

The Ms. Foundation: A Case Study in Feminist Fundraising

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About the Author

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Prior to 1986, she served as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation, a consultant to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Ford Foundation, and Assistant Secretary of the Metropolitan Life Foundation, a major corporate donor. She is the author of several books and articles on American philanthropy including (among others) *Noblesse Oblige* and *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930*, and co-editor of *The Nonprofit Sector in the Global Communique: Voices from Many Nations*.

She is a past President of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), a member of the Independent Sector Research Committee, the Governing Council of the Rockefeller Archive Center, the editorial board of *Voluntas* and former Chairperson of the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council.

This working paper is dedicated to Helen Hunt

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It had been a very long day, beginning at 8:30 that morning. Dinner ended at nine, and they had served wine -- every speaker's nightmare. As Marie Wilson strode to the podium, half the audience seemed to be silently praying, "please let it be short!" And then she began to speak, and they were mesmerized.

Part of what held her audience spellbound for the next hour was Wilson's tremendous skill as a speaker. But she also had a compelling tale to tell. Wilson talked about the history of the Ms. Foundation, the struggles since it began in 1972, its programs ranging from income generation projects run by former welfare recipients; to the wildly successful "Take Our Daughters to Work" day that brought girls flooding into offices and businesses across

the country; to efforts to enable rich women to take control of their own wealth.

She also discussed the Foundation's endowment campaign. Launched in 1986, it has grown to more than \$12 million dollars. The ways in which the Foundation plans to reach (if not exceed) its endowment goal are the subject of this essay, as are the many constraints that still surround efforts to raise money by and for women today.

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The Challenge

The Ms. Foundation was created in 1972 and chartered as a public foundation three years later "to support the empowerment of women and girls in the United States." In many ways it was a milestone. Ms. was the first multi-issue national women's fund to concentrate on the full spectrum of women's concerns, from antipoverty initiatives to pro-choice campaigns. The Ms. Foundation also sought to combine grantmaking, political activism and technical education in new ways. To quote its President, Marie Wilson, "They never thought that money was enough." Created by activists, rather than wealthy donors -- the traditional source of foundation development -- its credo was self-help. One of the primary aims was to fund organizations that were run "by the women affected by the problem being addressed," and to do so in ways that transcended the biases of race, ethnicity, disability, age, or sexual preference. By 1993, approximately 70% of the Foundation's projects were managed by women of color or a multiracial staff, and 30% were located in rural areas, reflecting the commitment to "empowering women and girls to make their own decisions" on a national scale.

If we step back from contemporary issues, the Foundation's significance becomes even more pronounced. Women of all social classes have historically been extraordinarily generous volunteers, in many cases committing themselves to what sociologist Arlene Kaplan Daniels terms "invisible careers" for the causes they believe in. Over the past two centuries, much of this time has been invested in programs to aid women and children, from the creation of orphan asylums in the nineteenth century to campaigns for female suffrage and anti-child labor laws in the twentieth.

But women have also been far more generous with their time than with money, for reasons that will be discussed in greater detail below. The result has been that women's causes -- especially feminist causes -- have

historically been underfunded. That the women who developed these institutions achieved so much with so little is an extraordinary testament to their commitment and skill. But it is difficult not to imagine how much more might have been accomplished with adequate funds.

Funding is still a problem. In 1976, for example, foundations contributed less than 1% of their funding to programs for women and girls. Thirty years later, this figure hovered around the 5% mark. Controlled by predominantly male board and staffs, the bulk of the country's grantmaking organizations had little interest in women's issues per se. Moreover, since women have traditionally been underrepresented in government, women's issues lacked articulate elected advocates, limiting their access to public support.

One of the most important challenges addressed by funds like the Ms. Foundation -- and one that comes into sharp relief when an endowment comes into the picture -- is the question of how to break this historical pattern. How can women's organizations move away from a reliance on shoestring budgets and self-sacrifice toward long-term sustainability and institutionalization? And how can this be done in inclusive ways that bring traditionally neglected groups such as women of color and low income women into decisionmaking processes along side of middle and upper class women in ways that sustain a sense of comfort and membership?

