

Earthquake: Shaking up NZ's philanthropic landscape

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¹ Christchurch Cathedral after the earthquake - <http://earthquake-report.com/2012/02/21/christchurch-1-year-after-the-devastating-quake/christchurch-cathedral-after-the-earthquake/>

Introduction

On 22 February 2011, the city of Christchurch – New Zealand’s second largest city – experienced an earthquake that wrought enormous physical and social change.

That earthquake – measuring magnitude 6.3 – was shallow and close to the city. It struck during lunchtime, when Christchurch residents were out enjoying the sunny early afternoon. When the shaking stopped, 185 were dead.

By the time this earthquake struck, Cantabrians had been living with almost daily tremors for six months. On 4 September 2010, just before 5am, they had been jolted awake by the first large earthquake. This one was stronger (7.1) but deeper and centered away from the city. Although there was widespread property damage from that quake, as most were in bed remarkably no-one was killed.

Christchurch would not be so lucky during February’s quake. Between September 2010 and June 2012, GNS Science – New Zealand’s leading provider of Earth, geoscience and isotope research and consultancy services – recorded at least 10,000 earthquakes in the Canterbury region. These tremors are now so common most Christchurch residents consider living with the almost daily shakes as “normal.” Negotiating remaining rubble, no-go areas and living without sufficient drainage and sewerage disposal treatments has also – sadly – become almost normal.

The two major earthquakes and the thousands of aftershocks have reduced many of Christchurch’s buildings to dust. Many of Christchurch’s landmark structures – notably, the Christ Church Cathedral – are now virtually destroyed, or have already been cleared away, leaving nothing but empty lots in the middle of a once vibrant and picturesque main center.

The legislatively-enacted government agency charged with leading Christchurch’s rebuilding, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA), estimates the cost of rebuilding Christchurch to be between US\$16-24 billion. But the drive to rebuild is strong – New Zealanders are galvanized to rebuild this once delightful city, full of historic architecture, as well as the lives of its 360,000 residents, some of whom are still living in very insecure housing. The drive to rebuild dominates Canterbury’s – and much of New Zealand’s – focus.

On the 25th March 2011, Philanthropy New Zealand (PNZ)² convened a meeting for this country’s philanthropic sector to consider the impact of the Christchurch earthquakes and determine how to respond. This meeting included representatives of New Zealand’s 12 community trusts, as well as my employer, ASB Community Trust, Community Trusts are philanthropic grantmaking entities that operate nationally, although each is mandated to allocate funds within a specific region. These Trusts were created when community banks were privatised during the 1980s and 1990s.

As stated, Community Trusts are mandated to fund only within their regional boundaries, yet we could see that Canterbury was faced with a problem of proportions clearly too large for its local philanthropic bodies to address. Thus, the question arose: “What is the role of place-based philanthropy if you are a regional provider outside Christchurch?”

² Philanthropy New Zealand is the membership organization for philanthropists and grantmakers throughout New Zealand, bringing New Zealand’s leading private philanthropists, trusts, foundations, businesses, community and energy trusts.

While there was a large degree of empathy for the plight of Christchurch, and a desire to support its recovery, Community Trust representatives generally agreed – because of their mandates – they could not contribute to a coordinated regional response to Christchurch.

Although PNZ members could understand the rationale for this decision, some felt that there was definitely a lost opportunity for a more strategic approach from these significant national funding entities. This feeling shaped the foundation of this paper’s purpose, which is to encourage Community Trusts to explore the possibility of developing a national framework so they can respond as a collective when a future disaster or significant emergency hits New Zealand.

This proposal stands from the position that instead of viewing disasters as single tragic event, they should be regarded as a possibility for any community. Therefore, it is argued that integrating disaster prevention with long-term development is the most effective way to save lives and protect livelihoods. (1)

Currently, there is no formal framework to support those Community Trusts that may wish to initiate a collaborative response to an event or issue that may require a national approach. Such a framework is necessary so these entities can respond collectively at a national strategic level, without compromising their legal and local funding obligations.

Also, as any disaster creates a multitude of unknown situations and unfamiliar environments, the creation of such a framework could encourage a national rethinking of the philanthropic approach to disaster grantmaking in New Zealand and also stay true to our own unique New Zealand flavor.

Over time, this new framework might also entice these entities to investigate other philanthropic granting initiatives to address other issues where a more strategic national approach is warranted. This could potentially allow the Community Trusts, as a collective, to be considered as a key catalyst to address particular national policy issues.

I believe such an approach is the way forward, and my desire to discover how other countries dealt with such matters was the basis of my Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society Senior Fellowship application and subsequent research. I wanted to discover the best-practice principles used by United States-based grantmaking entities that focus on disaster recovery, or who collaborate with other funders who do so.

Through my time in the United States, I have found that while there may be a range of challenges within a partnership or collaborative frameworks, there are also strategic opportunities for such entities to demonstrate leadership and maximise their impact if they work together.

In his speech to the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers, in July 2005, James A. Joseph, the President Emeritus of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, spoke at length on the issue of collaboration. He said that not only must the philanthropic sector collaborate with the people they seek to help, they must also collaborate with each other, saying:

“On the national and regional level, this is also a good time for building a culture of collaboration in grantmaking as well as in learning. The many existing vehicles for partnership created over the last several decades tend to be more deliberative than functional, but while what we can learn is magnified by our efforts to learn together, what we can do is also multiplied by the impact of our working together. Through effective collaboration, we can develop a new competence and build a larger capacity.” (2)

New Zealand is a small country. While its size may create some issues around our financial capacity to cope with a disaster – it is also enormously beneficial to our capability to pull together when such an event strikes.

Through the auspices of The Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, I travelled as a Senior International Fellow to New York in March 2012, where over the course of a month, through site visits and seminars I heard from a broad range of leaders in the philanthropic field. Through that I gained strategic insight and opinions on current philanthropic practices encompassing regional, national and international perspectives.

