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IN THIS ISSUE

Advancing Justice to Build Better
Communities: Why More Foundations
Should Fund Criminal Justice Reform
BY ANN BEESON

1

4/29: Revisiting the Legacy of
Civil Unrest in Los Angeles Eighteen
Years Later
BY LISA RANGHELLI

3

Soothing the Pain Points
in Grant Reporting
BY MICHELLE GREANIAS

7

A Message from the Executive Director

2

Member Spotlight

15

A room full of inmates are seen in their bunk beds at Southeastern Correctional Institution Wednesday, April 22, 2009 in Lancaster, Ohio. Ohio's prisons are at 132 percent capacity and space is squeezing tighter by the day, says prisons director Terry Collins. (AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato)



Advancing Justice to Build Better Communities: Why More Foundations Should Fund Criminal Justice Reform

Many foundations are engaged in important mission-driven work to reform public education and engage young people, alleviate poverty and homelessness, improve public health and challenge inequality. Because these social challenges are deeply con-

nected to America's epidemic of mass incarceration, it makes sense for foundations to invest in criminal justice reform as part of a unified strategy to improve communities and expand opportunity.

The United States is a global leader in incarceration and punishment. Although the country accounts for roughly 5 percent of the world's population, about 25 percent of the people incarcerated worldwide are locked up in the U.S. With about 2.4 million people in its jails and prisons today, the U.S. incarcerates approximately 1 in

By Ann Beeson¹

100 of its adult population. More than seven million Americans (or 1 in 31 adults) are now under some form of correctional supervision. And the U.S. now spends a whopping \$212 billion annually on the criminal justice system and employs more than 2.4 million people, more than Wal-Mart and McDonald's combined.

America did not always lock up so many people. State and federal prison populations skyrocketed from 196,000 in 1973 to 1,410,000 by 2004, an increase of 600 percent. The rise can be attributed (continued on page 11)



challenging grantmakers
to strengthen communities

A Message From the Executive Director



Dear Readers,

The spring conference season is well underway. It's a wonderful opportunity to catch up with friends, allies, supporters and critics alike. This year's Council on Foundations annual conference, held in April in Denver, featured a social justice track with sessions that explored a range of issues such as collaborative approaches, movement building and resource mobilization. One of the best parts of the track was how the voices of social justice grantee organizations were front and center on many of the panels – a refreshing change from the usually funder-dominated sessions at philanthropic conferences.

In this issue of *Responsive Philanthropy*, Ann Beeson of the Open Society Institute describes how poverty, homelessness, drug use and other social challenges are connected inextricably with the country's mass incarceration epidemic. She writes, "It makes sense for foundations to invest in criminal justice reform as part of a unified strategy to improve communities and expand opportunity."

Lisa Rangelhelli, director of NCRP's Grantmaking for Community Impact Project, writes about how several organizations from Los Angeles County were directly affected by or emerged in response to the 1992 civil unrest. These organizations view collaboration across race, ethnicity, class, religion, culture and gender identity as an important strategy to achieve remarkable benefits for their communities.

In "Soothing the Pain Points of Grantmaking," Michelle Greanias of the Grants Managers Network provides practical tips on how funders can streamline reports for operating support grants, as well as budget and financial reporting requirements. She also shares how grantees can help funders in this process.

Finally, our Member Spotlight features the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, a New York-based private foundation that is one of philanthropy's leaders in supporting community activism to tackle education reform and youth involvement.

We constantly are on the lookout for ways to improve *Responsive Philanthropy*. Our goal is to make this journal an important resource for you and your staff on critical and often overlooked issues facing philanthropy today. Please send comments and suggestions to readers@ncrp.org.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to be 'A Dorfman', written over a white background.

Aaron Dorfman
Executive Director, NCRP

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4/29: Revisiting the Legacy of Civil Unrest in Los Angeles Eighteen Years Later

By Lisa Ranghelli

For all Americans, the tragic date of September 11, 2001, is etched indelibly in our brains. “9/11” is the shorthand that needs no further explanation and has become part of our national vocabulary. For the residents of Los Angeles, an earlier tragedy is embedded in their psyches: that of “4/29.”

On April 29, 1992, four white officers in the Los Angeles Police Department were acquitted in the videotaped beating of African American Rodney King. The verdict was the straw that broke the camel’s back for low-income communities of color in the city, unleashing their anger and despair in three days of civil disturbances that resulted in 55 deaths, 2,300 persons injured and 1,100 buildings destroyed.¹ This disastrous event, watched by millions of Americans on television, brought national attention to the poverty, racial tensions and inequities in Los Angeles.

