

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PHILANTHROPY

Challenges and Opportunities for Alignment

January 14, 2022

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OVERVIEW

- What are EJ principles?
- What does it mean to fund in alignment with these principles?
- What are some examples of funders “getting it right” and “getting it wrong” in other places?
- What opportunities and challenges might exist in NJ for moving more resources to EJ?



DEFINING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Challenges material inequality, cultural misrecognition and power relations that deny meaningful participation (D. Pellow, 2003)

- Refers to broad cultural norms, people realizing their highest potential, personal empowerment, and democratic decision making (Bryant, 2001)

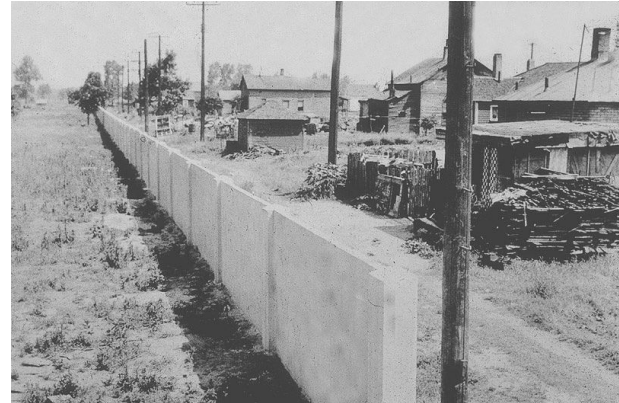
- **Distributive justice** - the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens among different communities
- **Procedural justice** - access to decision-making processes that impact our quality of life and environment.
- **Recognition** – freedom from oppression & ability to be fully recognized & treated with dignity in society
- **Structural justice** – political and economic conditions that structure possibilities and institutional outcomes



ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE & LAND USE

“the range of racisms that shape the urban landscape, but also illuminates the functional relationships between places—in particular between industrial zones and residential suburbs, and how their development reflects and reproduces a particular racist formation” (Pulido, 2000)

- ❖ “Spatialization of race” fueled by explicitly racist policies like redlining
- ❖ Racial & income segregation & suburbanization post WWII fueled in mortgage lending, real estate development, school funding, zoning, highway development, banking
- ❖ De-industrialization and disinvestment in cities
- ❖ Cities as robust sites of contestation (Harvey, 1996)
- ❖ History of locational conflicts in EJ Movement (Cole & Foster, 2001)



WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

The Principles of Environmental Justice (EJ)

- 1) **Environmental Justice** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
- 2) **Environmental Justice** demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- 3) **Environmental Justice** mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
- 4) **Environmental Justice** calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.
- 5) **Environmental Justice** affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
- 6) **Environmental Justice** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
- 7) **Environmental Justice** demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
- 8) **Environmental Justice** affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
- 9) **Environmental Justice** protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
- 10) **Environmental Justice** considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
- 11) **Environmental Justice** must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
- 12) **Environmental Justice** affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.
- 13) **Environmental Justice** calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
- 14) **Environmental Justice** opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.
- 15) **Environmental Justice** opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.
- 16) **Environmental Justice** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
- 17) **Environmental Justice** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

More info on environmental justice and environmental racism can be found online at www.ejnet.org/ej

Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted these 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, the Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (1991)

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<https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing

Meeting hosted by Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ), Jemez, New Mexico, Dec. 1996

Activists meet on Globalization

On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the "Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade." The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering out common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations. The following "**Jemez Principles**" for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants.

#1 Be Inclusive

If we hope to achieve just societies that include all people in decision-making and assure that all people have an equitable share of the wealth and the work of this world, then we must work to build that kind of inclusiveness into our own movement in order to develop alternative policies and institutions to the treaties policies under neo-liberalism.

This requires more than tokenism, it cannot be achieved without diversity at the planning table, in staffing, and in coordination. It may delay achievement of other important goals, it will require discussion, hard work, patience, and advance planning. It may involve conflict, but through this conflict, we can learn better ways of working together. It's about building alternative institutions, movement building, and not compromising out in order to be accepted into the anti-globalization club.

#2 Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing

To succeed, it is important to reach out into new constituencies, and to reach within all levels of leadership and membership base of the organizations that are already involved in our networks. We must be continually building and strengthening a base which provides our credibility, our strategies, mobilizations, leadership development, and the energy for the work we must do daily.

#3 Let People Speak for Themselves

We must be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard. Ways must be provided for spokespersons to represent and be responsible to the affected constituencies. It is important for organizations to clarify their roles, and who they represent, and to assure accountability within our structures.

#4 Work Together In Solidarity and Mutuality

Groups working on similar issues with compatible visions should consciously act in solidarity, mutuality and support each other's work. In the long run, a more significant step is to incorporate the goals and values of other groups with your own work, in order to build strong relationships. For instance, in the long run, it is more important that labor unions and community economic development projects include the issue of environmental sustainability in their own strategies, rather than just lending support to the environmental organizations. So communications, strategies and resource sharing is critical, to help us see our connections and build on these.

