra, welcome to the podcast!

[00:03:09] **Chitra:** Thank you. Thank you for having me.

[00:03:12] **Grace:** I was wondering if you could start by telling us a little bit about your organization and its mission and why this work is important to you.

[00:03:19] **Chitra:** So World Relief Seattle is part of a larger organization. It's headquartered in Baltimore, and overseas we do international development work. But in the United States, we're one of the nine voluntary agencies, were called VOLAGs, that do refugee resettlement work. And in Seattle, our vision is every immigrant welcomed by community, rooted in community, and empowered for community.

[00:03:47] And it's important to me because I myself was an immigrant. When I was a little girl, came from India, grew up there and had to learn the language, the culture. So I had to enter this culture myself and I count it a privilege to be able to turn around and do that for others who are entering our country.

[00:04:06] **Grace:** How old were you when you came over? I came over as a baby, but was naturalized when I was six, and so that immigrant story is very much one that I resonate with.

[00:04:15] **Chitra:** Yeah. I was seven and that was in the late sixties. So I'm dating myself was right after civil rights and it was so different. Getting off the airplane here in, in Chicago, it was like getting off on Mars.

[00:04:33] **Phil:** One of the things that Chitra you and I have talked about before, is that running a nonprofit...people on the outside who may not know the nonprofit world might think, "Oh, that's an easy job," but actually it's a really, really tough job and probably tougher than running an equivalent-sized business. Can you talk a little bit about what the job was like before mid-March. And then what it's been like since mid-March?

[00:05:01] **Chitra:** That's kind of the double whammy, right? Like we, in refugee resettlement work, were already struggling. I started, I think, as you know, Phil, the same day as President Trump's inauguration and have been around for all four years of this administration and their policies towards refugees has not exactly been friendly.

[00:05:23] So we have seen a precipitous drop in the number of refugees allowed into the United States. We've been in a couple of different existential crises in the last four years. Across our network in the United States, we've had to close down 10 of our offices. And coincidentally, our federal funding has also gone down in proportion to the number of refugees.

[00:05:49] So in that space, you can either just give up or you can innovate. And we chose to innovate and figure out where do we pivot? What does the community need? And within the first six weeks of my tenure, we did 12 focus groups and asked the community, what are we missing? What do you need? And from that, we developed what we call pillars -- service pillars -- and we did welcome, that was our bread and butter, welcoming new refugees, new immigrants, which includes everything from meeting them at the airport to housing to English language services and their first job in the country. But every parent we talked to said, "I'm okay, but my children, my children please do something for our kids."

[00:06:38] So we started next gen services and that's all the way from birth through high school graduation. We have family literacy for the little ones a very academically rigorous summer academy for K-8 and then an environmental science internship for the high schoolers. They also said 'we need help with legal issues around immigration.' So we added a legal injustice pillar, and we have now five full-time people taking on immigration related legal services, such as green card, citizenship, violence against women, work permits for asylees, so that has really expanded. And finally, we heard that we really need help with economic empowerment and the COVID emergency has just laid this bare, the disparities in our country, between communities of color and majority population and how people of color have been disproportionately affected by COVID. And we heard from the community we want to earn supplemental income. We at the same time had an acre of parking lot donated to us.

[00:07:51] And we were able to depave it and the community said we need access to food because we're in the middle of a food desert. We started a community garden. So we have 50 families from 22 countries that farm with us. And we also started a sewing program for women who are illiterate in language, and we taught them ESL through sewing, and many of those folks got jobs in the commercial sewing sector.

[00:08:20] So these are all things that are under our economic empowerment. And finally, we work at the detention center in Tacoma, Washington, which is the largest immigration detention center on the West Coast. And we provide services inside and when people are released, so all of those services have been just overwhelmed. Our demand has gone through the roof. At the same time, our funding, because of the COVID, refugee arrivals went to zero, which meant our funding from federal sources went to zero. At the same time other parts of our programs are just blowing up. So demand has increased and revenues have gone down at the same time.

