The People's Practice

ISSUE #01, AUGUST 2023:
THE PAST IS PAST DUE.
THE FUTURE IS 30 DAYS PENDING.
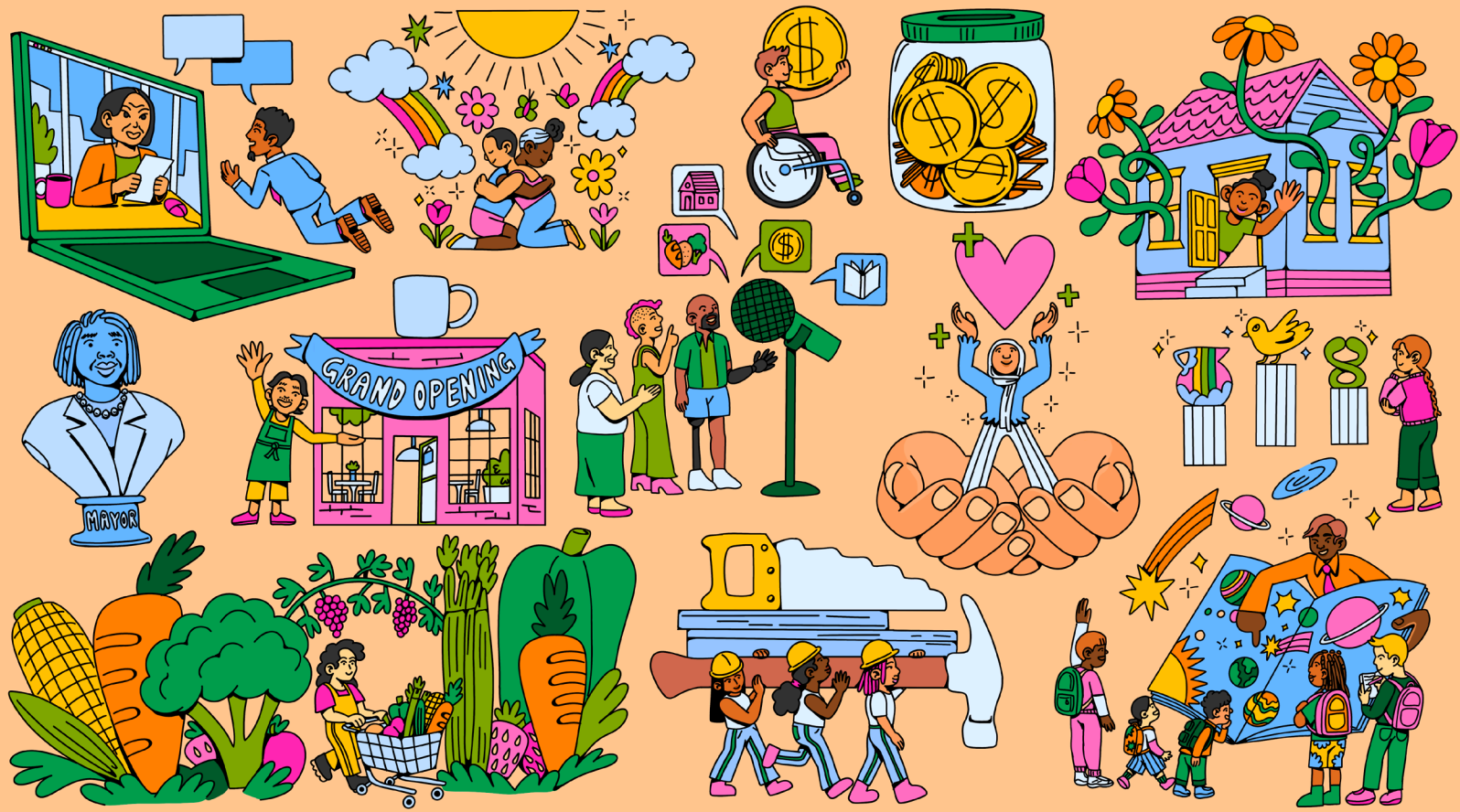
ARTWORK BY MARCO TIRADO

In today's community development sector, we as practitioners are all time travelers hurdling back and forward without a user manual for the time machine.

Ten years of foreclosure data. Year three of the five-year master plan. Four-week window for "community engagement" with residents who've been self-organizing for the past decade. Final report due in 30 days. Helping the resident that just got a 30-day eviction notice. Trying to shore up the finances of the small business that's been anchoring the corridor for 60 years … before community development was even a "thing". Working to dismantle 400 years of structural racism in one-year grant periods.

We need a better user manual. We need a better time machine. Historic community development and planning policies have ended up concentrating the impacts of structural racism and poverty within narrow geographies. If we don't understand and reckon with the history that shaped community development – really understand it and really reckon with it – we won't be well-equipped to address the consequences of decades of intentional segregation. If we don't give the sector the space to put aside at least some urgent needs and pressing deadlines, we're not going to have the time to build a collective vision of what a better future can look like – and that severely limits our ability to chip away at wealth disparities, health disparities, and disparities in how much voice and power there are between white people and people of color in the United States.

In this issue, we step back from the 30-day deadline to look at the bigger picture. We invite you to review our History of the Sector research and then to join our writers and artists in exploration. What does the origin of the community development sector tell us about what we should be focusing on today? What could a future with anti-racist community development look like, feel like, result in? Who's holding space in the sector today for radical imagination, and what does that look like? Who holds the power in community development to dictate our "collective when"?

These are big questions, but important ones if we want to move from lurching from task to task without a clear view of the bigger structural picture, where we've been, and where we're trying to go. Step away from the e-mail, step away from the phone, and join us in a better time travel. Onward.

ARTWORK BY MARCO TIRADO

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT: MARCO TIRADO

"A brighter future is one where the voices of people most marginalized take center stage. Their needs are heard, and their growth is prioritized. Support is given freely from their communities and beyond. Hoping for more than survival; demanding to thrive."

