Philanthropy Scan:
How Funders View and Apply Power to Their Work

Fall 2018

Prepared for: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Prepared by: Grassroots SOLUTIONS

Table of Contents

Preface

By Aditi Vaidya, MPH, Senior Program Officer, Healthy Communities
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Since 1972, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) has been committed to improving the health and well-being of all in America. When RWJF, in 2014, shifted its focus to building a Culture of Health, it became clear that such a pursuit would require strategies and partnerships to improve health and well-being far beyond the walls of the doctor's office. The shift was accompanied by an elevated focus on health equity – to ensure that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education, and housing, safe environments, and healthcare. Together, the shift to building a Culture of Health and its elevation of health equity as a defining principle, made it clear to RWJF that it would require a new examination of how change happens in communities, and with that, an understanding of the role of power in communities.

Residents in communities across the country are already building power and using their power to influence changes where they live, learn, work, and play. RWJF wanted to better understand the conditions that make this possible for more people in more places. For many years, RWJF has funded organizations and networks that engage in grassroots organizing in low-income communities and communities of color. Through grants, multi-funder collaboratives, and learning activities, RWJF has supported grassroots base-building organizations in promoting health, equity, and well-being. From our work on tobacco control to childhood obesity, RWJF has prioritized supporting local residents to build capacities and authentically engage in effecting policy decisions impacting their health. This grounding has laid a foundation for how to engage in work that builds community power, what functions community power can play in promoting health and well-being, and ultimately how community power can advance a Culture of Health and health equity. As a nation, we won't achieve health equity without grassroots organizing strategies to break down existing social and economic barriers to health such as poverty and discrimination and their consequences, including powerlessness.

To better support the ways grassroots community organizations are building and wielding influence and impact, we are grappling with a series of questions: what is power, how is power built in low-income communities and communities of color, how does power shift over time and with what influential factors, and how can grassroots community organizations build community power to improve social and economic conditions that advance health, equity, and well-being? One of the ways we started down this path of learning about community power was with a desire to learn from colleagues in philanthropy. In January 2018, RWJF commissioned a scan in partnership with Grassroots Solutions, to determine if there is an existing field of practice among philanthropy thinking about power that could inform RWJF's efforts to advance health equity. The scope included a targeted set of foundations and donor communities and a specific set of learning objectives for RWJF.

The findings raised some important takeaways for RWJF:

- There is a long history in philanthropy—from conservative to progressive funders—of supporting communities to build power;

- There is great benefit to learning collectively with equity-oriented funders to better understand this field of practice; and

- There is a critical need across the field to develop shared measures and metrics to better understand, quantify, and support the influence and impact of community power.

We now know that there is a space for RWJF to engage in learning alongside other funders. We hope that the findings, while not exhaustive, are informative for others in philanthropy who are also on their own learning journeys. And we look forward to learning together in the future.

Executive Summary

Background and Purpose of the Scan

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated solely to health. Its mission is to improve health and healthcare and to build a Culture of Health that provides everyone in America a fair and just opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. Since announcing its Culture of Health vision and commitment, RWJF has been refining its strategies and approaches to better orient its programming and partnerships to tackle barriers to health equity.[1]

RWJF was interested in learning how others in philanthropy think about power and apply it to their work, recognizing that powerlessness is one of the barriers to health equity. RWJF's working assumption was that power is a core component of various funders' strategies. To test that assumption, in January of 2018, RWJF hired Grassroots Solutions to scan a set of targeted foundations and donor communities. The main purpose of the scan was to determine if there is an existing field of practice among philanthropy thinking about power (e.g., definitions, types, how it is created, and how it is wielded) that could inform RWJF's efforts to advance health equity. Although the scan was designed with RWJF's specific learning objectives in mind, RWJF and Grassroots Solutions hope the findings are informative for other philanthropies interested in advancing equity and supporting community power-building.

Highlights from the Findings

Language and Terms to Define Power and Prevalence Among Funders

1 | Discussions about power—definitions, types, how it is built, and how it is wielded—are common among philanthropic organizations. At the same time, the extent to which analyses or research inform foundations' and donor communities' strategies and programmatic work to support community power-building varies. Although power is a subject increasingly examined by philanthropic organizations seeking to advance equity and address systemic issues, most have not adopted definitions or applied shared understandings of power organization-wide.

2 | Shared understandings about power within funding institutions and language that underpins foundations' and donor communities' strategies, theories of change, and programmatic efforts to support community power-building reflect three core beliefs: 1) that power lies in the ability to act collectively, 2) that power is built and manifests itself in numerous ways, and 3) that the people most directly affected by inequity and systemic issues must be positioned as leaders and decision makers.

----

[1] For more information, visit https://www.rwjf.org/en/cultureofhealth.html and https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2017/rwjf437343.

How Definitions or Shared Understandings of Power Were Derived

3 | Processes to develop and apply definitions, shared understandings of power, or analyses within foundations and donor communities were generally driven by a desire to be more effective. Processes often coincided with strategic planning, visioning, efforts to define or refine theories of change, or related to work on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Characteristics of those processes included the involvement of a broad array of stakeholders, deep listening, and commitment to ongoing learning and refinement (as opposed to treating discussions about power as a one-time event).

Applications of Definitions and Shared Understandings of Power

4 | Definitions, shared understandings, analyses, or research that inform foundations' and donor communities' strategies and programmatic work to support community power-building are applied in a variety of ways. They have had an impact on foundations' and donor communities' approaches to grantmaking, programming, internal operations or policies, and collaborations with others inside and outside their organizations. Most commonly, definitions, shared understandings, and analyses of power affect what funding is for, what geographies are targeted, and the duration of funding. In more limited instances, they have had an impact on who makes the funding decisions.

Measuring Progress and Results

5 | Assessing progress and measuring community power-building is a work in progress for most foundations and donor communities. What is tracked and measured to ascertain progress in building or wielding power is often more useful when determined in conjunction with grantees. Some aspects of power-building are easier to quantify, attribute, and communicate than others. Approaches to measuring and assessing progress and results are subjects of keen interest to the philanthropic organizations that participated in the scan.

6 | Experiences using definitions, shared understandings, analyses, or research of power to inform strategies and programmatic work to build community power have been overwhelmingly positive. In addition to more (and better) policy outcomes, results include stronger partnerships and room for innovation.

Conclusion

The six findings point to one central conclusion: It is worthwhile for RWJF to clarify the way it thinks about power and apply a shared understanding that incorporates various elements of the examples cited in the findings. Additionally, we think there is value in accelerating and expanding efforts to support building community power to more effectively address obstacles that stand in the way of health equity. Having and applying an understanding and shared analysis of power organization-wide, or to specific programs, has helped a variety of philanthropic organizations confront barriers that have historically impeded their grantees and community partners from making progress on a range of issues (e.g., health, housing, transportation, jobs, the environment, elections, and more) and achieve longer-term systems change.

At the same time, less than half of philanthropic organizations interviewed (45% of the 22 foundations and donor communities that participated in the scan) have a shared understanding of power that they apply in a consistent way. Most have not adopted definitions or analyses of power organization-wide. For those that have, there is no universally accepted or assumed way of going about the process to come to shared agreement. Furthermore, having and applying a shared understanding about power does not require that everyone within a foundation or donor community "lip sync" the same words. Based on the interview data and literature reviewed, what is more important is that: 1) there is baseline agreement about what power is, the forms it can take, and why it matters; 2) the communities you hope to serve are at the forefront, so that the priorities, solutions, and definitions of success are identified by them and for them; 3) there is alignment within your funding institution about how community power-building will be assessed in partnership with grantees; and 4) you are committed to ongoing learning. Other recommendations include not letting "the perfect be the enemy of the good." Instead, listen, test, and refine as you go. Additionally, as you move forward, it is worth considering a variety of data to assess progress and results. Involve grantees to ensure that what is tracked and measured is meaningful to RWJF, its grantees, and other partners. Lastly, be prepared to examine internal organizational processes and operations that may act at cross purposes with efforts to support power-building through grantmaking and programming. Willingness to reflect and act on the inequities that are inherent in the funder-grantee relationship is essential.

