

RACIAL EQUITY, CULTURE & PARENTHOOD

SEASON 1

SHIFT

WITH P. S. BLOSSOM



Narrative Change SHIFT with P.S. Blossom

The US has a complex history with race, reproduction, and class, which leads to negative health outcomes for women and other birthing people of color. Dominant public narratives surrounding these health outcomes do not always reflect the perspectives, voices, or lived experiences of women and other birthing people of color. The P.S. Blossom podcast explores issues at the intersections of reproductive justice and capital with a specific focus on the autonomy of women and other birthing people of color.

SHIFT with P.S. Blossom is a guide that accompanies each topic covered in the P.S. Blossom podcast. It provides a reproductive justice approach to controversial conversations. We encourage readers to actively participate in SHIFTing the Narrative by sharing personal stories and lived experiences in their communities.

Racial Equity, Culture & Parenthood

We live in a multicultural world, where traditions, history, and knowledge are passed from generation to generation, adapting and advancing our society. History has shown that perpetuating dominant narratives without the perspective of racial and health equity can be incredibly harmful, and it is each individual's job to change them. Systemic racism is present in society, the medical field, cultural traditions, and many other places.

Culture and parenting styles are often based on tradition and, if not reflected upon, can carry harmful contexts and narratives, perpetuating injustices, inequities, and inequalities. Speaking out, advocating for those who can't, investing, and educating our society are just a few of the steps we can begin to take toward justice and equity.

“ **Black women are innovators. Black women are problem solvers. Black women are part of the solution and have voices that need to be heard and lifted up, and most importantly, invested in.** ”

—Heidi Williamson

NARRATIVES AROUND RACIAL EQUITY, CULTURE & PARENTHOOD

Sometimes, it is difficult to identify harmful dominant narratives since they are deeply rooted in our culture. By identifying harmful dominant narratives, we can positively SHIFT social structures and behaviors.

Here are some examples of **harmful dominant narratives** around racial equity, culture, and parenthood:

- *“Policies, bills, and laws are passed by the government, so it’s impossible for them to be biased or promote inequalities or discrimination.”*
- *“Medicine is based on objective science. It cannot be biased or discriminatory.”*
- *“There is no such thing as reproductive justice.”*

Here are examples of healthier **intersectional counter narratives** that can help SHIFT harmful dominant narratives:

- *Acknowledging medical bias and institutionalized racism, we can create or push to create equitable changes in the medical system that benefit all.*
- *Racial inequities are real, and they run deep in our medical and health systems. They need to be addressed to prevent further perpetuation.*
- *Venture Capital can make a difference in achieving Racial Equity.*



Erika Seth Davies *(she/her)*

S1 EPISODE 7

[Erika Seth Davies](#) is the CEO of [Rhia Ventures](#), which aims to transform the U.S. market for sexual, reproductive, and maternal health into a vibrant and equitable one through its impact investing, ecosystem building, corporate engagement, and narrative change work. She is a seasoned leader with over 20 years of experience in development and fundraising, program design, collaboration and partnership management, and racial equity advocacy. Erika is the Founder of The Racial Equity Asset Lab (The REAL), a venture that centers racial equity in impact investing and works to shift capital to address the persistent racial wealth gap. She previously served as Vice President of External Affairs at ABFE (Association of Black Foundation Executives), where she designed the SMART Investing Initiative, a field-wide effort to encourage foundations to incorporate a racial equity lens in endowment management practices through increased access for racially diverse- and women-owned investment management firms. Erika is a Social Entrepreneur in Residence with Common Future and a former Fellow of Equitable Access to Capital Markets in the Fair Finance portfolio of the Beek Center for Social Impact + Innovation at Georgetown University. She was a member of the inaugural class of the ABFE Connecting Leaders Fellowship program, a recipient of the NYU Wagner School of Public Service IGNITE Fellowship for Women of Color in the Social Sector, and a member of the class of 2017 for Executive Leadership Institute of CFLeads. Erika most recently was the Associate Director of Philanthropy at McDonogh School and previously served as the Chief of

“ We are all part of the system that was designed, in a way, to marginalize, to harm, exploit, and extract from Black people. But I am constantly challenging the beliefs that have come along with that. I am constantly challenging myself to move differently. ”

“ If we do the work in a way that centers and honors Black women, then everyone gets lifted up. ”

Staff of the Baltimore Community Foundation. She enjoys volunteering and serves as a member of the boards of Impact Hub Baltimore and Baltimore Algebra Project. Additional positions and activities include serving on the Investment Committee for the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Impact Investing Committee of the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, Matter Unlimited’s Advisory Board, and the Abortion and Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice Cohort of Women Leaders for the World. Her most significant role is that of mother to Ethan and Evelyn.

