

Responsive Philanthropy

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Person with disability using accessible public transportation.



Philanthropy's Blind Spot: The Disability Rights Movement

I have two disabilities: I am blind and I am blunt. In my role as a disability rights organizer, it is perhaps the latter that is of greater importance. Today I would like to engage members of the philanthropic community in an examination of disability phobia, which is defined as discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities.

Along with other forms of intolerance, disability phobia is insidious and deeply ingrained in American culture. Like most Americans, grantmakers don't often think about it. As a result, they don't treat us – all 50 million Americans – as citizens and individuals.

From my perspective, foundations that fund civil rights and underrepresented communities have a decision to make: They can deny their disability phobia and not fund the disability rights movement. Or they can ask themselves if they are disability phobic, confront their biases, fund the movement and reshape the future of the American electorate.

By Jim Dickson

Because by overlooking the disability rights movement, foundations that seek to fight poverty, create a more equitable society and support disenfranchised communities are missing a golden opportunity for social change.

Surely, there is a segment of the philanthropic community that grants funds in support of people with disabilities. In 2008, for example, 2.6 percent of total grant dollars went to disability organizations. Regrettably, the bulk of these funds go to either fixing or caring for us. With the notable exception of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, very little goes to protecting our civil rights and (continued on page 13)



challenging grantmakers
to strengthen communities

A Message From the Executive Director



Dear Readers,

In April, I watched as 10 of 12 randomly selected “jurors” found philanthropy “guilty” of not fulfilling its mission to advance the common good during a mock trial that culminated this year’s Council on Foundation’s annual conference.¹ Although the bailiff announced the official verdict as a “hung jury,” clearly there is a growing sense among philanthropoids that the sector is falling short of its expected role in society.

The cover story in this edition of *Responsive Philanthropy* offers a stark illustration of how philanthropy can do better.

In “Philanthropy’s Blind Spot: The Disability Rights Movement,” Jim Dickson, board member of the Needmor Fund and the Aid Association for the Blind in the District of Columbia, asks, “Why are people with disabilities not considered, from a funder’s perspective, to be among the poor, underrepresented and disenfranchised?” He also points out that current grantmaking practices often overlook the need to eliminate the barriers that systemically marginalize people with disabilities.

Lisa Ranghelli, in “In the Limelight Again: Why Labor Unions Matter to Philanthropy” looks at why foundations should not ignore unions. She suggests ways that philanthropy can work with organized labor to advance their missions and offers some resources.

We also looked at continuing efforts to improve transparency in the sector with an interview with Janet Camarena, who manages the Foundation Center’s Glasspockets initiative.

And in “What Philanthropy Can Learn from Bankers about General Support and Multi-Year Grants,” Sean Dobson argues that foundations need to go beyond building a “trusting, respectful and listening partnership with grantees” to avoid imposing unnecessary and burdensome reporting requirements. He offers some comparisons - and lessons for foundations - from banks.

Finally, meet the National People’s Action, a network of community organizations working to advance economic and racial justice in the country.

We always appreciate hearing from you! Please send your feedback about any of the featured articles from this and past issues, as well as suggestions for future stories to readers@ncrp.org.

Sincerely,

Aaron Dorfman.

1. For more information, visit <http://www.cof.org/events/conferences/2011Annual/trial.cfm>.

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In the Limelight Again: Why Labor Unions Matter to Philanthropy

By Lisa Ranghelli

Organized labor has been in the news lately, as governors and legislators have sought to take away the public sector workers' collective bargaining rights and undermine workers' basic right to organize. About 12 percent of the United States workforce is unionized today, down from 35 percent at its peak, but it is still viewed as a formidable institution today. Labor has been the target of major political attacks and defended vociferously by tens of thousands of people from all walks of life in Wisconsin, Ohio and many other places where unions and worker rights are under attack. What is it about organized labor and its fate that should interest foundations, which cannot give grants to unions?

Historically, philanthropy and unions have had more societal connections than one might realize. In his 1999 book, *Unlikely Partners: Philanthropic Foundations and the Labor Movement*, Richard Magat documented nearly a century of interaction and collaboration. He noted that foundations and the labor movement shared common ideals for human well-being and a more just society.¹ Important philanthropic causes, such as the civil rights movement, enjoyed union support. Henry Allen, executive director of the Discount Foundation, noted that the United Auto Workers (UAW) provided critical funding for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and that Martin Luther King Jr., was in Memphis supporting the strike among African American san-

itation workers seeking collective bargaining rights when he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Today, there are a number of reasons why foundations seek to learn more about and work with unions. First, the labor movement has gone through a major leadership transformation over the last decade and has re-embraced its original vision of being a voice for all workers, not just those with union cards. Many unions now work on an array of issues beyond worker rights, including immigration policy, poverty, healthcare reform, economic development and environmental justice. Several unions also have made great strides in obliterating racism and sexism, and they now actively seek to organize women, people of color and

new immigrants, both documented and undocumented.

