The Foundation Review

a publication of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University

Volume 7
Issue 4 *Open Access*

12-2015

Back Matter

Recommended Citation

(2015). Back Matter. *The Foundation Review, 7*(4). https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1273

doi: 10.9707/1944-5660.1273


VOL. 7 ISSUE 4

SPECIAL SECTION ON THEORY OF PHILANTHROPY

7 A Foundation's Theory of Philanthropy: What It Is, What It Provides, How To Do It

Michael Quinn Patton, Ph.D., Utilization-Focused Evaluation; Nathaniel Foote, J.D., M.B.A., TruePoint; and James Radner, M.Phil., University of Toronto

This article explains what a theory of philanthropy is, how it contrasts with theory of change, and how it is more than, but incorporates, a foundation's philosophy and strategy. The three authors have more than 100 combined years of organizational consulting experience. The theory-of-philanthropy approach emerged from their work with foundation leaders who were seeking ways to more effectively integrate all aspects of their work – mission and values; governance, strategy, and staffing; resource allocation and evaluation – to increase effectiveness and impact.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1263

---

21 The Theory of Philanthropy of the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative

James Radner, M.Phil., University of Toronto; Nathaniel Foote, J.D., M.B.A., TruePoint; and Michael Quinn Patton, Ph.D., Utilization Focused Evaluation

This case study presents the theory of philanthropy of the Palix Foundation, which is seeking to improve health and wellness outcomes for children and families in Alberta, Canada, by mobilizing and applying knowledge about brain and early childhood development and the link to lifelong mental health and addiction outcomes. Following a developmental evaluation of a major phase of Palix's work, the foundation's leaders asked the authors to work with them to address questions emerging from the evaluation relating to the next phase in its development. This led to a concentrated effort in a short time to synthesize the foundation's underlying theory of philanthropy and apply it to those questions.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1264

---

43 The Blandin Foundation: The Journey to a Theory of Philanthropy

Kathy Annette, M.D., Wade Fauth, J.D., and Allison Ahcan, M.A., The Blandin Foundation

This case illustrates a different specific theory of philanthropy and different process for developing a theory of philanthropy. The Blandin Foundation, based in Grand Rapids, Minn., undertook a facilitated, participatory, reflective-practice process over several months with its

senior leadership team and board to develop its theory of philanthropy. Blandin's passionate commitment to vibrant rural communities in Minnesota emerged as the anchor of its theory of philanthropy.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1265

---

54 Reflections and Commentary on a Theory of Philanthropy

The conclusion to this special section presents reflections and commentary about the idea, application, and utility of a theory of philanthropy. First is a reflection about being involved in the theory-of-philanthropy process from Michelle Gagnon, president of the Palix Foundation. The authors of the overview article that opened this section then offer some reflections on their experiences – and ongoing learning – with many foundations doing theory-of-philanthropy work. Finally, there are three commentaries from experienced and knowledgeable observers of the philanthropic world, both from within foundations and from the outside working in consultation with foundations. The independent commentators were asked to offer thoughts and reactions after reading the explanation of theory of philanthropy and the two case examples.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1266

RESULTS

66 Influences of Venture Philanthropy on Nonprofits' Funding: The Current State of Practices, Challenges, and Lessons

Tamaki Onishi, Ph.D., University of North Carolina

This article examines the current state of venture philanthropy practices – defined as market-based approaches to grantmaking - in the nonprofit sector, based on data from a survey of 124 nonprofits that engage in venture philanthropy. The survey probes to what degree nonprofit funders are implementing core activities of venture philanthropy, including the use of market-based funding instruments, providing strategic assistance, board participation, and use of social and financial performance criteria. In addition, seven venture philanthropy organizations were also interviewed for this article; various tactics they have used to mitigate internal and external tensions are examined.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1267

SECTOR

81 When Backbone Organizations Become the Funder: The Use of Fiscal Intermediaries in the Context of Collective Impact

Jewla Lynn, Ph.D., Kirsten M. Breckinridge, Ed.M., and Ashley Denault, M.P.P., Spark Policy Institute; Chris Marvin, M.B.A., Marvin Strategies

Intermediary organizations are increasingly being engaged to work with grantees in collaborative approaches that aim to solve significant societal problems. At times the backbone organization – the group providing support to the collective effort – takes on the work of a fiscal intermediary. This article explores the complexities of the dual relationship by using examples from the Social Innovation Fund, a White House initiative, and Got Your 6, a collective-impact campaign that seeks to bridge the civilian-military divide. The benefits may outweigh the challenges if the dual role is deployed effectively; participants in the case studies offer insights into this dynamic.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1268

---

97 Place-Based Initiatives: Lessons From Five Decades of Experimentation and Experience

James M. Ferris, Ph.D., University of Southern California; Elwood Hopkins, M.U.R.P., Emerging Markets Inc.

