

# Responsive Philanthropy

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*Construction in New Orleans.  
CC image by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.*

## Philanthropy's Response to Katrina: A 10-Year Perspective

Local responses in anticipation of Hurricane Katrina's tenth anniversary have been decidedly mixed. Some who lived through the storm and its aftermath are anxious. They expect many of the images and stories in the media to be painful. They have their own memories of homes and neighborhoods destroyed and loved ones lost. Some harbor a

grief that has never cycled through its stages or been properly resolved.

Others see an opportunity to show the city in its glad rags, having come so far in so many ways from the destruction that millions witnessed on their television sets or read about in their newspapers. The new levee system makes New Orleans one of the best-protected coastal cities in the United States. There's a strong ecosystem for entrepreneurs. The city is open for business.

Certainly, one of the casualties of the storm will be a nuanced account of what happened in the 10 years after Katrina made landfall. Our assessment of the progress New Orleans has made

By G. Albert Ruesga

since 2005 will be shaped (some might say distorted) by our own agendas. Let the reader beware. My own prejudices and obsessions will become apparent soon enough.

### THE PHILANTHROPIC RESPONSE TO KATRINA

The official Katrina@10 observances will rightly commemorate the individuals who lost their lives and livelihoods in the storm. During these somber occasions, we'll remember the citizens who left the region and never returned, and we'll count our own lucky stars. We'll also take the opportunity to thank once again the *(continued on page 9)*



challenging grantmakers  
to strengthen communities

# A Message From the Executive Director



Dear Colleagues,

Ten years ago, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in New Orleans, causing unprecedented devastation made all the worse by an infamously inadequate response from the federal government. I was living in Miami at the time, and the eye of Katrina actually passed right over my house when it was still a relatively weak Category 1 storm. After it crossed Florida and entered the Gulf of Mexico, Katrina strengthened and began its march north. I'm sure we all remember being glued to the television as we watched the ordeal unfold. In the midst of this crisis, many in the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors came together to provide immediate relief and begin the process of rebuilding.

In our cover story, Albert Ruesga, executive director of the Greater New Orleans Foundation, reflects on the hurricane's anniversary in "Philanthropy's Response to Katrina: A 10-Year Perspective." In addition to spotlighting the excellent grantmaking that helped make recovery possible, Albert thoughtfully ruminates on the tough questions that still must be answered about social inequality's continued role in worse life conditions for many in our country.

Next, Douglas Bitonti Stewart, executive director of the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, explores the importance of community involvement in "Going Further Together: Collective Learning for Impact." Douglas uses the example of his foundation's work in early childhood education in Detroit's Brightmoor neighborhood to discuss how the intended beneficiaries of philanthropy are necessary participants at every level of planning and execution.

Finally, in "Shortcomings of Modern Strategic Philanthropy and How to Overcome Them," the Insight Center's Henry A. J. Ramos explores how an obsession with metrics inhibits structural change. Henry offers three recommendations for how foundations can best invest in the communities they serve and align efforts for long-term impacts.

Our Member Spotlight looks at the Ford Foundation, which rocked the sector with a recent open letter declaring its commitment to battling inequality and increasing general operating support.

As always, we hope *Responsive Philanthropy* is a useful resource for everyone in philanthropy. We are always trying to improve – let us know how we're doing at [readers@ncrp.org](mailto:readers@ncrp.org).

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature of Aaron Dorfman, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops and lines.

Aaron Dorfman  
Executive Director

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# Going Further Together: Collective Learning for Impact

By Douglas Bitonti Stewart

As the conference wound down, the facilitator congratulated the group for the learning we had done together. For two days, we had listened to experts in the field and convened with funder and research and policy colleagues from cities across the country to discuss best practices in early childhood education. The volume in the room had started to rise as attendees shoved materials into their burlap conference logo bags when the facilitator made her final comment, “Thanks again everyone ... and by the way, do you think we had the right people in the room here? Who are we missing?”

And that’s when it hit me. Maybe it was because the conference was filled with people from all over the country. Maybe it was because the conversations seemed to be filled with less listening and more boasting about accomplishments than I was used to. Or, maybe it was a combination of all of those factors and my initial reaction when I found out that the conference cost nearly \$3,000 to attend. Whatever it was, I was inspired to answer the question with two other questions. I cleared my throat, settled my nerves and asked, “Has anyone here ever had to worry about whether or not you were going to be able to feed your children?” The room went quiet and I asked my follow-up, “Is anyone not being paid to be here?”

