



Summary of Insights ToF Pocantico Symposium

May 23-25, 2018

ROCKEFELLER
Philanthropy
Advisors

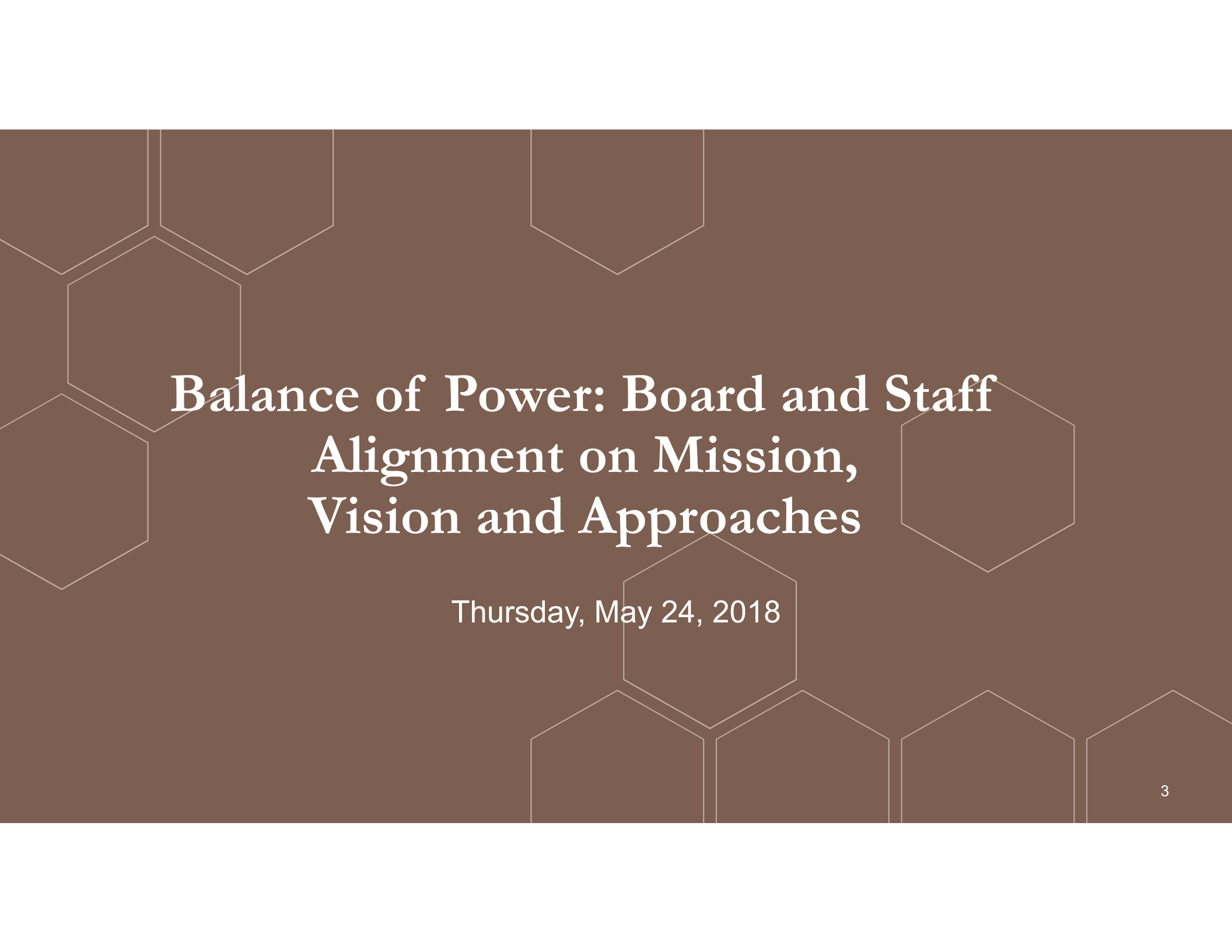
Symposium Overview

In May 2018, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors had the honor of hosting an illustrious group of foundation leaders from around the world for the inaugural convening of the Theory of the Foundation Learning Collaborative. The two-day symposium took place at the historic Rockefeller Brothers Fund's Pocantico Center in Tarrytown, New York.

