EGA Journal

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Minding the Gap

Contents

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Executive Director's Letter

BY RACHEL LEON

Dear Members,

photo: Sophie Leon Bauder

With fresh eyes and excitement, I read through the thoughtful contributions of this edition of the *EGA Journal*, whose theme is "Minding the Gap." I am struck by how much collective wisdom and strength this issue represents, and how much potential exists in the EGA community to meet head on the challenges and opportunities before us.

As I mind the physical gap between the Metro North platform and my train each morning to travel to EGA's New York City office, my thoughts are filled with ideas on how EGA can help fill gaps for environmental funders.

The creative planning discussed in "Minding the Resource Gap I" by Margaret O'Dell of the Joyce Foundation (page 2); the successes of the Health and Environmental Funders Network (HEFN) outlined in "Minding the Environmental Health Gap," (page 9); the strategic collaborations that successfully addressed the justice gap illuminated by Carmen Rojas of the Mitchell Kapor Foundation (page 12); and the inspiring piece on grassroots organizing by Lois Gibbs of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice and Dave Beckwith of the Needmor Fund all remind me that there is no lack of solutions. The hard part is not so much knowing what is needed, but acting on that knowledge by consciously *doing* and working together effectively. Such collective endeavors make us stronger than the sum of our individual grantmaking efforts.

I hope the articles on the following pages spark new thinking and action among all of us.

Once again, I want to express my appreciation to EGA's Board of Directors for allowing me this opportunity to work with you all at this critical juncture for both EGA and our planet. I also offer thanks and best wishes to my predecessor, Dana Lanza, and trust that the launch of her next project to advance mission-related investing will bear as much fruit as have her efforts at EGA.

Finally, I encourage you to read more about me in an interview beginning on page 22 of this issue. Then, please take a moment to drop me a line, send an e-mail, call me, or—even better—meet with me face to face so I can fully absorb all that each of you brings to the environmental movement. One of my many priorities for EGA is creating innovative platforms that allow us to share ideas and knowledge, so keep an eye out for new interactive and more frequent communication from the organization—and please participate! We need an active membership to remain strong.

I look forward to meeting you all in October 2009 at our Fall Retreat, at our State of the State Briefing in February 2010, and at a series of meet-and-greets coming soon to your region!

Yours in collaboration,
Rachel

Rachel Leon
EGA Executive Director

Minding the Resource Gap I: Creative Planning for the Coming Downturn

BY MARGARET O'DELL, THE JOYCE FOUNDATION

Foundation assets dropped nearly 22 percent in 2008, according to a recent report by the Foundation Center. Based on a survey of 1,000 foundations, the Center also predicts that giving in 2009 will decrease in the range of "the high single digits to the low double digits." However, because 2008 was preceded by two years of unusual double-digit growth in assets, the full impact of the market decline on giving will not begin to be felt until 2010. Therefore, even if our assets begin to recover in the next year, nonprofits are likely to see at least three years of significantly reduced grants.

This trend may affect environmental organizations disproportionately, because they tend to rely more heavily on foundation funding than do direct-service providers. Moreover, Dianne Russell, Executive Director of the Institute for Conservation Leadership (ICL), a capacity-building intermediary that supports the environmental community, is concerned that the environmental and environmental-justice sectors are behind the rest of the nonprofit world in grappling with the coming funding downturn. This funding gap threatens both the capacity that has already been built among environmental NGOs and the ability of funders who rely on core grantees to achieve their mission and goals.

Mobilizing a Response

To provide EGA members with ideas to deal with this threat, I interviewed several colleagues who are using both funding and non-funding resources to help core grantees be proactive about anticipating and responding before the economic challenge becomes a crisis, and/or to sustain the capacity their past funding has created—even in areas in which they expect to make cuts.*

Funder responses generally fell into three general categories: helping to sustain core grantees that face losing the funding they get from other sources; trying to meet the needs of lower-priority current grantees; and finding other ways to get the job done. Following are some of the strategies pertinent to each category.

Sustaining Core Grantees

Colleagues in the funding community have developed some thoughtful ways to work with core grantees:

1. Early and open communications

A group of Northwest US funders with a relatively narrow focus on wildlife and wild lands works with a limited pool of groups, so they had already been meeting regularly to talk about the organizations they fund jointly. One, the Wilburforce Foundation, has built a database that tracks grantees' financial history over the last decade, making it easy to spot long-term trends or sudden changes that even a grantee's executive director might miss.

In 2008, the group sent a collective email to all grantees, urging them to take proactive steps, including:

- Engaging their boards early to intensify fundraising efforts
- Exploring strategic alliances with other organizations
- Creating tiered budgets that anticipate cutbacks in funding and indicate how the group might respond
- Rethinking priorities and programs.

They also invited grantees to call with concerns about budgeting or staffing changes if they needed to adjust agree-upon program outcomes or had questions about the funding relationship.

2. Convening and listening

The McKnight Foundation in Minnesota, which funds in multiple program areas, has taken a different approach: convening community meetings across programs, emceed by its president. The foundation invited grantees to talk about social trends they observed in the larger community (such as increases in homelessness or demands on food pantries), how the organizations were coping, and how the foundation could be most helpful. Most commonly, grantees sought funding flexibility, noting that general operating support is the most useful type of grant and that obtaining an advance payment could prove critical.

3. Technical assistance through intermediaries

Several foundations said they support capacity-building intermediaries such as the ICL, the Environmental Support Center (ESC), and Training Resources for the Environmental Community (TREC). Those who are concerned about sustaining capacity say they don't intend to reduce, and may even increase, their support of such groups. In addition, these funders are providing additional small grants to ensure that online and print resources, such as ICL's workbook "Managing in Hard Times" are more widely available.

4. Other types of support

Most funders can offer a variety of resources in addition to cash grants, but some are being more intentional about making those resources available in ways that will extend grantees' own resources. [*Editor's note: See page 4 for a longer discussion of value-added grantmaking.*] For example, many foundations make meeting space available to grantees, helping them save on meeting costs. The McKnight Foundation has gone a step further, posting an online registration form and adding a staff position to coordinate outside meetings and offer logistics and technology support. Occasionally, some funders have made tech-support staff available to help small grantees who lack an internal capacity plan or even to troubleshoot technology problems.

Meeting Lower-Priority Needs

To manage the anticipated further drop in grant budgets in 2010, most funders face having to make adjustments to their portfolios. But some are seeking ways to maintain NGO effectiveness despite these cuts. For example, one funder is reducing its geographic scope but is also developing strategies to sustain the capacity that has already been built in areas that will no longer be a priority. To soften the impact, the funder is taking a number of precautions:

- Providing plenty of warning to grantees (two years' notice that funding won't be available in the future)
- Ensuring sustained support through intermediaries (such as training and technical-assistance providers ICL and ESC, which are being funded at historic highs)
- Making an assessment of grantees' cumulative accomplishments to assure other potential funders that much good work remains to be done by these groups.

Some foundations are making tiered decisions about their funding priorities: Core grantees will receive the types of financial and technical support outlined above; long-term but not central grantees will receive a final year of funding; and lowest-priority grantees will be removed from consideration for future funding.

