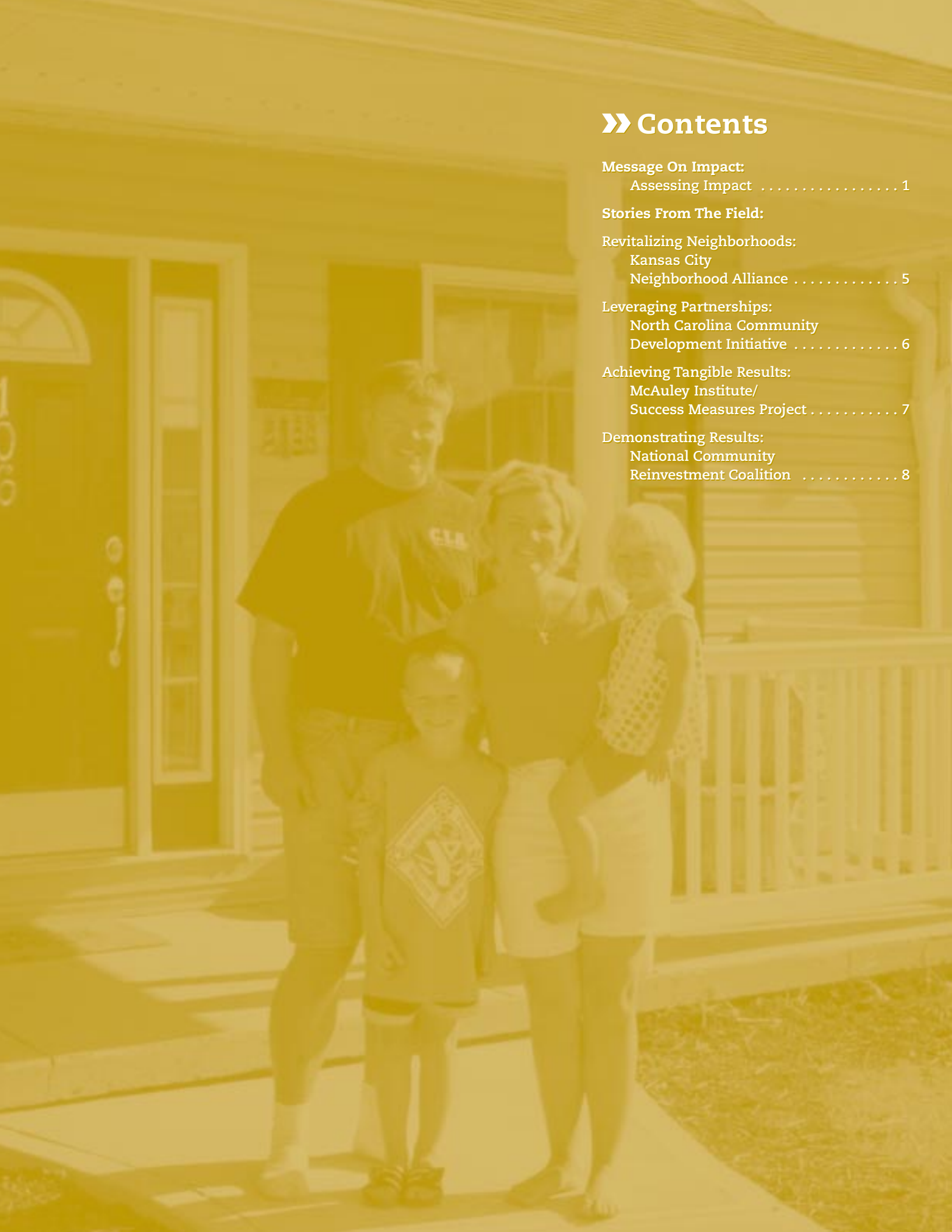


THE F. B. HERON FOUNDATION

IMPACT





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» Assessing Impact

Evaluation. Value added. Double-bottom line. Triple-bottom line. Blended return. Social Return on Investment. Social Metrics. Outputs. Outcomes. Impact. Results. Accountability. Effectiveness.

