



A PODCAST WITH RUSTY STAHL | S6 EP13

Funding That Works Academy Launch! Season Finale!

WITH
Rusty Stahl
Fund the People



INTRO (00:04)

Welcome to the Fund the People Podcast! I'm your host, Rusty Stahl. I'm President and CEO of Fund the People, where our mission is to maximize investment in America's nonprofit workforce. We give funders and nonprofits cutting edge ideas, research and tools to help drive equity, effectiveness, and endurance in the social sector. So let's start the show!

RUSTY [00:00:34]

Welcome to the Fund The People podcast. I'm your host, Rusty Stahl. Thank you for being here for this very special episode. **Today at Fund The People, we are launching a new program, the Funding that Works Academy.** The Funding That Works Academy is a professional development platform with **online courses and other resources that will equip funders, nonprofits and intermediaries with ideas and tools to provide funding that works for the people who make nonprofits work.**

On this episode, you'll hear why this new program exists and how it can be of use to you and your colleagues whether you're a funder, a nonprofit worker, a board member, a consultant, an association leader, or some other role in our sector.

We all know that the funding community and the nonprofit community are going through some really strange and challenging times. **We're experiencing the pressure of multiple crises, both current and chronic.** The current crises we all know, we talk about them all the time, we're really still inside of the aftermath of the pandemic with remote work, work from home, our workplaces kind of split apart and fragmented and all of the challenges and conflicts and organizational change and culture change that comes with that. And that's just the tip of the iceberg of the current crises that we've all been experiencing and that our organizations are still dealing with.

(00:02:21) The chronic crisis is something we don't talk about as much. It's so ubiquitous that it's just an invisible, constant sort of underlying anxiety that we all feel but can't quite put our fingers on. For years, the problem facing our nonprofit workforce was framed as a deficit of leadership in nonprofits. But that framing was just plain wrong. As we saw during the pandemic and during some of the political and policy upheaval that has taken place over the last 5 to 10 years, the nonprofit workforce is full of visionary, highly skilled, knowledgeable, resilient, creative, diverse, high endurance leaders and workers who are ready to sacrifice in service of their communities.

Now, there's no deficit of leadership or potential leadership in our sector, **the real problem is the chronic deficit of investment in the nonprofit workforce.** This is a centuries long underinvestment that makes it difficult to keep organizations and people afloat. It damages our ability to achieve our goals and objectives, nevertheless our missions and our visions.

(00:03:49) This chronic deficit of investment in the nonprofit workforce comes from multiple directions, which makes it even harder to see and to address. It comes from our government. It comes from our private foundations and community foundations. It comes from other philanthropic sources. It comes from individual donors. And it comes from inside nonprofits themselves. It comes from nonprofit boards. It comes from nonprofit executives. It comes from nonprofit fundraisers and program staff. It comes from all of us, it's inside all of us. It's in our attitudes, our mindsets, our practices, our policies, our behaviors.

There are well-known myths and mindsets that keep the deficit of investment in our workforce in place, but that we as a field have just found it nearly impossible to purge from our organizations. Things like the overhead myth and the idea of nonprofit costs, people costs that are somehow indirect from programs. When the truth is that nonprofit people are nonprofit programs, even the non programmatic people make nonprofit programs happen. And on the other side of the coin, from the overhead and indirect cost myths is the scarcity mentality within nonprofits. The very idea that we don't have what we need or we couldn't even get it if we wanted it.

(00:05:09) Unfortunately, folks, the old ways of doing grantmaking and doing fundraising, the ways we inherited from those who came before us are not working so well for us. They continue to dampen, they even wipe out the social impact that grant makers and fundraisers seek to have in our communities and through our social movements. **We need new theories and practices that speak to the current day and the future needs of our field. And that's why we've created the Funding that Works Framework** and the courses that we are teaching about the framework in **our Funding that Works Academy.**

So I would ask the foundation professionals and other grant makers and donors who are listening, are you struggling to help grantees navigate the challenges facing their staff? Are you seeking new funding practices that can break through old dynamics, through some of the entrenched contradictions and paradoxes of philanthropy and go beyond the traditional models of grantmaking or funding leadership development programs or capacity building initiatives? Are you trying to provide what your grantees and other nonprofits really need?

And to our nonprofit listeners, are you continuously feeling overwhelmed by burnout or the potential of burnout or other people's burnout? By the difficulty we're having in our field with recruitment, with retention, with unfilled jobs, with difficult executive transitions? Do you feel like you're constantly following the money, but you can't actually get anywhere with it?

(00:07:17) We're all experiencing this crisis or crises in the philanthropic and nonprofit community. These issues are impacting all of us, but they're also impacting the entire sector. We need individual and collective action from funders and nonprofits to address these system wide issues. And we need the associations who convene us, the consultants who advise us, the educators who train us. We need all these intermediaries to help us out. All our institutions are contributing to the problem. And luckily, **all of us can be part of the solution.**

And yes, I'll answer the question. We do need to change government policies and practices. How government funds and contracts with nonprofits, no doubt we need to change that. But as we work to change government, or as we wait for government to change, we need to take responsibility for our own practices, our own contributions to the problem and its solution. We need to model a new way of doing grantmaking and fundraising.

(00:08:24) So just imagine with me for a moment here. Imagine if foundation grants not only supported the programmatic health of a grantee organization, but also its financial health and the human health of the organization. Imagine if there wasn't this dichotomy between grants that are restricted to projects and programs on one hand, or completely unrestricted general operating support on the other hand. Imagine if there was another option that strengthened the people of grantee organizations and nonprofits in our communities.

