

# Alternative Governance and Racial Justice

A TOOLKIT FOR PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS

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PREPARED FOR: ALGOMA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
THROUGH SUPPORT FROM THE MUNK SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC  
POLICY'S PUBLIC GOOD INITIATIVE (PGI)



ALGOMA  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

# Acknowledgments

This toolkit was developed in collaboration with student consultants from the Munk School of Public Affairs and Public Policy's Public Good Initiative (PGI) and the [Algoma Community Foundation](#) (ACF). We would like to begin by recognizing ACF's founding board which includes Krista Bissiaillon, Jessica Bolduc, Tracy Fraser, Malin Johnson, Laura Wyper, Sydney Nolan, Ellie McGoldrick, Tamanna Rimi, and the staff team of Ashlyn McMillan, and Robin Sutherland. ACF's knowledge and dedication were integral in the formation of this toolkit.

*We wish to acknowledge that the land on which the Algoma Community Foundation activates their philanthropy is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek Nation. Over several millennia, the Anishinaabe and their ancestors have imparted significant democratic, economic and spiritual histories upon these lands grounded within a cultural pedagogy of interconnectedness, inclusion and reciprocity. Today, Algoma is home to seven sovereign First Nations and the Sault Ste. Marie Métis Settlement whose relationship with settlers is defined by the [Robinson-Huron](#) and [Robinson-Superior Treaties](#), as well as the [Jay Treaty](#) which establishes the rights of Indigenous peoples across the medicine line (US-Canada border). ACF recognizes that Algoma was formed through a history of genocide driven by the settlement of Canada, and as treaty partners this means that we have an active role to play in dismantling colonialism, righting relations and upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples.*

We want to recognize the [Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy](#) for supporting our learning and providing unique student leadership activities as aspiring policy professionals. This included the opportunity to work with the [Public Good Initiative](#), under the support and guidance of Julianna Campo, PGI's Director of Client Relations. We also want to thank Laura Billet for her invaluable contributions to the literature reviews and jurisdictional scans that were involved in the creation of this document.

*This toolkit was developed on the [shared territories](#) of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, Tkaronto and the GTA is home to many Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island. As students of the University of Toronto, we acknowledge that we are privileged to have the opportunity to live, gather, and work on this land. We recognize the source of this privilege comes from a colonial legacy that has historically and continually caused systemic harm to the identities, cultures, and governments of Indigenous Peoples. We understand that this acknowledgment is one of many steps towards strengthening the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Canadian settlers.*

Finally, we want to acknowledge the contributions of each of the organizations and individuals who shared their knowledge and experience with us as we worked on this toolkit. We want to extend our gratitude to the following individuals:

Tim Fox and the [Calgary Foundation](#)

Ajeev Bhatia and the [Next Generation Philanthropy Collaborative](#)

Nicole Gagliardi and the [Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough](#)

Nicole Pietsch and the [Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centers](#)

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# Table of Contents

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION                      | 3  |
| KEY TERMS                         | 4  |
| KEY THEORIES                      |    |
| Systems Change Approach           | 8  |
| Inverting Power                   | 14 |
| KEY PRACTICES                     |    |
| Restructuring Donor Relationships | 17 |
| Community Collaboration           | 19 |
| Accountability Frameworks         | 22 |
| ADDITIONAL RESOURCES              | 24 |
| END NOTES                         | 27 |

# Introduction

This toolkit was developed by the Public Good Initiative in partnership with the Algoma Community Foundation as part of a policy research project on alternative governance and racial justice in philanthropy. The Public Good Initiative is a student-run policy consultancy at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. The Algoma Community Foundation is a grant-making foundation based on Anishinaabe Aki in the Robinson Huron Treaty territory, also known as the Algoma District. ACF's board is committed to incorporating collaborative leadership practices and principles of racial justice into the work that they do as a foundation and wish to share this knowledge more broadly with the philanthropic community. This toolkit is designed to be used as a resource for community foundations seeking to center community collaboration and racial justice in their work and organizational structure.

When philanthropy tools are used to address racial inequity, we are able to then use philanthropy - and the flow of wealth and resources that it brings - as a tool for addressing racial injustice systematically. The theories, practices, and tools in this document can be used to decolonize wealth and work towards justice. By applying tools within a community foundation to address racism and ensure racial equity, the philanthropic sector can shift over time and move towards a more just allocation of wealth and resources for Black, Indigenous, and communities of Colour. Racial equity can be seen as an antidote to structural racism, and when it comes to Indigenous and Black communities, philanthropy can be a tool for reparations.

## ALGOMA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S VISION

The vision of the Algoma Community Foundation is to enable the people of Algoma to live vibrant and fulfilling lives while continuing to care for the natural ecosystems that have sustained us over generations. This vision recognizes and acknowledges the Anishinaabe history of generosity and sharing, as well as the unique spirit of giving in our communities.

## ALGOMA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S MISSION

Our mission is to practice innovative philanthropy based in careful thought, strategic investment, social justice, and relevant giving. We believe that responsible stewardship of our environmental, social, cultural, and economic diversity will create lasting change and loving relations for generations to come.