PERSPECTIVES IN PLACE:
MOVING FORWARD, SEEKING HOME
JOO HEE POMPLUN

As a coalition organizer with a health and healing justice lens, privileged to work with and learn from amazing community leaders of the Twin Cities at the intersection of housing, small business, climate, workforce, tenant rights, transit corridors, and narrative shifting, anti-racist community development embraces all of what I do.

Note that I did not pluralize intersection. Anti-racist community development is not a solo, uni-linear act. It cannot be achieved in one effort, by one sector, or at a single moment in time. It's an ensemble across disciplines. As the Anti-Racist Community Development research named, the anti-racist approach will require new frameworks, such as ones that lift up and resource "cross-sector and holistic strategies that integrate arts + culture, environmental justice, and public health."

I start with envisioning what anti-racist community development looks like. It's overcoming the disproportionate investments in streets and streetlighting of one neighborhood to another. It's investments sparked by publicly funded transit lines that connect jobs and affordable housing to poverty-ending careers. It's placemaking developments that build upon the vibrant communities and cultures who have made a place home for generations. It's where the rules of how we engage each other are co-created and not just kept by one person until the rules are violated. It is land back to Indigenous communities. And it is reparations as defined by the communities historically and perpetually harmed.

I then imagine what that feels like. As communities of color, we endure innumerable microaggressions throughout our days, in addition to too often outstanding aggressions, that cause our jaws to clench, chests to tighten, and vision to narrow to only what's in front of us. Anti-racist community development can be found in small random acts of kindness such as vacant lot cleanups and alley beautification, which then unconsciously penetrate our spirits in messages of respect and love. Ultimately, anti-racist community development as a feeling settles our nervous system and lets us rest into everything the term "home" embodies.

At The Alliance, we promote anti-racist community development through affirming principles, criteria, and practices of equitable development responding to the question: "How can development repair past harms and contribute to a stronger, more inclusive and thriving community?"

In 2016, the Twin Cities community of Minnesota released the Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard (Scorecard) to proactively define equitable development in community terms, and thus creating a framework for developers, planners, and communities across the United States that can be adapted to local visions.

The Scorecard desilos investments in our communities and forces a comprehensive perspective of development to acknowledge a development is only as equitable as it promotes not only one area of development, but how it impacts equity principles of the following six areas:

1. Community Power
2. Economic Development
3. Land Use/Environment
4. Housing
5. Transportation
6. Livability

As communities across the country picked up the Scorecard, which initially only had the first five principle areas, it was clear a less measurable but implicitly essential element was missing – livability, which can only be achieved by acknowledging community history and centering community power and community healing. Therefore, "Livability" was added as a sixth principle in 2021.

The Equitable Development Principles and Scorecard is more than a Scorecard. It is a tool for communication, co-creation, shared vision, shared language, and grounding. It is an organizing tool that requires the input of community and lays out community vision into concrete measurable actions community development projects, policies, investments, and practices can set forth to meet.

Anti-racist community development is found at the intersection of these six principles in cross-sector, holistic strategies. And the vision and work goes beyond a beautiful development; it is the intentionality applied to the interactions the development will have with our communities into the future so that we may realize the experiences and feelings I and others seek to be at home.

Joo Hee Pomplun serves as Executive Director of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, a multi-organization coalition building power across the intersections of geography, race, culture, and issues in the Twin Cities region of Minnesota to eliminate systems of oppression and advance our collective liberation. They have been impacting community development through organizing for over 25 years, and currently lead the Equitable Development Principles & Scorecard learning table at The Alliance.

The author is responding to the findings shared in the Anti-Racist Community Development Research Project, produced with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to increase understanding of structural racism in community development and pathways to racially equitable outcomes that promote health equity. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of RWJF or ThirdSpace Action Lab.

"THE VISION AND WORK GOES BEYOND A BEAUTIFUL DEVELOPMENT; IT IS THE INTENTIONALITY APPLIED TO THE INTERACTIONS THE DEVELOPMENT WILL HAVE WITH OUR COMMUNITIES INTO THE FUTURE ..."

THE PAST IS PRESENT
IN(TER)VIEW WITH NATHANIEL SMITH

 "Almost by definition, anti-racist community development work has to account for the historic oppression that residents of color + the organizations that serve them have faced. If we don't acknowledge the history of structural racism + anti-racist work in the past, it's going to be that much harder to build the future we're aiming for."

– Anti-Racist Community Development High-Level Findings

We sat down with Nathaniel Smith of the Partnership for Southern Equity to discuss the impact of history on community development and how it shows up in the sector.

What role do you think that history plays or should play within the field of community development?

Nathaniel: A James Baldwin quote I always use is, "History is the present." Many of the challenges faced by Black communities and other historically disinvested communities of color stem from the nation's origins in stolen land and labor, whether it be through eminent domain, slavery, or low wages. Understanding history is key to addressing the root causes of inequities today.

What role have community development corporations (CDCs) played historically, and how has that changed?

Nathaniel: Just like structural racism shows up in different ways, CDCs show up differently in communities as well. In some places, CDCs have been platforms for community agency and advocacy, while in others they have helped accelerate gentrification. Much depends on their relationship to power structures and financial institutions. When it comes to land use and development, CDCs are happy to work with financial institutions, but they don't have to be driven by them. In some places, the CDCs have been designed to primarily serve the financial, political power, and civic power systems rather than to be correctors of these systems.

Given the historic tie between slave plantations and prisons, could you speak to the linkage between the prison industrial complex and rural community development?

Nathaniel: Prisons, especially in rural areas, have been used as an economic development strategy, warehousing Black and brown bodies as a commodity. It's a shame because these apparatuses are created through government dollars; you're using prison labor to make profit, and you're counting prisoners in the Census, despite the benefits of being in that community not being equitably distributed. The equitable thing to do would be counting them in the neighborhoods they're from, even though they're not physically in the neighborhood. In the South, it's very prevalent; it's like we created an opportunity for folks to become slaves by being arrested.

You've mentioned a "values revolution" as a key part of organizing work. Could you speak more to that?