Introduction

Background

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated solely to health. Its mission is to improve health and healthcare and to build a Culture of Health. Health equity is a cornerstone of RWJF's Culture of Health vision. For RWJF, health equity means everyone in America has an equal opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. It is hard to be healthy without access to good jobs, homes, and schools. The Culture of Health vision is set against the backdrop of a nation where gaps in health and opportunities for health are large, persistent, and increasing.

Since announcing its Culture of Health vision and commitment, RWJF has been refining its strategies and approaches to better orient its programming and partnerships to tackle barriers to health equity.[2] RWJF's working assumption was that power is a core component of various funders' strategies. To test that assumption, in January of 2018, RWJF hired Grassroots Solutions to scan a set of targeted foundations and donor communities.

Defining Power

There are a variety of definitions of the word power that include descriptions of types or forms of power. Definitions utilized by participants in the scan are explored in the findings. For the purposes of this scan, at the highest level, Grassroots Solutions defines power as the force that creates change and the ability to influence others. That "force" can stem from collective action and through organized resources.[3]

Purpose of the Scan and Information-Gathering Process

RWJF was interested in learning how others in philanthropy think about power and apply it to their work, recognizing that powerlessness is one of the barriers to health equity. The main purpose of the scan was to determine if there is an existing field of practice among philanthropy thinking about power (e.g., definitions, types, how it is created, and how it is wielded) that could inform RWJF's efforts to advance health equity.

In collaboration with RWJF, Grassroots Solutions identified four areas of inquiry and related learning questions to explore:

1 | Language and Terms to Define Power and Prevalence Among Funders

- How are a range of foundations and donor communities defining power?

----

[2] For more information, visit https://www.rwjf.org/en/cultureofhealth.html and https://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2017/rwjf437343.

[3] See Appendix III: Glossary of Terms for a list of terms mentioned in the report with corresponding definitions.

- What shared understandings do funders have about power within their organizations and among staff and board members?

2 | How Definitions and Shared Understandings of Power Were Derived

- What processes have been undertaken by funders to define or come to a shared understanding within their organizations about power? Who was involved in those processes?

3 | Applications of Definitions and Shared Understandings of Power

- How are definitions or shared understandings of power being utilized to build community influence to address systemic issues or advance reforms?

- What are foundations and donor communities doing differently because they adopted a definition or shared understanding of power? What are some of the ways that applying definitions and shared understandings of power have affected or changed the approach that funders have taken to grantmaking, programming, internal operations or policies, and collaborations with others inside and outside their organizations? How, if at all, has it impacted the level of risk funders are willing to take in grantmaking, programming, and more?

4 | Measuring Progress and Results

- For funders and donor communities that also think about inequities or disproportionate impacts of current systems on low-income communities and communities of color, what criteria or characteristics are used to determine progress in building and wielding community power?

- How have funders reconciled accountability to their boards, or other entities that provide oversight, and the fundamental principles of community power-building?

- What have been the results? What consequences have foundations and donor communities experienced in applying their definitions of power or supporting power-building activities?

From January through May of 2018, Grassroots Solutions worked with RWJF to design and undertake a scan that would meet RWJF's information needs, budget, and timeline. The information-gathering process included one-on-one and small-group interviews with 34 individuals representing 22 foundations and donor communities. To complement the interview data collected and analyzed, Grassroots Solutions undertook a high-level review of relevant articles and recent publications about power and supporting community power building. It is worth noting that the subject of power among philanthropy is a "live conversation" and topic of growing interest. For example, in May 2018, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy released the "Power Moves" assessment. To the extent possible, Grassroots Solutions tried to factor these and other recent publications and trends into our analysis.

The interview list and literature reviewed were chosen in close collaboration with RWJF and reflected input from the interviewees. The interview list was comprised of a sample of small, medium, and large foundations located across the United States. The sample included a mix of place-based funders; organizations that deploy 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and unrestricted resources; and funders that strategically leverage their impact capital. With guidance from RWJF, we focused on reaching out to foundations and donor communities as opposed to philanthropic support organizations,

including affinity groups, collaboratives, and academic institutions that do not engage directly in grantmaking. Grassroots Solutions sought interviews with representatives from foundations and donor communities that could provide a range of ideological perspectives, but not all individuals we reached out to participated in the scan. For a complete list of participants, and more details about the interviewees and materials reviewed, see Appendices I and II.

About the Findings in this Report

The information-gathering process culminated in the development of this report. There are six findings organized around the four areas of inquiry and related learning questions. The findings reflect the self-reported experiences of the foundations and donor communities interviewed. The conclusion provides recommendations for consideration by RWJF. The appendices provide more detail about the information-gathering process and a glossary of terms.

Originally, RWJF planned to share a summary document of the findings with participants in the scan. Recognizing the considerable interest in the topic, RWJF decided to share the entirety of this report with a broader audience. RWJF and Grassroots Solutions hope that the contents of this report are informative for other foundations, donor communities, and their collaborators.

Findings

Language and Terms to Define Power and Prevalence Among Funders

Finding 1 | Discussions about power—definitions, types, how it is built, and how it is wielded—are common among philanthropic organizations. At the same time, the extent to which analyses or research inform foundations' and donor communities' strategies and programmatic work to support community power-building varies. Although power is a subject increasingly examined by philanthropic organizations seeking to advance equity and address systemic issues, most have not adopted definitions or applied shared understandings of power organization-wide.

PREVALENCE OF FUNDERS THAT HAVE ADOPTED A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF POWER

With limited exceptions, participants in this scan described having regular conversations about aspects or dimensions of power in their work. However, the extent to which those discussions informed their strategies and efforts to support community power-building differed substantially. On one end of the spectrum, there were foundations and donor communities that had undertaken processes to come to shared understandings about power, and they are applying those shared understandings to programmatic work and grantmaking that supports community power-building. Nearly half (45%) of the interviewees fit into this category. Most of these organizations have a place-based lens and are small to mid-sized foundations. These philanthropic organizations are testing and refining ways to support community power-building to advance equity and address issues that align with their missions. They were often cited by other participants in this scan as early adopters and on the leading edge in applying customized analyses, publications, and research about power to their work that other funders could learn from.

> "
>
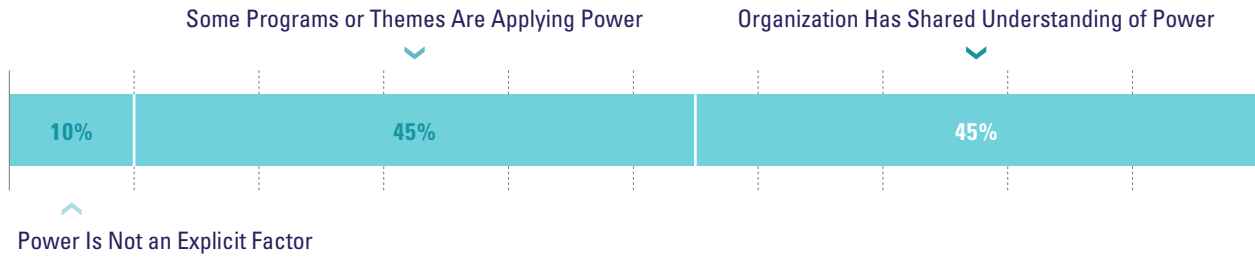> Absolutely [have a shared understanding of power] that is deeply informed by our grantees.
>
> We're similar to a university with different departments that may run into each other and create joint conferences, but not... a shared analysis.
>
> "

In the middle and toward the other end of the spectrum, were foundations and donor communities that described having some degree of shared understanding about power among programmatic areas or groups of staff within their organization.

Range Among the Foundations and Donor Communities Scanned

Some Programs or Themes Are Applying Power ⌄

Organization Has Shared Understanding of Power ⌄

| 10% | 45% | 45% |

⌃
Power Is Not an Explicit Factor

Several interviewees acknowledged that it can be challenging to articulate and apply ways of thinking about a variety of subjects in a consistent way across large and complex institutions. Some interviewees described operating autonomously within their program area or department to apply analyses or research about power to their work. Others noted that there is some alignment about power at the program officer level that does not apply across the organization. Among this subset of respondents, conversations and reflections about power and the application of analyses or research often happen in programmatic silos, rather than at the enterprise level. A few respondents went so far as to describe some friction using the word power in discussions with senior leadership, boards of directors, or donors. They mentioned the "translational" work that must be done to ease concerns about how their programmatic area or theme grapples with questions about power, including how to build and wield it.

