

Responsive Philanthropy

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In this March 26, 2007 photo, Andrew Chapin of New York City takes part in a rally on Capitol Hill in Washington supporting legislative efforts to repeal the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding gay soldiers. Photo by AP Images/Susan Walsh.

Are We Making Progress? Reflections on the LGBTQ Movement, Social Justice and Philanthropy

As a national philanthropic organization that has spent the last 27 years raising awareness about the funding needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) organizations, in 2007 Funders for LGBTQ

Issues changed its mission, making its long-held commitment to social justice explicit. The process that led us to take this step began with two questions that we posed as a part of our strategic planning process: If we say we are a social justice organization, what exactly does that mean? And, is all LGBTQ work synonymous with social justice?

Funders for LGBTQ Issues was founded by grantmakers in 1982 to address the lack of foundation support for lesbian and gay issues in the U.S

By Karen Zelermyer

(awareness about the realities of bisexual, transgender and queer communities was minimal at this point). The 1980s was a time of burgeoning growth for the lesbian and gay movement. Dozens of organizations and groups were being created every year to address the issues impacting our community, including civil rights organizations, community centers, health clinics, anti-violence projects, (continued on page 8)



challenging grantmakers
to strengthen communities

A Message From the Executive Director



Dear Readers,

If your fall has been anything like mine, you've been running from one meeting to the next, trying to keep up with an ever-increasing work load. I know many of the nonprofits in our membership are struggling financially, and the burden of an uncertain 2010 weighs heavily on them. Some grantmakers have downsized and the same amount of work is being done by fewer hands.

I hope you can take a moment to catch your breath with this issue of *Responsive Philanthropy* and spend some time reflecting on a few truly important issues in our sector.

Karen Zelermyer, executive director of Funders for LGBTQ Issues, celebrates progress in attitudes towards lesbian and gay Americans in our nation today. But she also laments the lack of sufficient gains on public policy and examines the extent to which philanthropy provides support for LGBTQ issues. Read her article on page 1.

Vincent Robinson, managing partner of the executive search firm the 360 Group, explores the barriers to diversity at the CEO level within foundations. How are trustees' preferences for celebrity CEOs unintentionally undermining efforts to diversify the sector, and what can we do about it? You'll find the story on page 3.

Melissa Johnson, NCRP's field director, explores the extent to which our *Grantmaking for Community Impact Project* actually has been influencing foundations. We've released reports in New Mexico, North Carolina and Minnesota. But have funders been responding? Are attitudes changing? Is money moving? Read her piece, beginning on page 5, to gain some insight into these important questions.

Our member profile in this issue features the PICO National Network, a nationwide network of 52 faith-based community organizations. It has been right in the middle of the nation's health care debate this year, bringing the voices of families and communities into the discussion.

If you have suggestions or ideas for stories we should cover in the future, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in orange ink, appearing to read 'A Dorfman', written over a white background.

Aaron Dorfman
Executive Director
NCRP

NCRP STAFF

Meredith Brodbeck
Communications Assistant

Julia Craig
Research Associate

Aaron Dorfman
Executive Director

Kevin Faria
Development Director

Niki Jagpal
Research & Policy Director

Melissa Johnson
Field Director

Kevin Laskowski
Field Associate

Anna Kristina ("Yna") C. Moore
Communications Director

Lisa Ranghelli
Senior Research Associate

Beverley Samuda-Wylder
Senior Administrative Associate



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National Committee for
Responsive Philanthropy
2001 S Street, NW, Ste. 620
Washington, DC 20009
Phone 202.387.9177
Fax 202.332.5084
E-mail: info@ncrp.org

Struck by the Stars: How the Search for Celebrity CEOs is Undermining Diversity in Philanthropy

By Vincent Robinson

In 2000, a relatively unknown state senator from Illinois arrived in Los Angeles, but was not able to get floor access to the Democratic National Convention. Of course, that same state senator electrified those convention-goers four years later, and now ... well, we all know the rest of the story.

