



African American Millennials:

Discovering The Next Generation of Black Philanthropy for the Effective Communication & Engagement of Non - Profit Organizations

Abstract

This study explores the giving and civic engagement behaviors and perspectives of African American young professionals, also known as millennials, so that non-profit organizations can better communicate and engage with them. Black millennial philanthropy is examined using primary research including a survey, in-depth interviews, and a focus group. A secondary analysis uses a variety of sources representing millennials and black philanthropy; including but not limited to online publications, research reports, and published academic papers.

If black millennials are more likely to give back in both time and money than previously thought, there exists evidence of a shift in traditional philanthropy. If there is a correlation between direct communication from non-profits and a greater likelihood of black millennial engagement, there is evidence of untapped volunteer, donor and leadership opportunities that could help support non-profit organizations.

The findings show strong evidence of black millennial interest in giving both time and money, but more strongly in giving time. There also exists evidence of an engagement disconnect between black millennials and non-profit organizations, suggesting that opportunities exist for more strategic and targeted communication to black millennials.

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INTRODUCTION

Millennials: Perceptions & Community Outlook

The millennial generation is approximately 30 percent of the U.S. population. While they are largely

defined as individuals born after 1980 through 2000 (Pew Research), some research groups identify millennials as those born between 1980 and 1995 (Edelman 8095). Viacom’s MTV Networks takes a broader approach by identifying millennials as individuals born between 1983 and 2004. Depending on the definition, they total anywhere from 50 - 80 million people in the United States, making them easily the largest generation since the Baby Boomers (Singer, 2011) (CNN, 2012). Edelman 8095, a division of leading public relations firm focused on marketing to millennials, gives this summary of the generation:

“While millennials share many traits and behaviors, they are more diverse ethnically, economically and socially than any other generation in history. They are more connected by being grounded in a global network with perspective and purpose. They have instant access to one another and to information. They are aware of and believe in their own voice and power. They are each a unique and powerful member of a generation that by 2025 will amount to 70 percent of the global workforce. The time to pay attention to millennials is now.”

Echoing Edelman 8095’s insights, the Pew Research Center refers to millennials as “confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat and receptive to new ideas and ways of living.”

Yet there are those who are not so enthusiastic about engaging with millennials. Forbes staff writer Susan Adams describes the way society sees this group as “entitled, spoiled and discontented.” Some research states that millennials are more ‘Generation Me’ than ‘Generation We’ (Chau, 2012). According to a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* as reported in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, “[comparing] the traits of young people in high school and entering college today with those of baby boomers and Gen Xers at the same age from 1966 to 2009, shows an increasing trend of valuing money, image, and fame more than inherent principles like self-acceptance, affiliation, and community.”

Despite this apparent self-centeredness, the trait that is attributed to millennials more than any other generation is altruism. A 2010 Pew Research study found that 21% of millennials say helping people in need is one of the most important things in life. A millennial respondent to the “The Next Normal: An Unprecedented Look at Millennials Worldwide” report by Viacom International echoed this belief, stating, “My age group has the potential to change the world for the better.” Christian Kurz, Vice President of Research & Insights for Viacom International Media Networks, agrees. “Millennials also showed a strong global response to world issues. With more access than ever, Millennials today take global trends and localize them to their own place and experience. They’re the first truly ‘glocal’ generation,” says Kurz.

This rising trend among millennials was further demonstrated by the Case Foundation’s 2012 Millennial Impact Report, which found that 75% percent of millennials said they made a financial donation to charity in 2011. Not only did the 2012 report show a significant percentage of millennials who made financial donations, it revealed that 63% of millennials said they volunteered in 2011. The report also noted that not only do millennials give back, but they are also committed and dedicated to continuing to give, with 41% anticipating they will give

more in 2012 than they did in 2011. This generosity comes despite the fact that an overwhelming 68% feel personally touched by the global economic crisis (MTV Networks).

As selfish and self-centered as some believe millennials are, the community-oriented behavior of this age group suggests they have the potential and desire to make a great impact in the world.

One subset of the millennial generation that is often discussed (Desmond-Harris, 2012), but which very little is definitively known is black millennials. These individuals fit within a demographic that is described by Professor



**An Introduction to African
American Millennials and
Philanthropy**

Kris Marsh, Ph.D., as the “new black middle class.” The new black middle class is defined as African Americans from 25-44 who are single (never married), live alone, and own their homes. In general, they tend to have high-wage occupations, advanced degrees, and household incomes above average (Marsh, Darity, Cohen, Casper, Salters). Yet even though there is little formal research to support their philanthropic or giving potential, the conceivable impact they could have on philanthropy is apparent to experts and thought leaders alike.

In an interview, Valaida Fullwood, author and black philanthropy thought leader, expresses the need for an intergenerational shift, “Each generation has distinctive roles they can play in advancing issues that are country or community-based. Black millennials, I think, bring energy time and resources, given their general space in life, that perhaps older generations struggle to

bring to the table. While older generations might have financial resources and have accumulated wealth to contribute to causes and wisdom and insights, younger generations have their own insights and unique skill sets and resources that should not be overlooked.” This acknowledgement of generational influence provides an introduction into the unique ability black millennials have to chart their own path in philanthropy.

Inasmuch as generational qualities set black millennials apart in their approach to giving, so do the causes that they could potentially impact. Giving validity to this assertion is Amber Cruz, Director of Programs, Mobilize.org, a leading civic engagement leadership organization for millennials. “The Millennial Generation is the most diverse generation in our country's history and in many ways that positions us to overcome some of the economic and racial barriers that past generations have faced. However, we know our political systems are slow to change and therefore require black/African American millennials' voices to call for reform and to become leaders around the social issues they face,” says Cruz.

“Black millennials are a part of a rising tide of talent of color in the US that are important for positive social change,” adds Dr. Rahsaan Harris, Executive Director of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy. Harris continues, “Black millennials, connected to their less well-off family & community members, can provide much needed insight to philanthropic efforts aimed at communities of color.” Leading philanthropy consultant Christal Jackson agrees, “I believe that black millennials are important to addressing social issues directly and indirectly related to philanthropy. By being engaged around creating solutions to problems plaguing their

communities, then connecting with the broader community for resources, black millennials can shift the frame of philanthropy.”

As black millennials seek to establish themselves in society as leaders and givers, media outlets have taken notice. In February 2012, *The Washington Post* featured the piece, “African American millennials seek to define ‘young, black philanthropy,’” and *Huffington Post- Impact*, in March 2013, posed the question “Will Black Millennials Be The Next Wave of Philanthropists?”

Philanthropy Shifting: New Frames of Black Philanthropy

The Latin root of the word ‘philanthropy’ means ‘love of mankind.’ In America, the act

of philanthropy has become strongly associated with very wealthy white men (Casserly, 2013). Yet philanthropy for communities of color is defined in the Kellogg Cultures of Giving report as “sacrifices of time, money and know-how.” How does this translate into modern society as an acceptable and relevant means of philanthropic giving for black donors and civic leaders? “The times beckon a new era of conscientious philanthropy, rooted in a love for community and expectations of social change. Let this generation, both young and old, embody a social transformation with bold recognition of our power and responsibility to give back,” says Valaida Fullwood, author and black philanthropy thought leader, in an article featured in the *Huffington Post*.

As African Americans become increasingly accepting of their capacity to change their own communities, which can be seen in the growth of collective community giving efforts organized

groups called giving circles (Community Investment Network), they are re-framing their definition of what a philanthropist is. Initiatives like The Giving Back Project venture to “ignite a movement of conscientious philanthropy by empowering a generation to recognize their power and responsibility to give back” (Project, 2012). Additionally, through websites that chronicle black giving, such as Black Gives Back, traditional frames of philanthropy are being debunked and replaced by more inclusive groups - including black millennials.

