

## **SESSION II : Management of Corporate Philanthropy**

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### ***Discussion Summary***

The conversation began with a discussion of the dilemma many internationally-oriented Japanese foundations experience when their interest lies in developing nations yet the only cogent, well-planned proposals they receive come from North American organizations. Participants considered the role a grantmaking organization could assume in encouraging and assisting potentially deserving applicants prepare a proposal that would later be reviewed by the same organization. Most speakers agreed that a funding group had a legitimate place in aiding groups without expertise, though this aid could take several forms. Some stressed that grantmaking groups should make greater efforts to publicize the availability of their donations, through distributing directories of foundations, presenting alumni workshops, and maintaining resident staff where possible. Though site visits or employing staff overseas is costly, it was stated that despite the low productivity of such approaches, non-profit organizations needed to be tolerant to achieve their ultimate objectives.

Other speakers emphasized reforming the grantwriting procedure itself and offered comments on how to improve the quality and therefore chances for approval of proposals from disadvantaged sectors. One participant suggested that funding agencies endeavor to produce more informative proposal guidelines that include some explanation of the philosophy underlying the agency, thereby providing the potential recipient with clues on how to adjust the project and proposal. Another urged that grantmakers should be patient with applicants and ask for revisions if necessary. It was cautioned that some populations, though deserving of assistance, are simply unreachable by a given

group, but others urged that funding organizations not remain passive and work with the applicants to develop stronger proposals.

It was suggested that this dilemma could be resolved in part by utilizing other members of the same corporation who travel abroad. A participant pointed out, however, that many grantmakers are not permitted to use other resources of their parent corporation.

The conversation then shifted to performance evaluations of grant recipients. Many admitted that this was perhaps the weakest aspect of grantmaking today, especially in the international context. They described the difficulties of making site visits to international programs, avoiding sometimes dramatic changes in a recipient program during the life of the grant, and recognizing the often invisible short-term impact of a grant.

It was stressed that the post-grant evaluation process begins before a grant is made, and thus funding organizations should develop such methodologies before they begin formal activities. Also, a foundation needs to understand clearly why it is undertaking an evaluation and determine the process accordingly. Though it was pointed out that evaluations should not be overemphasized, as many grants do not warrant an extensive follow-up, nonetheless several important reasons were identified, specifically to help the recipient to learn from the experience, to help the grantmaker to improve its own system, and for historical documentation. It was agreed that policing grantees was counterproductive for all concerned but that effective evaluation is an important part of grantmaking for both the donor and recipient.

Various case studies of evaluation procedures were shared and adjustments were suggested. Some organizations require only annual narrative and financial statements and a final report. Others demand more frequent reports. Though evaluation becomes more difficult in international programs, when possible, site visits by officers of the grantmaking organization, outside consultants such as TechnoServe, or other members of the parent corporation were encouraged. Some groups adjust their evaluations to the content of the grant, occasionally commissioning full examinations of the recipient program. A Japanese participant reported on a giving program that employed only a severe screening process and then undertook no evaluation,

leaving the recipient free to spend the grant as he chose. It was cautioned that though evaluation is an integral procedure, it may be years before the results of a grant are visible. Though evaluation should never degenerate into mere self-justification, a certain stewardship is important to judge whether reasonable progress was made toward the ultimate objective and whether grants in that area should be continued.