

## MEMORANDUM

To: U.S. Programs Board  
From: Ann Beeson  
Date: May 17, 2010  
Re: May 26-27, 2010 U.S. Programs Board Meeting

I look forward to seeing you at the May 26-27 Board meeting. Included below is a brief overview of our meeting agenda and the enclosed materials, and some highlights from our recent work. Following the Board meeting on May 26, we hope you will join us at 6:30 p.m. for dinner at Bricco, at 304 W. 56<sup>th</sup> St. (The dinner is for Board members only, and will provide a nice opportunity for the Board to get to know our newest members.) If you have not already sent an RSVP, please send a note to Orelida Hicks to let us know if you can join us: ohicks@sorosny.org or (212) 548-0372.

The Board is catching up to 21<sup>st</sup> century technology as we distribute our Board materials via Kindles for the first time. Please let us know if you encounter any challenges in using the Kindle, or if you have any suggestions regarding the new distribution method. We expect that using the Kindles will be a learning experience for all of us.

### **Overview of May Board Meeting Agenda**

Since February, George Soros has also invited two more distinguished leaders to join the Board, filmmaker/actor/activist Robert Redford and former SEIU President Andy Stern. (Andy Stern will join us for dinner on May 26 and for the Board meeting on May 27; Robert Redford is unable to attend the May meeting.) We are also delighted to welcome Bill Moyers as he re-joins the U.S. Programs Board. An updated list of Board bios is included at Tab 8. The new Deputy Director of U.S. Programs, Eric Ferrero, will also join us for his first Board meeting. Eric has worked at national social justice advocacy organizations for the last 15 years, and for the last four-and-a-half years has served as Communications Director at the Innocence Project, the national organization that uses DNA testing to exonerate innocent prisoners and pursues reforms in the criminal justice system. Eric's full bio is at Tab 8. (Former Deputy Director Nancy Youman is transitioning to a full-time position to advance OSI's international efforts on climate change.)

After welcoming our new members, the Board meeting will open on May 27 with a discussion of U.S. Programs' proposed strategy to address the crisis in journalism. Journalism is an essential component of an open and democratic society and a critical tool for transparency and accountability. Over the past 18 months, the Transparency and Integrity Fund has explored a variety of options for increasing OSI support for journalism in response to the crisis. Aryeh Neier will moderate the discussion, and Bill Moyers as well as outside guests Vivian Schiller, President and CEO of National Public Radio, and Steve Coll, President of the New American Foundation, will participate in the discussion of the strategy with the Board. Tab 4.

During the discussion of the Campaign for Black Male Achievement at our February Board meeting, George Soros recommended scaling up the Campaign and requested that staff develop a plan to significantly expand the Campaign. CBMA staff have been diligently developing the plan for the past few months, with invaluable input from Board advisors Geoffrey Canada and Sherrilyn Ifill. During our second session of the day, Shawn Dove will present the five-year scale-up plan and seek feedback and approval from the Board. Tab 5.

On May 27, we will begin the day with an in depth discussion of the work of the Transparency and Integrity Fund (TIF). (As a reminder, we now plan a detailed discussion of at least one program for every Board meeting.) In addition to TIF's work to strengthen accountability journalism, TIF supports organizations working to increase public access to information, assure broad and equal access to the ballot, and foster an independent and diverse judiciary. To inform the discussion, TIF staff have drafted a memo that updates the Board on activities since approval of their three-year plan last year, and have included a number of other materials to deepen the Board's understanding of their grantmaking and operational activities. During the first part of the discussion, Ethan Zuckerman and Laleh Ispahani will provide an overview of TIF and the current context for the work. During the second part, Bryan Stevenson will moderate an exchange with representatives of three grantees, Bert Brandenburg, Executive Director, Justice at Stake Campaign; Danielle Brian, Executive Director, Project on Government Oversight; and Michael Waldman, Executive Director, Brennan Center for Justice. Tab 6.