Funders are also encouraging NGOs themselves to reduce their overhead, proposing that they consolidate back-office functions, sublet office space, and collaborate to reduce the number of individual programs they run (even handing off certain programs to another organization with greater capacity).

Finally, funders are recognizing that some NGO closings are inevitable. Through ICL, they are making the booklet "Closing a Nonprofit Well" by Scott Denman, the story of the orderly closing of an organization in 2003, available to grantees now.

Engaging by Other Means

Funders are also considering new adaptive strategies: taking on more public-opinion research and issue-communications tasks; being more closely engaged with a single-issue grantee that focuses solely on the funder's goals; and moving further into the realm of operating NGO programs themselves.

The next three or so years will pose a great challenge to the effectiveness of environmental organizations and their work. Funders will need to take a long view, communicate with grantees and each other, and make some hard decisions in order to ensure that their work can be sustained through the downturn. ■

Resources

"Managing in Hard Times" http://icl.org/toolkits/hard-times.php

"Closing a Nonprofit Well" http://icl.org/articles/secc.php

* Because some of the information discussed is sensitive, specific individuals and foundations have not been identified unless the relevant information is already part of the public record.

Minding the Resource Gap II: Value-Added Grantmaking at Work

BY BETSY BRILL, STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY, LTD. AND THE LIBRA FOUNDATION

Special thanks to Karen Ashmore, The Lambi Fund of Haiti, and Stephen Viederman, former President, Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

These are times of change and challenge for nonprofits and grantmakers alike. The constraints imposed by the current financial downturn are making it harder for nonprofits to bridge the gap between capacity and sustainability. Adding to the stress are new federal economic policy proposals whose long-term ramifications are still unknown.

With these challenges, however, come extraordinary opportunities for grantmakers and nonprofits to find creative ways to achieve their mutual objectives. For environmental grantmakers in particular, national and international developments—including the passage of the historic American Clean Energy and Security Act, along with initiatives to develop high-speed rail and green jobs and the upcoming United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen—mean now is the perfect time to examine new methods of leveraging the human and financial capital we foundations still have at our disposal.

One effective way to do that is through value-added grantmaking. Value-added grantmaking is about doing more with less, optimizing opportunity, and extending partnerships to new and more effective levels. Ultimately, it's about best practice.

Beyond Financial Support

This topic was discussed at length at the plenary session of the Grantmakers Without Borders Annual Conference, held in Washington, DC in June 2009. Titled "More Than Money: Value-Added Grantmaking," the panel explored strategies beyond financial support that can help minimize the impact of asset losses on giving and most effectively respond to grantee needs. Speakers included Karen Ashmore, Executive Director of The Lambi Fund of Haiti; Stephen Viederman, former President of the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation and currently a shareowner activist serving the Needmor and Christopher Reynolds Foundation Finance Committees; David Mattingly, Program Officer with the Fund for Global Human Rights; and Susanna Shapiro, Program Officer with the Global Fund for Children (GFC).

Photo: Lambi Fund of Haiti

A women's leadership training convened by the Lambi Fund of Haiti.

At the plenary, David Mattingly described how the Fund assesses grantees' needs to consider what value it can offer beyond writing a check. He pointed out the importance of recognizing (and mitigating) the power dynamics of the donor-grantee relationship when identifying the need for capacity building; grantees may feel obligated to express interest in what the donor is offering. He also cautioned all donors to be flexible and responsive to changing conditions on the ground and to factor in the reality that value-added services are often much more labor intensive than simply awarding a training grant to an organization or groups of organizations.

According to Susanna Shapiro, the GFC grantmaking model not only provides annual cash infusions in the form of grants, but also works with grantees over the long term to help them maximize the social impact of their projects and programs. Through such value-added services, GFC maximizes its grant dollar by serving not only as a grantmaker but also as a connector and convener to help grantees amplify their reach, diversify their funding base, and enhance their ability to achieve their mission.

After the conference, I asked Karen Ashmore and Steve Viederman to recap and amplify their comments, and to share some specific strategies for value-added grantmaking that other foundations may find useful.

Photo: Lambi Fund of Haiti

Grantees participate in training on the operation of a grain mill.

Helping Grantees to Succeed

Karen Ashmore pointed out that sometimes, foundations actually spend more on value-added grantmaking than on cash grants, and that this practice proves even more effective during financial hard times than in better ones. Some of The Lambi Fund's tactics include:

- **Offering training in capacity building before making grants.** "The Lambi Fund provides extensive capacity building, project management, and leadership training to potential grantees before a grant is ever made," Karen notes. "We have a philosophy that if an organization does not have the capacity to manage a grant, then we work together with them to build [it] to ensure that it has the qualities it needs to succeed. This ensures a more efficient and effective grant."

- **Holding women's leadership conferences.** The Lambi Fund convenes women leaders to learn more about leadership skills. As a direct result, "We are seeing more women-led grassroots peasant organizations. However," she points out, "this [change] can lead to unintended consequences. In some organizations, men grumbled that the women are 'taking over.' So we convened 'gender-equity roundtables' so that men and women can discuss together the reasons why it is important to share leadership equitably. When everyone can work equitably together…, it contributes to the project's success."

- **Making collaborative purchases.** If several grantees have similar projects requiring similar materials, The Lambi Fund will combine orders for a quantity discount, preferring locally manufactured or produced products. "We like to purchase materials and supplies from local Haitian manufacturers

rather than ordering from the United States," she notes. "Not only does it save shipping costs, but the practice of buying locally supports the local economy, which is something that is desperately needed in a developing country."

She concludes: "Whether it is project training, leadership building, gender equity or collaborative purchase, all contribute to the success of a grantee project. The more the grantees succeed, the better the grantmaking becomes, because projects are successful and outcomes are attained for the benefit of all."

Aligning Mission and Investments

In his talk, Steve Viederman focused on aligning mission and investments, declared that there is nothing like a downturn in the financial markets to focus a foundation's attention on mobilizing all of its resources to fulfill its mission: "There is no time like the present to get off your assets, putting them to work for you," he maintains. He encourages foundations to participate in active ownership, a trend taking root in the United Kingdom and, increasingly, in the United States.

"'Active ownership' simply means letting the companies you own (or the mutual funds in which you invest) know that you care about their social and environmental performance, as well as their financial importance. Actions can be as simple as writing a letter to management expressing your concerns," says Steve. More important is "voting your proxies or instructing your asset mangers to vote on social, environmental, and governance issues. A good starting point is developing proxy-voting guidelines."

He adds that foundations can also join with other shareowners in filing proxy resolutions, or file them independently, noting "Even small foundations can make a difference." For example:

- The Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation got Intel to share information with communities when it filed on behalf of a grantee, the SouthWest Organizing Project.
- The Needmor Fund responded to a request from a grantee, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, to assist them in getting higher pay from Taco Bell, filing with the fast-food chain's parent company, Yum! Brands.
- The Nathan Cummings Foundation has been successful in advancing resolutions on a number of issues including climate risk, political contributions, executive compensation, and health-care principles.