# Key Terms

# Key Terms

## INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality is a term that was first coined by lawyer, civil rights advocate, philosopher, and scholar of critical race theory, Kimberlé Crenshaw, over 30 years ago. It is used as a lens to examine the ways that different forms of inequality, such as racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia, interact to exacerbate discrimination. Intersectionality requires considering the relationship between different forms of inequality, as this interaction presents additional challenges that cannot be seen by looking at them as distinct categories.<sup>1</sup> This lens is useful in addressing social and philanthropic issues, as it acknowledges the complexity within intertwining social categories, and addresses the needs of groups that face multiple overlapping forms of oppression.

## RACIAL JUSTICE

“A racial justice lens brings into view the confrontation of power, the redistribution of resources and the systemic transformation necessary for real change.”<sup>2</sup> Operationalizing racial justice means co-creating a just world that includes understanding the history of racism and the system of white supremacy; implementing interventions that use an intersectional analysis; and building the cultural, economic, and political power of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized peoples.<sup>3</sup>

## ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE

Alternative governance is about making sure the way you work reflects the work you want to do. Governance is a framework that determines who has a voice in decision making, how the decision making process works, and who is accountable for the decisions that get made.<sup>4</sup> Alternative governance takes a critical approach to how power works within an organization. It holds those leadership positions responsible for questioning how forms of oppression such as classism, racism, sexism, and ableism are present in the positions of power and policies in their organization. Alternative governance addresses both the culture and structure of an organization. At its core, alternative governance is about how an organization wants to be in relationship with its members, its community, and its donors.<sup>5</sup>

# Key Terms

## SETTLER COLONIALISM

Settler colonialism in Canada was and is a targeted and strategic elimination of Indigenous governments, ignoring Indigenous rights, terminating Treaties, and attempting to cause Indigenous peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, and spiritual entities in Canada through the process of genocidal policies and assimilation. Colonialism remains an ongoing process that shapes both the structure and the quality of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.<sup>6</sup>

## RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples based on truth, justice, and healing. It is an ongoing process of healing relationships that requires truth sharing that acknowledges and redresses past harms. It must also involve constructive action to address the ongoing legacies of colonialism. Reconciliation must be practiced in our everyday lives to create a more equitable and inclusive society that eliminates the social, health, and economic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.<sup>7</sup>

## NON-PROFIT INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

The nonprofit industrial complex is a system that pressures nonprofits to drift away from fulfilling their intended missions towards primarily maintaining their funding sources.<sup>8</sup> Under these circumstances, nonprofits become an instrument of the upper class to normalize their wealth and avoid public scrutiny for their role in creating and sustaining inequality.<sup>9</sup> The nonprofit industrial complex creates a top-down relationship between nonprofits and the communities they aim to serve. They reinforce strategies that treat inequity as an individual rather than a systemic issue in accordance with funders' worldviews.<sup>10</sup>

# Key Theories



# Systems Approach

## WHAT IS A SYSTEMS CHANGE APPROACH?

A systems change approach examines the way in which the structure of an organization may be altered and reimagined to better understand and address social problems. Fundamentally, this involves understanding the way that systemic issues are embedded within a process of cause and effect, and interrupting this process with a conscious and intentional organizational shift that aims to address social problems at their root, rather than focusing only on the problem's outcome. Many of these systemic issues are rooted in a long history of white supremacy and colonialism. Systems change is about intentionally addressing these issues by engaging with concepts of power and privilege.

### **A systems change approach involves:**

- Collaboratively understanding needs and assets
- Engaging multiple actors
- Mapping out the systems at play
- Distributing leadership
- Fostering a culture of learning<sup>11</sup>

In order to truly understand how systems change takes place, it is important to understand what systems are and the role they play in the functioning of an organization. Broadly speaking, systems are a way that we think about and understand the world. Systemic change refers to change that is embedded within these complex and multifaceted systems.

### **Social systems:**

- Exist within specific environments
- Are complex and intractable
- Compose multiple interdependent and connected parts
- Have causes and effects<sup>12</sup>

Systemic change improves an organization's structure to better support the needs of the communities it works with. A systems change approach is a specific theoretical and practical approach to achieving this type of change.

## WHY TAKE A SYSTEMS CHANGE APPROACH?

Before undergoing systems change, it is important for members of organizations and foundations to ask themselves what goals they wish to achieve through this process. This type of approach can help organizations reimagine their role in philanthropy and granting by addressing where inequities originate from, and how they can not only be addressed but prevented. Long-term, this will help to minimize the impact of certain social issues by identifying and treating their causes and origins. Through this model, organizations can be more intentional about the change they wish to contribute to, by taking concrete steps to restructure the way they function and operate.

Taking a systems change focus can help organizations reimagine their mission and priorities in a way that supports a changed governance and operational structure. Part of this process involves gaining a deeper understanding of the current structure, and the ways in which it serves to uplift marginalized voices or perpetuates unequal power dynamics. In understanding the structure of an organization, practitioners are better able to identify issues and areas for improvement that can then be addressed through the systems change approach. This will lead to better relationships with the community and donors, and contribute to a more effective organizational model.

# Systems Approach

## HOW IS SYSTEMS CHANGE ACHIEVED?

The systems change approach is a tool that may be used by community organizations and policy practitioners in order to address embedded institutional and organizational issues. This approach has been described as a “participatory organizational process” involving the identification of long-term goals, key assumptions, and strategic routes to bring about impacts and change. It also involves the determination of several key progress indicators and performance assessments.<sup>13</sup>

Fundamentally, the systems change approach is about deeply examining how organizations are structured and how they do their work in order to understand the intended and unintended impacts of the work that is being done. This examination should include an exploration of the processes that can be changed in order to help an organization function more effectively and better support its community.

