HOW CAN WE GROW THE WORK?

Ideas from Practitioners of Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace

PHILANTHROPY *for* SOCIAL JUSTICE *and* PEACE

Based on interviews with...

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Arab Human Rights Fund

Filiz Bikmen[2]
Formerly of Sabanci Foundation

Astrid Bonfield
Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund[3]

Marwa El-Daly
Waqfeyat Al-Maadi Community Foundation

Amelia Fauzia
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Neville Gabriel
Southern Africa Trust

Jenny Hodgson
Global Fund for Community Foundations

Barbara Ibrahim
The American University in Cairo

Mirza Jahani
Aga Khan Foundation

Lisa Jordan
Bernard van Leer Foundation

Avila Kilmurray
Community Foundation for Northern Ireland

Jee Kim
Ford Foundation[6]

Gara LaMarche
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Rachel Liel
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Nicky McIntyre
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Sibongile Mkhabela
Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital[4]

Bhekinkosi Moyo
Trust Africa

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Atlantic Philanthropies

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Oussama Rifahi
Arab Fund for Arts and Culture

Santosh Samal
Dalit Foundation

Rita Thapa
Tewa – Nepal Women's Fund

Ana Valéria Araújo
Brazil Human Rights Fund

Maartje Vooijs
Adessium Foundation

...and findings from a survey of 68 practitioners worldwide

[1]In our interview with Gara, he spoke mainly about his former work at Atlantic Philanthropies.
[2]At the time of our interview with Filiz, she was Manager of Programs at the Sabanci Foundation.
[3]Since our interview with Astrid, the Fund, a "spend-out" foundation, closed its doors at the end of 2012.
[4]In our interview with Sibongile, she spoke mainly about her former work at the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.
[5]At the time of our interview with Stephen, he was Trust Secretary for JRCT.
[6] At the time of our interview with Jee, he was a consultant and spoke mainly about his former work at the Surdna Foundation.

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March 2013

Interviews conducted by Chandrika Sahai, Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network, and Mark Sedway, Sedway Associates

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Foreword

How can we grow the practice of philanthropy for social justice and peace?

This is the question we put to twenty-four leading practitioners from different parts of the world during interviews conducted between May and December of 2012. In the pages that follow, you'll hear a fascinating and at times provocative array of answers, reflections, and further questions. Some talk about the relationship between social justice and economic development. Others call for a greater emphasis on indigenous philanthropy. Some speak to what is common among practitioners of social justice philanthropy, while others discuss geographic differences. Risk emerges as a key obstacle, networking as a key opportunity.

We did these interviews—along with a survey of 68 practitioners—as part of our work to spark conversation and connection among philanthropy practitioners committed to advancing social justice and peace in regions around the globe. The Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network exists to increase the impact of this kind of grant making. We do this by developing tools and practices, shifting the narrative in philanthropy, and supporting a community of practice.

We invite you to join the Network and the conversation. Let us know what you think about the perspectives in this piece, see our website at www.p-sj.org, and contact any of us individually for more information.

The Working Group on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace[7]

Akwasi Aidoo, Trust Africa

Ana Criquillion, Central American Women's Fund

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Chandrika Sahai, Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network Coordinator

[7] Working Group members form the core of the Network.

"USE A LOT OF COMMAS"

How Should We Define the Work?

"You can create a hierarchy of those who are doing it and those who are not," cautions Jenny Hodgson of the Global Fund for Community Foundations. "The way I deal with it is to use a lot of commas. It's about constantly defining a space but pushing out the edges and not a rigid are-you-in-or-out."

By and large, those we interviewed tend to use the "social justice" frame as encompassing a variety of traditions.[8] "I prefer to use the social justice term," says Nicky McIntyre of Mama Cash. "I see social justice as going beyond a set of legal frameworks and referring to the inherent dignity and equality of all people."

"We ask ourselves how can we structurally address problems and take on responsibility for future generations," says Maartje Vooijs of Adessium Foundation. She was one of several practitioners who spoke about working with colleagues to sort out the distinctions between social justice and human rights models for framing the work. "In some cases it doesn't really matter whether you frame it as human rights or social justice as long as you try to address root causes. We need to move away from the semantics and say 'What lens do we use to take on problems?'"