THE PROBLEM

Problem Definition:
Public Sector Engagement and
Communication with Black
Millennials

If millennials “are an integral part of the sector” says Jean Case of the Case Foundation, and black millennials and GenXers are defining the new black middle class as moving “away from the Huxtables in ‘The Cosby Show’ to the young, single, educated and black professionals” (Marsh 2012), then where lies

the opportunity to integrate black millennials into a new generation of givers?

Socially responsible black millennials matter to the body of philanthropy (Harris). They embody the diverse perspective that many organizations need in order to fully impact the communities they serve (Fullwood). Multicultural millennials, including African American millennials, as defined by diversity and inclusion consultant Tru Pettigrew, “share a common mindset that should be considered and factored into communications strategies more so than the traditional

siloed approach of targeting by race and ethnicity.” He continues, “giving back is important to them and they support the brands that also give back. They know what brands are giving back and in what way. They also have issues and causes that matter to them and their communities. They support the brands that support them.”

In contrast to the popular belief that philanthropy is only reserved for the privileged (Jackson), Forbes 30 under 30 millennial leader, Amanda Ebokosia notes that, “Black millennials are engaged in the community. But when you’re talking about the big divide, there is this struggle with black millennials taking a seat at the table. And because of this they are being left out of the conversation. When this happens the communities in which they are engaged in are also being overlooked.” Amber Cruz of Mobilize.org concurs, “Leading conversations around color can be challenging for any organization. I believe this is in part due to some of the racial challenges our generation has overcome because millennials have been surrounded by people of all colors and therefore that is all we know. However, it may also be due to the lack of knowledge around the racial implications of the social challenges our generation faces and therefore it is important to engage and empower black Millennials to bring this into the dialogue.”

As such, non-profits must use communication to overcome the following long-standing issues:

1. Overlooking civic engagement opportunities for non-profits and foundations with a group of diverse individuals who are a part of a culture of philanthropy (Fullwood, Ebokosia).

2. Limiting their ability to generate financial support and advocacy from the African American community, particularly for causes that affect the black community (Ebokosia, Goldberg).
3. Restricting the civic engagement access and resources black millennials seek to help them become more influential and effective givers.

Demonstrating how African American millennials give will provide institutions with the chance to diversify their leadership, donor pools, and advocacy groups using fact-based tactics that can help drive their agendas and missions.

KEY FINDINGS

In a survey conducted April 2 - April 23, 2013, 274 African American millennials shared their behaviors and perspectives on giving. Additionally, on April 22, 2013, two black millennials took part in a 75-minute virtual focus group describing their insights on giving and community involvement. The following are the key findings from the aforementioned research methods.

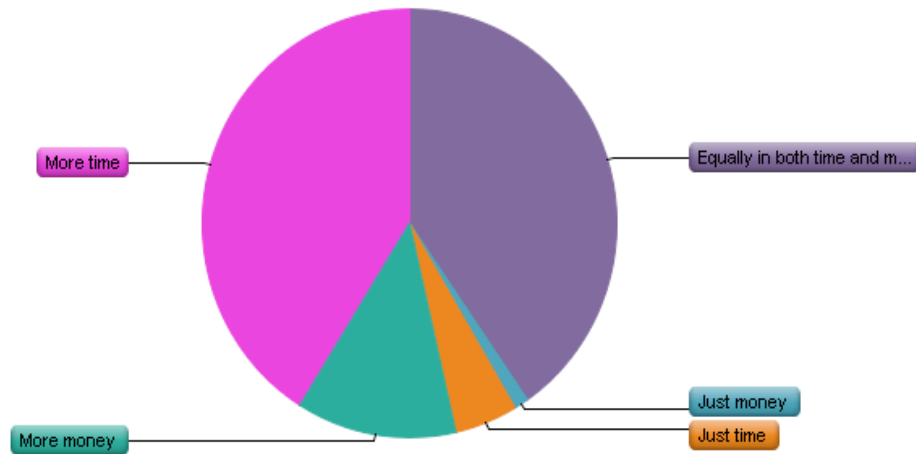
**How Do
Black Millennials
Give Back?**

According to survey findings, 41% of black millennials prefer to give back more in time, followed closely by 40% who prefer to give back both in time and money. Giving of time is important to black millennials because that is where they feel they get to witness their influence in

action. When focus group participant L. Mitchell was asked to describe why she finds giving of

her time so important, she stated that she is, “paying it forward. It is the debt I owe to help the next generation.” This finding supports the culture of giving often found in black communities but it also demonstrates the shift in traditional philanthropy previously described.

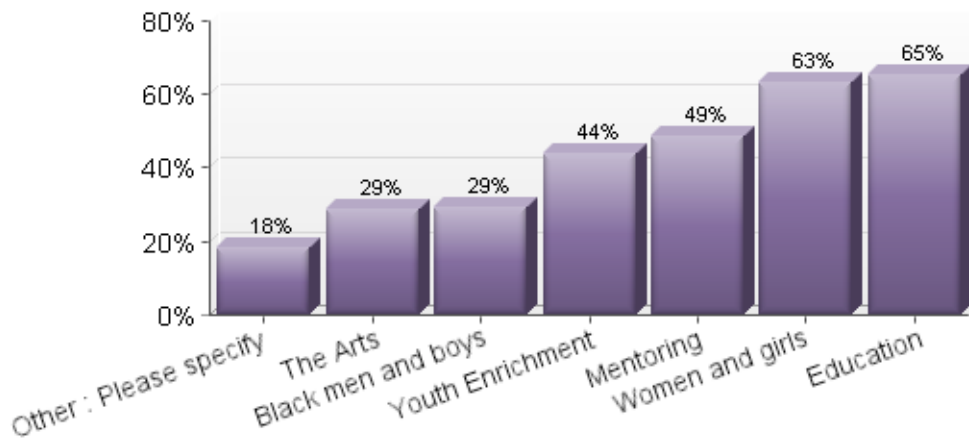
Below: How do you prefer to be involved in personally supporting an organization?



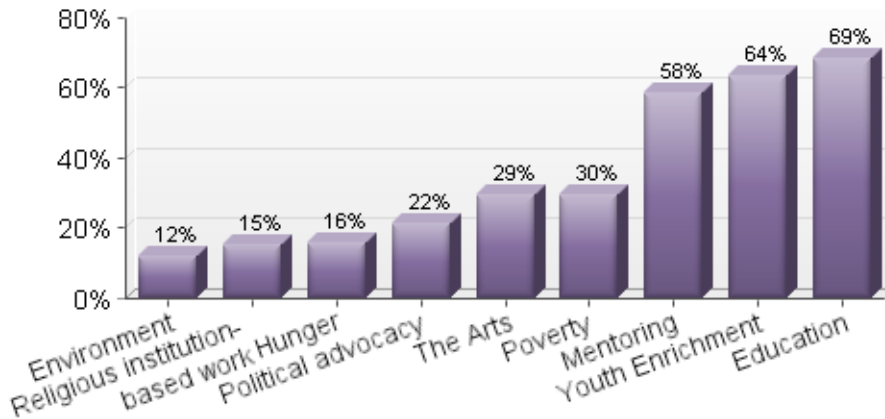
Answer		%
More time		41%
Equally in both time and money		40%
More money		12%
Just time		5%
Just money		1%
Total		100%

The next set of findings to report are the cause areas black millennials are most interested in supporting. Respondents were given the option to select three cause areas from a general list of issues impacting communities. The top three selections were: education - 65%, women and girls - 63%, and mentoring - 49%. The leading cause of interest to support when ‘other’ was selected was health or health-related causes. These findings were further confirmed when respondents were asked to select three areas of community work that interest them most: 69% chose education, 64% chose youth enrichment, and 48% selected mentoring. Throughout the

focus group, participants echoed one another with anecdotes of educational programs and institutions they gave their time and money to. These findings echo the findings of Dr. Erica Ball regarding the three areas that blacks give to most. It is therefore fair to assess that giving is highly influenced by issues that greatly impact the black community based on the causes respondents feel most led to support.



