

Bonus Episode - final

Phil: Hi Giving Done Right listeners, it's Phil. We are hard at work planning the second season of the podcast, look for it later in 2021. But today we're bringing you a special bonus episode from our recent virtual panel discussion on philanthropy and racial equity. It's part of CEP's three 20th Anniversary Virtual Learning Sessions, a series of events looking at the big issues facing philanthropy and society.

[00:00:31] Moderated by my Giving Done Right co-host Grace Nicolette, we had the pleasure of welcoming four dynamic leaders, each playing different roles in the movement for racial equity: Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation; Rashad Robinson, president of Color Of Change; Tricia Raikes, philanthropist and principal at the Raikes Foundation; and Yolanda Coentro, president and CEO of the Institute for Nonprofit Practice. During this really scintillating hour-long conversation, the panel talks about the state of philanthropy today and how it can best support the creation of an equitable democracy. Topics include the ways in which philanthropy can either further or dismantle structures that lead to racial inequities in our society. I think you're going to really enjoy it. Enough from me - here's Grace.

[00:01:23] **Grace:** I wanted to dive into our discussion today by starting with Darren. Darren, under your leadership, the Ford Foundation has committed to challenging inequality, broadly speaking, with racial justice being a key pillar of the work. I'm wondering, what do you see as the state of things in the field of philanthropy with regards to racial justice after the year that we had last year, 2020?

[00:01:47] **Darren:** Well, thank you Grace very much. And I'm really honored to be here with these three remarkable peers who I learn from every day by watching their leadership.

[00:01:57] And grateful to CEP you and Phil for all you do to help um the sector. I think we, in my 20 plus years in philanthropy, have made progress. There is no doubt that when I joined the Rockefeller Foundation in 2000, we did not talk about racial justice. We certainly never mentioned the words "white supremacy" and we absolutely did not talk about power because those are the core root challenges in a democracy, in a democracy that wishes to be multi-racial.

[00:02:40] And what we in philanthropy have to do, I believe is to help us succeed in that aspiration to be a successful multiracial democracy. And if we are to do that, philanthropy has to do what Dr. King said we needed to do when he said the following: "Philanthropy is commendable, but it should not allow the philanthropist to overlook the economic injustice which makes philanthropy necessary."

[00:03:14] So that's a very different idea than Carnegie and Rockefeller's ideas of generosity and charity. But Dr. King challenged us to do was to seek dignity and justice, and that requires the philanthropist to get uncomfortable. What Dr. King said was, we must address fundamental issues of power. And so I would submit that until in the board rooms, the family foundation offices of philanthropy in America, until we are talking about issues of power and saying that word. Until we are saying the words white supremacy as difficult and uncomfortable as it makes us, we will not see the material sustained progress because we

will continue to engage in the performative acts and in the token uh, interventions and in the iterative incrementalism that Dr. King again from the Birmingham jail challenged, um, is good, meaning, um, white uh, moderate friends, uh, to challenge themselves about. Uh, until we're able to do that philanthropy philanthropy's, uh, impact on this issue of racial equity will not materialized into sustained change.

[00:04:51] **Grace:** Thank you. I want to bring in Yolanda. So your Institute has trained over 1400 nonprofit leaders nationally with the skills and tools and networks for leading effective social change, so you have this really important nonprofit leadership perspective. What's the urgency that you're seeing in terms of how philanthropy has responded to this current moment?

[00:05:13] **Yolanda:** Thanks Grace. I want to thank you and CEP as well for inviting me to be on this panel. It's really a gift to have these kinds of conversations with folks at such an important time. Um, you know, as I reflect on what Darren just talked about relative to shifting power, I would say for us, you know, that is the, the critical piece of work that we do, um, on the nonprofit side to think about how to shift those structures within the field of nonprofit work.

[00:05:48] And philanthropy plays a key role in that. Um, and you know, while philanthropy kind of quickly many foundations and donors, pivoted funding, uh, towards racial justice and racial equity work as the racial reckoning erupted last spring, um, the, the urgency remains and I think it is incumbent upon us to figure out how are we going to continue to make these kinds of investments and prioritize this work in the field, um, as time passes.

[00:06:24] And so, you know, when I think about how the role that we play, it's really looking at, so if power sits in leadership, how do we support a change of leadership? How do we invest in leaders of color in racial equity work more broadly in the field? Funders are increasingly investing in these areas, naming them as priorities and those are obvious first steps and forwarding the work, but they're also looking to leaders for solutions more and more and funding more quickly with less restriction, which is so important. Um, and for our leaders, we know that for them to rise within the sector, that we have to fund the capacity building that organizations need to advance racial equity work and that they need to also fund opportunities for talent, BIPOC talent, across all levels of organizations to access different capital about that they need. And the way we kind of think about capital is in three types: there is knowledge capital, which is like access to information, education, thought, leadership, new ideas; social capital, that's access to relationships, right?

[00:07:39] Financial capital isn't just building financial access to financial resources for organizations and also for leaders so that they can sustain themselves in the work, but it's also, how do we help leaders get into positions of power and philanthropy and see themselves see the pathway to actually being able to influence where money goes?

[00:08:03] Um, there are lots of programs out there like INP who are doing this kind of work, and they've been doing it since our founding. So I suggest for folks on, on this webinar to think about how do we amplify them? And if you're already funding this work, and you

already believe in it, awesome! Then further help your grantees expand their resources, right?

[00:08:25] Don't wait for a leader to ask you to make an introduction. Spot them, give them a platform, offer them introductions to your networks. And remember that organizations that are serving the majority of BIPOC communities -- they need you. And so it's not as simple as funding leaders of color either. It's also about funding organizations differently that are serving communities of color to shift power.

[00:08:49] So how do we help them develop actionable equity agendas and help them invest in that? Because we can't go this for it alone. It's going to take all of us.

