

ACTIVIST PHILANTHROPIST

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**THE
NEW YORK
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION**
Radical generosity.

This issue of *Activist Philanthropist* was underwritten by Hyatt Bass and Anne Delaney.

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Making New York City work for all women is a team sport. Our Radical Generosity at Work campaign engages employees by offering a simple and direct way to participate in philanthropy that impacts communities where they live and work. Funds raised through the initiative will underwrite local workforce development, a proven way to help expand access to employment and grow the pipeline of women of color entering the workforce, and the best way to ensure that women and their families have the means to move toward economic security. Learn more at www.nywf.org/give.

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the spring/summer issue of Activist Philanthropist. We thank you for your support as we share stories of women community leaders and philanthropists working to advance gender, economic and racial justice in our city and beyond. We'd also like to thank Hyatt Bass and Anne Delaney for their enduring support and for underwriting the first-ever printed issue of Activist Philanthropist.

There is much work to be done to ensure that all women can provide for themselves and their families and live free of violence. The women you will read about in these pages inspire us to keep moving forward and we know you'll feel the same way. This issue begins with a look at what "Radical Generosity" means to us—and an invitation to tell us what it means to you. We profile the leadership and work of Dr. Angela Diaz who leads the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center and Pabrita Benjamin who leads Adhikaar; you'll learn all about our unique participatory approach to grantmaking and the power of including members of community in decision-making; you'll find stories and poetry from two young women philanthropists; and we share highlights from our latest round of grantmaking. We are delighted to share these articles and more!

Thank you for being an Activist Philanthropist who stands up for all women and the families who depend on them. We are honored to have you on our team. Onward!

Warm regards,



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ana Oliveira
President and CEO

Radical Generosity

by Ana Oliveira, President & CEO

If you've been keeping up with us, then you know that for the past 31 years, The New York Women's Foundation has been investing in programs, organizations, and people working to make gender, racial, and economic justice a reality. But for those of you just getting to know us, allow me to fill you in.

The Foundation was founded by a group of fierce women who shared three revolutionary beliefs: (1) problems and solutions live in the same place; (2) communities know best how to fix problems they experience; and (3) philanthropy is more powerful when it is collective and inclusive. Put together, these beliefs embody what we think of as Radical Generosity.

As a community foundation, we are backers of women leaders and their nascent organizations and programs in New York City. While some might characterize our bold early investment strategy as risk-taking, we don't see it that way because of our confidence in local leaders who have solutions to local problems. What they need



Tarana Burke, Founder and Leader of the #MeToo Movement with Ana Oliveira.

is funding, plus investment in their leadership—which we provide via coaching, mentoring, and opportunities to network with other visionaries—and opportunities for visibility. In fact, over 80 percent of organizations funded by The Foundation in the last 31 years are still in business—robustly supporting underinvested communities across the five boroughs.

Time and again, we have seen our “risk”—often the first or largest grant an organization has received—underwrite immense transformations. Here is just one example: The Foundation was the first funder of Restaurant Opportunities Center NY (ROC), which launched out of the ashes of 9/11 to help Windows on the World restaurant workers grieve, heal, and figure out



Board Alumnae at our 30th Anniversary Celebrating Women Breakfast

While some might characterize our bold early investment strategy as risk-taking, we don't see it that way because of our confidence in local leaders who have solutions to local problems.

what to do next. ROC NY grew from a vibrant local organization to a powerful national labor organization, advocating to improve wages and working conditions for the 14 million people across the country who work in America's restaurant industry through campaigns like One Fair Wage.

Our community focus extends to how we approach grantmaking. We follow a participatory strategy that challenges traditional notions of how philanthropy works. We involve community members in the

decision-making process itself, bringing together women from every corner of the city to learn about—and from—the ground-level efforts of our grantee partners. We entrust them to use that knowledge to help choose the next set of our grant recipients.

We also challenge the idea of who can be a philanthropist. From the beginning, we have told our supporters, “come as you are and give what you can,” and value the \$10 donations to our efforts as much as the million dollar

pledges. We embrace the power of collective action to create change so you will find that philanthropists from every level are embraced by The New York Women's Foundation. The collective of radically generous donors that we have created has enabled The Foundation to give \$66 million to more than 350 organizations since it was founded!

Now we are working on fostering a new generation of philanthropists who see investment as something that depends as much on community involvement as it does on money. How are we doing this? One way is by cultivating new philanthropists among young women of color—leaders whose voices need to be heard—through our “girls in grantmaking” program in partnership with the YWCA of New York.

As we expand the idea of who makes philanthropic decisions—and see the combined effect of many women giving gifts that are meaningful to them—we create alliances with the power to transform the lives of so many underinvested women and families. We also activate a lever that can dismantle the racism, sexism, and elitism that exists in the world of philanthropy and giving.

In these difficult times, we must embrace a new kind of Radical Generosity,

“

The collective of radically generous donors that we have created has enabled The Foundation to give \$66 million to more than 350 organizations since it was founded!

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an inclusive philanthropy where communities with varied resources work together. Because generosity is more than an act. It is the coupling of action and hope.

This article first appeared on The New York Women's Foundation's blog in July 2018. To have our latest blog posts delivered to your email, subscribe at: www.nywf.org/our-blog/

We asked our supporters what **radical generosity** means to them.

Here are some of their responses!

“Bold, purpose-driven philanthropy.”

“Innovative, risk-taking philanthropy.”

“Rethinking how we give... both in terms of type of giving, amount, and who we give to. It's time to take risks.”

“Being generous in disruptive and varied ways by donating your intellectual equity, providing leadership, word of mouth support, in addition to financial giving.”

“Giving until it hurts.”

