

[Get started](#)[Open in app](#)

MacKenzie Scott

[Follow](#)

16.6K Followers

[About](#)

Seeding by Ceding

[MacKenzie Scott](#) Jun 15 · 7 min read

Sitting down to write this post, I felt stuck. I want to de-emphasize privileged voices and cede focus to others, yet I know some media stories will focus on wealth. The headline I would wish for this post is “*286 Teams Empowering Voices the World Needs to Hear.*”

People struggling against inequities deserve center stage in stories about change they are creating. This is equally — perhaps especially — true when their work is funded by wealth. Any wealth is a product of a collective effort that included them. The social structures that inflate wealth present obstacles to them. And despite those obstacles, they are providing solutions that benefit us all.

Putting large donors at the center of stories on social progress is a distortion of their role. Me, Dan, a constellation of researchers and administrators and advisors — we are all attempting to give away a fortune that was enabled by systems in need of change. In this effort, we are governed by a humbling belief that it would be better if disproportionate wealth were not concentrated in a small number of hands, and that the solutions are best designed and implemented by others. Though we still have a lot to learn about how to act on these beliefs without contradicting and subverting them, we can begin by acknowledging that people working to build power from within communities are the agents of change. Their service supports and empowers people who go on to support and empower others.

Because community-centered service is such a powerful catalyst and multiplier, we spent the first quarter of 2021 identifying and evaluating equity-oriented non-profit teams working in areas that have been neglected. The result was \$2,739,000,000 in gifts to 286 high-impact organizations in categories and communities that have been historically underfunded and overlooked.

Higher education is a proven pathway to opportunity, so we looked for 2- and 4-year institutions successfully educating students who come from communities that have been chronically underserved.

Discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities has been deepening, so we assessed organizations bridging divides through interfaith support and collaboration.

Arts and cultural institutions can strengthen communities by transforming spaces, fostering empathy, reflecting community identity, advancing economic mobility, improving academic outcomes, lowering crime rates, and improving mental health, so we evaluated smaller arts organizations creating these benefits with artists and audiences from culturally rich regions and identity groups that donors often overlook.

Over 700 million people globally still live in extreme poverty. To find solutions, we all benefit from on-the-ground insights and diverse engagement, so we prioritized organizations with local teams, leaders of color, and a specific focus on empowering women and girls.

We also assessed organizations focused on supporting community engagement itself. The 1.6 million non-profits in America employ 10% of our country's workforce, and 63 million volunteers. While political pendulums swing back and forth, redistributing and re-concentrating wealth, we can choose to fund organizations with the potential to increase the impact of every dollar and hour donated by others. Social sector infrastructure organizations empower community leaders, support grassroots organizing and innovation, measure and evaluate what works, and disseminate information so that community leaders, elected officials, volunteers, employees, and donors at every level of income can make informed decisions about how to partner and invest. These organizations, which are themselves historically underfunded, also promote and facilitate service, which in turn inspires more people to serve.

We chose to make relatively large gifts to the organizations named below, both to enable their work, and as a signal of trust and encouragement, to them and to others. Would they still benefit from more (more advocates, more money, more volunteers)? Yes. Like those we shared in July and December of 2020, these 286 teams were selected through a rigorous process of research and analysis. These are people who have spent years successfully advancing humanitarian aims, often without knowing whether there will be any money in their bank accounts in two months. What do we think they might do with more cash on hand than they expected? Buy needed supplies. Find new creative ways to help. Hire a few extra team members they know they can pay for the next five years. Buy chairs for them. Stop having to work every weekend. Get some sleep.

Because we believe that teams with experience on the front lines of challenges will know best how to put the money to good use, we encouraged them to spend it however they choose. Many reported that this trust significantly increased the impact of the gift. There is nothing new about amplifying gifts by yielding control. People have been doing it in living rooms and classrooms and workplaces for thousands of years. It empowers receivers by making them feel valued and by unlocking their best solutions. Generosity is generative. Sharing makes more.

A favorite verse by Rumi captures this well:

“A candle as it diminishes explains,

Gathering more and more is not the way.

Burn, become light and heat and help. Melt.”

317 Main Community Music Center

A Place Called Home

ABFE: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities

ACCESS

Achieving the Dream

ACT Grants

Adeso

Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh Fund

African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund

African Leadership Group

Afrika Tikkun

Alaska Native Heritage Center

Allied Media Projects

Alonzo King LINES Ballet

Alternate ROOTS

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Amarillo College

American Indian College Fund

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

Amref Health Africa

APIA Scholars

Apollo Theater

Art for Justice Fund

Arts Administrators of Color Network

Arts for Healing and Justice Network

Arts Forward Fund

Arts Midwest

Ashé Cultural Arts Center

Ashoka Innovators for the Public

Asian American Federation

Asian American LEAD

Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy

Asian Pacific Community Fund

Asian Pacific Fund

Atlanta Music Project

Authors League Fund

AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development)

Ballet Hispánico

Big Thought

Black Ensemble Theater

Black Organizing for Leadership and Dignity (BOLD)

BoardSource

Borealis Philanthropy

· Black Led Movement Fund

· Communities Transforming Policing Fund

· Disability Inclusion Fund

- Emerging LGBTQ Leaders of Color Fund
- Racial Equity in Journalism Fund
- Racial Equity in Philanthropy Fund
- Racial Equity to Accelerate Change Fund
- Spark Justice Fund