As part of my research, I also interviewed representatives from four philanthropic funding organisations that had either funded communities following a disaster or initiated formalized partnerships to address a significant event or issue.

I have used what I learned from international best-practice to inform how I believe New Zealand's philanthropic community can pull together now in order to better prepare ourselves to handle significant events in the future.

In this paper I will provide background on the philanthropic scene in my country and how the earthquake has affected Christchurch and the country as a whole. The intention of this information is to give the reader a sense of the philanthropic giving in New Zealand and provide an overview on the ramifications of the earthquakes in Christchurch.

I will then outline key themes around collaborations and disaster grantmaking strategies – including the vital importance of building trusted relationships – and will conclude with thoughts of what next steps my fellow community trusts and other funding entities might like to take.

Background

“The recovery of the great Christchurch area after the devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 is the biggest challenge faced by New Zealand in living memory. The loss of lives, the destruction of buildings and the ongoing aftershocks have taken a terrible toll on the greater Christchurch community and the nation. Recovering from natural disaster on this scale has never been tackled before and is uncharted territory for the affected communities, the councils, business and government.”

The New Zealand Government’s Earthquake Recovery Minister, Gerry Brownlee (3)

In 2011, Business and Economic Research Ltd³ (BERL) reported that the combined funding contribution Community Trusts made to New Zealand was \$103 million for that financial year.

Given the significant size of the trusts as a whole (both in terms of their financial resource and individual staff capability), a formalized collaborative framework could allow these entities to better harness their respective assets and maximize impact when considering a long-term or preventative approach to dealing with disasters or other specific issues. As stated by Susan Beresford (the former president of the Ford Foundation), who was involved in a ten-year funder collaboration around higher education in Africa, “no matter how big one institution it is not as powerful as the voice of many institutions.” (4)

Given New Zealand’s geographical and population advantages – a small country, with a small but joined-up population – and the unique people-focused nature of our Community Trust entities, we are well-placed to create a collaborate disaster management framework that could be demonstrated and replicated internationally.

While the events experienced in Christchurch have been devastating, my view is that it presents an opportunity to have a discussion around how to maximize a philanthropic approach to disaster recovery. Certainly it is needed – the earthquakes have broken down assumptions that a certain level of predictability and order exists in the world. (5)

A discussion platform for New Zealand’s 12 Community Trusts could allow these leaders to investigate the possibility of formalizing a partnership, and consider who else they may wish to collaborate with for a framework to be developed.

Such a platform could also present the opportunity for these leaders to explore what leadership strategies they would be required to implement and employ if faced with such an event in their region, to better deal with the very complicated situations disasters create. This would be true even if the Community Trusts didn’t wish to develop a formalized national framework.

As recorded by BERL, the dollar contribution Community Trusts provide to New Zealand is not insignificant. Thus, a collaborative, preventative disaster grantmaking strategy could allow these entities to build on the respect that they currently have (as organizations, at the governance level, and among their operational staff), and lift their collective reputation as a key philanthropic voice for New Zealand. And, of course, it would better help the nation when it most needs it.

³ BERL is one of the leading providers of economic research, analysis, advice and consultancy for business and public sector clients in New Zealand.

Ramifications of the earthquakes

- The cost to rebuild in Canterbury is estimated to be as much as US\$24 billion, according to CERA.
- Together Christchurch's earthquakes rank as one of the most costly natural disasters for insurers worldwide since 1950. The New Zealand Government estimates that rebuilding Christchurch will cost the equivalent of around 10 per cent of New Zealand's GDP, which represents a very large shock in relative terms. As a comparison, according to Barclay's Capital, the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan (the most costly natural disaster in modern times) is estimated to have caused damage equivalent to 3-4 percent of Japan's much larger annual GDP.
- Prior to the earthquakes, Christchurch (population 360,000) was the second largest city in New Zealand (population 4.4 million) and the city's population was growing by around 1 per cent each year. Yet, by June 2011 – a mere four months after the February quake – an estimated 8,900 (2.4 per cent) people had vacated the city. (6) Anecdotal evidence suggests that people have primarily moved to other cities in New Zealand or to Australia.
- The number of people affected at a residential level (either through displacement, loss or insecurity of housing) is about 50% of the city's population.

A report by a local NGO, Interact Canterbury (7), presented in May 2012 (i.e. over a year after the fatal earthquake of February) highlights the following:

- Community organizations are experiencing increasing demand – double the demand in some cases. A number of community organizations are without suitable accommodation and staff are at risk of burning out.
- Physiological and physical violence, described as a delayed reaction to earthquakes, has resulted in a spike in anger-management counseling.
- Doctors note increased signs of anxiety and depression as people face complex issues. Pegasus Health, a local medical cooperative, is receiving around 100 referrals a week to its mental health liaison service.
- Increased aggressive behavior reported in schools – there have been increased suspensions and stand-downs, a total of 344 reported cases in 2011, with 125 reported cases during Term 1 2012 alone.
- High level of stressed and tired principals (70%), with 27% unsure of the future of their schools, and staff who are “running on empty.”
- Acute hospital bed numbers reduced by 30, due to building damage adding risk for people with health problems as winter peaks approach.
- Transitioning of communities – some areas are experiencing significant population growth and appear socially under-prepared, areas are already struggling to accommodate non-earthquake related workers with many living in caravans, and growing community areas are experiencing limited social support.
- Older residents are struggling to cope – many are confused by the significant changes to their lives, are struggling to get through winter in damaged houses, and are feeling forgotten.

