

Untangling Philanthropy

Design for Social Innovation

Grace Kang & Grace Kwon



Preface

As social designers, we are passionate about addressing the root causes of systemic issues and designing for impact that is equitable, tangible, and sustainable. We saw that the unjust systems in society prompted these convoluted narratives that wealth and power are the pathways to change. We wanted to untangle that misconception. Recognizing the effects of power, inequity, and the relational tensions that created structural barriers in our society sparked our curiosity into how systemic failure led to dehumanizing philanthropy.

Growing up in the church as pastors' children, we have lifelong experiences seeing everyday people give away their time, money, and talent without expectations. Witnessing how intimately tuned humans are into their social worlds gave us the privilege to see the sacrificial determination and compassion it takes to cultivate grounded values and self-awareness. We saw giving as an intimate act. But now it has evolved into something that has been institutionalized by individuals who exploited society for personal gain.

Our goal was to create spaces, tools, and conditions to support those looking for alternative ways to give, those whose sole purpose of bettering the lives of their families, neighborhoods, and at large, communities are at the core. We saw how the etymology of philanthropy, which is simply to love people, has become obsolete. To combat this problem, we worked hand in hand with radical disruptors in the space who have already been pushing boundaries to reimagine, redefine, and expand the meaning of giving. We saw opportunities where people in the social sector can overcome the greed, expectations, and distrust that perpetuates the interests of the ultra-rich, who were in the past, the major forces of philanthropy.

We hope this research gives you a better look into how giving has evolved and how it will continuously progress with the help of the next generation of creative altruists.

Designers

Grace Kang & Grace Kwon

Advisor

Esther Kang

MFA Design for Social Innovation

School of Visual Arts, New York City

Table of Contents

06	Our Approach
11	History of Philanthropy
15	Giving Culture is Changing
21	Process
30	Recipe for Collective Governance
42	Conversation Menu
52	COVID-19
55	Metrics & Evaluation
59	Closing Thoughts
60	Acknowledgments
65	Glossary

Our Approach

Knowing how complex systems are, we started with a systems approach to investigate the root causes and challenges of the social injustices in philanthropy. There were evident disparities in the way organizations funded social impact. However, before jumping into the problem, we needed to understand the historical groundwork, the key players in the system, and the structural characteristics that built philanthropy into what it is today—an imbalanced power dynamic.

Looking at the ecosystem, we discovered that philanthropy was evolving, and shifts towards a more equitable giving culture were on the rise. We believed it was crucial to acknowledge the alternative approaches that are paving the way for philanthropy to evolve and to learn what worked in terms of creating new practices that disrupt the current power dynamic.

All of this brought us to our pivotal moment. In order to design for systems change, we needed to continue our research and learning by working with organizations in and out of the system. This led to our partnership with two different giving communities — KACF, a community foundation that practices traditional giving and Radfund, a giving circle that practices collective giving.

The opportunity we saw was to challenge the status quo by making sense of the complexities set by people in power. Our goal was to examine how organizations still practice traditional giving and how the new wave of giving communities are adopting radical approaches to create an ecosystem that humanizes philanthropy. We wanted to compare how they operate, collaborate, and fund internally within their organization and externally with their grantee partners. By partnering with communities on both ends of the spectrum, we strategized our research process by conducting a comparative analysis to further explore the landscape and shifts happening from traditional to radical.

Thesis Glossary

Collective giving: when a group of individuals come together to pool money and collectively decide on the cause they want to support and how they want to distribute their resources.

External relationship: refers to the relationship between individuals at different organizations.

Factual discourse: a conversation regarding organizational performance based on numerical data and analysis, as a means to addressing an outcome.

Funder: an individual or organization that donates money and makes a grant.

Grant: A sum of money that is awarded to an organization or individual to undertake charitable activities.

Grantee: an individual or organization that receives a grant.

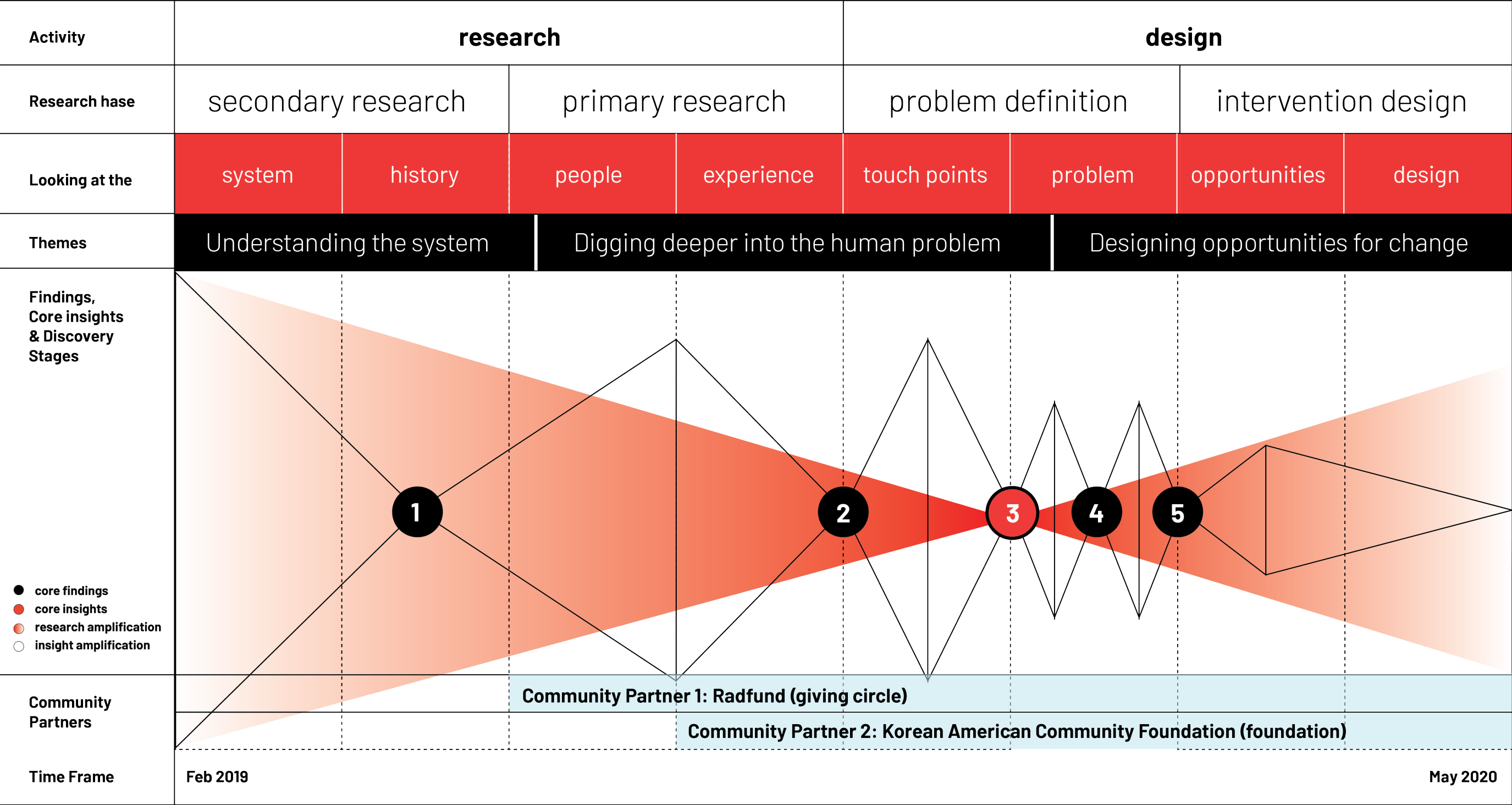
Internal relationship: refers to the relationship between individuals within an organization.

Radical giving: the practice of emergence for the purpose of moving foundations and funders towards supporting transformative, frontline work to address the root causes of systemic issues.

Relational discourse: a conversation reflecting on the individual and organizational experience, as a fundamental means for co-creating trust, value, and respect.

Traditional giving: the practice of giving for the purpose of fulfilling the funders' values, which addresses symptoms not root causes.

Trust: the act of sharing vulnerabilities, power, and resources.



- 1

The imbalance of power between funders and grantees results in informational gaps. Grantees being fearful of showing too much or too little, don't have the space to communicate their actual needs, which results in missed opportunities for shared understanding.
- 2

Radical funders who recognize that the power imbalance leads to inefficient social impact are disrupting traditional philanthropic structures through a giving practice called trust-based philanthropy.
- 3

Radical funders understand relational discourse comes before factual discourse. Numbers don't persuade people, relationships do. People are the currency, relationships are the drivers, and trust is the ultimate tool that finances social change.
- 4

Both traditional and radical funders needed a way to facilitate conversations with their grantees that equalizes the power dynamic and builds relationships that are grounded in trust.
- 5

Relationships have two folds. Internal community building is crucial to fund for resilience over recovery. Practicing collective governance and creating giving values can impact how funders facilitate conversations so that they become milestones for growth.

HISTORY OF PHILANTHROPY

	For charity	For public good	For tax deductions	
	18C	19C	20C	21C
Reason for giving	religious act	combat GOV failure	thematic / interest focused	mask exploitative work
Result	voluntary giving	support local causes	incentivized giving	nonprofit industrial complex

In the United States, philanthropy first started for charitable purposes. The concept was defined as an act of voluntary giving by individuals or groups to promote the common good. The government saw individuals who built their wealth through business as a source for social capital. Instead of taking responsibility for funding public goods, the government commissioned wealthy philanthropists to fund social services and programs.

Philanthropy was a system built on a strong culture of giving and collaboration. However, as America built its wealth, giving was incentivized to maintain the funds philanthropists voluntarily gave out of their own pockets. The government used tax-sheltered foundations as a vehicle to provide the wealthy with tax cuts for their charitable contributions. As a result, the wealthy then used philanthropy to mask their capitalist work by moving public money back into their own hands. What started as a strategy to address systemic issues, philanthropy turned into a system that served the wealthy. This system is known as the Nonprofit Industrial Complex (NPIC).

Philanthropy is a more strategic process of giving that is a long-term, strategic response focused on identifying the root causes of systemic issues and rebuilding systemic change. (treating root causes; proactive)

Example: Foundations practice philanthropy through the act of grantmaking. A grant is awarded to an individual or nonprofit to support a cause that aims to make social impact.

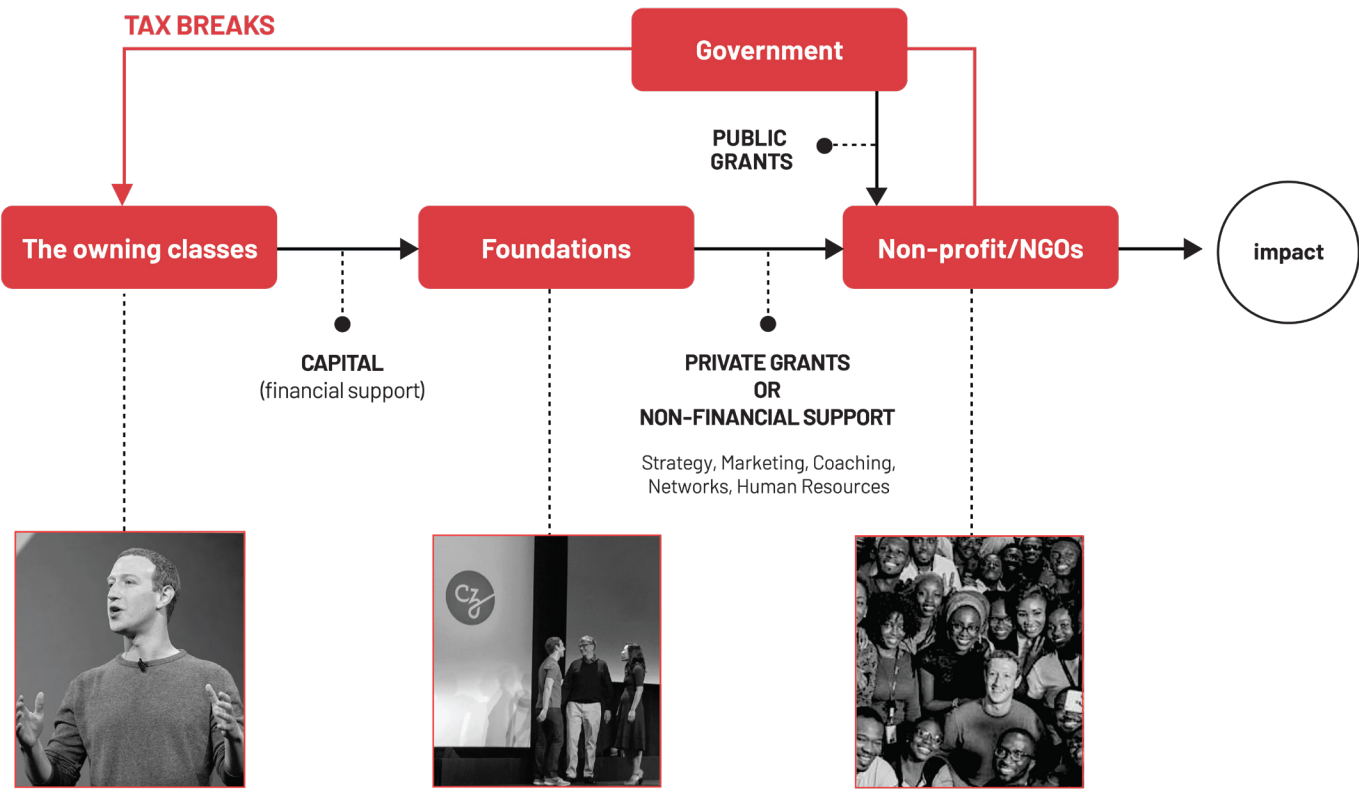
Charity is a short-term, empathetic response focused on an immediate crisis or need. (treating symptoms; reactive)

