

# Movements Matter

## THE SAVVY DONOR'S GUIDE TO INVESTING IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

### What Is a Movement?

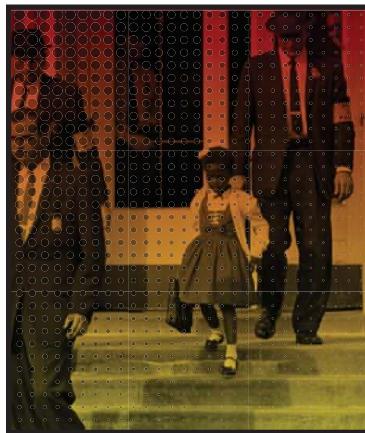
**Social justice movements are the mechanism by which people come together to make their voices heard and change their communities for the better.**

When faced with stubborn barriers to achieving healthier, more prosperous communities, movement-building is often the best tool available. When the inside levers of policy aren't functioning properly, movements build the will and the power for an outside strategy to do the job.

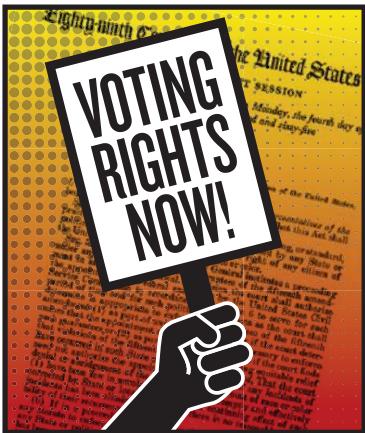
While there is no formula for a social movement, they usually share a few features. It involves people who are mobilized around issues they care about, and who share a powerful vision about what is wrong with society and how it can be improved. These people are engaged in diverse activities that are not under any one leader's control, and that lead to a change in attitudes, practices and public policy.

— JEAN HARDISTY, FOUNDER OF POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES AND DEEPAK BHARGAVA FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY CHANGE

### Black Civil Rights Movement



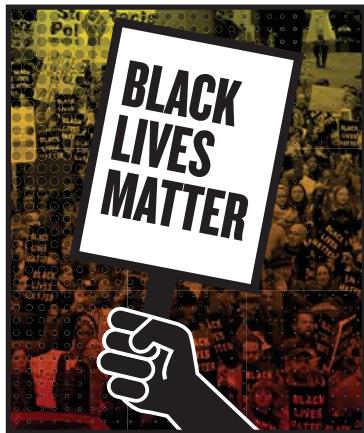
SCHOOL DESEGREGATION



VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965



BLACK POWER MOVEMENT

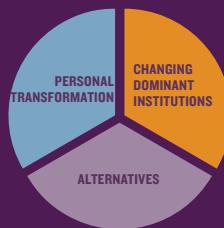


MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES

### Why Should Donors Care About Movements?

**Movements are the most effective way to break political and policy logjams.** They bend the rules of politics by changing what is possible. For philanthropists who care about sticky problems like education reform, disparate health outcomes, the environment and more, movements can help us realize huge gains for people in need. **Now more than ever, philanthropists have an opportunity to embrace the power of movements to build public will and expand the canvas of the possible to create social change at scale.**

# Movement Fast Facts



**Movements are decentralized, but they're not amorphous.**

Each movement is an ecosystem unto itself that is intertwined with others. Movements might appear chaotic at first, but there is almost always rhyme and reason. Understanding the different elements of a movement ecosystem is key to ensuring effective movement giving.



**The change movements seek is often non-linear and long-term.**

That can make measuring impact challenging – though not impossible. Individual donors are at an advantage when it comes to movement giving because they can take a longer, more holistic view of impact than foundations and other institutional givers, which are often constrained by the short-term and project-specific perspective of annual grant cycles. Individual donors are better positioned to give nimbly and responsively.



**Movements have been the impetus for most large-scale progress in the United States.**

Abolition, women's suffrage, African American voting rights, LGBTQ equality and even modern environmentalism all featured social movement ecosystems prominently in their development. That's because movements are an especially powerful expression of our democratic values, and they build the power of everyday people to change the laws that govern their lives.

## An Opportunity for Individual Donors: 5 Steps You Can Take Now

1

### Join movement-oriented donor support organizations

Solidaire, Resource Generation, Way to Win, and the Movement Voter Project are all communities of donors and advisors who can support you in your journey toward more effective movement giving.

2

### Listen and learn.

Talk to movement leaders working on the issues you care about. The best movement givers have relationships that help them understand what the movement needs and when. They don't assume they know all the answers, instead trusting the experience and knowledge of grassroots movement leaders closest to the problem to identify the best solution.

3

### Fund with the whole ecosystem in mind.

A diverse collection of institutions and people need support in order to build a healthy and effective movement ecosystem, not just nonprofits with the most name recognition or leaders with the largest platform.

4

### Take risks to reap rewards.

Sometimes a particular campaign fails or a promising avenue for change turns out to be a dead end. Savvy givers know that these "failures" build movement power, capacity, sophistication and collaboration that set the stage for new, unforeseen opportunities and long-term successes. Individual donors are better positioned than their institutional peers to embrace that risk.

5

### Commit for the long haul.

The journey from the abolition of the slave trade to the civil rights acts of the 1960s took more than 150 years. Because they build people power, movements take time and the change they bring about is long-lasting and durable. Great movement givers commit to supporting a movement through the ups and downs for the long-term, not just a year or two.