A Humble Approach to Place-Based Urban Education Philanthropy: Empowering Individuals, Associations, and Local Government Entities to Lead Incremental, Sustainable Change in Their Communities

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Key Points

- Urban communities are typically remarkably diverse in residents' backgrounds, values, and views of the good life. The "community," then, is held together by a staggering number of relationships, compromises, habits, associations, and traditions that have been worked out over time.
- Dramatic change spurred by philanthropic initiatives can disrupt and reorder community institutions in a way that fails to solve existing problems, creates new problems, and brings a rash of old problems back to life.
- A respectful, sustainable, and effectual place-based philanthropic strategy won't aspire to disrupt or dismantle. Instead, it will invest in strategies that increase individuals' ability to control their own lives, foster voluntary associations' development and activity, and enable citizens to shape public policy.
- The donors behind such place-based strategies need to have faith that communities can lead change themselves without external management and must accept that community-led reform will almost certainly produce initiatives that the philanthropic community wouldn't have chosen itself.

Often, those involved in place-based philanthropy believe that solving an area's intersecting social challenges requires two values: (1) respecting the people, practices, and organizations of a community and (2) bringing dramatic, systemic change to that community.[1] This report argues that those values are generally at odds and that when the two are incompatible, the first must be prioritized.[2]

In any given location, the "community" is made of a staggering number of relationships, compromises, habits, associations, and traditions. This is especially true in densely populated urban areas, where people from different backgrounds and with different visions of the good life have found ways to live together.

Many latent components of collective life are all but invisible. No one can map all the city's interpersonal connections or curate all its customs and

agreements. Nevertheless, these contribute mightily to the social fabric. They are everywhere. They develop naturally, without planning, and they continuously adapt based on conditions and individuals' shifting beliefs and priorities. Moreover, since they sprout from the particulars of each location—its founding, geography, faiths, employers, ordinances, and so on—they differ from city to city. These institutions truly are *of*, *by*, and *for* the people of a specific place.

Citizens have three primary conduits to affect civic life: individual liberty, voluntary association, and democratic participation.

A massive disruption and reordering of the community's institutions, even when done with the best intentions, can disempower citizens and destabilize the community. It can upend functional institutions.[3] Community members can lose control over things important to them, and the organizations and customs they rely on can be wiped away. This is especially true with schools, which reflect so many aspects of a community and are part of the rhythm of so many citizens' daily lives. Respecting an area's assets and history typically requires humility, a bent for preservation, and skepticism of sweeping change.

At the same time, communities can undoubtedly be unhealthy in countless ways. An area's constellation of organizations, interpersonal bonds, and conventions can still produce suboptimal outcomes. Schools can still be unsafe. Graduation rates can still be terribly low. Such results can be the consequence of unfair social and political factors that are outside the community's control. For example, a long history of discrimination can lead to unjust policies, sparse investment, and institutional distrust. This is what motivates many philanthropists to simultaneously invest in a discrete location and overhaul its institutions.

Given the costs of unwise, disruptive change and the costs of doing nothing meaningful, we must avoid two types of place-based education strategies. The first misguided approach drives toward swift, extensive reform across an array of institutions and policy domains, such as schools, housing, transportation, criminal justice, and public health. This approach is especially ill-advised when the nature of the change is predetermined by foundation staff or shaped by a small number of vocal but unrepresentative community leaders. This can have a veneer of place-based legitimacy, but it will likely elevate the priorities of a select group of individuals while disordering many lives.

The second strategy to avoid simply drives more resources to the existing arrangements and the local leaders who run them. This would funnel dollars into traditional school districts, nonprofits that partner closely with districts, existing school initiatives, prominent support organizations, and so forth. This might appear place-based, but it won't change local dynamics. If the basic system is left untouched and those currently in power simply have more resources and more ability to make significant decisions (and if those lacking power stay that way), there's little reason to believe that big things will change. The failure of the $500 million Annenberg Challenge is a good example.[4] As one assessment concluded, the grants "relied upon much the same set of relationships and processes that had yielded the status quo in large public school systems."[5] Another argued that it is wrong to believe school improvement can be built on motivated, well-resourced outside experts partnering with the existing system.[6]

A better approach to place-based education reform strengthens the *processes* that enable the entire community to engage in responsive, gradual, and meaningful change—change that addresses citizens' needs, doesn't upend citizens' lives, and allows all corners of the community to engage and influence outcomes.

