

DIVERSITY IN PHILANTHROPY

Are Women Being Short-Changed by Foundations?

By: Susan Glenn

Women's professional role in philanthropy has grown significantly in the last few decades. Today, 73% of program officers, the foundation professionals who make key funding recommendations, are women. Fifty-four percent of foundation CEO's are women and 35% of board trustees are women. Yet, despite this growing presence, women's advocates and foundation experts say foundation support for programs directly benefitting girls and women is disproportionately low.

According to The Foundation Center, a national authority on philanthropy, women and girls' programs received an estimated 6.4% of foundation grants in 2005. Approximately 1.4% went to programs for men and boys and the remainder to so-called universal programs, those benefitting both genders. (These figures are extrapolated from a sample of grants exceeding \$10,000 and meeting the Center's four criteria for targeting women or girls.) So aren't women's programs doing comparatively well based on these numbers?

According to Mary Ellen Capek, co-author with Molly Mead of *Effective Philanthropy: Organizational Success through Deep Diversity and Gender Equality* (MIT Press, 2006), "it is a joke to say women and girls benefit equally with men and boys from universal funding." Their extensively documented book is a research project sponsored by Women & Philanthropy, a project of the Council on Foundations, launched and funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The Council is a membership organization of foundations and grant makers working to advance "public good through private giving." Formerly an independent organization, Women & Philanthropy works to "leverage the power of women and girls" through effective philanthropy.

Mead and Capek assert that universal funding is based on an unstated norm, or Norm with a capital "N", the Norm being a white, middle-class, male standard. And that standard doesn't take into account the complexities and nuance of race, gender, and class. Or, as Mead and Capek succinctly put it, "Funding Norm does not effectively fund Norma — or anyone else for that matter."

Using youth programs as an example, Capek and Mead cite co-ed programs that are simply boys' programs that have been opened up for girls. The result, says Capek, are programs that don't meet the needs of either gender as effectively as programs that factor in culturally-formed gender differences. (Capek is careful to point out that gender differences refer, not to any innate biological differences or abilities, but to differences formed by acculturation.) The ineffectiveness of such programs is borne out by a 1996 study of New York

City's youth programs that showed three times more boys than girls participated in co-ed programs. A national study showed similar results.

Capek and Mead assert the funders' good faith attempts to maximize their impact and achieve gender equity has the unintended consequence of under-serving girls and diverting funds from effective gender-specific programs.

Nicole Cozier, program manager for Women & Philanthropy, agrees that program baselines are most often set by the dominant group and that in co-ed programs "men and boys are the default." She likens the situation to health care research of the past. "Years ago, clinical trials did not include women. So protocols were developed based on the male body. With cardiovascular disease, where the disease manifests so differently in women than in men, the result was women weren't getting critical information." The same is true when foundations fund programs that are by default built on a male model.



Jing Lyman has been a leader in philanthropic circle for decades. Currently a trustee of Enterprise Community Partners and a member of the Donors' Circle of

Women of Silicon Valley, she is one of the original co-founders of Women & Philanthropy. She remembers the organization's birth in 1977 and foundations' reluctance to fund "women's issues" such as domestic violence prevention. "At that time, women's programs were receiving only .6 of 1% of foundation funding and there were relatively few women in foundation leadership. We've made significant progress in increasing the number of professional women, but we're not there yet in convincing the funding public that women's programs are not a 'special interest'. It's in everyone's interest." She says one only has to look at how poverty disproportionately affects women and children to know additional funding is needed. (The U.S. Census Bureau reports 28.4% of households headed by single women lived in poverty in 2004. The figure for households headed by single men was 13.5%.) "Helping these women up and out lifts the entire family up and out."

So, if women have gained leadership in philanthropy, why aren't women's programs seeing more foundation support? Female program officers interviewed for Mead and Capek's research expressed reluctance to fund women's programs for fear of being "pigeon-holed" within their foundations or out of a sincere belief that funding women's programs is "undemocratic." The unspoken reality suggests Capek, is both the "persistence of Norm" as the invisible standard and the misperception that women have achieved equity and therefore don't require "special" funding.

Experts and advocates alike believe the answer is to

move the conversation beyond a focus on gender to concentrate on effectiveness and what Capek and Mead term "deep diversity." Says Capek, "Deep diversity is a nuanced understanding of how all types of difference (race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc.) intersect to affect how we function in society. Deep diversity is wide to consider all types of difference and deep to test and change our institutional assumptions."

Capek and Mead believe deep diversity will lead to more effective philanthropy that stresses "both/and" funding. Foundations will fund universal, co-ed programs effectively designed to consider gender and other differences and gender-specific or other targeted programs designed to reach specific populations.

Concludes Capek, "Getting a 'fair' share [for women] is not the point. It's getting an effective share for everyone."

Capek and Mead's book is the winner of the 2007 Independent Sector/ARNOVA Hodgkinson Best Research Book Award. Capek is the former executive director of the National Council for Research on Women and currently senior consultant for Women & Philanthropy, The Diversity in Philanthropy Project, and principal of Capek and Associates. Molly Mead is Director of the Center for Community Engagement at Amherst College and a national consultant on women, girls, and philanthropy. To learn more about their research, visit www.diversityinphilanthropy.org.

Women's History Month



Gerty Theresa Radnitz Cori (1896-1957)

Gerty Theresa Radnitz Cori, a pioneer in biochemistry, received international recognition for discovering, along with her husband, Carl, how glucose is converted into glycogen, a process dubbed the Cori Cycle. Her research had a profound effect on the treatment of diabetes, allowing physicians to understand how the body stores glucose by converting it into glycogen stored energy, which can be used when the body's reserves run low. In 1947, she and her husband, along with Bernardo A Houssay, received the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine for this discovery.

Cori's later studies on enzymes and hormones further advanced research in the treatment of diabetes and contributed to our understanding that missing enzymes indicate defective genes. This laid the foundation for future studies of genetic defects in humans.

Cori received her M.D. at the German University of Prague in 1920 and came to the United States in the 1920s. Despite her significant research, she had to fight discrimination and nepotism. Finally, in 1947, the same year she became the first American woman and the third worldwide to receive a Nobel Prize in the sciences, she was named a full professor of biochemistry at Washington University in St. Louis. In 1950, President Harry Truman appointed her to the Board of Directors of the National Science Foundation.