#5 Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves

We need to treat each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level, in this country and across borders. Defining and developing "just relationships" will be a process that won't happen overnight. It must include clarity about decision-making, sharing strategies, and resource distribution. There are clearly many skills necessary to succeed, and we need to determine the ways for those with different skills to coordinate and be accountable to one another.

#6 Commitment to Self-Transformation

As we change societies, we must change from operating on the mode of individualism to community-centeredness. We must "walk our talk." We must be the values that we say we're struggling for and we must be justice, be peace, be community.

JEMEZ PRINCIPLES FOR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZING

1. Be inclusive
2. Emphasis on bottom-up organizing
3. Let people speak for themselves
4. Work together in solidarity & mutuality
5. Build just relationships among ourselves
6. Commitment to self-transformation

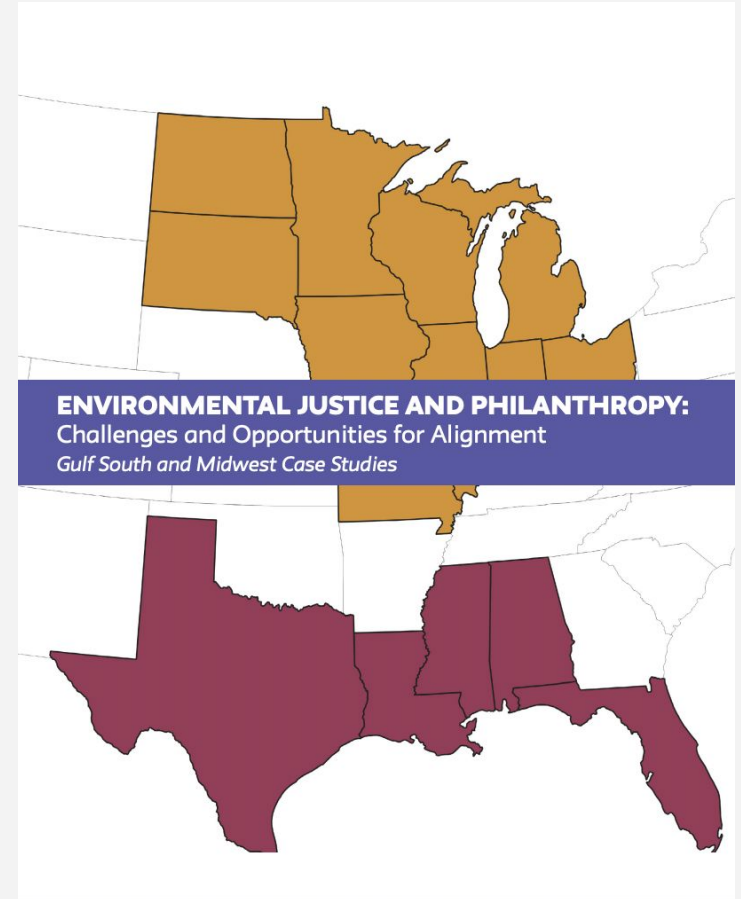
<https://www.ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf>

WHAT IS AN EJ ORGANIZATION?

Of the 14 foundations interviewed, none reported having a formal, explicit definition of environmental justice organizations.

OUR EJ ORGANIZATION DEFINITION

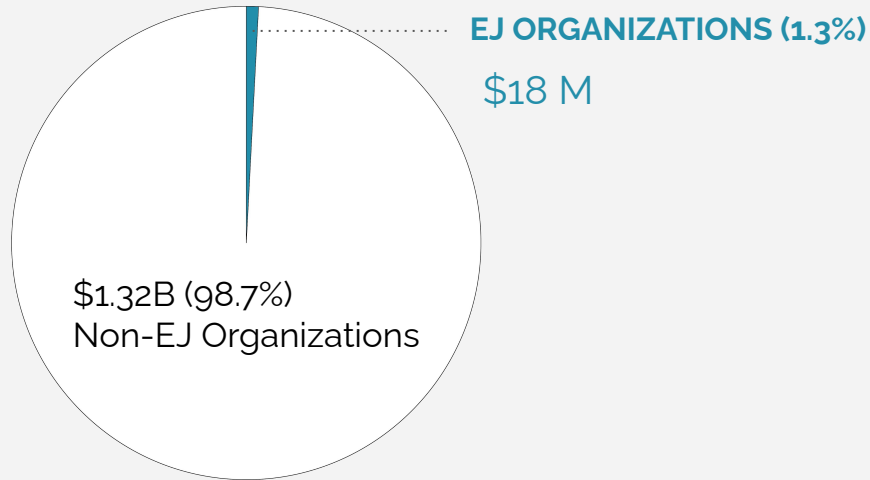
- ❖ Geographically or identity based
- ❖ Located in communities that are historically and systematically **overburdened by pollution**
- ❖ Values/Mission grounded in **EJ principles**
- ❖ **Rooted, in, accountable to, & representative of EJ communities** of Color, low-income communities, and tribal and Indigenous groups most impacted
- ❖ Works to **build local power**