Yet, many people on the ground knew that the situation was dire even before the unrest. “They feared there would be riots,” said Torie Osborn, former head of the Liberty Hill Foundation, which had organized a conference of 100 community organizers six months prior to the verdict. “There was so much despair in the communities – the crack epidemic, the loss of jobs, the destruction of affordable housing, homelessness, the fact that there were hundreds of liquor stores in their communities and no supermarkets. They articulated at that conference the deep racial and class

divisions that would soon explode onto the streets.”²

Another description of that period noted that while many organizations were working to combat these problems, they did not work together very often and didn’t have the power to create systemic change. “When you added up all the efforts to improve the lives of low-income Angelenos in 1992, the whole was substantially less than the sum of its parts.”³

Today, on the eighteenth anniversary of 4/29, the situation is quite different. As the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy’s (NCRP) new report on advocacy and organizing in Los Angeles County demonstrates, there now are many powerful organizations working in collaboration across

race, ethnicity, class, religion, culture and gender identity. And they are achieving impressive policy impacts in areas such as affordable housing, environmental justice, job training, wages, immigrant rights, LGBTQ rights and education reform. Many of these accomplishments cannot be monetized, but for those that could be, we found a return on investment of \$91 for each dollar invested in 15 organizations for their efforts. So what happened in the intervening years?

While the rest of the country moved on, philanthropic and civic leaders in Los Angeles looked for new strategies to heal their communities physically and emotionally. Several of the organizations we featured in *Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities: Impacts of Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement in Los Angeles County* were directly affected by or emerged in response to 4/29.

Community Coalition was founded in 1990 to deal with substance abuse issues in South Los Angeles. Just before the civil unrest, its leaders had met with then-mayor Tom Bradley to address the overabundance of liquor stores in their community. Resident surveys had determined that the liquor outlets were magnets for the crack epidemic, prostitution and related violence. During the riots, residents burned and looted as many as 200 of the 728 liquor stores in the area. After 4/29, the organization launched the “Campaign to Rebuild South Central L.A. without Liquor Stores.” According

“When you added up all the efforts to improve the lives of low-income Angelenos in 1992, the whole was substantially less than the sum of its parts.”

—Lee Winkleman

to Community Coalition, its campaign prevented the rebuilding of 150 alcohol retailers and helped spur the conversion of 44 liquor stores to neighborhood-oriented businesses and services.⁴ Because Korean immigrants ran many of these liquor stores, Community Coalition had the challenge of taking a stand in a way that wouldn't scapegoat the Korean businesspeople. The organization's members reached out to leaders in the Korean community to try to build bridges. They wanted to make clear that the campaign was about public safety, public health and quality of life, not about one racial group targeting another. One Korean American student, Joanne Kim, was so inspired by this vision that she joined the staff of Community Coalition in 1996 and today is the organization's chief operating officer.⁵

The organization continues to organize successfully on public safety and quality of life concerns today, and has worked in coalitions to effectively tackle education, foster care and other

critical issues facing South Los Angeles. The organization still takes great pains to avoid racial conflict, as in 2009, when it raised concerns about Century Market, a Korean-owned liquor store.

One organization that Community Coalition has maintained strong relations with is Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance. KIWA was founded in 1992 "from the ashes" of the civil unrest, which is called "Sa-I-Gu" in Korean. Koreatown, which is north of South Los Angeles and west of downtown, also was devastated by the uprising. KIWA wanted to address what its leaders saw as rampant worker exploitation in the Koreatown neighborhood. This was a tricky undertaking since it meant organizing Korean workers against Korean employers, and also bringing together Korean, Mexican and Central American workers to fight together for better working conditions.

KIWA's first victory related directly to the civil disturbance. A group of conservative businessmen had estab-

lished the Korean American Relief Fund to aid businesses that were looted or burned, and they refused to provide any relief money to affected workers. KIWA organized 45 displaced Korean and Latino workers to demand the extension of relief to employees. Eventually, the workers won more than \$100,000 in relief funds.

From that early victory, KIWA has gone on to win millions of dollars in increased wages for restaurant workers and more recently for supermarket workers. Today, the organization is viewed nationally as a model of multi-ethnic organizing. But back then, taking the step to be multiracial created a backlash. "We were organizing for the rights of all workers in Koreatown. The Korean American business owners attempted to present us as anti-Korean, claiming that KIWA was a 'traitor to our race,' asking 'how can you organize Latinos against your own people?'" recalled executive director Danny Park. "But we were never anti-Korean – we are just anti-exploitation."