"Many now argue that being an active shareowner is a fiduciary duty," Steve points out. "If you think you are too small to make a difference, as an anonymous philosopher once observed, you have never been in bed with a mosquito."

A Strategic Approach

However, value-added services aren't free. Both financial and staff-time costs of providing these services must be considered. Therefore, approaching value-added grantmaking in a strategic manner can help donors to assess the overall contributions they are making to their grantees' work and the issue areas they care about, as well as to structure these services in a way that is most responsive to individual grantee needs. Grantees should be involved in the process and given a safe space for communicating which services would be most useful.

As Karen and Steve's examples illustrate, engaging in thoughtful consideration of value-added services is a matter of best practice in grantmaking, but it is especially relevant now that donors need to find ways to do more with less. ■

Photo: Lambi Fund of Haiti

Lambi Fund of Haiti Country Director Josette Perard leads a training at a women's leadership conference.

Minding the Fisheries Gap: Supporting Sustainable Aquaculture

BY SCOTT CULLEN, GRACE COMMUNICATIONS FOUNDATION/NEW TAMARIND FOUNDATION

Ocean health is indisputably in decline and stocks of popular food fish are largely depleted. Already, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service, approximately 80 percent of all seafood consumed in the United States is imported, raising myriad food safety, environmental, and sustainability concerns that are likely to be exacerbated by the growing human population and rising demand. Consequently, aquaculture—the cultivation of aquatic animals and plants in natural or controlled marine or freshwater environments—is expanding rapidly and likely to play an even greater role in US seafood production in coming years.

However, conventional aquaculture is not environmentally friendly. It has been associated with a multitude of concerns including water pollution, habitat damage, and the release of captive fish into the wild, which then interbreed with or overtake wild fish. Fortunately, another solution exists that can provide fresh local protein in a cleaner, greener, and scalable way: land-based, recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS).

Open-Water Woes

Current methods of raising fish using open-water aquaculture are largely problematic. Because ocean fish farms allow the free flow of water between the ocean and cages in which fish are held, concentrated amounts of fish food, wastes, diseases, and any chemicals or antibiotics applied to the system can flow straight into ocean waters. A report about an ocean farming facility affiliated with the University of Hawaii said the operation "grossly polluted" the seafloor and "severely depressed" sea life. In Norway and British Columbia, numerous problems have occurred with parasites spreading from caged-farmed salmon to wild salmon.

Moreover, ocean fish farms are likely to reduce local employment. For example, in the 1990s, the fish-farming industry in British Columbia tripled, but added no new jobs. Worse, US ocean fish farms may even outcompete and ultimately replace traditional fishing. As the number of natural fisheries dwindles, support businesses such as marine supply stores and dock facilities will also suffer, risking more job loss and hurting the economies of coastal communities.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, in 2006, almost 33 million tons of world fish production was destined for nonfood products, in particular the manufacture of fishmeal and fish oil. Efficiency will likely dictate that fish for feed in domestic ocean farms come from nearby waters, thereby increasing the take of already-stressed local wild fish populations and leaving fewer prey fish in the wild for that marine creatures rely on for food.

Despite these threats, the second Bush Administration pushed open-water aquaculture as the magical cure to dwindling fish stocks. Proponents are still hard at work: Millions of dollars in funding for experimental offshore projects are winding through the federal government.

RAS: Greener and More Just

In contrast, RAS, which spans both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors, has the potential both to avoid the ecological and economic problems often associated with ocean fish farming and to provide more sustainable and safer domestic seafood for US consumers at all socioeconomic levels. This nascent effort has enormous potential worthy of foundation support.

Because RAS utilizes closed-loop facilities that retain and treat the water within the system, facilities need not be connected to open waters. Thus, waste discharge is reduced and fish and parasite escapes

Photo: Courtesy of Dr. James Rakocy, UVI

Lettuce and other vegetables growing in RAS aquaponic tanks at University of the Virgin Islands in St. Croix.

Photo: Courtesy of Dr. Martin Schreibman, Brooklyn College, CUNY

Nile tilapia, a species of fish often produced in RAS.

can be prevented. And because it is highly unlikely that fish themselves can escape the closed system, RAS can be used to grow a wide range of fish (as well as plants) without threatening the environment or competing with fisheries that depend on sales of local fish. For example, tilapia is a popular fish that grows well in RAS, whereas there is no wild fishery for tilapia in the United States.

RAS proponents are working to increase the environmental sustainability of the process by developing ways to reduce energy use and by being compact enough to be located on otherwise unusable urban properties. Furthermore, several opportunities exist to utilize any waste accumulated in these operations in creative ways, the most promising of which is using the nutrient-rich water from the system to grow aquaponic herbs and vegetables. The beauty of this process is that after the plants absorb the nutrients, the "cleaned" water can go back into the fish tanks, closing the loop.

Because RAS fish farms are usually fully enclosed and controlled, they are mostly bio-secure and can operate without any chemicals, drugs, or antibiotics, thus offering a more natural product for consumers. And because they are self-contained and cleaner, RAS can be located near markets or within landlocked communities whose residents will ultimately eat the fish and other crops (such as plants), rather than adjacent to natural water sources. The aquaponics systems used by urban farmer Will Allen and Growing Power, a national nonprofit organization and land trust he founded that helps to provide equal access to healthy, high quality, safe, and affordable food to people from diverse backgrounds, are currently demonstrating this possibility. RAS can also be located in underserved areas to provide a source of fresh protein and vegetables. This local scalability will result in a smaller carbon footprint due to reduced shipping distance.

RAS has a few opponents in the form of those who would benefit from business as usual, such as those wanting to invest or already involved in open-water aquaculture, as well as the copper industry, which supplies materials for open-water cages. Of course, there may be real though as-yet unanticipated problems with RAS, but for that very reason, testing and innovation need to continue.

Moving Forward

Recently those involved in RAS began a coordinated effort to organize, forming the Alliance for Sustainable Aquaculture to promote RAS over ocean fish farming as a preferable means of seafood production to supplement our wild fish supplies. The alliance includes some of the nation's leading RAS scientists, entrepreneurs, and even some federal agency personnel who are collaborating to promote the expansion of RAS education, research, and development. This effort, combined with rising concerns about imported seafood, continued problems with US fisheries management, and a new administration, suggests that the time is right to pursue a campaign to advance the enormous potential of RAS.

However, the issue seems to still be under the radar of the environmental and funding communities. RAS's primary financial support comes from government agencies such as the US Department of Agriculture and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We at the Grace Communications Foundation are exploring the possibility of funding in this area, and the EGA community should also consider supporting RAS ventures.

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Minding the Environmental Health Gap: HEFN Marks 10 Years of Progress

BY MICHAEL LERNER AND MARNI ROSEN, JENIFER ALTMAN FOUNDATION; ANITA NAGER, THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST; PETE MYERS, ALTON JONES FOUNDATION; AND KATHY SESSIONS, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDERS NETWORK*

Ten years ago a small, diverse group of funders came to the 1999 EGA Fall Retreat at Asilomar with a concept paper proposing a Health and Environmental Funders Network (HEFN) to bridge the gap between environmental funders affiliated with EGA and/or the Consultative Group on Biological Diversity (CGBD) and health funders organized through Grantmakers In Health (GIH). Our Retreat ad hoc meeting attracted a lively crowd and more than 50 funders signed up to join us. In subsequent months, the CGBD agreed to sponsor HEFN, we recruited more of our health colleagues at GIH's annual meeting, and HEFN was officially launched.