It is worth noting that a limited number of respondents (10% of the foundations and donor communities scanned) do not tend to use the word power within their organizations, and it rarely appears in internal and external communications. Synonyms such as "influence" or "enabling" are used more commonly than power. Also, for these philanthropic organizations, it is not an explicit factor in determining what, how, and where they make grants or impact investments. Power is not named outright in the development or implementation of strategies and programs. At the same time, these respondents expressed awareness of the financial and reputational power they possess as a funder, and how that power may affect the relationships they have with grantees and the communities they represent and support.

"

There's alignment, especially when you get to [the] program officer level, [and] those developing strategy. Varying levels in the organization... and then different alignment among directors and senior leadership.

We haven't come up with one definition or theory of change of how to build or exert power. [It's] not something we have done.

"

ACTIVE DIALOGUES ABOUT POWER AND SUBJECT OF INCREASING INTEREST

For most of the philanthropic organizations interviewed, power is a current topic of interest. Among the foundations and donor communities applying a shared understanding of power to their work, this is a subject of ongoing

reflection within their organizations and with grantee partners. Taken together, respondents' comments point to the notion that power can serve as either a barrier to, or facilitator of, efforts to address systemic issues and inequity. It can be difficult—if not impossible—to achieve ambitious upstream systems changes without considering power. Some interviewees mentioned initiating internal conversations about advancing equity and quickly found themselves bumping into questions of power. For these, and potentially other reasons, exploring approaches to more effectively build and wield community power were described as "live conversations" by at least a quarter of the participants in the scan.

Finding 2 | Language and shared understandings about power within funding institutions that underpin foundations' and donor communities' strategies, theories of change, and programmatic efforts to support community power-building reflect three core beliefs: 1) that power lies in the ability to act collectively, 2) that power is built and manifests itself in numerous ways, and 3) that the people most directly affected by inequity and systemic issues must be positioned as leaders and decision makers.

DEFINITIONS OF POWER, LANGUAGE, AND TERMS USED

Power is described in a variety of ways; however, there was widespread agreement among participants in the scan that collective action is integral to building community power to advance equity, effect change, and mobilize others to act. Respondents' descriptions were generally consistent with a definition that RWJF staff were considering when Grassroots Solutions began the scan ("Power is people taking collective action to create cultural, economic, and political change"), the definition that appears in the "Power Moves" assessment guide released by the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy ("Power, whether through organized people or organized money, is the force that changes systems, and changing systems is the only way to achieve equitable outcomes for all"), and other language and terms that appeared in the literature reviewed.

Common descriptions of power among respondents included variations on the following:

- Power lies in the ability to "act together," and it is about the "collective power of people"

- Power revolves around how organized something is, including people and resources

- Power lies in the ability or strength of "ecosystems"—including philanthropy, civil society organizations, public and private leaders, and community networks—to bring about change; no single organization can "win" (i.e., address systems-level social, political, and economic issues on its own)

- Power is the ability to "get someone to do something they would not otherwise do"

The first three descriptions were cited as dimensions of mission statements, strategies, and theories of change, particularly among respondents applying a definition, shared understanding, or analysis of power across their entire organization. Other less common descriptions that came up in the interviews included the following:

- "Power is relational and not a static trait"

- "Power...can be captured as aiming toward...access to justice and equality for people of all races and colors"

TYPES OF POWER

Three types of power were mentioned most often by respondents: political, economic, and cultural.[4] Political power was sometimes referenced in tandem with electoral power and civic engagement.[5] Cultural power was occasionally cited interchangeably with narrative or storytelling power. One respondent explained the three types of power in the following way: "Political power is the ability to influence collective decision making. Economic power is either access or ownership of capital and means of production. Cultural power is the ability to influence or shape how people think about things." A significant percentage of respondents observed that the three types of power are interrelated. Building one type of power can affect or amplify another type of power, and there can be spillover effects among the three types. For example, if a community or constituency has a lot of cultural power, then that cultural power may be channeled in a way that influences public policy and economic outcomes.

Several of the foundations and donor communities that participated in the scan concentrate on supporting efforts to build and wield one type of power. For example, approximately 20% of the respondents described having an explicit focus only on political power. This subset of interviewees utilize a range of nonprofit legal structures to support power-building. Around 20% described focusing explicitly on cultural and economic power. Among the respondents that support efforts to build and wield one type of power, they acknowledged that their work is complementary to their peers in philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders that makeup an ecosystem. The remainder of the foundations and donor communities interviewed support building and wielding one or more forms of power through their grantmaking, impact capital, and other activities. They described their grantee partners as being accomplished in one or more areas.

Professor Archon Fung, Academic Dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, describes four levels of change with related power analyses and strategies at each level.[6] The changes at each level range from individual redress (level one) to structural reform to affecting values and ideology (levels three and four). An example of change at level one is access to healthcare services. Examples at the second level are changes to laws or policies (e.g., minimum wage or paid sick leave). Examples at the third level are structural changes to how decisions are made and who makes those decisions (e.g., how public health departments are governed or, for example, collective bargaining). The fourth level is

> "
>
> We see economic opportunity, civic engagement, policies and institutions. The intersection of the three is [what we found] most effective in building power for communities.
>
> "

---

[4] In analyzing the interview data gathered, we concentrated on patterns and themes across the interviews. These three types of power came up regularly in the interviews; however, respondents acknowledged that power can take other forms. This is not an exhaustive or definitive list.

[5] Descriptions of political power and support for efforts to build and wield it reflected the permitted constraints of the law applicable to private foundations.

[6] Archon Fung. Gettysburg Project – Levels of Power and Reinvestment. https://vimeo.com/229159521

about how people change what they value and what they believe (e.g., changing world views about people of other ethnicities). The four levels of change have been used to help foundations, donor communities, and others understand what type of change they are trying to bring about and the type of power needed to bring about that change. Political, economic, and cultural power are types of power that can be leveraged to influence change at the four levels of Professor Fung's analysis, and there can be interplay or spillover effects between the changes that take place at different levels. For example, organizations may seek to build cultural power to shift narratives about how low-income communities are seen by decision-makers, thereby helping to bring about changes at levels two and three of Fung's analysis.

Participants in the scan fall somewhere along Fung's spectrum in their understanding and application of power as well as the type of change they seek. Some are more focused on building and wielding power "to protect whole classes of beneficiaries" through policy. Others are seeking to change the playing field, and the remainder are supporting efforts to "change hearts and minds." Although the scope of the scan did not include asking interviewees to classify their work along these levels, based on what participants shared, we estimate that nearly half of the foundations and donor communities scanned are working at multiple levels, particularly levels two and three. Only a few appear to be focused on the first and fourth levels of change.

CENTERING THE COMMUNITIES MOST AFFECTED

Many of the organizations interviewed provide grants and other resources to support specific communities based on income, geography, identity (e.g., race, gender, generational affiliation), or a mix. Although not quite the majority, nearly half of the interviewees stated that supporting community power-building requires centering those directly affected at the forefront of identifying solutions and addressing obstacles to bring those solutions to fruition—put another way, one respondent described it as "keeping the center of gravity at the grassroots." These funders were mostly focused on marginalized and underrepresented communities and defer to their grantees to determine who is part of those communities.

For example, one foundation observed that the communities supported through their grantmaking were best situated to articulate their own needs, desired working conditions, and to determine the appropriate pathways to address systemic barriers to improving their economic situation. If there was general alignment with the funder's broader priorities, grantees were given the leeway to determine exact targets and how best to engage them in advancing their goals. Another large foundation described it as: "Giving the voice, ownership, and ability for a neighborhood to say what it wants and how to achieve it. Articulate and drive that change they seek." Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz identify this as a key element for social movement builders, "Social movements make sure to directly involve those with 'skin in the game' and make sure that the frames and values are derived from them and not from focus groups conducted by distant intermediaries."[7]

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

[7] Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz, "Making Change: How Social Movements Work – and How to Support Them," March 2009.