WHAT DOES IT ALL ADD UP TO?

This is a key question that we at the F. B. Heron Foundation have long considered. After \$87 million in cumulative grants and \$42 million in mission-related investments made since our inception, it is certainly fair for our board to ask of staff; for staff to ask of grantees, investees and ourselves; and for the public to ask of us, as stewards of this resource.

The list at the top of this page suggests an intense and growing interest on the part of funders, practitioners, policymakers and other stakeholders to understand impact. In these times of declining public and private resources, the ability of individual organizations and the community development field to improve and demonstrate impact is all the more critical.

At Heron, evaluation was a core value from the day in 1992 when we opened for business with the mission of helping people and communities to help themselves. As a national foundation supporting direct-service, community-based programs, we wanted to deploy our resources as effectively as possible. As a mid-size foundation, we needed efficient means of assessing impact. As a new foundation, we had the advantage—and the challenge—of starting fresh. In recent years, we have sought to become a “private community investment trust” that deploys an increasing level of our endowment for mission-related purposes in addition to grants. The need to focus on social return has only intensified.

We take this opportunity to communicate Heron’s approach to assessing impact, with a particular audience in mind: our customers—grantees, investees and applicants. We thought that it might be useful to outline how and why we support practitioners and their networks in results-based, management-oriented systems for assessing impact. Following this letter, we highlight four organizations that demonstrate impact at the local, regional and national levels.

We emphasize that we very much regard our approach as a work-in-progress with much to learn.

EARLY LESSONS

We understand clearly that we are not alone, nor are we the first to address this issue. Many foundation resources have been and continue to be devoted to evaluations of various kinds. As we got started, we reviewed and considered a number of approaches across a spectrum, including an evaluation department with professional evaluators on staff to contracting with evaluation professionals to assess our grants and investments to dedicating a portion of each grant for evaluation. To be sure, there are sound arguments to be made for each of these choices or some combination of them.

We were also in conversations with our grantees about evaluation. Here’s what we heard: *We seek useful tools, not studies that sit on a shelf. We need indicators that are meaningful in our communities. People remember stories and we have terrific stories to tell, but we want to back up those powerful stories with data. We need to undertake data collection and analyses that are credible. We want practical evaluation systems with management tools and training to help us improve our effectiveness and communicate our results to stakeholders. We want to get to the ultimate ‘bottom line’: Are people’s lives improving?*

With our board, we agreed upon some key guiding evaluation principles and practices.

THE PRINCIPLES:

§ Keep it simple.

§ Keep it practical.

§ Keep it tied closely to impact on people and communities.

We do not underestimate the complexities involved in undertaking change in communities that have experienced disinvestment and neglect, or the wrong kind of attention, for so many years. These principles reflect our determination to *advance practical, effective means of improving and demonstrating impact on people’s lives.*

We want to get to the ultimate ‘bottom line’: Are people’s lives improving?

General support can... (help) us to learn more about the whole of the organization's objectives, endeavors, management, governance, and commitment to impact.

THE PRACTICES:

- § Identify high-performing practitioners intent on assessing their impact.
- § Ask our customers: How do you assess your impact?
- § Provide general support grants and stick with them over time.
- § Support peer networks who are serious about this.
- § Support effective technical assistance providers to help practitioners.
- § Turn the tables on ourselves.

IDENTIFYING THE HIGH PERFORMERS

Of course, this is not as easy as it sounds. But, over the years, we have identified a set of benchmarks to guide us in identifying high performers—or those on the path to becoming high performers.

First and foremost is the alignment question: Is a strong core of the organization's work a fit with Heron's wealth-creation strategies? If so, are they committed to accountability, including the ability to demonstrate their impact with data—or do they have clear plans or systems in place to do so? Do they have sound management systems with strong balance sheets, good management depth, and robust fiscal and governance systems? Are they leaders in their markets? Do they regularly set and measure performance against objectives? To use a bit of jargon: Are they "learning organizations" that engage in continuous improvement with data feedback loops?