Citizens have three primary conduits to affect civic life: individual liberty, voluntary association, and democratic participation. That is, community members can change local conditions when they can make their own choices, cooperate with like-minded neighbors to achieve a particular end, and influence our democratic government bodies.

Said another way, a respectful, sustainable, and effectual place-based philanthropic strategy won't aspire to disrupt or dismantle. It won't prejudge which organizations need to be decommissioned

or which laws need to be overturned. Instead, it will invest in strategies that increase individuals' ability to control their own lives (e.g., exercising school choice), foster the development and activity of voluntary associations (e.g., creating new schools and other mediating bodies), and enable citizens to shape public policy (e.g., having greater capacity to vote, petition, testify, and advocate).

Philanthropy and Preservation

Many education donors committed to a geography are motivated by the possibility of significantly improving the lives of that community's disadvantaged students. Donors see tragic social conditions such as low student test scores, poverty, poor health care, crime, and joblessness. So we can understand why few donors begin their work by asking, "What are the things here we should preserve?"

But they should. Every geography has assets, and those assets are largely a function of the particulars of that location. Every community will have established ways of doing things. Rather than seeing such practices as simply happenstance or the upshot of unjust power dynamics, funders should also try to understand them as sensible responses to conditions. Generations of previous citizens grappled with challenges and opportunities related to schools, jobs, transportation, housing, and more. Smart, civic-minded community members developed answers. School assignment zones might have been drawn to accommodate public transportation systems or reflect where many of a neighborhood's adults worked. A district-wide gifted and talented program might have been housed in a specific school to ensure a disadvantaged neighborhood's access.

Sometimes the history and logic of such decisions will be widely understood. Other times, because the practice has been in place so long, its roots are lost to time. A school might have been built in a particular location because of an old out-of-court settlement, or an athletic conference might have created two divisions to ensure teams with a history of bad blood play less frequently. Such things are built on the intelligence and experience of countless people knowledgeable about local conditions over extended stretches of time, not the bright idea of a current "expert." Such accumulated wisdom is lost when these things are wiped away and started anew.

The conventions that emerge accomplish at least two objectives apart from solving a specific problem. First, they connect today's citizens to those who lived in the same place years before. It might be meaningful to a neighborhood's students that they attend a school named after a local civil rights icon. It could be important to community identity that its local school was the first to integrate post–*Brown v. Board of Education*. Such continuity can be invaluable to a great number of people. Unfortunately, this is underappreciated in most reform initiatives.

Many of today's most upwardly mobile professionals (including donors) are—to use David Goodhart's term—"Anywheres."[7] They value personal autonomy, and they can succeed in most locations. They achieve their identities through academic and professional credentials and experiences. They might consider themselves citizens of the world or part of a global community. But many other people—"Somewheres"—associate themselves with a particular place. They find security, personal identity, and a sense of belonging in a specific location. The evolved practices of a community might seem unnecessary, parochial, or haphazard to an Anywhere, but they can be priceless to a Somewhere.

Second, evolved conventions are often negotiated settlements that help the citizens of a diverse community live together. It is difficult to establish comity in the face of great difference. Beliefs can be at odds, competition for resources can be fierce, and grievances can stretch back eons. The history of a specific geography (e.g., related to immigration patterns, employers, and housing) will determine the nature of local tensions. Typically, a community will have found ways over time to reduce such conflicts.

An ad hoc group of neighborhood parents may have been given a de facto veto over the district's selection of its school's principal. Contracts for certain building projects might be understood to always be awarded to minority-owned local businesses. A career and technical education (CTE) high school might flag the most accomplished graduates for particular local businesses. People ultimately trust and rely on such agreements even if they don't remember or understand why they came

about. When an ostensibly sophisticated, justice-oriented reform initiative committed to systemic change dissolves such practices, a rash of old problems can reemerge.

