



Philanthropy, systems and change

Perspectives, tools and stories
to help funders find their
best-fit contribution to change

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Contents

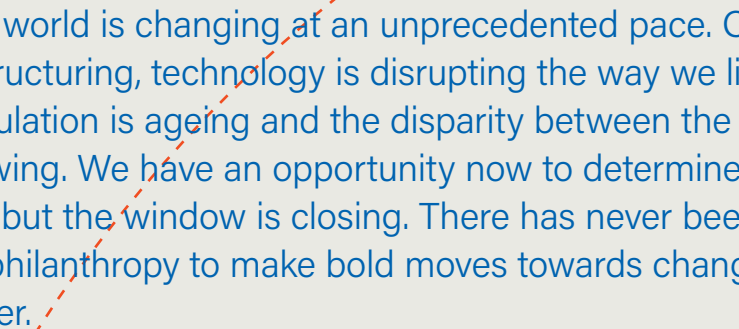
| | |
|--|----|
| How we got here | 4 |
| Acknowledgements | 5 |
| Contributors | 6 |
| About this report | 7 |
| <hr/> | |
| Philanthropy's four contributions to change in systems | 9 |
| What's your best contribution to change in systems? | 15 |
| Conversations with philanthropy | 18 |
| More | 40 |
| Contact | 43 |

Conversation tools

Download tools to help you and your team find your best fit contribution to change in systems.

[↓ Download conversation tools](#)

How we got here



The world is changing at an unprecedented pace. Our economy is restructuring, technology is disrupting the way we live and work, our population is ageing and the disparity between the haves and have-nots is growing. We have an opportunity now to determine what that future looks like, but the window is closing. There has never been a more important time for philanthropy to make bold moves towards changing the world for the better.

Increasingly, foundations across the world are showing an interest in moving away from the status quo, towards a more systemic and emergent way of creating change. Many have adopted the rhetoric of 'systems change', but the practice of procuring, monitoring and conducting this systemic work is still in its infancy.

A recent global funders retreat, hosted by The Fay Fuller Foundation in South Australia, put this conversation front and centre. Designed, convened and facilitated by the Social Innovation Exchange (SIX), twenty foundations from across the globe explored the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned on their journeys towards more system-aware ways of working.

During the funders retreat, a small breakout group started to explore the nuances for philanthropy in this changing landscape. There was a sense that some were stable and committed in their primary role as funders, while others were starting to assume additional roles to support change in systems. What quickly emerged was a spectrum of roles, all valid, important and different. Internal capacity, capability, structures and mindsets varied, depending on what role each foundation assumed.

This work, taken forward by The Australian Centre for Social Innovation, Perpetual, Dusseldorp Forum and the Paul Ramsay Foundation, seeks to build on that conversation in the Adelaide Hills. It's an analysis of extended conversations we have now had with foundations, academics and practitioners across the globe. It is not exhaustive research or a "how-to" guide for systems change. It's a starting point to support foundations to explore the role they are playing and how their internal conditions align with their ambitions.

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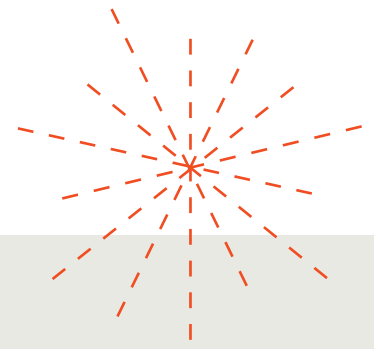
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Acknowledgements



We'd like to acknowledge the group of minds who first initiated this conversation in Adelaide and all the contributors who have helped us create this work.

Tackling today's social issues is complex work and whilst there is more to learn, we have been inspired by the thinking and practice happening across the world.



SIX Funders Node retreat on 'Taking risks and achieving greater impact', Adelaide, September 2018

The original spectrum thinkers

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This publication was funded and developed by



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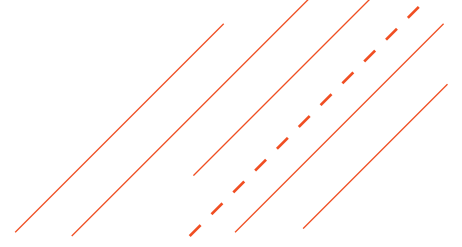
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The SIX International Funders Node in Australia, was been made possible by:



About this report



This work investigates the roles philanthropy can take in contributing to change in systems, with the aim of supporting systems-curious foundations to inform their philanthropic approach. We've talked to foundations explicitly focused on 'systems change', we've reviewed the literature, talked to systems-thinking practitioners as well as funders with no explicit interest in 'systems change' who nonetheless are busy supporting interventions in systems to create the change they want to see in the world.

When we refer to 'systems' in this report we mean elements (organisations) that are organised for a common purpose e.g. systems of local economic development, systems of education, systems promoting the arts or systems of substance use. When we talk about creating change in these systems we mean 'shifting the multiple conditions that hold problems in place' this can include changing policy, practices, resource flows, relationship, power dynamics and mental models.¹

Our conclusions are:

- Philanthropy can play a unique role in systems because of the flexibility many foundations have to fund and do things that others can't or won't.
- Every foundation is currently playing a role in systems and has the opportunity to shape that role, should they want to.
- There is no one role or gold standard for philanthropy in creating change in systems. There are many options, and society will continue to benefit from a diverse ecosystem of funders, each playing a different role.
- The norms of traditional philanthropy, e.g. short term, discreet investments and a board of experienced professionals, tend towards sustaining existing systems rather than transforming them to something different.

- The more engaged philanthropy becomes in its ambition to change systems, the more it requires foundations to work on themselves in relation to their mindsets, mental models and the redistribution of power.
- There is brilliant published thinking on this very topic but it can be challenging to make sense of with limited time.

Our aim is to cut through some of the complexity of 'systems change' (as much as is useful) and provide funders with the tools to reflect on their role in systems, informed by some of the leading thinking and practice happening across the world.

This is not a how to guide, but for those foundations who want to make a change, there are links to more detailed resources that can support the exploration of themes and strategies in greater depth and nuance.

1 The Water of Systems Change, John Kania, Mark Kramer, Peter Senge, June 2018

About this report

This document is divided into four parts:

Part 1: Philanthropy's four contributions to change in systems

Provides a short overview of the different contributions philanthropy is making around the world to change in systems and introduces a framework to think about four different kinds of contributions.

Part 2: What's your best contribution to change in systems?

Introduces conversation tools, informed by our research, that will support you to reflect on the contributions you make to change now and the contributions you'd like to make in the future.

Part 3: Conversations with philanthropy

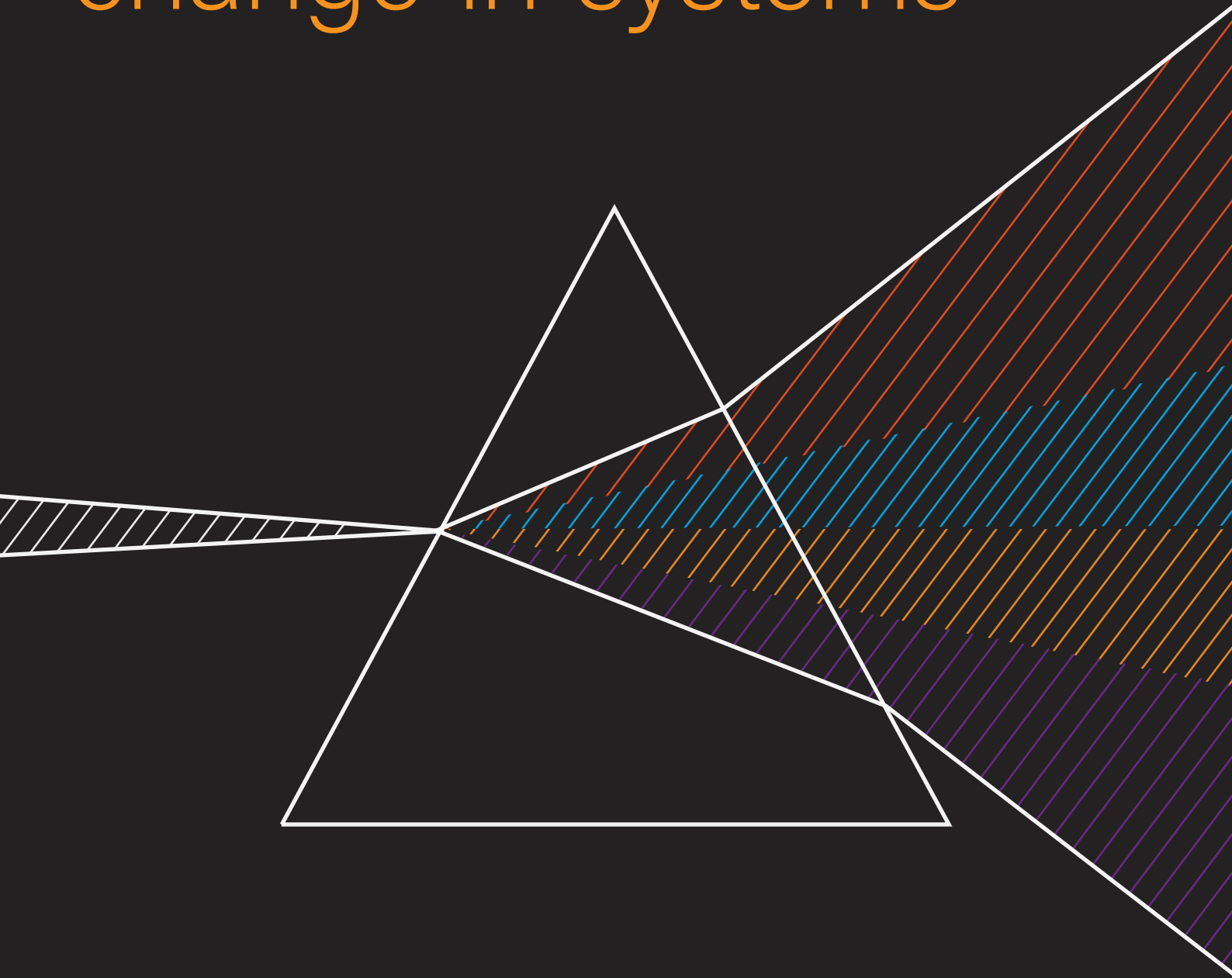
Provides examples and reflections from foundations around the world.