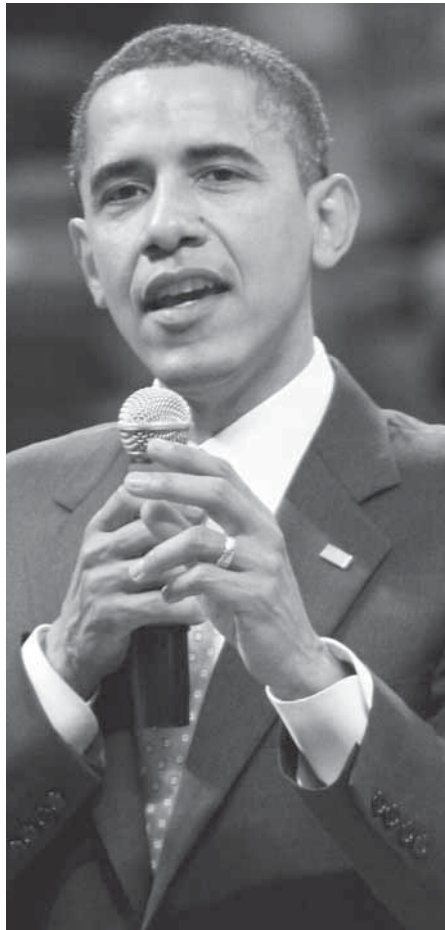
The experience of Barack Obama in 2000 says some important things about how we choose leaders. At the time, he was largely unknown. He wasn't seen as a peer. He was – and still is – African American. Above all, he was rejected. The political establishment of the Democratic Party in 2000 was perfectly prepared to ignore the man who now is our president as a potential leader. Look at what the party leaders were missing – and could have continued to miss, had not someone recognized his leadership potential and facilitated his emergence from obscurity. I can't help but wonder whether the philanthropic sector, by limiting our definitions of leaders to people who are "known" in some way and who are "peers" in another, might be undermining its truly noble (and fairly widely held) goal of having a broader, more diverse and inclusive leadership base?

CELEBRITY – REACHING FOR THE "STARS"

In executive search processes, we often hear clients say that they want a "star." Presuming that Jennifer Aniston is not a likely candidate to run a foundation (at the moment, anyway), we probe to find out specifically what constitutes a

"star." Over the years, we have determined that what clients usually mean is someone who is well known, either in the philanthropic sector or, more likely, in some other area, such as academics, media or politics. But as Jim Collins has pointed out, these "celebrity" leaders often either are not as able or willing to maximize the effectiveness of the

PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG STOCK PHOTO



Barack Obama gives a speech at a rally in Bristol, Virginia on June 5, 2008.

organizations they are invited to as other less well-known leaders may be. Collins' rigorous research in the corporate world found that celebrity leaders brought in from the outside actually correlated negatively with taking a company from "good to great".¹ He found the same to be true in the social sector.² Poor outcomes like these are not universal, but are surprisingly common, suggesting that "celebrity" is at best a red herring, and at worst, truly detrimental to organizational results.

Our experience suggests that many foundation boards and executives are convinced that their institutions' effectiveness will grow merely through association with celebrity leaders. Sometimes, we also observe that individual board or staff members in the organization can be seduced by the excitement of personal association with the star. In either case, fundamental and critical questions of leadership – whether the leader can inspire the organization's stakeholders, advance the organization's mission, steward its resources effectively, and is willing to do any of it – remain unplumbed and unanswered. As a result, we see institutions much later become frustrated by the lack of impact and results – and not understand how they arrived at such a place.

PEERS: IS HE OR SHE ONE OF US?

Many boards justifiably are concerned about the abilities of leaders to interact effectively with other leaders, decision-makers, movers-and-shakers and the

like. This seems a fair question, to the extent that such abilities are tied to the role and the organization's impact. The answer requires a close look at a leader's record of accomplishment and achievement and reputation among a variety of constituencies, as well as an examination of the leader's ability to reflect on the impact of his or her actions on others (known broadly as "emotional intelligence"). Instead, we routinely see executives and boards focus on markers that are proxies for conclusions, rather than evidence relevant to the organization's actual needs. Examples of these "signals" include the schools someone has attended, associations with prestigious institutions, and even financial compensation. Returning to our example of the dejected (and rejected) state senator, we know he had strong academic credentials and even, at that point, held elected office. And yet, he encountered such difficulty in gaining even the slightest modicum of credibility (or at least enough to get himself onto that convention floor in L.A.) that he went home early, perhaps realizing that he was not regarded as a peer.