[00:09:00] **Grace:** That's great. I'd love to circle back to that uh, nonprofit piece, um, in a little bit. I also want to bring in Trisha to this conversation. Um, Tricia, the Raikes Foundation has been deep into an equity journey even before, um, the pandemic and the events of last year.

[00:09:18] What did last year change for you all? Um, and I'd love to hear your perspective.

[00:09:23] **Tricia:** Well, thanks very much for the question, Grace. And I join my colleagues um, I am just humbled and honored to, to be a part of this conversation today. And I'm honestly still holding Micah's powerful words. Uh, that was, uh, an extraordinary, um, experience for all of us.

[00:09:39] Uh, so, um, I have to say I'm, I am definitely grateful that Jeff and I were already several years into our racial equity learning when the pandemic hit because it, it definitely helped us, um, act faster when we needed to respond to many of the extraordinary events of 2020. You know, we already had an understanding of the inequities that were baked into our system

[00:10:05] uh, so the disproportionate rate of infection and death, uh, in our communities of color from COVID, unfortunately didn't really surprised, but we did make some shifts in our work. Um, like many other foundations, we quickly reached out to all of our core partners. Uh, we asked them what they needed in that moment and that led to repurposing of grants for use in general operations.

[00:10:34] Um, we also relaxed, um, a lot of our expected outcomes and timelines. We also supported some specific organizations that were you know, responding in the moment, uh, to issues, uh, impacted by COVID. So, we work very closely with, uh, our local Seattle Community Foundation, because we wanted to make sure that they were targeting the funds they were raising to those most in need and moving the dollars quickly.

[00:11:03] Now I'll give you a couple of examples of, uh, specific things that, um, that we did because we work across youth systems. We work on issues in our K through 12 education. We work on, um, youth homelessness. We knew that when schools closed students experiencing homelessness were going to be hit very hard because schools happened to be that critical place where our young people experiencing homelessness, find the stability, that sense of belonging.

[00:11:36] Oftentimes it's where they access food and hygiene. Uh, and we knew that there would be no federal or local emergency dollars funding, um, that particular gap. So we worked quickly with one of our grantees. We brought other funders along and we were able to get funds distributed quickly and effectively across our state focusing, particularly in, um, in rural and indigenous populations because they young people leading our advising team knew where the greatest needs were because of their own lived experience and knowledge of the system.

[00:12:15] You know, our young people of color and our LGBTQ youth are disproportionately represented in our youth population. And so we had already built those strong relationships, um, and we could lean on them in a crisis. So it really reinforced the importance of proximity, um, in, um, the work that we do at the foundation.

[00:12:37] I would just add that the protests also really helped us fast-track our thinking around power and the importance of shifting power. We stood up an exploratory fund called the black leadership and power fund. And, um, it's different than any of our other foundation strategies, but we wanted to act quickly and we wanted to get in relationship, uh, to really learn what needed to be done.

[00:13:04] And we went about decision-making in a very different way. So those grants were directed by our black staff members to over a dozen organizations across sort of our three, uh, C3 and C4 entities. And they were unrestricted funds that were really helping to elevate things like black leadership and bolstering black engagement in our democracy and leveraging community-based organizations to advance anti-racist, uh, policy change.

[00:13:35] So from idea to execution, it was less than a two week timeline. So we're really realizing that you know, true change, uh, true outcomes for our black indigenous and people of color in this country really requires helping to build and shift power. So right now we're in the midst of a strategy development process.

[00:13:58] We are working as a full team on developing both a shared vision and a definition of power. We then hope to figure out what and how we will fund with that power analysis in mind, and, um, we're excited about it. It's new territory for us, but we are committed to learning and to really getting it right. And this last year has been a significant, um, motivator to do that.

[00:14:26] **Grace:** That's great. I think this theme of power, um, is one that's so important and there are many ways that it manifests in, in philanthropy in terms of who has the power and, um, how the power flows. And I'd love to bring in last, but not least, in this conversation Rashad. Rashad, your organization is often, um, sort of the, the needling that needs to happen with power, whether it's in Silicon Valley or Hollywood.

[00:14:54] And, um, in a recent interview, you mentioned, um, this is a quote. "We can't have charitable solutions to structural problems. You don't solve the Flint water crisis by just sending water bottles. You don't solve the crisis of inner city education, uh, by doing mentorship and just service days. Um, those are ways to help, but those are not ways to undo the inequality."

[00:15:17] Um, what then, from your perspective, given that you have worked across all these different industries, what is the role of philanthropy right now in your view?

[00:15:26] **Rashad:** Thank you. Thank you for that. It's great to be here with my colleagues and great to be with all of you virtually, and I'm hoping that soon, we'll be able to get back to, uh, engagement, um, in real life.

[00:15:38] Um, and all the ways that, that, that helps strengthen our work. But, you know, I think philanthropy's main role is one of understanding. Um, so many decisions blow from how we look at problems and how we're oriented to see them and understand the world and understanding the true needs. Um, you know, for instance, um, understanding that change is not bought, but change is grown.

[00:16:07] Um, an example is like if you're setting the stage for a photo shoot, you set up a bunch of plastic plants, you take the picture and then you walk away. In the photo, you can't tell the difference. But if you want a garden, Uh, you need that garden to produce substance sustainance for years and to be, and to be, uh, uh, sort of, uh, visible and clear.

[00:16:31] And that's the same thing when it comes to movement building. I remember, uh, one of my first jobs in high school was working at the Brooks Brothers at the, at the outlet mall, in my community on Eastern Long Island. And, you know, we could put displays in the windows where we pinned the suits in the back, so that they looked a certain way out front, but they didn't actually fit the sort of person that way when they came into the stores. And people would look at the display and think that that's how it might look on them. And that's not actually how it works. Understanding that equity in media, for instance, isn't about getting more air time or more Facebook pages.