The Tension Between Preservation and Change

Recognizing that a place-based strategy should prioritize preservation doesn't mean philanthropists should stubbornly defend the status quo. Changes in the economy, immigration, norms, technology, and much else require ongoing adjustments to institutions. But given the costs of sweeping and outsider-led change, *how* to pursue reform becomes the key question. Change initiatives should be shaped by respect for variety, a prudent disposition, and practical action.

Variety. The sheer size and diversity of an urban community will inevitably produce a wide array of institutions. Different groups will find ways to express themselves, preserve in-group solidarity, and pass on their customs. It might be through a school curriculum that spotlights local leaders, field trips to culturally important sites, or a summer camp that hires local graduates as counselors. The resulting citywide assemblage of organizations and practices may appear messy and inefficient to technocrats. But this mosaic reflects community agency—different groups' ability to live out their values.

Too often, those seeking systemic change look for grand, uniform solutions. Because they believe the system suffers from foundational problems, they devise rational, just, and fundamental interventions. When reformers find a project to their liking (e.g., an early reading program or a school schedule), they often seek to rapidly scale it across the entire system. But this approach narrows institutional diversity and undermines citizens and associations from pursuing their own priorities. Instead, urban place-based school reform should respect and defend variety and oppose homogeneity.

One good example was Chicago's Renaissance 2010 initiative (philanthropically supported by the Renaissance Schools Fund), which aimed to create 100 new schools of different models, many enrolled via choice.[8] A significant number of the schools were nonprofit-operated and somewhat autonomous of the existing system thanks to their charter or contract status. New starts were often coupled with the closure of persistently failing schools. As one report described it, Renaissance 2010 aimed to develop schools of different types and governance structures managed by a range of organizations to help create a vibrant market, expand choice, and increase competition.[9]

Perhaps the best recent counterexample was the massive Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation–funded initiative on teacher effectiveness. A number of mostly urban districts and charter management organizations participated in the foundation's preferred approach to measuring educators' contributions to student learning and reforming human resources decisions. Despite the enormous investment, an "evidence-based" approach, and centralized management, the initiative failed to achieve its goals. Notably, among the final evaluation's recommendations was for reformers to recognize that those likely to be affected by future similar projects might resist.[10]

Prudence. Change efforts that respect place should also be judicious, incremental, and publicly responsive. Reformers too often reason that their sense of urgency about student results warrants—even demands—speedy, comprehensive action. But those pushing swift, radical initiatives typically appreciate their predecessors' flaws but not their own. They underestimate the likelihood that they will make mistakes because of bias, faulty reasoning, insufficient information, or something else. They too seldom sufficiently consider the complexity of events or the potential for disastrous unintended consequences. For example, teaching that the American dream is a lie or that lessons on hard work and perseverance give cover to systemic unfairness might seem just to some in the moment, but this could have far-reaching, negative effects on the development of personal attributes that contribute to success and happiness.

Indeed, forced, dramatic change can have a despotic nature—for instance, the certainty that the reform is correct, the use of muscle to bring it about, the building of obstacles to prevent dissenters from avoiding the reform, and an incuriosity or coldness

to the objections of those affected. This is antithetical to place-based reform. Instead, donors should always move prudently, understanding that modest, step-by-step change respects grown institutions, allows a community to shape reforms, and provides time for citizens and associations to acclimate and respond to each new initiative.