[00:09:05] **Phil:** That's something that you just never see in business, right? Where revenue and demand go hand in hand. Here you are, and you've been hit with a drop in revenue and a simultaneous increase in demand, which is hugely challenging. We did a survey in May, as

you know, Chitra, of nonprofits. And what we saw was almost 80% of those who had earned revenue stream, fee-for-service, had seen a decline in earned revenue.

[00:09:29] A majority of those who were receiving gifts from individuals giving sort of under \$7,500, they'd seen a decline. So already nonprofits in May were saying they had or would be taking all kinds of actions like reducing programs and services in some cases because of social distancing and other cases because of revenue declines. 80% already were drawing from reserves, and these are organizations with maybe a few months reserves at the median if they're doing well. 62% had reduced staff hours or wages or employee benefits. Half had laid off or furloughed employees. And then to your point, 55% said they had seen an increase in demand for programs and services as a result of the pandemic, but a higher percentage had seen an increase in demand if they serve historically disadvantaged communities or populations.

[00:10:21] So that just illustrates that not only is it a brutally tough job in the first place, it's even harder now. And it's even harder still if you're serving folks who are hardest hit themselves by COVID. So I think I met you when you emailed me in early April because we had just put out a statement with some other organizations calling foundations to pay out more now because of the scale of this crisis to consider doing that. And you emailed, and then we talked on the phone, and we talked about the challenge that you were facing. And one of the points that you made that I thought was so powerful is that because you are trusted by those that you serve, you're in a unique position to be able to help them effectively.

[00:11:04] And I was struck by the fact that you shared that folks showed up, looking for food. I mean, you had your community garden, but you weren't a food pantry. And all of a sudden you're scrambling to figure how do we partner with a food bank to get these families fed? And that's because of the trust, right? That you've built up over so much time.

[00:11:22] **Chitra:** Yeah. We had such a demand that people were saying food security was an issue and it was that razor thin margin that allowed people to stay housed, because they weren't able to afford their month to month grocery bill. And we partnered with Northwest Harvest, which is one of the largest food banks here in our area.

[00:11:44] And we used the same parking lot where the community garden is and we set up a drive-through food bank. Long and short of it is every week there were 850 cars lining up for hours to get this food. And over the course of 21 weeks, I think we served something like 17,000 folks and we delivered food to those that couldn't get out.

[00:12:09] But again, you know, we're not in that business. And I went out there one day to help the team and took pizza to all the volunteers and, and what I noticed in each of those cars is that it's the, the Black and brown communities that are in those cars. And I've been doing this work for a long time and time and time again, when crisis hits, it's our communities that are in those food lines. And it distressed me so much. You know, I went back and I got our leadership team together and I said, 'guys, you know, I am so done with this. We've got to like lean into development. Yes. We stepped into relief for a little bit, but we are at heart, a development agency, and we need to change the system.' We can't

continue to do this because our folks need access to opportunity. They need access to capital. They need access to knowledge that is culturally appropriate and they need access to networks. And I said, 'let's, let's change the system together because the next time crisis hits, I want our folks to go to the store and buy their own darn food.'

[00:13:22] You know, I don't want them waiting for three hours to get groceries. I mean, that's humiliating at its core. Week in and week out, they were in those lines.

[00:13:33] **Grace:** You know, as you I've worked with donors, and I think what's interesting about your background is that you've been on both sides of the table -- you've worked at a funder before and now you're running a nonprofit.

[00:13:43] I mean, this podcast is, is meant to help donors understand how they can be better at their giving. What has been helpful to you as a nonprofit leader in terms of your donors behavior or coming around during this time and what has been less helpful?

[00:13:59] **Chitra:** I think the helpful part, I could say in two words and that's unrestricted giving. Those donors that we have built trust with over years and have gotten to know us, and they say to us, 'you're from the community you live in the community. You've had lived experience, you know, better than us, how to spend this money.' And they let us do that. If I have to like figure out the financial shuffle of how to get this money to this and keep donor intent intact? That just takes up so much time.

