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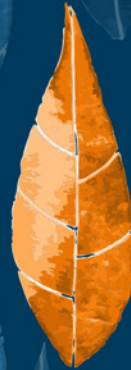for Responsive Philanthropy**

CULTIVATING NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

A Philanthropic Opportunity

(MISSED?)

A Smashing Silos in Philanthropy Report

By Niki Jagpal and Ryan Schlegel

Acknowledgements

About the Authors

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Organizational affiliations for identification purposes only

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Executive Summary

> "Unless we can figure out what is behind the nonprofit world's chronic underinvestment in leadership and turn things around, we will continue to overlook one of the most important ingredients of positive social change. Investing in leadership doesn't just deliver higher performance; it can also deliver a better, more equitable world."[1]
>
> — Ira Hirschfield, President of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

Improving the world does not happen in the absence of strong, skilled and connected leaders driving the change process. Leadership development, therefore, is an integral component of any work that seeks to address long-standing structural barriers to sustainable change.

However, U.S. grantmakers significantly underinvest in leadership development. An analysis of grants from 2003-2012 showed that leadership development funding comprised just 0.9 percent of total dollars granted and 0.8 percent of total grants. By comparison, for-profit businesses routinely invest $129 per employee for leadership development every year, while the civic sector invests only $29 per employee. Interestingly, grantmaking designed to achieve social justice is an exception, with 3.9 percent of total grant dollars going to leadership development.

Because leadership development creates new and previously uncultivated relationships, these programs can create fertile ground for grassroots collaboration that builds movements and leads to lasting change.

Leadership development is essential to achieving real results in three ways:

1. **It disrupts usual ways of thinking and builds the networks needed to win.** Leadership development goes beyond the individual and often can lead to collaborative leadership among those who share values or goals. It can serve as a catalyst for disruptive events that move leaders beyond day-to-day concerns to greater effectiveness. When people are removed from their quotidian routines, creativity and vitality lead to innovation. Being placed in a cohort with others in the sector working on varied issues is an opportunity to find common ground and identify overlap or intersections in seemingly disparate pieces of work.

2. **It prevents burnout.** The social justice work of grassroots leaders can be what fuels their passion, but it can also hamper their efforts if it becomes overwhelming in scope or in the emotional toll it takes. Their work is often boundaryless, demanding, even unmanageable. Nonprofit executives are expected to play numerous roles at their organizations, often with stretched-thin staffs: HR manager, confidante, strategic mastermind, motivator, negotiator, etc. It can be difficult for leaders to navigate effectively among all these roles and to strike a satisfying work-life balance. Leadership development can and must help leaders strike this balance.

3. **It has a multiplier effect on organizations.** How can foundations support a strong "bench" of secondary and tertiary leaders? One way is to support leadership that is collaborative and inclusive. It is important to foster new grassroots leadership that reflects the diversity of our country's population, particularly leaders who can lift up communities that lack a voice in decisions that impact them directly. Transformational

leaders and funders see the interdependence and interconnectedness of issues and constituencies and the importance of cultivating leadership among community-level organizations at varying structural levels.

This report explores leadership development as a tool to create transformational change. It profiles leaders and the organizations that provide them with the tools necessary to be successful. It emphasizes the relational and inclusive nature of this work and provides examples of the kinds of changes that can be realized by funding grantees and organizations that work in this space. It provides ways to address perceived challenges to funding leadership development, including the misconception that investments in this work cannot be measured.

NCRP recommends five concrete ways for grantmakers to boost support for leadership development:

1. **Begin or increase funding for leadership development.** First and foremost, any change-oriented foundation that is not yet funding leadership development should strongly consider doing so. Those already funding it at a modest level are urged to consider increasing their support.

2. **Integrate leadership development with program strategy.** Funding for leadership development cannot be an afterthought. It is most impactful when it is fully integrated with grantmaking strategy.

3. **Engage with grantees as true partners.** Because of the iterative nature of leadership development, funders should engage grantees as true partners and create a mutually agreed upon vision of leadership.

4. **Use a culturally inclusive lens.** It is important to consider how dynamics of identity, power and trauma may influence a participant's experience with leadership development. Gender, race, sexual identity, disability and many other aspects of each participant's identity will play a role in the efficacy of a particular leadership development program.

5. **Build capacity that supports leadership development.** Leaders of grassroots organizations often play many roles. For the executive director to most effectively participate in leadership development, it may be necessary to assist in building the capacity of other staff too.

There is a great need for more funding for leadership development in our sector. Grantmakers have an opportunity to address this at all levels, including organizations working for social justice at the grassroots level, groups that provide them with support to develop their leadership skills and national leadership programs that provide sustainable tools to keep the sector healthy. Each funder will find a different entry point into the leadership development sphere, but every grantmaker can increase its knowledge of available programs and see how this work aligns with its mission and strategy. If more funding is provided to groups doing the work described in this report, grantmakers will make substantial contributions to the public good and help to build a more just and equitable society.

It is our hope that this report and the resources provided in it will help more funders see the value of investing in grantee-driven leadership development and engage in critical self-reflection about the myriad benefits that this work offers to grantees and foundations alike.

Note: This report is part two of the "Smashing Silos" series, which looks at critical, and largely overlooked, aspects of effectively funding social change. Part 1, titled Smashing Silos: Multi-Issue Advocacy and Organizing for Real Results, *challenges the tendency to focus on narrow issue silos and provides practical tips for funding cross-issue grassroots organizations as part of a holistic grantmaking strategy.*

Introduction

After the election of Barack Obama to the presidency, meaningful progressive policies seemed likely to follow. Indeed, our nation passed historic health care reform with the crucial support of grassroots campaigns across the country that involved cross-issue advocacy and organizing groups led by networks of social justice leaders. The victory was hard-fought and its benefits to underserved communities continue to ripple across the social and economic fabric of the country. The role of philanthropy in the fight, discussed at length in *Smashing Silos: Multi-Issue Advocacy and Organizing for Real Results*, was integral to its success.

Since this win, however, the social justice ecosystem – the constellation of nonprofits and organizing groups that make up the infrastructure of the progressive grassroots – has experienced its share of defeats. Nevertheless, grassroots networks of activists, nonprofits and their allies continue to make significant gains across the country despite national setbacks. Take for example the culmination of years of hard work by the immigration reform movement in the 2012 executive action Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and its dramatic expansion in 2014. At the state and local levels, immigration advocacy groups are coalescing across barriers of identity and geography around shared goals and moving the needle on policy issues.

For decades, the urgent need for immigration policy reform was the elephant in every room in Washington – not to mention a topic of often painful conversation for the families of those facing deportation. Nationally, politicians were reluctant to address the issue head-on, instead choosing piecemeal measures that left about 11 million people on shaky legal, not to men-

tion social and economic, ground by 2014. But, since the early 2000s, a movement has been building at the grassroots with visionary local leadership and crucial philanthropic support. The movement's accomplishments so far are a credit to the hard work and dedication of its members and allies as well as the commitment made by institutional philanthropy to see it through to success. Since 2003, the philanthropic sector has injected $116 million into nearly 300 nonprofits working in immigration advocacy.[2]

Perhaps the movement's most impressive success to date came in November 2014 when President Obama expanded the DACA enforcement policy to include millions more immigrants.[3] The policy offered a just realignment of the nation's priorities, shifting the federal government's harsh deportation actions away from law-abiding, taxpaying, valued community members.

The major policy change was won because a network of immigration reformers, from local unions and faith groups to national social justice coalitions, worked tirelessly to achieve it. Leaders across the country were at the forefront: Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada's Astrid Silva, whom Obama praised during his announcement of the change, led Las Vegas' undocumented immigrant youth.[4] Christina Jiménez began as a young undocumented immigrant from Peru who went on to co-found the United We Dream Network, one of the most prominent coalitions pressing the federal government for swift policy change.[5] Julien Ross, executive director of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and co-chair of the National Partnership for New Americans, has played a key role organizing across silos at the intersection

of faith, labor and immigration policy.[6] All three possess strong leadership skills and a dedication to immigration reform that transcends traditional single-issue work. In fact, Jiménez helped found the New York State Youth Leadership Council and the DREAM Mentorship Program at Queens College, two programs devoted to nurturing network-wise leadership skills among immigrant youth.[7] And Ross's leadership skills were enhanced at the Rockwood Leadership Institute's yearlong Leading from the Inside Out fellowship in 2012, just before the movement achieved national success with DACA.[8]

Breakthroughs like this one, when community leaders pressure political figures, sometimes in spite of national political headwinds, are most often the result of grassroots networks of organizations and individuals. These coalitions cross issue silos, innovate on existing organizing methods, disrupt the usual ways of thinking and effectively connect constituents on the ground with targets for policy change. What's more, they are led by exceptionally competent movement-building leaders who rely on their capacity to facilitate coopera-tion and on mutual trust and support both within their organizations and within the broader network to succeed. These leaders – the Rosses and Jiménezes of the social change sector – are crucial to shared success because they are able to overcome perceived limits of identity, trauma and priority to bring the strength of numbers and conviction to their campaigns for justice.