Indeed, one consistent theme to emerge from our interviews was the idea of increasing the use of a social justice and peace *lens*, in a variety of philanthropic programs, rather than on increasing the development of social justice and peace *programs* themselves. We did not hear arguments for creating a special model of social justice and peace philanthropy and promoting its adoption. We did hear arguments about helping practitioners take their current practice and improving it with a social justice lens.

"Because the field isn't as well developed in developing regions, it's harder to make distinctions about what is 'social justice and peace philanthropy,'" says Jenny Hodgson of the Global Fund for Community Foundations. "Sometimes they're doing community development with a social justice lens, just not calling it that. It can't just be supported where the practice is deliberately articulated. Social justice can come through the back door."

> "It's about constantly defining a space but pushing out the edges and not a rigid are-you-in-or-out."

> "We need opportunities to share, talk, learn from each other, tackle new trends. How do we cope with such a dynamic environment?"

[8]For more on these traditions, go to http://www.p-sj.org/node/1342 on the Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace website to download "Social Justice Philanthropy: An Initial Framework for Positioning This Work," a paper by Albert Ruesga and Deborah Puntenney discussing eight of the different (and overlapping) traditions of social justice on which philanthropic practitioners base their practice.

"Some groups that say they're working on social justice philanthropy are doing it from an indirect perspective, through education, health, water," says Bhekinkosi Moyo of Trust Africa. "It's accurate to say they approach these issues with a social justice lens. But it's intervening in the bottom end, not the top end. The interventions are not a social justice program."

In terms of how to define the practice, there was near unanimity: keep the definition flexible, open, evolving.

"We will be successful if we create a community of funders from all over the world who are interested in social justice philanthropy," says Rachel Liel of the New Israel Fund, who underscored the importance of adapting the framing and understanding of the practice to new forms of philanthropy and new developments across the globe. "We need opportunities to share, talk, learn from each other, tackle new trends. How do we cope with such a dynamic environment?"

"Some groups that say they're working on social justice philanthropy are doing it from an indirect perspective, through education, health, water. It's accurate to say they approach these issues with a social justice lens. The interventions are not a social justice program."

"LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD"

What Are the Geographic Differences?

One aspect of the "dynamic environment" that we heard consistently was the difference between regions of the world in the perception and practice of philanthropy for social justice and peace. In particular, we heard several underscore a divide between the Global North and Global South.

"We need to level the playing field—North and South, donor and grantee, those who have access to the media and those who don't," says Rita Thapa of Tewa.

Oussama Rifahi of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) talked about a similar challenge, saying there's a general perception that "foundations with too narrow of an agenda impose values from outside of the region. The more vocal you are about your support for social justice as a grantmaking institution, the more there is suspicion and resistance."

"Philanthropy should address power dynamics and be a brokering, bridging agency," says Neville Gabriel of the Southern Africa Trust. "So far this role has been played by philanthropy from the North, and that does not work. This has to be indigenous."

Santosh Samal of the Dalit Foundation agrees. "Indigenous foundations may lack financial resources, but they have what is even more important—local knowledge of power imbalances and relationships with communities," he says. "Big international funders from the North can be more effective in addressing social justice and conflict issues if they work collaboratively with indigenous philanthropy globally."

Practitioners cautioned against a one-size-fits-all model of social justice philanthropy in light of different regional conditions.

"Each and every region has its own context," says Bhekinkosi Moyo of Trust Africa. "The majority of philanthropic institutions in Africa are still in the mode of providing material things—computers, buildings, schools. You cannot talk of social justice without talking about the material conditions of people. We can't divorce questions of social justice from those of economic development."

In the Arab Region, says Elie Abouaoun of the Arab Human Rights Fund, "for a long time social justice was the slogan used by leftist parties in the region. The term in Arabic remains slightly controversial and would be understood as more partisan than a concept of social justice as we understand it."

> "We need to level the playing field—North and South, donor and grantee, those who have access to the media and those who don't."

In Indonesia, according Amelia Fauzia of the State Islamic University of Jakarta, there is a related challenge. "'Social justice' is a popular term in Indonesia, but the problem is with the term 'philanthropy.' Islam has a strong tradition of philanthropy, but it is traditionally interpreted as charity."

Even within the Global North, Stephen Pittam, formerly of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, points to differences, such as between European and U.S. foundations. "Social justice can be a more mainstream notion in Europe," he says. "And if you come from Europe and from a social justice perspective, you're more likely to have a positive view of the state than you are in the U.S."