The lessons of the major philanthropic initiatives in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Newark, New Jersey, are instructive. Both cities saw encouraging growth in academic achievement as a result of far-reaching reforms based on choice and differentiation.[11] But there was a sense that outsiders led the reforms and were insufficiently knowledgeable of and respectful to the community.[12] In both cases, residents successfully pushed for a return to an elected school board—rejecting years of state control—so local citizens could direct the nature and speed of change. Although state leaders were confident that taking control away from the local board was the right decision, by 2016, when the Louisiana legislature returned power to the New Orleans board, local residents wanted the state out.[13]

Residents' ability to exert a democratic check on philanthropic ambition can have an important racial component as well. In 2019, New Orleans' re-empowered elected school board was significantly more popular among Black residents than White.[14] Surveys have shown that while the New Orleans public generally approves of the state-led post–Hurricane Katrina reforms, Black residents are less supportive.[15]

Practicality. Lastly, place-based reform must be primarily practical, not theoretical. Often, planners develop "theories of action" and "logic models" for crafting major, multipronged initiatives and ensuring their components fit together. Large urban districts often hire expensive consulting firms to craft such plans. The output can appear brilliant and tidy on a slide deck. Similarly, ambitious reformers often base their strategies on an inspiring, utopian definition of justice. This will then influence school assignments, funding formulas, curricula, discipline, and much more.

But real life is generally far messier and more complicated. The initiatives that best fit a community's needs might not align with a central plan, complement each other so well, or adhere to a favored philosopher's view of justice. The existing patchwork of after-school programs might look completely unintelligible while working quite well. Two new schools addressing community needs might run the risk of cannibalizing each other's enrollment. A new program for gifted students might appall John Rawls but be precisely what the community wants and needs.

Respecting place requires a high degree of pragmatism—a commitment to an array of small, targeted, and practical initiatives that respond to different citizens' felt needs and sensibilities.

Local wisdom, built on practical experience with complex community conditions, may run counter to the synoptic vision of technical experts. Moreover, a community will comprise citizens with many different understandings of the common good. Even if everyone involved agrees on a single definition, they may disagree about which programs best advance their shared cause. Respecting place requires a high degree of pragmatism—a commitment to an array of small, targeted, and practical initiatives that respond to different citizens' felt needs and sensibilities.

A good example is the Walton Family Foundation's long-standing grant program for new charter schools. Rather than building a complex plan to overhaul an entire district and all its components, this initiative has provided discrete support to nonprofits starting new schools. The grantees are different and aim to address different needs. These grants have facilitated the founding of thousands of programs that are responsive to families' interests and reflect the wide diversity of community priorities.[16]

Three Types of Place-Based Agency

The community respect at the heart of place-based strategies requires a preference for steady, incremental change. It also requires an appreciation of

variety, prudence, and practicality. But how does a philanthropist square this with the need to empower community members to lead reform?

It begins by understanding that citizens have three primary tools for engaging in public life: liberty, voluntary association, and democratic participation. Each of us can express agency and shape our environments via significant autonomy to act as we choose, gather and act with like-minded neighbors, and influence government bodies. The goal, therefore, for place-based philanthropists should be increasing citizens' strength in each domain—helping them exercise more individual power, participate in more and stronger voluntary associations, and have greater influence in democratic decision-making.

Obviously, this is a strategy for allowing a community to lead reform. But it is also a strategy for allowing a community to preserve its valuable organizations and customs, avoid ill-considered change, protect institutional variety, move prudently, and solve practical problems. Because they have to live with the upshot of reform, they will be mindful of the full range of possible consequences, including negative ones, and act with care. They will take into account their community's assets and avoid unnecessary disruption. And because a community is never of one mind, different segments will prioritize different goals and choose different strategies, thereby preserving, even expanding, institutional variety.

This understanding of respect for place puts philanthropists in a new position. They would need to primarily grow others' power, not use their own. Although they could certainly continue to establish a vision (e.g., improving high school graduation and postsecondary completion rates or increasing employment among young adults), they would need to loosen the reins on strategy setting. That is, instead of prioritizing, say, educator effectiveness, discipline, or tutoring, they would allow others to decide which strategies are needed to achieve joint goals.

Because it would elevate the decision-making authority of a community's residents, a respectful place-based approach would be unusually agnostic about the types of reforms its grantees would seek to advance. But the donors would be unbending in their commitment to strengthening the hand of citizens in their individual, civil society, and democratic decision-making capacities.

