



Girls for Gender Equity

Evaluation Findings:

The NYC Fund for Girls and Young Women of Color

March 2024

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ABOUT THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Since 1987, The New York Women's Foundation (The Foundation) has advanced a dynamic philanthropic strategy based on the fundamental reality that, when women and gender-expansive people thrive, their families and communities also thrive. We invest in women-led, community-based solutions that promote the economic security, safety, and health of the most vulnerable women in New York City. The New York Women's Foundation fosters the leadership of women and gender-expansive people, creates partnerships that spark catalytic change, exchanges insights with experts across sectors, and empowers women and gender-expansive people by training them in activism and philanthropy in order to accelerate and sustain forward progress.



The Brotherhood/Sister Sol

OVERVIEW OF THE FUND

The NYC Fund for Girls and Young Women of Color (The Fund) is a collaborative effort that brings a diverse group of philanthropic funders together to promote the progress of young women of color whose ambitions, voices, capacities and identities have long been dismissed or derailed. The first of its kind in the United States, The Fund envisions a city that offers every opportunity for all girls and young women of color, inclusive of two-spirit, transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) youth, to succeed economically and socially. It offers meaningful and holistic support to organizations and programs led by and for young women and gender-expansive youth of color.

The Fund supports emerging organizations with strong leadership opportunities for girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color. Over the course of its first years, The Fund focused on collective advocacy for policy change that would advance the economic and social power of girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color. Additionally, The Fund contributed to grantee partners' capacity building efforts, supporting leadership development for young people, and created spaces for collaboration and shared learnings that fostered connections between groups and collective action among grantee partners. During these years, The Fund also created opportunities for funders to learn, engage, and participate.

HISTORY

Historically, Black and Brown communities have been underserved by philanthropy and government entities. Aiming to address this issue, during his time in office, President Obama developed My Brother's Keeper, an important initiative that brought resources to support boys and young men of color. While this was a much-needed effort, something similar did not exist for girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color. This aligned with greater trends in the field, as only 2% of philanthropic funding is directed to organizations focused on women and girls.

To fill this critical gap, community leader Joanne Smith of Girls for Gender Equity advocated to government and philanthropy for resources to support girls and young women of color. Joanne and Girls for Gender Equity and Danielle Moss Cox, leading the YWCA of the City of New York, continued shaping the road forward and invited The New York Women's Foundation and NoVo Foundation as philanthropic partners to be a part of this effort. The leadership of Joanne and Danielle, along with the philanthropic commitments to this work, successfully received the support of former City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. This effort sparked the first-of-its-kind Young Women's Initiative (YWI).

During this time, The Foundation took the role of bringing philanthropy together to expand the support of these efforts, which resulted in the creation of The NYC Fund for Girls and Young Women of Color. To date, The Fund's Funding Table has grown to nearly 20 funders, including organizations from the region and national funders. The Fund's initial five areas of investments were informed by the recommendations from a convening led by Girls for Gender Equity, where advocates developed an agenda focused on priorities for supporting girls, young women and gender-expansive youth, including health, economic and workforce development, community support and opportunity, education, and anti-violence and criminal justice. Since 2015, The Fund's grantmaking totaled over \$12 million to more than 60 grantee partner organizations.

The world changed over The Fund's implementation. The election of Trump, racial reckoning, and the pandemic were among the many events that prompted The Fund to provide rapid response funding and make deeper commitments to girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color.

Since 2015, The Fund's grantmaking has totaled close to \$17 million to more than 60 grantee partner organizations.



Black Women's Blueprint, Inc.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE FUND

Partnership

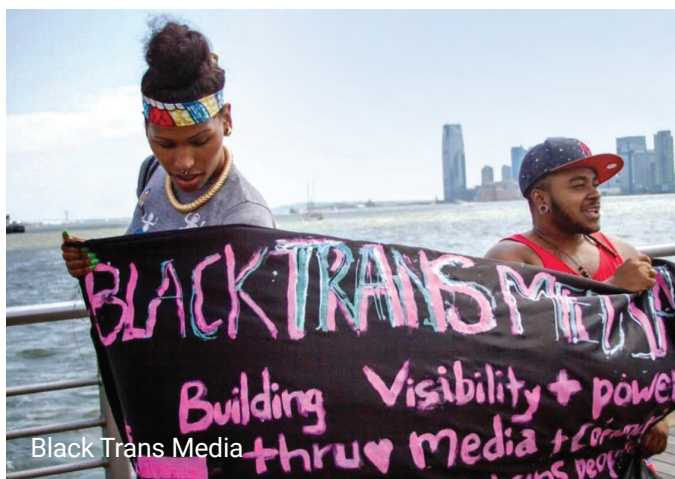
As a pooled fund, we engage multi-sector (community, government, philanthropy and corporate) partners at various levels. The Fund uses an asset-based approach to expand and enrich available resources and to unify allies through collaboration and learning. The Fund is also an ally to organizations working to advance the needs of boys and young men of color.