Above: What types of causes/ charities are you most interested in supporting? (Select up to 3)



Above: What areas of community work interest you most? (Select up to 3)

The next finding highlights factors that influence black millennials to give in time and money.

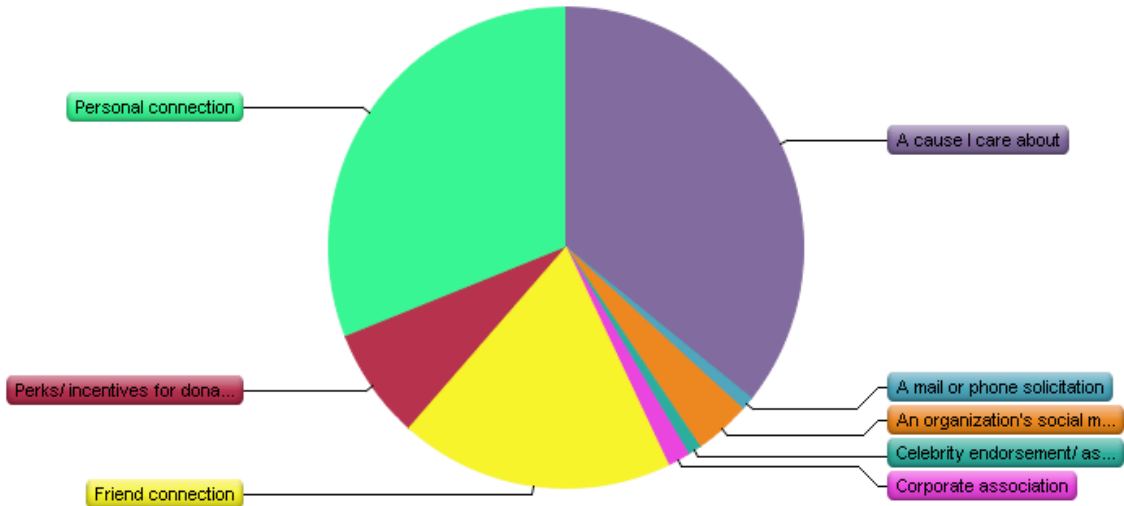
When asked, “What are your biggest influences to donate time to an organization,” an

overwhelming 92% of respondents selected “projects where I feel I can make a difference.” This

description of 'difference' can be seen through the actions of leadership skills, mentoring, and vocational talents favored by black millennials. We know this because when respondents were asked to rank how they would prefer to give their time to a non-profit and the top rankings were reported in this order: #1 leadership skills (board membership, committee work), #2 mentoring, and #3 talents (dance, spoken word, etc.). These findings begin to highlight the ways in which black millennials want to give their time to non-profit organizations and thus present opportunities for engagement.

When asked to select all the reasons that applied to question, "What are your biggest influences to donate your money to an organization," the top two reasons selected were: 89% "a cause I care about" and 77% "a personal connection." These findings were also seen during the focus group conversation when the two participants explained that their financial philanthropic giving went to their alma maters because of the quality education they received and cancer research causes because a family member was impacted by cancer, respectively. It should also be noted that less than 10% of black millennials are influenced to donate money by celebrity endorsements, corporate association, or solicitation by the non-profit.

Below: What are your biggest influences to donate your money to an organization? (Select all that apply)



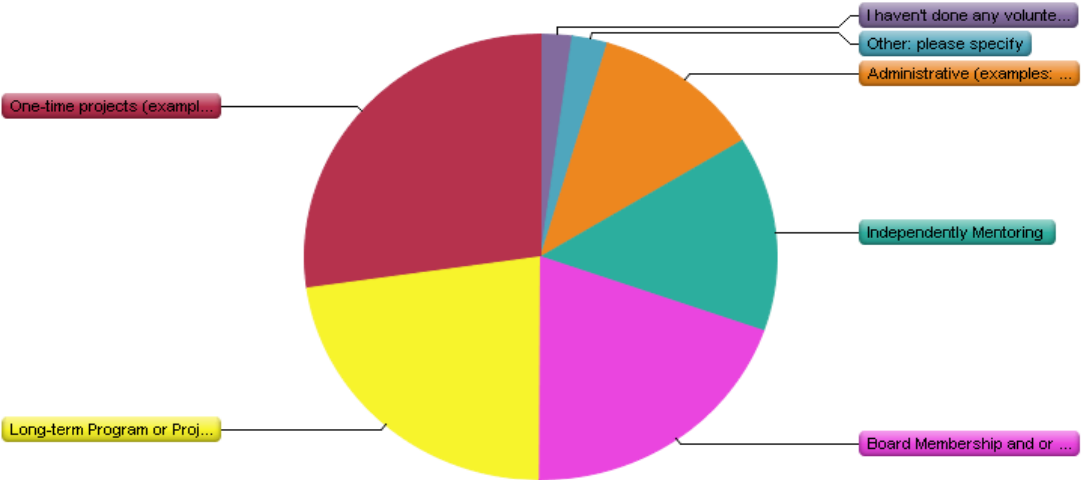
Answer	%
A cause I care about	89%
Personal connection	77%
Friend connection	46%
Perks/ incentives for donating	19%
An organization's social media presence	9%
Corporate association	4%
Celebrity endorsement/ association	2%
A mail or phone solicitation	2%

The survey also explored how black millennials give back by taking a look at their behaviors over the last year.

Within the last year, black millennials have given their time significantly in a variety of ways, including one-time projects, such as holiday soup kitchen serving (72%); long-term projects, such as mentoring or school tutoring (60%); and board membership (52%). While black

millennials have been varied in the types of volunteer work they do, it is not clear based on the findings how much time black millennials prefer to give to philanthropic activities. Over the last year there was an even distribution over several pockets of time: 27% spent more than 100 hours, 23% spent 25- 49 hours, 22% spent 50- 74 hours and 20% spent less than 20 hours. However, we can deduce from these findings that the variation in types of volunteering most likely impacts the amount of time black millennials give to their causes of choice.

Below: What type of volunteer work have you done in the last year? (check all that apply)



Answer	%
One-time projects (examples: holiday soup kitchens, clothes sorting)	72%
Long-term Program or Project-based work (examples: tutoring during school terms, mentoring through a program, large group based projects)	60%
Board Membership and or Committee leadership	52%
Independently Mentoring	37%
Administrative (examples: answering phones, data input, filing, etc.)	31%
I haven't done any volunteer work	6%
Other: please specify	6%

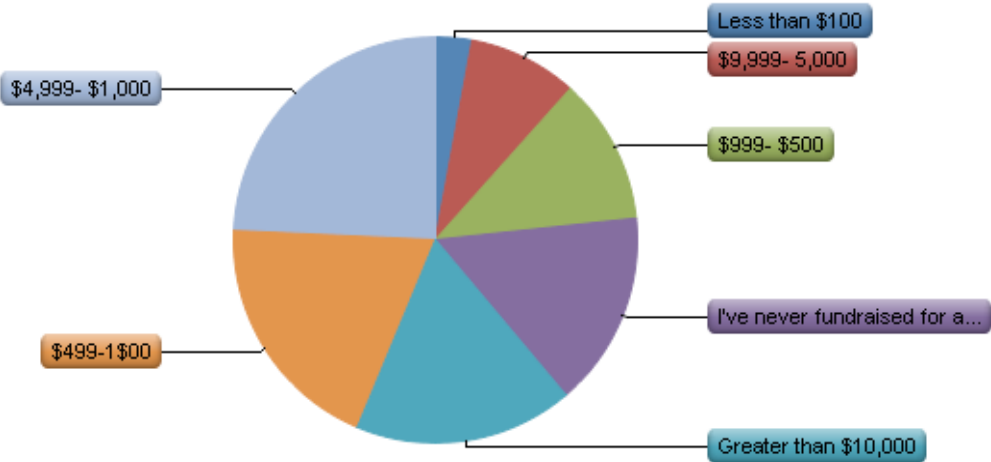
The final element to demonstrate how black millennials give are the findings associated with their financial giving and fundraising habits.