Such transcendent leadership does not develop on its own. In fact, the work of grassroots executive directors and movement leaders is full of challenges that make this sort of cooperative, holistic approach to leading very difficult to embrace without foundation support. Grassroots leaders are expected to balance the management tasks of their positions as well as the missions of their organizations and the emotional toll that comes from working on issues of systemic, sometimes violent, oppression with very little support. This report makes the case that leadership development at the grassroots of the social justice ecosystem is integral for meaningful and lasting progress, and funders have an opportunity and a responsibility to invest more in the human aspect of their work.

Members of LeaderSpring's 2012 Fellowship cohort (L-R: Executive directors Ryan Peters, Selma Taylor, Miho Kim, Doug Biggs, CJ Hirschfield and Angela Louie Howard). Photo courtesy of LeaderSpring.

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) has long advocated for philanthropy that is as just as it is effective – philanthropy that invests in marginalized communities and empowers them to advocate on their own behalf. Pursuant to that goal, this report details the state of grantmaking that supports the development of leaders who can advance the work of social justice and offers recommendations on how interested foundations can begin supporting this work. Our hope is that the data analysis presented, as well as the firsthand knowledge collected from funders and experts already involved in the field, will be useful tools for both foundation staff and nonprofits to make the case for leadership development as a key component of their work.

An enormous potential lies in the people who have committed themselves to the work of social justice. They and their families are emotionally and intellectually invested in a better, more just society. We believe it is time for more foundations to invest in good leadership development programs that produce real results.

The problems that our sector is working to address are urgent and long-standing, ranging from persistent poverty to environmental crises. We cannot succeed without substantial investments in leadership at the grassroots level, specifically among groups working to address rigid structural barriers to equity and creating sustainable change. According to a study conducted by the Foundation Center, foundation support for leadership development over a 10-year period comprised less than 1 percent of total giving.[9] This report includes original independent analysis of foundation funding for 10 years, with similar results. This is sobering news for foundations and nonprofits alike. This report provides compelling evidence that supports the hypothesis that investments made in leadership development have a multiplying, high leverage return.

The first section of the report provides a definition of leadership development based on literature and in-depth interviews with

We cannot succeed without substantial investments in leadership at the grassroots level, specifically among groups working to address rigid structural barriers to equity and creating sustainable change.

those either funding or providing direct opportunities for this work. The second section presents a state of the field of philanthropic funding for leadership development and social justice efforts coded for leadership development. Pursuant stories and anecdotes provide persuasive evidence that funding leadership is essential to achieve real results. Lastly, the report addresses commonly perceived challenges to funding leadership development and offers recommendations for funders who want to begin or increase their investing in grassroots executive leadership capacity.

Ira Hirschfield, president of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, recently wrote, "Unless we can figure out what is behind the nonprofit world's chronic underinvestment in leadership and turn things around, we will continue to overlook one of the most important ingredients of positive social change. Investing in leadership doesn't just deliver higher performance; it can also deliver a better, more equitable world."[10] It is our hope that this report provides funders and nonprofits with an actionable tool to address this concern and create a sector that is truly responsive to the most urgent needs our communities face.

What is Leadership Development?

"Transformational change is a systems approach, deriving its power by attending equally to hearts and minds (the inner life of human beings), human behavior and the social systems and structures in which they exist. It therefore tends to be multidisciplinary, integrating a range of approaches and methodologies. By dealing holistically with all elements of human systems, transformational change aims to be irreversible and enduring."

—Robert Gass [11]

There is no unique definition of leadership development specific to the nonprofit sector. This report explores leadership development through a transformative lens. As defined here, it sometimes takes individual leaders away from their usual work environments and places them in authentic relationships with their peers. It is about personal ecology – the ability to be of clear purpose and engage in self-reflection. Once a group of leaders finds shared purpose and recognizes the interconnected nature of their work, regardless of issue focus, they are able to build lifelong connections that deepen and evolve over time. It is relational, iterative and dynamic. Some programs focus on building specific skills while others provide the space and resources for leaders to self-identify their needs and strengthen their skills in those areas.

One of the most important ways to differentiate between leadership development and other forms of philanthropic support is to compare it to what it is not. First, it is not the same as capacity building. While capacity building frequently benefits an entire organization, leadership development is grounded in an understanding of the need to care for the self in order to bring added capacity to one's organization. Second, while many different types of leadership development exist along a continuum, this report focuses on developing the leadership skills of grassroots nonprofit executive directors who work on social justice issues. There is no doubt that these organizations themselves often are engaged in community-level leadership development, i.e., cultivating the skills of community members to advocate for themselves and their communities' needs. However, this form of leadership development, explored in-depth in NCRP's prior work under the *Grantmaking for Community Impact Project*, is different precisely because it is community-based and takes a very different form.

Leadership development can include providing financial or human resources that allow a person to grow in his or her role as a leader. Sabbaticals are a way by which seasoned executive leaders can have a break from their usual work, and thus often are considered leadership development investments. While these can serve as an opportunity to develop leadership skills, they lack the relational element that is integral to social justice and movement building. As defined here, sabbaticals also are a one-time reprieve and not an ongoing or lifelong process. Executive coaching might be a part of leadership development as described in this writing, but it is only one element. Training of trainers, usually directed at building leadership capacity among community members, is integral to community-focused work but is not included in this report. Leadership

development toward transformational social change requires sustained alumni networks over time.[12]

Other types of leadership development that are not included in this definition or examined in this report include trainings provided by chambers of commerce, development of next generation or emerging leadership, faith-based programs, sabbaticals, executive coaching and scholarships. While grants to individuals (e.g. the MacArthur Fellows Program) may have positive impact on relatively mature leaders engaged in movement building, they also are not included here.

This report focuses on grassroots executive leadership development,[13] a concept that applies to all levels of organizational hierarchy, as will be demonstrated in latter sections. Indeed, most – if not all – of the organizations we researched focus on personal and organizational leadership development. It is a lifelong process of development, not a one-time investment. Some might contend that the very idea of leadership development is antithetical to the concept of working in the social justice space because it is seen as elite and focuses on the individual. However, this is misguided because one of the quintessential elements of leadership as defined here is that it is relational.

Because leadership development creates new and previously uncultivated relationships, programs can create fertile ground for grassroots collaboration that builds movements. Leadership development and movement building are fundamentally intertwined, and understanding this is crucial and cannot be an afterthought. Large-scale social or policy changes do not occur in a vacuum; rather, they are contingent on an understanding of the critical role that leadership plays in achieving transformational change.

Leadership development programs that function in these ways provide a means to help leaders innovate and overcome barriers to success in social justice movements. It is for this reason that investing in racially and ethnically diverse leadership is key. But inclusivity and diversity are not limited to race and gender – true leadership develop-

ment acknowledges the impact of innumerable identity markers and how the process of self-identification is a unique experience for each individual. Moreover, several movements ranging from LGBTQ equality to environmental justice have proven to be "whiter" at the top when compared with the constituents that they serve. Leadership development is thus an iterative, intersectional and deliberate strategy to help build the power of movements. It exists on multiple dimensions from individual to systems-level leadership.[14]

Several of our interviewees noted the urgency to address the needs of leaders of color, at all levels of organizational size. Others define leadership development as having an implicit equity lens because it empowers leaders to work on structural and systemic barriers to justice and equity, be they racial, economic or social. A salient question for funders to consider is whether or not current funding patterns for leadership development contribute to reducing disparities and creating more just and equitable opportunities for communities that remain historically and structurally marginalized.[15]

SNCC leaders stage a lunch counter protest. Photo from Library of Congress courtesy of Creative Commons.

Lastly, some organizations that provide leadership development focus on cultivating "superstar" executives, foreseen as playing a role in movement building and change. This may be helpful to some individuals, but it disregards the defining aspects listed above, particularly relationship building that is rooted in trust. As we noted in our research on foundation funding for the civil rights movement, while movements often are associated with specific figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi, the transformational changes that these iconic leaders are lauded for never would have occurred but for the tireless advocacy and grassroots organizations fighting for justice. It minimizes the impact and power of grassroots work done by, in the case of the civil rights movement, SNCC, SCLC, CORE and other groups.[16] As our analysis of funding for the civil rights movement and our research on the importance of working on multi-issue advocacy and organizing clearly demonstrate, good leadership development empowers leaders to see the interconnectedness of their work and find shared purpose to dismantle dysfunctional systems.[17]

How Much Grantmaking Supports Leadership Development?

NCRP's analysis of Foundation Center data from 2003 – 2012 shows that funding for leadership development makes up a very small portion of total grantmaking. In fact, less than 1 percent of the total dollars given by the 1,000 largest foundations was devoted to leadership development in that 10-year span (see Figure 1).

Leadership development grantmaking invests in the human capital of the nonprofit sector. For the purposes of this analysis, it is defined as grants that are classified as having a primary or secondary purpose of contributing to leadership development. We also looked for associations between social justice funding and leadership development. This definition is broader than the perspective on leadership development funding elaborated in this report; indeed, the particular form of leadership development grantmaking we seek to promote is likely even more rarely practiced in the sector than these data demonstrate.