Part 4: More

Provides links to support practical action and more detailed exploration of key themes.



Philanthropy's four contributions to change in systems



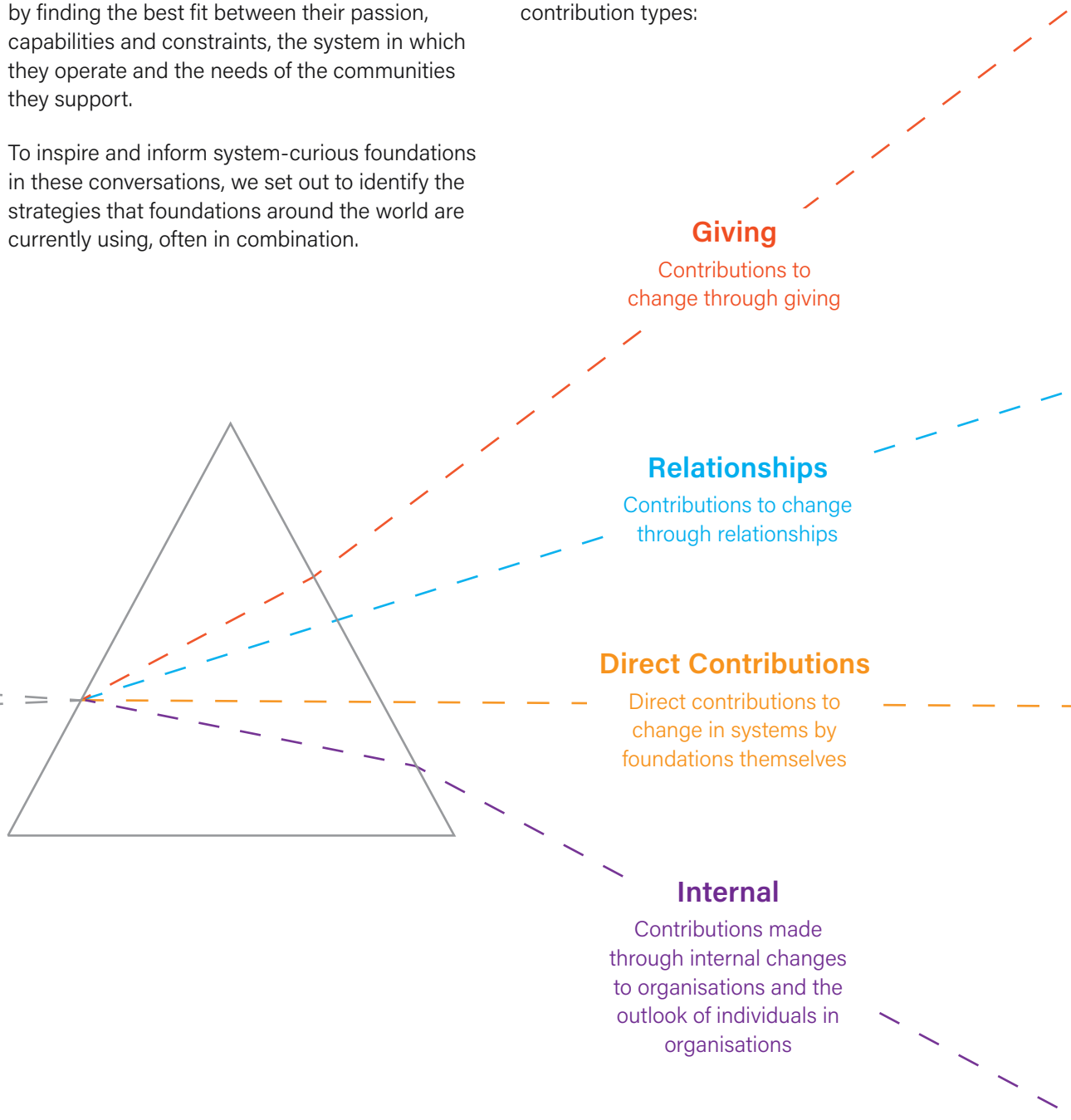
The four contributions of philanthropy to systems

Philanthropy has found a multitude of ways to contribute to positive change in systems.

What's the best way? That's really a question each foundation needs to answer for themselves, by finding the best fit between their passion, capabilities and constraints, the system in which they operate and the needs of the communities they support.

To inspire and inform system-curious foundations in these conversations, we set out to identify the strategies that foundations around the world are currently using, often in combination.

For the purposes of understanding choices, it's helpful to group the strategies as four distinct contribution types:



The four contributions of philanthropy to systems

Giving

Contributions to change through giving

Foundations' most obvious contribution to change in systems is through granting. Increasingly foundations are informing who and what is funded with a deep understanding of context.

We found that foundations explicitly thinking about their strategy for change in systems spent time and money developing an understanding of the complexity of the specific systems they worked in: the various elements of the system, interconnections between those elements and visible and invisible dynamics at play within the system including resources, power and mindsets. You could call this a 'systems awareness'.

When it comes to granting, foundations are also making choices about their ambition for change, choosing between more tangible investments that alleviate immediate needs or address individual risk factors, investments that improve the current system or longer term investments to transform systems toward a different and better state.

The Tow Foundation (USA) became frustrated with the incremental change they were making through investing in services, even though it felt good. They wanted to get more for their money and have become a foundation that has made some significant investments into systems reform. This includes funding systemic juvenile justice reform in New York State which led to a reduction of over 50 per cent across juvenile arrests, admissions to detention and intake to probation.¹² Emily Tow, President, told us, "To maximize our impact, we moved away from investing in services. We have a major shift to focus on addressing fundamental challenges and have seen remarkable results."

The JO and JR Wicking Trust's (Australia) initial investigations into the end of life space revealed the multiple systems at play and the mature conversations already active within sectors. They commissioned an intermediary to conduct a systems analysis to inform the best role the foundation could play³. Their new systems awareness led to them shifting from their original idea of funding a particular type of intervention, death literacy, to funding the intangible spaces between existing players and innovations. They have now commissioned three action orientated networks to join up their learnings and better align the multiple systems that interact at end of life.

Relationships

Contributions to change through relationships

The second contribution philanthropy makes to change in systems is through the relationships with grantees. A number of funders have been focusing on reshaping their relationships with grantees so as to effect greater change.

It's a spectrum of responses and some funders move along that spectrum. Some have concluded that grantees are the experts and it's really best for funders to stay out of the way, let grantees get on with it and provide neutral support if requested. Others have identified that they can add value to a grantee's mission by championing their work through press and events, building new connections for them, or even providing them use of their back office services. Other funders have chosen to amplify impact by building grantee capability, including how to effectively intervene in systems. Foundations who make direct interventions into systems often see grantees as collaborators, partners in creating change.

2 FSG, [New York State Juvenile Justice, Progress Toward System Excellence](#), (2014)

3 The Australian Centre for Social Innovation, [Investing in Systemic Impacts to Improve End of Life Outcomes](#), (2018).

