

Critical Issues
in
American Philanthropy

Jon Van Til
and Associates

CRITICAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY:
Strengthening Theory and Practice
by Jon Van Til and Associates

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Chapter 4

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Giving and Getting:
Philanthropy
as a Social Relation

In the decade since the Filer Commission Report, a growing body of research and theory has sought to clarify the nature of philanthropy, the institutional boundaries of the nonprofit sector, and the giving behavior of individuals and organizations. Most of this research conceptualizes and studies the philanthropic world as a world of donors. This work, including some done by the present authors, has focused on explanations of why and how and under what circumstances people give voluntarily of their money and time.

This research is important and should continue. It is also important to recognize that an exclusive focus on donors runs the risk of obscuring issues that are of concern to recipients and therefore to philanthropy as a whole. The common language of giver and receiver used to characterize philanthropy suggests a one-way relationship in which valued goods and services move only in one direction, a point of view we challenge here. A donor focus also ignores the ways in which recipients actively take part in defining what goes on in the world of philanthropy, ways in which recipients are agents in creating philanthropic institutions and relations.

Note: The authors are listed in alphabetical order. Paul Schervish would like to gratefully acknowledge Andrew Herman, who helped develop a number of the ideas concerning the theoretical nature of philanthropy and the strategies of philanthropy carried out by donors.

Attention tends to be diverted from the social needs that recipients have and that donors seek to address, and from what gifts actually accomplish from the perspective of those who receive them. Strategies that recipients and their advocates use to obtain support are generally left unexplored and unspecified.

Of greatest concern to us here is that the relatively exclusive focus on donors obscures the most fundamental sociological fact about philanthropy; namely, that philanthropy is a social relation of giving and getting between donors and recipients. The major aim of this chapter is to conceptualize and explore philanthropy in this way. This relational understanding of philanthropy elevates the position and priority of the recipient. It brings the recipient into theory, research, and practice in the field. Conceptualizing philanthropy as a social relation has the potential, we believe, for contributing to the making of a better match between the resources and needs of donors and the resources and needs of recipients. It can therefore help to improve philanthropic practice by developing a philanthropy that is more responsive to social need.

We begin this chapter by explaining what we mean by this understanding of philanthropy as social relation. We differentiate philanthropy from two other kinds of social relations, commercial transactions and electoral politics. Next we lay out an array of strategies that the two major parties in the relation—donors and recipients—use to gain the attention and favorable response of the other. Each of the strategies is defined by the relative power with which donors and recipients approach each other, that is, the extent to which each party takes into account the needs and interests of the other. Strategies as we conceive them are composites of three dimensions: complex goals, strategic rationales, and practices. Finally, we consider briefly some implications of our conceptualization of philanthropy and the strategies for philanthropic practices.

Throughout the chapter, we speak of the social relation that is philanthropy as an interaction between what appears to be only two actors: donors and recipients. We recognize, however, that a whole set of actors exist between and within these two sides of the social relation and that mediate the interaction. On the donor side, the relation to recipients is mediated by organizations such as foundations and funding exchanges and by individual office and field

staff members who represent such organizations. On the recipient side, the relation to donors is mediated by grant-seeking organizations (including universities, hospitals, museums, churches, and social service agencies) that provide services to clients and consumers and by advocacy groups that work politically for social change. Other organizations and individuals combine donor-side and recipient-side roles, such as the United Way and the Black United Fund, which both raise and disperse funds. Thus, while we speak here of donors and recipients, we in fact mean to include the chain of donor-side and recipient-side agents that represent and carry out the wishes, concerns, and interests of the two ultimate actors at either end of the chain of interaction.

In the following discussion, we speak of recipients most frequently, although not exclusively, as organizations that provide services for clients and consumers or that advocate for social change. In contrast, we tend to speak of donors as individuals who give money to support such organizations. This approach makes sense since over 80 percent of donors are individuals, where virtually all legally recognized tax-exempt recipients of these contributions are organizations.

The strategies we develop here to conceptualize the orientations and actions of recipients and donors in the social relation that is philanthropy emerged from three sources: our own research on philanthropic donors and recipient organizations, the literature on philanthropy and fund raising, and our conversations with other scholars and activists in the world of philanthropy. Donor strategies presented here were developed from the research of Schervish and Herman on wealth and philanthropy.¹ Recipient strategies were developed from what is known about donors and from the trade literature on fund raising² as well as indirectly from Ostrander's field work in voluntary social service agencies.³ A major task for future research is to specify which strategies and under which conditions these are most likely to result in a match between the resources and needs of donors and the resources and needs of recipients.

Philanthropy as a Distinctive Social Relation

Philanthropy, in our way of thinking, is not distinct because of its location in a clearly defined or bounded institutional sector or

realm. Philanthropy as we conceive it here is not limited to a "third" or voluntary or nonprofit sector.⁴ Our point is that philanthropy is a particular type of social relation that may occur in government and corporate settings, and it most certainly occurs in families and neighborhoods. The other kinds of social relations we look at here—commercial transactions and electoral politics—also are not defined or limited by a particular institutional realm. Commercial transactions occur not only in the economic marketplace but throughout social life wherever goods and services are exchanged for monetary compensation. Electoral politics is not limited to government organizations or the institution of the state but represents a mode of exercising power and decision making wherever votes are taken to establish positions, determine officeholders, and decide policy directions. In the same way, our notion of philanthropy as social relation is more extensive than the notion of philanthropy as institution or organization.

Like other social relations, that between donor-side and recipient-side actors contains identifiable patterns of interaction. Like other social relations, it is a transaction in which both parties get and give as a condition for establishing and maintaining the relation. At the same time, in this and many other social exchanges, the relation between the two parties is not an equal one. For a number of reasons a power difference between donor and recipient emerges from the current character of philanthropy as a social relation. The general tendency is for donors to occupy positions that give them substantially more active choice than recipients about how to define the philanthropic transaction and how to take part in it. Recipients also can and do make choices that affect what happens to themselves and to donors and shape the way philanthropy is organized.