We recognize that few organizations hit all of these benchmarks all of the time. There are ebbs and flows within organizations, and enhancing the capacity to achieve and sustain these benchmarks takes time and resources.

ASKING THE QUESTIONS OF OUR CUSTOMERS

We ask the questions: How do you think about assessing your impact? What is your theory of change? What are the questions that you think are key, the indicators that you think are revealing, and the data you yearn to collect and analyze to know whether you're making a difference?

We have experienced two broad categories of responses to the initial impact questions. The first category is: "We'd like to get a handle on evaluation, but we're so busy running our programs, dealing with policy changes and fundraising, we simply don't have the time."

The second goes like this: "Yes, we are busy running our programs, dealing with policy changes, and fundraising. But, we are determined to improve and demonstrate our impact. Here are the questions and data that we currently use." This response suggests an organization that is internally driven by accountability. It is this second group with whom we at Heron seek to engage.

Sometimes, groups are so accustomed to the funder controlling the evaluation questions that we will be asked: "If we measure x, y, and z, will that satisfy Heron?" Of course, it's tempting to weigh in with a "yes," "no" or "maybe." But we try hard to turn the question back: "Forget about what funders want. (Easy for us to say, perhaps.) You have years of experience working in this community on these issues. Does it meet your needs? Is it meaningful for your customers in the community? Will it guide you to be more effective?" We are often rewarded with insights about impact that go much deeper than the typical reporting on units of service or outputs.

PROVIDING GENERAL SUPPORT

Over the years, general support has represented 75-80% of our annual grantmaking distributions. We continue to hear from our customers how scarce—and valuable—general support dollars are. These dollars provide flexible "working capital" to help an organization conduct its business—to think and plan, to research and develop new strategies and products responsive to community needs, to set and modify objectives, to pay the light bill, to strengthen fiscal and management systems, to leverage project dollars from other sources, and to develop systems to track impact. General support can enhance the quality of the engagement, helping us to learn more about the whole of the organization's objectives, endeavors, management, governance, and commitment to impact.

STICKING WITH THEM OVER TIME

So much of this business, as with many things in the world, is about developing relationships. As we have added tools like program-related investments, which have terms of three to ten years and which require intensive due diligence and monitoring, our relationships with groups have naturally lengthened and deepened. Time affords a clearer understanding of an organization's performance, challenges, and strengths—often never more apparent than during a leadership transition, bumps and all, and through changes in economic and political landscapes. We get a sense of whether and how an organization learns from setbacks. We gain a clearer understanding of the depth of their commitment to assessing impact.

We presume that long-term support also helps us to get more candid responses, although we are mindful of the funder-grantee power dynamic. And, over time as support continues, the impact question looms larger and the bar is higher for improving and demonstrating impact.

SUPPORTING PEER NETWORKS

There is often power in numbers. There can also be powerful lessons learned and exchanged within a network. Trade associations within our funding areas have demonstrated varying degrees of interest, or more importantly, action on the topic of impact. Some are grappling with critical questions: How do we ensure that we are asking the right questions? Which indicators will get us beyond outputs to meaningful impact on people and communities? What kind of staff capacity do we need to do this? What automated systems provide the best tools? How do we ensure data integrity and credibility, and implement effective audit functions? How do we avoid drowning in data and how do we ensure that we use the data we collect to best effect? Where can we find effective consultants and research institutions to help us with this? How can we develop comparative data that can be aggregated with our peers in a meaningful manner to demonstrate impact, to connect more directly to the private markets, and push the field to greater scale?