The four contributions of philanthropy to systems

Across all relationship types the importance of mutuality was key. By default, funders have the money, power and upper hand in the relationship. Grantees are likely to accept advice or support if offered even if they'd rather be without it. Where there is mutuality in relationships, funders and grantees can enter into honest conversations that focus on what will create the best outcomes.

The Whitman Institute (USA) have thought deeply about what makes an effective grantee relationship. They guide their own granting through a set of practices they refer to as trust based philanthropy. One of the central principles is the clear expectation that they as funders do the homework to know grantees (and not the other way around). This has led to a shift in dynamic in the relationships with their grantees.⁴ Their thinking has gone on to inspire a number of funders to work to the same code.

Lankelly Chase (UK) have been on a five year journey to build their systems awareness and capabilities and to refine their strategy to be one that enables change in systems. They've changed what they invest in, their internal culture and their relationships with grantees. They've now taken on a coaching relationship with some of their grantees, working as systems coaches to build grantees' system awareness and practices.

Direct contributions

Direct contributions to change in systems by foundations themselves

A number of foundations with an explicit 'systems change' focus have taken the decision to cross the line from being funders of change to also be instigators of change. They have decided to make direct interventions into systems themselves, beyond supporting grantees. This is not without

controversy. Some foundations think this is a line that should not be crossed, others question whether all those who have crossed the line have the appropriate capabilities to do so.

Some foundations making direct contributions are using their power and networks to convene conversations that wouldn't otherwise happen or to advocate directly to people in positions of power. Some have become knowledge creators in the sector through learning, writing and publishing. A smaller group have created teams with specialist technical skills to develop and spread innovations, such as new services. Others have become builders in the system - initiating and incubating what they see to be elements missing from systems, such as capability building platforms.

The Rockwool Foundation (Denmark) support the development, testing and scale of new and innovative models in areas where current systems are failing, such as youth employment. This work is done by their own highly skilled Interventions Unit, in collaboration with external partners. Rockwool take on the risk of innovation, and invest in rigorous impact evaluations of new solutions to create new knowledge for the field.

The McConnell Foundation (Canada) have redefined their role, to see themselves as part of an ecosystem, with a toolkit to make change. That toolkit includes giving, lobbying, convening, collaborating and incubating the growth of new elements within systems. For example, they created Innoweave⁵ to build social innovation capability across Canada and the Solutions Finance Accelerator⁶ to grow the social investment market.

4 The Whitman Institute, [Trust-Based Philanthropy](#), Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

5 J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Social Innovation Generation, [Innoweave - Practical Tools for Social Innovation](#) Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

6 The McConnell Foundation, [Solutions Finance Accelerator](#), Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

The four contributions of philanthropy to systems

John Cawley of The McConnell Foundation describes their foundation's evolution: "Originally, we had a responsive grantmaking approach. Then we moved to foundation initiatives that were portfolios focused on a big issue. We still do both but we realised after spending millions over the years that we were not having the systems impact we needed and wanted due to the complexity and size of the issues.

So we redefined our role; we are curators or stewards of the ecosystem around an issue. As a foundation with an ability to take risks and as a politically neutral player not looking for money, we can be the connective tissue between parts of the ecosystem. Grants to charities are now complemented by a robust impact investing strategy, network building within a domain and across sectors, strengthening of community organizations [sic] and investment in social innovation approaches such as labs and developmental evaluation."

Internal change

Contributions made through internal changes to organisations and the outlook of individuals in organisations

Many of the foundation staff we talked to who were trying to advance a system agenda felt most constrained by practices within their own organisation. The fourth group of strategies relate to the contribution philanthropy can make to systems by changing their own organisation. In this group of strategies there is a strong and challenging theme of shifting the dynamics of power.

Some foundations are exploring how to use their financial power differently, going beyond ethical investing to use their corpus to directly reinforce their specific mission. This could be through making investments into the systems they are trying to change, or by choosing to spend down their corpus more rapidly, as the Whitman Institute (USA) has decided to do.

Some foundations are sharing decision making power with those who typically don't have it by increasing the diversity of people who make decisions about funding.

After a period of internal learning and reflection the Fay Fuller Foundation (Australia) have decided to hand over decision making control to rural towns for a 10 year, \$10million dollar investment into mental health in rural towns, shifting decision making power to those directly affected by the issue.

Many foundations have recognised and grappled with the difficult theme of colonisation. The reality being that the origin of much wealth is connected to the exploitation of Indigenous Peoples and lands. Without careful attention philanthropy can inadvertently perpetuate the marginalisation of Indigenous Peoples. Addressing this challenge can lead to deeply personal realisations as individuals acknowledge their privilege, as well as practical outcomes that affect who and how foundations fund.

The Swift Foundation (USA), who predominantly fund Indigenous-led organisations, have been transforming their organisation to meet the needs of the grantees they support. For example, they have prioritised listening and relationships as well as shifting to multi-year unrestricted funding, having recognised that "Indigenous communities do not subscribe to the Western concept of linear, project specific timelines."⁷

7 The Whitman Institute, [Funder Spotlight: Swift Foundation](#), Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

The four contributions of philanthropy to systems

The final underpinning strategy that foundations are embracing is that of organisational learning. Making internal changes, making direct interventions, supporting grantees in new ways or building systems understanding all require foundations to reflect and build new capabilities. If foundations identify the need to change it's the mindsets and practices for learning that will be the enablers.

What's your contribution?

What others have done may offer some inspiration for what you could do, but the combination of strategies that will work for you will require some reflection — on the contributions you make now, and the contributions you want to make in the future. The conversation tools in the next section are tools designed to support just that.

Markus Lux, Senior Vice President of Strategic Development at the Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany), one of the originators of the spectrum idea, told us how once, one of his board members, a business person, questioned why he put so much focus on strategy. His impassioned response was to the effect of: "In business you don't launch a new product to market without first analysing yourself and the market. Why should philanthropy be any different? As a board member you ask me to be financially responsible and taking time to develop an informed strategy is being financially responsible. This is value for money."

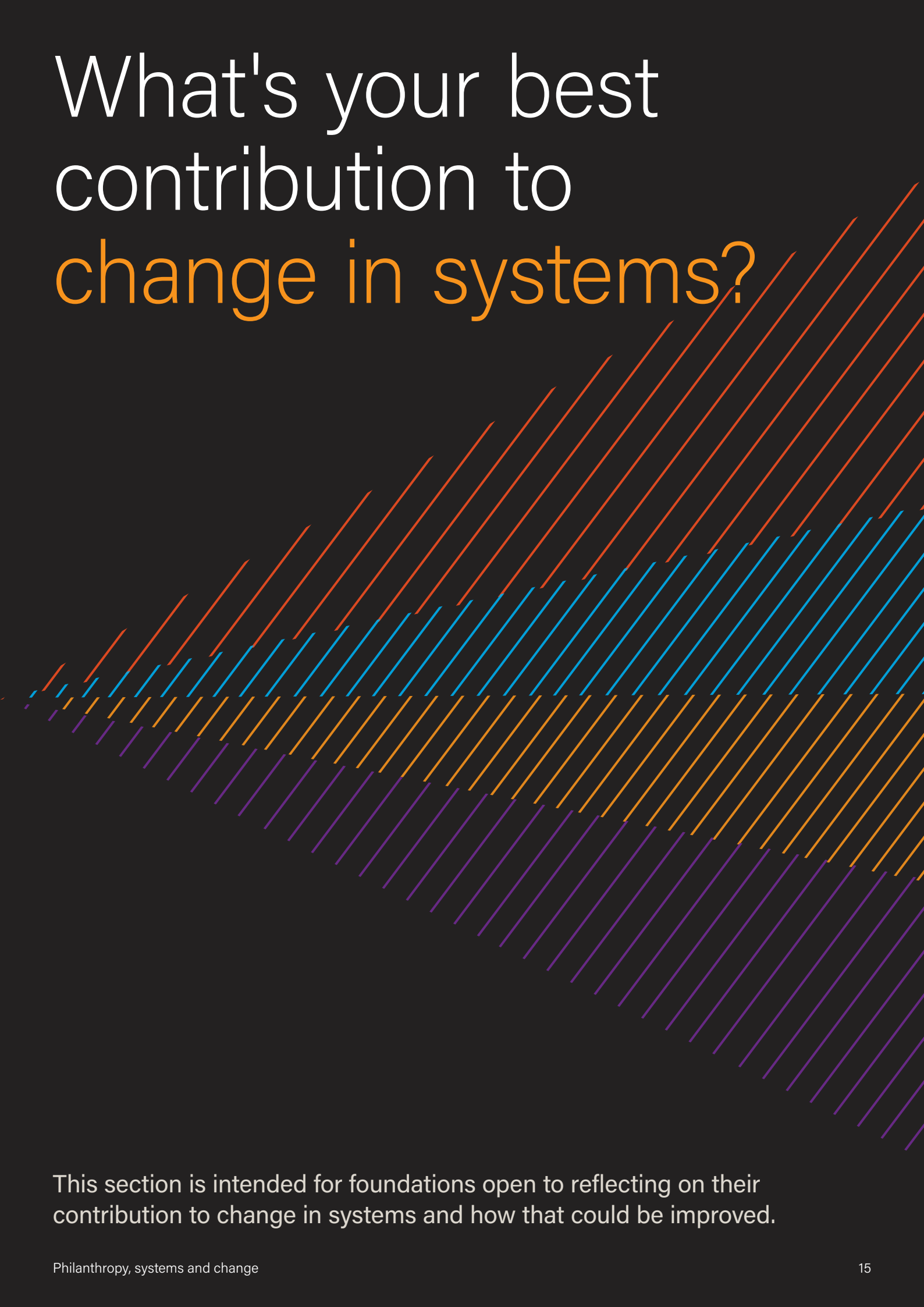
We hope you'll find a good return on investment from using these tools. While you're exploring your best fit contribution, you may want to bear in mind that not one of the foundations we talked to said they had yet found their best fit. They were all on an ongoing journey of learning and transformation.

