Dear Friends,

It’s been an extraordinary year. Our social change marketplace reinvented, reinvested, and dug deep to keep local communities supported in a time of tremendous challenge and loss. Our Social Innovators have been on the front lines, managing huge operational obstacles while continuing to serve communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and the persistent crises of racial and economic inequality.

The Social Innovation Forum (SIF) has held steady through all of it, nimbly adapting and expanding support to match our partners’ emerging needs. We’re proud of how so many of our funders and in-kind partners stepped up too, offering just-in-time funding and expertise that helped fill critical gaps.

We were ready for 2020 because we are rooted as a community. For almost two decades, SIF has cultivated trust, connection, and learning across a growing network of investors and community-based leaders. That work—and those active, committed relationships—made all the difference in 2020.

More recent investments paid off too: This year, we embarked on year one of a three-year strategic plan and rolled out a new set of core values to guide us. Those values and priorities provided the foundation we needed to meet the moment. They offer a map, too, as we move forward—especially as we continue the essential, ongoing work of addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our internal and collective work.

We’re thankful to all who showed up for change in a year that demanded so much from all of us. We were ready because of you.

With sincere gratitude,

Susan Musinsky
Executive Director

Ryan Dings
Chair, Board of Directors

With Thanks to Our Board

We’re lucky to count on 11 dedicated board members who guide our work while keeping us rooted in the communities and sectors we collectively serve and represent. We’re especially grateful to Ryan Dings, outgoing chair, who helped steer us through our first five years as an independent nonprofit with tremendous energy and commitment. Thanks to these leaders, we remain rooted and ready for the next phase.

The Social Innovation Forum catalyzes Greater Boston’s change community by connecting nonprofits that are poised to accelerate with investors and skilled volunteers who can help get them to the next stage of impact.

Social Innovation Forum Annual Report 2020
We were ready to face 2020 because we have strong roots to sustain us. Over 17 years, the Social Innovation Forum has built trusting relationships and deep capacity across a diverse network of individuals and organizations. In 2019, we crafted five core values that define what we stand for and guide all of our work. In a time of great turmoil, these values keep us grounded as we rise to the moment and find bold new ways to serve Greater Boston’s change community.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION*

Diversity: an essential component of SIF, and our social impact marketplace; it broadens the lens through which we address the historic systems of oppression and exclusion that continue to affect the underrepresented members of our community. SIF embraces a broad definition of diversity that includes race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, education, language, mental or physical ability, and other identities/diversities that are named and unnamed. We recognize that an individual or group may affiliate with multiple identities.

Equity: At SIF we acknowledge that conditions of inequity are historically and currently present in Greater Boston and that these conditions oppress some groups and populations. Improving equity includes identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented full access and participation. This can include taking proactive and intentional steps toward fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people.

Inclusion: SIF strives to create an environment that welcomes, respects, and affirms all people. Our approach to inclusion is grounded in the experiences of those that have been historically marginalized. Inclusion goes beyond diversity and allows all to participate fully so that a broad range of perspectives can influence our ability to realize our mission.

*Our team spent several months discussing and defining what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean for SIF’s work. In crafting our definitions we drew from those of Equity in the Center’s “Awake to Woke to Work,” Independent Sector, and the YWCA.

Partnering with SIF this year, we found such an immediate cohesion of values. Within my cohort and in our work with the SIF staff and consultants, we collectively built deep relationships and learned in a truly engaged community—it’s a community with a real human approach that has fostered fruitful connections and a more focused vision of Elevated Thought’s future.”

Marquis Victor, Elevated Thought, 2020 Social Innovator

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Our team actively seeks to gain new knowledge and understanding from others, with others, and independently about the range of social issues in our region. We welcome feedback, engage in honest reflection, and focus on ongoing improvement. We also share our learning whenever possible.

DEEP RELATIONSHIPS

Fostering authentic and trusting relationships is core to how we do our work. SIF makes connections among stakeholders and facilitates the building of genuine relationships with intentionality.

ENGAGED COMMUNITY

SIF’s marketplace approach centers on a connected and collaborative community in which everyone puts their skills to work toward the shared goal of accelerating social impact.

