



Introduction And Overview
Three Tools To Assist Progress

*Moving Philanthropy Closer
to Racial Equity and Social Justice*

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MOVING PHILANTHROPY CLOSER TO RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Working Drafts of Tools to Assist Progress

Introduction and Overview to Three Tools to Assist Progress

By Steven E. Mayer, Ph.D., Vanessa McKendall Stephens, Ph.D., and Betty Emarita

Moving Past the Silence: A Tool for Negotiating Reflective Conversations About Race

By Vanessa McKendall Stephens, Ph.D.

See accompanying PDF

Becoming a Catalyst for Social Justice: A Tool for Aligning Internal Operations to Produce Progress

By Betty Emarita

See accompanying PDF

Choosing Promising Ideas And Proposals: A Tool for Giving that Closes Gaps

By Steven E. Mayer, Ph.D.

See accompanying PDF

For more information about all of the tools, visit www.effectivecommunities.com.

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW TO THREE TOOLS TO ASSIST PROGRESS

Moving Philanthropy Closer to Racial Equity and Social Justice
Effective Communities, LLC

By

Steven E. Mayer, Ph.D., Vanessa McKendall Stephens, Ph.D., and Betty Emarita

Introduction

Improving racial equity and social justice remains a challenge to society and philanthropy.

Data consistently show gaps in the performance of society's various systems and markets, yielding very different results for different racial and ethnic groups.¹ On average, for example, America's schools don't do as well for African American children, our justice system metes out softer punishment for Whites, and our job and capital markets are more closed and less rewarding to non-Whites.

These gaps are maintained by denial of "equal opportunity" and "equal protection." Even though equal opportunity and equal protection are guaranteed by the Constitution, practices, whether institutional or customary, intentional or unintended, do not always reflect these mandates. Ultimately, the data speak for themselves: our society and its formal and informal systems do not provide equal opportunity or equal protection.

Achieving greater racial equity means achieving greater social justice. It means closing those gaps – in our educational systems, our justice systems, our job and capital markets, and so on. This is not to say that everyone will benefit equally – that everyone will get the same grades in school, the same penalties after wrongdoing, the same jobs or same salaries. Even with full equity there will be as much variation as there is now, *except that* access, rewards and punishments will not be based on race. This is the vision of equity embraced in the Constitution, and in this project.

Philanthropy has much to offer in contributing to progress. Most broadly, philanthropy is the giving of one's time, talent and treasure to create improvements to the vitality of society. Philanthropy exists in informal and institutional forms, and both forms can contribute to progress toward racial equity. Informal philanthropy includes the basic acts of helping a stranger, volunteering time and talent to organized efforts, and writing checks in support of worthwhile efforts. Institutional philanthropy is the work of a wide variety of certified philanthropic organizations, typically called foundations and nonprofits. They are engaged in all charitable purposes recognized by the IRS, be they "religious, educational, charitable, scientific, literary,

¹ The State of the South 2004: Fifty Years After Brown vs. Board of Education. MDC Inc, Chapel Hill. See www.mdcinc.org.

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testing for public safety, to foster national or international amateur sports competition, or prevention of cruelty to children or animals organizations.”² Given the extraordinary latitude to operate, each foundation and nonprofit organization is guided by its own internal policies that state to what extent its resources are directed to various purposes.

The purposes, scope and effort by the 71 philanthropic organizations visited through this investigation to address racial equity and social justice situation are impressive.³ They are each engaged in meaningful work, some with substantial resources, directed to a specific aspect of society’s means of producing greater equity and justice. Progress has already been made by these organizations.

Benchmarking Progress

No two efforts to achieve greater equity or justice conceive of “progress” in the same way, yielding a lack of common measures of effectiveness or impact. Developing a more common definition for progress in this complex arena, one goal of Effective Communities, allows for benchmarking progress in ways that can encourage philanthropy to be more confident in its investments in racial equity and social justice.

To better define progress, we first engaged stakeholders of nine community philanthropy organizations in active, reflective discussion. Discussions were focused on these questions: *What’s it like, working as you do to make progress? What does progress look like? What are you doing to help move it along?* The results of this conversation lead to defining seven Signs of Progress.⁴

We then shifted our focus from defining signs of progress to identifying what enables progress in the use of philanthropy to strengthen racial equity and social justice. We expanded our conversations to include more foundations and intermediary organizations – part foundation, part nonprofit. Conversations were relatively unstructured, but were focused on these questions: *To what ends are your philanthropy directed? What kind of progress are you intending to make? What are you doing to achieve this progress?*

From these conversations, we responded to a call from the field to develop tools that will help philanthropic organizations make progress toward racial equity and social justice. These tools build on the signs of progress developed earlier, and are useful to the full range of philanthropic organizations – funders, intermediaries, nonprofits, associations, networks, donors – as they explore the equity and justice implications of their work.

