



Skees Family Foundation works to end poverty by partnering with social entrepreneurs building self-help models in **education** and **job-creation** and leveraging **storytelling** for social change.



We met Dana and Justice Funders via videoconference at our annual retreat. As a mostly white family foundation on the verge of transforming our board from those born into financial power to those born with diversity of talent and experience, we craved to learn more about racial justice. Dana led us through a reflection on our own racism and revealed ways to redistribute wealth and power to the communities we claim to serve. Here, she shares her personal story of how she came into the work of social justice within philanthropy. -- Suzanne Skees, Founder and Board Chair

## Changing the Story of Philanthropy

By Dana Kawaoka-Chen



### Discovering Lies about My Family in a Textbook

In 8th grade, a passage in my Richmond, CA district-issued U.S. History textbook read: “During World War II, Japanese Americans were interned for their safety.” As someone whose entire paternal family was relocated and incarcerated without due process, I knew this statement to be wholly untrue, and it galvanized me to be more active in my own education.--I asked my teacher for a class period in which I could present on World War II from my family’s perspective. This moment also taught me about the power of stories, or more specifically whose stories are recorded, taught, and retold.

### The Stories We Tell Reinforce Racial Capitalism

Fast forward to the present day, and as the Executive Director of Justice Funders, I often find that the stories told about philanthropy reinforce a charity narrative that results in public praise of those whose wealth is derived from the exploitation of the labor of others, extraction of natural resources, and an ongoing participation in racial capitalism.

Experiencing dissonance between my own experience as a non-profit director prior to entering philanthropy, as well as seeing those in our communities who are hurt first and worst by historical disinvestment, displaced during periods of economic growth, and left on the frontlines during a global pandemic, has deepened my own commitment to changing the story of philanthropy both in practice and in narrative.

### Transforming Philanthropy from Benefacting to Redistributing Wealth

What has been inspiring to me in widening the aperture of my lens on philanthropy is finding the less-told stories of communities and movements that are changing their relationship to those with means and inviting philanthropy as redistribution, as embodied by this story from Critical Resistance in Oakland.

The Building Equity and Alignment for Impact Fund has been instructive for many groups and funders around deepening strategic collaboration between an ecosystem of organizations using democratic decision making and the work of prioritizing resources to frontline grassroots organizations.

In addition, the Buen Vivir Fund has offered a model to redefine impact investing between partners in the global north working in solidarity with movement organizations in the global south. These stories can be read as narratives about how to change the status quo.

### We Can Resist the Story of Oppression--or Rewrite It

Students of history will note that 2020 marks the 78th anniversary of the passage of Executive Order 9066, as well as the 32nd anniversary of the passage of the American Civil Liberties Act, which authorized reparations to those that were interned during World War II.

One of the lessons I have drawn from studying my own history is that I can keep giving energy to the conditions that have oppressed us, or I can give my energy to imagining, building, and growing the practices, organizations, networks, and communities who share a vision for a thriving and just world.

These new models for democratizing wealth, control and power are not only changing the story and practice of philanthropy, they are creating new models of community governance, ownership, and the ability to create regenerative economies that are supported outside of the market economy.

Looking forward, I hope that when my grandchildren are in 8th grade, they will learn about the time our generation decided to rewrite all the rules.

## Our New Advisory Board



Alex Pan works for the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship. This is an accelerator program for social entrepreneurs. Alex is the Associate Director and has been working there since 2016. Before that he worked for the Aspen Institute. He received his BA in International Development and East Asian Studies from Colby College and his MA in International Science and Technology from George Washington University. He assists us in evaluating our nonprofit partner options using his entrepreneurial expertise.



Suman Bhat-Kincaid is the Director of Philanthropy for Upaya Social Ventures. Since 2011, she has worked in the nonprofit sector raising awareness and expanding financial support for healthcare organizations. She last served as Senior Corporate Partnerships Officer at Bloodworks Northwest. Prior to that, Suman was the Manager of Corporate and Foundation Partnerships at SightLife, supporting their programs across Africa and Asia. She also serves on the board of Advancement Northwest, the Washington chapter of Association of Fundraising Professionals. Suman holds a BS in International Management from Butler University and an MPA from the University of Washington.



Tara Matthews is a California native who has spent her life rooted in service and mission-driven work. She spent 2.5 years in the Peace Corps in Uganda working as a NGO Program Specialist. During her time there she directed a national youth leadership camp for women, worked with community leaders and students on reusable menstrual pads, and ignited a social impact project called Kids Who Click, where youth were afforded the opportunity and safe space to express their emotions through photography. She currently works at The Pollination Project as Grants Manager.



James West has a background in social anthropology and philanthropy, and has worked with community leaders around the world as they tackle the issues that are most important to them. He believes deeply in the power of local leadership and in solutions which center local insight and ingenuity. James holds a BS from Oxford Brookes University and an MS from the University of California Riverside in Anthropology.

## My Job: Book 3



My Job GenZ: Finding Your Place in a Fast Changing World is coming soon FOR FREE online. Keep an eye out!






## In Memoriam






Sadly, on October 9, our father and grandfather, Hugh Skees, passed away at the age of 93. Hugh lived a full and, by his own words, blessed life. For all his smarts, Hugh's greatest attribute was his belief that giving back to the community is a responsibility and privilege. Hugh was loved and respected as a husband, father, grandfather, patent expert, gardener, peace advocate, and faithful man. He served on the Board of Skees Family Foundation for many years. May he rest in peace.