NIMBLENESS

SIF is willing to take risks, test new approaches, and pivot in order to respond to emerging priorities. We are adaptable and recognize the need to continuously adjust and innovate in an ever-changing world.
The Social Innovation Forum (SIF) plays a unique role in cultivating Greater Boston’s nonprofit community. We’re best known for our two-year Social Innovation Accelerator and the annual showcase event that introduces a set of vetted nonprofits to funders.

This year, our 2020 Innovators were forced to adapt quickly to keep their doors open and communities supported as COVID-19 took a heavy toll. SIF provided rapid-response programming and valuable connections to help them transform and persist while we pivoted to deliver our flagship Accelerator program—including the annual Social Innovator Showcase—virtually. We’ve extended many of our resources to our full network of 181 nonprofits, who count on SIF for support and learning that address critical challenges at each stage of growth.

Mission Accelerated
SIF’s 25 nonprofit partners will tell you: We stick with them for the long haul. Our 2019 strategic plan formalizes and expands upon the support we’ve always provided to graduates, with offerings that meet nonprofits at each phase of growth and impact. By late February, we’d launched multiple new alumni initiatives and an Alumni Council to guide the work. Then, COVID-19 hit. We opted to accelerate. The alumni structures we’d created—and years of accumulated trust—meant we were proximate with our Nonprofit Network and could respond quickly. SIF staff and consultants offered a series of timely, remote webinars to guide nonprofit leaders through the first phase of the crisis: accessing small business loans, retooling budgets, and more. A few weeks later, we invited leaders to share best practices in virtual fundraising, and we brought our previously slated learning cohorts online, integrating a timely “crisis leadership” component.

We moved quickly—adapting and extending a net to all who wanted in—because the situation called for it, our partners needed us, and it was the right thing to do.

“We participate in SIF offerings because we know they’re going to be high caliber—with great trainers and other organizations that are doing amazing work. There are so many conferences I’ve gone to, where I’ve been like, ‘Why am I here? The SIF gatherings are always worth the time.’”
Roseann Bongiovanni, Executive Director, GreenRoots, 2018 Social Innovator

“[COVID-19] hit. SIF reached out and said, ‘We know a lot of people that value your organization. Tell us what you need.’ And they came back with $55,000 in new grants. That’s unheard of! With SIF, you feel like you have not just a resource but an ally and a friend.’”
Bior Guigni, Chief Executive Officer, Beat the Streets New England (formerly Boston Youth Wrestling), 2019 Social Innovator

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“I know I can trust SIF, so when it came to Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funding, as crazy busy as I was, I knew that taking time to hear from whomever SIF tapped was going to give me great insights.”
Danielle Kaplan, Director of Operations and Finance, InnerCity Weightlifting, 2012 Social Innovator

“It’s an interesting time for nonprofits. There’s a lot to manage and a lot of difficult decisions to be made. By convening people and bringing in content experts, SIF creates a type of brain trust that wouldn’t be possible for a lot of smaller nonprofits.”
Leon Smith, Executive Director, Citizens for Juvenile Justice, 2017 Social Innovator

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The Gross Family Gives Together

In 2019, the Gross family came to us with an idea: Siblings Kelly and Anna had recently participated in our Next Gen collaborative track, an experience Anna described as “eye opening.” Kelly agreed: “We didn’t realize how much we would develop our own voice.” With their mother, Liz, the two sisters wanted to create a similar experience for the women in their extended family that was focused on a passion they all share: the arts.

Nine women—two generations of sisters, aunts, and cousins—entered the process with their own artistic and philanthropic interests, but their perspectives changed as they reviewed applications together. “As we learned more about the organizations,” Kelly said, “It was no longer just, ‘I like writing.’ We learned what actually mattered to us.” Liz added, “The layers of questioning and research through every section of the process really helped.”

The site visits were especially illuminating. During a visit to Elevated Thought, the Gross family crafted their own spoken-word poetry, and at OrigiNation, they learned and danced alongside youth. “I really loved meeting the people and hearing their story,” Liz reflected. Kelly agreed: “We said, ‘We can see the impact you have because you just impacted us.’”