Following the Transparency and Integrity Fund discussion, and over lunch, Jonathan Soros will moderate a preliminary discussion of the U.S. Programs 2011 budget and the allocation of resources across the programs. We have prepared a number of materials to help the Board understand and visualize the proposed budget, as well as a memo which outlines the criteria that guide our proposed allocations and highlights significant budget changes since last year. Following this overview discussion, program directors will be reaching out to the Board advisors over the summer for more detailed input as they develop their budgets and annual plans. The full budget and annual plans will be presented for approval during our September Board meeting. Tab 7.

We have reserved some time during the last session on May 27 for a few other Board matters. As Lenny Noisette explained during a brief update to the Board in February, he, Daniel Wolfe, and Diana Morris are developing a new integrated drug policy strategy – the Campaign for a New Drug Policy – that will advocate for expanded access to treatment, harm reduction strategies, and sentencing reform. At our February meeting, the Board approved a request to use up to \$2 million of the \$4.5 million in designated funding. Recent policy events now make it critical to spend additional resources in the immediate future, and so staff will seek approval from the Board to make additional grants toward the remainder budgeted for drug policy reform efforts (\$2.5 million). Tab 8.

Mimi Corcoran will then seek approval for two matters concerning the Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation (SFPA). She seeks approval from the Board to delegate grantmaking authority for SFPA grants over \$2 million to the three SFPA advisors, Geoffrey Canada, Deepak Bhargava, and Jonathan Soros. Mimi will then seek approval of a grant of up to \$3 million (contingent on matching funds) to the Fair Food Network in Michigan. Tab 8.

The Board will then meet in closed session to discuss Board nominations.

### **Program Highlights**

I offer below a few recent programmatic highlights. You will notice a number of cross-program collaborations, as U.S. Programs staff continue to connect the dots across our issue areas and to bring together grantees with shared interests to form new partnerships and expand their constituencies. In the last few months, program staff have conducted cross-program site visits to Texas, California, and Illinois, have hosted a number of convenings that bring together grantees from different programs, and have made a number of cross-program grants.

The **Transparency and Integrity Fund** and the **Equality and Opportunity Fund** partnered to convene a funder briefing on April 16 at OSI, co-hosted by the Ford and Kellogg Foundations, to discuss the ambitious Equity in Government Accountability and Performance project (eGAP). Using newly developed ground-breaking data visualization and analysis tools, this project seeks to advance a set of national advocacy and community organizing strategies to support equity, transparency and effectiveness in all government spending. The project was conceived following a panel discussion at the May 2009 U.S. Programs board meeting, and is a unique collaboration of groups representing diverse skills, concerns, and constituencies: the **Center for Social Inclusion**, **OMB Watch**, the **Gamaliel Foundation**, and **Good Jobs First**. Funders in attendance were deeply impressed with the project and its potential to profoundly impact the work of government and to build the advocacy capacity of a range of equity advocates.

In a cross-program initiative funded through the **Seize the Day Initiative**, on May 10-12 grantee **Good Jobs First**, working with grantees the **Center for Social Inclusion**, **OMB Watch**, **Opportunity Agenda**, and **Demos**, convened OSI-funded alliances working in eight states to ensure greater transparency and equity in the allocation and use of Recovery Act funds in Washington DC. This very productive gathering included discussions of data collection, advocacy strategies, communications, and creative approaches to green technology, transportation and housing work. Perhaps most gratifying was seeing the many ways in which transparency organizations and equity advocates are working together and building something greater than the sum of their parts.

**Criminal Justice Fund** grantees **Prison Policy Initiative** and **Demos**, co-funded with the **Transparency and Integrity Fund**, continue to gain ground in their community education and advocacy efforts challenging the census practice of counting prisoners as

residents of the counties in which the facilities are located rather than in the communities in which they lived prior to their incarceration. Maryland recently reformed its practices as a result of such efforts.