Nathaniel: Policy is a reflection of the values of people in power. Therefore, values change must precede or accompany policy change for it to be effective and lasting. For us to win, we must replace dominant values and a worldview of white oppression with a different worldview. We focus much of our work around Black liberation because we believe there is a Black worldview to be lifted up. The white worldview tends to be extractive, transactional, built on a culture of scarcity, and not connected to our planet. To replace that worldview with a new worldview, there must be a values revolution.

You mentioned a focus on Black liberation, which often includes reparative frameworks and healing. What is the relationship between reparations and reparative approaches and healing?

Nathaniel: Many people are using the term "reparations" when talking about restitution. Reparations require not just money, but also repentance, opportunity for healing, and repairing the spirit of harmed communities. Restitution focuses mainly on financial compensation. Both are needed, but reparative justice is more transformative. Repair requires work of the heart, creating opportunity for people to see each other and understand the harm and the damage that communities have faced. I'm not saying that restitution is not important, but we need a reparative agenda, and I think those are just two different things.

Closing the racial wealth gap is often discussed as a goal and approach for advancing racial equity. So I'm just thinking about how you would characterize that distinction between addressing racial wealth divide and achieving Black liberation?

Nathaniel: Wealth does not equal freedom. Being free means that you're just as much willing to give something up as you are to get something. I don't think a lot of people understand that. The big challenge around the wealth gap is that Black folks and historically disinvested communities of color are still centering our value in whiteness. To get free, we must stop doing this and resist the worldview that hasn't benefited us.

We have to translate and replace public decisions and policies harming our communities with policies that heal our communities, and then we can move into repentance. As a sector, we need to position people to acknowledge what they've done and work with the people they harmed to move forward. Then we move to the repair of people and places and begin the last piece around reimagining and reinventing a world aligned with our values as a community. Sometimes the work is not linear, but when people choose not to do it, we see efforts to overturn things like Roe v. Wade or the Civil Rights Act.

Are there any closing thoughts you have for folks doing anti-racist community development work, particularly practitioners?

Nathaniel: We recently acquired EcoDistricts, where we're developing a new protocol centered around racial equity and land use and development, and are reminded that you can't do effective community economic development work without understanding the effects of a country built on stolen land and labor reverberating today. You need this to successfully create communities that are reparative and healing for Black people and historically disinvested communities of color. You must do your homework and read and learn. You must understand the ripple effect that we still deal with today and be willing to disrupt that, but you can't disrupt something that you don't know about. You can't just be a developer. You also have to be a systems thinker, a multi-solver, all of these things. It's not just about building units and organizing people. You have to understand your work within the context of a system.

Nathaniel Smith is the founder and Chief Equity Officer of the Atlanta-based Partnership for Southern Equity. A child of Southern Freedom Movement Activists, Smith works to move forward an equity agenda that advances just outcomes that are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of communities and erases the barriers that stand in the way of people reaching their full potential.

The interviewee is responding to the findings shared in the Anti-Racist Community Development Research Project, produced with support from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to increase understanding of structural racism in community development and pathways to racially equitable outcomes that promote health equity. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of RWJF or ThirdSpace Action Lab.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT: GREGG DEAL

Free (top left)
Native people of this continent have been subject to the perception of our existence, rather than the reality of our existence. Racism exists outward, as it does for other marginalized groups, but there is an internal passive aggressive level of racism that is often only viewed by the receiver of these micro-aggressions. This perception playing into every part of informing our existence. This piece is using a photo of a Shoshone man from the very early 20th century, playing into the obvious place of relic. This piece is meant to bring a seemingly old image into a space that is inherently modern, offsetting the very idea that this man is old, or even part of this stereotypical perception. The very idea that a perceived old image can exist in a modern piece and look as though he belongs in mind, body and spirit is the result of true equality, given through the tenets of anti-racist community action. Can you imagine?

Sacred Hope (top right)
While Native perception is a legitimately difficult thing to consider, as we traverse that perception, we must consider that gender makes a difference. The sacredness of our women, non-binary, and two spirit people undermines the colonial concept that we are, as a people, inherently not worth anything. The divinity of our people, culturally, politically and socially is assured, and it is important we not only never forget, but that we must help this continent's citizens understand it as well. Equal consideration feeds into this understanding of cultural value and sustains the ideas of community-based racial equality for all.

Sustainable Equality (following page)
In thinking in terms of a worldwide effort to anti-racism, finding sustainability in it, allowing room for equality, solidarity, and community, a shout for the positivity of these things was my main purpose of this. Frequently working within the old propagandist graphic style, bringing something forward that is modern, but also finds quarter in the words that stand out to me most. Generally, I find things that make the most sense to me personally, but wanted to move to a place that was more inclusive, more open, and easy to connect to in the discussion at hand.

SUSTAINABLE EQUALITY

COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

PERSPECTIVES IN PLACE: OUR GRANDPARENTS' DREAMS, OUR GRANCHILDRENS' BIRTHRIGHTS

MORDECAI CARGILL

"You could get everything you needed between St. Clair and Superior, and at night it was lit up like Broadway," says Peter Lee, one of our Glenville elders. Every majority Black urban area in the US has a neighborhood like Glenville, and chances are the same pattern of decline and disinvestment. Our Anti-Racist Community Development research found what many of us already know intuitively – that systems have "explicitly targeted investment to white households and white-majority communities, with corresponding generational and systematic underinvestment in communities of color."

I'm Mordecai Cargill, a Glenville native and the co-founder and creative director of ThirdSpace Action Lab. ThirdSpace Action Lab is a multidisciplinary research and strategy design firm that works with clients and collaborators to advance racial equity and create more liberated spaces for Black people. My inspiration comes from Glenville, an aspirational destination, a community where Black people sought and found glimpses of the good life.

