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VOL. 1 ISSUE 4 *Strategic Communications*

RESULTS

14 Strategic Communications for Influence: Lessons From The Annie E. Casey Foundation and Its KIDS COUNT Initiative

Jane Reisman, Ph.D., Anne Gienapp, M.P.A., Kasey Langley, M.P.P., Carolyn Cohen, M.Ed., Tony Cipollone, Ed.D., Tom Kelly, M.P.P., Don Crary, M.Th., and Sue Lin Chong, J.D.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is using the KIDS COUNT Network in a new way: as a strategic communications tool in its focused efforts toward policy change, broad social change, and improved conditions for vulnerable children and families. Grantee activities surrounding the release of the *2008 KIDS COUNT Data Book* led to the quantity and quality of media that Casey believes will help achieve its desired outcomes. Relationships with journalists, use of locally relevant information, use of locally relevant media advocacy strategies, good preparation, and a solution orientation were present in states demonstrating desirable media coverage. doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00041.1

28 Speak Your Peace: A Communications Strategy for Changing Community Culture

Douglas Easterling, Ph.D., Holly C. Sampson, M.S.S., M.L.S.P., and Beth Probst

“Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project” (SYP) was developed by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation and the Millennium Group to improve the civility of public discourse, under the premise that this would strengthen community decision making, expand civic engagement, and increase residents’ interest in elected office.

The SYP campaign used a multi-modal approach to promote nine principles (or “tools”) adapted from Forni’s book *Choosing Civility* (e.g., pay attention, take responsibility, apologize, give constructive criticism). Public and governmental groups that adopted these principles did engage in more civil interactions, and there is some evidence that this has spread to other citizens who are active in local public affairs. doi: 10.4087/

FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00047.1

TOOLS

- 45** Going Deeper: Can Investigative Reporters Add Value to Assessment and Evaluation?
Larry Meyer, M.P.A.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supplemented its standard evaluation approach by engaging professional journalists to elaborate on evaluation findings. One goal was to increase the awareness and use of the evaluation findings by external audiences. The resulting reports are more direct, even critical, than any prior Knight Foundation attempt to evaluate and assess. It produced deeper looks into the intent and outcome of major initiatives, analyzing and addressing flaws in the theories of change underlying initiatives. However, the goal of reaching external audiences was not achieved. Better up-front targeting of audiences and more outreach to these audiences are suggested ways to increase awareness. [doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00042.1](https://doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00042.1)

- 53** Factors Influencing Donor Partnership Effectiveness
Danièle St-Pierre, M.P.A. and Lisa Burley, M.E.S.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) produced six case studies on jointly funded programs related to the environment, global health, and information technologies in developing regions around the world. A two-dimensional tool probing eight factors that influence donor (funder) partnership performance and interinstitutional communication was developed and used in conjunction with a Partnering Process Model to guide the preparation of the case studies. Among the factors considered (history of the partnerships, level of commitment, decision-making, etc.), communications among donors and within IDRC was the most important variable related to success of the partnerships. [doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00039.1](https://doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00039.1)

- 62** Are We There Yet? How to Know Whether Your Communications Are Effective
Edith Asibey, M.A., Justin van Fleet, Ph.D. Candidate, and Toni Parras, M.A.

This article describes the results of a study on current knowledge and practices in evaluating foundation communications. The study consisted of three parts: an online survey of practitioners, a series of in-depth key informant interviews, and an extensive literature review. While most practitioners agree that evaluating communications is necessary to make decisions about their communication strategy, more than half did not regularly do so. While there are worthy resources on program and campaign evaluation, few tools exist that are specific to evaluating foundation and nonprofit communications. The tangible result of this study was the development of such a tool for communication practitioners. [doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00040.1](https://doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00040.1)

72 Leveraging Grant-Making—Part 2: Aligning Programmatic Approaches With Complex System Dynamics

David Peter Stroh, M.A. and Kathleen A. Zurcher, Ph.D.

This is the second of two articles that focus tools that enable foundations to increase the leverage of their grant-making resources by working effectively with the dynamics of complex social systems. It emphasizes that “powerful questions” addressed to board, staff, grantees and other stakeholders can help transform thinking. It examines how foundations can align planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts with the behavior of the social systems they seek to improve. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation’s Food and Fitness initiative is an example of how systems thinking tools were used to inform all stages of the initiative. [doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00046.1](https://doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00046.1)

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

84 Philanthropy, Evaluation, Accountability, and Social Change

John Bare, Ph.D.

The author argues that many foundations have substituted process accountability for accountability for contributing to social change. Accountability in terms of required reporting is important, but it sets a floor, not an aspirational ceiling. Seeking to extend basic human rights to more individuals around the world, seeking to reduce racism in a given city, or seeking to change public-health norms in small town—all of these aspirations require first a willingness to take on challenges that defy short-term, causal, quantifiable results attributable to a best practice. There are tools—such as risk analysis, systems approaches, and game theory—that can help philanthropy engage in work on complex social problems that cannot be deconstructed into a series of small, linear projects. [doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00048.1](https://doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-09-00048.1)

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