



Since its inception, the mission of Grantmakers for Girls of Color (G4GC) has been to cultivate and mobilize resources in support of girls of Color.<sup>1</sup> In fact, G4GC is the only philanthropic organization in the United States specifically focused on girls, femmes, and gender-expansive youth who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latina, Asian, Arab, Pacific Islander, and other People of Color in the United States and beyond. This document is designed to anchor our diverse and growing network of donors, grantee-partners, movement leaders, advocates, and organizations in G4GC's guiding principles and core beliefs in order to collectively work toward the implementation of our mission. This effort to invest in the wellbeing of our girls and femmes depends on our ability to be in community and in alignment with each other. Please receive this document as an invitation to join in the engagement of our framework—adopt what is useful and share as liberally as you are so inclined.<sup>2</sup>

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## THEORY OF IMPACT STATEMENT

### Engaging Our Ancestors' Philanthropy

Love is the practice of caring for people. Over generations, this notion of care—giving and taking—has been operationalized in ways consistent with the values and norms of societies, cultures, and networks. Building from the operational intention to resource movements working to elevate justice for girls and femmes of Color ages 25 and under in the U.S. and beyond, Grantmakers for Girls of Color leads with the notion of understanding philanthropy through a lens of reciprocity, intersectionality, and cultural responsiveness. The ancestral wisdoms embedded in the cultural traditions of communities of Color reveal commitments to community wellbeing that invite complexity, accountability, and reciprocity in ways that sustain community and invite an understanding of “investment” that is material, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual. This approach is inherently participatory and intersectional—and of particular relevance to current movements and discourses that are seeking to facilitate authentic healing

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<sup>1</sup> G4GC defines “girls of Color” as any cis, trans, gender-expansive, non-binary and/or any girl- or femme-identified person age 25 and younger who identifies as Black, Indigenous, Latina, Asian, Arab, Pacific Islander, and/or other People of Color.

<sup>2</sup> We encourage the use, reference, and adoption of this document, and request that you cite Grantmakers For Girls of Color for ideas represented here using the following citation: Grantmakers for Girls of Color (June 2021). *Theory of Impact*. Brooklyn, NY.

and build genuine power to transform conditions in the lives of girls and femmes of Color. Historically, communities of Color have resourced themselves through food, through informal networks, and through formal relationships that have guided our ability to survive, heal, and thrive despite being impacted by structural oppressions. Coordinated acts of honoring the interconnectedness of our families and communities shape not only our understanding of how to best resource social movements, but also our ability to recognize direct-service by and for girls of Color as central to movement-building intended to transform outcomes in their communities. This legacy of ancestral philanthropy understands these components as nonlinear and not mutually exclusive. This is the legacy that informs our work at G4GC.