[00:14:33] But if a donor says use it where you need it most. That's the most helpful thing you can do for us. What's less helpful is when, and this has happened often, where our expertise is questioned or second guessed. Just on my leadership team, we have over 125 years of social service experience. And half of our leadership team are from immigrant refugee or asylee backgrounds.

[00:15:02] You've got to trust us at some point. People wouldn't ask me to come and run a tech company because that's not my background. And yet so many people from the business sector will often second guess how we're doing our work. And frankly, it's not even because we're doing it. Like we think we have all the answers? We're constantly listening to community and that I think is the secret sauce for our organization. It's an iterative process. It's not a one and done we're constantly coming back to the community and saying, did we get it right? We're not just going to them at the end, but we're involving them in the process all along.

[00:15:43] **Grace:** I'm curious if you were to advise a donor that line between being an engaged donor versus being one that, as you described, doesn't trust your expertise. Where does that line fall? Because I imagine if someone, you know, maybe they come from a business background and essentially that's what they want to offer. It may or may not be helpful. What would your advice be so that they are on the helpful side and not the unhelpful side?

[00:16:09] **Chitra:** There's roles, definitely, for those folks. We're going to be launching this year an entrepreneurship academy. And we're going to be asking people from business

backgrounds to specifically help us with those skillsets. So listen, find out where we need your help instead of just offering the advice first.

[00:16:30] **Grace:** Yeah.

[00:16:30] **Chitra:** We want to leverage the different assets that our donors bring to us, but we also, first and foremost, want to leverage the assets our participants bring.

[00:16:41] It's not so much that I get my feelings hurt or our leadership gets their feelings hurt, it's more we're trying to make sure that the folks that we serve, you know -- we talk a lot about asset-based development, as opposed to deficit-based development -- we want to make sure that their voices are heard first, that their ideas are the first ones that we listen to.

[00:17:03] And then, of course, we want our donors to participate with us. But I think if donors come with their learning hats on and listen more than they speak, I think that's the advice I'd give them. We value what you have to bring, but you have to take what you have to bring and put it into the context of where we are working.

[00:17:23] **Phil:** Yeah. Crystal Hayling, who is a friend, who runs the Libra Foundation, now and who was on our board for many years at CEP, you know, used to say, um, that she learned somewhere early in her philanthropy career that people didn't much care for their lives being viewed as problems to be solved. And another way of putting that is people are the best experts on their own experience.

[00:17:44] And yet, so often in philanthropy, donors come in with this notion that they've got the solution, and haven't really heard from people they intend to help. Talk to us a little bit about giving in this moment when the country is racked with simultaneous crises, and we have a lot of charitable assets that are sitting in the endowments of private foundations, donor advised funds that aren't really mandated to pay out at a particular level.

[00:18:16] I guess, what would you say to donors who might have a donor advised fund and you know, planning to spend 10, 15%, 5% a year or foundations that are spending the minimum 5%? What would you say to them about that? Maybe they want their foundation to exist in perpetuity, or maybe they want their donor advised fund to be administered by their children and grandchildren. What would you say to the donor who's thinking that way?

[00:18:43] **Chitra:** When I was at the foundation, I was a philanthropic advisor so I did work with folks that had DAFs. In 2018, there was \$121 billion in assets and donor advised funds. And I believe it's Fidelity Charitable is now the number one charity. They've surpassed United Way.

[00:19:04] And the average, depending on how you calculate the payout rate, it's anywhere between 14 and 20% a year...which of course is a lot better than foundations and their 5% minimum, right? But personally, I think DAFs should have a five-year maximum to pay out their funds and then, you know, they can replenish them. And that's because, just sitting in perpetuity, those funds aren't really having an impact on the public good. And for those of us that watch people suffer every single day. I hear stories every single day. The house is on

fire. The rainy day has come. It's a deluge out here right now. And when you see people suffer and then you hear that these funds are sitting there growing, you know, these assets are just growing year after year.