[00:17:08] It's about media ownership. Black people, for instance, not always being the guest on someone else's dinner party, but having our own. You know, yes, Black Twitter is great, but Black Twitter against Fox News or Facebook is not a fair fight. And that's not just because of the difference in resources. Black Twitter is organizing; Fox News and Facebook are infrastructure.

[00:17:32] We need both savvy and wide reaching organizing. And also the kind of infrastructure that builds the kind of power you can only build and sustain with major investments in long-term capability that establishes an audience, that is consistent, and creates a direct connection of trust that can move millions, uh, hundreds of thousands or whatever, sort of necessary to sort of drive engagement and winning.

[00:18:01] When philanthropy moves from thinking about helping us buy time in media to helping us buy media platforms itself, we're moving in the right direction to thinking sort of about power. Another way that we talk about it at Color Of Change is understanding the difference between presence and power. Presence is visibility, awareness, retweets, shout-outs from the stage. Power is the ability to change the rules. And sometimes we mistake presence for power. We can think that we've done something that we haven't actually done. We can think that a Black president, which is really good, has actually changed the rules and made us post racial.

[00:18:37] We can think that the celebration of Black celebrity means that America loves Black people. As much as America loves Black culture. And America can love, celebrate, and monetize Black culture and not like Black people very much at the same time. And those two things don't have to really be in conflict.

[00:18:57] And so understanding is incredibly key for anyone that's going into the space of helping to make a decision that will be force multipliers in terms of who gets to move an agenda and who doesn't. How those issues, and when I talk about sort of the difference between charitable solutions, um, versus, uh, structural change, for those of us who are doing this work, whether we're in philanthropy or in the field, it also just starts off by how we even talk about the problem.

[00:19:28] And I will say, I share a couple of quick things on this and then be quiet. Um, far too often, we will talk about Black communities as vulnerable. Vulnerability is a personal trait. I can sometimes be vulnerable. I don't know if I go on social media and see an ex-boyfriend that's way too happy with his life.

[00:19:45] That's my personal thing. I need to deal with that. But Black communities are not vulnerable. We've been targeted, attacked, exploited. When you call communities that have been targeted, attacked, exploited, vulnerable, people spend their time thinking about how to fix them, right? Charitable solution rather than working to fix the structure.

[00:20:05] Right? It's the difference between say "Black people are less likely to get a loan from the bank." Instead of saying "banks are less likely to give loans to Black people." They may sound the same, but on one hand, we end up with financial literacy programs for Black people to help Black folks do better with banks that from their very beginning have targeted, exploited, red lined, and kept us out versus actually dealing with structural change at the banks.

[00:20:30] You can think about it in terms of every single system. When we talk about sort of Black people, oftentimes focusing the onus on fixing Black people, Black families, Black communities, rather than fixing the structured and the systems that have stood in the way of change. So once again, understanding from an operations perspective has to lead to not just sort of funding programs, but funding infrastructure, because that builds power and saying what we actually mean so that we actually lead ourselves towards the solution that can be sort of a drivers of change that is lasting, not change that is about charity.

[00:21:07] **Grace:** Hmm, that's, that's really powerful. Um, I think, you know, I think about our had a recent conversation where that last point you made was really brought home to me that, you know, when we say that, um, you know, Black communities and other communities of color were disproportionately affected by COVID. To your point, no, actually it's that COVID affects everybody, but that they have been, you know, disproportionately, um, they have not had the systems and the protection that other groups have had over time and therefore COVID, um, is impacting them in a different way.

[00:21:39] And, and that language is important.

[00:21:41] **Darren:** Um,

[00:21:41] Grace, can I just say on this point, I think philanthropy has been organized to solve social problems. And just following on Rashad's brilliant explication here, I think philanthropy needs therefore to change from a problem diagnosis to an understanding of power and systems and structures.

[00:22:10] And this is why the work around the white supremacy, around understanding how our systems and structures have been designed, and how we have learned to understand what problems are in society. I'm fascinated when I look back in the archives of the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation and see reports from the 1960s and titled "The Negro Problem."

[00:22:43] So this "The Negro Problem" was a study of ghettos and the problem with Negroes in these ghettos, as opposed to studying how did these ghettos come to be? How did we come to see Negroes as the problem? And I think we have to excavate our language and our understanding. And I think that quite candidly has to be led by white philanthropists, which is why I'm so grateful to courageous philanthropists, like the Raikes who are willing to talk about white supremacy as a reality and not some figment of me and Rashad and Yolanda's imagination.

[00:23:37] I mean, but that, that is, it is actually real. That the institutions in our society were actually not designed for us. And this isn't an indictment of individuals. And that's why sometimes the conversation becomes difficult with philanthropists, because people feel that it is a personal attack. You're calling me a white supremacist.

[00:24:04] No, we're not calling you a white supremacist. You are trying to do good works, good philanthropy in a system that is white supremacist. And until you recognize that that's the system, you will be spinning your wheels, doing these incremental things because, and feeling like you're not having impact feeling that your programmatic interventions and your philanthropic investments have been wasted.

[00:24:36] When, in fact they've not been wasted, but they are fighting against a system that needs itself to be dismantled. And the work of philanthropy needs to be in dismantling those systems and building the kinds of systems where equality is actually built in.

[00:24:58] **Grace:** What would your advice be? Darren and others? I mean, I imagine that there are some funders on this call for whom, you know, the dichotomy, you, you mentioned Rashad of like presence versus power.

[00:25:08] I mean, we're still wrestling with presence here, right? And like, maybe that last year, the events was the first time that there was like a real personal, or maybe even organizational reckoning around white supremacy. Where does one go to learn more about these structures and to see the problem more clearly.

