

*Donor Research Project*  
*Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society*

Philanthropy and Communities of Color  
Literature Review

2006

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## **Introduction**

The literature on diversity and philanthropy is growing with over eighty publications produced by nonprofit organizations and scholars since 2003.<sup>2</sup> This report will highlight the main themes within the literature and focus on several important new pieces in the field.

The literature falls into two broad categories: experiential-based observations and empirical research. This report will integrate the two categories (along thematic lines), while noting the distinction. The amount of research based on survey data, extensive interviews or archival/database analysis is limited.

Several themes emerge in the literature. This review will emphasize four:

- Issues surrounding differences and similarities in racial/ethnic philanthropy;
- Mapping the evolving landscape of racial and ethnic funds and donor education strategies;
- Wealth creation and philanthropy; and
- Issues of diversity.

To a lesser extent this report will also look at a few studies on diaspora giving.

### **Racial/Ethnic Philanthropy: Differences and Similarities**

One trend within the literature examines giving within particular ethnic groups.

Several authors have reported on the state of *African American* giving. Writers continue to discuss the ways in which black philanthropy is linked to the church. Copeland-Carson, *Promoting Diversity in Contemporary Black Philanthropy* (2005) maintains that African American churches can be seen as the forebears of contemporary community foundations in that they pooled members' funds for general community purposes, thus continuing a distinctly African philanthropy. She also points out the transferences of traditional African giving practices to American shores and contemporary rise of pan-African philanthropic efforts.

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<sup>2</sup> This review includes works from 2003 through 2006 *only*. The Donor Research Project has produced literature reviews for earlier periods, which are available upon request.

Hays-Russell (2005) has provided information on mega-church growth, their philanthropic traditions, outreach programs and the challenges facing these churches.

One question raised is how to mobilize African American philanthropy on a national scale. Gard in a 2004 *BusinessWeek* article cites the outreach program of the Twenty-First Century Foundation as an example of expanding knowledge about philanthropy among communities of color. The emerging leadership of African American business professionals is seen as key to this effort. A research project at Howard University is also examining the philanthropic practices of African American businesses in an initiative sponsored by the National Center for Black Philanthropy. In *New Trends in African American Philanthropy* (2006), Gasman argues that the key to garnering funds from African Americans is to make sure that the community can see results in their local communities. In a similar vein, Salmon in a 2004 article in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* claims that philanthropy may be empowering for African Americans and other minorities because it provides access to established power structures where they can effect real change. The author cites the Coalition for New Philanthropy as an example of trying to get African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans to increase their philanthropic activities.

A recent and important study based on a series of interviews with African Americans in major corporations is *Black Power Inc.* by Cora Daniels. Daniels, a journalist, explores the emergence of a new black elite that sees business, rather than politics, as the basis of power in the US. Like the Coalition for New Philanthropy-sponsored volume *Pathways for Change*, Daniel's study emphasizes generational analysis.

Observational materials on *Asian Americans* have included a discussion of challenges Asian American organizations face in receiving foundation and charitable giving (Kong and Saika in *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity and Change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*). The authors cite the major challenges facing the Asian Pacific American community organizations in receiving foundation and charitable giving as including: the "model minority" myth, and the post-September 11 political climate. Recommendations for overcoming these challenges include efforts to:

- Increase, stimulate and facilitate giving by Asian Pacific Americans;
- Incubate new models of community philanthropy of mutual benefit to both donors and Asian Pacific American community-based organizations;
- Educate the field of organized philanthropy about less visible but significant forms of philanthropy within the Asian and Pacific Islander diasporic communities in the United States; and
- Build the infrastructure and sustainability of Asian Pacific American nonprofit organizations.

The Leadership Center for Asian Pacific Americans contributed a study on donor motivations and patterns of Asian Americans in Chicago, as well as recommendation for the infrastructure necessary for small to mid-sized community based organizations to create a sustained and dependable donor base.