Finally, how do you raise funds for feminist initiatives that may seem volatile to corporations, and threatening or unimportant to legislators and foundations? How do you even persuade women donors to give their gifts publicly rather than anonymously, in their own names? These are the types of questions surrounding not only the Ms. Foundation's efforts to amass an endowment, but the issues of long-term survival that surround women's organizations more generally.

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The Ms. Foundation and its Programs

Since its inception, the Foundation's mission has been "to fund groundbreaking projects and offer technical assistance to organizations that consistently bring issues vital to the social and economic well-being of women and girls to the forefront of public thinking." By 1977, Ms. was heavily involved in supporting an array of activist and educational projects in such diverse areas as health, employment, domestic violence, and nonsexist multicultural education. Marshalling resources to break down "the barriers of race, class, disability, sexual orientation and culture," it was actively engaged in identifying feminist concerns, supporting and leveraging funds, and investing in women leaders.

Most of the first grants were small, ranging from \$100 to \$5000. But because it was coupled with technical assistance, fundraising advice and efforts to bring grantee programs to the attention of other potential donors, this seed money played an important role in leveraging additional funds that extended well beyond the modest sums from Ms. This dual emphasis on direct grants to community-based self-help projects, and advisory and referral services characterized one of the Foundation's main lines of work during its first decade. Several programs were in place by the end of the 1970s. The Reproductive Rights and Health Project donated grants to grassroots groups, helping to bolster a variety of pro-choice initiatives. The "Free To Be Foundation," on the other hand, worked to combat prejudice and racial stereotypes through educational products. Originated by board members Marlo Thomas and Letty Cottin Pogrebin, the project donated the royalties from the sale of its books, records and video cassettes for children, linking fundraising to educational initiatives.

By the mid-1980s, a growing proportion of the Foundation's grants were being given to programs to help children, especially efforts to prevent sexual abuse and to aid the victims of incest. Despite the prevalence of these problems, they were often ignored or underrated by other funders. According to statistics compiled by the Feminist Majority Foundation, over 50% "of all American women will experience sexual assault and/or domestic violence in their lifetimes." Yet in the early 1990s when this report was drafted, the United Way was allocating only \$11 million nationwide for shelters for battered and abused women and girls, less than half of one percent of its annual national budget. According to the authors, "Nationwide, there are four times more shelters for animals than there are for beaten women." (p.3)

The Women's Economic Development Project was also introduced in the 1980s to help low income women and women of color to develop grassroots, community-based economic development projects. This

encompassed a variety of activities, from an annual Institute on Women and Economic Development to ongoing technical assistance programs and a quarterly journal entitled *Equal Means: Women organizing Economic Solutions*. By 1991, the annual Institute was drawing participants from 30 states, Egypt, Thailand, Australia and Puerto Rico.

A \$2.3 million Collaborative Fund for Economic Development was added in the 1990s, providing \$150,000 grants for "innovative job creation projects that promote women's economic self-sufficiency," including micro-enterprises, self-employment activities and cooperative businesses designed to promote economic independence among low income women and women of color. Thirteen foundations and corporations contributed in all, ranging from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Ford Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation to Levi Strauss.

Economic justice held a place on the Foundation's agenda from the outset. Examples of early economic development grantees included such organizations as the Ramah Navajo Weaver's Association in New Mexico, and the Watermark Association of Artisans, a low income women's craft cooperative. Chicago's Women's Self Employment Project was awarded one of the \$150,000 grants given through the Collaborative Fund. Modeled on the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, this group makes small business loans to groups of Latino, Caribbean and African-American women to enable them to start their own businesses.

Reproductive issues continued to grow in importance as well. The Reproductive Rights Coalition Fund founded in 1988 donated over \$500,000 to statewide pro-choice coalitions, and helped to track elections, pending legislation and possible Supreme Court cases on reproductive rights. Efforts to help women with AIDs were also funded.

While many of the Foundation's programs focused on the empowerment of the poor, others sought to strengthen the visibility of girls and the managerial capacities of women of wealth. By 1967, the Foundation's board and staff had identified the "masculinization of wealth" as one of the key problems undermining women's ability to promote social change. A 1988 conference on "Women, Money and Power" kicked off a special initiative for Women Managing Wealth. Designed to help "women in families of wealth and power seize control of those resources and use them to empower women and children," it offered peer group support networks as well as financial training. In the words of one annual report, "Women Managing Wealth operates on the belief that financial literacy enhances women's power and influence in the struggle for full equality." In

effect, it was designed "to help women take responsibility for the money in their lives."

