



Stanford PACS
Center on Philanthropy
and Civil Society

REFLECTIONS ON PHILANTHROPY

FROM THE 2017 PHILANTHROPY INNOVATION SUMMIT

ABOUT STANFORD PACS

Stanford PACS is a research center for students, scholars, leaders, and practitioners to explore and share ideas that create social change. Its primary participants are Stanford faculty, visiting scholars, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students, and philanthropists, nonprofit, and foundation practitioners.

Stanford PACS has relationships with five schools at Stanford University (Humanities & Sciences, Engineering, Education, Business, and Law) and more than 15 departments, and we leverage the intellectual assets of a diverse, world-class faculty across the university. This provides a unique platform to create knowledge and share it with the nonprofit and for-profit communities in Silicon Valley and globally.

Stanford PACS offers postdoctoral fellowships, PhD fellowships, and financial support for undergraduates completing honors thesis work. Additionally, Stanford PACS sponsors regular public speaker programs and symposia and philanthropy salons that include speakers who are well-known public intellectuals, philanthropists, and academic, foundation, and nonprofit leaders.

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ABOUT STANFORD SOCIAL INNOVATION REVIEW

Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR), published by Stanford PACS, informs, energizes, and motivates social change leaders from around the world and from all sectors of society —nonprofits, foundations, businesses, academia and government. Through an array of channels—daily online content, a quarterly print publication, monthly webinars, thematic conferences, podcasts, asynchronous learning assets, and more—*SSIR* bridges research, theory, and practice, and addresses a wide range of social issues (including economic development, human rights, public health, and education) and solutions (like impact investing, social entrepreneurship, and nonprofit business models). *SSIR*'s award-winning content is created for and by current and future social change leaders.

It is *SSIR*'s mission to advance, educate, and inspire the field of social innovation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every two years, the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society hosts a Philanthropy Innovation Summit. At this day-long event, peer philanthropists, Stanford faculty, scholars, and leaders share their inspiration and expertise, authentic stories of successes and struggles, and results-oriented approaches to social change.

At this international convening, individual and family philanthropists connect in order to brainstorm with one another, leverage Stanford PACS research to catalyze effective philanthropy, and take away actionable ideas, best practices, new strategies, and new networks with which to amplify one's impact as a philanthropist.

This collection of articles, written by individuals at the Philanthropy Innovation Summit, expresses key themes, learnings, and questions that emerged throughout the day. By sharing these reflections, we hope philanthropists and social change leaders around the world will be better informed and even more motivated to leverage strategic philanthropy in tackling society's most pressing challenges.

Videos and additional materials from the Philanthropy Innovation Summit are available at: pacscenter.stanford.edu/summit2017learning

BEYOND FUNDING: LEVERAGING YOUR PHILANTHROPIC TOOL KIT

By Anne Marie Burgoyne and Will Fowler

Within the philanthropic portfolio of Emerson Collective, we uplift and support the work of our partners by providing capacity-building resources—a diverse array of supports we believe can be as much or more catalytic than our monetary gifts.

The spirit of our Emerson philanthropy has focused around two questions: “How can we help?” and “What can we learn?” The former question drives the ethos of our capacity-building investments. Our goal, to build an ecosystem around hard problems, pushed us to ask the questions, “Beyond money, what can we bring to the table?” and “How can we enable

the people with whom we partner to bring their most effective selves to their work?”

Our partners embrace a wide array of structures and needs; 501(c)(3)s, 501(c)(4)s, social enterprises, and fellowship programs are all in our portfolio mix. So our goal is to meet leaders where they are, with the right financial gift as well as other opportunities that expand their skills and their horizons. We provide a variety of training opportunities on topics as diverse as nonprofit management, leadership, fund development, governance, and achieving scale. We also offer other

sorts of supports, including webinars (all topics sourced by partners and featuring partner stories), coaching, and accounting support. We even offered a management training in Nairobi last year in response to multiple partner requests.