The financial giving results showed the greatest distinctions between the ages of the black millennials surveyed. It is reasonable to say there is a direct correlation between the ages and income levels of black millennials and their ability to give financially. For example, 62% of younger millennials (20 - 24 years-olds) made less than \$25,000 annually. Of this age group, 55% reported their largest single financial gift was \$100 or less. This is different than older black millennials (30 - 34 year-olds), where 50% make \$50,000- \$90,000 and 21% make more than \$100,000 annually. 45% of this age group reported giving \$250 at one single time.

As we look at the giving habits of black millennials it should be noted that they do not seek recognition for their gifts as traditional philanthropy may suggest. While 38% of those who responded said the greatest amount they would give is \$100- \$250 to be recognized for a monetary donation, 53% admitted they would not be more inclined to give if they knew they would be recognized publically for their financial gifts.

Fundraising is also a key area for black millennials. Notwithstanding age, an equal number of black millennials reported the largest amount they have fundraised for one cause is either greater than \$10,000 or between \$1,000- \$4,999. This presents an opportunity to leverage their fundraising abilities in a significant way. However, 15% of those surveyed who said they have never fundraised. When asked to explain why they have never fundraised, 49% said they were not interested in fundraising; it should also be noted 41% of this group also prefers to give more in time only. 34% reported no one has ever asked them to fundraise.

Below: What is the largest amount of money you have ever fundraised for one cause?



Answer		%
Greater than \$10,000	<div style="width: 22%;"></div>	22%
\$4,999- \$1,000	<div style="width: 22%;"></div>	22%
\$499-\$100	<div style="width: 18%;"></div>	18%
I've never fundraised for a cause	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>	15%
\$999- \$500	<div style="width: 11%;"></div>	11%
\$9,999- 5,000	<div style="width: 8%;"></div>	8%
Less than \$100	<div style="width: 4%;"></div>	4%
Total		100%

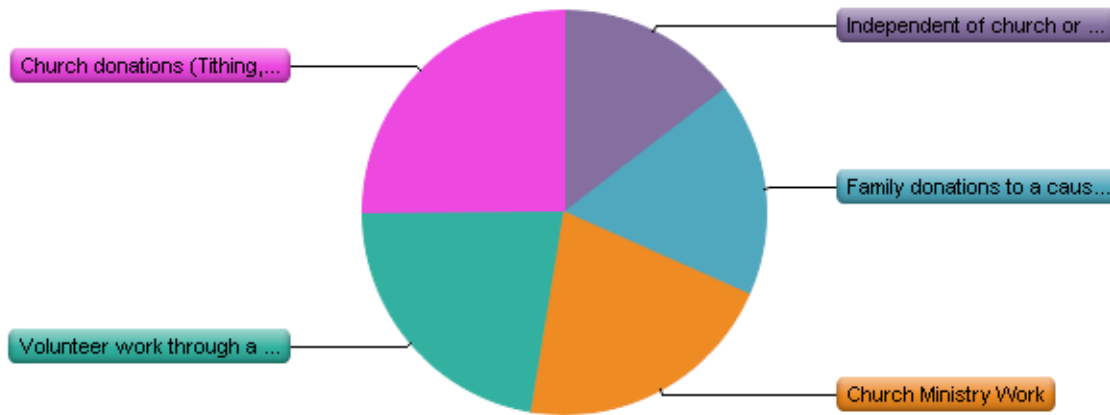
The giving back of black millennials is deeply rooted in their family upbringing and communities. Findings of the survey reveal that giving back was part of the childhood of 78% of black millennials. Of those whose

Why Do Black Millennials Give Back?

childhoods included giving back, church was said to be the top area of giving. This finding supports existing research on traditional black philanthropy and the way in which it is found to be expressed most often (Ball). Focus group participant L. Mitchell acknowledges that through

church, she and her family fed the homeless and hosted families from their native Jamaica over the years. C. Savage also credits his family and church as being large influencers on his giving habits today, “church sets the standard. It’s what I should be doing.”

Below: What types of giving did your family do? (Check all that apply)

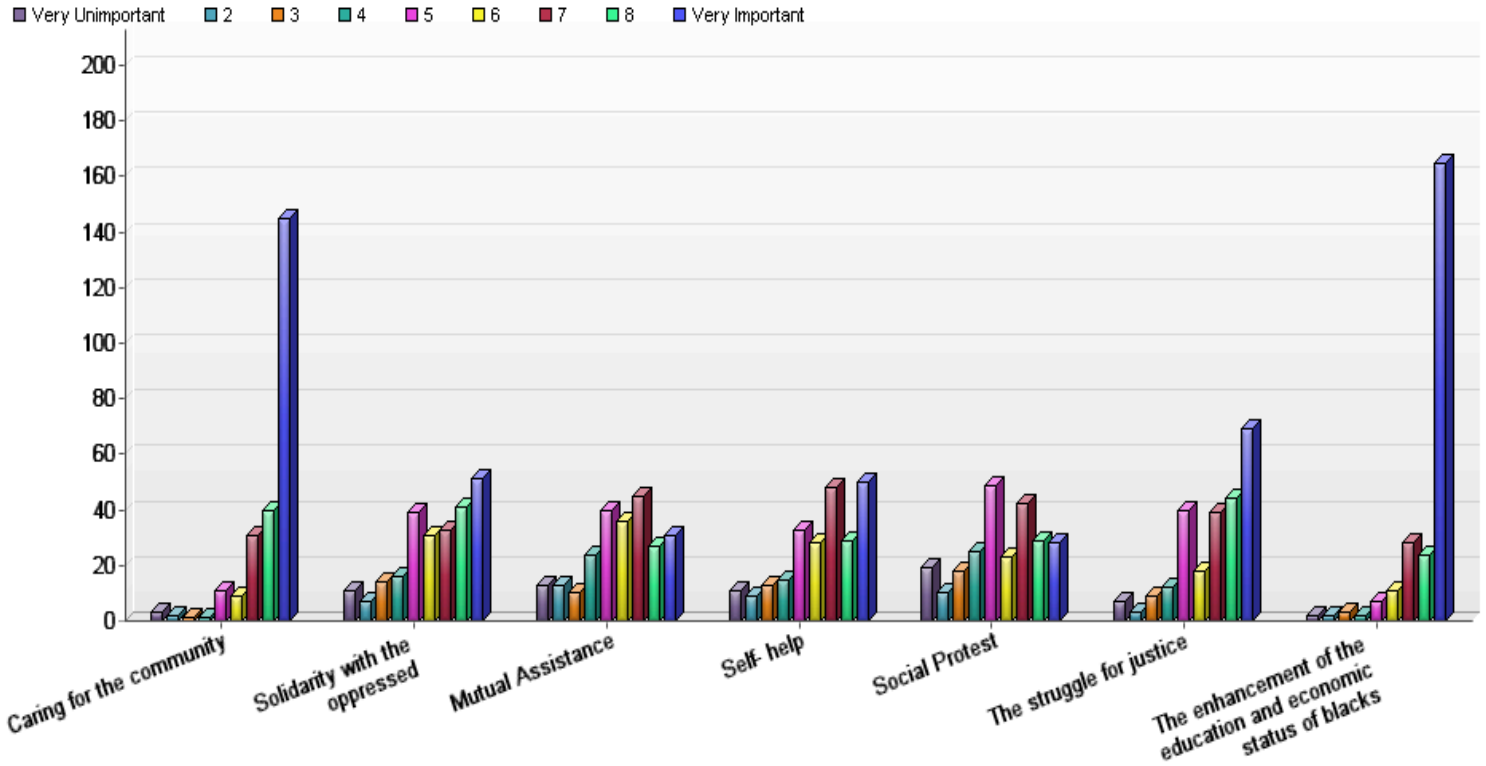


Answer		%
Church donations (Tithing, Offering, Special donation, etc.)		80%
Volunteer work through a non-profit		71%
Church Ministry Work		66%
Family donations to a cause and or non-profit		54%
Independent of church or organization		46%

Not only is black millennial giving an extension of family and community rearing, it is also done out of desire for educational advancement. When asked to identify with a list of motives that influence African American philanthropy, respondents chose “the enhancement of the education and economic status of blacks” as the most important motive for their giving. “Caring for the community” was the next most important followed by “the struggle for justice.”

