This Spring over 200 foundation leaders and activists gathered in Baltimore for the 4th annual Just Giving conference. As always, we explored the farthest edges of philanthropy - where all our issues intersect, and where grassroots movements are the engines of the deeper, systemic transformations we seek.

Our world’s mounting social, economic, and ecological challenges urgently require us to work more collectively and strategically. And we believe this work demands that funders deepen our collaboration with social change movements. Only thus will we—better understand and organize support for a just transition.

We expressed in the conference themes our commitment to move from a frame of “more” to “better”. We want to align ourselves as funders and activists who collaborate in the ancient wisdom and innovative solutions that “decommodify nature, reimagine work, liberate knowledge, and democratize wealth.”

The annual Just Giving conference is one of very few spaces where funders and their partners can co-create a form of philanthropy dedicated to these goals.

A packed plenary hall burst into applause when the Heinrich Boell Foundation’s Heike Loeschmann quietly asserted, “Our guiding star should be a political economy that subordinates capital to the service of society and not the other way around.”

EDGE Funders then asked: knowing this, what can and should a donor do?

“Foundation representatives said:”

“I liked the mix of “big picture” ideas and analysis and the more grounded workshops and engagement labs.”

“I most liked the practical examples from those doing philanthropy better.”

“This conference is for folks who have and are interested in a systemic analysis. Particularly the work of the grassroots.”

“Save the date: Just Giving 2016, April 18-21, Berkeley, CA.”

Engage with EDGE’s Gender Justice Caucus
Follow our work in support of climate justice movements on the road to the Paris COP.
Join EDGE Funders if you are not yet a member.
Call other funders and donors into our community.

“"It was a joy [at] my first EDGE conference to find a community that ‘gets it’...has commitment and staying power to tackle the system as an orchestra—many instruments playing together, each its own sound.’”

— Funder Participant

“‘We want a philanthropy commensurate with the challenges facing the world today.’”

— Harriet Barlow, Blue Mountain Center & Just Giving Conference Co-Chair
“I call on EDGE Funders Alliance to grow the strength and diversity of our funder-organizer movement for justice.” —Ellen Dorsey, Executive Director of the Wallace Global Fund & Board Member, EDGE Funders Alliance.

After exploring the conference theme in each morning’s plenary, we deepened our exchange during the breakout workshops, engagement labs, and caucuses that followed. Echoing Firoze Manji’s reminder that “Thinking is a product of struggle, not the other way around,” we learned from fellow funders and movement partners who are investing in and experimenting across the spectrum of visionary solutions: political education with farm workers and domestic workers; cooperative economy design; protecting whistleblowers & transnational worker organizing; honoring rights of people to move, migrate, or stay; drawing connections between racism and militarism; seeding agroecology; protecting whistleblowers & transnational worker organizing; honoring rights of people to move, migrate, or stay; drawing connections between racism and militarism; seeding agroecology; protecting whistleblowers & transnational worker organizing; honoring rights of people to move, migrate, or stay; drawing connections between racism and militarism; seeding agroecology; protecting whistleblowers & transnational worker organizing; honoring rights of people to move, migrate, or stay; drawing connections between racism and militarism; 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