"You would not have found so many grassroots organizations, as well as funders receptive to working with the labor movement if there hadn't been these changes in leadership there," observed Allen. As a result, many of the issues and constituencies that foundation leaders care about overlap increasingly with labor's focus and priorities.

Second, although the labor movement is not as large and influential as it once was, it still brings substantial power and resources to the table. According to Victor Quintana, senior program officer at the Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, these financial and political assets are the very reason unions are



Protesters during a minimum wage campaign.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PUP.

under attack today. “When it operates at its best, the trade union movement has institutional power and relationships that it can bring to bear in partnership with community-based organizations to affect a range of social justice issues: from worker and immigrant rights to accountable economic development. Because trade unions can mobilize people and have economic resources, the reaction has been for business interests to go after the best organized of the workforce in this country, particularly public sector unions. This is not an accident; it’s a question of power.”

Although labor may be the big kid on the block at times, union-community partnerships are mutually beneficial. “Labor needs the audacity of grassroots organizations and their reach into new communities,” asserted Janet Shenk, program officer at the Panta Rhea Foundation. “But community groups need labor’s scale and infrastructure, political clout and all that comes with numbers and experience.”

For example, the labor movement has been a major advocate for national health care reform. It has mobilized voters in large numbers. In collaboration with community organizers, it grew and sustained a living wage movement that led to a long-overdue increase in the federal minimum wage. It has helped keep immigration reform on the agenda of federal policymakers.

In fact, over the past 15 years, partnerships between organized labor and community groups have become more common and more sophisticated, resulting in significant policy wins that are helping millions of people. *Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities*,² NCRP’s series of reports on the impacts of advocacy, organizing and civic engagement, has highlighted a number of these partnerships across the country, including:

- In 2003, Albuquerque Interfaith and

teachers’ unions joined forces to secure a state amendment that provided funding for a tiered teachers’ salary structure, which increased earnings, addressed teacher shortages and improved retention in New Mexico public schools.

- The Raise the Minimum Wage Coalition won a \$2 per hour increase in the Pennsylvania minimum wage in 2006, giving 89,000 minimum wage workers a \$3,000 annual raise and also benefiting 410,000 workers earning just above minimum wage.
- In Los Angeles, the Coalition for Safe and Clean Ports, including 39 community and labor organizations coordinated by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), won replacement of old, dirty diesel trucks that compromised the health of truck drivers, residents and business people along transport

corridors. The use of clean trucks will improve health outcomes, reduce deaths and lower medical costs - to the tune of \$2.2 billion.

- The North Carolina Justice Center, state AFL-CIO and many other groups campaigned together to secure enactment of a statewide earned income tax credit in 2007, putting \$59 million per year back into low-income taxpayers’ pockets.
- In 2008, the Transit Partners Coalition, which included Minnesota community groups, the transit workers local, environmentalists and others, won a long-term commitment of state funding for road and transit infrastructure improvements. Conservative estimates are \$85 million per year in new tax revenue for transit.
- Last year, Our Oregon won passage of a ballot measure that increased corporate income taxes and the marginal tax rate on the wealthiest taxpayers, generating \$727 million for the state in just one biennium. “Labor unions were critical to that victory, particularly SEIU, AFSCME, the teachers’ union and the state affiliate of the AFL-CIO. They outspent the opposition,” recounted Quintana. “On election day, unions’ and community groups’ get-out-the-vote efforts achieved the victory.”

Currently, community groups and unions are working on other fronts, such as challenging banks to address the foreclosure crisis, fighting state and local budget cuts and expanding children’s access to health care. They also are joining forces to help the most exploited and abused in the workforce today, including domestic workers and warehouse workers. Unions have developed relationships with immigrant worker organizations and are challenging widespread wage theft by unscrupulous employers. These examples demonstrate the diverse array of

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– Victor Quintana, Unitarian
Universalist Veatch
Program at Shelter Rock

issues that unions and community groups are tackling together, as well as the broad benefits of their victories for many constituencies.

Regardless of whether a foundation is directly concerned with the plight of workers or it focuses on other issues that intersect with labor's priorities, how can a grantmaker support those common interests? Although foundations cannot give grants directly to unions, they can undertake other activities to promote collaboration between their nonprofit grantees and organized labor. Janet Shenk noted that some foundations already do support 501(c)(3) worker organizations, such as farmworker support groups or worker centers that provide services to immigrant day laborers and advocate for better working conditions. She encourages foundation leaders to take the next step and support groups that are working with mainstream unions to build power in metro areas, or change conditions in major industries.

