

The People's Solutions [for Philanthropy]



It can be difficult to keep up with the ever-changing world of complex systems and social change solutions, and not all "solutions" are inherently equitable, just or facilitate a world in which all can thrive. Fortunately, we have three straightforward questions that can help you distinguish false solutions from the real deal:

Who benefits?



All social justice issues have roots in systemic racial and economic inequity, which has historically been fueled by the control of capital and land by a small percentage of wealthy individuals and families. Authentic solutions must benefit those who have been most harmed by wealth and resource extraction and labor exploitation, which requires specific attention to how solutions redistribute wealth, land, and power to frontline communities.

Who makes the decisions?



Those closest to the problems will inevitably know the most about what the solutions need to look like. For any systems-change solution to truly work for Indigenous communities, communities of color, and working class communities, it must embody the practice of community self-determination.

What else will this impact?



Sometimes "solutions" that are narrowly focused on a single issue can undermine progress on other issues that we care about. For example, a renewable energy project (a climate justice "solution") that displaces people from their ancestral lands undermines the land rights and sovereignty of indigenous communities. It also may not consider who owns, profits and benefits from this energy infrastructure. Real solutions must work for ALL of our issues and support communities in owning and governing the solutions for themselves.

These questions were adapted from The People's Solutions Lens, created by the It Takes Roots Alliance for the People's Orientation to the Global Climate Action Summit in September 2018.