Systemic Change

The Fund supports advocacy, community organizing, and policy change strategies necessary to advance the systems within which girls and young women interact and the culture in which they live, while addressing immediate harms and historical trauma.

Accountability

The Fund both partners with and holds government accountable to address the needs of the most marginalized girls, young women and gender-expansive people of color, while also supporting them as leaders and community assets.



Perspective

Issues of gender, race and class are critical considerations for any strategy for change, which must strive for inclusion across race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, non-binary gender identities, and disability.

Youth Leadership

The Fund supports youth leadership and centers the voices of girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color as active and compensated advisors. It prioritizes organizations led by and for young women of color across race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, and disabilities in the most economically underserved communities.



INSPIRATION TO PHILANTHROPY

As the first fund of its kind, The Fund set the stage for similar models across the country. These other funds have since adopted some key principles.

First, The Fund adopted a participatory approach to grantmaking that included guidance from a Grants Advisory Committee (GAC) comprised of young people who reviewed applications, joined funders for site visits, and made funding recommendations. The inclusion of the GAC further ensured that The Fund supported organizations and programs that were led by and for young people.

Additionally, The Fund sparked the National Philanthropic Collaborative of Young Women's Initiatives, a consortium of women's foundations that focuses on policy opportunities to support girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color and creates leadership opportunities through Young Women and Girls (YWAG) advisory committees. This work is both local and national and includes geographically focused efforts to share learnings and experiences with a national table of gender justice funds.

GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

- Understand and elevate the experiences of grantee partners and the impact of their work as part of the first initial years of The NYC Fund for Girls and Young Women of Color;
- Learn about the experiences of funder partners that were part of The Fund's Funders Table and clarify parameters for future engagement.

PROCESS

In summer 2023, The New York Women's Foundation reached out to all of The Fund's active grantee partners (39) and to current funder partners (8) to ask them to share their experiences being part of The Fund. Grounded in a trust-based approach, participation in this evaluation was optional. Fifteen grantee partners and eight funder partners opted to participate.

Grantee partners had the option to share their responses in writing or to schedule a one-hour interview call. The interviewer encouraged respondents to take the lead in conversation flow, to ensure they had the opportunity to share information they deemed important. Interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure precision, and analysis to identify themes and responses was done via Excel.

Funder interviews were informal conversations focused on funder partners' experience with the Funder Table. Notes were taken during these discussions.



Black Women's Blueprint, Inc.

REFLECTING ON THE IMPACT OF THE FUND

Based on the findings of this evaluation, The Fund has achieved impact on multiple levels, including individual, community, and systems. Evidence demonstrated that organizations:



1. Increased economic security among girls, young women and gender-expansive people of color in NYC



2. Increased funding opportunities for programs led by and for girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color



3. Centered young people in advocacy efforts and policy-making spaces



4. Improved mental health outcomes within this community



Mekong, Inc.



1. Increased economic security among girls, young women and gender-expansive people of color in NYC

A primary objective of The Fund was to help build a networked and resourced ecosystem of organizations centering the lives of low-income young women of color across race/ethnicity and gender/gender identity/sexuality.

Of the grantee partners interviewed, almost 90% helped support the economic and social power of young women and gender-expansive youth of color. Examples of activities included providing stipends for youth program beneficiaries, increasing access to education and training for transferable skills, and hiring and investing in leadership development for young people.

1a. Grantee partners provided stipends for youth beneficiaries

Participant organizations noted that having the ability to pay young people for their time and expertise was a priority, and The Fund's resources made this support possible. These payments provide program participants with financial autonomy, with many opting to support their families and communities and to pay for higher education.