Nonetheless, leadership development funding comprised just 0.9 percent of total dollars

granted and 0.8 percent of total grants in the 10 years the Foundation Center gathered data. In fact, the amount granted for leadership development as a percentage of the total has decreased since 2003 while the number of grants as a percentage of the total remained fairly constant (see Figure 2). That is to say, the actual share of

Figure 2. Dollars Granted Compared to Number of Grants for Leadership Development, Shown as a Percentage of Totals, 2003–2012

— Leadership Development Dollars Granted
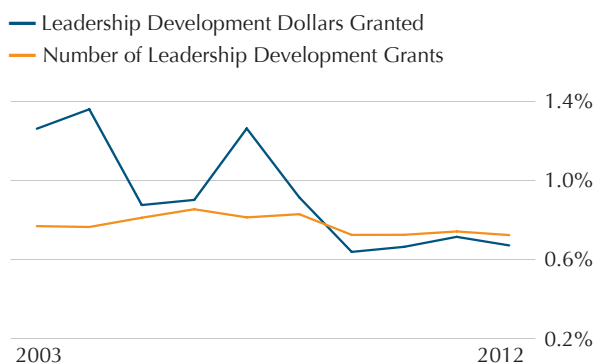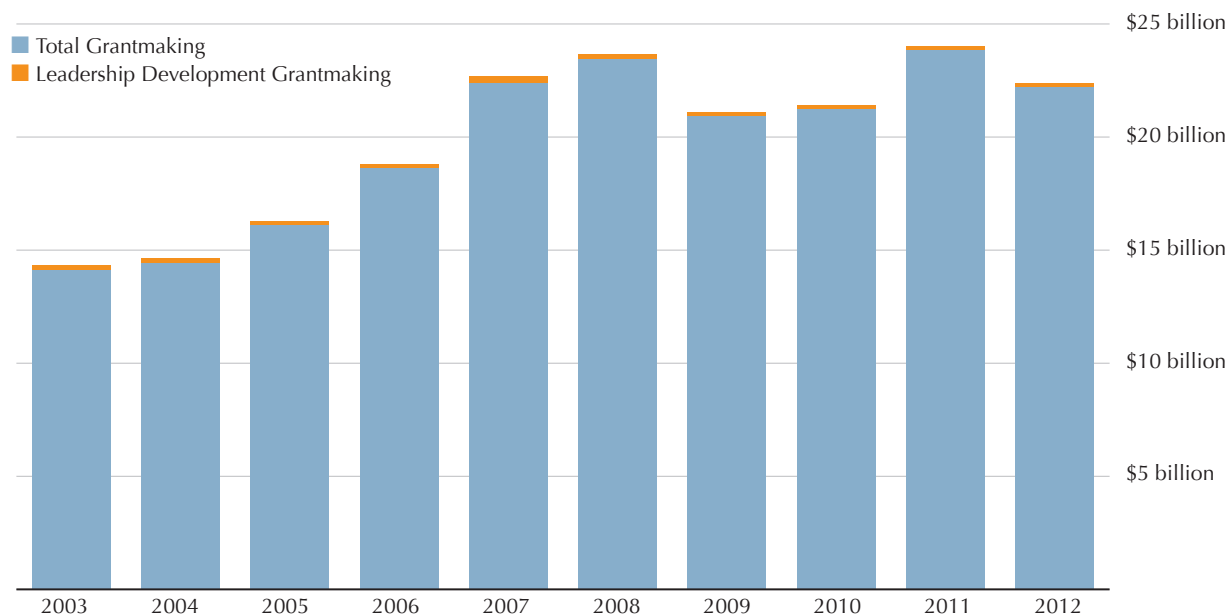— Number of Leadership Development Grants

Figure 1. Leadership Development Grantmaking Compared to Total Dollars Given by the 1,000 Largest Foundations, 2003–2012

■ Total Grantmaking
■ Leadership Development Grantmaking

dollars devoted to leadership development is not keeping pace with grantmaking as a whole and, in fact, the size of grants made for leadership development may be waning. Nonprofits and foundations should not seek to emulate the trends or leadership development priorities of the for-profit sector, but these percentages should be even more disturbing when one considers that businesses on average invest $129 per employee per year in leadership development while the social sector invests just $29.[18]

In absolute terms, the amount of funding for leadership development has decreased from a high of almost $270 million in 2007 to about $160 million in 2012 (see Figure 3). This amount represents a slight recovery from a 10-year low during the recession, but is still less than the yearly average of about $176 million. And it certainly does not reflect trends in the broader sector, where total grantmaking has recovered to 2007 levels after a small setback and social justice funding is very close to reaching its pre-recession high.

Not surprisingly, the majority share of funding for leadership development also is classified as social justice grantmaking. Between 2003 and 2012, 54 percent of leadership development dollars qualified as social justice funding (see Figure 4). It seems that when foundations fund leadership development, they usually are also funding social justice, whether because of the demographics affected by leadership programs – for example, those geared toward people of color or LGBTQ leaders – or because of the causes targeted.

Interestingly, however, only 3.9 percent of social justice grantmaking was also leadership development funding. This suggests that, while social justice is consistently correlated with leadership development (whether intentionally or not), leadership development is rarely a priority component of social justice funding. It is true that, relatively speaking, leadership development is more often a component of social justice funding than funding at large but, because social justice goals so often align with leadership development program funding, it is notable that so little social justice funding is devoted to leadership development.

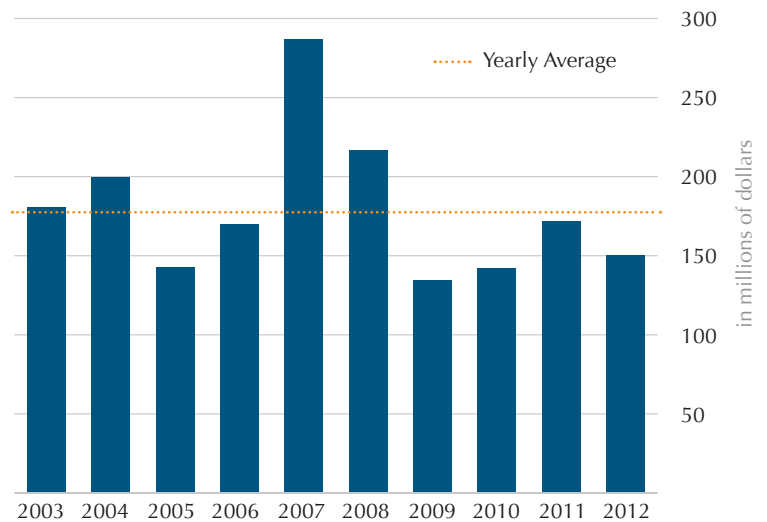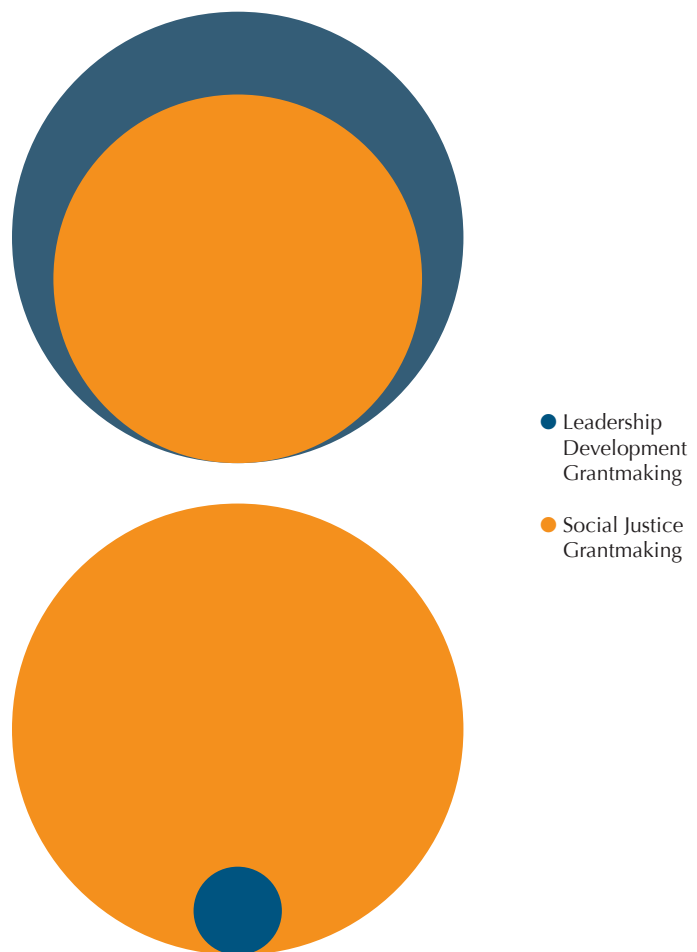Figure 3. Amount of Funding for Leadership Development, 2003–2012

Figure 4. Relationship Between Leadership Development Funding and Social Justice Funding, 2003-2012

- Leadership Development Grantmaking
- Social Justice Grantmaking

Our analysis of the Foundation Center's data echoes in large part what has been said by other leaders in the field. Long-time philanthropy scholar Laura Callanan's analysis of Foundation Center data concluded that less than 1 percent of overall giving between 1992 and 2011 was dedicated to leadership development.[19] Rusty Stahl, president and CEO of Talent Philanthropy, wrote that the 20-year average of investment in "nonprofit talent" during the same span was just over 1 percent.[20] Our analysis also corresponds well with data released last year by the Center for Effective Philanthropy. Its survey showed that 73 percent of nonprofit leaders felt that they lacked sufficient resources and opportunities to develop their leadership skills.[21]

Anecdotal evidence suggests a significant underinvestment in leadership programs that are small and locally focused, as well as those of large national organizations. At least a half dozen organizations in the leadership space closed their doors over the last several years and many more are likely to do so.[22] More study is needed about the needs of leadership programs. What is the economic viability of leadership programs (both national and locally-based)? What are high-leverage options and key considerations for such investments?