### **There are five key elements that are essential to a successful systems change model:**

1. Thinking systemically in terms of understanding social problems and identifying collaborators to assist from the outset.
2. Using research and analysis to substantiate strategy and to figure out what is needed and what works.
3. Creating and maintaining an effective communication strategy internally, with partners, and with public audiences.
4. Understanding the nature of politics and policy work as they relate to your organization, including laws, administrative rules, and official governing practices.
5. Maintaining consistent and ongoing measurements and evaluations, including datasets, that will guide strategy and contribute to accountability.<sup>14</sup>

# Systems Approach

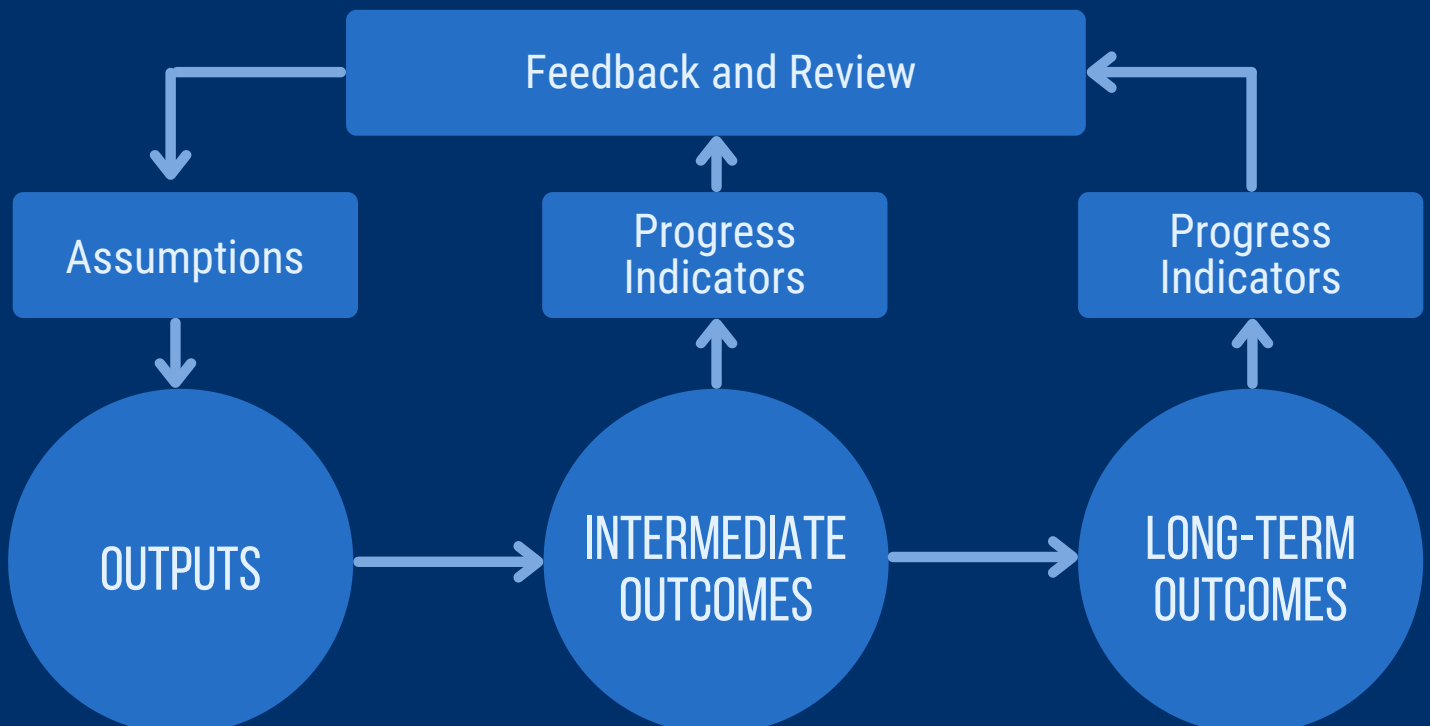
## THEORY OF CHANGE

A systems change approach can be developed using what is known as a theory of change. A theory of change (TOC) is a process for how change will occur. It can be a graphic depiction of how an organization or project creates change, outlining the process step-by-step towards the ultimate desired outcome.<sup>15</sup> In a philanthropic context, a TOC should be developed through a participatory organizational process with stakeholders.<sup>16</sup>

### Theories of change typically include:

- Long-term goals
- Key assumptions
- Strategic routes to create impact
- Measurable indicators of progress
- Methods to assess performance
- Quality review mechanisms
- A narrative summary of the plan<sup>17</sup>

A theory of change can act as a roadmap for how a non-profit organization wants to make an impact within communities while connecting that work to greater systems. A theory of change is an iterative process, with information learned at each step used to improve the overall plan.<sup>18</sup> If an organization has a theory of change embedded in equity, this means that equity is embedded in all things they do.<sup>19</sup> A TOC can act as a foundational document that guides an organization. New ideas can be presented in relation to the TOC and a case can be made for whether or not they align with the organization's core goals and values.<sup>20</sup>



