

MEASURING SOCIAL CHANGE INVESTMENTS

A Research Project of the Women's Funding Network

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Over the past 30 years, philanthropic institutions in the United States have increasingly invested their resources in ways they anticipate will lead to powerful and positive change in the lives of women and girls (Capek, 2001). The Women's Funding Movement has grown in response to a variety of social, political, and institutional injustices that leave women and girls at a disadvantage in terms of achieving their full potential within society. Funders within this movement have supported all kinds of activities directed at ameliorating these injustices, including direct services, education, and advocacy. Worthwhile investment strategies and practices have been developed over time by individual institutions and shared among other foundations and funds with the same interests in and commitments to building a more just and equitable society. For the last several years, members of the Women's Funding Movement have been engaged in ongoing discussion about the need to systematically consolidate their knowledge and expertise in such a way that the significance of these social change investments can be demonstrated and used in planning future investment and fundraising strategies.

Social change philanthropy specifically invites people to invest in transforming some component of their world for the better. The history of women's philanthropy clearly demonstrates that these investments produce dramatic improvements in the lives of women and girls as well as significant change in broader social, political, and institutional landscapes. Among other things, grants have fueled advocacy and legislative change, built domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers, and promoted economic justice by helping to move women into employment and out of poverty. In addition to grantmaking, funding institutions have broadly invested in such areas as research, education, and capacity building among their grantees. In spite of the visible changes resulting from these investments, the development of tools and processes for identifying and measuring the changes as they unfold has failed to keep pace. Philanthropists *know* that their investments had significant impact because they can look back at the history of their efforts and the outcomes they produced. But they currently require more expertise at systematically building the body of evidence that will enable them to project this history forward. Their grantee partners *know* that their work was important, but need training in the methods that will enable them to capture the results of their actions. The goal is to develop the ability to (a) articulate how social change investments and activities today will help create the structure, culture, knowledge, and influence that will shift the slow-moving world in desirable directions, and (b) effectively track how these investments and activities are related to outcomes at various levels (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2002).

The Women's Funding Network (WFN) is a worldwide partnership of women's funds, donors, and allies committed to social justice, in particular as it relates to appreciating women and girls as key to building strong, equitable, and sustainable communities and societies. As part of its commitment to making certain that women's funds and their

grantee partners are recognized as the investment of choice of people with shared values, WFN is supporting ongoing research on *Measuring Social Change Investments*. The research will explore how change is understood and measured in the broader universe, develop and test a model for understanding and measuring the impact of philanthropic investments and activities that benefit women and girls, and begin to disseminate what women's philanthropic institutions and their grantee partners know and continue to learn about the best ways to initiate and sustain social change, whether through strategic grantmaking or strategic activities. In addition, the results of this work will lead WFN to develop tools and processes to enable its members and their grantee partners—individually and collectively—to track and understand their achievements in ways that will enable them to develop more effective future strategies and attract new donors to the movement. This work is important both because WFN member funds and their grantee partners need to be able to track the results of their work, and because it is important for all philanthropists and philanthropic institutions working on issues important to women and girls to be able to collectively demonstrate the real value and impact of their investments.

BACKGROUND

Although the history of the Women's Funding Movement demonstrates success on a large scale, social change philanthropists understand that much work remains to be done. To preserve and expand achievements will require increased levels of investment and, in order to attract new funding partners, philanthropic institutions will need to expand their ability to demonstrate the impact of their grantmaking and other activities. In the economic environment of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, a number of converging realities dictate the need for socially responsible philanthropists to match the skill of those with less interest in social change at both articulating the need for and tracking the societal changes for which they have struggled. A generally strong economy and the rapid expansion of industries associated with high tech and information technology dramatically increased the number of high wealth individuals in this country in the 1990s and simultaneously boosted the assets of the middle class. The initial result was a wider pool of potential donors for philanthropic institutions as well as the possibility of larger gifts. But early research on this group shows that different strategies are required to attract some of these donors, particularly those new economy business people whose incomes increased rapidly during this period and who are accustomed to a fast pace and rapid results in all they do (Ragey, 2001). More recently, the booming economy lagged, making these and other potential donors more cautious about the kinds of investments they make, and more demanding of evidence of the outcomes of the investments they make. In the current situation, philanthropic institutions must develop strategies to attract new investors, and to do so, they must be able to present compelling evidence of their achievements. If they are unable to do so, they risk the loss of important opportunities to attract new funding partners to the work and to maintain the strong commitment of their current partners. The

popularized acronym coined to reflect this more recent expectation of donors is *SROI* (Social Return on Investment). While newly named, this concept of measuring social change investments has been an ongoing concern in the field of philanthropy since its inception.