The picture painted by NCRP's analysis of the Foundation Center's data is not a positive one, though there are small pinpoints of potential progress. Leadership development grantmaking is abysmally low for such a crucial aspect of the work of grantees, but when it is done, it aligns well with social justice goals. We hope that the Foundation Center, as well as other organizations devoted to robust data collection in the nonprofit sector, will continue to examine the issue.

Who Is Funding Leadership Development?

Funding for leadership development is rare, but our review of the data and literature and our interviews with sector experts revealed some exemplars. Any foundation considering leadership development funding should talk to and study these funders and their approach to the issue.

- American Express Foundation
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Barr Foundation
- Bush Foundation
- The California Wellness Foundation
- Compton Foundation
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- The Durfee Foundation
- Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
- Ford Foundation
- General Services Foundation
- Hidden Leaf Foundation
- The James Irvine Foundation
- Levi Strauss Foundation
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- Nathan Cummings Foundation
- New Israel Fund
- NoVo Foundation
- Omidyar Network
- S.H. Cowell Foundation
- Thrive Networks
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation
- The Whitman Institute
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- Y&H Soda Foundation

Which Institutions Provide Leadership Development?

Many programs are doing exceptional work in the field of leadership development – some with a national focus, some devoted to a certain field or demographic, those that work on a local level and others that are working at a global scale with local leaders. Not all can be mentioned in this report, but we would like to lift up a few for emulation here.

For nearly 15 years, the Rockwood Leadership Institute based in Oakland, California, has been an exemplary resource for leadership development in the progressive space. Its approach to developing leadership skills focuses on resilience, partnership, purpose and personal ecology (Rockwood's term for self-care), in addition to capacity. This emphasis on self-care and on relational, goal-oriented leadership that supports and extends well beyond the self has nurtured a handful of cohorts since the program's inception. Cohorts often remain connected after their leadership development period has ended, an explicit goal of the program that contributes to a robust social justice ecosystem and builds the human infrastructure needed for long-term progress.[23] Rockwood's style of leadership transcends management to barrier-smashing collaboration. As Eveline Shen, Rockwood alumna and executive director of Forward Together, put it, "[The Rockwood program] wasn't just tools and tricks and tips but a way of being in leadership."[24] For example, Shen learned the importance of building leadership across her entire organization and also the importance of personal ecology. Rockwood continues to innovate and adjust its curriculum to be responsive to the needs of individuals and the sector; its leadership in the field is invaluable. In 2014, Rockwood trained a diverse group of 500 leaders, expanded its alumni network to 5,000 and reached a remarkable milestone – people of color now comprise more than 50 percent of its alumni.

Van Jones, who co-founded organizations such as the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and Green for All, said about Rockwood: "Leading from the Inside Out is the most successful leadership training program I have ever seen for nonprofit leaders. The role Rockwood is playing in moving us from mere groups of nonprofit organizations working in the same general areas to a real movement that has a chance of winning is priceless and unique."

Another exemplar in the field that deserves mention is Bend the Arc's Selah Leadership Program, which has a close partnership with Rockwood and a pioneering approach to forging multigenerational cohorts out of emerging leaders. Selah's name comes from the Hebrew word often used in prayers and songs to cue the listener to focus intently before moving on to the next verse. The program urges its participants to develop the "internal power and presence necessary to change external systems." Selah enhances capacity, helps participants become self-supporting and self-sustaining leaders, and

Eveline Shen, executive director of Forward Together, receives LeaderSpring's 2014 Leadership Legacy Award. Photo courtesy of LeaderSpring.

builds a community of progressive activists.[25] Even better, its relationship with Rockwood is collaborative and cooperative: They share ideas with each other and their programs benefit accordingly.[26]

Many other worthy leadership development programs exist at the local level and have curricula tailored for local circumstances – and they are producing real results. It is a question of scale and, in the context of leadership development, we must disabuse ourselves of the notion that bigger is better. Smaller organizations often are more flexible and thus have the facility to effect change. Some of these organizations are reviewed in this report but a more in-depth search for, and examination of, these programs would be a valuable contribution to research on the field.

iLEAP International Fellows. Photo courtesy of iLEAP.

Why Is Funding Leadership Development Essential to Success and Real Results?

Building the skills of leaders is essential to ensure that interventions into the ecosystem of our sector are transformational and not transactional. Nonprofit and social justice sectors have fewer resources for leadership development than the private sector; at a bare minimum, many funders expect organization leaders to have some facility to manage, lead, collaborate with and inspire others.[27] Systems change requires a complex "juggling" of seemingly contradictory goals and tactics. These contradictions are best managed by strong leaders with charisma, skills and an authentic knowledge of communities and issues involved.[28] Leaders must be able to navigate the often-distant worlds of their constituents and their targets,[29] as well as attend to "invisible tasks." In other words, one does not notice a leadership problem until things implode; great leaders keep that from happening behind the scenes.[30]

Focusing on leaders may generate some anxiety in progressive spaces where egalitarianism and inclusion are foundational values. But it is crucial for social justice leaders to understand how to lead effectively and justly if they are to be successful.[31] There is a difference between focusing on "leadership" versus focusing on "leaders." While this report is primarily about executive leadership, there is value in understanding that leadership can emerge from any level of an organization, not just the executive level. As one of our funder interviewees stated, traditionally progressive movement leadership has been top-down. "We need to be in relationships with each other in new and transformative ways; we need space to build trust – transactional relationships in coalition building don't form the kind of beloved community we need."[32]

There are three important ways in which leadership development contributes to achieving real results:

1. IT DISRUPTS USUAL WAYS OF THINKING AND BUILDS THE NETWORKS NEEDED TO WIN.

In the first *Smashing Silos* report on multi-issue advocacy and organizing, we noted how philanthropy's many issue silos can divide foundations against themselves, blinding them to the connections between issues and especially to the power of organizing and advocating across those issues.[33] The report showed how maintaining a siloed approach to philanthropy actually can undermine the very goals of a grantmaking intervention. This in turn results in a siloed approach to leadership.

Leadership development goes beyond the individual; it often can lead to collaborative leadership in cooperation or coalition with

Figure 5. Leadership as a Process for Transformational Change
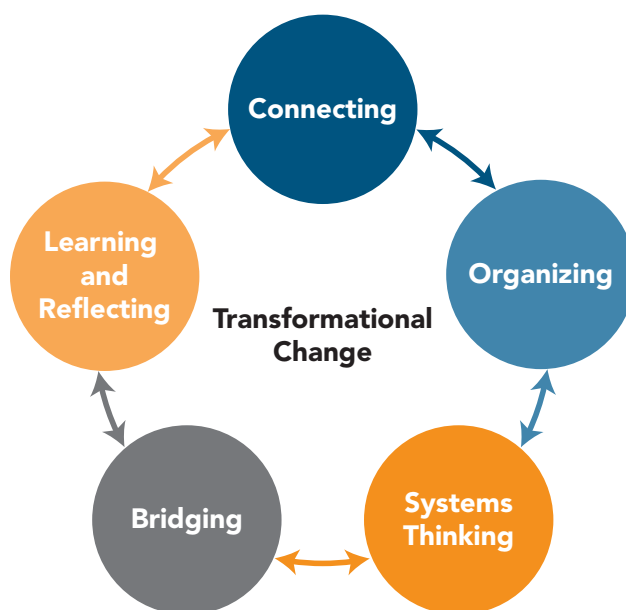
other leaders who share values or goals. It can serve as a catalyst for disruptive events that move leaders beyond day-to-day concerns to greater effectiveness. When people are removed from their quotidian routines, creativity and vitality lead to innovation. Being placed in a cohort with others in the sector working on various issues is an opportunity to find common ground and identify overlap or intersections in seemingly disparate pieces of work. Leaders can benefit from guidance on nonviolent communication, communicating across identity, trusting allies, learning how a progressive coalition for social justice ought to work well and how it can falter, among many other skills vital to forging lasting and trusting professional networks. With thoughtful disruption of the "normal," networks of leaders and institutions will emerge. In fact, these networks should be indicators of progress for funders interested in just and lasting change.