[00:25:30] **Rashad:** I mean, I think that there's a lot of places. One, I would say, um, the, the work that is happening in communities that are winning on these issues is actually the first place to start. Right. You know, one thing that I think, uh, we should be proud of, right. In terms of the infrastructure that has been funded over the last several years, and I can't see folks spaces, but I know that many folks were involved in this is that, you know, in the, um,

you know, there was this one moment over the summer where I reached out to my dear sister, Patrice Colors, one of the co-founders of the Black Lives Matter Movement in Los Angeles.

[00:26:04] I saw some of the police interaction that was happening on the ground in Los Angeles and reached out to her to see how she was doing, how others were doing, if there's anything that we could do. Me being, you know, thousands of miles away. But if there was ways that we could amplify push to a media, what have you?

[00:26:20] And she reminded me about the last seven years of organizing: leadership development, folks having to learn to work together, and like what we have built together, a point at which, uh, it was racist to say Black Lives Matter. And now it's being raised on flags and put on streets and the power that racial justice has as a persuasion vehicle. Sometimes we talk about racial justice as the moral thing to do. And it is. Sometimes we talk about it as a charitable thing to do, and it is. But it's also the strategic thing to do. Think about this summer when many of us thought that the best we could do in terms of activism was uplift powerful investigative journalism, or clap outside of our windows for the essential workers that were getting us through.

[00:27:06] It was racial justice that powered people to the streets. It was racial justice that led to the spike in voter registration, particularly among young people. Racial justice became a majoritarian issue this summer. Now the opportunity is to translate that into a governing majority, but that gives us the ability to win on healthcare, to win on climate, to win on education. If you care about sort of a whole range of issues, you've got to think about the ways in which racial injustice has impacted our ability to win and not think about racial justice as a deficit, but actually think about it is our most powerful, motivating force. It's the force that actually motivated multi-racial communities to stand up, right?

[00:27:50] If racial justice is now majoritarian issue in polling and Black people are not the majority, that means that we have persuaded a lot of other people to stand with us. And that is powerful in terms of what does it take to win. And so, as I think about what is it going to take to get a true democracy?

[00:28:08] It's not that it will produce racial justice is that racial justice is our path to getting there and we should be thinking about how to leverage it, how to unleash it and not think about, um, in the final quarter of any game, you don't bench your best player. And I believe racial justice is our best player.

[00:28:26] And for folks that want to learn more and get involved more, there are movements working. And as philanthropists, the thing I would say, just on behalf of those of us who do the work, um, and our running organizations, that if you want to do learning that you've got to find ways to do that in ways that are a fair and equitable and responsible to the folks on the ground, doing the work. Um, you know, Color Of Change has a much bigger infrastructure than many of my other brothers and sisters doing this work.

[00:28:55] Um, but even we can be in a screen with all the folks wanting to come and learn sometimes. And at the end of the day, our responsibility to keep winning has to be to the work.

[00:29:06] **Grace:** Yeah. Folks should also be compensating for, uh, people that they are asking advice for in this process. Tricia. Um, I'm curious if you could share a little bit more about your journey, like how you learned more about these structures. And I know that you and Jeff also have a voice among communities of donors who may be predominantly white. And how do you bring people along when they're just seeing the problem for the first time and may not see it with the breadth and the depth of others on this panel?

[00:29:42] **Tricia:** Great question, Grace. Maybe I'll, maybe I'll just step back a moment and share a little bit about how Jeff and I got started. Um, you know, we've always been drawn to work on our problems. Um, you know, how we can really help bring enduring change and try to, you know, address root cause. And, you know, in our case, we've been very drawn to systems that serve our young people.

[00:30:07] But as you can imagine, you know, uh, All best efforts and good intentions. Our work was clearly, uh, incomplete. And over the last five, six years, um, we've really come to understand more deeply the role of racism, uh, and, uh, the way it plays out in the lives of Black Americans and people of color across our country.

[00:30:31] You know, it is as, as, uh, like esteemed colleagues have mentioned, it is just built into so much of how our country operates. There was an interesting piece I read recently that described racism like smog, that, um, we don't often see it and we don't think about it because it's everywhere. And when I talk about the, we, I mean, people like Jeff and I, and, and other white people, because we don't experience it in the same way.

[00:31:01] And so I think, um, the words of Isabel Wilkerson still stick with me. She wrote that our caste system based on race is very much the infrastructure of our divisions. So as Rashad said, you know, uh, race is absolutely focusing on race is absolutely the right thing to do, but we also recognize that we won't achieve the, um, aspirations that we have for, uh, for our work.

[00:31:28] Uh, if we don't understand the critical role that race plays in our history, uh, in, in our current moment. So it's been quite a journey for Jeff and I over the last number of years, but I can tell you, we are fully in a, and we are here for the long haul. You know, one of the quotes I was, uh, quite inspired by, um, by, from one of Ibram kindies Kendi's was that it's important to, to know our past.

[00:31:57] And when we know our past, we will know our present. And so Jeff and I are very committed to doing the work, to educating ourselves on the history of our country. Uh, but as we have learned along the way, we've also realized that, um, our privilege has affected how we define the problems and the solutions. It's impacted.

[00:32:19] Um, You know, how, who we surround ourselves with. And early on, um, most of those individuals were white people, so we've done a lot of reading. We've engaged with a

lot of colleagues and community leaders. We've also hired DEI consultants to work with our teams, but also to work with each of us individually.

[00:32:42] Um, so where has that gotten us? Well, we've, um, clearly diversified our team. We've also changed our operating values. Um, we have spent a lot more time in conversation with our BIPOC uh, leaders in our community, and we've listened to our young people who share their experiences because they are so familiar with the systems, uh, that they experience.

[00:33:06] So. Uh, we have now made sure that, um, those young people are sitting in all the right tables, uh, when decisions are being made, uh, that will impact them. And we know along the way that, um, that we have gained a lot of valuable insights from shifting the way we show up. And it's really improved, uh, our work to date.