In 2009, I left Glenville to attend Yale University majoring in African American Studies with a concentration in Black Culture in the 20th Century. I relished in the legacy of Black Power activists and artists who built alternative institutions to meet the holistic needs of Black people and Black community – the kinds of visionaries who birthed the community development sector. What I learned in school affirmed what I was seeing and gave me the language to describe what was happening – policymakers and urban planning practitioners made decisions that created these distinctly Black neighborhoods that are characterized by concentrated poverty, disinvestment, and blight. These are the conditions that our lauded Black artists were reacting to; they were organizing to change it. This convergence of creative and productive power led me to community development.

I came back to Cleveland in 2013, moved to Glenville in 2016. In 2018, my co-founder Evelyn Burnett and I launched ThirdSpace Action Lab. We understand that the status quo does not accurately address the nuances of Black life. We are passionate about nourishing places where Black artists, organizers, and community builders dedicate their talents to making the world a better place for Black people.

"WHAT I LEARNED IN SCHOOL AFFIRMED WHAT I WAS SEEING AND GAVE ME THE LANGUAGE TO DESCRIBE WHAT WAS HAPPENING – POLICYMAKERS AND URBAN PLANNING PRACTITIONERS MADE DECISIONS THAT CREATED THESE DISTINCTLY BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS THAT ARE CHARACTERIZED BY CONCENTRATED POVERTY, DISINVESTMENT, AND BLIGHT."

Across Third Space's literature review and interviews, we heard detailed perspectives on how community development history continues to reverberate in the field today. Pretty soon, I noticed a pattern — despite structural racism, Black people survived and built strong communities and institutions. Although I'm a Black history enthusiast, I know that focusing too intensely on the past can be a convenient balm, a signal of dissatisfaction with the present. Preoccupation with how things were can keep us from what is, and more importantly, what we can strive toward. We must breathe life into memory to make it move, to push things forward. As our research named, "if we don't acknowledge the history of structural racism and anti-racist work in the past, it's going to be that much harder to build the future we're aiming for." This is very much the sankofa principle of looking back in order to go forward.

Interviewees in this research shared that truly anti-racist community development means rewarding "bolder, more creative approaches that are deeply rooted in community context and built from the priorities and solutions of the people that live in those communities, particularly residents of color and residents living with low incomes." To realize our vision for the future of Black neighborhoods, we need to give space, time, and resources to residents and practitioners to imagine what community development could be … and that starts with candid, sector-wide dialogue about where things stand, where we want to get to, and what we need to close that gap.

I know that whatever happens next cannot overlook the impact of Black folks and our rich cultural, artistic, and organizing history. Our imagination has outpaced "the good old days"; our modern strengths will summon the great right now.

Mordecai Cargill is the Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer of ThirdSpace Action Lab and ThirdSpace Reading Room. He previously served as the Director of Strategy, Research, and Impact at Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, a community development funding intermediary committed to fostering inclusive neighborhoods of choice and opportunity throughout the city of Cleveland. Mordecai earned his BA in African American Studies from Yale University, with a concentration in Black Culture in the 20th Century.

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PRINCIPLES on DISPLAY.

Anti-racist community development **practice** requires anti-racist community development **principles** - values systems that incentivize equitable approaches and disincentivizes predatory and extractive approaches.

Status quo community development is race neutral.

That makes it harder for the sector to address root causes of racism, poverty, and disinvestment.

Anti-racist community development is race conscious and race explicit.

This could result in more effective and durable approaches, as well as more structural solutions.

Interviewees in our research named five core principles of doing anti–racist community development work, as well as recommendations for keeping the community development sector principled for the long haul.

See the full set of Principles on Display posters at:

WWW.THEPEOPLESPRACTICE.ORG/PRINCIPLES/

PERSPECTIVES IN PLACE: THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISN'T NEUTRAL

EVELYN BURNETT

In my journey from a community development funder to a practitioner, I saw that many of us don't fit within traditional definitions of community development. That exclusion is not by chance; it is intentional. The community development ecosystem is hyper-professionalized and disproportionately focused on housing development, resulting in a narrow, exclusionary definition of the field and underrepresentation of diverse experiences and perspectives among practitioners. When we work within narrow definitions of community development, and thus develop narrow solutions, we perpetuate racist practices.

ThirdSpace Action Lab was born out of an understanding that one-size solutions to specific, endemic issues doesn't work in community development. Our sector has worked hard to standardize, to "build capacity", to "model best practices", to make our work uniform, sterile, and above all, neutral. Neutrality, however, doesn't acknowledge that folks don't experience equity in service provision. Neutrality doesn't honor the history or culture or assets unique to Youngstown or Selma or Oakland. Neutrality reinforces the comfort of the powerful and reduces our collective capacity to hold ourselves and others in community development accountable. I am calling for my peers in race-conscious community development to be more radical, more direct, more connected, and most importantly, more accountable. So what does accountability in community development look like? I'm glad you asked.

Accountability in Community Development

Experimentation
We have been socialized to believe that the problems are just too big and that there are no viable, innovative solutions or ideas, but rather the status quo approaches will solve issues over time. We have to name this falsity and tap into our most radical imagination and commit to experimenting with new ideas and reconsidering old ones. We must reject the American notion of rugged individualism and embrace Nguzu Saba principles like unity, collective work, responsibility, and creativity. Our Anti-Racist Community Development research found that the sector needs to create "infrastructure that increases capacity and knowledge sharing about cross-sector work and policy reforms that knock down statutory + process barriers that keep work siloed," to create this kind of space for creativity.

> "NEUTRALITY REINFORCES THE COMFORT OF THE POWERFUL AND REDUCES OUR COLLECTIVE CAPACITY TO HOLD OURSELVES AND OTHERS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTABLE."

Recommitment

Community development is driven by invisible hands that are not accountable to communities and their residents. When community development over-emphasizes "technical experts far removed from lived community experience," it reinforces patterns of paternalism and often misses the abundance of assets that exist even in places that have been chronically under-supported. We must rediscover the beauty and what makes our communities unique and then recommit and invest in our communities to recreate places we're proud that we can live, work, play and grow old in.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is essential if we want to see change in our communities. It may mean waiting in long lines to vote; attending city council meetings; paying Black, Indigenous, and Latino businesses more for their services or goods to allow them to compete; helping neighbors maintain their lawn; or boycotting stores that mistreat residents the list goes on. But if enough of us do some of these things, we will see results. Steps like these are the building blocks for a collective future. Our trusted ecosystem of community development practitioners often reference the Black Power Movement's "emphasis on community development as a vehicle for self-determination and for intentional disruption of past racist approaches to policy making."