“Going where no funders have gone before! Daring to support organizations and leaders whose visions challenge us to think harder and stronger about organic and sustainable solutions to seemingly insoluble societal inequities. We can foster change by giving at the strongest levels we can.”

“It means that when I make generous donations I also equip The Foundation to be bold in its grantmaking and support of community groups who need it the most.”

“Pushing beyond perceived limits of giving.”

Tell us what radical generosity means to you! Write to us at hello@nywf.org.



IN FOCUS

Following Your Call

A Conversation
with Dr. Angela Diaz

by Feminista Jones

How do you heal a teenager facing a serious illness, a psychiatric crisis, a history of sexual abuse? How do you inspire trust in someone who has been repeatedly failed—whose strengths may never have been acknowledged and whose wounds may never have been addressed? How do you provide top-notch, comprehensive health services to young people who have no money and no health insurance? And how do you perform that miracle not once but thousands of times a year?

“Well, first of all, you have to really love adolescents!” says Dr. Angela Diaz, Executive Director of the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center—an organization that is exclusively dedicated to helping some of the

lowest-income and most underserved teenagers in the city. “And then you have to really believe in their resilience and creativity—to recognize all their courage and hard work. A lot of people don’t, you know. And, finally, you have to put absolutely everything you’ve got into providing them with the sensitive, appropriate care that they need and deserve.”

Dr. Diaz easily identifies with the young people who comprise the majority of the Center’s patients. Like almost every adolescent served, she is a person of color. And like a sizable segment of those teens, she is an immigrant. Originally born in the Dominican Republic to a family of limited economic means, she journeyed to

New York as a 12-year-old to join her mother. When Angela was 8 years of age, her mother immigrated to New York looking for a better life working in a factory to support herself and to help support her family in the Dominican Republic. “My mother is a strong woman. She remained an anchor—a real inspiration—for me,” she explains. “But I also know just how hard those parental transitions and absences can be on a child.”

Dr. Diaz also has a bone-deep understanding of how tough it can be to have to fight for every single success—how challenging it is to enter a new school without a word of English and to continually battle against the gender and racial assumptions that impede

the progress of so many girls in this city. “When I was young, I loved math and science—I had a real natural aptitude for those subjects,” she recounts. “And very early on, I decided that I wanted to become a doctor. I had no inkling of just how difficult it would be for someone like me to do that—how many barriers would stand in my way. But I quickly made up my mind to let nothing stop me.” Armed with that determination, she went on to master English, to excel at all her subjects, and to establish strong connections with her classmates and teachers. She finished high school, earned both her medical degree and Ph.D. in epidemiology from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and obtained her master’s degree in Public Health from Harvard University.

Finally—and perhaps most importantly—Dr. Diaz has a true gift for connecting with teenagers. A mother of three, she has learned to take her cues directly from the source—to shape Center services to meet the needs that its young clients articulate themselves. She has inspired and trained the staff to take the time required to win the trust of those with whom they work—and to continually communicate the message that they are precious, that they are strong, and that they have the capacity to overcome the many challenges in their lives.

Being the largest adolescent-specific clinic in the country—supporting more than 10,000 young people and providing free, accessible, comprehensive health services to a population almost entirely comprised of young people who lack health insurance—is, naturally, a major challenge. The Center is almost entirely funded by private donations and grants; raising the money to sustain its infrastructure remains a ceaseless task. But Dr. Diaz’s vision for both what is needed and what is possible continues to grow. She has plans to increase the number of young people served by 50 percent while also promulgating her successful care model to other clinics across the country. She has served on the boards of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Children’s Aid Society, and the Federal Food and Drug Administration’s Advisory Committee—and remains a tireless, nationally- and internationally- respected advocate, fighting on multiple fronts against proposed cuts to Medicaid and CHIP.

Dr. Diaz recognizes the critical role that adult mentors, supporters, and role models can play in any young person’s life and tries to ensure that every teen who enters the Center finds someone to rely upon. “I could never have gotten as far as I have without the help of people who were willing to take me by the hand, show me the way, encourage

my intellectual curiosity, and promote my growth,” she explains. “I could never have made it without the help of my ninth grade ESL teacher, Ms. Doris Collazo; my 11th grade guidance counselor, Mrs. Simmons; and one wonderful nun and nurse, Gail Kelly, who created the Mount Sinai Health Career Program for inner-

“
Well, first of all, you have to really love adolescents! And then you have to really believe in their resilience and creativity.”

”

city youth that put me on the path to realizing my dream of becoming a doctor. Every young person needs that kind of encouragement in her life.”

There is no doubt that Dr. Diaz is an inspiring role model to all the teens who come in contact with her, and that she and her team have made Mount Sinai’s Adolescent Health Center into a place of truly holistic support—an oasis in which young people can both heal and succeed, a place in which they can share what is in their minds and hearts and feel a little less alone.



Challenging Notions of Who Can Be a Philanthropist

By Mireya Navarro

Kali Hough remembers her first site visit well.

She and four other fellows from Girls IGNITE! Grantmaking were about to meet with a grant applicant. Would they be good at public speaking during the meeting? Could they make it conversational and not be awkward? Would they be taken seriously by the adults in the room?

It was, she said, “nerve-racking.”

“One of the co-fellows asked our foundation representative, Bea, ‘So are we gonna be the only ones talking?’” Hough said, meaning whether she and the other fellows would handle all the questions.

“She smiled at us and said, ‘Yep, that’s the idea,’” Hough said. “The confidence she had in our ability that she expressed to us in this moment was incredibly empowering.”

Hough, 18, had just gotten a taste of The New York Women’s Foundation participatory grantmaking, its well-tested model to decide who should get grants. The Foundation recruits women and girls from across the city to review proposals, visit organizations seeking funding, and make recommendations or award the grants themselves.