After the devastating earthquake in Haiti, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano announced that Haitians living in the U.S. illegally on the day of the earthquake could apply for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) from January 21 until July 20, 2010. The **Strategic Opportunities Fund** took the lead, with co-funding from **Equality and Opportunity Fund**, in providing an emergency grant to the **Fund for New Citizens**, to support outreach to the Haitian community and to coordinate legal services by immigration legal services providers in New York City on Temporary Protected Status. With a complex set of TPS requirements, misinformation in the Haitian community, and a time-limited application period, there is great urgency to ensure that eligible Haitians are able to apply.

The **Strategic Opportunities Fund** and **Grantmaking Operations** partnered to develop a U.S. Programs-wide Technical Assistance Initiative to provide grantees with capacity-building support to assist them in weathering the economic crisis. A Request for Proposals was issued earlier this year to hire a consultant provider to work with our grantees, and interviews are currently being held with finalist candidates.

**Democracy and Power Fund** grantees played particularly vital roles in recent policy victories on health care reform – with the **Center for Community Change**, **Faith in Public Life**, **Gamaliel Foundation**, **PICO Interfaith Organizing Network**, and **USAction Education Fund** conducting essential advocacy in Washington and field pressure across the nation – and on student loan financing reform, with the United States Student Association playing a central role. D&P grantees are also leaders in building public support to advance other key national priorities, including comprehensive immigration reform, job creation, and financial regulatory reform. D&P is supporting a portfolio of organizations that are developing a new economic paradigm that confronts poverty and inequality, identifies appropriate regulation, and lifts up voices from communities with the greatest levels of economic insecurity. Grantees addressing this challenge include the **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities**, **Economic Policy Institute**, **National Domestic Workers Alliance**, and the **Roosevelt Institute**.

In June, Democracy and Power Fund staff will make their first set of funding recommendations to build state power to advance open society in North Carolina and Texas. At present, we plan to recommend funding just over \$1 million total for eleven multi-issue, state-based organizations that focus on advancing criminal justice, economic opportunity, and immigrant's rights; expanding voter participation; and building power in African-American, Latina/o, and immigrant communities.

**Equality and Opportunity Fund** grantees are moving quickly to respond to the passage of Arizona law SB 1070, which makes the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and gives the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally. The **Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund**,

the **National Immigration Law Center**, and the **ACLU** filed a lawsuit on May 17 challenging the law on constitutional grounds. The **National Day Laborer Organizing Network** has dispatched staff to Arizona to coordinate public education actions aimed at educating advocates and residents about the anticipated rise in racial profiling of Latinos.

In *Padilla v. Kentucky*, the Supreme Court held that criminal defense attorneys have an affirmative duty to inform their immigrant clients that pleading guilty may have deportation ramifications. Since 2002, the Equality and Opportunity Fund has funded the **Defending Immigrants Project**, which includes the **Immigrant Defense Project**, **National Immigration Project**, and **Immigrant Legal Resource Center**, to educate defense attorneys about the immigration consequences of criminal convictions. The Defending Immigrants Partnership is now working to ensure defense attorneys understand the implications of *Padilla* and how to comply with it.

President Obama signed an executive order directing HHS to draft rules requiring hospitals that receive Medicare and Medicaid payments to grant all patients the right to say who has visitation rights and who can help make medical decisions, including gay and lesbian partners. Equality and Opportunity Fund grantee **Lambda Legal** played a critical role in securing this policy change.

In response to regulatory advocacy by **Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative** (NSI) grantee **National Fair Housing Alliance** (NFHA) and a broad coalition civil rights and fair housing organizations, U.S Treasury adopted rules requiring lenders to report the race and ethnicity of borrowers receiving loan modifications. NFHA continues to monitor reporting on loan modifications for compliance with civil rights laws and federal fair lending requirements. In 2009, NSI grantees **National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty** and **National Housing Law Project** helped expose the widespread lack of state-level protections for tenants in foreclosed properties through a series of influential reports. After Congress passed the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act last summer to address this gap, these groups continue to work together to ensure that the act is effective by educating tenants of their rights and preventing unlawful evictions through litigation.