In the end, moved by both experiences, the Grosses made a rare decision to select and fund two Social Innovators. Anna and Kelly already see themselves applying lessons learned to their independent giving. Kelly said, “It’s very easy to feel overwhelmed by the number of organizations out there. This really gave me confidence that, even if it’s at a small scale, we can make an impact.”

“With Funders

“The expertise around the table from co-funders helps me become a more discerning funder, opening my eyes to other ways of thinking about the social issue. It also exposes me to lots of organizations in our local community. I like having more smart heads around the table. I think it really results in better, more informed decisions.”

Martha Bacigalupo, Pine Lodge Charitable Fund, 2019, 2020, and 2021 Collaborative Track Sponsor

Our social change mission extends to funders. Each year, the Social Innovation Forum (SIF) partners with a group of committed investors to help select and sponsor our nonprofit Social Innovators. These “track partners” assist with our rigorous vetting process and cover two years of intensive support for the selected nonprofit, all while honing their own grant-making skills. Over the past eight years, we’ve explored collaborative variations on this model.

Collaborative tracks offer the chance for multiple funders to pool their resources in a shared giving model. As expected, they have also proven to be a powerful mechanism for strengthening learning and relationships as funders exchange expertise, form alliances, and explore emerging social issues with support from our experts, community leaders, and one another. Nonprofits, meanwhile, gain exposure to a larger group of donors, who frequently make additional grants separately.

Looking Ahead: From Collaborative to Inclusive

We’re developing a next evolution of the collaborative track in which we’ll invite Social Innovator alumni to the table as co-decision makers, ensuring that community voices have a say in selecting programs that affect their lives.
There is no direct question or task in the image. The document appears to be a report or article discussing the Social Innovation Forum's activities and future plans. It mentions focusing on social change, diversity and inclusion, and a call to action for communities to contribute to the forum's initiatives.

**READY FOR WHAT’S NEXT**

We’re ready to continue facing the challenges that emerged in 2020.

At the Social Innovation Forum, we’re committed to cultivating a thriving social change sector whatever the future may bring. As we look ahead at the coming year, we are especially invested in expanding our efforts in four areas.

1. **Sustained support for nonprofits:** We will continue to be there for the nonprofits in our network, offering virtual (and, eventually, in-person) learning opportunities on timely topics and of varying levels of intensity and duration to help them meet their evolving needs.

2. **Funder learning & connections:** We will prioritize trust and collaboration in funder relationships with nonprofits and will develop new mechanisms to keep funders up to date on nonprofit needs in this fast-changing environment.

3. **Expanding the network:** We’re ready to widen our web, providing more ways for nonprofits, investors, and others to join our social change marketplace. To that end, enhanced communications and outreach will be a major priority in the coming year.

4. **Diversity, equity & inclusion:** We continue to look inward with our board and staff to center diversity, equity, and inclusion in our mission and operations. In the year ahead, we will work to build a more racially diverse leadership team, emphasize racial equity within our organization, and continue learning as we work to become an organization that more fully embodies this closely held value.

**READY TO HELP?**

We’re grateful to the community members who’ve sustained our work this year and all other years with their generous gifts of time, talent, and resources. We invite you to help us meet the moment with bigger and bolder commitments in 2021.

**MAKE A GIFT:** Gifts to the Social Innovation Forum ensure we can be there for Greater Boston’s changemakers with transformative opportunities and connections.

**LEARN WITH US:** Attend one of our upcoming events to build your understanding of current social issues and to become a more engaged and capable agent of change.

**MEET WITH US:** We are always eager to connect with new and long-term partners. Let’s schedule a virtual coffee!

**SUPPORT A SOCIAL INNOVATOR:** Review our Social Impact Investment Guide (available online!) to find vetted nonprofits working on issues that matter to you.

**PROVIDE IN-KIND SUPPORT:** We’re eager to build relationships with businesses and organizations ready to invest significant time and expertise in creating social change.

**SOCIAL INNOVATORS**

- 1647
- Adaptive Sports New England
- Boston HERC (Higher Education Resource Center)
- Elevated Thought
- Origami Cultural Arts Center
- PAARI (Police Assisted Addiction & Recovery Initiative)
- Vital Village Network
- WHALE (Waterfront Historic Area League)

We tip our hats to our 2020 Social Innovator cohort for their leadership, resilience, and collective commitments to the community in a challenging year. The support you have given one another and those you serve is inspiring!

