

Facilitating Equitable Systems Change:

September 2023

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SYSTEMS CHANGE AND
WHY SHOULD IT BE EQUITABLE?

WHY EMBRACE SYSTEMS CHANGE?

THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY LEADERS IN
ADVANCING SYSTEMS CHANGE

WHY SOME FUNDERS DON'T PRIORITIZE
SYSTEMS CHANGE

Introduction

PRUH H-HFWLYH UHVLOLHQW VROX

“ Most social and environmental problems require
comprehensive changes in public and private systems,
VLJQL®FDQW FKDOOHQJHV

LQ°XHQWLDO SRLQWV ZLWKLQ

DSSURDFK WR HPEUDFH V\ VWHPV F

Why Embrace Systems Change?

6\ VWHPV F KDQJH DSSURDFKHV FDQ SURYLGH WDQJLEOH EHQH@WV



:KLOH QRW HYHU\ EHQH@W DERYH LV UH°HFWHG LQ HYHU\ SURJUDPH LV FOHDU WKDW WKHUH DUH QXPHURXV EHQH@WV IRU SKLODQWKU

Key Questions for Foundation Leaders

- What systems are implicated in our work?
- Do we consider ourselves or want to be a systems change funder?
- What benefits do, or might, we see as a result of prioritizing systems change?

SDUW UHVWULFWLRQV DQG LPSRVHG DFFRXQWDELOLW\ 7KXV WKH
YDULHW\ RI ZD\WKURXJK DGYRFD\ WKURXJK IXQGLQJ GLVUXSW
DQG DPSOL®FDWLRQ WKURXJK EXLOGGLQJ QHZ LQVWLWXWLRQV WH

- ,QYHVWLQJ LQ QDUUDWLYH FKDQJH ZKLFK KDV EHHQ FLWHG DV V\ VWHPV FKDQJH E\ FKDQJLQJ PHQWDO PRGHV KH DUWV DQG P

\$V SDUW RI WKDW H-RUW LW DFWLYHO\ HQJDJHV LQ QDUUDWLYH

SDUWQHUV HVSHFLDOO\ WKRVH ZLWK OLYHG H[SHULHQFH DQG H ,Q OHDGLQJ E\ H[DPSOH E\ OHYHUDJLQJ WKHLU UHVRXUFHV H[SHU

Key Questions for Foundation Leaders

- How might we change our funding models and choices to better reflect system change needs?
- How can I engage staff and partners in better analyzing how the different parts of a problem, including root causes, are all interrelated?
- Are there additional ways we can better leverage our position to drive policy or otherwise advocate for systems change beyond our spending targets?

Leading on Systems Change: Internal Lens

- **Articulating a clear vision:** Foundation leadership can explicitly detail a clear vision for their
RUJDQLJDWLRQoV UROH LQ GULYLQJ V\ VWHPV FKDQJH DQG FRPP
VWDNHNKROGHUV ERWK LQVLGH DQG RXWVLGH WKH RUJDQLJDWLR
(OOHQ 'RUVH\ ([HFXWLYH 'LUHFWRU RI WKH :DOODFH *OREDO)XQG

- **Engaging deeply with stakeholders:** For systems change, the range of necessary stakeholders
FDQ EH TXLWH ODUJH DQG SKLODQWKURS\ OHDGHUV ZLOO KDYH
VWDNHNKROGHUV WR EXLOG VWURQJ UHODWLRQVKLSV DQG IRVWH
5LS 5DSVRQ &(2 RI
SDUWQHUVKLSV ZLWK FRPPXQLW\ RUJDQLJDWLRQV DQG RWKHU IXQ

DQG ZRUNHG FORVHO\ ZLWK JUDQWHHV WR GHYHORS DQG UH@QH V

- **Aligning resources with the articulated vision:** 3KLODQWKURSLF &(2V DQG ERDUG PH
critical in setting the tone for aligning a fuller spectrum of their organization's resources
IXQGLQJ VWD~ WLPH HQGRZPHQW H[SHUWLVH IRU H[DPSON Z
FKDQJH

'HEUD 6FKZDUW] ODQDJLQJ 'LUHFWRU RI ,PSDFW ,QYHVWPHQWV DV

,Q ZRUNLQJ WR EXLOG UHODWLRQVKLSV ZLWK RWKHU LQYHVWRUV

ZLWKLQ WKH IRXQGDWLRQoV VWD~tKDV HPSKDVLJHG WKH LPSRUWD

- **Creating a framework for intersectional programs and grantmaking: Reducing internal silos**
FDQ EH SLYRWDO IRU IRXQGDWLRQV HQJDJHG LQ V\ VWHPV FKDQ
DGGUHV V WKH FRPSOH[LQWHUSOD\ RI PXOWLSOH VRFLDO DQG H

Key Questions for Foundation Leaders

- How can we, as leaders, more effectively set visionary yet realistic goals for systems change?
- As we look at our internal operations, what messages might we as leaders be sending inadvertently about the value of learning, experimentation, and risk-taking that could hinder innovation?
- What would we need to change about our measurement and assessment approaches to get better insight while recognizing the need for patient assessment of systems work?

