



A PODCAST WITH RUSTY STAHL | S3 EP8

Fair Labor Standards for Community Organizers

WITH
Kinzie Mabon and
Kevin Simowitz
All Due Respect



[Intro](#)

[Pilot ad](#)

[Episode intro](#)

[Interview begins](#)

INTRO [00:00:03] You're listening to the Fund The People Podcast, I'm your host Rusty Stahl. On this show we serve up a healthy nutritious alternative to the nonprofit starvation cycle. If you work as a funder, a non-profit, or intermediary, we'll help you invest in America's nonprofit workforce to drive equity, effectiveness and endurance in our nonprofit and social justice community. So let's get going.

PILOT AD: Folks, Fund The People is cooking up a very exciting new program: The Funding that Works Academy, which will offer online courses that teach our new Talent Investing Framework right from our website. Our initial courses will focus on the fundamentals of talent investing, and there will be versions available for foundation professionals, foundation board members, nonprofit professionals, nonprofit board members and folks working in intermediary organizations, like consultants, educators and membership associations. We want to give our podcast listeners early access to this great new program, so if you fit into any of those broad categories that I just mentioned and you're interested in helping us to pilot the course, please send an email to info@fundthepeople.org and write Pilot in the subject line, you will get special early access to our cutting-edge content and help us make improvements to the course before rolling it out widely. So remember just email me info@fundthepeople.org and write Pilot in the subject line, and we'll get back to you with details. Thanks!

[00:02:07]

RUSTY: Hey there! Welcome to the Fund The People podcast. I'm Rusty Stahl, your host, and I'm really grateful for your time and attention. I know you have a choice of bike paths so thank you for pedaling with us. This is season 3 episode 8. Today we're exploring Talent Investing Principle # 3: Address the problem, not just the symptoms. This principle tells us to seek to end the deficit of investment in the nonprofit workforce, not just to focus on its results. And as usual, there are other principles we touch on in this episode. So to learn all about all eight principles, please do go back and listen to season 3 episode 1 when you have an opportunity.

In this episode, you'll gain insights from new research on the working conditions facing community organizers in social justice nonprofits, and you'll learn about how organizers, executive directors and funders view this issue and we'll talk about what can be done. I'll speak with Kinzie Mabon and Kevin Simowitz who are both on staff at an organization called All Due Respect. All Due Respect is an exciting new project that seeks to set new labor standards and ensure fair wages for community organizers.

Before we get started with the show, be sure to subscribe on Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen. We email folks who are on our mailing list with every new episode and we share other great resources as well. So head on over to fundthepeople.org to sign up for our mailing list and while you are there, remember, you can get tons of original content and tools from our toolkit and that includes our whole Talent Justice suite of resources on investing in intersectional racial equity in the nonprofit workforce. And now please enjoy my conversation with Kinzie Mabon and Kevin Simowitz.

I am pleased to welcome to the podcast Kinzie Mabon and Kevin Simowitz. Thank you guys for your time and for being here.

[00:04:32]

KINZIE: Thanks for having us.

KEVIN: Hey! Thanks for having us, this is great.

[00:04:35]

RUSTY: I'm really appreciative of the work you've been doing at All Due Respect and I wanted to make sure that we shared out with our listeners. So Kevin, why don't we start with you? Tell us a little bit about what is All Due Respect.

[00:04:50]

KEVIN: All Due Respect is a project to try to set new labor standards for community organizers in the country, and we've thought about doing that by making sure that organizers, the directors of community organizations and the funders that support those organizations are kind of engaged in a new conversation and a new project to think about "what does it look like to recruit and retain community organizers, especially community organizers who have like been left out of a conversation for a long time, all for the purpose of strengthening our organizations?" So at All Due Respect we take really seriously the idea that organizers are the backbone of our movement, and if that's true we also know that we have to strengthen some of the working and

living conditions for community organizers so that we can have strong organizations and their movements can continue to thrive.

