

The Foundation Review

Volume 8
Issue 1 *Open Access*

3-2016

Editorial

Teri Behrens
Johnson Center for Philanthropy

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr>



Part of the [Nonprofit Administration and Management Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Behrens, T. (2016). Editorial. *The Foundation Review*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.9707/1944-5660.1290>

Copyright © 2016 Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University. The Foundation Review is reproduced electronically by ScholarWorks@GVSU. <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr>

EDITORIAL

DEAR READERS

As we begin our eighth year of publishing, look for some changes. With this issue, we've introduced a new look for our cover. Later this year, we'll begin publishing an ePub version so that subscribers can easily download a full issue. We're also excited to be publishing a special issue in collaboration with the Council on Foundations; we'll have five issues this year – a great time to subscribe if you haven't already.



Collaboration, both among funders and among grantees, is one of the recurrent challenges in philanthropy. Issues such as donor intent, mission, geographic focus, grant size, competition for resources and theories of change present challenges to successful collaboration. However, with the right people and approaches, we have an increasing number of successful examples. **Klugman and Jassat** assessed the success of advocacy groups that collaborated to help hold the health care system in South Africa accountable. They found that flexible funding, a shared value system, and diverse capacities, constituencies and reputational resources enabled effective collaboration on advocacy.

Minyard, Phillips, and Baker describe how funders in both the private and public sectors recognized that greater scalability and broader impact might be achieved through aligned efforts. Their article explores the origins and structure of the Philanthropic Collaborative for a Healthy Georgia and examines its first initiative: to encourage the development of school health programs in public schools. Trust, flexibility, and shared vision were key to using pooled funding to align resources to achieve greater impact.

Capacity building for grantees has been another recurrent theme over the past two decades. Foundations can only achieve their mission through grantees who implement the work; foundations therefore have an interest in helping those nonprofits succeed.

Wade, Kallemeyn, Ensminger, Baltman and Rempert share the results of an effort to build the capacity of grantees to report on outcomes – and of funders to help develop shared outcomes. The majority of participating grantees benefited from their participation – in particular those that received evaluation coaching.

Devine reports on an evaluation of the Wallace Foundation's Strengthening Financial Management initiative. They compared two different approaches to building the capacity of nonprofit leaders to strategically manage their resources. Not only did they find that building nonprofit financial-management capacity is possible but that the gains arising from the more limited model were comparable to those seen in a higher-intensity approach. The findings have implications for the feasibility for cohort-based, nonprofit capacity-building efforts more broadly.

There have been significant advances in recent years in approaches to understanding how foundations contribute to advocacy and public policy change.

Masters, Barsoum, Martinez, and Angeles present a framework for evaluating a foundation's role in complex policy-change efforts, based on a 10-year retrospective evaluation of The California Wellness Foundation's grantmaking in public policy. After examining more than 25 policy outcomes associated with the foundation's grantmaking priorities, three dimensions of contribution emerged: the role of its grantees relative to other organizations, the prominence of its role and funding relative to other funders or donors, and the degree of alignment between the policy change and the foundation's policy goals.

Ways to ensure grantee voice are another ongoing discussion in philanthropy. Somewhat technical in nature, **Militello, Janson, and Tonissen** describe the development of the InQuiry evaluation tool, a rigorous, innovative tool for including grantee voice. InQuiry combines Q methodology (factor analysis to quantify perceptions) with a qualitative participatory approach. InQuiry generates both quantified metrics of what participants believe about a given topic and also a rich narrative of why participants think the way they do. These data yield metrics for understanding fidelity, outcomes, and impacts.

Gouwenberg, Hoolwerf, Bekkers, Schuyt, Ali, Necker and Smit present the most important results of the European Foundation for Research and Innovation Study, the first study to map the roles and collective contributions of Europe's large, heterogeneous, and fragmented sector of research and innovation foundations. The collection of data and the study's final report allowed a better understanding of the role foundations play, and could play, in advancing research across the European Union.

Celep, Brenner, and Mosher-Williams address the important role of internal foundation culture in achieving social change. Foundations are expected to operate more transparently, accountably, and collaboratively while delivering greater results. At the same time, foundation leaders are reporting pressures from internal challenges that include recruiting and retaining the best talent. This article argues that having a change-making culture is critical to success but that the topic is often left out of strategy conversations.

One of the characteristics needed to have a change-making culture is a commitment to learning. **Darling, Guber, Smith, and Stiles** share their Emergent Learning framework as way for foundations to learn together with other actors in the complex environments in which they work. They distinguish "adaptive" from "emergent" and explore the conditions necessary for emergence. They share tools that support whole-system learning, which requires shorter, faster, more rigorous real-time learning and more cross-pollination among peers.

Delaney reviews William Moody's recent book, *Staying the Course: Reflections on 40 Years of Grantmaking at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund*. Delaney was left wondering whether the highly relationship-based grantmaking style is something program officers can continue to do as pressures for lower administrative costs and faster results have increased.

Across all these articles, the importance of relationships among and between funders and grantees is clear. While this has become a truism in philanthropy, the complexity of the field means that there is a constant need to deepen and expand our understanding of the many facets of building these relationships. In addition to the funder role, foundation staff can play roles of capacity builder, partner, evaluator and co-learner. Negotiating relationships while juggling multiple roles in a complex environment makes giving away money wisely a real challenge. These articles help to continue to build the knowledge base of the field in how to meet these challenges.



Teresa R. Behrens, Ph.D.

EDITOR IN CHIEF