“People are always paid for their time, their expertise, and the expertise of their lived experiences.” – THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED NYC

Members used their stipends to support their household expenses and [pay] for college. – VIBE THEATER EXPERIENCE

The Dream Team Ambassador Program was a stipend program for student leaders from different schools to come together for organizing and advocacy training. Some new teams were able to build up their campaigns for more resources within their schools. For example, the CCNY Dream Team Network Coordinator was able to get their school to commit to building an Immigrant Student Success Center. – NEW YORK STATE YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

1b. Grantee partners increased access to education and training opportunities on transferable skills

Another way organizations increased economic opportunities for young people was by teaching them transferable skills. These educational and training opportunities had a ripple effect, allowing young people to apply these learnings into their daily lives and positively impact their communities.

We have introduced educational workshops designed to enrich the skills and abilities of girls, young women, and gender-expansive youth of color. One such workshop, known as the Real Master Class, encompasses various components, including life coaching with a holistic self-assessment approach, goal setting for mastering the art of public speaking, and the establishment of a well-rounded foundation that addresses mental, physical, spiritual, emotional, and economic dimensions. – GIRL VOW, INC.

TONYC has had an ongoing practice of training actors from our programs, and have had a number join our staff team. For example, two young women joined into one of our special facilitator training sessions at their program site (Neighbors in Action). After it, one of them came on staff as facilitator and the other one is now a program director at a youth advocacy organization where she is training youth to be advocates. – THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED NYC

An alum who got her master’s in social work and wanted to give back to her community became a middle school counselor and started her own nonprofit, called Yes, sister friend to bring young girls and women of color in community. Now she’s giving back in a way that pretty much tripled the investment that we made in terms of just making sure she was able to continue her studies. – WELFARE RIGHTS INITIATIVE

1c. Grantee partners hired and invested in leadership development for young people within their organizations

Lastly, during the interviews, participants noted the importance of investing in the leadership of young women and gender-expansive people of color within their own organizations, providing a path to economic security for young women and gender-expansive people of color. This aligns with The Fund's goal to support community-based organizations led by and for young women and gender-expansive youth of color.

[The funds also allowed us to] create spaces and a leadership pipeline where young people could actually come into their own in determining then the future of the funding landscape. They're advising on program time and impact and then advising on their own trajectory and what is needed. – GIRLS FOR GENDER EQUITY, INC.

...I met them as a member of the TGNC Leadership Academy, and I've seen them show up to a lot of the outside work that we did. They helped us organize some internal events. I would say one of the big successes was seeing them become part of the staff, and seeing our folks invest in our people. You know? We talk a lot about community supporting community. – NEW YORK TRANSGENDER ADVOCACY GROUP



One of our peer educators led [a] forum at her high school around racism, bringing the kids and the teachers together. It was kind of a movement... There were newspaper articles about it. It was really exciting because she had been part of the programming since middle school. – **CENTER FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE EDUCATION**

Interviews highlighted the different ways that the work of The Fund's grantee partners improved economic security for girls, young women and gender-expansive people of color. These learnings demonstrated that Fund investments have contributed substantially to the growth and maintenance of the ecosystem of organizations led by and for young women, girls, and gender-expansive youth.



2. Increased funding opportunities for programs led by and for young women of color

Data showed that 40% of grantee partners interviewed had experienced increased opportunities for support since beginning their partnership with The Fund. Organizations noted that being part of The Fund, and in a relationship with The New York Women's Foundation, increased their credibility and access to funding opportunities.

There was a surge in funding that was allocated to support movement building organizations, power building organizations that serve black communities of color.

– **VIBE THEATER EXPERIENCE**



Sadie Nash Leadership Project

Because we can say we received money from The Fund and The Foundation, this provided credibility and allowed us to leverage those funds to receive support. – YWCHAC

The fact that The New York Women’s Foundation leveraged the initial funds that were offered by the City Council speaker at the time to grow a pool of money that would be invested in girls and young women of color throughout New York City was bold. – WELFARE RIGHTS INITIATIVE

These learnings showed that The Fund has been a portal for increasing funding available to New York’s young women of color through both its own investments and by influencing the strategies of member organizations.

Simultaneously, organizations noted that even with the support of The Fund, funding opportunities, specifically for general operations, continue to be a challenge for grassroots organizations led by and for young women of color.