In our work, we routinely see candidates rejected out of hand for roles in which they could flourish. Few reasons are given, but I suspect these potential leaders receive scant consideration largely because they didn't study at a prestigious college or university, win a Rhodes scholarship, or make within 25 or 30 percent of the position's salary. In fact, we see compensation used not only to attract celebrity leaders, but also to exclude others who have not reached those levels of remuneration – all in the interest of determining who is a "peer" and who is not. Again, these dynamics leave the actual leadership needs of an organization obscured and the long-term prognosis of the organization's success and impact in serious question.

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not because of
ability, talent
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WHAT'S DIVERSITY GOT TO DO WITH THIS?

This past September, in an article titled "A Man's World," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* released findings from its survey of nonprofit leadership. The results show very clearly that white men continue to lead the nation's largest charities in overwhelming numbers – more than 82 percent. Of those appointed recently, we see that this trend is hardly on the decline – 81.7 percent of those chief executives also are white. In foundations specifically, a large number of senior posts – defined by the Council on Foundations as chief executives and chiefs of grantmaking – are held by women (55 percent), but ethnic minorities hold fewer than 7 percent of these leadership positions. The *Chronicle* notes further, "Despite the preponderance of women in nonprofit jobs, they are entirely absent from chief executive roles at certain kinds of big charities." Hmm.

I recently asked someone close to this growing body of research to share with me any underlying qualitative reasons that may explain not only these

data, but also why the trend-line doesn't seem to be moving in any direction suggesting that the social sector is making strides toward a more diverse leadership base. The answer was surprising – the view among researchers and those who commission the studies is that they lack a baseline for comparing the diversity of senior leaders over periods of time.

Really? Without even being systematic, it is not difficult to see that, nationally, foundation boards and executive ranks never have been particularly diverse, and remain that way. And is the explanation really that opaque? Using some simple reasoning, I would argue that our dynamic duo of Celebrity and Peerage might provide some uncomfortable guidance to our answer.

If foundation boards and executives seek "stars" – who may be found leading the nation's most prominent social sector institutions, including colleges and universities, or hold other positions of notoriety outside the field – and also are looking for those who are peers, again defined by school affiliations, networks or compensation levels, it is necessarily the case that the pool of diverse candidates shrinks to an almost infinitesimal level. The reservoir is shallow not because of ability, talent or accomplishment as much as prevailing notions of "leadership." Even asking – and answering – questions about an organization's specific leadership needs that will facilitate impact and the achievement of its mission could help deepen the waters of potential talent.

By its very nature, identifying additional criteria can highlight the need to look beyond Celebrity and Peerage. Instead, accepting status quo definitions of leadership – rather than challenging them – leads us to the numbers we have now, which in turn show us a cycle explaining why promoting diversity is so (continued on page 10)

Making Progress Toward Increasing Funding for Advocacy, Community Organizing and Civic Engagement

By Melissa Johnson

Well under way, the Grantmaking for Community Impact Project (GCIP) is making progress toward increasing funder understanding and demonstrating the impacts of nonprofit advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. When NCRP launched this project in 2008, our intention was to increase funding toward these strategies, often the most direct way to address issues affecting marginalized communities and lead to systemic change.

In addition to producing a research report, we talk simultaneously to foundation staff, donors and trustees to assess where they fall on the continuum of funding these policy engagement efforts. Many funders in our first three sites – New Mexico, North Carolina and Minnesota – are well on their way to supporting nonprofits to build their capacity

to engage in advocacy and organizing while others are just beginning to invest in these strategies. Our work in the first three sites and early follow-up shows great promise that our approach, which combines outreach strategy, publication of findings and education, may prove to be effective at increasing philanthropic support for advocacy, organizing and civic engagement.

Thus far, our field outreach has included conversations with more than 100 foundations. At the same time, we have sought to educate ourselves on the social, economic and political climates of each of the states. Our process is simple: analyze the philanthropic landscape; research key issues and basic demographic and socioeconomic disparities that exist; and talk with as many funders as possible about their funding strategies.

In addition to this core strategy, our partnerships with the regional grantmaking associations and statewide centers of nonprofits give us deeper insight into how change has been made successfully in the nonprofit sector. We soon are able to identify a clear picture of which funders already support advocacy, organizing and civic engagement, and could serve as leaders for their peers. We then are able to devise a list of foundations whose missions could be achievable by investing in these strategies.