There are several recent works on *Hispanic* philanthropy. The study *Envisioning Growth-Achieving Greatness: The Story of the Hispanic Stewardship Development Partnership* by Wagner and Rodriguez, et al. (2004) is a reflection on a six-year project funded by the Lilly Foundation to increase the fundraising capacity of Hispanic faith-based organizations. Undertaken in collaboration with the Indiana Fund Raising School, the study outlines the basic principles of fundraising (marketing, board involvement, programs and strategies, among others) and traces the impact of the training through several case studies. The authors suggest that more research and training are needed to (1) better understand how principles are adapted successfully to another culture and (2) disseminate practices that lead to sustainable, effective organizations.

Another recent study, *Familia, Fé y Comunidad - Giving and Volunteering among Hispanics in Silicon Valley*, (2005) was undertaken by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and the Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley. Based on a 1500 sample size, the study's major findings were that:

- Hispanics under-report their voluntary and giving activities;
- Hispanic giving levels are comparable to those of whites (3.8% of household income), whereas Asians reported lower levels (1.8%); and
- Hispanics define community as an extended network of family and friends that reaches beyond geographic bounds.

The study concludes with 16 recommendations to increase the level of Hispanic philanthropy. Among the most notable are:

- Create giving circles;
- Educate and celebrate Hispanic giving;
- Use community resources to build philanthropic expertise;
- Engage in strategic partnerships;
- Encourage more nonprofit board service; and
- Develop speaker bureaus.

A comprehensive assessment of the extent of the community service and charitable giving practices of the population aged 45 and over was conducted by the AARP [*Time and Money: An In-Depth Look at 45+ Volunteers and Donors* (2003)]. The survey found that African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latinos and non-Hispanic whites are substantially involved in both formal and informal volunteering and giving at roughly equal levels.<sup>3</sup> However, some differences were uncovered by the survey.

African Americans are among the most active volunteers and are especially likely to report on volunteering on their own, apart from organizations. Volunteer efforts focused on homeless and hungry populations, minority rights, religious institutions, neighborhoods and tutoring. Asian Americans are more likely to volunteer on occasion rather than regularly. On average, they donate larger amounts of money than the other

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<sup>3</sup> Questions probing both informal and formal giving and volunteering activities were included because of the assumption that some of the community service and charitable giving behaviors among African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans might be missed by traditional survey questions.

groups included in the survey. They are most likely to support museums, theaters, libraries or other cultural and arts organizations. Hispanic Americans volunteer the most hours per month. They are also the most likely to provide help to other immigrants in the U.S. and send money to help people in other countries. Non-Hispanic whites tend to donate more financially and are likely to volunteer to help animals, the environment and public servants.

Rooney et al. (2005) examine the effects of race and gender on philanthropy and how the interaction effects between race, gender and survey methodologies (*The Effects of Race, Gender and Survey Methodologies on Giving in the U.S.*). Results indicate that differences in philanthropic behaviors correlate by gender and not by race. The study found that racial differences in giving and volunteering levels tend to disappear after controlling for other variables and suggest that minorities are not disadvantaged in their ability to self-finance community-based goods and services.

Perhaps one area where the differences are most pronounced is in the support of arts and culture. In her 2006 study of cultural heritage organizations, Carole Rothenstein provides an overview of heritage organizations and a snapshot of their structure, finances and programs. Her work confirms that the primary intent of these organizations is to preserve neighborhoods and communities, and to benefit youth, elders and families through a broad programmatic range of cultural, educational and human service activities. The study also finds that cultural heritage organizations are small and lack financial resources in comparison to the nonprofit arts, culture and humanities sub-sector. Moreover, Black and Hispanic organizations are shown to be potentially more vulnerable financially than are organizations affiliated with other racial/ethnic groups. The findings of this study are reinforced by other studies as well. For example, the work on Black Foundations undertaken by the Twenty-First Century Foundation (Hunt and Maurrasse, 2004) notes that only 5% of African American grantmaking goes to cultural institutions. [A survey undertaken for Diversity Pipeline Alliance (DRP, 2006) also underscores the small percentage of giving that is dedicated to arts and culture organizations.]