The goal is to embed funding decisions with the wisdom from the communities the foundation helps, but this kind of power sharing also comes with side benefits for participants, such as bolstering leadership at an early age.

“As a high school girl who grew up in Brooklyn,” Hough said, “I’m not used to having my voice matter and having a measurable impact on my community and the city in which I was raised.”

Participatory grantmaking is still unusual in philanthropy. Foundations more often rely on the expertise of staff members who may, at most, go on listening tours to help with grant decisions. But seeking out collaborators from the communities where it invests is part of the identity of The

The Foundation's oldest participatory grantmaking group is the Grants Advisory Committee, or GAC, launched in 1990 (under the name "Allocations Committee") barely three years after The Foundation was created. Women from across the city—professionals, entrepreneurs, staff members at nonprofit

organization aligns with The Foundation's mission and whether it should receive new or renewed funding.

The process is one of multiple deadlines, phone conferences, and some nervousness even for accomplished adults, since GAC members must make a formal presentation of their findings to the board and anticipate questions.

As a high school girl who grew up in Brooklyn, I'm not used to having my voice matter and having a measurable impact on my community and the city in which I was raised.

Foundation, which itself was formed as a response to the scarcity of philanthropic dollars going to women.

Problems and solutions "live in the same place," said Ana L. Oliveira, President & CEO, The New York Women's Foundation. And giving equal weight to the insights and knowledge of community "insiders" to award grants, she said, also serves to mitigate the inherent inequality in institutional giving.

"Traditional philanthropy associates decision-making power with financial power," Oliveira said. "We associate decision-making power in grantmaking with lived expertise, learned expertise. We value lived experiences."

organizations—come together for two grantmaking cycles each year, recruited through word of mouth, referrals from nonprofit groups, and presentations to funders and others.

It gets intense quickly. Over a period of seven weeks, the volunteers are deployed in teams of four to read proposals, make site visits, and prepare their recommendations to the Program Committee of The Foundation board. Each team meets with three grant applicants to ask questions and identify strengths and challenges in how organizations operate, and to determine whether the applicants are in over their head or solidly on course. They assess how well an

"Building consensus can also be a challenge," said Karina de Sousa, a repeat GAC member. "You are working on a team with two to three other people from different walks of life to discuss serious issues facing communities that you each have different levels of familiarity with. As a team, you must work together to determine a recommendation for if, and at what level, an organization should receive support."

"All of this taken together does not always make for a clear answer and requires a real commitment on the part of the team and The Foundation staff," she added.

But for many volunteers the rewards outweigh the challenges—approximately half of GAC members return to do it all over again.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, the board agrees with the GAC recommendations. When

it doesn't, staff members said, it is usually because The Foundation often directs its grants to innovative or unproven efforts that hold great promise but would be less likely to get funding from other institutions. (For further support, The Foundation offers technical and other assistance as needed.)

"It's really important for us to make sure that the small emerging organizations are funded, and often times we're the first institutional funders," said Jennifer Agmi, director of programs.

It is all part of The Foundation's embrace of radical generosity, which Oliveira partly defines as shaking philanthropists out of their comfort zones.

"Look, if philanthropy had paid attention to Tarana Burke ten or 11 years ago," said Oliveira, referring to the New York social justice activist who gave the name #MeToo to the movement against sexual assault long before it exploded in social media with the Harvey Weinstein story.

"She would have been funded earlier," Oliveira said. "We would have advanced a little bit in our dismantling racism, and dismantling gender hierarchy and oppression, and reaching women who are economically challenged to just take a stand. Because



Board Alumnae at our 30th Anniversary Celebrating Women Breakfast

it's a survival issue without economic backing."

This year, The Foundation announced it would seed a special fund with an initial \$1 million to support Burke's work and to address "the needs of cis and trans activists of color working in community-based organizations" nationwide that are focused on preventing or ending sexual violence.

Radical generosity, Oliveira noted, is meant to force the question: "Who are the Taranas that we're missing today?"

In 2016, The Foundation cast a wider net by reaching out to a younger cadre of community insiders. Girls IGNITE! Grantmaking, in partnership with the YWCA of the City of New York, recruits

16 teenage girls and gender-fluid youth aged 12 to 24 as fellows each year to review grant proposals and make site visits. Unlike GAC, the cycle is longer, done over the eight-month school year to allow for sessions on how nonprofits work. And the fellows, not The Foundation board, make the final decisions on whom to fund. The fellows also get paid a stipend.

The purpose, in addition to participatory grantmaking, is to cultivate the next, more inclusive generation of philanthropists.

"I am an immigrant, a woman of color, a future first-generation college student," said Eun Joo Jung, a graduating high school senior, and a Girls IGNITE! Grantmaking Fellow. "My labels here in

Grantee partners and applicants said that the participatory strategy offers them a chance to expose their organizations to new audiences and sometimes tap into new sources of expertise.

the United States tell me my opportunities are much more limited than the average, but throughout this program, the possibilities have seemed endless in the near future.”

Also in 2016, The Foundation launched the Participatory Review Committee, another junior version of GAC focused on organizations serving young women of color. Members of this committee are 15 to late 20s and help choose recipients for grants given by the NYC Fund for Girls and Young Women of Color, a collaboration of 16 foundations (including Ford Foundation and NoVo Foundation) that pools resources to address the issues and advance the leadership of this particular population.

Altogether, the participatory grantmaking

volunteers and fellows in the three different programs helped distribute \$8 million among 169 organizations or grantee partners in 2017.

Grantee partners and applicants said that the participatory strategy offers them a chance to expose their organizations to new audiences and sometimes tap into new sources of expertise. GAC volunteers have been invited to join the boards of some organizations and others have offered technical assistance and other services.

“Just getting to meet so many people who are interested in this work, coming from so many different backgrounds, that’s not the purpose of participatory grantmaking but that was just a really nice side impact,” said Loren Miller, executive director of the Center for Anti-Violence Education in Brooklyn.

