

SHIFTING THE FUND-RAISING PARADIGM

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Pressure to change the prevailing fund-raising paradigm, which is powered by historical patterns of raising major donor dollars that control allocations, is coming from women who are advocates for women's and children's needs. They argue that their needs are not being met currently by their federations. Through the establishment of Jewish Women's Foundations, these activist donors are attempting a new way to define, research, and solve problems affecting women and children. In so doing, they are reaching out to new donors, inspiring established givers, and giving women the knowledge and power to make their own funding decisions apart from the normative federation structure.

Several Jewish federations have established Jewish Women's Foundations, with the goals of reaching out to new donors, enlivening the interest of established givers, and providing women the knowledge and power to make their own funding decisions apart from the normative federation allocation structure. At issue is the attempt to shift the prevailing fund-raising paradigm.

This article explores the questions and issues posed by these new foundations. The accompanying article by Sylvia Neil focuses on one of the most well-established Jewish Women's Foundations.

THE CURRENT FUND-RAISING PARADIGM

The current fund-raising model functions according to precedent, relying on major donor dollars and the annual campaign calendar structure. Although women have recently expanded their involvement in the determination of community priorities and the allocation of moneys raised, generally they have had less financial capability than men with which to affect and define their local federation's activities. The tendency is for large donors to preserve and control the areas of funding, making it difficult to put new issues of concern on the communal agenda. Information about new issues and needs tends to come from within the established funding community, either from federation staff or the agencies themselves.

Also, the long-established fund-raising structure is driven by the requirement to raise funds each year. The campaign schedule dictates the parameters of educational and social activity that federations provide their donors. It also limits the time in which to plan and evaluate what services are being provided in the community or should receive more serious consideration.

Pressure to change the prevailing fund-raising paradigm has come from women who are advocates for women's and children's needs, which they argue are not being met currently by their federations. They are urging federation decision makers to provide both greater attention and more Jewish community dollars to these issues. They are seeking a new way to define, research, and solve specific problems affecting the lives of women and children.

REACHING THE VISION OF JEWISH WOMEN'S FOUNDATIONS

Jewish Women's Foundations have women's and children's needs as the core of their vision, rather than raising money for an array of local agencies and for Israel. Can a change in vision and in operational modes be accomplished, thus ensuring greater female participation? Whose agenda will be followed—that of the federation or of the women—or will both work in concert? From where will information and research on unmet needs come—from inside the federation or

from outside sources? Will Jewish Women's Foundations share their expertise and resources with fledgling foundations? And most important, who will have actual control of the Foundation? Because the Foundation is owned legally by the federation, can it be structured separately, with its own staff, vision, and operating procedures? These questions remain to be answered.

Although the existing Women's Foundations vary in structure, they share several common elements. Foremost is their activist approach to funding, which necessarily elevates the importance of educational efforts. Within the traditional federation culture, education is secondary to the pressure to bring in money. For the most part, donors have been content to let federation staff define the issues, having made the assumption that the best planning is found in the inside of the federation.

In contrast, Women's Foundation donors set the goal for themselves of effectuating change with the funds they raise themselves. Becoming strategic, informed funders who solve problems, rather than merely funding traditional services, requires extensive education not only about the needs of the community but also about the relationship between grantor and grantee. It requires a commitment to do the necessary research, to go where women and children work and learn. It also requires an assertive stance that advocates the value of funding programs solely for this target population. And finally it requires a willingness to fund innovative and sometimes experimental new programs.

The new Women's Foundations are predicated on examining the totality of women's status in the community. In addition to funding new programs, they must explore how existing services meet the needs of women and children. For example, can immigrant resettlement services be redesigned to better meet the needs of families? What about services to the developmentally disabled children and adults alike?

A basic funding decision that each Women's Foundation must make is whether to fund women's and children's programs

serving solely Jewish clients or to follow more universalistic strategies. Outreach to new donors may require making a more universal appeal. However, there is no guarantee that collaboration with other, different groups will take place, and thus these efforts should be monitored carefully.

Jewish Women's Foundations have the potential of involving women donors at all giving levels, though the first such foundations have set minimum gifts of \$10,000 payable over five years. This elitist model reinforces the perception that new programs can only be funded with major gifts by more privileged donors. Thus, major marketing efforts must be undertaken to show the impact of smaller contributions.

Finally, the first Jewish Women's Foundations, which are located in large Jewish communities, have the responsibility to share their expertise with fledgling efforts in smaller communities that have a more limited universe of women donors with which to work.

CONCLUSION

Risk is inherent in the development of Jewish Women's Foundations. Change is always difficult and may provoke complaints both from within the federation and from new donors about the new fund-raising paradigm. If quick results, both in raising money and in making effective funding decisions, are not produced the way that donors are accustomed to in annual campaigns, then there may be a fall-off in interest. There is no guarantee that women's issues will be less marginalized or that collaboration with minority groups to address common concerns will take place.

For all these reasons, it is essential that local federations provide the time and the start-up costs to enable the Jewish Women's Foundations to organize, to study issues before making grants, and to develop an advocacy role within the federation. Introducing change in both process and substance requires that the staff and lay people of the Foundation work in concert with those of the federation, providing regular progress reports to the federation board. Continuous

evaluation of the Women's Foundation's efforts is key to determining whether it is fulfilling its vision.

Much has been learned from this paradigm shift. First, many women now recognize their ability to effect change, and they are taking that risk. Understanding the histori-

cal culture of the federation, they are willing to become activist donors who are bringing the new agenda of women's and children's needs to the community. And federations, in providing the start-up costs and/or separate space facilities of launching the foundations have committed themselves to this shift.