Below: The following is a list of motives that influence African American philanthropy.

Please study the list carefully and then rate each motive on how important it is in your giving, where 1 = very unimportant and 9 = very important (Prince, 1994)



Question	Very Unimportant	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Very Important	Total Responses	Mean
Caring for the community	3	2	1	1	11	9	31	40	145	243	8.09
Solidarity with the oppressed	11	7	14	16	39	31	33	41	51	243	6.30
Mutual Assistance	13	13	10	24	40	36	45	27	31	239	5.82
Self- help	11	9	13	15	33	28	48	29	50	236	6.27
Social Protest	19	10	18	25	49	23	42	29	28	243	5.57
The struggle for justice	7	3	9	12	40	18	39	44	69	241	6.81
The enhancement of the education and economic status of blacks	2	2	3	2	7	11	28	24	165	244	8.18

Another demonstration of why black millennials give back is how they classify themselves as philanthropists. When given a list of seven general approaches of philanthropy or "Faces of Philanthropy" and asked to rank how much they identified with each, the responses were very telling.

The face of philanthropy black millennials most identify with by choosing "just like me" is the Altruist. "This face of philanthropy tends to focus on social causes and giving that provide a sense of purpose and personal fulfillment. They believe giving promotes spiritual growth (in this case, not religious-based). Giving is a moral imperative and everyone's responsibility" (Prince, 1994). The second most identified face of philanthropy respondents selected, as being "like me" are Communitarians and Repayers. Communitarian philanthropists give because of their sense of belonging to a social community. They give, not out of a sense of obligation, but because they consider non-profit organizations more effective at delivering social services and more attuned with community needs. They support cultural, human service, religious and educational organizations (Prince, 1994). Repayer philanthropists do good in return for what they have received in life. They think wealthy people have a special responsibility to be philanthropic in their actions and social outlook. Repayers insist on cost-effectiveness and want non-profit organizations to focus on client needs (Prince, 1994). And interestingly, the third most identified faces of philanthropy black millennials identified with by choosing "somewhat like me" are Socialites and The Devout. Socialites focus on doing good work or charitable giving of money because it can be fun. They are often members of a social class or group for which fundraising includes some form of socializing and entertainment. The authors acknowledge that Socialites are often charitable "at heart" (Prince, 1994). The Devout do good because it is God's

will. They believe that giving is a moral obligation. In their eyes, everyone needs to take responsibility for creating a better world and should not expect personal recognition for volunteering of time, talent or money (Prince, 1994).

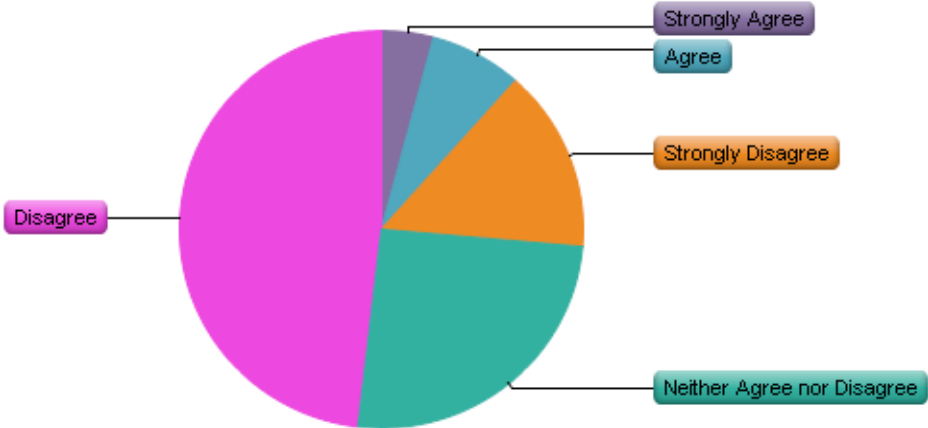
The abovementioned findings that uncover the why of black millennial giving validate the behaviors that guide traditional black philanthropy and community devotion. Black millennials didn't begin giving back as adults; many started this lifestyle as children and seek to continue to be part of the change that is taking place in their communities. These results also help to establish the philanthropic perspectives personified by black millennials, which can assuredly be valuable in communication and engagement strategies with this demographic.

Black Millennial Perceptions on Non-Profit Engagement

According to the aforementioned insight from sector leaders and black millennial civic leaders, the engagement challenges that exists between non-

profit institutions and black millennials is great. Supporting these perspectives are black millennials themselves. Of those surveyed, 65% of black millennials strongly disagree or disagree with the following statement: Non-profit organizations do enough to engage young, black volunteers and or donors.

Below: Do you agree non-profit organizations do enough to engage young, black volunteers and or donors?



Answer		%
Disagree		48%
Neither Agree nor Disagree		25%
Strongly Disagree		15%
Agree		7%
Strongly Agree		4%
Total		100%

Further, when asked to weigh in on this statement, “Non-profits do not do enough to recruit and engage with black millennials,” the majority of respondents selected the statements “Clearly describes my feelings” or “Mostly describes my feelings.” Conversely, the majority of respondents said these two statements “Mostly do not describe my feelings”: “Non-profits do enough to recruit and engage with black millennials,” and “Non-profits do more than enough to recruit and engage with black millennials.”

The sentiments of black millennials feeling left out of conversations and overlooked from non-profit cause work is a clear indicator of the gaps in communication that should be addressed.

“[Non-profits] miss out on volunteers, donors and connectors,” said focus group participant C.

Savage when asked what non-profits are missing out on when they do not engage with black millennials. Additionally, black millennial leader Amanda Ebokisia shared, “Non-profits have to really embrace change and really want to take calculated risks when it comes to engaging.

[They must] Pay attention to how the message is formed. Consistency with your brand also builds trust, and it builds reliability and that builds a stronger platform for donors higher retention rate for donors.”

As expressed in the aforementioned findings, African American millennials are active within their communities, particularly in areas that require time and leadership commitment. However, findings also strongly show that

**Recommendations for
Non-Profit Communication to
Black Millennials**

African American millennials do not feel organizations put forth enough efforts to engage them.

Evidence from these findings offers a platform to present recommendations in an effort to improve upon communication strategies of non-profit organizations to black millennials.

