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RESULTS

7 Mission Shift: Using and Evaluating Strategic Communications to Implement Organizational Change

Taryn Fort, B.A., and Kelci Price, Ph.D., Colorado Health Foundation

Strategic communications can play a role in implementing organizational change by reinforcing understanding of the changes and encouraging acceptance of those that impact a target audience. The Colorado Health Foundation uses strategic communications as an integral tool in achieving its organizational mission to improve the health of all Coloradans. Evidence reveals that a well-designed communication strategy was critical to successfully announcing and implementing significant changes to how the foundation operates and invests. This article profiles the strategic communications approach, from its inception through the application of learnings gathered from a subsequent evaluation.
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SECTOR

27 How Do You Measure Up? Finding Fit Between Foundations and Their Evaluation Functions

Julia Coffman, M.S., and Tanya Beer, M.P.A., Center for Evaluation Innovation

As the number of foundations has grown, the philosophies and ways of working across the sector have diversified. This variance means that there is no one right model for how a foundation's evaluation function should be designed. It is imperative for a foundation to think carefully about how the structure, position, focus, resources, and practices of its evaluation function can best fit its own needs and aspirations. This article focuses on questions foundations can ask to assess that fit, and the specific considerations that can inform these decisions.
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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

44 Tackling Big Issues Together: The Story of One Funders Network Promoting the Mental Health of Young Children

Whitney Gustin Connor, M.P.A., Rose Community Foundation; Colleen Church, M.P.A., Caring for Colorado; and Barbara Yondorf, M.P.P., Yondorf & Associates

Funder collaboratives have been a part of the foundation landscape for years. Foundations have recognized the potential to have an impact on the social sector that goes well beyond the sum of each partner's contributions. Rose Community Foundation and the Caring for Colorado Foundation established the Early Childhood Mental Health Funders Network, an organization of more than 12 community, private, and family foundations, to develop shared strategies for promoting the behavioral health of young children and families. This article examines the evolution of the network from a learning collaborative to an incubator for jointly funded initiatives. Among its collaborative funding efforts is LAUNCH Together, a five-year, $11.4 million initiative to support the behavioral health of young children and their families.
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58 Integrating Funders Into a Multisector Transit-Equity Collaborative: Lessons From the Field

Davian Gagne, M.S.W., Mile High Connects

With the implementation of its $7.8 billion FasTracks light- and commuter-rail project, the Denver region has the potential to be a national model for equitable transit and community development. This article examines the efforts of Mile High Connects, a collaborative working to ensure that the transit project benefits low-income communities and communities of color by connecting them to affordable housing, healthy environments, quality education, and good-paying jobs. The collaborative, which includes local and national funders that have coalesced around the central issue of transit equity, has adopted a collective-impact model that has at its core two tools to measure and track its work and to show the social-impact outcomes achieved through its initiatives.
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Disrupting a Foundation to Put Communities First in Colorado Philanthropy

Nancy Csuti, Dr.P.H., and Gwyn Barley, Ph.D., The Colorado Trust

For decades, funders have held the power of the purse and nonprofits have written proposals to secure funding to improve the community. This article explores how The Colorado Trust confronted the fact that the lives of many Coloradans remained fundamentally unchanged after years of nonprofit-led grantmaking and, in response, developed a community-led grantmaking process aimed at achieving a new vision of health equity. Resident groups were empowered to identify the needs in their own communities, and received funding to disperse as they saw fit to implement their plans to address those needs. These residents are also discussing what success will look like for them and how they will know when they achieve it, thus shifting power from the funder to the community in the evaluation process, too.

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Reconciling Community-Based Versus Evidence-Based Philanthropy: A Case Study of The Colorado Trust's Early Initiatives

Douglas Easterling, Ph.D., Wake Forest School of Medicine, and Deborah Main, Ph.D., University of Colorado Denver

One of the dominant tensions in philanthropy involves the question of whether foundations should focus their grantmaking on projects that come from the community versus projects that have a base of scientific evidence. How a foundation answers this question leads to different strategic orientations. This article describes how this tension was expressed and resolved during The Colorado Trust's early years of initiative-based grantmaking. The community-based philosophy is illustrated through the Colorado Healthy Communities Initiative, while Home Visitation 2000 serves as an exemplar of the evidence-based approach. The Colorado School Health Education Initiative purposefully integrated the two philosophies. The community-based and evidence-based philosophies each have inherent limitations which can be overcome by incorporating the opposing philosophy. This finding is consistent with Barry Johnson's (1992) Polarity Management model and potentially at odds with the principle of strategic alignment.

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