10 Power and Preservation Place-Based Reforms

To provide examples of what this type of place-based strategy would mean in practice, here are 10 guides for interested donors.

Expanding Family Choice. It is hard to name an education policy or practice that disempowers citizens more than assigning low-income students to schools that fail to meet their needs does. Any place-based strategy worthy of that name must begin by enabling families to make the most important of education decisions: where their children go to school. A community's residents cannot control K–12 education if a government unit forcibly enrolls schools based on home address. Although philanthropists should not dictate to the community which choice policy is best (e.g., intradistrict choice, interdistrict choice, scholarships, charters, or education savings accounts), the principle of empowering families should be paramount.

Public Information Campaigns. Philanthropists can help citizens make informed decisions (whether individuals are exercising personal liberty, working with voluntary associations, or engaging with the government) by supporting community groups leading public information campaigns. Place-based philanthropy is about local power, and knowledge grows and facilitates the use of power. Importantly though, such initiatives should be dedicated to *information, not advocacy*. That is, donors should not push their policy priorities through such campaigns. Instead, grants should be made to groups helping spread information (about, say, test scores, graduation rates, or mental health) that enables citizens to draw their own conclusions. For example, in New Orleans, a majority of families still don't know their school's letter grade and don't understand how letter grades are calculated.[17] But when provided information on school performance, parents choose higher-performing schools.[18]

Public Opinion Surveys. For decision makers to advance policies and practices the community

favors, they need to know what community members believe. Often, the most prominent individuals and loudest voices do not actually reflect community-wide sentiments. Support for conducting and disseminating opinion research can help local individuals become more informed and shape the priorities and decisions of voluntary associations and democratic bodies.

Because individual and group agency is the goal, those in passionate dissent with the prevailing view should also have a place at the table.

Membership Associations. Donors should help like-minded community members work together through membership associations—collections of individuals with similar beliefs, interests, or positions. Too often, philanthropists see associations as simply means of accomplishing a particular political or policy end. For example, if donors want to increase teacher pay, they will look for ways to support groups that work to increase teacher pay. But that treats associations as instrumental; smart place-based strategies treat individuals and their groups as ends. Associations are ways for people to gather, build a sense of solidarity, and develop shared views. These steps should come before, and are arguably more important than, political action.

New Reform Bodies. Most urban areas will have an array of community-based organizations, and many will be doing fine work. But if new and different activities are required for lasting change, new and different mediating bodies are needed. A place-based strategy will prioritize startup and early phase funding for fresh ventures. Philanthropists need not—and typically should not—predetermine which types of ventures are required; the ideas should come from the community. They might include new schools, educator support groups, curriculum developers, or something else. These groups should be created, shaped, and led by local citizens acting on their sense of community needs.

Niche Initiatives. Since philanthropy is often focused on scope of influence, donors can be less interested in small, particular initiatives than in projects that can scale. But a large urban geography will have many small communities with views at odds with the majority. Place-based approaches are fundamentally about widespread empowerment, so a group shouldn't be shunted aside merely because it wants to choose a different path. Donors should be willing, even eager, to invest in small initiatives with no real promise of scale so long as such initiatives respond to real needs and interests. This could include new offerings such as CTE specializations, including automotive technology or hospitality, chess clubs, language immersion schools, schools using a classical education model, or Montessori elementary schools. Niche initiatives can also help preserve long-standing ways of doing things when the momentum is behind new and different.

Pressure-Valve Initiatives. Inevitably, all philanthropic initiatives will eventually reveal the political and cultural preferences of those funding them. As that worldview is reflected in more initiatives, there will be backlash from those in the community of a different mind. If this opposition is ignored—or, worse, antagonized—frustration will mount, and resistance will aim to undermine the entire enterprise. A wise place-based approach recognizes that a sense of powerlessness is the ultimate opponent. So donors should support some number of projects that are manifestly out of step with the dominant views of the larger initiative—for instance, a network of private schools with a traditional approach to discipline when the larger effort is seeking to end suspensions and implement restorative justice. Similarly, some families may strenuously object to including critical race theory in various courses; their preferences should also be accommodated. Because individual and group agency is the goal, those in passionate dissent with the prevailing view should also have a place at the table.

