

Paper 2: Current Event- INDS 6412

Cesar Caballero

Southern Utah University

INDS 6412

Professor Lexie Grant

February 4, 2021

COVID-19 Impact on the Grant World

For this assignment, I decided to focus on some of the effects this COVID-19 pandemic has had on not only the grant world but on the non-profits associated with it as well. I selected an article titled “How will COVID-19 Impact Foundation Grants?” by William Worley published on April 6, 2020. I also used some other articles that felt relevant to the topic.

Article Summary

In the aforementioned article, William Worley discusses some of the effects that the pandemic is having on the nonprofit sector. He elucidates how there have been some funds created exclusively in response to the global COVID-19 Pandemic. Worley elaborates on how many foundations all over the world have decided to help and change their initiatives and processes to help their grantees. Furthermore, it is discussed that while many organizations have done their part in helping nonprofit organizations with their grant applications, there are others that have stayed silent and not done much; some have gone as far as cancelling their usual grants. This in part to the fact that it seems exceedingly difficult to explore grant timelines or strategic plans for nonprofit organizations since the future for everybody seems in jeopardy now. The author further explores the fact that many organizations are in trouble because they cannot plan too far in advance for many of their normal activities such as fundraisers and promotional events.

Finally, Worley compares the pandemic and its effects to the effects the terrorist attacks of September 11 had on the world. He explains the problem with this pandemic is that we do not know when it will end and that because of that, we do not know what to anticipate regarding the future for the nonprofit organizations. He ends the article by explaining that the landscape of nonprofits will dramatically change some way or another, but we cannot entirely be sure how. It will be interesting to see how this pans out.

9-1-1 Response

Grants are such an essential part of nonprofit organizations, yet they should not be their only source of income. With that being said, Howlett and Bourque point out that “many organizations go into grant writing with the mistaken impression that if they just get a grant, everything will be okay” (pg. 2). The previous statement is often the case with many of the nonprofit organizations all around the world. If nothing else, this last year with the COVID pandemic has proven that things can change in a matter of days. It is never a good idea to rely solely on grants to help us support our organization and this past year has definitely showed how many nonprofit organizations are on ‘life support’ because they made that fatal mistake of surviving only on grants.

Since the need from organizations for grants has only increased given our current world health climate, many foundations have stepped up and helped. Worley (2020) mentions that many new funds and initiatives have been created as a response to the outbreak (pg. 2). While not all the foundations have followed suit and done something similar with some foundations completely putting everything on hold (or cancelling their grant process for the year altogether), many others have made sure to make a difference in the world and helped by providing additional aid to what they would do on a regular year. Worley states, “at least \$5 billion worth of grants to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak have been given by foundations, mostly to relief organizations, public health agencies, and medical research groups...” (pg. 2). It seems as if some of these foundations went on ‘emergency mode’ and decided to respond to this global pandemic emergency as if they were responding to a ‘9-1-1 call,’ which if you think about it could be a perfect analogy for what is happening all throughout the world. Not just the world or communities are making this ‘9-1-1 call’ but so are the nonprofit organizations that live to serve

everyday people. It is essential to understand the dire situation in which all these organizations find themselves – even the healthy and stable ones that did not rely solely on grant money or funds. The fact that in most states there are lockdown regulations, occupancy restrictions or curfews have completely changed the way nonprofit organizations operate. Gone are the days when having crowded events or fundraisers to showcase organizations would take place (more on that later). So, understanding where this important ‘9-1-1 call’ is coming from is one thing but knowing who will respond this so-called call is as -if not more important.

9/11 Response

The fact that many foundations are providing more aid and relief to organizations is truly relevant. Foundations, for the most part seem to be trying to help in whichever way they can. And yes, while some have changed or cancelled their involvement with grants and the community, the majority is stepping up. The question we may want to ask ourselves is: Is this something that happens every time that there is a global emergency? Or is this a one-time situation? Obviously, for those who pay close attention to global events, most of these foundations tend to become superheroes and step up when the time calls for it. They have done it before, and they will probably do it again. Duke Haddad (2015) explains, “the terrorist attacks of 9/11 inspired Americans to help their neighbors in need like never before by donating billions of dollars to families that lost family members during the 9/11 attacks.” (pg.1). Not only in that occasion have Americans helped their communities, Duke Haddad further elaborates that foundations and organizations have banded together when the time calls for it; this included disaster relief efforts during Hurricane Katrina, the Haitian Tsunami of 2010, the Japan Tsunami in 2011, and many others critical events (pp.1-3).

Why is this important you may ask? It is crucial to understand that during those times of dire need, plenty of foundations decided to help and give special considerations (such as less restrictive guidelines and rules in their grant processes) to nonprofit organizations in order to receive grants. Because of the latter, Worley compares the events of 9/11 to this pandemic. He explains,

“Comparing this to the terrible disaster of 9/11, in some ways this is more difficult to respond to, because we don’t know when it will end, we don’t know how large it will be, and we can’t see where the hotspots are that will most need our support.” (p.3).