When KIWA was getting attacked by the Korean business community and newspapers, the organization put out the message that bringing justice to Koreatown is the best way to serve the Korean community: "Stepping up to address injustices to all our neighbors and coworkers is the way to avoid more civil disturbances like in 1992." KIWA's insistent message finally took hold. According to Park, on every anniversary of the 1992 unrest, the community asks itself how it is doing in terms of community race relations.

Today, KIWA still harkens back to the lessons of Sa-I-Gu. On April 29, 2009, KIWA sponsored a film and discussion event that featured two short movies about the unrest and a dialogue with Marqueece Harris-Dawson of Community Coalition. Seven months later, KIWA's director Danny Park was

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOPE.



SCOPE members rally support for their green jobs plan.

honored at Community Coalition's annual gala dinner.

Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE) is another group featured in our Los Angeles research whose roots can be found in the aftermath of 4/29. Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives (AGENDA) was a membership organization formed in South Los Angeles in 1993. After the social unrest, AGENDA's leaders were determined to undertake a new approach that would engage low-income communities of color in reshaping the economic and political landscape. AGENDA quickly realized that to change policies and systems it would need to work in coalition with others throughout the region; it helped form the Los Angeles Metropolitan Alliance, which secured a landmark agreement for jobs and training from the film company DreamWorks. The organization grew in scale and added other strategies, including research, training and voter engagement, now all housed under SCOPE. Jobs and career ladders continued to be

"We were organizing for the rights of all workers in Koreatown. The Korean American business owners attempted to present us as anti-Korean ...

But we were never anti-Korean — we are just anti-exploitation."

— Danny Park,
Executive Director, Koreatown
Immigrant Workers Alliance

a primary focus: SCOPE catalyzed the creation of a Health Care Career Ladder Training Program in 2002, and last year a SCOPE-led coalition that included Community Coalition won a green jobs ordinance to train low-income residents to retrofit city buildings to be more energy efficient.

Along the way, SCOPE decided that winning jobs programs would not be enough to have long-term impact, so it embarked on an ambitious nonpartisan voter engagement program to create a more accountable political structure. Through voter engagement, SCOPE also has extended its reach to the state and national level, playing central roles in the California Alliance and the Pushback Network.

All three of these organizations have evolved into sophisticated, powerful forces for change that work effectively in coalitions and build bridges across race, geography and other historical barriers. And they all have received steady, long-term support from the Liberty Hill Foundation.

Liberty Hill took a hard look at its grantmaking approach after 4/29. Its leaders realized that just providing a few years' worth of seed money to new organizations and then moving on was not effective. It didn't allow those groups to build the capacity they needed to be successful. Having community activists alongside donors

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Community Coalition members demonstrate for education reforms to increase student access to college prep classes needed to graduate and gain access to college.

on its funding board helped the foundation use its strategic planning process to completely redesign its program. As described in *Change Philanthropy*, Liberty Hill created the Fund for a New Los Angeles in 1993 with newly donated funds so that it could give larger grants (in the range of \$35,000) for longer periods to a set of anchor organizations rooted in low-income communities. In turn, these anchors could provide leadership and support to other nascent groups. Most of the organizations featured in our Los Angeles study were anchor organizations of the Fund for a New Los Angeles, demonstrating the success of Liberty Hill's strategy. Collectively, these groups have helped reweave the social fabric of the region, reshape its politics and retool its economy.

Could 4/29 happen again today? South Los Angeles still faces many challenges, including lack of jobs and economic development and the continued presence of nuisance business-

es and gang violence. Michele Prichard, who was Liberty Hill's executive director from 1989–1997, noted, "While it is certainly possible that 4/29 could happen again, especially in this Great Recession, which is exacerbating unresolved racial inequalities, there would be a different response this time. These organizations have matured and expanded their depth and reach into communities of color, along with building strong alliances with each other." She concludes that, "social infrastructure would undoubtedly make a positive difference in voicing and responding to community needs much more rapidly and meaningfully than before. And that would be a huge difference."

Lisa Rangelhi is director of the Grantmaking for Community Impact Project (GCIP), and has authored/co-authored the report series Strengthening Democracy, Increasing Opportunities: Impact of Advocacy, Organizing and Civic Engagement.