[00:33:28] So from my experience, philanthropy would benefit from decentralizing its own expertise and listening more to people, um, who know what it's like to navigate these broken systems. Because I think when we do, and then we invest, um, in what they see needs to be fixed. Um, I think we'll, we'll, we will make greater progress.

[00:33:52] So when I think about sort of specific advice to some of my colleagues in philanthropy, um, there's certainly a lot of great resources and lists. We have a curated list on the Raikes Foundation site, but, um, I would like to actually point to one particular article that I found, um, inspiring and, and both Jeff and I referred to it.

[00:34:15] And that is the uh, the article called The Curb Cut Effect that was published years ago in the Stanford Social Innovation Review. It illuminates the concept of targeted universalism, which is if you really want to fix a system -- and it could be transportation, it could be education, it could be policing -- you have to start by talking to those who are most impacted or who are least well served by the systems because it turns out if you listen and then you design the changes in the system to meet their needs, then everyone will likely benefit. And so, um, I think philanthropists looking for high leverage solutions,

[00:35:00] um, that's a really important place to start is to understand, um, the targeted universalism concept. And I guess lastly, I would just incur, I wouldn't encourage any of the, um, the white folks that are listening to this conversation today, to really stick with the work, you know, our learning and evolution.

[00:35:20] Um, it's not been easy. We've had a lot of really tough conversations in our foundation, but, um, we are super clear now that there is no neutral in this work. You are either working to dismantle these systems and structures, or you are allowing the status quo to continue. So I'd really like to invite some of my white colleagues that are not already engaged in this work, uh, to really join us in the work.

[00:35:48] **Grace:** Thank you

[00:35:49] **Darren:** Grace, can I just, before going into your Yolanda, because I want to say something that I hope Yolanda will agree with, and that is something that Trisha just said about how we invest, how we philanthropists invest. I believe if you believe in racial equity,

you will not do what too many foundations and donors do, which is project support to death nonprofits. And the ways, the pernicious ways in which project support and the under resourcing of the infrastructure investments, hits small hits uh, minority led, uh, people of color led organizations is profound.

[00:36:34] And it is a reason in part why the capacity that Yolanda spoke of in the BIPOC community is often so fragile. Because it has been under invested in as institutions because we know that institutions are what sustained change and what donors get excited by is the social entrepreneur of the day or the silver new shiny object.

[00:37:04] That's all important. We need innovation, we need ingenuity. But we need institutions in these communities to support and to be the ladders for leadership development so that we will see more people of color led organizations when those organizations are sufficiently resourced. So from an equity standpoint, this too will require donors to get uncomfortable and to move out of the normative ways in which we center ourselves.

[00:37:37] My own organization is as guilty of this as any, and it's been something we have been tackling we've through a number of interventions. You know, when I became president, we were 21% general operating support. As of last fiscal year, we were over 80% general operating support. Um, and, and we, we should be, I mean, because ultimately the work that we are working on it's institutions, it's, it's the Legal Defense Fund.

[00:38:04] When people say, why have you funded the Legal Defense Fund for 45? Well, in 1964, we were funding the NAACP legal defense fund to sue the states of Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana for voter suppression. Guess what? Last year we made a large grant to the legal defense fund to sue the states of Louisiana, Alabama, and Georgia for about a suppression. Those institutions.

[00:38:34] If, if our aspiration is to be a, multi-racial a vibrant, multiracial democracy, then we have to understand that democracy will be contested because as we become multi-racial in a system that has been designed through the gaze of white supremacy, the more democracy looks like America, the more it will become contested. Which is why, what we have seen in recent weeks.

[00:39:04] When people say what democracy looks like, can't be what just happened in Georgia. Democracy will be rigged if you're counting the votes in Philadelphia and Milwaukee and Detroit. There's gotta be something wrong. Democracy is actually not working if those votes are being counted. And what I think the philanthropist has to say is we want everyone's vote to be counted, but that idea, which is a non-partisan idea, that idea will be contested as we become a more vibrant multicultural, multiracial democracy.

[00:39:47] **Grace:** That's great. I think, um, it, your comment makes me think about, um, CEP had a report a couple months ago, um, in part funded by the Ford Foundation around how there really isn't a good reason why funders are not giving more general operating support.

[00:40:02] **Darren:** Yes, there is. Oh, grace. Yes, there is. The reason is power. Control. Come on. I mean, we can be beaten around the main... It's about power. It's about control. It's

about being able to say my input got this outcome. And that's what I care about. As opposed to saying, if we want to solve this challenge, here are the five key institutions we need to be resourcing to achieve those objectives and let them decide. They are better positioned to know what the right strategy, the right outcome ought to be for their community.

[00:40:42] So let's not pretend grace that we can't figure out why it's about power.

[00:40:48] **Grace:** Yeah, it seems like the seating of power is sort of like the, the core, the hardest, last nut to crack, because it is an essence stepping out of the center of, of the conversation. I am wondering Yolanda, you're working with a range of nonprofit leaders and some folks may say, well, you know what.?

[00:41:07] My work as a funder or as a nonprofit leader, actually doesn't touch upon racial equity as much because, um, you know, I work on climate change or animal welfare. What do you say to them? I mean, what's the opportunity for funders to support nonprofits, regardless of whether it's a specific focus of their work.

[00:41:29] **Yolanda:** Thanks for that question. Just if I could back up for a moment, I had the gift of, a couple hours ago, interviewing Professor Ibram X. Kendi and he spoke Darren. I think, you know, you summed up so much of what we talked about in that conversation. And he talked specifically about how racial progress is always followed by racist progress.