This relative inequality between donors and recipients and the disparity in the extent of active choice available to each party derive from the larger societal context in which philanthropy occurs. We conceptualize this context by drawing on social theory about human agency and societal structure.⁵ Social structure both creates and is created by human action and choice in an iterative process. Once created, social structure defines the terms and boundaries of choice, presenting both obstacles and possibilities for ac-

tion. Donors and recipients, then, are both constrained and facilitated by the structure of philanthropy in what they do and how they think. At the same time, both donors and recipients participate as agents in reinforcing or changing this structure of philanthropy—the structure that then in turn forms the context for their own thinking and acting in the philanthropic world.

Commercial Transactions, Electoral Politics, and Philanthropy

If it is not an institutional or legal boundary that separates philanthropic relations from commerce and politics, then what is it? What distinguishes philanthropy as a particular kind of social relation? The most important distinction we make between philanthropy and commercial and electoral relations revolves around the *media of communication* through which needs are put forth in each case. Each type of relation differs in how a request or demand is made and in how such demand elicits a response. Commercial appeals or demands are made in terms of dollars, while electoral appeals or demands are made in terms of votes. Philanthropic appeals are made in normative or moral or value terms.

In commercial transactions, consumer demands or needs generate a response from suppliers of resources largely to the extent that demands are expressed through dollars. Needs are communicated to suppliers or producers through what economists call "effective demand," that is, demand backed up by and made efficacious by the power of monetary votes or dollars. It is not just the existence of needs or demands that is important in getting a response, but also the fact that these needs can mobilize or generate a response that produces what is demanded. Similarly in electoral politics, needs or interests get attended to largely to the extent that they can be expressed as votes—what one might call another kind of effective demand.

The important question here is just what makes commercial and electoral demands effective in eliciting responses? It is, we believe, that commercial and electoral demands are regulating and "coercive." That is, they are presented through quantifiable media upon which suppliers depend for their very existence in material terms. Elected officials must have votes. Commercial suppliers must

have consumer dollars. The demands of voters and consumer dollars cannot in the long run be ignored. In philanthropy the demands are not compelling in the same way.

In philanthropic relations, the media for communicating recipient needs or demands are neither votes nor dollars but rather words and images that are put together in such a way as to make a normative or moral appeal for support. In philanthropy, demand is made efficacious by inviting the supplier or producer to attend primarily to the needs expressed themselves rather than to the medium through which they are expressed. Philanthropy thus recognizes or responds to what can be called "affective" rather than "effective" demand.⁶ By this we mean that philanthropy is mobilized and governed by a moral or normative currency that ultimately appeals to the nonmaterial or "affective" aspects of the giver's consciousness rather than to a particular material interest.

This approach to philanthropy should not be interpreted as meaning that demands or needs expressed by institutions or organizations presently defined as "charitable" or philanthropic do in fact always operate according to the moral or normative currency that we see as the defining characteristic of philanthropy defined in these relational terms. Indeed, it is one of our points that the non-profit sector is no more exclusively the realm of philanthropic relations than the for-profit sector is exclusively the realm of commercial relations or government is the exclusive realm of electoral relations. For instance, nonprofit hospitals may in fact be characterized largely by commercial relations just as for-profit hospitals may in fact respond philanthropically, as we have defined the term, when they mobilize some services around patient need rather than ability to pay. Put simply, when appeals or demands are not expressed primarily in normative or moral terms, they are not philanthropic in the sense we mean that term here, regardless of the social setting from which they come.

The Tendency of Philanthropy to Be Donor-Led

The major consequence for the way that philanthropy works as a social relation arises from its governance more by moral than by material or electoral claims. Because normative appeals do not carry

the same kinds of rewards or sanctions as money or votes, philanthropy (unlike commercial transactions or electoral politics) tends to be driven more by the supply of philanthropic resources than by the demand for them based in recipient needs. Because philanthropic appeals are normative or morally based, they tend therefore to be "weaker" and less compelling than when the currency is votes or money. This means that attention to recipient needs may not always remain prominent or determinant in the minds of those providing donor resources or in the minds of those who seek funding on behalf of ultimate beneficiaries.

Commercial and electoral relations retain at least some semblance of consumer and voter sovereignty. That is, they tend to be demand-led in the sense of being responsive in some degree to consumer needs and voter interests. Suppliers or producers in commercial and electoral relations are constrained at least to some extent by the countervailing power of consumers to buy other products from other producers and by voters to cast their ballots for other candidates.

Philanthropic donors—by which we mean suppliers or producers of monetary resources essential for philanthropy—are not similarly constrained by the countervailing power of recipients and their representatives. This is because philanthropy tends to be supply- or donor-led. That is, recipients enjoy little or no ability to ensure or "discipline" the response of donors. Appeals in the form of words and images arranged in a normative display cannot be accumulated as can dollars or votes. As a result, philanthropic donors who supply the resources essential to meeting recipients' needs are not threatened by the withdrawal of the media for expressing the need. The consequences of philanthropy being supply-led are profound for both donors and recipients. We characterize two such major consequences by the terms *donor ascendancy* and *recipient influence*.

Donor Ascendancy and Recipient Influence

Because normative appeals offer little, if any, immediate extrinsic reward or sanction to a potential donor, any single appeal can be refused without any direct negative material consequence. It is, of

course, true that donors are not exempt from pressures to give money to "charitable" causes as a part of their climb to success in the corporate world or as a result of belonging to certain social networks.⁷ Still, for the most part, the obligation to give money is essentially based on moral grounds—because it is the right and good and sincere gesture to be made—without direct material censure or reward. Normative claims impose this obligation only to the extent that donors recognize and heed them. So recipient groups find themselves dependent on donors not only for funds. Ironically, they depend as well on donors for the very recognition of the legitimacy of the appeals by which recipients make claims on donors in the first place.

The structural tendency in philanthropic relations is, therefore, to grant more power to the donor than to the recipient. As we noted earlier, donors occupy positions that afford them substantially more choice or agency about how they define the social relation that is philanthropy and about how they act and think in it. The concept of agency thus explains more about how the philanthropic world looks and works from the vantage point of the donor. The concept of social structure explains more about the vantage point of the recipient. One of our aims here is to specify the social relation between donor and recipient in such a way as to provide practical guidelines toward empowering recipient groups and the beneficiaries they represent. We want to increase the influence, bargaining power, and choices of strategies available to recipients in their relation with donors and potential donors. Simply defining philanthropy as a social relation in which there is some kind of reciprocal exchange is itself a first step in this direction. As we said earlier, it brings recipients more prominently into the relation.

