3-31-2020

Executive Summaries

Executive Summaries

Tools

7   Rubrics Versus Voting in Participatory Grantmaking

Oktawia Wojcik, Ph.D., Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; and LesLeigh Ford, Ph.D., Keely Hanson, M.P.A., Claire Boyd, B.A., and Shena Ashley, Ph.D., Urban Institute

Participatory grantmaking is increasingly being seen as an approach to philanthropy that can shift power dynamics. This article addresses whether changing the decision-making process in addition to changing the decision-makers has an effect on how grants are allocated. It examines the design of two grant review processes — one based on popular voting, the other a more traditional rubric approach — and compares their outcomes to learn whether a more open and discursive process based on popular voting for grantee selection helps to overcome bias against small organizations. They conclude that more consideration needs to be given to the criteria being used for selection, regardless of the method.

17   Engaging Grant Beneficiaries in Human-Centered Design

Nicholas G. Randell, M.B.A., and Megan MacDavey, M.S.S.A., Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation

As part of ongoing efforts to engage grant partner voices in their work with young people who have intellectual disabilities, program staff at the Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation looked at a way of designing solutions that puts them at the focal point of the process: human-centered design. This approach proved an effective team-building initiative with the potential to make grantmaking more participatory and to generate grantmaking opportunities that better incorporate beneficiary voice. This article describes human-centered design and its applications in a foundation setting. It shares one project that sought to understand barriers to a particular grantmaking objective, reflects on some learning for the field, and concludes with thoughts about where human-centered design can take us next.

30   Understanding the Foundation's Role via Social Network

Todd L. Ely, Ph.D., University of Colorado Denver; Katie Edwards, M.P.A., The Nonprofit Centers Network; Rachel Hogg Graham, Dr.PH.; University of Kentucky; Danielle Varda, Ph.D., Visible Network Labs and University of Colorado Denver

Collaboration between foundations and other organizations is critical to the success of foundation-supported initiatives, but the power dynamics among foundations, grantees, and their broader communities can be challenging. This article leverages a social network analysis of community partners focused on addressing needs of people experiencing homelessness and housing shortages to illustrate how the results can constructively inform foundations on how they are viewed by community partners along dimensions of trust, value, resource contribution, activities, and contribution to outcomes.

45 ## The Formal-System Self-Assessment Tool

Erika Takada, M.P.H., and Clare Nolan, M.P.P., Engage R+D; and Meera Mani, Ed.D., David and Lucile Packard Foundation

One of the challenges in systems evaluation is identifying meaningful indicators of interim progress toward longer-term change. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation's 10-year strategy, Starting Smart and Strong, partners with three California communities to develop and test solutions to support parents, caregivers, and educators as they prepare children to be ready for school. This article explores how and why the three California communities and the Foundation have found the Formal-System Self-Assessment Tool to be a useful guide for focusing their efforts and creating greater understanding of their advancement. It also shares the tool's development process.

56 ## Sustainable Development Goals: Exploring a Foundation's Contribution

Filippo Candela, Ph.D., Marco Demarie, M.A., and Paolo Mulassano, Ph.D., Compagnia di San Paolo

To understand how a foundation's work aligns with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals is useful to many philanthropic functions: communication; advocacy; offering a role in a common, worldwide effort; and evaluating the organization's own choices (explicit or tacit) against the background set by the project. Compagnia di San Paolo, an Italian grantmaking foundation, conducted a text analysis using a set of keywords extracted from grantees' project descriptions to measure how successfully its work aligned with the SDGs. This article describes the foundation's research methods and shares the results of its analysis, which found significant contributions to the goals in a number of areas funded by Compagnia and less alignment in others. The analysis is particularly noteworthy in its identification of an unintentional pattern of convergence between the foundation's activities and the SDGs.

Sector

70 Archiving Forward and Backward

Lori Eaton, M.L.I.S., Found Archives, LLC; and Phoebe Kowalewski, M.A., M.L.I.S., Cornell University

Archives preserve and provide access to the raw data that allow researchers to study and analyze grantmaking and its impact on people and communities. Limited-life foundations may have an even greater incentive to capture their work in archives: Once they close their doors, much institutional knowledge is lost. By examining two specific cases — the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, which began planning for its archives early it its work, and the Atlantic Philanthropies, which began the process later — this article discusses what it means to build, manage, and preserve archives of a limited-life foundation. This article also offers recommendations for foundations seeking to plan and structure archives, with specific suggestions for organizing and preserving records at various stages of an organization's lifespan.

83 Collaborating Within: Cross-Team Grantmaking

Chris M. Kabel, M.P.H., and Anna Cruz, M.A., Kresge Foundation; and AnnJanette Rosga, Ph.D., Theresa Esparrago Lieu, M.A., and Natalie Blackmur, B.A., Informing Change

Philanthropy has increasingly expressed interest in cross-sector approaches to addressing long-standing challenges. At the same time, there has been increasing attention to the impact of internal foundation culture on their external work. The Kresge Foundation has increased cross-team work in an effort to bridge across issue areas and partnered with Informing Change to assess the results. As philanthropy seeks to support collaboration among grantees and launches new multifunder collaboratives to affect systems change, structures within foundations may need to change to actualize this ideal.

Executive Summaries