When there was no answer I simply said, “Well, I’m sure we’re all thinking the same thing, but it seems to me we need to make sure the next time we’re together

talking about families living in poverty and the challenges they face making sure their children are ready for school, we should have a few in the room learning and teaching alongside us.”

## PLACE-BASED WORK ALONGSIDE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THAT PLACE

Of course, the question of whether the right people are in the room goes beyond conferences, and there are innumerable opportunities for shared learning in every aspect of our social impact work.<sup>1</sup> For the last eight years, I’ve been privileged to serve the Detroit-based Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation. After a 20-year career raising money to support social impact organizations I was passionate about, from people whom I came to adore, I was given the opportunity to work with one of those donor families to galva-

nize their dreams to repair the world. As the first staff person hired, I worked alongside the family to craft a mission statement and outline four impact areas: building the Jewish community, promoting education, supporting arts and culture and fighting HIV/AIDS.<sup>2</sup>

Steeped in their shared Jewish heritage, the family approaches their philanthropic work in the spirit of tzedakah, which is the Hebrew word used to describe justice.<sup>3</sup> Instead of seeing giving as an act of charity or benevolence, this core value means the family works to empower communities because it must be done, and done with a sense of justice. To do so takes a lot of listening and the recognition that the act of tzedakah cannot be done to someone. For our grantmaking to have a lasting impact, the people inside the issues we hope to solve need to allow us and our



*Photo courtesy of the Max. M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation.*

## New and Renewing Members

American Jewish World Service

Blandin Foundation

California Community Foundation

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Community West Foundation

Compton Foundation, Inc.

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Funders for LGBTQ Issues

Los Angeles Alliance for a New  
Economy (LAANE)

Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund

The Needmor Fund

Norman Foundation

Park Foundation, Inc.

Retirement Research Foundation

Ruth Mott Foundation

The San Francisco Foundation

Southern California Grantmakers

Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program  
at Shelter Rock

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Walter & Elise Haas Fund



*Photo courtesy of the Max. M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation.*

partners into their lives – and we need to let them into ours. All those involved need to be active, willing and vulnerable participants in the process.

### SHARED LEARNING, ALIGNMENT AND ACTION

This value and ideal drove the family to work on the ground alongside people in places of need. One of those areas is a six-square mile neighborhood in Northwest Detroit known as Brightmoor. For the past seven years, through our partnership with the Brightmoor Alliance, we've been working with residents and leaders in the neighborhood to support their efforts, especially in the realm of early childhood education.

Thanks to this focused work and the relationships formed along the way, we have learned a great deal about this critical time in a child's life, as seen through the eyes of the women in poverty who step forward to open early child care centers in their homes and the neighborhood. While we didn't think of it in these terms at the time, we were cocreating together with those partners as we

listened and responded together to the changing nature of the work.

One of the first grant proposals we received from an organization serving Brightmoor focused on improving the quality of the early childhood educational offerings in the neighborhood. This potential grant partner was well versed in the neighborhood and had been working with the early childhood education providers for a few years before we arrived on the scene. After receiving the proposal, we asked if we could meet with the people for whom the effort was intended. After some back and forth and offers of letters of support from women of the neighborhood, the agency agreed to introduce us to a few of the actual women who would be participants in the program and a meeting was arranged.

Zina, Felicia and Sonya entered our offices and thanked us for agreeing to meet. After introductions and comments from both teams about context, we shared the full proposal we had received with the women. While they told us they had never seen a grant proposal before, they knew to

jump to the back of the packet to see the budget. The size of the \$500,000 three-year grant shocked our guests. The women asked if they could have more time with the proposal so they could better understand the scope of the proposed work.

Two weeks later, the three Brightmoor early childhood leaders came back to our office and presented their questions. Humbly, they shared the proposal was missing three elements critical to the success of the work: basic needs to help the families focus on their children's education, transportation to get families to their locations and scholarships. The first two made immediate sense and we knew they represented other long-term issues families in Brightmoor face. The third issue was less obvious. The women described their idea for scholarships as creating an incentive for both the families in their care and their small businesses, which centered on a sliding scale of increasing scholarships tied to quality milestones. The better the quality of the center, the more scholarships they could offer, strengthening both their businesses and the families who always struggled to pay their bills.

Our teams worked together, alongside the grant partner, to align our shared incentives. The resulting work and agreement increased our investment in the project to more than \$800,000. Thanks to Zina, Felicia and Sonya's insight, when the state of Michigan began its own quality initiative once the resources were available, scholarships were tied to quality ratings.

### MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

There's an African proverb etched into the walls at the Gates Foundation that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." The social impact sector lives this message most every day. However, we have a

As a white male who  
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some not,  
some visible to me,  
some not –  
I'm starting  
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and am encouraging  
my colleagues  
to do the same.

little bit farther to go when it comes to inclusivity at conferences where we learn and share together.

So what do we do? Since my questions at the early childhood conference seemed to point a finger at the sector, I've been focusing on pointing a finger back at myself, and challenging how I can make decisions differently.

As a white male who enjoys all sorts of privileges – some earned, some not, some visible to me, some not – I'm starting to ask myself new questions and am encouraging my colleagues to do the same. When I recently had a chance to go to another expensive "you-really-should-be-there" conference focused on the leadership of our local region, I asked myself if my being there would truly benefit those in attendance. I decided to call my partner at the Brightmoor Alliance, a man well-versed in the politics of the region who is very different from me in many ways, including not having enough resources to get to the conference, and asked him if he wanted to attend. Reverend Larry had not been invited but I knew he would be welcomed. He went, strengthened his existing networks, made new contacts and most assuredly made an impact on the conversations in which he participated.

Moving forward together as a social impact sector, let's redouble our efforts to learn alongside our partners – both those who work to address the issues we hope to face as well those inside the very same issues. ■

*Douglas Bitonti Stewart is executive director of the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation.*

## Notes

1. Because the "nonprofit" sector is the only sector described by what it is not, the term "social impact" is used throughout this piece in its place. The author feels "social impact" is a more appropriate name because its chief aim is to make an impact in our world, not to simply break even. The term also places the sector within the context of its sister sector: for-profit, for-impact.
2. See <http://www.mmfisher.org/>.
3. Jacquelyn DeGroot, "Jewish Philanthropy: The Concept of Tzedakah," Learning to Give, <http://learningtogive.org/papers/paper66.html>.

# Shortcomings of Modern Strategic Philanthropy and How to Overcome Them

By Henry A. J. Ramos

During the formative years of modern strategic philanthropy, from the mid-1960s to late 1990s, most leading foundations identified key issues and related fields of interest they wanted to influence, assessed practitioner leadership and ideas on the ground and worked with experts and stakeholders to identify and implement appropriate interventions.

These experts and stakeholders were typically associated with anchor

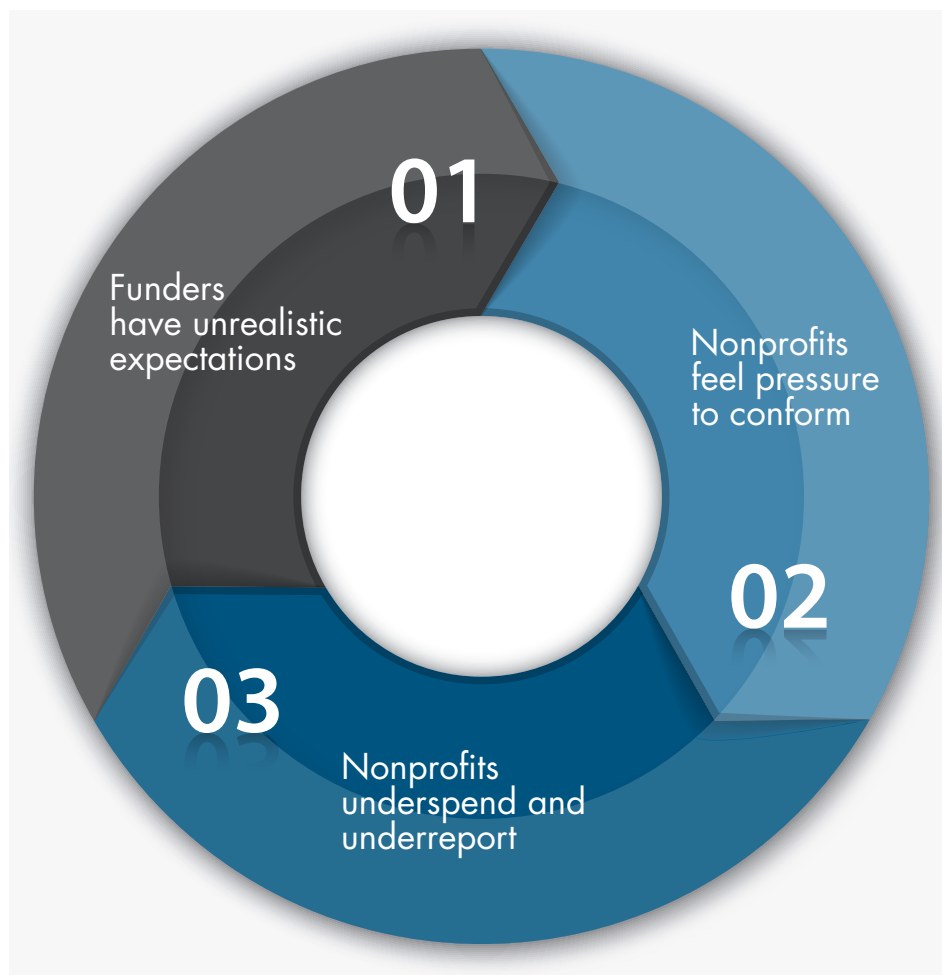
nonprofit organizations – large community-based, self-help institutions and networks whose work created jobs, nurtured local leadership and represented community interests in larger regional discourse and decision-making. These anchor nonprofit institutions and intermediary networks helped support and build the talent, ideas and innovations necessary to tackle large economic, social and cultural problems. They also