# 2019-2020 Nonprofit Partners



## Seed Grants: Small grants for young nonprofits

	Costa Rica	From the time we started working with Bean Voyage, they have formed their board, hired new employees, and have scaled from training 13 coffee womxn to over 300! They have taken COVID in stride and we can't wait to see what comes next.
	Nicaragua	CREA has continued to grow through our time working with them, surviving both a hurricane and COVID. They continue to accomplish their own mission while providing flexible additional resources depending on the needs of their clients.
	Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ghana	Idea4Africa has been growing, while moving most of the leadership team to within the countries they work. They've moved mostly to online trainings and taped trainings in response to COVID but will hopefully get to be back in person soon!
	Uganda	KadAfrica is now working with refugees in addition to rural women and have been working diligently with their clients to continue to farm and produce passion fruit during the pandemic.
	Nepal	Since 2018, Women LEAD has added some amazing staff, completed their youth leadership courses, and scaled to combat sexual harassment. They have grown during the pandemic and have transitioned smoothly to predominantly virtual work.

## Partnership Grants: Small grants for continued partnership

	Latin America and the Caribbean	Agora Partnerships has been an inspiration. They have continued to grow, in spite of various political uprisings, natural disasters, and pandemics. The work they do for entrepreneurs all over Latin America is incredible.
	Haiti	Anseye Pou Ayiti has done a remarkable job training teachers and providing resources to schools in the many years we have been working with them. They come up with creative approaches to problem solving, especially during the pandemic!
	Palestine	Over the past few years, TYO has grown their leadership team, students reached, and curriculum taught. They have shown incredible resilience and flexibility and have been able to continue with their work throughout the course of the pandemic.

## Catalyst Grants: Larger grants for growing partners

	Sri Lanka	Educate Lanka has developed partnerships with a variety of funders, worked with many students, and has been a true partner over the past several years., through terrorist attacks, pandemics, and natural disasters. We have no doubt they will continue to grow and thrive, no matter what the world throws at them.
	East Africa	Resonate has moved to local leadership, steadily increased their student numbers, expanded their curriculum, and made a strong name for themselves in the time we have known them. It has been an incredible experience to watch them grow.

# Family Grants

Each year, our individual families can give a small grant to an organization that reflects their values spanning from their hometown to across the globe.

Bri and James; The Leskos; Alex and Landon; The Shelly-Ron Family



Bean Voyage provides training and market access to smallholder women so they can produce specialty coffee, and lead sustainable lives.

Suzanne-Vincent Family



Gladeo is a public benefit corporation building a more inclusive, equitable and prepared workforce of the future by providing high-quality, culturally-responsive career guidance to anyone, anywhere.

The Tarullos; Christina



Fighting for civil rights and empowering Asian Americans to create a more just America for all.

Eddy and Nelson



The LGBT Asylum Project is a nonprofit organization exclusively dedicated to providing accessible legal representation for LGBT asylum seekers who are fleeing persecution due to their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or HIV status.

The Sally-Mike Family



Voix et Actions is geared toward the development of the Haitian community and the physical and moral relief of the disadvantaged people who live there.

Sandy-Mary Family



A New Way of Life Reentry Project provides housing, case management, pro bono legal services, advocacy, and leadership development for women rebuilding their lives after prison.

Tony-Kris Family



Xavier's mission is to educate each student intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

Sylvia-Gary Family



The Dragonfly Foundation brings comfort and joy to kids, young adults, and their families enduring cancer and bone marrow transplants.

# Generational Grants

Every two years, each generation of our family meets to vote on a new, mission-aligned partner.



South Sudan

Education Bridge works to create flourishing South Sudanese communities through holistic education and peacebuilding.



Kenya

Eggpreneur is a social enterprise working in remote Kenyan communities to build sustainable egg farming ventures that help families end the cycles of poverty.



Burundi

Tujenge Africa Foundation creates educational hubs to incubate a national network of innovators, leaders, entrepreneurs, and peace agents.

# Meet Our New 2021-2023 Nonprofit Partners!

## Seed Grants



ADA is a virtual training program in technology and soft skills aimed at vulnerable women from different regions of LATAM.

Argentina



Embrace Her supports young people with programs that improve personal finance and business management skill.

Zambia



Preserve International Fighting poverty and seasonal hunger through the provision of innovative, rurality-minded technology & training to reduce post harvest crop loss.

Uganda



Tech ME is a social enterprise leveraging technology to solve social issues with particular focus on education, entrepreneurship and civic engagement.

Nigeria

## Catalyst Grants



Bean Voyage provides training and market access to smallholder women so they can produce specialty coffee, and lead sustainable lives.

Costa Rica



Idea4Africa inspires and equips youth entrepreneurs to develop social and economic value.

Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and  
Ghana



KadAfrica empowers farmers through the cultivation of passion fruit by equipping them with training, resources, and a market for improved quality of life.

Uganda

## Financials

27 grants issued

\$84,000 total amount granted

97% job creation, 3% other

93% global, 7% US

ESG Investments: 95%

Impact Investments: 5%

## Impact Investments



Beneficial Returns is an impact investment fund designed to support the growth of leading social enterprises that operate in emerging markets worldwide.



Jibu's mission is to ensure every person on the planet has access to a safe, affordable, and sustainable water source. They currently work in East Africa.



Village Enterprise works to end extreme poverty in rural Africa through entrepreneurship and innovation.