Relevant Resources

The foundations and donor communities using analyses or research to inform their work at the enterprise level or program level to support building and wielding community power were influenced by a variety of individuals, organizations, and schools of thought. The work of Archon Fung, Marshall Ganz, Hahrie Han, Richard Healey, Sandra Hinson, Jennifer Ito, Rhonda Ortiz, and Manuel Pastor came up regularly in the interviews. For example, the Grassroots Policy Project developed a "three faces" power analysis to address structural crises. The three faces of power are: 1) organized people and organized money, 2) movement building (networks of organizations to move a political agenda), and 3) the battle for "big ideas" (e.g., ideology, narrative, and worldview).[8] Other influencers included community organizers, grantees, and other foundations. Participants in the scan are using these various sources to examine where power resides in the systems they are trying to change and, for some, how they as a funder operate within that system.

---

[8] Richard Healy and Sandra Hinson, Grassroots Policy Project. "Organizing for Governing Power." December 2015.

How Definitions and Shared Understandings of Power Were Derived

Finding 3 | Processes to develop and apply definitions, shared understandings of power, or analyses within foundations and donor communities were generally driven by a desire to be more effective. Processes often coincided with strategic planning, visioning, efforts to define or refine theories of change, or related to work on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Characteristics of those processes included the involvement of a broad array of stakeholders, deep listening, and commitment to ongoing learning and refinement (as opposed to treating discussions about power as a one-time event).

THE IMPETUS FOR FUNDERS TO DEVELOP AND APPLY DEFINITIONS OR SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS OF POWER

Among foundation and donor communities applying shared understandings or analyses of power, the impetus was often organization- or program-wide frustration about insufficient progress or lack of headway on individual issues or practice areas (e.g., environment, elections, etc.) because of larger structural barriers. Other catalysts included:

- Changes in foundation leadership

- Strategic planning cycles

- Cross-programmatic dialogue about significant opportunities for "intervention"

- Desire to advance equity

Eight of the foundations interviewed began developing and applying analyses and understandings about power in conjunction with strategic planning, onboarding new leadership, and work on diversity, equity, and inclusion (or a combination of the three). All expressed being driven by an organization- wide desire to achieve greater impact. It is worth noting that at least three of the foundations and donor communities that do not currently have shared understandings of power anticipated that discussions about power would happen or accelerate when their organizations begin undertaking more intensive work related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Participants in the scan were also prompted to examine power because of external political events and demographic trends. A small group of respondents expressly mentioned the 2016 presidential race and changes in the electorate, noting that the outcome of recent state and national campaigns had caught them somewhat off guard. They stated that their strategies and programs had been reactionary and too cautious to achieve the outcomes they hoped for, which rendered them less well equipped to advance ambitious and bold work in an evolving social and political landscape. Furthermore, these respondents cited being too focused on near-term changes or achievements that largely preserved the status quo instead of pursuing systemic changes that could create conditions conducive to achieving a variety of bolder outcomes and impacts over a longer period. In other instances, respondents observed

that too much emphasis was being placed on supporting efforts that engaged and mobilized people who were already "convinced" (e.g., about an issue, election, or set of values that aligned with the philanthropic organization's mission) instead of expanding the base of people who could be cultivated as leaders and then persuade others to care about the causes or concerns in question.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROCESS

Generally, respondents did not describe undertaking many formal processes exclusively focused on power. As noted earlier, power was a dimension of strategic planning or theory of change work and continues to be a subject of ongoing discussion, reflection, learning, and adaptation. That said, the development and application of understandings of power applied organization-wide were informed by available analyses, research, examples from other foundations and donor communities, and in some cases, with the help of consultants. Some resources (many of which were mentioned in Finding 2 and appear in Appendix II) helped to ground discussions in a shared vocabulary. A limited number of participants in the scan conducted evaluations of their portfolios in tandem with strategic planning or visioning efforts that also helped inform discussions about power, including how to support strengthening it to achieve a variety of different mission-aligned aims.

> "
>
> It was a listening process. For us it wasn't a request or need for grantees to go through [a] process they weren't doing themselves. We sought to identify organizations that took questions of building power seriously.
>
> "

Interviewees consistently pointed out that philanthropy does not have all the answers. Central to the success of the processes that culminated in defining and applying a shared understanding of power was the involvement of a diverse array of stakeholders. Respondents described "deep listening" and ongoing conversations with grantees, representatives of the communities those grantees represent or work among, board members, and others. These conversations with stakeholders took place before, during, and after coming to agreement about how their respective philanthropic organizations would test and refine approaches to supporting community power-building. One foundation noted at the beginning of their process they held listening circles, choosing a mix of cities and locales to visit. Another described having one-on-one conversations with grantee partners over an extended period.

Respondents observed that deep listening and regular conversations were critical to ensuring that grantee partners were undertaking these processes with them as opposed to having it done "to them." This mattered because, in some cases, the process resulted in fundamental changes in their foundations' strategies, programs, and grantmaking (this subject is explored further in Finding 4). For example, some foundations went from supporting direct service programs to funding advocacy, organizing, and policy-related activities. Other philanthropic organizations shifted from focusing on one issue to supporting multiple issues. These profound changes had budgetary impacts on grantees and geographic scope or targets, and it was vital to include grantee partners, board members, and other collaborators in their foundations' evolutionary thinking. Also, respondents observed that these conversations did not end after a definition, understanding, or approach to helping build community power was agreed upon. Instead, dialogues continue, allowing these funders to assess progress, what is working, and what aspects of the foundations' definition, understanding, or support for community power-building may warrant refinement.

Also, participants in the scan that had developed and are applying shared understandings of power within their organizations noted that having program staff and board members working in partnership with stakeholders, grantees, and others—as opposed to interacting episodically—was essential. The benefits of ongoing interaction were that it deepened the investment of board members in the work of its grantees and helped some transition from seeing themselves as a governing body to collaborators in power- and movement-building. The challenge was that board members were directly exposed to critical feedback and had to be comfortable giving up some measure of control in deciding how best to define the problem, solutions, and ways to support building and wielding power to achieve the sorts of changes identified collectively. This was especially difficult for board members traditionally accustomed to "top-down" strategic planning processes during which board members and senior leadership make decisions that cascade down to program and other staff in the organization.

"

The director and board placed themselves in the uncomfortable position and engaged in this type of accountability conversation.

Our board is involved in almost everything we do. The process of determining the focus and crystallizing what we learned... We didn't have any foundation-led process to solicit grantees and members. We build relationships and are in regular conversation... Very immersive, but not designed as [a] formal process with [a] work plan and list of stakeholders. Approach to work was very relational; we're in constant conversation rather than work flow style.

"

Applications of Definitions and Shared Understandings of Power

Finding 4 | Definitions, shared understandings, analyses, or research that inform foundations' and donor communities' strategies and programmatic work to support community power-building are applied in a variety of ways. They have had an impact on foundations' and donor communities' approaches to grantmaking, programming, internal operations or policies, and collaborations with others inside and outside their organizations. Most commonly, definitions, shared understandings, and analyses of power affect what funding is for, what geographies are targeted, and the duration of funding. In more limited instances, they have had an impact on who makes the funding decisions.

GRANTEES AND WHAT TYPE OF WORK IS FUNDED

Most participants in the scan agreed that the way they think about power has had a direct impact on what type of work they support, which organizations receive grants, and where funding happens, especially if geography is a key dimension of their work. For some, applying their thinking about power resulted in greater attention paid to supporting the creation of conditions favorable to policy, electoral, or other types of change, as opposed to being singularly focused on specific issues. Their portfolios shifted from supporting grantees that only worked on one issue to portfolios that are issue agnostic. Instead, the mix of grantees and issues in these funders current portfolios are focused on removing structural barriers and improving conditions for systemic change. The reasons for these shifts in their portfolios varied. In some cases, funders concluded that addressing structural barriers would lay more effective groundwork to advance their issue priorities or strategic objectives. Others determined that progress on issues seemingly unrelated to their priorities could have positive spillover effects and chose to support priorities and strategies determined by their grantees and community partners.

