

Justice Notes

Updates on Social Justice Fund NW's Donor Organizing in the Northwest



Edgar Franks

Continuing the Fight

Climate justice momentum builds through I-1631 organizing

An interview with Edgar Franks from Community to Community Development

Edgar Franks is the Civic Engagement Program Coordinator at Community to Community Development (C2C), an SJF Grantee based in Bellingham, Wash. Edgar and C2C were early members in Front and Centered, a coalition of people-of-color led environmental justice organizations in Washington, which played a crucial role in the recent campaign for the clean energy initiative (I-1631) that was defeated in November.

How did C2C first get involved in the fight for a statewide clean energy initiative?

In all started back in 2014 when [Washington] Gov. Jay Inslee was trying to institute a climate plan based

on California's cap and trade plan. We had lot of concern since we had heard from allies in California who were excluded during that process. Basically, people most impacted by climate change were left out and we didn't want the same thing to happen here.

Our friends at [SJF grantee] Got Green were part of a coalition coming together of frontline communities, communities of color, talking about real climate justice. We joined in with the desire to challenge and expand the conversation about climate change to include equity, inclusion, and participatory democracy. We were sick of tokenizing. Any potential solutions had to take into account

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SJF Board Co-chair Kim Powe, left, at the kick off for the I-1631 Front and Centered canvass.

“There is still a lot of momentum in [Whatcom and Skagit counties] to try to achieve something big around climate and the environment. Just because election is over doesn’t mean the organizing stops.”

workers, immigrants, tribes, and other communities.

Why was it important that C2C and Front and Centered participated from the beginning in the writing of I-1631?

We wanted to be part of the process; it was a political opening and opportunity for us to engage in a potentially groundbreaking climate and environmental justice initiative.

We had to make sure that rural communities and farmworkers were taken into account, that our perspective was being heard. We had already been taking on polluters in our communities, looking at solutions holistically and talking about “Just Transition.” [Just Transition is “a set of ... principles, processes, and practices that build economic and political power to shift from an extractive economy to a regenerative economy.”] It took almost three years but the conversation really did shift over that time and we feel like our perspective was taken seriously and included in the final product.

Paramount to this was the way in which groups that don’t often work together – labor, big greens, grassroots environmental justice groups, and others – created a genuine, functioning coalition that could serve as a model for other state or national level campaigns. Past climate initiatives – in California, British Columbia, Washington’s I-732 in 2016 – were exclusive, you had to be a supposed “policy expert” to be involved. This process was different.

As we all know, 1631 was defeated in November with around 43 percent of the vote. What was most frustrating in terms of how it all played out?

We built up good momentum in the final months of the campaign. But the propaganda of the oil industry was effective. Their misleading talking points – such as the “secret committee” that was to make all decisions if the initiative passed – swayed a lot of people. They also used fake endorsements, such as listing Latino businesses supposedly opposed 1631... but when we called some of these businesses they said they had never even been asked!

Clearly the fossil fuel industry was afraid, otherwise they wouldn’t have poured in over \$30 million to defeat 1631. All the work of our communities forced their backs against the wall; the power of our organizing had them scared. And the only way to win was by lying to people.

What do you see as the biggest success of the I-1631 campaign? What was achieved despite the initiative losing at the ballot box?

Our campaign got a lot of attention around the country. Organizations and communities took note of what happens when you build strategic alliances, bring in diverse groups, and incorporate different approaches to solving problems.

We also took our outreach to places that are usually left out, i.e rural areas. People really feel that energy in places

like Whatcom and Skagit Counties where we did a lot of canvassing. There is still a lot of momentum in these places to try to achieve something big around climate and the environment. Just because election is over doesn’t mean the organizing stops.

In the workshops and presentations we found that the framework of “Just Transition” really connects to people, especially the idea that local communities have the solutions. For example, we did a Just Transition training with Got Green in Mt. Vernon at the Steelworkers Hall. The popular education framework we used resonated with the young people.

We displayed a timeline of how much oil is being consumed, and that planted a seed about how our current system is not sustainable, and about the urgency for change. Some of the high schoolers who attended said they learned more about climate science in those couple of hours than they ever had from classes or books.

People in these community realize that it’s up to them to be the change. It’s not only possible but it can be done.

What’s next?

We’ll be gathering with our allies to evaluate our strategy and talk about the key lessons from the 1631 fight. And we’re continuing to work with young people, like the young people who canvassed so much of Whatcom and Skagit counties. They want to stay involved so we’re going to have a People’s Movement Assembly in Mt. Vernon this spring. The struggle continues!

ELECTION 2018

Wins, Losses and Building Movement Power

OPAL Executive
Director Huy Ong
at the SJF Donor
Appreciation
Event in
December.

In early December, the executive director of OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, Huy Ong, came to Seattle and spoke at SJF's annual Donor Appreciation event. Huy talked about the election victories in Oregon, and about OPAL's strategic vision for continuing to build on those victories. In particular, OPAL and other SJF grantees based in Portland were able to bring an intersectional analysis to the campaign in favor of the Clean Energy Initiative, ensuring that racial, economic and gender justice were centered as part of the fight.