A Businesswomen's Advisory Committee was also created in the mid-1980s, to begin to explore ways in which corporations might be encouraged to fund Ms., and women's issues more generally.

Perhaps the best-publicized program was the Foundation's Take Our Daughters To Work Day, first staged in April of 1993. It was a tremendous success, as pictures of girls in offices splashed across the front page of newspapers across the country. The New York Times not only treated the event to front page coverage; the 320 girls who descended on the paper's offices that day produced their own version of the Times, entitled (appropriately) Girls Times. Sporting the same gothic banner as the parent company, this six page flier headlined the remarkable fact that "Daughters, by the Dozens, Come to Work," and featured Gloria Steinem's front page quote, "Girls need real-life examples they can relate to." As these youngsters stormed the country's offices, Marie Wilson proudly commented, "Take Our Daughters to Work Day is an unprecedented historical event focusing national attention on girls to make them visible, valued and heard." Wilson was subsequently honored as one of the People of the Year by New Woman Magazine for her role in developing the program.

Over the course of the past two decades, the Ms. Foundation developed a diverse array of programs, ranging from efforts to enhance self-esteem and empowerment among the poorest of the poor to the very rich. Its revenues rose as well. The 1977 annual report recorded a balance of less than \$350,000. Thirteen donors gave \$2,000 or more that year, including Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Five of them gave anonymously. Eight corporate donors were also listed: Atlantic Richfield, Exxon, General Motors, Gulf and Western, Johnson and Johnson, Textron, the Celenese Corporation and Ms. Magazine. And many of the Foundation's grants were very small, in the \$100 to \$5,000 range.

As of June, 1991, its total portfolio had risen to over \$6 million, and the list of its foundation, corporate and individual donors spread over five pages of small type. Twenty foundations, nine corporations, and eleven donors (six of whom remained anonymous) donated \$10,000 or more. Income generation also played a role in the Foundation's growth. Between 1972 and 1988 alone, the "Free to be You and Me" project provided over \$800,000 in royalty fees.

To quote one of the Foundation's creators, Gloria Steinem, Ms. had grown from an organization supported by "a small number of committed social activists" to encompass a significant pool of corporate, foundation and individual donors. "Initially, we rarely knew where the funding was coming from beyond the next thirty days. Now foundations are willing to give two-to-three year grants."

They also cast the net more widely among individual donors. The Foundation's 1977 report expressed the "hope that general contributors will eventually provide the basic financial core of the Foundation, since they are evidence of the strength and diversity of support for the Women's Movement." Donors of \$15 or more were promised a copy of the Foundation's annual reports, while "Friends" in the \$2,000 level received invitations to meetings and seminars "on issues of critical and timely concern to the Women's Movement." Donors of \$20,000 or more to the Special Grants Program were offered the added incentive of attendance at the Board meetings, including the right to "make recommendations as to which approved projects they would like to support."

Between 1983 and 1985, almost 400 donors gave gifts of \$100 or more. The majority of those who allowed their names to be listed in the annual report were women, although a few men such as the former president of Stanford University and the Rockefeller Foundation, Dick Lyman, and television personality Phil Donahue appeared as well. Four years later, 22 individuals and couples donated at least \$5,000, five of whom remained anonymous.

The end of the 1980s also witnessed the creation of the Gloria Awards. Presented at an annual fundraising dinner, these Awards recognize the accomplishments of both philanthropists and nonprofit entrepreneurs. Since 1989, winners of the Gloria Award for Philanthropic Vision have included Alida Rockefeller Messinger, Phoebe Valentine, Lucia Woods Lindley, Pamela Grace Model, and Helen Hunt.

The Foundation's Funding Circles were introduced in 1991. These are open to donors who contribute at least \$20,000 toward a specific area. The first Funding Circle was organized around the Women's Voices Project. Jointly sponsored by the Ms. Foundation and the Center for Policy Alternatives, this project conducted a nationwide poll and special focus groups across a broad spectrum of women from differing racial, ethnic and economic groups in order to identify women's personal concerns and policymaking priorities. The findings stressed the importance of equal pay for equal work, flextime in the workplace and better healthcare, followed by

a longer list of priorities that ranged from the need to curb sexual harassment and discrimination to the desire for better job training and child care services. Issued in two separate reports, one on polling results and a companion policy guide, the results were widely publicized.

