



MODULE 3: HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, OPPRESSION AND PHILANTHROPY

**"PHILANTHROPY IS
COMMENDABLE, BUT
IT MUST NOT CAUSE
THE PHILANTHROPIST
TO OVERLOOK THE
ECONOMIC INJUSTICE THAT
MAKES PHILANTHROPY
NECESSARY."**

—Martin Luther King, Jr.



CONTEXT

In order to understand the dynamics of oppression in the United States today, we have to understand some of the historical currents around racism and classism that people of color and low-income communities have faced for centuries. This historical context will inform how we understand the genesis of philanthropy and the need, past and present, for social justice philanthropy today.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will explore the historical context of oppression in the United States.
- Participants will make connections between historical examples of oppression and where we are today in the United States with regard to race, class, gender, and other social group memberships.
- Participants will grapple with the connection between philanthropic tradition and the distribution of wealth, power, and privilege over time.
- Participants will understand what social justice philanthropy is and how it can be applied to their own work/lives.

READINGS & RESOURCES

Read the Introduction to “The New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander (pp. 2-19)

Read “Constructing Race, Creating White Privilege” by Pem Davidson Buck:
http://bit.ly/Buck_Whiteness

Watch spoken word performance of “What is Genocide” by Carlos Andres Gomez:
http://bit.ly/Video_Gomez_Genocide (transcript of poem: http://bit.ly/Transcript_Gomez_Genocide)

Listen to Bryan Stevenson’s TED Talk: http://bit.ly/Stevenson_Injustice

Watch President Obama’s speech on race in the United States:
http://bit.ly/Video_Obama_PerfectUnion

Read Social Justice Philanthropy on Resource Generation’s website:
http://bit.ly/ResourceGen_Social-Justice-Phil

Read MacFarquhar, Larissa. “What Money Can Buy,” The New Yorker. January 4, 2016 Issue.
http://bit.ly/NewYorker_Money-Buy



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPLYING THIS MODULE

- In advance of facilitating the exercises below, we recommend assigning a pre-reading using the readings and resources listed above. At minimum, we recommend the Introduction to “The New Jim Crow” by Michelle Alexander and Social Justice Philanthropy on Resource Generation’s website.
- This module builds on material introduced in Modules 1 and 2 by providing a historical context of how oppression has manifested over time and why we are where we are today. We have shared multiple resources, in a variety of mediums that you can use based on the group you’re working with.
- With all of the suggested activities and resources in Module 3, you could spend between two and four 60-minute sessions covering this material. It’s important to allow time for discussion, processing, and to check for understanding.

The background of the slide features a photograph of two individuals, a young man and a young woman, looking towards the left. They are positioned behind a large, semi-transparent red arrow that points from the right towards the left. The arrow is thick and has a slight gradient. The background image is partially obscured by a white diagonal band that runs from the top left towards the bottom right, creating a layered effect.

EXERCISES & ACTIVITIES



COMMUNITY DISCUSSION: DEBRIEFING THE READINGS AND RESOURCES

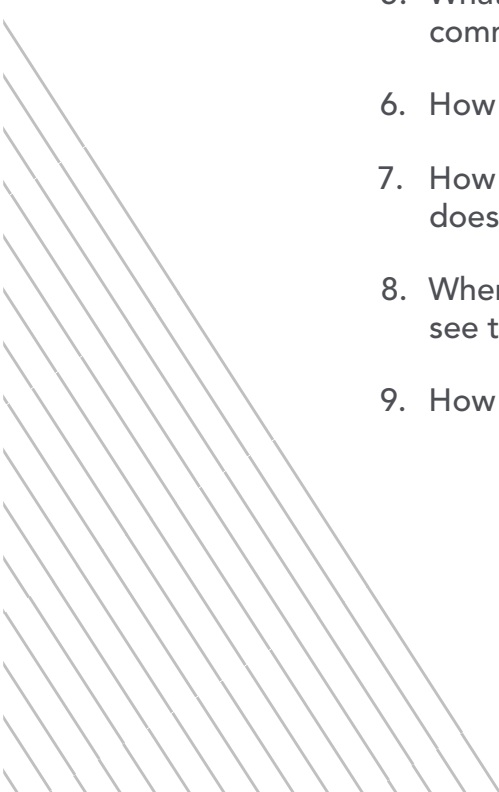
Start by collectively discussing the excerpt from “The New Jim Crow” you pre-assigned for this module. This can happen in multiple ways, including:

- Having each participant share two to three excerpts from each article (a word, sentence, or paragraph) that resonated with them. This will allow you as a facilitator to get a sense of what each participant is drawn to in the reading, and can guide how you move the conversation forward. This also gives the participants ownership in sharing a new narrative of what these readings are presenting by lifting up what resonates most with them.
- Ask general guiding questions (samples provided below) and facilitate a conversation with participants about all of the resources they read/watched, noting patterns in what they’re commenting on and probing deeper when appropriate.
- Providing these questions to participants while they’re doing the readings, and allowing them to drive the conversation when you come together as a group to discuss.