Example: Individuals practice charity through the voluntary act of giving money, goods, or time directly to a cause



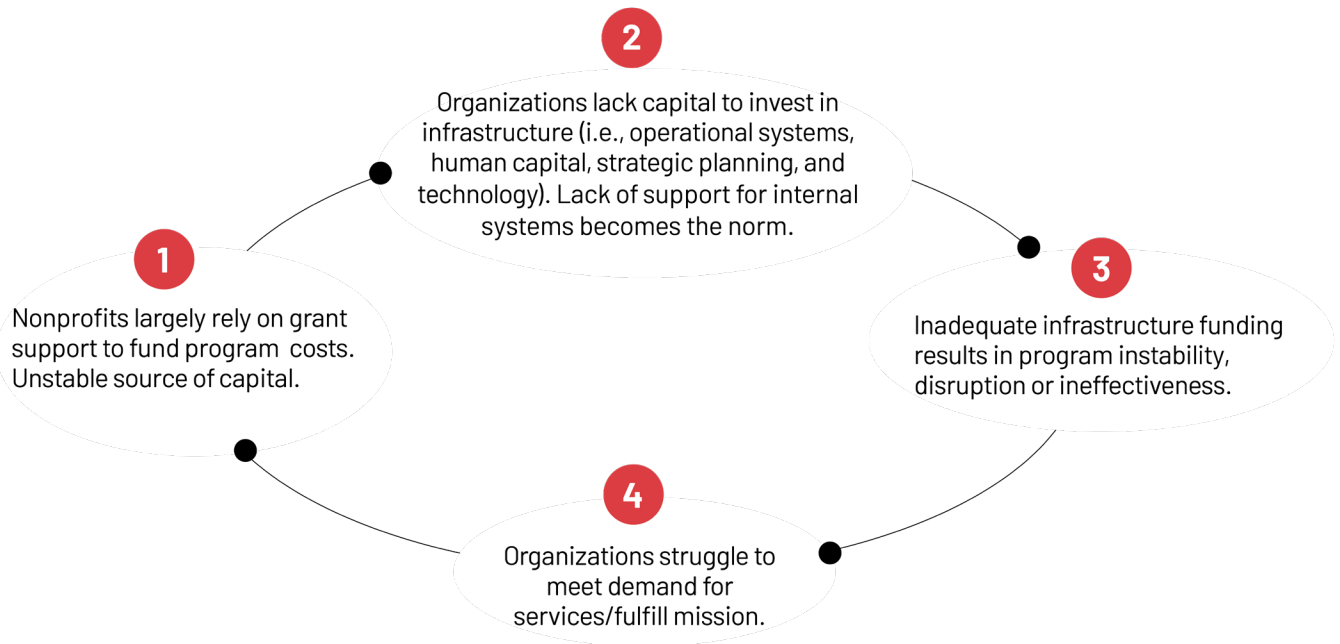
Nonprofit — Industrial Complex

NPIC is a system of relationships between the government, owning classes, foundations, and nonprofits that results in the surveillance, control, and monitoring of social justice movements. It puts nonprofits in a position where they must focus on maintaining their funding sources rather than fulfilling their mission. Living in this perpetuated cycle of sacrificing their mission for funding encourages nonprofits to adopt capitalist structures and redirects their energy away from mission-based work.



Nonprofit Starvation Model

Around 50 percent of the nation's nonprofits are operating with less than one month's cash reserves.



how philanthropy works

Looking at philanthropy, the NPIC is deeply embedded inside it. While foundations distribute grants to nonprofits, they serve as tax shelters for the wealthy, taking away funds that should be used for social services and programs. This cycle dictates how nonprofits should operate and creates a power imbalance that favors the funders. Instead of a focus on rebuilding systemic change, philanthropy is an imbalanced dynamic where relationships between grantees and funders are rooted in codependency and transaction, which hinders true collaboration and the holistic approach that is needed to drive social impact.

GIVING CULTURE IS CHANGING

Challenging the System

Philanthropy is evolving from a system that focuses on capital, quick fixes, and control to one that focuses on accountability, long-term change, and radical collaboration. The focus on accessibility and transparency has pushed the traditional philanthropic world to engage in ways that democratize giving.

Questions around equitable giving practices have challenged foundations to expand their 5% payout rule, which refers to the law that they must distribute five percent of their investment towards grantmaking. Radical funders, who understand the systemic barriers as a result of the NPIC, are actively seeking out effective giving models that dismantle the power dynamic. Giving communities are realizing that funding organizations with multi-year grants and unrestricted grants lead to longer lasting impact. Even the faces at the decision-making table are becoming more diverse in age, race, and class. All these disruptive shifts are redefining the culture of giving by approaching philanthropy through an equity lens.

Traditional giving: the practice of giving for the purpose of fulfilling the funders' values, which addresses symptoms not root causes.

Radical giving: the practice of emergence for the purpose of moving foundations and funders towards supporting transformative, frontline work to address the root causes of systemic issues.

The Culture Shift

Traditional giving is top-down, closed doors, and expert-driven. It is associated with the notion of big money and wealthy funders who use their foundations to privatize power. These individuals have the ultimate decision-making power, and because of this imbalance, grantees have to conform to their interests and agenda rather than working toward social impact. Basically, philanthropy is conditioned for social organizations to fail if they don't adopt capitalist structures that adhere to the funders.

A new wave of **radical giving** is now emerging that's equity-centered, open doors, and community-driven. For example, Resource Generation, a group of next-gen philanthropists who come from generational wealth, is breaking out of the traditional giving structure by checking their privilege at the door and working hand in hand with people on the frontline. The Korean American Community Foundation is addressing the needs in their local area by practicing a participatory grantmaking model, which invites community members to the decision-making table. Giving circles like Radfund, a group of everyday individuals who leverage the power of collective giving, are using unrestricted grants to provide organizations the agency to determine how to make impact with their grant money.

giving circles

A giving circle is a form of participatory philanthropy where individuals come together around a shared identity, pool their money and resources, and collectively decide the cause they want to support. They tend to be hyper local to their community and practice direct giving to community-based issues. While their existence is not entirely new, giving circles enable people to have the discretionary power to make an impact on a particular issue, organization, or community.

Case Study: Asian Women Giving Circle is the first and largest giving circle in the nation led by Asian American women. They raise funds to support Asian American women-led projects in New York City that use arts and culture to:

- Bring about progressive social transformation
- Raise awareness and catalyze action around critical issues that affect Asian American women, girls, and families
- Highlight and promote women’s central role as leaders, creators, developers and managers of these projects

*Giving circle members....
give more **money and time**
give for **community-oriented** reasons
use **equity-centered** giving strategies
are more **engaged** in political activities*

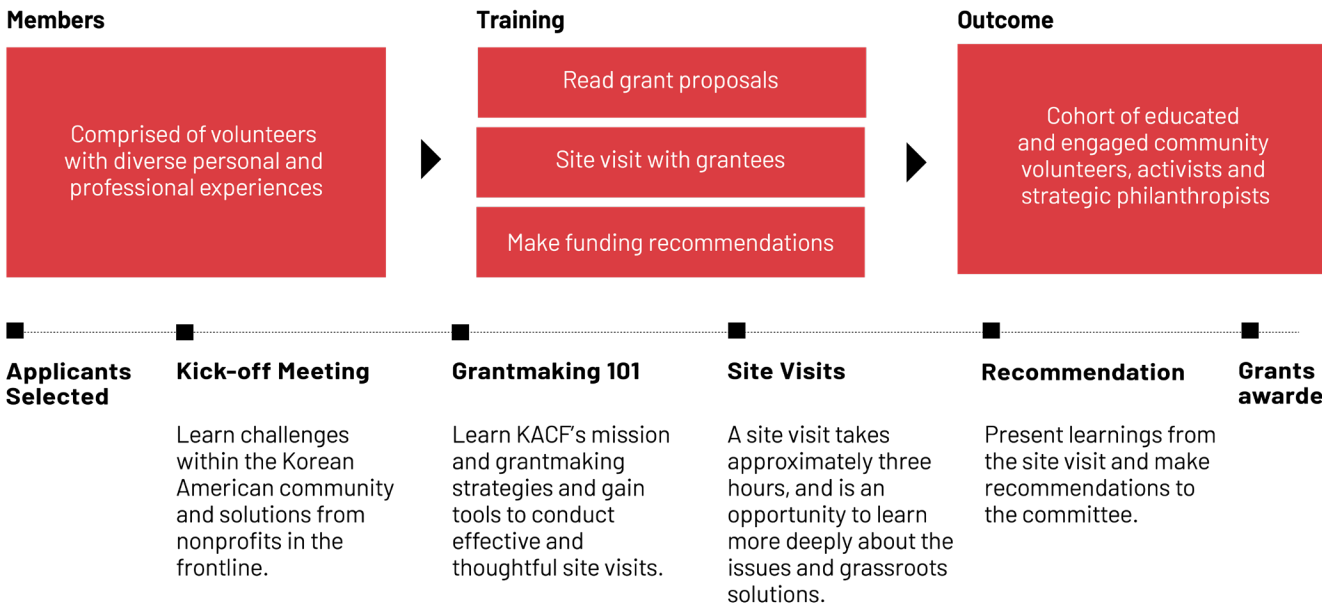


participatory grantmaking

Participatory grantmaking is a decision-making process that includes community advocates and people who are affected by a particular issue or problem. It is a collaborative problem-solving framework that involves the equitable participation of funders, grantees, and the public to achieve better outcomes and decisions.

Case Study: Korean American Community Foundation practices a participatory grantmaking model, and each year, they invite community volunteers and advocates to participate in their grantmaking through their Community Grants Committee (CGC).

CGC: How It Works



social justice philanthropy

Social Justice Philanthropy supports organizations that are getting to the roots of problems instead of only addressing the symptoms. A key part of the process is giving to those who are directly affected by and working on a social issue. These funds are allocated in order to fulfill the organization's larger social justice mission. It is an alternative approach to traditional philanthropy, where grantees are respected as partners in social justice.

Practiced by Resource Generation

Core Principles

- ONE** Focuses on the root causes of economic, racial, and social injustice
- TWO** Includes the people who are impacted by those injustices as decision-makers
- THREE** Makes philanthropy more accessible and diverse
- FOUR** Keeps foundations accountable, transparent and responsive in their grantmaking
- FIVE** Donors and foundations act as allies to social justice movements by contributing not only monetary resources but their time, knowledge, skills and access
- SIX** Foundations use their assets and investments, alongside grant-making dollars, to support their social justice missions

ONLY 8%

of the foundation's grant dollars devoted to long-term change strategies between 2003 and 2013

(Top 20 foundations in the U.S.)

trust based philanthropy

Trust-Based Philanthropy reimagines traditional funder-grantee relationships to create a philanthropic ecosystem that puts trust first. It envisions a world where relationships are built on vulnerability, transparency, and humility; where community and nonprofit leaders are valued, supported, and trusted; and where funders bring awareness to power and equity to their grantmaking. By recognizing the power imbalance between funders and grantees, giving communities that practice trust-based philanthropy work to actively rebalance it.