Notes

1. Thelma Gutierrez, Charles Feldman and Anne McDermott, "Los Angeles riot still echoes a decade later," CNN, April 29, 2002, <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/US/04/28/la.riot.anniversary/>.
2. Alicia Epstein Korten, "Change Philanthropy: Candid Stories of Foundations Maximizing Results through Social Justice" (San Francisco, CA: Center for Community Change, Jossey-Bass, 2009).
3. Lee Winkelman, "Integrated Voter Engagement: A Proven Model to Increase Civic Engagement; Case Study of SCOPE" (Funders Committee for Civic Participation, 2009).
4. Meredith Minkler et al., "Promoting Healthy Public Policy through Community-Based Participatory Research: Ten Case Studies." University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health and PolicyLink, Undated.
5. Angela Chung, "Agent of Change," KoreAm, April 2009.

Soothing the Pain Points in Grant Reporting

By Michelle Greanias

As part of its second phase of work, Project Streamline asked both grantmakers and grantseekers to identify and provide solutions to the main “pain points” in grant application and reporting practices. A single – if not simple – question rose to the top:

How can funders minimize financial reporting requirements for nonprofit organizations to the maximum extent possible, while still carrying out proper financial due diligence?

The inquiry led us to four core recommendations for funders eager to streamline their grant budget and financial reporting processes, and five tips for how grantseekers can help them. The Project Streamline Grant Budgets and Financial Reports Guide¹ explores these recommendations and tips in detail, but what does streamlining reporting requirements look like in the real world?

As funders take a step back to examine their processes and requirements, many are questioning the value of grant reports for general operating support, wondering if the two main purposes of such reports – compliance and evaluation – apply. For example, an organization receiving general operating support is considered in compliance as long as it operated during the grant period with no major changes to its tax status or mission. And, while the organization’s programs may have specific outcomes, operating support does not

have a direct cause-and-effect connection to them that can be evaluated.

With operating support accounting for 19 percent of grants given by foundations,² reducing or even eliminating the report requirement presents a significant streamlining opportunity. Successful strategies to streamline operating support reports include:

1. Eliminate financial report requirements

If your organization has received general operating support from the Saint Luke’s Foundation in Cleveland, you no longer have to submit a final budget report.

The shift was made more than a year ago, when staff realized the report was not relevant when it came to general operating support grants. “In the proposal, we already ask them to list their annual operating budget and the lump sum they want from us,” Peg Butler, grants manager at Saint Luke’s, says. “At the end of the grant, we don’t need to know what they’re spending on, itemized.”

2. Combine reports and new requests

Some grantmakers have decided to combine the final grant report with the new application when



PHOTO BY ILLUS PORTUGAL

Grant Budget and Financial Reports

Streamlining Recommendations for Foundations

1. Use the information grantees already have.

Nonprofits use budget and financial report formats that fit into their financial systems, yet funders regularly ask them to slice and dice their financial information into funder-specific formats. Using nonprofits' existing materials not only can save nonprofits time and add to the "net grant,"¹ it also can give you important insight into a nonprofit's financial sophistication.

2. Align grant schedules with the grantee's timing, not the funders'.

Funders should make sure that two elements of grants – grant start and end dates and reporting periods – align with the grantee's fiscal cycles and project timelines. Too often, these schedules are based on the funder's process, regardless of what makes the most sense for the grant.

general operating support is likely to be renewed, lowering the amount of overall paperwork required.

One example is the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation in Chicago. After participating in the Center for Effective Philanthropy's grantee perception survey, the foundation discovered that its grantees in the arts, the majority of which reapplied every year, gave the foundation much lower scores than the rest of its surveyed grantees when it came to the application process. Donnelley Foundation staff realized that, for these renewing grantees, the standard form was too time-intensive and burdensome.

3. Require less reporting than funders typically require of grantees.

We recommend that funders follow three principles:

- Reporting generally should be required on no more than an annual basis.
- When a number of funders jointly support a project or program, one budget and financial reporting format should be used, and all funders should agree to accept reports in that format.
- The smaller a grant is, the simpler the grant budget and financial reporting requirements should be.

4. Ask only for the information you will use.

Funders need to know what information to ask for and what they're going to do with it.

By taking information from both application and renewal forms, they were able to create a new combined form³ for its arts grantees.

The Bush Foundation in Saint Paul also combines year-end and renewal reports for its Regional Arts Development Program grants. These grants are 10-year-long strategic commitments for arts organizations, broken up into initial 12- to 18-month entry grants, then three-year implementation grants. For each grant in this sequence, organizations submit a combined form, which includes a narrative account of any actions taken to overcome the unexpected during the grant period.