## **Mapping**

The National Forum of Regional Association of Grantmakers commissioned a mapping of racial, ethnic and tribal funds [*A Scan of the Landscape: Racial, Ethnic and Tribal Philanthropy* (2006)]. The purpose of the study by Kristin Lindsey was to build awareness of these efforts in a way that strengthens the field, supports connections between practitioners, builds capacity, and elevates racial, ethnic and tribal philanthropy as strong, viable options for donors. In addition, it sought to enhance the visibility of racial, ethnic and tribal funds within the philanthropic community. Researchers identified 85 foundations, funds, programs or initiatives with a primary purpose of engaging donors in racial, ethnic and tribal communities. Forty-one practitioners, representing the RETP (racial, ethnic and tribal philanthropy) organizations were interviewed.

The research provided the following observations:

- RETP is an emerging field within philanthropy;

- Cultural competence (the ability to understand cultural and ethnic nuances within and between communities of color) is fundamental to understanding and supporting successful philanthropic engagement in these communities;
- How to leverage “outside” sources of philanthropic capital and the best use of partnerships and investments from mainstream individuals and institutions are important questions for RETP projects;
- Research and communication is an important tool to advance RETP; and
- Activities to learn about, engage in, support and strengthen RETP are on the rise.

The author stresses the importance of cultural competence. Examples of this include connections between education about philanthropy and learning about wealth accumulation (which is an important and reoccurring theme in the literature); the role of informal giving; building donor awareness of strong, credible and ethical nonprofits; and how ethnicity and race shape donors’ interests, motivations and the types of organizations they may want to fund.

Lindsay underscores four key areas for RETPs:

- Fundraising (Giving Circles are suggested as an important strategy);
- Leadership development;
- Building organizational capacity; and
- Engaging in donor education of which she identifies three types:
  - stand alone;
  - education plus giving experience; and
  - using pooled funds as an educational experience.

Siegel and Yancey’s 2003 study, *Philanthropy’s Forgotten Donor? Engaging the Individual Donor*, which maps donor education initiatives, observed that these programs have overlooked ethnic and racial communities. They note that ethnic and recent immigrant communities tend to give to local, community-based organizations such as churches, mosques and temples, and through family, cultural, business, civic and mutual aid associations rather than through mainstream philanthropic institutions. They argue that the donor education programs need to expand in order to overcome lack of awareness on the part of potential donors in communities of color and recommend that donor education programs build relationships with those institutions in ethnic communities that have donors’ trust.

Hunt and Maurrasse (2004) in *Time, Talent and Treasure: A Study of Black Philanthropy*, offer a snapshot of the range of philanthropic support within the African American community. Their survey of 324 Black foundations found \$190 million in assets and \$48 million in grantmaking concentrated particularly in those areas that include children and youth. The study’s recommendations to increase philanthropic capacity include efforts to:

- Increase educational and outreach activities to African Americans;
- Convene additional dialogues and seminars;
- Create online databases for black foundations, associations and philanthropists;
- Outreach to professional advisors; and
- Increase leveraging opportunities.

## Wealth Creation and Philanthropy

In *Pathways for Change: Philanthropy Among African American, Asian American, and Latino Donors in the New York Metropolitan Region* Mottino and Miller (2004) argue that African American, Latino and Asian American donors give to create pathways for people excluded from access and opportunity. The study, based on 150 interviews with donors of color, found that generational differences are important; that the largest proportion of donations go to community organizations and education, with a good deal of attention placed on advancing the careers of the best and the brightest; and that education facilitates access to wealth and ultimately capital markets, which is seen as the most promising way to address social problems. The volume also includes several strategies for fundraising.

Boice (2003) in *More than Money* also noted that philanthropy professionals have generally overlooked the buying power of communities of color and she encourages fundraisers to cultivate relationships with diverse communities. She argues that with proper research, programming, implementation, evaluation and most importantly, a culturally sensitive approach, nonprofit organizations will reflect the surrounding and changing communities.