I feel strongly that there can be joy in every step of this process; in fact, our survival relies on us experiencing joy in struggle and celebrating our creativity and resilience. I find joy in problem solving, and in that joy, I am free to dream, to exercise my radical imagination. As a Black woman, I dream of being released from the responsibilities of being studied and therefore exceptional; I'm cool with being regular. Radical imagination allows a reprieve from the status quo. It gives us something to work towards, instead of something to withstand.

Evelyn Burnett is co-founder of ThirdSpace Action Lab. She previously served as Vice President of Economic Opportunity at Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, and Associate Director with Admiral Center at Living Cities. Evelyn holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business and Organizational Communications and a Master's of Public Administration from The University of Akron.

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MANIFESTING THE IDEAS, REIMAGINING THE POSSIBLE
IN(TER)VIEW WITH ROMI HALL

We had an opportunity to spend some time with Romi Hall to talk about the long arc of change, the urgent timetables of community development work, and what Black futurism and Donella Meadows' iceberg model tell us about building a sector that can support anti-racist work for the long haul.

Can you share a bit about your work in community development? How did you get into the sector?

Romi: Funny thing, now I realize my start in community development really happened while I was getting my master's in public health over 15 years ago. In asking this question, I realize that I have actually always been working at the intersection of health, housing, and community development – it wasn't really understood as an intersection when I started my career in community development.

While in graduate school, I had the opportunity to intern with a faith-based organization who was creating respite spaces in places of worship for unhoused individuals in Philadelphia. Through building relationships and hearing stories of the Welcome Church members, I started to understand the social determinants of health and wanted to create thriving communities for all. This internship piqued my interest to work in housing and comprehensive community development (CCD), and led to my first job out of graduate school working at a venerable community development corporation in St. Louis. I worked on a massive CCD initiative where a team of colleagues and I spent a year deeply engaging residents. Through our engagement, we created a dynamic action plan based on the specific asks of residents and with cross-sector partners, the school district, municipal leaders, and residents to make the bold vision of the plan a reality. After this experience, I went to another community development corporation in Oakland that affirmed my interest and passion of working at the intersection.

Throughout my experience in community development, it has always been hard to name what I do. Collective Impact articles, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's working papers on health and housing, and articles about being a community quarterback, helped me gain clarity that the work I do is valuable and important in creating thriving communities. I honestly often pinch myself because the career that I have had has been incredibly formative and provided profound insights and a strong belief that anything is possible.

A lot of people we interviewed in our Anti-Racist Community Development research felt that the sector needs to do more of this big picture, intersectional work. Have you had that experience?

Romi: Yes, and I would add to this statement, that we also need to embrace adaptivity and transformation. The work of anti-racist community development will not be won by solutions that solely focus on the implementation of programs and services, increasing capital access, and partnership. These are important ingredients, but just crack the surface. The work we need to do to get to the big picture and intersectional aspect of our work is to restructure our mental models individually and collectively so we can reshape the system we currently function in for the tomorrow we want that generates opportunity. This is more than the quick timetables and timelines our work in community development often works on.

Arguably, the urgency, the quick timetables, the quick turnarounds, they are essential to the work, but so is the longevity and marathon-running aspect of this work. How do people keep that sense of longevity while doing the day-to-day community development work?

Romi: It is really hard. The quick deadlines and timelines are always coming, they just do not stop – how I wish they would. What I have learned through my mentors in this field, with other housing and community development leaders across the country, and in fellowship opportunities, is that having a results orientation matters. I have particularly understood this more with becoming a parent as I partner with my husband to raise our son into a kind, inclusive, and thoughtful human being. To achieve this result, my husband and I work together to support our son's growth and development. We have centered who he is and what he needs as we spend time with him, take him on adventures, create space for conversations and vulnerability, discipline him with love, and talk about the hurts of the world and how we can work to fix them. Every day in parenting there are quick turnarounds and deadlines, though our big picture is clear. While he is still becoming, we see glimpses of our son achieving this result that encourages us to continue to keep going. And, we're also witnessing our son be empowered and achieve the result on his own, too.

Results are powerful. They are manifestations of ideas, dreams, and capabilities that offer profound insight into a new future. Results are what can keep our focus in the short and long term and makes clear the work that needs to happen. Having clear results can be a compass to navigate the different terrains, valleys, and mountains that are inevitably a part of the journey. I am acutely aware of how I experience this long and short view together as a parent, and how important holding both of these views are key to advancing anti-racist work.

In anti-racist community development, the results call us to center Black and brown people, actively engage Black and brown people in every part of the process and build deep trust through achieving results. To do this, our calculus toward work has to change as we need to hold both what is in front of us now and what could be in the future, weaving and stitching together the possibilities and opportunities to get there. We also need to recognize that we need true, trusting partnerships to do this work, and to have deep compassion for ourselves and others as we make mistakes and grieve what is not, trusting that what we do will contribute to what could be.