Huy also laid out OPAL's formula for building power: organized people plus organized money. It was a perfect vision for the Social Justice Fund NW crowd on hand that night, including many supporters from the ATR-era who have been steadfast in their support of grassroots organizing in the Northwest region for decades. The event was also highlighted by three Giving Project alums who spoke about how participating in SJF had been a transformative experience for them.

December wrapped up one of SJF's most successful fundraising and grantmaking years ever – thanks to all of

Some of the biggest victories happened in Oregon, where SJF grantees like OPAL Environmental Justice, PCUN, Unite Oregon, VOZ, Rural Organizing Project, and Causa were part of various successful campaigns. The grassroots coalitions they helped form were instrumental in passing a groundbreaking measure: the Portland Clean Energy Initiative, which will impose fees on the area's biggest polluters and fund programs for clean air and green jobs.

our supporters for making it possible!

Victories, Setbacks in 2018

In 2018, SJF Giving Projects deepened our legacy of funding community organizing. We made 79 grants in all totalling \$1.1 million (check out the Fall Progress Report on page 5 for more details). SJF grantees work at the intersection of a variety of issues including immigration, environment,

gender, and criminal justice. Many of them also engage around these issues during election time, and November 2018 was no exception.

In the Northwest, social justice movements won some big victories in the midterm elections but also faced some difficult setbacks. (See "Continuing the Fight for Climate Justice" on the cover.)

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SJF Honored

Wins 2018 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization

On November 1, Social Justice Fund was honored as the **2018 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization** at the **National Philanthropy Day** event in downtown Seattle. More than 600 people were on hand, and SJF Executive Director Mijo Lee spoke to the crowd about the importance of taking risks, and how what we in philanthropy call “risk” pales in comparison to the life-and-death risks that our grantees take everyday.

Thanks to AFP Advancement Northwest and the selection committee for this special award. Under our previous name – A Territory Resource or ATR – SJF also won the Outstanding Philanthropic Organization award back in 1995.



SJF Executive Director, Mijo Lee, accepting the award for 2018 Outstanding Philanthropic Organization.



WATCH VIDEO

A video was made about Social Justice Fund NW for the occasion. You can watch it at: bit.ly/SJF_award



SJF Seeks Participants for 2019-2020 Giving Projects

- Rural Organizing Giving Project March 9 - Sept. 4, 2019
- Momentum (open only to Giving Project alums) April 14 - Aug. 18, 2019
- Leaderfull Movements Seattle April 13 - Nov. 20, 2019
- Leaderfull Movements Portland April 13 - Nov. 20, 2019
- Economic Justice Giving Project Portland Sept. 28 - March 18, 2020
- Economic Justice Giving Project Seattle Sept. 28 - March 18, 2020
- Criminal Justice Giving Project Oct. 19 - April 29, 2020

Sign Up for More Information

To sign up for more info, go to bit.ly/giving_projects

2019 Rural and Small Town Organizing Giving Project

Project Dates: March 9, 2019 - Sept. 14, 2019

This project will meet in Seattle and welcomes people living in Seattle or in rural areas (let's talk about how to support your participation in Seattle meetings). We'll be funding grassroots organizing that builds power in ANY Northwest areas outside of Seattle and Portland, with priority given to organizations in rural, small town, and reservation communities.

As always, organizers and workers from grantee organizations are encouraged to participate in the Giving Project - even if your organization will apply for this grant.



SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND NW

2018 Fall Progress Report

With your support, Social Justice Fund NW engages donors at all giving levels and trains leaders to organize their friends and family to fund the movement. Your donations fund the most effective, inspiring, and transformative organizations in the Northwest.

130
Giving Project
participants

1500
donors

\$1.6 million
in grants

(includes \$500,000
in donor-advised
fund grants)

79
grants

2017 Financial Report Available here: http://bit.ly/2017_SJF

OUR CORE MISSION

Our core model continues to be successful in developing leadership and moving money to social justice organizing. Each Giving Project guides members through a deep process of learning about race, class, fundraising, and social justice.



Aaron Carr of the 2018 Black Led Organizing Giving Project during the race and class workshop.

New SJF Hires, Staff Promotions

BANA ABERA

Project Manager

Project Manager Bana Abera is an organizer, facilitator, and project manager based in Seattle. In 2016, Bana co-facilitated the Alternatives to Youth Detention Project, a collaboration with SJF and EPIC (Ending the Prison Industrial Complex). Prior to that, she served as the Criminal Justice Policy Research Specialist for the Seattle Office for Civil Rights.



MARC MAZIQUE

Operations Associate

A writer and musician, Operations Associate Marc Mazique has served in administrative roles for nonprofits and universities for many years. He has also been active in various struggles around police accountability, immigrant rights, and the occupation of Palestine, among others, and been a member of two radical marching bands.