Pioneered by The Whitman Institute, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Headwaters Foundation, General Service Foundation, Durfee Foundation, and Satterberg Foundation.

Core Principles

Give Multi-Year Unrestricted Funding

Unrestricted funding over time is essential for creating healthy, adaptive, effective organizations.

Be Transparent & Responsive

Open, honest, and transparent communication minimizes power imbalances and helps move the work forward.

Do the Homework

Before entering into a grantmaking relationship, the onus of due diligence should be on the funder, not the grantseeker.

Solicit & Act on Feedback

Grantees provide valuable perspective that can help inform a funder's support and services.

Simplify & Streamline Paperwork

Nonprofit staff spend an inordinate amount of time on funder-imposed paperwork; they will be more effective if they are freed up to concentrate on mission.

Offer Support Beyond the Check

Responsive, adaptive non-monetary support can help foster healthier organizations by bolstering leadership and capacity.

PROCESS

Research — Partners

Aldervan Daly

Executive Vice President /
Institutional Advancement
for Rising Ground

Alison Cornyn

Project Director /
Incorrigibles & Faculty /
School of Visual Arts

Brennan Gang

Deputy Director and
Director of Programs
/ Korean American
Community Foundation

Caroline Mak

Programs Director / Hot
Bread Kitchen & Advisor /
Women's Enterprise Action
Loan Fund

Chelsea Toler-Hoffmann

President / The Keep
Families Giving Foundation

Cheryl Taruc

Funder / Radfund

Christina Gorczynski

Executive Director / Impact
Austin

Emily Rasmussen

Co-founder & CEO /
Grapevine

Esther Morales

Funder / Radfund

Hali Lee

Co-Director / Donors of
Color Action & Founder /
Asian Women Giving Circle

Kobla Asamoah

Head of Small Business /
Hot Bread Kitchen

Pia Infante

Co-Executive Director /
Whitman Institute

Rebecca Chen

Funder / Radfund

Rei Chou

Founder / The Feast

Sarah David-Heydemann

Funder / Radfund

Seiji Carpenter

Funder / Radfund

Sloan Leo

Director of Social
Innovation / The Vaid Group

Stephanie Chen

Grants Contacts Manager /
Police Athletic League

Vivian Cox Fraser

President & CEO / Urban
League of Essex County

Yahya Alazra

Campaign Director /
Resource Generation

Stakeholder — Research

	traditional					radical
partners	STEPHANIE CHEN Grants Contacts Manager / Police Athletic League	VIVIAN FRASER President & CEO / Urban League of Essex County	BRENNAN GANG Deputy Director and Director of Programs / Korean American Community Foundation	PIA INFANTE Co-Executive Director / Whitman Institute	CHRISTINA GORCZYNSKI Executive Director / Impact Austin	ESTHER MORALES Funder / Radfund
key quotes	Senior board members want to maintain their positions though they've held it for several years. It blocks opportunities for younger board members who have the energy and creativity to change the way organizations fund and work with grantees.	You need to find out what the funder is doing and craft something that interests them. You need to be in alignment with the work they're doing to actually get the funds. I've been in meetings where funders don't give honest feedback, but behind closed doors, they say that this isn't going to work. I've also seen a lot of partnerships where funders all jump to the problem, but they don't spend a lot of time getting to know the partner.	Numbers, data, and grant proposals don't reveal what really goes on behind the scenes. The unexpected calls and messages with our grantees about their failed attempts shows the level of trust built with our partners. These small moments matter. But I'm the only one who can do that for now.	What if we worked hand-in-hand with grantees to examine together the complexity of the problems our funding is intended to address? A deliberate, trust-based approach can liberate foundations from the structures that hold too many of us back.	Relationships between grantees and funders need to be leveraged to support issues on the ground ASAP. We now [during COVID-19] see that never before seen relationships are forming. Behind the scenes, funders and grantees are going into battle together. Trust is radically happening. Trust is radically opening up doors.	We do our own research and call when we have questions. We wanted to find an approach that allows the grantees to focus on their work, not paperwork.
level of trust toward grantee	low					high
pain points	Older board members leave no room for the next-gen board members to innovate and contribute to the change.	There is no space to share honest feedback or needs with grantees.	Few leaders in the organization have trusted relationships with grantees, which means opportunities for honest feedback are limited.	Trust-based philanthropy is not yet widespread. There are barriers to conveying the impact, especially when it comes to reframing what impact means for the grantees.	Only through practice can funding for equity, diversity, and systemic change be implemented meaning; it's going to take some time.	While the hands-off approach benefit how grantees operate, there's no room to build trusted relationships that can lead to long-term impact.
needs	Opportunities to challenge existing power structures that lead to shared understanding and power.	Trust in each other as collaborative leaders, not transactional business partners.	Changes in how funders approach, listen, and advocate for grantees.	Scaling trust-based philanthropy.	An experiential learning experience that normalizes trust-based philanthropy.	A conversational experience where funders and grantees get to know each other better as collaborators.

Design Research Question

*How might we design opportunities for funders and grantees to **rise above traditional philanthropic processes to interact and build relationships that fuel trust?***

Community Partner — 1

KACF

The **Korean American Community Foundation** transforms and empowers communities through philanthropy, volunteerism and inter-community bridge building. KACF pursues these goals through grants and organizational development support to nonprofits working to strengthen the economic security of low-income Korean Americans in the greater New York metropolitan area. KACF has awarded grants from \$20,000-165,000.

- ACTIVE YEARS** 18
- PEOPLE** 13 Board of Directors, 18 Associate Board, 4 Staff, 3 Advisory Groups
- PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND** Corporate, Finance, Healthcare, Law, Marketing
- WHO THEY GIVE TO** Organizations who have an operational history of at least 6 months; Are a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization or have a fiscal sponsor that is 501(c)3; Have an established and working Board of Directors
- HOW THEY GIVE** Direct service grants; Capacity building support; Rapid response funds (see glossary).
- DECISION-MAKING MODEL** Participatory grantmaking (CGC); Traditional hierarchy
- OUR PARTNER** The KACF Associate Board is a group of professionals (late 20s-30s) who serve as ambassadors of KACF by raising awareness of community issues. Their aim is to advance philanthropy by developing and mentoring the next generation of leaders in the Korean American community.

Community Partner — 2

RADFUND

Radfund is a giving circle based in Brooklyn, NY. They are a group of friends committed to liberation. Together, they give money to individuals and organizations in New York City organizing to challenge structural inequality and to fight for racial and economic justice. In the last five years, Radfund has given \$137,600 in unrestricted funds to 14 community organizations through their giving values and practices.


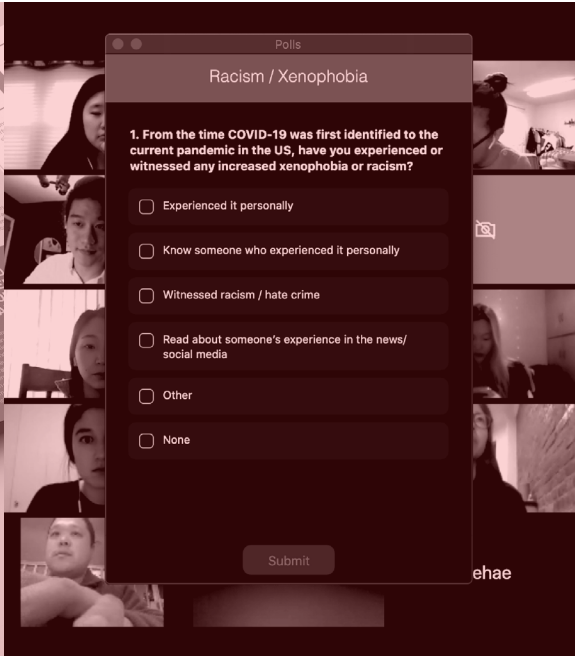
Giving Model: Formula 1
Radfund encourages members to give away at least 1% of their income and .1% of their wealth; a model that allows for full participation and voice no matter how much money they have.

- ACTIVE YEARS** 5
- PEOPLE** 13 volunteers/funders
- PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND** Community Organizers, Nonprofit, Law, Policy, Technology, Finance, Health, Production
- WHO THEY GIVE TO** Individuals/organizations who are directly affected by threats and oppression; Have an intersectional analysis of the relationships between race, class, gender and gender identity, ability, religion, and sexuality; Have a hard time accessing resources through traditional philanthropic channels; Employ strategies that include community organizing, leadership development and training, direct action, and advocacy; and Primarily live and work in New York City
- HOW THEY GIVE** Multi-year grants; Rapid response funds; Unrestricted grants (see glossary).
- DECISION-MAKING MODEL** Equal participation; Consensus based
- OUR PARTNER** 13 Radfund members

DESIGN INTERVENTIONS



RADFUND - RESEARCH JOURNEY MAP

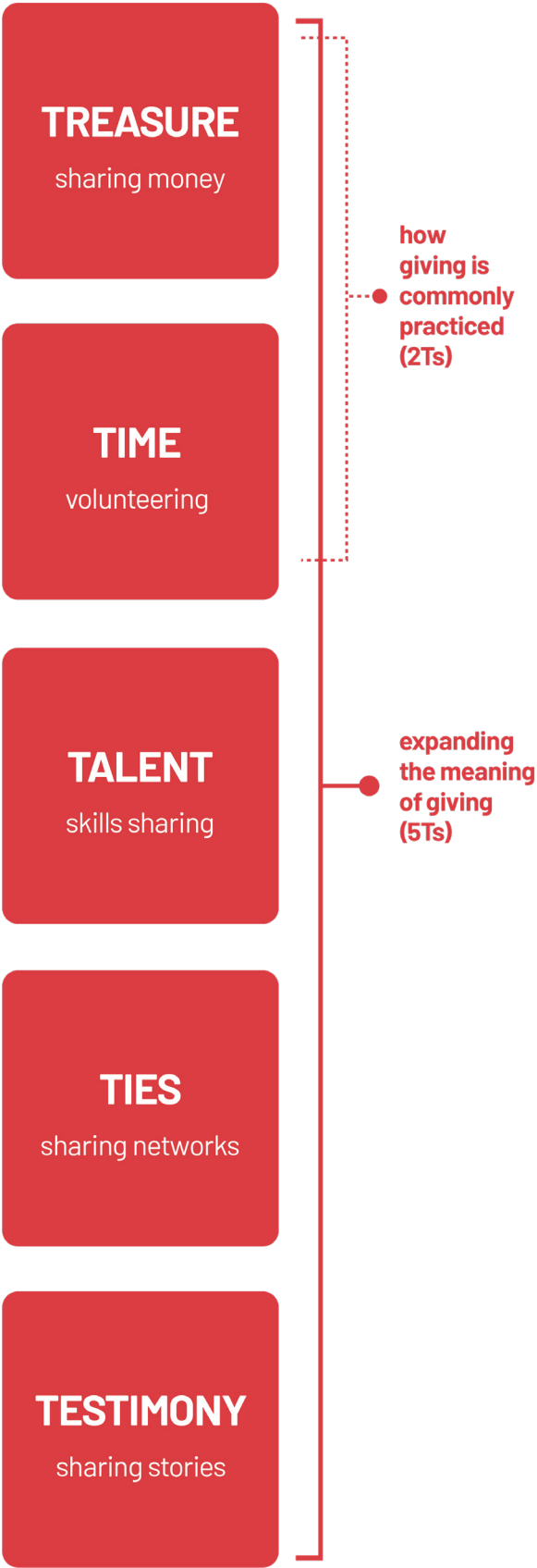
				
Empathy Understanding the community	Problem Definition Looking into the human problem	Ideation Co-creation as a pathway to insights	Design Tangible ideas	Test Feedback for growth
<p>WHO 13 volunteers part of a giving circle</p> <p>WHERE Brooklyn, NY</p> <p>WHAT Wanted to scale their giving model by creating a toolkit</p> <p>WHY Expanding the group created feelings of lost intimacy. Seeing the growth in inquiries about how they built their giving circle, Radfund wanted to put their 5 year collective giving experience on paper so other communities, cities, and organizations can learn how to create their own.</p>	<p>We created a 30+ page toolkit that illustrated how Radfund built their giving circle through collective governance, radical trust, and a community-centered lens. Our findings from testing:</p> <p>1. Generate content for a specific target audience</p> <p>2. Set time aside to share personal stories The elaborate how-to's may get in the way of creating space to share personal journeys, definitions, and expectations to giving.</p> <p>3. Expand the meaning of giving Participants defined giving as only three T's (treasure, time, talent).</p>	<p>After identifying some of the pain points in the first prototype, we collected three insights that paved the way in designing our first intervention.</p> <p>1. Note-card recipes over an elaborate cookbook Individuals want a simplified guide that provided actionable goals.</p> <p>2. Conversational experience over DIY toolkit manual Crafting language that people new to philanthropy or social justice work can understand.</p> <p>3. Looking at the forest before the trees Understanding the value of collective giving before jumping to solve problems.</p>	<p>OBJECTIVE</p> <p>1) Simplify toolkit</p> <p>2) Emphasize the need to have conversations that solidify community values before looking to fund</p> <p>3) Expand the meaning of giving by illustrating how sharing testimonies and ties lead to building a resilient giving community.</p> <p>Intervention: Recipe for Collective Governance</p>	<p>With our Recipe for Collective Governance, we advised our community partner at KACF during COVID-19 to make space for interpersonal conversations.</p> <p>As a community, they learned how to take note of their power and capacity. By sharing vulnerable stories of trauma and fear, they were expanding their notion of giving – from funding with treasures to funding with testimonies.</p> <p>They practiced collective governance by first supporting each other before going out to support others.</p>