[00:05:45]

RUSTY: Thanks, thanks for that Kevin, and thanks for making the connection between people, organizations and movements because they are so intertwined and interconnected and folks who are managing organizations and funding them need to know. So Kevin, before we dig in further, can you just pause and tell—for folks who maybe are not familiar with the language—can you define or talk about what community organizing is?

[00:06:16]

KEVIN: When we thought about organizing we're thinking about community organizations that are moving people to take action together, especially to take action together to address whatever problems feel sort of most pressing in their lives. And so organizers are always talking about moving from thinking about problems to thinking about issues. So problems are things that we all have individually, issues are things that we are going to address together.

For a long time I had an index card taped above my desk that had just sort of the job of the organizer, the job of the organizer was to recruit new members and to develop those members into leaders and then to move those leaders into action together to win campaigns. And so, when we thought about organizers and organizations in the context of All Due Respect, that's the work that we've been thinking about.

[00:07:10]

RUSTY: Thanks for that, that's great. And we'll post some more resources in the show notes for folks who want to learn more about the essentials of community organizing and the jobs of community organizers. All right, well, why don't you tell us about yourselves, let's start with Kinzie, who are you? What brought you to your work and to this show today?

[00:07:34]

KINZIE: Yeah, so I started organizing about eight years ago and it was on a ballot initiative campaign and I moved into voting rights work which is where I spent a lot of my time almost up until I started working with All Due Respect. But I also, in my last position, focused on training organizers and building them up and so when I came across All Due Respect, I was really excited to see an organization that was working on some of the problems that I myself had experienced and my organizers had experienced. That's kind of how I got here and I am just, I'm a Nebraskan, which is very rare to find in this national space and so I'm just bringing a midwest point of view to the organizing space.

[00:08:24]

RUSTY: Fantastic. I believe, and I have no one to verify this, but I believe you're the first Nebraskan on this show. So really, really nice to have you!

[00:08:38]

KINZIE: I do love being the first, so thank you for that honor!

[00:08:43]

RUSTY: We love having firsts here. I spent a couple years in Indianapolis and saw just, you know, the dramatic difference in the context from the East Coast, where I grew up, really is important to have those different perspectives in these conversations. So, glad you're here. How about you Kevin? And if you can tell us a little also about when All Due Respect got started, as you talk about your career arc as well, as I believe you were part of the founding process.

[00:09:13]

KEVIN: I was, yeah. Although I'm from Ohio and we're in danger of turning this all into the Midwest podcast, which I think would be fascinating, it's probably another conversation but have us back, we'll talk all about regional foods, regional airports and everything in between.

But I had started organizing when I was a college student, I didn't really know what organizing was, which I think is a not unfamiliar path for many organizers, I didn't know what organizing was. I definitely didn't know what I was trying to do, even in the short-term, much less think about, oh, is this the thing that I'm going to do for the rest of my professional life. But I was serving lunch at the Salvation Army near the campus where I went to school and I was talking to somebody who told me that he needed to get back to his job, and I knew that many of the people who are eating lunch at the Salvation Army worked, either part-time or full-time, more than full-time. And I asked where he worked, and he told me that he worked at The Observatory Hill Dining Hall, and then he asked me if I knew where that was. And I did because that was where I eat three meals a day as a freshman at the University of Virginia. And it just really struck me that somebody that worked full time at the place where I ate every one of my meals was living and eating at the Salvation Army where I was coming to like serve one meal a week and feel, it was supposed to feel good about. It was like, well this is really wrong and somebody should do something about it. And so I started working with other students on campus. I didn't even know what a living wage campaign was, I didn't even know what a living wage was, like we just really felt like, "Well this is wrong and someone should do something about it."

We learned from some of the successful living wage campaigns at Harvard and Georgetown that had preceded us and some of the amazing students and workers were sharing their lessons, built a living wage campaign on campus and was really fortunate as a result of that to get connected to a local community organization where the director said some version to me of: "You know, if you ever really want to learn how to do this, some of us actually know how to do this for organizing thing." I wonder what that would be like? And in all of my sort of 19 or 20 year old hubris, I went down to the office, really thinking that I'd be able to help them a lot, bring all of my lifetime's worth of experience and expertise into the organizing space and it was an amazing organization.

