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7

Shifting Power in Maine: Findings From a Six-Year Community-Based Health Initiative

Susan Foster, M.P.H., M.S.S.W., S.E. Foster Associates; Teresa Doksum, Ph.D., M.P.H., Independent Consultant; and Charles Dwyer, B.A., Maine Health Access Foundation

Between 2013 and 2019, Maine Health Access Foundation provided place-based funding to communities to address systems issues that impede the ability of Maine's most vulnerable individuals to obtain essential services and supports. This article presents findings and lessons learned from an evaluation and learning process that spanned five of six years of the initiative. Key findings support the original theory that partnerships contribute to effective systems change and that community-generated ideas spark innovative interventions. The foundation shares what they learned about shifting power away from the funder and closer to the community, how those lessons have informed its current strategy, and what implications this has for philanthropy more broadly.

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23

Walking the Talk in Participatory Philanthropy

Megan Meyer, Ph.D., University of Maryland; Emily Goering, Ph.D., Kaye Implementation & Evaluation; Karen Hopkins, Ph.D., University of Maryland; Cheryl Hyde, Ph.D., Temple University; Nicole Mattocks, Ph.D., University of Maryland; and Jonalyn Denlinger, M.B.A., J Denlinger Consulting

Foundations have implemented a variety of new grantmaking practices to increase community engagement and beneficiary voice in funding decisions. This article examines the participatory grantmaking process of a Baltimore, Maryland, community foundation that invested \$1.5 million in an initiative to support community-building and improvement activities in two communities. Based on qualitative data gathered over the five years of the initiative, this article offers some initial insights into how to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of participatory grantmaking, and begins to address the critical importance of foundations that are carefully considering the implications of their funding methods.

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38

(In)equality Through Unrestricted Grantmaking: Examining Trust and Power in the Collaboration Between the Dutch Charity Lotteries and Their Grantees

Olivier Hunnik, M.A., and Arjen de Wit, Ph.D., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; and Pamala Wiepking, Ph.D., Indiana University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Since 1989, the Dutch Charity Lotteries have provided multiyear unrestricted funding to a wide range of nonprofits at home and abroad. This article shares insights into how unrestricted grantmaking influences the relationship between funders and grantees. It discusses hidden and invisible power dynamics that exist in the relationship, even when there are few formal restrictions on grantees' spending. Relaxing formal restrictions gives rise to some uncertainty about what grantees actually have to "prove." This article offers suggestions for how foundations can try to detect and consider expectations that are explicit and implicit, conscious and unconscious, and address these to ensure a more equal collaboration.

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52

Strategy Resilience: Getting Wise About Philanthropic Strategy in a Post-Pandemic World

Jewlya Lynn, Ph.D., PolicySolve; Clare Nolan, M.P.P., Engage R+D; and Peter Waring, M.A., Ridgeway Information

Drawing on case examples, the authors propose five elements of resilient philanthropic strategies: They release control over pathways and outcomes; support networks rather than solutions; address systems, not symptoms; focus on transformative over transactional capacity; and align philanthropic power to supplement, not supplant. Recognizing that COVID-19 is only one of many disruptions our world is likely to face, this article seeks to offer a new way of thinking about strategy resilience that centers people and organizations instead of the power of financial resources. At the core of this theory is the assumption that given today's complexities, philanthropy must use its power differently — releasing control over organizations and their change strategies while using its unique position, reach, and voice to work in solidarity with community leaders.

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64

Holding Foundations Accountable for Equity Commitments

Tanya Beer, M.P.A., Center for Evaluation Innovation; Patricia Patrizi, M.S.S., Patrizi Associates; and Julia Coffman, M.S., Center for Evaluation Innovation

In recent years, foundations of all types and sizes have made commitments to advance racial equity and justice. But good intentions can be undermined by the strategic and administrative structures and processes that shape foundation decisions. This article examines how foundation strategy, evaluation, grantee reporting, and monitoring processes have allowed foundations to retain their power and sidestep direct accountability to the people and communities they say they want to serve. Without substantial shifts in decision-making power and how they act in relation to others, foundations may be making equity and justice promises that they ultimately will be unable to keep.

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79

Youth and the Juvenile Court System: A Community Foundation's Commitment to Integrating Voice and Community Expertise

Michael A. Yonas, Ph.D., and Jennifer C. Sloan, M.P.H., Pittsburgh Foundation; Anna Hollis, B.A., Amachi Pittsburgh; Tiffany Sizemore, J.D., Duquesne University School of Law; Kathi Elliott, D.N.P., Gwen's Girls; Michelle McMurray, M.S.W., Pittsburgh Foundation; and Jeanne Pearlman, Ph.D., Pittsburgh Foundation

The Youth Voices Juvenile Justice Pilot project sought to learn from youth who have first-hand knowledge of the juvenile court system and from those at risk of such an experience to inform the foundation's efforts to improve outcomes for youth. To ensure solutions were driven by affected youth instead of the foundation's own agenda, discussion groups empowered young people to reflect on events that impacted their lives, on their hopes and dreams for the future, and on ways the juvenile court system can listen to their voices and respond with meaningful changes. Recommendations on school discipline reforms, greater access to diversion and prevention programs, and changes to court-related fees, fines, and restitution policies informed the foundation's grantmaking. The project revealed the importance of respectfully listening to and learning from youth to understand the circumstances affecting the quality of their lives, and of ensuring that insights from youth will result in more effective models for change.

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91

How to Encourage Sustainable Change: A Reflection on How Philanthropy Can Partner With Grantees to Build Organizational Capacity

Allison Dymnicki, Ph.D., American Institutes for Research; and Alex Hooker, B.A., and Rebecca Goldberg, B.S., S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation

In 2014, the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation embarked on the National Character Initiative to support organizations seeking to advance character development among youth. The initiative sought to promote lasting change by focusing on building grantee capacity that was based largely on grantee priorities. This article highlights key findings from an evaluation of the foundation's approach by elevating the perspectives of grantees, foundation staff, and field experts who served as consultants. It discusses supports the foundation provided to grantees and three key transformational elements in capacity building: proactive and responsive technical assistance, a culture of learning, and opportunities for partnerships. The evaluation surfaced key lessons for grantmakers looking to embrace a capacity-building orientation and shift the traditional funder–grantee dynamic. Strategies discussed in this article can support long-term growth and sustained practices beyond the life of a grant that, ultimately, lead to improved outcomes for organizations and the people they serve.

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105

The Revolution Within: What It Really Takes to Partner With Communities

Courtney Ricci, Ph.D., Nancy Csuti, Dr.P.H., and Mia Ramirez, M.P.H., The Colorado Trust

This article is a follow-up to an article in *The Foundation Review* published in October 2016, that described a new vision for grantmaking at The Colorado Trust that shifted power from the foundation to community residents. The Trust believed its Community Partnerships for Health Equity strategy would result in measurable change that was authentically planned, implemented, and led by residents of Colorado communities. This article describes the initial years of the strategy, which began with a phased approach to sharing power with communities, and how the lessons from those years led The Trust to pivot to a new approach. This next iteration, the Community Partnerships Organizing Strategy, builds power in communities and wields power in support of communities. The Trust is still learning from the communities that continue in the phased approach as well as those who are part of the Community Partnerships Organizing Strategy, and continues to go through internal transformations necessary to authentically engage in community change work.

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