Learnings

Working with radical giving communities led us to this core insight: relationships have two folds. For external partnerships to work, funders within an organization first need to understand the power and resources they have before they can take collective action.

To identify ways funders practice internal community building, we looked to small and informal giving communities such as giving circles. Our research showed us that giving circles already have the ideal pathway for building internal relationships because members have a shared identity or shared interest towards a particular cause. Before interacting with external organizations, giving circles build strong internal relationships with their members. They do the internal work by creating aligned goals and values that reflect their shared identity, which serves as a foundation for organizational growth. The concept of community is already deeply rooted in their identity and practice as everyday individuals who strive to support the communities in which they live.

Contrary to how traditional philanthropy is centered on financial capital, giving circles redefined giving into 5T's – treasure, time, talent, ties, and testimony. They value all the types of member contributions, from financial resources, professional expertise, and knowledge of community groups.



Impact Austin The Five T's to Giving

Relationships have two folds. For external partnerships to work, funders within an organization first need to understand the power and resources they have before they can take collective action.

Their approach to giving creates a dynamic that values friendships over financial partnerships. Members ensure that their giving is not reactive to the needs of the community, but rather focused on building resilience and funding systemic change. The power of their collective governance is grounded in their values as funders who leverage their resources—money, time, stories, skills, and networks— to reduce disparities and liberate those affected by structural inequality.

As outsiders looking in, we saw extraordinary value in how deepened relationships lead to political participation, meaning it empowers everyday individuals to come together to address the needs in their communities. This group of radical funders redefined philanthropy as an act that's powered by the people. Internally, they practiced consensus in their decision-making to ensure equal participation regardless of financial contribution, and externally, they took direct responsibility for

their grantmaking by going out of their way to research their grantees. Their proactive measures worked outside of the NPIC to achieve equitable outcomes and target groups who are not visible due to the barriers set in place by it.

Our learnings from giving circles highlighted how internal community building practices make giving transformational rather than transactional, which led to our first intervention: **Recipe for Collective Governance.** We recognized collective leadership was crucial to how funders can make impact not only as individuals but as a collective, an ingredient we felt was missing in the traditional philanthropic world. We wanted to challenge emerging funders to take a step back and do the internal work – to identify their values, create a shared vision, and build the knowledge and capacity of themselves and their partners. Through this visual guide, we inspire new giving communities to reimagine how their collective governance is the first step towards creating impact.

Case Study: Radfund

Overview

Radfund wanted to document their five year journey of how they have practiced radical giving. By co-creating a toolkit that outlined their giving journey, we gained access to their community and learned the in-depth tactical processes they took when giving. As design researchers, we gained insight into how giving circles work and the unique touchpoints to their giving model. As social designers, we witnessed how Radfund's internal values as a community shaped their giving into an act that was transformational rather than transactional.

Radfund's Giving Values

They acknowledge the inherent power dynamics of funder-grantee relationships, and use their privilege to support people doing good work. Their goal is to give away money to groups they trust and not further encumber them with reporting or needless contact. They believe that by giving together, we encourage each other to give more and give more thoughtfully.

At the core, they looked to giving as an act of political advocacy rather than a transactional experience. The toolkit provided a pathway to community engagement for new and emerging funders who are looking for alternative ways of giving.

Radfund's Approach

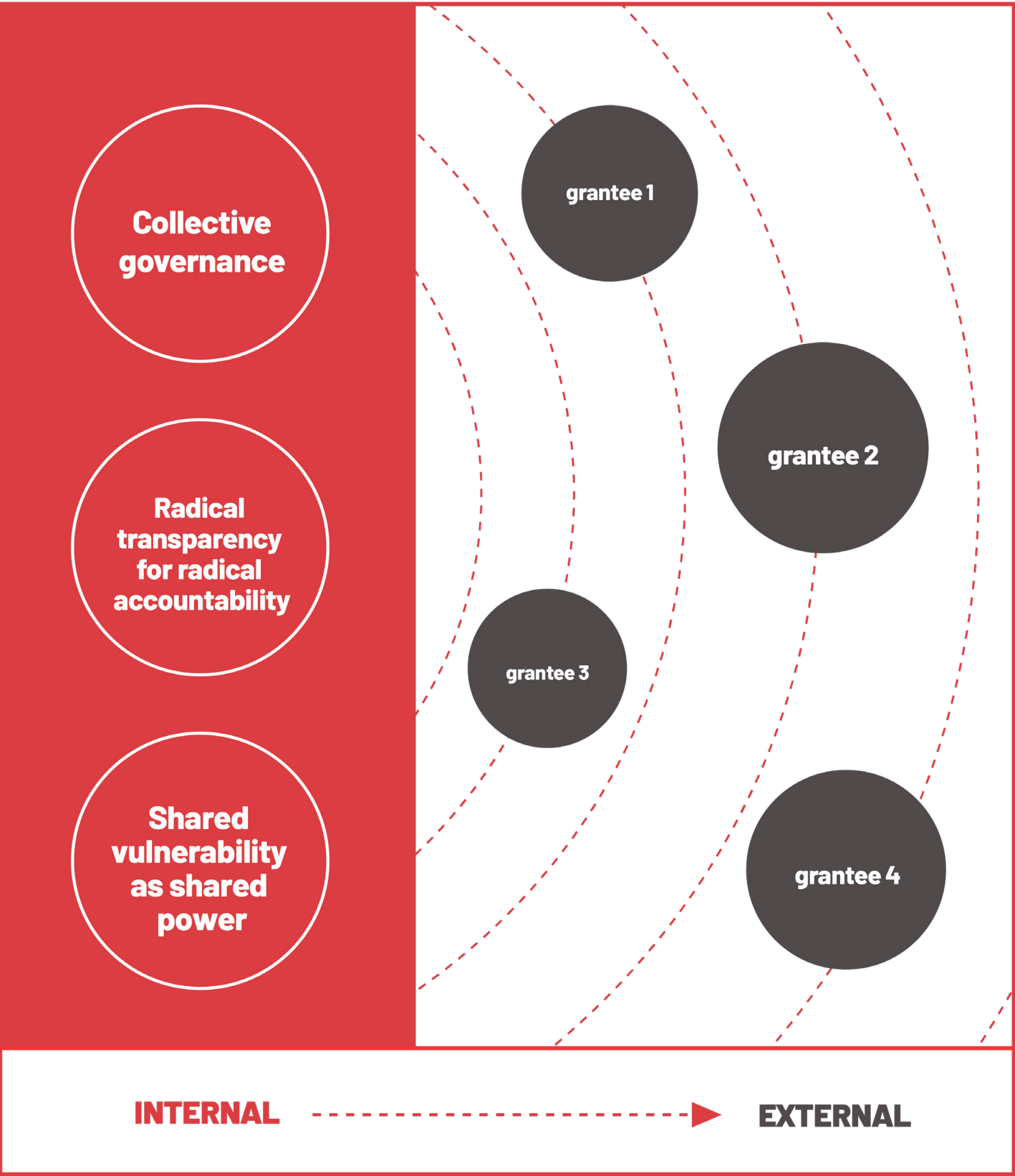
- All members participate as equals, regardless of specific contribution, and give according to their wealth and income.
- They openly share with each other how much wealth they have and how much money they make – an act that builds group transparency, accountability and trust.
- They strive to build a political home that provides opportunities to learn from each other and challenges us all to live up to their shared values.
- They work to build lasting relationships with each other and those they support.

Learnings

Radfund's strong internal relationships, funding process, and diligence for equity gave us the ideal overview of how collective giving can disrupt and rebuild philanthropy. While Radfund is not representative of all giving circles, we found value in their giving model and internal operations. They make space to have conversations around power and privilege to build self-awareness. They don't just give money away—they have deepened, strengthened and politicized their friendships by creating a space that serves as a political home to help guide them as they work to make the communities in which they live more just. Building off of their framework, we designed a tool to help funders, looking for alternative giving practices, expand the meaning of giving as not just sharing funds but sharing power.

Change happens from the inside out.

Our learnings from giving circles highlighted how internal community building practices make giving transformational rather than transactional. We recognized collective governance and leadership are crucial to how funders can make impact not only as individuals but as a collective, an ingredient we felt was missing in the current philanthropic world.



1

BIG MONEY MAKES BIG IMPACT? THINK AGAIN.

The notion of big money is the most common association with philanthropy. This mindset supports the mission and values of the funders, not the grantees. Giving circles exist to disrupt this very notion that big money leads to more impact. They believe that giving should not be limited to monetary contribution. It's an intimate act where people can share their time, skills, networks, and stories. When looking at the average pool of funds coming into foundations, 80% of funds are actually from individual everyday givers that give from a range of \$25 to \$2,500. Less than 20% of the funds are actually from big donors. Less can be more. Small is all.

TIP

Don't get carried away with how much you contribute. The art of collective giving is rooted in the concept that impact is a joint effort. Less is more when people give together. It's never about the money. It's about the relationships that glue your community and funds together.

2

SOCIAL ISSUES ARE SYSTEMIC ISSUES.

Most giving circle members have experience in social justice work and know how funders can distort incentives. They understand that most funder networks are old and established, and how difficult it can be for newer or smaller organizations or individuals to break in without knowing the right people, moving in the same circles, or speaking the right language. Understanding the structural inequities is why most giving circles prioritize giving to groups that may have a hard time accessing resources through traditional philanthropic channels.

Look to your personal or professional network and see if anyone works in the social justice space. Listen to the stories of how they work and who they serve. Your connections and local community leaders can offer opportunities to identify, engage, and learn how your funding can be of significant impact to those who need it the most.

3

SHARED VULNERABILITY BECOMES SHARED POWER.

Giving circles are more informal in that they see each other as friends, not funders. It's not just about the money. It's about building a political home where members can deepen their friendships and contribute to their community by creating spaces where they can give money away with friends. They practice vulnerability to strengthen their internal relationships by sharing personal stories, giving emotional support, and confiding in each other. To sustain their giving and friendships, they leverage the unstructured, informal conversations to ground relationships in trust.

4

RADICAL TRANSPARENCY LEADS TO RADICAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

Transparency is key when building a powerful, strategic, and effective funder community. Some of the most radical giving circles encourage members to openly share with each other how much wealth they have and how much money they make – an act that builds group transparency, accountability, and trust. No matter how much money they have or give, members have full participation and voice in the process. They acknowledge their power and privilege as an individual and as a collective.

TIP

Transparency should lead to seeing the right things, not all things.