Once they have developed relationships with labor leaders, foundation staff members can be brokers between community groups and unions, helping each understand the potential value of working with the other. "Our support of community-based organizations builds their capacity to engage effectively in public policy fights," explained Victor Quintana. "If we build grantees' capacity, then they have something to bring to the table when they partner with unions. Once they have a local victory or accomplishment, it signals to unions that they are partnering with folks who can deliver."

Henry Allen added, "We help community groups know the right questions to ask the unions to ensure good partnerships. And we can play a constructive role by talking with unions that are new to this and don't have a clear understanding of the value of collaboration with community groups."

Foundations also can help nonprofits understand which types of activities they may legally participate in with labor. The Alliance for Justice provides information to clarify whether and how 501(c)(3) organizations can attend union-sponsored rallies, collaborate with unions on ballot initiatives or partner in various voter mobilization and education activities.

For foundation leaders and staff members interested in learning more about organized labor, the Neighborhood Funders Group hosts a Working Group on Labor and Community Partnerships (WGLCP). WGLCP was formed in the mid-90s following an NFG conference on jobs and the economy. As Henry Allen recounted, "Here was a very good conference, but for the entire time there was not a single speaker from a labor union. Some of us were struck by the glaring absence at a major conference on jobs of any talk about worker organizing and unions."

As Janet Shenk recalled, "Henry Allen, Sue Chinn and others recognized that the labor movement was changing, with new leadership and it was crucial to the development of a social movement in this country. But unions can be pretty inaccessible to outsiders." According to Shenk, the confluence of growing philanthropic interest in the working poor and union interest in organizing low-wage immigrant workers needed a bridge, and WGLCP was formed to provide one.

Since its founding, the working group has helped educate grantmakers about unions by organizing site visits, learning tours, panel discussions, teleconferences, research projects and "bilateral conversations." WGLCP commissioned groundbreaking research by Janice Fine on the role of worker centers, and more recently it released a related report, *Realigning Labor – Toward a Framework for*

Collaboration between Labor Unions and Day Labor Worker Centers, by Nik Theodore. Yet, WGLCP's greatest asset may be its members. Janet Shenk said, "We're small enough that we get to know each other. We call each other for advice and to compare notes. It's very helpful. That's the best thing about the working group."

Its members also are passionate advocates for working with unions. "Our goal is to affect American democracy, by putting issues of equity, fairness and justice on the front burner," noted Quintana.

Henry Allen summed it up: "If your foundation has an interest in lifting people out of poverty, advancing the conditions of low-wage workers, community development, health care or any number of issues, here is a strategy – not to the exclusion of other strategies – of funding collaborations that build the power of community, faith-based groups and unions to achieve policy changes that align with your foundation's interests." ■

Funders interested in learning more about the Working Group on Labor and Community Partnerships may contact either of its co-chairs: Molly Schultz Hafid, Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock, molly@veatch.org or Shona Chakravarty, Hill-Snowdon Foundation, schakravarty@hillsnowdon.org.

Lisa Ranghelli is the director of NCRP's Grantmaking for Community Impact Project, and has written reports on the impacts of advocacy, organizing and civic engagement.

Notes

1. Richard Magat, *Unlikely Partners: Philanthropic Foundations and the Labor Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).
2. Visit www.ncrp.org/gcip.

Advancing Transparency in Philanthropy

Editor's note: In January 2010, the Foundation Center launched Glasspockets, a website that promotes online transparency and accountability practices among foundations. Below is an interview with Janet Camarena, director of the Foundation Center's San Francisco office, who manages Glasspockets.

Responsive Philanthropy: *A year since launching Glasspockets, what have you learned about how foundations are viewing transparency?*

Janet Camarena: First, let me provide some background regarding why we launched Glasspockets. As you may know, the Foundation Center was established in 1956, during a period of increased foundation scrutiny stemming from the McCarthyism that was so pervasive at the time. Russell Leffingwell, then chairman of the Carnegie Corporation, coined the phrase in his congressional testimony: "We think the foundation should have glass pockets." That is to say, philanthropy is best served by proving it has nothing to hide. From the beginning, Leffingwell and the other foundation leaders who helped found the Center felt it was critically important that our mission focus on providing transparency for the field of philanthropy. This has been our professional calling ever since, making Glasspockets very much a mission-based project that connects us to our roots.

Today, as more and more people are accessing greater quantities of information online, pressure on foundations to be more transparent about their opera-



Janet Camarena

tions and about how they fulfill their missions to serve the public good is increasing. Therefore, Glasspockets was the result of a natural evolution of our original mission and the changes we are seeing in the field of information and knowledge management. Adding to these elements the demographic changes across the sector that are driving the demand for more inclusiveness and openness, we now face the perfect storm for this transparency movement and the Glasspockets website.

Not only has the response from the foundation community been almost uniformly positive, but we also are impressed by the number of communications officers and foundation leaders who are reaching out to us to learn more and to find out how they can participate.

