**Colorado Funders for Inclusiveness & Equity**

**Meeting Notes**

**April 16, 2015**

There were six handouts from this meeting in addition to these meeting notes.

Welcome & Check-in

The meeting opened with a welcome and check-ins. We then conducted a “vote” for the 2015 COFIE book club choice and members chose *We should all be Feminists*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. We will discuss the book at our December COFIE meeting.

COFIE Question (Round Robin)

Next, the group engaged in a Round Robin activity, wherein we posed a question that had been previously submitted by a member and each person around the table could share a response/guidance, etc... The COFIE question was: *How do you make the case for taking the time to attend COFIE meetings to your leadership?*

Responses:

* Concrete things come out of it…ideas for orientation, grant making strategies, etc.
* Important for all white or primarily white organizations. There are things discussed here that I wouldn’t think about and it helps bring a shift in perspective.
* Less time than a class in terms of personal development investment.
* Learning more about interacting authentically with people on the ground in the community. Translates to where your organization is in terms of better serving the communities you are in.
* We’re encouraged to do it as a program staff.
* Who are we missing that should be here…people who aren’t self-selecting or organizations that aren’t pushing people to be here.
* Our organization always strives to be inclusive and we look at diversity, why not be involved.
* Being able to be the white staff member who brings this to the table, instead of relying on our staff of color to do it for us.
* I came to my supervisor with the case and was ready to pitch, but my supervisor immediately saw it, and appreciated that we are looking at diversity from all different lenses.
* A constant learning process. Even at last month’s meeting we don’t have language on our Evites about people with special needs, and after the session, we went back and added it. It helps brings up issues.

The group discussed dedicating the entire September meeting to Round Robin process and perhaps adding current events related to COFIE to the agenda.

Best Practices in Giving With an Equity Lens

We were then joined by Lisa Duran, Executive Director of Grassroots Grantmakers. Lisa opened by saying that the work of Grassroots Grantmakers is about healing and overcoming the dynamics of oppression. She led the group through the discussion of three big questions:

1. **Who are you?**
2. **How do you feel about the role of residents/affected communities in your work? Is it relevant? Not? Why?**
* How to not set residents up to fail
* It should be driving who our community partners are and how we make funding decisions
* All grantmaking is supposed to come from community processes
* Fine line between putting residents on display and talking about accomplishments
1. **What are you most curious about within this topic?**
* What vehicle do you use to drive this work?
* For a foundation that doesn’t engage at the grassroots level, what is a starting point?
* How can an entrenched organization that has been doing things one way for decades make an institutional shift?
* How to bring about systemic change in a political landscape
* How to convince colleagues that this is important
* How more traditional foundations can work in concert with GRGM

Lisa shared that the GRGM annual conference is in October in Brooklyn, NY. She stated that the conference is for grantmakers and residents and invited COFIE members to come and to bring interested residents. More information about the conference to come.

Next steps:

1. Buy your copy of “We Should All Be Feminists.” We will discuss at the December meeting.
2. Be thinking about ideas for the October external training session.
3. Jamie and Erin will send out meeting notes.