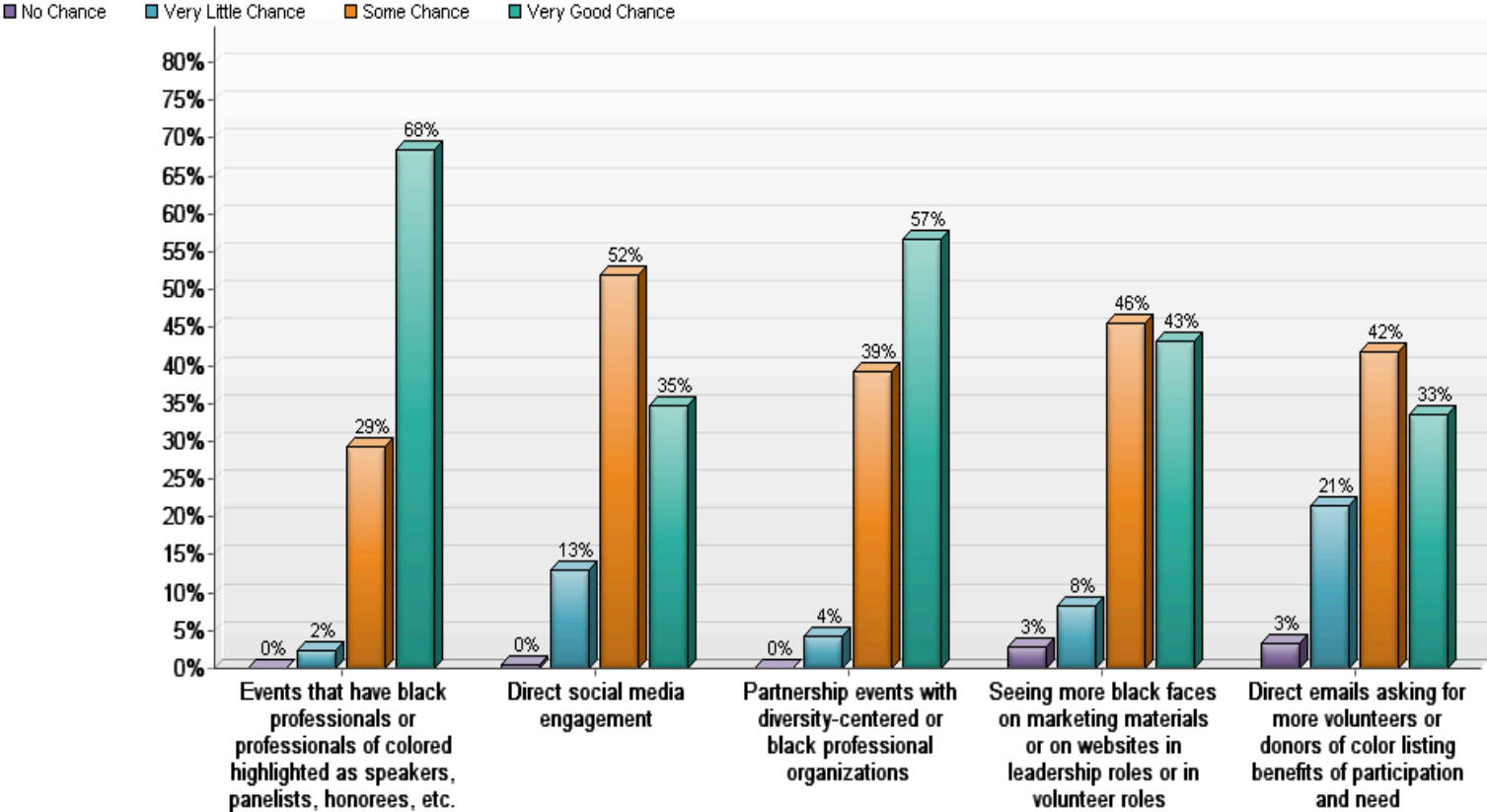
Opportunities for engagement from non-profits are possible. The following are recommendations based on findings for enriched engagement through communication strategies and tactics.

Recommended Strategy I: Leverage engagement activities that demonstrate

relationships and networking opportunities with key black leaders, networks, and organizations.

Civically-led black millennials need to see how non-profits are involved with those they feel they can relate to the most – other civically-led African Americans. When asked, “What are the chances you would get involved with an organization if it took part in the following diversity-based activities,” 68% of respondents said there was a very good chance they would be involved if the organization hosted events that have black professionals or professionals of color highlighted as speakers, panelists or honorees. Additionally, 57% of respondents said there would be a very good chance they would get involved with an organization if it hosted events in partnership with diversity-centered or black professional organizations.

Below: What are the chances you would get involved with an organization if it took part in the following diversity-based activities?

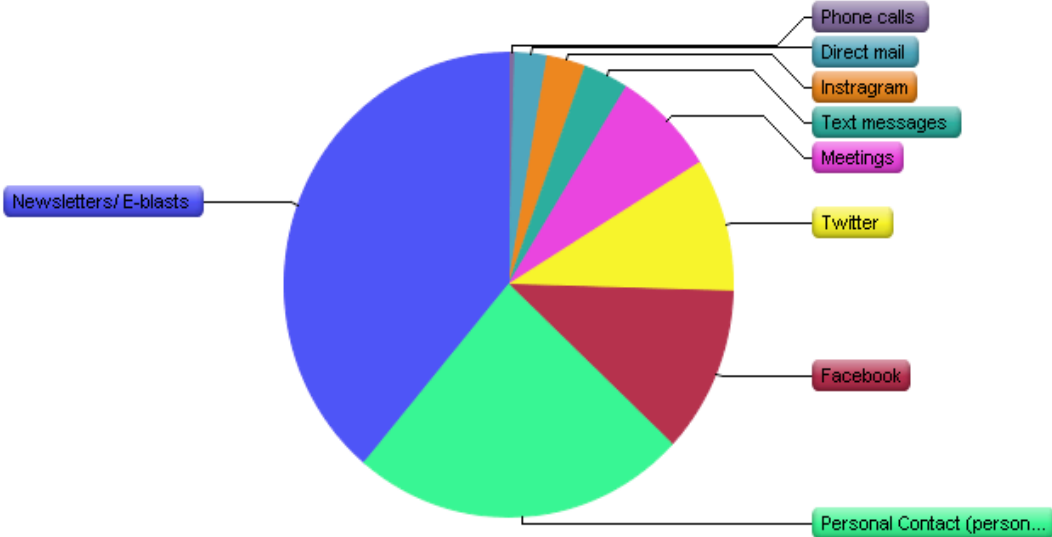


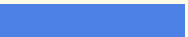







Sample Engagement Tactics to Leverage:

Recommended Sample Tactics:

1. Design a panel in partnership with a black professional organization featuring one or more black industry thought-leader, funder, executive, or someone of the like.
2. Host a networking reception or happy hour in partnership with one or more diversity-centered professional organizations.
3. During an annual fundraising event, honor a prominent African American who has been instrumental in the organization’s success, cause area or sector.

Below: *What is the best way to keep you engaged with an organization?*



Answer		%
Newsletters/ E-blasts		39%
Personal Contact (personal phone calls, personal one-on-one emails with staff, etc.)		24%
Facebook		12%
Twitter		9%
Meetings		7%
Text messages		3%
Instagram		3%
Direct mail		2%
Phone calls		0%
Total		100%

Recommended Strategy II: Increase visibility of African Americans in leadership or service roles to display diversity and inclusion within the organization. 89% of black millennials said there would be a “very good chance” or “some chance” they would get involved with an organization if they saw more black faces on marketing materials or on websites in leadership roles or in volunteer roles. This is a key indicator of these young professionals’ desire to know non-profits value members of their race in leadership and service roles. An increase in this capacity may lead to black millennials to believe they too can serve in those areas within the organization.

Recommended Sample Tactics:

1. Diversity Spotlight within printed and/or e-newsletters

Nothing says an organization values and celebrates its leadership more than highlighting them. Additionally, while overall black millennials reported newsletters and e-blasts as the best way to keep them engaged, it is by far the most popular method for black millennials 30-34 year-olds. This spotlight area can be used to showcase employees, board members, or even

volunteers of color, including African Americans, who help to make a difference within the organization.

2. Blog & Online Features of various black stakeholders

While similar to tactic 1, this feature with a picture(s) would live on the website of the organization. From board members to donors, using an online space to highlight black individuals as often as non-black individuals could help to increase interest from black millennials to become active.

Recommended Strategy III: Grow and build relationships with black millennials on social media.

Millennials occupy the technology space. This is also true for black millennials and how they stay engaged with non-profit organizations online. The age group of black millennials who prefer social media as the best mode of communication are millennials 20-24; where 41% chose the platforms of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to stay engaged. 30-34 year-olds prefer Facebook over Twitter and 25- 29 year-olds are equally engaged on Facebook and Twitter.