Independent Research. Philanthropists often prioritize policy advocacy as a means of bringing about significant changes in government behavior. But this runs the risk of elevating foundation leaders' priorities. Recall, for instance, philanthropy-favored reforms related to school turnarounds,

teacher evaluation, and online learning. Philanthropic advocacy can take power away from individuals and associations—those that should be driving change. Instead, place-based philanthropy should support research that can inform citizens and mediating bodies (e.g., on the effectiveness of certain tutoring programs or the cost of new facilities).

Democratic Participation. Although place-based donors should stay out of political and policy advocacy, they should help local citizens learn how to fully participate in the political and policy process. Grants should be made to groups that work on voter registration. Similarly, donors should support training sessions on how to fruitfully engage with local school boards, the state legislature, the governor, and the state board of education. This includes education on how to write and submit testimony, draft legislative and regulatory proposals, file public records requests, and seek and conduct meetings with policymakers and their staff. Since place-based philanthropy is about citizen and group power, donors should invest in programs that build the knowledge and skills of community leaders. The goal is to help the community lead its own change.

Fundamental District Reform. In many cities, nothing inhibits citizens' agency more than the district apparatus does. In urban centers, school districts are often large, byzantine, and in the grip of powerful interest groups. The district's dominance has traditionally been the reason donors have built reform strategies that put the district front and center; that is, philanthropists believe they can get more of what they want when they direct their activities through the powerful district. But the same dominance that makes districts appealing institutions for donor investment also means districts have countless ways of thwarting citizens and their associations. A wise place-based strategy will seek to reform the district in ways that distribute its power to citizens and civil society bodies. For example:

- Large districts should be broken into smaller units (say, five 20,000-student districts instead of one 100,000-student district) so each district better reflects a particular community's needs and each citizen's voice carries more weight.[19]
- Districts should be banned from assigning students to schools based on home address. All schools should be populated via family choice.
- Districts should be prohibited from serving as charter school authorizers, which enables the district to control civil society activity and family choice. Every city should be served by at least one non-district authorizer.
- The district should directly operate as few schools as possible. It should increasingly contract with nonprofits to manage schools. Paul Hill and Ashley Jochim have advocated this model, and it is largely in effect in New Orleans today.[20]

Conclusion

Place-based urban education philanthropic strategies should first and foremost prioritize the power of all local citizens to act autonomously in voluntary associations and democratic deliberation. This is how donors can respect a community and foster meaningful, sustainable change. The upshot will be messy, reforms will be slow, and often the change will be incremental in nature and seek to preserve much of the landscape.

The donors behind such place-based strategies need to have faith that communities can lead change themselves without external management, and donors must accept that community-led reform will almost certainly produce initiatives that the philanthropic community wouldn't have chosen itself. Donors also have to appreciate that a community is not monolithic; empowering its citizens means different and conflicting voices will be raised.

It is completely understandable if donors decide this is not what they want. Philanthropists have the right to spend their money as they see fit. To some donors, providing financial support that allows other people to maximize their power and make decisions the donor dislikes might seem insensible. Such donors should continue to give in ways that advance their own priorities.

But if philanthropists commit to a place-based approach, they should give up on the idea of sweeping change, especially sweeping change that takes the form the philanthropic community prefers. The ulti-

mate goal of place-based giving is not the realization of the philanthropist's priorities, but the ability of empowered citizens to shape their communities as they deem best.

