

Voqal's Vision for Progressive Change: Investment Areas for Social Equity

To achieve social equity, Voqal believes in investing in four aspects of organization development to build grassroots, progressive power. These investment areas, when taken together, build a society that values diversity and perspectives of the many, not the privileged few.

The following outlines each investment area, culminating in how Voqal understands social equity. Voqal chooses its partners because they understand social changes takes relationships, community organization, and time to build on progress. We want this to be an open dialogue, so if you disagree about how we define our investments, please let us know.

Building Infrastructure

Voqal believes it will take new voices, roles, and structures to dismantle the current systems that benefit a few to build a system that benefits all. Voqal wants to ensure new leaders, advocates, and supporters of progressive policies have resources to build political and social power, with a focus on internal functionality so that organizations can fulfill their missions. Organizations that fit in this investment area are spending time to diversify revenue streams and/or staff, increase community support through volunteers or activists, or strengthen partnerships, to name a few.

When categorizing a grant into this investment area, Voqal asks:

- Is the organization strengthening organizational infrastructure or governance?
- Is the organization strengthening staff capacity or management?
- Is the organization seeking ways to diversify revenue or staff?
- Is the organization seeking to develop new partnerships and community relationships?

This investment area focuses on the people and processes within an organization so that the organization can create stronger, better advocates.

Stronger, Better Advocates

If an organization has established internal structures and a base of supporters, it can focus on building power to bring about progressive social change. Staff and supporters have the leverage to meet with elected officials, participate in writing legislation, or host community forums, to name a few. Organizations working in this investment area are seen as the expert on their topic and use that expertise to drive the conversation at local, state, and national levels.

When categorizing a grant into this investment area, Voqal asks:

- Is the organization developing leaders, including community members, to build skills of professional advocates?
- Is the organization educating its community about issues and how to contact decision-makers?
- Is the organization an active participant in drafting policy and/or legislation?

Once an organization has established advocates, it can shift to driving an increase in public support for broad progressive solutions that help all and not just those in its community.

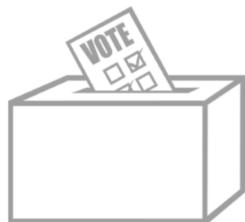
Increase Public Support

Voqal considers an organization focused on increasing public support if it has proven sustainable operation practices and already has an active, reliable support base. Once these are established, it can work to educate the general public about an issue and why a progressive lens is the best for finding a solution. Organizations in this investment area are driving the conversation in various media outlets, developing national messaging, and securing individual turnouts for voting or contacting elected officials, to name a few.

When categorizing a grant into this investment area, Voqal asks:

- Is the organization educating the general public about an issue?
- Is the organization sharing how a progressive solution is the right path?
- Are organization representatives sought for local and national media engagements?
- Is the organization driving people to the polls to vote for progressive policy solutions?

When organization can focus on the national conversation, it can increase public support for any progressive issue that can then lead to a progressive democracy.



Progressive Democracy

Voqal believes a progressive democracy, at its heart, consists of an engaged public who has easy access to vote and campaign financing that naturally centers the needs of the people over corporations and big money. Voqal knows there are many ways to ensure these two basic fundamentals are met and seeks organizations that are activating campaign finance reforms, ridding the U.S. of gerrymandering and other voter suppression techniques, or shoring up fundamental rights, to name a few.



When categorizing a grant into this investment area, Voqal asks:

- Is the organization advocating or lobbying for progressive laws, policies, and practices?
- Is the organization working with communities to build power for influencing decisions that affect them?
- Is the organization focused on policy at local, state, or national levels that address participation in democratic principles, such as voting?

Once the U.S. can establish, with the support of its social sector, fair rules for participating in democracy, it can achieve elusive and ever-promising social equity.

Social Equity

If Voqal invests in progressive organizations that seek to strengthen internal capacity, develop strong advocates, drive public support, and advocate for progressive democratic principles and practices, it believes social equity can be achieved.

Voqal will consider social equity the reality if the following rings true in this country:

- The “gaps” in society, be in education attainment or household wealth, are not delineated along race or ethnic lines
- The LGBTQ+ community feels safe walking down the street, using any restroom, and being themselves at work
- Immigrants have access to education, healthcare, and social/legal services without fear of deportation
- The 99% are not at the mercy of how a privileged few choose to structure taxes, wages/profits, and other economic drivers

We know this vision of social equity is embarrassingly lacking of details and not all-inclusive, but we only seek stepping stones so as not to presume what is needed in the months and years ahead to preserve this democracy and enlarge “man” to truly include all humankind.

We look forward to working with you on this journey.

When considering organizations to receive grant-funding, Voqal seeks grassroots, community-led partners focused on building progressive power and infrastructure at local and national levels. Based on the current political climate, the specific issues and tactics Voqal funds will vary, but its grant funding is always in service of progressive democracy reforms and ensuring all living within the U.S. have easy access to social services and civic engagement opportunities, while also being safe and secure.

While there are many communities feeling the affect of deep social inequities in the U.S., Voqal concentrates its support to protect and defend the following communities (in alphabetical order).

- African American and Black communities
- Immigrants and Refugees, with a focus on African immigrants from the Caribbean or Africa
- Indigenous Peoples (American Indian and Alaskan Native)
- Latin American communities (Mexico, Central and South America, and Caribbean)
- LGBTQ+ communities
- MASA communities (Muslim, South Asian, and Arab)

In addition to concentrating support for specific communities, Voqal focuses funding in the following issue areas.

- Building political power and capacity for organizations led by people of color
- Modernizing voting and expanding voting rights
- Encouraging unbiased law enforcement and fair courts
- Supporting public financing and clean and fair elections
- Strengthening independent and transparent redistricting
- Increasing alternative media outlets that center community needs