Measuring Social Change Investments builds on ongoing discussions among members of the Women's Funding Movement interested in better understanding various aspects of the social change around which their work revolves. Questions such as, *How do we evaluate the impact of our work*, and, *How do we know when we've succeeded* reflect their desire to become more effective at tracking and claiming the impact of social change investments. The *Measuring Social Change Investments* research was designed by WFN after examining the results of a study completed by the Women's Fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (2001). This work examined how a sample of 18 foundations support public policy and advocacy work and how they measure progress in terms of social change achieved as a result of their investments. The Women's Fund conducted a review of the advocacy literature which confirmed a lack of specific knowledge or tools for the effective measurement of the results of advocacy activities. The review also concluded that traditional evaluation methods (including surveys, focus groups, interviews, observation, and stories or anecdotal evidence) may represent the best methods currently available. More generally, the study found that most foundations directly engaged in and supporting non-profit organizations involved in public policy, advocacy, and other social change strategies are unclear about the most effective methods for measuring the impact of their investments. One study participant reported the use of specific indicators—actual policy change, increases in membership, contact with policy makers, and media coverage—as evidence of the foundation's effective grantmaking, but relatively little broad understanding and agreement on these issues was discovered. Many study participants reported they relied on grantees to establish goals and outcome measures, resulting in interesting but inconsistent information for use in strategic grantmaking decisions. Yet most study participants reported an interest in developing their ability to establish specific goals and measure specific outcomes of their grantmaking.

The *Measuring Social Change Investments* effort moves beyond Milwaukee study in a number of ways. Through it, WFN:

- ❑ Has conducted a more in-depth review of the broad literature related to social change and build a case for understanding the unique contributions to broad-scale change made by women's philanthropic institutions.
- ❑ Is developing and testing a model for understanding and measuring the impact of philanthropic investments in social change that benefits women and girls.
- ❑ Is designing and disseminating tools and processes that enable non-profit and philanthropic institutions to track and evaluate achievements in a way that

informs the alteration of approaches and the development of new strategies as programs advance.

The remainder of this paper is organized in two sections. The Understanding Change section presents evidence from the literature review for an interpretation of how social change can be understood by philanthropists and grantee partners interested in the issues of importance to women and girls. This section argues that social change is multi-dimensional and inevitable, and that to measure it will require a model that can accommodate both its complexity and lack of predictability. In order to be effective, a model must also capture the rich array of achievements—from micro to macro in scale—that represent the result of deliberate investment in transforming the social and institutional landscapes of our world. The Achievement Vector section presents a preliminary model for exploring the social change outcomes of philanthropic investments and the efforts of the grantee organizations they support. The model incorporates many of the dimensions of change that emerged in the literature review and represents a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures of the achievements of these organizations.

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE

This section presents the results of a review of the literature related to social change, exploring the question from a variety of perspectives and moving from the general to the more specific. Social change is an elusive category because of its complexity and the many different understandings of just what it means and how it occurs. The review is therefore broad, and attempts to make sense of change in a way that will make the most sense for philanthropic institutions working toward social change that positively impacts women and girls.

What is Social Change?

One of the reasons social change is difficult to pin down is that it occurs at different levels within society. Structural change is different than cultural change, although the two are interconnected. Change in social structure means change that happens within society's institutions—the government, the economy, the workplace, the family, for example—and change within these institutions represents the kind of large-scale change that is often a major goal of philanthropic investments. An example of a desirable structural change would be that increasing numbers of women hold legislative positions within local, state, and federal governments. Individuals are actors within institutions, and engage in different kinds behavior in relationship to them. But individuals also exist outside of the institutional structures that impact their lives. Change in culture means change that happens in the *way* people do things, in the symbolic and expressive behaviors they engage in both within and outside institutional contexts. An example of a desirable cultural change would be that society generally accepts the increasing presence of women in legislative positions as a normal and

appropriate state of affairs rather than an oddity. While some scholars argue that structure creates culture, a more dynamic view suggests that culture both reflects and affects social structure (Rubin, 1996). From this perspective, it would be important for philanthropic institutions to invest in both kinds of change in order to achieve their goals.