Given our discussion of philanthropy as donor-led, it is now clearer why and how recipients exercise less choice, power, and influence than donors. Recipients are dependent on donors for their organizational existence and for the well-being of their clients, consumers, and employees. The imperative of finding a donor leads recipients to search actively and continuously, to "prospect" as it is sometimes put in the fund-raising literature. This is done at considerable effort and expense. Small recipient organizations and

those whose activities are controversial are at a distinct disadvantage in mounting the fund-raising or "development" efforts. While it is true that some donors choose to search actively for recipients, donors do not have to carry on this kind of activity as a condition of their existence. They can choose among the requests that come to them from grant-seeking recipients. Indeed, one of the problems of being a well-known donor is that one is constantly receiving requests for contributions and having to decide which of them to grant.

Although donors certainly cannot be said to depend on recipients for their actual and material existence, it could be said that donors depend on recipients for the moral and normative and perhaps social meaning of their existence. Recipients have their own influence and their own set of resources to give to donors. In recipient appeals to potential donors, the moral currency that is used is not without value and command. As will be seen in our discussion of philanthropic strategies, donors respond to a whole array of non-material incentives, ranging from making a sincere effort to meet social needs to fulfilling a moral duty, obtaining psychic satisfaction, achieving social and personal legitimation, gaining status in the community, or achieving a social agenda.

Although philanthropy as currently constituted tends toward donor ascendancy, in actual practice the balance of power does not always remain firmly established on the side of the donor. Whenever recipients or their advocates introduce and enforce normative claims or incentives that affect donors, the balance of power begins to shift toward recipients. It is, then, not always the case that philanthropy is governed by the supply of donor resources though this does not refute the structural tendencies we have noted here. Framing the issue in this way does call for a specification of the conditions under which the structural tendencies get modified so that recipients have more influence. The strategies we next consider differ in the extent to which they contain possible directions for creating and strengthening such conditions. As we will show, it is not simply a matter of the degree to which recipients and their needs are taken into account by donors. It is also a matter of the qualitatively different ways in which this comes about.

Strategies in Philanthropy: Modes of Interaction Between Donors and Recipients

By focusing on philanthropic strategies of donors and recipients, we are able to characterize philanthropy in a different way than by types of donor motivations, the size of gifts, or the cause or purpose for which gifts are dedicated. While these matters are certainly important, none really helps us to understand how donors and recipients actively participate in philanthropy. By conceptualizing strategies of philanthropy as modes of consciousness and modes of engagement, we highlight the different ways that people on the donor and recipient sides of the relation come to think about and carry out philanthropy.

The strategies as we conceive them are a composite of three dimensions: a complex goal, a strategic rationale or consciousness, and a strategic practice or mode of engagement. These dimensions can perhaps be best understood as answers to a series of questions. What is the multiple set of goals or ends that each party seeks to accomplish or bring about through participation in the relation? How does each think about or understand the way in which the relationship between them is or ought to be constituted in order to accomplish these ends? How is this presented or communicated to the other so as to gain access and attention? What kinds of claims and appeals are made, and how exactly are they expressed? What does each party actually do? What specific practices are engaged in and how are they carried out?

The strategies, as we have developed them, differ in regard to the quality of the social relation between donor and recipient. We discuss this difference in terms of (1) the kind of involvement, contact, and communication between the two parties or sides; (2) the kind of specific knowledge each has about the other; and (3) the relative priority given by the two parties to what donors want in comparison to what recipients need. An important focus here, as we have said, is one particular aspect of the social relation of philanthropy, namely, the media of expression or communication between donor and recipient. These strategies are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive. A particular donor or recipient probably participates in more than one at a time, and the strategies we list are by no means

complete. Given our earlier discussion about the donor-led character of philanthropy and the power of the donor, we present donor-side strategies first because we see them as framing an important context within which recipients must think and act.

Donor-Side Philanthropic Strategies. In previous research, Schervish and Herman⁸ identified sixteen qualitatively different strategies or "logics" of philanthropy that are carried out by donors, distinguishing them according to differences in goals, modes of consciousness, and modes of practice. Here we discuss nine of those strategies, locating them within three broad approaches by which donors understand and carry out their relation to recipients. The three general donor-side approaches we will consider here are the personal-engagement, mediated-engagement, and donor-oriented strategies (Table 4.1).

Personal-Engagement Strategies. In the personal-engagement approach, donors attend immediately and directly to the needs of recipients and, as the name implies, are in personal, physical contact with them. We describe three specific types of personal-engagement philanthropy, each of which shares a common set of goals. Individuals who carry out personal-engagement philanthropy are attempting to do more than fulfill their personal aspirations and support a beneficial outcome for recipients. Those who pursue the various types of personal-engagement philanthropy also seek to know and be known by the ultimate beneficiaries of their support and in some cases to allow beneficiaries to actually enforce attention to their needs. The way such donors think about their relationship to recipients reflects a concern to learn as much as possible about the recipients and their specific needs. Accordingly, the distinctive practice that characterizes personal-engagement forms of philanthropy revolves around efforts to be in personal contact with recipients, to learn their appeals, and to ensure that these appeals become binding on them.

A number of diverse types of philanthropy fall under this general category of personal-engagement philanthropy. The extreme instance of the direct personal matching of donor resources to recipient needs is *consumption philanthropy*. In this approach

Table 4.1. Donor-Side Strategies.

Personal-Engagement Strategies: direct personal contact and exchange of information between donors and beneficiaries, with priority given to recipient needs

1. *Consumption:* donor is also beneficiary of gift
2. *Therapeutic/empowering:* donors seek simultaneously to enhance their own sense of self-empowerment and to give over some active organizational control to beneficiaries
3. *Adoptive:* donors attend personally to recipient needs in an ongoing and multifaceted relationship

Mediated-Engagement Strategies: contact between donors and recipients mediated by organizations or other individuals though knowledge and concern for recipient needs may be high

1. *Contributory:* donor gives to a cause with no direct contact with recipient
2. *Brokering:* donors solicit other key donors in their own network
3. *Catalytic:* organizers donate time to mobilize large number of other donors in a mass appeal

Donor-Oriented Strategies: donors governed and mobilized by their own circumstances rather than by those of recipients

1. *Exchange:* giving propelled by mutual obligation within a network of donors
2. *Derivative:* giving based on obligations associated with job expectations or family responsibilities
3. *Noblesse oblige:* philanthropy grows out of decision to designate part of family money for social involvement

donors contribute to causes or organizations from which these donors directly benefit. The match is so complete simply because the donor and beneficiary are the same. Consumption philanthropy, it turns out, is the largest single category of philanthropy because it includes contributions to churches, schools, cultural institutions, and professional organizations, from which givers and their families directly benefit.