TIP

Create a safe space and a brave space. Facilitate interactions where people can express themselves without judgment but also encourages dialogue. Whether you're meeting in-person or virtually, create community agreements that stay in practice in the space, give time for everyone to speak, and share affirmations.

groups going. Keep things balanced by creating space for friendly banter. Go out, get drinks, host dance parties. You can't build trust overnight, so hold time and space for social interactions.

5

BECOME ADVOCATES FOR YOUR GRANTEES.

Giving circle members strive to be issue experts, meaning they do the work to understand the needs and wants of their grantee partners and the communities they serve. They take responsibility for knowing what works for their grantees. Funders need to equalize the power dynamic by taking the lead in advocating for the communities they aim to support. Do the research, stay connected, and support partners by being their cheerleader.

TIP

Create a sense of agency and responsibility towards your grantee partner's success by having a pitch competition amongst your funder community when who to fund. The best pitch gets funding for the group they advocated for!

6

PRIORITIZE COMMUNITIES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY

Giving circles are motivated to give for community-oriented reasons and prioritize giving to the neighborhoods in which they live. Most members are hyper-connected to their communities because they understand the lived experiences of those who have been directly affected by social injustice. They believe that helping these groups organize to be more stable and sustainable strengthens their local communities.

TIP

Have you ever wondered why the produce at the local farmer's market is better for your health and lasts longer in your fridge? It's because they are closer to your home! The time it takes to get the fresh produce to your fridge is a lot shorter. Giving works the same way. The closer you are to your grantee partner, the better. Know and support your local community.

7

PRIORITIZE WORK BEFORE PAPERWORK

Trust-based philanthropy reimagines traditional funder-grantee relationships to create a philanthropic ecosystem that puts trust first. The basic principle is that the onus of due diligence should be on the funder, not the grantee. The intention is to give them the time and space to put all their energy toward their mission-based work. These radical funders are sensitive to their grantees' availability and prioritize timely communication over unnecessary reporting. They value building trusted relationships with their grantees.

unitanqiling philanthropy

Recipe for Collective Governance

Building community from the inside out

We wanted to challenge emerging funders to take a step back and do the internal work – to identify their values, create a shared vision, and build the knowledge and capacity of themselves and their partners. Through this visual guide, we inspire new giving communities to reimagine how their collective governance is the first step towards creating impact.

🕒 1.5 hours

👤 funding communities

PURPOSE

Specify what mindset, motivation, and knowledge must be grounded to engage in collective giving

DESIGN GOAL

Inform and inspire funders, looking for alternative giving practices, expand the meaning of giving as not just sharing funds but sharing power

1

BIG MONEY MAKES BIG IMPACT? THINK AGAIN.

The notion of big money is the most common association with philanthropy. This mindset supports the mission and values of the funders, not the grantees. Giving circles exist to disrupt this very notion that big money leads to more impact. They believe that giving should not be limited to monetary contribution. It's an intimate act where people can share their time, skills, networks, and stories. When looking at the average pool of funds coming into foundations, 80% of funds are actually from individual everyday givers that give from a range of \$25 to \$2,500. Less than 20% of the funds are actually from big donors. Less can be more. Small is all.

TIP
Don't get carried away with how much you contribute. The art of collective giving is rooted in the concept that impact is a joint effort. Less is more when people give together. It's never about the money. It's about the relationships that glue your community and funds

2

SOCIAL ISSUES ARE SYSTEMIC ISSUES.

Most giving circle members have experience in social justice work (i.e., nonprofit, community organizing, etc.) and know how funders networks are old and established, and how difficult it can be for newer or smaller organizations or individuals to break in without knowing the right language. Understanding the structural inequities is why most giving circles prioritize giving to groups that may have a hard time accessing resources through traditional philanthropic channels.

Look to your personal or professional network and see if anyone works in the social justice space. Listen to the stories of how they work and who they serve. Your connections and local community leaders can offer opportunities to identify, engage, and learn how your funding can be of significant impact to those who need it the most.

3

SHARED VULNERABILITY BECOMES SHARED POWER.

Giving circles are more informal in that they see each other as friends, not funders. It's not just about the money. It's about building a political home where members can deepen their friendships and contribute to their community by creating spaces where they can give money away with friends. They practice vulnerability to strengthen their internal relationships by sharing personal stories, giving emotional support, and confiding in each other. To sustain their giving and friendships, they leverage the unstructured, informal conversations to ground relationships in trust.

4

RADICAL TRANSPARENCY LEADS TO RADICAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

Transparency is key when building a powerful, strategic, and effective funder community. Some of the most radical giving circles encourage members to openly share with each other how much wealth they have and how much money they make – an act that builds group transparency, accountability, and trust. No matter how much money they have or give, members have full participation and voice in the process. They acknowledge their power and privilege as an individual and as a collective.

TIP
Transparency should lead to seeing the right things, not all things.

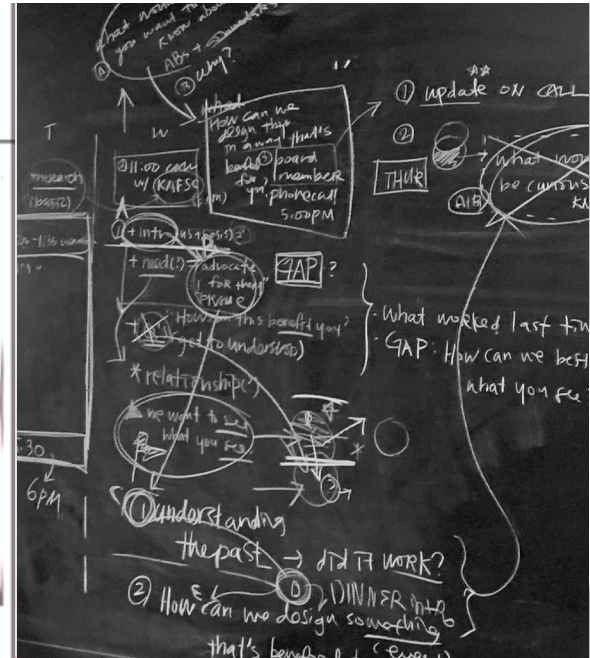
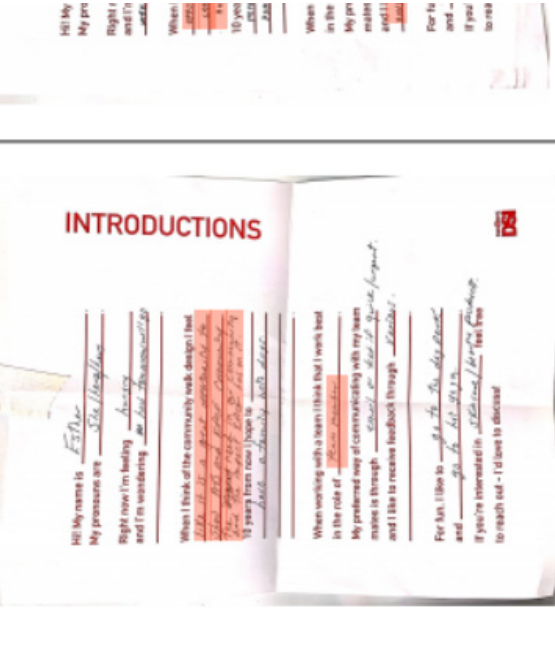
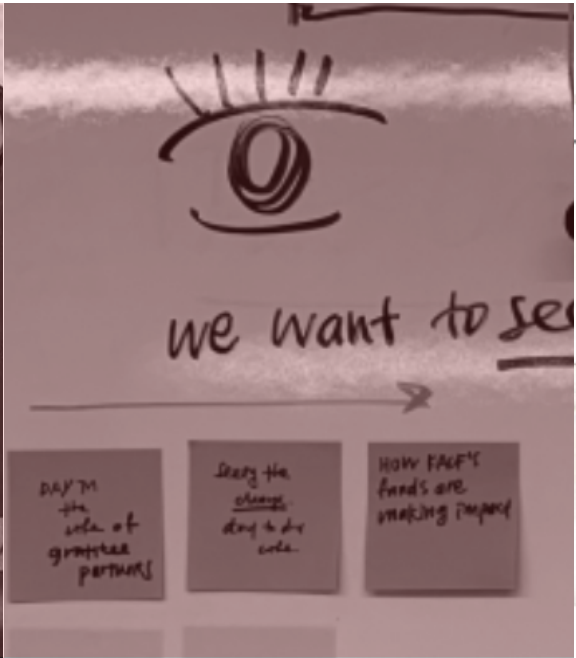
5

BECOME ADVOCATES FOR YOUR GRANTEEES.

Giving circle members strive to be issue experts, meaning they do the work to understand the needs and wants of their grantee partners and the communities they serve. They take responsibility for knowing what works for their grantees. Funders need to equalize the power dynamic by taking the lead in advocating for the communities they aim to support. Do the research, stay connected, and support partners by being their

TIP
Create a sense of agency and responsibility to your grantee partner's success by having a p competition amongst your funder commu who to fund. The best pitch gets funding they advocated for!

KACF - RESEARCH JOURNEY MAP



Empathy Understanding the community	Problem Definition Looking into the human problem	Ideation Co-creation as a pathway to insights	Design Tangible ideas	Test Feedback for growth
--	--	--	--------------------------	-----------------------------

WHO 18 Associate Board members

WHERE New York, NY

WHAT Had the desire to create community a gathering

WHY To create opportunities for KACF members to be in the shoes of grantee partners and for marketing and PR

Snapshot of the power dynamic
From our research, we knew that relational tensions between funders and grantees still exist today. We found that power shows up in many forms – meetings, site visits, and grantmaking. Funders needed to reimagine the way that they approach their grantees. To make power visible, we facilitated three activities..

ACTIVITY 1

Agenda prototyping

We asked the Associate Board to ideate a quick agenda for the community gathering.

Findings

- 1) The ideas aimed to satisfy the funder's mission
- 2) The ideas proposed were centered around a poverty show
- 3) Final output was only focused on the foundation's needs and wants
- 4) There was no consideration of the grantee's involvement

ACTIVITY 2

Taking inventory of power through envisioning sessions

Findings

- 1) They wanted to leverage the experiences and skill sets they have to take action, but the how was unclear
- 2) They recognized they are privileged, but the only service outlet they knew of was funding or volunteerism

ACTIVITY 3

Co-creating the community gathering with grantee partner, KAFSC

We invited grantee partners to co-create the community gathering experience. What funders thought of as needs of grantee partners and what grantees actually needed were totally different

Findings

The relational gap between funders and grantees leads to a huge informational gap that hinders the efficiency in creating social impact

GOALS

- 1) Close the relationship gap to close the informational gap
- 2) Identify shared values and goals
- 3) Create a space where all partners can be vulnerable and transparent with each other
- 4) Design micro-moments that equalize power to reach a point of shared understanding

**Intervention:
The Conversation Menu**

Where intimate conversations become milestones for growth.

Learnings

Our research into giving circles revealed how open and intimate conversations ground relationships in trust. Speaking with nonprofit leaders, we learned funders rarely hold the time and space to facilitate conversations about the day-to-day activities. 70% of funders say they are willing to engage with their grantees in open dialogue about general operating support, but only 32% of nonprofits believe they actually are. Seeing the way giving circles commune and build internal relationships, we felt the need to bring this momentum to the way funders engage in external partnerships with their grantees.

Looking at the grantmaking cycle, funders interact with their grantees at three main touchpoints:

- 1. **Kick-off** - a meeting that typically takes place during the beginning of the grantmaking cycle where funders get to know the grantees.
- 2. **Check-in** - a meeting that manifests offline or online, with the purpose to review the grantee's progress on their project.
- 3. **Final Reporting** - the final deliverable grantees submit to the funders that outline the interpretation of an intervention's impact.

We explored how funders check-in with their grantees because it's a pivotal moment where power dynamics come into play. On the traditional side, foundations conduct site visits with their grantees to evaluate and measure impact, which results in monitoring. Grantees are so focused on fulfilling funders' expectations that there is no room for honest feedback. Instead of making space to celebrate failures, grantees are conditioned to highlight their successes in order to maintain their funding, which leads to feelings of discomfort and mistrust.