[00:19:59] I don't know. I just think, "Hey, you know, the people that donate to us through DAFs, some of the most compassionate people I've ever met." And so let that compassion come forth right now because we are struggling. I mean, folks in our communities are struggling just to make ends meet. People are getting evicted. People are dying. And wouldn't it be fun to watch your money have effect right now while you're living?

[00:20:26] **Grace:** Yeah, I've been encouraged to see there have been -- perhaps in the margins, I don't know how mainstream it is -- some discussion around donors voluntarily paying out, spending down their whole donor advised fund, like you said, in a, in a specific timeframe. My family, my husband and I, we have a donor advised fund at Fidelity Charitable, and we do try to spend it down every year. We're also not major donors by any stretch of the imagination. So I guess, what is it, what we're trying to say is that we're not necessarily...we don't have a problem with donor advised funds within themselves. It's really how they're used, right? Like, it's the fact that the funds are allowed to sit there. And maybe there should be some more incentives or other structures that would usher those funds more quickly to those in need.

[00:21:12] **Phil:** The point that you're making, that this is a crisis that... I'm 50 years old. I've never seen anything like this in my lifetime. And so if ever there was a time to dig deep, it's now for donors. It's just an extraordinary... I don't think anyone's going to look back and say, 'boy, I wish I'd done a little less in this time.' Or, you know, 'I wish I had sacrificed a little less to help others.'

[00:21:35] I don't think that's the way people are going to feel when they look back.

[00:21:39] **Grace:** I think there's one fundamental tension that I often feel as a donor. And I'm wondering, Chitra, to get your thoughts on this. So I think that, you know, even listening to you or as I read the news or come across nonprofits that are working in direct service, my thought and reaction is often, 'Oh my goodness. This work is so important. Take all my money.' You know? Like I want to be giving to these causes that are really impacting the communities that I care about.

[00:22:09] And yet, I have a specific pot of money to give away perhaps, and it sometimes can feel like direct service needs around us could be like a bottomless pit in some ways, where I feel like I want to give for instance to refugees.

[00:22:24] And yet it just seems like almost, there's like a fear that perhaps if I give a little, it will keep requiring more and more and more of me. And do I have enough like energy or even resources to, to give to that? And that's not a feeling that I'm proud of, but I wonder if other donors also struggle with that.

[00:22:41] I mean, you see these needs, you work with donors. How should they be thinking about these needs around us right now?

[00:22:50] **Chitra:** I think everybody has limited assets and to think of giving, not just financially, but giving of your time giving of your talents. That's really important too. But depending on how much you have to give, I would suggest going deep with one cause or two or three causes, as opposed to like doing the peanut butter spread \$25 here or there. I mean, those \$25 gifts are important, but when a donor says 'I am in, I have cast my lot with you and I am in for good. And I'm going for the five-year long haul or a 10 year distance with you.' For nonprofit leaders, that year-over-year kind of giving is just so comforting. Those kinds of donors that I have, they're the ones that I invest in as far as like telling them here are our struggles. Here are our challenges. They're the ones that I'm really laying myself bare to. Not even how much they give, but if they give consistently that's more important than how much they give, because it speaks of a commitment to the cause.

[00:24:07] **Grace:** It reminds me of that common question that donors sometimes ask nonprofits, "what is your plan for being sustainable?" And I think my answer in those cases is always, "you know, a nonprofit will be sustainable when donors sustain them," you know? And it's somehow there's a sense of nonprofits need to sprout a business model or something like that when actually, you know, faithful consistent donors of whatever size makes such a big difference.

[00:24:35] **Phil:** It does relate though also to this other tension, right? That I think donors feel, but it sounds like, Chitra, the way you were describing your own organization's analysis of the current situation, you feel it too. Which is the pressing demand of immediate suffering versus the long-term work to eliminate that suffering in the first place.

[00:25:01] Going back to where, what you talked about before, you talked about trying to get at like the systems that need to be changed. But then the day to day, you've got people who need your help. How do you balance your energy?