According to grants administrator

Erin Dirksen, the change happened in 2004, when Bush Foundation grantees expressed frustration at the redundancy of the final report and renewal application that were both due at the same time. The new single form creates a one-step system in Bush Foundation grantmaking. "When we receive this final form, we mark it as 'done' in our grants database and open a new pending grant request at the same time," according to Dirksen, who says streamlining this part of the application saves staff time and limits grantee frustration.

3. Ask just for the existing annual report

For years, the Roy A. Hunt Foundation in Pittsburgh has been using a simple approach to track use of general operating support funds: asking for grantee organizations' annual report publications. "Our general operating support grants are made with the understanding that the trustees must embrace the mission of the organization," said executive director Bea Carter. "The annual reports, over time, tell us if the organization is on or off course."

SO WHAT CAN GRANTSEEKERS DO TO HELP?

Nonprofit organizations can help funders streamline their budget and financial reporting requirements and processes by:

1. Posting your information online:

We encourage nonprofit organizations to post online their most recent Form 990s and audited financial statements so that they can be accessed easily by funders. Some funders may be willing to use these materials in lieu of requiring specific budget and financial information to be sent.

2. Watching for any red flags you might have:

Nonprofit organiza-

tions should know and analyze the kinds of things that funders look for in budget and financial information. Be aware of any red flags that might concern a grantmaker, and be prepared to explain them. Ratio analysis tools exist to help nonprofits assess their financial fitness.

3. Ensuring that your grant budgets and financial information are internally consistent:

Often, grant application budgets are developed by a nonprofit program staff person, using categories and line items that make sense for that project. Meanwhile, the organization's financial documents, which may use a different set of categories and line items, can be used for grant reporting. It will streamline the process if you align these documents, ideally keeping them consistent with your organization's official accounting system.

4. Asking if you're not sure about a funder's requirements for financial information:

Although this tip seems obvious, many nonprofit organizations hesitate to ask for help and clarification – even when they need it and grantmakers are ready to provide it. In turn, many funders' requirements aren't clear, and need your feedback to get them right.

5. Being upfront and clear about your project's real cycles:

Be sure to let the funder know the actual start and end dates for the project, your organization's fiscal year, and other pertinent schedule information. Funders might not be aware that you may prefer to submit financial reports in alignment with your organization's timeline, not their own granting cycle.

ABOUT PROJECT STREAMLINE

Project Streamline is an effort of funders and nonprofits to improve grant application, monitoring and reporting practices. It is a collaborative initiative of the Grants Managers Network, in partnership with the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Association of Small Foundations, the Council on Foundations, the Forum of



Regional Associations of Grantmakers, the Foundation Center, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations and the National Council of Nonprofits.

ABOUT THE GUIDE SERIES

The Guide series, each component of which is made available online at no charge, supplies the necessary tools to help grantmakers apply Project Streamline's four principles:

1. Taking a fresh look at information requirements with a special focus on what due diligence grantmakers really need to do in order to make a grant.
2. Rightsizing grant application and reporting requirements.
3. Reducing the burden that grant-seeking places on grantees, with a special focus on improving financial reporting and implementing online systems.
4. Improving communication with and obtaining feedback from grant seekers to support and help direct your streamlining efforts.

For more information and to access the available Guides, visit www.projectstreamline.org.

Michelle Greanias is the executive director of the Grants Managers Network

Notes

1. Available for download at <http://www.projectstreamline.org/sites/projectstreamline.org/files/Grant%20Budgets%20and%20Financial%20Reports%20Guide.pdf>.
2. Foundation Center, *Foundation Giving Trends, 2009* (New York: Foundations Center, February 2009).
3. Available online at: www.projectstreamline.org/sites/projectstreamline.org/files/Donnelley_Foundation_General_Operations_Final_Report_and_Application_for_Renewed_Funding_0.pdf.

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Funding Criminal Justice Reform *(continued from page 1)*

largely to “get tough” crime policies, including the proliferation of punishable offenses and harsh mandatory sentencing schemes that dramatically increased sentence lengths. Despite the fact that crime rates are down, the number of people caught up in the criminal justice system continues to grow.

Most people in prison are low-income people of color, and a majority was convicted for nonviolent offenses. Roughly half of today’s prison inmates are functionally illiterate, and four out of five criminal defendants qualify as indigent. One out of every six African American men has spent time in prison, one out of every eleven Latinos. Significant numbers of people in prison suffer from drug addiction or mental illness and many are chronically homeless, cycling from shelters to jails and eventually to prison. After they leave prison, people with criminal records face unreasonable barriers to viable employment and housing, and many have permanently lost the right to vote.