At that time, there was little effort in organized philanthropy to addressing the issues that lie at the intersections of environment and health. Few foundations were investing in this area, and interested funders were fragmented across issue silos. However, the scientific basis for concern about pollutants' impacts on wildlife, people, and ecosystems was growing ever stronger. Many communities had self-organized against local hazards and environmental injustice, and state and national environmental health groups were beginning to appear. It seemed to us that progress on environmental issues (such as the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts) typically occurred when the public saw environmental cleanup as essential to health. So as we formulated our goals and strategies, we aimed not only to bridge gaps across environmental and health philanthropy but also to create the philanthropic underpinnings of a grassroots environmental health movement.

However, for most of our first 10 years, HEFN members and our NGO colleagues found ourselves operating in a domestic policy environment increasingly hostile to environmental protection, public health, and sound science itself. HEFN became a place where funders could develop and test strategies to circumvent this gap and, in the interim, broaden the base of public, business, and policy support in anticipation of a more favorable climate.

A decade later, we can report that more than 250 grantmakers from more than 125 foundations now participate in HEFN, investing more than $65 million annually in work at the intersections of health and the environment. Additionally, societal capacity to address these issues holistically is dramatically stronger.

Education and Collaboration Are Key

In reflecting on what has worked, lessons both practical and profound emerge:

We tried to make learning about the field easy: Funders could join for free, keep up with activities via short email digests, listen in on our conference calls, and participate in HEFN sessions at meetings they regularly attended. As HEFN's staff and budget have grown (modestly), we still use a "ladder of engagement" approach, offering newcomers a variety of learning opportunities, then scaling up how much information funders receive and the work they are asked to do as they become more engaged. We have tried to create a culture that values learning, diversity, candid conversation, and caring for the people behind the work. (As one new grantmaker said on first attending a HEFN meeting, "You folks seem to really like each other!")

More strategically, we made collaboration a priority. From the beginning, HEFN has devoted considerable energy to partnering with other funder groups.

Photo: Courtesy of HEFN

Children participate in a rally against the chemical additive Bisphenol A.

Collaborating with EGA, GIH, and others on environmental health programming relevant to those groups' interests has met people where they are and successfully drawn many more funders into the field. This external collaboration has also enriched the environmental health field with diverse skills, various perspectives, and new relationships.

Supporting strategic collaboration among HEFN funders and with NGO partners has also paid off. Over the past 10 years, HEFN has nurtured many funder conversations leading to informal or organized collaborations. HEFN funders worked closely with NGO leaders to co-fund and, in some cases, co-found many strategic initiatives and scores of efforts in various regions, professions, and sectors.

Many of these initiatives have been in the anti-toxics arena, achieving impressive gains. States from Maine to California have banned hazardous substances; more and more cities and hospitals build "green and healthy" standards into their purchasing guidelines; and hundreds of companies have voluntarily shifted to safer alternatives. Local communities have won victories over polluters, and environmental health and justice advocates have deepened their civic engagement and clout. Professionals from chemistry to nursing have moved ecological health into training and practice. The European Union is implementing a comprehensive chemicals policy overhaul, and serious reform debates have begun in Washington.

Years of investment and collaboration have helped to build a base of community support for environmental health protection as well as an architecture of strategic relationships that may help sustain more fundamental societal change in this area. Today, the HEFN Catalysts Collaborative is a lively forum for funder action to support our society's accelerating shifts from toxic to safer chemicals and materials.

Filling the Gaps

Funder collaboration within HEFN has also helped to bridge the gaps across environmental health and environmental justice (EJ) issues. Making EJ a high priority led to the establishment of a HEFN Working Group on Environmental Health and Environmental Justice and the incorporation of justice issues in many members' programs. HEFN's 2008 grants tracking found that some 30 percent of tracked investments in environmental health had an EJ dimension.

In turn, health funders joining HEFN brought more attention to responsive and place-based grantmaking. HEFN's California Working Group, for example, addresses environmental health and justice issues within the state as a focus for learning and collaboration. And in 2005, HEFN funders interested in EJ and/or in the Gulf Coast also were proud to join with EGA colleagues in helping to form the Gulf Coast Fund for Community Renewal and Ecological Health following hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Concern for the "gender gap" sparked organizing that led to the establishment of a HEFN Working Group on Women's Environmental Health (WEH) to highlight environmental health issues of concern to women and to promote women's leadership in the movement. The WEH group partners with the Catalysts Collaborative to elevate women's voices in chemicals policy reform and cultivates relationships with funders concerned with reproductive health, rights, and justice.

With most HEFN participants based and investing in the United States, a considerable global gap remains in environmental health funding. Nevertheless, in its early years HEFN provided a critical vehicle for funders supporting the work toward the Stockholm Convention, an international treaty on chemicals. New collaborations are under way to further strengthen the growing global environmental health and justice arena, including a funder-NGO collaboration on grants to key groups in the Global South and transitional economy countries; relationship building with funders and NGOs addressing chemical policy reform in Europe and Canada; and pioneering work to advance environmental health and justice in China, Israel, and Japan.

Looking Ahead

As HEFN reaches its 10-year anniversary, we are planning a special meeting for November 2–4, 2009 in Washington, DC to reflect and explore new directions.

We have successfully created a field of philanthropy that approaches human, ecological, and community health in a unified way. Working with our grantees and NGO colleagues, we've made great progress toward closing the public-awareness gap about the dangers and pervasiveness of many common chemical exposures, and the stage now is set for national policy reform. A growing base of engaged and organized health-affected groups, health care professionals, grassroots and EJ organizations, scientists and chemists, labor, activists, progressive industry leaders, and others is energized.

However, we still face a gap in the funding required to enable this base to step up to the remarkable new policy opportunities available. Many other gaps remain to be filled, including the need to strengthen environmental health and justice work related to climate change and energy. The demand for safer chemicals, largely underwritten by our funder community, is rapidly outstripping the supply of solutions available from green chemistry. The environmental health and justice community has a great stake in this area but little in the way of resources and expertise to push societal shifts related to jobs, economic recovery, and economic development. In addition, few funders within our ranks are focused on ecological health problems such as poverty, biotechnology, nanotechnology, electromagnetic field disruptions, and conventional agriculture. We have farther to go in developing and articulating an ecological model of human health, and in embedding core values and new science in the policy and market decisions that shape public health outcomes.

With much gratitude we thank the EGA community for their many collaborative endeavors with us over the past decade, as well as the CGBD for such a supportive home base. We believe HEFN has brought real value to environmental protection and environmental philanthropy, and we welcome the chance to partner over the coming years toward individual and collective investments to make this a healthier, more just, and more sustainable world. ■

* 1999 affiliations. The authors' affiliations remain the same today, except for Myers and Nager, who are now Trustees of the Jenifer Altman Foundation.

