
A Message From the Executive Director



Dear Colleagues,

Like most white people in the United States, I grew up completely oblivious to the many privileges I enjoy because of the color of my skin. It wasn't until I took courses in college like "Race, Power and Inequality in America" from Paul Wellstone or "Race, Reform and Rebellion" from Manning Marable that I began to develop an understanding of how our nation, its institutions and the experiences of its people are overwhelmingly shaped by race and racism. Serving as a community organizer for 15 years, primarily working with communities of color, deepened that understanding.

That's why I'm so pleased that this edition of *Responsive Philanthropy* is a special issue devoted to what philanthropy can do to combat implicit bias, or the way in which our unconscious minds shape and contribute to our thoughts and actions. Our fantastic roster of authors explores how this phenomenon both affects the many challenges we as a society face and its implications for how philanthropy addresses these issues.

In our cover story, acclaimed scholar and activist John A. Powell lays out "Implicit Bias and Its Role in Philanthropy and Grantmaking." He provides a comprehensive overview and definition of implicit bias, and explains how the study of mind science gives the sector vital information about how to overcome it. John reminds us that, while those who work in philanthropy have an especially strong commitment to fairness and equality, even this can be undermined by our own susceptibility to biases of which we may not even be aware.

Next, in "Implicit Bias and Native Americans: Philanthropy's Hidden Minority," renowned Native rights champion Crystal Echo Hawk shares how this process affects one of the nation's most underserved communities. Crystal conducted several interviews with both Native and non-Native nonprofit leaders to provide unique assessments of how this hidden bias is affecting the state of Native American philanthropy.

In "Gender Norms: The Missing Part of Gender Equity Philanthropy," Riki Wilchins, executive director of TrueChild, details how American foundations are lagging behind international grantmakers in their gender justice programming. Riki explains how gender norms, or the ways in which people identify what it means to be male or female, demand a more comprehensive funding approach to successfully effect equal outcomes.

Finally, in "A More Progressive Approach: Recognizing the Role of Implicit Bias in Institutional Racism," DeAngelo Bester, executive director of the Workers Center for Racial Justice, delves into how racism can look radically different to those who recognize the way implicit bias pervades systems and institutions. DeAngelo offers practical advice on how recognizing one's own implicit bias is an important first step in negating its effect.

Our Member Spotlight showcases the work of Asian Pacific Community in Action, an organization that advances health equity in Arizona by helping remove barriers to care.

Special thanks to Niki Jagpal, our senior director of research and policy, for her work and guidance in putting this issue together, and to Rachel Godsil of Seton Hall University School of Law for her thoughtful feedback.

As always, we hope *Responsive Philanthropy* is a useful resource for all those in the philanthropic sector, and we are always trying to improve. Let us know how we're doing at readers@ncrp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to be "AD", written over a light green circular graphic element.

Aaron Dorfman
Executive Director