established close relationships with the people and issues at work in communities served.

Influential foundations, such as Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Kellogg Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York, developed powerful leadership traditions, aligning themselves around a core constellation of anchor nonprofits. They were committed to building field and nonprofit capacity to expand the benefits, reach and efficacy of their social investment commitments – often given in the form of flexible core support funding over multiple years.

But there has been a notable move away from this kind of responsive grant-making in recent years. Foundations across the nation increasingly focus on utilizing nonprofit platforms merely as temporary vehicles to advance their own targeted, short-term initiatives. They focus on outcome metrics that are foundation-driven rather than field-driven. They want immediate results and more attribution and credit for this perceived leadership.

This change has been influenced by a corresponding shift in public policy favoring expanded competition, utilitarianism and the interests of more wealthy and powerful groups over the needs of the nation's most vulnerable populations. Increasingly, those with society's greatest advantages and means decide what is best for the poor and the marginalized, rather than these disadvantaged groups and the grass-roots leaders and institutions that work most closely with them.



As a result, foundations are less likely to support the indirect costs involved in the targeted project activities they fund, including organizational capacity building such as leadership and staff development, research to identify new and better ways for grassroots nonprofits to work, and reserve and endowment funds that give long-term stability to nonprofits.

The recent influx of technology and finance entrepreneurs into the philanthropic sector has contributed to this trend toward greater efficiency. The ideology and methodologies of their day jobs influence their philanthropic investments, and nonprofits are increasingly run like businesses and subcontracting entities.

The net effect is that nonprofits are incented to focus on accommodating funders' growing demands for metrics that underscore their grantees' tactical prowess, efficiency and fiscal solvency, at the expense of addressing and solving complex social problems and concerns.

An especially common result of this dynamic is an undue emphasis on maintaining low ratios of overhead to program expenditures, a death knell to meaningful community change and nonprofit sustainability. In a 2009 Bridgespan-supported article in *The Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Ann Goggins Gregory and Don Howard report how this vicious cycle fuels the persistent underfunding of nonprofits and the overhead required to do their work well:

"The first step in the cycle is funders' unrealistic expectations about how much it costs to run a nonprofit. At the second step, nonprofits feel pressure to conform to funders' unrealistic expectations. At the third step, nonprofits respond to this pressure in two ways: They spend too little on overhead, and they underreport their expenditures on tax

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forms and in fundraising materials. This underspending and underreporting in turn perpetuates funders' unrealistic expectations. Over time, funders expect grantees to do more and more with less and less – a cycle that slowly starves nonprofits."<sup>1</sup>

While it is appropriate for nonprofits to strive for efficiency, the extent of this impulse in recent years has been excessive. Today, it is difficult for even highly developed and longstanding community-based nonprofit anchor organizations and intermediaries to survive, let alone thrive, without significant foundation support. Yet, for all but the most-endowed organizations, maintaining currency and stabilization against the

backdrop of contemporary fundraising machinations consumes at least as much time and attention as does actual substantive work.

In the recent quest to advance effectiveness and impact through expanded foundation restrictions, I fear that more has been lost than gained. Many important nonprofit leadership institutions and networks have shuttered over the past decade after failing to meet unrealistic requirements. Without a change in course, many more are likely to vanish. This is especially costly in more marginalized, lower-income communities that rely on a thin layer of nonprofit anchor institutions as their only defense against the changing global economy and uncompassionate public policy trends.