[00:41:55] And so that systems and structures become more sophisticated in response. And so we see white supremacy, uh, evolve, uh, to, because it's threatened. And, and where I think there's the opportunity, and we're seeing it right here in this room, is looking at representation and leadership and why? Because these conversations there, aren't a lot of people like Tricia who start there and we're grateful, so grateful for Trisha and other philanthropists on this call who are pushing this work, despite the fact that they may not have lived experience with oppression, marginalization, structural racism.

[00:42:45] Because like I said before, like I'm, I'm not eager to have a divide. I'm eager to push social progress. Right. But if we don't have representation, leadership, meaningfully invest in it, advance it. We can't advance racial equity if you don't know what you don't know. And so in that way, it's when, when I think about, no matter what you're investing in or what a leader is leading, like you said, climate change, animal welfare, education, the the root cause always when you study it, the root cause for these issues and the way that they, they impact communities is structural racism.

[00:43:30] You can't escape it. And, and so the more you kind of immerse yourself in that understanding, I think what comes to light is the opportunity. If we advance racial equity, everything advances for all of us and the people who need to be at the table are representative of all of us. And that hasn't been the case today.

[00:43:55] And so I think as you know, we talk about, um, the kinds of investments that need to happen. It's general operating, it's capacity building, it's pushing on organizations to change their structures, to Rashad's point about just infrastructure needs to change. So how do we help people navigate that process?

[00:44:17] Because it's complex. They may not know where to start, but a lot of people know where to start. And so there are ways to invest in those efforts and also for nonprofits to, to advance those up for efforts. You know, and I, and I would say just generally we know the research shows that these are the areas where funding is majorly lacking and, um, part of it is because you can't see or feel it. You know, it's, it's big, it's abstract. But it's like if we don't go upstream and tackle the big issue, then the programmatic investments at the ground level are, are, aren't going to get us where we want to go.

[00:44:56] Um, And, you know, the last thing I'll say, I've been thinking about this a lot lately, because you know, there's a lot of work around, um, under and the effects of capitalism relative to racial equity, obviously. And I think the reality is where we're not going to, um, move away from capitalism anytime soon.

[00:45:18] And so I think we have to look at how to leverage the context we're in so that, and there's nobody better to do that than a lot of folks in this room who have access to capital, to think about how we value what we pay for. If we focus on efforts like community, organizing political action, advancing leaders of color, organizational effectiveness, around racial equity strategies, then we will build the difference we want to see.

[00:45:47] And I think moving away from this focus on, we're going to try to shift beliefs as if you know, there's a lot of times I think people and I may come under fire for this. So I apologize for everyone who loves implicit bias training and other trainings. I think they're so important. And implicit bias training isn't going to get us where we want to go, right? If we wait for beliefs to change and instead of making the changes and watching beliefs shift, then we're not going to get anywhere. The context needs to change for beliefs to change. I don't know if you've ever tried to change somebody's beliefs from when their cultural upbringing, it's not easy.

[00:46:31] It takes time. And I'm just not interested anymore in risking the lives of more Black and Brown people to change hearts and minds. And so we have effective strategies to advance this, and I think we can put the money there and really change the game. I really do.

[00:46:50] **Grace:** That's great. I want to stay on this thread and actually transition to Q & A , because I think a lot of the questions that we're getting are specifically on this topic.

[00:46:57] So, I mean, I'm going to summarize a couple of them and I'm going to throw them out and any of the panelists can respond. There's a bunch of questions about. How we push this conversation, um, how do we dismantle these systems? Or if we're people of color within philanthropy, uh, how do we push without losing our jobs, um, or, or really being viewed as divisive?

[00:47:18] And I'm wondering, um, if the panelists have any advice for folks who are really trying to live out these values, but institutionally run into a whole bunch of barriers, what would you say to them?

[00:47:32] **Darren:** Well, I think that it's very difficult for, um, for philanthropists to engage because our complicity, we're implicated, and people take this very personally. And I think

it's, we, we, those of us who are seeking to, um, To engage, have to understand that and approach these conversations with some degree of empathy around that.

[00:48:04] Right? I mean that for many, I mean, I had a, uh, very wealthy white woman who genuinely said to me, you know, when I, I knew that we had a problem in a racism, but when I, I actually watched the George Floyd video, like multiple times and cried more, each time it broke my heart and it broke her heart and she was crying because she was crying for America.

[00:48:32] She was crying for a belief that she had grown up with. That opportunity was abundant in this country. And that actually, while there was racism, it wasn't systemic. It wasn't embedded in the way in which I talked about it. And so she was crying. The grief was genuine. And the grief was because it took that for her to actually see that this is real and it is systemic.

[00:49:04] And, and so when we talk about how we convince people, we have to understand that for some people, again, not all people, but for some people, um, this is very, very painful conversation because they are rich. They are successful. They are wealthy in part because this very system has worked for them has created their wealth.

[00:49:34] And now you want to have a conversation with them where they can talk easily about about a system that has benefited them. And so we have to understand that and have some degree of empathy, some degree of an ability to put ourselves in the other person's shoes. Now, on the other hand, you know, I said in a, in a, in a board room a couple of years ago where I w I was the only African-American, which sadly is not unusual white supremacy and the problem, and someone after the meeting said to me, Darren, you shouldn't use that term.

[00:50:11] It's a real turnoff. And if you want white people to engage, don't talk about white supremacy to figure out another way to talk about it. And I said, I have been trying to figure out how to talk about this without saying white supremacy. Uh, I cannot, you know, I've tried prejudice. I've tried bias. I've tried.

[00:50:33] I mean, I've thought about a lot. I, I don't know what else to call this because it was designed with one thing in mind. And so I don't know what, please help me find another word. If it will help white people be engaged, but I have been unable to find a term, uh, or word for that term.

[00:50:59] **Tricia:** You know, Grace one of the things that I wanted to, um, to share is I do think oftentimes, um, this work is, um, sort of viewed as the responsibility of the staff, bringing it forward, um, with the principals and, um, and often it's the staff of color, uh, that is expected to sort of prioritize equity within an organization.