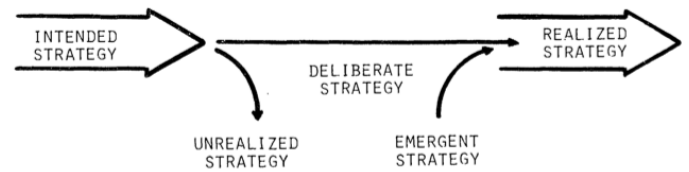
# Systems Approach

## EMERGENT PROCESS STRATEGY

Emergent strategy can be a part of a systems change approach, as it falls under the umbrella of strategic philanthropy. Strategic philanthropy is focused on the eradication of the root causes of complex societal problems.<sup>21</sup> Emergent strategy involves transforming old norms and imagining new ideologies that oppose traditional harmful stereotypes and prejudices. Emergent strategy presents itself as a tool for social change by intentionally adapting to new circumstances. It was originally a method of describing adaptive relationship and leadership models and can be traced back to the work of Black science fiction writer Octavia Butler. From there the concept evolved into plans of action and strategies for organizers interested in justice and liberation by using simple interactions to create complex systemic change.

An emergent strategy is a strategy that was not intentionally implemented at the beginning but developed throughout the process. When the emergent strategy and deliberate strategy are combined, they form the final realized strategy. An emergent strategy is helpful in addressing complex problems like deeply rooted social issues. It allows for action to be taken before everything is fully understood, with room to modify the approach as time goes on. An emergent strategy also lets management empower those who have more detailed information at the grassroots level. It lends itself to collective action and convergent behaviour while more deliberate strategies often reinforce hierarchical structures.

An initial strategy is intentionally created by an organization to accomplish a certain goal or task. The intended strategy branches off into unrealized strategy and deliberate strategy. The deliberate strategy is chosen to be implemented and the unrealized strategy is any aspect of the original intended strategy that falls to the wayside. As the deliberate strategy is implemented, a new emergent strategy develops.



Adrienne Maree Brown is a writer-in-residence at the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute (ESII) who has done extensive work on partnerships, collectives, collaborations, and networks in emergent strategy work. In her book, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, she outlines helpful tools for emergent strategy work that emphasize bottom-up organizing, relationship-building, and inclusivity. These tools include self-assessments to understand you and your organization's relationship to change, growth, adaptation, interdependence, decentralization, and transformative justice.<sup>22</sup>

**"Small is good, small is all. (The large is a reflection of the small.)**

**Change is constant. (Be like water).**

**There is always enough time for the right work.**

**There is a conversation in the room that only these people at this moment can have. Find it.**

**Never a failure, always a lesson.**

**Trust the People. (If you trust the people, they become trustworthy).**

**Move at the speed of trust. Focus on critical connections more than critical mass--build the resilience by building the relationships.**

**Less prep, more presence.**

**What you pay attention to grows."<sup>23</sup>**

# CASE STUDY: ANTI-OPPRESSION RESOURCE TRAINING & ALLIANCE

The Anti-Oppression Resource Training & Alliance (AORTA) is a cooperative with a mission to help movements:

**"Renew a stronger sense of liberatory vision, values, and purpose."**

AORTA's vision is:

**"A world where people are able to live meaningful lives full of sovereignty, honest work, and joy, free from dispossession, exploitation, and violence and rooted in right livelihood and relationship to place. We desire resources to be distributed equitably and power shared, and for solidarity to be cultivated amongst people bridging our common humanity and recognizing our fundamental interdependence."**

They address systemic oppression using an intersectional lens, with the goal of fostering:

- Deep democratization and collective governance
- Leadership development
- Resiliency building and healing
- The practice of principled struggle

AORTA recognizes its organizational assumptions and stances, anchoring its approach in systemic, cultural, and organizational transformation. As an organization, it recognizes the roots of today's social movements in histories of enslavement, genocide, and previous movements. To address these issues, AORTA emphasizes the need to take an approach that goes beyond mainstream culture in order to encourage skill-building, cooperation, and collaboration.

AORTA offers several different options for organizations that are interested in engaging in their work. They facilitate change by supporting movements through meetings, training, and visioning processes. They also consult on conflict capacity building, HR policy re-design, and supporting liberatory visions and values. Additionally, AORTA offers rigorous training for anti-oppression facilitators that work within organizations and movements.<sup>27</sup>

# CASE STUDY: MOMENTUM

Momentum is a training institute designed to “give progressive organizers the tools and frameworks to build massive, decentralized social movements.” Their work is to build off a combination of systematizing previous movements’ best practices, critical movement theory, and applicable skills. Momentum recognizes that structure-based organizing and mass protests are both traditional methods of organizing within the United States, and combines the strengths of both to create a new method of organizing.<sup>28</sup>

Momentum gives activists the support and tools needed to support their movements using both training and a national community of practice. Their goal is to:

**"Challenge the institutions and policies that uphold capitalism, racism, and patriarchy."**

The organization focuses specifically on grassroots organizers and decentralized social movements. They emphasize transformational change from outside of the political system. To do so, Momentum highlights the need for leaders that are able to shift public opinion and organize people at scale. It then supports these leaders with “an organizing model rooted in international civil resistance, with tools that will win profound structural and cultural changes.”<sup>29</sup>

Momentum’s approach revolves around what they refer to as a “cycle of momentum,” which involves three stages:

1. Escalation
2. Active popular support
3. Absorption

The escalation of nonviolent action is used to encourage the public to reflect on which side of the movement they are on, which leads to active support when the public refuses to cooperate with injustice in massive numbers. To be successful, Momentum proposes that movements need to be able to absorb new members during critical movements by “frontloading” their story, strategy, and structure.