² Section 501(c)3, US Tax Code.

³ A list of these organizations is included at the end of this Introduction.

⁴ *Community Philanthropy and Racial Equity: What Progress Looks Like*. Minneapolis: Effective Communities Project, 2005. See www.EffectiveCommunities.com/Articles

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Three Tools for Moving Philanthropy Closer to Racial Equity and Social Justice

While signs of progress abound, three barriers to progress are significant. To overcome each of these, we have drafted a tool to enable further discussion, experimentation and ultimately progress.

BARRIERS TO PROGRESS	TOOLS FOR MAKING PROGRESS
Racial equity and social justice are not easily discussed	Moving Past the Silence: A Tool for Negotiating Reflective Conversations About Race
Becoming effective in this arena requires unique preparation	Becoming a Catalyst for Social Justice: A Tool for Aligning Internal Operations to Produce Progress
Philanthropic efforts to increase racial equity and social justice are meaningful but dispersed, diluted or fragmented	Choosing Promising Ideas and Proposals: A Tool for Giving that Closes the Gaps

Racial equity and social justice are not easily discussed. We have learned that in many places, the terms “racial equity” and “social justice” are so laden with heavy historical and emotional baggage that the terms themselves get in the way of making progress. Many people in the discussion have a strongly visceral reaction to them, making communication and conversation difficult or nonexistent. Mistrust, fear, avoidance, animosity and/or resistance are deeply embedded in individual experiences from all sides of the racial divide, and reduce the chances for productive conversations that could fuel change. All our respondents expressed dismay with this situation.

We are learning that conversations about race and racial equity are rare and fraught with discomfort. Groups struggle with knowing how to begin and create space to talk honestly across race and about race. When tension, pain, apathy or even animosity surface, participants often back away and silence the exchange, fearing repercussion from the colleagues, stakeholders or potential partners. Because constructive conversations about race and racial equity do not often happen, few philanthropic organizations actively seek conversations designed to make progress toward racial equity.

One theme in our conversations is progress is sometimes better made without referring to race at all. It is better to speak obliquely and create initiatives that promise “affordable housing for all” or that address “root causes of poverty” without naming race – and indeed, promising inroads have been made. Another theme is, the legacy of racism must be confronted directly to make progress, and until African Americans and Whites can learn to better understand and to trust each other, progress will only be short-lived. Still another theme is progress is helped by productive conversations that explore and define issues of race and inequity, to build trust and lay a foundation for further discussion. When conversations are productive, they inform potential

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strategy. Creating the capacity for reflective, constructive dialogue that engenders and sustains trust is essential.

The first tool, ***“Moving Past the Silence: A Tool for Negotiating Reflective Conversations About Race,”*** developed by Vanessa M. Stephens, offers a framework for beginning these conversations inside a philanthropic organization and then broadening these conversations to engage constituents and partners. With this tool, the user can help create reflective conversations about race, proceeding through four developmental stages: 1) Scan and gather information; 2) Listen and learn; 3) Make decisions; and 4) Negotiate change and impact.

* * *

Becoming effective in this arena requires unique preparation. For a board of directors, education, social services or even community economic development are much easier to make a priority than improving racial equity or social justice. Equity and justice are typically not seen as a priority, a necessity or even an option. Individuals, whether on staff or boards, typically come to prioritize equity and justice along very different paths. The process of bringing these issues to priority is sometimes led by staff, other times by the board. Until the board chooses to prioritize this arena, however, staff leadership is limited in its impact.

Unlike charity, social justice demands attention to root causes—the underlying structures that generate and maintain inequities. Philanthropic organizations need to become more intentional catalysts for change. They will become more effective agents for progress in equity and justice by aligning key areas of operational practice, including administration, donor relationships, and staff and board development, with professed values. They also must pursue new sources of information that let them better understand wider segments of their community, and let them pursue more informed courses of action. Finally, resources – not just money but also influence – must be focused on making progress.