There are other ways that applying definitions and shared understandings of power have affected or changed the approach that funders have taken to grantmaking and programming. Some foundations now provide new or more grant support for coalition-building and collaborative efforts to strengthen relationships among organizations and groups working on different issues. Applying a power analysis helped these funders conclude that many of the organizations and groups working on seemingly disparate issues were

> "
>
> For our program area, the conversation we are having to effect change is that we have to get to [the] root cause of what is happening. Structural barriers that prevent low-income communities and communities of color from attaining the highest aspirations because of lack of power.
>
> "

connected because the communities they serve face similar systemic obstacles. These funders hope to cultivate relationships and leadership that will exist, and can be leveraged, beyond a short-term advocacy or civic engagement campaign's end. In addition, a few of the philanthropic organizations interviewed mentioned that applying a shared understanding of power led them to fund strategic communications efforts around key issues such as health, poverty, and more. They looked to their grantee partners and the communities they serve to determine how their grant support could be more useful; with that feedback, a decision was reached to increase grantmaking and programming around activities aimed at altering public perception and the narrative (i.e., deeply-held beliefs about a social issue and population) in targeted regions. For other respondents, applying a shared understanding or power analysis to their grantmaking or programmatic work meant transitioning from solely funding direct service programs to supporting organizations that engage in advocacy, grassroots organizing, and civic engagement.

DURATION OF FUNDING AND RELATIONSHIP TO GRANTEE-DETERMINED SOLUTIONS

Most respondents reported that applying a shared understanding of power or analyses and research changed where they looked for potential grantees and the size and duration of grants. Interviewees mentioned that regular site visits or conversations with grantees and local partners, foundations, and donor communities allowed them to identify organizations that were not previously on their radar. Also, the size and duration of their grants changed. Respondents whose organizations or program areas had adopted definitions or were applying some form of power analysis in their work often described transitioning from administering primarily short-term grants to multi-year general operating grants (in some cases, five to eight years in duration).

Lastly, approximately a quarter of the foundations and donor communities interviewed reflected on how applying their organization's definition of power affected how they think about "sharing power." And nearly half of the interviewees observed that to build community power to better address systemic issues, those directly affected need to be at the forefront of identifying solutions to change systems, and that is achievable when those most affected are engaged before funding requests are made. Several of these respondents emphasized the connection between who receives funding, for how long, and sharing power so that the solutions funded reflect priorities determined by grantees and the communities they serve. Some described taking into consideration the combination of political, economic, and cultural power that they hold, and regularly examine ways they can share power and be part of "a movement" to address inequity and achieve desired changes in systems. One funder put it this way: "We situate ourselves right smack in the middle of anti-oppressive policies. We think about that in a few ways, understanding the role philanthropy has historically had in the United States: 1) How does whiteness and privilege manifest itself in philanthropic history and as an institution? 2) Who are the experts and how to unpack power? 3) What does it mean to be an organization that works toward anti-oppression and social justice? 4) How do we participate and communicate with our community of grantees?" These interviewees noted that reflecting and acting on the inequities that are inherent in the funder-grantee relationship is central and necessary to building community power.

"

In the most concrete way, this has led us to do grantmaking as long-term...
general operating grants. Organizations grounded in place and
building power along the types of power I identified.

Internally, our proposal asks... the extent to which what is proposed
in the grant application are community-driven solutions.

Our theory of power or change centers on a community having solutions,
and there is grantmaking criteria around authentic leadership.

"

Measuring Progress and Results

Finding 5 | Assessing progress and measuring community power-building is a work in progress for most foundations and donor communities. What is tracked and measured to ascertain progress in building or wielding power is often more useful when determined in conjunction with grantees. Some aspects of power-building are easier to quantify, attribute, and communicate than others. Approaches to measuring and assessing progress and results are subjects of keen interest to the philanthropic organizations that participated in the scan.

USEFUL INDICATORS OF PROGRESS AND MEASURES

There was consensus among participants in the scan that both quantitative and qualitative data are critical in assessing community power-building and funders' contributions. Substantial concerns were raised about the limitations of quantitative data, or conflating outputs with outcomes. Additionally, there was widespread agreement among respondents that tracking the development of relationships can be as important as tracking outcomes and longer-term impacts. Useful indicators of progress commonly cited by respondents included:

- Transformations in relationships (e.g., between people and government, ability among grantees to leverage relationships for cross-issue efforts)

- Leaders developed from communities of color and low-income communities who hold a variety of positions of influence

- Solutions determined and promoted by those most affected by inequities

- The health and stability of ecosystems (e.g., durable organizations that can withstand more than one "issue fight" and are able to demonstrate influence)

Some interviewees have developed measurement frameworks that divide indicators and measures into categories that are adapted from the Grassroots Policy Project's "three faces of power." For example:

1. Growth in individuals and constituencies

2. Growth in organizations and infrastructure

3. Type of change sought in the world

There was near universal agreement that the purpose of assessing progress is to inform learning and improvement. It is not a self-congratulatory exercise or about building power for power's sake. The reason to measure progress and assess results is so that philanthropy can more effectively support building power among the communities they and their grantees serve to achieve the changes in the world they seek. Many respondents are enthusiastic about finding ways that philanthropic organizations can learn from and bolster each other's efforts. In "Making Change: How Social

Movements Work – and How to Support Them," Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz address this point, "Metrics that focus on process and that take into account stages of development are important for organizations to learn...as well as to both justify one foundation's investment and to encourage others to jump in."[9]

Relevant Resources

Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, and Rachel Rosner put forth recommendations for funders and organizations to use to measure and track the progress of movement building. They argue that to truly understand the health and effectiveness of a movement, both transformative and transactional measures are needed. Transformative measures are generally more qualitative in nature and get at a deeper understanding of change, while transactional measures are often quantitative. However, there is overlap and fluidity. For example, "you can judge success by the crowds that show up to protest (transactional measure), the more transformative marker is whether leaders grow, develop, and acquire the ability to pivot from issue to issue."

ROLE OF CO-CREATION TO DEVELOP MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS AND ASSESS PROGRESS

To mitigate challenges related to assessing progress, many interviewees look to their grantees for assistance. What is tracked and measured to ascertain progress in building or wielding power is determined in conjunction with the groups funded. The foundations and donor communities that adopted this approach cited a few reasons:

1. Grantees are the best positioned to define "reasonable outcomes based on capacity and size;"

2. Grantees understand the context or landscape they are working in and are well positioned to identify solutions and pathways to change;

3. It presents an opportunity to address some of the power imbalances inherently present in a funder-grantee relationship; and

4. It authorizes grantees that represent or work in specific communities to "recognize their long-term transformational change" and to "do for themselves."

> "
>
> The [measures] we find most useful are going to be perceived as more subjective. Spending time with communities regularly and seeing what is changing.
>
> We are in the middle of learning a lot. Think [there are] many ways that we do this... [We are] starting to want to track how strong or stable are some of the community organizing groups— almost like anchors— how they have been developing or evolving. Also, track new and emerging groups that up until now had not been engaged in some of this work.
>
> "

----

[9] Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz, "Making Change: How Social Movements Work – and How to Support Them," March 2009.

Co-creation of measurement frameworks is supported by the literature reviewed. In their research, Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, and Rachel Rosner note that, "Metrics are most useful when the parties involved in defining, tracking, and assessing metrics are doing so for their own self-learning rather than for punitive reasons. Organizations should be involved in developing metrics and have access to the data as a means of self-reflection, not to instill fear of being defunded. Funders can help by understanding that there may be hard lessons to learn but learning them together helps push through the disappointments, allow for adjustments, and build to success." [10] In "Power Moves," the authors state: "...funders acknowledge their power relative to grant partners and applicants but try to mitigate that imbalance through more inclusive decision-making, such as co- developing what success looks like and how to define impact."[11]

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

Respondents representing some of the smaller foundations mentioned that assessment is a two-way street. These respondents acknowledged the need for philanthropic organizations to be more self-aware of the power that they possess and practice greater transparency. The following learning questions factor into their self-reflection of progress in supporting community power-building:

1. How transparent are we with our grantees?

2. How transparent are we about our successes, failures, and learning with our grantees, the philanthropic field, and the public?

