NARRATIVE AREA OF OPPORTUNITY: REPARATIONS UNLOCKING DEMOCRACY

A framing that offers reparations as a requirement to realize the vision of a healthy, functioning, inclusive multiracial democracy.

Best used against:

- Racial Progress Narrative
- Too Complicated/Too Long Ago Narrative
- Meritocracy & Bootstraps Narrative

Articulate:

- In your own words, define democracy.
- In five words, describe the state of democracy in the United States today. Has the U.S. ever been a true democracy? Why or why not?
- Think about the concept of repair—how does it intersect with your understanding of democracy?
- What makes a democracy healthy?
- In your opinion, why is saving democracy important?
- Think about a key unlocking a door—what needs to happen mechanically for this to happen? What happens once the door is unlocked?
- Do you feel as if you can participate in conversations about race and the history of racial violence and anti-Blackness in the United States? Why or why not? What could increase your participation in these discussions?
- Think about the concept of power—in what ways have the branches of the government
hoarded or overstepped their power throughout U.S. history? In what ways is power being hoarded and/or abused today?

Align:
- How does your advocacy currently touch on the topic of democracy?
- If you work within the justice space, where does your work primarily sit (i.e.: racial justice, gender justice, voting rights, etc.)—how do reparations intersect with your current work?

Amplify
- How can you employ the “Reparations Unlocking Democracy” frame in the face of rising white nationalism, voting restrictions, and refusal to accept election results?
- What audiences might resonate most with this frame and why?
- Where does this frame already show up within society? Where are there opportunities for this frame to grow in parts of society, and why?

Activity

Watch Amanda Gorman’s “The Hill We Climb” (inspired by Facing History & Ourselves mini-lesson).
- What emotions were present when listening to the poem? What images were conjured? What were your main takeaways from it?
- What is the significance of the metaphor of a hill in the context of the United States?
- In what ways has democracy strengthened or weakened since Gorman performed this poem in 2020?
- Reflect on this stanza from the poem: “This is the era of just redemption. We feared at its inception. We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of such a terrifying hour. But within it we found the power to author a new chapter, to offer hope and laughter to ourselves.”
  - What does the phrase “just redemption” mean to you? What is its significance in our current political environment?
  - How could reparations help author a new chapter in the history of the United States?