Social investment leaders can do more to find a better working balance of community, nonprofit and funder interests. And given what is at stake looking to the future, we must do so. To this end, I offer three recommendations to establish the essential elements of next stage foundation investment.

These investments would enable leading nonprofit organizations and networks to focus more fully on their missions, thus stabilizing and leading to greater innovation in the field. Working holistically, their impact on their communities would far exceed what funders can achieve by solely supporting particular program strategies and allied grant allocations.

## 1. PROMOTE A STRONGER INTEGRATION AND ALIGNMENT OF EFFORTS

Remarkably little of today's work in social investment is integrated and aligned to maximize impact. Instead, grantees are typically caught in a web of overlapping and often contradictory funder performance and reporting requirements, while funders, too often lacking coordina-

tion of efforts, unwittingly promote competition among groups doing similar work. Leading funders should do more to coordinate their efforts, as well as those of their grantees, to achieve greater complementarity and rationalization of efforts.

Funders are in a unique position to encourage more discussion and corrective action on these issues. Even within most large foundations, there is still too little cross-program coordination and joint-program investment, even though it has the potential to markedly increase social investment responsiveness and impact. By rationalizing the field in these ways, funders could better ensure the results we all seek and minimize the burdens on their grantees to decipher competing funder imperatives and outcome expectations.

## 2. USE FOUNDATION ENDOWMENT ASSETS IN MORE CREATIVE AND PURPOSEFUL WAYS

While a growing number of foundation leaders are championing impact investment as a progressive and responsive approach to philanthropic capital management, a strong case can be made for more aggressive philanthropic leadership in this arena.

There is so much untapped potential in this space to steward and grow endowment funds while addressing many of the issues covered by economic justice nonprofits like the one I run. Foundations should explore ways to employ a more generous portion of their endowment assets to mitigate the persistent pressures on low- and moderate-income Americans – including debt from high interest student loans, health care and household maintenance and the difficulty of amassing the necessary capital to become homeowners or entrepreneurs. For example, housing investment funds in places like Detroit and South Central Los Angeles could

help revitalize communities while providing an opportunity to collaborate with local nonprofits.

Foundations could also use their endowment investment resources and reliable nonprofit partners to establish an alternative credit-lending model to payday loan establishments, or establish a comparable revolving fund that could significantly reduce educational loan burdens.

An incredible wealth of program-related and allied investment potential exists in these spaces for major philanthropic organizations to build out in partnership with grassroots and regional nonprofit anchor organizations.

## 3. RECOMMIT TO SUSTAINING ANCHOR ORGANIZATIONS AND FIELDS

Foundations must rethink their retreat from supporting anchor organization sustainability and field-building investments. The lack of funds for planning, leadership development and organizational self-sufficiency is hurting the long-term vitality of the entire civil society sector.

It is not possible to sustain the kind or quality of work and leadership required to move societies and institutions forward without investing in institutional capacity.

The current problems are especially profound for organizations and networks created by and for people and communities of color, whose needs and public responsibilities are growing exponentially. Especially given the profound racial and ethnic demographic shifts we see taking hold across our society, we need to help these organizations and networks to perform at the highest possible level of quality and impact.

It is time for leading funders to find new and responsive ways to help grantees build the institutional wherewithal essential for achieving social change. Perhaps they could consider innovative

ways to support organizational sustainability that are more time-contingent, such as experimenting with time-bound endowment commitments for select anchor partner organizations. Recipient nonprofits would have to meet certain performance indicators and formula matching donations at key points of the term, say a decade in most instances. After 10 years, the initial investment could be returned to supporting funders for new field-building investments; but successful recipient nonprofits would still be left with comparable endowment levels based on their matching fund efforts. Surely, some versions of these ideas will have to emerge as standard practice in the years to come.

Foundations have always done their best work by being visible leaders and innovators in the philanthropic investment space. In today's rapidly changing society and economy, with so much added responsibility bearing down on organized philanthropy to meet new needs, it is not a time for our leaders to be unduly cautious; rather, this is a time for bold new ideas and experiments. Who better to make this happen than the leading funders that have committed themselves to addressing the societal inequalities that have beset our economy and civic culture in recent decades? ■

*Henry A. J. Ramos is president & CEO of the Insight Center for Community Economic Development and a former member of the grant program staffs of the Ford, James Irvine and Levi Strauss foundations.*

## Notes

1. Ann Goggins Gregory and Don Howard, "The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, August 2009, [http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the\\_nonprofit\\_starvation\\_cycle/](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_nonprofit_starvation_cycle/).