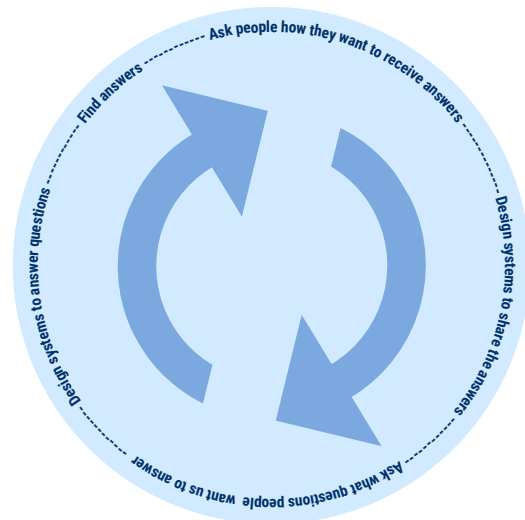
# Inverting Power

## WHAT DOES INVERTING POWER MEAN?

Inverting power is a common practice in alternative governance approaches. Traditional mainstream governance follows a “top-down approach.” Top-down approaches involve a hierarchical structure with a small group of decision-makers (typically part of the upper management) who control the focus and direction of an organization and its mandate. From there, directives trickle down to employees and, in some cases, the broader community. Upper management decision-makers hold the most power and have the most input on the work that gets done. Inverting power reverses this dynamic with a “bottom-up approach.” Decisions made for organizations with a bottom-up approach begin with the community and prioritize community values and needs. The community is responsible for determining the role that the organization has for them.<sup>24</sup>



Inverting power is important for organizations that are involved in social change work because it gives the opportunity for individuals facing intersectional oppression to be centered in leadership.<sup>25</sup> It helps organizations avoid falling into the trap of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex by directly engaging with and listening to the communities they are supporting. One of the ways this can be done is by restructuring the role of the organization, especially the management or board, to better integrate community feedback. This includes identifying and meeting the expectations of community stakeholders through an ongoing process.<sup>26</sup>



## SHARED LEADERSHIP

Another method of challenging traditional power dynamics within an organization is through a shared approach to leadership. Decision-making power within a shared-leadership model is distributed horizontally rather than vertically, as traditional models of leadership are structured. Shared leadership predominantly emphasizes collaboration, empowerment, and engagement by allowing multiple people to leverage their strengths, skill sets, and ideas to accomplish common goals.

It exists along four dimensions that have been found to contribute to team success:

- Joint completion of tasks
- Mutual skill development
- Decentralized interaction among personnel
- Emotional support<sup>30</sup>

By using a shared leadership approach, organizations can oppose the traditional hierarchical systems that prioritize the voices of those with the most power and instead allow for a more collaborative approach. This system also allows individuals to leverage their own skills by taking ownership of various tasks while ensuring that multiple members of the organization have input. This type of structure increases accountability and can lead to better thought-out decisions as there are multiple people responsible for discussing and approving organizational plans and procedures.



# CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER PETERBOROUGH

Established in 2009, the mission of the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough is to inspire giving to build a vital community for everyone. They work with donors and charitable organizations to invest in the people, ideas, and activities that support community vitality.

The Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough prioritizes:

- Relationships
- Using community knowledge
- Being effective and helpful
- Ensuring financial responsibility

They provide grants to organizations that specialize in a range of causes, including arts, health, emergency care/shelter, and more. They have several categories of granting, including funding options that are primarily donor-driven and other options that are more community-driven.<sup>31</sup>

**The Foundation's governance structure is a feminist leadership structure that makes use of a leadership team, rather than a single executive director. They currently have two members on their executive team, and have divided roles based on expertise and interests. As equal members, all team-members have discrete areas of responsibility, with shared accountability across all decisions made, such as with granting strategies and priorities.**

**This model requires mutual trust and check-ins when needed. The two team members meet weekly to touch base on matters that are shared between them. In order to maintain their leadership structure, the development of communication policies between executive directors and the board is a continuous process.**<sup>32</sup>

**From a practical perspective, their leadership structure "increases the resiliency and sustainability of smaller organizations, and removes some structural barriers to leadership."<sup>33</sup> This may allow, for example, individuals with children to take on co-Executive Director roles when they may not have the capacity to manage the responsibilities of an individual Executive Director.**



# Key Practices

# Restructuring Donor Relationships

## WHAT IS DONOR-CENTRISM?

Coined by Penelope Burk, “donor-centered fundraising” refers to the practice of prioritizing donors’ need for meaningful information through prompt personal acknowledgments, confirmation that their gifts have been set to work as intended, and communication of measurable results.<sup>34</sup>

Vu Le explains that the prevalence of donor-centrism in the nonprofit sector perpetuates inequity through encouraging competition rather than collaboration between nonprofits. This promotes a saviour complex and fuels systemic injustice, which crowds out the voices of marginalized community members. It furthers the idea of transactional charity rather than fostering true partnerships with donors, staff, and community members.<sup>35</sup>

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY-CENTRIC FUNDRAISING?