LeaderSpring is an Oakland, California-based organization that provides important leadership strengthening and development to progressive grassroots leaders and organizations. LeaderSpring's mission is "to foster a powerful, equity-driven social sector by strengthening leaders and organizations; developing communities of leaders; and transforming the systems in which they work."[34] Since 1997, LeaderSpring has delivered customized leadership programs that strengthen progressive grassroots leaders and their organizations, resulting in greater social and economic opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people living in the most impoverished neighborhoods of the San Francisco Bay area. Since 2010, in response to requests by funders, LeaderSpring expanded its reach to invest in leaders working in low-income communities across California. Its two-year fellowship program focuses on improving organizational effectiveness and bolstering community impact by strengthening executive leadership. Their leadership development approach includes monthly leader circles, multiday retreats, individualized goal setting and individualized executive coaching. Fellows also have the opportunity to go on study trips tailored to their needs. LeaderSpring also builds communities

Cynthia Chavez, executive director of LeaderSpring, at LeaderSpring's 15th Anniversary Celebration. Photo courtesy of LeaderSpring.

of leaders, providing the space needed for creative idea exchanges and forging relationships across issue silos for transformational change. The majority of LeaderSpring's graduates are people of color (61 percent) and women (70 percent) who work in fields as diverse as education, health, child care, job creation, economic justice and advocacy. As Cynthia Chavez, executive director of LeaderSpring states: "Investing in leaders can be naturally disruptive and destabilizing of power structures and the status quo."[35]

Daniel Lee, executive director of the Levi Strauss Foundation, sees the importance of breaking down issue silos when discussing the foundation's Pioneers in Justice program: "Being open-ended and listening to those leaders and their communities – when they're the right leaders – allows people, foundations and movements to think out of the box." He noted that placing Pioneers in relationship with each other and nurturing their relationships over time also has changed how Levi Strauss interacts with its grantees. For example, the foundation is more connected to its grantees and the relationship goes beyond that of providing a grant. The traditional power dynamic between funder and grantee is transformed to one of a partnership in which grantees are empowered and encouraged to articulate their needs and ideas. Disrupting power in this way leads to innovation and transformation.

Leadership development also can create a space where mistrust rooted in the history of

each individual, organization or movement can be overcome. Quality leadership development programs can facilitate deep personal connections of trust and respect, which are critical ingredients for effective advocacy and policy change. The Barr Fellowship, an effort to celebrate and connect extraordinary social sector leaders in Boston, is one example. As Kimberly Haskins, senior program officer at the Barr Foundation, puts it, "Instead of trainings or workshops on leadership skills and tactics, we have focused on trying to create opportunities for deep connections. In practice, this might mean a group trip to post-Katrina New Orleans, or a day with professor john powell on the topic of targeted universalism, and a facilitated conversation on how social equality is (and can be) furthered by Fellows' organizations."[36]

Two illustrative examples of this kind of barrier-breaking leadership occurred in just the last few years. In 2012, the state of Maryland passed a pair of historic ballot initiatives, one to give marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples and one to give the right to in-state tuition at public universities to undocumented immigrant youth (DREAMers).[37] The initiatives passed in no small part because of Gustavo Torres, a Rockwood alumnus and executive director of CASA de Maryland, who forged crucial alliances between his organization, their immigrant rights allies and LGBTQ advocacy groups across the state.[38] Likewise, in mid-2012, Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, led her organization's volunteers and allies in a march along with myriad other civil rights organizations to protest the brazenly racist "stop-and-frisk" policy of the New York Police Department.[39] Bucking the narrative that had long put LGBTQ groups at odds with people of color – a narrative Carey called a "so-called 'wedge'" and a "red herring" – both leaders overcame a perceived barrier to cooperative progress and, more importantly, lent their voices and thousands of others to the causes of racial justice and LGBTQ rights. Both breakthroughs would not have happened without the visionary leadership of Carey and Torres.

Bringing leaders together to form an organic, cooperative network is a worthy goal both for the effect it has on the leaders and their organizations and on the inherently competitive dynamic of the nonprofit sector.[40] Competition for limited resources can strain organizations to their breaking point and leads to inefficiencies that are not in the best

Rockwood Leadership Institute's June 2014 Art of Leadership cohort. Photo courtesy of Rockwood Leadership Institute.

interest of the causes we serve. When leaders trust one another and share spaces where they can be honest with and support each other, competition can transform into collaboration. For example, when Sarita Gupta, executive director of Jobs With Justice, helped forge a network of worker advocacy organizations called UNITY, she was able to work with funders to ensure that they were funding the network in a way that was beneficial to the movement on a holistic level. This meant less funding for UNITY itself and more for its constituent organizations, a move that was made possible by the trusting network of leaders with Gupta at the helm.[41]

When leadership development results in an organic network, it creates a mechanism and a space for the development to continue even after the allotted time has passed. That is, leadership development program graduates leave with a robust, supportive network of new professional ties, allowing their professional development to continue with the support and fellowship of the cohort. In this way, funding leadership development with a network focus is a particularly sound investment. The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund understood this dynamic when it chose to support the Fellowship for a New California, a leadership development cohort made up of emerging leaders in the immigrant rights movement housed at Rockwood.[42] As Linda Wood, senior director of the Haas, Jr. Fund's Leadership Institute, explained, the Fellowship for a New California was successful beyond the physical and temporal constraints of the program itself: The first cohort created its own organic professional network to continue the work of leadership development and help the respective organizations coalesce around policy goals.[43]

It is important that organizations and movements have leaders whose identity and experiences are reflective of the constituents they serve – and developing more leaders of color, LGBTQ leaders, women leaders, etc., is already a goal of many leadership development programs.[44,45] We should consider, however, that being a Black female leader in a field of white male faces can be isolating.[46]

Leader networks can help connect leaders with common challenges and experiences and provide support systems that are important to their success. Once again, the Haas, Jr. Fund provides a good example: Its 21st Century Fellows program, hosted by Rockwood, was started in part to create a network for LGBTQ leaders of color to support and relate to one another.[47]

A common thread runs through many of the examples used to illustrate the virtues of network-building leadership development. Indeed, Akaya Windwood, president of Rockwood Leadership Institute, explained that leadership development is the "how" and not the "what" of its mission. Rockwood's main objective is to build interconnected networks of relationships that further progressive goals; its leadership development courses focus intentionally on creating these networks.[48] According to one interviewee, Rockwood's emphasis on relationships leads to unexpected collaboration with new partners.[49]

As the social change ecosystem evolves and diversifies to include more organizations devoted to more issues, and as power increasingly becomes concentrated in moneyed circles allied against progressive goals, the unit of analysis in the sector is changing from the nonprofit to leader networks.[50] Network-wise leaders wield the combined capacity of their respective organizations as well as their own knowledge and charisma in a collaborative force with the potential for real results. Forging leader networks can be, and should be, an outcome of progressive leadership development that strengthens movements and redounds to the benefit of not just the leaders and their organizations, but the sector itself.

2. IT PREVENTS BURNOUT.

The second way leadership development contributes to achieving real results is that it helps prevent burnout.

During our interviews with leaders in the social justice leadership development field, Britt Yamamoto, executive director and founder of iLEAP, offered a metaphor that is useful to illustrate the pernicious effect of burnout among social change advocates.[51] Since 2008,

iLEAP has been training grassroots leaders and activists from the Southern Hemisphere who are confronting deeply entrenched social challenges. A fire, he said, is sometimes suffocated by the same thing that fuels it; wood can feed a blaze but too much in the wrong place can just as easily snuff it out. As any camping enthusiast knows, it takes a delicate balance of fuel and breathing room for a fire to burn warmly and persistently.

The work of grassroots leaders for social justice can be the wood for their fire. It fuels their passion for the cause, but it also can hamper their efforts if it becomes overwhelming in scope or in the emotional toll it takes. Their work is often unbounded, demanding, even unmanageable. Nonprofit executives are expected to be many things to their stretched-thin staffs: HR manager, confidante, strategic mastermind, motivator, negotiator, etc. It can be difficult for leaders to navigate effectively among all these roles and to strike a balance between their work and their life outside work.[52]

Understandably, the financial stress that is a constant reality for many nonprofits has a tremendous effect on the personal and professional well-being of leaders. During the last recession, from which much of the sector is still recovering, 65 percent of executives reported significant anxiety related to their organization's finances, and CompassPoint's *Daring to Lead* found that this financial anxiety was "strongly associated with executive burnout."[53] For many leaders, this struggle is not limited to times of recession. The precarious financial reality of many grassroots organizations is another factor making leadership jobs exceptionally trying.

The demands placed on these leaders can feel even heavier when they are faced with the perceived intractability of the progress they work for.[54] How can we better support leaders who are passionate about change they might not see in their lifetimes?