The McAuley Institute, a national housing and community development intermediary, and the Development Leadership Network (DLN), a

membership organization of community development practitioners, forged a partnership to take on these questions. The result is the Success Measures Project, a national participatory initiative designed by practitioners—with advice from research institutions and other stakeholders—to improve and demonstrate impact in the community development field. The initiative has produced a framework that begins with an organization designing a “benefits picture” of success, followed by identifying measures and metrics, and resources required to move towards the benefits picture. It includes a guidebook of practitioner-defined measures that have been field tested at various sites around the country, and training to promote data integrity. In 2003, McAuley is launching a web-based prototype that will give organizations a common, flexible, low-cost data-collection tool. (See p. 7.)

We think that this Project holds the promise of providing organizations with a powerful tool for improving and demonstrating impact—and, perhaps eventually, for teaching funders and policymakers what we need to know about effective means of impact on people's lives and communities.

SUPPORTING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Practitioners cannot do it alone. A focus on practitioner-guided approaches to assessing impact does not preclude the critical role of high quality technical assistance (TA) providers and research institution partners. One such partnership—forged among the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance, the University of Missouri, and Kansas City officials—has resulted in a data-driven impact tool using geographic information systems. (See p. 5.)

While more tried-and-true TA providers are needed to help put impact tracking systems into place, the best tracking system in the world won't help if the organization hasn't been tending to its financial systems or lacks other key capacities. There are good and poor management practices, and examples of each across sectors. A number of the trade associations and intermediaries in the fields in which we are working have demonstrated track records helping community groups to build stronger organizations, and we consider them to be key partners.

Which indicators will get us beyond outputs to meaningful impact on people and communities?

ASSESSING IMPACT AT HERON

We view impact as an accountability and a fairness issue. If we’re asking the questions of our “customer” grantees and investees, it is only fair that we turn the tables on ourselves. Over the years we’ve developed various management tools to help us understand and improve our impact—again, tied closely to the work of our groups.

One tool that has evolved is an “impact spectrum.” It’s a simple portfolio analysis tool that recognizes the early and developmental stage of assessing impact in the field of community development, and the need to work with groups who are progressing in the direction of measuring social return on investment. There are five points along the spectrum:

The Impact Spectrum



As we developed the tool, we anticipated that we would use it to track a group’s progression along the spectrum over time, and to determine the “sticking points.” For example, if a number of groups can’t move beyond “plan” to “system,” what would help them to move on? We have crafted criteria to define each point along the spectrum and conducted joint reviews to ensure consistent application of the criteria among individual program officers.

While many groups do not move in a neat, linear fashion, and this is a process-oriented tool, it has helped us to gain a better understanding of our individual and collective portfolios, and a helpful vocabulary that we continue to apply internally.

Also, we have begun to apply the Success Measures Project framework, described above, to ourselves. We want to design a Heron benefits picture of success, and a set of measures and metrics for our grantmaking and investing in our core wealth-creation areas—all towards the goal of greater accountability.

Through these and other efforts, we learned quickly that turning the tables on ourselves is hard and humbling work. It would go beyond hubris to suggest that our grantmaking was responsible for the results of organizations with many funding sources. But we believe it is worth the effort. It helps to have an engaged and energetic board that never lets up on the impact question. It helps to keep in mind the words of wise and wonderful people like the late John Gardner, a leading light in public service, whose description of his duties as the newly appointed Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Johnson Administration might also apply to the challenges associated with assessing impact in communities: “A series of great opportunities disguised as insoluble problems.”

We try to remind ourselves that the people carrying out missions consistent with Heron’s—helping people and communities to help themselves—are grantees and investees. They are doing the real work. We need to hitch our wagon to their success.

Mary Jo Mullan
Vice President, Programs

» Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance

If community development is in part about residents taking control of and improving their environment, residents of Kansas City in Missouri and Kansas now have a tool: CityScope. Developed by the **Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (KCNA)**, the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), and city officials, CityScope is a comprehensive survey of housing, grounds, and infrastructure conditions of Kansas City's neighborhoods.