Even though the other two forms of personal-engagement philanthropy are much less prominent, they are important to describe because they indicate possible directions for the future development of philanthropy. One such approach is what we call *therapeutic* or *empowerment* philanthropy as it takes form in various funding organizations such as the Vanguard Foundation and the Funding Exchange. The term *therapeutic* is coupled with the

term *empowerment* to emphasize how the practice of philanthropy is viewed and concretely organized by donors to come to grips simultaneously with their own need to become personally empowered in regard to their wealth and their desire to empower others. The feelings of donors who pursue this approach that their own needs have been denied or obscured in their lives of wealth lead them to be particularly sensitive to the experience of powerlessness among those at the opposite end of the economic spectrum. The upshot is the creation of an organizational structure with two unique aspects. First, in regard to donors there is a requirement that they contribute relatively equal amounts so that no one donor is overly able to influence decisions. Also, there is the more or less informal expectation that donors will meet among themselves to discuss how they can grow in their self-understanding as socially responsible wealthy individuals. Second, in regard to recipients, such donors constitute boards of directors composed of nondonors, representatives of recipient groups, and beneficiaries. They also establish organizational bylaws that ensure the articulation and enforcement of recipient claims by limiting or even eliminating giver control over funding decisions.

A third form of personal-engagement philanthropy is called *adoptive* philanthropy. In adoptive philanthropy, donors become personally involved in the lives of the beneficiaries they seek to help. This is typified by Eugene Lang's and others' efforts in the I Have a Dream program. In addition to devoting funds to a cause, the goal is for donors to involve themselves directly in the lives of inner-city students in an effort to motivate and guide them toward a college education. Working in and supporting the Boys Club and Girls Club and in Big Sister and Big Brother programs are obvious examples. Others include efforts by suburban churches to assist inner-city churches, corporations that commit themselves to develop a particular neighborhood or assist particular schools, individuals who assist particular artists or scholars as does the MacArthur family, and a respondent in the Study on Wealth and Philanthropy who supports a writer's retreat for women. Many other examples could be enumerated, but the point is, again, that personal attention to particular needs of the beneficiaries is foremost in the donor's mind,

in part because the recipient is physically in the donor's social world.

Although substantially different in how they come to recognize and heed the moral claims of recipients, adoptive, therapeutic/empowerment, and consumption donors all have in common the highest regard for the needs of the recipients. In fact, by being so directly in contact with the ultimate beneficiaries and not just with their advocates, such donors often go so far as to give over legal governance at least in part to these beneficiaries, their advocates, or third-party professionals such as social workers and academics.

Mediated-Engagement Strategies. A second level and type of attention to recipient issues is represented by a variety of strategies in which contacts with the recipients are indirect or mediated by organizations or individuals who serve as advocates on behalf of recipients. In general terms, the composite goal is to contribute to important concerns while, at the same time, remaining somewhat insulated from having to expend time in contact with ultimate beneficiaries. If the strategy of personal engagement is like retail relations in the commercial sphere, mediated engagement is like wholesale relations. The strategic consciousness revolves around discerning how much and to what one should contribute while the practice tends to be limited to making such contributions and getting others to do so as well.

The most common form of such mediated engagement is termed *contributory* philanthropy. This approach, second only to consumption philanthropy in the amount of giving, is the form most likely to occur in all income groups and is the most familiar popular image of philanthropy. The contributory strategy revolves quite simply around obtaining and mobilizing financial resources on behalf of a cause. The term *contributory* is used to emphasize the fact that philanthropic involvement is primarily in the form of monetary contributions rather than in time or skills. In addition, there is virtually no direct contact between the donor and the ultimate beneficiary. Rather, the moral appeal to which donors respond is formulated and presented by a grant-seeking or advocacy organization. This, of course, is the most common mode of fund raising by such groups as OXFAM America, CARE, the NAACP, univer-

sities, hospitals, symphony orchestras, peace groups, and numerous other traditional and progressive organizations devoted to raising funds for important causes and needy recipients. It is important to note that the contributory strategy often reflects a very high level of commitment and devotion by contributors to fulfilling the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries and, indeed, to the beneficiaries themselves. But the relation to them remains indirect and impersonal, mediated by various intermediary organizations and individuals.

A second form of mediated interaction occurs in *brokering* philanthropy. Here organizational officers, board members, or other interested parties devote their efforts to fund raising by seeking contributions from major donors. Once again, a high degree of affective commitment may motivate brokering donors as they demonstrate by spending time and effort to solicit contributions from others. We usually see this strategy exercised by wealthy individuals who turn to their social and business associates to raise funds for a cause. But such brokering is not limited to efforts by the rich to solicit contributions from their peers. The nonwealthy also pursue the brokering strategy by seeking pledges from friends and associates for each mile traversed in the various "walks" and "runs" on behalf of efforts to relieve hunger and cure AIDS, to name just two.

A less widespread but equally visible form of mediated engagement is *catalytic* philanthropy. If the vast majority of participants in the mass-involvement types of philanthropy like Boston's Walk for Hunger are engaging in brokering philanthropy, many of those organizing and directing such efforts are engaging in catalytic philanthropy. Like brokering philanthropy, the major goal is broadening the base for fund raising on behalf of a cherished cause but, again, without requiring any direct involvement with beneficiaries by those giving time and money. In contrast to brokering philanthropy, however, the catalytic strategy—as its name implies—is directed toward mobilizing not a small number of personally known peers but a large number of unknown contributors. Accordingly, catalytic philanthropy is often led by media stars, sports figures, and other celebrities. They lend their names, notoriety, and personal efforts to raise money by eliciting an affective engagement of a broad popular base. What the sociologist Robert Merton discovered more than forty years ago in his study of Kate

Smith's dramatic success in getting Americans to invest in war bonds is directly relevant here. The public's perception of personal sacrifice and dedication by celebrities on behalf of a cause induces more contributions than what would be generated by a verbal appeal alone. Even when the central figures who lead such catalytic projects are not publicly known at the inception of a mass-participation drive, they often become so over time. For instance, those of us who live in Boston have witnessed how the dramatic success of the Walk for Hunger coincided with the rise to prominence of its inspirational founder and organizer, Dan Daley.

