



Sustainable Empowerment – Annual Fund, 2019

As I grow and evolve as an Executive Director and academic, my focus and intention remains on how to create and implement programs that support equality and agency for women and girls in under-resourced communities. One thing I have learned over the many years of working in under-resourced communities is that language is critical and often times disrespectful and condescending. It is for that reason WGEF uses the designation 'Sustainable Empowerment' when describing our work and clients.

In a world on fire, with shrinking resources, conflict, displacement and political turmoil, philanthropy and the norms of giving have changed. There is little room for non-relief conversations, and the focus is on, what I call, Disaster Philanthropy, defined as, "private funds and resources used for disaster recovery."

But this is a monumental mistake, not just for WGEF but for all organizations doing the hard work of 'sustainable empowerment' and most of all the women and families who benefit from important programs that enable agency and resources moving away from entrenched poverty and insecurity.

WGEF believes that one's geographical location does not determine their challenges to be more or less important – hope and support are transnational and one must think locally, globally, emergency and sustainable. I continue to believe that one should identify programs that evoke a passion or belief; that are truly creating sustainable empowerment and gender justice.

Peace,