Blue Hills, an early CityScope user, is an urban core neighborhood affected by community disinvestments resulting in high crime, low home-ownership rates, and dilapidated housing stock. In the early 1990s, KCNA initiated a five-point improvement plan: *Build hope* through crime reduction and community policing; *Build capacity* through resident engagement and leadership training; *Build the market* for new home ownership through financial literacy training; *Build the houses* with a strategic housing rehabilitation program; and *Build the industries* using quality local contractors and developing banking relationships.

Neighborhood leaders wanted to measure success and demonstrate the changes they had been making. "You can always tell a story," says Ed Linnebur, Director of Neighborhood Impact at KCNA. "But we also wanted more." Linnebur created an inventory tracking system based on input and recommendations from neighborhood groups. "I went to the final users first, because if they didn't find the inventory useful, there was no point in doing it," he says.

CityScope helped KCNA target resources through data-driven priorities. Since KCNA's entry into Blue Hills, property appraisals have risen 40%, violent crime has declined by 49% and private home-improvement lending is up 33% —all surpassing citywide benchmarks. KCNA trained over 15,000 families in home ownership, resulting in 6,000 new homeowners: a 40% success rate. Also, 1,400 new savings accounts were established by low- and moderate-income people.

KCNA adapted the Blue Hills approach and CityScope to new areas. To improve the city's practice of issuing personal-property code violations, a team trained by KCNA and UMKC mapped baseline data on 87,000 residential properties using a GIS system. Combined with crime statistics, unemployment data, HMDA records, and property values, this data-driven



For over eight years, Heron has supported KCNA's community development efforts, including engaging residents who are trained in assessing and improving conditions in their neighborhoods.

tool can be used to identify properties for improvement and to leverage City resources to go after the worst code violators.

"It goes beyond feeling that you're doing good work. It's about demonstrating results," says Richard Moore, Chairman of the Board of KCNA and President of Commerce Mortgage Corporation.

CityScope is now available to the entire Kansas City metropolitan area. The government uses the tool for effective deployment of funds and staff. The training provided by KCNA to municipal staff, community leaders and non-profit organizations reinforces the critical role of individual households in improving communities, demonstrates investment opportunities in low-income communities, and provides data on the quality of outcomes.

"We are proud to be partners with KCNA in developing CityScope. It is a powerful tool for neighborhood revitalization," says Martha W. Gilliland, Chancellor of the University of Missouri.

For maximum results and strategic decision-making, KCNA will collect CityScope data for at least ten years. KCNA is working with other cities and is developing a complementary survey system that will capture quality-of-life measures.

It goes beyond feeling that you're doing good work. It's about demonstrating results.

ORGANIZATION MISSION:
To build the capacity of Kansas City's neighborhoods to become safe, strong, stable, and attractive places where people are proud to live

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION:
Community development corporation

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:
Metro Kansas City

POPULATION SERVED:
Total metro pop.: 18MM;
KCNA's client population: 50-80% of area median income (1990 Census and KCNA data)

YEAR FOUNDED:
1979

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES:
Affordable housing; financial literacy; community organizing and mapping

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
Gloria M. Eurotas

STAFF SIZE:
21 FTE

ANNUAL BUDGET:
\$15MM

CURRENT HERON SUPPORT:
\$100,000 general support grant

» North Carolina Community Development Initiative

ORGANIZATION MISSION:

To strengthen the capacity, impact, and sustainability of established community development corporations (CDCs) in North Carolina

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION:

Nonprofit community economic development intermediary

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:

North Carolina

POPULATION SERVED:

Directly supports 26 CDCs working in low-wealth urban and rural communities

YEAR FOUNDED:

1994

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES:

Operating grants, technical assistance, project financing (through a subsidiary corporation, Initiative Capital)

CEO:

Abdul Sm Rasheed

STAFF SIZE:

12 FTE

ANNUAL BUDGET:

\$47MM (including \$25MM in pass-through activity)

CURRENT HERON SUPPORT:

\$100,000 general support grant

The **North Carolina Community Development Initiative** is nationally recognized as a model public-private community development intermediary dedicated to building assets for low-wealth individuals and communities. The Initiative provides core operating grants to 21 high-performing community development corporations (CDCs) in rural communities, small towns and major cities, channeling desperately needed financial and technical support to them, stabilizing their operations, improving their success rates and increasing their capacity. “We are building a legacy for our communities by pushing CDCs to higher levels of productivity,” says President and CEO Abdul Sm Rasheed.