Understanding that the outward appearance of change depends on the distinct lens through which it is viewed, e.g., a structural or cultural lens, becomes informative when exploring other levels at which change happens. From a macro perspective, change is sometimes seen as something that happens *to* people, something they have to deal with, accept, and adapt to. For example, the late 20th century saw the movement of certain kinds of jobs from within American borders to other countries. For many, change of this magnitude appears to be the result of historical forces, as a reality that individuals can do little about. And the corollary change that happened in those other countries—increased labor abuses and compromise of workers' rights in some instances—can be almost completely invisible to people struggling to adapt to the loss of their own job (Basu, 1995). From a micro perspective, the impact of this kind of change can be comprehended by examining how individual lives are advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of shifting labor markets (Rubin, 1996). Understanding what happens in individual lives when an employer abandons a neighborhood is much easier than comprehending the meaning of the macro-level statistics about the global movement of jobs.

For social change philanthropists, making the connection between the macro and micro levels of change is crucial because it is often the gray area toward which their investments are targeted. For example, one kind of job that moved from the United States was the sewing of garments for large manufacturers, a job done mostly by women. The impact of the loss of these jobs represents a negative social change, resulting in increased poverty for women, their families, and their communities and all the corresponding issues associated with poverty. The efforts of social change philanthropists might be directed at ameliorating the immediate effects of the women's poverty, at helping victims and others recognize the underlying causes of their difficulties, at educating the public and calling attention to the problem, or at other aspects of the resulting situation. Their goals might be to bring back or create new employment opportunities in a neighborhood, help the victims negotiate their lives until new opportunities arose, and create the kinds of structures and protections that would increase the likelihood of the new jobs being permanent. Ideally, philanthropists investing in creating a positive change in the situation would also be aware of the impact of their work on behalf of local women on women workers elsewhere. Thus, their social change investments would happen at many levels in that gray area between macro and micro conditions.

To understand how those investments combine to make change, philanthropists must be able to measure success at different levels as well. When social change goals are

framed as changes in macro-level indicators, e.g., a more equitable distribution of manufacturing jobs on a global level, it is easy to feel that change has not happened until the macro-level indicator shifts. But the separate components at the micro level that combine to create the shift in the indicator also represent important change independent of the macro-level change.

How Does Social Change Happen?

There is no question that macro-level change is critical in terms of increasing justice for women and girls, but there is disagreement among scholars about the order in which the “inputs” must occur in order to achieve the desired outcome. From one perspective, “Laws are made to function as locomotives pulling social change in a desired direction” (Kaul, 1991). This view suggests the primary goal of social change investment should be to directly impact public policy, to actually begin by changing laws which would then drive change at other levels of society. But history provides other lessons. Change also emerges out of efforts that occur at the community level, and change that occurs among smaller groups of people clearly also drives what happens legislatively (Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991; Bruyn & Rayman, 1979; Elshtain, 2002; Naples, 1998). Many aspects of the broad women’s movement and the more specific efforts within it effectively illustrate this possibility (e.g., Fraser, 1990; Gordon, 1994; Gordon, 1990; Sapiro, 1990; Skocpol, 1992). Other literature supports both sets of ideas, suggesting that there is an ongoing interplay between what happens at the two levels (Rubin, 1996). In describing the various theories regarding ways in which public policy agendas are established, Kingdon (1984) reveals the complexity (and sometimes chaos) that drives how legislative change happens. This work illustrates that generating sufficient salience for an issue to capture the attention of the legislature is frequently a less linear process than activists might hope, and highlights the fact that social change is rarely an orderly process. Some historical evidence demonstrates that even when an issue reaches the legislative agenda as a result of the hard work of advocates, (e.g., Mansbridge, 1986) the cultural change required to support and demand passage of legislation fails to keep pace with activists’ efforts.

There are many other lenses through which to think about social change and how it happens. Western perspectives characterize social change as something that the community can organize around, influence, and guide (Bynum, 1992; Crowfoot, Chesler, & Boulet, 1983; Franz & Stewart, 1994; Marris & Rein, 1967). Other cultures have different perspectives, for example, some consider change as an external, natural, and inevitable force to which people respond but over which they have little direct control (Maruyama, 1983). Adding to the complexity of the question of how change happens are the variety of cultural interpretations and perspectives that demonstrate that what is meaningful and appropriate change in one setting may be undesirable in another (Teske & Tétreault, 2000; Thomas, 2000). Differences often emerge at the international level because countries struggle to define appropriate change from within their own context which may reflect a very different level of development than other

countries. What constitutes appropriate change is also a contested arena within societies, communities, and even social movements, with conservatives, liberals, progressives, and radicals competing for the power to establish their own definitions of appropriate conditions, opportunities, and policies (Frazer, 1990; Ryan, 1992). Institutions also play a part in the social construction of reality (Berger, 1966), with the media, politics, and others taking an active role (Bennett, 1988; Frazer, 1990; Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