In contrast to the strategy of personal engagement, then, the strategy of mediated engagement does not entail a direct knowledge of or contact with the final beneficiaries of the philanthropic efforts—although the strategy does not preclude it. The major advantage of this strategy is its relatively efficient fund-raising process—one that appeals to donors because it leaves them relatively unencumbered in that they can retain whatever degree of social distance from the recipients they desire. The most serious disadvantage is that in the absence of a systematic direct contact between donors and recipients, it is possible for extraphilanthropic personal and organizational goals to become substituted for the moral claims of beneficiaries. Donors continue to respond to direct normative appeals in this strategy. However, there is the possibility of substantial slippage between how such normative appeals are recognized and responded to when mediated by advocacy groups and how they might be recognized and responded to if donors were placed in personal contact with those in need.

Donor-Oriented Strategies. A third general strategy encompasses a number of philanthropic approaches that tend to be governed almost exclusively by donor-side rather than recipient-side considerations. The major characteristic of what we call a donor-oriented giving strategy is that it is primarily attentive not to recipient needs but to donor interests and obligations. It is not the pull of engagement with recipients but the push of obligation that governs this strategy. The complex goal or teleology of donor-based philanthropy, then, revolves around fulfilling a set of obligations derived from family, business, or social relationships. Dedication to specific

causes remains a goal of philanthropy, but it is not key to what mobilizes philanthropy in the first place. The strategic consciousness centers around learning and recognizing the expectations of one's position in relation to peers rather than in relation to those outside one's personal circle. The major practice is moving back and forth between responding to the expectations derived from one's social position and getting others in one's social purview to do the same.

Concretely, one prominent form of donor-based giving is *exchange* philanthropy. In this strategy, individuals give to a cause at the request of an associate in anticipation that in the future they will be able to call upon that associate to contribute to their cause. Individuals participate in a network of friends and associates each of whom feels free to call upon the other to support a favored project. Again, it is not that the beneficiaries disappear completely from the picture; it is just that the needs of beneficiaries are not what motivates philanthropy in the sense of setting it in motion. In contrast to the affective dedication surrounding personal-engagement and even mediated-engagement philanthropy, exchange philanthropy is matter of fact and dispassionate in tone. Whatever urgency emerges results not from what individual donors deem important but from the need to fulfill a social obligation that reproduces the bonds in a social network of friends and associates.

In a similar vein is *derivative* philanthropy, in which philanthropy is once again starkly supply-led in the sense that giving of money and time is derived from the everyday expectations of employment or social status. Schervish and Herman⁹ found that this gets played out most commonly in two arenas. The first is at the workplace. A number of respondents indicated that they expect their senior staff to be engaged in some form of philanthropic activity or community involvement as a condition for working in their firm. Other respondents, especially attorneys, indicated that they were on the receiving end of such imposed obligation, again in the form of service within the broader community and not simply in the performance of pro bono legal work. The second arena wherein derivative philanthropy is relatively prominent is in volunteer networks of women of the upper class. Here the traditional family and social roles accorded wealthy women become expressed

in the realm of philanthropy as the expectation that they devote substantial amounts of time to various volunteer activities, ranging from the simplest clerical tasks to the most arduous of managerial responsibilities. Although younger generations of women eschew the imposition of such roles and many who carry them out are deeply critical of their status, the point is that this is a form of philanthropy that is clearly supply-led. The engagement of donors occurs in response to the mobilization of normative expectations in their own world rather than the mobilization of moral claims in the world of others.

A final form of donor-initiated mobilization is *noblesse oblige* philanthropy. This term is used in a nonpejorative sense to emphasize that for many the inherited practice of philanthropy is derived from the expectation that community involvement is a traditional family obligation. What connects this strategy to inherited wealth is not an attitude of condescending parentalism but the fact that those pursuing this strategy inherit along with their wealth a set of expectations about how they are to use their wealth. Money is conceived as divided into three categories: an untouchable principal or capital, an amount for daily consumption, and an amount for philanthropic endeavors. Once again it is the nature of socialization and an understanding of money derived from a particular status—here, membership in an established family line—that induce philanthropic activity, rather than the pull of moral obligation. Recipient needs may come into play in determining the specific causes to which such individuals devote their time and money, but the fact of involvement is determined from another quarter, namely, a preexistent duty to allocate a certain part of one's time and money to philanthropic endeavors.

As we will also see in the case of the recipient-side strategies, the donor-side strategies can be understood as differing in regard to the kind of relationship that exists and is carried out between donors and recipients. The three specific approaches summarized under the rubric of donor-oriented giving exemplify that pole of the relationship most expressive of the underlying tendency of philanthropy as it is now organized to be supply- or donor-led. Exchange, derivative, and *noblesse oblige* philanthropy all center around efforts by donors to fulfill obligations derived from relations with

those in their social circle rather than from relations with recipients. In the strategies grouped together as mediated-engagement philanthropy, there is a shift in psychological attention toward the needs of beneficiaries and a shift in practice toward heeding and responding to the world of beneficiaries even though personal contact with recipients does not occur. The most direct communication and contact between donors and recipients takes place, as we have said, in the personal-engagement strategies such as consumption, adoption, and therapeutic/empowerment philanthropy. Compared to donor-oriented approaches, especially, personal-engagement strategies shift the direction of concern to the ultimate beneficiaries of philanthropy. It is not just that donors come to heed the needs of recipients in a more direct and responsive manner that distinguishes approaches to philanthropy that bring donors and recipients into personal contact. It is also that a set of conditions are set in motion that have the potential for transforming the very way donors and recipients think about and interact with each other, both individually and as social groups.

