

Fostering Innovation and Effective Performance Through Strategic Philanthropy

The philanthropic sector continues to grow and diversify; moreover, policymakers and local citizens increasingly look to philanthropic organisations to provide leadership for the development of more effective program innovations and improved performance for local community services. Increasingly, organised philanthropy is also working closely with community organisations to create new opportunities for collaboration and greater collective impact. This leadership role of philanthropy is especially important given the emphasis on better performance of local service organisations which creates powerful incentives for community organisations, including nonprofits, to rethink their governance structures and their relationships to services users and the citizenry more broadly. Competition for philanthropic and public resources is also more intense. Thus, many local nonprofit organisations need to develop sustainable and nimble business models. Given these important trends and developments, foundations and individual philanthropists face growing pressure to be “strategic” with their grantmaking and philanthropic investments to support community organisations and improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of public and nonprofit services. This lecture will focus on the role of strategic philanthropy in fostering local program innovation and greater impact. In the context of the current more turbulent funding and regulatory environment, philanthropy can be especially important, especially in collaboration with other local public, nonprofit and for-profit organisations. Best practices in developing positive collaborative relationships to enhance program performance in local communities will be directly addressed.