Despite attention to real differences across regions, we also were reminded to not overlook commonalities.

For instance, when Marwa El-Daly of the Waqfeyat Al-Maadi Community Foundation was on her way to a meeting of the Global Fund for Community Foundations in Romania, "I was thinking about the gaps," she says. "An Egyptian coming to Romania—I couldn't imagine anything we had in common. But I realized how similar we are. We do the same work but using different language and terminologies. The learning opened the door to what we have in common."

"What we've tried to do is respond to particular agendas and circumstances, but I wouldn't say there are massive differences between regions," says Martin O'Brien of Atlantic Philanthropies. "We bring certain values which are the same regardless of where we operate."

The key variable to follow, according to Avila Kilmurray of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, is what is behind many of the geographic differences. "Sometimes it's not just North-South but the scale you're able to work at," she says. "If you're sitting at a well-endowed, secure foundation, your view of the world is very different than if you're actually wondering whether the foundation will survive the next five years."

We were struck—and inspired—by the different ways we heard practitioners from around the world speak of philanthropy for social justice and peace. Most used language that was more professionalized and conceptual. Some, such as the founder of Tewa in Nepal, Rita Thapa, tended to speak in more personal and spiritual terms.

"I see it as a rounded life practice—to do good for others is doing good for oneself," she says. "My well-being is best ensured when I know everybody's well-being is being taken into account. Effective social justice philanthropy depends on a transformation that inevitably happens within one's own heart. This is a journey that is as much internal as on the outside."

"Sometimes it's not just North-South but the scale you're able to work at."

"LOOK AT MULTIPLE VARIABLES"

What Is Common in Practice?

> "Dealing with root causes allows us to have a sustainable approach such that change lasts beyond the intervention."

Although regional differences consistently emerged from our interviews, there was also a shared ingredient: nearly everyone framed philanthropy for social justice and peace in terms of a focus on systemic change. Ana Valéria Araújo of the Brazil Human Rights Fund puts it succinctly: "Social justice philanthropy means addressing root causes rather than consequences."

That emphasis on root causes is seen as essential to sustainable impact.

"We've been working on empowering others to serve children well, and that requires us to understand why they're not being served," says Lisa Jordan of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. "Dealing with root causes allows us to have a sustainable approach such that change lasts beyond the intervention."

In the case of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, the root-cause approach has proven useful in working with divided communities. "We found that drawing causal connections—for example, poverty linked to inequities in income distribution and wealth—helped cross the boundaries of local, single-identity communities," says Avila Kilmurray. "It pushes us to look at common causes."

Several practitioners spoke of difficulties in the effort to help their regions transition from more traditional forms of philanthropy to the longer-term, systemic approaches of social justice work.

"In Islam it is incumbent on every believer to give a percent of what they have after meeting basic needs, and giving is understood in terms of justice," says Barbara Ibrahim of The American University in Cairo. "Within that deep culture of giving, however, gifts have not focused on root causes. The impulse is toward ameliorating want and the giving is more charitable than strategic."

"It's very difficult for many small funds—in places like Mongolia, Nepal, Czech Republic, Brazil because of the traditional environment for giving in their regions—to push forward from a charitable approach focused on direct service and often through religious organizations to a more social justice approach," says Nicky McIntyre of Mama Cash.

"A lot of the movement to social justice philanthropy goes hand-in-hand with the move toward more systemic interventions as philanthropies," says Sibongile Mkhabela of the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital and formerly of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. "We find this in our interviews with

leaders of philanthropies in the Global South. They're doing what might be termed 'social justice philanthropy,' but they aren't necessarily calling it that."

Stephen Pittam, formerly of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust had a similar take. "The messaging of social justice philanthropy has to have universal values," he says. "But it's going to have to touch the particular issues of regions."

"I feel that the global scenario, particularly in the north, is driven by corporate-like functioning and they are into shorter management of problems and end up addressing the manifestations of injustice and conflict rather than the root causes," says Santosh Samal of the Dalit Foundation.

One other element frequently suggested as common in practice and essential to using a social justice lens was attention to multiple variables in analyzing and responding to problems.