To combat the power imbalance, a new wave of philanthropic giving inspired funders to take a more radical approach. For example, giving circles conduct check-ins virtually or through phone calls because they don't want to interfere with the grantee's work. However, the fear of intruding actually hinders them from building community with their grantees. While some aspects of their hands-off approach benefit how grantees operate, there is no room to build trusted-relationships that can lead to long-term impact.

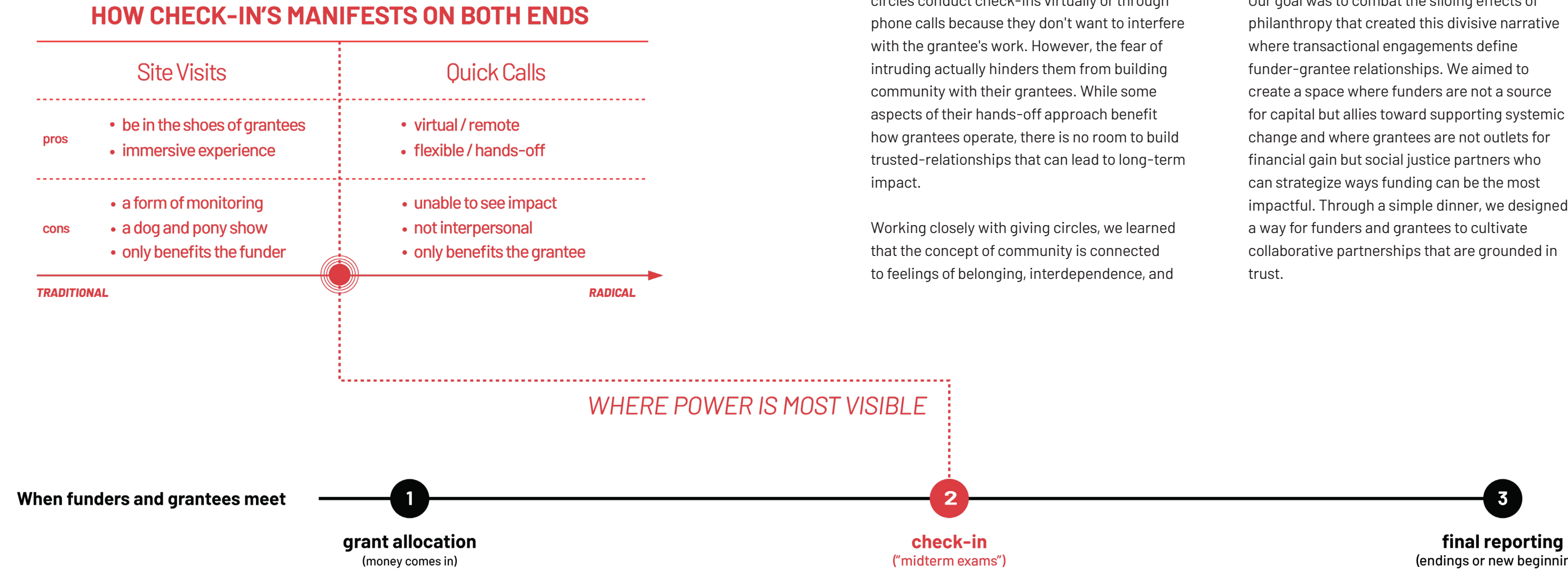
Working closely with giving circles, we learned that the concept of community is connected to feelings of belonging, interdependence, and

trust. Yet, the approach both foundations and giving circles practiced did not set conditions where funders and grantees can build relationships grounded in trust. On both ends of the spectrum, funders needed a way to facilitate conversations that equalizes the power dynamic and opens the door for honest communication.

This led to our second intervention:

Conversation Menu, where intimate conversations become milestones for growth. Inspired by the way giving circles deepen relationships through open dialogue, we designed an experience for funders and grantees to come together to create space for shared vulnerability.

Our goal was to combat the siloing effects of philanthropy that created this divisive narrative where transactional engagements define funder-grantee relationships. We aimed to create a space where funders are not a source for capital but allies toward supporting systemic change and where grantees are not outlets for financial gain but social justice partners who can strategize ways funding can be the most impactful. Through a simple dinner, we designed a way for funders and grantees to cultivate collaborative partnerships that are grounded in trust.



Case Study: KACF

Overview

The KACF Associate Board wanted to create a community gathering event to bring awareness to the issues faced by the Korean American community and the impact the next generation of philanthropists could make through their giving. They hosted events within their internal network to expand their funder base but rarely interacted with their grantees beyond galas and site visits.

Activity 1: Agenda Prototyping

As co-designers, we challenged them to create a journey map of the community walk and envision how the collaborative gathering could benefit the foundation and the grantee participants.

Initial event goals:

- Designate a time and space for participants to experience the day-to-day lives of the grantees
- Host a neighborhood walk in Flushing to witness the work the grantees are doing for low-income Korean American communities
- Provide an opportunity for internal members to come together and break bread through volunteerism
- Use the gathering to create a marketing/PR campaign

Findings:

- Grantee involvement was limited because the main goal was to build community amongst themselves.
- The event ideas appeared to be a poverty

show (i.e., asking grantees to give them a tour of Flushing to experience the day in the life of low-income communities)

- There was no acknowledgment of the power imbalance (i.e., suggesting grantees take time out of their weekend to offer their services to benefit the funders)
- The final output was only focused on the foundation's needs and wants.

The goals they set out to achieve focused on educating and creating empathy among their group members. They saw the grantees as a tour guide rather than a collaborative partner. Facilitating this simple journey map exercise exposed the many gaps they had when it came to their role as funders. Coming from privileged career backgrounds, they had the professional expertise but did not have the tools or capacity to reflect on their power and privilege. We saw that their current interaction points fed back into power structure in philanthropy, where funders only engage amongst themselves rather than connecting and learning about the communities they support.

As social designers, we found two core needs:

1. Build awareness on their individual and collective power to understand what they could offer as funders
2. Equip them with the knowledge and capacity to facilitate a grantee-centered experience and build collaborative partnerships with their grantees

Activity 2: Taking Inventory of Power

Before we could design a grantee-centered experience, we facilitated another activity to discuss identity, power, and privilege. Our goal was to challenge this group of young funders to take inventory of their power and understand how their privilege shows up in the work they do.

Findings:

- Funders are curious about who the grantees are, what they do, and how they make impact with their grant money.
- There was a hunger for more human stories. They wanted to see beyond the numbers and learn about the actual experiences.
- Everyone wanted to leverage the experiences and skill sets they have to take action, but the how was unclear.
- Funding isn't a means to an end. Funders recognized they have privilege backgrounds, but the only service outlet they knew of was offering money or volunteerism.
- Their Korean American heritage was a crucial driver that motivated them to explore their identity as funders.

From our findings, it was clear that members wanted to engage beyond their financial contributions. Funders were motivated to share their stories and talents but did not know how to leverage their resources for their grantees. Together, they built awareness around how their power as funders can unfold in this unhealthy dynamic where grantees are in service to them. This realization shifted their mindset to think not of themselves but of the communities they serve.

Hi! My name is Esther
My pronouns are She/Her/Hers
Right now I'm feeling hungry
and I'm wondering how tomorrow will go

When I think of the community walk design I feel like it is a great opportunity to show KACF and KACF community the impact need in our community and the impact KACF has on it.
10 years from now I hope to have a family with dogs.

When working with a team I think that I work best in the role of Team member
My preferred way of communicating with my team mates is through email or text if quick/urgent.
and I like to receive feedback through various.

For fun, I like to go to the dog park
and go to hot yoga.
If you're interested in skincare/beauty products feel free

Hi! My name is Doyeun
My pronouns are she/her

Right now I'm feeling warm ☺
and I'm wondering how I can contribute to this project.

When I think of the community walk design I feel curious.

10 years from now I hope to I'm not sure I can think that far ahead right in this moment!

When working with a team I think that I work best in the role of a thinker
My preferred way of communicating with my team mates is through email or coffee/tea
and I like to receive feedback through email and/or over coffee/tea

For fun, I like to write
and walk
If you're interested in traveling to new places feel free to reach out - I'd love to discuss!

Hi! My name is Vivian Lee
My pronouns are She, her

Right now I'm feeling excited about this walk
and I'm wondering what will come out of this meeting

When I think of the community walk design I feel curious, apprehensive

10 years from now I hope to have a family

Activity 3: Co-creating Community Gathering

Our journey led us to our main insight. The relational gap between funders and grantees leads to a huge informational gap. Because members rarely engaged with their grantees, they lacked the knowledge and capacity to understand the complexities of the grantee’s work. To fill the informational gap, we needed to first address the relational gap by bringing the grantee’s voice to the table as co-designers, not beneficiaries.

Grantee Partnership

Collaborating with KAFSC, we gained a better understanding of how they approach their work and their communities.

Findings:

1. Grantee’s needs manifest in two different ways: internal organizational needs and community based needs.

On an organizational level, KAFSC lacked human capacity and the technical skill sets to do their work effectively. On a community level, they needed to develop programs that address the changing needs of the community. For example, in recent years, KAFSC saw an influx of young females and English speakers reaching out for services. They needed to reimagine how their programs can provide the right services to both native and non-native speakers.

2. Grantee partner also has Associate Board members

KAFSC had a group of young Associate Board members who fundraise and lead programs. Similar to KACF, the grantee Associate Board was in search of new ways to expand their

role as leaders. They were hungry for more collaborative efforts with other Korean American organizations but lacked the capacity to strategize opportunities.

Design Opportunity

Our conversation with KAFSC led us to these two design goals:

- 1. Bridge the relational gap between funders and grantees in order to inform funders how they can be advocates for social justice
- 2. Create space for grantees to openly share experiences as an organizational leader and as advocates for the communities they serve

As a foundation, KACF had many existing programs and events that supported marginalized communities affected by economic insecurity. All these things worked to benefit the cause but not the people fighting on the frontlines. To bring the grantee's voices in, we formed a design committee with Associate Board members from the foundation and the nonprofit.

Looking at how KACF interacts with its grantees, we found that only foundation staff members take the initiative to build trusted relationships with their external partners, which resulted in a huge relational gap between the funders and grantees. To better equip the next generation of philanthropists, we wanted to shift the focus away from internal network events and formal site visits. We challenged them to seek out opportunities, whether big or small, where they can facilitate intimate interactions where shared vulnerability and power lead to trusted relationships.

The relational gap between funders and grantees leads to a huge informational gap.

KAFSC (grantee)

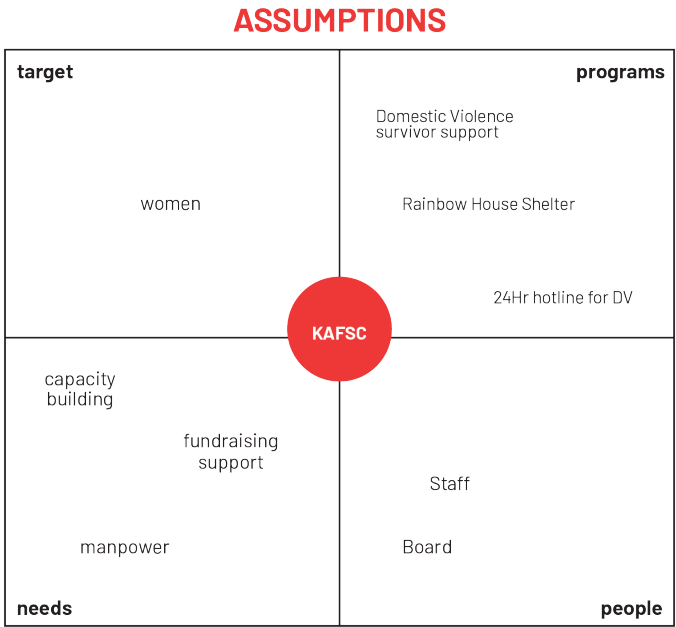
Korean American Family Service Center is a nonprofit organization that supports and empowers adults, youth and children to lead safe and healthy lives. They are committed to preventing and ending domestic violence, sexual assault, and relationship abuse, and creating a violence-free society.