Incarcerating so many people is expensive. America’s imprisonment binge has diverted billions of public dollars from education, housing, health and mental health care and other resources that ensure public safety by making individuals, families and neighborhoods healthy and sustainable. The consequences of this disinvestment are starkest in high-incarceration neighborhoods that include “million dollar blocks,” single city blocks on which states spend \$1 million or more each year to incarcerate residents. These neighborhoods suffer from high rates of asthma and infant mortality, failing schools and extreme poverty. The large numbers of people returning to these neighborhoods from prison, coupled with the many obstacles to a real second chance, fuel a grinding cycle of disinvestment and reincarceration that

undermines efforts to improve the lives of people who live there.

Just as foundations encourage grantees to leverage their efforts by connecting with organizations and issues in related fields, foundations themselves can maximize impact and advance their missions by broadening their funding strategies. Foundations that recognize the connections between the social problem they are trying to remedy and other systems that perpetuate poverty and exclusion can help communities work together to expand opportunity and reform broken systems.

ENSURING QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Organizations working to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline offer a strategic investment opportunity for foundations working to reform the education system. Schools need good teachers and inspiring classes, but they also need to abandon zero tolerance disciplinary codes that treat childish behavior as criminal and shift schools from places focused on learning to places of social control. Getting good teachers into classrooms should go hand in hand with getting the police



PHOTO BY XAVIER MARCHANT

Efforts to address poverty, homelessness, high unemployment, drug use and other social challenges are connected with the growing epidemic of mass incarceration. It will take a unified strategy to improve, strengthen and provide opportunities to diverse communities.

out. The drive toward higher test scores has created an unintended incentive for schools to drive out low-performing students, which leaves kids on the streets with few alternatives. If foundations working on education reform also support organizations dedicated to reforming school discipline and push-out practices, they can build better schools and keep kids out of the criminal justice system.

The **Advancement Project** has worked for more than a decade to define, analyze and dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. It provides comprehensive research and advocacy strategies in direct partnership with community-based organizations and education advocates to reduce the suspension, expulsion and school-based arrest rates in several communities including Baltimore, Denver, New Orleans and Chicago. The Advancement Project currently is working closely with the **National Center for Fair and Open Testing**, the **Forum for Education and Democracy**, the **Education Law Center**, the **Juvenile Law Center**, the **NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund** and other groups to raise awareness about the need to reform the Education and Secondary Education Act to ensure that testing and accountability requirements do not provide incentives for schools to push out low performing students and perpetuate the school-to-prison pipeline.

Other foundations are working to expand opportunities for young people outside the classroom. When these foundations work hand in hand with juvenile and criminal justice system reformers, they broaden constituencies for both efforts. OSI-Baltimore partnered with a local community organization and the Advancement Project to work with the Baltimore City School System to rewrite its code of conduct. As a result, the schools now have clear and fair rules governing school suspension.

They also have guidelines directing them to use other programs and techniques to prevent future misbehavior. The outcome of these efforts has been a more than 50 percent drop in school suspensions over a four year period.

ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

The high cost of incarceration and the nearly insurmountable barriers to successful reentry faced by people with criminal convictions perpetuate poverty. Foundations working to alleviate poverty and homelessness can invest in efforts to shift resources away from incarceration and toward community revitalization. Looming state budget crises create new windows of opportunity to promote a more sensible allocation of public resources.

The pragmatic criminal justice reform strategy referred to as “Justice Reinvestment” has attracted widespread and bipartisan support in states across

the country. Under the direction of the **Council of State Governments Justice Center**, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative is modeling strategies and developing policies and programs in Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Arizona, Kansas and Texas to help states safely reduce prison, parole and probation populations at a sufficient scale to generate savings for reinvestment in the infrastructure and institutions of high incarceration communities. The state of Kansas adopted a plan to save \$80.2 million in prison construction and operating costs over five years and to dedicate \$6.9 million for reinvestment in community-based programs.

Directed by the **Corps Network**, the **Civic Justice Corps (CJC)** is a national service model for reversing divestment in high incarceration neighborhoods. By engaging formerly incarcerated young people and adults in visible and valuable neighborhood improvement projects, the CJC provides a civic pathway to successful reentry and responsible citizenship and builds public support for smarter community investments. CJC’s approach reverses the stigma and alienation associated with incarceration and helps people returning from prison become valuable resources for their communities. CJC’s focus on green service-learning projects in high incarceration communities prepares corps members for careers in the emerging green economy and builds healthier communities. There currently are 17 local Civic Justice Corps demonstration projects across the country, including the Sacramento Local Conservation Corps in California, Mile High Youth Corps in Denver, Greater Miami Service Corps, Quilter Conservation Corps in Fremont, Ohio, and Operation Fresh Start in Madison, Wisconsin.