"If you're looking to change one variable, it's unlikely that you are a social justice philanthropist," says Lisa Jordan of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. "You have to understand the economic dynamic, the gender dynamic, the race or ethnicity dynamic, the health dynamic, the power dynamic. You have to be very patient and able to look at multiple variables at the same time."

> "A lot of the movement to social justice philanthropy goes hand-in-hand with the move toward more systemic interventions as philanthropies."

"SOCIAL JUSTICE HAS NO CLEAR BOXES TO CHECK"

What Are the Barriers?

"Our biggest challenge," says Sibongile Mkhabela of the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital and formerly of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, "is that we'll all be dancing to the music of the donor, and ideological biases often influence how they give, irrespective of what we see on the ground. Many donors want you to tick boxes, and social justice has no clear boxes to check."

"Individual donors often don't know about structural issues," says Amelia Fauzia of the State Islamic University, Jakarta. "They want to give their money to direct charity."

One barrier, practitioners said, can be fear of risk, especially among foundation trustees.

"Foundation boards are rather risk-averse, and social justice is inherently risky," says Gara LaMarche of New York University. "When you're talking about large foundations from wealthy people who are the 1%, not the 99%, big philanthropy is not likely to support upending the social order."

"It seems to me that the most successful Boards are those that focus on outcomes and the big picture," says Astrid Bonfield of the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. "And foundations have a great opportunity to take risks that others can't. To be able to say we banned cluster bombs, it's extraordinary. Foundations can do great stuff if they want to change the world."

Other practitioners raised a related barrier: a focus on short-term, tangible "wins," at the expense of the long term.

"There is an overriding concern with short-term results and monitoring," says Neville Gabriel of the Southern Africa Trust. "Social justice philanthropy needs more time and energy."

Indeed, most practitioners named patience as an essential quality of the social justice grantmaker.

"The key obstacle to social justice and peace philanthropy is that it's hard work that doesn't reap instant results," says Santosh Samal of the Dalit Foundation. "Philanthropists want to see changes in their lifetime, and social justice and peace are outcomes that need a very long time frame. We need to be aggressive like climate change advocates and show through case studies why social justice and peace philanthropy is needed."

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"Foundations have a great opportunity to take risks that others can't."

"A new generation of philanthropists wants quick results. In the social justice arena, it just doesn't work," says Rachel Liel of the New Israel Fund. "We need to learn how to cope with the DNA of funding social justice. Social justice and peace are processes which take a long time. You need to have the ability to postpone immediate satisfaction and evaluate long-term impact."

There are political barriers, too. "There's a fear of getting involved in politics and local controversies," says Martin O'Brien of Atlantic Philanthropies. "And it's also difficult to have an impact on large and systemic problems."

Several practitioners encouraged continued attention to what might be holding back the spread of philanthropy for social justice and peace.

"We need to do a structural analysis on ourselves: why is all this good work so under-resourced despite all the resources in the world?" asks Rita Thapa of Tewa. "We need to think more holistically and get away from clichéd words."

One cause, according to Stephen Pittam, formerly of Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, is a tension inherent in philanthropy itself.

"Philanthropy thrives when there's inequality," he says. "It's one of the real struggles I'm having in thinking about social justice philanthropy in the UK. We're in a situation in which the top 1% can get away with paying a lower level of tax than the poor. The philanthropic sector is going hell for leather against the government limiting tax breaks on large donations from the rich. Meanwhile, philanthropy for social justice is attempting to counter issues of inequality, which inevitably means advocating that the rich pay a fairer share of tax. It's a huge paradox."

The tension can hit community foundations and other public charities especially hard. "If you're trying to bring in donations, and you're also raising questions about the justice of the taxation system," says Avila Kilmurray of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, "the two may not go hand-in-hand."

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"WE'RE VERY OPTIMISTIC"

What are the new directions and opportunities?

Many practitioners pointed with enthusiasm to new inquiries, strategies and players in the world of philanthropy for social justice and peace, in part as a result of broader changes in the philanthropy field and across the globe.

"We're very optimistic," says Barbara Ibrahim of the American University in Cairo, "because the fear barrier to talk about what's wrong in civil society or government is completely gone. Another thing we've noticed is that philanthropy, instead of being only the purview of the wealthy or very religious, is now on the mind of young activists and professionals."

Such changes are requiring practitioners to develop new moves in their philanthropy.