This subset of foundations interviewed see this as key to building trust with grantees and the communities they operate in and serve, as well as shifting the dynamics between them and their grantee partners. One way that transparency is tracked is through grantee perception surveys that are shared with the foundation staff, board members, and grantees. Also, many respondents actively and regularly share progress about their grantees' work with their boards and with the public, encouraging board members to participate in immersive experiences, such as site visits and shared learning conversations with grantees and the communities they work with. One interviewee mentioned that they are experimenting with digital experiences, such as podcasts and videos, to share progress, successes, and failures with its board and the public.

> "
>
> For us it is the ability to be transparent and to say to folks, this is how we make our decisions, and this is how we are engaged in the work.
>
> "

[10] Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, Rachel Rosner. "Transactions, Transformations, Translations: Metrics that Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements," October 2011. https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/transactions_transformations_translations_web.pdf

[11] National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. "Power Moves." May 2018. https://www.ncrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PowerMoves.pdf

Finding 6 | Experiences using definitions, shared understandings, analyses, or research of power to inform strategies and programmatic work to build community power have been overwhelmingly positive. In addition to more (and better) policy outcomes, results include stronger partnerships and room for innovation.

STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS AND CLARITY

Participants in the scan with an organization-wide understanding of power, as well as those applying analyses and research to their programs, described seeing grantees and community organizations become more skilled and more deeply connected with allies to work in a long-term transformative way that transcends any one issue, project, or campaign. Many of the funders spoke about the importance of a durable ecosystem of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, community groups, public and private leaders, and others that are connected to each other as integral to achieving systemic changes and advancing equity. For example, some respondents shared examples of state-based groups uniting in coalition with each other and national organizations to advance workers' rights and other issues. This and other anecdotes from the interviews are consistent with findings from Pastor and Ortiz's work. They observe that: "Supporting efforts to scale up is important and this will involve both building networks of like organizations and connecting networks of seemingly disparate forces. Thus, funders should consider providing resources for network creation and convenings as well as peer-to-peer learning, should encourage and structure incentives for groups to work together organically, and should build alliances of funders small and large to pool resources and boost strategies by working together."[12]

> "
>
> We funded groups in their inception and the smaller groups coalesced together to form more powerful coalitions that are better able to address systems change. Now they are part of larger national coalitions and local work contributing to national movements. They are not reactive but going after systems perpetuating inequities.
>
> "

Respondents also reported that having a shared understanding of power or applying a power analysis helped produce stronger relationships with grantees and board members. It gave these funders "more clarity" about the value of "doing with, not for" the communities that they serve. It helped staff and board members to better communicate their purpose as an organization internally and externally. For board members, especially, they could more clearly see their role as partners in advancing systemic change as opposed to mainly exercising thought leadership or accountability functions.

COMMUNITY-SELECTED LEADERS DEVELOPED

A significant percentage of respondents cited a higher volume of policies adopted that better reflect the needs of the communities that the various foundations' and donor communities' grantees work in and serve. In many cases, policies pursued were chosen by the grantees and their community partners as opposed to the foundations or donor

----

[12] Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz, "Making Change: How Social Movements Work – and How to Support Them," March, 2009.

communities. These were regularly mentioned as the clearest, near-term manifestations of community power-building activities. One interviewee reported more than 600 policy wins directly affecting targeted communities in 14 locations across one state that are making a measurable difference in people's lives. These policy changes correlated with efforts funded by the foundation to push narratives to humanize undocumented people and change narratives around formerly incarcerated people.

Other respondents referred to leaders developed representing low-income and communities of color and healthier organizations in targeted geographies as manifestations of applying a shared understanding of power or an analysis. For example, multi-year grants have reportedly helped grantee organizations think beyond their own immediate fundraising needs to remain operational, and in so doing, implement innovative work that has attracted more funding from a broader, more diverse array of sources. Also, it has helped grantees work to cultivate diverse community leaders with increasing influence that grantees can wield to achieve a variety of advocacy, electoral, or community engagement-oriented goals.

> If it really matters, you will be able to change policy. Not the ones foundations deem important, [but] those prioritized by [the] organized community.

CREATING MORE SPACE FOR MANAGED RISK AND INNOVATION

Multi-year, general operating grants were also described by participants as integral in creating more space for managed risk and innovation. Many interviewees noted that financial stability gave grantees more freedom to think creatively about how to address broader systems changes. They reported that it has created space for communities, especially communities of color, to be innovative and take managed risks. For example, one regional funder in the Midwest described how some of their grantees decided to engage in a successful "culture change" campaign and were working in ways that the foundation could not have imagined. Another funder supported efforts to change perceptions of undocumented children and their access to public services, such as education and health programs. This effort reportedly contributed to changes in local and statewide policies, including making it easier for undocumented children to access public programs and services. There was a sense that prior to developing and applying a shared understanding of power, this would not have happened. The opportunity did not exist for the grantees because the foundation had been focused on achieving more transactional "political wins."

A cautionary note is that foundations and donor communities must examine their own appetites for risk. This subject is explored in the "Power Moves" assessment guide: "Ultimately, risk-taking in philanthropy requires a willingness to innovate, knowing that things may not go as planned, and this need not mean 'failure.'" In addition, Pastor, Ito, and Rosner also caution funders on how best to foster innovation and risk-taking, "In all of this, we offer an admonition to funders: Innovation also includes failure, and part of what is needed is a new relationship where grantees can honestly indicate what is working, what is not, and what is needed."

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The six findings point to one central conclusion: It is worthwhile for RWJF to clarify the way it thinks about power and apply a shared understanding that incorporates various elements of the examples cited in the findings. Having and applying an understanding and shared analysis of power organization-wide, or to specific programs, has helped a variety of philanthropic organizations confront barriers that have historically impeded their grantees and community partners from making progress on a range of issues (e.g., health, housing, transportation, jobs, the environment, elections, and more) and achieve longer-term systems change.

At the same time, less than half of philanthropic organizations interviewed (45% of the 22 foundations and donor communities that participated in the scan) have a shared understanding of power that they apply in a consistent way. Most have not adopted definitions or analyses of power organization-wide. For those that have, there is no universally accepted or assumed way of going about the process to come to shared agreement. Furthermore, having and applying a shared understanding about power does not require that everyone within a foundation or donor community "lip sync" the same words. What is more important is that:

- There is baseline agreement about what power is, the forms it can take, and why it matters;

- The communities you hope to serve (e.g., low-income, communities of color, etc.) are at the forefront, so that the priorities, solutions, and definitions of success are identified by them and for them;

- There is alignment within your funding institution about how an understanding or analysis of power will be used to shape the design and implementation of strategies to address priorities identified by the communities you hope to serve, as well as how community power-building will be assessed in partnership with grantees; and

- You are committed to ongoing learning and refinement.

RWJF and its collaborators are not alone. Power is a topic of growing interest among philanthropy. Among foundations and donor communities that reported applying a shared understanding of power to their work for some time, it is a subject of ongoing reflection within their organizations, with grantees, and with other collaborators and partners.

> "
>
> [Philanthropic organizations] need a common framework. Lip syncing and saying things precisely? Not going to happen… if you are making shift, it will be unfamiliar for people. Moving from one type of grantmaking to another – that requires different muscles.
>
> "

Recommendations

Based on our analysis of the interview data and literature reviewed, and experience Grassroots Solutions brought to the scan, some specific recommendations for RWJF to consider are as follows.

- **Focus on power to help address inequities communities face.**

  We think there is value in accelerating and expanding efforts to support building community power to more effectively address obstacles that stand in the way of health equity. Philanthropic organizations or programs within foundations and donor communities utilizing power analyses and research (often versions tailored to align with their specific missions) decided to do so because they were not seeing enough progress on causes and concerns they cared about. Addressing structural barriers specific to low-income, communities of color, and others was central to laying more solid groundwork to advance their organization's vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

  > If you don't have a shared understanding of power, you're not going to be able to use it well when you gain it.

  Although choosing to focus more intentionally on power can happen at the program, theme, or departmental level, it is helpful to have an organization-wide commitment, as well as support from the board and senior leadership, to engage in a journey. Developing and applying a shared understanding of power at the program or organization-wide level is not a one-time event. In Grassroots Solutions' experience working with a variety of philanthropic and nonprofit clients, fundamental disconnects between programmatic teams and senior leadership or board members about power can result in a more halting process or one that creates confusion or distrust among grantees and community partners.

