Three Pillars Initiative

Trust-Based Philanthropic Modeling of TPI

Turning Ideas into Practice

We would like to give a special thanks to the Trust-Based Philanthropy Project for the work they have done and continue to do in making trust-based practices the norm in philanthropy, and we want to give credit to them for the materials they have provided from their six principles to their specialized guides.

Trust-Based Philanthropy is an approach that addresses the power imbalances within classical philanthropy and aims to reimagine relationships to transform the sector. The widespread strategic reconsideration by community foundations across the country to address this approach is setting the course for a healthier and more equitable society. Empowering youth is a perfect embodiment of the Trust-Based Philanthropy approach. At Three Pillars Initiative, we aim to empower the next generation of leaders to create the impact they want to see in their communities by teaching them the art, science, and business of philanthropy. The implementation of a Trust-Based Philanthropy model, one that legitimizes the power to youth in philanthropy, has been central to our programming from our inception.

The TPI model offers a tangible framework around which Trust-Based Philanthropy redistributes power to youth.

Here's how it works within the key elements of the Trust-Based Philanthropy approach.

1) **Central Philosophy** – Our entire TPI model involves the mutual benefits of a learning partnership between grantors and grantees in the community. Each brings something to the table with equal value to redistribute power and learn from each other.

2) **Addressing the Values-to-Practice Gap** – It is impossible to create a better future without including the future decision makers. It is likewise impossible to create change without future leaders to sustain change. These are both common yet significant gaps between values and practice experienced by foundations. Furthermore, these gaps are growing as foundations take stronger stances in favor of fundamental change without tangible plans on how to empower others including youth. As shown in the Open Road Alliance's Roadblock Analysis Report of 2018, 46% of barriers to nonprofit success are funder created. The TPI model works against that by avoiding delays in disbursement, following through on strong visions, and being very clear and consistent in strategy as

illustrated by the TPI curriculum itself and its self-sufficiency model. The programs always have the same goals, i.e. youth impacting youth.

3) **Ecosystem Balance** – The social environment in which the TPI program model exists includes being open, honest, collaborative, and inclusive. By being self-reflective, acknowledging power imbalances and cultivating and maintaining power-aware relationships internally and externally, TPI provides a more balanced system in which youth development and learning takes place.

4) TPI as an organization is structured strongly in line with the Four Dimensions specified within Trust-Based Philanthropy:

   a. Our <u>values</u> surround the redistribution of power to youth because they are crucial to our future.
   b. Our <u>culture</u> is one that involves and empowers youth to actively be aware of power.
   c. Our <u>practice</u> is illustrated in the fact that nearly half of our TPI Board of Directors seats are filled by youth.
   d. Our <u>leadership</u> is active in constant self-evaluation, both in ourselves and our work and to learn and improve.

The Trust-Based Philanthropy approach also provides six key principles for doing power-balanced philanthropy. TPI addresses each of them:

- <u>Unrestricted funding</u> – We work with community foundations where circumstances have significantly changed, such as with COVID-19, and/or where funds need to be used differently than intended.
- <u>Do the homework</u> – Students do research on finding needs in the community and on organizations, as well as doing the site visits and key staff interviews. The core theme of the entire junior year program is root cause analysis.
- <u>Simplify and streamline</u> – Our program makes it easy for organizations to apply with less paperwork and fewer restrictions. Turn-around time from submission of a funding request to a decision is typically 8 weeks.
- <u>Transparent and responsive</u> – We are very clear with our objectives and evaluation process and have short response times both in communication

steps and funding timeframe. We have open communication that builds relationships.

- <u>Feedback</u> – We get feedback from youth, foundations, and community organizations on everything we do and are constantly incorporating it into our work.
- <u>Support beyond the check</u> – Volunteering and community service projects represent the third leg of TPI's Three Pillars of Philanthropy: Giving, Getting, and Volunteering.