One of the elements of the Glasspockets website that has attracted the greatest response is the "Who Has Glass Pockets?" template, which provides foundations with a way to assess their own transparency and accounta-

bility practices and to compare them to those of their peers. We are also seeing a growing number of foundations exploring social media and other online mediums designed to increase the visibility of philanthropy at work. In 2010, we issued a report¹ on this trend.

We feel we've sparked a movement, and that's just what we hoped to do. We're excited about the growing number of foundations that really get it – that understand what is at stake – and we're excited to play a part in this progress.

RP: *Do you think that Glasspockets has helped increased transparency among foundations?*

JC: The anecdotal evidence is clear: Raising awareness and raising expectations about the value of transparency is causing foundations to rethink what information they make public and how they make consumers aware of that new level of openness. Glasspockets has helped encourage that. We've also seen a number of smaller foundations stepping up, ready and willing to show us their "glass pockets." It's promising to see this; whereas in the beginning we were the ones reaching out, now the majority of profiles are coming in unsolicited. These include not only big, private foundations, but we're also seeing interest from small organizations, community foundations and grantmaking public charities as well.

RP: *How is Glasspockets reaching those foundations who are not already proponents of transparency?*

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JC: The single most important thing for us to do is to involve more foundations in the conversation. In the past year, we have benefitted immensely from solid media exposure focused on the value of transparency in the field, and that, in part, has helped get foundations talking about what other foundations are doing. Whether through speaking at conferences or blogging about the subject, we are taking steps to keep that conversation going. As demands for transparency grow and foundations look (for some, albeit reluctantly) for better ways to communicate, Glasspockets stands as a resource and model.

The development, evolution and outreach of Glasspockets also is supported by our key partners: the Communications Network,² Grantmakers for Effective Organizations,³ the Center for Effective Philanthropy⁴ and One World Trust.⁵ Their insights and ideas - not to mention their own efforts - have proven invaluable in building awareness of Glasspockets in the foundation community. Of course, we would also be excited to welcome additional partners to join us and help spread the word.

RP: *What are your plans for Glasspockets this coming year?*

JC: In 2011, we are looking to expand greatly the breadth of foundations represented and hoping to add many more "Who Has Glass Pockets?" profiles. Because the profiles are entirely voluntary, we rely on interest within the community; the more foundations that submit their practices⁶ to Glasspockets,

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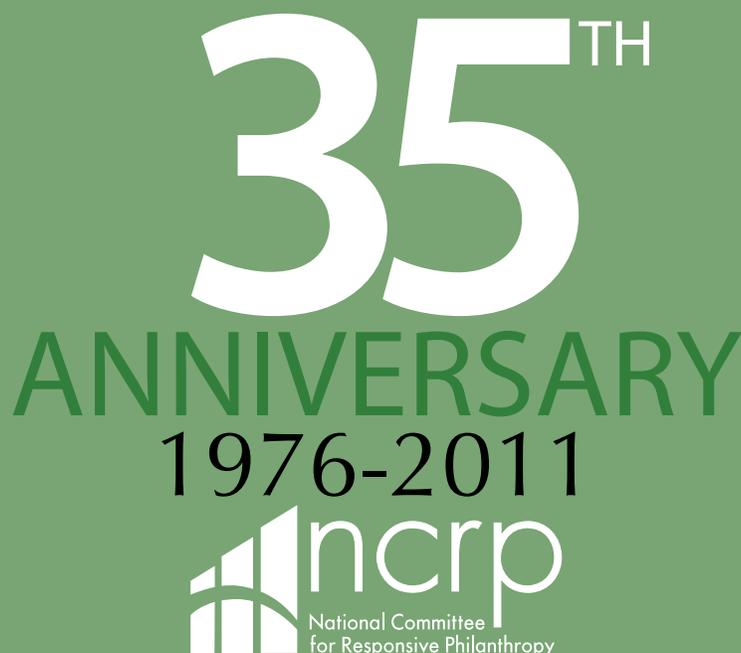
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Thank you!



dations to emulate good ideas. Communications staff members tell us they often use our 23-point assessment as a checklist when discussing elements that need to be added to a foundation website and report that Glasspockets has helped them make an effective case for being as transparent as possible. The more foundations that participate in this manner, the more good examples of transparency we can share with the field. We can't ask for more than that.

With Glasspockets, we've also created a space in which one can find several examples of real-life policy. For instance, a foundation looking to create a diversity policy can now see what other foundations are doing in their efforts to do the same and the rationale that shaped their practices. Our Transparency Heat Map offers access to more than a dozen examples, all linked from one page. All of a sudden, a task that might have required significant research can be informed immedi-

ately with key models from peers. The same is true with social media. From the Transparency 2.0¹⁰ area on Glasspockets, you can visit every foundation on Facebook and get a glimpse of what they have to offer. It's great for anyone considering wading into those waters.