During the early outreach process, foundations have shared their hesitation in supporting policy engagement efforts, including concerns on how to identify and measure advocacy and organizing work, how to find nonprofits that engage in the work, and understanding what it takes for a nonprofit to be successful at these strategies. Additionally, funders continue to struggle with what they legally are permitted to fund. Thus, for each site, after the research reports are released, the real test begins – we aim to provide support for those foundations that are most ready to use the research reports as tools to adapt investing strategies and increase support for policy engagement over time.

We have begun to identify how progress is being made toward increasing funding for this work.

DIALOGUE

One of the major elements of our outreach in each research site is a deliberate effort to bring foundations and nonprofits engaged in policy engagement

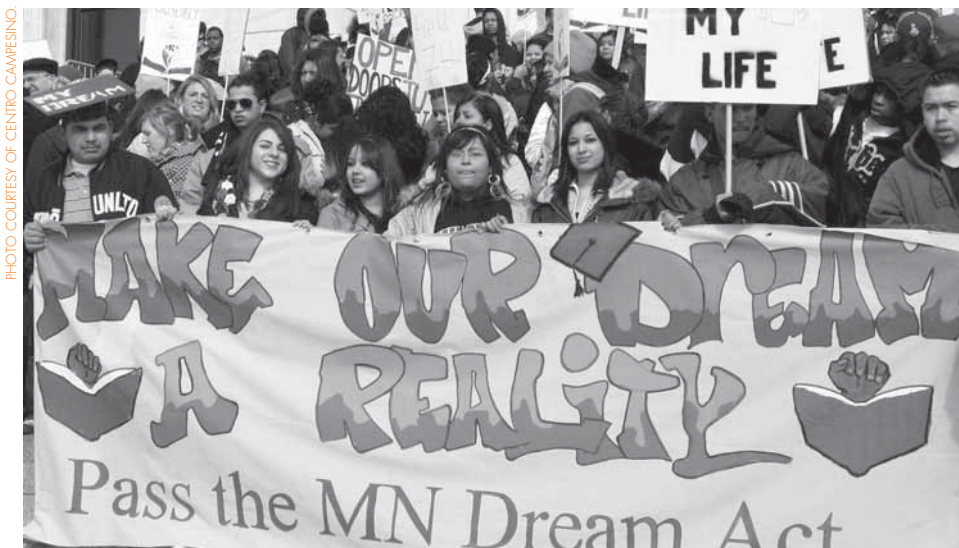


PHOTO COURTESY OF CENTRO CAMPESINO

Students lobby for the DREAM ACT during the 2008 Student Day at the Capitol. They are members of the Centro Campesino's Youth Organizing Committee from Waseca, Owatonna and Northfield.

into dialogue with each other. To facilitate this, we create host committees comprising representatives from local foundations and nonprofits for our release event, to put together programs that encourage conversations about the findings of the research reports and stimulate constructive dialogue between foundations and nonprofits. Although none of the three events have been exactly the same, each involved discussions of the capacity needed and impact of the policy engagement efforts, as well as the funding necessary to enable nonprofits to achieve the greatest benefits for their communities.

In New Mexico, Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish set the stage for this honest conversation with attendees in the December 2008 release of the report. In North Carolina, nonprofits and foundations came together for nearly a full day of dialogue, holding two breakout sessions after hearing the findings of the report. One was focused on how foundations provide more support and another was focused on how nonprofits can hone their skills to be effective at documenting and communicating their impact. Both sessions included foundations and nonprofits engaging in open dialogue. The most recent event in

The most common roadblock encountered by foundation leaders that prevents them from supporting direct policy engagement efforts of nonprofits is a widely held misperception that advocacy is the same as lobbying ...

Minnesota featured a multimedia presentation by representatives from each participating nonprofit group to highlight their accomplishments, and served as a great complement to the research report.

EDUCATION ABOUT ADVOCACY, COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Many foundation staff with whom we engaged in dialogue over the Grantmaking for Community Impact Project during the past year learned more about the continuum of support

they can provide to nonprofits involved in advocacy and organizing. Since most of these foundations have supported the research, education, leadership development or capacity building efforts of nonprofits that engage in policy engagement, NCRP sought to identify deeper ways these grantmakers can fund the strategies directly.

The most common roadblock encountered by foundation leaders that prevents them from supporting direct policy engagement efforts of nonprofits is a widely held misperception that advocacy is the same as lobbying – a myth that many trustees and donors believe.

