

Raise the Bar

Moving From Harmful to Liberatory Funding Practices with Palestine as Your Compass

Funder Organizing & Philanthropic Advocacy Brief

Each funder has its own individual identity, history, and set of possible opportunities and constraints.

Beyond these individual institutional contexts, shared spaces for funder coordination, education, and organizing—whether they are philanthropic affinity groups, formal funder networks, informal funder communities, or funder organizing and education efforts—often offer a wider range of possibilities for learning and action than any one funder can generate alone. And although the dominant culture of philanthropy—particularly private philanthropy—tends to emphasize institutional individuality and autonomy, truly liberatory approaches require funders to communicate, coordinate, and align in service of the movements they support. Part of this means leaning into the different roles that different funders are equipped to play, which allows philanthropy to act like an ecosystem rather than a series of islands.

Many entities exist to support funder organizing and education about Palestine in particular, and this ecosystem has grown significantly over the past few years. Other spaces incorporate a commitment to Palestinian liberation and solidarity as part of a wider focus on human rights, social justice, and anti-authoritarianism or anti-fascism.

Funders toward the more liberatory end of the spectrum are seeding, supporting, leading, and participating in such efforts. On the more harmful end of the spectrum, funders are using their power and leverage in collective funder spaces to silence Palestinian voices, exclude peers who support Palestinian liberation, and build narratives on human rights and social justice that omit any discussion of Palestine. This section, which is part of [Funders4Palestine’s Raise the Bar tool](#), unpacks funder practices across the spectrum, from coordination and shared education to organizing and collective action.

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1. Building a stronger ecosystem of support

LIBERATORY			HARMFUL
Organizing with other funders to act as an ecosystem, building collective knowledge, power, and resources	<i>How to get there</i>	<i>What's holding you back</i>	Disrupting and undermining funder organizing for Palestinian causes
☐ Working with other funders and donors to leverage each entity's specific positionalities and strengths in the funder/donor ecosystem in service of wider goals. ☐ Pooling resources or coordinating grantmaking in ways that reduce individual risk for funders while lowering barriers decreasing labor for grantee partners. ☐ Convening shared funder spaces and one-on-one conversations to educate peer funders about Palestinian-led work in Palestine and solidarity organizations across the world and diaspora. This includes educating peers about the historical and ongoing suppression of such work. ☐ Ensuring that liberatory Palestinian voices and perspectives are part of wider funder conversations and spaces dedicated to a range of social justice and human rights issues, and that activists are amply compensated and supported to participate and shape content. ☐ Encouraging and supporting staff and board to participate in political education, training, and advocacy initiatives that strengthen internal capacity for collective action to support Palestinian liberation, as part	☐ <i>Seek opportunities to deepen knowledge and build community in funder organizing spaces (e.g., co-sponsoring conference sessions or political education events, joining funder meetups or organizing groups, and joining existing funder organizing and advocacy efforts).</i> ☐ <i>Live by the principle of "an attack on one is an attack on all," standing by and supporting funder peers—especially less resourced ones—if they are attacked for expressing solidarity with Palestine.</i> ☐ <i>Support or convene funder efforts to deepen learning and advance shared advocacy across issues, geographies, and movements, incorporating Palestine into discussions whenever possible.</i> ☐ <i>Join funder sign-ons or add your name to group letters on Palestinian liberation that seek to shift narratives while creating strength and safety in numbers.</i> ☐ <i>Invite funder organizers, external experts, or staff/board from funders that support Palestinian liberation to speak to staff, board, or committees.</i>	☐ <i>Oversensitivity to "risk" that holds back or bogs down coordination efforts by requiring lengthy internal discussions or approval processes with leadership and/or legal.</i> ☐ <i>Participating passively in funder organizing spaces or treating such spaces as opportunities for unilateral advocacy rather than spaces to build and advance collective learning and action.</i> ☐ <i>Avoiding shared collaboration, learning, or advocacy spaces that touch on Palestinian liberation.</i> ☐ <i>A culture of institutional individualism that places the institution's safety, comfort, and survival above all else.</i> ☐ <i>Siloing relationships and organizing by geography and/or issue area, with little attention to cross-border, cross-issue, or cross-movement connection.</i> ☐ <i>Siloed and inconsistent approaches to supporting political education and knowledge-building; investing in learning for program staff exclusively.</i>	☐ Defunding, threatening to defund, or using your power to limit the scope of collaborative funder efforts or networks working to advance Palestinian solidarity. ☐ Establishing or leading collective funding efforts that include structural prohibitions against supporting Palestinian liberation or solidarity; seeking to silence or exclude peers in shared funding endeavors who speak up in support of Palestinian liberation. ☐ Neglecting, preventing, or blocking the inclusion of Palestinian voices and examples into wider funder education efforts around global human rights, liberation, and justice struggles. ☐ Insisting that funder education focused on Palestinian liberation include Zionist voices and perspectives as a counterpoint. ☐ Putting out guidance that characterizes unregistered groups as inherently risky (or even illegal) to support and/or recommends enforcing depoliticization (i.e., funding only humanitarian work) as a risk mitigation strategy.