GUIDING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO DEBRIEF “THE NEW JIM CROW”

Also included here are specific excerpts from the Introduction to highlight for the group as you discuss the reading.

1. What stood out to you from “The New Jim Crow” excerpt?
2. What is Michelle Alexander’s main argument? How do you feel about her claims?
 - a. “Like Jim Crow (and slavery), mass incarceration operates as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs... that operate collectively to ensure the subordinate status of a group defined largely by race” (13).
3. What other factors contribute to oppression in this country? What evidence do you have to either support or refute Alexander’s arguments? Make sure to highlight the following points:
 - a. “When the system of mass incarceration collapses (and if history is any guide it will), historians will undoubtedly look back and marvel that such an extraordinarily comprehensive system of racialized social control existed in the United States. How fascinating, they will say, that a drug war was waged almost exclusively against poor people of color — people already trapped in ghettos that lacked jobs and decent schools. They were rounded up by the millions, packed away in prisons, and when released, they were stigmatized for life, denied the right to vote, and ushered into a world of discrimination. Legally barred from employment, housing and welfare benefits — and saddled with thousands of dollars of debt — these people were shamed and condemned for failing to hold their families together. They were chastised for succumbing to frustration and anger, and blamed for landing back in prison” (176).
 - b. “One study suggests that the standard crime news ‘script’ is so prevalent and so thoroughly racialized that viewers imagine a black perpetrator even when none exists. In that study, 60% of viewers who saw a story with no image falsely recalled seeing one, and 70% of those viewers believe the perpetrator to be African American” (106).

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4. In order to understand race and ethnicity and how they've changed over time, we have to understand two things:
 - a. What groups bring with them to their encounters with other people and with the world around them, and what's happening in the social world in which they exist.
 - b. How people understand and negotiate their lives in racial and ethnic ways, and how larger societal and historical factors shape the way people act. This includes how society encourages some racial and ethnic groups and hinder others (oppression).
 5. What connections did you make between Alexander's claims and President Obama's comments on the current state of race relations?
 6. How do you see yourself in all of this? How does this make you feel?
 7. How do you see privilege at play in this reading? What do you agree with? What doesn't sit well with you?
 8. When we think about the intersection of skin color (race) and money (class), how do you see these two aspects of your life interacting?
 9. How does Alexander's book connect to philanthropy?

EXPLORATION OF HISTORICAL OPPRESSION



- Read *Constructing Race, Creating White Privilege*

http://bit.ly/Buck_Whiteness

- The goal of this exercise is to explore the causes of privilege along the lines of race and class in America, to explore the assumptions we all carry around, and to establish a more meaningful engagement with our own identities.
- Ask participants to discuss the events expressed in the essay, *Constructing Race, Creating White Privilege* by Pem Davidson Buck, and tie it into how historical events influenced racial structure and tensions in our country today.

FOR ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE OF HOW OPPRESSION PLAYS OUT, WATCH THIS SPOKEN WORD PERFORMANCE OF THE POEM "WHAT IS GENOCIDE" BY CARLOS ANDRES GOMEZ:

http://bit.ly/Video_Gomez_Genocide

(transcript of poem: http://bit.ly/Transcript_Gomez_Genocide)

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

- When working with a group that's open to movement, you can ask for volunteers to act out the events they read about in the article, in silence using only their bodies.
- **Context:** The Theatre of the Oppressed, established in the early 1970s by Brazilian director and activist Augusto Boal, is a form of popular theatre of, by, and for people engaged in the struggle for liberation. More specifically, it is a theatre designed for people who want to learn ways of fighting back against oppression in their daily lives. Theatre is used not as a spectacle but rather as a language designed to help participants define, feel and discuss complex concepts through movement.
- **Set Up:** This activity uses movement to express participants' understanding of the reading.
- **Suggested Statement:** "In this activity we're going to do some sculpting. What do you think I mean by that? Well, you've had a chance to read the article, and learn more about this history of oppression and the construction of white privilege, but what do those words and events look like? That's what we're going to find out now."
- Ask for a few volunteers. Give the group of volunteers a few key "scenes" from the article to create a "sculpture" using their bodies. A few key "scenes" to include are:
 - The separation of black and white indentured servants.
 - The establishment of a class system based on racial privilege or privilege due to skin tone.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BOAL AND THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED:

<http://www.theatreoftheoppressed.org/>

- Since this is a silent activity, tell the sculptors they can sculpt their “clay” (the other volunteers) in two ways: (1) they can physically model a shape for the clay to mirror. (2) Before the activity starts, they can ask their partner for permission to touch their arms and legs. If their partner nods yes, they can move the clay’s limbs to the shape they want it to be in.
- **Facilitator’s Note:** As they are posing, the facilitator should help establish and maintain a reflective tone. Consider asking questions as they pose like, “What feelings do you think came up for people in this situation? What do you see?” What do you feel? Are you angry? Afraid? Hurt?”
- **Facilitator’s Note:** You should observe the sculptors and clay during the sculpting and after. You want to look for themes and noteworthy poses or body language. For example, the clay is not making eye contact or is looking down to demonstrate injustice. Bring your observation of themes out in the final debrief.
- **Process:**
 - How did it feel to be the clay?
 - How did it feel to be the sculptor?
 - Which “scenes” were hard to sculpt?