Our trainings are structured to enable our partners to come together in community, while building a skill that enables their organizations to get stronger and drive toward greater impact. Sometimes we gather organizations that know each other well in order to build a safe and constructive space to build even stronger ties, and other times we choose to curate groups in order to form new bonds and foster strength in cross-pollinating ideas, models, networks, and leaders.

We typically bring leaders in pairs to our California gathering space, since we find that people engage and learn more when they share the experience with a colleague. The buddy structure also reinforces post-training follow-up within organizations.

In addition, every training includes an Emersonian dinner with all training participants—a lovely meal that promotes shared storytelling and mutual exploration of the topics of their work and our time.

This week, for example, we flew in 15 pairs of leaders from a cross-section of our portfolios to Palo Alto for a two-day training on fund development. We targeted partners with budgets under \$1 million that are all experiencing significant growth. Leaders from a diverse array of organizations shared stories, swapped ideas, and promised to be in contact in the months to come to provide support and encouragement.



After these trainings, we always gather feedback to increase the efficacy of our programs, as well as to identify new areas of need and get suggestions of excellent field practitioners. We consistently receive thanks for the specific learning that individuals take away, but even more important, attendees express gratitude for the chance to build community, explore their own leadership and management styles and skills, and have the chance to learn with other people in a supportive and creative setting. Our goal with these trainings is to build community, build confidence, and offer an opportunity that leaders cannot access without Emerson's backbone to provide curation, collaboration, and shared opportunity.

Our capacity-building program is entirely optional. We are on a path to diminish the power dynamic among money, ideas, and human capital in the sector (a concept that I heard Leah Hunt-Hendrix, executive director and cofounder of Solidaire, articulate beautifully when we recently sat on a panel together), and so we structure invitations to our partners in a way that enables them to easily accept or decline. Our role is to offer opportunities, take feedback and insight, and iterate toward supports that are the right fit—the right content in the right format at the right time—and not to expect partners to bend toward solutions that are not.

From an impact perspective, we have seen great strides in outcomes for many of our partners. We send six-month follow-up surveys after all of our training experiences, and hear back stories of re-energized boards of directors, re-formed fund development strategies, and renewed focus on scale

and impact. We also hear back more broadly about how valuable it feels to be offered the same experiences as peers in the for-profit sector, and how time to think and plan is a great gift, especially in times that are very tumultuous.

Our commitment to capacity building is fueled in part by the composition of and insights from our growing staff. Our team is full of social entrepreneurs who benefited from (or wished they had been offered more) cohort-building and capacity-building supports. Armed with this knowledge, we are on the journey to identify a portfolio of offerings that is responsive. We are operators and problem solvers and come to our work with that lens and that empathy. Clearly, different donors bring different perspectives and assets to their philanthropy, and so their choices of what to offer beyond the money might be entirely different.

I am convinced that philanthropy is about much more than money, and it is when these other offers are made and received that the work becomes richer, trust takes hold, more meaningful communication is enabled, and sustainable change begins.

As Emerson is a learning organization at heart, we have benefited from peers in the field who also provide strategic resources beyond grantmaking. We are inspired by the Skoll Foundation and Omidyar Network, which are both excellent conveners. The MacArthur Foundation is strong at taking big bets and running competitions and fellowship programs. The Hewlett Foundation periodically takes on important issues of our time with enormous commitment and rigor, including their current Cyber and Madison initiatives.

At Emerson, we are trying to very much honor the fundamental foundations of philanthropy: supporting leaders and organizations that value individuals and their agency and potential. We recognize that money is a fungible and necessary resource that drives action and supports hard and important work. But we also realize that we as a collective are in a unique position to provide opportunities that support a breadth of social change makers who are hungry for more and better skills, knowledge, and connectivity. We are diligent in finding ways to be practical and responsive, as well as innovative and passionate. In it all, we believe deeply in the power of humility and perseverance—qualities that help fuel our rugged optimism to help shape a better and more equitable world.

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