
Preface

Why Effective Philanthropy?

The impetus for this book grew from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Women's Philanthropy Cluster, a multiyear, core-funding initiative that the foundation launched in 1996. The Philanthropy Cluster brought together the Global Fund for Women, Michigan Women's Foundation, Resourceful Women, Women & Philanthropy, and the Women's Funding Network to share strategies that would strengthen each of the Cluster organizations and develop collaborative long-range planning strategies to improve philanthropy for women and girls.¹ Both authors of this book have written in-depth background monographs for the Cluster, and in 1999 the foundation asked us to expand our work into a book highlighting best practices in the field and collecting in one volume resources needed to make the case for the importance of foundations funding programs and organizations that specifically serve the needs of women and girls.²

Kellogg's Philanthropy Cluster is one of the most recent among coalitions that have worked for over thirty years to increase both the amount and the percentage of foundation dollars reaching women and girls as well as to improve strategies for funding women's and girls' organizations and programs.³ Although these efforts have had some success, the consensus of the Philanthropy Cluster—along with many other philanthropy professionals, nonprofit leaders, and researchers—has been that women and girls still do not receive foundation funding proportionate to their numbers in the population. Nor do most typical grantmaking approaches adequately build on the strengths of women and girls or meet their documented needs and the needs of their families and communities. So we began this project

with a primary focus on how philanthropy does and does not work for women and girls.

For the first phase of our research, October 2001 through February 2002, we interviewed sixty philanthropic and nonprofit leaders—polling them, among other topics, about effective funding strategies and roadblocks to increasing and improving funding for women and girls.⁴ As we spoke with these leaders about their observations and concerns, it became clear that we had to broaden the focus of our book: among the most frequently mentioned issues that surfaced in these interviews was the need to understand and talk about gender in the broadest possible contexts of race, class, sexual orientation, religion, national identity, culture, disability, and other realities of people's lives.⁵ The bottom line according to the people we interviewed is that in order to be effective, foundations must both understand diversity and *institutionalize* that knowledge.

Other frequently cited issues and concerns raised by these leaders are listed below, ranked in order of frequency. We have used these findings to shape the structure of our book.

- The need for talking in more subtle ways about *organizational culture* and the importance of institutionalizing diversity and gendered cultural competence⁶
- The need for better and more accessible demographic data as a key tool of institutionalized diversity and cultural competence
- The need for grantees to focus on effectiveness and target foundations' issue areas when they make the case for funding women and girls
- The importance of relationships and partnerships (between funders and grantees, among funders, and among grantees themselves)
- The importance of applying international understandings of gender to domestic grants programs
- The need to take a closer look at women in foundation leadership positions (constraints, strengths, and the need for leadership on women's issues)
- The need for new language and strategies for talking about effective grant making for women and girls
- The importance of leadership to address and institutionalize such effectiveness
- The need to educate and/or change both foundation and nonprofit boards to be more accountable for effective philanthropy

The most important insight we gained from all the research, conversations, and thinking that inform this book, however, is the link between doing effective philanthropy and funding women and girls. When foundations are effective, they fund women and girls explicitly. They understand, for example, that funding a “youth”-in-science-and-technology initiative in inner-city Los Angeles does not work well for either boys or for girls unless:

- Funders exercise “due diligence” regarding a potential grantee’s ability to understand specific cultural differences, including gender, that affect how children think of themselves and their career opportunities
- Both the funder and the nonprofit doing the work account for documented differences in how boys and girls from different cultures relate to and learn science and technology⁷

When foundations understand how much they gain by considering multiple perspectives—all the complex historical and cultural dimensions, including gender, that affect individuals, families, and communities—then gender becomes just one piece of the big picture, and foundations start funding women and girls explicitly. And, not surprisingly, their other funding initiatives also become more effective.

About the Authors

The research and thinking that shape this book come from a variety of sources. Authors Mary Ellen Capek and Molly Mead have years of hands-on experience in philanthropy, nonprofit leadership, and higher education. They are also researchers and leading authors on the subject of women, girls, and philanthropy.

Mary Ellen Capek is a founding officer and former executive director of the National Council for Research on Women. She is a founding board member of the Aspen Institute’s Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, a former member of Independent Sector’s Research Committee and The Conference Board’s Work/Life Leadership Council (formerly Work/Family Council), a founding member of Women & Philanthropy’s Action/Research Committee, and board chair of the Equality New Mexico Foundation. She currently works as a consultant to both foundations and nonprofit organizations, delivers speeches and workshops on deep diversity and effective philanthropy, and is a research scholar affiliated with the Anderson Schools of Management at the University of New Mexico.

Molly Mead is Lincoln Filene Professor at Tufts University's University College of Citizenship and Public Service. She teaches courses in leadership, gender and public policy, and innovative nonprofits in the department of Urban and Environmental Policy and the department of American Studies. She is a research advisor to the Girls' Coalition of Greater Boston, a member of Women & Philanthropy's Action/Research Committee, and also works as a consultant to foundations and nonprofits on the topic of women, girls, and philanthropy. She has worked closely with the United Way of Massachusetts Bay to help them develop their Today's Girls . . . Tomorrow's Leaders campaign, a program that raises funds for and develops the capacities of programs that serve girls. She regularly speaks at events around the country where funders and grantees discuss how to serve women and girls more effectively.

Research Informing This Book

The authors' original research informing this book includes interviews and focus groups with more than 250 women and men over the last decade.

- Mead's in-person interviews in 1993 and 1994 with philanthropic leaders in Boston and a six-year research study (1995–2000) on the outcomes for girls who participate in coed youth programs in Boston
- Capek's research in 1997 and 1998 for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation that included in-person and telephone interviews with current and former trustees, CEOs, senior executives, and program officers in private foundations, corporate foundations, family foundations, community foundations, and women's funds; leadership of the identity-based Affinity Groups of the Council on Foundations; heads of women's organizations and other nonprofit organizations; women donors across the age spectrum; consultants, professional fundraisers, and development directors
- Research done in 2000 and 2001 by both Capek and Mead for Chicago Women in Philanthropy: focus groups, in-person and telephone interviews with foundation CEOs and trustees, foundation senior staff and consultants, nonprofit leaders, and researchers in the Chicago philanthropic community
- Sixty "key informant" telephone interviews conducted specifically for this book, some of them re-interviews of subjects in the earlier Kellogg

Foundation research, that included interviews with leaders with significant experience and responsibility in private foundations, corporate foundations, family foundations, women's funds, women's organizations, and other nonprofit organizations

- Thirty-seven interviews conducted for the six “model” case studies (included in chapter 3 of this book) with foundation trustees, staff, and grantees