Social Capital: An Inclusion and Equity Brown Bag Lunch and Conversation  
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Opening Reading: “Senegal” by Maya Angelou

What is Social Capital?
“Social capital is the shared values, experiences, and expectations that promote familiarity and trust in a community. And it has a lot of relevance for a funder working in a community.” (MPC Handout)

“'Social capital' refers to features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.”

“Social capital is ... the networks of association and norms of trust and reciprocity that facilitate collective action ...”

Networks and Norms
“Networks” are associations or relationships with friends, family, and colleagues.

“Norms” refers to a pattern of behavior in a particular group, community, or culture, accepted as normal and to which an individual is expected to conform; social norms often reflect shared experiences and expectations, shared understandings of the meaning of things, and shared values among members of a group.

Bonding (strong ties) and Bridging (weak ties) Functions
"Bonding social capital refers to the links between like-minded people, or the reinforcement of homogeneity. It builds strong ties, but can also result in higher walls excluding those who do not qualify, American college fraternities being a prominent example of such bonding."

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For an illustration of the Equity challenges inherent to bonding social capital, see Toby Morris’ blog, “On a Plate.”

"Bridging social capital … refers to the building of connections between heterogeneous groups; these are likely to be more fragile [weak ties], but more likely also to foster social inclusion."[6]

Related to the Bridging function (intentional reaching out to build weak ties) is an important Linking function (Malcolm Gladwell’s “Connector”),[8] which connects members of one’s strong and/or weak ties to each other.

**Mapping Exercise**
Based on Rosalind Edwards’ “Mapping Your Social Capital, A Suggested Work and Family Class Activity”

Why is social capital important?
- It builds trust leading to a general sense of reciprocity and good will.
- It supports the development of collective problem-solving.
- It is a key ingredient to resilience, social and economic strength (like diversifying stock).
- Like financial capital, social capital tends to be self-reinforcing and cumulative: the more you invest in it, the more the “stock” grows; if you don’t invest in it, the “stock” flat-lines.
- Building social capital for those with limited access to resources builds EQUITY and lowers the likelihood that race, gender, and other similar factors will determine the fate of an individual or community.

**Q & A**

**How do we build it equitably?**
Share stories and brainstorm!

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1 Toby Morris, “On a Plate,” [http://thewireless.co.nz/articles/the-pencilsword-on-a-plate](http://thewireless.co.nz/articles/the-pencilsword-on-a-plate)
2 Schuller, Baron, and Field, “Social Capital.”