The emotionally taxing nature of the work itself also is worth considering. Working directly with people experiencing sometimes violent oppression in their day-to-day lives can cause anxiety either from remembered or fresh

Leadership development pioneers like Selah, Rockwood, iLEAP, LeaderSpring and others were born of the need for leadership in a social justice ecosystem that can consume its leaders and not nurture new ones.

trauma.[55] Leaders in the social justice ecosystem, perhaps more than anywhere else, are likely to take the emotional toll of their grueling and important work home with them.

For many of the leaders we rely on to make change, the work can become or at least overtake their lives; this can exhaust a person quickly and, in rare circumstances, irreparably. What's more, leaders in social justice organizations cannot be compensated in a manner comparable to their for-profit sector counterparts for their often consuming work. How many leaders, after failing to receive the support they needed to prevent burning out, have left their organization or the sector?

Leadership development pioneers like Selah, Rockwood, iLEAP, LeaderSpring and others were born of the need for leadership in a social justice ecosystem that can consume its leaders and not nurture new ones. As Rockwood's Windwood put it, "Progressive leadership development professionals understand that self-care frees us to care for, nurture and encourage others."[56] Leadership development for grassroots advocates must start with a search for resilience and a commitment to self-care, not make it an addendum.

Often, when funders and nonprofits partner together to address some systemic issue, they attack head-on the organizational, political, social, racial and other structures that support it. But if they ignore the human element of their work they miss another link

in the interconnected, interdependent world in which we work. As Robert Gass states in *What Is Transformation?*, unless we address the emotional needs of leaders in the field and reckon with the human element, "all too often the larger system, like a rubber band, tends to pull itself back into the homeostasis of the pre-change conditions."[57]

It also is important, as with most aspects of our work, to look at the burnout issue through a gender lens. Burnout, one interviewee said, is one of the things driving women away from executive level jobs in the nonprofit sector.[58] Whether because of work–life imbalance or a lack of emotional support, some women seem to steer clear of leadership positions because of the justified fear of exhaustion and burnout. The trend is borne out in data that show women are twice as likely as men to report feeling burn out and significantly less likely to report having a satisfactory work–life balance.[59] Addressing burnout with better and more frequent leadership development is good for the sector; it appears it would be especially good for the sector's women.

The nonprofit sector relies on the hard work of individuals on issues that can be emotionally exhausting. People are a finite resource, and when they burn out and leave their work, the cause or the sector, much is lost. Those people who are most emotionally invested in the work are both those who do it best and who are most prone to its negative effects. Mitigating burnout is among the most important aspects of good social justice leadership development and it is critically important that funders support it.

The best way for leadership development programs to combat burnout, as noted by many of our interviewees, is to teach self-care as one component in a holistic approach to leadership. Holistic, transformational leadership comprises emotional intelligence, self-reflection, self-care (Rockwood's "personal ecology"), vision and ability to inspire and align others to accomplish shared goals. It is about rejuvenation and renewal, intentionality in nurturing the self and identifying one's needs and building the metaphorical and physical space to cultivate lifelong relationships.

Forward Together's Shen has committed herself as a leader and as a colleague to making her work environment supportive, enriching and emotionally honest, all key aspects of a healthy personal ecology. Her approach to her work of leading a multifaceted, multistate campaign for reproductive justice should be lauded for its efforts to focus on self-care and work-life balance. At Forward Together, Shen says, one aspect of the mission is to help create stronger families. In an effort to live their values and support Forward Together staff, family life is valued in principle and in practice. It is clear she models caring for self and for others in a potentially difficult field, a crucial aspect of her leadership style.[60]

It is important to understand the interconnections among care for the self, burnout and leadership. They are interdependent. Some might see the focus on the individual as antithetical to the nature of community-focused social justice or transformational work. However, a leader who feels eviscerated by the pressures of the work could avoid reaching the burnout stage by tending to him or herself. If one thinks about the Buddhist concept of interdependent arising, the connections are clear. Consider a piece of paper. When we look at the paper, we do not think of the tree that was once a sapling, the farmer who nurtured its growth or the rain and the sun the tree flourished with and thrives on. But if we do, we realize that we are not as disconnected from the clouds or the sun or the farmer or the tree as we might think. The paper would not exist in the absence of any one of these. Developing holistic leadership is crucial to nourishing human capacity to contribute to the common good. Because leaders set the tone and model the culture of the organizations they lead, it is imperative that they have a healthy relationship with their work. If not, the burnout and dysfunction will permeate throughout the organization.

3. IT HAS A MULTIPLIER EFFECT ON ORGANIZATIONS.

The third way leadership development contributes to achieving real results is by supporting a strong "bench" of secondary and tertiary leaders at grantee organizations and in groups of organizations. The collaborative and inclusive approach used by Fellowship for a New California (FNC) is a great example. Working in collaboration with Rockwood, FNC was launched in 2011 and focuses on developing next-generation leaders of immigrant communities. Linda Wood emphasizes the importance of fostering new grassroots leadership that reflects the diversity of California's population, particularly leaders who can lift up voices of communities that lack one in decisions that impact them directly.[61] The foundation's Flexible Leadership Awards brings together leaders from the LGBTQ and immigrant rights fields. Seemingly disparate issues are not seen as such in these movement leaders' minds – they can see the interdependence and interconnectedness of issues, constituencies and the importance of cultivating leadership among community-level organizations at varying levels of structure.[62]

Ellen Friedman, executive director of the Compton Foundation, describes this type of leadership development as diversifying the movement, creating cohesion and alignment and linking personal mastery with structured collaborative action. "People need to know themselves before they can lead others. Know your triggers, blind spots and passions so that you can more effectively lead." Friedman makes clear that leadership is an inside-out skill and a way to support emerging leaders.

Shen also has demonstrated the multiplicative effects of network-wise leadership. As executive director of Forward Together, she supports the development of new leaders across the social justice infrastructure, including leaders who had never self-identified as such before.[63,64] In recent years, Forward Together's approach to empowerment has spun off new networks of leaders in the reproductive justice organizing ecosystem.[65]

Bend the Arc's Selah Leadership Program was geared initially toward emerging leaders and has moved toward being more intentionally multigenerational. As Deputy Director and Rabbi-in-Residence Jason Kimelman-Block states, while participants must be in some position of influence, Selah's approach is grounded in the philosophy that leadership happens at all levels in an organization.[66] Interestingly, Bend the Arc's current CEO, Stosh Cotler, began participating in an experimental group with Kimelman-Block in 2004. The Nathan Cummings Foundation wanted to bring Jewish social justice[67] leaders together and create a cohort with shared purpose and skills. The content for this cohort was developed with Rockwood. The field of Jewish social justice was entirely new to Cotler, although her background as an antiviolence organizer aligned with its values. As a co-developer of Selah, Cotler built this leadership program with two goals: to build and strengthen the Jewish social justice field and to increase the leadership capacity of Jewish social justice leaders.

Cotler found similarities between her time at university and the frameworks and tools she and others developed to create Selah. As a student, university provided her with the political framework that allowed her to make sense of her identity, and to clarify her path to being a change agent for social transformation. Selah did much the same, providing her with frameworks essential to understanding her role as a leader and the skills needed to succeed at her organization and contribute to the social justice sector. Cotler's involvement in Selah's program proved a pivotal point for her as she learned the skills to transform from an organizer to an organizational leader. After three years building the Selah program, Bend the Arc President Simon Greer promoted her to the position of executive vice president. Cotler felt strongly that the leadership practices Selah used should be steeped in the organization's culture and systems. She remains a firm believer in the fact that leadership is a continuous process of learning; the notion that leadership is static is simply false. She is an example

of the power of leadership development to empower next-generation activists to become leaders in their communities. As Daniel Lee said, regarding the participants of the Pioneers in Justice program:

> These leaders are tasked with driving change at their organizations. If there's a firm commitment to that at all levels within an organization, then it's easy to keep working with them and they choose new leaders and continued practices that reflect the Pioneers programs. We really thought that, if we really focus on these leaders, it puts a large onus on them to be the point-of-change at their organization.[68]

Investments in organizations that provide leadership development programs can have a multiplier effect. As previously noted, Selah's leadership program began with content from Rockwood. Similarly, LeaderSpring's nationally respected program – grounded in relational, transformative and culturally appropriate values – has been replicated by other organizations focused on transformational change and organizational development. LeaderSpring has gained national recognition in part because its local model has been adapted by others working statewide or regionally. As Bob Uyeki, executive director of the Y&H Soda Foundation says, "LeaderSpring […] is essentially about social justice. It's not about training leaders to be efficiency machines. This is about a vision for a better and a different world."[69]

"[Pioneers in Justice Fellows] are tasked with driving change at their organizations. If there's a firm commitment to that at all levels within an organization, then it's easy to keep working with them and they choose new leaders and continued practices that reflect the Pioneers programs. We really thought that, if we really focus on these leaders, it puts a large onus on them to be the point-of-change at their organization."