She said one GAC volunteer is now helping the organization upgrade its website.

First impressions are no less powerful among the volunteers. Many GAC members say they feel a sense of awe about the depth of nonprofit work in New York City. Mothers with children in foster care. Sexual assault victims. Transgender youth. In some corner of the city, they have all come together to help each other, the volunteers soon discover.

“I have received a thorough education on the rich ecosystem of organizations serving women and girls in New York City,” said de Sousa, who has done six grantmaking cycles with GAC and the Participatory Review Committee.

“I have not only learned about issues and communities, but heard directly from brilliant leaders and community members about innovative solutions that they have developed,” she said. “These lessons are far beyond anything you could find in a book or a classroom.”

At its core, Oliveira said, participatory grantmaking challenges the very notion of how philanthropy works and who can be a philanthropist.

“It is one of many levers,” she said in a recent opinion piece, “that can dismantle racism, sexism, and elitism, which exist even in the world of philanthropy and giving—from the inside.”



GRANTEE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

An Interview with Pabitra Benjamin of Adhikaar

By Luthfun J. Nahar
The New School IGNITE! Fellow

As many as 140,000 Nepali-speaking people call America home. They are an underserved and underrepresented group—PEW Research Center (2015) estimates 46 percent are proficient in English and 24 percent live in poverty. And so, in 2005, four immigrant women of color founded

Adhikaar (which means “rights” in Nepali) to address the structural inequality while placing women and the Nepali voice at the center.

Adhikaar’s accomplishments include the release of a groundbreaking survey of nail salon workers in 2015; successfully campaigning with

allies for domestic workers’ bill of rights; co-founding and currently leading the NY Healthy Nail Salon Coalition; filling the English language gap in accessing free and affordable healthcare; and, following the devastating 2015 earthquake in Nepal, working with others to lead a campaign that resulted in Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Nepalese living in the United States.

In just over 10 years, the center has become a home away from home for the Nepali-speaking community.

We discuss Adhikaar’s work, particularly its TPS campaign, with Executive Director Pabitra Benjamin. Under the current administration, the Department of Homeland Security has revoked TPS for about 328,000 immigrants from El Salvador, Haiti, Sudan, and Nicaragua. Later this year, the agency will decide the fate of five other nations, including almost 15,000 people from Nepal. Nepalese immigrants received TPS after the twin 2015 earthquakes that killed 9,000 and left half a million homeless. Benjamin shares the grassroots organizing that led to TPS and the enduring struggles ahead.

The TPS campaign:

When the earthquake hit in 2015, we knew we had limited time to organize to get TPS status. Nepal was recovering from a civil



Adhikaar members working on the TPS campaign

war—and there was a lot of political turmoil in the country. Adhikaar was one of the lead voices in calling for TPS.

We worked hard in a two-week period to move the administration. From what I recall, TPS happened faster for Nepal than any other country that has TPS. Because the Obama administration was there, we worked with numerous organizations on the state and national level that have access to DHS. We connected with various organizations, including NY Immigration Coalition, Asian American Justice Center, and American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). We worked with our partners in the Nepali community here to pressure the Nepali government and the ambassador, who had just been appointed to his post. This is one way to protect our people here so they aren't forced to go back to Nepal, which to date cannot adequately handle the return of so many people.

Do you think TPS will be revoked for Nepal?

The Trump administration is unpredictable at best. With this administration, you cannot use logic. If you look at South Sudan and Sudan, they extended TPS for one and not for the other. They use their political lines as reasons to give TPS or not, and it has not been on the rule of law. In Haiti, after the initial earthquake, there was a hurricane, a cholera outbreak, and more devastation for the country. Recovery has not fully been met.

Nepal is approaching its third renewal. Within the last two years, we've also had political blockades after the earthquake and massive floods in the southern part of the country. We've also had major political instability. The newly elected government needs time to implement the National Reconstruction Plan and lots of people await the money the government owes to help rebuild homes.

Has Nepal recovered from the initial earthquake? I would say no. I think in some ways, they are trying to end the [TPS] program and so they might try to get rid of everybody.

What struggles are the Nepali-speaking people facing?

TPS is one of the urgent ones. TPS has given 14,791 people authorization to get jobs and stability in the United States. It's been a lifesaver.

For domestic workers, we and our partners have made major strides in changing policies for workers in New York. But implementation doesn't happen on its own, especially for communities like ours, where we have limited English proficiency, generally limited literacy, and then folks don't know how to navigate the bureaucracy. A lot of people are fearful. When employers threaten to report them to ICE or threaten to fire after TPS expires,

people are fearful to report what's happening. We have to work to alleviate that fear.

Many live in New York City but work in other areas, like Westchester, Long Island, and New Jersey without the same regulations. We are looking how to solve those issues and expand our capacity to impact policies and practices in other areas.

We are also working with our partners at National Domestic Worker Alliance and Cornell University to professionalize the industry more through nanny trainings. Members are training other members in Nepali on skills like nutrition and workers' rights. By getting more training, they are able to negotiate for better wages with employers.

And for our nail salon work victories in 2015 and 2016, bill of rights and ventilation regulation, licensing program—again, implementation takes a lot of work. So we've been supporting that licensing process, in training and building with other coalition partners—Workers United and NYCOSH—on how to build workers' power within [that profession].

We are building a worker's association with Workers United that offers everything from trainings on health and safety and the required 26-hour class and also making

sure people know how to demand their rights, including collective bargaining power. We also try to build with owners. We want to make the salons profitable if they are respecting workers' rights.