In a paper exploring the future of foundations, Charlie Leadbeater, author and trustee of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (UK), writes: "**Decisions we take in the next decade will shape our long term future for the rest of the century and perhaps beyond**" and asks what role philanthropy will choose for itself in the decade of transitions. He sees that philanthropy is torn between the temptation to act as stabilisers of underfunded systems, improvers of those systems and transformers who mobilise transformative coalitions across society. "**My fear is that people will look back from [2030] and wonder why we did not do more; why we busied ourselves improving broken systems when we needed to make much bigger, bolder commitments to change the world for the better.**"⁸

Stephen Huddart, CEO and President of The McConnell Foundation (Canada) told us that it's now mission critical that philanthropy seeks to change how systems work: "**Humanity now finds itself at this critical juncture when the systems that we have developed and that we have inherited – whether we are talking about the capitalist system, democracy or the internet – are creating a crisis for us. In order to navigate the next decade we have to be asking the question of everything we do – every program, every investment – when it comes to setting priorities: is this advancing the transition to an equitable low carbon economy or not?**"

8 Charles Leadbeater, Future of Foundations, NESTA, (Forthcoming).

What's your best contribution to change in systems?

The background of the slide is a dark grey or black color. It is decorated with a pattern of diagonal lines that sweep across the page from the bottom-left towards the top-right. The lines are grouped into three distinct color bands: a top band of orange lines, a middle band of light blue lines, and a bottom band of purple lines. The lines are thin and closely spaced, creating a textured, dynamic effect.

This section is intended for foundations open to reflecting on their contribution to change in systems and how that could be improved.

Conversation tools

Based on what we learnt from our conversations with philanthropy we've created a set of tools to support you to have robust conversations about the contribution your foundation currently makes in systems and the contribution you want to make in the future.

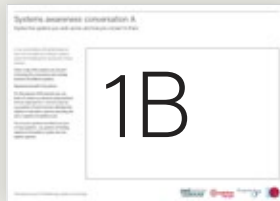
The conversation tools will help you think and talk about:

- Who to involve in the conversation
- The systems you work in
- The systems in which you want to increase your impact.
- Your contributions to change through giving, relationships, direct contributions and making internal changes.
- Your priorities for action

Completed individually the tools can support your personal reflection. Completed with your team the tools can support discussions to identify differences of opinion, build alignment, set priorities for growth and ultimately gain clarity on your choices.

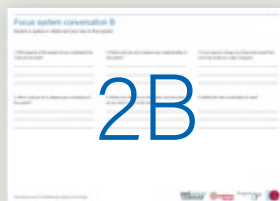
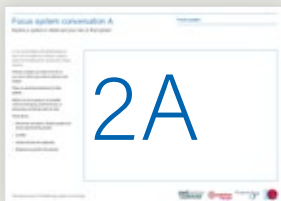


[↓ Download conversation tools](#)



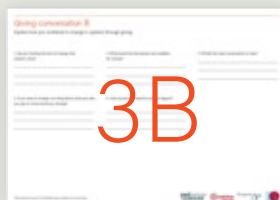
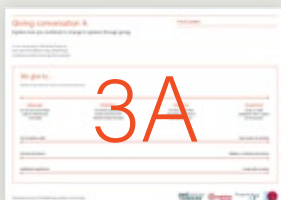
Systems awareness conversation

Explore the systems you work across and how you connect to them.



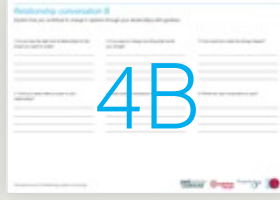
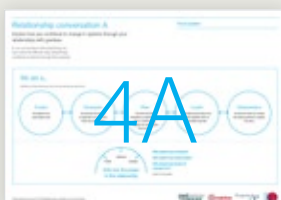
Focus system conversation

Explore a system in detail and your role in that system.



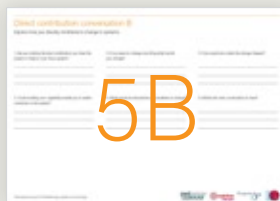
Giving conversation

Explore how your giving contributes to change in systems.



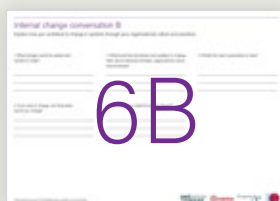
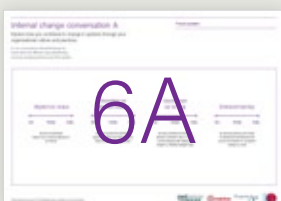
Relationship conversation

Explore how your relationships with grantees contribute to change in systems.



Direct contribution conversation

Explore how you directly contribute to change in systems.



Internal change conversation

Explore how your organisational culture and practices contribute to change in systems.



Next steps conversation

Explore what you want to do next.

Conversations with philanthropy



In our research, TACSI spoke with philanthropists around the world and with people who work in the philanthropic sector: foundation staff, academics, consultants, thinkers and practitioners. Here we discuss some of those conversations, along with some other published sources and look at the thinking that informed the conversation tools.

This section is aimed at those who see a benefit to becoming more system aware in their granting, increasing the impact of their relationship with grantees, making direct contributions to change in systems and/or in shifting their own operating practices.

Unless otherwise referenced, quotes come from interviews conducted in early 2019.



“Key to systems change work is uncertainty, an appetite for failing, learning from that, and long-termism. It can also be hard for change to be attributed to any one funder or program. If boards are unable to sit within that frame, to understand that they may not see the change that is aspired to during their tenure, then there will be little appetite for complex systems change.”

Stacey Thomas
Chief Executive Officer
Fay Fuller Foundation, Australia

Why 'systems change'?

In our conversations, we heard that the most common reason for philanthropy to explore working at a systems level was a dissatisfaction with the impacts of existing granting strategies. Foundations had an ambition to achieve greater impact and to make better use of the unique flexibility of philanthropy.

In our conversations, we heard that the most common reason for philanthropy to explore working at a systems level was a dissatisfaction with the impacts of existing granting strategies.

For Stacey Thomas, CEO of The Fay Fuller Foundation in Australia, taking a systems view was a pragmatic choice: *"We knew that if we continued to fund the work that we were, there would always be people who would require such programs and services— what we wanted to do was look at how to prevent people requiring them and this needed a systems view. From a theoretical point of view, it just made sense... It was never positioned as ambitious or even systems change and I wonder if we would have been able to come as far so quickly if that language had been used?"*

Sean Gibbons, CEO of Communications Network (USA), saw the need for philanthropy to think systemically because of its limited funds. *"Let's take one of the biggest foundations for example. There's a 12 billion endowment at Ford Foundation. If the Ford Foundation were to pay every electricity bill for Detroit public schools, in two years they would be broke. What becomes evident is that no singular institution has the wherewithal to make systems change independently. What they can do is make influence...together."*

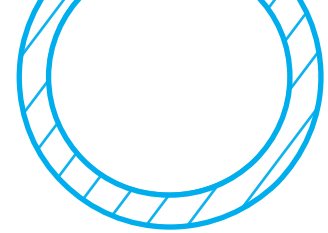
Or as Emily Tow, President of The Tow Foundation (USA), put it: *"To maximize our impact, we moved away from investing in services. We have a major shift to focus on addressing fundamental challenges and have seen remarkable results."*

People working in philanthropy describe how undertaking systems change also means funders changing, to see from a different perspective.