**SOCIAL INNOVATOR ALUMNI**

- 2020 ACT Lawrence / Community Boating Center / Fathers’ UpLIFT / GreenRoots / Political Asylum Immigration Representation Project (PAIR) / Partners for Youth with Disabilities / The Review Collaborative, a program of HomeStart / Strategies for Youth
- 2021 Boston CASA / Citizens for Juvenile Justice / Community Economic Development Center / Institute for Nonprofit Practice / Julie’s Family Learning Program / Project Citizenship / Room to Grow
- 2012 Cooking Matters / InnerCity Weightlifting / LGBT Aging Project / Science Club for Girls / Tempo Young Adult Resource Center / WorkExpress
- 2013 Fiscal Health Vital Signs / Future Chefs / Massachusetts Senior Action Council / MathPOWER / Smart from the Start
- 2014 Generations Incorporated / Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance / Medicine Wheel Productions / My Life My Choice / Playworks New England / Project Hope
- 2015 Bessie Tarr Wilson Initiative for Children / Heath Inc. / Maritza Apprenticeship Program / More Than Words / RAW Art Works / uArts
- 2016 CitySprouts / Cradles to Crayons / Girls’ LEAP / ReVision Urban Farm / The Theater Offensive / UTEC
- 2017 Boston Urban Youth Foundation / Building Impact / Actors’ Shakespeare Project / Strong Women, Strong Girls
- 2020 Boston Children’s Chorus / Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute / Close to Home / Common Impact / RediScience / ViaVIA
- 2019 Madison Park Development Corporation / Boston Learning Center / Eagle Eye Institute / Haley House / Social Capital Inc. / Year Up

**2020 SOCIAL INNOVATORS**

To learn more about SIF or to discuss your next commitment, please send a note to Carolyn Shaughnessy (she/her/hers):

[cshaughnessy@socialinnovationforum.org](mailto:cshaughnessy@socialinnovationforum.org)
The mission of the Social Innovation Forum is to create a positive social impact in Greater Boston. We are committed to strengthening communities and improving the lives of all people. Social Innovation Forum's critical work is only possible through the generosity of Investors & Supporters.

**EVALUATION AND INTERVIEW COMMITTEE**


**SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM ALUMNI COUNCIL**


**SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS**


**SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM STAFF**

Sarah Dinges, Program Manager | Melissa Duggins, Director of Strategy and Operations | Cassandra Gonzales, Communications and Events Coordinator | Tanya Inwald, Director of Programs | Michelle Lindberg, Senior Coordinator, Strategy and Operations | Abigail Meligrano, Program Co-Op | Susan Musinsky, Executive Director | Anna Nashkel, Program Manager | Syed Raza, Development Co-Op | Carolyn Shaughnessy, Director of Network Engagement

**FINANCIALS**

**OPERATING REVENUE • $2,109,402**

- 31% Foundations
- 30% In-kind support
- 21% Individuals
- 12% Corporations
- 4% Coworking fees
- 2% Special events

**REVENUE BY SOURCE**

- 4% Net assets released from restrictions
- 29% Contributed goods & services
- 15% Contributions & grants
- 4% Coworking fees
- 2% Special events
- 1% Other income

**REVENUE BY TYPE**

- 49% Fees & services
- 15% Corporations
- 30% In-kind support
- 12% Foundations

**FINANCIALS**

**EXPENSES • $2,195,678**

- 74% Program services
- 18% Fundraising
- 10% General & administration

Due to COVID-19, SIF shifted the timing of some of its FY20 programming into FY21 and rolled the restricted program revenue forward into FY2021. SIF also secured a $156,918 Paycheck Protection Program loan in FY20. SIF will apply for and anticipate receiving full loan forgiveness in FY21.
“Especially this year, being a Social Innovator in a cohort of similar organizations was absolutely invaluable. I’m grateful that we’ve been able to learn from each other. I grew to really respect how each of us faced the challenges of this COVID-19 crisis with such grit and grace.”

Sam Acevedo, Executive Director, Boston HERC (Higher Education Resource Center), 2020 Social Innovator