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Executive Summary

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VOL. 6 ISSUE 2

RESULTS

10 Improving Care and Service Coordination for Vulnerable Populations Through Collaboratives: One Funder's Approach, Impact, and Implications for the Field

Lisa Payne Simon, M.P.H., Amber Slichta, M.S., and Ann F. Monroe, M.S., Health Foundation for Western & Central New York

Improvement collaboratives are short-term learning systems that bring together teams from multiple organizations to seek improvement on a focused topic within the organizations. This article describes findings from four collaboratives conceived and funded by the Health Foundation for Western & Central New York. Findings suggest that the foundation's collaborative model – an adaptation of the intra-organizational Breakthrough Series model for use in a multi-organizational setting – can be effective in fostering improvement within organizations and promote coordination across agencies to improve health and social services for vulnerable populations.

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27 Where Heart Meets Smart: The Making of a Grantmaker

Elizabeth A. Castillo, M.A., and Mary B. McDonald, Ph.D., University of San Diego, and Christina P. Wilson, M.A., Rancho Santa Fe Foundation

Nonprofit-management programs have grown significantly since they first appeared in 1980. While applied projects are common in the curriculum, most programs do not offer applied learning experiences in philanthropy. This article tells the story of a partnership between a foundation and a university graduate program that facilitates applied learning in philanthropy through a course in grantmaking. The authors find that there is much to be gained by foundation-academic partnerships. Foundations benefit from an increase in theoretical and methodological rigor, an infusion of fresh perspective and energy, and an expanded awareness of a region's nonprofit landscape. Students benefit by learning what works firsthand from veteran grantmakers, recognizing the human dimension of philanthropy, and engaging in meaningful learning that has real community impact. The university advances scholarship and connects it to practice in ways that produce significant benefits for the community.

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TOOLS

41 Survey Instruments Used to Evaluate Foundation-Funded Nonprofit Capacity-Building Programs: Considerations for Organized Philanthropy

Catherine H. Brown, M.A., University of Nebraska

Alongside a growing interest in nonprofit capacity-building programs is a growing concern with program impact, especially by funders. This article describes how the McKinsey Organizational Capacity and Assessment Tool and the Abt Associates survey have been used to assess changes in nonprofit capacity. Drawing on field experience, the author compares the benefits and costs of these instruments from the perspective of evaluators and survey respondents. Both perspectives are combined to offer guidance for foundations that are considering incorporating surveys into nonprofit capacity-building programs.

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SECTOR

52 Public-Philanthropic Partnerships: A Review of Recent Trends

Alan Abramson, Ph.D., Benjamin Soskin, Ph.D., and Stefan Toepler, Ph.D., George Mason University

The last decade has seen a surge of interest in public-philanthropic partnerships (PPP). The role of foundations in such partnerships created some uncertainty within the philanthropic sector; collaboration with government agencies raised questions about the sector's independence and concerns about transparency and accountability. To explore the issues involved in PPPs, this article looks at two key federal initiatives, Michigan's Office of the Foundation Liaison, and the involvement of foundations in state and local responses to the 2007 financial crisis and the implementation of the federal economic stimulus package.

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SECTOR

67 Transparency, Performance Assessment, and Awareness of Nonprofits' Challenges: Are Foundations and Nonprofits Seeing Eye to Eye?

Ellie Buteau, Ph.D., Mark Chaffin, B.A., and Ramya Gopal, B.A., Center for Effective Philanthropy

As can be expected in any relationship, foundations and nonprofits do not always see eye-to-eye on the issues that affect their work together. This article brings to light topics on which nonprofit and foundation CEOs' views are not aligned, as well as topics on which they are but progress is not where either group would like it to be. The authors discuss four aspects of foundation practice: transparency with the nonprofits they fund, support for nonprofit-performance assessment, awareness of nonprofits' challenges, and the degree to which foundations use their resources to help address nonprofits' challenges.

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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

81 Raising the Bar – Integrating Cultural Competence and Equity: Equitable Evaluation

Jara Dean-Coffey, M.P.H., and Jill Casey, B.S., jdcPartnerships; and Leon D. Caldwell, Ph.D., Association of Black Foundation Executives

Social justice and human rights are part of the mission of many philanthropies. Evaluation produced, sponsored, or consumed by these philanthropies that doesn't pay attention to the imperatives of cultural competency may be inconsistent with their missions. The American Evaluation Association's Statement on Cultural Competence provides those who produce, sponsor, and use evaluation an opportunity to examine and align their practices and policies within a context of racial and cultural equity and inclusion. This article seeks to open a discussion of how philanthropy can use an equitable-evaluation approach to apply the principles of the AEA statement, present the concept of equitable evaluation alongside an approach for building equitable-evaluation capacity, and apply equitable-evaluation capacity-building to philanthropy.

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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

95 From Citywide to Neighborhood-Based: Two Decades of Learning, Prioritization, and Strategic Action to Build the Skillman Foundation's Youth-Development Systems

Della M. Hughes, M.S.S.W., Brandeis University; Marie Colombo, M.A., and Laura A. Hughes, M.P.H., Skillman Foundation; Sara Plachta Elliott, Ph.D., Youth Development Resource Center; and Andrew Schneider-Munoz, Ed.D., National Center for Innovation and Excellence

The city of Detroit has the highest child poverty rate in the country. In an effort to build and sustain outcome-focused youth-development systems, the Skillman Foundation moved from a traditional grantmaker to a place-based investor and change-maker. Three aspects of Skillman's approach directly shaped the evolution of its youth-development investments: recognizing Detroit's economic, social, political, and environmental challenges; articulating overarching goals to provide direction and setting priorities for the scope and focus of its programmatic work; and using rapid learning to inform strategic decisions and social-innovation practices designed to tackle deeply entrenched problems.

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114 Shifting From 'Evaluation' to Valuing: A Six-Year Example of Philanthropic Practice Change and Knowledge Development

Angela K. Fruscianta, Ph.D., William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

Knowledge development sits at the convergence of movement toward engagement, data-based decision-making, and networked learning for social and policy change. This article explores five knowledge-development trajectories at one family foundation that include tools and frames developed for increasing organizational learning, beginning network learning, and informing both program and operations for enhanced strategy implementation. The author also chronicles knowledge development from its inception as a dedicated position within a foundation.

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