The purpose of the gathering was to:

- share recent findings from the Theory of the Foundation initiative;
- facilitate peer-to-peer discussions on a range of topics focused on foundation management, its role in society, and grantmaking; and
- to foster effective collaboration and strong internal leadership.

We are grateful for the participants' insights, candor, diversity of views and experience, and pleased to share key takeaways from this learning experience. We look forward to continuing to engage you as our thought partners in this important work.



Balance of Power: Board and Staff Alignment on Mission, Vision and Approaches

Thursday, May 24, 2018

Balance of Power: Board and Staff

Discussion Summary

This discussion revolved around the division of power and checks and balances that govern a foundation's grantmaking and operations. Participants shared insights from their experience navigating decision-making and internal management issues, while incorporating the guidance of board members and adhering to the needs of a diverse stakeholders, including community partners and beneficiaries. Discussion topics included board-staff relations, internal dynamics and complex organizational cultures.

Balance of Power: Board and Staff

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Governance/leadership should reflect populations served
 - Build teams that reflect the cultural/social background of beneficiaries
 - Give community partners a place at the table and the option to contribute to decision-making

- ✓ Leveraging non-financial assets
 - Utilize knowledge, network, communication skills and reputation to benefit partners and mission
 - Act as a bridge to connect likeminded donors, which holds especially true for Family Foundations
 - Use a well-regarded organization's name to boost trust and credibility in public perception

- ✓ Building collaboration into the organizational culture and values
 - Adopt a “non-restrictive” approach to measuring long-term impact rather than short-term outcomes
 - Encourage openness and transparency with internal and external partners

- ✓ Risk-taking and effective approaches
 - Address problems at the source rather than providing temporary fixes through grants
 - Invest endowments - a trend that is changing the business model of philanthropy in the interest of creating greater change
 - Make “big bets” or take innovative approaches to amplify impact in a shorter period of time (i.e. impact investing)

The background is a solid orange color with a pattern of white-outlined hexagons of various sizes and orientations scattered across the surface. The hexagons are arranged in a somewhat irregular, honeycomb-like pattern.

Driving Greater Change: Building Effective Collaboration

Thursday, May 24, 2018

Building Effective Collaboration

Discussion Summary

This discussion revolved around the concept of multi-stakeholder collaboration and its potential to accelerate impact and create sustainable change by leveraging varied backgrounds and strengths. Panelists shared experiences and anecdotes on topics, including the importance of transparency in research distribution, communication and trust in collaboration, and willingness to take risks.

