

Place-based Philanthropy for City-wide Change – Written Responses to Live Audience Questions

Responses by: Patricia Rossi and Rotem Ayalon

Q: *What are some strategies in addressing the power imbalance in the space?*

Rotem: We have modified our governance structure and are including community representatives. It is making a big difference in leveling the power imbalance.

Patricia: We have put in place an advisory committee, all external people from different sectors with different experiences. They can influence our work. Also, in the beginning, we always talk about the term partnership, what it really means, what are some of the discomforts Although we want to work together and bring different things to the table, we never forget to mention that we are also wearing the funder's hat which helps with transparency.

Q: *Do you have some advice about the tension between top down and bottom-up approaches? I try to connect folks who want ground up change with those who bring resources from top down, however those more familiar with top down approaches often speak fear that we will 'end up with just dialogue'. I don't share the fear but am curious about it.*

Rotem: The tension needs to be continually addressed. We held a series of dialogues before launching the second phase of our project. We asked questions and listened to the communities, and then actively implemented the suggestions and proposals we heard during the dialogues to improve our model. Communities gave us feedback afterwards and thanked us for implementing the changes they proposed. It took time and effort but has paid off greatly.

Patricia: We did similar work to better understand what areas needed to be more invested. Our focus areas are a direct result of this listening exercise. We have also learned that if a solution does not answer a real need, it is not effective. It might take more time; they may do more talking But in the end the work will be more sustainable and long term.