

Highlights from ECF Session

10/3/23

Room 1 with Jessica Avendaño, Sunlight Giving Foundation

Dilemma / Question: *What to do with this data from Candid?*

Background and context:

Sunlight Giving commissioned Candid (previously GuideStar) to collect grantee data. There were four reasons to do so:

1. Shift the burden from grantees having to collect this data to the funder;
2. Enables the foundation to see more easily how much of our grantmaking was going to BIPOC-led organizations;
3. Expand our foundation's commitment to equity; and
4. Collecting this data is aligned with our values as a funder.

The data collected reveal that most of our grantees are led by BIPOC, mostly in direct services and 10-15% are engaged in systems change.

So... we're asking ourselves, *"What's next on using this data?"* and *"How might we collect demographic data on who our grantees are serving?"*

Wisdom from the group...

- What's the data already telling you?
- Provide technical assistance to grantees to collect their own data if you require it. Or any data-related requests, provide support.
- It's hard to achieve consistent data collection to draw conclusions.
- Have conversations with your community partners on how data collected is useful to them.
- Community-based organizations want to do whatever it takes to satisfy others and funders. It's an opportunity for something perhaps bigger and more meaningful. What might that be?
- In the public domain, we have collected data to advance a certain result or goal. What are you trying to advance or achieve and what role does data collection play?
- What more would you want from the data? Are there gaps? What's the purpose of collecting data, or more data?
- If you had one more data point, you'd be able to influence (What? Such as funding amount? Who? Such as your board?)? What are you trying to solve or overcome with more data?

Jessica's reflections...

- So affirming to hear your comments and insights.
- The data already collected did not surprise us. We can be OK with that. Gaps are not obvious or present from the data.

- If I had a “magic wand...” what more data would we want? And why?
- If we say this is important, provide TA and support.
- Continue to share more about our foundation’s internal equity work with grantee partners and the field.

Room 2 with Robert Medina, Sobrato Philanthropies

Dilemma / Question: *How to intersect language justice and racial justice?*

Background and context:

Sobrato has been doing some powerful work on better understanding the experiences of dual-language learners. There are racial justice conversations and language justice conversations. It feels there is an opportunity to see how language intersects with race. Here are some points Robert pointed to as he shared the context:

- Increase the connections between these two critical conversations
- One attempt to intersect the two is with storytelling and narratives of people closest to the situation – how did it feel being raised as an English learner?

So... we’re asking ourselves, *“How can we intersect language and racial justice?”*

Wisdom from the group...

- What is the end goal of your conversation? Is it to galvanize language justice more to racial justice or to lift up/build-up language justice more?
- Is anyone saying don’t combine language and racial justice? How can we proactively combat scarcity.
- Young people have been key to starting this conversation through storytelling.
- It takes intentional facilitation to curate a safe container and space to have these conversations
- People at times use language as a proxy for race.
- Excited to see Sobrato’s journey to figure this out and get more clarity re language and racial justice.
- I am hungry for the vision – what would the world look like if we did this?
- Language has been used to discriminate.
- Language is a vehicle to get to remembering.
- What are the obstacles to language justice?
- Can’t silo language justice. Language and identity are so tied together.
- Fear is real to bring these issues together. Relationships, building relationships with one another can help with this fear.
- We can speak in our home languages from time to time in English dominate spaces and not take on the burden of translating for those who don’t understand.

Robert’s reflections...

- Really value people’s sharing, questions, raising gaps.

- To continue engaging in stories
- Look into the power of relationship building to see how that can be part of the strategy to link language + racial justice

Do's and Don'ts and Aspire for...

Do:

- Explicitly and unapologetically fund leaders of color.
- Bring provocative ideas. Keep bringing them.
- Max out on risk taking: these are what others are doing... reach to take more risks.
- Deepen relationships "beyond the check." That's all we will have after we spend down.
- Take more risks, space and opportunities to recommend things to our board.
- Be even more bold. Create more venues and platforms to share.
- Connect my values to my work. Be more courageous and try new things.
- Have more conversations on the BIG picture.
- Dive into the "why" more.
- Have more conversations about reflecting on and connecting to a sense of belonging.

Don'ts:

- Don't cause harm as our foundation exits / spends down.
- Don't get too comfortable. Retain a sense of urgency. Foundation jobs can be quite comfortable. Remember why I'm here.
- Don't engage in hubris thinking we know what's right.
- Be mindful of how big the drama of our agency gets and slow it down or stop it.
- For executive directors to share out the decision-making parts of the work and not be the sole person making decisions.

Aspire: (we ran out of time...)

- Build family members on our foundation's board's comfort to NOT engage in "smarty pants" philanthropy.
- Social safety net that works in California
- Engage in practical conversations on how what gets in the way of systems serving families better.

Closing words...

- Gratitude!
- Thank you all for the session! 2 words "authentic collaboration"
- space
- Virtual belonging! Love it
- connection
- Connection

- Appreciate you all being here in community!
- Aspire
- Re-energized
- accountability