



Social Justice Philanthropy

An Overview

By Aileen Shaw for The Synergos Institute
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SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPLES

Philosophical Differences: Social Change and Traditional Philanthropy

The primary difference between social change and traditional philanthropy is that while traditional philanthropy avoids making radical challenges to existing wealth and power structures, social change philanthropy advocates a grantmaking philosophy based on the principles of social, economic and political justice.¹

Justice Matters Institute defines a just society as one in which

...every group has a voice, every culture is respected, and every individual has equal access to resources and means of communication. Working for social justice entails working to overcome current injustices while building solutions that make a better world.

Advocacy is the strategy most often employed in the pursuit of social justice. According to the Advocacy Institute:

Advocacy is pursuit of influencing outcomes - including public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions - that directly affect people's lives.

Advocacy has a vision for the future:

Advocacy consists of organized efforts and actions based on the reality of "what is." These organized actions seek to highlight critical issues that have been ignored and submerged, to influence public attitudes, and to enact and implement laws and public policies so that vision of "what should be" in a just, decent society become a reality. Human rights - political, economic, and social - is an overreaching framework for these visions. Advocacy organizations draw their strength from and are accountable to people - their members, constituents, and/or members of affected groups

In social justice philanthropy, funding is directed toward organizations advocating the collective interest of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. Central to the concept is the belief that poverty is caused by inequitable allocation of resources and

¹ For the most part the terms *social justice* and *social change* philanthropy are used interchangeably in this paper. Generally, the literature does not differentiate between the two; rather there is a tacit understanding that organizations working for change are engaged in effort to make the world a more just and democratic place.

access to power in society and that disempowered groups should be given the tools to challenge existing structures as well as a voice in decisions that affect their circumstances. This is very different from the charitable model of the wealthy giving to the poor, which has overtones that are elitist or paternalistic.

Social change philanthropy is not charity. Indeed, the difference between the two forms of philanthropy is often articulated in terms of the “advocacy versus services” debate. Charity takes the form of giving to direct service programs or service providing activities such as museums, hospitals, schools, social service agencies and nonpolitical organizations engaged in providing public goods. Advocacy on the other hand concentrates on individuals or groups working toward democracy, citizens’ rights, justice and quality of life issues. The focus is on organizations seeking to influence the public policy process or effecting policy changes to solve social programs. Simply put, the emphasis is on helping people to help themselves. Social justice funding is concerned with addressing the causes rather than alleviating symptoms of inequities. It contains an implicit understanding that social services are the job of the government and should not be subject to mercy of private individuals or institutions.

Traditional philanthropy, typified by the private foundation, has historically been defined by an attitude of noblesse oblige and is based on a charitable paradigm. The charitable model reinforces existing power dynamics between the have and the have nots; giving is concentrated on causes that do not challenge the status quo or on efforts that temporarily alleviate problems. Social justice philanthropy on the other hand questions the assumptions inherent in charity. It has its origin at the debate about the causes of poverty and social problems. The much-quoted Martin Luther King axiom is apt in this context, “Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice that make philanthropy necessary.”

In traditional philanthropy, the motivations of donors are often self-interested. The benefactor is generally remote and engages in charitable activities as a means of attaining status and public prestige. In this universe, the grantor and grantee can appear to be very different species. Social justice philanthropy, by contrast, attempts to bridge the gap between the two groups. This emphasis is apparent in the governance and

operations of foundations where great importance is placed on building genuine relationships between the grantor and grantee.

In other words, social justice philanthropy is not a solution imposed from above by the wealthier in society; rather, it emphasizes a bottom up approach with the goal of encouraging democracy by involving those most affected by social problems in determining a solution.

Change from the Bottom Up: Supporting Grassroots Organizing

Social justice philanthropy seeks systemic or institutional change. The principle that institutional change begins with people directly affected organize to better their conditions underlies most forms of social movement organizing. Social change organizations are typically engaged in activities around organizing, educating and mobilizing disenfranchised communities. The majority of funding for social change, therefore, is directed to community-based activist organizations engaged in:

- Grassroots organization and empowerment activities
- Mobilizing communities for research and action on issue of public policy.

