The Foundation Review

Volume 5
Issue 2 *Open Access*

2013

Front Matter

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Recommended Citation

(2013). Front Matter. *The Foundation Review*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1161>

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THE

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*Published Quarterly from the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at
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THE FoundationReview

VOL. 5 ISSUE 2

Editor in Chief

Teresa R. Behrens

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The Foundation Review is the first peer-reviewed journal of philanthropy, written by and for foundation staff and boards and those who work with them implementing programs. Each quarterly issue of *The Foundation Review* provides peer-reviewed reports about the field of philanthropy, including reports by foundations on their own work.

Our mission: To share evaluation results, tools, and knowledge about the philanthropic sector in order to improve the practice of grantmaking, yielding greater impact and innovation.

The Foundation Review is a proud product of the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University.

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Statement of the Editorial Advisory Board

We believe that the forthright sharing of information among foundations and nonprofits builds a knowledge base that strengthens their ability to effectively address critical social issues. We encourage foundation donors, boards, and staff to honor this transparency in their own practices and to support others who do so.

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DEAR READERS

Although this is an unthemed issue, many of the articles carry through on the collaboration theme of our Grantmakers for Effective Philanthropy co-edited issue on collaboration. Additional articles offer some insights into broad sector concerns.

Jarosewich, Mir, and Simkin offer a tool for assessing the effectiveness of networks along five dimensions: network management, sustainable service systems, data-driven decision making, policy and advocacy, and knowledge development and dissemination. This tool begins to fill a hole in the philanthropic sector's methods for engaging with networks as an entity, rather than as a collection of individual organizations.

Coffman, Beer, Patrizi, and Thompson provide insights into how the evaluation function is actually being carried out in foundations. The evaluation requirements that foundations place on their grantees have a profound effect on the functioning of the sector. Heavy demands for data that are not used are a tremendous drag on the sector. On the other hand, the need to use evaluation more effectively for learning and improvement remains. This research suggests that the most common response is still to focus on the supply side; that is, to get more data. The authors have some recommendations for moving beyond the piling on of data.

A key question that funders often wrestle with is how to hold a network, rather than an individual grantee, accountable. **Linkins, Frost, Boober, and Brya** focus on how to achieve collective accountability and sustainable systems change. It highlights common challenges and presents guidelines for funders. Effective support of collaboration demands that funders change their mental models about accountability.

While the idea of organizations having predictable life cycles has been widely accepted, **Easterling** explores the implications of applying a life cycle approach to collaborations. He argues that funder-driven collaborations are often artificial, awkward, and unsustainable. He argues that funders should tailor their support of naturally occurring networks to match the network's stage of development.

Erenrich provides a thoughtful reflection on the importance of artists in leading grassroots movements. She highlights models for leadership-development training for cultural activists that can enhance campaigns for social justice by creating opportunities to network, reflect, and refine strategy. This article is a call for funders to think more creatively about who leads and how social change happens.

Coffman provides a review of the online Implementation Guide for Community Change: Tools from First 5 Marin. Rather than theorizing about community change, this toolkit offers practical tools that have been used to work with a variety of community groups across time.

One of the benefits of an unthemed issue is the insights that can come from reading about unrelated work and putting it together in new ways. Some questions that came to mind for me were: What do we know about the life-cycle of evaluation in foundations? Are there predictable ways in which foundations evolve in their use evaluation and can we learn something from that to make it more effective? On a different topic: How can communities hold a group of funders accountable?

I hope this issue stimulates some questions for you!

Teresa R. Behrens, Ph.D. EDITOR IN CHIEF

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Reviewed by Julia Coffman, M.S., Center for Evaluation Innovation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

VOL. 5 ISSUE 2

TOOLS

14 Measuring Dimensions of Network Functioning: The KnowHow2GO Network Survey

Tania Jarosewich, Ph.D., Censeo Group; Nushina Mir, Ph.D., Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and Linda Simkin, M.Phil., Action Research Associates

This article describes a network survey that was created for Lumina Foundation's KnowHow2GO initiative, which focused on strengthening college-access networks. The survey measures five dimensions of effective networks: network management; sustainable service systems; data-driven decision making; policy and advocacy; and knowledge development and dissemination. The authors suggest that with minor changes, the survey can be applied to other collective-action efforts.

doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-12-00033.1

SECTOR

36 Benchmarking Evaluation in Foundations: Do We Know What We Are Doing?

Julia Coffman, M.S., and Tanya Beer, M.A., Center for Evaluation Innovation; and Patricia Patrizi, M.S., and Elizabeth Heid Thompson, B.A., Patrizi Associates

This article presents new findings about what foundations are doing on evaluation and discusses their implications. It is based on 2012 research that benchmarks the positioning, resourcing, and function of evaluation in foundations, and follows up on a 2009 study that used a similar design. Many evaluation-units now lead a range of evaluation practices that include performance management, knowledge management, organizational learning, and strategic learning. The main challenge is still how to increase evaluation use and the most common response is still to focus on the supply side.

doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-13-00009.1

52 Moving From Partnership to Collective Accountability and Sustainable Change: Applying a Systems-Change Model to Foundations' Evolving Roles

Karen W. Linkins, Ph.D., Desert Vista Consulting; Lynda E. Frost, J.D., Ph.D., Hogg Foundation for Mental Health; Becky Hayes Boober, Ph.D., Maine Health Access Foundation; and Jennifer J. Brya, M.A., M.P.P., Desert Vista Consulting

The authors discuss three complex initiatives that made sustainable changes in integrated behavioral health and primary care. Using a conceptual framework based on the Building Blocks of Systems Change model, this article focuses on how to achieve collective accountability and sustainable systems change. It highlights common challenges and presents guidelines for funders.

doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-12-00024.1

67 Getting to Collective Impact: How Funders Can Contribute Over the Life Course of the Work

Douglas Easterling, Ph.D., Wake Forest School of Medicine

Foundations have a long tradition of convening and funding collaborative groups with the hope that this will lead to large-scale impact. Although funder-driven collaboration sometimes leads to breakthrough solutions, foundations have also pushed the participating organizations into artificial, awkward, and unsustainable efforts. This article argues that funders should support naturally emerging networks and should tailor their support to match the network's stage of development. A 5-stage developmental model is introduced and illustrated through a case study of the Central Appalachian Network (CAN).

doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-12-00002.1

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

84 Funding Leadership-Development Training for Cultural Activists: A Reflective Essay

Susan J. Erenrich, Ph.D., Cultural Center for Social Change

Throughout history, artists have led grassroots movements of protest, resistance, and liberation that have culminated in transformational change. Often, these artists have been overlooked or given too little attention by funders. This reflective essay highlights a number of models for leadership-development training for cultural activists. Opportunities for these cultural activists to engage in training can enhance individual campaigns for social justice; provide opportunities for them to network, strategize, and reflect in safe spaces away from the turmoil of day-to-day organizing; and allow them to examine theoretical frameworks related to grassroots crusades, ethical responsibilities, and their role in relation to the communities they serve.

doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-13-00001.1

96 Implementation Guide for Community Change: Tools from First 5 Marin

Reviewed by Julia Coffman, M.S., Center for Evaluation Innovation

doi: 10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-13-00100.1

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