Havens, in his 2005 study commissioned by the Twenty-First Century Foundation, *Wealth Transfer Estimates for African American Households*, has found that African American households gave a larger amount but a smaller share of aggregate national household giving in 2001 than in 1992. Two themes emerge from his findings: First, income, wealth and charitable giving in the African American community have risen rapidly in recent years. African American households as a group made substantial economic gains during the period and their charitable giving increased even faster than either their income or their wealth. Second, African American gains were not as large as that of the total population. Based on these conclusions, Havens argues that philanthropic efforts should target wealth and emerging wealth in African American communities, as well as strengthen areas that will lead to greater wealth accumulation, such as education.

In this area of wealth accumulation and philanthropy, two other ongoing areas of research of the Donor Research Project deserve mention. The first is work undertaken with the Diversity Pipeline Alliance.

Conducted online over a five-week period in May and June 2006, a survey elicited 466 responses from professional membership organizations in communities of color. The major findings include:

- A high percentage of respondents volunteer (83%); give money (90%); and see a strong correlation between philanthropy, building leadership skills and career advancement (100%);
- The largest percentage of gifts targeted organizations that provide educational (24%) and health (24%) services. Areas such as arts and culture, political advocacy and the environment received little interest;

- Well over fifty percent of all gifts were focused on the local (neighborhood and city), and racial and ethnic communities. However, a high percentage of gifts was designated to national (15%) and international (13%) issues or organizations;
- Respondents tended to connect the relationship between philanthropy, leadership development and career advancement with board service. Less emphasis was placed on making monetary donations.

Work is also underway on employee affinity groups in the financial sector. The research has documented the presence of 65 Asian, African, and Latino employee affinity groups—and an equal number of similar groups (multicultural, Native American, women’s and those based on sexual orientation) in over 20 financial firms operating in New York City. A directory has been compiled of 21 of the groups that includes data on the groups’ mission and philanthropic preferences, as well as contact information.

Preliminary indications, including historical and background information from this literature review, points to the importance of these groups, both in terms of business and philanthropy. The closed nature of corporate culture presents difficulties in extracting information. While the pattern of consolidation in the financial industry is shifting the environment for these organizations. However, in addition to web-based and archival research and focus group meetings, interviews have been held with representatives of Deloitte and Touche, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, JP Morgan Chase, among others. Findings indicate that many of these groups are new, having been founded post 2000; most are comprised of professional (as opposed to support) staff, have leadership structures, internal communication mechanisms and the approval of their firms. They have both career advancement and philanthropic missions, engage in mentoring relationships (especially inside the firms) and a number of them encourage nonprofit board service. Finally, the trend seems to indicate increased alignment between the philanthropic objectives of the corporation and the group.

### **Foundations and Diversity**

Several studies have been published since 2003 quantifying foundation giving to minority-led nonprofits. The most definitive are the studies by the Greenlining Institute, *Fairness in Philanthropy Part I: Foundation Giving to Minority-led Nonprofits* and *Part II: Perspectives from the Field* (Aguilar et al. 2005/2006).

According to Aguilar, minority-led nonprofit organizations received between 3% of the dollars and 2% to 4% of the grants dispersed by independent foundations and community foundations. Corporate foundations rank higher in embracing diversity in their grantmaking programs, though these activities are increasingly shaped by market considerations. Barriers to increased giving include:

- Lack of transparency on the part of the foundations;
- Lack of trust in organized philanthropy; and
- Foundation wariness in funding advocacy-related issues.

The report offers four key recommendations to increase foundation funding:

- Increase transparency;
- Establish community advisory boards;
- Diversify foundation staff and boards;
- Leverage the work of small foundations already engaged in this work.

Similar themes are presented in a 2004 report by Community Foundations of America, *Engaging Communities of Color in Philanthropy*. The report finds that barriers to funding minority-led nonprofits include: the inability to access foundations; the lack of trust between minority-led nonprofits and foundations; and inadequate resources on the part of many minority-led nonprofits to devote to relationship building with foundation staff.

The report offers several observations about community foundations' engagement with communities of color:

- Foundation internal capacity and staffing shape outreach to ethnic and racial communities;
- A strong institutional commitment sustained over time is required to develop relationships with communities of color;
- There is a need for internal leadership and external ambassadors [the study notes that only 4.3% of the leadership of community foundations are people of color];
- It is important to educate donors about the benefits of organized philanthropy; and
- Focus groups are an effective tool to engage local nonprofit organizations and leaders to build partnerships.