[00:25:13] **Chitra:** Collaboration and partnership I think is really critical for the nonprofit sector. Unfortunately, so much of the ways that foundations and donors operate keeps us from doing that because it's a very competitive system. And so we're always competing with our fellow nonprofits. But I feel like we do a really good job of collaboration. And for example, when we stopped doing food distribution, we went out and found all the other folks that are doing food distribution and made sure that we pointed the folks that were coming to our place to others for us.

[00:25:53] It's much easier, frankly, to raise money for those daily needs. Donors came out of the woodwork. They love to buy stuff and bring it to us, you know? So they brought cartons the eggs and milk and diapers, and, you know, people love to get on the Amazon wishlist and buy things. But when we start talking about systems change and, I mean, we want donors that can take a big bet on us, frankly. We've been given a kitchen that we want to turn into a commercial teaching kitchen and start small food-related businesses for example. From the community garden people want to start like making jams and jellies and momo sauces to sell...and then the entrepreneurship academy? Those kinds of things are much harder to find donors that'll take a big bet on us to change the systems. But when you look long-term know, that's really, what's going to have the impact.



[00:26:53] And then education, for example, like really giving our kids a fighting chance. With the pandemic, we're seeing this huge digital divide with kids in BIPOC communities. A lot of our refugee families might just have one device at home that they're all sharing. There might be 10 people in a two-bedroom apartment, so there's no quiet spaces to do their work. We need to change those kinds of systems of kids have that trajectory with education to move past where their parents are. It's much harder to raise money for that because you're not seeing it with your eyes.

[00:27:31] **Grace:** Let's say I'm a donor who I love what you just described -- the systems change. Talk me through why I should make this bet. I don't want to get burned. This, this was hard-earned money, but it seems like you have a great track record. What is the thought process that you would like them to come along on?

[00:27:49] **Chitra:** I always encourage donors and foundations, not just to ask about the demographics of the people that we serve, but the demographics of the people in leadership and on the board of an organization. And the reason that I think we can do it, and we will do it, is because a good portion of our leadership, not just the direct-service staff, but all the way up to the executive director, we represent the community that we serve. We have lived experience.

[00:28:20] Our board now is majority refugee asylee immigrant. It goes all the way up to the leadership. And that's so important because when you're working in communities that have faced great challenges, have been traditionally marginalized, who does the work, what the hand that's pulling you up looks like, matters.

[00:28:41] When the hand that's pulling you up always looks different than your own, it sends a very, very powerful, albeit unconscious message to people that somehow they're not capable. But when you see someone that looks like yourself, that went through the same struggles and challenges that you went through, and they're on the other side of that? That's why we talk about every immigrant, like the last part of our vision is "empowered for community." We want our folks to turn around and be the ones that are doing the work that we're doing. When I started this job, I said, I'd be there for five years and I would train a refugee or an asylee into my position.

[00:29:22] So I've been on a five-year track to do that because I just believe it's so important to have leadership that looks like the people we serve. And the reason that I think that we will like, you could take a big bet on us, is the woman that runs our resiliency programs as a former refugee. She came here with nothing and is probably the most innovative person I know, but she's always... Like for those of us that are from the community, it's not a 9-5 job.

[00:29:55] Our social networks are the people in the community. The people we have over for dinner are the people in the community. We don't need some kind of listening mechanism where we're going out there and listening -- we hear it every single day. I've got people social distancing on my back porch that tell me "you need to be doing this."

[00:30:15] Some of the most innovative ideas I've heard are from the community. One of the young ladies that came through our programs as a refugee. She told me the other day, you

know, it was after George Floyd and she said, Ms. Hansted -- and she's from Kenya -- and she said, "you know what you need to do in cultural orientation, Ms. Hansted, is take all the people who are Black and brown and put them in a different room and, and talk to them about what it means to be Black in America, because no one told us the disparities and the struggles and the challenges we were going to face. Nobody told us and I have three brothers." And wow, you know? The intersectionality of the work we do, and the reality of what's happening in our country right now? It was dropped right there by a woman that had gone through our programs.