Alice Evans, Deputy Chief Executive at Lankelly Chase (UK) told us: *"The best thing funders can do to shift the focus from them and what they are funding to looking around and seeing themselves as part of an interconnected whole. Most foundations think it's them that are responsible for making change."*

'Systems change', then, is perhaps a combination of transformative ambition and systems awareness. It's quite possible to take a systemic view whilst still busying ourselves improving broken systems and you could have transformative ambitions without looking through a systems lens. However, a number of foundations seem to be concluding, based on their experience, that investing in the transformation of systems is the best value for money. And value for money is important.

Why 'systems change'?



As John Spierings, Executive Director, Reichstein Foundation (Australia), said, **"We do get a tax advantage so we can't just focus on what we're passionate about, it needs to add value."**

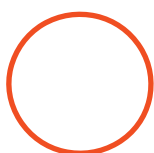
Both funders and grantees told us about the unique opportunity philanthropy has to create change in systems. To take on roles and work in ways that others can't or won't.

Jennie Winhall, Director of Social Innovation at the Rockwool Foundation (Denmark) told us **"Some of the problems we're looking at are no one's direct responsibility. Our position as a foundation means we can work across boundaries to create responses involving an ecosystem of different organisations to create new kinds of social value."**

Liz Gillies, CEO of the Menzies Foundation (Australia) told us **"Philanthropy is in a unique position to support innovation and system change for impact - we need to do all we can to connect, collaborate and build the platforms for this to occur."**

Rachel Kerry, Executive Officer at the CAGES foundation (Australia), also sees the disruptive opportunity: **"Philanthropy has an opportunity to play a disruptive role and support the exploration of effective, appropriate and accountable systems which are designed by and for the people they service."**

Aboriginal leader Alistair Ferguson, Founder and Executive Director of Maranguka Justice Reinvestment, has experienced first-hand how philanthropy can enable different approaches. **"Communities have had a raw deal being let down especially with government— philanthropy gives a unique opportunity for patience, tolerance, persistence and working at the pace of community."**





“You can buy food for hungry people but if you’re trying to change the food system it could take a decade.”

Emily Tow
President of The Tow Foundation, USA

Conversations about giving

Systems awareness

Granting with a systems awareness and sensibility requires funders to look for different things in grantees.

May Miller Dawkins, Researcher and Advocate (Australia) explained, **"Usually we're asking 'Can this organisation deliver?' It's very myopic, compared to 'What impact does it have if we invest in this organisation? What are this organisation's relationships to others? How does it shift who has influence?'"**

The implications are that funders have to work in a very different way.

Miller Dawkins continued, **"Funding has mostly steered in the direction of encouraging organisations to overclaim what they can do, not working at the pace of community, not resourcing for collaboration and power balance."**

Emily Tow also raised the need for funders to shift their expectations about timeframes if they are going to work at a more transformational level: **"You can buy food for hungry people but if you're trying to change the food system it could take a decade."**

What gets funded?

So what do funders fund when they take a systems view?

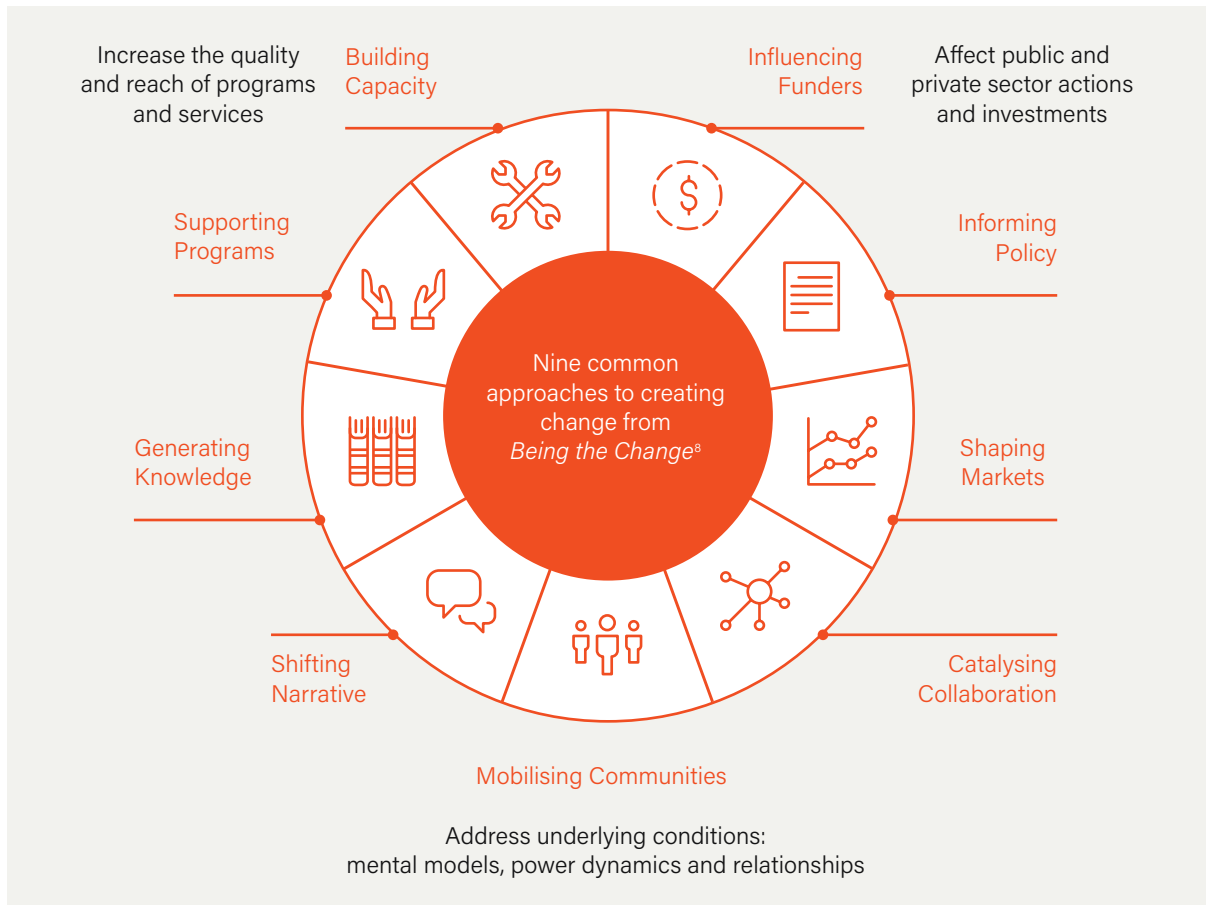
John Spierings, gave us an example of a systems perspective: **"When we're looking at systems (for example criminal justice), race runs through every element of how that system behaves. Unless you bring racism to the justice conversation, you're perpetuating a system that is deliberately biased against Aboriginal people."**

Adopting a systems view brings to light the importance of working on intangible elements of systems that require investment to shift. These might otherwise be invisible to funders. As you might expect if you are addressing issues as structural as racism, the nature of systems giving is diverse.

Based on research with 50 foundations of all sizes across North America and Europe, mission driven consulting firm, FSG, codified nine frequently mentioned approaches to creating change (orange wheel) and their relationship with foundations' impact goals (outside text). They noted that foundations typically implement a different set of approaches in each program area, depending on that program area's goals and context and considering what approaches other funders and actors working on the same issues are (or are not) using.⁹

9 FSG, *Being the Change*, (2018)

Conversations about giving



In the recurring theme of power that runs through many of our conversations, who gets funded to change systems is also a critical question.

May Miller Dawkins told us: "For organisations with large amounts to disperse, they want to go to the big organisations who have a track record but that is only reinforcing their power. I want them to think about how to shift that more. There are amazing Aboriginal community controlled organisations, who are never properly invested in and are running on shoestring budgets. Invest in them."

In an interview for Vox¹⁰, Edgar Villanueva, Vice President, Schott Foundation for Public Education, USA and author of *Decolonizing Wealth* points out that only 8-9¹¹ percent of grant-making from foundations (in the us) goes into communities of colour. "...when you take the historical account as to how indigenous communities and how people of color have contributed to building

wealth in this country, and the trauma that exists because of how wealth was accumulated, I think that it's an easy case to make that philanthropic capital should at least be more inclusive of those communities."

For Miller Dawkins and many of the people we spoke to, power is a fundamental consideration in granting and any other activity foundations engage in: "You're probably not doing systems change unless you're considering your power in the system, regardless of how much you're talking about systems change or funding it."

Other philanthropists, however, talked about the importance of supporting system interventions with the potential to leverage large scale change, even if that meant supporting or working closely with established institutions such as government or large business.

