



# Methods of Social Change: Facilitation Guide for Giving Circles



45 minutes to  
1 hour



## Materials

- Facilitation guide
- Methods of Social Change handout
- Flip-chart paper
- Markers
- Colored dot stickers

## What to Know

This exercise is designed to help your giving circle consider diverse methods of social change beyond philanthropy. Consider using this discussion guide in a meeting before your group is deciding where to allocate your funds. You can use this discussion to inform selection criteria or to identify other ways beyond philanthropy to support the cause your circle is funding.

## Desired Outcomes

- Develop familiarity with the various types of social change methods, the benefits and challenges of each, and how they are interrelated.
- Explore how different types of giving can achieve different kinds of social impact.



2 min

## Framing

**1** Frame the activity by explaining to the group that while your giving circle likely focuses their work on philanthropy, there are various other methods for making change—all with their individual benefits and challenges.

**2** Explain that the organizations that your giving circle gives to may utilize a variety of social change methods and the more familiar your circle is with different methods, the more strategic you can be in your giving.

## Introducing the Methods of Social Change

**1** Give a quick overview of the different methods (social service, community organizing, social entrepreneurship, advocacy, philanthropy, education) using the Methods of Social Change: Working Definitions handout.

**2** Ask participants: *Which—if any—of these methods have you used or engaged with before? Are there methods on the handout that are new for you?*



5 min



30 to 40 min

## Learning about the Methods

- 1 Once participants have a sense of the definitions, break into groups to identify the opportunities and challenges of each method and write them on chart paper. With a larger group (15 people or more), you might have each group work on one method. With a smaller group (under 15 people), you could have groups work on two methods each.
- 2 Once groups finish, have groups read through their answers for each method and post their chart paper on the wall.
- 3 Next, explain to participants that there are different spectrums for evaluating these methods of social change and for thinking about their relationships.

You could say: *One spectrum is methods that work to change the existing systems vs. methods that use the existing systems to make change. Another spectrum could be methods that provide support for individual needs vs. methods that work to address problems on a community or societal level.*

As a group, discuss: *How would we place each of the methods if we were using the two spectrums described?*

- 4 Then, have the group stand up and walk over to the wall where the posters with the different methods are posted. Give participants colored dot stickers. Ask participants to put a dot on the poster(s) that represent the type of social change method(s) used by the organizations that your giving circle usually funds. If your group hasn't yet completed a grant cycle, ask participants: *What types of social change would be most meaningful or effective for our giving circle to fund?*

- 5 Ask the group to step back and see what patterns or trends emerge from where everyone placed their circles. Discuss the implications of this as a group.

You might consider discussing: *Is our giving circle happy with the types of social change we currently fund? Do the methods of social change that our grantees employ align with our values?*



5 to 10 min

## Closing Discussion

To close the activity, discuss the following question: *How might our giving circle contribute to our grantees, in ways other than donating funds?*



# Methods of Social Change: Working Definitions

## **DIRECT SERVICE**

Directly meeting people's material or spiritual needs by providing free or low-cost access to goods, services or communal spaces.

## **PHILANTHROPY**

Giving money to support projects or organizations that address a need or issue.

## **ADVOCACY**

Using argument and persuasion to achieve a particular action or change. Often advocacy is directed specifically toward lawmakers or policymakers to persuade them to pass or implement a particular policy. Businesses and corporations can also be the target for advocacy.

## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**

Pursuing justice for the less powerful by developing a strong, democratic organization whose power comes from the numbers and mutual commitment of its members.

## **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Launching a venture for the common good. While this can include the creation of new non-profit organizations, some social entrepreneurship are employing a for-profit structure, becoming Benefit Corporations or B-corporations that help achieve a social mission.

## **EDUCATION**

As its own method of social change (beyond its function as a form of direct service), education in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual, and from there potentially an effect on society.