In so many ways, this pandemic is affecting grants and nonprofit organizations in the same way that 9/11 or other disasters did, except as effectively pointed by Worley, the problem here is that we do not have an end in sight. Asides from that, we do not know when it will end. During other disasters, we knew when the situation was going to be over and we knew how to proceed and what communities were the most affected. Here, we do not have that information and even when we get back to some type of normalcy, it is the whole country that has been affected and probably dramatically changed by this pandemic.

So, what are foundations doing regarding this? For the most part, as pointed out before, they are giving a ‘helping hand.’ They are trying to find ways to ‘loosen’ up procedures and in most instances, their support has only increased towards goals that promote community involvement and engagement. For the most part, foundations are understanding this crisis, supporting organizations that are researching the crisis/ disease, and giving their full attention to those whose grants will support the already fractured communities and economy all across the United States (Worley, p.3). I want to continue to focus our attention on these organizations that continue to make a difference in the world since the ones that have cancelled their collaboration

with nonprofit organizations are not as many. I want to explore how these foundations and the nonprofit that collaborate with them are fighting extremely hard to make the impact that our current world requires.

Do Guidelines Matter Now?

In their book, Howlett and Bourque suggest that when creating a proposal, we need to know our foundation ahead of time. They explain that we need to consider the guidelines or rules they may have. Regarding those guidelines and ‘homework’ information on them, we need to understand that this pandemic is making a tremendous impact on nonprofits. The important part here is to see that for the most part, it seems as a positive impact as most of the foundations are doing their best to safeguard their goals/ missions and they do so by continuing to support those that align with their ideals. “The past year has been a tumultuous and unprecedented one. The nonprofit sector continues to grapple with new realities...” (Osili, p.1). Seeing that the future of nonprofit organizations seems to be on the line as the world faces this unprecedented crisis, it is beyond exciting to see that while the effects of this pandemic have been horrifying, most foundations continue to press for a positive change no matter what – they continue to ‘do what it takes!’ Osili states that this time of uncertainty should not be a time for a problem to arise or for a crisis to continue to occur; instead, it should be seen as an opportunity to make things happen and help nonprofits achieve their goals through grants (p.2).

Inspired by the previously shared information and just like Worley states in his article, most foundations are loosening rules on grants, making their funds as unrestricted as possible, and listening more to their grantees in changing any policies that may stand in their way to receive the best possible grants. Among other notable changes as discussed by Worley are the facts that some of the most important foundations have adapted their expectations of grantees

strategic plans. This including but not limited to their fundraisers, social events, report deadlines, financial flexibility, and overall long-term expectations. In addition, Osili also corroborates the same point explaining, “from virtual events to interactive websites, to artificial intelligence, to e-commerce tools, social media platforms, and blockchain, technology has expanded its impact on philanthropy.” (p.3). I think it is especially important to accept that this is no time to be restrictive or potentially strict about details that otherwise would be of grave importance. I believe it is truly phenomenal that many organizations are reaping the benefits of foundations trusting them to achieve their goals through less restrictive guidelines. What matters now is to be sure we are successful in helping our communities and even save lives through the work some of these organizations do. It is rewarding to see that most foundations are strategically working together with organizations in order to find better ways to achieve their shared missions.

Conclusion

Reading the article and finding some information about this topic was more rewarding than I ever expected. I anticipated to find out that nonprofit organizations were about to collapse and from the look of it, it seems as if they have been given special considerations due to the current pandemic. Besides from a handful of foundations not collaborating with the organizations, most of them are doing their part as never before working towards shared visions. Collaborating, organizations and foundations are making positive changes that will alter the philanthropy landscape in the future. Maybe in the future, guidelines will continue to be less restrictive or pressuring; maybe in the future, there will be more virtual events and opportunities for grantees. Above all, it is all about considering this ordeal or so-called problem, an opportunity to ‘rethink’ the landscape of nonprofits and grants (philanthropy).

References

Haddad, D. F. (2015, September 11). *The Impact of 9/11 on Philanthropy*. NonProfit PRO.

Retrieved February 2, 2021 from <https://www.nonprofitpro.com/post/impact-911-philanthropy/>

Howlett, S. R. B. (2021). *GETTING FUNDED* (6th ed.). Word & Raby Publishing.

Osili, U. (2020, December 28). *The Future Of Nonprofit Economics, Bellwethers of Funding*.

The NonProfit Times. Retrieved February 2, 2021 from https://www.thenonproffitimes.com/npt_articles/the-future-of-nonprofit-economics-bellwethers-of-funding/

Worley, W. (2020, April 6). *How will COVID-19 impact foundation grants?* Devex. Retrieved

February 2, 2021 from <https://www.devex.com/news/how-will-covid-19-impact-foundation-grants-96835>