By 1992, a second Funders Circle was added, this time with a focus on Safety, including such issues as sexual abuse and domestic violence. Donations from this group were distributed to a variety of shelters, national coalitions, self-defense training programs, and advocacy groups. In 1995 a third Funders Circle will examine issues of economic justice.

A survey conducted in 1993 as a part of the endowment gift study examined the demographic results of twenty years of fundraising and leadership development efforts via memberships, awards, committees and funders circles. An overwhelming number (97%) of the donors were women, most of whom fell within the \$60 to \$99 range. Almost all (98%) were Caucasian, and slightly over half (52%) were married. Twenty-one percent were single, 14% divorced, and 8% widowed. The majority (93%) regarded themselves as feminists, and 83% reported giving to the Ms. Foundation because it was a women's organization. A surprisingly high ratio (78%) learned about the Foundation through a request for funds received in the mail. Thirty percent were baby boomers in their forties; 20% in their fifties; the same ratio in their sixties, and 13% of the Foundation's donors were over seventy.

Given the scope and number of programs it has funded, the history of the Ms. Foundation is a record of remarkable achievement. The 1991 report broached the issue of "What sets us apart from other funding organizations?" Although somewhat more complex than the original mission of the 1970s, the answer clearly echoed the founders' ideals, citing "Our roots in activism. our mandate to help women design their own programs for economic survival. Our encouragement of collaboration among women of different ethnic and class backgrounds. And our support of new emerging feminist issues. Finally, we're different from other funding organizations because we want to help women and girls realize their aspirations to become leaders in the various arenas in which they've chosen to work."

The Problem

Between 1972 and 1993, the Ms. Foundation managed to attract a diverse group of foundation, corporate and individual donors. Although the roster of foundation and corporate backers had grown considerably, most of the Foundation's donors were white middle-aged women. This raises two

interrelated questions. First, what inspires women to give to women's organizations -- especially those with feminist aims? In other words, what creates the "culture of comfort" that encourages them to donate funds -- and what discourages them from giving? Second, what sorts of strategies can enable women's groups like Ms. to amass adequate operating funds, and the endowments they need to ensure long-term sustainability? Both questions have important implications for women's organizations. Steinem summed up the challenge when she noted that "one major way of ending the feminization of poverty is to attack the masculinization of wealth." This is a formidable assignment. No matter how outstanding their programs are, women's groups enter the race for funds at a disadvantage. Statistics compiled in the Feminist Majority Foundation's report on "Empowering Women in Philanthropy" (1991) illustrate the extent of "the sex bias in philanthropy." In 1990, only 5% of foundation grants -- \$165.8 million out of a \$3.25 billion pool -- were given to programs specifically earmarked for women and girls, despite the fact that over 50% of the country's population is female. Part of the rationale for this discrimination is that many general grants include funds for women and girls, even though not earmarked specifically for that purpose. But the record of United Way allocations for 1990 reveals a different picture. While YMCAs received \$106 million of these supposedly "general" funds, YWCAs netted a scant \$66 million. Similarly, while the Boy Scouts got \$88 million, the Girl Scouts received only \$56 million.

The Feminist Majority report traces part of the problem to the inertia of tradition. As they explain, many foundations are governed by past precedents. "Because programs for women and girls have historically been underfunded, foundations justify continually shortchanging women." Nor has the influx of women onto foundation staffs made a discernible difference in raising funding levels for women's programs. Although women now comprise almost 60% of the professional staffs of grantmaking institutions, they constitute a scant 29% of foundation trustees. This means that 71% of the people who sit on foundation boards are male. The general consensus is that for things to really change there need to be more women and people of color on boards. Male and female donors often adopt very different giving patterns. According to statistics compiled by the Independent Sector in 1989, American men gave almost twice as much as women, averaging annual contributions of \$1200, as opposed to slightly less than \$700 for women. These figures are hardly surprising, given the fact that women tend to make less than men, and even wealthy women often do not control the fortunes they inherit. And yet, as researcher Sue Schneider points out, 40% of the 3.3 million Americans with gross assets of \$500,000 or more are women. Despite this, women's philanthropy has

been undervalued." Independent Sector Vice President Virginia Hodgkinson stated the problem more bluntly: "If women gave as much in money as they do in time, giving in this country would soar."