—Daniel Lee, Executive Director
Levi Strauss Foundation

Measuring the Impact of Leadership Development

One concern common to many funders about leadership development is whether and how to measure its impact. The turn toward strategic philanthropy over the past decade has been accompanied by an increased emphasis on measurement. The focus on quantitative data in philanthropy means that many funders' first question when presented with a prospective leadership development funding program will be, "How do we measure success?" In fact, many of the field experts we interviewed offered the challenge of measurement as the primary obstacle perceived by foundation staff when considering funding leadership development.

The reality is that there have already been successful attempts at quantitatively measuring the impacts of leadership development. A five-year evaluation of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund's Flexible Leadership Awards identified comparative "dashboards" of leadership, mission goals and accomplishments, as well as the pre- and post-development budgets of participant organizations, as reliable quantitative measures of success. The evaluation found that a majority of participants met or surpassed their leadership and mission goals. Additionally, the participant organizations saw their average budgets in the five-year period increase by an average of 64 percent, a total of $19 million portfolio-wide increase as a result of a $4.5 million investment by the foundation. In fact, those organizations whose defined goals at the outset included scaling up (such as through policy change and organizational change, and not necessarily an increase in size) saw an average budget increase of 85 percent. The study discussed how improved performance may be attributed to leadership development. Although the study's sample size prohibited sweeping conclusions about

causal relationships, the report found a positive link between leadership development and organizational success to be "a reasonable hypothesis."[70]

While this report contributes to a growing body of evidence of the impact of leadership development funding, it can be difficult to quantify the impact of leadership development on individuals and nonprofits. Results often are complex, long-term and multidirectional. One example of a qualitative outcome is one's ability to better articulate a vision for progress, or an individual leader gaining a movement-level perspective that empowered him or her to forge coalitions. The new knowledge of self-care may help a leader realize that his or her best work in service of individual goals and the movement's goals would be done elsewhere and leave his or her organization.

Anecdotal evidence also can be helpful in illustrating the impact of leadership development. When Barrie Hathaway, executive director of the Stride Center, started his LeaderSpring Fellowship in 2006, he felt overwhelmed by the immensity of the challenges his organization and the community faced. He wondered if his leadership was enough to address seemingly insurmountable issues, and thus he considered leaving his post. However, a course on leadership development with an emphasis on renewal and perspective changed his mind. He realized the challenges he faced were not his alone and that with more support and a stronger sense of self-care, he could and should continue his important work. He and his team went on to raise five times more in funds and tripled the organization's annual earned revenue. This growth enabled Stride Center to expand its programs from serving 100 clients to more than 500 each year. Now, greater numbers of participating adults have secured higher-

earning employment and gained greater self-sufficiency for themselves and their families.

All of the changes brought about by good leadership development are profound; they affect a complex and living system and they are consequently very difficult to measure. But that does not mean measurement is impossible, nor does it mean that we as a sector should not try to quantify its impact. Foundations should, first and foremost, focus on relationships when they want to measure leadership development. Relationships amplify the voice of each individual and nonprofit and lead to movement building; they should be the unit of analysis for any leadership development program. Did the leadership development propel the participant to serve on new boards of directors, form new organizational partnerships, join a coalition or movement, work collaboratively with other leadership development alumni or otherwise establish new relationships that further the cause?

iLEAP's assessment of their work with grassroots women leaders from Central America include a detailed interview, which asks participants these and other questions:

- Did the participant experience a shift in thinking about leadership and who he or she is as a leader?
- Did the participant articulate greater confidence in communication and relationship building?
- Did the participant demonstrate greater clarity and a sense of personal renewal to continue and accelerate social change work?
- Did the participant report
  ○ Changing positions, e.g., a promotion or move to another organization
  ○ Receiving formal recognition for leadership
  ○ Securing additional resources for his or her cause
  ○ Increasing the scale and visibility of the cause
  ○ Successfully influencing public policy
  ○ Creating new initiatives for unaddressed social issues

These measurement tools are helpful in illustrating the potential relational and network outcomes of leadership development, but some foundations may require a more quantitative analysis scheme to justify funding such a program. The Center for Assessment and Policy Development investigated cost–benefit analyses of leadership development programs in 2008 and found that, while their utility can be limited by the short- and long-term timing of effects and the inability to isolate net results, they are still a potential assessment tool. Nevertheless, because of these complexities, it is not a tool the Center would recommend consistently.

It is beyond the scope of this report to provide a complete account of potential measurement tools for foundations considering leadership development funding; however, tools do exist (see Appendix on page 31 for a list of resources). Participant interviews and carefully determined signals of network effects along with cautious cost–benefit analyses of organizational impact are just some of the models available.

Table 1: Perceived Challenges to Funding Leadership Development

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
Decision-makers at the foundation level do not see the value of investing in leadership development.	• Learn from peers and experiment with different approaches to initiate funding for this type of work. • Understand that leadership development is integral to the success of programs. • Think of leadership development as insurance that your initiatives have a higher likelihood of success, particularly in movement building. • Bring grantees into relationship with decision-makers. Seeing how much is already being accomplished with minimal resources makes a strong case for investing in grassroots leaders.
The desire to continue funding current grantees prevents the grantmaker from adding leadership development.	• Consider whether the foundation's mission and theory of change allows for empowerment. If not, why? • Diversify your portfolio to carve out specific funds to provide leadership development opportunities for your current grantees and then scale up based on impact. • Provide core support, allowing grantees to articulate their own leadership needs. • Provide leadership development grants on top of other types of support, such as general operating support and multi-year funding.
There is a dearth of knowledge about which organizations provide good leadership development programs, as well as the needs of the sector.	• Review available programs and the impact of their work on helping grantees achieve their missions, as demonstrated in available literature. • Ensure that the work is not duplicative. • Provide funding to organizations that offer leadership development programs. • Understand the profound personal impact of leadership development on the individual, organizational and movement levels. • Listen to leaders' needs and find shared purpose. Many executive directors of social justice nonprofits feel isolated. • Imagine what your grantees could accomplish with an intentional fostering of their leadership.

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
Leadership development is difficult to quantify and the foundation is committed to linear strategic philanthropy with an emphasis on demonstrating impact.	• Anecdotal evidence is powerful in the face of perceived difficulty in measuring impact. • Recognize that leadership development is neither "elitist" nor a one-time investment. It is an ongoing and lifelong process. Grantmakers are uniquely positioned to provide support for specific parts of the process, such as convenings or funds to attend a good leadership program. • Understand that leadership development has a multiplier effect and makes positive contributions to your programs/goals/outcomes. • Take a sector-wide view – this is fundamental to seeing the value added by investing in leadership development.
Funders are focused on issue silos and outcomes.	• Acknowledge power dynamics – investing in leaders is often disruptive and destabilizes power structures and/or the status quo. • Organization and program perspectives without movement perspectives are counterproductive. • Foundations might lack a core understanding of what movement building is or what it entails. Build awareness of centralized power among funders and on-the-ground collaboration that is integral to advancing socially just work. • Use trends and theories of change that undergird leadership development to measure "success." Each story/anecdote shows how the person gets transformed within the organization and then within the movement. Moving the needle contributes to success even if the win is yet to come.

Recommendations for Funder Consideration

Leadership development is important to the success of movements for social justice. Grantmakers interested in making lasting, progressive change need to integrate it in funding portfolios. There is no one-size-fits-all leadership development course, and there is no one "right way" to develop leadership. There are, however, a few characteristics of leadership development and approaches to assessing and choosing leadership development options that we suggest for consideration. These recommendations are intended for funders working on any issue who are considering or are already funding leadership development and would like to learn more.

1. BEGIN OR INCREASE FUNDING FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.

Our overarching recommendation is to begin funding leadership development. If your institution already funds it, consider making a more substantial commitment.

As with anything we do as advocates and organizers, we must begin this process in humility. Start by acknowledging that no one – including practitioners of institutional philanthropy – knows all about leadership development; express a desire to know more. Learning how other funders have embarked on and maintained the success of leadership development funding programs is a good first step. There are, in fact, high-profile foundations that have already made significant commitments to funding leadership development. Initiate a conversation with them and about them: How did they decide to begin funding leadership development? Which resources did they consult in the early stages of their program? Which approaches to funding leadership development have been particularly successful in their experience? Are there any that have not met expectations?

Is there a knowledge gap about what leadership development is, or which organizations provide good programs and develop leaders that sustain movement building across issues? It is important that funders build off the knowledge already gathered by peers in a new endeavor like this one.

Below are four additional recommendations for those grantmakers that are either involved in or wish to start funding leadership development.

2. INTEGRATE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN PROGRAM STRATEGY.

Funding leadership development, much like leadership development itself, ought not to be an afterthought when making grants. Rather, consider the needs of your grantees as articulated by them and help them build the necessary skills and relationships to achieve your hoped-for outcomes. Diversifying one's portfolio is a sound financial investment strategy for any grantmaker, so consider adding it to already existing grants or encourage applicants for funding to include an explicit leadership development component.