I worked with Virginia Organizing, at the time it was Virginia Organizing Project. It is an amazing spot to learn because as a college student, I got to intern for three years and I got to ride all across the state and go to chapter meetings and go to lobby visits and meet with members and

elected officials and if you could show up on time, and you were willing to take notes and hopefully make some coffee when you got to the chapter meeting space, you were part of the team. And it was just a really wonderful hands-on way to learn organizing. And from there, I organized with Maine People's Alliance in Maine where I still live, and I was the Political Director with the Caring Across Generations Campaign, which is a national effort to organize older adults, people with disabilities, home health care workers, and family caregivers into new systems of care in our economy.

And then, when I was leaving the Caring Across Campaign, I was trying to figure out what I should do next. So I did what we all do, you start to reach out to your mentors and your old bosses and the people whose work I've respected so much in organizing, someone to see who is doing something that I should throw in with. And it was this crystallizing moment for me because so many of the people who had taught me so much about what organizing was weren't in the field anymore. And when I was calling and texting they were telling me things like, "Oh, I had to leave because I have kids and I can't go to four chapter meetings a week at night," or someone told me that they just really needed dental insurance and couldn't get dental insurance at their organizing job and so they had taken another job.

It struck me that in this moment where the stakes were so high for our democracy, for the people in our communities, the stakes were so high and organizing was such an important way to win, that the organizers who I know, who are the most strategic and the strongest organizers were leaving the work, for this totally fixable and preventable reasons. And so out of that moment All Due Respect was born, the project that became All Due Respect started to take shape in that moment.

[00:13:44]

And so what year was that, Kevin?

[00:13:48]

I guess All Due Respect really started to come together in 2019. Yeah, the way that we thought about it at the outset and I'm saying we, at the beginning I was talking with Jill Reese, longtime community organizer and labor organizer, about what this project could be and then Alicia Jay and I co-founded the project together. So there's like, as with any organizing project, lots of people in the mix, I'm just the one on like right now.

But we were thinking about what would it look like to take these problems that everybody who's been around organizing knows exists and actually like turn them into an organizing effort. And if you've ever been to a conference with other organizers and you've ever been to the bar after the conference, like one of the topics of conversation is like exactly the challenges that we are going after of places that have ridiculously high turnover, or wages that are just far too low that you see posted in jobs or jobs that are posted without any salary information at all. Just these things that as we're campaigning on truly challenging progressive issue campaigns out in the world, we have these very solvable campaigns within our organizations. And so we really came to this thinking about what would it look like to have a project where there were actually people and

resources dedicated to trying to solve some of these things and where our theory of change was that it was important to have funders and directors and organizers in the mix, so that we wound up with an ongoing organizing project and an ongoing conversation and not just a... we didn't just come out of it with: "funders should do better," which is like true in some respects, but it's also not particularly helpful and doesn't lead us anywhere new and so we were thinking about what does it look like to have this as a project and to have all three of those constituencies represented in like a tripartite organizing system.

[00:15:44]

RUSTY: Terrific, thanks, that's helpful context for understanding both where the project came from and then why it looks the way it does. So, I guess I got introduced to the project by talking to Alicia Jay who I knew from the philanthropy world because I think she had worked at a foundation and was then like a consultant that we had talked to a couple times over the years. So when it came on my radar screen, it was through Alicia. And then she and you all produce this new report and I was privileged to have the opportunity to sit in on a funder briefing you did on Zoom, which I know has to have its own challenges of doing a funder briefing on Zoom when they used to be in person (hopefully will again one day be in person), but I thought it was a great report and a great conversation that you were engaging these progressive funders in. So I wanted to make sure the folks listening to this show know about the research you've done through All Due Respect and hear some of the findings that you've come to. So we're going to dive in in this conversation to share some of the findings from this report. So, Kevin, right before we dive in, can you just tell us a little bit of background on the report itself? Obviously, you've given us the context in which the report got started, but what were you looking to learn more specifically in this piece of research and what did you do to go about getting your findings?