“ Change is not easy. It’s not overnight. It’s not immediate. It takes work. ”

ON THE EPISODE

During [Erika’s Perspective: Pace Yourself for the Journey](#), the CEO of Rhia Ventures visits the podcast in her first 90 days to share her perspective on what it takes to drive racial equity. Erika Seth Davies is a leader and entrepreneur with asset management and racial equity expertise and the founder of the Racial Equity Asset Lab. Tune in to hear about Erika’s unexpected path to social entrepreneurship, her advice for approaching conversations about racial equity with those who are new to it, and how she plans to prioritize these conversations at Rhia Ventures. Erika also shares the insight that everyone benefits when the focus is on lifting up those experiencing the most harm, offers an overview of her approach to leadership, and provides pivotal advice for a new generation entering into social equity work.



“ My goal is that folks can know that they're going to have whatever support and care they need as if it was a dental cleaning or a primary care checkup. ”

Lizamarie Mohammed *(she/her)*

S1 EPISODE 9+10

[Lizamarie Mohammed](#) is the Senior Program Associate for Rhia Ventures, supporting the Corporate Engagement program and policy work, which influences the business community to support sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice. She has over a decade of policy and advocacy experience in sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice. Prior to Rhia Ventures, Lizamarie was the State Issues Manager at the Guttmacher Institute, where she analyzed sexual and reproductive health-related legislative, regulatory, and judicial actions, tracked state policy developments, and monitored state trends across the US. Her work there led her to develop the maternal health portfolio, which included issues related to maternal mortality and access to sexual and reproductive health for those incarcerated. Lizamarie is passionate about social justice issues, is committed to advancing access to quality, comprehensive care for those historically marginalized and underserved, and brings a racial equity lens to her work. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Skidmore College in Gender Studies and Government and a Juris Doctor from Seattle University School of Law. Lizamarie is a mom of two toddlers, an abortion doula, a knitter, and a policy wonk in DC. For self-care, especially as a forever-postpartum person, she takes pottery classes as dedicated kid-free time!

“ Everybody has varying degrees of what their postpartum journey will look like, but having the time to be able to care for yourself and care for your infant and your family is so critical. ”

ON THE EPISODE

Lizamarie Mohammed joins us in [Reproductive Rights and Racial Equity \(Part 1\)](#) to tell the story of how a letter she sent to Planned Parenthood kicked off a career in reproductive and racial advocacy. She shares how her experience of pregnancy and postpartum care illuminated barriers to access for those who need it most. Lizamarie explains her approach to policy and reveals how her experience at Washington State influenced her perspective. She is committed to supporting those on the ground in driving the direction of policy with the ultimate goal of seeing everyone experience equal access to the care and the resources they need to pursue any version of building a family that feels right to them.

“ I think not having certain things covered, like midwives or doulas or lactation consultants - is largely because we weren't prioritizing the person who's pregnant and going to be giving birth and parenting. ”

During [Reproductive Rights and Racial Equity \(Part 2\)](#) of our conversation with Lizamarie Mohammed, she dives further into how her lived experience has informed her work and advocacy. She begins by differentiating between reproductive health and reproductive rights before exploring how the Reproductive Justice (RJ) framework helps individuals determine the most pertinent areas of need. She outlines different avenues of advocacy that listeners can pursue to help enact change and explains how offering better parental benefits can significantly improve a company's bottom line. We also touch on historical policies, who they serve most, and public perception and stigma around breastfeeding and chestfeeding. This is a powerful conversation about advocating for one's self.