3. Centered youth voices in advocacy and policy-making spaces

Another goal of The Fund was to increase the number of young people involved in policy making spaces. 80% of grantee partners interviewed emphasized how their work centers the voices and experiences of young people advocating for the issues that they care about the most. During the first years of The Fund, grantee partners provided a space for girls, young women and gender-expansive people of color to gather skills and resources to advocate for the change they want to see in their communities.

Grantee partners reported that young women and gender-expansive people of color in their programs increasingly used their stories and new skills to advocate for changes they want to see. Grantee partners were excited to be able to provide resources to create optimum conditions for beneficiaries to use their voices to advocate for their communities. These efforts, many of which resulted in advocacy campaigns led by young people, have influenced policy changes such as the passing of the Gender-Neutral Restrooms Bill in NY.

The Power of Storytelling training provided members of ROC to use their voice and use their stories to advocate for policy changes around childcare, working hours, and improved benefits and pay... After going through our training, a young women member spoke in the childcare rally in Albany and publicly testified in the challenges of childcare.
– **RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITY CENTERS UNITED**

We have worked together with State Senator Lea Webb and Assembly Member Reyes to have the Governor sign the legislation (A5088-A / S4266-A). This bill establishes a NYS Task Force on Missing and Murdered BIPOC Women and Girls that will address the discrepancies in the lack of care and/or concern for missing and murdered Black, Indigenous women and girls of color. – **GIRL VOW, INC.**

Daniel Dromm was the sponsor of the Gender-Neutral Restrooms Bill. The first version of it was just about city buildings, and then expanded to any single restroom that's open to the public in New York City. Folks [from the Academy] testified at those hearings, and some... actually went to the bill signing. After the bill passed, we started to look at: Okay, what is implementation? We realized that the implementation piece of it would be really difficult. Members of the Academy worked really closely on some signage so we could actually walk into restaurants and be like, we see that you have men's and women's bathrooms here are signs that you legally are required to use. Folks dropped maps, and we went out. It was interesting to have ground level experience for folks of talking to someone who they needed a change, a change from doing education, figuring out how to do that safely, and sometimes having them make the change right in front of us. It was interesting to see that you can actually take this on yourself to go and have these conversations. It gave folks a concrete taste of what happens after a bill passes.
– **NEW YORK TRANSGENDER ADVOCACY GROUP**



4. Supporting girls and young women of color to improve mental health outcomes

Improving mental health outcomes for girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color was another priority of The Fund. The need to support organizations addressing mental health needs for these communities became even more evident after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022, The New York Women's Foundation held conversations with grantee partners to better understand how to support organizations working with young people. These discussions highlighted the pandemic's impact on the mental health of youth beneficiaries and grantee partners' staff, who were also young people of color. Barriers to mental health and wellbeing included burnout, losing spaces that used to be safe environments, and increasing hate crimes.

Over 60% of grantee partners interviewed for this evaluation highlighted their work supporting the mental health of girls, young women and gender-expansive people of color. They described how they provided tools and support to help participants navigate emotions, created safe spaces for youth and their staff, and advocated for young people’s mental health and healing.

We've offered internal trainings on trauma informed facilitation; and then we all took a mental health first aid training. Learning what support can we offer as an organization has been really impactful. – **THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED NYC**

Youth Program activities and curricula are entirely formulated in response to the stated needs of the participants themselves; as a result, youth have designed and led a local mental health campaign. – **THE ARAB AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK**

Because funding [from The Fund] came to us as general operating support to all programs, one of the things we've been able to do is be flexible in terms where the need was...For example, at the outset of the pandemic we needed to expand the ability to provide mental health and wellness support across all programs. – **SADIE NASH LEADERSHIP PROJECT**

It's not surprising to me how many times we've been told “we wish there was a turning point when we were teenagers.” Because we are immigrants, so our parents are immigrants, and the challenges we faced. We felt like there was no safe space. There was no one to talk to and that was the purpose of starting our work with young girls.
– **TURNING POINT FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES**

These learnings highlighted the need for increased support to organizations that are supporting mental health and safety by addressing issues such lack of communal and safe spaces, and access to housing, food and education for girls, young women, and gender-expansive youth of color.



United We Dream Network, Inc.