[00:17:27]

KEVIN: We wanted to learn the current state of play of organizing and organizers in terms of labor standards, pay scales, all those sorts of things. We knew that we needed to be a little bit more focused than just saying "organizing." And so when we kicked off the research we worked with an amazing researcher who helped do a lit review of all of the studies and journal articles that already existed about organizing. One of the gaps felt like a project that was specifically understanding community organizing, there's like a decent amount of data about labor organizing, and some different data about electoral campaigns. But it felt like, okay, we want to really think about community organizing and community organizations, especially we were thinking about state-wide, multi-issue organizations was like our primary unit of measurement, we're not the only organizations or organizers represented in the work but we wanted to have a touchstone to come back to and that's how we were thinking about: okay, those are the community organizations.

And so we wanted to understand what was happening, like, right now. There have been, you know, the National Organizers Alliance did a report 20 years ago now so we wanted to think about what's the same and what's different. And then, the other big thing that we wanted to get out of these findings was to make sure that we didn't just come out of this with a research report that talked about how bad everything was, or that the organizers didn't get paid enough. They

don't! Spoiler alert! Kinzie's going to talk about what we learned, and we didn't want a report, if Alicia were here she would describe it as like you know just another binder that sits on your shelf, or another tab that you're too guilty to close in your Chrome, but you know you're never going to have time to read. Like, we wanted a report that pointed forward at solutions and interventions, not just from us, but from ideas that were generated by the people that we talked to in the research.

And so, to do the report we put out a broad survey that we invited organizers to take across the country. And we did follow-up conversations and interviews with a set of those organizers. In addition, we did surveys and conversations with a set of funders who support progressive organizing work in the country, as well as with the set of directors who run the organizations that were talking about. And all of that worked together generated a bunch of quantitative data, a lot of qualitative data, and became the report that's still available on our website. If people want to read either the executive summary, or, with a free afternoon, the entire thing.

[00:20:07]

RUSTY: Okay, thanks for sharing that. So Kinzie, I'm excited to talk with you now about the findings. So there's 10 findings in the report and so for the purposes of this conversation, we're going to talk about them in kind of three clusters, if you will. So the first four findings in the report discuss the challenges that community organizers are facing in working conditions in their organizations. So, tell us about those findings.

[00:20:39]

KINZIE: So, 9 out of 10 organizers that we talked to have experienced burnout, and as someone who came on to this project after the report briefing was my first day, which is very exciting, that was something that I think I knew, and I had seen myself. I'm someone who... I worked on an initiative where we slept under our desks and worked 14-hour days, and burnout is a very real problem in this work in general. But just seeing the fact that, like, 90% of the people we talked to have experienced burnout and the report starts with that, really, which is, I think, a good place to start because I think it levels everyone's expectations for where the report is going, right? Like, why this work is being done.

So, in addition to that, organizers of course believe that working conditions for themselves need to be improved, including some of these conditions are: low wages, lack of training or management, the culture of martyrdom that exists in movement work, which is very much something that I experienced, right? We're all talking about how we're working our 60, 70, 80 hour weeks and if you're not doing all of that work, then are you really here for the work? I think that that's something that is pervasive, as well as low staff capacity, there's just so much work that has to happen and there's so much to go around and there's not enough people to do it. And lastly, lack of decision-making authority. These are just some of the issues that are named in our report, but those are the ones that are big and really stuck out to me.

Along with this, like organizers being burnt out, organizers leaving the work, really hinders all of the movement and makes it impossible to continue moving things forward decade after decade,

when you're losing all of the institutional knowledge, all of the training, all of the people who have gone through this, who are trying to be there for other people. It's impossible to continue working this way. Those are some of the big ones that focus specifically on organizers.

But I think something that is mentioned in the report is that we can't take for granted that people always want to do these jobs. I think as we are continuing on in the political atmosphere that we currently exist in, and burnout continues, the great resignation is still a thing for organizing work and movement work, and we're running up against a bunch of, like, environmental problems that are making it harder to bring people into the work, and if you can't bring people into the work and you can't keep people in the work, who's here to do it?