10 [The unbearable whiteness of American charities](#), Dylan Matthews, Vox, July 2019

11 [Data Snapshot on Racial Justice Grantmaking](#), Rick Cohen, June 2014



“Don’t go in with the intention to change a system. Build trust. Create privileged relationships that enable strategic, effective small change around decisions that govern a system. Don’t expect systems change outcomes in 12 months.”

**Christian Seelos,
Director of the Global Innovation for Impact Lab
at Stanford University Center on
Philanthropy and Civil Society, USA**

Conversations about relationships

For Christian Seelos, Director of the Global Innovation for Impact Lab at Stanford University Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, creating change starts with relationships: **“Don’t go in with the intention to change a system. Build trust. Create privileged relationships that enable strategic, effective small change around decisions that govern a system. Don’t expect systems change outcomes in 12 months.”**

Relationships, it seems, are fundamental to navigating complexity.¹² We also found that for some foundations and grantees they can be a source of complexity. For example when it becomes unclear if a foundation is hands-off, hands-on, or oscillates between the two.

Mutuality

Trust and mutuality in relationships was important for many funders with a systems change focus. For example Teya Dusseldorp, Executive Director, Dusseldorp Forum told us: **“We don’t use the language of funders and grantees which locks in a power imbalance. We are partners in the work of systems change.”**

Emily Tow told us how they handle this at The Tow Foundation: **“We invite our grantees to share their expertise to help us make funding decisions. We ask them, ‘What are you dreaming about that we could help you with?’ We understand that they know best what it takes to make real change happen.”**

Mutuality is also important for grantees. It’s not hard to find grantees with stories of overly controlling relationships with foundations who, intentionally or not, exert their power to shape what grantees do. Unsurprisingly, few are willing to share in a public forum.

For Alistair Ferguson, mutuality in relationships with his multiple funders, including Dusseldorp Forum, are critical: **“Sustainable partnerships has been the single biggest key to the success to date. First Nations’ perspectives lead the way, we self determine how the funding is spent which enabled us to change justice systems from the ground up.”**

In an interview by the Whitman Institute, Jacqueline Garcel, CEO of The Latino Community Foundation, outlines the thinking that has shifted practices in her own organisation over the first two years of her leadership: **“We should continuously ask ourselves: How do we institutionalize [sic] trust within our organizations? [sic] It has a lot to do with how you go out and invite people to apply, how you oversee the reporting. When you do site visits with grantees, set the tone so it doesn’t feel like you are overseeing their work but rather how you can collectively work together to achieve the goals that you’ve both set out to do.”¹³**

The Whitman Institute’s principles of trust-based philanthropy have served as an inspiration for a number of foundations and leaders including Dimple Abichandani, Executive Director at General Service Foundation: **“We used to send out a grant contract that was basically 14 legal clauses. Instead of conveying support or enthusiasm for the work, our contract conveyed a series of legal restrictions. So we significantly edited it down and revised the accompanying award letter with language that says ‘we are happy to support your amazing work.’ While that may seem like a basic change, it goes back to the relationship. We want to convey that we’re in partnership, rather than in a contractual relationship.”**

12 ten20 Foundation with Logan Together, Go Goldfields, Connecting Community for Kids, The Hive, Sanderson Alliance, Maranguka Community Hub, Social Ventures Australia and The Australian Centre for Social Innovation, [Funding community-led place based practice: Insights and actions for funders and communities](#), (2019)

13 The Whitman Institute, [Funder Spotlight: Latino Community Foundation](#), Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

Conversations about relationships

As has been the trend for some time, philanthropy has been thinking hard and exploring how to bring additional value to their grantees, recognising that can go beyond money.

Philanthropy as champion

A common role philanthropy takes on is to add value by actively championing grantees' work.

Emily Tow told us, **"We offer communications support to our smaller grantees; we host workshops sharing knowledge; we help them promote their own work because that is a form of systems change."**

Philanthropists should also consider the impact of the stories they give weight to. Sean Gibbons from Communications Network said: **"Philanthropy trying to disrupt the school to prison pipeline— it's also a narrative— be careful of narratives. Most African American men are not at risk as the largest number of people serving in the Army are black men. You could be promoting the narrative that black men are the most patriotic men in the country and most entrepreneurial cohort in the business. Philanthropy are not supporting them in some of these narratives in their effort to avoid assisting people who are already winning."**

Few things are simple in the interconnected world of 'systems change'.

Given the importance of relationships and interconnections in systems work, foundations have found that they can create particular value in connecting grantees with each other or with potential future allies in the system.

The Tow Foundation supported a successful advocacy to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York. Emily Tow told us:

"There were six organisations in New York City [and] each was articulating it differently. We brought all of those organisations together to unify their communications and talking points. Language was causing them to work at cross purposes."

The Robert Bosch Stiftung went so far as to create IAC Berlin, a centre with the specific aim of initiating new forms of cooperation and building impact oriented networks, with a focus on alumni from the foundation itself and grantees and staff. The centre now has an active online and offline network of around 7000 members.¹⁴

Philanthropy as coach

Some foundations choose to be actively present and provide neutral support when requested but don't intervene with strategic direction or personal opinion. As John Spierings of the Reichstein Foundation told us:

"We're not in the day to day battle but we think of ourselves as engaged but neutral. We have ongoing learning from our campaigns that are successful. We work with people and organisations that have strategic capacity; that is, the ability to adjust their activities to changing contexts. We trust and have innate faith in such changemakers."

14 IAC Berlin, [Home Page](#), Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

Conversations about relationships

One frequently noticed relationship type for foundations working in complexity is that of philanthropist as capability builder, sometimes directly, sometimes via a third party. Their thinking is that if they expect grantees to work in different and unfamiliar ways, e.g. more systemic ways, they should fund grantees to get time and support to build those mindsets and capabilities. This is particularly important when power, risk and responsibility are being deliberately shifted onto communities that have not had them before. Not doing so could be setting up communities who have already been failed by systems to fail again.

In FSG's *Being the Change*, Alice Evans at Lankelly Chase, explains how they have built their capability as systems coaches: "One of the first things we did was train staff as coaches, to give them tools to rethink how to engage in relationships and manage the power dynamic that exists in money conversations... The coaching has also helped us tremendously. Now when we enter conversations, we are more aware of our power as a grantmaker and name it. I believe that if you deny the power you have, you decrease other people's ability to acknowledge their power. We recognize [sic] that while we have financial and convening resources, others have content resources. If we don't acknowledge our power, we hold the system back from growing."¹⁵

To support six rural communities to prepare a ten year action plan to address community mental wellbeing, the Fay Fuller Foundation is providing one year of capability building from an intermediary. Two communities will receive ten years of funding and all six communities up to ten years of ongoing capability building. The capabilities to be built will be negotiated between the intermediary (with experience in mental health and place based innovation) and the communities themselves, as will the dosage of support.

Nadia Roumani, Director of Financial Advisor Philanthropy Initiatives, Effective Philanthropy Learning Initiative at Stanford PACS, raised concerns about the risks of over emphasising or over expecting systems thinking from grantees. "If grantees don't have a framework to understand it, you're adding a layer of complexity for the relationship that's not helpful, that's asking NFPs to contort in another way."

She champions mutual learning between foundation and grantee, something Lankelly Chase have also embraced. "A great exercise for foundations to do [is] a systems mapping with their grantees so there's a co-created process."

15 FSG, *Being the Change*, (2018), 55.



“Know where you need to be
leaders, a platform to enable others,
provide connection, champion
your expertise and let others
guide the way.”

Alice Evans
Deputy Chief Executive
Lankelly Chase, UK

Conversations about direct contributions

A strong trend amongst foundations focused on changing systems is making contributions beyond money, by taking actions that try to prompt change directly, rather than via a grantee. The flexibility some foundations have to determine what they do, combined with the notable power and networks that people in philanthropy often hold, mean that philanthropy is well placed to make things happen where no other organisation has a clear remit. However, this wielding of power comes with great responsibility.¹⁶ As one foundation told us: "Know where you need to be leaders, a platform to enable others, provide connection, champion your expertise and let others guide the way."

The direct contributions that smaller foundations can resource may be more limited in scope, whilst larger foundations may have the capability to take on multiple roles at different times. How those roles intersect with roles taken by others is critical. Stephen Huddart of The McConnell Foundation told us how they now rarely support a singular systems intervention but instead choose the combinations of interventions that will have the best leverage. These include giving, lobbying, convening, collaborating and incubating the growth of new elements within systems: "It's an expanded toolkit that we're talking about here. We're orchestrating those and are sensitive and open to the roles that others would invite us to play. We find it useful to be in a number of different collaborative relationships playing different roles."