Why Some Funders Don't Prioritize Systems Change

RQ D YDULHW\ RI IDFWRUV LQFOXGLQJ EXW QRW OLPLWHG WR LV WKH DSSHWLWH IRU GLVUXSWLRQ ERDUG DQG VWD- HQJ DJHPHQW



VLJQL®FDQW LQYHVWPHQWV RI VWD- WLPH DQG I



Ways Non-Systems Funders Can Better Enable Systems Change

7KHUH DUH VHYHUDO IXQGHHU EHKDYLRUV WKDW DUH KLJKO\ EHQH

WXUQ FDQ EH LQ°XHQFHG E\ WKH ZD\ WKH\ UHFHLYH IXQGLQJ

r (VWDEOLVKLQJ ORQJ WHUP JUDQWHH UHODWLRQVKLSV DQG SUR
r 3URYLGKQJ JHQHUDO RSHUDWLRQJ VXSSRUW DV RSSRVHG WR UH

Ensuring Multi-Year Support

/RQJ WHUP IXQGLQJ GH°QHGH KHUH DV JUDQWV RI
WKUHH WR °YH \HUV RU PRUH YHURQH LPSRUWDQDWZDRXWSXWV

WR HQJDJH LQ V\VWHPV FKDQJHVSHFWLF WKDW WKH °HGH\ JUDQWHH
SDWLHQFH DQG WHQDFLW\ ,W FDQ DOVR KHOS LQFUHDVH
LQQRYDWLRQ OLNH YHQWXUH FDSLWDO IRU SUR°W HQWLWLHV

RUJDQL]DWLRQ WKH °H[LELW\ WR WDNH DGYDQWDJH RI

)RUG)RXQGDWLRQoV %8,/' SURJUDP pSURYLGHV PXOWL OHYHO VX
FRPPLWPHQWV °H[LEOH IXQGLQJ DQG LQVWLWXWLRQDO VWUHQJW
DQG H-HFWLYH LQ LWV VHFRRG URXQG RI °YH \HUV JUDQWV WR KXQ
VHHNV WR JLYH JUDQWHHV WKH °H[LELW\ DQG UHVLOLHQFH QHH

JUDQWHHV ZLWK RYHU SHUFHQW DJUHHKQJ WKDW %8,/' VXSSRU
EHFRPH PRUH H-HFWLYH

KWWSV ZZZ URFNSD RUJ ZS FRQWHQW XSORDGV 5RFN3\$ 6FDOLQJ 6ROXWLRQV :(% SGI
KWWSV ZZZ IRUGIRXQGDWLRQ RUJ WKH ODWHVW QHZV IRUG IRXQGDWLRQ H[SDQGV °DJVKLS EXLOG SUR
KWWSV ZZZ IRUGIRXQGDWLRQ RUJ QHZV DQG VWRULHV QHZV DQG SUHVV QHZV DGGLWLRQDO SDJHV ID
FXUH IXQGLQJ IURP RWKHU VRXUFHV

Providing General Operating Support to Turbo Boost Stability and Innovation

°H[LELOLW\ WR DOORFDWH IXQGLQ

XQUHVVWULFWHG IXQGLQJ FDQ DOO

GLVFLSOLQH ,Q UHDOLW\ WKHUH DUH VLJQL®FDQW EHQH®WV

Simplifying Grants Management Processes

2QH H[DPSOH RI DQ RUJDQL]DWLR
GUDPDWLFDOO\ VLPSOL@HG WKH D
H-RUWV FDQ EH FRXQWHUSURGXFWLYH ,Q IDFW RYHUO\
LWV SKLORVRSK\ DQG DFWLRQV 3
,W ZDV VKRZQ GXULQJ WKH DJH RI &RYLG WKDW

Key Questions for Foundation Leaders

- How can our organization change our application, funding, and reporting practices to deepen our relationships and increase alignment with our grantees and other partners?
- What do we have in place to collect honest feedback about our processes, that acknowledges the power dynamic?
- What more can we do to support our grantees who are deeply involved in systems change?

Conclusion

SRZHU WR LQ°XHQFH RWKHU VW DWHK RSRGWHUQW LQO XG WQJLV SRVW
QRQSUR@WV SKLODQWKURSLF OHDGHUV FDQ QRW RQO\
EHQH@W WR WKHLU PLVVLRQ DQG
D SULRULW\ WKH\ FDQ DOVR FRVXSDFULW JWKHLUFRSDWLRQ HUV DQG J

About Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

5RFNHIHOHU 3KLODQWKURS\ \$GYLVRUV 53\$ DFFHOH

WKH VSHFWUXP RI LVVXH DUHDV)RXQGHG LQ 53\$

IDFLOLWDWHG PRUH WKDQ ELOOLRQ LQ JUDQWPDNLQJ
53\$ FXUUHQWO\ DGYLVHV RQ DQG PDQDJHV PRUH WKDQ

VHUYHV DV D ILVFDO VSRQVRU IRU RYHU SURMHFWV

)RU PRUH DERXW WKH 6KLIWLQJ 6\VWHPV ,QLWLDW