

Pathways to Power

Collaboration Areas

In 2019, the Global Fund for Community Foundations organized the [Pathways to Power Symposium](#) in London which brought together a diverse range of 110 people from around the world, all working in different parts of the development and philanthropy eco-system at both national and international levels, and all deeply engaged in different efforts to shift power.

As part of the planning for the event, we issued a call for ideas, inviting people to submit their thoughts on what some of the essential “pathways” (or barriers) to shifting power are. For the GFCF, for example, community philanthropy is one potential pathway, but we have increasingly come to understand that it is just one among multiple strategies that need to be pursued in order to reform and transform the current international development system and foster more people-led and people-centred approaches.

We received a lot of great ideas which we then sought to categorize into different clusters or headings which are listed below. The list may not be exhaustive but it certainly reflects many voices and views of change-makers around the world.

1. **Shifting the Power as a conversation and community** (Who do you go to when you want to learn more about the shift the power movement and other efforts to shift power?)
2. **Localization/Local Ownership** (Who do you go to for ideas about returning or increasing control over resources and strategic decision making to local actors, including community members, CSOs, and local public institutions?)
3. **Systems Change** (Who do you go to for insights, frameworks, or new practices, theories and conversations that support systems thinking and systems strengthening?)
4. **Community Philanthropy** (Who do you go to for insights, frameworks, or new practices that advance our understanding of community philanthropy practice and strategies?)
5. **Self-Care and Solidarity** (Who do you go to for inspiration, personal support, and renewed energy in the face of persistent resistance to change - in areas such as equity and power, aid reform and situations of workplace resistance, burn-out and value drift?)
6. **Positive / New Narratives** (Who do you go to for advice about changing the narrative about how low-income & marginalized communities and southern civil society organizations are perceived and portrayed? Who do you go to for advice about alternative ways of understanding and portraying stories of transformative change?)
7. **Evidence for Change** (Who do you go to for support in building evidence, case studies, metrics, and research that make a compelling case for shifting the power to local actors?)
8. **Decolonizing development / Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** (Who do you go to for insights, strategies, and inspiration to promote more diversity, equity, and social inclusion in our field, whether within our individual institutions, our practices and models or at the level of the overall system?)

9. **Funding Practices to Shift Power** (Who do you go to in order to learn about funding practices that foster community-led development and put local actors in control of resources?)
10. **Reimagining INGOs** (Who do you go to for advancing efforts aimed at shifting contractors, funders, and INGOs towards facilitative, brokering, and convening roles - as opposed to “do and deliver” mindsets)?
11. **Reimagining Southern Civil Society** (Who do you go to for insights and arguments around changing mindsets, practices, and blue-prints of southern civil society so that it can become less donor-serving and more rooted in and relevant to the communities it serves?)
12. **Strategies to Counter Shrinking Civic Space** (Who do you go to for insights, frameworks, or new practices to counter the systemic pressure from government on free and open civil society, and to help mobilize and grow local constituencies for civil society organizations?)