# Philanthropy's Response to Katrina

(continued from page 1)

individuals, families, foundations, church groups, businesses and others who contributed so much to the reconstruction and rebirth of New Orleans. Thousands of volunteers still come back year after year to put up houses or paint ramshackle schools. I still get choked up when I see them walking back to their hotels from their labors. People in their cars honk at them and wave in appreciation.

I've been a frequent critic of the philanthropic sector. I've poked fun at pompous CEOs and bloviating program officers.<sup>1</sup> In the spirit of self-improvement, we can legitimately raise the question of whether or not, in response to Katrina, organized philanthropy did the right things in the right measure.<sup>2</sup> We can justifiably ask what \$3 billion in private contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals accomplished for New Orleans' most vulnerable citizens.<sup>3</sup> I'm happy for the field to engage these questions, but prefer that this happen some other time, perhaps some other place. For me, as for many, the space we reserve for commemoration is hallowed ground, and I don't yet have it in me to engage in these debates.

More pressing, I believe, is the question of why, when current realities are as harrowing as anything we might have witnessed 10 years ago, we lavish so much attention on the past. If a normally constituted human being had eight fingers instead of 10, I assure you we'd have a two-year head start on forgetting, once again, the lessons of 2005.

## A TALE OF TWO ZIP CODES

Rather than drag the reader through the entire chamber of horrors, let me focus on a representative statistic,<sup>4</sup> published three short years ago in a report titled *Place Matters for Health in Orleans Parish*:<sup>5</sup> "Life expectancy in the poorest zip code in the city is 54.5 years, or 25.5 years lower than life expectancy in the zip code with the least amount of poverty in the city, where it is 80."

I leave it as an exercise to the reader to determine which of these ZIP codes is predominantly Black and which is predominantly white.

And I invite the reader to slow his or her headlong rush through this article and allow that one statistic to sink in a bit. Twenty-five and a half years. The difference in life expectancy between males and females in the United States is currently about five years. This, in my view, should be enough to get everyone's attention. Perhaps, like me, you've wondered why this difference in life expectancy hasn't generated more hand-wringing, more conference panels, more calls to action. A 10-year difference in life expectancy should be nothing short of a national scandal. A 15-year difference should be unthinkable.

But a 25.5-year difference? Here we have a kind of Katrina unaccompanied by torrents of rain. Here's an implacable flood driving the poor in our city to deaths that are obscenely premature.

What kind of healing do we need to feel the full weight of that solitary number: 25.5? What can foundations do to help trouble the water a bit, to quicken our pulses at the idea that our neighbors

might be dying 25 years before we do?

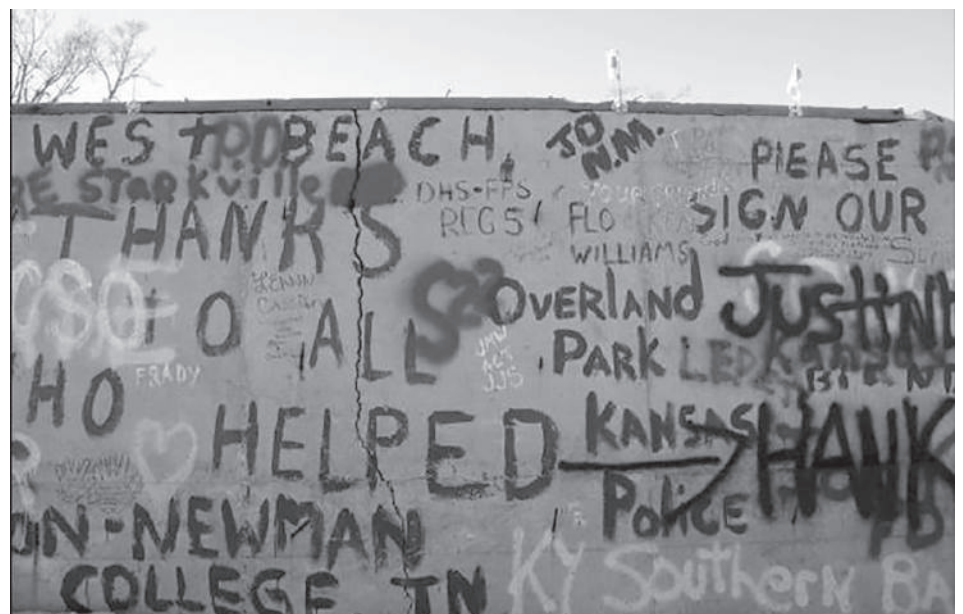
Ten years ago, I watched events in New Orleans unfold from a safe distance. I was living in Washington, D.C., at the time and my fellow Washingtonians and I clucked our tongues at the images on our TV screens. Some of us remarked that 'there but for the grace of God goes Washington, D.C.' We shared a sense that Black lives appeared to matter as little in our nation's capital as they did in the American South.

