

# HYPOTHETICALS

*I am pleased to offer you hypothetical situations that are loosely based on my real-life experience as a philanthropist. These are meant to offer you food for thought as to how you may want to be collegial and support funder collaboratives and giving groups.*

## Hypothetical #1

*You just want to learn more about an issue in general and meet other like-minded funders and donors*

You are very interested in environmental matters and specifically about the issue of climate change. You notice when you are researching about climate change issues on the web that there is a funder group called the Biodiversity Group that seems to offer meetings once a year for funders interested in learning more about climate change issues. You have no interest in being pitched by nonprofit groups for money but you do want to learn more in a safe space with other like-minded donors so that you can ultimately decide how and what to fund in the privacy of your own home at a later date and after the conference. You sign up to participate in the next BG meeting about climate change issues because it seems to you that this is that kind of organization, and you are not disappointed.

**Thought prompts – actions you can consider**

- **Wine and dine** – You go to the meetings and sit in on the panel discussions. You look at the invite list to track down other funders that may have similar interests to you and ask if they want to have a side meeting or lunch to talk about issues of common interest. You go home after the meeting inspired and better educated. You don't end up funding any of the nonprofits that came to present their work at the meeting itself, but you still feel fulfilled by the stimulating conversation and the new ideas that the conference instilled in you.
- **Next step for action** – You learn from the conference organizers that the meeting is supposed to be for learning only – no pitches or activity to pool funds to support a specific cause is allowed. The meeting is supposed to be a safe space for funders just to get to know each other. In fact you noticed one funder who did not “get the memo” about pitching and marginalized themselves very quickly trying to just focus on pitching their priorities to everyone at the meeting. However, you do have an issue you care about and you do want to see if other funders at the conference may want to fund but you don't want to marginalize yourself. Specifically, you are interested in supporting nonprofits that are campaigning to electrify the transportation sector. You ask the conference organizer if you can create your own special meeting to the start of at the end of their BG meeting to specifically ask funders interested funding the electrification campaign to talk separately about a joint funding strategy. Since so many funders are already at the meeting, it turns out that it is super convenient for folks to tag on an extra day and so you are able to move forward with this special separate meeting. It all worked out wonderfully.

*Now jot down your own thoughts about how you would approach solutions in this hypothetical:*

## Hypothetical #2

### *You want to work with other funders to move the dial*

You get very impatient with long meetings. You don't want to just go to a meeting to generally learn about a topic that you care about because you feel that you already have ample expertise in the field. Instead you want to be with a group of experienced funders who know about the topic at hand and want to pool funds together to make a difference and strategically align donations to nonprofits in a coordinated fashion.

### Thought prompts actions you can consider:

- **Find an existing funder group** – There are lots of funder collaboratives and giving circles that already exist working together to support causes that you care about. You find a giving group that is perfect for you and decide to join. You make new friends and leverage your donations with others who have similar interests and alignment.
- **Create a funder group from scratch** – You can't seem to find a donor group that fits your interests perfectly. You do know a couple other donors who also care about the same issues you want to pursue in your own funding strategy. You all talk and found a giving circle that you then ask others to join. You are careful to create a clear vision and mission statement so that you only have campaign and launcher funders in the mix to ensure that the funds are geared toward changing a societal norm or launching new projects. In the beginning a couple of sustainer funders tried to join, but it causes a problem right away because they did not want to fund project grants, whereas everyone else in the room wants to figure out how to pool funds to give shorter-term project grants with clear deliverables that would change a societal norm. The sustainer funders part ways amicably and find a different giving circle that is focused more on general learning about the issues they care about.

*Now jot down your own thoughts about how you would approach solutions in this hypothetical:*