Place-based approaches have changed and matured in response to historical conditions. In recent years, a new framework has emerged that views place as an open system where neighborhoods are aligned with larger areas and influenced by market forces and public policy. This article summarizes the findings from a yearlong inquiry into the state of place-based initiatives, underscores the lessons learned, and develops implications for foundation practice. Seven key lessons emerged from this inquiry.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1269

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

110 Constancy and Change in the Women's Funding Network: International Horizons and Core Values

Eleanor L. Brilliant, D.S.W., Rutgers University

This article is a case study of women's advocacy funders and their network organization, the Women's Funding Network (WFN). The author analyzes the evolution of the network and its member funds from 1985 to 2012 as they struggled for survival in a complex and changing environment, and examines tensions that exist between the ideals of a social-movement organization and its drive for money, the nature of women's organizational leadership, and what it means to view civil-society activities through a gender lens. This case study illustrates dilemmas inherent in the development of identity-based social-movement organizations as they seek resources for sustainability and prominence in a crowded field. The author includes a timeline of the evolution of the WFN.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1270

128 Understanding Collective Impact in a Rural Funding Collaborative: Collective Grantmaking in Appalachian Ohio

Judith Millesen, Ph.D., Ohio University

This article documents the history and work of the Appalachian Ohio Funders Group, a nine-member regional grantmaking collaborative committed to strategically enhancing the region's assets through leadership, networking, financial and in-kind investments, leveraged resources, and collaboration. Specific attention is given to what makes the collaborative unique – namely, the organizational diversity of the funding partners, the lack of a shared issue area, and the fluidity of work within the group. The findings provide insight into how meaningful collaboration takes place when funders share a love of place and negotiate the costs and benefits associated with collaborative work, and how an explicit commitment to being creative and adaptive can help a group respond to emergent opportunities.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1271

155 Creating Choices Before Making Choices: One Family Foundation's Journey to Finding a Strategic Focus

Kelly C. Medinger, M.N.A., Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation; and Angela R. Logan, Ph.D., University of Notre Dame

For family foundations, the family must create grounded and compelling choices for a strategic grantmaking focus that honor the intent of the original donor, accommodate the preferences of the current board, and respond to the conditions of the present community. This article examines the journey of the Marion I. & Henry J. Knott Foundation toward a strategic grantmaking focus. The authors examine a foundation's first step of building a grantmaking strategy – finding an issue or problem to address – and presents a three-part model for creating choices that reflect a foundation's donor intent, organizational talents and resources, and broader community needs. The study adds to the body of knowledge about the value, process, and challenges of finding a strategic grantmaking focus, whether that focus is for all or simply one portion of a foundation's giving portfolio.

DOI: 10.9707/1944-5660.1272

FSC
www.fsc.org
MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C006300

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE CERTIFIED

This publication is printed with soy ink.

Printed in USA

bef
b-e-f.org

Call for Papers and Grant Requests

THEMED ISSUE OF *THE FOUNDATION REVIEW* ON **EXITING WITH IMPACT**

In recent years, much has been written about foundations that are spending down (investing all their resources in a limited time frame). Organizations like the Center for Effective Philanthropy, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO), and the Foundation Center – which provide high quality resources on foundation effectiveness and operations – are beginning to offer insights and resources on exits and spend downs. At the same time, perpetual foundations are regularly exiting from initiatives, lines of work, or from particular geographies. For both limited-life and perpetual foundations when exiting an area of work, there are many challenges about how to exit while leaving in place strong organizations, networks, and fields that can continue to get results.

For this themed issue, we seek articles that rigorously address how a philanthropic funder can make a constructive or even impactful exit.

Through the support of our sponsoring foundations, we are able to offer small research grants to help defray the direct costs of research on these challenges. **We will award four grants of $2,500 each to support direct research expenses such as travel expenses or small student stipends.**

Additional Background
While there is a growing body of publications on limited life foundations, the vast majority is from foundations offering their own perspectives[1] on their experience. Rigorous, comparative research across foundations that takes into account multiple perspectives (e.g. grantees, funder partners) could add enormous value to the discussion of exits and spend-downs while providing guidance for those who are preparing an exit.

For purposes of this issue, we are focusing on planned exits, which may include exiting:

- specific initiatives or lines of work,
- a particular geography,
- strategies,
- a field of work, and/or
- a complete spend-down where a grantmaking organization spends itself out of existence.

(Note: While funders also end relationships with specific grants or grantees, that is not the focus of this themed issue.)

We are particularly interested in papers that explore one of more of the following questions in three broad areas:

1. When and why do funders exit?

a. What factors inform the decision by donors, whether institutional or individual, to adopt time-limited grantmaking strategies or structures?

In what circumstances are time-limited strategies a more or less appropriate approach? How do donors deciding whether to adopt a time-limited model weigh the tradeoffs in impact, opportunity costs, and resource needs?

b. Are there particular topics or issues that are most often addressed through time-limited grantmaking?