HEFN invites EGA members to:

- Check out "Voices and Visions" from our new community-generated stories project, share your own story, or help your grantees to share their stories.
- Join us for HEFN's 10th anniversary meeting this fall.

Please visit www.hefn.org for details.

HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDERS NETWORK

HEFN Headlines of Progress:

Birth weights up after EPA pesticide ban, study finds
Washington Post, March 25, 2004

Massachusetts to reduce in-state school bus emissions by 90 percent
Washington Post, December 19, 2006

500 cosmetics firms agree to remove harmful ingredients
Detroit Free Press, January 26, 2007

Youth group sets civic example, helps shut down toxics plant
San Jose Mercury News, August 15, 2007

Chemical law has global impact
Washington Post, June 12, 2008

Lawmakers agree to ban toxins in children's items
Washington Post, July 29, 2008

13 Md. health facilities to stop using pesticides
Baltimore Sun, October 28, 2008

Child care goes 'green'
Salem (OR) Statesman Journal, February 5, 2009

'Green chemistry' movement sprouts in colleges, companies
New York Times, March 25, 2009

Health Canada makes it official: BPA is health hazard
Canwest News Service, April 14, 2009

Maryland childhood lead levels decrease
WBOC-TV, Delaware, July 29, 2009

See more news at www.environmentalhealthnews.org.

Minding the Justice Gap: Bay Area Collaborations Offer a Model for Hard Times

BY CARMEN ROJAS, MITCHELL KAPOR FOUNDATION

As a result of the economic crisis of 2008-2009, the gap in financial support reaching nonprofit organizations is enormous. Organizations have collapsed, services and staff have been cut, and education about pressing issues has come to a near halt. The impact of funding cuts and cutoffs has been felt in communities across the country, but nowhere is it more palpable than in low-income communities and communities of color, where the economic and ecological crisis did not just begin in 2009 but has been a reality for a greater part of the last 50 years.

Yet, as the following stories will show, many opportunities still exist to fund organizations, support collaborative efforts, and build a movement toward a greener, more equitable planet for all.

Disproportionate Impacts

It was a hot and muggy June evening in the city of Richmond, CA. Nearly 100 community members, environmental advocates, policymakers, and religious officials gathered in Saint Mark's Church for the unveiling of a report, "Measuring What Matters: Neighborhood Research for Economic and Environmental Health and Justice in Richmond, North Richmond, and San Pablo." Published by the Oakland, CA-based group the Pacific Institute in partnership with seven local organizations, the report offers a look at the serious environmental and economic problems faced by West Contra Costa County (West County) residents and, more importantly, explains how these problems can easily be avoided and resolved through individual behaviors and policy changes. Based on three years of research into these issues, the report was designed to provide a tool for looking realistically at the conditions facing residents and to establish a starting point for the type of community involvement that could lead to healthier and more equitable lives for West County residents.

The study's findings show a dire situation. West County is home to 47,000 residents, 90 percent of whom are people of color; the median household income is $32,000 a year. Compared with Contra Costa County as a whole, where about 58 percent of residents are white and the median household income is $102,000, and coupled with its proximity to environmental hazards, such as a Chevron oil refinery, West County—like many Bay Area low-income communities of color—suffers disparities in income and wealth and disproportionate exposure to environmental risks.

Reporting on issues ranging from lead contamination in homes to lack of access to open space, the study offers a sad and foreboding picture for West County residents. Among other things, nearly 50 percent of homes are at risk for lead exposure (through

Photo: Pacific Institute

Lilia Quiñónez, member of Morada de Mujeres del Milenio, speaks about her experience living in Richmond, CA, at the community presentation of the report "Measuring What Matters."

paint); water-quality regulations are violated "an average of 4.5 times per month"; and on 142 days during the three-year study period, the Chevron Richmond refinery flare emissions were "above Air District thresholds for causing harm to nearby residents' health."

Rather than accepting the conditions faced by West County residents as an inevitable reality of economic hard times, the partner organizations have united to empower these residents with the information they need to understand the problems they are facing and offer them the resources and tools they need to develop long-term solutions. The efforts in West County represent a regional trend by which organizations mind the justice gap by building strong, strategic partnerships, enabling members of historically disenfranchised communities to understand the causes of their living conditions and enact meaningful solutions, and ensuring that these solutions are applied in the realm of public policy.

Creative Collaboration

This project is an amazing success in light of the downward regional trend in funding. The winning strategy to change the environmental and economic conditions in low-income communities of color is clearly collaboration, collaboration, and more collaboration. Mitchell Kapor Foundation grantees are sure to add *organic* before the word *collaboration*, emphasizing the importance of community actors' coming together prior to seeking funding to build a campaign, research project, or public-education effort. In the last year, we've seen a number of such remarkable collaborations that bridge knowledge, resources, and movement-building strategies and have resulted in a transformative outcome for low-income communities and communities of color.

Here are a few of these success stories, along with descriptions of the partners involved.

- **Richmond Alliance for Environmental Justice**
  Partners: Asian Pacific Environmental Network's (APEN) community-based Laotion Organizing Project, Communities for a Better Environment's (CBE) state-wide organizing team, and Earth Justice's national public-interest legal team.

  Strategy: Lawsuit. These organizations joined forces to sue the City of Richmond for accepting a faulty Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on Chevron facilities, thereby allowing the company to expose the community to increased health and environmental risks in a planned major expansion of its facilities.

  Result: On June 4, 2009, Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge Barbara Zuniga tossed out the EIR because it failed to disclose that the expansion would allow Chevron to process heavier, more contaminating crude oil.

Photo: Pacific Institute

Chevron refinery. Richmond, CA

The efforts in West County represent a regional trend by which organizations mind the justice gap by building strong, strategic partnerships.

- **Oakland Climate Action Coalition**
  Partners: Grassroots partners include Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Bay Localize, and Walk Oakland Bike Oakland. Regional and state-wide NGO partners include Communities for a Better Environment, Movement Generation, Sustainable Peralta, Rising Sun Energy Center, Urban Habitat Program, and West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project.

  Strategy: New citywide legislation in Oakland, CA to set greenhouse gas emissions standards.

  Result: On July 7, 2009, Oakland's City Council unanimously adopted a set of benchmarks to cut the amount of global warming pollution produced by the city. Through the leadership of the Oakland Climate Action Coalition, the Council will begin planning measures to determine how best to reduce greenhouse gases to 36 percent below 2005 levels by 2020.

- **No New Power Plants for San Francisco**
  Partners: National NGO Sierra Club; policy change NGOs including Our City, Latino Issues Forum, and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. Legal support was provided by the Brightline Defense Project and the Environmental Defense Fund; local media support came from the *Bay View* newspaper.

  Strategy: Fight a plant siting. During the summer of 2008, the hottest debate in San Francisco was centered on a new city power plant, to be built by Mirant Corporation in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods, Bayview Hunters Point and Potrero Hill.

  Result: The coalition successfully organized city residents to stop the construction of a new plant as well as to shut down the last power plant in San Francisco. Their strategy of educating the public and elected officials about the need to reduce its reliance on fossil-fuel electricity, especially when plants are located within low-income communities and communities of color, succeeded.