[00:23:33]

RUSTY: Right. You can't retain people who you can't recruit.

KINZIE: Exactly. And I think all of us who have hired organizers, or are trying to hire organizers have experienced just that. I was formerly the organizing director for the Nebraska Civic Engagement Table. Part of that job was to hire organizers, I hired organizers every year, and I did notice that every year it was getting harder and harder to recruit people even though we paid well and had good benefits and had training. I think people know that it's hard work because it is hard work.

[00:24:09]

RUSTY: One of the things that stuck out to me in this section was the direct line between working conditions for organizers and the success of the campaigns that they work on and the effectiveness of sort of the movements that they're a part of, and the organizations that they're apart of and, you know, often I feel like funders, government and board members will sort of try to pull these things apart and say there's some things that, you know, are directly related to programming or issue campaigns, and then there's the stuff that's indirect that's like, oh yeah, that's a nice to have. And all that "nice to have" stuff is the working conditions that creates that environment in which people work, whether that's, you know, compensation or organizational culture, or the management issues you mentioned, you know. I think it's so important to show that there is this direct connection between how we treat people and how much we can win and how well our work happens.

[00:25:14]

KEVIN: Because when those things are separated, there's like never time for the "nice to have." There's always a thing that is more pressing than doing, you know, an assessment of your current HR practices. And so I appreciate you're underscoring this, because it's so important to the project. The reason why we exist is to build stronger organizations that are more effective at winning campaigns. If this was just a project about being nicer to organizers, like, we might still do it because people should be nicer to organizers, but the driving force behind what we're doing is not just about being nice to organizers, it's about thinking about how can we have the strongest possible organizations and Kinzie, like you said, this is hard work which is, like, exactly right.

That's one of the other things that we are always trying to bring to the surface is, I don't think I'm speaking for myself, I don't think there's a way to make organizing jobs easy and I don't think that's, that's not a goal of mine, and I don't know what it would look like to make an organizing job easy. Organizing is really tough and if you're doing it well, you're always generating more work for yourself and for your organization. And so our thinking is, well, how do we make sure that organizers, in all the ways that Kinzie just listed, feel supported within their organizations and within the sort of movement ecosystem, more broadly, because you could decide to leave one organization and go someplace else and you should still feel supported in doing that.

KINZIE: Yeah I was just going to add like, it's both feeling supported and feeling powerful, right? I think one of the things that I love about the support that's named in the report is the 'decision-making authority.' How many times do we get handed something by someone who doesn't spend time in the community, who isn't out there every single day at the community meetings, canvassing, etc. And you look at that, you look at your work plan and you go: this isn't going to work, this isn't going to do what it needs to get done, or this shouldn't be the focus of this issue campaigner, you know or what have you? And I think it's both support and power, and talking about how we can sort of change the movement as a whole, move into a new paradigm of how we treat each other and come to decisions together in this work.

[00:27:42]

RUSTY: Yeah, that definitely speaks to the issue of burnout too, because part of burnout is that disempowerment drives burnout and decentralizing decision-making and empowering staff increases sustainability of people and teams. So yeah, thank you for pointing that out. That's really backed by research I've seen too on burnout, so there's a direct connection with what you're saying.

So Kinzie, tell us about this second cluster of findings that are really about executive directors in these community organizations that are facing their own set of challenges in hiring and retaining organizers.

[00:28:25]

KINZIE: Directors are also pretty aware of these problems that are going on and I think they recognize that organizer burnout, organizer retention, organizer power have an effect on their issue campaigns, their organizations. But they don't have the resources that they need to pay competitive salaries and build staff capacity. And I think that we all know that's true. Especially speaking from, like, a non-profit point of view, someone who worked on budgets and applied for grants. It's very real, but money crunch is there. The directors that we spoke to really named that.