## Reciprocity as Praxis

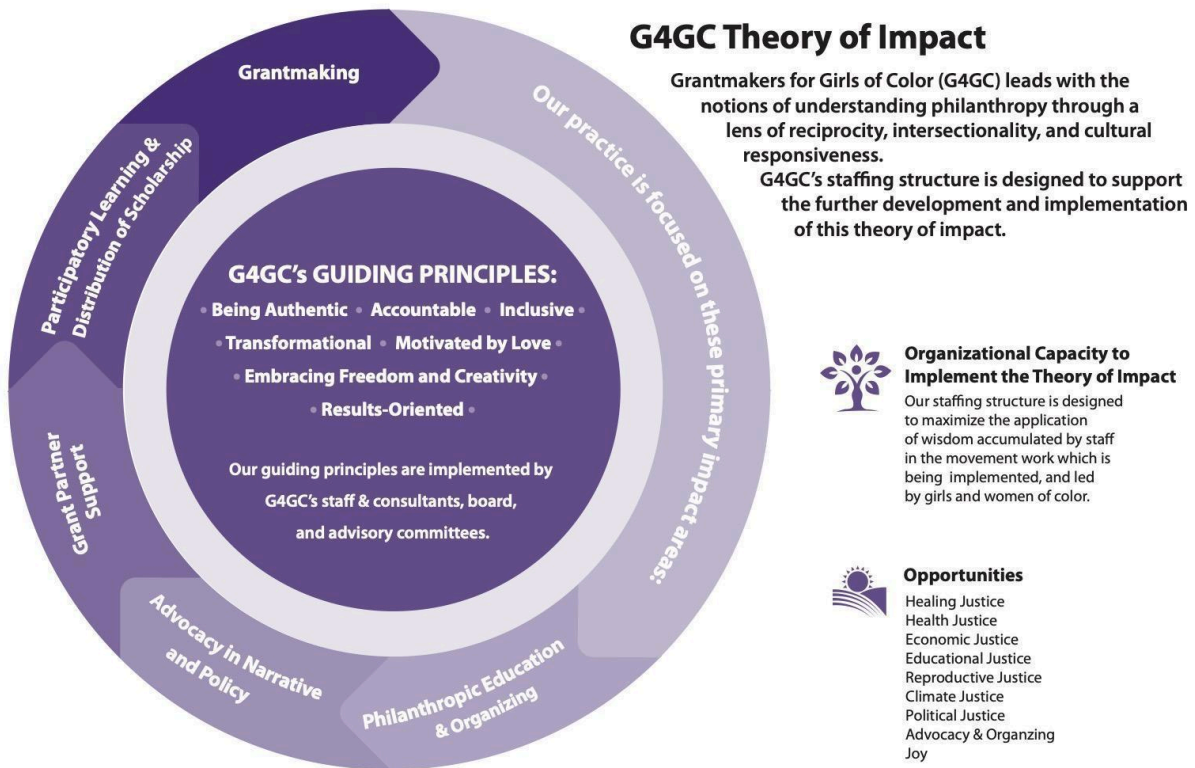
G4GC embraces a model of engagement that reflects what we have labeled “reciprocity as praxis.” Reciprocity is understood as the mutual exchange of influence, actions, resources, and privileges. A praxis is a practice or custom informed by theory. Beyond a theoretical engagement, operationalizing the notion that those at the center of an inquiry or most immediately impacted by an issue have the wisdom and capacity to actively inform strategies.

When framed together, “reciprocity as praxis” becomes the implementation of the belief that we all benefit from the investment in organizations most historically marginalized by philanthropy, and that making deep investments in these organizations generates transformative outcomes for girls, femmes, and gender-expansive youth and our communities who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latina, Asian, Arab, Pacific Islander, and other People of Color in the United States and beyond. These healthy communities then create new directions for philanthropic giving and community development that support just and liberated futures for girls of Color.<sup>3</sup>

In order for G4GC to deliver on our Theory of Impact—and function through reciprocity as praxis—we must provide ongoing spaces for the interrogation of policies, practices, and decision-making strategies that reflect investments that include, but are also broader than, the distribution of financial resources. For G4GC to be in alignment with this more capacious definition of “resourcing” and “philanthropy,” we examine not only our primary theory for resourcing efforts that are working to secure liberated futures for girls of Color, but also our specific goals and measures of success in association with our narratives and actions across our spheres of influence. This includes organizational development, grantmaking, communications, participatory learning, advocacy and policy, and philanthropic education and organizing.

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<sup>3</sup> An example of how this notion is being operationalized is the #1Billion4BlackGirls campaign—a partnership between G4GC and six other co-founding organizations, including other philanthropic organizations, movement leaders, and G4GC grantee partners. This campaign is designed to accelerate financial investments in movements, organizations, and collaboratives that uplift the wellbeing of Black girls through pooled and aligned investment, while increasing the capacity of co-investors to counter the exploitative narratives and practices that have historically informed philanthropic interactions with Black girls and femmes. For the Black Girl Freedom Fund, a signature fund of G4GC and a core fund of the #1Billion4BlackGirls campaign, Black girls and femmes are entrusted to make the final decisions regarding awards, which honors their gifts to the movement, and which builds our collective agency and accountability to Black girls and femmes in the field. We demonstrate that we trust Black girls and femmes to lead, which is an expansive and reciprocal relationship, rather than a transactional one.



G4GC's activities are guided by the cooperative and collective work and decision-making of G4GC's staff, board, advisory committees, consultants, and youth.

### Youth Engagement

The engagement of youth, who represent those at the center of our work, and the philanthropic community of women who have led discussions and the development of investment strategies are essential to the integrity of our investments. Indeed, youth engagement and designing a tree of support for femme-identified youth of Color across the spectrum of their identities are pillars of engaging the notion of reciprocity as praxis. For G4GC as an organization, as well as for each of our specific funds, youth advisors are critical decision-makers and thought-leaders. By increasing the skills of youth to inform decision-making in philanthropy that directly impacts them, and by using our communications platforms as a way for our community to hear from and engage directly with young people, G4GC is intentionally disrupting the erasure of girls of Color by trusting them to design their own liberated futures.