Complementary Foundation Strategies

Since November 2008, when the economy began its dive, the Mitchell Kapor Foundation has deepened its ties to grantee organizations so as to identify the ways in which we can support their efforts beyond responsive grantmaking. In a series of meetings we held with various grantees, the same types of support were requested:

- Convening: Organizations need foundation resources to convene to share experiences, conceptualize pressing issues and policies, learn from their wins and losses, and build relationships across sectors.
- Expert Access: Grantees also seek access to experts in technical fields to help them facilitate community understanding of scientific and related issues, as well as to inform policy alternatives in the areas on which they work.
- Partnerships: We philanthropists have special access to policymakers, academics, and other foundations; working in partnership with organizations, we can help our grantees to build productive relationships with these groups.

Overall, our grantees have been reinforcing their desire for us to work more closely with them. In today's hard times—as well as in better ones—this type of engaged grantmaking holds great promise to transform the policy landscape and environmental norms for a more equitable world. By building multi-sector and cross-interest collaborations, we include various types of expertise and strategies for reaching the same goal of cleaner and more racially just communities. ■

Resources

Mitchell Kapor Foundation: www.mkf.org

"Measuring What Matters" report: www.pacinst.org/reports/measuring_what_matters

Pacific Institute: www.pacinst.org

Minding the Power Gap: Pulling the Train of Change with All Three Locomotives

BY LOIS GIBBS, CENTER FOR HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND JUSTICE, AND DAVE BECKWITH, THE NEEDMOR FUND

Like a heavy train, important social-change work in this country must be powered by three engines: policy work, science/data, and grassroots public education. If any of the engines is weak, the train will stall. Now is the time for funders to fill 'er up—ideally, by providing all three areas with substantial, patient operating support.

Photo: istockphoto.com

Policy, Experts, and Grassroots Are Vital

We can win change faster and more effectively if all three engines are operating at maximum horsepower:

- The engine representing advocacy and lobbying (Policy) is associated with changes in laws, regulations, or institutional policies. This one is often highly valued and well supported.
- The second engine (Experts) comprises science, academia, data, and peer-reviewed studies. This one is also highly esteemed and well resourced.
- The third engine (Grassroots) represents the voices of victims, the general public, the "Joe Six Pack" and "Susie Housewife" of local, grassroots organizing efforts. For decades, this third locomotive—whose job is building the base of the environmental movement—has been less valued than the other two. It is now struggling mightily, low on fuel.

Such inattention is unwise. Last November, a strong third locomotive was crucial to the outcome of a national election with dramatic results—the swearing in of the first US president of color. Barack Obama's election train reached the station full and was received with great fanfare. How that happened can teach us much about how society might also win systemic change in the environmental and environmental-health arenas.

Obama's train of change used all three locomotives well:

First, the engine called Policy: The factual case for various issues critical in the campaign needed to be made. Think-tank representatives performed the relevant research, provided the salient facts, and made recommendations about how to move forward on a different path.

Second, the engine called Experts: Pollsters, advertisers, speech writers, and other communicators worked their magic, disciplined and steady, led by a masterful and experienced core of leaders. Folks who understand policy and what types of policy and

regulatory change were needed wrote white papers and talked with other leaders to obtain their support.

Third, the engine called Grassroots: In a giant ground game, vast numbers of everyday people went door to door to talk with neighbors about "this Obama guy," and change, and "Yes, we can!"

The combined power of all three engines moved the campaign forward to its successful conclusion.

Photo: Mary Clare Rietz

Environmental Justice Town Hall meeting in Cincinnati; panelists included City Councilman David Crowley, far left; CHEJ's Lois Gibbs, second from left; and local representatives from grassroots groups and the NAACP.

Fueling the Environmental Protection Train

Today, the health of the environment and threats to human health from chemical exposures in food, water, and ecosystems on which we depend are leading many everyday conversations. Parents are concerned about toxic toys. Communities are becoming aware of the effects of climate change on their farms, gardens, and even front lawns. Consumers are reading labels on many of the products they purchase. This new consciousness has set the stage for turning passive self-interest into active policy reform. The public is ready to get on the train of change.

One recent example is the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility campaign, which aimed to halt a proposed study by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the pesticide industry in which children under three years of age would be deliberately exposed to a household pesticide and monitored for several years for any health effects. This ultimately successful effort pulled with all three engines, making sure to engage the Grassroots all along the track.

Academic institutions provided convincing science about the toxicity of the chemicals under study and the special vulnerabilities of infants and toddlers. The Experts engine was hooked on and well fueled, with enough resources aboard to undertake the data collection and testing needed to debunk the study's rationale.

Environmental and policy organizations created a line-by-line counterstatement to the pesticide industry's claims that society needs their products, and to their position that the study would cause no real harm to wildlife and human health. Policy people brought the usefulness of animal- verses human-study data to the center of this debate, and also pointed out that USEPA's acceptance of industry funds for the study represented a conflict of interest. (They also discovered there were no laws on the books to prohibit testing on children.) The Policy engine pulled the train well. It, too, was fueled

The engine that struggles, underfueled with money and people, is often the Grassroots—the engine that may be the main vehicle for change.

with enough money to fulfill its role—along with plenty of close access to media and key decision makers.

At the Grassroots, activists initiated a campaign that built up and out from the local low-income Florida community that was to be experimented upon. The Center for Health, Environment, and Justice (CHEJ) and other groups who work with communities nationwide collaborated to frame the issue and organized a nationwide, bottom-up strategy to demand that USEPA cancel the study and pass a new policy that would never again allow such a proposal. Eighty thousand people signed letters to their federal representatives in support of the campaign's goals. Extensive media efforts fomented a public outcry. Thanks to critical outside financial resources, the engine called Grassroots was pulling its weight as well!

Ultimately, the study was cancelled, the policy rewritten, and the new law passed by Congress.

Another example: In many states, public school buildings have been proposed for old industrial sites, brown fields, even unremediated Superfund sites. Since 2005, communities have been asking for policies to stop school sitings on contaminated lands, especially in low-wealth neighborhoods. Through hundreds of local community efforts, the issue has become front-page news.

Several think tanks have mapped out the facts about the thousands of schools located in severely polluted and dangerous areas. This type of database development is very resource intensive. They have the money, though. The Experts engine is ready to pull.

Policy groups at the federal level have successfully established a mandate for USEPA to establish guidelines for state and local governments as they develop plans for new-school construction. The Policy engine is fueled up, fired up, and ready to pull.

The base-building Grassroots engine, however, is not stable and has real potential to stall. Resources are lacking to reach out and enlist parents, PTAs, teachers' unions, and segments of the public who may be unlikely allies, as well as activists within the traditional environmental movement.

Currently, without all three engines pulling at full power, our schools are still being built where poisons threaten children.

Balanced pulling power is the key to success. All three engines—Experts, Policy, and Grassroots—must be fully operational if we are to win anything that's lasting and important. The engine that struggles, underfueled with money and people, is often the Grassroots—the engine that may be the main vehicle for change. Would Obama be in office if not for his ground game?