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- of a wider commitment to movements for justice and liberation globally.
- ☐ Equipping and supporting board members to talk with and educate their fellow board members and peer trustees at other funding institutions about the importance of supporting Palestinian liberation as part of a wider commitment to social justice and human rights globally.

- ☐ Before sharing resources on Palestine/Israel, review them with Palestinian colleagues and/or build the capacity to recognize the political agendas and underpinnings of such materials before sharing.
- ☐ Share information and resources with staff and board about progressive philanthropy's current and historical impact on Palestinian solidarity and the underfunding of Palestinian-led work.
- ☐ Support existing philanthropic infrastructure rather than building your own (for example, join collaborative or pooled funds and support community funds, feminist funds, public foundations, and other intermediaries).

- ☐ No process or a limited process for vetting potential resources and speakers on Palestine/Israel.

2. Engaging in collective action

LIBERATORY

Leading and/or driving forward collective actions that increase material solidarity with Palestinian liberation

- ☐ Working with other funders to release shared statements and commitments to Palestinian liberation across issue areas; building communities of practice to support and hold each other accountable.

How to get there

- ☐ Consistently participate in (and actively/materially support) collective actions that deepen solidarity with Palestinian liberation as part of broader struggles for social justice and human rights, seeking to build

What's holding you back

- ☐ Participation in collective action is inconsistent and opportunistic, rather than strategically integrated and systemically coordinated.
- ☐ Joining group efforts only after a critical mass of peers have done so.

HARMFUL

Engaging in collective action to punish or marginalize solidarity with Palestinian liberation

- ☐ Using your leverage to silence speech about Palestine from peers in shared collaborative funds or funder networks.
- ☐ Putting out guidance that encourages movement organizations to avoid expressing solidarity with



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- ☐ Contributing to pooled emergency or rapid response funds led by movements and/or funders.
- ☐ Working with other funders to challenge anti-terrorism financing regulations.
- ☐ Working with other funders to oppose legislation that seeks to criminalize social justice and human rights work under the pretext of combating antisemitism or so-called terrorism.
- ☐ Speaking as a donor or board member at a family foundation to leverage your power and influence as a person or entity with wealth.
- ☐ Working with peer funders and movement partners to develop and invest in creative approaches to strengthening the infrastructure that supports grantee partners, including alternatives to fiscal sponsorship.
- ☐ Recognizing that attacks on one movement affect all movements; fostering collective action and mutual accountability in response.
- ☐ Participating actively in funder spaces aimed at building alignment in service of movement priorities and shared goals.
- ☐ Working in a spirit of partnership across public/private funder divides in service of strengthening an ecosystem approach to supporting movements.
- ☐ Integrating advocacy across the work of your organization, recognizing the interconnectedness of justice movements and the importance of ecosystem-level strategies.

sustained efforts that reach beyond signing pledges and amplifying calls to action.

- ☐ *Build on internal political education efforts by highlighting the risks of silence, inaction, and reliance on the status quo, including sharing case studies of effective funder organizing and advocacy efforts.*
- ☐ *Integrate funder advocacy into your overall organizational strategy and begin to align your advocacy efforts with other like-minded funders doing similar work.*
- ☐ *Explore opportunities for engaging in longer-term collective actions that seek to move money (e.g., joining a collaborative fund, contributing to pooled emergency funds, etc.).*

- ☐ *Joining group efforts for primarily symbolic or public relations reasons, instead of joining group efforts as a means to strengthen the shared funding ecosystem, move money together, or shift power relations.*
- ☐ *Continuing to collaborate with funders you know are actively harming Palestinian groups and/or solidarity efforts without questioning or challenging how those behaviors undermine liberatory movement work.*
- ☐ *Valuing civility and politeness over integrity and truth-telling.*

Palestine as a strategy if they wish to maintain strong relationships with funders.

- ☐ Encouraging or pressuring other funders to de-fund anti-Zionist or pro-Palestinian organizations, or using shared funder channels and platforms to silence peers, spread misinformation, or amplify smear campaigns.
- ☐ Actively undermining or framing philanthropic organizing efforts as risky or problematic, discouraging or penalizing grantees and partner organizations from engaging in advocacy or funder organizing.
- ☐ Remaining silent or inactive in the face of policies, regulations, or political pressures that threaten the sustainability and independence of social justice or liberation-focused organizations—or actively supporting efforts to harm these groups.