

INTRODUCTION

Setting the Scene

In an era marked by unprecedented wealth transfer and shifting societal dynamics, philanthropy is not sitting on the sidelines, but is being called to actively adjust to a new reality. This moment presents challenges and opportunities that should prompt those of us in the philanthropic sector to rethink how we work to fulfill our respective missions.

What has brought us to this moment? First, recent crises—like natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, racial and ethnic injustices, migrant challenges, and the increased recognition of systems-based inequities, among others—have shown the need to be quick and adaptable in our philanthropic responses. Ongoing global events, such as humanitarian crises and climate-related disasters, have continued to prompt philanthropic responses on both local and international levels. Social movements advocating for various causes, including racial justice, gender equality, and climate action, have remained active and continue to shape funding priorities. Moreover, governments worldwide are changing the rules for how philanthropy works, making things like transparency and accountability more important than ever.

The public is also expecting more from the philanthropic sector, raising questions about the ethical implications of private funders shaping public policies. Globally, there's a growing pushback against what's perceived as an inappropriate influence on public policy by private funders. In the United States, concerns persist regarding the dominance of affluent donors in dictating solutions to societal and environmental challenges without involving the affected communities. This translates to a desire from the public for transparency; people want to understand what philanthropies are doing, and why. In the middle of all this, younger people are starting to have a bigger say in where philanthropic money goes. They care more about equity, inclusion, and transparency, as well as changing systems that cause problems. With these and other challenges converging, philanthropic organizations are called to reconsider their mission and core principles, how they approach their work with others, and how they work to fulfill that mission. This analysis may result in an adaptation of strategies and practices ensures continued relevance and effectiveness in a changing world.



This book, a complement to *Reimagining Philanthropy A Roadmap for a More Just World*, will aid philanthropies in that evaluation as they seek to effectively drive change and create a more just and equitable world. It starts with practical guidance on embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion in your philanthropy. A discussion on systems change in philanthropy explores how philanthropic organizations can move beyond addressing symptoms to uprooting the root causes of complex societal issues.

In a world where interconnected problems demand holistic solutions, this analysis seeks to uncover the strategies that enable philanthropy to be a catalyst for systemic transformation. The intricacies of philanthropic frameworks and operating models will be explored through the lens of exploring how organizations can adapt their frameworks to maximize their effectiveness in a rapidly changing world.

With so much work to do that is urgent, the next topic that is covered is strategic time horizons in philanthropy. Effective philanthropy often requires a long-term view, but that doesn't necessarily translate into in-perpetuity funding. This discussion will provide guidance on thoughtful and intentional time-horizon planning to achieve the imperative of lasting change. Next is impact investing, an approach beyond grantmaking to generate both positive societal impact and financial returns, all in alignment with the organization's philanthropic mission. Measuring impact and communication are also delved into as areas of thoughtful consideration for philanthropic funders seeking significant impact.

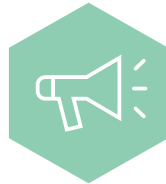
Reflections for Leaders

As philanthropic leaders embark on this transformative journey of introspection, it will be helpful to consider certain fundamental questions that can their organizations toward maximizing impact in our rapidly changing world. These questions provide a framework for thoughtful reflection as you engage with this book and foster discussion within your organization.



Purpose and Impact

- What is the ultimate purpose and mission of our philanthropic organization?
- How do we currently measure and assess our impact, and are we achieving meaningful outcomes?
- Are our philanthropic efforts aligned with our values and the needs of the communities we serve?
- What steps can we take to enhance our understanding of the long-term impact and sustainability of our initiatives?



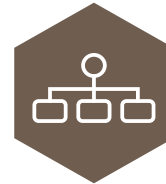
Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Are we engaging effectively with the communities and populations we aim to support?
- How can we ensure that the voices and perspectives of those directly impacted by our work are included in our decision-making processes?
- Are we actively collaborating with other stakeholders, including nonprofits, government entities, and private sector partners, to maximize our collective impact?
- What strategies can we employ to cultivate authentic relationships and build trust with our stakeholders?



Strategy and Approaches

- Are our current strategies and approaches effective in addressing the root causes of social problems?
- How can we leverage a systems approach to identify and tackle the underlying factors that perpetuate social challenges?
- What innovative approaches or models exist that could enhance our philanthropic strategies?
- Are we open to experimenting with new ideas and taking calculated risks to achieve greater impact?



Organizational Culture and Practices

- Does our organizational culture foster a learning mindset, adaptability, and collaboration?
- How can we create an inclusive and diverse environment that values different perspectives?
- How can we transform our funding practices and operating behaviors to disrupt inequities, remove barriers to progress and create more impact?

Taking the time to reflect on these questions as you read the chapters that follow can provide valuable insights and help your organization adapt its practices and strategies to better serve the communities it aims to impact. In the chapters that follow, we explore these pillars more deeply, offering practical guidance to help you and your organization navigate this crucial juncture. Embracing the opportunities for change and growth, you can lead your organization toward greater effectiveness, impact, and a more just and equitable society.