Recommended Sample Tactics:

1. Host Twitter chats on topics related to the organizational mission, programs or even upcoming events.
2. Create hashtags unique to the non-profit and include them in tweets to increase search engine optimization.

3. Develop social media campaigns or contests that require supporters to engage on the respective platform through activities such as picture posting, hashtag generated tweets, sharing stories on Facebook, etc.

Conclusion

Oftentimes millennials get a very bad rap within society (Adams, 2012). This can be due to age, career level, maturity or any number of other plausible reasons. Yet black millennials

get an even worse rap. Displays of young black people in the media are rarely positive (Desmond-Harris, 2012). This, coupled with donor views of black youth as “lazy and dumb,” according to a 2012 study by the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School, don’t help raise the bar of responsibility. Yet despite the negative news, there are black millennials who are helping to change the world. The research contained within this study is evidence not only the potential, but also the certainty that black millennials are taking their place within community leadership and philanthropy.

The examination of this research supports the first hypothesis, suggesting black millennials prefer to give back to causes they can most relate to in their communities equally in time and money and demonstrating both an extension of black philanthropy and a shift in traditional philanthropy. Through the examination of the behaviors and perceptions of black millennials there are strong correlations between their behaviors and traditional black philanthropy

behaviors. Based on the findings we can confidently attribute the giving behaviors of black millennials to the rich charitable foundation that exists within the black community. Further, the causes that matter most to black millennials are related to the disparities and societal inequities that greatly impact the black community: education, women and girls, and mentoring and youth enrichment. Understanding – with proven results – that black millennials prefer to give just as much in time as they do in money to the causes in their communities provides essential information that can be used in strategies and planning to draw in black millennials to action.

The examination of this research also provides strong support of the second hypothesis that non-profit diversity engagement and recruitment efforts are viewed as ineffective by black millennials, demonstrating opportunities for targeted communication strategies by non-profits. The responses of survey respondents and insight from key sector leaders sheds light on the inadequacies that exist, from a black millennial perspective, on how the demographic is being targeted in direct communication. As noted by millennial leader Amanda Ebokosia, “Non-profits have to engage with millennials, especially black millennials, by adjusting the way they communicate in all aspects. Whether it be [with] online or printed materials, they have to adjust the way they communicate. This means maintaining an active voice [on social media], showing passion, being enthusiastic and transparent with their work.”

Philanthropy to black millennials isn't just an action of check writing. It is also an act of giving time and leadership to effect change within the fabric of their communities. Throughout the research survey, focus group conversations and in-depth interviews of this study, it is evident

that the voices, perspectives, outlooks, and energy of black millennials are necessary to help eradicate the social issues that directly impact the black community. As such, deliberate efforts to engage black millennials should be made by non-profit organizations whose cause work focuses on key issues in the black community. An increase in engagement with black millennials has a strong probability to bring about increased donor funding, volunteer support, and board leadership.

CASE STUDIES

PROFILES OF YOUNG BLACK MODERN-DAY

PHILANTHROPISTS

“THE OBAMA GENERATION”

CAPITAL CAUSE

KEZIA WILLIAMS, CHAIR

WASHINGTON, DC

AGE: 30



The Organization: Founded in September 2009, Capital Cause is a fiscally sponsored non-profit organization that engages young philanthropists in both crowdfunding grants to build capacity for non-profits and crowdsourcing professional skills to address community issues. Capital Cause believes in philanthropy as an act of time and money. It focuses on the

cultivation of young professionals as philanthropists to create sustainable community giving and engagement.

The Work: In order to accomplish the mission of Capital Cause, its leadership and membership teams plan fundraisers where more than 50% of funds go to member-selected non-profit organizations. Capital Cause also plans service events and one-day service projects that can be completed in less than 5 hours. It also hosts signature giving circles projects, which are short-

term high-impact projects completed by five to seven individuals. Lastly, supporters of Capital Cause are encouraged to become members with a donation of thirty dollars and a commitment of five hours.

[SMALL CONTRIBUTIONS + QUALITY VOLUNTEER TIME = MILLENNIAL ENGAGEMENT SUCCESS]

The Formula: After raising \$250,000 in less than 90 days while on the 2008 Barack Obama Campaign for Change, Kezia Williams and the four other founders of Capital Cause learned quickly that, “small contributions made a really big impact over a short amount of time.” “We targeted young professionals because we are young professionals,” Williams shared about reaching the millennial generation in 2008. It seemed as if the formula of keeping fundraisers to fewer than fifty dollars per person and asking young professionals to donate fewer than five hours each was an effective strategy to engage millennials. The five young women asked themselves, “instead of small contributions of time and money to benefit a candidate, why not use the same concept to benefit a cause?” This formula for low-cost, high-energy, and high-impact service projects has benefited Washington, DC since March 2010.

The Members: Over 90% of Capital Cause members and volunteers are black.

“[Capital Cause] provides an avenue of service for those who are serious about giving back,” shared Williams. The members are passionate and they “come ready to rollup their sleeves to give back.” After year one, the organization’s leadership learned that members wanted to give back more in time and surprisingly, even more in money, despite their limited resources. “The

more opportunities we have, the more passionate they [are] about getting involved,” Williams explained.

The Leadership: All eleven members of the leadership team are millennials, with five focusing on strategy and six on operations.

The Impact: One in five people live in poverty in Washington, DC, and there is a 42% poverty rate in the city’s hard-hit Ward 8 (DC Fiscal Policy Institute, 2011). “112,000 people live in poverty which means less than \$24,000 income for a family of four,” Williams said of Wards 7 and 8, DC’s poorest areas. In 2012 alone, Capital Cause provided 5,500 hours of service to Washington, DC, particularly in Wards 7 & 8. This accomplishment served as a catalyst for Capital Cause to be recognized by District Mayor Vincent Gray, who declared November 14, 2012 to be Young Philanthropist Day in Washington, DC.

The way to serve DC is simple for Capital Cause: find a need and help to fix it.

In 2011 and 2012, Capital Cause focused on reducing educational inequity and eradicating poverty. “Our young philanthropists have really been eager to apply their skills to help eradicate educational inequity by enabling non-profits to fundraise more effectively,” said Williams. This includes creating solutions, and building capacity, which it did for Enjoy Reading, a Ward 8 non-profit. Capital Cause developed corporate outreach materials that enabled Enjoy Reading to solicit new grants above \$600. It provided a similar service to Mary McLeod Bethune

Academy, a Ward 5 public school where 80% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Capital Cause's work enabled the Academy to solicit a \$600,000 grant.

Capital Cause also does direct service work. In 2012, a CC team worked with two Ward 7 & 8 public schools to address an immediate need of clean clothes for the children. Through a giving circles project, members washed 140 loads of clothes for needy families. Capital Cause also created direct impact in early 2013 when it asked 500 donors to donate \$10 to give books to a school in Ward 8 where over 80% of students could not read. As a result, 2,000 students got books and literacy supply kits to help them read.

Capital Cause young philanthropists show up "where they can meet a need where a need exists."

Black Millennial Influence on Cause Work:

When asked why black millennials are so engaged with the work of her organization, Williams said:

"A lot of us [are] first generation college students and we are working in jobs where we have some disposable incomes and time unlike previous generations. We are really empowered to create the change we want to see from the ground up. Whenever we are able to effectively able to communicate what the need is [to our members], we always see a huge response."

[“WE ARE POISED TO CREATE CHANGE BECAUSE WE HAVE THE TIME AND DISPOSABLE INCOME TO DO SO. WE HAVE THE WILL AND PASSION TO THINK THAT THROUGH OUR COLLECTIVE ACTION, WE CAN REALLY CREATE CHANGE.”- K. WILLIAMS]

“MIXING FASHION & SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE FOR CHANGE”

KARYN BRIANNE WATKINS
& LOVETTE AJAYI
FOUNDERS OF THE RED
PUMP PROJECT
CHICAGO, IL
EST. SINCE MARCH 2009
AGES: 29 & 28,
RESPECTIVELY



The Organization: Karyn Watkins and Lovette Ajayi, who have been best friends since their days as undergraduates, have

fueled their friendship with their passion for the education and advocacy work of HIV & AIDS prevention for young women. They knew in order to engage their millennial peers, it would take more than a message, it would take something they could all relate to: A Red Pump.