The criminal justice system has become an extremely expensive and

If foundations working
on education reform
also support organizations
dedicated to reforming
school discipline and
push-out practices,
they can build
better schools
and keep kids out of
the criminal justice system.

ineffective temporary housing “solution” for many people. Access to affordable and publicly subsidized housing is scarce for populations facing severe barriers to housing and economic stability, especially people with criminal records. Federal Housing and Urban Development guidelines continue to allow people with felony convictions to be banned from returning to subsidized homes. The result often is the unnecessary and wasteful introduction into the criminal justice system of people whose only crime is not having safe, reliable shelter. The **Corporation for Supportive Housing** is working in cities across the country to facilitate collaboration across criminal justice, human services and housing sectors to develop flexible, integrated funding streams for the creation and operation of affordable reentry housing linked to supportive services for people returning from jail or prison.

EXPANDING TREATMENT FOR DRUG ADDICTION AND MENTAL ILLNESS

The country’s failure to invest adequate resources in treatment for drug addiction and mental illness also has fueled over-incarceration. Public health and social justice funders can work together to support partnerships between criminal justice advocates and organizations promoting expanded drug treatment and mental health services to divert people from prison to treatment programs.

Drug war sentencing policies have spurred a dramatic growth in incarceration for drug offenses. About half of the people incarcerated in federal prisons are there for drug offenses, and the number of people in state prisons has increased thirteen-fold since 1980. Federal, state and local governments spend more than \$40 billion each year in hopes of realizing an unrealistic “drug-free” America. Yet, many street drugs are cheaper and more available



PHOTO BY STEVE ISS/AMERICANPOVERTY.ORG

Alejandro, a 10-year-old boy charged with possession of marijuana, stands on a milk crate to be fingerprinted.

than ever before, and unacceptably high rates of drug-related death, disease and crime persist. Organizations like the **Drug Policy Alliance**, the **Harm Reduction Coalition**, the **North American Syringe Exchange Network**, **Faces and Voices of Recovery** and the **Legal Action Center** are working to shift U.S. drug policy from its focus on international interdiction and domestic law enforcement to a public health model that aims to reduce the harms associated with drug use and make treatment available on a voluntary basis to people who need it.

Although mental illness affects a significant percentage of Americans, mental health treatment is unavailable to many who need it. As a result, many Americans with mental illnesses – particularly poor people and people of color – live on the margins of society and are at enormous risk of repeated arrest and incarceration. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, more than half of all prison and jail

inmates have suffered from mental illness. The **Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law** is engaging in impact litigation, policy advocacy and public education to end the criminalization of people with mental disabilities. The center also provides technical assistance to community-based mental health organizations for programs that reduce the criminal justice involvement of people with serious mental illness.

In Maryland, a reentry policy team has developed a Maryland Opportunity Compact proposal that seeks to improve long-term outcomes for formerly incarcerated people by providing addiction and intense case management both before and after release from prison. The program aims to reduce prison costs by returning people with substance dependence safely from prison to the community. While foundation grants will pay for the initial cohort, the Department of Corrections will use the savings from shortened prison terms for future cohorts.

CHALLENGING INEQUALITY

Just as the U.S. struggles to close the education achievement gap and end residential segregation, the criminal justice system perpetuates the country’s history of inequality by disproportionately targeting people of color. Foundations working to advance equality and level the playing field have a range of opportunities to support criminal justice reform along with other civil rights advocacy. Some of the country’s preeminent civil rights organizations support criminal justice reform in tandem with other civil rights priorities. The **NAACP** is broadening its work on criminal justice. The **Leadership Conference on Civil Rights** continues to be a key player in sentencing reform efforts. Think tanks like the **Applied Research Center** and the **Aspen Institute’s Roundtable on Community Change** are

documenting racial profiling and linking disparities in criminal justice to education, employment, housing and child welfare. Online racial justice networks like **Color of Change** are drawing international attention to specific cases like the Jena Six and the Oscar Grant shooting by Oakland police. Last year, Color of Change organized opposition to the crack/powder sentencing disparity and produced a video with the **Brennan Center for Justice** at New York University School of Law called "My First Vote," which documents the disenfranchisement of people with criminal records.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Although criminal justice reform remains woefully under-resourced, there are promising signs that more foundations