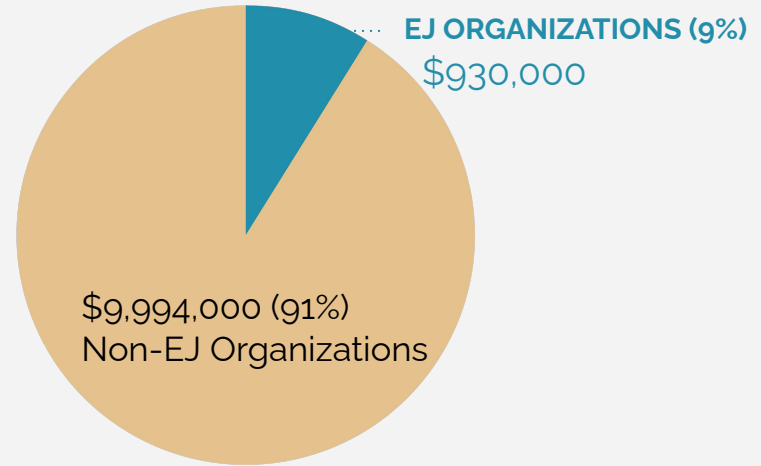
FUNDING DISPARITY: NATIONAL

Between 2016 - 2017, 12 national foundations awarded \$1.34 billion in environmental grantmaking in total **but only 1.3 % of this funding went to EJ organizations**

All Environmental Grant Dollars (\$1.34 B)



EJ Activities Dollars (\$11M)



WHAT WE HEARD: BARRIERS TO ALIGNMENT

ACCESS

RACISM

CAPACITY

IDEOLOGY

I mean, it's centuries of colonization and slavery and deep systemic racism that I just think it's a trend in everything nationally, especially in philanthropy, where it's definitely dominated by white supremacy and by "do gooder capitalism," the sort of charity model....

- Grassroots Activist 5

...We (funders) can be much better advocates and champions for the environmental justice groups when we have a relationship with them directly, we know them, there's that trust and that two-way communication, makes us better donor organizers... -

Funder 5

WHAT WE HEARD: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT

FUNDERS

Open up, connect with EJ groups

Form administrative hubs

Participatory grantmaking

Share political power, access

Make theories of change explicit

Internal transformations

Adopt EJ definition & track dollars

I try to just get out and see, going to events that community groups hold, or where community organizations are gathering. Whether they're tabling, or community garden events, just so I can spend more time, because what I find is, you meet more EJ leaders when you're working with and talking with the EJ leaders you already know. - Funder 3

WHAT DOES ALIGNMENT LOOK LIKE?

Funders support activities that undermine or harm EJ communities

Well meaning, but misdirected funding, i.e. DEI, EJ activities by Non-EJ groups

Funders directly supporting EJ organizations

MISALIGNED

ALIGNED

DON'Ts

- Support activities that pose harm to EJ communities
- Block access of EJ groups to resources, information
- Reinforce negative stereotypes of BIPOC led grassroots groups
- Require partnerships not grounded in trusted, authentic relationships (Jemez principles)
- Confound DEI efforts with EJ work
- Fund white led, non EJ groups to lead EJ work, displacing EJ leadership & self determination

DOs

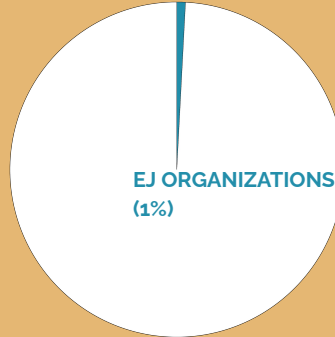
- Commit to funding targets that deliver a larger percentage of environmental grant dollars to EJ organizations
- Adopt theories of change informed by & developed with EJ groups - adopt EJ principles & definitions
- Make visits, participate in informal meetings with EJ orgs
- Encourage authentic relationships based on shared values, trust, strategic alignments
- Encourage existing grantees to practice solidarity & self transformation - take the leadership of EJ groups

MOMENT TO ACT

What opportunities & challenges exist in NJ for moving more resources to EJ organizations?



Build trusted partnerships
with existing EJ groups
(NJEJA, ICC, SWEA)



Set Funding Targets



Tackle racism beginning within
your own institutions

RESOURCES

For More Information:

Tishman Environment & Design Center, The New School University

<https://www.tishmancenter.org>

Environmental Justice and Philanthropy Report, 2019

<https://www.tishmancenter.org/projects-publications>