**Campaign for Black Male Achievement** grantees **Coalition Of Schools Educating Boys Of Color** (COSEBOC) and **Congressional Black Caucus Foundation**, in partnership with Howard University's School of Education, hosted an educational forum on Capitol Hill for a standing room only audience in April to kick-off COSEBOC's fourth annual Gathering of Leaders in Washington, DC. During the briefing the founders and student representatives of New York City's Eagle Academy and Chicago's Urban Prep Academy shared their success strategies for graduating black boys from low-income communities. Urban Prep recently garnered national media attention for graduating 100% of its first graduating class of boys into four year colleges. Representatives Robert C. Scott (D-VA), Charles D. Clyburn (D-SC), and Danny Davis (D-IL) addressed the audience about policies they are advocating from to improve educational outcomes for black boys. The **Raising Him Alone Campaign** formalized a partnership with Baltimore Public Schools to implement its parent training and organizing strategy designed to support single mothers raising boys. The partnership was launched at Tench Tilgham

Elementary School in the East Baltimore community. Raising Him Alone promotes healthy parenting practices for single mothers seeking to support the academic and social development of their sons.

The prison population in Maryland continues to decrease, and the number of people who are paroled continues to increase as a result of the parole reform work led by **OSI-Baltimore** grantee JFA Institute. As of January 2010, the prison population was about 21,900 compared to 22,900 in January 2009. In April 2010, after years of **OSI-Baltimore** grantees educating the public about the benefits of maintaining small juvenile correction facilities, the state has decided to limit the number of youth confined at state-licensed facilities to 48.

Baltimore Public Schools experienced their fifth year of declining school suspensions and continued increase in school attendance (especially at the middle school level). OSI-Baltimore grantees implemented new year-round employment program for court-involved, foster care and economically-disadvantaged city youth. OSI-Baltimore grants also supported three new “Accelerator Schools” designed to speed the progress of struggling, over-aged and academically behind Baltimore City students.

Maryland is increasing access to addiction treatment by expanding one of its Medicaid minimum benefit packages called Primary Adult Care. This program covers adults, provides primary and mental health care, prescription drug benefits and now limited addiction treatment. OSI-Baltimore awarded a grant teach treatment providers how to bill in this new system so they could see more patients. OSI also extended grants through the **Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation** to enroll as many eligible participants as possible. As a result, for the first time, treatment is available for those who remain uninsured.

**Criminal Justice Fund** grantee **A Better Way Foundation’s** organizing and advocacy efforts to remove barriers to employment faced by formerly incarcerated individuals has helped advance efforts to “Ban the Box” seeking information about prior convictions on initial employment applications for government jobs in the state of Connecticut. Two **Soros Justice Media Fellows** have received critical acclaim for their recently released books – **Robert Perkinson’s** *Texas Tough*, and **Michelle Alexander’s** *The New Jim Crow*.

The **National Security and Human Rights Campaign** continues to support organizations as they face a number of challenges in an increasingly polarized political landscape. Recent challenges include an upsurge in terrorist attacks directed at the U.S. and increased fears of “homegrown terrorism,” which have encouraged public acceptance of surveillance and the profiling of Muslims; venomous attacks on the patriotism of the “al Qaeda 7,” attorneys who demanded due process rights for Guantanamo detainees before they joined the Justice Department; and the introduction of proposals to deprive terrorism suspects arrested in the U.S. of *Miranda* warnings and trials in civilian courts, and strip the citizenship of Americans who provide “material support” to foreign terrorist organizations.

To build collaboration between organizations and foster innovative thinking in addressing these challenges, NSHR hosted two convenings this spring. On March 17, advocates from seven Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) organizations met with advocates from eight human rights and civil liberties organizations to discuss the heightened profiling of AMEMSA communities triggered by the Fort Hood shootings and the attempted Christmas Day bombing. The advocates who attended this full-day convening are committed to working together to build a consensus platform for combating profiling.