But for that to happen, gender differences have to be taken into account, and more targeted strategies devised for reaching different groups of women. Often, the incentives that inspire men and women to make donations differ markedly. For example, male donors tend to be attracted by the prospect of visibility. For women who have been raised to avoid the limelight, the thought of having their gifts publicized can be a chilling prospect: hence the tendency of women to give their largest gifts anonymously.

Prestige, competition and peer pressure are the carrots for a great deal of masculine largesse. Women, on the other hand, take longer to cultivate, and are more inclined to give to an organization in which they are directly involved. In effect, men fund things out a spirit of competition; women endorse causes.

To quote Marie Wilson, "women's organizations cannot afford to have uneducated constituencies. Men operate on more a quid-pro-quo basis. They have more of an assumption that they already know what they need to know about an organization. Generally, all they have to do is to get a group of their colleagues together in a room and convince them that this is an important thing to do. Often, they will get gifts by offering similar gifts to others' causes in return."

Sue Schneider reported in her research on gender differences in Jewish giving that "a man makes a contribution and then becomes involved by serving on a board or committee, while a women typically is first a volunteer, a consumer of the service, or a participant in a program offered by a nonprofit organization." The implication of these differing styles is that while men simply pick up the telephone, swapping promises of donations with their peers, women donors tend to be much more of a long-term investment.

Lack of communication is another problem. As Gloria Steinem points out, while "men talk about money all the time, women rarely discuss it. This has to change. It has to become more acceptable for women to discuss monetary issues as well."

Generational issues also play a role. Research has shown that generosity and age are intimately linked. People in their thirties and forties, who are

still establishing themselves professionally, tend to give less, while people over 65 -- including women -- give more. According to the Feminist Majority report, older women "have been the mainstay of women's organizations."

Steinem explains why, noting that "the generational split among women is the exact reverse of that among men. Men are radical when they are young and become increasingly conservative with age. Women tend to be the exact opposite: conservative when they are young, but increasingly radical after thirty or forty. Women are valued for their beauty, or as sex objects or inexpensive laborers. As they age, these sources of power diminish, while men's earning power only increases with time." As a result, women become radicalized as they grow older because "they are educated by life."

Until recently, older women with money to give generally have not earned that money themselves, because their opportunities for employment were limited. This has important implications for their roles as donors as well. Many tend to give anonymously, or reserve their largest donations for the causes and institutions that interested their husbands. Or they shy away from giving more than their friends out of a misplaced sentiment of consideration. As Marie Wilson explained, "some women are legitimately modest. In addition, the price of getting out there can include the fear of isolation, and questions about who is going to be upset." Moreover, "many women have the feeling that they don't have enough money to give away, and only recently have they begun to give to women. It's a question of what is valued. Women have to do a lot of consciousness raising for each other. They need to create a vision of the communities they want to live in and use their money to build these communities."

Often, women who have surplus money to contribute and women's causes they care about don't come forward because they lack role models, and don't want to be perceived as taking the lead themselves. Or they fall into the timeworn pattern of backing the causes they believe in with time rather than cash. Kehle Kushing Freeman, who is herself both a donor and volunteer, neatly summarized this problem in an essay in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. As she explained, "Wives, even those of us who work for pay, substitute significant contributions of time and energy for significant contributions of money to the philanthropic causes we support. We rarely make claims for equal access to the family's resources," and then only "after we've subsidized all the ballet lessons, karate lessons, summer camps and semesters in France that the middle class considers necessities of life for its children."

This often leads to a double standard. Freeman illustrated this point by recounting a gift that her husband had made to a local arts center where he served on the fundraising committee. "It was exactly fifty times the pledge I had made to the women's arts foundation on whose campaign committee I served.... I'll wager this same scenario is being played out all over the country. It seriously affects the financing of institutions and causes that predominantly serve women."

Solutions

What encourages women to give? For some, like Helen Hunt, it is the cause itself, and the person who asks for the donation. If you trust them, and you believe in the cause, chances are you will give. Steinem agrees. As she explained, "For women's groups like Ms., personal identification and commitment are the most important factors in attracting and holding donors. Whether through Take Our Daughters to Work, or programs to promote feminist legislation or aid battered women, personal identification leads to personal commitment. This is the best quid-pro-quo we have to offer."