Several foundation executives found the research reports a helpful tool to educate their grantmaking committees and boards of trustees. At the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, nonprofits also were invited to talk about their advocacy and organizing efforts.

EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE AND SCOPE OF NONPROFIT PARTNERS

In all three states, there is great diversity among the nonprofits that utilize advocacy, organizing and civic engagement as strategies to achieve their missions. The organizations featured in the

NEW AND RENEWING NCRP MEMBERS

(August 19 to October 26, 2009)

Capek & Associates
 Center for Civic Policy
 Center for Community Change
 Center for Health, Environment, and Justice
 Center for Participatory Change
 Center for Public & Nonprofit Leadership, Georgetown University
 Communities Helping All Neighbors Gain Empowerment (CHANGE)

Community Action New Mexico
 Cuidiu Consulting
 Dalia Association
 Drescher Foundation
 Edward W. Hazen Foundation
 HandsOn Northwest North Carolina
 Integrative Health Technologies
 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
 Little Tokyo Service Center
 Media Sutra
 National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
 NC Justice Center
 New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

New World Foundation
 North Star Fund
 PICO National Network
 Project Vote
 Rockefeller Foundation
 Rockwood Leadership Program
 Southern Coalition for Social Justice
 Southern Partners Fund
 Surdna Foundation
 Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program at Shelter Rock
 Warner Foundation
 Washington Interfaith Network (WIN)
 Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
 Woods Fund of Chicago

reports include both grassroots community-based organizations and statewide advocacy groups. At least one funder has stated that it did not know that some of the nonprofits in the reports even existed. Our reports served as a tool to expand funders' knowledge of the scope and variety of nonprofits in their own states, thus broadening the potential grantee pools of the foundations. Funders also have demonstrated new appreciation for the length of time it takes to achieve real policy change and the importance of nonprofits working in coalition with one another.

ASSESSING AND ADAPTING GRANTMAKING STRATEGY

In New Mexico, Albuquerque Community Foundation president Randall Royster provided an inspiring call to action for funders in the state. He pledged that the community foundation would consider funding advocacy work for the first time in its 28-year history. The community foundation is part of the New Mexico Collaboration to End Hunger, a collaborative that combines services and advocacy funding to achieve real change.

In North Carolina, the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust recently announced a new initiative that seeks to fund health advocacy organizations in the state for the first time. There also are some foundations that considered removing the "no funding for lobbying" clause from their guidelines, thus opening the door for new proposals and dialogue with nonprofit partners.

Our strategic outreach to funders and the documentation of the impact and community-wide benefits of policy engagement efforts through our research reports were catalysts to these foundations to venture along new paths. We hope to continue to provide support and assess their progress over time. We also hope that other grantmakers will be inspired.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW MEXICO ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION



"We are happy that we accomplished something that would not only make ourselves proud but our ancestors proud," said Juanita Garcia of New Mexico Acequia Association's Sembrando Semillas Project. Youth learn through a community-based experiential learning process that cultivates a love of the land called "querencia."

COLLABORATION AND PEER LEARNING

As a result of funder outreach and the research reports, some grantmakers have expanded their peer learning networks. In North Carolina, one statewide funder shared that after reading the report, it reconsidered a previous decision and agreed to continue a statewide partnership that supports services for the Hispanic communities in the state. The report not only served as an education tool for the advocacy work of the Hispanic community in the state but reaffirmed its importance.

In Minnesota, prior to NCRP's outreach, funders had been coming together in a Community Organizing Working Group to share and learn about each other's investments over time. The working group, which was an important resource for NCRP during our work in the state, now has identified increasing funding for community organizing as a desired goal for the group.

As we move on to our next site – Los Angeles County – our team plans to do critical follow-up at the six-month and 12-month marks to identify further how many funders and in what ways they have concretely moved towards funding more advocacy, organizing and civic engagement. We invite not only funders in New Mexico, North Carolina and Minnesota, but other funders to use the report in the following ways:

- Distribute the NCRP reports to your staff and board as an educational tool.
- Assess your mission and determine if investing in advocacy, organizing and civic engagement will help you achieve it better.
- Identify the barriers that prevent you from funding this work.
- Reach out to funders highlighted in the reports to learn more about how they evolved to support advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement efforts.
- Talk to nonprofit partners about how, why and to what extent their work using these strategies makes a difference in their communities.
- Contact your regional grantmaking association to help identify peer funders in your own region that already support nonprofit advocacy and organizing.