LEARNINGS FROM “A BOLD, BIG AND REVOLUTIONARY FUND”

During the interview process, grantee and funder partners uplifted takeaways and best practices that enabled The Fund’s success. These lessons continue to inform how we partner with grantee and funder partners. Data from interviews demonstrated the importance of cultivating relationships with partners based on trust, finding opportunities to support grantee partners beyond funding, how narrative change is instrumental to justice work, and how having clear roles and consistent communication is vital when partnering with organizations that work closely with their communities.

1. A trust-based relationship is crucial for transformational work

Over 90% of grantee partners interviewed noted the impact of having a trust-based relationship with The New York Women’s Foundation. They highlighted how their relationship with The Foundation’s staff, which was based on trust and centered flexibility, facilitated organizational transformation and growth. Grantee partners stated that they felt supported by The Foundation, and how its flexibility in the face of ever-changing community needs was key to their success.

1a. Excellent relationships with Foundation staff promoted a supportive partnership

Multiple organizations noted that they felt supported by The Foundation and The Fund. They described how Foundation staff’s responsiveness and empathy made them feel seen and valued. Respondents attributed their ability to continue doing progressive work to a relationship with the Foundation that was centered in collaboration toward the common goal of supporting girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color in New York City and beyond.

I want to make sure that The New York Women’s Foundation understands how valuable their approach is to the communities that they’re investing in. We’ve always felt seen, we’ve always felt heard, and we’ve always felt valued. That’s the model that other philanthropic institutions should really follow. – WELFARE RIGHTS INITIATIVE

What has set our relationship with New York Women’s Foundation apart is the exceptional rapport we’ve built with their team. Our unique connection extends to the relationships we’ve cultivated with [our] relationship manager and [other] staff members. This level of familiarity and understanding has been invaluable to us. We greatly appreciate having funders who not only support our mission but also comprehend the intricacies and demands of our work. This mutual understanding has fostered a relationship characterized by trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to our common goals. It’s a partnership that goes beyond financial support, as New York Women’s Foundation has become a true ally in our mission to make a positive impact in our community. – GIRL VOW, INC.

1b. Trust-based relationships promoted organizational transformation and growth

During our conversations, grantee partners also mentioned the impact of a trust-based funding approach. Knowing that they had a stable funding source to support their general operations was instrumental in their ability to transform their work. Many organizations also expressed the support they felt, as grass-root organizations led by and for young women and gender-expansive people of color. They noted that even when challenges arose, The Foundation was a key partner in navigating these experiences and helping them grow from them.

[Through the general operations grant received] we were able to solidify [the organization] a lot more by hiring our first full time Dream Team Network Coordinator who spearheaded the launch of this network, gave it structure, and created an ambassador program for people to be compensated while learning how to organize in school.. – **NEW YORK STATE YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

Stability of our funding [through The Fund] allowed us to maintain extended partnerships ...and has supported our organization in innovating how we do our practices to better [embody] the values of anti-oppression work. – **THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED NYC**



Desis Rising Up and Moving

New York Women's Foundation funded [this] project since its beginning. It invested early in an organization started by two young Latina [students], born and raised in the Bronx, who have never seen a leadership program for people [that looks] like them... [After] they graduated, the leadership of the organization got weaker. The Foundation, instead of taking away their funding, increased the funding to support the strategic planning to successfully grow the program. – **WOMANHOOD PROJECT INC**

Thanks to The New York Women's Foundation, Brooklynat has been able to evolve organically over the past five years. For example, initially funds from [the Fund] supported both Brooklynat and our adult women's empowerment program Arab Women Activists and Leaders, which enabled us to build trust and community buy-in for Brooklynat and all of our youth programming. – **THE ARAB AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK**

1c. Flexible and stable funding allowed grantee partners to pivot in response to ever-changing community and organizational needs

General operating support allowed grantee partners to make their own determinations about how best to use funds and respond to community needs. Changing their programs in response to rapidly changing external environments was critical throughout their work as part of The Fund.

One of the things that's been so helpful about The Fund is that it allowed us to pilot a program and then to make fairly serious revisions to it each year as we learned about what works. Being able to revise the program is super important. I know funders love to see a new thing, but also what it needs to change to meet the actual needs of folks is really valuable and I'm so glad we have that space to be able to do that in this program.

– ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

The roof of our office collapsed one night. We sent out an eblast and New York Women's Foundations was the first to respond. [The Foundation] gave us \$5,000 to support us during this hard time, which was key to continue serving our community.