A life expectancy of 54 and a half years. Is there perhaps some way that philanthropy can help us remember the present as vividly as we recall the past?

## A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER<sup>6</sup>

If you work in a foundation, if you have the privilege of funding the good people who help us remember the present, please know that much is expected of us. A higher consciousness, a greater sense of urgency, a more robust response to current suffering and injustice.

Years ago, I sat at a long table lined with academics, one of whom described the research he had just conducted on the role of philanthropy in the Civil Rights Movement. It turns out that foun-



A wall on Highway 90 in Gulfport, MS. CC image by Jewish Women's Archive.

dations had generally been circumspect and very slow on the draw.<sup>7</sup> They came around eventually, as they did with many progressive movements, when all the difficult work had already been done. And even then, they played a minor role.

I, the self-appointed spokesman for organized philanthropy, was indignant. I knew personally of many foundations that had taken risks to advance the cause of social justice. Here, I had in front of me yet another uninformed foundation-basher. But still his thesis gnawed at me, and the more I tried to negate it, the more clearly I saw how the exceptions proved the rule.

The Movement for Gender Equality, Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring – we let them spend their rage and bury their dead. After that, we convened them and funded those who knew how to speak to their betters. This was photo op philanthropy, the kind that smiles for the camera as it places one foot on a trophy that others had the courage to bag.

The foundation response to Katrina was very different. Hundreds of foundations across the country and across the world mobilized to help put New Orleans back on its feet. They made huge investments in relief and rebuilding efforts; they gave voice to beleaguered residents; they helped us rebuild better than before. Here was philanthropy at its best. Not photo op philanthropy, but rather a response from the heart that has lasted to this day and has transformed our city. I know the overwhelming majority of my fellow New Orleanians share my gratitude for the generosity of so many.

The problems with organized philanthropy – the work of foundations and the like – are more systemic; they extend far beyond our attempts to respond to any one disaster. These problems explain why it's the pope, rather than a foundation CEO, who's deemed by Fox News to be the most dangerous person on the planet.<sup>8</sup>

For now, dear reader, dear fellow philanthropoid: If you're moved to do so, make your pilgrimage to New Orleans this year. Give us an opportunity to thank you again. We can mourn together for the dead. And, most importantly, arm in arm, we can find a way to honor the dignity of those who are thankfully still with us. ■

*G. Albert Ruesga is president and CEO of the Greater New Orleans Foundation.*

## Notes

1. The editors at the White Courtesy Telephone blog have much to answer for.

The following are some of the grantmakers that provided crucial support after Hurricane Katrina.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation  
 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
 Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund  
 Conrad N. Hilton Foundation  
 Ella West Freeman Foundation  
 Ford Foundation  
 Foundation for Louisiana  
 (formerly the Louisiana  
 Disaster Recovery  
 Foundation)  
 Greater New Orleans  
 Foundation  
 JPMorgan Chase  
 The Kresge Foundation  
 The Needmor Fund  
 Patrick F. Taylor Foundation  
 Rockefeller Foundation  
 RosaMary Foundation  
 Reily Foundation  
 Surdna Foundation  
 W. K. Kellogg Foundation  
 Zemurray Foundation

- See: <http://postcards.typepad.com/>.
2. Pablo Eisenberg, "After Katrina: What Foundations Should Do," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, January 2006, <https://ncrp.org/news-room/news-2006/233-after-katrina-what-foundations-should-do>.
  3. Steven Lawrence, "Snapshot of Philanthropy's Response to the Gulf Coast Hurricanes," Foundation Center, February 2006, [http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/katrina\\_snap.pdf](http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/katrina_snap.pdf).
  4. For a broader picture of "inclusion" in the New Orleans metro area, see: *The New Orleans Index at Eight: Measuring Greater New Orleans' Progress Toward Prosperity*, the Data Center, August 2013, [http://www.datacenterresearch.org/reports\\_analysis/the-new-orleans-index-at-eight/](http://www.datacenterresearch.org/reports_analysis/the-new-orleans-index-at-eight/). *The New Orleans Index at Ten* will be released shortly.
  5. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Orleans Parish Place Matters Team in conjunction with the Center on Human Needs, Virginia Commonwealth University Virginia Network for Geospatial Health Research, June 2012, <http://www.orleansplacematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CHER-FinalText.pdf>.
  6. Parts of this section appeared originally in a blog post titled, "The Philanthropic Undead and the Untimely Death of George Falconer," available at [http://postcards.typepad.com/white\\_telephone/2013/07/voices-from-stonewall.html](http://postcards.typepad.com/white_telephone/2013/07/voices-from-stonewall.html).
  7. There were some notable exceptions. See Sean Dobson, "Freedom Funders: Philanthropy and the Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1965," National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, <http://ncrp.org/campaigns-research-policy/36-campaigns-research-policy/1081-freedom-funders-philanthropy-and-civil-rights-movement>.
  8. Dan Arel, "Fox News calls Pope Francis 'the most dangerous person on the planet,'" Patheos, June 2015, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/danthropology/2015/06/fox-news-calls-pope-francis-the-most-dangerous-person-on-the-planet/>.