Recipient-Side Philanthropic Strategies

We have developed three strategies that recipient organizations can use to gain the attention and favorable response of donors and potential donors. They are needs-based, opportunity-based, and agenda-based strategies (Table 4.2).

Needs-Based Strategy. The foremost goal of the needs-based strategy is to put forth as straightforwardly and in as unmediated a fashion as possible the preeminence of beneficiaries' needs. The central concern always remains the depth and scope of the needs and interests of the people—potential clients, consumers, beneficiaries—for whom or with whom the philanthropic project is being proposed and carried out. The two major ways that beneficiaries' needs may be directly and forthrightly communicated to donors are, first, for a grant-seeking organization to serve as a broker between donors and beneficiaries and, second, for beneficiaries to frame and express their needs directly to donors on their own. In some cases, the two approaches are joined, as when beneficiaries become an integral

Table 4.2. Recipient-Side Strategies.

Needs-Based Strategy: needs of beneficiaries are presented forthrightly to donors as the sole basis for mobilizing contributions; these needs may be presented either by the beneficiaries themselves or by recipient organizations or groups on their behalf

- Recipient frames need as inherently worthy of attention
- Recipient poses relationship to donor as a collaboration around a shared responsibility
- Recipient appeals revolve around efforts to communicate information about beneficiaries and their need

Opportunity-Based Strategy: needs of beneficiaries are recast and expressed as donor opportunities representing social or political benefit for the donor beyond simply responding to the needs themselves

- Recipients' appeals are formulated to persuade donors that responding to the needs of beneficiaries simultaneously provides donors with valued rewards
- Recipients may present the proposed project or program as an opportunity for the donors to make an innovative or distinctive contribution to the community, to enhance their own status or influence, to make a good investment, or to enter a prominent donor network
- Recipients may offer donors reduced costs or special access to programs or activities of recipient organizations

Agenda-Based Strategy: needs of beneficiaries are submerged and even compromised as recipients offer donors the chance to fulfill interests arising from events or circumstances in the donors' personal, family, or professional life

- Recipients cultivate personal relationships with current and prospective donors by focusing on what donors want or need as the condition or incentive for making a gift
- Recipients remain alert to new and emerging donor agendas as old agendas are fulfilled or fade in importance
- Recipients often maintain and update detailed prospecting files on individual donors

part of the group actively seeking funds. This is the case, for example, with a battered-women's shelter whose staff and board members seeking the grant include women who have been or might be in the future residents of the shelter.

Given such a strong focus on the needs and interests of the beneficiaries, beneficiaries are more likely to be involved directly in this strategy than in the opportunity- or agenda-based strategy. Indeed this involvement is itself often one of the goals of the needs-

based strategy. If beneficiaries are not involved directly (as is perhaps most often the case), grant seekers still press clearly, forcefully, and sometimes dramatically the import of their need. This is the case, for example, with the appeals made by Mother Teresa. In addition to convincing donors of the import of the need itself and involving ultimate beneficiaries in the philanthropic process, those pursuing the needs-based strategy often seek to educate the community as a whole in an effort to press the needs in a broader arena.

The strategic consciousness or rationale expressed in a needs-based strategy focuses on a relationship between donor and recipient of a shared sense of responsibility and obligation to the community and its needs. Donors are not held in special esteem in this view. Rather, they are often seen as collaborators in a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation. Recipients take it as a given that donors wish to contribute and be involved in projects that seek to address community needs, and that if given the chance to do so, they will come forward and give what they can. Recipient groups are not hesitant in their zeal for seeking funds, and the relationship is conceived as being less hierarchical than is typically the case. The intrinsic rewards for donor contributions are highly valued both by the recipients and by the donors to whom this kind of appeal is attractive. These rewards include the intrinsic worth of being part of a community with connections to others and the inherent satisfaction of doing with and for others.

Recipient-side practices consistent with a needs-based strategy are targeted toward donors who are likely to be responsive to a direct and immediate appeal. Possible specific fund-raising tactics might include mailings to lists of donors who have given to similar programs. Mailings would likely include substantial amounts of concrete, explicit information about the need or interest being addressed. Testimony from potential or actual beneficiaries might be included. Telephoning from known lists and door-to-door campaigning, especially in areas most affected, are other tactics consistent with this strategy. Public speaking engagements, ads in the public media, and opportunities for donors to meet with potential or current beneficiaries could be arranged.

From the point of view of recipient-side organizations, the needs-based strategy has a number of advantages. It allows these

recipient groups and the beneficiaries with whom and for whom they work to define the issues or needs that are important and the projects most appropriate and feasible to address them. Because the needs-based strategy focuses the appeal to donors around these points, it is the most recipient centered.

Opportunity-Based Strategy. In the recipient-side strategy we call the opportunity-based strategy, the mode of gaining access to the donor and a favorable response shifts toward the donor. While the importance of the needs addressed and the value of the project designed to address them are not ignored in this or any other strategy, here recipient needs are mediated through and expressed as donor opportunities. The goal of the transaction is to persuade the donor of the value of this opportunity. It is a strategy that requires that the recipient have more specific knowledge about the donor and what the donor might want and value than is the case with a needs-based strategy.

The strategic consciousness or rationale on the part of the recipient in the opportunity-based strategy conceives of the relationship with the donor as one in which the recipient who is seeking the grant must pose some reward—perhaps social or political or even indirectly material—that will induce the donor to make a gift. Giving is not seen as its own reward here, and so the recipients feel indebted to and beholden to the donor. This is less likely to occur in the needs-based strategy, where recipients do not feel compelled to provide something extrinsic in return for a gift.

The basis for asking donor support here is what recipients have to offer to donors beyond the satisfaction of giving itself. Recipients can offer donors the opportunity to be seen as innovators in the community, to make their mark by funding a project posed as a new and exciting solution or an innovative response to a need or interest. Appeals may be expressed so as to persuade donors to give to a program that is professionally managed, fiscally responsible, and efficiently organized—in other words, a good investment. The recipient group may offer, explicitly or implicitly, the donor the chance to be brought into the organization in a decision-making position as a member of the board. This may be presented in such a way as to imply that the donor's position at his or her place of

business may be enhanced by such voluntary activity, thus contributing to the donor's economic and social well-being. Becoming a donor may be presented by recipient groups that are seeking a gift as the opportunity to become part of a community network of other donors of high status, thus also enhancing one's own social position and opportunity to have a voice in community affairs. To facilitate such networks and to provide entertainment as well as raise funds, recipient groups that use the opportunity-based strategy may organize events that provide donors a chance to see friends and be seen, to combine pleasure with social conscience. While some donors may view this kind of appeal as an onerous social obligation, to others it is an indispensable part of their social and business lives. The onus is on the recipient group that is seeking the gift to discover what will appeal to which donors and to carry out that particular form of appeal.