"The Arab Spring, the protests in Israel—those aren't coming from the regular NGO structure," says Rachel Liel of the New Israel Fund. "It's more of a spontaneous movement and very unstructured. We as a sector haven't built enough strategies and understanding to answer this new creature."

Many foundations are embracing the role of policy advocacy in a way they haven't before, requiring shifts in what Filiz Bikmen, formerly of the Sabanci Foundation, calls the "software" of foundation work.

"We are focusing on not just what the government can do but what the government should do and how it should do it," she says. "To do that we are shifting from hardware to software. Many foundations in Turkey don't yet have teams that can do advocacy and the capacity to deal with the softer side of the work. This is all new so there is a human resource issue."

Others we interviewed focused on new opportunities and imperatives in raising funds.

"For far too long we haven't asked about sustainability," says Mirza Jahani of the Aga Khan Foundation. "If we look at civil society in the West, it's where it's at because of people's ability to endow institutions and effectively support an inclusive business model for the media. If you establish a business model for social justice philanthropy it's more likely to be sustainable."

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Jahani and several others emphasized the value of indigenous donors for social justice and peace efforts, through greater support of community philanthropy and other means.

"Issues of legitimacy arise when it's not supported by a local donor base," says Jenny Hodgson of the Global Fund for Community Foundations. "It raises the whole idea of cultivating a culture of philanthropists in the Global South who support social justice."

Santosh Samal of the Dalit Foundation pointed to Foundations for Peace, a network of indigenous foundations from around the world working in situations of conflict, as an example of the important role of indigenous philanthropy. "Small funds can be used strategically by indigenous foundations to have big impact," he says.[9]

Jee Kim, now at the Ford Foundation, thinks "the biggest opportunity is to engage new money coming online. There's an explosion of wealth, and wealth inequality, in parts of the world like India and China, places where there are new billionaires every few weeks and new foundations every few months, and we need engagement and exposure. No one is talking with these new philanthropists about social movements and civil society."

"I'm not so interested in a big international foundation based in India," says Nicky McIntyre of Mama Cash. "I'm more interested in shifting an Indian funder to set up a foundation in India for social justice."

"No one is talking with these new philanthropists about social movements and civil society."

[9] See the Foundations for Peace report "Small Money, Big Impact" at www.foundationsforpeace.org.

"GET AT VALUES AND EXPERIENCE"

How Can We Make the Case and Spread the Practice?

We found great interest in exploring ways to make the case for philanthropy for social justice and peace and spread the practice. Five particular strategies were highlighted:

1. *Emphasize vision and values over interventions, "the why" more than "the how."* "What I found to be most effective," says Jee Kim, now at the Ford Foundation, of his effort to build support for social justice approaches while he was at the Surdna Foundation, "is, instead of diving in at the program guidelines and strategies level, to get at values and where people are coming from in terms of experience. What is your understanding of social justice? What does a just society look like? It was pushing hard against short-term planning and landing on a set of core values to move long-term. What's needed in the broader realm of institutional philanthropy is talking about social justice philanthropy from a value-based framework. " Lisa Jordan of the Bernard van Leer Foundation encourages a similarly big-picture pitch. "The question is how long do you want your footprint to last," she says. "Do you want to make change in the moment or intergenerational change? The sustainability aspect of social justice philanthropy is very attractive."

2. *Mobilize and equip ambassadors.* Nicky McIntyre of Mama Cash says overcoming the barriers to funding women and girls (in her organization's case) involves "leadership and finding allies in the sector, often men, who have had their own awakening and taken their foundation through a process. We want to create a working group of the converted, who do a dog-and-pony show going to boards, speaking with peers, proving that using a gender lens or social justice lens creates better outcomes." Gara LaMarche of New York University endorses NGOs as effective, if underused, ambassadors. "Foundations are treated very delicately by NGOs," he says. "There's an untapped power and safety in numbers. I'd be interested in conversations at the demand side. Was there pushback? There's a need for NGOs and public charity foundations to be more insistent in the political sense. There's too much politeness in the field."

3. *Bring ideas to various self-organized circles of work.* "What's needed," says Jee Kim, reflecting on his time advocating for social justice philanthropy within and outside of the Surdna Foundation, "are committed, coordinated leaders who share values and are practiced and fluent in communicating them, who can then effectively engage other donors and funders. I've talked with leaders who find themselves in

"What's needed in the broader realm of institutional philanthropy is talking about social justice philanthropy from a value-based framework."