Social change is founded on a bottom-up vision of economic justice and participatory democracy. Social movements come from the ground up. The primary methods of advancing social change are through grassroots or community organizing; advocacy; and public education and information.

Grassroots organizing is working directly with people to involve them in an issue or a campaign. A key element is the involvement of people at the local level. As a strategy, community or grassroots organizing is centered on strengthening civic life at the local level, developing effective community leaders, and forging partnerships. Social change employs strategies that are empowering, raise consciousness, and link personal experiences to broader global and historical processes. In Latin America for example, popular education is widely used as a tool for social change. Popular education works by engaging participants to analyze the situation they are in to develop the skills to organize and take control over their own lives.

Advocacy activities have as their goal changes in public policy. Social change is achieved through influencing and shaping public policy. It works on bringing about changes in laws, public policies and procedures as well as in societal attitudes and behavior. Research undertaken for social change is action-oriented; institutions funded are typically engaged in developing options for social and public policy alternatives or intermediary organizations working with community-based groups on public policy or issues research.

How is social change achieved?

Historically, social change takes place through a variety of political, legal, and economic strategies. Elements of social change are grounded in protest or movement activities. These may include direct action in the form of rallies, marches and other forms of non-violent political protest. Legal action is concentrated on litigation and advocacy. Economic strategies include those of divesting or boycotting products or places. Community economic development emphasizes affordable housing, and jobs, garnered by an active and involved community. Political work often focuses on electoral strategies geared toward organizing previously disenfranchised constituencies. Voter registration is used by activists to increase democratic participation, promote citizen engagement and tackle political issues.

Community Based Philanthropy

Social change philanthropy within the U.S. has a distinct identity and chronology. Foundation support for social change began in the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S. as funding of social movements primarily in the civil rights, women's and peace movements gained popularity. The 1970's saw the creation of the Funding Exchange, a network of fifteen publicly supported, regionally based community foundations operating the axiom of *Change not Charity*. With the Funding Exchange a genre of foundations known as the alternative funds arose in the U.S. They established themselves upon the principles of giving to change oriented grantees and turning over decision-making authority to community representatives.

This community-based model of philanthropy, which allows grantee communities to assume policy-making responsibilities as members of boards of trustees or directors, advisory or working committees has been adopted by several other sectors of philanthropy, particularly among the women's funds and at a range of public and community foundations. The field of social change social change philanthropy in the U.S. has grown substantially and now incorporates funds that promote social change among demographic and identity-based groups including women, African-American, Latino, Asian-Pacific Americans and gay, lesbian and youth sectors of the population.

In describing this sector of philanthropy, the terminology is varied – social change is also referred to as social justice philanthropy, social movement philanthropy, community-based philanthropy, alternative or progressive philanthropy and the terms are often used interchangeably. In reality, the commonality is that they have a democratic structure, and share the goal of funding change oriented groups. Among the characteristics of social change philanthropy is the tendency to criticize existing social and economic arrangements and a concern with questions of power. Changing power relationships is seen as being central to the process of change. Fundamental to these grantmakers is the belief that in determining where money goes, real community change can only take place when those affected are involved in deciding where the resources should be allocated.

In general, alternative foundations not only give money to social justice, the source of their funds is more democratic and broad based. The belief that everyone can be a philanthropist underlies the concept of social change philanthropy. Within this movement, traditions of social justice philanthropy are often faith-based. The giving programs of Catholic, Episcopal, Unitarian and Jewish faiths are deeply rooted in funding issues of social justice. Social justice is a tradition in these communities where congregations constitute a more democratic source of money. Many individuals come to social justice from a faith-based perspective.