Grounded in equity and social justice, “community-centric fundraising” proposes an alternative model in which relationships with donors are respected and maintained, but the needs of entire communities are prioritized. The Community Centric Fundraising Movement advocates for fundraising principles and practices which build the power and voices of racialized communities.

### Community centric fundraising includes:

- Creating opportunities for donors to further understand the complexity of foundation work
- Respectfully and firmly pushing back when donors behave in a way that is harmful to the community
- Being honest and transparent with donors about resources needed
- Never adhering to donors’ wishes if they come at the expense of clients and the community
- Encouraging donors to think about issues of anti-racism, systemic oppression,<sup>37</sup> equity, wealth disparity, and intersectionality and their roles and privileges within these areas

**“We treat donors as partners, and this means that we are transparent, and occasionally have difficult conversations.”<sup>36</sup>**

# CASE STUDY: THE CALGARY FOUNDATION

Founded in 1955, the Calgary Foundation employs a systems change approach to achieve its mission to “inspire philanthropy, support the charitable sector and build a permanent endowment to address the current and future needs of people in our community.”<sup>38</sup>

## Through multi-staged consultations and extensive analysis of research, the Foundation identified five Vital Priorities:

1. Poverty reduction
2. Strengthening relationships with Indigenous Communities
3. Promoting a sustainable future
4. Living a creative life
5. Encouraging mental health

In resisting donor-centrism, The Community Knowledge Centre makes the Foundation’s knowledge accessible to donors, agencies, and citizens. Donors may find information about community needs and charities serving these needs while charities can discover opportunities to collaborate with other organizations addressing a need.<sup>39</sup>

Another initiative undertaken by the foundation to address key issues in the community is Vital Signs, which gathers expert research and the results of a citizen survey in areas critical to the quality of life. Launched in 2007, the objective of Vital Signs is to increase the effectiveness of grant-making, better inform donors about issues and opportunities, and spark discussion.<sup>40</sup>

To further its practice of racial justice, the Calgary Foundation is convening a Racial Equity Working Group tasked with helping the Foundation to establish a culture of racial equity; developing and implementing racial equity learning sessions for staff, volunteers, and the board; and sourcing a consultant to conduct an equity audit across all departments.<sup>41</sup>

The Foundation welcomed a Director of Indigenous Relations to the leadership team as a part of its journey of reconciliation. The Foundation further embeds reconciliation into its work through the inclusion of oral grant applications, the stipulation that areas of reconciliation must be identified in staff performance evaluations, and the integration of conversations surrounding reconciliation in the staff interview and application process. Moreover, the Foundation’s collaborative granting process intentionally recruits community members with diverse lived experience and is very intentional about outreach with Indigenous communities.<sup>42</sup>

Guided by the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a crucial step for the Calgary Foundation was to design and mobilize truth-telling with staff members, board members, and volunteers. The initiatives undertaken by the Foundation to cultivate reconciliation, decolonization, and racial justice are the result of intentional efforts to create a new knowledge system that informs the Foundation’s practice (efforts that are continuous).<sup>43</sup>

**“The work of social impact continues to grow and evolve and so we continue to grow, evolve and design as efforts of social justice, reconciliation, and decolonization move forward.”<sup>44</sup>**

# Community Collaboration

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY COLLABORATION?

Community collaboration signifies a movement beyond traditional funding models towards building ongoing sustainable relationships with communities. When philanthropic organizations have historically attempted to engage Indigenous communities, they “often came as providers of benevolence rather than as people willing to engage with people to resolve problems.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, philanthropists have approached Indigenous communities with a “do to” attitude rather than a “working with” commitment.<sup>46</sup>

To achieve racial equity, Dorsey, Bradach, and Kim invite philanthropists to “actively build knowledge of, connection to, and mutual trust with communities most impacted by the social change issues you seek to address, through intentional learning and investment.”<sup>47</sup>

**The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada calls for a new paradigm of philanthropy and recommends that foundations:**

- Be open to innovations and paradigms that support sustained change
- Develop true partnerships and commit to long-term investments
- Develop relationships with First Peoples’ communities and nurture them
- Do what is asked
- Consult with the community and support community ownership<sup>48</sup>

**Similarly, the 2020 Racial Equity and Justice in Philanthropy Funders Summit called for the philanthropic sector to build authentic relationships with equity-seeking communities through:**

- Community consultations
- Increased outreach
- On-the-ground presence within the community
- Leadership development programs for racialized individuals and organizations
- Active efforts to shift the view of racialized communities from recipients to active contributors and philanthropists<sup>49</sup>

# CASE STUDY: THE TEMAGAMI COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Established in 2001, the Temagami Community Foundation is administered by a board of volunteer directors who accept three-year terms and assist with reviewing grant applications, providing investment and governance advice, as well as important links into the respective communities to which they belong. The Foundation's mission is to:

**"Cooperatively and actively nurture and care for the place we know as Temagami – the water, the land and its inhabitants – for today and the future."**

The Foundation funds a variety of programs including a summer art camp, development of regional canoe routes, local history and community enhancement projects, and awards for local student volunteers. The Foundation calls for grant applications that foster common wellbeing and shared responsibility, promote discussion and dialogue, advance environmental awareness and stewardship, enhance arts and culture, honour First Nations, and further sustainable community and economic development.<sup>50</sup>