It is clear that, even though it has now been two years since the first earthquake in September 2010, there is still much work to do in Christchurch to help people rebuild and recover their lives. The

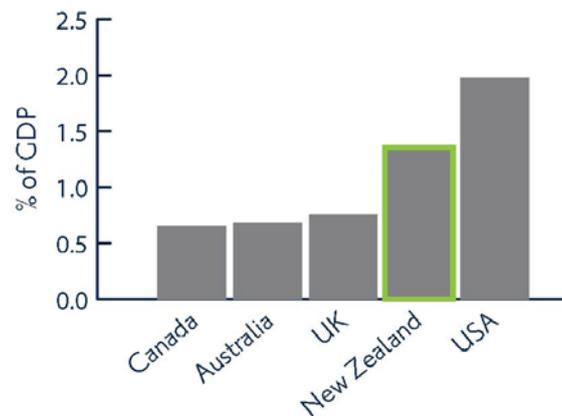
philanthropic community of New Zealand and in particular the Community Trusts I believe are well-placed to at the very least provide a mechanism through which they can learn from these experiences.

New Zealand's charitable context

The BERL "Giving New Zealand Philanthropic Funding 2011" (8) provided information about the size and scope of recent philanthropic giving while at the same time indicating the specific nature and location of philanthropic giving.

- Total giving to charitable and other community purposes in New Zealand during 2011 is estimated to have been NZ\$2.67 billion. That is equivalent to approximately 1.35 per cent of New Zealand's GDP. However, that's an estimated figure only – others put New Zealanders' total giving for 2011 at between NZ\$2.43 billion and NZ\$3.34 billion.

The graph below demonstrates the above percentage in relation to other countries.



- 2011 was double the level estimated when compared to BERL's "Giving New Zealand 2006" study.
- Almost all grants (approximately 99 per cent) go to New Zealand recipients, although New Zealand-based charities may then give to overseas charities.
- Most grants went to recipients in specific regions rather than to national organizations.
- More than one quarter of grants (28 per cent) went to Auckland recipients and around one sixth (15 per cent) to Canterbury recipients, while the remainder was spread widely across the rest of the country. The high proportion going to Canterbury is very likely to reflect the surge of support following the earthquakes.
- The Christchurch earthquakes led to a spike in donations, although BERL's report shows there was a trend of increased generosity over and above the response to Christchurch. The major factors contributing to this increase is the lifting of the cap on tax credits and New Zealand's payroll-giving scheme (where employees donate a portion of the pay at source).
The 2011 report also stated that some Community Trusts were the biggest funders in their regions, with combined grant allocations of \$103 million. For example, ASB Community Trust granted \$40.9 million in this period (catchment population of 1.3 million).

Context of the Community Trusts

New Zealand's 12 Community Trusts were established in 1988 from the sale of a group of regional Trustee savings banks. They are bound by a legislative act; the Community Trusts Act 1990. Each of the 12 Community Trusts varies in size, both in terms of capital and administrative capacity. However, all have three key characteristics:

- Each is a perpetual trust
- Trustees are appointed by the Minister of Finance (on average for a four-year term) and there are generally 12 to 15 board members on each trust.
- Each holds its income and capital on trust to be applied for charitable, cultural, philanthropic, recreational and other activities that are beneficial to the community, and principally in the geographic area defined for each entity.

Community Trusts' responses to the Christchurch earthquakes

Shortly after the February 2011 earthquake, several Community Trusts undertook a number of funding initiatives as identified below. This list of responses is not intended to be exhaustive as some trusts may have also undertaken local funding initiatives that were not formally advertised.

ASB Community Trust: Set up a quick-response mechanism through which any applications received could be reviewed promptly and grants provided to assist social service agencies in our region (Auckland and Northland) to deal with increased demand from displaced people.

BayTrust: Gave US\$24,000 in the days immediately after the initial (September) quake and have been supporting Christchurch residents who have moved to live in the Bay of Plenty. BayTrust says that while its Trust deed states that its funds are to primarily benefit the people of the Bay of Plenty, it will continue to monitor the situation in Christchurch and listen to fellow funders in that area.

The Canterbury Community Trust (TCCT): As the local Canterbury trust, TCCT recognized that many of the organizations that they previously supported were potentially now facing increased accommodation, communication, travel, and employment costs. Thus there was (and perhaps still remains) an expectation of a substantial increase in applications to TCCT for assistance for operational costs.

Community Trust of Southland: This Trust reviewed community organizations within its specified area that may have been impacted as a result of the earthquakes – e.g. perhaps by experiencing an increase in demand for that organization's services by way of an influx of people from Canterbury. Examples include counselling services, or St. John's Ambulance Service, which has incurred increased costs locally through sending people and equipment from Southland to Christchurch, stretching local resources and requiring extra funds to plug the gaps.

Trust Waikato: Provided funding to support Waikato community groups in their earthquake relief efforts, and providing assistance to people moving from Christchurch into the Waikato region.

An approach to developing funder coordination

“A deep understanding of context, the ability to embrace complexity and paradox, and a willingness to flexibly change leadership style will be required for leaders who want to make things happen in a time of increasing uncertainty.” From “A Leader’s Framework for Decision Making” (9)

Notwithstanding the complexities a formalized framework for community trusts may bring – and recognising that the concept may not be feasible or attractive to some – the Christchurch situation provides opportunity for Trust leaders to explore the intricacies of the New Zealand philanthropic environment with regards to disaster grantmaking and consider a long-term philanthropic view.

As stated, each Trust would face some legal ramifications from working outside their regions, but an initial discussion about the possibility of developing a preventative disaster grantmaking strategy, with best-practice principles and a unique community trust flavor, would be a good first step.

The intention of a discussion platform would be to raise the various dynamics that would need to be considered if a national framework were to be developed. It would also be important for this initial meeting to identify some key objectives, risks and any obstacles that would need to be addressed, and potential ways the partnership could deliver on its agreed approach.