Civil Society Organizations

While a distinct literature is available for the United States, in other societies, particularly the developing South, debates over social justice funding tend to be couched

in the more neutral language of strengthening civil society. Accordingly, emphasis is placed on democratic or civil society with an actively involved citizenry and on programs that strengthen citizen participation. In many developing countries, the term foundation itself is not widely used. Instead, “civil society resource organization”, “civil society organization” translates to what is understood in the U.S. as a grantmaking foundation.

Civil society is a new concept in several developing countries. CSOs or CSROs are often the primary protectors of and representatives of social and economic justice. For societies moving into a new era of democracy and citizen participation, protecting civil society may include basic freedoms such as ensuring democratic elections. Much of the work of foundations is directed at building organizations that assist communities in strengthening citizen action and providing the technical resources to support new philanthropic practices and organizations.

Characteristics

The language of social change philanthropy is distinctive and centered on the principles of empowerment, democracy and institutional change. Certain core values define social justice philanthropy. These include justice, economic equality, public, and access to political power. It aspires to a democratic society in which:

- all people can participate equally and fully,
- people have access to resources, and
- control over public policies.

At its core, social change philanthropy:

- Mobilizes participants around a vision of a better future
- Appeals to a set of values and beliefs
- Advocates a more equal distribution of resources in society
- Works for societal change that benefits the poor and disenfranchised
- Crosses social, political and cultural differences to promote constructive change

Emphasis is placed on:

- Challenging social inequalities
- Tackling root causes
- Institutional change
- Access to resources and opportunities
- Self-determination

- Democratic civil society
- Building community self-sufficiency
- Empowering poor communities
- Promoting leadership development
- Diversity and inclusivity
- Accountability
- Community controlled projects

SECTION II: PHILANTHROPIC PRACTICE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

If you approach philanthropy from a place of humility and respect, you really have an opportunity to be part of social change, not saying, “We have the money so we have the answer.”

Kavita Ramdas, President and CEO, Global Fund for Women, May 2002

The Principles

Achieving social justice requires a change in the power relations between marginalized groups and privileged individuals and institutions.

Social change philanthropy has to contend with traditional power relationships. For the most part, funders are operating in circumstances that come with a long history of oppression, bringing its own set of issues and dynamics. Foundations from the industrialized North funding in the developing South, for instance, must confront legacies of colonialism and imperialism. Nevertheless, the goal of making organizations more inclusive is a fundamental principle of social change philanthropy. It gives expression to the aspiration that that solutions must come from the people themselves fully participating in decisions that affect their lives. Inclusivity is key to the practice of participatory philanthropy. Yet differences in class, race, ethnicity, and national borders are an everyday reality. The challenge is creating genuine opportunities for dialogue that build collaboration across gaps of wealth, power, culture, nationality, gender and race. The community foundation model is perhaps the most likely vehicle for addressing these dynamics.

The way in which social change philanthropy is structured allows for priority setting to come from grantees.

The processes and mechanisms by which money is distributed are central to any understanding of social change philanthropy. Often, foundations view their funding as a catalyst for bringing about meaningful social change. For example, community foundations function to bring together disparate elements of the community – people who otherwise would not interact with each other—to tackle local issues. Emphasis is placed

on funding that enable recipients to determine their own priorities, and funders try to avoid prescriptive grantmaking.

Emphasis is placed on conducting the grantmaking process in the spirit of mutual respect, not charity.

For funders of social change, partnership is the preferred model of interaction between grantor and grantee. The very nature of the philanthropic relationship mitigates against genuine partnerships. The use of the term *grantseeker* itself implies the imbalance in the relationship and has been abandoned by several institutions in favor of the word *practitioner*, a term which recognizes that both groups come to the relationship as partners rather than supplicants. Interestingly, this works both ways, funders in the Synergos study found that refraining from use of the term *grantmaker* enabled them to take a place alongside NGOs and work together on building change.