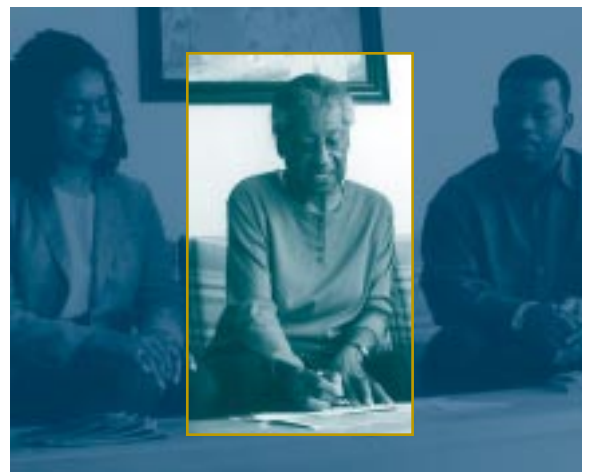
Since the Initiative’s creation in 1994, the production of CDCs in North Carolina has nearly tripled. The results: CDCs receiving core funding from the Initiative have produced 1,500 single-family homes; 1,200 multi-family units; 300,000 square feet of office space; 3,951 full-time jobs; and \$169 million in fixed asset value of housing and commercial property. Rasheed speaks frankly of his mission: “We want to be the best possible stewards of the funds entrusted to us.”

Working in partnership with its CDC grantees, the Initiative determines the appropriate success measurement indicators and explicitly states productivity and organizational development goals at the beginning of the grant period. It provides core operating funds that help support the regular collection of data at appropriate intervals (for example, quarterly) and only disburse grant funds after reporting requirements are met, resulting in a 100% reporting environment. Further, the Initiative and its grantees sign explicit contracts to ensure that mutual obligations are understood. The Initiative works closely with its grantees, meeting with the executive directors and key representatives of their boards twice annually, to act as a resource in their programmatic and strategic efforts. Income and expense sheets carefully track all monetary transactions. Accountability is explicit. To aid in the reporting, the Initiative is developing online tools that would enter output and outcome results into a database.

In essence, grantees are expected to plan their programs to strategic outcomes and to use success measurement data to make course corrections on significant program decisions. As community-based organizations, all grantees are responsible to community residents and leaders for the basis of their programmatic directions. Their strategies must be designed for measurable, collective impact on individual lives. The data reinforce that the mission and values of the organization are in sync with their programmatic activities and community stakeholders. Likewise, the data paint a picture of the resources and capacities of the community and can identify emerging market opportunities for public and private partners.

The Initiative uses the data to make future funding decisions and to demonstrate the impact to their own stakeholders. The Initiative has recently been awarded a \$3 million contract with the city of Charlotte to manage a public-private fund for community development activities. Their careful attention to outcomes may encourage other municipalities to invest in community-based strategies that lead to revitalization, greater tax revenues, and more productive citizens.