What other Trusts or funding entities that might like to join should also be a point of this discussion as there are a number of philanthropic responses that have been initiated as a result of the Christchurch earthquakes, which continue to develop. These could be built upon and leveraged, such as:

- Philanthropy New Zealand, through its current Canterbury Recovery Funders Network, could provide the discussion platform – in the interim stages at least, with key information to inform what has been learnt to date, and perhaps identify other key stakeholders that may be worthwhile canvassing before a formal framework was agreed upon. The partnership formed by the Todd and Tindall Foundations⁴ could provide the Trusts with key links or opportunities to bring leaders from the Canterbury community around the table to share learnings from their experiences. Also, representatives from the Todd and Tindall Foundations could also share their own learnings from a funder perspective.
- The Wayne Francis Charitable Trust (WFCT) (also a private family foundation), established a Youth Advisory group in 2006 to offer recommendations on how WFCT might best contribute to the development of youth and youth work in Christchurch. This advisory group currently plays a key role to support the WFCT to meet its objectives and could provide a similar role to inform the discussion platform.
- The Vodafone NZ Foundation (one of [27 Vodafone Foundations worldwide](#)) has set up a Canterbury Fund, in partnership with the [Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust](#), to support the rebuilding of Christchurch and respond to quake related needs. Supporting youth is a major theme of the fund.
- The Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust was launched by the Prime Minister of New Zealand and is responsible for the allocation of the money raised by the [Christchurch](#)

⁴ The Todd Foundation and Tindall Foundation are private family foundations who have collaborated to engage a Christchurch-based Project Manager to inform their funding decisions.

[Earthquake Appeal](#) to support earthquake recovery initiatives. The Trust Deed anticipates that the lifetime of this trust fund was to have funds allocated in the first two years of establishment

Also worth consideration is a legal structure set up by the 12 Community trusts to manage the design, and implementation of a national database system. This legal structure involves three CEOs and senior managers from particular trusts that essentially ensure the database system is working effectively for the 12 Trusts, and each trust contributes a percentage of administration costs (depending on the size of their organization) to cover associated costs.

Now almost into its third year of implementation, there are potential key insights that could be learned from representatives of this entity, particularly around project resourcing and the dynamics of constantly changing governance structures within the Trusts.

This paper is proposing that a group of key individuals investigate what would be involved if the Trusts or other funding entities (as noted in the examples listed above) wished to join together around the issue of disaster preparedness and relief efforts to develop a national framework.

To help in this, this paper discusses some key themes around international best-practice, to help inform a proactive and preventative strategy well ahead of any disaster.

Themes:

- Advantages and disadvantages of collaboration within a changing landscape
- Building on existing relationships and having a clear purpose
- Tapping into existing services
- Resourcing beyond the financial – investing in people

Advantages and disadvantages of collaboration within a changing landscape

Recognizing that individual trusts and foundations each have their own strategies, philosophies and practices, collaboration does, however, have the potential to bring new ideas and proposals into the policy arena and can empower civil society organisations with new information and resources. (10)

However, when developing the framework, leaders must keep top-of-mind the constantly changing environment both within their organization and within the changing landscape on the ground.

The development of a collaborative framework is intended to provide the Community Trusts with a preventative and more considered proactive national approach when the next disaster hits New Zealand. Not only will the leaders need to recognize that it is more than likely that who signed off on the framework may not be at the table when the disaster hits, but also that the response to disasters needs to alter over time. In particular, what is an appropriate immediate response is different from what sort of response is required in the weeks, months, and even years that follow.

This point was ably summed by Ambassador James A. Joseph, in his speech at the annual meeting of the Delaware Valley Grantmakers in 2008 talking of his role and learnings as the Chair of the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation:

“I have found through my work in Louisiana that foundations too often miss a great opportunity to have a major impact in responding to disasters because we use our resources primarily for charitable relief and provide very little for critical reform. Let me explain. There are really three stages in the response to a disaster: relief, recovery and reform.

The first stage is the time when the disaster is most dramatic, the public attention most pervasive and the public response most immediate. Survival is at stake and there is an outpouring of public support to provide relief from suffering and to maintain order. The next stage in the disaster continuum is recovery, taking stock of what had happened, rebuilding the infrastructure and seeking to return life to normalcy.

The third stage shifts the crisis response paradigm to the need to improve pre-existing conditions, to rebuild smarter and better than before. My experience with Katrina is that private donors, especially individuals and charities provided billions of dollars for relief and the government is providing billions of dollars for recovery, but neither sector has provided very much for reform. That is why the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, whose board I chair, decided that one of our priorities would be strengthening of the nonprofit sector in Louisiana to participate more effectively in the public life of the state, to give a voice to those traditionally without a voice and to ensure that places like New Orleans are rebuilt better than they were before the disaster.”

Certainly we have seen this pattern with the Christchurch recovery efforts.

Working on the point that leaders are fundamental to a partnership setting off on the right track, a key concern – is how to sustain momentum and provide the resources or capacity that would be needed to allow the framework to meet deliverables at all stages of a response, The current situation in Christchurch could be regarded as a key opportunity to reflect on as a first step.

There is potential for both the Community Trusts along with other philanthropic leaders, to be a key catalyst for educating the wider New Zealand audience, and in particular their Boards – the decision makers – and create a broader understanding of the issues faced by Christchurch people as they cope with the earthquakes’ aftermath, learn what initiatives have worked well in the region, and where or how philanthropic funding was best utilized.

This understanding as a first step could generate more buy-in for collaboration to implement a preventative disaster framework. There is also the potential for such information to influence at either a national policy or philanthropic level, to make a considerable impact for either those communities affected now at the local Canterbury level and also be the catalyst for more forward thinking in the preventative disaster strategy space.

However, it should be noted that there appears to be little research to date on the type of philanthropic giving that has gone into Christchurch, its effectiveness and what the results of this funding have been.

Building on existing relationships and having a clear purpose

Developing good relationships is key to the success or failure of a philanthropic collaboration. A vitally important component of the success of New York Regional Association of Grantmakers Gulf Coast Recovery Taskforce, for example, was the very early creation and adoption of a statement of core values, or a mission statement. While participants said creating the mission statement was “tough, but well worth the effort,” and reported that it took three meetings to agree on it, mission statements are important for uniting what may be a disparate group. Agreeing on a mission statement serves an ongoing function that can focus a collaboration – as members of that Taskforce said, they returned “time and again” to the mission statement when decisions had to be made. (11)

Here are two case studies, looking at the opportunities – or the challenges – that arise from different entities joining up to tackle an issue.