The Inspiration: While in college, Ajayi learned that twenty of her friend’s cousins in Malawi, Southeast Africa, were orphaned because of HIV/AIDS. This made her begin to pay attention to the epidemic in the United States. “I came up with the idea of doing something around HIV/AIDS and red shoes...it was a easy connection. Women love shoes and red is the color that

represents AIDS,” said Ajayi. It was the perfect idea to put the two together and start the conversation about HIV/AIDS prevention. When Ajayi went to Watkins about the idea, Watkins loved it! “HIV is something that is completely preventable with education and proper understanding; there was something we could do here,” remembered Watkins. Both were bloggers and decided to bring social media into the idea. Soon, what had started as a simple campaign with fifty bloggers posting about HIV/AIDS awareness turned into 135 bloggers joining their campaign.

The Cause Work: Now a registered non-profit organization, The Red Pump Project has grown to include an Ambassador Network throughout the country that advocates for its mission and hosts events on every major National HIV/AIDS awareness day - including National AIDS Testing Day, World AIDS Day, and National Black Women and Girls AIDS Day. “Taking a look at the statistics of this disease and knowing the impact and watching people push it to the side...this is still a big deal and no one is talking about it,” Watkins said, sharing why she remains connected to the cause. But it is the impact the disease has on women and girls that really drives the work The Red Pump Project does. “It doesn't have to be so bad,” Ajayi said emphatically. “It is 100% preventable and there are easy things we can do to curb the spread of it. We can all make a choice that can save our lives,” Ajayi concluded.

Millennial Responsibility and Accountability: For Ajayi, millennial responsibility is simple. “Everyone should have a sense of responsibility about something, this just happens to be mine. If Red Pump can stop one person from contracting this disease then we have done our job. As millennials, whatever our cause of choice is or whatever we feel most passionate about

because the change we need to see starts with you,” she said. Watkins too believes in responsibility, but she also thinks that she and Ajayi are accountable to their peers. “We do feel accountable for getting the word out there; personal accountability. Luvvie talks to her siblings and I talk to my friends. Then spreading that to others and motivating our peers. We know what our peers are capable of. We know how smart they are. We know how committed they are. We said we’re going to take this on ourselves. By virtue of us doing that then we are accountable because people recognize us and associate us with the cause so they hold us accountable as well.” This sense of internal and external accountability keeps the founding duo on task and dedicated to the work they do.

[WE KNOW WHAT OUR PEERS ARE CAPABLE OF. WE KNOW HOW SMART THEY ARE. WE KNOW HOW COMMITTED THEY ARE. - K. WATKINS]

Black Millennial Engagement & Social Media: Through the power of social media, The Red Pump Project has been able to engage millennials in a space that they already use and in which they feel comfortable. “Red Pump has been built on social media. I can’t imagine doing the work we do without Twitter, without Facebook,” shared Ajayi. From Twitter chats to local ambassador events, the message of prevention is spread by “breaking down the barriers,” as Watkins explained. But it's the strength of the Red Pump Project Ambassadors that exemplifies the desire of black millennials to advocate for Ajayi and Watkins’ cause. “They reach out to us because they want to be ambassadors. They want to lead programming in their cities. They

reach out to us with ideas and what they can do to spread the message. The Ambassadors have been key for us,” Watkins added.

Millennial Financial Support:

Watkins and Ajayi initially funded the Red Pump Project as a personal endeavor. But as the cause has grown, the efforts have been funded by other black millennials. “Red Pump is on the shoulders of black millennials who support our work, who come to our events and pay the entry fee to hear about our work- and see some fashion while there,” Ajayi explained.

[“RED PUMP IS ON THE SHOULDERS OF BLACK
MILLENNIALS WHO SUPPORT OUR WORK...- L. AJAYI]

“BORN TO LEAD”

AMANDA EBOKOSIA, FOUNDER
OF THE GEM PROJECT, INC.

NEWARK, NJ

AGES: 27



Leadership isn't anything new for Amanda Ebokosia.

From thought-leadership through platforms that include *Forbes* and *Black Enterprise* to being featured as a member of the 2013 *Forbes* 30 Under 30, Ebokosia is leaving her mark as a trailblazer in her generation.

Driven to Lead: When it comes to leadership, “It comes down to having the need to change the perception of disadvantaged or at-risk youth. Really changing the perception of how they see themselves as being equal players and investors in their own success,” said Ebokosia.

Through the GEM Project, Ebokosia and her team help to foster leadership skills within young people between the ages of four and twenty-four. When Ebokosia realized young people in targeted communities didn't realize what leadership meant, she began to see how this connected to a lack of self-confidence, self-esteem and academic performance. The GEM Project youth are allowed to “become Picassos of their own fate,” explained Ebokosia, “I believe that their views start to change. When their views start to change, the way they view the world changes.”

[“ALL CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD WHEN IT COMES TO SUCCESS AND HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT THEMSELVES.”- A. EBOKOSIA]

The Impact: As part of its philosophy of skill building for success, The GEM Project involves its youth in program execution. This allows it to provide educational programs that meet the social and personal needs of young people, while also reinforcing its mission of leadership development. By putting leadership first, “we increase confidence and organizational skills which increases their scholarly impact,” shared Ebokosia. To date the GEM Project has educated more than 1,200 youth.

Black Millennial Engagement: Staffed completely by millennials under 30, The GEM Project thrives off the energy and passion of this generation. “About eighty to ninety percent of our staff are black millennials. We pretty much mirror the community that we serve,” Ebokosia explained. But it was never planned this way. Ebokosia wanted to simply change the perception of how young people saw leaders. Yet she believes the engagement of the young people is truly due to self-identity, “when we run our programs, they [the youth] see themselves in us and are more attracted to join.”

Millennial Financial Support: With most of the funding of the GEM Project coming from black millennials, the programming relies heavily on the support of donors.

**RECOMMENDED TARGET BLACK MEDIA OR MEDIA THAT
HIGHLIGHT BLACK PHILANTHROPY TO PITCH STORIES &
EVENTS**

Black Gives Back- blackgivesback.com

Black Celebrity Giving- blackcelebritygiving.com

Clutch Magazine Online- ClutchMag.com

emPower Magazine- empowermagazine.com

Friends of Ebonie - friendsofebonie.com

The Griot- Thegriot.com

Haute Giving- haute-giving.com

Huffington Post- Black Voices- huffingtonpost.com/black-voices

Madame Noire- madamenoire.com

The Network Journal- tnj.com

The Root- theroot.com

Afro American Newspaper- afro.com

Black Enterprise- blackenterprise.com

EBONY Magazine - ebony.com

Essence Magazine- essence.com

UPTOWN Magazine- uptownmagazine.com

Online

Online & Print

RECOMMENDED DIVERSITY-CENTERED OR AFRICAN
AMERICAN PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS FOR NON-
PROFITS TO ENGAGE WITH

African American Board Leadership Institute - aabli.org

Association of Black Foundation Executives - abfe.org

Black Philanthropic Alliance - blackphilanthropicalliance.org

Capital Cause - capitalcause.org

Community Investment Network - thecommunityinvestment.org

Echoing Green - echoinggreen.com

Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy - epip.org

The EnVest Foundation - investfoundation.org

Friends of Ebonie - friendsofebonie.com

The Liberty Hill Foundation - libertyhill.org

The National Coalition of Black Civic Participation - www.ncbcp.org

National Urban League- nul.org

National Association of the Advancement of Colored People- naacp.org

The Open Society Campaign for Black Male Achievement - opensocietyfoundations.org

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