Victoria Grant, one of the founders of the Temagami Community Foundation, suggests that community foundations are unique because they take a holistic approach that envisions and works with the community as a whole.<sup>51</sup> In building their relationship with Indigenous communities and supporting Indigenous philanthropy, the Temagami Community Foundation recognizes they not only have a financial contribution to make, but also a contribution of listening, friendship, knowledge creation, and relationship building.<sup>52</sup>

Grant describes how her family's trapping, hunting, and harvesting practices honoured the diversity and interdependence of all life:

**"You took what you needed, but you always made sure you left enough for recovery, ensuring the land and its inhabitants continued to survive, providing life and sustenance for future generations."**<sup>53</sup>

Grant explains how philanthropic organizations such as the Temagami Community Foundation work:

**"The capital funds, the endowment funds, can be thought of as your family hunting territory, and the interest from this capital can be compared to the harvest. The interest is used to create opportunities that nourish and enrich life in the present, leaving the capital intact for future generations."**<sup>54</sup>

**The Temagami Community Foundation has identified several overlapping approaches to engage with Indigenous Peoples:**

- **Growing Indigenous participation in their movement**
- **Developing sustainable funding and grant-making opportunities to support Indigenous initiatives in collaboration with community foundations**
- **Taking a relationship-focused approach to partnership development**<sup>55</sup>

# CASE STUDY: THE AKONADI FOUNDATION

Founded in 2001, the mission of the Akonadi Foundation is to:

**"Support the development of powerful social change movements to eliminate structural racism."**

The Foundation identifies movement building as a critical strategy for achieving racial justice because they are powerful enough to address large-scale power imbalance and to transform society fundamentally. In order to fulfill its mission, the Foundation focuses funding on "ecosystem grantmaking." The Foundation emphasizes the importance of funding inter-connected clusters of organizations to bolster the capacity of each organization within the formation and to support a more impactful movement to challenge structural racism.<sup>56</sup>

Ultimately, the Foundation proposes that:

**"The most important aspects of how we think about how to fund—which are mirrored clearly in ecosystems in nature—are the importance of relationships and interconnectedness."**

**The most important aspects of the ecosystem are:**

- Diversity
- Interconnectedness
- A relationship to the larger environment<sup>57</sup>

**The Foundation funds a diverse cluster of organizations that play different roles at different scales, but work together to eliminate racism by:**

- Building power in racialized communities
- Creating a culture of racial justice
- Making policy<sup>58</sup>

**The Foundation also builds power to impact policy by funding an ecosystem of organizations that have:**

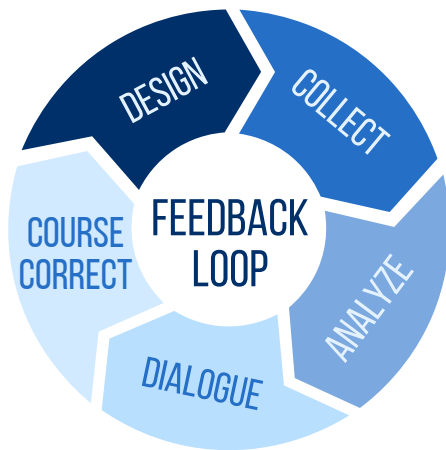
- Mutually supportive relationships
- Shared values and goals
- A commitment to developing a shared strategy

**Additionally, the Foundation funds organizations that are flexible and strategic in responding to the urgent and specific needs of racialized communities who have been hardest hit by the economic crisis.<sup>59</sup>**

# Accountability Frameworks

## WHAT ARE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORKS?

Accountability frameworks are part of the structure of a nonprofit and ensure that an organization and its members are held accountable to the organization's core mission and values. Accountability frameworks can take many different forms but are built into the policies of an organization and are attached to formal documents and processes. Areas needing attention can be identified through organizational assessments and commitments can be institutionalized through organizational policies, protocols, and expected practice.<sup>60</sup> Policy can be an important part of creating equitable practices. By recording and embedding practices through policy, an organization is not reliant upon individuals to address systemic issues.<sup>61</sup> Without concrete policies that institutionalize equitable practices, an organization is at risk of losing those practices when certain members leave.<sup>62</sup>



Accountability frameworks also hold organizations accountable to the community through feedback loops. Feedback loops are a continual process of two-way communication between service users and service providers. Creating feedback loops starts with getting buy-in from both users and providers. Once everyone is on board, the service provider designs a method for collecting feedback, undertakes collection, analyzes the findings, and then takes that information back to the community they serve to start a dialogue. In response to the feedback from service users, the service provider course-corrects to improve their program to better suit community needs.<sup>63</sup>

## EXAMPLES:

**The integration of equity values and equity work into annual staff performance evaluations.**<sup>64</sup>

- The Calgary Foundation requires all staff to identify an area for reconciliation and strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples to work on in the next year. This review is part of an ongoing process of truth-telling, learning, and unlearning that is done in partnership with community stakeholders.<sup>65</sup>

**The creation of groups and caucuses centered on race, gender, ability, and other locations of systemic power to hold both the organization and each other accountable.**<sup>66</sup>

- The Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres uses anti-racism and anti-oppression groups to facilitate check-ins and review the organization's work through an intersectional lens. The Coalition's meeting model has a group and caucus process that allows for structured discussions in meetings as well as breakout discussions to address emerging issues. During meetings, members can call a caucus to address why certain groups may be unheard or left out of a discussion.<sup>67</sup>