Finally, as NCRP hopes to complete the series of seven reports in different regions in the U.S., we hope to share with both funders and nonprofits our findings, lessons learned, progress and achievements. We encourage funders that have an interest in beginning or deepening their support for advocacy, community organizing and civic engagement to contact us. ■

Melissa Johnson is the field director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. She can be reached at mjohnson@ncrp.org.

hotlines, arts organizations, film festivals and social support groups. There were no laws protecting the rights of LGBTQ people in the workplace; gays were not allowed to serve in the military; and the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the right of states to make the sex lives of LGBTQ people illegal. There were no positive portrayals of gay men or lesbians in the media. The times were framed, first and foremost, by the growing AIDS epidemic – frequently referred to as the “gay disease” – and the desperate need to secure treatment and research.

Within the world of philanthropy, there was a small handful of nascent public lesbian and gay foundations (most notably Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, based in New York City, and Horizons Foundations, based in San Francisco) and one private

foundation (the Chicago Resource Center) that supported gay and lesbian issues. A few other foundations were making small grants to gay and lesbian groups but they did not mention it in any of their written materials. There had never been any programming at the Council on Foundations or at Affinity Group meetings. Gay and lesbian people were not included in The Foundation Center’s grants taxonomy. We were virtually invisible within mainstream philanthropy.

Since those years, the LGBTQ movement has made considerable progress in its quest for equality and acceptance. According to recent polls, 75 percent of Americans now support the idea of same-sex relationship recognition, 69 percent oppose laws that prevent qualified LGBTQ people from adopting children, 64 percent favor allowing openly gay military personnel to serve in the armed forces, and 19 percent report that their feelings toward gays and lesbians have become more favorable over the past five years.

These encouraging cultural shifts have been accompanied by an inconsistent patchwork of federal and state laws and regulations, some of which have affirmed the rights of LGBTQ people and others that, in contrast, deny their rights and undermine their safety.

In almost all of the battles currently being waged to

secure the rights and safety of LGBTQ people, there are both good news and bad news. There also is an incredible array of LGBTQ and ally organizations, grassroots activists and funders that have worked to affect change. As a result of all this work, today:

- Eighteen states recognize LGBTQ relationships either through marriage, civil unions or domestic partnership laws. The bad news is that 32 states do not legally recognize the relationships of same-sex couples and the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which allows states to define marriage as a union specifically between one man and one woman, cements this inequity.
- Congress is considering a fully inclusive Employment Non Discrimination Act (ENDA) that would prevent someone from being fired because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. However, until such a law is passed, transgender people are at risk of losing their jobs in 38 states and LGB people are at risk in 29 states.
- The Matthew Shepard Act, which would extend hate crime legislation to cover sexual orientation and gender identity, is awaiting a Senate vote. In the meantime, bias-related murders of LGBTQ people are at their highest rate since 1999.
- More than 13,000 LGBTQ service members have been discharged from the U.S. military under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” as the LGBTQ community and our allies organize for its promised repeal.

We also have made progress within philanthropy. Our annual research has tracked grants to LGBTQ populations from more than 300 U.S.-based private, public, community and corporate foundations. The Council on Foundations is led by a gay man. The Foundation Center includes LGBTQ in its taxonomy

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AP/GETTY IMAGES



Two young protesters with their mothers during a gay rights rally in Hollywood on May 26, 2009.

of grants. And, there is a vibrant network of public and private LGBTQ foundations that have played an important role in supporting the communities, activists and organizations working on all of the efforts mentioned above.

Unfortunately, all of this progress has not resulted in a larger piece of the philanthropic pie for LGBTQ populations and issues. Our research reveals that LGBTQ issues receive less than 0.02 percent of all foundation dollars, approximately the same percentage it was receiving in 1989 when The Foundation Center began tracking these issues. Further, the primary reason that LGBTQ foundation giving has kept pace with the overall growth in giving is due to a handful of private foundations that were established by gay men over the last decade. Too few of our country's more than 70,000 foundations support our communities.

As the sector has shifted, so has our organization. In our first two decades of existence, Funders for LGBTQ Issues work was grounded in two assumptions. The first was that if we empowered LGBTQ people and communities, they would be able to organize themselves to change the world around them. The second was that the world would be more fair and just if resources were distributed equitably.

