

Discussion of Fund for Poverty Alleviation and Related Advocacy in U.S. Programs

George Soros has created a new national fund to provide the poor with essential services during the economic crisis, the Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation. He has pledged \$250 million over two years as a challenge grant with the goal of leveraging matching funds in a range of 1:1 to 3:1 when feasible. The first grant in the amount of \$50 million is to the Robin Hood Foundation to alleviate poverty in New York City, and will be publicly announced on May 12th. Mimi Corcoran has been hired to lead the national effort. Mimi has been working closely with Ann Beeson and some of the U.S. Programs Board Members to support connections, as appropriate, between the Fund and U.S. Programs.

During the session, Geoff Canada will discuss the national landscape and Mimi will provide an overview of the initial thoughts on the Fund's strategic goals and its overall framework. Diana Morris will outline her thoughts on how the Fund could be used to fill the gap in services for the poor in Baltimore, and Ann Beeson will comment on the connection between the Fund and U.S. Programs support for advocacy to ensure equity in the economic recovery. Geoff will then facilitate a discussion with the Board.

Moderator: Geoffrey Canada

Discussants: Mimi Corcoran
Diana Morris
Ann Beeson

Questions to frame the discussion:

1. How can the Fund for Poverty Alleviation provide immediate relief while also advancing systemic reform?
2. How can we build connections between the Fund for Poverty Alleviation and U.S. Programs support, through the Seize the Day Fund, for advocacy to ensure transparency and equity in the economic recovery so that we maximize the benefit of both funding initiatives?
3. How might we use the Fund for Poverty Alleviation to leverage substantial investments in advocacy by U.S. Programs in certain cities and regions?
4. What additional funding for advocacy is necessary to ensure a strong social safety net during the economic crisis?