Additionally, we are a workers' center and community center that takes

We are building a worker's association with Workers United that offers everything from trainings on health and safety and the required 26-hour class and also making sure people know how to demand their rights, including collective bargaining power.

on wage theft cases for workers at restaurants and gas stations—both non-unionized low-income industries with high populations of new immigrants. We also support individuals with domestic violence cases by working with other DV organizations and are a 911/411 for the community.

Lastly, healthcare: we helped enroll people in ACA. Where we can, we advocate maintaining healthcare for all people. Many people are low-income folks and in informal industries who otherwise would not have healthcare.

What does a cross-cultural alliance around these issues look like for Adhikaar?

We have to fight the model

minority myth. A lot of our folks are asylum seekers or undocumented. Our members are working class with less education. And even if they got education in Nepal, it often doesn't apply here. A goal for us in 2020 is for Nepali-speaking folks to be counted in the census in order to increase the resources in our community.

It's typical for us to have translations between Nepali, Spanish, sometimes French Créole, and Tagalog. If you are in that space a lot, it doesn't just become allyship, it becomes friendship amongst workers that are then building together a broader movement of work. The essence of it: when you give people the space and they are doing similar work, they find ways to communicate.

We need to talk about anti-Blackness; we can't bring the racism from Nepal and inherit the racism of America. We have to constantly combat racism to show why our struggle is aligned with that of the Black community. We continue to want to thrive in doing it.

“

In the near future, I want to build our youth work. We have young people who now have families, young people moving here with their families, and some who are growing up who don't have a lot of Nepalese-speaking role models.

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Since joining the Board in 2015, and becoming an ED last year, what has been your primary concern and goals ahead?

We have a lot of ongoing work so my priority has been more structural—more efficient and effective programs and campaigning. Making sure our staff have the training needed to grow our work and that we are working together effectively.

In the near future, I want to build our youth work. We have young people who now have families, young people moving here with their families, and some who are growing up who don't have a lot of Nepalese-speaking role models.

By 2019, we will be able to have a thriving—or the beginnings of a thriving—youth program and help our young folks stay on the right track not just in terms of going to school and supporting their families, but also in terms of being politically educated and training more young organizers as well. There is a lot of power in young folks.

Story of Youth Engagement at DC Rally:

We are working with the We Belong Together campaign. [Director of Organizing and Programs] Narbada Chetri Didi (translation: older sister) recruited two families who have TPS to participate in Washington, DC. One of the families was a mother who is a nail salon worker who came with her two sons. One of the sons was 10 years old and super rambunctious. He was like, “this is so boring.” Narbada Didi and I talked to him about [why] it's a big deal to know that your parents could potentially be kicked out of the country because the administration wants to end TPS.

Afterwards, the parents and children saw other young folks, especially from the Latino community, who are deeply invested. A lot of them have been to gatherings and rallies with their parents. [They were] hearing the other young kids share their stories.

The next morning, the 10-year-old boy spoke at the press conference about DACA

[Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals] and why we needed to pass the Dream Act. Later in a meeting with a congressional staff person from Tennessee, the young boy said to them, “My mom has TPS. My dad has TPS. My brother has TPS. I am the only one that's a citizen. And you are trying to kick my family out. What are you going to do if all my family has to leave and I'm here alone?”

That power of transformation even within a 24-hour period shows how young folks learn fast. It's just a matter of giving them the right tools and resources. That indicated to us that we need to do more to integrate young people.



Adhikaar Executive Director, Pabitra Benjamin

Adhikaar will continue to campaign for immigrant rights and reform. Benjamin says support from The New York Women's Foundation, one of Adhikaar's first funders, “has been a blessing.” In addition to growing their youth capacity, Benjamin hopes Adhikaar will begin an education series on LGBTQ issues within the community.



A Young Poet and Her Feminist Poetry Stand

By LaToya Jordan

When considering ways young people can raise money, most people probably think of lemonade stands, cookie booths, or car washes, but 12-year-old Ela Alster introduced her Battery Park neighbors to a new kind of sidewalk sale: the feminist poetry stand.

Last August, the seventh grader set up a poetry stand to raise funds for The New York Women's Foundation. For \$5, buyers were treated to original poems written by Ela. The six poems she wrote for the fundraiser covered a range of topics, including the hardships women face, how there is strength in numbers, collected inspirational quotes about women, affirmations, and a thank you letter to women.

In one of her poems, titled "It's OK," she writes, "Some women have been raised not to dream, to blend in with the crowd, and not to exceed expectations / But that's not ok. // It's ok / To dream big. / It's ok / To stand out. / It's ok / To be better. / It's ok / To be strong. / It's ok / To speak out."

Ela's poetry fundraiser was part of a mitzvah project. In addition to the poems sold at her sidewalk stand, copies of the poems were available for purchase at her bat mitzvah, held in September 2017. Ela sold 186 copies of her poems, raising \$932, which was then matched by her mother Cristina's employer, for a total of \$1,864 donated to The Foundation.

The idea for the project came to her easily because it combines two things she is passionate about: feminism and poetry. Once she decided what her project would be, she set out to choose an organization. "I researched some trustworthy foundations that focused on certain aspects of feminism I was interested in and thought, 'here's a way I could really make a difference,'" she says.

Ela is one of countless pre-teen and teen activists using their voices to speak up about injustices in their communities, in their countries, in the world. She began identifying as a feminist once she became aware of sexism and how much of an impact it has on "our society, on me, and on other people in my life," she

says. “Once I found out about sexism, I hated it. I don’t want to grow up in a world or society where I’m treated differently because I’m a woman. I felt the injustice and felt empowered to do something, even if that something was just to speak about it.”

It’s important for young people to be activists, Ela says because kids are in the stage where they’re learning about all the possibilities in the world, which can be a benefit to adult activists. “Sometimes it may be harder to challenge the ways of society for people who have lived their entire life in a world where injustice has continued to exist and prevail.”