Changing the Decisionmakers

Part of the work of social change philanthropy involves a change in the way decisions are made and who makes them. Formal mechanisms to include the input of communities into the decisionmaking structure include representative board of trustees, staff, and grantmaking committees or advisory bodies. The exact mechanisms for consultation and community review in the decisionmaking process vary depending on the type of foundation. In some organizations, staff work with outside review teams or community review panels to make recommendations to the board. In others, boards are diverse groups of individuals brought together to make grantmaking decisions as equal partners in a collaborative process. The benefits are manifold. The existence of a more diverse and open decision-making structure leads to more of a presence in the community and greater legitimacy. The range and diversity of individuals used in evaluating proposals is part of what makes an organization accountable.

The time and effort involved in creating inclusive organizations should not be underestimated. Power dynamics and relations between stakeholder groups require energy and consideration. Conscious attention must be paid to issues such as anti-racism,

teambuilding and to resolving tensions and mediating differences. Issues such as equal participation in meetings must be addressed and may require training.

Grantmaking for social change involves not just increasing funding to social and economic justice causes but altering the structure and processes of philanthropy itself.

This involves:

- Alternative structures with a redistribution of grantmaking powers.
- Broader and more representative community partnership in grantmaking decisions
- Open and assessable grantmaking processes
- Transparency and accountability in how systems and processes are conducted
- Respectful interactive communication

The Practice of Social Change Philanthropy

General Support / Multi-Year Funding

Social change philanthropy encourages grantmakers to fund institutions rather than projects. Typically, foundations support narrowly defined projects with a view toward short-term measurable results; whereas the most urgent needs of community groups are often for core operating funds and organizational capacity. Unlike project-oriented funding, operational funds let organizations focus on their real priorities and development needs. Adopting a grantmaking focus on administrative needs and building and strengthening organizations is a key strategy employed by foundations working to advance social change.

The decision to focus on general support grants is deliberate and involves a conscious effort on the part of funders to resist directing the agenda. When foundations establish program priorities, activities can become too funder influenced; less influence is accorded to initiatives that emerge from communities. Funders of social justice emphasize partnering with donors around a grantmaking agenda rather than through competition for project-by-project grants.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Grantmaking for social changes goes beyond the award of money to provide information, training, networking and direct assistance to recipient organizations.

Often for social change funders, building the capacity of grantees is a core program in itself.

Attaining social and economic justice is a long and complex process. It requires sustained effort, organizing and planning for the long haul. Particularly in new and emerging democracies, considerable priority is accorded to strengthening philanthropic infrastructure and resources in those societies. Institution building is key.

Strengthening the capacity of disadvantaged communities, therefore, is a primary strategy for promoting social justice. This can be achieved through the provision of financial and technical assistance to local community-building efforts. Social change funders make grants for (or directly provide) technical services including training, research, networking and so forth.

Capacity building grants build on and develop a community's strengths and resources. Also called technical assistance, capacity building takes the form of training groups how to organize, fundraise, develop leaders, and build organizations. Technical assistance can be provided through in-house workshops or through contracting out the expertise to external organizations. Some funders focus exclusively on infrastructure programs designed to build the capacity of grantees to carry their work out more effectively. This involves strengthening their management, board structures, fundraising capacity and basic organizational functions as well as long term planning or strategic development.

Aside from structural development, community groups may require skill-based assistance to strengthen their campaigning, advocacy, and communication capabilities. For organizations mobilizing new constituencies, training in the tools and methods of community organizing, workshops on citizen participation, political organizing and advocacy are often needed. As organizations move to another phase of their institutional development, training in policy analysis, developing issue campaigns and action research are among the skills required. Increasingly, the use of the Internet for campaigning and outreach is an area in which community-based organizations need specialized assistance.