Finally, we want to build on the knowledge base and conversation that has already started at Glasspockets and through our Transparency Talk blog and podcasts. If you are a foundation professional, consider joining this important conversation!

Through initiatives like Glasspockets, the Foundation Center is playing a leading role in galvanizing a transparency movement within philanthropy by demonstrating the many positive steps that foundations are already taking and encouraging foundations to learn from their peers. We know this will increase public trust in foundations as greater numbers of foundations openly communicate information about their governance,

procedures, programs, and impact to the public. At the same time, greater transparency will reduce duplication of effort in the field and facilitate greater collaboration among foundations. It's a win-win all around. ■

Notes

1. "Are Foundation Leaders Using Social Media?" *Grantmaker Leadership Panel Report* (New York: Foundation Center, September 2010) http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/social_media.pdf.
2. <http://comnetwork.org/>
3. <http://www.geofunders.org/>
4. <http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org/>
5. <http://oneworldtrust.org/>
6. Online submission at: http://glasspockets.org/inside/whgp/submit_form.html
7. <http://blog.glasspockets.org/>
8. http://glasspockets.org/inside/whgp/profiles/whgp_map_by_freq.html
9. <http://foundationcenter.org/grantmakers/folders.html>
10. <http://maps.foundationcenter.org/glasspockets/transparency.php>

What Philanthropy Can Learn from Bankers about General Support and Multi-Year Grants

By Sean Dobson

Bankers have become a tad unpopular these days, considering they had a hand in, well, melting down the global economy. However, bankers do usually get at least one thing right: They know how to pick and finance winning organizations. It's humiliating but true: Philanthropists can actually learn from – ughh – *bankers*.

I was guided to this uncomfortable insight while reflecting upon the thoughtful new report from the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), *“Grantees Report Back: Helpful Reporting and Evaluation Processes.”*¹ CEP surveyed 24,000 grantees about foundation reporting requirements and found that, “On average, grantees do not find current reporting and evaluation processes to be very helpful in strengthening their organizations and programs.”

As a former executive director of a nonprofit organization, I was not surprised by CEP's findings. I spent way too much time (usually late at night, after I had completed my “real work”) filling out byzantine forms, asking for metrics unrelated to the actual strength and success of my organization or the project under review.

True, some of the better foundations provided useful evaluation tools that forced me to poke my head up from the trenches and look around and see the bigger picture with regard to my organization, its performance and our current project.

Nevertheless, the CEP report

proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that most reporting requirements are net time-wasters.

If the CEP report illuminates the problem, unfortunately, it proposes a mere partial solution; CEP finds that the foundations that are most likely to avoid the pitfall of imposing onerous and irrelevant reporting requirements are those that bother to establish a trusting, respectful and listening partnership with grantees.

Amen to that. My tenure as a nonprofit executive director would have

been more pleasant and productive if I had dealt with more program officers who viewed me as an equal partner with a common mission, asked me to fill out a reasonable after-action report and then – *gasp* – actually discussed it with me.

In other words, foundation officers need to be more courteous. Yes, the world would be a better place if people were nicer to each other.

But the sector needs more than a lesson from Miss Manners. We need systemic change in practice. In particular, I wish the CEP report had also stressed the prescription CEP itself in other reports² (as well as Grantmakers for Effective Organizations [GEO], NCRP and others)³ has advocated for years: more general operating support and more multi-year support grants.

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

By definition, if a foundation gives general operating support, it is not imposing a detailed agenda on the grantee. Instead, it is making a judgment that this nonprofit has a proven track record of success in advancing the foundation's goals and therefore should be given the grant based on the probability of continued success. It also trusts that the grantee knows how to recognize success.

In such a case, the foundation would accept the grantee's own internal metrics of progress, which are usually pegged to a multi-year strategic plan, as after-action reporting. The only financial documents neces-





sary would be the grantee's audited financial statement of the previous year plus a board-approved prospective organizational budget.

MULTI-YEAR FUNDING

Most nonprofits have multi-year strategic plans and missions too complex for progress (or lack thereof) to be definitively measured in one-year increments.

For example, the campaigns I ran for an advocacy nonprofit almost *never* concluded in one year – victory or defeat could only be determined after several years, and defeat usually had positive benefits for the organization because the act of waging a campaign brought in new members, new funders, more publicity, more contacts, more experience and more knowledge. As Nietzsche famously observed, “What does not kill me makes me stronger.”

WHAT ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY?

News flash: Multi-year grants *can* be evaluated on an annual basis. That's because, as mentioned above, if the grantee has a proven track record of success, it almost certainly follows a multi-year strategic plan with annual targets – the same annual targets that would serve as good milestones for the underwriting foundation to review during the course of the multi-year grant.

PROGRESS ON AN ISSUE NEVER HAPPENS OF ITSELF OR BY MAGIC
Regardless of their impact based on

after-action reporting, do general support and multi-year grants constitute good grantmaking in a broader sense?