She chose poetry as her form of activism, influenced by the rich history of writers and artists who create art as social justice. One of her favorite poets is Langston

it has been a love of hers since when her parents read Shel Silverstein to her at bedtime.

Though the poetry fundraiser was her first solo activism project, Ela plans to continue her work for the causes most important to her. After making the donation to The New York Women’s Foundation, she met with and interviewed The Foundation’s President and CEO Ana Oliveira and was inspired by Ana’s passion. She wants to continue to support The Foundation and learn more about grantmaking, as well as get involved with a writing organization for women and girls.

In one of her poems, Ela thanks the women in her life for teaching her what it means to be a woman. One woman she calls her “biggest feminist role model” is British actress and activist Emma Watson. “I

After making the donation to The New York Women’s Foundation, she met with and interviewed The Foundation’s President and CEO Ana Oliveira and was inspired by Ana’s passion.

see how she empowers people by talking about feminism.”

Ela hopes that she, too, can be an inspiration to girls her age and younger, reminding them that, “each one of us, we’re all different and we’re all important, and no matter how small we may seem, we can all make a difference. The more we talk and stand, the more of an impact we can make. I hope to always have that sort of unwavering determination and hope. I know it gets harder as you get older and go throughout life, but I hope to never give up speaking out.”

“

It’s important for young people to be activists, Ela says because kids are in the stage where they’re learning about all the possibilities in the world, which can be a benefit to adult activists.

”

Hughes because of the way “he takes such ordinary things and unjust norms in society and communities and opens your eyes to them,” she says. Writing poetry came naturally to Ela as

loved the Harry Potter series and watched all the movies. I related to her and her Hermione character. I’ve watched her in interviews more recently as she’s become an adult and I

Because I'm a Woman

By Ela Alster

Mini skirt
Crop-top shirt
High heeled shoes
Blacks and blues
The different hues
Of your forced compliments.
Your catcalls
All over the walls
Of my life.
Because I can't wear that skirt
without being a slut.
Wear that shirt
Without being a flirt.
Those stilettos speak for me
Saying yes
Even when my mouth says
No.
My keys are my weapons
On my way home at night
Because my voice will be
Muted
By your desire.
By your lack
Of self control.
My body becomes your medal,
Your prize
For winning me.
I am no longer human
In your eyes.
I don't have feelings.
I become the victim
To your needs
And satisfaction.
I am an object
That you use

Any way you see fit.
Abused sometimes
Even when your hands
Don't feel my skin.
Because instead
Of you
Being taught respect,
I
Am taught that I am
Lesser
Than you.
That I am
Asking for it
When I put on
That little bit
Of lipstick.



A Winning Combination

By Luthfun J. Nahar
The New School IGNITE! Fellow

Every evening, after feeding the children and cleaning the apartment, my aunt sat at the kitchen table folding lengths of magenta and pink ribbon into roses.

As a child, I didn't know where the bountiful crop of roses went or that this immigrant woman from Bangladesh was an entrepreneur. And I certainly didn't know that immigrant businesses led by low-income women of color like my aunt were becoming a significant part of the entrepreneurial landscape of New York City.

While they experience

many obstacles to accessing resources, especially in today's political climate, women are paving the way for innovation and creative solutions in today's interconnected world.

Women of Color Critical to the Nation

A 2015 report by Brookings Institute states, "increasing the rate of minority and female entrepreneurship may help to reduce the race and gender wealth gaps, to reduce income and wealth inequality, and to increase social mobility." This is already happening in New York City where the growth in numbers

of businesswomen of color is contributing to a reduction in income and wealth inequality.

Women Entrepreneurs NYC's (WENYC) report, *Unlocking the Power of Women Entrepreneurs in New York City*, states that New York City leads the nation in the number of women entrepreneurs. Employing over 190,000 people and generating \$50 billion in sales annually, women entrepreneurs in New York City have increased in numbers to 43 percent since 2002. Nationwide, the number of Black women business owners has grown 322 percent

since 1997, making them the fastest growing group of entrepreneurs in the United States, even though women remain only half as likely as men to start a business.

According to a 2015 report by the Kauffman Foundation, women bring skills that set them apart from their male counterparts, including a more nuanced view of risk and greater ambition. In addition, the report says the increase in women in business leaders correlates with increased business returns. More women in business is good for all in business.

The New York City government has been a key leader in creating entrepreneurship opportunities for women, allocating funds, and establishing accountability measures. In 2015, the city launched WENYC, which will provide 5,000 low-income women entrepreneurs with business training and resources, thus promoting upward mobility and alleviating racial and gendered disparities in business ownership.

One beneficiary of this new trend in New York City is I Bike Harlem, which Maxine Daniels began three years ago. Daniels received the Spirit of Entrepreneurship award at The New York Women's Foundation 30th

Anniversary Neighborhood Dinner in the fall of 2017. Her business engages people with the history, culture, and cuisine of Harlem. "This year we toured a total of 690 tourists and locals," she said. Most riders come from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, or The Netherlands.

Mind the Gap

In 2013, The New York Women's Foundation's support of women-led small businesses in low-income communities had a 900 percent return on investment.¹

Yet, women still face unique barriers including less access to the pools of mentorship, resources, peer support, and capital long enjoyed by their white male counterparts. For the marginalized immigrant community, these unmet needs represent a significant gap between potential and execution.

Julia Jean-Francois, co-director of the Center for Family Life, a New York City social services organization, clues us in: "The biggest obstacle is not knowing the ways businesses are structured in the United States. Often it's an overwhelming burden while working minimum wage or less jobs. The City has a resource center that addresses that, but the



marginalized immigrant community hasn't connected to it." The gap, Jean-Francois believes, centers around language barriers and the need for instruction in English as a language. The low level of literacy presents further barriers to accessibility, including the process of getting incorporated as a business, tax forms, gaining access to banks, or something as seemingly simple as having a checking account.