Building Effective Collaboration

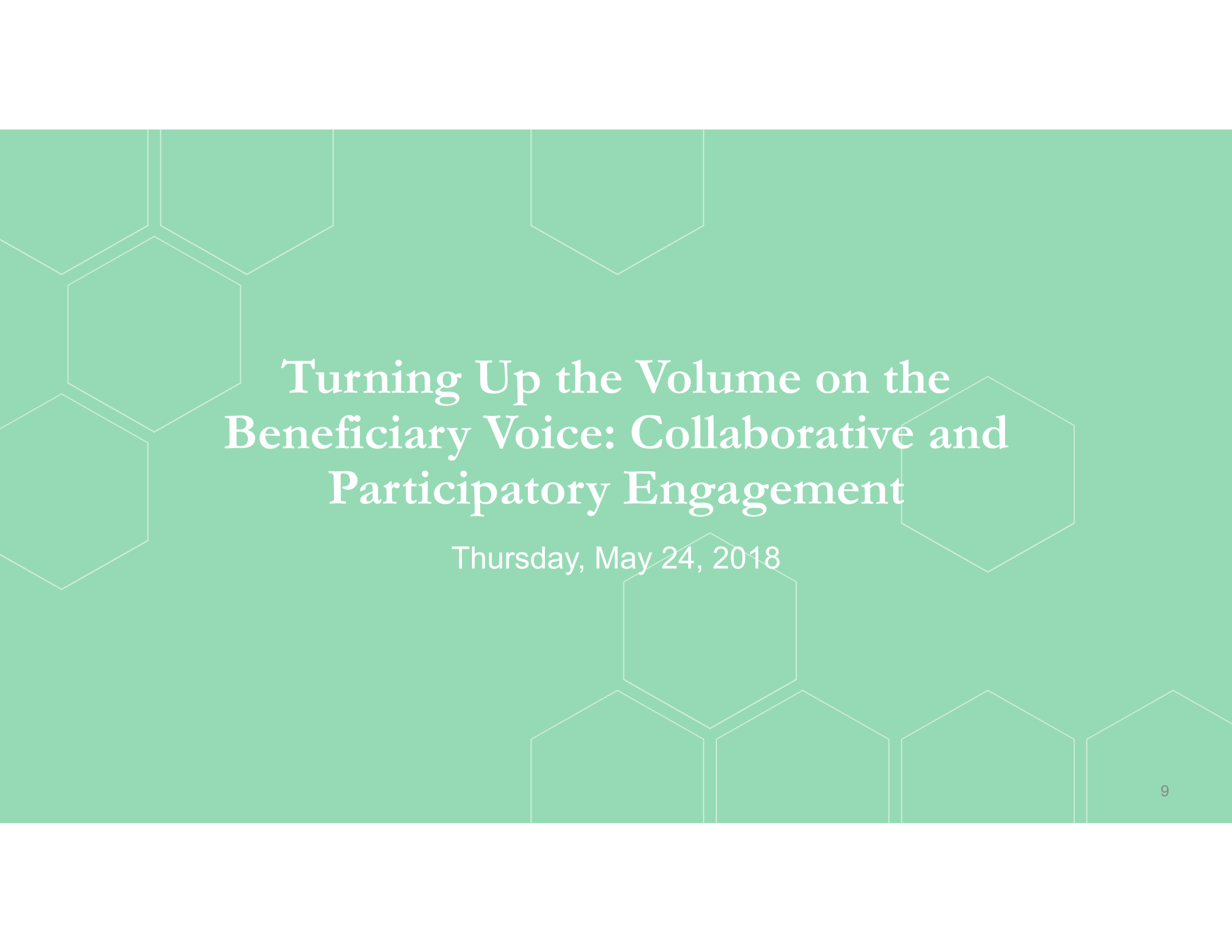
Key Takeaways

- ✓ Transparency and knowledge sharing
 - Share freely research findings with stakeholders, including grantees, partners, the sector, communities and civil society
 - Pursue opportunities to partner with other organizations to further develop initiatives
 - View grantees as partners in knowledge development that benefits the field

- ✓ Grantmaking and joint action
 - Ensure funding is clearly allocated and aligns with mission and vision
 - Take a nuanced approach to planning when addressing complex issues
 - Focus on strong alliances and initiate funder collaboratives

- ✓ Essential factors for successful collaboration
 - Open communication and trust for partners
 - Understanding of and appreciation for different roles and strengths
 - Mindfulness of pitfalls and barriers
 - Willingness to take risks

- ✓ Diversifying perspectives and bridging communication gaps
 - Build a diverse team by hiring from multiple sectors and diverse backgrounds
 - Hire less generalists and more specialists
 - Create and foster grantee relationships where the grantee is not dependent on the foundation



Turning Up the Volume on the Beneficiary Voice: Collaborative and Participatory Engagement

Thursday, May 24, 2018

Beneficiary Voice

Discussion Summary

Participants split into groups for lively and informative discussions on how organizations can best leverage input from their beneficiaries to inform strategy and create programs to meet their needs. When reporting back from their group conversations, participants agreed that listening to communities can improve funding effectiveness and more clearly identify the need. Thus organizations should give community members or elected officials opportunities to inform or contribute to decision-making.