Internal Capacity Building Assistance:

- Strategic planning
- Program development
- Fundraising and sustainability
- Fiscal and accounting
- Staff and board development
- Community organizing
- Advocacy

Foundations often provide the bridge between grantee organizations and the outside world. In an examination of the role of bridging organizations concerned with social change in developing countries, L. David Brown highlighted their special role as intermediaries or conveners in society.² Occupying such a role enables organizations to span the gaps among diverse stakeholders to promote social change. In the promotion of social change among stakeholders with diverse economic, political and cultural interests, he attests:

Bridging organizations are particularly suited to promoting collaboration where stakeholders are not motivated to cooperate and the problems are not well-organized and understood.....Development bridging organizations can catalyze the creation of shared understanding and solutions, and they can link different stakeholders to jointly implement these solutions.

Networking is key to the practice of social change philanthropy. Partnerships increase the impact of groups' work. Foundations have a role to play in building coalitions and linking organizations to larger movement for change. Foundations are in a unique position to act as a facilitator or convener in a community providing opportunities for groups to engage in mutual education and alliance building and providing a forum from which practitioners come together to share experiences, dialogue and exchange ideas. As an outsider the foundation may well have credibility with the other stakeholders and have a degree of independence from the issues at hand, coordinating joint action and catalyzing shared visions for social change.

Particularly in developing countries, foundations operate in a complex universe that may include business, government agencies, community groups, non-governmental

² L. David Brown, "Development Bridging Organizations and Strategic Management for Social Change". Institute for Development Research.

organizations and academic institutions. Promoting cross-sectoral partnerships, creating links and building bridges among diverse stakeholders can lead to potentially constructive partnerships. Success will often depend on creating synergy between civil society organizations, government and private sectors and international institutions.

Technical assistance in the areas of research, communications and media management is another area where foundations can build the external outreach and capacity of grantees. Part of public education and advocacy function, social change funders are becoming increasingly aware of the media outreach and documentation needed to highlight their causes and to generate publicity. Media coverage that highlights efforts by local communities that are successful. Similarly, community groups need assistance in producing policy papers either in-house or through intermediary organizations.

External Capacity Building Assistance:

- Research
- Media and Communications
- Networking
- Conferences
- Workshops

Grantmaking criteria for social change organizations

The majority of social change funding is directed to community-controlled projects or local, grassroots, community-based organizations. ***In general, the following factors are taken into account in establishing criteria for making grants:***

Strategic Intent: The context is critical. Projects that are focused on local communities but make the connection between local, national and international problems are a priority. Social change funders support organizations engaged in long-term, strategic responses to problems of poverty and injustice.

Vision and Values: Groups with institutional change as part of their mission. Funders look for values-based organizations, with an emphasis on social values in their mission/vision.

Democratic Organization: The guidelines of social justice funders generally require that recipient groups operate in a membership-directed, democratic manner. Funders look for evidence that the affected group controls the project or organization, that the leadership is representative of the constituency. Guidelines often highlight democratically structured organizations with an emphasis on membership and leadership development. Is it an organization with open, participatory structures?

Accountability: Guidelines typically stipulate that applicants must operate in a membership-directed, democratic and nondiscriminatory fashion. Groups funded must be accountable to their communities (AGM, written constitution with aims and objectives are often taken as indicators).

Diversity criteria are required of applicants. Applicants are required to have a demonstrated commitment to inclusiveness and diversity and concrete evidence of the commitment. This emphasis is founded in the belief that groups that reflect the diversity of their communities are the most capable of carrying out social justice aims.

Programs and grantmaking priorities that emanate from these core concerns:

Disempowered and disenfranchised communities including:

Women
Low income populations/impooverished groups
Communities of color
Traditionally marginalized groups

Priority areas / issues funded include:

Civil rights
Human rights
HIV/AIDS
Local economic development,
Empowerment of women
Discrimination racial and sexual
Economic globalization
Environmental degradation
Labor
Ethnic, religious and political conflict.
Combating racism and xenophobia

In selecting projects or initiatives foundations attach priority to:

- Programs that promote equity and nondiscriminatory participation
- Promising programs that otherwise would have difficulty attracting funding

- Advocacy, awareness and campaigns on public interest

Promoting Local Philanthropy

Building self-sufficiency is a central tenet of social justice philanthropy. The establishment of local, self-reliant organizations, capable of sustainability offers the best course for achieving social change. It is important that recipients are actively raising money from their own communities. This helps reduce dependence on external, largely international agencies and demonstrates the community nature of the group in question. Building a broad donor base gives organizations maximum freedom to pursue their mission.