Within this complexity, the proactive effort of any particular group to influence the direction of social change becomes one among many competing influences. History demonstrates that social change occurs in different ways on different occasions in different places (McCarthy, 2001; Howard, 1974). Because it is the result of myriad, sometimes unconnected, actions and because it is rarely an immediate or direct result of any given effort to create it, it is difficult for any group to claim a direct causal link between a particular set of actions or investments and a broad social change outcome (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2002). The action or investment may not only be separated by years from a concrete measurable outcome at the macro level, but the issue itself often changes as the process of effecting social change proceeds (Buechler, 1997; Schechter, 1982). One theory suggests that social change is a question of balance and that while philanthropists and activists may work on an issue for lengthy periods with little concrete evidence of success, a point may come when the efforts have produced enough issue salience in the form of smaller-scale change that the issue develops an impetus of its own and progresses with less struggle to the macro-level change desired (Gladwell, 2000). Large-scale social change is almost always a grindingly slow process; success is mostly achieved in small increments on convoluted pathways subject to all kinds of positive and negative influences over time (Buechler, 1997). And because change is dynamic rather than static, it is rarely complete: success for one interest group inevitably represents failure for another, resulting in ever-changing landscapes of pushing and pulling at social issues.

How Do We Recognize Change?

The recognition of change can occur in a variety of ways. Sometimes people are simply aware that something is different in their social world; their awareness is based on feelings rather than any kind of direct analysis. While feelings are an important indicator, organizations are usually called upon to provide other kinds of evidence that their activities have resulted in some kind of measurable change. Indicators are the evidence generally used to identify when something is different (Yeung & Mathieson, 1998). Increases in the number of women elected to Congress, changes in public law, and reductions in the number of women experiencing domestic violence all represent possible indicators that things are improving for women and girls. Indicators are established through a process of identifying goals; plans for achieving those goals are developed by linking the desired change in the indicator with the strategic activities believed to be instrumental in making the particular change happen. Benchmarks are

points within any given indicator that marks a particular stage of the overall achievement or progress along the way. So, for example, if the social change goal is for women to hold at least 50% of Congressional seats, the indicator is the actual number of seats held, and benchmarks of success would be established in increments based on what is reasonable and can actually be accomplished.

Although indicators are an effective way to measure social change, they tend to be used to measure macro-level changes, and, as they are established in advance based on major goals, they tend to be linear and relatively one-dimensional. Most of what we know about social change suggests that it is rarely linear and never one-dimensional. This means that *in addition* to indicators that capture the trajectory of change as it proceeds toward pre-defined (and often macro-level) goals, social change philanthropists require a model for understanding change that also provides opportunities to incorporate the shifting realities of change as it is happening, as well as to capture more micro-level transformations of social, political, and institutional landscapes.

Women as Agents for Change

For participants in the Women's Funding Movement, there is no question that social change is understood as responsive to the strategic investment of resources at a variety of levels. The long tradition of women investing in the creation of a better world confirms that investors believe in social justice and are willing to invest resources in ways they believe will result in positive social change (Capek, 2001). Women around the world have invested financial and other resources in ways that make sense in their particular local situation, but have also attempted to maintain a sense of the global consequences of local action (McCarthy, 2001).

The 30-year history of the modern Women's Funding Movement provides stark evidence of the extent of the impact of women's insistence on being central actors in the definition and creation of social justice. Some examples of this impact include increases in the number of women who hold board and staff leadership positions in foundations; the growth in research on the status of women and girls; the expanding participation of women in regional and national meetings; and the number of women's funds supporting the work of non-profit organizations (Capek, 2001). Related movements have also produced profound impacts on American society. During the Progressive Era, women fought for the protections of Mother's Pensions, for the right to vote, and later for protections under the Social Security Act (Gordon, 1994; Skocpol, 1992). After mid-century, women organized and participated in numerous movements, including the Shelter and Anti-Violence Movements, the Welfare Rights Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement (Morken & Selle, 1994; Schechter, 1982). Toward the end of the century, women had succeeded in dramatically increasing the number of women in Congress, expanded the role of women in supporting the rights of groups with less access to the centers of power such as lesbians, immigrants, and the disabled (Rubin, 1996), and joined forces with women around the world in the International Movement

for Human Security. Within these movements, women not only invested in creating change, but did so from within frameworks that reflected their own ways of interacting, being inclusive, and getting the work done (Gittell, Ortega-Bustamente, & Steffy, 1999).