[00:31:07] **Grace:** I think that's so powerful because I think often times we downplay how important being from the community is or having that experience. Cause I think sometimes we can think wrongly well, you know, if a consultant with the right frameworks came in and put the inputs in from the community. And I'm obviously exaggerating a little bit, but I think often that is what happens, right? Is that there is this top-down approach. You know, "look at their situation. If they knew it was good for them, they wouldn't be in this situation." I think that there's something really dangerous about that kind of thinking and yeah, it's, it's important to be humble and realize that the people on the ground are the experts.

[00:31:45] **Chitra:** Yes. Yes. Absolutely.

[00:31:48] **Phil:** It's an effectiveness argument that you will be more effective as a donor, right? Is what I hear you saying, Chitra. If you fund and empower the people who understand, by virtue of their lived experience, the challenges better than anyone else. But there's a flip side of that, right? Which is that you're, you face challenges in fundraising that might be different, and I say this because you've told me this, that might be different than a white male executive director who has various connections to a largely white, uh, in your community anyway, donor class, right? So how is fundraising harder for you and what can a donor who's listening to this do to help make it less hard?

[00:32:39] **Chitra:** Well, I just want to say one thing about the last thing before I answer your question Phil. I didn't mean to make it sound like, um, only people from the community can be part of this work. We need everybody. I'm just saying be humble enough to be led by people from the community. Yes. It is much more difficult, in answer to your question, to raise money. And I used to think it was just crazy. Like people would say, "Oh, maybe those folks just had a bad day or maybe you're just imagining it." And that's why data is so important because the study that came out from Bridgespan and Echoing Green, um, and then some of the work that you guys have done also just, it made me breathe a sigh of relief. Because I thought, okay, I'm not losing. It's not just my imagination. But the study from Bridgespan said that 92% of foundation presidents and 83% of full-time staff are Caucasian.

[00:33:39] And in general they said three quarters of white people have entirely white social networks. And to my point before about, who do we hang out with? The folks that I socialize with aren't in the high-net-worth category, mostly. We live in the community and those are the folks that we hang out with. So, when I go out and try to increase our network of donors and I have a house party, for example, who am I going to invite? My friends. And bless their hearts, you know, they give. But we're not touching that top 1% of donor that like I say, can make a big bet and write a check. You know, that kitchen is going to cost us \$300,000. Well,

that's, that's not a whole lot for some people. But I don't know anybody that can write a check for \$300,000! So we'll go to a foundation.

[00:34:38] Now the foundations that do support us are amazing and we've worked so hard to even get that first conversation with a foundation, again, because I don't have those natural networks. I just do what I do. I just write and write and bother them till they finally have to give you a call back. It's just being persistent. That's what immigrants do, right? There was another study that said that people of color have less unrestricted funding. And I think that's a trust issue. It is hard, but it is doable if you keep being persistent. And, and most of all, if you keep believing in the cause and realize, "Hey, I'm not raising this money for me, I'm raising this money so other families can flourish, you know? So immigrant communities can flourish in this country."

[00:35:29] **Phil:** Chitra, thanks so much. This has been a really great conversation and I think it's such a great opportunity to understand better what it's like to lead an organization like yours, and really the invaluable work that you do to help people and to begin to change systems so that maybe in the future, that kind of help isn't needed in the same way.

[00:35:52] At the end of every podcast, we like to close with the same question, which is, Chitra, to you giving done right is what...fill in the blank.

[00:36:01] **Chitra:** So I would say giving done right is being led by communities that you're serving and working in partnership with communities that are being served to find out what is the greatest need and leveraging your dollars, your time, your talent, to make those things happen in the future.

[00:36:23] **Phil:** Thank you, Chitra, for spending time with us today.

[00:36:25] **Chitra:** Oh gosh, this was so fun.

[00:36:35] **Phil:** So Grace, what'd you think of our conversation with Chitra?

[00:36:38] **Grace:** I loved it. I am so inspired by her work and, and just the range of skills and expertise that she brings to bear to help so many different kinds of people in her region.