Then on April 14, NSHR convened, through a consultancy with the **New America Foundation**, a full-day meeting of national security experts and human rights advocates – two communities that have tended to keep their distance from one another – to assess the level of threat to the U.S. posed by terrorist groups, examine the structures in place for addressing terrorism, and consider jointly what can be done at this juncture to ensure that a future terrorist attack does not result in the massive civil liberties and human rights violations unleashed in the wake of 9/11. Given the diverse backgrounds of the participants, there was a surprising degree of agreement that the fear-inducing “war on terror” narrative has harmed our national interests by communicating weakness to our adversaries, and should be replaced with new narrative of societal resilience in the face of adversity.

OSI’s **global warming initiative** and the **National Security and Human Rights Campaign** work together on a grant to the **Connect U.S. Fund**, a foundation/NGO initiative co-founded by OSI. Connect U.S. promotes responsible U.S. global engagement in an increasingly interdependent world through grantmaking and operations that advance critical foreign policy objectives and support an effective, collaborative community of individuals and organizations working toward common objectives. In mid-May, Connect US partner and grantee the Fissile Materials Working Group gathered 220 participants representing dozens of U.S. and foreign non-governmental organizations, embassies, foundations, national labs, governments, the nuclear industry, Congressional staff and intergovernmental organizations for a nongovernmental summit on “Next Generation Nuclear Security.” Connect US also recently released its 2010-2011 annual call for funding proposals designed to influence U.S. foreign policy during what it notes is a time of financial hardship, deep partisanship in Washington, and a strong and perhaps understandable tendency among U.S. policymakers and the public to turn inward because of the urgency of domestic social and political priorities.

In its research and development role, **Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF)** is exploring the role that art and culture play in advancing social change and engaging audiences around critical social issues. SOF is undertaking this work through a set of activities that include information-gathering, mapping, network-building, and grantmaking. One SOF-commissioned report, *Advancing Social Justice Through Arts and Culture in New Orleans*, makes the case for the centrality of culture to social change in New Orleans, and provides recommendations for future funding in the region. A number of the people and

organizations that participated in the evening of New Orleans culture during our December 2009 U.S. Programs Board meeting were interviewed for the report.

The **Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation** has committed \$10 million in support of the Obama Administration's **Social Innovation Fund (SIF)**. Working closely with other funders, SFPA completed letters of intent to support SIF intermediaries working on benefits access, disconnected youth and employment. The intermediaries supported are: **The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, New Profit, Inc. and The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City** in partnership with the **NYC Center for Economic Opportunity**. On May 27<sup>th</sup>, the Obama Administration is expected to announce the philanthropic commitments to the Social Innovation Fund. Jonathan Soros will attend a meeting with the President and a public event hosted by the First Lady.

SFPA is supporting three projects in Michigan in partnership with other foundations and state representatives; a public announcement of the partnership is expected soon. To advance SFPA's goal of expanding access to benefits, SFPA is seeking approval from the Board for a grant to the **Fair Food Network for the Mo' Bucks Double Coupon project**, which supports the use of food stamps in farmer's markets by doubling their value with a private match. This demonstration advocates for an increase in food stamps while also focusing on nutrition in areas often called "food deserts" because of lack of access in the community to healthy food. The **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for the Earn and Learn Initiative** will act as an intermediary on behalf of SFPA to create immediate subsidized job opportunities structured to encourage participation in education and training programs among disconnected, at-risk youth (18-24) with workforce attachment, particularly for young minority males; ex-offenders re-entering the workforce; and chronically unemployed adults. **Michigan Association of United Ways (MAUW) for the Michigan Benefits Access Initiative (MBAI)** offers an innovative and comprehensive approach to assisting Michigan citizens in accessing benefits. MAUW will train 2,875 nonprofit "counselors" over the next three and a half years to use web-based technology to increase the number of Michigan households that receive the benefits for which they are eligible. These benefit access counselors will help families access benefits and tax credits totaling approximately \$183,000,000 in 4 years.

SFPA has committed to provided matching funds to support a \$10 million proposal by **Corps Network** to the Department of Labor to expand the **Civic Justice Corp** program, a service model for adjudicated youth originally developed and seeded through funding by the **Criminal Justice Fund**. If awarded, the project will expand the program at six Corps sites, in at least two states, to engage 600 participants.

I look forward to seeing you next week.