About the activity

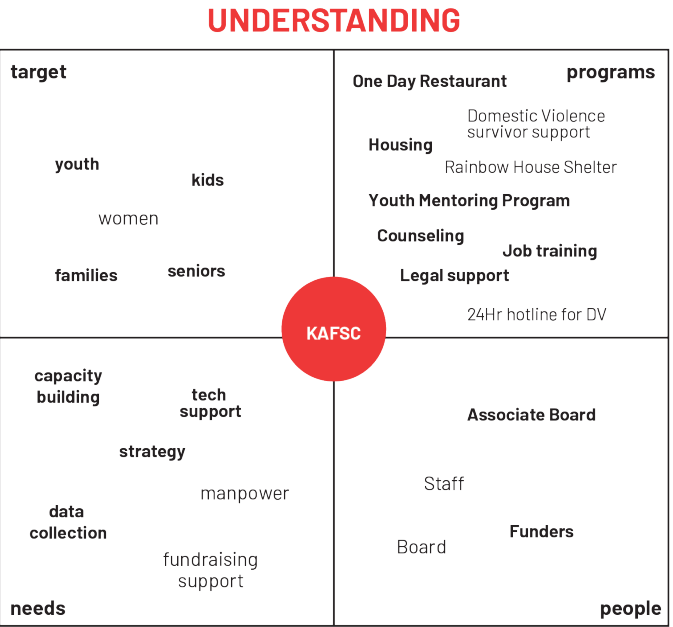
We invited KAFSC to an interview before co-creating the community gathering. Together, we mapped their day-to-day activities and the problems that they faced. The goal was to understand how a collaborative project with KACF can benefit the them and the communities they serve.

Learning

Divestment in time with grantees lead to the inefficiency in creating social impact.



(Before Interview)



(After Interview)

Conversation Menu

Micro-moments that equalize power to reach a point of shared understanding

1.5 hours

min 10 people

1:1 = funder: grantee

PURPOSE	DESIGN GOAL
Build trusted relationships through conversations that puts relational discourse before factual discourse	Develop a facilitation guide where vulnerable conversations are welcome and necessary to identify true needs and ideas that were previously unspoken

How It Works

- 1

Light starters that become an entryway for acknowledging what everyone brings to the table
- 2

Digging deeper through the **main course** to explore how their experiences shaped their values and the work
- 3

And ending with **dessert**, where funders and grantees envision how they can support one another in addressing social issues



COVID-19

Our interventions proved useful in times of crisis, like the one we're all in now. When COVID-19 hit, KACF took immediate action to support their grantees with additional funds. In addition to these efforts, the Associate Board members wanted to engage with their grantee partners and the greater Korean American community.

Through a series of virtual events, they wanted to:

- Address how KACF is providing direct support to affected communities
- Raise awareness around the grantees' needs during the crisis
- Build relationships with the communities they serve to increase funding
- Provide new and existing funders with a connection to their grantee partners

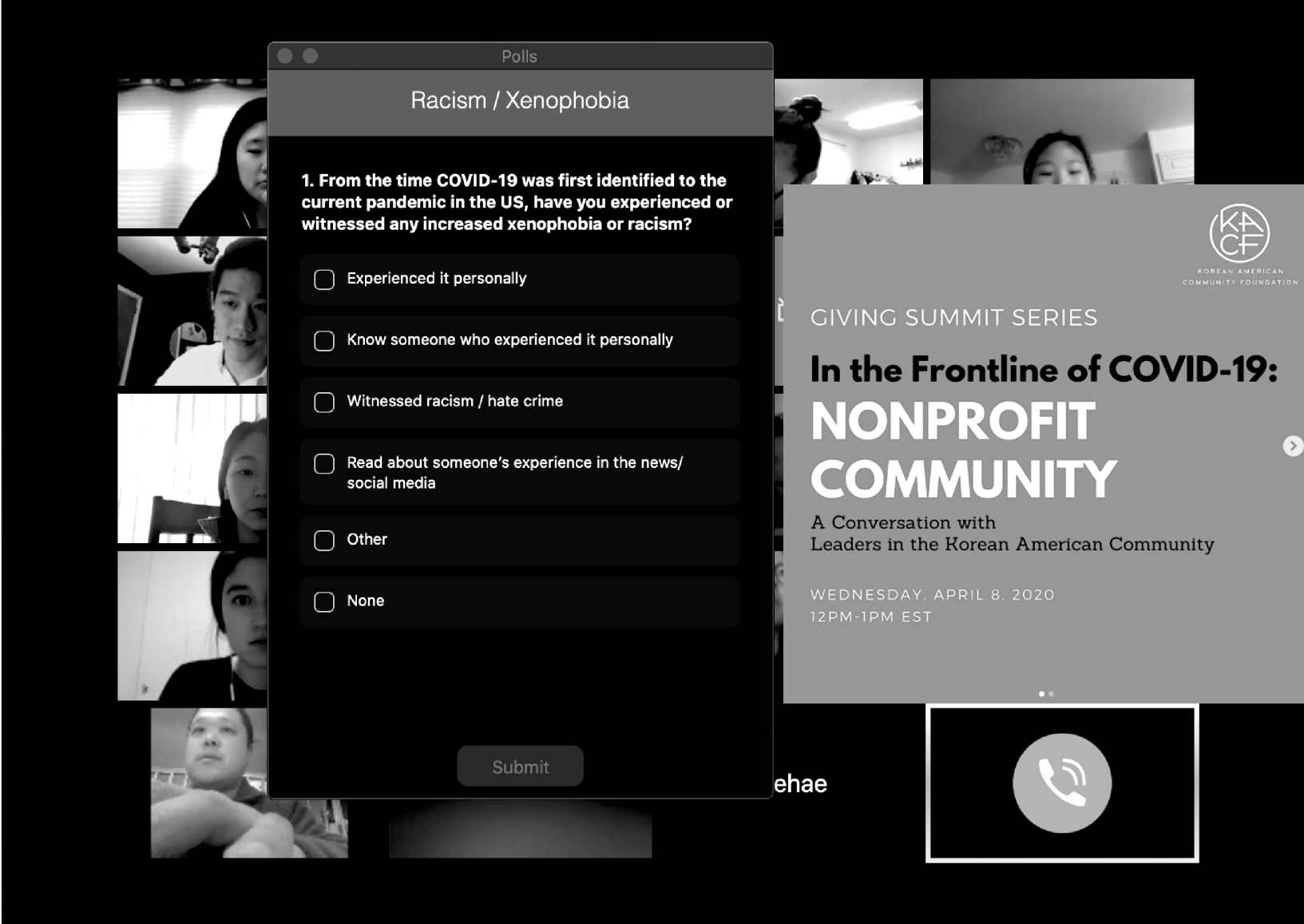
Since the Associate Board only hosted engagements focused on networking and career-building up until the moment of crisis, they needed tools to activate their community in urgent times of need.

Applying Our Interventions

Empowering the local communities around us has never been more relevant. We saw this time as an opportunity to truly explore how funders can be more expansive in their approaches to address the urgent needs of their grantees and better influence long-term impact.

With our recipe for collective governance, we challenged our partner to use this moment to reflect on their values and reimagine their giving. Instead of seeing funding as a means to an end, we advised them to share stories and ask questions about how the crisis affected them and their communities. We started by having a discussion on how to strengthen the Asian American community in response to the fueled anti-Asian racism and xenophobic violence. Grounding the meeting by acknowledging the loss and trauma allowed us to create a space where funders feel empowered to share their reflections. These personal conversations became micro moments that paved the way for internal community building.

As a funder community they were getting clarity on who they were as a collective, how they were experiencing trauma together, and why it was important to bring in the voices of those on the frontline. They were learning how to take note of their individual and collective capacity to understand how to support one another and the organizations helping communities affected by the pandemic. Together, we defined shared vulnerability as shared power in an attempt to build a more resilient community before going out to rebuild for societal needs.



METRICS & EVALUATION

Our theory of change paints a picture of how trust manifests throughout our interventions.

The **inputs**, components we will use to provide value to funders and grantees include learning experiences where teams practice sharing vulnerability, holding conversations around trust and community building that challenge traditional funding models and processes, and developing case studies on Trust-Based Philanthropy in action.

The **outputs**, or the tangible elements of our intervention, center around accessing information about what goes on at grantee sites, creating community building practices, identifying opportunities to build social capital, holding space for intrapersonal conversations that lead to self-awareness, building capacity to develop effective risk management strategies from the conversations, and accessing to grantee's real concerns and radical ideas based on their field experience. Reframing conversations where shared vulnerability and power can become the foundation for building trusted relationships.

The **outcomes**, the effects of our audience engaging with the intervention, include:

Increased Self-Efficacy – funders and grantees readily see themselves as collaborators with equal power and agency

Growth in Curiosity – funders deeply value the expertise, time, and commitment of people on the ground doing mission based work for social needs

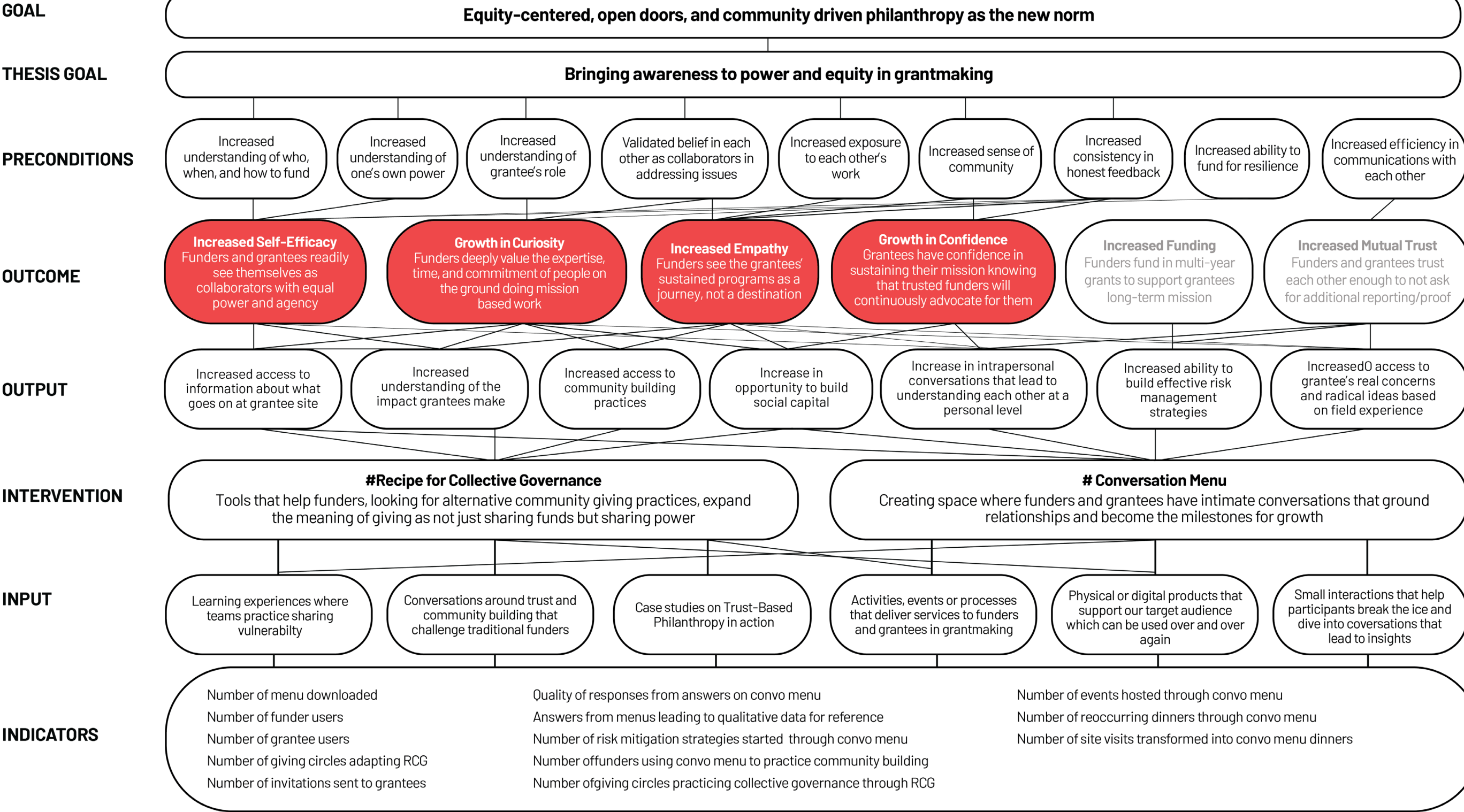
Increased Empathy – funders see the grantees' sustained programs as a journey, not a destination

Growth in Confidence – grantees have confidence in sustaining their mission knowing that trusted funders will continuously advocate for them

The pre-conditions summarize what must exist before our goals are achieved – specifically, what mindset, motivation, and knowledge the audience must achieve to engage. Funders need to understand how their power and privilege shows up in their work by taking away space for grantees to express their needs, concerns, and ideas from their lived experiences. In order to unlock collective power, funders need to change their perspective and see their grantees as collaborators and equal partners in addressing social injustices. By acknowledging the different layers of turmoil and adversity grantees experience, the goal is to see each other as humans before funders and grantees.