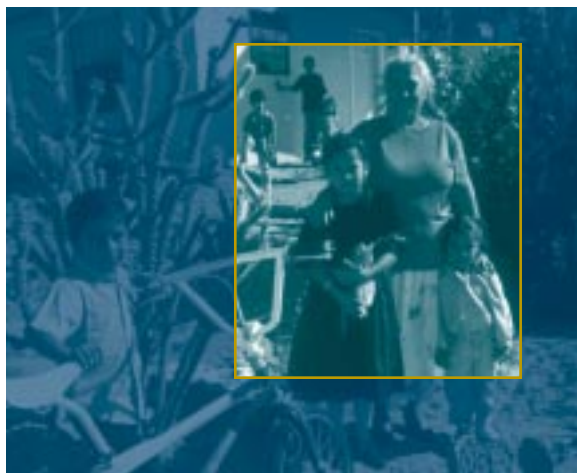
“Accountability is the order of the day,” says Rasheed. “We need to be sure that community-based organizations have the capacity—including technology, management, and analysis skills—to demonstrate empirically the value of their work.”



Heron provides general support to the Initiative, which financed the development of 516 units of permanent single-family housing in areas ravaged by Hurricane Floyd. Ms. Mattie Davenport is seen with Initiative staff as she signs the contract to her new home.

Accountability is the order of the day. We need to be sure that community-based organizations have the capacity ... to demonstrate empirically the value of their work.

» McAuley Institute/Success Measures Project



In addition to their SMP work, McAuley assists community-based organizations in creating housing and economic opportunities for low-income women and their families.

Committed to accountability to their constituents but frustrated by the lack of practical evaluation tools, a group of community development practitioners within the Development Leadership Network (DLN) set out to develop an effective means of evaluating their work. They teamed with the **McAuley Institute**, a national housing intermediary that has provided financing and technical assistance to over 2,100 community-based groups since 1983. The result is the Success Measures Project (SMP), an evaluation framework to identify, measure, track, report—and eventually aggregate—meaningful community-development outcomes.

“Our challenge is to get managers of organizations to internalize evaluation to see whether we’re having the impact we set out to have. We need clear measures that are respected by all of the players, including the program consumers, the organization’s management, policymakers and funders,” notes Marty Johnson, CEO of Isles, a community-development corporation in Trenton, New Jersey and a driving force behind SMP.

SMP is based on participatory evaluation where the definers of a program’s success includes its participants, an organization’s board and staff, and community residents. Within two years, 300 experienced community-development leaders adopted the evaluation framework and 44 indicators in three program areas: housing, economic development and community building. Fifty community-based organizations field tested the measures, an important reality

check that led to some design changes. The SMP guidebook lays out the evaluation process, including measures and data collection tools.

SMP starts with a benefits picture based on an organization’s mission and values. Research and evaluation are used to improve an organization’s programs, management and decision making. “SMP helped us to redirect our program strategy,” notes Jeanne Wardford, CEO of Northern Area Association in Detroit. “We were planning a focus on affordable housing. Through the SMP process, we recognized that an important priority for the community was commercial real estate development, and that a better strategy for us was to partner with a neighboring housing developer and redirect our energies on commercial real estate.”

For SMP to achieve scale, community-development practitioners must accept and embrace tangible measures that can be aggregated and communicated to stakeholders and investors. Toward that end, McAuley is introducing a significant, new web-based Success Measures Data System in 2003. It will provide a full range of tools to conduct participatory, outcome-based assessment. This technology will create a voluntary, national databank of changing conditions in neighborhoods, and integrate public information such as census data and property values, analysis and reporting technologies. McAuley will also provide technical assistance in its constructive use.

“We have much work to do, but we’re excited by the potential that the web-based system holds for collecting and pooling primary level data from the community development field,” says Maggie Grieve, manager of research and evaluation at McAuley. “Because SMP is based on organizational mission and values—that is, what experienced community leaders think is critical to measure—the system can be used by advocates and critics alike to assess effectiveness. It holds the potential to change how all actors, including policymakers and funders, think about the impact of community-based development.”

We have much work to do, but we’re excited by the potential that the web-based system holds for collecting and pooling primary level data from the community development field.