If your foundation aims to reduce hunger, can bowls of soup ladle themselves? If your foundation seeks to safeguard civil rights, do legal reforms automatically get upheld or enacted?

Only strong nonprofit organizations can catalyze and guide the kind of collective action needed to help solve big social problems. General

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support and multi-year funding help build strong nonprofits because they make responsible, multi-year budgeting and planning possible.

Yet, maddeningly, the level of support in philanthropy has barely budged over many years in terms of the percentage of grant dollars for general operation and multi-year funding.⁴

This level would finally rise if foundations emulated their more pragmatic counterparts in the for-profit sector - yes, the bankers.

LEARNING FROM BANKERS

When a Wall St. banker invests in, say, Texaco, does he or she stipulate that Texaco may only use the money to drill in Bahrain or refine the crude only in Louisiana? No. The banker simply judges Texaco's decades-long track record of creditworthiness and profitability and then invests (either as a loan or equity) in the form of “general operating support.” Almost always, such investments extend longer than a single year. In other words, the banker is humble enough to recognize that he or she does not know as much about the oil business as Texaco does. That's why the banker cuts the check and then gets out of the way.

Of course, this analogy is not perfect. For example, bankers only want

New and Renewing Members

American Association of University Women
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Clowes Fund, Inc.
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Northwest Workers Justice Project
Proteus Fund
Public Welfare Foundation
Seattle Human Resources Coalition
Sisters of the Road
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Southern Coalition for Social Justice
Southern Partners Fund
Tides Foundation
Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock
Warner Foundation
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repayment with interest and don't care if the borrower becomes stronger organizationally as a result of the investment. Foundations don't require collateral to make a grant.

But foundations and bankers are engaged in basically the same enterprise: investing in organizations to help them succeed. Smart financiers pick winners based on long-term performance, provide the financing and then let them do what they do best, secure in the knowledge that the recipient's long-term track record of success obviates the need for customized, hyper-detailed reporting.

Why don't more foundation officers adopt this commonsense mode of investment, especially considering how much easier it would make their own lives by reducing their administrative responsibilities? A 2008 report by GEO uncovers one answer that accords with common sense: Foundations whose staff and board members have had hands-on experience running nonprofit organizations engage in better grantmaking practices, above all general operating support and multi-year grants.

Of course, not *all* grants should be general operating support and multi-year grants. There will always be a limited need for project-specific and one-year grants. To ensure effective grantmaking in those rare cases, in addition to CEP's recommendations referenced above, grantmakers will find useful the recommendations given by Project Streamline.

CONCLUSION

CEP's report finds that trusting and listening relationships between foundations and grantees correlate negatively to burdensome and time-wast-

ing reporting requirements; therefore, those types of relationships should be encouraged.

But foundation officers need to do more than practice random acts of kindness. They need to emulate their hard-headed counterparts in the banking sector by making general operating support and multi-year grants the default type of philanthropic investment. ■

Sean Dobson is field director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. Prior to joining NCRP, he helped found and then lead the Progressive Maryland Education Fund and its 501(c)(4) sister organization, Progressive Maryland, Inc., which together build power and advocate for working families.

Notes

1. Ellie Buteau and Timothy Chu, "Grantees Report Back: Helpful Reporting and Evaluation Process," *Data in Action* (San Francisco, Cambridge: Center for Effective Philanthropy, January 2011) http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org/assets/pdfs/Data%20in%20Action/CEP_DatainAction_GranteesReportBack.pdf.
2. Andrea Bock, "General Operating Support Remains the Exception," *The CEP Blog*, December 6, 2010, <http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org/blog/2010/12/general-operating-support-remains-the-exception/>. See GEO's "The Money," <http://www.geofunders.org/the-money.aspx>. Also Rick Cohen, *A Call to Action* (Washington, D.C.: NCRP, March 2007) http://www.ncrp.org/index.php?option=com_ixxocart&Itemid=41&p=catalog&parent=4&pg=1.
3. Bock, op cit.
4. Visit: <http://www.projectstreamline.org/projectstreamline>.

The Disability Rights Movement *(continued from page 1)*

ultimately integrating us into mainstream American life.

As Catherine Hyde Townsend commented in a *Diversity and Philanthropy* interview titled, *Empowering People with Disabilities through New Grantmaking Strategies*, “We don’t need to fix people with disabilities. The problem is the social and physical barriers that people with disabilities face – from how someone gets into a building to how they are treated in the workplace.” Townsend illuminates a fundamental problem with disability grantmaking: it often seeks to change people with disabilities rather than addressing and helping to eliminate the systemic forces that marginalize those with disabilities.