Finally, the indicators, or data points we will establish to measure our intervention's effectiveness, will paint a clear picture of how bringing awareness to power and equity in grantmaking leads to equity-centered, open doors, and community driven philanthropy.

THEORY OF CHANGE





Closing Thoughts

Through our research, we uncovered philanthropy is an imbalanced power dynamic between funder and grantee where relationships are rooted in codependency and transaction. It is built on the notion that big money makes more impact. Looking into the system, traditional philanthropy is top-down, closed doors and expert-driven. Grantees have to conform to the funder in order to receive funding, but this dynamic creates inefficient impact by supporting the funder's mission and values rather than the grantees.

Looking at philanthropy from a design lens, we saw change is long overdue, and in this crisis, the cracks in the system are more apparent than ever. But, as social designers, the opportunity we saw was to humanize philanthropy, make sense of the complexities set by people in power, and push Trust-Based Philanthropy forward.

The need to untangle philanthropy became more evident in times of crisis like the one we're in now. The systemic barriers in place were preventing direct action when it is needed the most. However, moments of hardship and crisis expose not only the bad but also the good - we're now seeing funders and grantees going into battle to build trusted relationships and leverage their collective power. To make trust-based philanthropy the new norm, we challenged funders to transition and adapt to this new reality.

We hope our design interventions are used for exploration, not as doctrines to force conformity but as guidebooks that support giving communities to build for resilience over recovery.

Acknowledgments

Esther Kang

It's easy to say, you were like our third thesis partner. Your encouragement and motherly-and-yet '왕 언니' like guidance got us to where we are at today. Thank you so much for being our most trusted collaborator, thought-leader, educator, and mentor. Your experience in the field, passion for equity-centered futures, and out of the world ideas and questions were the stepping stones to our incredible insights. We are incredibly lucky to have you with us on this journey. Thank you for always showing up, challenging us when we needed a push, nourishing us with snacks, and most importantly, caring about the work. We love you so much!

Hali Lee

It was love at first sight. We started our research into philanthropy because of you. When we first saw you at Yale, delivering your story about Donors of Color, we were in awe of you and your work. Seeing a Korean American, badass woman, POC leader disrupting the norm, challenging the status quo, and designing a community of POC funders most powerfully and creatively way possible, inspired us in so many ways. Thank you for being our lighthouse, our sounding board, and role model. We are grateful to you for trusting us and inviting us to collaborate with Donors of Color Action. Your work, dedication, and genius will forever live within us. 감사하고, 존경하고, 사랑합니다! You truly are our philanthropy 이모 now.

Brennan Gang

We still remember the first time we were at your office at KACF. The round table, pastries, and the stories we shared about our Korean upbringing. We want to thank you for your complete trust and candidness. Thank you for being the best sounding board, ideation partner, and most importantly, a fire blazer in the complicated space of philanthropy. Seeing your incredible leadership and role at KACF was in itself a huge learning for us. Thank you with all our hearts!

Radfund

Thank you Esther, Cheryl, Seiji, Rebecca, and Sarah - for inviting us to co-create with Radfund. It was a radical experience getting to know the gang and your amazing efforts toward collective giving. Seeing the power of friendship, leading to political participation, blew our minds. Through your F1 model, we saw how creative the practice of giving can be and the potential it has in liberating power structures that have long constrained the power of giving. Thank you for giving us the time and opportunity to look deeper into the powerful possibilities of giving circles!

Christina Gorczynski

They say if you're meant to be, you're bound to meet. When we met you in Austin, we just knew, and we both screamed, "She gets us!". Your love for collective giving and cultivating the next generation of leaders gave us hope. Hope that there are people like us who are trying to push boundaries, think beyond, and enlarge the meaning of giving. Your insight into the 5T's and real-time stories about funders and grantees going into battle together in times of crisis helped us get through this rigorous and complex research into philanthropy. At times our research got lonely and hard, but your energy, love, and existence gave us so much hope. Thank you for showing us how to navigate the slopes, giving us the juice, and opening your arms wide open!

Sloan Leo

Thank you for being our inspiration in better understanding what community design is, how it should manifest, and why leveling out power matters. Your candidness about the industry, years of experience, and expertise in the field motivated us to continually challenge the status quo. Your work in organizational innovation showed us the importance of facilitation and how it is an art of design aiming to bridge people's minds, hearts, and souls.

Acknowledgments (cont.)

Chelsea Toler-Hoffmann

Thank you for opening your arms wide open to our thesis project! We still remember the hour-long conversation we had after Global Guest Lecture. Thank you for being open-minded to our challenges and putting our ideas about local and community-driven philanthropy into action. We had a blast at the summit in Austin and met so many wonderful partners and now sounding boards like Christina from Impact Austin, Rei from The Feast, and Daniel from Google Fiber. We look forward to partnering with you again and supporting each other more!

Rei Chou

We can't say enough how much we love you. It was pure magic that we found each other in the bathroom of the Parker Jazz Club in Austin. And look at where we are today! We want to thank you for inviting us into your community of conscious storytellers, life-long learners, and change-makers. Your wisdom and love for people are spread all throughout our research. Seeing a POC partner like you leading the way into community-centric social innovation left us in awe. Thank you for sharing your work and congruently healing the world through it! We love you, and look forward to our future partnerships!

Alison Cornyn

Thank you so much for letting us jam with you on the Incorrighbles project and being our intro to thesis professor. Working with you gave us insights into what goes on in an art studio that does mission-driven work. From content to logistics, it was eye-opening to see what goes on behind the scenes. Thank you for always being open to our questions and being open to sharing your ideas and experiences in the social sector. We miss the good times we had at your studio! We hope to work with you again! We love you!

Miya Osaki

Without you, we would not have had the creative space or support to finish our thesis research. Thank you for leading DSI and allowing us to challenge ourselves as social designers. Your empathy, love, and candid feedback showed us that you really care. We feel it. We appreciate you for always being open and curious to hear our stories, concerns, and ideas. Thank you for being our fearless leader, and we look forward to seeing how DSI will continue to grow.

Raycho

Thank you for being a great friend, mentor, and sister-like advisor when things got tough. You were always open to hearing our ideas and even letting us meet your amazing friends. We could not have done our research without you all! Thank you for being a great sounding board whenever things popped up in my head and being the best cheerleader who believed in my work! LOVE YOU!

Our Thesis Group

Caroline, Damian, Dhara, Kexin, and Tara! Thank you so much for being the best versions of yourselves throughout the year! It was a crazy ride, wasn't it? Each and every one of you influenced our research for the better and helped us take it beyond what we could have imagined. We want to thank you for giving us the space to grow throughout this journey. Tara, your fearlessness in creativity and on-the-point insights always challenged us to push more! Caroline, your smart questions and sociological point of view gave us fresh eyes to see our research differently. Dhara, your heart for social justice and community-centric insights always humbled us and created space for us to look back at the people before the work. Damian, your input on the NPIC was the kick-start for our systems research. Thank you for always giving us intel into the history and pedagogies that we are often blinded to. Kexin, Your incredible wisdom and witty comments always made us laugh. Thank you for letting us tap into your mad skills in desk research.

Evan Ressegger & Alyson Fraser Diaz

Thank you, lovely ladies, for connecting us with your personal contacts and entrusting us with their stories. Your connections really impacted our research process! We could not have done it with you two! In the giving circle world, funders have expanded the definition of giving into 5T's (Treasure, Time, Talent Ties, Testimony). Thank you for giving us your Time, Talent, Ties, and Testimonies! You've legit funded our research.

GLOSSARY

Capacity building support: organizational support in strategic planning, board development, fundraising, leadership development and much more to help nonprofits to grow and become stronger.

Collective giving: when a group of individuals come together to pool money and collectively decide on the cause they want to support and how they want to distribute their resources.

Direct service grants: provide a direct service, such as educational attainment, meaningful employment, financial education, public benefits, legal services, access to affordable housing and home-ownership, and other pathways to immediate and long-term economic stability.

External relationship: refers to the relationship between individuals at different organizations.

Factual discourse: a conversation between two or more people or groups regarding performance, analysis, and numerical data.

Funder: an individual or organization that donates money and makes a grant.

Grantee: an individual or organization that receives a grant.

Grantmaking: the formal practice of philanthropy where funds are awarded from a foundation or funder to an individual or nonprofit. The purpose of the act is to support a cause which aims to deliver social and beneficial impact.

Individual giving: when a person uses their money and resources to support a cause.

Internal relationship: refers to the relationship between individuals within an organization.

Multi-year grants: provide grantees with long-term funds, which enables funders to build a real partnership with an organization, build on the previous year's learnings, and deepen their engagement with an organization over time.

Rapid response funds: provide immediate and longer-term support to affected communities during a crisis (i.e. COVID-19).

Relational discourse: a conversation between two or more people or groups regarding trust, co-creation, and respect.

Trust: the act of sharing vulnerabilities, power, and resources.

Unrestricted grants: funds the grantees may use for any purpose, including general operating support.

References

Asian Women Giving Circle. "Asian Women Giving Circle." Accessed May 17, 2020. <http://asianwomengivingcircle.org/>.

National Committee For Responsive Philanthropy. "Begin or Increase Funding for Social Justice." Accessed May 11, 2020. <https://www.ncrp.org/chapter/begin-or-increase-funding-for-social-justice>.

INCITE! "Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex," August 1, 2018. <https://incite-national.org/beyond-the-non-profit-industrial-complex/>.

Coffman, Suzanne. "Half of U.S. Nonprofits at Risk Financially, New Report Shows." Accessed May 6, 2020. <https://learn.guidestar.org/news/news-releases/half-of-us-nonprofits-at-risk-financially-new-report-shows>.

"Difference between Philanthropy and Charity." Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://brensimon.com/difference-between-charity-and-philanthropy/>.

"Giving Circle Membership: How Collective Giving Impacts Donors," n.d., 12.

"Giving Circles | Learning to Give." Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/giving-circles>.
Council on Foundations. "Glossary of Philanthropic Terms," December 4, 2013. <https://www.cof.org/content/glossary-philanthropic-terms>.

"History of Philanthropy.Pdf." Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://philanthropynewyork.org/sites/default/files/resources/History%20of%20Philanthropy.pdf>.

"KACFNY." Accessed May 17, 2020. <https://kacfny.org/>.

Fidelity Charitable. "Key Insights into the Future of Philanthropy." Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/articles/key-insights-into-the-future-of-philanthropy.html>.

Non Profit News | Nonprofit Quarterly. "Moving beyond Feedback: The Promise of Participatory Grantmaking," August 28, 2019. <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/moving-beyond-feedback-the-promise-of-participatory-grantmaking/>.

"Opinion | A Call to Modernize American Philanthropy - The New York Times." Accessed April 20, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/27/opinion/philanthropy-minorities-charities.html>.

"Strengthening Relationships." Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://www.geofunders.org/what-we-care-about/strengthening-relationships>.

"Participatory_grantmaking-Lmv7.Pdf." Accessed April 18, 2020. https://www.fordfoundation.org/media/3599/participatory_grantmaking-lmv7.pdf.

Radfund. "Radfund." Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://www.radfundnyc.com>.

"The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle (SSIR)." Accessed April 18, 2020. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_nonprofit_starvation_cycle.

Trust-Based Philanthropy. "Trust-Based Philanthropy." Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://trustbasedphilanthropy.org>.

"What Is Social Justice Philanthropy?" Accessed April 30, 2020. <https://resourcegeneration.org/resources-3/resource-library/social-justice-philanthropy-and-giving/>.

"What Is the 5% Payout Rule? - NCFP." Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://www.ncfp.org/2008/10/15/what-is-the-5-payout-rule/>.