What is the scale and scope of time-limited investments? Do limited-life foundations address different issues than perpetual foundations with time-limited strategies or initiatives? What is the up-side potential in the context of a spend-down or exit? Are there ways in which a limited-time approach can accelerate impact?

2. What do we know about how funders can exit well, with the most impact?

a. How can funders collaborate in a spend-down or exit situation?

How do you collaborate with other funders but not "dump" your grantees on them as you exit the work? How can field-building be coordinated and anchored over time?

b. How do foundations manage their own human resources when they are spending down?

What are appropriate human resources practices (hiring, developing, retaining valued staff) in a spend-down context? How do you effectively communicate with and support staff? How are foundations utilizing consultants in a spend-down context? What are the specific challenges and benefits of heavy use of consultants vs. staff in accomplishing exits and spend downs?

---

[1] In July 2015, the Foundation Center completed a literature review for the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civil Society at Duke University's Sanford School for Public Policy.

c. How can exiting foundations live up to the mandate to "do no harm" to their grantees or the field? What may be unintended consequences of spend-down or exit situations?

Are specific kinds of non-profit capacity building most important/relevant as a foundation ends their support? What constitutes best practices in saying goodbye to grantees so as to minimize harm? What do we know about when and in what form (e.g., endowments, capacity building grant, etc.) to provide final grants to current grantees? Do spend-downs invest equitably in small, medium and large grants? How do spend-down and exit investments compare to the broader field in terms of investing across diverse racial, ethnic, rural and urban, dimensions? What has been learned about planning for an exit from the start of an initiative or strategy?

3. **What are the roles of evaluation and knowledge capture in an exit context?**

a. When and how should the final impact of a limited-life foundation be assessed?

What are the plans of currently identified spend-down foundations with regard to final impact assessments? What are they assessing and how are they going about it? What is an appropriate amount of time to wait to conduct a final impact assessment after a foundation closes its doors or an initiative comes to a close?

b. How can we extend and preserve the knowledge from foundations or bodies of work that are ending?

Are there common themes or lessons across foundations that have exited a field/ initiative or that have spent down, that can provide insight/guidance to others? How does the context of a limited-life foundation impact the purposes and practices of evaluation? How are exiting foundations planning for the resources and intellectual property to be saved, shared, etc. How are the currently identified limited-life foundations planning to archive their work – where, how, who will have access, etc.?

Submit abstracts to submissions@foundationreview.org by February 29, 2016. If a full paper is invited, it will be due June 15, 2016 for consideration for publication in March 2017.

Abstracts are solicited in four categories:

- ***Results.*** Papers in this category generally report on findings from evaluations of foundation-funded work. Papers should include a description of the theory of change (logic model, program theory), a description of the grant-making strategy, the evaluation methodology, the results, and discussion. The discussion should focus on what has been learned both about the programmatic content and about grantmaking and other foundation roles (convening, etc.).
- ***Tools.*** Papers in this category should describe tools useful for foundation staff or boards. By "tool" we mean a systematic, replicable method intended for a specific purpose. For example, a protocol to assess community readiness and standardized facilitation methods would be considered tools. The actual tool should be included in the article where practical. The paper should describe the rationale for the tool, how it was developed, and available evidence of its usefulness.
- ***Sector.*** Papers in this category address issues that confront the philanthropic sector as whole, such as diversity, accountability, etc. These are typically empirically based; literature reviews are also considered.
- ***Reflective Practice***. The reflective practice articles rely on the knowledge and experience of the authors, rather than on formal evaluation methods or designs. In these cases, it is because of their perspective about broader issues, rather than specific initiatives, that the article is valuable.

Research Support
To apply for a research support grant, please answer the following questions in no more than one page total. Only 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible for these grants, and your abstract must be accepted in order to be eligible for a grant. Review will be a two-step process and whether or not a grant is requested will not be considered as part of the abstract review.

1. **What is the amount you are requesting? (Up to $2,500)**
2. **How will the funding be used?**
3. **What will be the impact on the research of receiving funding? How will the research and paper be completed without the funding?**
4. **How does this project relate to your overall research agenda and / or mission?**
5. **Please provide the organization name and proposer contact information.**

Thank you to our sponsors for this issue:

S. D. BECHTEL, JR. FOUNDATION
STEPHEN BECHTEL FUND

The ATLANTIC Philanthropies

Call for Papers for Volume 8 Issue 4

Abstracts of up to 250 words are being solicited for Volume 8, Issue 4 of *The Foundation Review.* This issue will be an open (unthemed) issue. Papers on any topic relevant to organized philanthropy are invited.

Submit abstracts to submissions@foundationreview.org by March 15, 2016. If a full paper is invited, it will be due June 30, 2016 for consideration for publication in December 2016. Abstracts are solicited in the four categories of *Results, Tools, Sector and Reflective Practice.*