A primary social barrier to the advancement of people with disabilities is socio-economic status. Poverty is the disability community’s invisible twin. According to the Disability Funders Network, people with disabilities are nearly twice as likely as people without disabilities to have an annual household income of \$15,000 or less. Until foundations provide the disability rights movement the resources to organize – in other words, to increase our civic engagement – the cycle of poverty will continue. True diversity in our nation cannot be achieved until funders that have a passion for justice support the integrated civic engagement of those with disabilities.

I don’t for a minute think that disability is a minus. In fact, there is a silver lining in that we are viewed as the nation’s deserving poor (no one likes to say “No” to a cripple). Of course, all poor and marginalized Americans deserve attention from foundations. Yet, why are people with disabilities not considered, from a funder’s perspective, to be among the poor, underrepresented and disenfranchised?

Perhaps it is because we can and do pass legislation in an amazingly short time. However, enforcing these laws is another story. For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) took only two and half years to pass. The most far reaching civil rights law to date, it placed mandates on state and local government, businesses and telecommunications, and protects the rights of people with disabilities with regards to employment. Yet, over a decade, the courts systematically reduced the scope and effectiveness of the ADA. In response, over the course of eleven months we passed the ADA Amendments Act, which overturned the courts assault on our civil rights.



PHOTO COURTESY OF:

A person with disability calling other disabled persons to get involved in the civic process. Courtesy of: American Association of People with Disabilities

Over the past nineteen years, two major pieces of election reform legislation, the National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) have become laws. The Motor Voter Act, in particular, was a major victory for the disability rights movement, as it was our actions that broke the filibuster and allowed for passage of the Act. Minnesota Senator David Durenberger (whose own state already had Motor Voter) initially opposed the national legislation. The disability community met with the Senator and his staff many times with, despairingly, no success in changing his vote. So, on a Friday afternoon in April 1993, we informed the Senator’s Minnesota headquarters that the following Monday we were going to hold a press conference in front of his Minneapolis office to announce that the Senator was opposed to people with disabilities registering and voting. The first person at the press conference was the Senator’s Chief of Staff, with a statement announcing Senator Durenberger’s decision to change his vote. Consequently, Motor Voter made it to the floor and passed.

After the 2000 Florida election crisis, most pundits and advocates thought that HAVA could not be passed if it included mandates. Mandates were simply a political non-starter. The dis-

[Disability grantmaking] often seeks to change people with disabilities rather than addressing and helping to eliminate the systemic forces that marginalize those with disabilities.

ability rights community, through bitter experience, knows that without mandates and deadlines, accessibility will not improve. We insisted that accessibility be a mandate, have a deadline and be funded. We won that fight. HAVA not only mandated one accessible voting machine in every polling place, but also appropriated \$850 million to buy them.

Today, we continue the fight for our fundamental civil rights. This fight cannot be won with ineffective models of service and giving. Our battles for access to transportation, equal and affordable healthcare, fair-wage jobs and accessible and inclusive housing are central to independence, and are not won with direct service and charity giving.

Standing upon the firm foundation of our political, social and economic victories since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, America's disability community has moved well beyond

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the direct service model. Today's disabled citizen yearns for and seeks the opportunity to live the American dream. More than 50 million Americans are a

force that cannot be stopped from shaping our own destiny, but funders must stand with us and provide the essential funding. Grantmakers are among the partners we need to finally bring our nation's largest minority into the 21st Century. ■

Jim Dickson is a board member of the Needmor Fund in Toledo, Ohio, and the Aid Association for the Blind of the District of Columbia.