Beneficiary Voice

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Grantees can act as gatekeepers to beneficiaries
 - Be cautious to not apply too much of a filter between funders and beneficiaries to avoid conflict of interest or ulterior agendas
 - Organizations can feel uncomfortable or as if they are circumventing the grantee when interacting directly with beneficiaries
- ✓ Listening to what communities want and need can be a driver for change
 - Interest in involving beneficiaries in decision making and participatory grantmaking is growing
 - Feedback can improve effectiveness but feedback structure and dynamics remain underexplored
 - Some organizations have been surveying elected officials from the community as a stand-in for the public
- ✓ Firsthand engagement in the field and community
 - Witness firsthand the effectiveness of programs
 - Identify the spaces for improvement
 - Explore varying levels of potential for involvement depending on the grantee or funder
- ✓ Alternative to the term beneficiary
 - The term can seem pejorative
 - Viewing beneficiaries as partners rather than funding targets is key



Talent Management and Human Resources: Recruiting, Empowering and Aligning Talent for Mission and Impact

Friday, May 25, 2018

Talent Management and Human Resources

Discussion Summary

This panel discussion presented multiple recommendations for managing and developing talent within the organization, which is a growing concern among the sector. Participants emphasized the need to build teams that are reflective of the populations served, understand and espouse the values and needs of the organization, and possess specialized skills and knowledge needed for their roles.

Talent Management and Human Resources

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Strategies, approaches and challenges for identifying, recruiting and retaining top talent
 - Identifying qualities, skills, characteristics of top talent and ensuring they align with values, needs and trajectory of organization
 - Paying competitive salaries
 - Difficult to attract people from sectors outside of philanthropy
 - Experts vs generalists

 - ✓ Investing in people: Empowering, engaging and developing human capital
 - Creating professional development opportunities
 - Aligning performance management process with values of the organization and focusing on development as well as potential
 - Keeping people happy and engaged and providing growth opportunities in a flat organization

 - ✓ Diversity, equity and inclusion
 - Importance of intentionality and strategic focus in attracting diverse talent
 - Diversity of thought and political perspectives
 - Equity of pay and power
 - Walk the walk: diversity at the leadership and decision-making level

 - ✓ Shifting the organizational culture to promote and enable talent
 - Leadership leading by example and exercising emotional intelligence
 - Breaking down silos and creating a team-based culture
 - Elevating human resources to the C-suite, a cross-organizational role that is talent, management and development focused
 - Overcoming risk aversion
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Social Compact in a Changing Landscape: Reexamining Relationship with Society and Addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Friday, May 25, 2018

Social Compact

Discussion Summary

This panel discussion spotlighted diverse experiences and perspectives on the evolving understanding and expression of social compact, as well the changing operating landscape. Participants focused the question of accountability and the wide range of often overlapping audiences to whom they feel accountable, including but not limited to donors, founders, communities served, partners and grantees. A discussion emerged on the challenges to social compact, such as being captive to the Founder's Syndrome or subject to policies that may hinder an organization's ability to act. Foundation leaders also shared strategies and approaches to strengthen foundations' ability to drive change and deliver on their social compact.

Social Compact

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Defining, articulating and exercising accountability
 - To whom are foundations accountable and how do they articulate accountability internally and externally?
 - The importance of honesty and transparency regarding the challenges of accountability
 - Viewing those to which the organization is accountable as partners and referring to them for guidance
 - Subjects, drivers and articulation of accountability can change over time with the development and evolution of a foundation
- ✓ Legitimacy and role in society
 - The impact of legislative climate, legal framework and new laws (taxes, restrictions on activities of NGOs, hostile environments, etc)
 - The challenge of establishing and communicating legitimacy/social compact in a context where the population does not understand the role/work of foundations and views it as the domain and responsibility of the state
 - The dangers of being viewed as exercising undue political influence
- ✓ Social compact in the international context
 - International organizations that provide funding to other nations face challenges in terms of social compact and may still feel compelled to model their giving to meet the needs of their beneficiaries rather than the broader population
 - The culture of accountability is not inherent to every regional or country context (either culturally or legislatively) and has to be self-imposed
 - When possible, important to have local teams engaging with local communities, in order to strengthen accountability and legitimacy
- ✓ Diversity and social compact
 - More organizations are compelled by their social compact to construct Boards and leadership reflective of the populations to which they are accountable
 - Although foundations view themselves as accountable to marginalized communities, those populations are frequently not well represented within the foundations and do not receive as much funding as organizations stewarded by males, particularly white males