– TURNING POINT FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

We've gone through many transitions as an organization, and we've been able to grow with The Foundation. We started off as a peer-led youth coalition that is now doing advocacy training for other young people and other individuals across the city with community partners. – YWCHAC

Not just the funding, not just the actual dollars, but the ways that those dollars have being given has enabled us to be responsive, be present for what [our community] needs and to shift and adjust as we needed. – SADIE NASH LEADERSHIP PROJECT

During and after COVID-19, funding resources were decreasing. Without funding from The Foundation, ROC would have not been able to continue their trainings, which is an instrumental service provided by ROC to its members. – RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITY CENTERS UNITED

For funder partners, the most valuable aspect of being part of this funding table has been the opportunity to engage with grantee partners and gain insight into the needs and demands of New York's girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color. Funder partners also appreciated discussions on strategies for centering gender and racial justice in grantmaking, and for implementing trust-based philanthropy. One partner stated that funders meetings have provided a forum for articulating "strategies writ large" and then thinking through how they impact girls, young women, and gender-expansive youth of color.

2. Grantmaking has greater impact if supported with additional resources

80% of grantee partners interviewed noted that opportunities such as capacity building, partnership development, and networking opportunities came as a result of their relationship with The Fund. They noted that these offerings were an effective complement to The Fund's grant.

2a. Capacity building opportunities were key for the leadership development of young women of color.

Capacity building opportunities had an impact on The Fund's grantee partners. Leadership development opportunities strengthened their ability to lead their organizations and achieve greater impact.

The Fund played a key role in my leadership development. The connection between La Colmena and Cost Effective was instrumental for me to get the resources, tools and guidance needed to lead this organization. The Foundation believed and supported me since day one, being there for me in emotional and mentally heavy moments [as] I was forming as a leader, while already being in the leadership position.. – LA COLMENA



The capacity building grants that we received allowed us to shore up our resources as well as strengthen internal operations and systems which is a real goal to make sure that our organization has all the systems in place to run efficiently to serve our youth.... Hopefully, more foundations can provide more capacity building support because that is really necessary in building up an organization. – VIBE THEATER EXPERIENCE

The opportunity of receiving mentorship [by Cost-Effective] because [we were] a grantee partner, was transformative. – WOMANHOOD PROJECT INC

The Hetrick-Martin Institute

2b. Convenings facilitated by The Fund enabled opportunities to strengthen collective impact among Grantee Partners by promoting sharing of learnings.

Another way organizations noted that The Fund made an impact beyond grant dollars was through opportunities to foster connections with other social justice organizations and partners with similar goals. Grantee partners highlighted how helpful it was to be able to share learnings and collaborate with other organizations.

*[The Fund] allowed us to foster connections with our sibling organizations, such as Girls for Gender Equity. We want to make sure that wherever we recommend young people to go, it is a space that aligns with our organization because we want them to feel safe. I see those kinds of partnerships, connections, and collaborations as a critical part of us doing good work in this field. – **SADIE NASH LEADERSHIP PROJECT***

*[Through The Fund] we were also able to solidify our relationships with educators, because now we had time, and people who were dedicated to doing that. Before, we were running around as volunteers trying to grow our work without any stable funding. – **NEW YORK STATE YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL***

2c. The Fund facilitated the development of individual relationships and network development for young women of color leaders.

Lastly, grantee partners highlighted how important it was for them, as young women and gender-expansive people of color leaders, to be able to create a strong network of young community leaders who looked like them. This observation expands on the importance of The Fund's focus on representation.





The overarching value for me as a black woman of color as a leader of an organization, to be in a space back then, in 2015, with young women of color who were coming together to say this is a vision that we want of a community investment. That power of representation in an experiential way, I cannot put into words how important that is as a model; and how important that is, as just a motivation and an inspiration to continue to work. We don't see each other in empowered spaces. We see each other a lot in "disadvantaged" spaces. I think we need to balance that out so that that could be something that our young woman and our girls can aspire. – WELFARE RIGHTS INITIATIVE

Opportunities for networking and sharing best practices among The Fund's funder partners were also invaluable, particularly sharing about how members applied what they had learned through funder engagement meetings to their overall strategies.