Self-sufficiency can be best achieved by diversifying sources of income and through the development of a strong local base. This involves the development of new philanthropic resources and securing sustainable funding. For some foundations a key strategy for alleviating poverty is to focus on strengthening foundations and stimulating philanthropy. Developing an understanding of local philanthropy and working with partners to create new community-level funds and strengthen philanthropic practice may be a priority area of focus.

Community Foundations

The community foundation is the best vehicle for locally developed, sustainable philanthropy. Several new democracies have emerging community foundations. In countries such as Brazil or South Africa community foundations, although new, are rapidly gaining preeminence as a vehicle for bringing together marginalized sectors of society. According to the South African Grantmakers Association (SAGA), “Realization that the future does not lie in politics and political power is beginning to surface, and the apolitical nature of the community foundation concept brings hope that communities can work on their own regeneration.” The role of community foundations is building bridges in divided communities is also acknowledged by SAGA:

A community foundation can bring these leaders together to establish effective communication channels, identify shared values and expectations and build trust across, racial, political and economic divisions.

Community foundations are especially well placed to tackle social and economic problems at the local level, identifying community needs and with working with partners to solve problems. As such, community foundations have the dual role of raising and giving away funds, raising resources from their local communities as well as from outside sources. Many are focusing on need to build a permanent endowment. Ultimately, the sustainability of any organization will be dependent on its ability to access a permanent pool of funding. Endowments are a guaranteed source of future income. Funders of social change sometimes make endowment grants as a strategy for facilitating the long-term survival of groups.

For a community foundation, promoting local philanthropy involves making sure the community understands its mission and vision. In building up awareness, accessing local funds and building endowment campaigns, particularly in cultures without a long history of philanthropy, organizations need to invest time and resources in communicating what the organization is and what it stands for through newsletters, websites and events.

Maintaining funding levels from a local base is challenging. There are steps that funders can take to overcome this. Developing fundraising programs from the local general public can take the form of providing incentives such as matching grants that encourage participation. Matching or challenge grants have a leveraging effect and encourage recipients to diversify their funding base. Some funders place highest priority on mobilizing funds from local resources in poor communities. The Social Change Assistance Trust in South Africa, for instance, operates has a program, the Fundraising Incentive Scheme, which rewards each R1 profit raised through local community events with R5.

Leadership

Good leaders are essential in tackling social problems. Leadership training programs, often with an emphasis on young people or women, are becoming increasingly common as a form of foundation support for social change. Foundation are adopting

initiatives that, as is the case of the Ford Foundation's *Leadership for a Changing World* or the Rockefeller Foundation's *Next Generation* leadership program, recognize, strengthen and support leaders. Such programs typically work by bringing leaders together, providing opportunities for shared learning and collaboration as well as developing participants own leadership skills.

Rewarding strong community leadership is important in today's environment. Leaders of community groups often work in isolation and suffer from work overload and burnout. Individuals with skills to build partnerships particularly among diverse interests are needed. Often participants in foundation programs are selected for exercising leadership in their own communities and in building bridges across communities. The Ford program rewards leadership that is strategic, inspirational, sustainable, and brings together different constituencies in pursuit of social justice. Leadership programs tend to recognize leaders early in their career when individuals selected can use the experience to go on to make major contributions in their communities.

The exercise of bringing individuals together in itself supports social justice, bringing advocates together to work across issues and develop a common vision. For foundations, fellowship programs play a twofold role—developing leaders with the skills required to lead social justice organizations and secondly, bringing in-house the experience of practitioners.