Notes

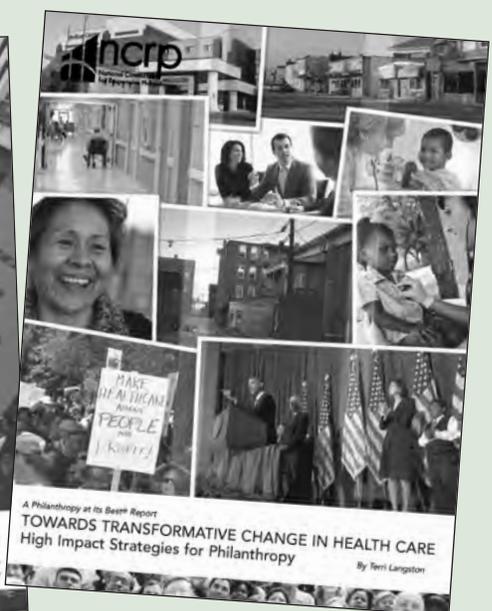
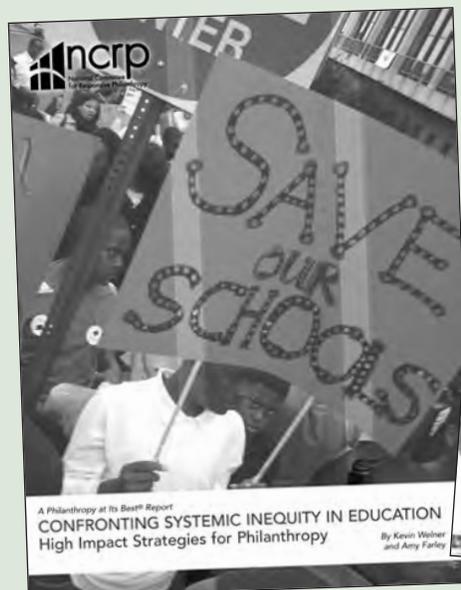
1. Foundation Center, *Foundation Giving Trends 2010*.
2. Catherine Townsend, "Empowering People With Disabilities Through New Grant Making Strategies," *Voices & Opinions*, http://www.diversityinphilanthropy.com/voices/exec_com/catherine-hyde-townsend/.
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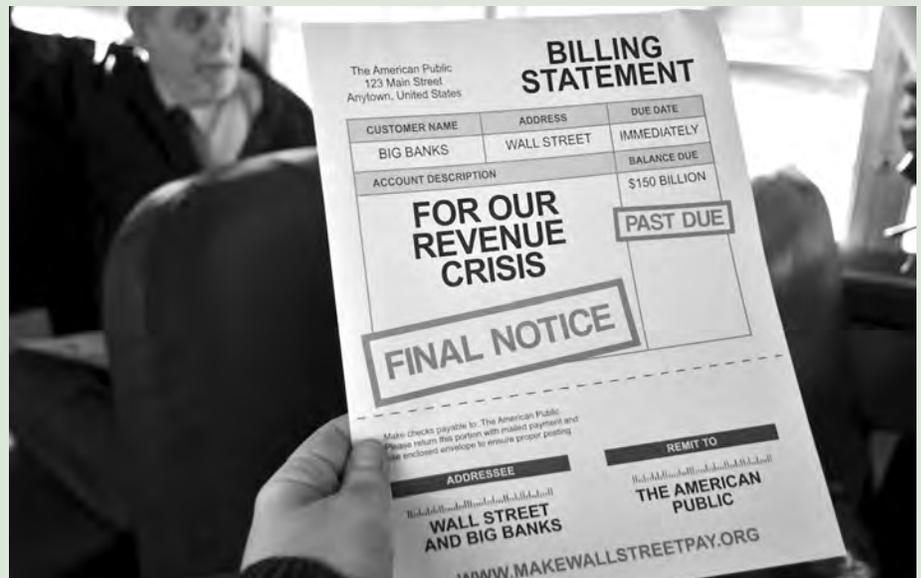
<http://makewallstreetpay.org>

Since the 1970s, National People's Action (NPA) has worked "to advance a national economic and racial justice agenda." More than 200 organizers in the organization's network strive to unite people across the United States and hold financial institutions responsible with regard to the people and communities they serve.

The country currently is experiencing its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Citizens face rising foreclosures, diminishing pensions, rampant unemployment and other economic problems. "This crisis is largely on the backs of ordinary Americans who were buying homes, wanting their piece of the American dream, and were given exotic loans. It was irresponsible lending by the banks," says NPA Development Director Jeff Pinzino.

A general lack of response from the banks and the national government since the crisis began also is greatly contributing to the fallout, and the people who suffered most as a result of the recession are receiving the least aid. Pinzino says, "It really is a situation where banks are profiting at the expense of ordinary Americans, especially after public intervention through the bank bailout. Banks need to step up, pay their fair share and help clean up the mess that they have caused in communities across America."

With its campaign, Showdown in America, NPA is challenging banks to help get the economy back on track,



Members of National People's Action calling for accountability, an end to financing predatory payday lenders and for Wall Street banks to pay their fair share to solve the current revenue crisis.

pushing Congress to stand with the people and encouraging Americans to speak up about their difficulties. The initiative calls on banks to "fix the foreclosure crisis, invest responsibly and sustainably in communities to create jobs, stop bankrupting taxpayers and communities, end discriminatory lending practices and provide workplace protections to employees."

"It's time for the public to hold banks accountable. It is not worth continuing to let these super-rich Wall Street executives profit at the expense of the American people and the homeowners that really are the backbone of our society," Pinzino says.

NPA is taking on such issues through repeated demonstrations, call-in days and extensive work with attorneys general across the country. The organization also is taking part in

an online initiative, Make Wall Street Pay, in which individuals can send Wall Street executives the bill for their foreclosed home.

The country's financial situation is expected to get worse before it improves, and NPA and its organizers are preparing for the long haul, encouraging people everywhere to join their efforts. "We believe there's an urgency around these issues that will only intensify. If we're serious about solving the problems in front of us, it's going to take a movement. It's going to take action from people across America who will stand with us and fight," says Pinzino. ■

This Member Spotlight was written by Meredith Brodbeck, communications associate at the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP).



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