Change through convening

Convening in ways that support the (re) building of relationships and networks was a common strategy for foundations to make direct interventions into systems. As FSG articulates in *Being the Change*: "Rather than coming in with answers and focusing on efficient deployment of grants, the critical value of the foundation of the future may be in the ability to step back and help the various stakeholders who work on an issue to see their challenges in the overall context, lift up potential new opportunities and then deploy various kinds of capital (including, but not limited to, money) to help those stakeholders work toward change."

Emily Tow of The Tow Foundation told us: "Effective philanthropy is more than making grants. We have greatly enhanced our impact by having our staff participate in task forces and coalitions. Foundations have clout and we are committed to using that power to attract more resources to the causes we care about."

16 National Committee For Responsive Philanthropy, *Power Moves*, (2019).

Conversations about direct contributions

Change through advocacy

Direct influencing and advocacy within systems is something some philanthropists have embraced but others approach with caution. For Stephen Huddart, now is a critical time for philanthropy to engage with lobbying and advocacy with governments at all levels as well as with corporations: *"It's easy to see why organisations are quite fearful of sticking their head above the parapet. I think it's super important to do it, emphasise it and put a lot of resources into it. Partly because our public sector is struggling in the West. We're seeing this polarisation of ideologies and the public service is caught in the middle. We're beholden to these strange flips between right and left and further right. It's so important to have civil society voices speaking up and being counted and visible and able to be trusted or referenced in order to, in part, counter that. So there's a real responsibility that most of us have not fully taken on board. And there is a real art to lobbying— an art and science. It's not just writing a letter to your MP or getting a thousand people to do it. It's cultivating those relationships, doing it strategically, understanding the dynamics, limits and windows of opportunity that take place."*

Change through knowledge

Serious gaps in some systems exist around types of knowledge and learning and some foundations fill this gap by building deep knowledge of specific issues and diverting resources into researching, writing, publishing and promoting new works.

For example The Annie E Casey Foundation publish to share lessons learnt from their work and raise awareness of critical issues impacting children and families¹⁷. Social innovation foundation NESTA publish extensively on social innovation¹⁸, the Rockwool Foundation are contributing to the evidence base for interventions and Lankelly Chase have written and published extensively on systems change in philanthropy¹⁹. In FSG's *Being the Change*, Alicia Philipp and Anna Pinder, President and Director of Community Intelligence, talk about the foundation's evolution into a trusted knowledge resource: *"Our overall vision is to be the most trusted resource for growing philanthropy to improve communities throughout the Atlanta region. In that role as a trusted resource, we must be the source of knowledge and the connector for the community. We have a real opportunity to amplify what we know to help other funders and donors in the region make better resource decisions ...To enable us to achieve this vision, we developed new roles, acquired new experts and simultaneously invested in current staff, enriching their skill sets."*

17 The Annie E. Cassie Foundation, "[Newsroom](#)," Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

18 NESTA, "[Reports](#)," Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

19 Lankelly Chase, "[Publications](#)," Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

Change through building

Foundations can fill the gaps they see in a system by incubating missing functions in house or catalysing the creation of new organisations/entities to fulfil those functions.

In Canada The McConnell Foundation incubated Innoweave²⁰ to build social innovation capability and the Solutions Finance Accelerator²¹ to grow the social investment market.

The ten20 Foundation (Australia) is a ten year sunset organisation that focuses on early childhood vulnerability and community led, collective impact efforts. Through listening to communities, ten20 identified the need for a national intermediary to further learning, link local insights to national reforms and build funding infrastructure. Realising that dedicated investment and support was needed in the seed stage, they brought together other funders²² and incubated the intermediary team in house, over five years, before formally spinning it off as a separate organisation, Opportunity Child. ten20, in a host role, provided capacity around governance, strategy development, fundraising, recruitment, office space and equipment and operational support including financial management. Caroline Chernov, Executive Director, told us: "philanthropy should fund early stage risk for the system transformation we need."

Foundations considering these kinds of actions need to ask themselves if they are the best organisations to do the job. Is it better that a foundation take on a role rather than funding another organisation to do so? Does the foundation have the capability and systems awareness to do so? Are appropriate levels of accountability in place? Working in ways that are more directly engaged in making systems interventions is seen as risky by some but beneficial by others. Laura Speer is Director of Strategy at the Annie E Casey Foundation, who make a wide range of direct systems interventions including building knowledge, advocacy work and system building. She told us: "We've found the reciprocal relationships between doing and being donors valuable, we have a consciousness about both, and both sides of expertise/issues in an area."

20 J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Social Innovation Generation, [Innoweave - Practical Tools for Social Innovation](#) Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

21 The McConnell Foundation, [Solutions Finance Accelerator](#), Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

22 [Opportunity Child](#) was funded by ten20 and Woodside alongside its national partners GoodStart, ARACY, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Telethon Kids Institute, Centre for Social Impact and Red Cross who all contributed significant in kind support.



“You think you are out there changing the world but you need to simultaneously change yourself.”

Stephen Huddart
CEO and President
The McConnell Foundation, Canada

Conversations about internal change

“The challenges we face are too great to ignore the power structures, mental models and mindsets that hold problems in place. As institutions, practitioners and funders we are part of the story that needs to change,” Carolyn Curtis, Trustee of the Fay Fuller Foundation and CEO, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI).

The fourth opportunity for foundations to contribute to change in systems has required foundations to look inward to how they operate. In conversation, some felt that taking this on was a challenge almost as sizable as reinventing criminal justice or food systems.

“We realized [sic] if we were trying to make change externally then every change we want to make in the external world we have to make in ourselves,” Alice Evans, Director, Systems Change, Lankelly Chase.²³

“Foundations cannot just modify their way of acting in the world (out there) to make change without also significantly altering how they function internally (in here) to allow them to implement,” Rob Ricigliano, Systems and Complexity Coach, The Omidyar Group (USA).²⁴

Looking internally and ‘seeing yourself as part of the system’ is, in fact, one of the tenets of systems thinking. ‘Systems change’ practitioner Seanna Davidson told us: “It’s easy to be distracted by external activities, it’s much harder to practice what you preach behind closed doors but that’s what funding systems change is asking of us at individual and organisational levels.”

Many of the foundation staff we talked to who were trying to advance a system and a transformational agenda, in fact, felt most constrained by practices within their own organisation even when their organisation had an explicit systems change ambition.

Stacey Thomas, CEO of the Fay Fuller Foundation described the challenges as she sees them: “The key to systems change work is uncertainty, an appetite for failing, learning from that and long-termism. It can also be hard for change to be attributed to any one funder or program. If boards are unable to sit within that frame, to understand that they may not see the change that is aspired to during their tenure, then there will be little appetite for complex systems change.”

The good news is that there seems to be a consensus that philanthropy needs to change, at least from FSG’s work in North America and Europe. “Whether the foundations had grantmaking budgets of \$5 million, \$50 million, or \$500 million, they agreed that new practices are needed in the areas of staffing philosophy, structure and design, skill development and supportive culture.”²⁵

23 [Being the Change](#), FSG, 2018

24 [Being the Change](#), FSG, 2018

25 [Being the Change](#), FSG, 2018

Conversations about internal change

Aligning corpus to mission

There has been a trend for some time in philanthropy to divest corpus from unethical investments such as fossil fuels. A number of systems aware philanthropists are now exploring how corpus is best used to reinforce mission. For some, that has meant using more of their corpus, while others are exploring how investments could be directed towards activities that directly support their systems mission.

Rodney Foxworth, Executive Director, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, helps foundations activate their corpus for purpose: "The requirement for a foundation to maintain their IRS standing is to spend 5 per cent of their endowment annually towards their mission, that also includes consulting and staff. People think it's 5 per cent grant out but that's not entirely true (that can include real estate and office space) so generally the 95% sitting in endowment is not used to advance the mission. And so we work with folks to figure out what to do with that other 95 per cent."

But this is not only a strategic and technical or even purely organisational issue. Like all the internal change strategies it has deeply personal dimensions that need to be worked through. Rodney explained: "Particularly because we're working on the endowment side not grant making, you become a certified financial professional, your entire educational landscape for investing is swayed in a particular direction. Now folks are trying to unlearn or take the best of what they have learned. Acknowledging that 'My learning from my professional career has really tied me up to perpetuate things that are harmful for communities.' Grappling with that is hard."