As environmental funders think about the work we want to support in the next few years, it's important to consider the heavy train we're proposing to pull. Reforming environmental policy after years of questionable science and stubborn industry-skewed lawmaking will require all the strength we can muster. Environmental grantmakers need to provide multilevel support for Experts, Policy, and Grassroots. Together, we can do it! ■

Minding the Communications Gap: Bringing Consumer Demand to a Tipping Point

BY JIM JUBELIRER, JUBELIRER FAMILY FOUNDATION

Scientific consensus predicts that modern economies have at most 10 years to reduce their carbon emissions significantly before climate-change feedback loops begin irreversible changes in global temperature. Every stakeholder in our system—governments, business, consumers, NGOs, and funders—must shift toward more sustainable policies and behaviors. But regulation (e.g., CAFE standards) and business investments (e.g. hybrid cars) won't go as far as needed if voters—both consumers voting with their dollars and people voting as citizens—don't understand the economic and environmental threats and opportunities.

Environmental philanthropy can do much more than it has to fill the "3A's" information gaps:

- What people are aware of
- What their attitudes are
- How those attitudes translate into action.

Better understanding the latest research on consumer opinion and segmentation studies can help grantmakers to plan more successful funding and communications strategies, as well as to provide insight and guidance to their grantees.

LOHAS, Drifters, and Deniers

Studies show that people are primarily concerned about what they put in (food and beverages), on (cosmetics and skin care), and next to (clothing) their bodies. Secondly, people are seeking ways to economize. They also tend to focus on issues that affect them directly—more global concerns such as social justice or climate-change mitigation are not on the minds of most consumers.

According to the Natural Marketing Institute (NMI), which has been doing scientific polling of shopping behavior since 2002, a significant percentage (17 percent) of people are trendsetters who focus on both personal and planetary issues. These trendsetters, called LOHAS (for Lifestyles of the Healthy and Sustainable), tend to be more active in information gathering and sharing. NMI reports that two other groups, people they call Drifters and Conventionals, have increased from 39 percent of the total population to 50 percent in the past three years (see chart). Although people are thinking greener, and tend to buy greener than they used to, it remains unclear whether this increased demand is sufficient to make an impact that matters. For instance, a recent consumer-segmentation study entitled "Global Warming's Six Americas" identified a small but influential segment (7 percent), called Dismissives, who actively seek to deny the reality of global warming. These deniers have been successful in spreading fear, doubt, and uncertainty.

One of the key factors for making genuine progress in environmental protection is to create messages that resonate with these specific target audiences. This task will require identifying the key values of the "swing voters" (those who don't have a strongly held position) and mounting an aggressive attack against the Dismissives. These deniers have been successful in promoting the view that global warming is a hoax because they find a receptive audience in those who really aren't sure about the science, or don't know whom to trust. Countering the well-funded industry of global-warming deniers to help push consumer demand for environmentally sustainable goods and policies is one area in need of additional support from grantmakers.

The Role of Consumers in Changing Institutional Behavior

The business community, meanwhile, has responded to new information about environmental degradation in a variety of ways. Sustainable business is a huge and growing trend. Naysayers may claim these efforts are "greenwashing," but the reality on the ground is more complex. US-based multinationals understandably want to protect their empires and generally resist government regulation. However, regulation can sometimes create a level playing field and more predictable investment environment that can spawn tremendous innovation. We have only to look to Europe and Japan, where environmental protection is a much higher priority. Businesses there have responded by introducing breakthrough products that can then be sold on a global basis. European leadership in high-mileage cars and clean-diesel technology might never have happened without high gasoline taxes.

Research shows that companies are motivated to change their environmental footprint based on a combination of internal and external influences. Some external influences include:

- Consumer demand
- Government regulation
- Shareholder or activist pressure
- Competitors' actions
- Economic factors such as inflation and job loss.

Internal influences may include the desire to:

- Raise revenue
- Cut costs
- Engage employees (i.e., to be seen as a responsible employer)
- Do the right thing by setting an example for others.

Wal-Mart, for example, has a customer base that has not been in the vanguard of the eco-movement, yet it is one of the more prominent business leaders in greening both its products and its supply chain. CEO Mike Duke has stated that a focus on sustainability helps Wal-Mart keep prices low for consumers, increases transparency, and builds trust. As he pointed out, "Increasing population and decreasing natural resources make greater efficiency imperative for a company's survival."

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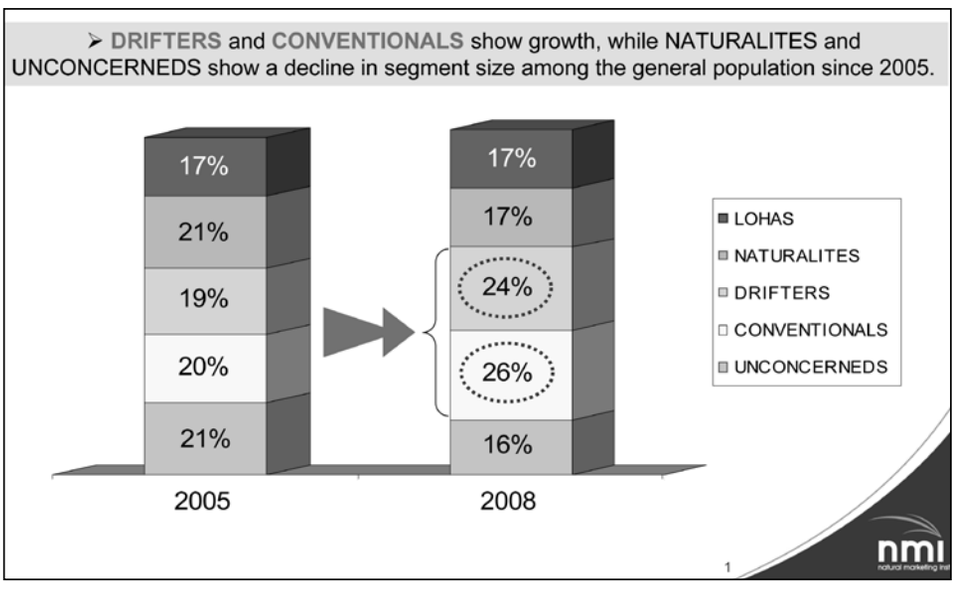
How "Green" Are Today's Consumers?



According to the Natural Marketing Institute (NMI), 17 percent of US consumers, called LOHAS, are trendsetters who focus on both personal and planetary issues. The percentage of people in this segment has remained steady between 2005 and 2008. NATURALITES are driven by personal health and wellness concerns, frequently purchase "green" consumables, and want to do more for the environment. DRIFTERS (24% of the population, up from 19%) have some level of green interest, but their behaviors are not deeply rooted. Their shopping habits are driven more by price and personal concerns. CONVENTIONALS (26%, up from 20%) care most about practical considerations such as cost savings from energy conservation. UNCONCERNEDS (16%, down from 21%) have other priorities and are not actively engaged in conservation or green purchasing.

State of the States Co-Chairs Chosen

EGA is pleased to announce the selection of its 2010 State of the States Policy Briefing co-chairs, Lisa Renstrom and Amy Solomon. The co-chairs are selected by staff and approved by EGA's Board of Directors.