That's a great reminder to folks to be able to really ground themselves and not immediately jump to the impulse for action. Can you share some examples where you are currently seeing people doing that bigger picture anti-racist community development? Are these examples replicable or unique?
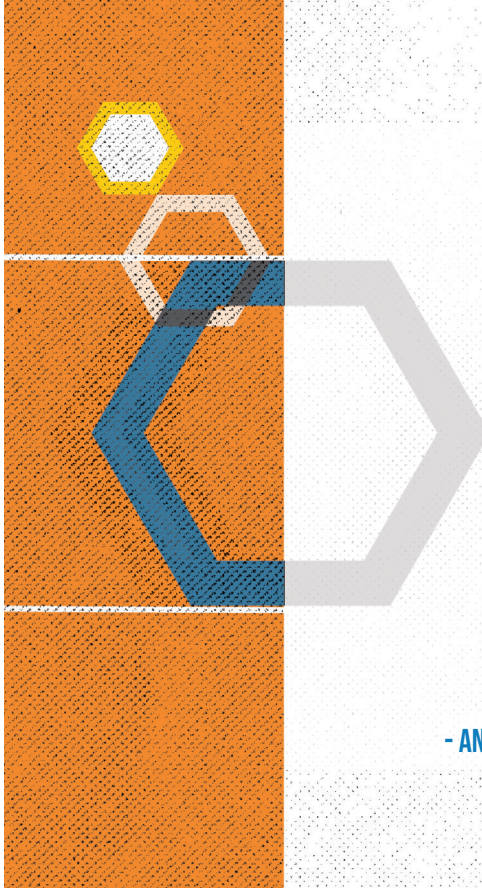
Romi: Action is really important. I cannot stress this enough. Though actions can be detrimental to communities if they are not clear on the why or steeped in community voice and vision. I can think of a number of examples across the country where good, transformational work is happening – though, what I am struck by in these questions are the words "replicable" and "unique." I am thinking differently about the examples and really thinking about the frameworks that can influence replication and uniqueness to advance anti-racist community development.

To this end, Donella Meadows' Iceberg Model comes to mind and makes me wonder how we can replicate actions beyond what we see and experience as anti-racist community development to go much deeper to leverage our collective actions to influence systems and structures and generate new dynamic narratives about Black and brown communities. I have also been really interested in futurism, particularly Black futurism. In 2019, I had the opportunity to briefly support Walter Hood's Black Towers/Black Power. 2020 as part of the Museum of Modern Art's (MOMA) Reconstructions: Architecture and Blackness in America exhibition. As part of Mr. Hood's exhibit, he explores a new future in the historically Black community of West Oakland. Inspired by the vision of the Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program, Mr. Hood recreates a new vision of an existing divested corridor in Oakland with high-rise buildings, art, commerce, and more. Mr. Hood envisions a thriving community based on the collective voice of Black people. His work is provocative and dares for the viewer to reimagine what is possible, because "it has been really hard for Brown and Black people to imagine a future … and maybe it's possible to re-imagine ourselves in new places and then find ways to get there."

An anti-racist community development paradigm calls on our example orientation toward replication and uniqueness to be beyond what meets the surface, and is driving work that is both restructuring the systems and mental models, while creating new narratives and structures for all people to thrive. To get there, we will need to think and act differently, with new clarity of results, and be willing to envision a future that has not happened yet but that I deeply believe is very much possible.

Romi Hall has worked at the intersection of health, housing, and community development for 15 years. She currently works as an expert at this intersection for NeighborWorks America. She is participating in this Q&A on her individual capacity and not as a spokesperson or representative of NeighborWorks America. Romi formerly served as Director of Neighborhood Collaborations at East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation. She co-wrote the SSIR article Connecting Housing, Community, and Health and wrote "Advancing Social Determinants of Health as the Pathway to Recovery for Black People" featured in Centering Black People in Community Development: New Visions from Black Women Leaders through the Center for Community Investment. Romi received a Master of Public Health from Drexel University and an undergraduate degree from the University of Nevada, Reno.

The interviewee is responding to the findings shared in the Anti-Racist Community Development Research Project, produced with support from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to increase understanding of structural racism in community development and pathways to racially equitable outcomes that promote health equity. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of RWJF or ThirdSpace Action Lab.

Interviewees in our research named that community development can't be about just today. We share some of their thoughts for the sector on the role of reckoning with the past and realizing the future.

"What does the **ARCHITECTURE OF LIBERATION** look like? … For us, it's about how do we play a role in helping to realize … [actions] that will not only disrupt the way that certain delivery systems are **REALIZING RACIAL INJUSTICE**, but to hopefully help to **REIMAGINE AND RETHINK AND CREATE NEW DELIVERY SYSTEMS** and new value systems **EMBEDDED IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT** that create outcomes that we want to see."

- ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWEE

"There are some groups that are thinking about some **CORE PRESUMPTIONS** of what were sort of **PILLARS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCE**, like pure debt models versus co-ownership models versus … rethinking loan-to-value as part of underwriting issues. I think there's enough that we can revisit some of the existing … pillars … and **REIMAGINE ONES THAT PROMOTE GREATER COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**, allows for even more flexible or completely different underwriting standards."
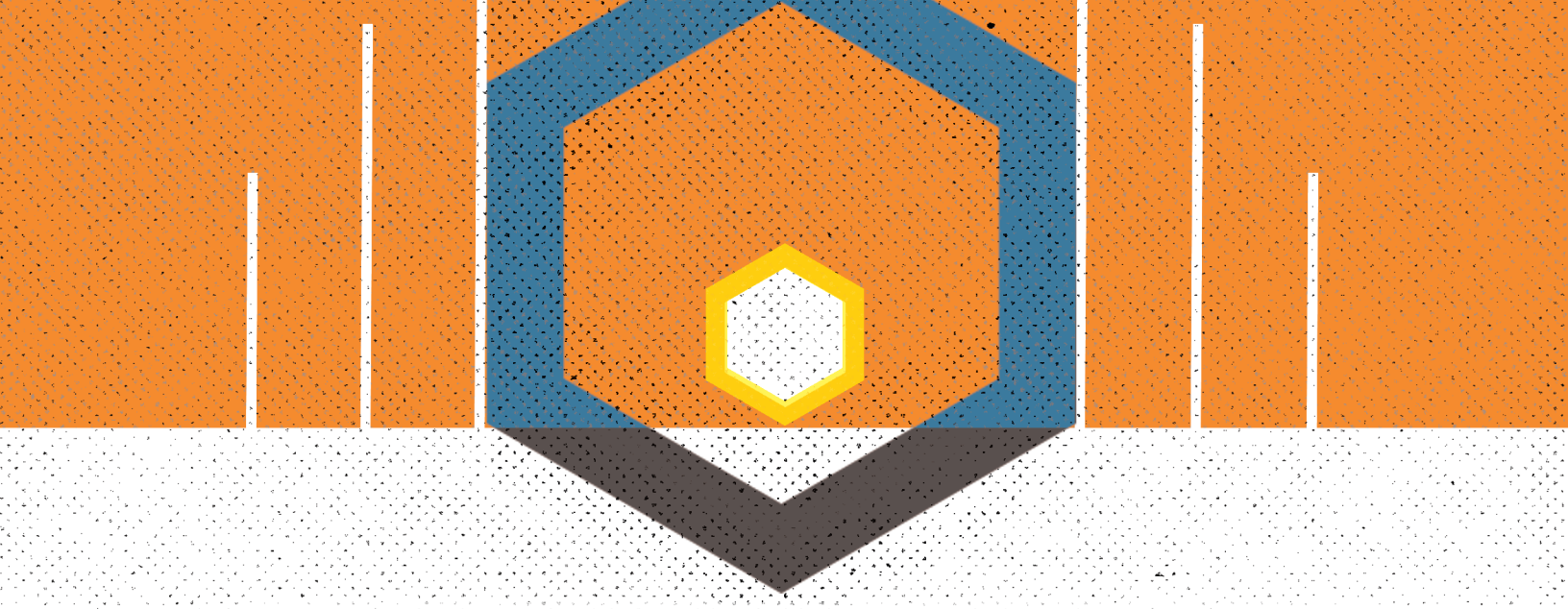
- ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWEE

"If you look at the **HISTORY OF PUBLIC HOUSING** . . . you see all the things that were there, like a mental health clinic, [an obstetrician's office], a library, a post office, a credit union . . . They realized in order to have a **SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY** . . . you did all this kind of work because [institutions like hospitals] **WEREN'T CARING FOR THIS GROUP OF PEOPLE** . . . All of the sort of social welfare things . . . and they were talking about . . . policing and their surveillance of those areas as well . . . **THESE THINGS ARE ALL INTERLOCKED**."

- ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWEE

"There is **GREAT POTENTIAL FOR PHILANTHROPY** to lead the effort in **DEVELOPING LEADERS** who are **EQUIPPED TO TRANSFORM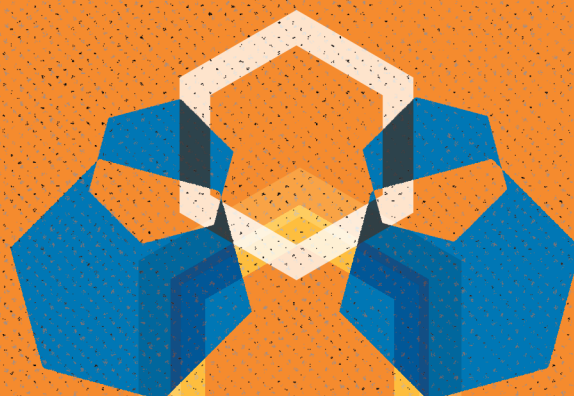 THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SECTOR.** In particular, future community development leaders need the **TECHNICAL SKILLS AND EXPOSURE** to the financial, developer, and investment spaces to be able to **NAVIGATE THE** larger community development **ECOSYSTEM**, especially through technical training."

- ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWEE

"Any kind of **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT** or effort to … address inequality … that doesn't take into account or … have **MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY [TO] THIS HISTORY** is not going to … be equitable, because there needs to be some sort of **REPARATIVE FRAMEWORK** for the **PAST INJUSTICES**."

- ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWEE

THE THIRDSPACE THEORY OF CHANGE

BUILD AWARENESS

GATHER INFO

ANALYZE INFO

CREATE VISION + PLAN

IMPLEMENT

EVALUATE PLAN

ARRIVE AT NEW AWARENESS

CONTINUED AWARENESS-BUILDING
FOR MORE THOUGHTFUL ACTION

BEYOND THE SILVER BULLET: WHAT DO I DO NOW?

The past matters. The future matters. The authors, interviewees, and artists in this issue made that case abundantly clear, and they offered up lots of concrete examples and aspirational visions in the process. It can be natural to want to jump straight to action, to find the solution that's going to fix it all.

Sadly, there are no silver bullets in racial justice work. Sustained structural inequities require sustained structural responses. If we're not willing to make sense of the past that got us here, or imagine the future that we're working toward, or consciously examine the infrastructure that will support this work for years to come, we run the risk of falling back into the familiar trap of always responding to urgency. The grant period. The construction timeline. The repayment schedule. Certainly not the arc of generational change.

