

Philanthropedia

October 9, 2009 - 9:17 am | By Sean Stannard-Stockton

For some time now I've been pushing the idea that facilitating a way for philanthropy and social cause experts to share their knowledge with individual donors is the big opportunity in philanthropy. The **Tactical Philanthropy Knowledge Network** is our effort to tackle this problem. Another effort is under way by a group called **Philanthropedia**.

Philanthropedia surveys foundation professionals about the best nonprofits in a given sector and then presents the top ranked organizations to users of their service. Unlike many other ranking methodologies in which a relatively small set of indicators is applied across a variety of groups, Philanthropedia is leveraging the wisdom of experts (not crowds!) in order to access the qualitative evaluation process that is inherently at the heart of great grantmaking.

Philanthropedia's **first focus area was Education** (they've also completed **San Francisco bay area homelessness**, **Climate Change** and are working on microfinance). After **surveying 39** experts using a methodology developed by **RAND** called the **Delphi Method**, they published a list of **eight outstanding organizations**. They also include profiles of the groups, what the experts saw as strengths and what they saw as areas of improvement, as well as comments from beneficiaries. They also include **information on the experts** as a group as well as giving individual bios.

To be clear, I do not think that a donor should fund an organization just because a bunch of experts like it. Experts fall into "group think" all the time and some of the organizations the experts like may simply be popular with their peers. But I do believe strongly that the work Philanthropedia is doing offers an outstanding way for donors to find organizations to look at more closely.

We need a lot more projects with this sort of focus. Today there are 5,000 staffed foundations employing thousands of professional program officers. Yet this group only controls 13% of annual charitable giving. On the other side we have millions of individual donors who control 82% of annual charitable giving and yet have limited access to good knowledge about how to give well and to whom they should give.

We need to find ways to disperse the knowledge of professional grantmakers so that it can inform individual donors.

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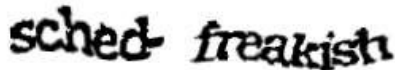
Very interesting from @soccapital What Does Behavioral Economics Say About Raising Patient Capital? <http://bit.ly/458klw> about 3 hours ago

New Blog Post:Philanthropedia: cool new project to leverage expert knowledge of great nonprofits: <http://bit.ly/3wUQ8q> about 3 hours ago

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Liz: I completely get your column. We have taken this idea and made a site where philanthropy and volunteerism can...

Jeff Mason: Well said George! This is why more \$\$\$ should go to "high-performing" nonprofits. These are...

Liz Wainger: Loved this post. Cogent, rational about a complex subject.

Ingvild Bjornvold: Nice conclusion - that is what I call performance management. 1) Clear, reasonable, theory...

Maureen: Wonderful, clear, logical, love it.

Wayan: Hmm... also I don't think the 6 degrees of separation works all that well with Social...

Press Coverage

9/11/09 - San Francisco Business Times: New firm bets donors will pay for advice A profile of Tactical Philanthropy Advisors.

9/8/09 - Christian Science Monitor: How charities harness social media for a social impact A profile of how nonprofits are using Twitter. Quotes Sean on why Web 2.0 is important for nonprofits.

9/4/09 - Alliance Magazine: From a blog and a wealth advisory firm comes Tactical Philanthropy Advisors The philanthropy and social investing magazine Alliance covers the launch of Tactical Philanthropy Advisors.

9/3/09 - Philanthropy UK: Philanthropy blogger launches advisory firm The leading publication on UK based philanthropy writes up Tactical Philanthropy Advisors.

8/31/09 - Wall Street Journal: Carving A Niche In Philanthropic Assets The Wall Street Journal profiles the launch of Tactical Philanthropy Advisors.

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