SECTION III: Challenges and Obstacles

Economic Realities

Funders of social change internationally are faced with tremendous gaps in wealth and resource distribution. In Brazil for example, it is estimated that 2% of the population own 42% of the land. Huge peasant populations, political instability, lack of even the most basic resources and natural disasters make progress difficult. In these societies, the focus is generally on democratization and opening up of economies. Grants in these societies are often dominated by funding for community development or in getting resources to grassroots groups in the form of credit or loans. Support for microenterprise development and small businesses, especially those run by women is a priority. Funders need to begin with where communities are. Basic social needs must be met first.

Social and Political Context

The political climate and stability and the degree of social and economic development in the country are important. Timing is key, foundations need to take account of and make sure the time is right for support of social justice activities. In societies that have recently undergone (Indonesia) extensive social and political turmoil, the country may not be ready for social justice activities, rather social justice is the end goal. Working to bring about changes in policy that will improve conditions for impoverished communities is simply not realistic in countries where other factors such as vulnerability of government structures, political corruption come into play. Step 1 may be awareness raising with advocacy for policy reform a long term strategy.

Culture and History of Philanthropy

The prevailing attitude to philanthropy and foundations in society needs to be taken into account. Some countries have long and established histories of civil society organizations working on social problems. In others there is little understanding or experience of the role of civil society organizations and/or foundations. Many countries

do not have a strong history of organized philanthropy. Taking account of cultural and socio-economic realities is important.

While the United States has a clearly-defined and articulated differentiation between charity and social change activity, other countries do not have the philanthropic infrastructure to raise public awareness on the issues involved. Education will be required therefore to develop models for giving that are not charity-oriented. Nor does one size fit all. Models of good practice for philanthropic giving that work in one country may not be adaptable in other societies as incentives for giving vary tremendously depending on a range of factors.

General Universe

Also important is the fact that foundations are rarely solo actors. Outside the U.S., foundations do not have the degree of autonomy associated with U.S. institutions. Rather, foundations must work with bilateral and multilateral development agencies, Northern and Southern NGOs and also in partnerships with private business and community groups.

Legal and Fiscal Environment

Any attempt to build an infrastructure for social change philanthropy must take into account regulatory and tax issues. The tax framework in the country of operation will have a large impact on incentives for giving and efforts to stimulate local philanthropy. In some instances, social change institutions are at a considerable disadvantage. For instance, in South Africa while soup kitchens and orphanages are deemed to be charitable in purpose and hence subject to tax advantages, organizations addressing poverty through helping people to help themselves are subject to a much more restrictive section of the tax code. In the U.S., organizations are constrained by government policies around advocacy.

Community Foundations

The recent emergence of community foundations is a positive development in many Southern countries. They offer the best model for democratic grantmaking, focused on community development initiatives rooted in and supported by communities themselves. Bringing people from diverse backgrounds onto the boards of organizations requires that attention be paid to building bridges across class and race. It also involves equipping participants with the skills needed, such as management and financial abilities, to participate fully and effectively.

At the same time, community foundations face practical considerations. They must raise money to give it away. Raising substantial amounts of money while maintaining a commitment to shared decisionmaking has its challenges. Board members that bring in the money are needed and this can be at odds with diversifying the donor base. Asset development is a huge task for emerging community foundations. Decisions need to be made about whether to focus on endowment building or giving the money all away. Endowment-building is a new concept for many societies. Local communities will require education for instance about the role and benefits of endowments, especially given the urgency of current needs.

Media and Message

Social change organizations need to pay attention to their message. The apparently unrelenting nature and the scale of injustice can be a challenge. According to the Advocacy Institute: “Social justice advocates must have opportunities to learn how to celebrate and share victories with the public in order to balance the picture and avoid the public from “burning out”.

Investing in media relations, marketing and public relations is important even necessary to shift public policy debate. “Social and economic justice advocates have not succeeded in framing for the public how their work is rooted in a value system that emphasizes equity, compassion and justice“ Justice Begins at Home, Report of the Advocacy Institute.