"The WENYC has missed working with super low-income women whose primary language is not English." Their work is an admirable step forward, but "I don't think it was meant for this particular group of women."

Another barrier is the real or perceived bias that Black or brown women's businesses

¹ <https://www.nywf.org/news/unlocking-power-women-entrepreneurs-new-york-city/>

are of lower quality and competence. “People are very fearful. It doesn’t matter their individual legal status. People who are documented and have the ability to work still feel anxious that people will suspect they don’t belong here and discriminate against them or refuse to hire them. It created a lot of uncertainty. They may also feel unwelcome and hurt. Immigrants have an enormous impact on businesses yet they feel dismissed and diminished.”

The Cooperative Model

The Center for Family Life began its Worker Cooperative Development Program in 2006 to meet the demands of employment in the ethnically and economically diverse South Brooklyn neighborhood of Sunset Park. “Acting as an incubator of worker cooperatives—businesses maximize the potential of members’ skills—the program assists members in the

creation of cooperatives that will lead to long-term, stable jobs and a fair wage within a work environment that upholds the values of equity, dignity, and mutual respect for all workers.” The nonprofit has supported 11 enterprises, from cooking collectives to cleaning and childcare services.

The Golden Steps cooperative provides non-medical care and companionship to elders. The worker-owners, who practice collective decision making, bring unique insights about end-of-life care from their home countries. This enterprise started from the simple observation that “elders from another country won’t be buried anywhere near their family. They weren’t going to be cared for by family in the way their own parents had been cared for.”

The women, hailing from mainly Spanish-speaking Latin

American countries, sought to provide emotional support and “help older people have a fulfilling and safe and less medically psychologically traumatic end of life. Those are rich insights. We wouldn’t have gotten them otherwise,” Jean-Francois says.

Everyone Benefits from Inclusion

This brings us to the heart of the necessity of inclusion. Those from the margins of society hold the greatest insight and potential for the radical leadership that is key to problem solving.

It’s a matter not of charity, but necessity—the mainstream business world has much to learn from low-income immigrant women of color. “In addition to its being ethically important that everyone gets a chance to participate, we find solutions by engaging people with very diverse perspectives. If we don’t do that, the solutions we come up with are all the poorer.”

When a nation as diverse and complex as ours places the experiences of Black and brown women at its center, everyone benefits. It’s too late for my aunt who long ago traded in making ribbon roses for caring for her grandchild, but organizations like the Center for Family Life ensure that women like her stand a chance to harvest their vast wealth of experience.



Center for Family Life's Co-operatives
United for Sunset Park members



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Volunteer Karina de Sousa on Radical Generosity

By Sayoni Nyakoon
The New School IGNITE! Fellow

Last June, I sat down with Karina de Sousa for her take on empathy, compassion, and radical generosity.

Her Story: At the time, Karina was the manager of special projects for the National Urban League and a frequent activist-volunteer at The New York Women’s Foundation. Currently, she is an MBA candidate at Emory University’s Goizueta Business School.

What piqued your interest in social enterprise?

I’m originally from Mozambique but I lived in Ithaca, NY, for 10 years—a small college town. During that time, my family never went back to Mozambique. It wasn’t financially feasible with my dad in graduate school.

When I moved back at age 13 it was jarring going from a small college town to a developing country and seeing the level of relative poverty that existed back home.

How does Mozambique compare to the United States?

Mozambique is not as “developed” as the United States, but my time there as a teenager fundamentally changed my perspective on the world and my career aspirations. I was more enveloped in diverse spaces, attending an international school and expanding my network across the globe. It also taught me resourcefulness.

In terms of my career in the United States, there are so many opportunities that have helped me develop over the first six years of my professional career. I’m so grateful to be able to volunteer with organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters and The New York Women’s Foundation, which have given me a more solid understanding of the public service landscape in New York City. Furthermore, my participation in NYU Wagner’s Fellowship for Emerging Leaders in Public Service helped me navigate how to intentionally and strategically plan my own public service career.

How did you get involved with The New York Women’s Foundation (NYWF)?

My mentor, Robyn Brady Ince, introduced me to The Foundation. She works

at the National Urban League, and we met when I worked as an intern in the education division. She used to be on the board for The Foundation and she urged me to volunteer at the Celebrating Women Breakfast and to apply for the Grants Advisory Committee (GAC). GAC allows women from all walks of life to get involved with the grantmaking process by helping The Foundation select nonprofits to fund. I served on GAC for five cycles, including three cycles as a team leader. I also served as a team leader on the Participatory Review Committee for the NYC Fund for Girls and Young Women of Color, which is administered by The Foundation. I absolutely adore The Foundation and everything it does.

The New York Women's Foundation has a new slogan—Radical Generosity. What does this mean to you? I would say, given the political climate that we're in, when I think of radical generosity I think of empathy and empowerment. We have to empathize and think about other people's viewpoints and listen to each other's opinions, whether we agree or not. The ability to step outside of yourself and see a different point of view—that's empathy and that's radical because not enough of us choose to engage in empathy. And generosity is tied to empowerment. There are so many different ways you can give back. You can give your time, or you can give monetarily, or you can give in terms of connection—who you connect

people to. And what I appreciate about The Foundation is that they try to empower people and communities and because of that, they fund community solutions. That's what I love about the idea about generosity.

How else is The Foundation radically generous? The Foundation doesn't step in and tell the organizations they fund what to do, and I think in the realm of philanthropy that's really rare. The Foundation calls the organizations they fund *grantee partners*, and they really emphasize the latter, *partner*, piece. They listen to communities and believe communities have the expertise to carry out solutions to their challenges.