**Equity and value statements being included in job postings**

- The Calgary Foundation includes a statement on reconciliation in hiring documents so that potential applicants are aware that they must be willing to grapple with the work of reconciliation if they are hired.<sup>68</sup>

**Use gendered, anti-racist, decolonial, or other justice-based lenses for granting practices**

- Philanthropic Foundations Canada has developed questions to ask during the different stages of the granting process to apply a gender-based lens to grantmaking.<sup>69</sup>

# CASE STUDY: EQUITY THOUGHT INNOVATION LAB

A group of ten people working in domestic violence organizations in California participated in an Equity Thought Innovation Lab focus-group seeking to address the question:

**"What else might be possible if we are bolder and more intentional about aligning our organizations with our equity values?"**

In response, the group developed eleven equity principles for domestic violence groups and the social justice field. These principles were to be used as an accountability framework for embodying the values of social justice in both practices and policies.

The group discussed not only how inequity leads to domestic violence and influences access to services, but also how to take action to undo policies and systems in their organizations that uphold inequity for both staff and clients. They began by defining equity:

**"Equity means being able to see the different paths, remove or compensate for the barriers placed by oppression, share the shortcuts created by privilege such that everyone has what they need to be successful as they define it."**

The group sought to change critical conditions they saw in the domestic violence field:

- Too few women of colour in leadership positions
- Salary inequities between management and frontline workers who were largely people of colour
- Some communities do not have adequate access to services
- Certain types of education and experience being rewarded differently in a way that is not helpful and could be harmful

The group developed and put their equity principles into practice by determining how they would allocate the lab's compensation among themselves. These conversations explored the intersections of inequity and revealed that the cost of participating in the lab was very different for each person when considering:

- Emotional and psychological labour and carrying the weight of "educating"
- Who was holding logistical planning for the group without compensation
- Pay while being there, use of vacation days, and unpaid time
- Child and elder care cost
- Work coverage<sup>70</sup>

## 11 EQUITY PRINCIPLES:

1. Have a transparent compensation scale policy where the lowest full-time salary is at minimum one third of the highest full-time salary
2. Encourage internal promotions by providing training and skill building for all staff members
3. Organizational leadership is honest and transparent by creating feedback loops
4. Institutionalizing and modelling self-care
5. Compensation policies and access to benefits that care for the whole of a person and provides what they need to show up to work with their whole self
6. Create growth opportunities to move into different roles and fields
7. Have annual checks on the number of hours worked and workload responsibilities
8. Hire diverse board members and management leadership that reflects the diversity of the community
9. Remove or raise salary caps and recognize the value of front line work
10. Make hiring decisions in inclusive and equity-centred ways
11. Ensure the staff reflects the local communities being served<sup>71</sup>

For an example of a racial-equity lab in action within the Canadian context, check out the great work of the [Edmonton Shift Lab](#).



# **Additional Resources**

# THEORY OF CHANGE TEMPLATE

## ASSUMPTIONS & PRE-CONDITIONS:

- What relationships are you building?
- What human capital do you have and need?
- What are your financial resources?
- What information do you have? What information do you need?



## OUTPUTS:

- What are your initial outputs?
- How will you measure them?
- How will you learn from them?
- How are they tied to your impact?



## INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES:

- What are your intermediate outcomes?
- How will you measure them?
- How will you learn from them?
- How are they tied to your impact?



## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES:

- What are your long-term outcomes?
- How will you measure them?
- How will you learn from them?
- How are they tied to your impact?

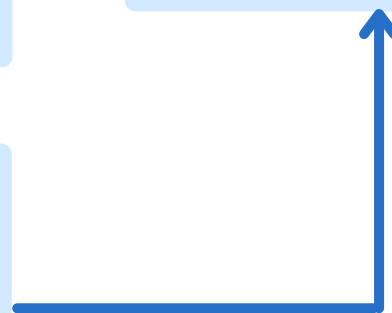


## IMPACT:

- What change are you trying to achieve?
- How will you know you have achieved it?

## INDICATORS & FEEDBACK LOOPS:

- How will you evaluate your outputs and outcomes?
- How will you include community feedback?
- How will you learn from and incorporate your findings?



For a practical guide to constructing a racial equity Theory of Change, refer to [this guide](#) from the Aspen Institute.

# QUESTIONS FOR THE GRANTING PROCESS<sup>72</sup>

## THE FOUNDATION'S GRANT STRATEGY:

- Does your foundation seek appropriate knowledge and expertise on anti-racism and intersectional justice?
- Is your foundation informed about or collaborating with other funders that value racial justice?

## OUTREACH & APPLICATION:

- Is the application process designed to encourage Black, Indigenous, and people of colour to apply?

## ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATION:

- Do grantees have Black, Indigenous, and people of colour in leadership positions?
- Are grantees accounting for the needs of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour when designing projects?
- Do the grantees' goals align with the mission and values of your foundation?

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

- Is capacity-building available to grantees to learn more about reconciliation and racial justice to strengthen their work?

## EVALUATION & LEARNING:

- Are grantees and foundations measuring outcomes specific to Black, Indigenous and people of colour?
- Is there potential for a relationship of mutual learning and knowledge sharing between granting organizations and grantees?

## COMMUNICATION:

- Are language and images relevant to Black, Indigenous, and people of colour being used in media communications?
- Are reconciliation and racial justice initiatives being promoted and celebrated?

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