"There's a need for NGOs and public charity foundations to be more insistent in the political sense. There's too much politeness in the field."

spaces where there's no language around social justice philanthropy. It's not resistance but lack of exposure—people haven't been engaged." "Let the affinities develop organically," urges Oussama Rifahi of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture. "A network's ultimate purpose is for members to mature and move away from it. It's like electrical charges. How many couplings result?"

4. *Demonstrate the impact.* "We need good literature about how the social justice approach can have an impact," says Gara LaMarche of New York University. "We're living in a time that the language of metrics and a bottom-line business mentality are very prominent, and there is more pressure than there used to be to talk about results and impact. We need tools for assessment that meet the legitimate concern about what you are accomplishing yet are appropriate to a social justice context." "We have to show it has more impact," says Nicky McIntyre of Mama Cash. "If a philanthropist doesn't want that kind of impact—structural change and shifting who has power and changing the status quo—then no matter what we do it's not in their interest, and they won't be convinced."

5. *Share the stories.* "The methods of describing the impact of the work through specific case studies and storytelling is most efficient and conveys impact through emotion," says Oussama Rifahi of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture. According to Martin O'Brien of Atlantic Philanthropies, "Examples are the best way to create confidence and the best way to conquer fear. It reassures others: 'we got into this, and we're fine.'" "I strongly feel that the kind of sharing where people are able to be convinced about the need for this approach to philanthropy cannot be communicated through seminars and meetings," says Santosh Samal of the Dalit Foundation. "People need to see this work for real. We need to show evidence, by taking people to the communities that have benefited from this work. Films can be another way. The impact when you see it with your own eyes is deep and moving."

"Let the affinities develop organically."

"Examples are the best way to create confidence and the best way to conquer fear. It reassures others: 'we got into this, and we're fine.'"

"ONLY BY BUILDING VOICES DO YOU GET VOICE"

How can we support fellow practitioners?

We asked practitioners how they would like to be supported, what people they would like to connect with, what practices they would like to learn about. The hunger for a community of practice was nearly universal, though there were disagreements about what kind of community of practice.

"I don't feel like those of us dealing with social justice and peace issues have enough of a community of like-minded practitioners" says Rachel Liel of the New Israel Fund. "We need to create a sector, one that has its own identity and accumulated knowledge and is willing to step up and fight the fight. Maybe this perspective comes from the work we do with excluded communities who fight for recognition. Philanthropies doing social justice lack recognition."

Most emphasized the need to create more opportunities for practitioners to interact and learn from each other. At the same time, they differed on whether those interactions would be better within regions or across regions, with most pushing for within.

"I've been involved in one global network where you lose nuance and the dominant paradigm becomes *the* paradigm," says Jenny Hodgson of the Global Fund for Community Foundations. "So we've convened regionally. There needs to be an African voice, a southern Africa voice, a South Africa voice. Only by building voices do you get voice."

"I really like the idea of being part of a social justice philanthropy network whose agenda is informed by local and regional needs and at the global level is more thematically oriented," says Ana Valéria Araújo of the Brazil Human Rights Fund.

"There's enormous value in connecting people across regions and areas," says Gara LaMarche of New York University. "Having said that, these conversations can be colored by Global North and South issues. At a certain point it would be apples and oranges in terms of resources and political context. I've always been a believer in east-east, west-west."

Some suggested regional convenings that bring in a small set of practitioners from outside, or arranging to send practitioners on learning visits to other regions.

All emphasized interaction opportunities for small groups or one-on-one.

"I really like the idea of being part of a social justice philanthropy network whose agenda is informed by local and regional needs and at the global level is more thematically oriented."

"A real conversation is difficult in a network of 100 or 150," says Rita Thapa of Tewa. "If we could begin with deeper conversations in little groups where there is trust and open sharing, one can see what these can offer to shape broader discussions and networks."

"A simple success measurement is who is talking to whom?" says Jenny Hodgson. "Where are the lights coming on and where are the connections made and who is sharing stuff? There's a value to these relationships. People feel lonely and isolated and don't realize it until they get off a call where someone talked about exactly the same things they're facing."