The report also notes that both nonprofit executives and foundation leaders felt that board and staff diversity affects grantmaking programs and priorities.

Various programmatic and administrative strategies have been proposed to counter this lack of foundation funding of minority-led nonprofits. Kasper, Ramos, et al. in their (2004) article in *Foundation News and Commentary*, "Making the Case for Diversity in Philanthropy," effectively summarize the argument for incorporating diversity at the operational and policy levels. They argue that increased diversity will facilitate problem solving for foundations; bring new perspectives; broaden networks; increase representation to communities of color; help recruit talent; and help advance values surrounding social justice. They use the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation as a case study.

A study by Jiannbin Shiao, *Identifying Talent, Institutionalizing Diversity: Race and Philanthropy in Post-Civil Rights America* (2005), offers a somewhat cautionary tale about the limited impact of diversity on foundation policy making. Shiao argues that by devising policies that encourage diversity, grantmaking institutions have helped to transform race relations in the United States amid a backlash against affirmative action. He argues that in the 1980s foundation thinking about race policy and grantmaking underwent an evolution from a Black-centered, radical perspective focused on "good causes" to a non-White-centered approach that emphasizes good strategy and "inclusive expertise." The new paradigm is to move beyond confrontation to achieving advancement through professional channels in mainstream institutions. These conclusions reinforce the

findings of the Mottino/Miller and Daniels studies and underline a clear trend in the research.

Based on an examination of *Foundation News and Commentary* and The Ford Foundation and Cleveland and San Francisco Community Foundations, he argues that diversity provides a limited understanding of a foundation's race policy, having secondary saliency to an individual's position within the institution, with senior (board) levels (least occupied by individuals of color) less encumbered by institutional constraints and job considerations.

A similar approach is embedded in, *Effective Philanthropy: Organizational Success through Deep Diversity and Gender Equality* (2006). In the volume, Mary Ellen Capek and Molly Mead examine the impact of gender diversity on foundation culture. They are quick to link gender with other aspects of diversity and spend some time looking at the Hispanic in Philanthropy's efforts concerning the Latino Collaborative as a fundraising model. The Collaborative, which includes local and national funding streams and match requirements, raised \$21 million by 2005.

### **Diaspora Giving**

Yin and Lan's 2003 study, *Why Do They Give? Change and Continuity in Chinese American Transnational Philanthropy since the 1970s* at the Harvard's Diaspora Philanthropy Global Equity Initiative, evaluates the key characteristics of Chinese American giving to China and its changes since 1979. The authors observe that dramatic changes have occurred in diaspora giving since the 1970s, largely due to strong networking capacities of Chinese American communities. This has expanded the scope of giving from informal or personal giving to broader and more professional networks.

Young and Shih (in *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity and Change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2003) argue that the Chinese diaspora must be seen as complex and multifaceted. They discuss the changing attitude of the Chinese government towards its expatriates, as the government has increasingly begun to capitalize on the investment capital of the Chinese diaspora. The authors also describe the patterns of Chinese diaspora giving to China, highlighting philanthropy in nonprofit organizations, Chinese universities, organizations in Taiwan and Hong Kong and Chinese American philanthropic organizations with a China focus. They find that the official nonprofit sector is much less a beneficiary of overseas Chinese philanthropy than they had hypothesized, whereas Chinese universities see private philanthropy as a critical resource for expansion and development.

A 2006 article by Dwight Dyer prepared for the Hispanics in Philanthropy board retreat meeting, reviews the impact of remittances on Mexican communities. The article notes that over \$18 billion was sent to Mexico via remittances in 2005. The central debate is whether these dollars are best used to buy necessities or help underwrite infrastructure development. The argument that is made is that though consumption has a multiplier

effect, the impact of development is more far reaching. Along those lines the study identifies three areas where nonprofit organizations can help the development process by:

- Strengthening civil society organizations;
- Identifying entrepreneurial opportunities; and
- Coordinating activities with public authorities.

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