It is also as we talked about a little bit earlier, it is difficult to find, hire and retain trained organizers—especially the ones that come from the communities that we are working with, which is like, that's the goal. You're trying to build people up within the communities and how people access power in a way that they may not have access to otherwise, and the training portion is

real. Another thing about me is that I've built a training program that was, like, really focused on front and four weeks, hardcore training for organizers, very specific to the nonprofit they were going to be dispatched to, and that like, just in that project some of those people are three years in and are still there. But as I look at the ecosystem, the larger ecosystem, my friends, my colleagues, the people that came into organizing after me, lots of people who have been trained to have all this experience are leaving, and it's expensive to train organizers, it is expensive to hire new people in general.

So, we have to find a way for organizational success to keep trained folks and move them into positions where they can pass that knowledge on. And then also directors don't have access to the information that they need about wages and policies and creating and maintaining sustainable jobs. And those are some specific things that we think we can fix. There's no reason that there shouldn't be a resource for people who are trying to support their staff and trying to support organizers. There's no reason that they shouldn't have a resource to look to.

[00:30:50]

RUSTY: That is true. That is another solvable problem you've identified here, but I'm sure it's frustrating to executives who are like trying to pull things together and support their staff and make the budget work and make compensation happen and can use all the templates and examples from colleagues and peers that they can get their hands on to do it because they shouldn't have to make it all up from scratch...

[00:31:15]

KINZIE: And it's impossible to. They also work a job, you know, running an organization is, that's hard.

[00:31:21]

RUSTY: Right, and so many executive directors are also HR directors which they are not necessarily set up to succeed in doing that.

All right, let's talk about the third cluster of findings about funders. You talk about how funders have this important role and sensitive role to play in addressing the challenges that we've talked about facing organizers and directors in community organizations. So, tell us about these last three findings.

[00:31:55]

KINZIE: The funders or the people working in philanthropy that we talked to, there is an understanding of the role that they have to play here. They know that there is a disconnect between supporting organizing and the money that's being given out and why the money is being given out, you know, the different grants. And it has to, this role that they play has to happen in partnership with organizations because organizers especially were like: funders have such a big role to play and we want them to take responsibility for this. And then on the other side with funders, there was the concern of not wanting to over step or step into a role of being paternalistic and like really telling organizations what they have to do. Like, I really understand

why those two things are happening at the same time, because I also think that organizers wouldn't necessarily enjoy if a funder came in and told them exactly what needed to happen step by step and that's also going to stop money from going places.

[00:32:57]

RUSTY: When you said that'll stop money from going places do you mean like it's a zero-sum if they reroute money towards compensation and takes it from elsewhere or what did you...

[00:33:07]

KINZIE: What I mean is there are so many ways to run organizations and there's so many ways to build community, make decision-making power, do management, etc. When you make a set of rules, a specific set of rules that people have to follow, it is automatically exclusive. We, the three of us sitting here, are only representative of a few communities, a few cultures, right? At my time at the [Nebraska Civic Engagement] Table I worked with over 70 nonprofits, many of which were refugees, immigrants, etc. And there were lots of different ways of having an organization. And I also, I managed giving grants from the Table and had I been really hard and strict about certain rules, there were some things like, any grant of mine had to be paying people \$15 or over, but some rules will be exclusive and that's just part of living and white supremacist culture and the way people perpetuate that will always be something we have to be careful of.

[00:34:10]

RUSTY: And sounds like what you're saying is that there's this weird space that no one knows how to get to exactly where it's like, the funders aren't being overstepping, but they're doing more to be proactive about investing and supporting staff in the nonprofits they support. And then the nonprofits need to also come to that middle place without being frustrated that the funders are doing more but making sure that the intervention from the funders is meeting their actual needs.

[00:34:43]

KINZIE: I think that's exactly what I'm saying, at least. And there is a way to do that. There are conversations [that] can be had, relationships can be built, more relationships can be built. I think that's a conversation that the report has and that we've had, Kevin and I have had outside of this, as there has to be a way for relationships between funders and people more than directors. There needs to be a larger conversation. And the last takeaway here, which is that **the philanthropic sector needs to view the current challenges as a crisis that needs a response and they need to shift how they operate. They need to change a lot of how they interact with organizations and not just organizations but the staff as well.** So that people don't feel like they have to put on a dog and pony show. That people can actually have these conversations with the people who have the money and we could all be honest for real.