Marie Wilson struck a similar theme, suggesting that "the existing 'culture of comfort' is created by the women we know and trust. It is important to let women know that they will be involved in determining where the money is spent."

Steinem turned the issue around. Perhaps the key is not women's "comfort level," but their "discomfort level." One of the causes that attracts some women to organizations like Ms. is the opportunity to combat sexual abuse. Writing in 1986, Steinem suggested that "there is reason to suspect a higher incidence of incest inside powerful families. Certainly, there is more resistance to punishing those at fault." Issues like sexual abuse and domestic violence transcend class lines, providing a powerful incentive to give.

Another factor is visibility. Wilson underscored the value of media coverage in fundraising, noting that "people don't fund what they don't know." Initially, the Ms. Foundation was "steeped in modesty." Very few people recognized their name, and those who did sometimes confused it with Ms. Magazine. But potential funders -- even women -- often ask "when were you last in the newspaper?"

One of the most important factors in addressing the comfort level is being able to prove that your organization is a known entity. Because we are

such a media-oriented society, this kind of publicity is a significant determinant in what endures and what is funded. Within this context, getting so many women to participate in Take our Daughters to Work Day "did more to enhance their ability to raise funds than twenty years of grantmaking." Steinem also noted the importance of placing publicity about women's issues and organizations in mainstream publications.

"Until we learn to get out in public, we won't get enough money for the work we want to do," Wilson noted. "Women are not trained to capture the limelight. Working women want to be associated with an entity that's known. They want to give to an effort they've seen cited in a magazine or newspaper, like Take Our Daughters to Work."

Other kinds of publicity can help as well. One of the virtues of the Gloria Awards has been their ability to encourage women with a strong commitment to the Foundation to publicly acknowledge their support. Programs such as this can begin to encourage women to stop giving anonymously. There is a crying need for women who are willing to serve as role models for other women donors. By coming forward, their gifts can have a "snowball effect," attracting donations from their peers as well. Career women require different incentives. Statistics suggest that the baby boom generation is beginning to reach the stage in their lives when they are ready to donate money as well as scrambling to earn it. According to the Feminist Majority's report, "women under age 45 today are the fastest growing group of donors to progressive feminist groups." This is the largest generational group in American history, and it will continue to be a major presence on the philanthropic scene for the next three to four decades. Moreover, because many of these women hold paid jobs, they clearly control their own money, and they are perfectly at ease in conversations about power and wealth.

But this also means that they have been socialized differently. Women who have worked their way up the corporate ladder are less reticent about coming forward, and more concerned about the bottom line. While older women stress the importance of funding causes, baby boomers are likely to ask questions about quid-pro-quo issues as well. According to Anna Lloyd, who headed the Foundation's Businesswomen's Committee, the incentives needed to attract women who are willing and able to give donations in the \$500 range vary considerably from either the direct mail appeals that attract \$35 donors, or strategies to interest women of inherited wealth.

Lloyd suggested that one type of incentive that might be attractive to this group would be to provide opportunities to mix with other donors at this level at cocktail parties or breakfast meetings (preferably in a corporate setting) . They could use these opportunities not only to network and share information about their own careers, but to discuss how they might get their corporations to fund the Ms. Foundation. According to Lloyd, a "steady and routine stream of meetings among peer groups of businesswomen within a business environment" would be a powerful fundraising tool.

The Foundation's work with economic development programs for low income women could be another important draw. Lloyd suggested that Ms. might host a conference to draw women entrepreneurs from all classes together to network, share information, and begin to find ways to interact on a more regular basis.

Mainstreaming is another issue. To quote Joan Morgan, a Ms. Foundation consultant who works with the Gloria Awards, Take Our Daughters to Work "put them on the map. It also has had a multiplier effect for other organizations, like the Girl Scouts. As Marie Wilson put it, "If I have the power and visibility, I can make you more visible, too."