The practices used to express the opportunity-based strategy seem likely to include a strong visual packaging of the program as innovative and exciting, as an entrepreneurial opportunity for the donor. A selling package that emphasizes financial reports and evaluations of the program and its organization might be used. Donors with high name recognition and social status or "star" status may be used to appeal to other potential donors. The recipient organization may offer donors free or reduced-cost services, such as discounted subscriptions to symphonies, museums, and theaters, or implicit promises to university donors that members of their family will have an edge in admission. In these instances, the donor also becomes a user, as in the earlier discussion of consumption philanthropy.

In the opportunity-based strategy, groups that are seeking grants must still argue the importance of the need persuasively, but this and the capacity of the proposed project to meet the need are not seen as sufficient to get the gift. In addition, this strategy requires that the recipient group obtain information about potential donors that anticipates what they might want as the basis for an appeal. It requires that recipients learn relevant fund-raising techniques that focus not just on their needs but on the interests of the donors.

Agenda-Based Strategy. The third and final recipient-side strategy for seeking funds we will describe here is the most donor centered of the three. An agenda-based strategy is organized around and mediated through tactics that pose for donors a chance to carry out some preestablished agenda of their own or to fulfill some interest arising from an event in their family, professional, or business life. Recipients approach fund raising by locating specific donors who have some agenda and by persuading them—often indirectly and with discretion—that the agenda can be met in the course of giving to a certain project or organization. This strategy requires that the recipient have detailed and personal knowledge of the donor. It is a strategy that requires an investment on the part of recipient groups that can be made only by the largest, most affluent, and most professionally staffed grant-seeking organizations.

The claims that recipient groups that use this strategy make on donors include some event in the donor's life, such as a recent inheritance, change in marital status or parental status, graduation from college, geographical move, or illness or death of a family member. Files that catalogue this kind of information are kept on current and potential donors. Critical events in business or professional life include a recent promotion, surge in company profits, new position on a board of directors, a geographical move of corporate headquarters, or the need to counter some adverse publicity as a result of a boycott, union strike, industrial accident, or pollution alert.

The specific practices that accompany an agenda-based strategy for grant seeking are articulated in the fund-raising literature on what is called "prospecting" and in advertisements for costly workshops where recipient groups learn the techniques appropriate to this strategy. Expensive reference manuals with names, addresses, and other personal information about wealthy donors are printed and frequently updated. The fund-raising literature that emphasizes this approach advises recipient groups to do "investigative work" on potential donors and to keep elaborate and detailed "prospecting files" on individuals who may be persuaded to give.¹⁰ Information from personal conversations between donors and the staff or volunteers of the grant-seeking organizations and from a wide range of other sources such as newspaper clippings are to be included in

these files. Annual reports of the donor's business are collected along with any other information that can be found about the donor's company. Medical records, credit records, family counseling files, and academic records are referred to in one source as "hot potatoes" that should be used with discretion and a sensitivity to the need for confidentiality. Grant seekers are cautioned by one fund-raising manual that though "It may take a long time to establish a real working relationship with the keepers of these records," the rewards will be worth the effort and the grant seeker should stay with it.¹¹

The agenda-based strategy seems problematic from the point of view of many recipient groups and, in at least some instances, the donor as well. The outlay of resources on the part of the recipient is very high, and some ethical questions seem troublesome. The use of donors' medical and counseling records does not seem to us justifiable no matter how effective they might be in getting a gift. The need of clients and consumers seems to almost disappear in the agenda-based strategy, and the usefulness of the project in meeting that need is at best seen as secondary. The strategy seems most suited to a donor base of a small number of large donors, given the investment that must be made in order to get the gift. The donor may be personally very involved in the recipient organization if convinced that a personal agenda can be played out and a donor need met. The basis for the donor's involvement, however, may or may not be consistent with what recipients and beneficiaries want or need. Once the donor has fulfilled his or her need, interest in making further gifts to the recipient organization may end. Donors with their own agenda may also expect—or be seen by recipients as expecting—formal and public recognition of their efforts, such as naming opportunities and ceremonies of appreciation that are highly publicized.

The three recipient-side strategies we have outlined here differ according to the kind of involvement between donor and recipient, knowledge about the other, and the relative priority given to donor or recipient interests. Involvement of the various parties and contact among them over time seem highest in the needs-based strategy, where donors, beneficiaries, and recipient groups are all very invested in addressing the need or concern in a collaborative

manner. Since the needs-based strategy is centered around beneficiary needs, recipient groups and donors are required to know only of each other's mutual interest and concern as a condition for the gift and for the relationship between them.

In the opportunity-based strategy, the degree of involvement or contact of the various parties with one another is less than in the needs-based strategy. They are required to have enough contact with one another for the recipient to receive the gift and for the donor to fulfill the desired opportunity obtainable through the gift. Recipients would seem to require somewhat more detailed information about donors than is the case in the needs-based strategy. Since the opportunity-based strategy is more donor centered than the needs-based strategy, the recipient organization has to know what opportunities will appeal to which potential donors, and donors have to know what opportunities are being offered beyond the chance to respond to and participate in some community project or program.

The agenda-based strategy requires recipients to accrue perhaps the most intensive knowledge of a personal nature about donors. The appeal for a gift is mediated through a personal, private agenda of the donor's that the recipient discovers through detailed investigation. Since this strategy is almost exclusively donor centered, recipients must have detailed information about the donors in order to ascertain their agenda.