3. Narrative shift has individual, community and systems impact

Over 70% of grantee partners interviewed noted the importance of shifting the narrative around their work. Respondents discussed how they were able to highlight the boldness of their members, shifting the idea of a "charity work model" to a community resilience model. Participants also highlighted the importance of youth beneficiaries seeing leaders who look like them, and of providing a safe space that centers their identity and experiences matter.

ROC's training aims to shift the narrative highlighting the BOLDNESS of its members by encourage them to use their voice and their stories to advocate for fair work treatment, increase salaries, and access to childcare. – RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITY CENTERS UNITED

Through efforts like the Gala and skills training, La Colmena is shifting the "charity work" model to empowerment of the migrant workers. Members of La Colmena are smart, capable and bring a lot to the table. – LA COLMENA

For our youth participants in particular, our workshops are sometimes the first places that they hear that their identities matter and that their boundaries matter. There's this interpersonal narrative shift that hopefully our youth participants can grow with. The big picture piece of it is starting with, I matter. I'm worthy, and training people to use their voice and bring their voice to bigger dialogues. – CENTER FOR ANTI-VIOLENCE EDUCATION

There is this new generation of TGNC kids coming up who are really going to grow up with all these amazing role models who look and sound and think like them, who are doing the work. And that's part of what's so exciting for us about the Academy. The more TGNC people out there testifying at City Hall, leading rallies and talking to people, the more other TGNC folks see that it's a possibility for them. The reach of the program is wider than we'll ever be able to measure because if somebody calls in to NPR and is talking about the Academy, there's somebody out there who's like, Oh, I've never heard a trans person talk about being an organizer like that. – ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

Funder partners also highlighted that Funder table conversations encouraged members to expand their grantmaking to sharpen their gender lens, include gender-expansive people in women-centered grantmaking, more deeply integrate trust-based philanthropy's focus on following the lead of the community, and expand unrestricted grantmaking.

These findings showed the impact that The Fund has made during this first years when it comes to shifting the narratives that for a long time have marginalized communities of color, especially women and gender-expansive people.

4. Clear and consistent communication enables strong alignment and sustainable relationships among members of The Fund

40% of grantee partners interviewed identified clear communication and mission alignment as key factors for sustainable partnerships with funders and other community-based organizations. Centering continuous communication, as well as clarity and alignment on the roles and missions of all key players, was critical to effectively achieve the goals of their projects.

Understand who is in the room with you at the very beginning: Cool stuff happens when we join coalitions, but I think we, as AVP, are also learning that we need to think about what the work means, especially when we are the leaders in the LGBTQ+ space in this room. We have to be thinking about our constituents, as well as sort of the coalition work. Those moments where you go: Oh! We are actually the only ones who thought to ourselves this is an issue, because this person is trans. We need to acknowledge that and make sure everybody else in the room [also acknowledges it]. – ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

It is important [to have] an internal support system that can help you through rough moments, that can show you another perspective to ensure alignment with the mission of organization, making sure this is where you really want to be and what you want to do. – LA COLMENA



The Brotherhood/Sister Sol

When collaborating and coming to space with other organizations make sure that there is buy-in [across everyone]. I think that's really important in terms of the commitment. –
GIRLS FOR GENDER EQUITY

Funder partners also found discussion of grantee partners' accomplishments to be valuable, providing a sense of accountability and urgency. Several members cited the example of grantee partners' work to achieve New York's first majority-female City Council. Many funder partners expressed an interest in receiving more information about grantee partners' performance on previous grants.

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED BY THE GRANTEE PARTNERS

There were several challenges and lessons learned shared by the grantee partners and funding table. First and foremost, the pandemic shifted ways of working, which included bringing programs online that were once in person. As for many, the rapid changes in how youth engaged in support created barriers to engaging girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color.

Sociopolitical trends created the need for rapid response work versus long-term strategy development. Many organizations were acutely focused on addressing the needs of their community at the moment, which did not leave space for future planning.

Funding sources were also scarce during the past years – several grantee partners noted that beyond resources from The Fund, there were not enough sources of operational support to cover general operating costs.

Finally, given the multitude of competing challenges facing girls, young women and gender-expansive youth, staff burnout and turnover was a key issue facing organizations that were part of The Fund. Several organizations have used capacity building support to focus on staff healing and care during this time.

CALL TO ACTION FOR FUNDERS IN THE FIELD

Throughout the interviews, grantee partners uplifted several opportunities for funders to consider as they support girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color in New York City and beyond. These recommendations have been brought to The Fund table for action.