Relationships with organizations and their leaders are crucial to the success of a program to fund leadership development, and it is important for these associations to develop with foundation staff who are dedicated and knowledgeable when it comes to leadership development. Importantly, leadership development needs to be a focal point in work across the board at foundations, not a silo unto itself. It should be an integral aspect of the approach of each program or department to its work because it is, as we hope we have demonstrated here, a sine qua non of social justice work.

3. ENGAGE WITH YOUR GRANTEES AS TRUE PARTNERS.

In keeping with the values of strategic social justice philanthropy, foundations should attempt to form relationships with grantees that are true partnerships. Foundations need to work with grantees to solve pressing social ills, rather than dictate the solutions. Robust, honest relationships between foundation and nonprofit staff – in this context and others – lead to trust that is critical for these partnerships. The Whitman Institute provides an excellent example. Whitman provides flexible, multi-year funding because it sees its grantees as equals. Indeed, the foundation states, "We believe that investing in equity requires that our giving practices demonstrate equity. We strive to walk our talk through respectful, trusting relationships with grantees, funders and investors and other colleagues."[71]

Whenever possible, foundations should trust grantees and allow them to articulate their leadership development needs and set the agenda for action. To this end, grants for leadership development should be general support grants coded for leadership development purposes. When a foundation's funding comes with tight restrictions on how, when, where and with whom it can be used for leadership development, it interferes with the process of self-determination critical for leadership development education to be successful. That is, in order for a participant to be wholly invested in a leadership development plan and benefit most from it, the plan ought to be appropriate to each one's circumstances.

Considering the Barr Foundation's support for Barr Fellows, and for some of the collaborations that have emerged from that network, Stefan Lanfer, director of communications at Barr, noted the importance of the foundation seeing itself as part, but not the hub, of that network. Its role is to set the table, but not the agenda for potential collaborations.[72] Funding leadership development has a profound personal impact on the grantees, too; it signals that the funder believes in the individuals leading the nonprofits and creates a strong sense of trust. For example, Akaya Windwood

did not really realize the trust involved until she herself received funding to attend Rockwood's leadership training by Haas, Jr. Fund in 2013.[73]

4. USE A CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE LENS.

It also is important to consider how dynamics of identity, power and trauma may influence a participant's experience with leadership development. These are aspects of the process best understood by the participants themselves – another reason why funders should follow the lead of their prospective leaders, so to speak, as well as carefully consider the cultural, political and social context of the leadership development course. Gender, race, sexual identity, disability and many other aspects of each participant's identity will play a role in the efficacy of a particular leadership development program. Black, Latino, gay or women leaders have different needs and perceptions of what leadership means, and these perceptions are not always positive. It is understandable that marginalized groups might identify holding power with perpetuating oppression, and may be hesitant to take up the leadership mantle.

Foundations have to be prepared to address concerns around power and identity and be mindful of the different needs of different leaders. The needs of organizations will vary and shift across circumstances and even throughout the life of a leadership development grant. Successful leadership development funding programs will give grantees the space to determine their own courses to achieve lasting, meaningful results that are specific to each organization's needs.

5. BUILD CAPACITY THAT SUPPORTS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.

One of those needs, in the case of some nonprofits, may very well be support (technical, financial or otherwise) for a grantee nonprofit's staff while the executive director is participating in a leadership development program. As with any aspect of systems change work, leadership development must be considered as part of a multidimensional network of reactions and relationships. Thus,

when an executive director is gone for a week, a month, several months or longer, her or his absence may strain the staff's capacity. At many organizations, the executive director carries a workload that includes fundraising, strategic planning, human resources and much more. Funders should consider how an executive director's engagement in a leadership development program may impact fundraising and work environment and provide support accordingly.

Foundations should be intentional and communicate clearly with leadership development participants and their staffs to determine how best to support the nonprofit throughout the process. It would be a shame for a stellar leadership development course to result in an empowered executive director returning to a decimated organization. Further, foundations should consider awarding additional funds that can maximize their investment in leaders.

These recommendations comprise a basic set of action items founded on the understanding of leadership development as holistic, relational, iterative and dynamic. They are not exhaustive, but we hope they prove helpful in increasing or beginning to fund this integral component of nonprofit success.

Conclusion: Leadership Development Can Contribute to Our Democracy

On Election Day 2014, a ballot initiative for sweeping change to California's criminal justice system passed with 58 percent of the popular vote. Proposition 47 reduces the penalties for crimes associated with addiction and poverty, such as petty theft and substance possession, and diverts funds from the prison system to mental health care, addiction services and job training. It was the culmination of years of hard work on the part of a broad coalition of nonprofits and advocacy groups from all corners of the social justice sector led in part by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), PICO National Network (a faith-based organizing group), Bend the Arc, myriad criminal justice reform groups and several large foundations. The coalition's intersectional approach to the issue of mass incarceration, as demonstrated by their diverse constituencies, is a bold and hopefully long-lasting contribution to social justice movement building in the state. Strong, movement-focused leadership clearly played a role in securing this win.

As we hope this report demonstrates, grantmakers must fund leadership – both for grantees and the organizations that provide leadership development – if we hope to effect transformational changes in our communities. The power of leadership is multifaceted: it nurtures individuals, builds lifelong relationships, fosters collaboration and makes significant contributions to movement building by providing the space for unforeseen cross-issue work. Unfortunately, the results of our data analyses demonstrate that there is an urgent need for philanthropy to provide significantly more funding for this work than it currently does. Our research found several instances of high-quality leadership development organizations closing their doors and some foundations cutting funding for this work. This only adds to the urgency of prioritizing leadership development, particularly at the grassroots level, at foundations of all types, regardless of issue focus.

Leadership is anything but something "extra" for grantees. It must be an integral component of grantmaking strategy at any change-oriented foundation from the outset of each project and initiative. Just as relationships and trust are recurring themes in this report, leadership is the basso ostinato that keeps the social justice ecosystem vibrant. It is, in a sense, insurance on any grant that a foundation makes; it increases the probability of success or achieving outcomes. Put simply, it is in the best interest of every grantmaker to fund this work.

Imagine a world in which empowered community-based executive directors across the country have strong relationships with each other. Philanthropy leveraged its tremendous assets to create these conditions by making strategic investments in grassroots leadership, benefitting communities and instigating positive structural change.

This report is a call to action for foundations to make this vision a reality. Now is the time for us to engage in critical self-reflection about our grantmaking strategy. Recent events across the nation have led to an acknowledgment that inequity persists in its most insidious form as a way to keep communities of color from equality of opportunity. The response from ordinary citizens and organizing groups demonstrates that we are potentially at a movement moment. While innumerable factors need to change and systemic reform on any issue is a long-term process, the level of engagement across the country must be capitalized on to move the needle on structured and normalized barriers in our socioeconomic environment. Foundations can and must be

a part of this movement-building process by providing flexible, unencumbered support to leaders from our communities to build their skills and relationships. Only by finding shared purpose and demanding real accountability from all sectors will transformational change be possible. Justice is within our reach – it is a question of whether we have the will to move from moment to movement.

Appendix: Additional Resources

- Alliance of the South East (ASE)
- Bend the Arc (Selah Leadership Program)
- Brecht Forum
- Catalyst Project
- Center for Courage and Renewal
- Center for Creative Leadership
- Center for Social Inclusion
- Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO)
- Center for Whole Communities
- Chicago Freedom School (CFS)
- Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)
- Gamaliel
- Grassroots Leadership College
- Highlander Research and Education Center
- iLEAP
- Interaction Institute for Social Change
- Leadership Learning Community
- LeaderSpring
- Management Assistance Group
- Management Center
- Movement Strategy Center
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)
- Project South
- Rockwood Leadership Institute
- Social Justice Leadership
- Social Transformation Project
- Southern Echo
- stone circles at The Stone House
- Strategic Leadership Institute
- Training for Change
- Wellstone Action!

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CULTIVATING NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP:
A (Missed?) Philanthropic Opportunity

The quality of leadership determines what an organization, sector or movement can accomplish. Cultivating the characteristics needed for bold vision, clear strategy and the ability to deeply connect and collaborate toward shared goals requires investment, expertise and courage. Philanthropy must deeply invest in human capacity to see the changes in the structures and systems that shape our lives and our world. This ground-breaking report by NCRP lifts up the principles and practices that map out a new way forward.

— Taj James, Founder and Executive Director, Movement Strategy Center

Leaders – at all levels – drive and create change. And for funders, there are fewer, more powerful levers to advance change than investing in leaders. *Cultivating Nonprofit Leadership* makes a compelling case for foundations to expand the support for leadership development, providing concrete examples of leadership investments that have made a difference, not just for individuals, but for the issues they work on."

— James E. Canales, President, Barr Foundation

Cultivating Nonprofit Leadership reminds us that to invest in leaders is to invest in the messy, human process of changemaking, one that begins with a critical flowering of self-awareness, acceptance and nurturance. Let's answer the call to invest deeply in scaffolding an infinitely more supported and interconnected leadership body, and honor our humanity instead of scorning it for weakness.

— Pia Infante, Co-Executive Director, The Whitman Institute

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