[00:51:24] And, you know, ideally the responsibility would be with people like me. You know, the trustees, um, and the foundation leaders. But unfortunately, um, I know that that's not the reality yet. Uh, and it's not the reality in most organizations. And I have to say it was certainly not the reality, uh, for us. And I think sometimes, um, there is sort of a moment a jolt that really initiates a lot of this work too, to Darren's point about the woman

that was really moved by, uh, by watching, um, watching media. But for us, uh, it came in 2015. We had at the time only one Black staff member and she came into work the day after nine people were murdered attending the bible study at the Emmanuel African Methodist church in Charleston, South Carolina.

[00:52:19] And no one in our office had said a word about it. And she, you know, she thought to herself, we're supposed to be an organization that cares about equity. Um, and yet this mostly white team at the time, um, nobody said anything. So it was very powerful and hurtful, uh, for her. But I think, you know, the truth is that was our moment when we realized we were not doing the work. And so it was quite painful, uh, the months that ensued. But I think oftentimes it is an incident that starts us onto, uh, onto the path. And that was certainly the case for us. And so that led us to, to train and then to diversifying our team. And we know that, uh, that our work is much better for, or, but I guess part of my advice to folks that are like listening, there are CEOs and executive directors, I would say, don't shield your trustees, uh, from these kinds of conversations.

[00:53:20] I think it's really important to help connect them to peers like Jeff and me um, or donor networks, but yeah, that are actively engaged in the learning because Jeff and I were unaware of what was happening on our team at the time until much later. And we certainly wished we hadn't been left in the dark. Um, so we are now very committed to learning alongside each other.

[00:53:45] Um, and I think, uh, oftentimes in white dominant organizations, you know, leaders with even best intentions, um, will have their blind spots and they won't know how to really, uh, enter into that work. So, uh, bringing on the professional support, I think will be, um, really important to do and to really encourage those conversations internally, because if we can get the right leaders to model that work, we will be able to create those spaces, um, to, to all be on the right journey together.

[00:54:18] **Grace:** Thank you for your openness, with that, Trisha, I think that's just so helpful to know about your own kind of the inflection points. I'm seeing a bunch of questions that I'm going to also amalgamate. You know, Darren, and you said this, um, in a previous comment and, and this really is a question for, for anyone. I think that there can be this perceived tension between seating power, but then the idea that as funders, we have a role of stewardship, right.

[00:54:44] Or that there's an evaluative component to what we have to do. And, you know, the idea of general operating support, where you find the organizations that you trust and you fund them deeply can sort of rub against this feeling of like being able to track every nickel and dime to be able to tell the trustees like this is the, this is the impact that we're making.

[00:55:05] Can you address this tension? Because I think that it's sort of, again, at the core of some of the, I think some of the things that people are feeling inside is that like, yes, I would like to,

[00:55:16] Just give without strings, but like, what about, what about, what about, right? And so could you. Some, you know, any of you,

[00:55:22] **Darren:** I'm happy to, to jump in here, Grace because I think, uh, the first of all, this begins with leadership and it is the role in a legacy foundation, like like Ford or with a living donor, um, an executive director, someone to be able to, uh, to articulate a vision.

[00:55:44] And so when I became president of Ford, my job was to articulate a vision that's that said, we are putting institutions at the center. If we have an aspiration for a multiracial democracy to strengthen democracy is Henry Ford said, he didn't say multiracial democracy. He said democracy. But the issue for it to be stronger is for, to be multi-racial.

[00:56:08] And so if we want that to be, how does change happen and what we know over our 80 years, that it is institutions who sustain change. Yes. We gave a grant to help Dr. King with that project or Gloria Steinem with that project. But it was those grants to the Southern Christian leadership to SCLC. It was the grants to Gloria for the Ms Foundation.

[00:56:36] It was the grants to Muhammad Yunus to build the Grameen bank. Those were the signatures. And so if we know that from evaluation, then we understand that institutions are at the center. I reject the idea that by investing with general operating support, you're doing non-evaluative work. You can evaluate institutions and their resilience and their durability.

[00:57:09] As a result of your general operating support. There are indicators of that. Color Of Change is a recipient of large general operating support. We are able by looking at monitoring and receiving information about the Color Of Change's work annually and how that aligns with its own work plan and progress to know, we also have indicators of looking at things like infrastructure, board development, all of these things are metricable.

[00:57:43] And so when donors say, Oh, I want to be able to measure. I reject that there is something less rigorous and it is not with no strings attached. No one gives money to a nonprofit with no strings attached and no nonprofit wants them money with no strings attached leaders like Rashad want to be, want to be accountable.

[00:58:05] Yolanda wants to be accountable. She's not saying give me the money, no strings attached. And so I think we have work to do in philanthropy to change the mindset. That has people thinking that this is overhead are either won't support overhead. Well, if you want support overhead, you are not likely to have impact.

[00:58:27] And I just think that having that real conversation with donors, um, is, is just usually important in the last thing I'll say is part of the reason here is the tyranny of the word strategy and the harm that has been done by a series of articles that were written by mostly consultants and consulting firms that laid out this new idea of a strategy.

[00:58:53] And so strategy now has become tyrannical. It has become so overpowering and has so crowded out the intangibles, which are often the most important part of your input and the most important part of the work that these organizations do in community. It is, it has done, and it is put philanthropy at the center.

[00:59:17] And so that's the problem with strategy. It puts us at the center and it turns our grantees into contractors. And so we need more than contracting partners because they actually know more about the problem and are more approximate to the challenge. Then we are,

[00:59:34] **Rashad:** We just, um, we just ended up with this great story and entertainment train about the work we're doing in Hollywood writers rooms.