Imagine if, instead of treating nonprofit people as overhead, we respected nonprofit workers as the bedrock beneath organizational effectiveness. Instead of thinking of nonprofit people as indirect costs, we recognized the direct line between the well-being and compensation of all nonprofit professionals in an organization. A direct line between those people and the impact their organization has on the world. No one is indirect. Everyone is part of directing social change through their nonprofit work. Imagine if, instead of burnout and churn, our funding systems help nonprofit leaders to burn brightly, to thrive and to sustain their work for the long haul. **Just imagine, you can be part of that change.**

(00:09:57) You know, on this podcast, since we've been producing episodes, we started in September of 2020, you've heard us discuss the nature of the problem. That was the theme of season one. You heard us introduce the concept of talent-investing in season two and talk about its principles and practices in the episodes and seasons that followed. These were our broad themes throughout the lifespan of this podcast so far, and we are going to keep going with it. Season seven will be arriving in your podcast feed in the fall. But, you know, these were themes and we haven't really had the chance on this show to dig in and help you really learn this framework we've been laying out broadly and put it into practice, apply it in your context.

So we want to give you a more cohesive, comprehensive view of Fund the People's Framework and how to use it. And really, we want to help you use it. So today I'm pleased to launch the Funding that Works Academy. It's our new professional development platform designed to help grant makers and fundraisers move philanthropic money in a way that actually supports and develops nonprofit leaders and workers. **With Funding that Works you'll learn to understand the challenges facing our sector in a new way so that you can craft interventions that will actually address the real problem.** You'll learn the theory and practice of talent-investing. It'll help you make grants or raise money in a way that actually puts people at the center of the social sector. With people driving strategy, capacity, programs, outcomes and impact.

(00:11:57) **What we are offering is a paradigm shift, and it's also a pragmatic shift, an approach that can be integrated into your existing priorities, structures and processes.** Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to sell you snake oil here. Our courses don't offer any cookie cutter solutions. We're not giving you a magic bullet, to use another analogy, but we help you take a set of concepts and practices and apply and adapt them in a customized fashion for your institution, your sphere of influence, your context.

(00:12:39) So that's what the funding that Works Academy is all about. It's built right into the fundthepeople.org website. It offers a series of courses and it's going to do more and more over time. **We're starting by launching the Academy part of our website and launching our first course, which is for foundation professionals and other grant makers.** So if you'd like to find out more about whether funding that works is right for you, I invite you to visit fundthepeople.org today and click on **Funding that works Academy**. There you'll get to know about the specifics of the Academy and our courses and you'll learn all of the great resources that are available to you.

You can also go to bit.ly/fundingthatworks right now for more information. And if you want to learn about the foundation course, you'll be able to click into it there. But you can also go directly to bit.ly/fdnpro and **that'll get you directly to our course for foundation professionals.**

(00:14:00) To help launch that course today we're offering our podcast listeners a special discount code, so if you do decide to buy the course at checkout, use this discount code for 10% off. The **discount code is POD10**. This is time limited, this discount code. You have to buy the course by Wednesday, May 10th to get the use of that discount code. So it gives you a good reason to go check it out and consider purchasing that course for foundation professionals.

Now, **we will be rolling out more courses for nonprofits and intermediaries in the coming months.** We'll have courses for foundation trustees, nonprofit professionals, nonprofit board members and folks working at intermediary institutions such as consultancies, higher education and associations. So if you want to see all the courses that we're going to be rolling out, just go to bit.ly/fundingthatworksshop click on the course that you would like and you can enter your name and email to be notified when the course becomes available.

Thank you so much for listening and thanks for your consideration and your interest in Fund the People and the Funding that Works Academy. If you want to hear more from me about all of this and ask me some questions, **I'll be talking about the Funding that Works Academy as part of our launch today on a livestream on LinkedIn Live** and possibly some other social media channels. But we're starting with LinkedIn this afternoon **at 2 p.m. Eastern Time, 11 a.m. Pacific**. So go to Fund the People's Page on LinkedIn to get more information.

(00:15:56) **You can also email me** if you have any questions whatsoever or any interest, you want to shoot something past me, **I'm at rusty@fundthepeople.org**. So I look forward to seeing you on LinkedIn today at 2 p.m. when I'll be talking more about the Academy and taking some questions.

This is the last episode of season six. We're taking the summer off, as I indicated before, while we record some new interviews and plan our California Talent Justice Summit. I want to thank Loftis Partners for being our season sponsor throughout season six. It's been an awesome partnership and we look forward to staying in partnership with Loftis Partners and perhaps having some other of our listeners become sponsors of the show.

(00:16:42) We also want to thank the following funders for their generous support of Fund the People, which makes this podcast and all our programs possible: The Bar Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, The Walter and Elise Haas Fund, the Kresge Foundation.

(00:17:06) My deep gratitude to the team who make this show happen: Erin Giunta produces the show, Johnny Taylor records the show at the Beacon A.V. Lab, and Carla Paez and Juan Manuel Acosta edit the show. Thanks again to all of our esteemed and amazing guests this season. And thank you, dear listener, for tuning in, for taking a talent-investing journey with us and for sharing this show with your networks. Please go check out our offerings from the Funding that Works Academy and I'll talk to you today at 2 on the live stream at LinkedIn and this fall right here on your Fund the People Podcast.

OUTRO (00:17:48)

Thanks for listening to Fund the People Podcast! Visit fundthepeople.org and click on "Podcast" to find a transcript for this-and other-episodes and all the links discussed in the episode. If you enjoyed this episode, we'd really appreciate a 5-star rating and a quick review if possible on Apple Podcasts - it helps more people to find the show. Thank you for driving change in our communities. Remember to keep your tank full, take care of yourself, and take care of one another.