MAGAN DO

Grantmaking Director

Grantmaking Director, Magan Do, joined SJF in 2011 as a Practicum Student through UW's School of Social Work, served as a Board Member, and participated in two Criminal Justice Giving Projects. Magan has many years of experience in local non-profits and community organizations.



KAREN TOERING

Interim Program Director

Interim Program Director, Karen Toering, previously spent seven years leading Giving Projects as an SJF Senior Project Manager and Project Manager. She is a grassroots organizer, cultural worker, and consultant for non-profit arts and social justice organizations. Her work includes base-building and collaboration on media justice and media policy initiatives through her work on the ground and on the boards of national media advocacy organizations.



RAHEL GAGURO

Financial Associate

Financial Associate Rahel Gaguro was born in Ethiopia and raised in Seattle, Rahel grew up balancing two different cultures. Her experience of injustice in the U.S. and abroad led her down to a path in the nonprofit sector. She's worked in nonprofit management, social services, and donor relations in refugee and immigrant communities locally and globally.



Get Involved With SJF

If you are interested in working with Social Justice Fund NW, visit our Jobs Page for openings at socialjusticefund.org/about-us/jobs/

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or intern, send us an email at info@socialjusticefund.org

A New Approach to Funding Coalitions

By Magan Do

Social Justice Fund NW has always funded coalitions as part of our strategy for funding community organizing in the Pacific and Mountain West, but last year, we made a deliberate decision to dedicate two Giving Projects to funding only coalitions and alliances. Partially we made this decision because we heard from grantees that more funding needed to go to coalition work in the region. The other was that we wanted to strengthen our understanding of coalitions and why coalitions are an important and powerful strategy.

Some things we learned:

- Coalitions come in all shapes and sizes. Coalitions can be long-term or short-term, multi-issue or single-issue, super local, statewide, national, or even international. Coalitions as with community organizing, should be shaped by those most directly impacted, as such coalitions may change throughout their life cycle to meet community need.
- Coalitions are powerful. When we talk about building collective power, coalitions really embody that. Coalitions are not just bringing together individuals, they bring together organizations and their memberships to make change.
- Continuing to fund coalitions is necessary. Coalition-building is



SJF Board Member, Rob Cato, leads a Coalitions and Alliances Giving Project site visit to Wyoming Equality and Equality State Policy Center in Cheyenne, Wyo.

a strategy that has been used historically because they are effective and for this work to continue, we need to continue to invest in them.

To ground our work, Giving Project members had an opportunity to learn from coalition leaders from outside of the region to give us an idea of what coalitions can look like and understand that coalitions do not have to look a certain way. The work done in coalition is broad and can often encompass many issues in one coalition.

Site visits are often where the work being described on paper becomes real for members. With this grant process, we were able to see firsthand the ways that coalitions bring together very different organizations with

different memberships, sometimes different values, and often different geographic regions to build power and make a huge impact in ways they wouldn't be able to individually. For example, we visited and learned from one coalition doing work both inside and outside of Washington state prisons to make systemic change that supports the safety and self-determination of trans and gender nonconforming people. Outside of the prisons, they bring together organizations doing work in, but not limited to, the fields of disability justice, trans health care, and prison abolition.

We moved thousands of dollars to coalitions in the region and it was exciting to see the different kinds of work being done all over the region.

Congrats to Coalitions and Alliances Grantees!

The 21 members from the Portland-based Giving Project and the 14 members from the Seattle-based Giving Project collectively raised over \$200,000, and with generous matches from Satterberg Foundation and Northwest Areas Fund, granted \$296,790 to the following organizations:

253 Making Connections Initiative * | Tacoma, WA

Black Lives Matter Portland and The All African People's Revolutionary Party * | Portland, OR

Coalition for Trans Prisoners* | Seattle, WA

Community Justice Project* | Seattle, WA

Equality State Policy Center and Wyoming Equality ** | Laramie, WY

Missoula Racial Justice Coalition** | Missoula, MT

PCUN and CAPACES Leadership Institute's (CLI)

Grassroots Coalition** | Woodburn, OR

People's Plan for Community Justice** | Seattle, WA

Portland Harbor Community Coalition** | Portland, OR

Seattle ACED (Artist Coalition for Equitable Development)** | Seattle, WA

Seattle Domestic Workers Alliance * | Seattle, WA

Seattle Native Coalition on Gender-based Violence and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women** | Seattle, WA

SW Washington Communities of Color Coalition** | Kelso, WA

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network ** | Burien, WA

*Portland Giving Project **Seattle Giving Project



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About SJF

Social Justice Fund NW is a foundation working at the frontlines of social change. We leverage the resources of our members to foster significant, long-term social justice solutions throughout Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. For more about Social Justice Fund NW, visit SocialJusticeFund.org



Save the Dates!

**GRANTEE SUMMIT
SEATTLE**

MAY 11, 2019

**GRANTEE SUMMIT
PORTLAND**

JUNE 8, 2019