[00:59:41] Particularly we've been in about 35 since the uprisings of crime, crime type procedural, if there was also getting the TV show Cops and Live PD off the air.. But let me just say this, just to add to what Darren was saying was that, uh, several years ago, um, when we presented this plan of expanding into cultural space, we got some support from a set of foundations that trusted us to go in this direction and we started engaging and then we hit some walls around sort of getting into those writers' rooms.

[01:00:13] And so then we went and we got, we took some of those resources and we've worked with the Norman Lear School at USC and did a big seminal study of all the crime TV shows. It came out last January and we got some good stories and we got a little bit more attention. And then we were in a couple of more writers rooms.

[01:00:29] And then basically what ended up happening was we had got built this relationship with the writers group. And somehow we had a, we had a scheduled presentation, worked for writers about this presentation, where I was going to walk through it with about 15 writers that had signed up. This was scheduled two weeks after George Floyd was murdered.

[01:00:50] It ended up from about 15 writers to about a hundred, writers, producers ended up showing to the zoom call, where I walked through the study. I walked through what the networks do. I walked through the narratives. I walked through all the ways in which race and crime was misrepresented. We had to report because people trusted us to make decisions.

[01:01:09] We had been inside of the writing rooms and learned from our mistakes. We kept moving along the way. Now we actually have a whole set of shows, which have me designed their whole next season around showing the role of injustice in communities, showing the structures that actually lead to, um, racist policing, showing the ways in which young people get trapped in a criminal justice system.

[01:01:35] You, if that would've happened, then a foundation would have had an idea. It would have taken us two years. Right. But because folks trusted us to have ideas to go through the track record, we're going to end up with a whole bunch of narrative, um, projects that are going to reach millions of people in their homes, better than any PSA or ed we could write that would have never happened.

[01:01:57] If it was not for general operating support would have never that if I had put in a grant proposal in the beginning, I'm going to be in 30 writers rooms with, you know, people would have laughed at me. Oh, I would have not ever put it because I would have never wanted to be held to that standard. But when the moment hit, we were able to prepare.

[01:02:18] And so this is also about, um, the ways in which we win, how do we want to win? And if we truly believe we can win, we actually have to be able to invest. In ways that can allow things to become force multipliers. And right now, um, you know, we have your billing to deal with the fact that for the last 20 years in this country, violent crime has basically steadily went down.

[01:02:44] But according to Pew research and everywhere else, Americans believe that violent crime is going up. There's a gap between perception and reality. And we, along with other organizations along with research partners are able to have the infrastructure to address this gap between perception and reality, which can do so much to the policy work.

[01:03:02] And so much else that doesn't happen without general operating support doesn't happen without trust. And absolutely we're going to be evaluated on this in the end, and we want to be evaluated. I want to stay in this story and sing this song and hope that it leads to other types of support. So we try other things, some which will be great, some which will fail, but that actually has to be part of the story.

[01:03:26] **Grace:** That's a really, really powerful comparison and story to stay in our minds. We're nearing the very end of our time. And I just want, I want to give each panelist. I mean, I think that I've heard this said on Twitter and other places, boy, there's just a lot of talk about philanthropy and racial equity. It's time to it's time to act like why, why are we not acting?

[01:03:48] And I guess I wouldn't want it to give each of you 30 seconds just to exhort the field. Like, what is your, what would you like to leave with us?

[01:03:57] Um, the sort of the nugget, um, as we, as we depart today, Yolanda, I'll start with you.

[01:04:05] **Yolanda:** I would that's exactly. Actually what I was thinking about relative to the final nugget is act while you learn and invest in the action and the learning for yourself, and also for others. There's just no time to lose.

[01:04:19] And there are pathways to do it. We've heard some of them today, so I hope people will join in. And if there are ways any of us can help share ideas, people will know how to find us.

[01:04:30] **Grace:** Thank you. Tricia?

[01:04:33] **Tricia:** Oh boy. Uh, a few seconds. Um, you know, I would just say this work has honestly changed me. It's changed the way I see the world.

[01:04:42] It has changed how I want to show up. And so for me, it's kind of holding myself accountable. It's um, being. Bold enter into conversations with some of my peers and to, as we started having these conversations, uh, to sort of push a nudge, um, and to really help them, you know, enter, enter into this space, um, and to, uh, and to stick with the work.

[01:05:09] Because I think, uh, as we said earlier, and Rashad said, it's, uh, it is the right thing, but it's also the smart thing to do when we want to make the kind of progress that we

want to make in this country. And so I just don't see any other option than to, uh, to move forward and to bring others along.

[01:05:26] **Grace:** Thank you. Rashad?

[01:05:29] **Rashad:** I mean, I just think that the world's going to look different by 10, 15, 20 years from now. And I just ask all of us to like maybe close our eyes. And if we're looking at the movie 20 years from now of this moment, what character do we want to be in that story? Who was the archetype? What did we want to contribute?

[01:05:48] What do we want to be able to tell the people that are writing the story of our contributions in this moment? And I think all of us have an opportunity and are privileged by just by being on this call because of the position you're in to actually have a role in shaping the future. And I think that that is the opportunity to adjust.

[01:06:06] I really appreciate for Tricia adding that racial justice, right. Is strategy. It is the smart thing to do. It is the winning framework.

[01:06:15] **Grace:** Thanks. And Darren?

[01:06:17] **Darren:** Well, I would just say that we are moving into a different world. We lived in a BC world until recently before COVID world. Soon, we will be living in a post COVID world.

[01:06:36] The BC world is over. We are never going back to that world. So the question is, what will the PC, well, what will the post COVID world look like? And what will philanthropy do to ensure that the negative things that we saw in the BC world, the discrimination of bias, the prejudice, uh, that, that is eradicated.

[01:07:07] That that is in fact not a feature of our world. There is work, urgent work or philanthropy to do, to achieve racial equity and racial justice. And now is the time

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