ORGANIZATION MISSION:

To create housing and empower communities

PROJECT MISSION:

To promote practical, effective evaluations of community development

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION:

National intermediary

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:

National

POPULATION SERVED:

Community-based organizations operating in low-income areas and their constituents; indirectly, funders and policymakers

YEAR FOUNDED:

1983; Success Measures Project: 1995

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES:

Systems development and implementation; technical assistance and training; affordable housing lending

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

JoAnn Kane;
Maggie Grieve, *Manager, Research and Development*;
Virginia Seitz, PhD,
Research Director

STAFF SIZE:

27 FTE; Success Measures Project: 3 FTE + consultants

ANNUAL BUDGET:

\$39MM; Success Measures Project: \$764M (\$18MM over three years)

CURRENT HERON SUPPORT:

\$100,000 general support grant;
\$75,000 project support for a web-based data system for the Success Measures Project

» National Community Reinvestment Coalition

ORGANIZATION MISSION:

To increase fair and equal access to credit, capital, and banking services and products toward building community and individual net wealth

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION:

National membership association

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:

National

POPULATION SERVED:

Low- and moderate-income, underserved urban and rural communities

YEAR FOUNDED:

1990

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES:

Capacity and partnership building through TA, training, publications, research, public education to promote CRA

CEO:

John Taylor

STAFF SIZE:

16 FTE

ANNUAL BUDGET:

\$299MM

CURRENT HERON SUPPORT:

\$100,000 general support grant

The National Community Reinvestment

Coalition (NCRC) was created in 1990 by 16 local, regional and national groups to build wealth in underserved communities and bring low- and moderate-income populations across the country into the financial mainstream. They focused initially on preserving and strengthening the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) at a time when the cumulative CRA lending commitments totaled \$6.4 billion.

By 2000, CRA commitments had increased more than a hundred-fold to over \$1 trillion. NCRC is a forceful trade association for economic justice with members including nearly 600 local community-based organizations in all 50 states, in rural and urban areas. Members include community development corporations, civil rights groups, community reinvestment advocates, local and state government agencies, and churches.

How were these results accomplished? NCRC partnered with their members, other nonprofits, policymakers, banks, and bank regulators. At every step, data analyses informed NCRC’s efforts to monitor their achievements, to redirect their strategies, and to educate legislators, regulators and communities. “Data and analyses drive our movement,” says John Taylor, NCRC’s Chief Executive Officer.

NCRC offers tailored data analyses to their members of local mortgage lending patterns, subprime mortgage lending, and small business lending. These analyses contributed to the surge in lending agreements, and supported successful policy efforts. NCRC efforts have also contributed to federal and local anti-predatory lending laws.

Data helped NCRC to demonstrate that CRA loans are good business. NCRC encouraged the Federal Reserve to conduct a survey in 2000 which found that CRA-related lending is profitable for 85% of lenders—a critical finding in attracting additional capital to underserved markets.

Data and analyses drive our movement.



Data helped NCRC to demonstrate that CRA loans are good business. Small-business owners benefit from access to affordable capital.

During the debates in 2000 over the Financial Modernization Act, NCRC urged the Department of Treasury to study CRA’s effectiveness. Treasury’s study found that CRA-regulated lenders originate more loans to low-income people than non-regulated lenders. This countered arguments that CRA was no longer needed and should be “modernized” out of existence. NCRC has helped regulators establish performance-based criteria to evaluate a financial institution’s performance in lending, investment, and service to underserved areas.

NCRC has forged effective partnerships with financial institutions. At NCRC’s Banker-Community Council, the concerns and interests of NCRC’s members and leading banks are addressed. Improved understanding of local experience with small business lending led the Council to develop the CommunityExpress program with the Small Business Administration. In only four years, CommunityExpress has resulted in over \$100 million in loans to small businesses along with technical assistance and training from NCRC member organizations and closer ties with their lending partners.

NCRC is also seeking to improve data disclosure on small business lending by regulated financial institutions. As John Taylor says, “there is no better antidote to discrimination than public disclosure of lending by race and gender of applicants and borrowers.”

T H E F . B . H E R O N F O U N D A T I O N

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