“ **By saying Indigenous communities, I don't want to leave people with this impression that it is a monolith because even within the Indigenous communities, there's a lot of different communities with different languages.** ”

“ **A policy is great and all, but if people don't know that it actually exists - what's the point of it being there? It's not just the law that's critical. It's also [about] people knowing what their rights are under this law.** ”

Ena Suseth Valladares *(she/her)*

S1 EPISODE 13+14

[Ena Suseth Valladares](#) is the Director of Research at California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. Ena is responsible for specifically addressing Latinas' reproductive and sexual health priorities and how they are reflective of the Latina community's needs. She has worked on reproductive justice issues for over 15 years, primarily working on reducing health inequities and improving access to social and health services through community-informed research and policy.

Ena received her B.A. in Integrative Biology from the University of California at Berkeley. She completed her MPH, with an emphasis in Community Health, from California State University, Long Beach. A firm believer that quality health care and community-based health services are a right that all individuals deserve, In addition to gathering fun data, Ena likes to share random (nerdy) factoids, is a bit of a tree-hugger, and really LOVES LA.

ON THE EPISODES

For [Parenting And The Dominant Narrative \(Part 1\)](#), our guest is Ena Suseth Valladares, Director of Programs at California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ), who has been working in the reproductive justice space for over 15 years. In this episode, she talks about the damaging nature of the dominant narratives that exist in the reproductive space and how she and her team are working to bring about a powerful culture shift through community-informed research and policy. She shares the difference between reproductive health, rights, and justice as she dives deeper into understanding the struggles that teen and immigrant parents have been forced to endure for many years, and what it is going to take to protect the reproductive rights of all people, plus so much more.

“ **You deeming someone not worthy of healthcare or worthy of a certain assistance, it's going to lead to you not leading them worthy of having their rights respected.** ”

In [Parenting And The Dominant Narrative \(Part 2\)](#), Ena explains the importance of being sensitive when it comes to categorizing Indigenous communities, the factors that lead to discrimination, racism, and exclusion in the reproductive health space, and how the collaborative approach that CLRJ has adopted is empowering immigrant communities to stand up for their rights. This is a conversation that touches on some of the United States' most pressing issues in a way that will leave you feeling hopeful about the future.



Marcela Howell *(she/her)*

S2 EPISODE 28 (Original Pilot of S1)

[Marcela Howell](#) is the Former President, CEO, and Founder of [In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#), the only national Black Women's RJ organization. The goal of In Our Own Voice is to lift up the voices of Black women leaders at the national, regional, and state levels on policies that impact our lives.

Marcela has over 40 years of experience advocating for women's rights, reproductive health and justice, and women's empowerment. Prior to founding In Our Own Voice, she served as Senior Policy and Communications Consultant for the Communications Consortium for Media Change (CCMC). She is the Former Vice President of Policy, Communications, and Marketing at Advocates for Youth, a non-profit organization that works on adolescent sexual and reproductive health issues.

“ **Reproductive justice is different than reproductive rights, is different than reproductive health. It really is an intersectional perspective about how you make decisions if you are a Black woman in America. ”**

Marcela is the author of [Walk in My Shoes: A Black Activist's Guide to Surviving the Women's Movement](#), a collection of inspirational essays to help young Black women navigate the women's movement and empower them to become leaders in the fight for Reproductive Justice.

“ **Investment in Black communities helps everyone. You're not doing us a favor. You are doing your pocketbook a favor, because that investment will prove to be very profitable. ”**



Ulili Onovakpuri *(she/her)*

S2 EPISODE 28 (Original Pilot of S1)

[Uriridiakoghene \(Ulili\) Onovakpuri](#) returned to the Kapor Capital team in 2016. She is focused on sourcing investment opportunities, conducting diligence, and supporting Kapor Capital's portfolio companies, particularly those in the digital health and medical technology industries.

“ For us, it's really about not just having folks at the table, but forming these partnerships where folks are also included on the upside, and they're a part of your team, and you're including them. ”

Previously, Uriridiakoghene served as Director of Global Programs at Village Capital, a global accelerator program and venture capital firm that supports healthcare, education, agriculture, energy, and FinTech businesses. At Village Capital, she worked side by side with entrepreneurs from around the world, helping them grow their ideas into marketable businesses.