COMMUNITY CONVERSATION TO DEBRIEF CONSTRUCTING RACE, CREATING WHITE PRIVILEGE

- Ask the group for a synopsis of what was expressed in the essay?
- What does it say about the relationship between blacks and whites back in the 1700s in the United States?
- So why was race constructed? And who was “constructing” it?
- How was race constructed? What was defined first? (Answer: whiteness) And what came with that definition? (Answer: privilege)
- What were some of the privileges? [Answers: They were allowed to bear arms, to act in self-defense, to own livestock, to be hired as overseers, to have families and to “control” their women without interference (sexism and racism). Eventually, they got the right to own land, to vote and have access to skilled trades like blacksmithing, etc. (the right to own and sell their labor)]
- How did these events tie into some of the ways race and white privilege play out today?
- What privileges exist that support one group and are denied to others?

MAJOR POINTS TO RAISE

- We did not construct “race” but we either benefit or hurt from it.
- The construction of “race” was to create a buffer to protect the elite.
- If we are able to work past “race,” we can see that the major issue is class/economics.
- We’ll explore this more in Modules 5 and 6 when we examine class and socialization and conditioning.



COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE PHILANTHROPY?

Start by collectively discussing the *Resource Generation* reading you pre-assigned for this module using the discussion questions below. Ask the group for a synopsis of what was expressed in the essay.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does *Resource Generation* define social justice philanthropy?

- If needed note the definition:
 - “Social justice philanthropy focuses on the root causes of social, economic and environmental injustices. It strives to include the people who are impacted by those injustices as decision makers. It also aims to make the field of philanthropy more accessible and diverse. In social justice philanthropy, foundations are accountable, transparent and responsive in their grantmaking. Donors and foundations act as allies to social justice movements by contributing not only monetary resources but their time, knowledge, skills and access. Social justice philanthropy is also sometimes called social change philanthropy, social movement philanthropy, and community-based philanthropy.”
- For clarity, make sure to touch on some examples of how philanthropies embrace social justice in various ways:
 - **Organizational structure:** It strives to build diversity into staff and board.
 - **Operations:** It seeks input from those who are directly affected by and working on an issue to inform funding decisions; it underscores the importance of partnership and encourages foundation staff to work collaboratively with grantees by giving their time, knowledge, skills, and connections.

- **Giving:** It works to promote transparency, providing nonprofits with information about why funding decisions are made
2. Introduce National Center for Responsive Philanthropy's definition of social justice philanthropy (below) and ask participants to compare and contrast with the Resource Generation definition.
 - "Social justice philanthropy is the practice of making contributions to nonprofit organizations that work for structural change and increase the opportunity of those who are less well-off politically, economically and socially:
 - Suggest that there are different definitions of social justice philanthropy. It is the application of principles to a practice. How individuals and institutions understand and internalize social justice principles will shape their practice of social justice philanthropy.
 3. What is your reaction to Martin Luther King Jr.'s quote: "Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the economic injustice that makes philanthropy necessary?"
 - Framing philanthropy as a link between history and culture.
 - Link this quote back to the social justice readings completed to date. Encourage participants to reflect on the historical context of philanthropy today.

SOCIAL HISTORIC U.S. FOUNDATION






Explore the New Yorker article on the Ford Foundation to reinforce how philanthropy reflects history and culture. Then analyze how the Ford Foundation is working to animate social justice principles today. For a rich discussion, we recommend assigning the article as pre-reading, and reviewing a series of excerpts to facilitate a guided discussion. Begin by asking participants to recap the subject of the article. If participants struggle, offer this brief synopsis:

- The article covers changes taking place at Ford Foundation under the leadership of a new president, Darren Walker, who is dedicated to social justice.

