
The 4 Benefits of Philanthropy Infrastructure Organizations – The 4 Cs

Capacity – they build resources. Foundation representatives noted how services provided by infrastructure organizations help generate money and other resources for the field. These services range from training on fundraising and information on fund sources, to providing references and other linkages to sources of money. Through building this kind of capacity, infrastructure organizations can play an important role in changing the culture of giving within societies.



Capability – they build skills knowledge and expertise. On a related front, foundation representatives noted how the infrastructure helps foundations and other philanthropy organizations develop better skills, knowledge and expertise to use their resources more effectively. The majority of survey respondents noted the value of infrastructure in terms of knowledge gleaned, on topics ranging from international grantmaking, to financing, risk management, evaluation, philanthropy development, and legal advice in updating anachronistic statutes. They also called out the value inherent in the vehicles of service provided, from one-to-one advice, such as providing 'customized calculations', to online resources, seminars, webinars, peer learning, convenings, and fellowships.



Connection – they build relationships. Most survey respondents highlighted the value of connections made for them by infrastructure organizations, whether for networking, peer learning and sharing, or collective action purposes. Bringing organizations together to build relationships is at the heart of what many infrastructure organizations do. Sums up one survey respondent, "the main value and really useful support for us, is the management of networking communications and meetings with other foundations working in the same field or the same geographical area." By bringing foundations together, infrastructure organizations create a virtuous circle in which the connections further reinforce the capacity and capability of philanthropy organizations individually and collectively.



Credentials – they build reputation, recognition and influence. Foundation representatives also noted how infrastructure organizations act on behalf of philanthropy as a field. They build its profile, recognition and trust with governments and wider society. As one survey respondent put it, they "revive the vision of the sector and connect organizations to converse about our challenges and how to address them." Says another, "We have been supported in different activities, but especially in some approaches to the governmental sector in order to know how to influence public policies related to our field."



These four categories could be considered a starting point for constructing a framework to assess the value of infrastructure organizations. Developing such an evaluative framework would enable the field of infrastructure support to answer one of the criticisms commonly levelled at it: namely that it does not measure its effectiveness and is therefore unable to account for itself. A common evaluation framework also allows us to begin to address our strengths and weaknesses as a field.