The Whitman Institute describe how they came to the decision to spend down their corpus over 10 years: "In 2011, TWI found itself at a crossroads. As a small foundation with modest assets, we realized [sic] that we could not sustain our level of giving indefinitely (consistently above the legal minimum foundation payout of 5 per cent of assets)...We had to make a decision: we could either stretch our resources by cutting back to the five per percent payout or we could sustain our higher payout rate, possibly even raising grant amounts, over a shorter time. The board of trustees saw the option to spend out as an opportunity to get clearer about our ultimate purpose as a foundation and to exercise greater influence in the field of philanthropy writ large."²⁶

Charles Leadbeater, author and a trustee of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, writes that foundations pursuing transformational agendas will need to be radical in their own transformation. They will need to take apart every aspect of the traditional model of philanthropy and decisively move away from this model. For Leadbeater rethinking the financial model of philanthropy is critical: 'The investment income that foundations earn comes from an economic system that generates the very problems they then seek to solve. The grants that foundations make are often ineffective in tackling the structural failings of these systems. As it stands foundations are a symptom of the problems we face, not their solution.'²⁷

26 The Whitman Institute, "[Spend Out](#)," Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

27 Charles Leadbeater, Future of Foundations, NESTA, (Forthcoming).

Conversations about internal change

Diversifying decision makers

The value of diversity at the board level is a long and ongoing discussion. We've learnt how foundations are increasing the diversity of their boards and their staff as well as handing over grant making decisions to communities themselves.

Stacey Thomas, CEO of the Fay Fuller Foundation, for example, told us how they will give decision making power over a 10 year, \$10m investment into rural mental health to people in rural towns: "The power dynamics that exist between those offering financial support and those seeking it has always been of interest. I sometimes get the impression that philanthropy likes to talk about the dynamics but isn't always as interested in truly interrogating what could be done differently to minimise them. It can be uncomfortable, uncertain and challenging and these are not areas people are happy staying in for long periods of time. When we really thought about what it would take to have an authentic relationship with people, handing the decision making over seemed like the only way."

Most grant making decisions, however, are of course made by privileged white people. Rodney Foxworth puts it frankly: "The fact is that people who make decisions about what change needs to happen or where money goes are people who are least impacted by those decisions."

Edgar Villanueva, Vice President, Schott Foundation for Public Education, USA told us: "There's a direct correlation between the lived experience of the people in decision making seats and where the money goes."

In an interview by Jacqueline Garcel of the Latino Community Foundation outlines her work in increasing the diversity of her team: "Business as usual is not enough. If we want change, let's start with ourselves. Foundations need to hire more people who are not from philanthropy; it's so important to infuse organizations [sic] with new energy, outside the box ideas and new blood. Let's hold ourselves, our staff, and our boards accountable. Are we really taking the risks required of us as a field to bring about equity and justice?"²⁸

Decolonising funding

In both North America and Australia there is a strong movement calling for philanthropy to rethink its relationships with power, racism and Indigenous peoples.

In his article *Money as Medicine* Edgar Villanueva writes about what it means to shift funding processes to the benefit of colonised people: "Decolonizing [sic] funding processes involves asking questions that usually remain unexamined in critiques and reforms: Where did the wealth come from? Why is it held back from public coffers? How is it invested as an endowment? Who gets to manage, allocate and spend it? Funders in particular must start with self examination. We must take a long gaze in the mirror to see how colonization is showing up in our institutions and be prepared to work through uncomfortable conversations about who we are, what we believe and how we can adapt our approaches to be more equitable. We need to avoid the need to be an expert and instead learn by doing it, funding it. In other words, we must use our money as medicine to steadily eradicate the colonizer [sic] virus, replacing the 'divide, control, exploit' paradigm with 'connect, relate, belong.'"²⁹

28 The Whitman Institute, [Funder Spotlight: Latino Community Foundation](#), Accessed 28 Jul. 2019.

29 Edgar Villanueva, "[Money as Medicine](#)", *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 21 May 2017.



“The fact is that people who make decisions about what change needs to happen or where money goes are people who are least impacted by those decisions.”

Rodney Foxworth
Executive Director
Business Alliance for Local Living Economies

Conversations about internal change

Rodney Foxworth, Executive Director, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, described what he calls “the hypocrisy of institutional philanthropy.”

“You’re trying to create good in the world but you’re likely to have created that money and wealth from things that were extractive and exploitative.”

But he also sees philanthropy has a powerful and hopeful role to play: “Philanthropy can be the catalytic capital that communities need to redress centuries of systemic violence and inequity.”

Jason Galville is program director of the philanthropically funded Atlantic Fellows for Social Equity program: “Fellowship, not leadership allows us to create cultural safety for Indigenous people. Flexible trusted funding allows us to be honest and fearless. Both of these approaches allow us to provoke the systems around us and ultimately push back on colonised institutions.”

Embracing learning

A key conclusion of our research is that the more engaged philanthropy becomes in its ambition to change systems, the more it requires foundations to work on themselves in relation to their mindsets, mental models, their capabilities and practices. If a foundation chooses to change its giving strategy, form different kinds of relationships with grantees or engage in direct interventions in systems then organisational learning will be the enabler.

Talking about the need for philanthropy to shift its fundamental analysis of power and race, Edgar Villanueva expressed his frustration at learning in the sector: “We keep autocorrecting as we go through our primary medium: conferences. The problem is we’re not going to get there fast enough.”

One of the requirements of working in systems is a capability to learn and a certain agility. The relatively few external constraints on foundations can enable them to be responsive but the traditions and bureaucracies of some foundations can be an inhibitor.

Stacey Thomas, CEO of the Fay Fuller Foundation, credits an **internal lens of reflection and learning** for the foundations rapid transformation from reactive funder to strategic and long term investor in systems change: ‘The key turning point for us was commissioning research that employed both data analytics and ethnographic methodologies. By comparing what the data said with what people said their experiences were, we were able to get a richer understanding of system failings. Also understanding the role that we play as a funder in this system, meant we were able to be very strategic about what roles we wanted to play, what roles we wanted to fund and what roles needed to connect to other parties. When we looked at all of this the board felt [systems change] was an exciting and important prospect.’

Conversations about internal change

For Stephen Huddart the learning experience for boards is critical: **"It's so important to build the trust and confidence of the board; you can't move without it. We have to think about governance for systems change and complexity. Learning journeys and building relationships are important, you can't just pull your own socks up and go to your board and say 'guess what? Now we're going to do systems change' ". Fully embracing learning can also shift your whole organisational form. The McConnell Foundation have recently been exploring the potential of moving to a decentralised, Teal organisational model which promises to increase learning, responsiveness and better distributing decision making power.³⁰**

Justin W Cook has thought a lot about philanthropy systems change and learning and is Founding Director at the Center for Complexity at Rhode Island School of Design (USA). He told us: **"A pre condition of systems change is setting up the foundations of unlearning. Ways to unpack assumptions, biases and static ways of understanding the world and that requires moving beyond transactional learning to transformative learning."**

Justin W Cook's number one piece of advice for foundations embarking on creating change in systems is to invest in organisational learning. **"I would say that becoming a learning organisation is critical. We tend not to invest in that, we invest way more in mission than learning."** He names the critical conditions that need to be in place for organisations to make that transition. Organisations need to:

1. accept that it's hard and uncomfortable but necessary
2. have the ability to learn and act on that learning
3. discover how they exist in a larger community ecosystem or community of practice.

It's important to remember that trying new things will sometimes require trying things that don't work and it's important to learn from them too. We asked Alice from Lankelly Chase, (who writes and thinks as much as anyone about philanthropy and systems change) about the key to their approach: **"I wouldn't say we were thought leaders but we've certainly been making a lot of mistakes."**

Stephen Huddart described to us how on his first day as CEO of The McConnell Foundation he found a telescope on his desk: **"Being the CEO of a foundation gives you these extraordinary powers, one of which is to look into the future at the horizon and beyond. When you turn the telescope around you get this weird conversion of perspective and actually what you are looking at is yourself. At our own organisation, at ourselves and our practices as leaders. We've organically created a culture of learning, reflection and open and frank conversations around what's working and what's not. And that's never stopped, it's a continuous process...You think you are up there changing the world but you need to simultaneously change yourself."**

30 Laloux, Frederic, Reinventing Organizations: An Illustrated Invitation to Join the Conversation on Next-Stage Organizations, (2014) Belgium: Diateino.

More

Our conversations with philanthropy illuminated four types of contribution that philanthropy can make to change in systems. The conversation tools provide practical tools to identify the changes you want to make or learn more about. The resources outlined in this section will support your deeper exploration of potential changes to mindsets and practices. They are, by and large, the references that have informed this work and most have been recommended by the contributors we've interviewed along the way.

Recommended starting points are marked with an asterisk.

Articulating your strategy

*Quinn Patton, Foote, Radner. [A Foundation's Theory of Philanthropy: What It Is, What It Provides, How to Do It](#)

*Quinn Patton, Foote, Radner. [Toolkit: A Foundation's Theory of Philanthropy: What It Is, What It Provides, How to Do It](#)

Systems and philanthropy

*Corner, Julian. [Systems change and philanthropy. Alliance Magazine. 5 Mar. 2019](#)

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