Working from these assumptions, we advocated for the hiring of LGBTQ people in foundations, produced issue-based reports and organized gatherings for grantmakers. We also worked to persuade specific foundations to fund LGBTQ organizations where we saw an opening, based on a supportive leader or what seemed to be an obvious link between our issues and the issues they funded. We expected that the ultimate outcome of these strategies would be more money from more foundations being directed to LGBTQ issues and populations.

LGBTQ targeted funding
was not reaching the
most marginalized within
our community: LGBTQ
people of color,
transgender and gender
nonconforming people,
lesbians and LGBTQ
people living in poverty.

For more than two decades, Funders for LGBTQ Issues employed these strategies to advance our cause. And, by many measures, we were successful. There is now a much greater awareness and acceptance of LGBTQ issues both within philanthropy and among the general public. There also are many more foundations and grants being directed to LGBTQ issues and many more “out” LGBTQ people working in foundations. While we never would claim sole credit for these shifts, we are confident that our work made a valuable contribution.

Over time, however, we became increasingly (and painfully) aware of some huge shortcomings in the LGBTQ movement and its organizational infrastructure. We know that the leadership of almost all of the national and statewide LGBTQ organizations, including our own LGBTQ foundations, is predominantly white. We also know that transgender and gender nonconforming people have almost no role in the decision making and leadership

of these institutions. And, we know from our own research that autonomous LGBTQ people of color organizations receive little or no foundation support, and are forced to survive with budgets under \$50,000 and no paid staff.

Our failure to build an inclusive LGBTQ movement led us to see the limitations of our guiding frameworks and strategies. Three primary factors informed our thinking. The first was a growing body of knowledge being produced by many critical race theorists and LGBTQ people of color activists, arguing that the path to justice must involve deep structural and institutional changes, and by feminists addressing the importance of working from an intersectional, gender justice perspective.

The second factor was our own research, which revealed that LGBTQ-targeted funding was not reaching the most marginalized within our community: LGBTQ people of color, transgender and gender nonconforming people, lesbians, and LGBTQ people living in poverty.

The third factor was the persistent advocacy and activism of LGBTQ people of color and transgender and gender nonconforming people. Increasingly, our field was being challenged to think about the ways in which its visions included a racial equity lens and a trans-inclusive lens—foundations were no exception.

These lessons led us to the realization that the once effective strategies – given the context in which we were working in the 1980s and 1990s – were no longer applicable. We needed to identify new, more effective frameworks and strategies to address the current realities.

The results? A mission that grounds LGBTQ issues within a broader framework of racial, gender and economic justice and the programs to match it. More importantly, we are guided by an overriding belief that we cannot attain our rights if they remain separate from the rights of all marginalized people.

Today, Funders for LGBTQ Issues has a number of new program areas intended to bring our vision into practice. The LGBTQ Racial Equity Campaign works at the intersection of LGBTQ rights and racial equity to better support LGBTQ communities of color. Common Vision works with two learning cohorts of foundations to strengthen grantmaking practices grounded in a structural transformation framework. And, we work to position our staff and board members strategically in philanthropic efforts that have the potential to advance our mission.

We also continue to produce research, build resources and organize gatherings. In late October, we will release a landmark web site – www.lgbtraciaequity.org – that compiles funder tools, perspectives from the field and resources to support grantmakers in addressing the racial inequities facing LGBTQ communities. And, our current web site – www.lgbtfunders.org – continues to house searchable directories of LGBTQ grantmakers and organizations, as well as various cutting-edge reports including *Global Gaze: LGBTI Grantmaking in the Global South and East*, *Building Communities: Autonomous LGBTQ People of Color Organizations in the US*, our annual *LGBTQ Grantmaking by US Foundations* report, and other publications related to LGBTQ funding.

Nearly three decades after our founding, I am encouraged by the current level of commitment from so many leaders in the field who share our desire to explore new opportunities for alliance building and new organizational models for working intersectionally. Together, we have the potential to advance social justice beyond what's possible working alone. It's not easy, but given the complex challenges facing our world, do we have an alternative? ■

Karen Zelermyer is executive director of Funders for LGBTQ Issues.