The language they use is radical as well. At GAC orientation, they tell us to think of ourselves as Activist-Volunteers and Activist-Philanthropists and that kind of language empowers people to think about different ways they can be involved. Even within The Foundation there are so many ways to be involved.

You can do GAC, for example. It happens over five weeks and it's incredibly intense. It includes proposal reading, site visits, making presentations, and forming recommendations...but they also have a group for young professionals, which includes tapping into your own network and connecting those around you to philanthropic activities and events.

It sounds like there are a lot of ways to get involved!

Yes! And they're not all time-consuming—in the past few years I've gotten my friends to come to the Celebrating Women Breakfast and volunteer too. And you can get involved at all levels. If you can only give 5 dollars or 10 dollars, you are still a philanthropist and that amount makes a difference. On a community level and a system-wide level. As an immigrant living in New York City, my involvement with The Foundation was a key component of my civic engagement and a way for me to give back to the community that I was now calling home.

Do you have any upcoming plans to help mold the system?

I'm pursuing an MBA at Emory right now so I can learn how to expand my quantitative background and get a solid foundation in business. Then I'll go back into social enterprise and hopefully stay in philanthropy long-term. I'm sad to have left New York City even though I'm excited about this new chapter in my life. In New York there are so many spaces—for activists and intellectuals—you can always keep yourself invigorated. The energy never ends.



The Foundation Awards Over \$4 Million in Grants to Women-led New York City Organizations

The Foundation's grantmaking for 2018 is off to a robust start and shaping up to be our largest ever, thanks to the commitment and generosity of our supporters and donors.

For the first half of 2018, we awarded \$4.135 million in grants to 43 organizations that excel at addressing head-on the complex needs faced by women, girls, trans and gender fluid individuals, and families living at or below the poverty level in New York City, with programs that focus on economic security, anti-violence and safety, health, sexual rights, and reproductive justice.

The Foundation welcomed 13 new grantee partners in this round, including the Coro

New York Leadership Center, Laundry Workers Center, and Jahajee Sisters. Coro New York's award will support its partnership with the New York City Council to increase youth engagement in participatory budgeting and amplify their voices in government. The award to Laundry Workers Center will help them educate low-wage workers in the laundry, warehouse, and food service industries in the advocacy and reform process. The Jahajee Sisters award will help foster its mission to create a safe and equitable society for underserved Indo-Caribbean women and girls through healing, the arts, and leadership development.

In a departure from our previous practice of annual

grants, The Foundation awarded multi-year grants in the areas of "Early Investment" and "Resilience NYC - Civic Engagement" to 21 organizations. This will provide our partners with greater ability to plan for both near- and long-term initiatives.

Since 1987, The Foundation has distributed over \$69 million to over 370 organizations working to meet the needs of women and families across New York City. Individual grant amounts in this cycle ranged from \$40,000 to \$150,000.

The Foundation anticipates awarding \$9 million to New York City organizations during 2018.

Grantee partners for the first half of 2018 follows:

ECONOMIC SECURITY GRANTS

Promoting the economic security and independence of women and girls by supporting programs that provide greater access to education, leadership opportunities, job training, employment, and financial resources.

African Communities Together - \$130,000

African Refuge - \$130,000

ALIGN: The Alliance for a Greater New York - \$60,000

Brandworkers - General Operating Support - \$60,000

Business Center for New Americans - \$130,000

Center for Frontline Retail - \$60,000

Custom Collaborative - \$60,000

Gender Equality Law Center - \$60,000

Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) - \$60,000

Latinas On the Verge of Excellence, L.O.V.E. Mentoring Program - \$130,000

Latino Leadership Institute - \$60,000

LatinoJustice PRLDEF - \$70,000

Laundry Workers Center - \$60,000

Masa-MexEd - \$60,000

Mekong NYC - \$130,000

New York Paid Leave Coalition - \$130,000

New York State Tenants & Neighbors Information Service - \$130,000

Rise - \$130,000

The Healing Center - \$60,000

Women's Justice NOW - \$60,000

HEALTH, SEXUAL RIGHTS, AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE GRANTS

Supporting women, girls, and gender-fluid individuals' ability to take control of their health and sexual rights, and to obtain quality healthcare, including the full range of reproductive services.

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health - \$130,000

Pride Center of Staten Island - \$60,000

RESILIENCE NYC - CIVIC ENGAGEMENT GRANTS

Accelerating change and responding to the shifting national political landscape and policy changes that adversely impact New York's most vulnerable communities.

Coro New York Leadership Center - \$125,000

Generation Citizen - \$150,000



Grantee partner Mixteca



Grantee partner African Communities Together

Girls for Gender Equity - \$40,000

Higher Heights - \$130,000

IGNITE - \$150,000

New American Leaders - \$150,000

New Leaders Council - \$40,000

New York City Anti-Violence Project - \$150,000

New York Immigration Coalition - \$150,000

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY GRANTS

Creating momentum for change on issues focusing on vast economic and social disparities including criminal justice reform, ending gender-based violence, and increasing access to living wage employment and affordable housing in high-need neighborhoods.

Cooperative Economics Alliance of New York City
-\$60,000

Faith in New York - \$60,000

New Economy Project - \$60,000

Respectability - \$60,000

The Debt Collective - \$60,000

Since 1987, The New York Women's Foundation has advanced a dynamic philanthropic strategy based on the fundamental reality that, when women thrive, their families and communities also thrive. The Foundation is the largest women-led grantmaking organization in the United States, and one of the top two in the world. We invest in women-led, community-based solutions that promote the economic security, safety, and health of the most underinvested women in New York City. We foster women's leadership, create partnerships that spark catalytic change, exchange insights with experts across sectors, and empower women by training them in activism and philanthropy to accelerate and sustain forward progress.



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