Claiming the Results of Collective Investments

Participants in the Women's Funding Movement have established goals that represent the virtual transformation of the social, political, and institutional domains; these goals include the development of social structures that enable women and girls to achieve their full potential. In contrast to philanthropists whose investments target the deconstruction of social support systems and the reduction of government's influence in human lives, progressive philanthropists invest much more broadly, aiming to both ameliorate current problems and build better systems for the future (Covington, 1997; Feree & Martin, 1995). Given the apparent successes of investments in the deconstruction of social support systems, it may seem that the narrowing of strategies is appropriate for the Women's Funding Movement. But in spite of the potential attractiveness of that possibility—generated in part by the daunting nature of the seemingly boundless scope of what needs to be done—the lessons of change suggest that a different strategy is appropriate. While increased investment in advocacy and public policy is needed, the retention and expansion of broad-based strategies is also critical. What may be far more important in the long run than the development of strategies for investment efficiency based on more narrowly targeted efforts, is the courage to claim the breadth and depth of past achievements, and to develop future strategies that capture, reflect, and build on those expansive efforts of the past.

In order to convince current and potential donors that their investments will contribute to social change outcomes, philanthropists within the Women's Funding Movement need to be able to speak with authority about two things: how the investments they make in specific activities are tied to the outcomes they hope to achieve, and the extent to which they have made progress on the indicators they have established for their success (Ostrander, 1995; Nagai, Lerner, & Rothman, 1994; Shaw & Taylor, 1995). But how they go about constructing these arguments will also have an impact. Teske (2000) argues that a feminist vision of the future depends on how people relate to one another, and the extent to which the understanding of power is related to the collectivity of effective action (power *with* rather than power *over*). She uses a "hopeful metaphor . . . The Butterfly Effect" (p. 116) to describe how small changes in context can ultimately change the world. The challenge for women philanthropists is to make sense and extract some degree of order from a chaotic world. To do this, Capek (2001) concludes that they must develop new thinking, new language, new collaborations and coalitions, and new strategies in order to maintain and build the momentum generated thus far.

Measuring outcomes only in terms of broad social change such as legislative change diminishes the importance of the many investments that comprise both the groundwork for large scale change and often result in smaller scale, intermediate

outcomes. Cross sectional—or point-in-time—analysis similarly fails to capture the growing force for change that results from small-scale investments. Looking back is required to actually see the cumulative effects of sustained giving and effort; looking forward represents the opportunity to implement the lessons of the past. A model and process for capturing and building on past achievements that simultaneously acknowledges the many dimensions of change should reflect:

- ❑ Lessons learned over time *and* in the present,
- ❑ Indicators that capture macro- *and* micro- level successes,
- ❑ Evidence of major achievements *and* the more mundane and routine activities that constitute preparing the “soil” for change,
- ❑ The ability to plan for specific outcomes *and* the ability to move in unanticipated directions, and
- ❑ Moving forward *and* incorporating the lessons of the past.

ACHIEVEMENT VECTOR

The Achievement Vector (AV) represents a preliminary model developed by the Women’s Funding Network of how individual non-profit organizations (grantees) might rate themselves in terms of how their activities and actions both produce specific social change outcomes and contribute and connect to the efforts of others working toward the same broad social change goals. The intention is that the AV be used by philanthropic institutions for the purpose of capturing information about the combined impact of their grantmaking activities. Additionally, the AV is meant to be useful for non-profit organizations in evaluating their performance on the outcomes of their strategies for social change. Once tested at the grantee level, the model will also be adapted for additional uses by funders interested in examining their own activities and actions, social change outcomes, and connectedness within the larger Women’s Funding Movement. Ultimately, WFN may gather the results of multiple Achievement Vectors into a comprehensive body of evidence of how many independent investments in social change are both resulting in small and large scale change, and building the necessary critical mass to more generally move our society and world in a better direction.

The “vector” concept comes from international benchmarking work on development. The term is used to suggest multiple measures (vectors) whose interconnectedness creates a web of the critical components that represent progress (Yeung & Mathieson, 1998). Both the term and the visual representation are useful for the *Measuring Social Change Investments* project. The term vector is important because it conveys both magnitude and direction; the visual is important because it conveys the interconnectedness of what may otherwise seem like independent activities. Both of these characteristics are important for understanding the impact of social change investments. Additionally, the vector moves beyond more traditional models for

evaluating change that tend to be linear and to leave little room for capturing and understanding the significance of intermediate or unanticipated outcomes (Branch, Hooper, Thompson, & Creighton, 1984; Taylor-Powell, 2001).