Uriridiakoghene received her MBA with a concentration in Health Sector Management from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. She is a native San Franciscan and a proud UC Berkeley Alumni. In her free time, you will likely find Uriridiakoghene watching Bollywood movies or playing with her niece Maya.

ON THE EPISODE

[Reproductive Justice and Venture Capital](#) may seem like unrelated areas of interest, but in reality, they are interconnected in many ways! Policy expert, writer, educator, and producer, [Heidi Williamson](#), hosts a conversation with [Marcela Howell](#) and [Uriridiakoghene \(Ulili\) Onovakpuri](#) to explore these intersections and imagine an empowered future for all. Kicking off our conversation, we are introduced to writer and policy consultant Marcela and her work as the Former President, CEO, and Founder of [In Our Own Voice with the National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#), and Ulili, Managing Partner at [Kapor Capital](#). Sparked by 2020's protests against police brutality, there has been a movement towards racial justice and equity within and beyond criminal justice. This conversation centers on health, reproductive justice, and freedom for all. Join us for the podcast release of the inaugural 2020 episode that differentiated between sectors, explored both tensions and possibilities, and considered the role that investors could play in ensuring reproductive justice.

“ You have to have people at the table who look like the customers that you hope to invest in and who look like the founders who you hope to invest in. ”

Reflection Questions

Have you heard of Racial Equity? If so, What do you think it means?

How do you think Racial Equity is manifested in the Health sector?

How have you experienced Racial inequity?

Do you think immigrants have a different standard of care?

How much do you think our culture influences how we view parenthood?

How much do you think parenthood styles have changed over the years?

Different cultures have different traditions - can you name some of your cultural traditions?

Do you think Racial Equity can be achieved in society at large? How?

Do you know any bills or laws that support Racial Equity?

How do you think Venture Capital can intersect with Reproductive and Justice?

What do you think are some of the changes in our society after the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020?

Guest Recommendations Topic

Erika's Perspective: Pace Yourself for the Journey

- Listen to the episode [here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [The Racial Equity Asset Lab \(The REAL\)](#)
- [Common Future](#)
- [ABFE](#)

Reproductive Rights and Racial Equity (Part 1)

- Listen to the episode [here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [Catholics For Choice](#)
- [Guttmacher Institute](#)

Reproductive Rights and Racial Equity (Part 2)

- Listen to the episode [here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice](#)

Parenting And The Dominant Narrative (Part 1)

- Listen to the episode [here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [California Latinas for Reproductive Justice \(CLRJ\)](#)
- [Justice for Young Families](#)

Parenting And The Dominant Narrative (Part 2)

- Listen to the episode [here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [Black Women For Wellness](#)
- [SisterSong](#)
- [Ibis Reproductive Health](#)

Reproductive Justice and Venture Capital

- Listen to the episode [here!](#)
- Read the full episode transcript [here!](#)
- [National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#)
- [Hummingbird Black Creative](#)
- [Kapor Capital](#)

Follow Our Guests

Erika Seth Davies

[Linkedin](#)

X: [@ErikaSeth76](#)

Lizamarie Mohammed

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IG: [@lizersaurus](#)

X: [@LizMohammed](#)

Ena Suseth Valladares

X: [@ena_suseth](#)

Marcela Howell

[Linkedin](#)

Uriridiakoghene (Ulili) Onovakpuri

[Linkedin](#)

IG: [@ulili.o](#)

Heidi Williamson

[Linkedin](#)

IG: [@htwilliamson](#)

Relevant Social and Platform Links

Rhia Ventures is a social impact organization with a mission to advance reproductive and maternal health equity by intentionally leveraging capital to center the needs, experiences, and perspectives of historically marginalized people in decision-making.

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P.S. BLOSSOM TEAM

Executive Producer, Co-Host: [Victoria M. Griffin](#)

Co-Host: [Crystal Pirtle Tyler, PhD](#)

Creative Director: [Lillian Zhao](#)

Production Assistant: [Elena Morales](#)

Check out the P.S. Blossom Podcast on [Amazon Music](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)!



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