(continued from page 4) difficult. If boards want to appoint leaders who are celebrities and peers of themselves and other leaders – and that pool is 82.1 percent white men – then it's little wonder that so few recent appointments buck the trend. I suppose it is a matter of chicken-and-egg with respect to breaking the cycle – that is, one cannot draw diversity from a pool that is not diverse – but in 2009, when women dominate the nonprofit workforce and academic achievement levels of women and people of color have never been higher, something other than the numbers must tell the story. Our first-hand experience really does suggest that the culprit is psychological rather than statistical.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

In the face of such powerful forces, supported by a long history, courage is necessary to break the cycle. The

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courage needed here is not hard. It requires taking an authentic, reasoned look at an organization's path to impact and need for leadership. It means looking carefully at a variety of networks, and evaluating candidates on their track records of achievement and management. It means having compensation reflect the intrinsic value of the role, rather than serving as an allure or gatekeeper. All of these are part of the regular, day-to-day business of organizational governance and management. Most of all, it requires challenging our assumptions of what leadership truly is, rather than what we think it is or what we've been taught it is.

In an increasingly diverse society and world, foundations matter more than ever, leadership matters more than ever, and diversity does as well. In light of its work, this field might have a special opportunity to break the cycle. Foundations exist outside the private marketplace. Public goods routinely are developed and supported by foundations. Perhaps diversity and leadership are two public goods for which foundations can pick up the tab, simply by changing attitudes and practices. If last year's presidential campaign teaches us anything, it's that change can happen, and can happen quickly. ■

Vincent Robinson is the managing partner of The 360 Group, a consulting and search firm that works with organizations who are serious about social change, based in San Francisco.

NOTES

1. Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001).
2. Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good To Great* (New York, Harper Collins, 2005)

PICO National Network

Est. 1972

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ABOUT

Founded in 1972 by Father John Baumann, PICO National Network began as a regional training institute to help support neighborhood organizations in California. The organization since has implemented a congregation–community model, with guidance from Dr. Jose Carrasco and Scott Reed, in which congregations of all denominations and faiths serve as the institutional base for community organizations. Rather than common issues, the faith-based or broad-based model regards values and relationships as the “glue that holds organizations together.”

PICO’s innovations have led to its large network of community organizations, which now has 53 affiliated federations in 150 cities and 17 states, involving more than one million families and one thousand congregations from 40 different denominations and faiths. The network employs more than 160 professional community organizers.



*Demonstrators during the Health Care Affordability Lobby Day and rally on September 15, 2009 at the U.S. Capitol.
Photo courtesy of PICO.*



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REFORM

While the organization typically works on community-level issues, PICO currently is undertaking a national campaign for health care reform after “thousands and thousands of visits that took place in local communities around the country where people identified concerns that it was affecting the quality of life for them and their families,” according to PICO executive director Scott Reed.

Previous experience with the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), taught the organization how to “aggressively move national policy and contribute to it in a meaningful way,” according to Reed. SCHIP was vetoed twice by President Bush despite its strong support among members of Congress before being signed by President Obama in February 2009.

PICO now is focused on “moving the middle” on health care reform by collaborating with other organizations, having strong clergy engagement and engaging local strategies that will propel the debate into local communities to ensure that health care will become affordable to all working families.

Reed says, “We believe that you can develop organizing efforts that have integrity, do strong local development of leaders, have a powerful presence and work on issues that are local, state and national.”

PROGRESS

The issue of health care has become an “action-reaction rollercoaster” for PICO, and it is doing what it can to be flexible. Its efforts have seen great success thus far. In addition to presenting at President Obama’s health care summit in February, the organization has engaged 300,000 people of faith in a national call with the president and brought together 12,000 people at more than 100 pro-reform events reaching more than 100 members of Congress.

PICO sees many positives in the momentum of the health care debate, particularly the discussions about expanding Medicaid, increasing the number of people that will be insured, and eliminating discriminatory practices by insurance companies. The organization would like affordability to become a larger priority, but is pleased by the issue’s progress and remains confident going forward.

Reed says, “At the end of the day, we’re going to win. We’re going to win in part because of the good work we’re doing, the work that so many others are doing, and we have a president who is committed to doing something on health reform. If successful, it will be a significant piece of legislation that shifts the paradigm that public institutions, like government, play an important role in delivering needed services and protecting the marketplace for working families.”

Meredith Brodbeck, communications assistant of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, prepared this member spotlight.



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