The McAuley Success Measures Project (2001) informs the work in that it offers support for the idea that specific groups need to establish and generate evidence for their successes from within their own frames of reference while doing so in ways that speak to more universal understandings of development. Research conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy (2002) confirms both the need for a multidimensional approach and the appropriateness of building this model upward to the funder level as well.

The vector categories represent a synthesis of what is known about the kinds of investments in social change that led directly to or formed part of the foundation for achieving the desired results. This knowledge emerges from the grantmaking experience of social change philanthropists within the Women's Funding Movement and is supported by research in a variety of sectors (e.g., Ackelson, 1988; Halpern, 1997; National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy [1995, 1995, 1997, 2000]; Steinberg, 1996). The categories are:

- ❑ Naming the Issue
- ❑ Direct Service
- ❑ Education and Public Awareness
- ❑ Knowledge and Research
- ❑ Advocacy and Public Policy
- ❑ Community Organizing

Each of the six vectors represents a component of the fabric of social change; the six together illustrate a comprehensive picture of how a non-profit organization contributes to creating change.¹ There is a linear logic to the ordering of the vectors that represents the sequence of activities the history of some social movements demonstrates. But the model also provides a way for an organization to report its achievements in just one category if that is where its efforts are focused, while simultaneously capturing and recognizing the value of connections with others doing different components of the larger work. The vector also allows for the recording of efforts and achievements that occur in an order other than the linear model. Using the Shelter Movement (also referred to as the Anti-Violence Movement or Domestic Violence Movement) as an example (e.g., Schechter, 1982), the progression of social change investment through the six vector categories could be illustrated as:

- In the early 1970s, at a time when women who were battered in the home were viewed by society as passive, dependent, and somehow responsible for their own

¹ See Page 15 for a graphic representation of the Achievement Vector model and a condensed version of the related assessment questions.

plight, early work by feminists and grassroots activists led to the *naming* of the issue—domestic violence—through the refutation of then-accepted theories and the claiming of both the knowledge and the right to analyze and deal with the issue.

- The movement grew, providing *direct service* to women who suffered from domestic violence and creating the social and physical space for women to examine the issue and their experiences from a variety of perspectives (e.g., social, cultural, institutional) and to build the collective energy to demand the appropriate social response to the increasingly visible problem.
- As shelters helped women recover on an individual level, it quickly became apparent that just as the problem was not about individual women, the solution could not be wholly the responsibility of individual women. Recognition that recovery depended on society's acknowledgement of domestic violence and on a demand for corresponding changes in institutions led to *education and public awareness* campaigns targeting police, hospital staff, and others whose cooperation was required.
- At the same time, *research* by groups committed to issues of social justice generated new *knowledge* about the extent of the problem of domestic violence. For example, in the mid-1990s researchers uncovered evidence that low-income women often experienced levels of violence that negatively affected their attempts to leave welfare. In the context of welfare reform and limits on public assistance benefits, this knowledge contributed to the creation of waivers on the time limits of low-income mothers suffering abuse.
- Throughout the history of this movement, others were involved in *advocacy and public policy* reform efforts that challenged ineffective or nonexistent laws as well as the inequitable distribution of financial resources.
- Finally, as change began to occur at one level, new recognition of the extensiveness of the problem of domestic violence emerged. *Community organizing* represents an increasingly important activity in that it serves to identify and uplift local women and men into leadership positions that enable them to contribute to the ongoing sustainability of the movement.

Within each of the vectors, the model breaks down four standards for achievement:

1. Listening—intended to measure the kinds of situations and experiences organizations are involved in that promote opportunities for hearing what the community (broadly defined) is saying about the issue. Effective listening creates opportunities for uplifting the voices of women and girls and putting a human face on critical change issues, identifying important partners in the work, detecting new trends in the life course of an issue, and gathering evidence of success and the need for new strategies, among other things (Naples & Clark, 1996; Reinharz, 1992).

2. Collaboration and Empowerment—intended to measure the extent to which organizations are aware of and working alongside others toward shared social change goals, and the degree to which organizations are working to strengthen individual and collective voices in relationship to an issue (Hartsook, 1996).
3. Action—intended to measure the specific activities engaged in by organizations targeted to achieving defined outcomes.
4. Outcomes—intended to measure outcomes—both intended and unanticipated—that result from efforts in the other three categories. Outcomes at the organizational level will often appear as intermediate steps to achieving large-scale social change rather than absolute success on an issue.

