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Editorial

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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