[00:35:40]

RUSTY: Yeah, so that, I think, brings us perfectly to the next question, which is how do you want to see funders and nonprofits using this report as a tool to begin or continue or better address these issues? Kevin, why don't we go over to you for this.

[00:35:57]

KEVIN: There's plenty of work to be done. One of the challenges but also opportunities of the report is that there is no "lets just do these three easy things at the end," we felt like that would be not authentic. And you know the follow-up, we're going to talk about this a little bit, but the follow-up from the report is really testing some of the things that came out in the research in a series of like collaborative pilot projects with different organizations and funders. One thing that we have started to do and are excited to do more of with funders who are interested is to have conversations like this with foundation staff to sort of talk about what we learned and what we think we're still learning—not from a management consulting perspective of like "Hey, we fixed it. Here's what you need to do"—but from almost a conversation facilitation perspective of like, "here's what we've been thinking about, here's what we heard, here's what we're working on next, how does this match up"... Especially on the foundation side, with what foundations are hearing and doing.

You know, a lot of stuff that was impossible within philanthropy three years ago has turned out to be not so impossible. So, you know, we could never get rid of all the grant reports, or it's really important to have program-specific funding, we can't do unrestricted funding. We've seen a lot of foundations, to their credit, like, really be responsive to the moments with which they were faced over the past three years and moved to unrestricted funding. And grant reports are, you know, a 45-minute conversations instead of a 45-page document that you have to file. We've seen those shifts happening and there are shifts to be made on all sides of this. It's not just on the foundation side. And so, part of what we're thinking about is how do we continue that momentum on both sides—the organization side and the foundation side—to think more about what are the practices that can strengthen organizations and strengthen organizers?

[00:38:00]

RUSTY: It is a good starting point you've created with this research. So Kinzie, what don't you tell us more about what you all are thinking as organizers, about how you're going to use the report to drive the conversation forward and change forward.

[00:38:15]

KINZIE: We're already working on some pilot projects, as Kevin mentioned, and collaboration with some other folks. The first of which is a guidebook that organizers, directors and funders can use to decide the high-level policy values that they want to achieve for the organization or to keep an eye out with for grantees. It's not meant to be specific policy prescriptions for organizations. We want to keep in mind that everyone has a different budget, staff capacity values, goals. There are some things that we can all agree on as being, what is like, the base level. Those will be covered in the guidebook.

And in the guidebook, we're going to talk about several topics including compensation, hours of work, but also supervisor's support, employee voice, transparency and career building. As we maybe mentioned a little bit when talking about the report, there isn't a clear pathway forward for organizing careers and that's something that we want to address. We're setting things up in sort of problematic policies versus the base level policy should have an aspirational policy in a third column there. So we really want to consistently refer back to the larger values of the organization and liberation work altogether that center staff, especially organizers, and conversations around workplace culture and policy.

That's the first of the pilots we're working on and we're also working on a pilot that is surrounding values-based HR. So we're going to be participating in a cohort of some small to medium-sized nonprofits to shadow for trainings and building relationships. And then we're hoping to build a database with some specific policy prescriptions for organizations with examples from other folks who are doing it and have those policies.

[00:40:16]

RUSTY: That sounds fantastic. Those are definitely those solvable problems that you're trying to tackle that were talked about in the report. So, I think folks in the field will be eager and lucky to have these pilots and I'm sure will give you good feedback to continuously improve upon them.