Some argued that technology could be a boost as well.

"With the explosion of social media, we've noticed dramatic changes in the modes of cultural production," says Oussama Rifahi of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture. "There's a 5-minute short film posted on YouTube. A week later, 10,000 people have watched it. Which award winning documentary can claim the same reach?"

"We can use technology more creatively," says Barbara Ibrahim of The American University in Cairo, who mentioned one example of helping with the development of a new GrantCraft guide over Skype. "We've developed relationships of trust over Skype. Imagine if we had Skype right after the Cairo meeting[10] and, for instance, the group enthusiastic about more sensitive indicators had a monthly call to move the discussion forward."

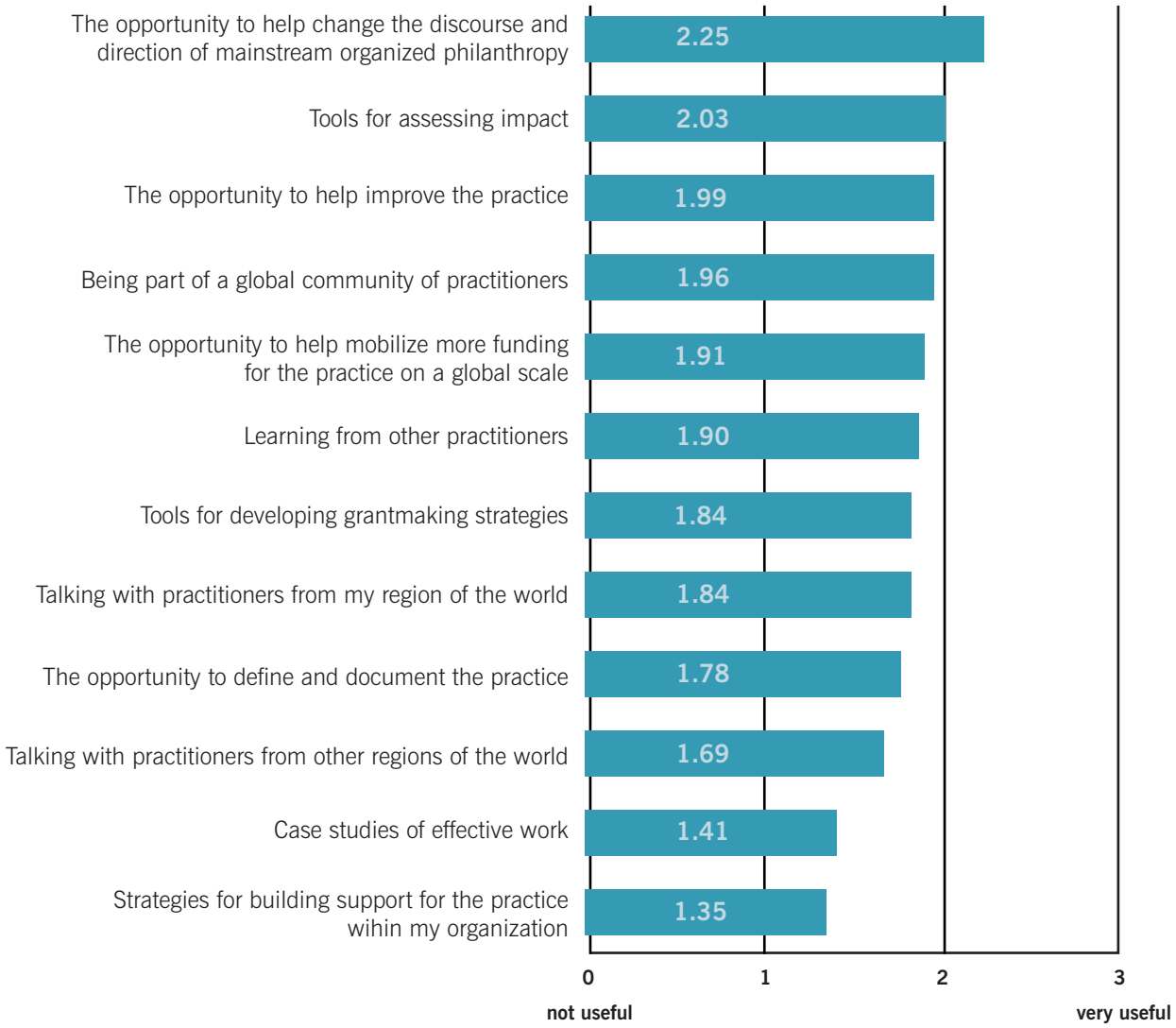
"A simple success measurement is who is talking to whom? Where are the lights coming on and where are the connections made and who is sharing stuff?"