### Primary Impact Areas

Collectively, our practice is focused on the following five primary impact areas:

- **Philanthropic Education and Organizing** of foundations, donors, and other co-investors

who seek to resource and/or have the potential to invest in the wellbeing of Black, Indigenous, Latina, Asian, Arab, Pacific Islander and other girls and femmes of Color in the United States and beyond. G4GC's role with philanthropic and financial institutions is to produce educational and other materials that will mobilize investments in girls of Color that reach more than \$100 million per year. This practice will allow us to become a home for those in philanthropy looking to resource girls and gender-expansive youth of Color, and to build career pathways for philanthropic leaders from marginalized identities and communities.

- **Grantmaking** to organizations led by women and girls of Color in the United States and beyond, across issue areas that include, but are not limited to: healing justice, health justice, economic justice, educational justice, reproductive justice, climate justice, political justice, advocacy and organizing, and joy. These direct investments are paramount to movement and power-building and invite girls and femmes of Color to apply their leadership skills, in partnership with others, toward the development of their just and liberated futures.
- **Grantee Partner Support** to provide a foundation for accompaniment, capacity-building, growth, and sustainability among organizations and networks resourced by G4GC in order to support the development of a strong foundation toward liberated futures for girls of Color. This includes actively participating in, and supporting, work that builds, advances, and strengthens the internal infrastructure of movements and organizations that center and are led by girls and gender-expansive youth of Color.
- **Participatory Learning and Distribution of Scholarship** which informs philanthropy and movement/organizational partners centering girls, femmes, and gender-expansive youth of Color. Research-informed policies advance ethical and values-aligned practices that pave the way for articulating—and measuring—progress.
- **Advocacy in Narrative and Policy** focused on developing and adding missing layers of insight to public constructs of what girlhood is for young people of Color, and how their resilience informs opportunities for financial and policy-level investments that resource their wellbeing. G4GC's participatory approach creates opportunities for youth of Color to create and control their own narrative, and the stories that surround them, and provides tools and platforms for the advocacy in their storytelling to advance social change.

Each of these activities should be implemented in alignment with G4GC's guiding principles, which include being authentic, accountable, inclusive, transformational, motivated by love, embracing freedom and creativity, and urgent and results-oriented.

## The Co-Investment Model

Co-investment takes many forms at G4GC, where the priority is to resource movements and organizations led by and for women, girls, and femmes of Color toward the goal of supporting just and liberated futures for girls and gender-expansive youth of Color. G4GC's co-investors are private, public, and family foundations; corporate and individual donors; policymakers; thought-leaders and advocates; researchers and theorists; women and adult femmes who work and lead movements with girls and young femmes of Color; and young people themselves. As a trusted steward of resources into the organizations and movements elevating the wellbeing of

girls and femmes of Color, our demonstrated commitment to long-term governance, transparency, accountability and sustainable growth is woven into our cultivation of several signature initiatives (e.g., Love is Healing, Black Girl Freedom Fund, and New Songs Rising Initiative, among others, including a forthcoming partnership explicitly focused on trans girls of Color). These initiatives are co-constructed and function as an intentional expression of reciprocity as praxis, particularly in their elevation and nurturing of the dynamic relationships that sustain and grow from the strength of our ancestors' philanthropy. We invite investments that include grants and other financial investments, research partnerships and other coordinated data collection efforts, structured technical assistance, and aligned communications to support the development of public narratives that elevate the stories of girls and femmes of Color and counter adultification by constructing notions of liberated girlhoods of Color across the sphere of public consciousness.

### **Organizational Capacity to Implement the Theory**

G4GC's staffing structure is designed to robustly support the further development and implementation of this Theory of Impact. Our team members share deep expertise in movement, acquired through lived experience, practice, and scholarship; and our relationship with our supporters and collaborators are steeped in shared values. Our staffing structure is designed to maximize the application of wisdom accumulated by staff with content/issue-expertise and lived experience in the movement work which is being theorized, implemented, and led by girls, femmes, and women of Color. Our infrastructure reflects our values as an organization and intentionally embed into our design a culture of partnership, healing, reciprocity, and love.