At ThirdSpace, we believe that structural change requires breaking the cycle of urgency and replacing it with another slower, more deliberate one. Thoughtful action requires a continual cycle of awareness–building – reflecting, imagining, evaluating, repeating. We believe that the contributors to this issue have provided particularly strong opportunities for us to collectively build awareness and gather information. We offer five prompts for doing that critical work.
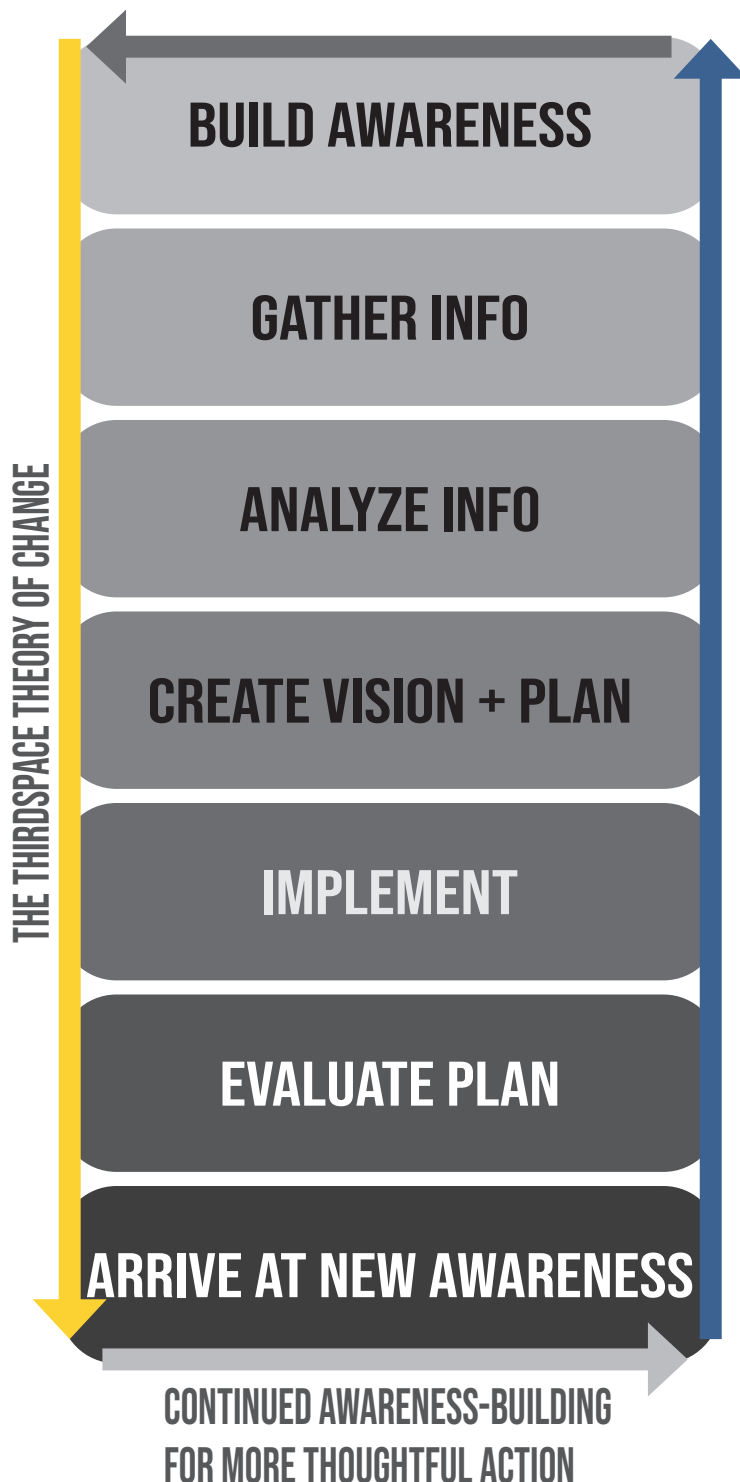
OFFERING 1: SIT WITH THE RESEARCH.
To start, we encourage you to sit with the deep analysis that folks offered up in the Anti-Racist Community Development research. We've produced three reports that capture their incredible insights - Core Characteristics of the Sector, High-Level Research Findings, and A Brief History of Race, Place, and Policy in the Sector.

OFFERING 2: INVEST IN YOUR INNER HISTORIAN.
Make some time to consider how history shows up in your work. How has race showed up in your own community development journey? Is there a hidden (or obvious) history of race within your organization? Are staff aware of what the founders of your organization hoped to accomplish when they started it or what context they were responding to? What's a long-standing community development practice or policy that you've always been curious about but don't know where it's come from? What's the innovative federal policy from the past or the ancestral practice that's waiting to be discovered? It's time to turn to community elders, the Internet, and the bookstore (preferably the local, independent, Black- or brown-owned bookstore) to capture those insights from the past.

OFFERING 3: NAME WHERE YOU'RE NODDING TO THE FUTURE.
Whether we *name* it or not, whether we *see* it or not, there are nods to the future all around us. Even while our work needs to be grounded in the realities of today, all of us have the capacity to be futurists. At ThirdSpace, we're working with partners across the United States to assist in making how structural racism shows up today more evident, but we're also trying to model the future that we want to see. That shows up through investing in our collective awareness building; serving as an accessible community anchor in our home neighborhood of Glenville; and archiving Black history and culture in our neighborhood and city as a grounding for future community investment. What are the most forward-facing approaches to community development work that you're seeing around you? What were the nuts and bolts of making that kind of work real? What are the new practices and approaches that you would be most passionate about pursuing if you had the time and resources? Would these practices and approaches resonate with the community you serve? Do they have their own priorities for the future? Take a moment to consider (and actually write down) the ways that you manifest the future in your own work ... in small ways, in big ways, in ways that may not have even happened quite yet but can and will.

OFFERING 4: INVESTIGATE THE GAPS.
There is a long trail of historic reference points about community development. There are all sorts of examples of how the sector is being reimagined for a brighter future. Still, we must acknowledge that there are gaps, including within ThirdSpace's own research. However, being able to articulate what those gaps are is an important part of a continual process of working toward more thoughtful action. What are the questions and inquiries that still linger with you after you've done a bit of homework? What's the information that you're not finding in the search? Is there an obvious reason that information isn't accessible or has been actively withheld? Are there people that hold answers informally that we need to document and share? Answering these questions can help us being to prioritize how we might best use scarce time for information gathering and focus in on addressing those gaps that are most pertinent to the work we're trying to advance.

OFFERING 5: CALENDAR A CHECK-IN WITH YOURSELF.
This kind of reflection, awareness-building, and information gathering is hard to prioritize in a sector and a world that asks us to prioritize constant, urgent need. Yet, if we don't find ways to make this a priority, it's more likely that our efforts and our solutions will be less effective and that both we and the people that come after us will be trapped in the same cycle of urgency. If we really want to make space for learning that can inform our planning, implementation, and evaluation work in the sector, we can't just imagine that it'll happen organically. What are the times and spaces where we can do our own personal reflection work about structural racism and anti-racist practice? Where can we schedule time for collective sensemaking? Who needs to be in the room for that discussion, and can we extend it beyond the walls of our own institution? Do yourself a favor, and start calendaring time for this important work today.

It just takes practice.

Join us in the movement for anti-racist community development.

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