The second tool, ***“Becoming a Catalyst for Social Justice: A Tool for Aligning Internal Operations to Produce Progress,”*** developed by Betty Emarita, assists foundation boards, staff and consultants in focusing their organizational processes to support goals related to racial equity and social justice. It encourages boards and staff of philanthropic organizations to: 1) Clarify values on social justice and align practices with values; 2) Become a learning organization to better understand social justice issues; and 3) Develop strategies to expand the impact of social justice activities.

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Philanthropic efforts to increase racial equity and social justice are meaningful but dispersed, diluted or fragmented. Institutional philanthropy's greatest strength, as well as its greatest weakness, is that each organization works independently. Consequently, efforts to increase racial equity or social justice are patchworked. Some involve only one city, or only one state, or only one country. Some involve only education, or only housing, or only art. Some are focused on systems, others on individuals. Progress is clearly noticeable in places, but it only dots the landscape.

To advance the pace of progress in the field of racial equity and social justice, ideas and proposals that yield more must rise to the top.

The third tool, ***“Choosing Promising Ideas and Proposals: A Tool for Giving that Closes the Gaps,”*** developed by Steven E. Mayer, presents five action areas as a framework for identifying the most promising proposals, projects and ideas. These areas are: 1) Increase philanthropic resources dedicated to racial equity and social justice; 2) Offer leadership, especially across divides; 3) Strengthen organizations, networks and associations; 4) Craft solutions and advance them from ideas to policy to practice; and 5) Reduce barriers, change conditions and transform local economies. The tool also can be used to monitor progress over time, and identify opportunities for strengthening organizations and projects.

* * *

These tools do not have to be formally adopted and tried to be beneficial. Reading the tools, imagining how they could be useful, discussing them with colleagues, taking them up in staff or committee meetings, and deciding to take the next exploratory steps – each is a significant step that encourages progress.

We would like to hear about your experience with these tools. What do you think of them? What would it take for your organization to go further with them? You can respond to any of the authors, or through the Web site www.effectivecommunities.com.

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Philanthropic Organizations Visited

ALABAMA: Black Belt Community Foundation.

ARKANSAS⁵: Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families; Arkansas Community Foundation; Arkansas Land & Farm Development Corp; Arkansas Public Policy Panel; Foundation for Mid South; Heifer Foundation; Lee County CDC; Southern Good Faith Fund; Southern Partners Fund; W.K. Kellogg Foundation; William J. Clinton Foundation; Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

GEORGIA: ICAM; Southern Partners.

JACKSONVILLE, FL: Jacksonville Children's Commission; Jacksonville Community Council, Inc.; Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation; Jesse Ball duPont Foundation; The Community Foundation

LOUISIANA: Acadiana Community Foundation; AJAMM Ministries; Bank One; Baptist Community Ministries; Baton Rouge Area Foundation; Campaign for Human Development; Catholic Charities; Center for Nonprofit Resources; Central City Renaissance Alliance; City of Hammond; Divinity; Entergy; Foundation for Mid South; Greater New Orleans Foundation; Institute of Mental Health; Keller Family Foundation; Living Witness; Louisiana Nonprofits Organization; LSU Foundation; New Orleans Neighborhood Development Corp; Out-of-School-Time Collaborative; PICO; Point Coupee Enrichment Fund; SE Louisiana grantmakers and nonprofits; Success by Six; Twomey Center for Peace and Justice; Volunteers of America; Wisner Fund; Xavier University.

MISSISSIPPI: Foundation for the Mid South.

NEW YORK CITY: Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy; ERASE Racism; F.B. Heron Foundation; Long Island Community Foundation; New World Foundation; New York Regional Association of Grantmakers; Twenty-First Century Foundation.

NORTH CAROLINA: Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro; Community Foundation of Winston-Salem; Faith Partnerships Incorporated (*); Foundation for the Carolinas; Gold Leaf Foundation; Hindsight Consulting/New Generation of African American Philanthropists; Mary Reynolds Babcock; Southern Regional Development Initiative; W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

NATIONAL RURAL FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE: Alaska Rural Community Health Economic Strategies; Appalachian Ohio Regional Investment Coalition; NRFC's Rural Livelihoods Initiative / New Mexico Community Foundation; South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations.

CANADA: Community Foundations of Canada; Hamilton Community Foundation; Community Foundation of Ottawa

⁵ Many of these organizations operate outside the state in which they are listed.