Part of the purpose of testing the model is to discover how organizations currently invest their resources and the extent to which they function in multi-dimensional ways to effect social change. Understanding these investments will enable philanthropic institutions to make better strategic decisions about how they invest their resources. For example, while it may appear to be ideal that every organization is involved in activities in each vector category, it may actually be more efficient for organizations to specialize but to be simultaneously involved in partnerships and collaborations with groups concentrating their energies in other vector categories. What is clear is the need to be either directly or indirectly involved in activities in each vector category.

At the level of the non-profit organization, the information will be gathered through a series of questions that will be framed around the *Listen, Collaborate and Empower*, and *Action* values. Each organization will work with the list of six vectors and be asked to (a) rank them in order of importance in terms of what they do based on percentage of resources invested, (b) indicate what activities they do in each vector in terms of listening, collaborating, and action, and (c) report on the social change outcomes their efforts have directly led to or to which they have made a contribution. At the level of the funder, the information could be gathered in a similar way except funders would be reporting on both their grantmaking investments and their own activities. At this level, the project could begin to examine gaps in terms of what gets supported and what does not (e.g., whether funders are supporting community organizing) and could begin to disseminate lessons about balancing investments in each of the vector categories.

One reason the vector model may be especially effective is that so many other conceptual frameworks can be overlaid. One important overlay might be the building of organizational capacity to reach maximum possible achievement in terms of program delivery capacity, expansion capacity, and adaptive capacity (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1999). Through understanding how organizations currently work toward change, funders may decide to invest in capacity building that will facilitate grantees' ability to participate more extensively in broader social change efforts. The Achievement Vector also meshes nicely with the work of the Chicago Foundation for Women on organizational sustainability (Puntenney, 2000), which emphasizes the need for non-

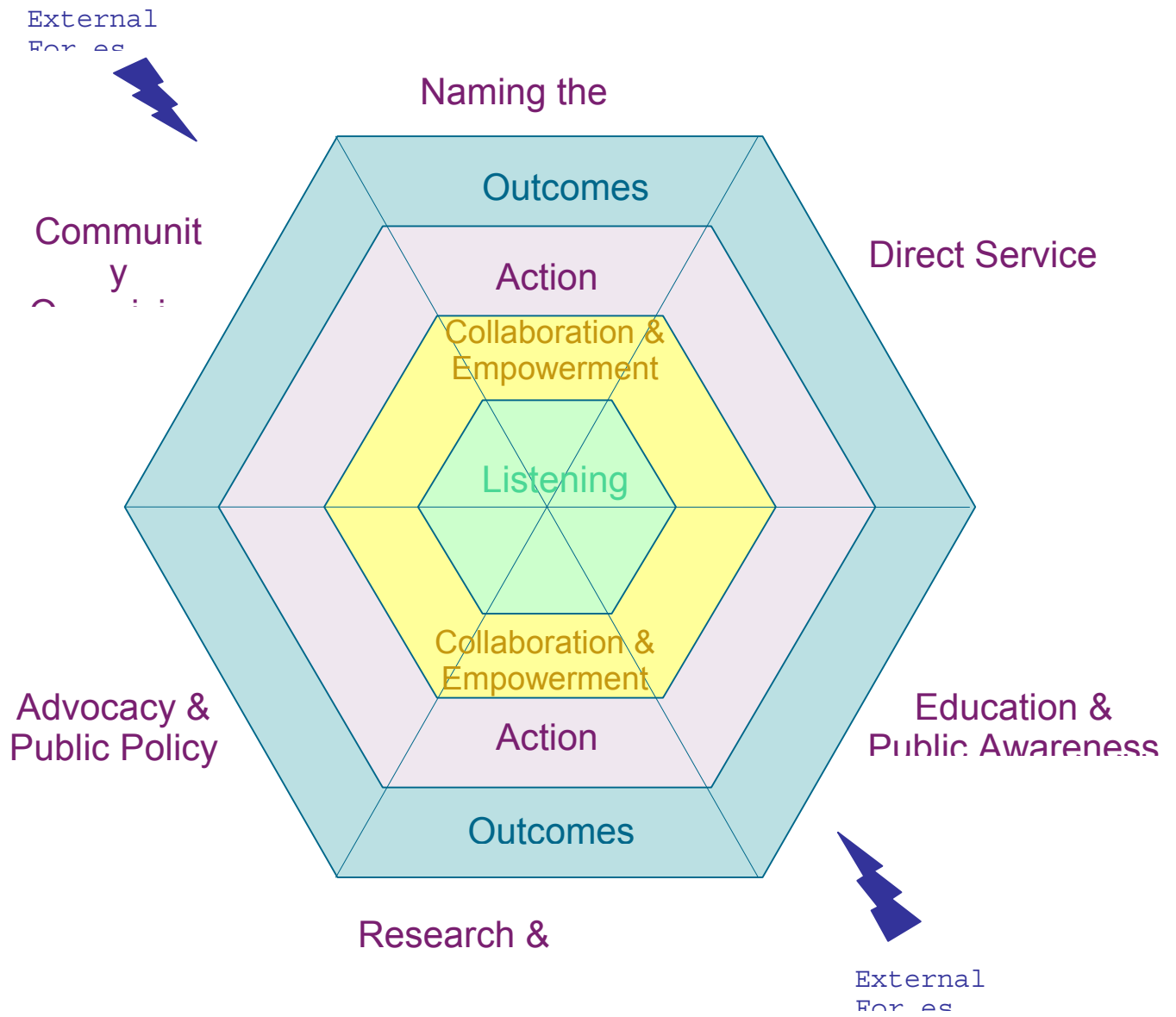
profit organizations to be both intentional and flexible as they make their way toward social change goals. The Vector model is also consistent with the Logic Model for strategic planning (Taylor-Powell, 2001) and expands on a purely outcomes approach to evaluation (Rodriguez, Suárez-Balcázar, & Nelson, 2001). Yet another reason to adopt this model is because it accommodates a variety of issues raised by individuals who had the opportunity to comment on its development. One issue was the need to be able to look both back into history for examples of how specific kinds of investments contributed to effecting social change, but also to project forward in a more proactive way armed with the knowledge past efforts have taught. Another was the need to focus the model on organizational assets and capacities rather than on needs and deficiencies. The visual image of the Achievement Vector provides a way of illustrating how the activities of each group combine to create a different-looking world and enables funders to speak positively about investments being made. A final issue was that philanthropic institutions must challenge themselves not to consider change complete when only the majority have benefited. Building listening into every step, including community organizing as a vector category, and paying attention to the adaptive capacity of each organization assures that the issues facing underserved elements of the population retain their salience as the movement works toward achieving real and lasting change.

