



Stanford eCorner

Measure of Success in Philanthropy

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/230/Measure-of-Success-in-Philanthropy>

How do philanthropies measure success? The Global Fund for Women makes general support grants, not project support grants. This is a huge issue in philanthropy, because general support grants are much harder to measure.



Transcript

It's a really good question and it's one that we struggle with a lot because we're also an organization that does something else that's quite rare in philanthropy which is we make general support grants. We don't make project specific grants, and that's a huge issue in philanthropy because one of the things of course that helps you measure is when you say specifically I'm giving you money for X amount of blankets to be distributed and this many hospital beds to be filled by these many patients. That you can measure. If you give a grant to a women's group in Turkey working on women's human rights in Turkey and to strengthen women's voice and women's access to choices in Turkey, how do you measure that? The way in which we've tried to deal with it at the Global Fund is that we have both tried to articulate clearly what it is we are trying to do. When we talk about our mission, we see it as being really able that our grants are designed to strengthen the infrastructure of the global women's movement. That we're trying to make sure that in every country in the world, in 162 countries now where the Global Fund works and funds organizations that there will be civil society independent organizations able to raise issues around women's rights, able to do that in a way that significantly challenges perceptions of women as anything other than full and equal participants in a society. Nonetheless, given that we raise money and that it is the business of donors to find out whether their resources have been well spent, we're often challenged to kind of talk about our outcomes, if you will, and our impact evaluation. The ways in which we have tried to work on that have been to have periodic external evaluations of our work. We recently finished one looking at 40 different organizations serving girls in about 16 or 17 different countries. Some years ago, we had a similar evaluation that was funded by the Hewlett Foundation that looked at whether grants to "empower women" also had outcomes with regard to women's willingness to use contraceptive technology or being able to have more access to reproductive health services.

In fact, they did find those correlations but it wasn't a pure evaluation in the sense that the women's groups themselves had not set out to say we are going to do this, this and this. We are hoping to refine our evaluation methodology in the coming years. We feel like it's very important in order to be able to make a good case for why investing in women works we need data and we need to have a strong data as we can to be able to bring to light what we really see as some of the incredible accomplishments of women's organizations. One of our challenges has been that there's this really fine line between the quantitative matrix and the qualitative outcomes where you know that a woman who would never have spoken before is now running for a village council election in India and the Panchayat elections. How does that get measured? How do we measure where she was three years ago and what she's doing now? How do we measure the less obvious things of the woman who is not running for Panchayat elections but will vote for the woman who's running for the Panchayat elections. I think we're very

aware of the fact that that is an ongoing challenge for us and we're very committed to trying to find ways with our grantees. We're very committed to having them be part of asking the questions of what an evaluation should look like.