Next, ask participants to read the following excerpts consecutively:

- *"Ford had recently decided, in fact, that inequality was the problem of the times — more than climate change, for instance, or extremism... So now it was going to do something dramatic: it was going to work on inequality and nothing else... Some big changes that were not negotiable had been made already: the pursuit of "Internet rights" was to be added to Ford's portfolio, and L.G.B.T. rights in the U.S. was to be subtracted, since that issue had achieved such momentum that Ford's money could be better spent elsewhere."*
- *"In the sixties when you came to see the president, it was meant to be intimidating," Walker says. "It was like you were being presented to the emperor. But it's not me. I'm not a white guy from the Harvard class of 1955!"*
- *One of the reasons that Walker was an ideal president for the Ford Foundation was that his life was an example of just the sort of social transformation that Ford's programs were intended to produce.*

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- *“When he took over at Ford, he was determined to remember that even though he had half a billion dollars a year at his disposal, and his grantees were compelled to beg him for some, and he could say no to any one of them and that would be the end of it, still, it was those grantees and their work that gave his work meaning. It was a strange and uncomfortable thing to be a social-justice person in a social-justice foundation committed to ending inequality and yet to find yourself every day in relations that could scarcely be less equal.”*
 - *Ford thought of itself as the sort of foundation whose staff did not dictate what its grantees should do, but sought out grantees with ideas and methods of their own: that was the social-justice way. But, ironically, this meant that it required far more staff than it would if it came up with its own ideas and hired people to execute them. Coming up with ideas to be executed was the sort of thing that could be done in a meeting at headquarters; but finding small, local N.G.O.s and community leaders and artists and researchers to fund in dozens of countries around the world required offices in those countries, with program staff and administrative staff and maintenance staff and gardeners and drivers, plus money for travel and hosting meetings and all the rest of it... Humility was expensive.*

Facilitate a discussion to unpack these quotes, drawing on the definitions of social justice covered in Module 2.

- How does the Ford Foundation’s work reflect history and culture?
 - Note the Foundation’s establishment as a relic of Ford’s legacy.
 - Note the Foundation’s current work as marking the issues that are seen as most relevant or pressing today.


- In the Ford Foundation example, how do we see the application of social justice principles play out?
 - Reference Ford's selection of Daryn Walker as president.
 - Reference choices Daryn made to create open atmosphere.
- What tensions or challenges do you see in this example of social justice philanthropy?
 - Note that applying social justice principles takes dedication, effort, and expense.
 - Note that power dynamics exist that can cause grantmakers and foundation leaders to feel uncomfortable.

EXERCISE

DEFINING WHAT SOCIAL JUSTICE PHILANTHROPY MEANS TO YOU

Should you wish to extend your work on this module, you may can assign two additional readings listed below and complete the following exercise in an additional session. Alternatively, you can complete this exercise below without additional reading.

- Read Rusega, Albert. "What is Social Justice Philanthropy?" The Alliance Magazine.
http://bit.ly/Alliance_Social-Justice-Phil
- Read "A Few Thoughts Towards More Inclusive Philanthropy," blog by Nadia Owusu on Living Cities blog.
<http://bit.ly/Inclusive-Philanthropy>



Begin the exercise by reminding participants that there are no hard and fast rules for what social justice philanthropy is and how it should be practice. Tell participants that they will be coming up with their own vision for how they see social justice philanthropy, based on readings and reflections to date. Offer some framing questions to consider:

- What are some ways of practicing social justice philanthropy?
- What are the different words people use to describe social justice philanthropy?
- What are some of the tensions that arise for the philanthropists when they talk about advancing social justice philanthropy?

Ask participants to get started by coming up with their own definition by completing the sentence: “To me, social justice philanthropy means...”

After a period of independent working time, ask each person to share their definition one at a time. Then facilitate a discussion using the following questions:

- What words and concepts that resonated with you in listening to your peers?
- What common themes did you hear?
- What differences did you hear?

If participants are working together to do grantmaking in the future, then you may consider asking them to workshop a definition together in real-time or collaborate offline. If participants will be pursuing philanthropy independently from one another separately, you may consider asking them to write their own definition (and commit it to philanthropic autobiography if they are journaling).

UNDERSTANDING HOW DIFFERENT PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS DEFINE AND ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE WILL BE OF INTEREST TO SOME INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS READING THIS TOOLKIT. BELOW YOU WILL FIND SOME ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM PHILANTHROPY GROUPS THAT DESCRIBE HOW SOCIAL JUSTICE PRINCIPLES ARE APPLIED AND ADVANCED IN THE SECTOR.

Tanya E. Coke, Scott Nielsen, Henry A.J. Ramos, Sherry Seward and Bradford K. Smith, *Social Justice Grantmaking II: An Update on U.S. Foundation Trends*, ed. Steven Lawrence (New York: Foundation Center, 2009).

http://bit.ly/FoundationCenter_Social-Justice-Highlights

Read Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski, *The State of Social Justice Philanthropy* (Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2012).

http://bit.ly/NCRP_Phil-Landscape

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy: "Social Justice Philanthropy: The Latest Trend or a Lasting Lens for Grantmaking," 2005.

http://bit.ly/NCRP_Social-Justice-Phil