Continue to support and engage with collaborative funds to accelerate resources into the community.

Center and trust the voices of community: Grantee partners emphasized the need to continue to center and trust the voices of community to advance what is needed on the ground.



Focus on improving mental health outcomes for girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color in NYC: Interviewees noted the need to focus on mental health and wellbeing in a variety of ways including through safety and healing justice work led by and for young people.

Promote clear communication among stakeholders and address staff turnover to enable long lasting relationships: Create trusting relationships between funders and grantee partners. Make efforts to streamline processes and paperwork to address organizational burnout.

Continue to invest in groups that are by and for young women and gender-expansive youth of color: Girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color know their communities best and creating spaces for them to lead and further develop their skills is critical.

Invest more in powerful convening spaces: Bring girls, young women and gender-expansive youth together to create, share and plan. By bringing organizations together, there is an opportunity to foster new ideas among grantee partners.



Sadie Nash Leadership Project



Girls for Gender Equity

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Based on the feedback from grantee partners of The Fund, there is opportunity to continue advancing the important work led by and for girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color throughout New York City. The upcoming years of The Fund will explore opportunities to support young people's mental health, noting that this may look several different ways depending on the community. Grantee partners will focus on improving mental health outcomes for girls, young women and gender-expansive youth of color, while simultaneously building a new group of youth leaders who will create together and share learnings to uplift the voices of young people across New York City and beyond.

The New York Women's Foundation will continue to use a clear, multi-level system of support for The Fund's grantee partners. Relationship managers will offer group and individual opportunities for intentional relationship building throughout the grantmaking cycle with the goal of maintaining an active, holistic understanding of the work our grantee partners do. This approach ensures we encourage open, courageous, collaborative conversations within our communities; conversations that reflect nuances and complexities that might not be captured without the infrastructure of The Fund's trust-based collaborative funding model.

PARTNERS OF THE INITIAL YEARS OF THE FUND

Grantee Partners

The African American Policy Forum
The Alex House Project, Inc.
American Indian Community House of New York
Ancient Song Doula Services
Arab American Association of New York
Arab American Family Support Center
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Atlas DIY Corporation
The Audre Lord Project
Black Alliance for Just Immigration
Black Feminist Project
Black Trans Media
Black Women's Blueprint Inc.
BlackFem, Inc.
The Brotherhood/Sister Sol
Brown Girl Recovery
CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities
Casita Maria, Inc.
The Center for Anti-Violence Education
Choices in Childbirth
Community Connections for Youth, Inc.
Comunilife, Inc.
CONNECT
Desis Rising Up and Moving, Inc.
FIERCE
Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
Girl Vow
Girls for Gender Equity
Global Action Project, Inc.
The Hetrick Martin Institute, Inc.
Indo-Caribbean Alliance, Inc.

Jahajee
La Colmena
The Lilly Awards Foundation
Make the Road New York
Masa-MexEd, Inc.
Mekong, Inc.
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project
The New York City Urban Debate League, Inc.
The New York Foundation
New York State Youth Leadership Council
New York Transgender Advocacy Group
The Raise Foundation
Resilience Advocacy Project
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
S.O.U.L. Sisters Leadership Collective
Sadie Nash Leadership Project
Sakhi for South Asian Women
South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!)
Sylvia Rivera Law Project
Theatre of the Oppressed NYC, Inc.
Transformative Cultural Project, Inc.
Truthworker
Turning Point for Women and Families
United We Dream Network, Inc.
viBe Theater Experience
Visual Arts Research and Resource Center
Welfare Rights Initiative
The Womanhood Project, Inc.

Women of Color in Solidarity
W.O.W. Project
Young Women of Color HIV/AIDS Coalition
YWCA-NYC

Funder Partners

Amplify Her Foundation
Andrus Family Fund
Brooklyn Community Foundation
Cricket Island Foundation
Eliza K. Bromfield Fund
ELMA Philanthropies
Fondation CHANEL
Ford Foundation
Foundation for a Just Society
Harnisch Family Foundation
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Ms. Foundation for Women
New York Community Trust
The New York Women's Foundation
North Star Fund
NoVo Foundation
Pinkerton Foundation
Proteus Fund
Scherman Foundation
Schott Foundation
Stonewall Community Foundation
Surdna Foundation
Third Wave Fund
Tides Foundation

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