Implications for the Practice of Philanthropy

As we have discussed, philanthropy typically is mobilized and governed more by availability of donor resources than by the existence of recipient needs. The implications of what we have had to say here about reconceptualizing philanthropy as a social relation between donor and recipient and about developing and applying philanthropic strategies that represent the interests and concerns of donors and recipients flow from this tension that is generated by a supply-led or donor-led process. As a counterbalance to the structural tendency of philanthropy to be supply-led—and therefore for donors to have more power in the relation than recipients—conditions need to be specified under which recipients can and do have influence in

the philanthropic relation. As we have said, it is our belief that this counterbalance—that bringing recipients in—will improve the quality and performance of philanthropy for donors and recipients.

One principle in particular seems to derive from the arguments we have made here: donors have needs to be fulfilled as well as resources to grant, and recipients have resources to give as well as needs to be met. In other words, *donors and recipients both give and get in the social relation that is philanthropy*. In consumption philanthropy, where donors and recipients are one and the same, we see that recipient needs are the most heeded. We think it is not accidental that such consumption philanthropy turns out to be the largest form of philanthropy in terms of size of contributions. What can be learned from this is not that consumptive philanthropy itself should be extended but rather that contributions are mobilized most strongly when donors see their interests and concerns to be the same as those of recipients or closely identified with them. This is counter to the more traditional view of philanthropic relation in which givers and receivers are socially distant and hierarchically arranged.

In each of the strategies we have laid out here, donors and recipients can be seen both as wanting something from each other and as having something to give that the other values. If recipients could be clearer about this, it would counter their tendency to go "hat in hand" to potential donors. It seems to us that recipients could use the needs-based strategy more often than our review of the fund-raising literature would suggest they do, or at least are advised by that literature to do. A fundamental assumption made over and over in this literature is that donors will not give to a project simply because it is presented as an effective way to address an important community need or interest. The desire on the part of a donor to be a part of a community effort, the satisfaction of being an active participant in creating one's own community and being connected to others in a collaborative project, the enlightened self-interest on the part of donors who recognize that they might benefit directly or indirectly from some philanthropic project—these are not seen as sufficient to motivate donors to give. In *Proven Tips and Secrets for Winning Grant \$\$,* for example, grant seekers are advised that while they "must present a clear picture of why [their] program is necessary" and they must "solicit community involvement in the grants-

manship process," the most important factor is the ability to "tailor each proposal to the individual requirements of funders."¹² Grant seekers are urged to keep the donors' wants constantly in mind and to "appeal to them often" in the proposal.¹³ Even more bluntly, *Grantsmanship: Money and How to Get It* advises, "Tailor the letter [of inquiry] to the [funding] organization's opportunity, not the applicant's need."¹⁴

This kind of advice, repeated frequently and, as the above quotations illustrate, in very similar language, seems to advocate the use of what we have conceptualized here as the opportunity-based and agenda-based recipient-side strategies of grant seeking. Although these strategies may be effective in one sense, they are the most donor centered, and they require the largest investment and effort on the part of recipients. The agenda-based strategy in particular requires that recipient groups have a substantial amount of information about donors in order to find out what donors want and how they as recipients might satisfy those wants as a condition of "winning" the gift. The fund-raising techniques that are applied, again, especially in the agenda-based approach, often require the counsel of "experts" who constitute a whole new industry that can be called the fund-raising business. Clients and consumers, along with the needs and interests they carry, are the least visible in these strategies and the appeals and practices that derive from them.

The needs-based strategy that we have conceptualized here places the concerns and interests of the grant-seeking organization and the clients and consumers it serves at the center. It is less costly to carry out. It empowers recipients because they are the ones who define the need and the program, ideally in collaboration and in dialogue with clients and consumers and with donors. The depth and scope of the need and the interest in all parties in addressing that need with an effective program are seen as sufficient to win the gift. Donors are envisioned as members of the community who have resources that they are willing to contribute in return for the satisfaction of community involvement and participation. While individual donors may indeed use their philanthropic activities to create opportunities for themselves or to carry out their own personal or professional agendas, these are not the focus of the grant-seeking

organization's appeals. They are seen as individual matters not at the center of the social relation that is philanthropy.

Our call for a recipient movement toward the needs-based strategy corresponds to a parallel call for a donor movement away from donor-oriented strategies and toward mediated-engagement, especially personal-engagement, philanthropy. From the point of view of donor strategies, the implication is to encourage increased donor engagement—both personal and psychological—in the needs and interests of recipients. Such engagement may well lead to increased monetary contributions by donors, but this is not the only or even the most important consequence. Engagement between donors and recipients has the potential for transforming the practice of philanthropy in a more profound way. The projects funded may become more in line with what people need and less with what they can get funded. As the hierarchical and nonreciprocal distinction between donor and recipient becomes replaced with more collaborative approaches, philanthropy has the potential of becoming more innovative and creative, not only in regard to types of social projects that it initiates but in regard to the interactive quality of social relations that it exemplifies.¹⁵ A philanthropic practice that emphasizes a personal-engagement strategy for donors and a needs-based strategy for recipients would be organized around the values of reciprocity, cooperation, mutual respect, accountability, and commitment.

By conceptualizing philanthropy as a social relation rather than as an institution, sector, or organization, we have attempted to locate in a positive way the distinctive attribute of philanthropy. What constitutes philanthropy is not the legal tax status of an organization or the deductibility of a contribution. Rather, it is an interaction between donors and recipients that revolves around an effort to match what donors have to give to recipients with what recipients have to give to donors. Much of this matching tends to be talked about as donors giving concrete resources to recipients and recipients giving nonmaterial or intrinsic rewards to donors. This is true enough for much of the current practice of philanthropy. However, our definition of philanthropy as a social relation and how it gets carried out in the more mutual donor and recipient strategies indicates that there is more to it than this. When philan-

thropy is practiced at its best, donors are given material opportunities—and not just psychic rewards—through their relation to recipients. In turn, recipients are given various kinds of nonmaterial resources—in addition to material support—such as respect, empowerment, and esteem when philanthropy is recognized and carried out as a reciprocal social relation.

In this chapter we have taken the first step toward conceptualizing philanthropy as a reciprocal relation and toward laying out a range of strategies that donors and recipients use in that relation to orient and guide their behavior. It is the task of future research to specify the conditions and circumstances that increase the use of the strategies that are most open to bringing recipients into philanthropy as mutual partners.

Notes

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