Next Steps

As the model is refined, specific strategies may be recommended for using the Achievement Vector, including:

- ❑ Convening grantees for the purpose of discussing how they think about and measure their own progress.
- ❑ Training philanthropic institutions and their grantee partners in the use of the Vector so they will use it to track social change outcomes in order to effectively leverage current resources as well as attract new donors.
- ❑ Encouraging the use of pre- and post-campaign testing devices to capture changes as they occur.
- ❑ Establishing benchmarks for achievement based on the results as they are gathered from a variety of organizations.

Women's Funding Network
Measuring Social Change Investments
Achievement Vector



Standards for Achievement:

Listening

Action

Collaboration & Empowerment

Outcomes

WOMEN'S FUNDING NETWORK
Measuring Social Change Investments
Achievement Vector

1. Approximately what percentage of your resources do you invest in each of following areas? Briefly describe what you actually do in any applicable area in the four categories:
- **Listening:** open communication with clients, the community, and funders about issues and needs.
 - **Collaboration/ Empowerment:** creating the relationships and partnerships that build on community assets.
 - **Action:** what your work is about.
 - **Social Change Outcomes:** how your efforts have created or contributed to specific social change.

Percentage of
Organization's
Resources
Invested in
Each Area

Brief Description of Each Activity

_____ %	<p>NAMING THE ISSUE</p> <p>Listening_____</p> <p>Collaboration/Empowerment_____</p> <p>Action_____</p> <p>Social Change Outcomes_____</p>
_____ %	<p>DIRECT SERVICE</p> <p>Listening_____</p> <p>Collaboration/Empowerment_____</p> <p>Action_____</p> <p>Social Change Outcomes_____</p>
_____ %	<p>EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS</p> <p>Listening_____</p> <p>Collaboration/Empowerment_____</p> <p>Action_____</p> <p>Social Change Outcomes_____</p>
_____ %	<p>KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH</p> <p>Listening_____</p> <p>Collaboration/Empowerment_____</p> <p>Action_____</p> <p>Social Change Outcomes_____</p>
_____ %	<p>ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY</p> <p>Listening_____</p> <p>Collaboration/Empowerment_____</p> <p>Action_____</p> <p>Social Change Outcomes_____</p>
_____ %	<p>COMMUNITY ORGANIZING</p> <p>Listening_____</p> <p>Collaboration/Empowerment_____</p> <p>Action_____</p> <p>Social Change Outcomes_____</p>

2. Describe the external forces that impact the work you do in these areas: _____

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