

Notes from Funding and Fostering Democracy

No Better Time conference

Reporter: Chris Gates, PACE

Our session was well attended and we had no problem filling the entire time with conversation. As tends to the case with this type of session, the conversation was a mix of:

- People looking for fundraising help
- People looking for help in understanding how the field of philanthropy views the field of DD
- People complaining about the way phil works

Among the issues and ideas raised:

- A concern about funders need for evaluation and how hard it is to evaluate this work
- A realization that very few funders directly fund democracy and most came at it through the lens of the issue they work on
- Advice that it might pay to reach beyond the big likely suspects in the funding world and approach smaller foundations, community fdns, and living donors
- Advice that it's better to propose to try a DD idea in a site or two, evaluate it, and if it works, only then propose to take it to scale (as opposed to starting with big, grand national projects)

Finally, we all realized that there are very few venues where funders and nonprofits can come together and talk in a safe space.