The media consultant who executed "Take Our Daughters," Nell Merlino, stressed its "mainstreaming" effect for men, as well as businesswomen and corporations. Merlino was emphatic about the need to find ways to tap every source of revenue, including more aggressive efforts to draw men into the fold. As she put it, "if the only question you are asking is how to get more money for women's issues from women, you're perpetuating a form of ghettoization. To date, male donors have been a marked minority among Ms.'s supporters. Wilson pointed out some of the difficulties in raising money from men, because, as she put it, "feminism can be threatening." Particularly during the Reagan era, it was "enormously difficult" to raise money from men and from corporations. But that seems to be changing now, not only because many men took their daughters to work, but because "men have watched their daughters' struggles. Suddenly, they 'got religion.'"

Corporate support has also had a "checkered record." During the 1970s, women's issues were "fashionable," and Steinem's presence as one of the founders played a particularly important role in helping to bring in corporate support. Much of that funding stopped in the 1980s. According to Lloyd, three years ago, "Ms. didn't even have an ongoing business connection; their ties to the corporate community were entirely on an ad hoc basis. But

to draw in corporate supporters, you need a clear cut bottom line. Visibility is important -- corporate donors want to know what they are getting in return." The Foundation's economic development and job creation programs and Take Our Daughters to Work Day have tended to draw the greatest corporate interest.

Merlino and Lloyd also emphasized the need to develop income generating projects. For example, the Foundation is now selling Tshirts and kits for corporations and teachers in conjunction with Take Our Daughters To Work Day. Merlino was particularly critical of what she termed the "hat-in-hand" approach inherent in fundraising. As she explained, "fundraising does not necessarily engender a sense of power."

Instead, she advises organizations such as Ms. to take a page from the fundraising successes of AIDs groups and the March of Dimes. For example, a recent "Dance-a-Thon" drew 10,000 people, and AIDS Walks have raised as much as \$4 million. In Merlino's estimation, "reliance on a more market-driven strategy ... has a better chance of conferring independence. Women have to learn to operate on both tracks. We need more confidence and power."

Anna Lloyd added other suggestions for profitmaking ventures. For example, corporate human resources departments are currently grappling with the need to become more responsive to the needs of women in the workplace. Ms. has a great deal of expertise in this area, including the results from the Women's Voices project. They could market this expertise on a commercial basis.

Banks are also trying to find ways to target some of their investments in poor neighborhoods. The Ms. Foundation has a tremendous amount of information and expertise concerning grassroots entrepreneurship, which they could share in return for operating support.

Income-producing activities can provide a much needed source of unearmarked funds for operating and endowment support, both of which are hard to raise. As Steinem points out, "Endowment money is like operating money. Donors usually want to pay for projects rather than the rent. So the difficulties surrounding an endowment campaign have a familiar ring." Much like the millions of Americans who donated funds for famine relief in Ethiopia, there is a tendency to want to take care of immediate needs rather than solving underlying problems over the long term. According to Marie Wilson, "Donors don't always have a lot of interest in tying up capital. People like to see their money work for them

right away. They want to address the visible poverty and distress they see around them."

Another challenge is the task of keeping donors and volunteers engaged, and giving them a sense of what their money is buying. In Lloyd's words, "What's the return for their check?" The issues of voluntarism and involvement are important, since research has shown that volunteers are more likely to give. And these activities take on added importance given the differing philanthropic styles of women and men. While men may not need to be directly involved in the organizations they support, among women this kind of involvement seems almost essential.

Wilson noted that Take Our Daughters to Work helped Ms. raise funds because it was participatory. It provided a way of personalizing the kinds of problem-solving activities that are the essence of the Foundation's work. The staff is currently organizing a national volunteer program in conjunction with this program, and they are already seeing results, verifying the notion that "if women can give their time, they are more likely to give their money as well."

Joan Morgan, who organizes fundraising events on a professional basis, added some caveats, pointing out that the correlation between giving and voluntarism holds true when people are given a "major assignment, but not if they are only licking envelopes." One of the challenges is how to find ways to integrate donors in the \$35 range, (who may give more in future) into the Foundation's work as volunteers. Anna Lloyd recounted how she had seen Marie Wilson "get a room full of people all fired up, and they immediately sign up, but then they have nowhere to go." Another question is how to court businesswomen, and how to effectively tap their business skills. How can the Ms. Foundation develop peer groups among career women as a means of cultivating them for future donations?