[00:36:50] **Phil:** Yeah, totally. And the fact that she roots her understanding of what kind of help is needed in really close consultation with that community. And then another was how quickly she and the organization had to shift in the face of the crisis and take on work that they hadn't even been doing before while continuing what they were doing. Just the sort of agility that that requires is not something to take for granted.

[00:37:19] **Grace:** It's kind of incredible the range of services that they've had to provide, whether it's like legal services, obviously because they're in refugee resettlement, but also the knowledge of knowing logistics for food distribution and mentoring and afterschool programs and workplace development. It's, it's staggering.

[00:37:38] You know, when I hear stories like hers and I talk to people like her, I just think, "wow, I really want to see her like well supported and well capitalized because the work is just so important."

[00:37:47] **Phil:** And you could hear her frustration about, I mean, I think she's very diplomatic and appreciative of her donors, but also the frustration that we hear from so many nonprofit leaders about how much is sitting untapped, either in donor advised funds or an assets of foundations. And now both of those are really important vehicles, but in this time, might it be the case that whatever a donor I was expecting to do in terms of their spending level, they should push themselves to do a good deal more because the needs are just so urgent and pressing. You know, Chitra said something to me in April, I think it was, which really stuck with me -- if an organization like hers goes under in this time because they don't have the support, it's almost like losing an employee who you've had for many years and how expensive it is to start all over, right? All that trust, all that knowledge they've accumulated. And I do worry that some small community-based organizations working with people who desperately need help are not going to make it through this crisis if donors don't step up.

[00:38:55] **Grace:** Right. And then at some point, the wheel has to be reinvented, right? Like if the needs are still there, it's not efficient to have an organization start from scratch to replace one that went under during this time, when that trust in those relationships were already existing.

[00:39:09] **Phil:** Yeah, that's absolutely right. A guy named David Salem who was on our board years ago, who's an investment person and he's managed, you know, like hundreds of zillions of dollars for foundations. He'd talk to me about how, you know, in investing, we understand the power of compounding, but that in the sort of social impact world, there is also a compounding effect.

[00:39:33] And that was a powerful analogy to me. And I think it absolutely applies to an organization like hers and a leader like Chitra.

[00:39:39] **Grace:** I felt personally really challenged by her sort of to go deep with nonprofits and, and really not try to spread that giving around because I feel like I get these like appeals all the time for causes that I think are really compelling.

[00:39:54] And frankly, it takes a lot of time and effort to do the due diligence and really go deep with a cause over time. I think on a practical level, what that's looked like for me is when I do get some of these requests, if I happen to have a little bit of extra money in like a budget category for that month, maybe I would give like a small, you know, \$25 gift to someone. But that really like the giving is, it's really about those bigger categories. My takeaway is don't give to the last minute asks, but really put the emphasis on like the bigger causes.

[00:40:32] So Phil, where can people go for more information about effective giving?

[00:40:37] **Phil:** They can go to our website [cep.org](http://cep.org) and also [givingdoneright.org](http://givingdoneright.org), which is the podcast site for all our episodes and show notes.

[00:40:45] **Grace:** And I know we've mentioned your book every episode at the end, but truly your book *Giving Done Right* is a great source for information about the breadth and

the depth of the nonprofit sector and how to support the nonprofits that one gives to, so highly recommend that.

[00:40:58] **Phil:** Appreciate that, Grace. And, of course, you are also a great resource and you're on Twitter @GraceNicolette. I'm on Twitter @PhilxBuchanan. And you can send us a note if you're listening to the show, if you have suggestions, comments, feedback, GDRpodcast@cep.org is the email address.

[00:41:15] **Grace:** And if you liked the show, please leave us a review on Apple Podcasts. It really helps.

[00:41:19] **Phil:** Thank you again to Chitra for joining us. Thank you to the CEP podcast team: producer, Sarah Martin; research and logistics guru, Molly Heidemann; and our terrific colleagues, Jay Kustka, Ethan McCoy, and Sae Darling. Thanks and see you next time.