[10] The Convening on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace was held in Cairo, Egypt, in February 2009. For a summary report, go to http://www.p-sj.org/node/1170.

SURVEY FINDINGS

People Want Different Things from the Network

We surveyed 68 philanthropy practitioners worldwide and asked them to rate a dozen potential benefits of participating in the Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network in terms of their value. Here's how they ranked them:



Our most important takeaway came from an analysis of the findings by Barry Knight, executive director of CENTRIS and a member of the Working Group on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace.

"The chart gives averages across all respondents, but deeper inspection of the data shows that individuals want different things from the network," he says. "Practitioners cluster into five distinct reasons for wanting to engage:

1. **Mainstreaming social justice**—the desire to influence the way that philanthropy as a whole works;
2. **Peer learning**—the desire to learn from other people and places in the world;
3. **Tools**—the desire for knowledge about how to do certain technical things, most particularly impact evaluation;
4. **Strategy**—the desire to improve practice within their organization;
5. **Connection**—the desire to reduce isolation and loneliness."

These distinct reasons—and the recognition that different practitioners might want different things from a network—will remain front and center as we continue to shape our community of practice.

We were also struck by the top-rated benefit: "the opportunity to help change the discourse and direction of mainstream organized philanthropy." Seen against other, more conventional benefits that one might expect participants in a network to value, the ranking of this benefit at the top of the list came as a surprise. Yet we sensed in our interviews that many practitioners of philanthropy for social justice and peace see in its philosophy and practice a critique of mainstream philanthropy, support that critique, and consider the opportunity to grow the work an opportunity to act on that critique.

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WHAT'S NEXT

Building a Community of Practice

Our interviews and survey generated a number of ideas—practical and philosophical—that we are incorporating as we build the Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace Network for the coming years.

What Kind of Network?

One theme from the inquiry stood out above the rest: a call for the Network to function like a true community of practice.

Practitioners are looking for a community that can help alleviate their isolation, create a sense of common identity in a field, and provide professional legitimacy and political cover for their work. They want a group of peers with whom they can reflect on their practice, a space to be self-critical, and a body of knowledge and experience to learn what works and what doesn't.

It was clear from the interviews that the legal and cultural factors that influence the growth and practice of social justice and peace philanthropy vary from region to region. Practitioners see the value in a global community, but they want the discussions, learning and sharing to first take place at the regional level.

And, loud and clear, practitioners are also saying what they *don't* want: another network with complex organizational structures, membership dues, and significant investments of time and energy. Indeed, when asked what kind of support they need, several responded with "Not another network!" Most practitioners said they belong to all the formal networks they need, while those still looking for such networks did not think Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace should be one.

Instead, they are calling for a community that is organic, self-directed, nimble, spontaneous, and inclusive, driven not by dominant ideas but diverse voices, with conversations relevant to context and tolerant of those at the periphery as well as the center.

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How Are We Building It?

With this vision of a community of practice in mind, our agenda for the coming years includes the following activities:

1. Facilitating organic regional and continental groupings of practitioners—foundations and individuals—to develop spaces for peer learning and support and regional agendas for advancing the practice of philanthropy for social justice and peace.

2. Joining those groupings, as appropriate, in conversation with existing regional and thematic philanthropy networks, associations, and communities to deepen reflection on philanthropy for social justice and peace generally and the social justice lens in particular.

3. Building a repository of tools and information on defining the practice, grantmaking strategy, impact evaluation, and mobilizing resources. Many of these resources will be collected from practitioners, while some will need to be created.

4. Exploring specific thematic areas in grantmaking—such as arts and culture—and their role in philanthropy for social justice and peace.

5. Collecting and sharing practitioner stories and voices that establish "proof-of-concept," document the practice, demonstrate impact, share lessons, provide cover, and show the community of practice in action.

6. Developing a web-based presence to connect members of the community and share the above resources.

For more information, please contact Chandrika Sahai
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We hope you'll join the Network!

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