- **To develop and apply an organization- or program-wide understanding of power, try not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Listen, test, and refine as you go.**

  Most of the foundations and donor communities applying a shared understanding or analysis of power did so over time. The process was not linear and sometimes "messy." It involved listening, discussion, testing, reflection, and ongoing refinement. Also, these processes invariably include challenging conversations about race and racism, gender, identity, and the role that foundations and donor communities have played in maintaining the status quo or perpetuating systems that disadvantage certain groups of people. These organizations made mistakes along the way, learned from them, and moved forward; in so doing, they avoided paralysis or "overthinking it." Additionally, it can be helpful for some common language to ground that process, but respondents cautioned against spending too much time and energy parsing words or crafting definitions.

  Foundation staff, grantees, and community partners need to have enough shared vocabulary to understand each other, but many ultimately drew upon the experiences of grantees and community partners to define terms and develop frameworks to support building and wielding the types of power explored in the report. This stands in contrast to extended, elaborate processes to come to "perfect" descriptions or analyses and then applying them. Instead, it may be helpful to think of mistakes as teachable moments and an opportunity to share powerful

lessons with others in philanthropy. Moreover, involving the communities most affected by inequities in the design and implementation of your programmatic strategy and grantmaking can help mitigate some of the risks associated with your journey to refine or expand support for community power-building.

- **Consider a variety of data to assess progress and results and involve grantees to ensure that what is being tracked and measured is meaningful.**

  Numbers matter, but when it comes to building community power, so do people. RWJF and other funders should be wary of applying frameworks to assess progress and success that rely on quantitative data alone. In addition, we recommend that RWJF and others work with grantees and community partners to identify appropriate indicators of progress and measures that will be useful to them and their grantees and community partners. As noted in the findings, these could include:

  › Transformations in relationships (e.g., between people and government, ability among grantees to leverage relationships for cross-issue efforts)

  › Leaders developed from communities of color and low-income communities who hold a variety of positions of influence

  › Solutions determined and promoted by those most affected by inequities

  › The health and stability of ecosystems (e.g., durable organizations that can withstand more than one "issue fight" and are able to demonstrate influence)

- **Be prepared to examine internal organizational processes and operations that may act at cross purposes with efforts to support power-building through grantmaking and programming. Also, willingness to reflect and act on the inequities that are inherent in the funder-grantee relationship is essential.**

  It is common for philanthropies looking to build or strengthen community power to focus their attention on the external ways that grantmaking and programming affect the communities they are trying to serve only to find that internal questions about power (e.g., how it manifests within a foundation or donor community), and the organization's appetite for sharing it, come up as well. Based on the interviews and Grassroots Solutions' experience working with philanthropies and nonprofits, it is harder to achieve the impacts or changes you want in the world without reflecting on how power operates at your organization. Furthermore, supporting community power-building requires sharing power in partnership with grantees and the communities you hope to serve.

  Following are types of questions that may arise through a process to develop, refine, and apply a shared understanding of power:

  › How is information shared among staff, with grantees, with funder partners, and more? How comfortable are staff and board members using language and terminology about race, racism, whiteness, identity, etc. that relate to power and equity?

  › Are staff reflective of the communities you are trying to support?

- How are decisions made, especially between leadership and staff? Who are the experts?

- What degree of grantee or community input about what constitutes success is factored into decision-making about program design, implementation, and measurement?

- What role has philanthropy historically had in the United States? How does power manifest itself in our institution?

- What level of change is your organization authentically committed to trying to bring about? Individual redress? Structural reform? Other? What type of power is needed to bring about the desired change?

Thank You

It has been a pleasure working with the RWJF to design and conduct this scan. Grassroots Solutions hopes that the findings are useful and informative for RWJF and its collaborators.

Appendix I: Interview List

Types of Foundations and Donor Communities Selected

From March through mid-May 2018, Grassroots Solutions conducted one-on-one and small-group phone interviews with 34 individuals who could provide a range of insights about power and supporting community power-building. Interviewees included representatives from small, medium, and large foundations; a mix of place-based funders; organizations that deploy 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and unrestricted resources; and funders that strategically leverage their investment capital. As noted in the introduction, we opted to go "deep" rather than "wide," focusing on gathering information from foundations (mostly private) and donor communities as opposed to affinity groups, collaboratives, and academics that do not engage directly in grantmaking. Also, we prioritized foundations that fund grassroots and base-building organizations. Of the small and mid-sized foundations interviewed, we worked with RWJF to identify those that explicitly fund power-building, grassroots organizing, and experimentation at smaller scales that could be scaled and accelerated. The reasons for creating these boundaries around the scan were twofold: 1) to try and ensure that the insights gleaned would be as relevant and relatable to RWJF as possible and 2) to meet RWJF's desired timeline and budget.

9 Large Foundations

8 Small to Mid-Sized Foundations

22 Total* Foundations and Donor Communities

11 Place-Based Funders

14 Funders that Strategically Leverage their Investment Capital

4 Funders that Deploy 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), and Unrestricted Funds
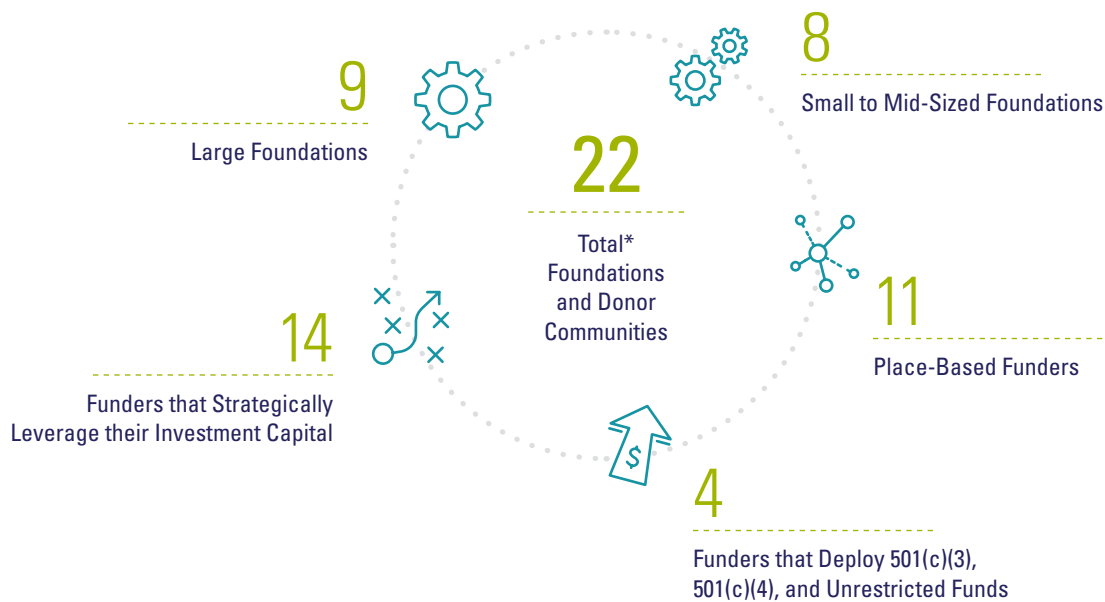
* Foundations and donor communities selected fit into more than one category, which accounts for why the total does not add up to 22.

