"If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants" - Sir Isaac Newton

Introduction - "Flawed Input"

As confident as we are in our work, and as much as we believe that we are in the right place at the right time, we also recognize that the value and accuracy of our analysis is limited by the quality of the data used in our models. If we introduce flawed inputs into our analytical tools, we will reap flawed results.

As such, we approach our work with great humility and patience. While we must scale our reach, we cannot risk doing so with bad data, invalid assumptions, or improper analysis. Doing so would only exacerbate the problems we are trying to fix.

This also speaks to the necessity of Slingshot Memphis and the work we are doing. No one else is looking at the intersection of poverty and investment principles like we are. If we make misinformed decisions now, it could be years, decades even, before we realize the error in our course. Now is the time to fundamentally reconsider how we - funders and fighters - allocate our limited resources in the fight against poverty.

Our Work in Q1 2018

The first quarter of 2018 has been our most productive and challenging ever. Our work with our nonprofit partners is progressing rapidly. We are months ahead of where we were at this time last year. We have spent hundreds of hours meeting with these organizations, touring their facilities, attending their events, and learning as much as we can about how they are exacting change in the community and, in doing so, fight poverty, every day.

We have also been focused on increasing our visibility. To improve the quality of life for our under-resourced neighbors, Slingshot is helping recondition the charitable giving landscape in Memphis. Such reconditioning necessitates a tremendous amount of awareness and dollars. Speaking of which, in Slingshot's effort to raise and allocate $1 million dollars before year end, we have ramped up our fundraising activity and social media presence. Thanks to our Board of Directors and Seed Funders, who are committed to covering all operating costs, every dollar raised will directly impact our neighbors in need.

Finally, *landscape analysis* - understanding the context in which our partners work - is key for identifying organizations and interventions that are really moving the needle on poverty. To

address this, we've asked more questions of our nonprofit partners and improved our onboarding process.

Standing On The Shoulders of Giants
Flawed inputs can present major challenges at the community level. For example, counterintuitive data-points, *without further examination*, can mitigate hope, instill fear, and, if unchecked, be absolutely debilitating.

Case in point: While Memphis ranks at the top in nearly every category of poverty, it was recently named the most generous city in America. What do these two data points miss?

First, they do not account for the counterfactual - what Memphis would look like without our city's generosity. Countless investments through the years - by funders and fighters - have, without a doubt, generated a demonstrable impact in the lives of our under-resourced neighbors.

Second, they don't account for unrealized gains. Some of the most lucrative investments in the for-profit sector have long time horizons. This is also true with poverty-alleviating programs. For example, investments in education, particularly in early childhood, have some of the best results when combating poverty. However, the benefits of these investments - increased educational achievement, higher wages, lower rates of crime - will not accrue until years later.

Focusing only on those two facts ignores the work that is already being done in our community. To effectively combat poverty, we must recognize the "giants" who have been leading this fight for years. You cannot slingshot that which does not already exist. Thankfully, so much good already does exist.

This is where our opportunity lies. We must accelerate this work. To really improve the quality of life for our under-resourced neighbors, *good* is not good enough. We must ask better questions and collect better data. We must innovate and challenge the systems that limit the impact of our efforts.

Conclusion
Using data to accelerate the fight against poverty in Memphis is not only possible, it is absolutely necessary. Over time, this approach will position everyone to serve more people more effectively. This is how our work can create real change in the community.

This challenge is exactly why Slingshot matters. With better data and more transparency, we can begin to invest our limited resources in those poverty-alleviating solutions with the greatest return.

I can tell you with confidence, Slingshot is way ahead of schedule. Despite the many challenges, our data-driven approach works. It works, in large part, because we identify and fix flawed input. And, it works because we are standing on the shoulders of giants - the funders, fighters, and, most important, our under-resourced neighbors.

Onward,
Justin W. Miller