Politically-oriented women's groups like Emily's List have an advantage in this respect because they have a readily identifiable product. The cause of electing women to political office has a strong appeal because, as Wilson put it, "you can see the candidates, you can touch them, you can identify with their careers." It is "considerably more difficult to raise money for grassroots causes." As a result, "The collegial fundraising styles you see among men occur for women most easily around Emily's List." As Steinem put it, "How do you keep people informed and enthused about changes that may take decades?"

Questions

The challenges facing the Ms. Foundation underscore the differences -- and the importance -- surrounding the questions of how to increase women's giving, and how to raise the funds to institutionalize women's organizations.

There are other questions buried in these queries as well. How can organizations that are rooted in a strong sense of activism and personal commitment bridge the transition to institutionalization? How far can -- or should -- they go toward income generation? How can they take the time to effectively cultivate donors from different generations and classes without drawing too much attention and staff time from programmatic development?

Most of the Ms. Foundation's backing currently comes from individual women. This in turn raises a host of generational issues. Older women are the most likely to give. But they are more likely to give anonymously, or to divert their funds to the causes that their husbands embraced. If they do control inherited funds (which is not always the case -- many inheritances are tied up in trusts), they may not feel that the money is rightly theirs to give. And family claims often take precedence over philanthropic gifts.

As Marie Wilson explained, "the best fundraising does consciousness-raising." The Ms. Foundation has introduced a variety of programs to increase giving by women of wealth, from its wealth management program, to the Funders Circles, to the Gloria Awards. In the process, they have encouraged some wealthy women to come forward and give money in their own names; to form peer groups; and to shape some of the Foundation's programs. Given the fact that women in this age bracket continually stress the importance of peer relationships and the quality of the cause in encouraging women to give, are there other initiatives that might be introduced to attract their support?

Career women pose a different set of challenges. Baby boomers currently have less money, but greater numbers, greater control over their earned wealth, and they are just reaching the period in their lives when they will begin to give. The problem here is finding an effective quid-pro-quo. What sorts of volunteer activities can be devised to capture their attention, and bind them to the Foundation over the long term? Given the fact that they may have very different values than their older counterparts, will they ultimately follow male patterns of giving (seeking prestige and visibility), or traditional female patterns (anonymity, small gifts, and attraction to a particular cause)? What are the implications of these differing possibilities for fundraising in future? One particularly striking issue was the theme of

visibility. Given the fact that women have traditionally not been encouraged to seek publicity, what can be done to increase the visibility not only of donors, but of women's organizations as well? How can they devise strategies for generating publicity on a par with Take Our Daughters to Work Day?

Several types of initiatives have contributed to the Ms. Foundation's past fundraising successes, including its leadership development activities through the Gloria Awards, the space it provides for anonymity and learning through its Funders Circles; its educational activities via newsletters and Funders Circles; and the quality of the causes it endorses. But is there a way for it to match the visibility and quick rewards offered by women's support of political campaigns? To quote Nell Merlino, "What is the return? Women donors often don't get a sense of what their money is accomplishing."

The issue of sustainability poses a different set of questions. For example, men still control the bulk of the money that will be donated. How aggressively should these dollars be pursued? What else can be done to change the perception that women's issues are somehow separate or different from national issues?

How can more enduring ties be forged with corporations? Take Our Daughters to Work offered an excellent start, because it promised not only widespread participation, but recognition for the corporations that support it. How else can women's programs offer visibility to corporations without compromising their missions?

How much energy can or should be put into income generation projects? Is there a way to blend the sharing of expertise with the Foundation's larger educational mission?

Finally, what implications will these choices have for the way the organization is run? "The real issue," noted Anna Lowe, "is how to enable an organization like Ms. to make the transition from an organization run on idealism to long-term sustainability." How many new fundraising leads can small staffs afford to pursue before they lose their sense of purpose, or their capacity to run day-to-day programs?

Although men freely talk about money, among rich women, there is a reluctance to even address what some term the "m" word and the "p" word. But until issues of money and power are addressed forthrightly, women's causes will remain underfunded and condemned to a precarious existence.

It is a question of value. It is also a question of will. "If feminism means anything," Steinem noted in 1986, "it is not women as victims, but women refusing to be victims." To paraphrase the legendary suffragist, Susan B. Anthony, organizations such as the Ms. Foundation deserve "a purse of their own."

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