Interview Participants

ANDRUS FAMILY FUND
Leticia Peguero

ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION
Scot Spencer

CHORUS FOUNDATION
Farhad Ebrahimi

DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE
Roger Kim and Gara LaMarche

ENERGY FOUNDATION
Carrie Doyle

FORD FOUNDATION
Laine Romero Alston, Ethan Frey, Jose Garcia, Amy Kenyon, Mayra Peters-Quinteros, and Anna Wadia

HEADWATERS FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE
David Nicholson

HILL-SNOWDON FOUNDATION
Shona Chakravartty and Nat Williams

THE HYAMS FOUNDATION
David Moy

JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION
Val Chang and Chantell Johnson

KRESGE FOUNDATION
Michael Shaw

MARGUERITE CASEY FOUNDATION
Luz Vega-Marquis

MARY REYNOLDS BABCOCK FOUNDATION
Justin Maxson

MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION
Kara Carlisle

NOVO FOUNDATION
Anna Quinn

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION
Emma Oppenheim and Bill Vandenberg

SOLIDAGO FOUNDATION
Sarah Christiansen and Guillermo Quinteros

SURDNA FOUNDATION
Helen Chin

THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT
Alex Desautels, Anthony Iton, and Sandra Witt

UNNAMED
It was the policy of one organization not to disclose its name or that of the interviewee

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION
Robby Rodriguez

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FUND
Austin Belali

It is worth acknowledging that the interviews explored how funders are supporting community power-building to address inequities or disproportionate impacts of current systems on low-income communities and communities of color. As noted in the Introduction, Grassroots Solutions sought interviews with representatives from foundations and donor communities that could provide a range of ideological perspectives, but not all individuals we reached out to participated in the scan. Although speculative, this aspect of the scan may not have aligned with how self-identified conservative philanthropic organizations think about their work and programming. That said, these funders have helped certain communities and constituencies build and wield power and they would likely have interesting insights to contribute in the future.

Appendix II: Literature Reviewed

In addition to the information gathered through the interviews, Grassroots Solutions examined a variety of relevant articles and recent publications. It is worth noting that our examination of the literature below served as a complement to the interviews; however, this is by no means an exhaustive list of all material available about power or supporting community power-building.

AUTHOR	TITLE	SOURCE
Frank Farrow and Cheryl Rogers	Voices of Partners	http://s26107.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/VOICES-OF-PARTNERS-Executive-Summary-final-1.pdf
Archon Fung, Harvard University	Gettysburg Project - Levels of Power & Reinvestment	https://vimeo.com/229159521
Richard Healey and Sandra Hinson (Grassroots Policy Project)	Organizing for Governing Power	http://grassrootspolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Organizing-for-Governing-Power-RH-copy-Web.pdf
Vivien Labaton	Why Movements Matter	http://prospect.org/article/why-movements-matter
Gara LaMarche and Deepak Bhargava	The Road Ahead for Progressives: Back to Basics	https://www.thenation.com/article/road-ahead-progressives-back-basics/
Eric Liu	You're More Powerful than You Think	http://www.citizenuniversity.us/eric-liu/
Heather McLeod	Pioneers in Justice: Building Networks and Movements for Social Change	http://www.levistrauss.com/pioneers-in-justice-building-networks-and-movements-for-social-change/#.Wo3gZsKos2x
Movement Generation	Just Transition Framework	https://movementgeneration.org/about/our-theory-of-change/
Manuel Pastor and Rhonda Ortiz	Making Change: How Social Movements Work — and How to Support Them	https://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/making-change/

AUTHOR	TITLE	SOURCE
Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, and Anthony Perez	There's Something Happening Here… A Look at The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities Initiative	https://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/tce-bhc
Manuel Pastor, Jennifer Ito, and Anthony Perez	Transactions – Transformations – Translations: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements	https://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/metrics/
Adele Peters	"Power Is The Ability To Change The Rules": How Rashad Robinson Holds Companies Accountable	https://www.fastcompany.com/40474488/power-is-the-ability-to-change-the-rules-how-rashad-robinson-holds-companies-accountable
Lisa Ranghelli, Jennifer Choi, and Dan Petegorsky, with extensive assistance from Caitlin Duffy and Stephanie Peng, from the National Council for Responsive Philanthropy	Power Moves Your Essential Philanthropy Assessment Guide for Equity and Justice	https://www.ncrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PowerMoves.pdf

Appendix III: Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
501(c)(3) Organizations and Permissible Activities	Organizations that only operate charitable activities are classified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. There are two types: private foundations and public charities. Currently 501(c)(3) organizations are prohibited from participating in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. Permissible activities that were cited in the interviews include: leadership and network development; strategic communications and alliance-building; policymaker and candidate education; nonpartisan voter education, registration, and mobilization; general advocacy training efforts; coalition building; and some lobbying. Most of the participants in the scan provide support through their grantmaking for 501(c)(3) permissible activities.[13]
501(c)(4) Organizations and Permissible Activities	There is another type of nonprofit organization—501(c)(4): Social Welfare Organizations—which are currently permitted to engage in some political activity, including lobbying for or against legislation and ballot measures. Four of the funders interviewed deploy resources in support of both 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) activities.[14]
Affinity Groups	The Council on Foundations defines affinity groups as: "A separate and independent coalition of grantmaking institutions or individuals associated with such institutions that shares information or provides professional development and networking opportunities to individual grantmakers with a shared interest in a particular subject or funding area."
Community Partners and Collaborators	For the purposes of this scan, Grassroots Solutions defines community partners and collaborators as the individuals or organizations that may work closely with foundations, donor communities, or their grantees to achieve mutual goal(s) in a geography or other type of community that the philanthropic organization hopes to build power among.
Community Engagement	For the purposes of this scan, Grassroots Solutions defines community engagement broadly. It can encompass strategies and tactics to involve members of a specific community—geographic, ethnic, racial, economic, gender, and more—to design, shape, and act on causes or concerns that affect their lives and well-being.
Culture Change Campaign	For the purposes of this scan, Grassroots Solutions defines culture change campaigns as those that are upstream of policy and politics that seek to change the broader context in which organizations and individuals work. For example, by redefining an issue in terms of shared values and beliefs, or by shifting public assumptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

----

[13] For more information about tax designations, visit www.cof.org.

[14] For more information about 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) permissible activities, visit:
https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/05/Comparison_of_501c3_and_50c4_Permissible_Activities.pdf.

TERM	DEFINITION
Donor Communities	For the purposes of this scan, Grassroots Solutions defines donor communities as a collective or group of donors—individuals, foundations, or others—that share similar goals and sometimes pool resources to fund issues, campaigns, movement building, and more.
Ecosystem	This is a term that can be interpreted in diverse ways; however, in this context, and based on what the interviewees shared, Grassroots Solutions would define it as the nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, community groups, public and private leaders, and others that are connected to each other as integral to achieving systemic changes and advancing equity.
Grantees	The Council on Foundations defines grantees as "the individual or organization that receives a grant."
Impact Capital and Impact Investments	Impact capital or impact investments are made to companies, organizations, and funds and are designed to generate social and environmental benefits as well as financial returns.[15]
Large Foundations	For the purposes of this scan, large foundations are defined as having assets over $1 billion.
Movement Building	For the purposes of this scan, movement building refers to the variety of nonpartisan efforts that foundations and donor communities can support—such as organizing, advocacy, communications, and election-related activities—to strengthen a social movement.[16]
Place-based Funders	Place-based funders support work "in a place." That "place" can be a municipality, city, arts district, neighborhood, or region. Place-based funding generally reflects a commitment to a target area or community (typically over an extended period) and is complemented by relationships among a variety of community actors. Support and resources provided can extend beyond grantmaking.[17]
Small to Mid-sized Foundations and Funders	Among the foundations and donor communities that participated in the scan, there was a significant range among what we classified as small and mid-sized. For the purposes of this scan, "small" funders are defined as having up to $100 million in assets and "mid-sized" funders between $100 million and $1 billion.
Social Movements	There are a variety of ways that social movements are defined, but there is general agreement about the following: social movements involve a collection of people coming together around a common purpose to change a system/the status quo through sustained action over an extended period.

----

[15] This definition is adapted from definitions used by the Global Impact Investing Network and McKinsey & Company.

[16] This definition is adapted from a variety of sources, including Wellstone Action.

[17] This definition is adapted from a variety of sources.

TERM	DEFINITION
Structural Barriers	For the purposes of this scan, Grassroots Solutions defines structural barriers as the lack of opportunities, burdens, or policies and procedures in place that disproportionately disadvantage some people based on identity or geography.
System Change	Systems change refers to fundamental changes in policies, processes, relationships, access to and distribution of resources, and rules and structures, as well as deeply held values, norms, or stories.[18]

----

[18] This definition is adapted from Srik Gopal and John Kania's article "Fostering Systems Change" in Stanford Social Innovation Review and OpenSource Leadership Strategies' framework (www.openleadership.com).