About the Author

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Notes

1. Various researchers and advocates have argued that place-based strategies require local ownership, agency, voice, long-term commitments to a specific place, comprehensive and holistic change, systems change, and systems-based strategies. They also require centering the community, building community trust, engaging and embedding in a location, altering underlying structures, and addressing ingrained structures and policies. See Sokol Shtylla and Hilary McConnaughey, "Going Local: The Power of Place-Based Philanthropy," Milken Institute, November 13, 2019, https://milkeninstitute.org/articles/going-local-power-place-based-philanthropy; Rebecca Miller, "Place-Based Philanthropy: What's a Board to Do?," Philanthropic Initiative, August 27, 2020, https://www.tpi.org/blog/place-based-philanthropy-whats-a-board-to-do; Prudence Brown, *Effective Place-Based Philanthropy: The Role and Practices of a National Funder*, Democracy Fund, October 2017, https://democracyfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Effective-Place-Based-Philanthropy_20170ct11.pdf; Giannina Fehler-Cabral et al., "The Art and Science of Place-Based Philanthropy: Themes from a National Convening," *Foundation Review* 8, no. 2 (2016), https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/vol8/iss2/10/; Elwood M. Hopkins and James M. Ferris, eds., *Place-Based Initiatives in the Context of Public Policy and Markets: Moving to Higher Ground*, Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy, Sol Price Center for Social Innovation, March 2015, https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/files/2014/12/Prioritizing-Place-Moving-to-Higher-Ground.pdf; Rob Abercrombie, Ellen Harries, and Rachel Wharton, "Systems Change: A Guide on What It Is and How to Do It," NPC, June 23, 2015, http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/systemschange/; and Jen Jope, "Lessons from Place-Based Philanthropy," Giving Compass, May 14, 2019, https://givingcompass.org/article/lessons-from-place-based-philanthropy/.

2. This report has in mind national funders who are currently engaging in, or are considering engaging in, locations where they do not have deep roots and decades of experience. The arguments here may be less applicable to family foundations and other smaller philanthropies that have been committed to a hometown area for generations. Such donors may naturally prioritize preservation in their place-based strategies because of their ties to their communities and interactions with their long-standing institutions. For more information on family foundations and place-based strategies, see Virginia M. Esposito, *Pride of Place: Sustaining a Family Commitment to a Geography*, National Center for Family Philanthropy, https://www.ncfp.org/knowledge/pride-of-place-sustaining-a-family-commitment-to-geography/.

3. See Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty* (Stuttgart, Germany: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1970), https://www.amazon.com/Maximum-Feasible-Misunderstanding-CommunityPoverty/dp/0029220106/.

4. See Mark A. Smylie et al., *The Chicago Annenberg Challenge: Successes, Failures, and Lessons for the Future*, Consortium on Chicago School Research, August 2003, https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2018-10/p62.pdf. Even though the initiative prioritized localism and self-determination, it primarily worked through existing schools inside the existing district structure. Ultimately, schools that participated failed to achieve gains different than nonparticipating schools. As Chester Finn and Marci Kanstoroom wrote, the initiative was not based on theories of choice, competition, and accountability so much as providing the existing system with additional resources and expertise. See Chester E. Finn Jr. and Marci Kanstoroom, "Afterword: Lessons from the Annenberg Challenge," in *Can Philanthropy Fix Our Schools? Appraising Walter Annenberg's $500 Million Gift to Public Education*, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, April 2000, https://fordhaminstitute.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/annenberg7.pdf.

5. Raymond Domanico, "Introduction: An Unprecedented Challenge," in *Can Philanthropy Fix Our Schools? Appraising Walter Annenberg's $500 Million Gift to Public Education*, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, April 2000, https://fordhaminstitute.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/annenberg7.pdf.

6. Chester E. Finn Jr., "Foreword," in *Can Philanthropy Fix Our Schools? Appraising Walter Annenberg's $500 Million Gift to Public Education*, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, April 2000, https://fordhaminstitute.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs/annenberg7.pdf.

7. David Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics* (London: Hurst, 2017), https://www.amazon.com/Road-Somewhere-Populist-Revolt-Politics/dp/1849047995.

8. See Paul Hill et al., *Portfolio School Districts for Big Cities: An Interim Report*, Center on Reinventing Public Education, October 2009, https://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/pub_psdp_interim_oct09_0.pdf.

9. Viki M. Young et al., *Renaissance Schools Fund-Supported Schools: Early Outcomes, Challenges, and Opportunities*, University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research, October 2018, https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2018-10/RSF.pdf.

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