[00:40:38]

KEVIN: It's a growing list of pilots, Rusty. I mean truly like we are thinking about new pilots that help understand the effects of unionization on nonprofits and community organizations. We've been thinking about a pilot that specifically engages with electoral pipelines, since that's how so many people come into movement work, is participating in an electoral campaign, and thinking about how do you get in that pipeline in a way that steers you towards organizing as a career if that's what you want. So, really for anybody who is listening and thinking like it would be interesting to explore this, we're all pre-exploring whatever thing it is that you're thinking about, and all the pilots are trying to do it with that partnership that we've described a couple of times, so making sure that the organizers on the ground, the directors of those organizations, and the funders of those organizations are all sort of participating and learning together. Because whatever we learn out of this set of pilots, Kinzie and I are pretty clear, there will be another set of that. It's like, we're excited about an iterative process where we try some stuff and we learn some stuff and then we try some more things after that.

[00:41:46]

RUSTY: Actually as you guys were talking, I was thinking about, I remember sitting in my dad's study at his house, this was probably in the late 90s or so. I think I was in college, I might have been in high school, I can't remember. And sort of trying to look around on the internet for stuff about community organizing careers for myself and feeling frustrated that it was such a difficult thing to find information on and it actually felt exclusionary like it was this top secret thing that only certain people, like, in this inside click or set of organizations could participate in.

So, I think what you're talking about with helping kind of crack open access and enable so many more people to understand what organizing is and be able to come into the field and get the training and support and empowerment that they need to make it work and make it sustainable, will be so beneficial to so many people. So as we kind of wrap up here, and speaking of the internet and access to information, where can people find this report, Kevin, and how can listeners connect with all of you and All Due Respect?

[00:43:08]

KEVIN: Yeah, I really appreciate the time. The report and our contact information is on our website, it's allduerespectproject.org. I think if you Google "All Due Respect," you'll find this, too. I want to thank you, Rusty, and like the work that you all are doing at Fund The People. It's like one of the exciting things about the project is, like, you start this thing never believing that you're the only thing in the ecosystem but not sure about who all your fellow travelers are and so throughout this work, you know, to your point about how can people find organizing careers, like, it's not just us in this right? It's like, we're like very happy to be on the team with you all and like the dozens of other organizations, a lot of which are new and thinking about like, okay, how do we improve these labor standards for organizers, people coming in with different perspectives but all part of the same team. I just really want to emphasize like that feels great. Our goal is to be, you know, one of the many working on this.

And like I said, report and contact information is allduerespectproject.org. The report, also want to, you know, just express a lot of gratitude, like that was not just us, not just me and Kinzie or not even me, Kinzie and Alicia who is not here with us today. But a bunch of people helped put that report together from doing the interviews, and distributing the surveys, to having some really fantastic folks pull all that information together and write it into a final product, they're all thanked in the report. It would be another hour if I listed everybody right now, we just want to be clear, this is a massively collaborative effort and couldn't have done it without any other people who are listed there.

[00:44:50]

RUSTY Thanks, and so people should go to allduerespectproject.org. And I believe you can get to the executive summary and then the full report by going to allduerespectproject.org/resources.

[00:45:04]

KEVIN That's true. Yep.

[00:45:05]

RUSTY: And [the report is called All Due Respect: Building Strong Organizations by Creating Fair Labor Standards for Organizers](#), published April 2022. Everyone should read it, at least read the executive summary, share it in your networks, share it with your boss, your board, your funders, your grantees, start conversations in the field. It is a great tool for starting or continuing those conversations about working conditions for community organizers and frankly, for anybody who's doing social justice work, whether they're community organizers in particular or not. So

thank you both Kinzie and Kevin for coming on the show. And thank you for your time and your work.

[00:45:52]

KINZIE: Thank you so much!

KEVIN: This was really great. Thanks so much for having us!

[00:45:56]

OUTRO:

Thanks for listening to the Fund The People podcast where we help you cook up nutritious and delicious alternatives to the nonprofit starvation cycle by investing in the nonprofit workforce. On behalf of myself, Rusty Stahl, our gracious guests and everyone who makes the show possible we hope you enjoyed the episode. You can find links to the resources that were mentioned, guest bios, show notes, and the audio for this episode by visiting fundthepeople.org and clicking on Podcast. Thank you for driving change in our communities, our country and the world. Remember to keep your tank full, take care of yourself and take care of one another.