The New York community Trust

The New York Community Trust (NYCT) set up a collaboration model to look at the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the city in the 1980s – the New York City Aids Fund. The rationale for a partnership approach was that they recognized the epidemic was too large for them to respond to on their own, and that they could potentially have a bigger impact if they worked with other foundations. The collaboration’s intention was to increase private funding for addressing the AIDS epidemic at the community level, and improve the coordination and targeting of these resources.

Key learnings included:

- It was important to start the concept of the partnership with key people who NYCT trusted.
- Although it wasn’t as clear at the start how they were to achieve their outcome, they were very clear on the purpose.
- While foundation representatives may not have had the exact skills/experience for that particular issue is (not enough medical expertise in an HIV/AIDS project, for example), there may be complementary skills / experience that could be called upon for the initiative. For

example representatives may have community development skills or have been involved in a collaborative partnership previously.

A key message I received from an interview with Joyce Bove⁵, who initiated the partnership, was that relationships made an enormous difference, and that going into the collaboration with people they trusted and had long-standing relationships with was extremely beneficial. She put that down to the fact that, while they wouldn't know what the dynamics of their collaboration might be, they had already established trusted relationships with the selected partners. This meant they already knew they shared a common goal and objective – they just had to work together to get there.

Since its inception in 1989, the New York City Aids fund has successfully increased private funding to fight the AIDS epidemic and helped improve the coordination and targeting of resources in the city to address HIV illness at the community level. The fund is currently guided by an advisory committee representing grantmaking organisations, public agencies, human services organisations and persons living with AIDS. Among its many tasks, the advisory committee continues to help analyse the availability of government funding in order to determine where private funding is most needed and can have the greatest effect.

Partnership for Higher Education in Africa

Conversely, the experiences from a ten-year partnership funding program in Africa show how difficult collaborations can be. The Partnership for Higher Education in Africa ran 2000 – 2010, and comprised seven Foundations in all.⁶ Over its decade of operation, the funder collaborative donated nearly half a billion dollars to build higher education in nine African countries.

Once the partnership wound up, among its successes, its report, “Lessons from a Ten Year Funder Collaborative: A case study of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa” (4), also highlighted that differences among the Foundations involved posed some of the biggest difficulties in the partnership. The report showed that getting staff from different foundations to work together was not easy, as it took precious time for participants to get to know one another.

The report outlined the steps each entity took to set up and grow the partnership, how it made its grant decisions, and what that money was spent on. However, it also delves into the challenges the partnership faced, and what advice others might take when considering similar collaborations.

The first challenge discussed in the report is the lack of clarity around goals and measurable outcomes – that while they all agreed on the broad objectives, much time was spent trying to work out *how* to meet those objectives. The report also discussed a lack of expertise and coordination, the bigger than expected time commitment the project required, a lack of communication to external audiences, and how different working cultures within the partnership organizations created tension.

⁵ Joyce Bove is the Senior Vice President for Grants for Special Projects, and in 1989 she received the Council on Foundations' Roberts W. Scrivner Award for Creative Grantmaking for her leadership in shaping the local and national philanthropic response to the AIDS epidemic.

⁶ In the 1970's and 1980's many countries in sub-Saharan Africa struggled with domestic and international conflict, disease such as Malaria (and eventually HIV/AIDS) sputtering economies, poverty, corruption and natural disasters. Their universities, which depended on government funding suffered from a steep decline in that support. Several foundations based in the USA but working in Africa, put broadly formed this partnership to help build up the capacity of universities and increase education opportunities.”

Many of these challenges can be avoided if partners already have a working relationship, or at least share commonalities. This would likely be the case if such a collaboration was set up among Community Trusts in New Zealand, and/or other philanthropic entities to develop a framework, recognizing that there are particular leaders within these entities that enjoy a shared history, work ethnic and cultural understanding.

However what was also recognized in the case of the higher education programme was that it was the initially the presidents of the Carnegie and the Rockefeller Foundation that reached out to presidents of other foundations who were working in Africa. These were people known to each other and had previously worked together well. How relationships and cultures are maintained once Presidents or leaders delegate responsibilities to other staff should also be taken into consideration..

Summary

In her article, “The Reality underneath the Buzz of Partnerships” (12), Francie Ostrower says “there is a tendency in the philanthropic world to assume that collaboration has intrinsic value and effectiveness and to expect partnership to serve as a solution, often to problems that have not been well defined.”

Recognizing that partnerships potentially can take a lot of time, those involved in the discussion platform to investigate a collaborative framework must keep in mind what the end goal is, and then fully test what incentives and methods would truly bring those ends about. If there is general agreement to develop a framework, the challenge will also need to consider how it will be able to maintain a long-term view and a structure that it can depend on. (10)

Defining the intention or the objectives of the framework, and potential benefits to the individual Trusts, and the philanthropic sector should be a key objective of the core group of those leaders who are looking at the potential framework. Clear objectives will need to be considered, along with how to measure achievement and a strong sense of the frameworks’ value and effectiveness, and what the problem is that needs to be solved, must be well-defined, agreed and understood by all involved.

Tapping into existing services

One of the axioms of social development is that any intervention's results are far better if you work *with* the community, rather than doing things *for* or *to* a community.

Most communities will already have some infrastructure on the ground that funders can tap into and use when a disaster strikes – that may be local not-for-profit entities, government agencies or local authority services.

Being aware of what already exists is certainly a key component in best-practice for Trusts or Foundations which endeavor to help communities dealing with a large-scale tragedy or disaster. After all, why replicate what is already working, and why not tap into local knowledge?

Any collaborative framework in New Zealand would also have to look for ways to encourage the affected community to be as proactive as possible. For the partnership to develop a process within the framework where meaningful conversations can happen with those in the affected communities could prove to be a powerful tool and test a number of assumptions.