Brazosport College

Broward College

Building Movement Project

CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities

Cal Poly Pomona

California State University Channel Islands

California State University, Fullerton

California State University, Northridge

Candid

Center for Asian American Media

Center for Cultural Innovation

Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP)

Center for Evaluation Innovation

Center of Life

CFLeads

Chaffey Community College

CHANGE Philanthropy

Charity Navigator

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

Chicago's Cultural Treasures

Child in Need Institute (CINI)

Children's Defense Fund

Chinatown Community Development Center

Chinese for Affirmative Action

Co-Impact Gender Fund

Collage Dance Collective

College of the Desert

Common Counsel Foundation

Common Future

Community MusicWorks

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services

Constellations Culture Change Fund

CUNY Hostos Community College

Dance Theatre of Harlem

David's Harp

Decolonizing Wealth Project

Digital Green

Donors of Color Network

DonorsChoose

Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation

Dream a Dream

East Bay Fund for Artists

East West Players

El Museo del Barrio

El Paso Community College

Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy

Equal Measure

Equitable Evaluation Initiative

Equity in the Center

Esperanza Peace and Justice Center

Excelencia in Education

Exponent Philanthropy

Faith in Action

Faith in Public Life

Filantropía Puerto Rico

Firelight Media

First Peoples Fund

Flamboyant Arts Fund

Florida International University

Fondo Semillas

Foundation for Contemporary Arts Emergency Grants COVID-19 Funds

FSG

Fund for Shared Insight

Funders for LGBTQ Issues

Girls First Fund

GiveDirectly

GiveIndia

GivingTuesday

GOONJ

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

GreenLight Fund

Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center

HIAS

Homeboy Industries

Hyde Square Task Force

IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts

IDinsight

Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN)

Institute for Transformative Technologies

Interaction Institute for Social Change

International African American Museum

Jan Sahas

Japanese American National Museum

Jazz at Lincoln Center

Junebug Productions

Jusoor

Kennedy-King College

Kepler

Kiva

L.A. Arts Endowment Fund

Lee College

Leeway Foundation

Lever for Change

Long Beach City College

Los Cenzontles Cultural Arts Academy

Lwala Community Alliance

Magic Bus

Maine Expansion Arts Fund

Mama Foundation for the Arts

Management Leadership for Tomorrow

Mann Deshi Foundation

MDRC

Memphis Music Initiative

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Metro IAF

Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund

Mexic-Arte Museum

Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

Mid-America Arts Alliance

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Mosaic Network and Fund

Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit

mothers2mothers

Motown Museum

Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico

Museum of Chinese in America

Muslim Advocates

Muso

Namati

National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures

National Center for Family Philanthropy

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

National Council of Nonprofits

National Equity Project

National Museum of Mexican Art

Native Americans in Philanthropy

Native Arts & Cultures Foundation

NDN Collective

Neighborhood Funders Group

Neutral Zone

New City Kids

New England Foundation for the Arts

New Profit

NGOsource

NTEN

Odessa College

Oregon Arts and Culture Recovery Fund

OutRight Action International

PA'I Foundation

Partners In Health

Pasadena City College

PEAK Grantmaking

PEN America Writers' Emergency Fund

Penumbra

Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity

Pillars Fund

Piramal Swasthya

Play On Philly

Porterville College

Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)

ProInspire

Project Evident

Project Row Houses

Race Forward

Recess

Renaissance Youth Center

Renton Technical College

Repair the World

Repairers of the Breach

Results for America

Rise Up

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors

Rockwood Leadership Institute

Room to Read

Roosevelt Institute

RYSE Center

San Antonio College

San Francisco Community Health Center

San Jacinto Community College

Sanku — Project Healthy Children

Santa Barbara City College

Save The Music Foundation

Self Help Graphics & Art

Service Year Alliance

Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO)

Sins Invalid

Sipp Culture

SNEHA (Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action)

Social Finance

Solidaire Network

Souls Grown Deep

South Arts

Southwest Folklife Alliance

Southwest Texas Junior College

Sphinx Organization

Spy Hop

TechSoup Global

The Antara Foundation

The BOMA Project

The Bridgespan Group

The Center for Cultural Power

The Door

The Education Trust

The Freedom Fund

The Greenlining Institute

The International Association of Blacks in Dance

The Laundromat Project

The Management Center

The Nonprofit Quarterly

The Studio Museum in Harlem

The Theater Offensive

The Urban Institute

The Village of Arts and Humanities

The/Nudge Foundation

Third Sector

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation

Tostan

Triangle Project

Ubuntu Pathways

United Philanthropy Forum

United States Artists

Unity Productions Foundation

University of California, Merced

University of Central Florida

University of Illinois Chicago

University of Texas at San Antonio

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Urban Bush Women

Urban Word NYC

Ushahidi

VolunteerMatch

West Hills College Lemoore

West/Southwest Industrial Areas Foundation

Western States Arts Federation

William Rainey Harper College

Wing Luke Museum

Womankind

Women's Funding Network

Women's Audio Mission

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)

Youth Empowerment Project

Youth on Record

Youth Speaks

YR Media

ZUMIX

[About](#) [Write](#) [Help](#) [Legal](#)

Get the Medium app