are recognizing the connection between entrenched poverty and inequality and the over-incarceration epidemic. A newly organized Criminal Justice Funders Network aims to expand support for organizations working to reform the criminal justice system. In addition to the Open Society Institute, the group includes the Ford Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation, The California Endowment, the Fund for Non-Violence, The Omnia Foundation, The Peace Development Fund, The Rosenberg Foundation, The U.S. Human Rights Fund, The Women Donors Network, The Women's Foundation of California, and the Race Gender Human Rights Fund. The Foundation Center's 2009 Report, Social Justice Grantmaking II, identifies a growing optimism and new strategies for foundations to work together to support

a range of much-needed reforms. By reforming bad policies and shifting resources away from incarceration and toward education, housing and public health, organizations supported by a range of foundations can work together to build healthy, sustainable communities. ■

Ann Beeson is the executive director of U.S. Programs at the Open Society Institute.

Notes

1. I am grateful for the research and drafting assistance of William Johnston, program officer, Criminal Justice Fund, U.S. Programs, Open Society Institute.

PULSE EVENTS

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Organizing for Impact

May 19, 2010, 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Speakers

Aaron Dorfman, NCRP Executive Director; and **Marjorie Fine**, Linchpin Campaign at the Center for Community Change

Nonprofit organizing, advocacy, and civic engagement have demonstrated impact in improving the lives of millions in communities around the world. More and more foundations are taking another look at these strategies. What role do these social change strategies play at your foundation or in the foundations with which you work? What role could they have? How can those interested in social justice work make the case within and to these institutions to encourage greater investment?

For more information or to register, visit www.ncrp.org/partners-members/pulse-events or contact Kevin Laskowski at klaskowski@ncrp.org.

Edward W. Hazen Foundation

New York, NY

www.hazenfoundation.org

Est. 1925



EDWARD W. HAZEN FOUNDATION

MISSION

Since its founding in 1925, the Edward W. Hazen Foundation has focused primarily on the education and development of young people, who Mr. Hazen once described as “those who in the natural course of events will be the leaders of tomorrow.”

Years later, the foundation began to focus on community organizing for education reform and youth organizing, with four goals: (1) effective schools for all students; (2) full partnerships for parents and communities working to reform and restructure their school systems; (3) development of young people; and (4) policies, social systems and public institutions that are supportive, responsible and accountable to youth and their communities.

RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF COMMUNITIES

After witnessing several groups using organizing strategies to analyze and improve their communities’ schools, the Hazen Foundation was drawn

immediately to the groups’ approach for its change-focused agenda and high potential impact. Foundation president Lori Bezahler said, “The power of collective action was very much in the values that we hold as an institution about who controls knowledge, who makes decisions for communities and how that can be realigned in such a way to be reflective of communities and therefore have the real voice and power of communities.”

Hazen feels that community organizing produces innovative education policies and programs, enlightens education funders and strengthens the next generation of social justice leaders.

“On a number of occasions when communities or community organizing groups have brought about change, we have seen that the political will generated from bringing that change into existence helps sustain it, despite the churn of reform. That’s also why we think organizing is a valuable lever for reform,” said Bezahler.

PRIORITIZING RACIAL JUSTICE

Also vital to Hazen’s spirit as an institution is its commitment to racial justice. Encouraging internal and external diversity and equity became a priority for the foundation, greatly due to the tenacity of Jean Fairfax, one of two African Americans who joined Hazen’s board of trustees in 1973. “It was she who was constantly asking the question, ‘If this is serving this community, how is this community in a decision-making position in this organization?’” said Bezahler.

Racial justice continues to be central to Hazen’s work, and the foundation recently rewrote its mission statement to make its commitment even more explicit. Hazen feels a responsibility to challenge other grantmakers on the issue of race and to drive the conversation in the philanthropic community.

“We think it’s really important, perhaps now more than ever, to define what racial justice means,” said Bezahler. “What are the structural issues that go beyond individual prejudice that affect young peoples’ lives? How we do address these as grantmakers in terms of who we fund, how we work with our grantees and how we help them to become more sophisticated and more nuanced in their understanding of those issues?” ■

Meredith Brodbeck, communications assistant at the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), prepared this member profile.



Above Left: Photo courtesy of Coleman Advocates, San Francisco. Above Right: Photo courtesy of Padres y Jovenes Unidos, Denver



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