There are also definite current opportunities for expanding understanding in New Zealand about the significant changes that have transpired during Christchurch's rebuilding, and learning from what's already been experienced, the partnership could be the key catalyst to instigate a mechanism for this to happen which would also help inform the frameworks process and objectives when considering what opportunities could exist to talk to those working in the area, and tapping into existing services.

Any disaster also will strain a community's resources, so in philanthropic terms it is not enough to simply pour money into a damaged community – one must also provide resources to support personnel on the ground and acknowledge the value of learning from them.

This was quickly recognized in response to the earthquakes that Turkey experienced in October 2011. A key insight from meeting Senay Ataselim Yilmaz from the Turkish Philanthropy Funds (TPF)⁷, was that with hindsight her organization recognized it should have identified credible NGO partners, philanthropic entities or particular projects a lot quicker in order for their funding to be more effective. For a long time, TPF didn't know who was doing what, and many assumptions were made. Implementing a more proactive approach would have allowed TPF to increase their reach and be more effective with their funding into the community a lot sooner. TPF's philosophy is that NGOs know best what assistance is needed and understand the complex political, social and cultural context of a disaster. TPF also highlighted that the emergency phase of a disaster attracts most of the attention and resources. TPF is keen to not only be there when the disaster hits, but also wants to have approaches in place that help people in need in the most efficient and effective way and providing support past the emergency phase.

⁷ Senay Yilmaz is the Chief Operating Officer for TPC. This is a relatively new foundation (formed in 2007). It is a small organisation with three employees and a board of 12 trustees. The 7.1 magnitude earthquake that hit Turkey 30 October 2011 killed 604 people, left 4152 injured, while at least 11,232 buildings sustained damage – 6017 of which were found to be uninhabitable.

To illustrate how tapping into local communities is advantageous to philanthropic organizations, I will look at the responses to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the Japan earthquake of 2011.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ripped through the Gulf Coast area of the United States of America during 2005, devastating local communities and killing – directly or indirectly – more than 1800 people and causing nearly US\$100 billion in property damage. Of the two, Katrina was by far the most destructive, and her effects are still very much felt today.

To capture any lessons from the philanthropic community's response to the hurricanes – and to recognize those involved – the New York Regional Association of Grantmakers (NYRAG) surveyed those of its members involved in the recovery effort, along with community foundations and non-profit organizations located on the Gulf Coast. These findings can be read in "Best Practices in Disaster Grantmaking" (11), by the NYRAG Taskforce for the Gulf Coast.

The very first point made in the report is the importance of utilizing "key people in affected communities," with the second being utilizing "key existing relationships to gather information." Another is to "put staff on the ground" and "create collaborative funding efforts." All of these point, I believe, to a framework developed that New Zealand would be well-advised to replicate.

Among the report's highlighted "practices to avoid" are "failing to recognize recovery time required following a disaster" – that recovery can take years, not weeks or months – and "using a 'philanthropic lens' rather than a 'community lens' when looking at recovery" – i.e. being paternalistic, and doing things *to* a community, rather than *with* a community. This section also mentions that "disaster recovery is not the time for non-profit organizations to be developing radical new programs. Collaboration between non-profits must occur organically and not be forced." In other words, it is much better to have built the necessary relationships and strategies well before you need to use them.

Among the report's suggested strategies to consider for "future investment" is to "support and empower local philanthropy" and "develop opportunities for funder cooperation and collaboration" – again, do the work now so we can all work together better in the future.

I believe New Zealand's philanthropic fraternity would do well to take heed of this report's findings.

Referring to points made earlier in this paper, the Gulf Coast Taskforce needed to monitor its relevance, recognizing that the needs of partners were changing over time, and 12 months after the hurricane fewer taskforce members attended meetings as interest waned. This situation meant the taskforce revisited its core guiding principles. In undertaking this process they also tested the members on the purpose of the taskforce, and heard that members wished to learn from experts in the hurricane-affected region. It was agreed that the membership be opened to broader stakeholders, recognizing that some funders were just now starting to look at ways to fund in the area – i.e. 12 months after the disaster-

Japanese earthquake and tsunami

The worldwide response to the magnitude 9 Japanese earthquake of March 2011 was unprecedented, with approximately US\$6.6 billion⁸ (¥520 billion) in aid having been pumped into the region (US\$630 million from the United States alone) and 930,000 people assisting in recovery efforts. However, it quickly became apparent that a number of new entities were coming into the area of grantmaking with little or no experience, nor were they familiar with the communities affected.

Although the rebuilding of the affected area is still very much in the early stages, information delivered by the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) has highlighted that international development and relief agencies did well to promptly initiate relationships with local partner organizations they had previously worked with. This use of “grass-roots ties” – particularly where it was people-to-people – was instrumental in mobilizing donors, and JCIE singles out United States-Japan affiliated organizations in particular.

One particular JCIE report on US giving in response to the earthquakes says that this familiarity seems to have helped them overcome some of the challenges that donors faced in identifying effective projects that take into account the societal context, the fluid situation on the ground, and the need to avoid overlap with national and local government initiatives. (13)

JCIE Executive Director James Gannon points out that although Japan is a rich country, most of the international funding was going towards immediate relief effort, with limited prospects of funding for the mid to long-term work that will be required of Japanese nonprofit organizations.⁹

In particular Mr Gannon advised that while the number of NGOs in the affected zone increased, the local philanthropic scene remains particularly weak, and given that the phase of recovery “will be long and arduous,” building the capacity of NGOs is paramount for an effective rebuild.

Key learnings included:

- Strong “people-to-people” ties at grass-roots level played “an important role in mobilizing Americans” to donate, while those ties also helped channel funds to “Japanese recipients on the ground.” (13)
- Rather than seeing disaster-affected individuals as victims or passive recipients of outside assistance, good disaster management recognizes local people and their community-based organizations.
- Funders should not make assumptions that the not-for-profit sector affected has the capacity to effectively manage the sudden influx of funding received and may require extra support to work through the rebuild phase.