# Ford Foundation

New York, NY

[www.fordfoundation.org](http://www.fordfoundation.org)



FORD  
FOUNDATION

**NCRP:** *In a widely-shared open letter, Ford Foundation President Darren Walker declared the foundation's commitment to battling inequality and increasing general operating support. What reactions have you received to this announcement so far, and have any surprised you?*

**Ford Foundation:** We're proud of our FordForward strategy – and pleased that the response it generated from colleagues, partners and grantees has been overwhelmingly positive. At the same time, we all understand that Darren's letter was just the next in a series of communications, and that many still are asking the very real question, "Will I get funding?" No doubt, some uncertainty remains – uncertainty that will dissipate during the weeks and months ahead. But, overall, our community of stakeholders seems excited and optimistic about the direction we're heading in together.

**NCRP:** *Why has the Ford Foundation reinvested its work promoting social justice philanthropy?*

**Ford Foundation:** The Ford Foundation's board of trustees just returned to Detroit, our birthplace, for the first time in more than half a century – and reconnecting with our roots reminds



A grantee site visit. Photo courtesy of the Ford Foundation.

us that our institution has always worked, as our founder Edsel Ford put it, "for the public welfare." To us, reinvigorating this work is about continuing our decades-long legacy of supporting visionaries on the front lines of social justice. We also recognize that, as a social justice foundation, we have a unique responsibility. For one thing, social justice is much harder to quantify than other forms of impact. It's messy and doesn't have the same kind of linear trajectory you can fit neatly in a PowerPoint. With this in mind, we've developed new program areas and new ways of working that disrupt our tendency to create silos – this project is X, and this project is Y – and instead encourage a more holistic, integrated approach to promoting social justice. More broadly, we have the ability to be patient and

invest long term in institutions that are leading meaningful change, which is why we're committing \$1 billion over the next five years to general operating support.

**NCRP:** *In June, the Supreme Court issued major rulings upholding the Affordable Care Act and expanding marriage equality to all 50 states. What role did the Ford Foundation and its grantees play in the movements that led to these decisions?*

**Ford Foundation:** Without question, both decisions represent enormous victories for people and organizations that care about social justice – and we're proud to support many of these visionaries. When it comes to LGBTQ issues in particular, many of our grantee partners worked long and hard to make this June's decision a reality, including the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Movement Advancement Project and the Civil Marriage Collaborative. Ultimately, our history shows that successful social movements need strong ideas, institutions and individuals, and we're committed to supporting leaders like these in the fight against inequality. ■

## Select Publications

### ***Walton Family Foundation – How Can This Market-Oriented Grantmaker Advance Community-Led Solutions for Greater Equity?***

By Gita Gulati-Partee May 2015

As part of Philamplify, NCRP assessed the Walton Family Foundation, a grantmaker primarily administered by the relatives of Walmart founders Sam and Helen Walton. The foundation has disparate success in its environmental and educational portfolios, demonstrating the mixed results of its market-based approach.

### ***Hess Foundation – Will This Secretive Foundation Evolve Beyond Checkbook Philanthropy?***

By Elizabeth Myrick June 2015

This Philamplify assessment looks at the Hess Foundation, a family foundation that heavily funds large, established arts, education and health institutions. The foundation is primarily run by the heirs of Hess Corporation founder and former New York Jets owner Leon Hess. The analysis found the foundation completely lacks transparency and access in its grantmaking and operations, not having a website, paid staff or other channels for communicating with foundation leadership.

visit: [www.philamplify.org/foundation-assessments](http://www.philamplify.org/foundation-assessments)

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