Summary

At the time of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Linetta Gilbert argued in her article, “Are We the Right Sort of Glue?” (14), that “if community philanthropy institutions are to fulfil their potential to increase the welfare of all members of the community, they must engage the abilities and resources

⁸ Figure to March 2012; “Disaster donations top ¥520 billion”, [Japan Times](#), 8 March 2012, p. 1.

⁹ Interviewed via phone 3pm Monday 19th March 2012

of all those members.” She goes on to highlight the wisdom of “using what we have to get what we need,” recognizing that much of the region’s wealth is found in its people.

As stated above, however, with the strains that particular communities can face following a disaster , and the demands on services, if a framework were to be investigated there are key factors that could prove beneficial in its development.

Firstly, the framework could help identify ways to acknowledge people in an appropriate way and resource them well so they are able to come and discuss their knowledge in a meaningful way. Secondly, there would be a process in place that encourages full and frank discussion to ensure that the various stages of a disaster and, presumably changing goal posts by funders or government, can be fully explored.

Lessons from each of the above case studies could be incorporated into a collaboration framework developed by New Zealand philanthropic entities.

Resourcing beyond the financial – investing in people

While, as the saying goes, “money makes the world go around,” it’s people-power that makes the real difference. All the case studies above show how important it is to develop relationships with the right organizations, staffed by the right people who know what jobs need to be done, and who hold the necessary skills.

Thus, if New Zealand’s Community Trusts enter into a discussion to develop a framework, human resourcing – who has what skills within the Trusts – will be just as important as financial resourcing, so people power must be very much part of our framework to make it most effective.

Recognizing that the various trusts have varying degrees of financial and administrative capability, the actual mechanisms to support various trusts if a disaster strikes in their region, should be a key point of discussion within the framework’s development.

Ralph Hamilton makes this point in his “Moving Ideas and Money” article, which highlights that grantmakers have access to information, ideas and practices that can help shape community discourse and strengthen community development. (5) He says: “One important factor to keep in mind is the individual program officer. As noted throughout, most collaborations originate and are dependent upon the interest, relationships and commitment of a particular program officer or a small group of program officers.” In other words, in any collaboration it’s the people who drive it.

In my interview with Elan Garonzik, the Vice President for Programs at ELMA Philanthropies Services (U.S.) Inc, he discussed his organization’s funding experiences in Haiti and after Hurricane Katrina, and the realization that it was very important to bring key stakeholders together for peer-to-peer exchange. His rationale for doing this was their philosophy that the more informed people were within the philanthropic field, the more able Foundations and individuals would be to look at the bigger picture. This meant ELMA was best-placed to respond to, or fund more effectively as their staff were breaking down a number of assumptions that had been made by either staff or foundation trustees on what was happening on the ground at the time.

In turn the information gained by ELMA built their own internal capacity for responding to future events and secondly it better informed other philanthropic entities that ELMA had key relationships with who were also investigating ways to fund in Haiti. . Mr Garonzik was bold enough to say that if you don’t look at broadening the philanthropic sector as a whole then all one is simply doing “is placing Christmas decorations on the Christmas tree.”

In practice, that meant ELMA could respond to significant events, such as Katrina and Haiti, not by looking at the disaster as a single event, but looking beyond the field of initial philanthropy to what advocacy, research and training capacity needed to be built. It was all about the bigger picture – however, we must acknowledge that such changes take time.

As a local example, Helena Francis¹⁰ wrote in a Philanthropy New Zealand publication about a key lesson she identified from a collaboration formed to respond to the earthquakes by the Todd and Tindall Foundations – two significant philanthropic organizations in New Zealand. –.

¹⁰ Chairperson of the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust

“One of the things we are learning is that the money is great but we also need the people capacity behind that money. You can chuck \$5 million at the problem, but if you haven’t got the wisdom, the intellect and the conversations behind it, you won’t maximise its impact... What we know is we need staffing capacity – foundations need to invest in their people, because it essential to have good people on the ground if they are able to direct their funding effectively.” Helena Francis: Philanthropy in Christchurch – “Not Just about the money” (15)

Summary

When considering a partnership model, there is opportunity for those developing the framework to consider those resources - outside their funding streams – that could allow for a more strategic development approach in building our own sectors capacity, by ensuring that those working in the funding sector are strengthened as much as possible to respond to the next disaster In New Zealand.

“There are no external pressures on foundations that can force them to take these measures— as noted many times, a foundation will not go out of business because it is ineffective. Thus, if foundations are to put processes in place that make them effective organizations, then that can only occur through a clear commitment from the board, with the participation of the staff, that is then translated into a specific set of evaluatory processes and standards that become a regular part of foundation operations.” Francie Ostrower: “Foundation Effectiveness, Definitions and Challenges” (16)

Across the country, the Community Trusts (and other potential philanthropic partners) have an extensive range of valuable personnel resources, with extensive experience in particular areas - research, community development models, and evaluation, to name a few.

The success of any framework created among New Zealand’s Community Trusts would be highly dependent on the right people, correctly resourced, doing jobs that suit their skill set. I would suggest that almost as much time be devoted to ensuring the right staff are appointed into key roles, as into the development of any other part of the framework.

Conclusion

Michael Edwards, in his article “The Role and Limitations of Philanthropy,” puts forward the idea that different approaches to philanthropy are no more in competition with each other than hammers and screwdrivers in a toolkit. However, he stresses that we still need to know when and how to use these tools to best effect, and that requires substantial improvements in foundation learning and accountability. (17)

My paper has shown there is much international evidence that a coordinated, collaborative response from grantmakers working closely with community groups or NGOs local to the affected area, have improved effectiveness – particularly when the right people with the right skills are involved.

My hope is to facilitate a discussion platform for New Zealand’s 12 Community Trusts in a first step for them to investigate the possibility of their formalizing a partnership – either as an entire group or perhaps with only the Trusts that agree to be involved – which may be joined by other philanthropic grantmakers.

Through this partnership and the development of a framework, any risks will have to be noted and mitigated, particularly around any legal issues that may preclude some Trusts taking part and funding outside their mandated region, or as a result of differences in culture or focus.

Recognizing that there is no real level of predictability in the world, I intend to invite leaders of these entities to consider ways they could look at a collaborative response for when a disaster next hits New Zealand. Or, what is likely to be more advantageous, to address these issues and create relationships and strategies ahead of time to ensure a more effective response when disaster strikes. What I believe is necessary is the creation of a preventative, national view of philanthropic disaster response.

I believe that, with New Zealand’s relatively small geographic area, its strong philanthropic and NGO culture, we are very well-placed to create such a framework. At the very least, this framework would provide each individual trust with information or a best-practice model for managing their own grantmaking practices and the needs of their community if a disaster were to happen in their respective region.

Plan of Action

- 1) Provide leaders of the twelve community trusts with a copy of this position paper and seek feedback on the proposal.
 - a. . If the proposal was to be supported I would discuss the potential timeframe factors and capacity needed and clarify any implications with my employer the ASB Community Trust.
 - b. In particular I would address those leaders involved in the national database system (referred to on page 12) for their insights on that project, particularly around resourcing and changing governance structures.

- 2) Provide the CEO of Philanthropy New Zealand with a copy of this position paper and canvass this entity as a potential mechanism to research what has been funded in the Canterbury region to date, investigating where government and philanthropic funding has targeted, what initiatives have proved successful and two years after the earthquakes what are particular needs still needing to be addressed.

If there is interest by PNZ in undertaking this work, I would investigate with my employer, the possibility of me allocating time to undertake this work, with the intention that this would be information to support the discussion platform and if possible the wider philanthropic audience of new Zealand.

- 3) Collating all feedback from the above stakeholders, an overarching proposal could be developed that would initiate a meeting with four or five interested Community Trust representatives to discuss the development of a possible framework.
 - a. This may also prove to be the most effective time to invite other funding entities to the table for the discussion.

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Interviews

James Gannon, Executive Director: Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE/USA); www.jci.org – *Phone Interview; 3pm Monday 19th March 2012.*

Senay Ataselim Yilmaz, Chief Operating Officer: Turkish Philanthropy Fund; www.tpfund.org – *Interview, 1.30pm Monday 19th March 2012.*

Joyce Bove, Senior Vice President, Grants & Special Projects: The New York Community Trust; www.nycommunitytrust.org – *Interview; 11am Wednesday 14th March 2012.*

Len McNally, Program Director, Health & People with Special Needs: The New York Community Trust; www.nycommunitytrust.org – *Interview included with Joyce Bove discussion.*

Elan Garonzik, Vice President for Programs: The ELMA Philanthropies Services (U.S.) Inc; www.elmaphilanthropies.org – *Phone Interview; 1pm Thursday 15th March 2012.*

Program Speakers

Robert Edgar, Vice President, Donor Relations: New York Community Trust – Topic "*The Early U.S. Community Foundations: the example of New York Community Trust*".

Marilyn Gelber, President: Brooklyn Community Foundation – Topic "*Different Roots, different model: NYC's 'other' community foundation*".

Shannon St John, Director: Networks of the Synergos Institute; Founder, Second Star Philanthropic Services, former Executive Director, Triangle Community Foundation – Topic "*Asset Development, Donor Engagement and the Promotion of Philanthropy*".

Kathleen McCarthy, Professor of History and Director, Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, GC, CUNY.

Tade Aina, Program Director, Higher Education and Libraries in Africa, International Program: Carnegie Corporation – *“International Philanthropy, Education, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York”*.

Ed Pauly, Director of Research and Evaluation: The Wallace Foundation – Topic *“Philanthropy with Impact: Harnessing the Power of Evaluative Thinking”*.

Kevin Murphy, President: Berks County Community Foundation – Topic *“How Community Foundations Shape and Are Shaped by their Environment”*.

Vincent McGee, Senior Advisor: The Atlantic Philanthropies; Board Chair, The Overbrook Foundations; Advisory Board Member, Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society – Topic *“Foundation Vision and Strategy: Social Justice Grantmaking; Foundation Spend Down”*.

Taehyo Park, Executive Director: Beautiful Foundation USA – Topic *“(Re)defining Community: Giving and Sharing”*.

Heather Scott, Diane Miller and John Harvey: Council on Foundations – Topic *“Community Foundation Services and Standards: the example of the US Council on Foundations”*.

Nick Deychakiwsky, Program Officer: Mott Foundation – Topic *“Defining and Supporting Community Philanthropy in a Global Context”*.

2012 Senior Fellow Program Participants

Mark Andrew Bentley, Chief Executive Officer: Auckland Communities Foundation – Research Topic – *to explore non-profit/government partnerships to accelerate community foundation sustainability in New Zealand.*

Ms. Josephine Buontempo, Managing Director/Consultant : Kasali Consultancy Services; Member, Board of Directors, Freemantle Foundation, Ltd. – Research Topic - *to seek international perspectives on community foundations and philanthropy to develop a viable community foundation model in Western Australia.*

Ms. M. Beatriz Noriega González, Director Social Investment: Fundación Merced – Research Topic- *to explore the development of an operational model to bolster Fundación Merced’s support and partnership with Mexico’s community foundations.*

Ms. Szilvia Szmuk-Tanenbaum, Co-trustee: Pine Tree Foundation of New York, Inc. – Research Topic - *to study effective grantmaking and strategic board development models appropriate for a small independent foundation.*

Mr. John Robert Ulanga, Executive Director: The Foundation for Civil Society –Research Topic - *to investigate approaches to establishing community foundations in Tanzania and South Africa, and the associated challenges.*

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