EGA hosts its State of the States policy briefing every other year to focus on the work of member foundations and NGOs on a regional and state level. At the meeting, funders have a chance to brainstorm and share information about local strategies and how they work, taking home ideas from other regions that may be applied to their own geographical funding areas. The upcoming 2010 State of the States briefing will be held in Boston from February 22–24, 2010.

Photo: Betty Anderson

Lisa Renstrom is incoming President of Rachel's Network, a Washington, DC-based network of women philanthropists dedicated to stewardship of the earth. Prior to that, she served as President of the national Sierra Club from 2005 to 2007. Lisa's previous posts have included Interim Executive Director of Voices & Choices, a Charlotte, NC-based environmental organization that advanced economic and environmental sustainability through large-scale change models and civic engagement, and Co-Chair of the 1997 Charlotte Regional Environmental Summit. She and her husband, Bob Perkowitz, founder of ecoAmerica, created Bonwood Social Investments, a fund that invests in organizations that engage the public in environmental and climate solutions. The former owner/operator of two family hotels in Acapulco, Mexico, Lisa holds a master's in Pubic Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School and a BA in Finance from the University of Nebraska.

Photo: Courtesy of Amy Solomon

Amy Solomon has been a program officer at the Bullitt Foundation since 2002, working in the organization's Energy, Industry, and Technology; Leadership and Civic Engagement; and Urban Ecology program areas. She also serves on the boards of the Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide. Prior to joining Bullitt, Amy was a consultant to environmental nonprofits and foundations on programmatic and organizational development issues. From 1987 to 1995, she served as Executive Director of the Northwest Renewable Resources Center. Amy holds a BA in American Studies from Yale University and an MBA in business from Stanford University. ■

Welcome EGA's New Operations Manager

Photo: Kayla Fields

This past January, Frances Pimentel joined EGA as our Operations Manager. In this position, she acts as point person for internal operations and administrative issues, ensuring that the EGA office works smoothly. Her duties run the gamut from managing finances to coordinating schedules to troubleshooting tech problems, as well as serving as Executive Assistant to Executive Director Rachel Leon. Her favorite part of the job, though, is helping members: "If they have a problem and I can make them happy, that's the best part," she says.

Frances brings extensive experience in nonprofit office management to her post, including positions as Office Manager at Connect NYC and The Nature

Conservancy (TNC), Program Coordinator for the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Council, and Administrative Assistant for the Legal Aid Society.

Her first exposure to the environmental field was working with TNC; however, her interest was piqued after seeing degradation first hand during an extended visit to her native Saint Croix, Virgin Islands: "I witnessed the effects of erosion, overfishing, and damage to coral reefs—it had a tremendous impact."

Frances grew up in New York and earned a BA in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the City University of New York. A resident of Brooklyn, she is active in urban agriculture and enjoys hiking, reading, and traveling. ■

Meet EGA's Summer 2009 Interns

This past summer, EGA welcomed its fourth class of interns, university students with an interest in environmental issues who wish to explore the world of philanthropy by working in our New York offices.

Photo: Nihan Acar

Balki Aydin, who hails from Bursa, Turkey, is a graduate student at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ, where she is specializing in International Law and International Economic Development. She holds a BS in Political Science and Public Administration from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. As an undergraduate, Balki served as project coordinator for Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe - European Student's Forum, for which she organized national and international events.

Balki's interest in interning at EGA stemmed from a desire to find her niche in the environmental field. "Last semester I took a class in environmental law and policy and learned a lot about what's going on in the international scene," she says. "I realized that's what I want to do." At the office, she's been researching trends in greening public housing: "I saw how easily people's lives could be changed for the better if the money were properly directed," she observes.

After completing her degree, Balki intends to return to Turkey and work in environmental philanthropy.

Photo: Tri Huynh

Victor de Couto, who grew up in Kobe, Japan, completed his BA at La Salle University in Philadelphia, PA in 2008 and is now pursing an MA in International Relations at Seton Hall University. His previous two internship experiences, along with his current graduate-student worker position with the Dean's Office of Arts and Science at Seton Hall, have helped to develop his strong background in data mining and analysis.

Victor's interests in energy security, climate change, and international organizations were among the things that brought him to EGA: "I wanted to learn more about how energy issues affect climate change and the economy. Having already interned at a grant-seeking nonprofit, I was interested in looking at these issues from the angle of foundation funding," he says.

As an EGA intern, Victor has been involved in the Tracking the Field program, studying how funding is apportioned to various segments of the environmental movement. He has also been pursuing an independent project "looking at the emerging market for solar technology, along with possible philanthropic opportunities for funding solar-energy initiatives." ■

Bringing Us to the Next Level: Introducing EGA's New Executive Director, Rachel Leon

On July 21, 2009, EGA Development Manager Rachel Goldstein interviewed Rachel Leon, the association's new Executive Director. Rachel Leon, who stepped into her position on August 3, comes to EGA from the JEHT (Justice, Equality, Human dignity and Tolerance) Foundation, and most recently served as a consultant for the Open Society Institute. Following is an edited transcript of their conversation.

Photo: Dave Bauder

Rachel G: First, would you tell us a little bit about your personal background?

Rachel Leon: I grew up in Upstate New York, and I have a very varied background in the sense that while both my parents grew up on working farms, I was raised in an inner-city neighborhood in Schenectady with almost no greenery. So while I grew up with a real love of farms and horses and beautiful country, there weren't any parks in our neighborhood and I saw a lot of poverty around me.

Rachel G: How did that background lead into your work life? What are some of the career experiences you've had so far?

Rachel Leon: Growing up I had a lot of influences; for example, my mother ran a day-care center for low-income kids in a church in our neighborhood and has always been an activist. After graduating from SUNY–New Paltz with my degree in Public Communications and Women's Studies, and freelancing for some newspapers, my first job was working with the Hunger Action Network, a membership organization that worked not only on filling immediate needs—we served our member food pantries and soup kitchens across New York State by helping to secure direct funding for their programs—but also on addressing the root causes of hunger and seeking legislative and policy answers, such as increasing the minimum wage. One of our victories during my tenure was helping to pass a school breakfast requirement statewide. My duties included everything from writing and publishing statewide reports to helping individuals who were homeless as they tried to navigate their way through the welfare system. It was an incredibly challenging and wonderful experience.

Then I became the Executive Director at Common Cause New York, where I worked on addressing inequity from a democracy perspective—why it is that some people's voices get heard and others don't. I did quite a bit of coalition-building there. We were able to assist various issue-based organizations in pushing for solutions by creating and releasing quality information into the public eye, raising the issues such that they had to be dealt with. In some cases, it led to victory on issues that legislators had previously felt they could ignore.

Then I moved to the JEHT Foundation as Senior Program Manager for Fair and Participatory Elections. There I managed the multi-million-dollar democracy

docket, working on the same democracy issues, but from a funder's perspective, funding organizations and projects to increase integrity in elections and increase transparency and accountability across the country.

Rachel G: What struck you as the biggest difference between working on issues as an NGO or grantee and working on them as a funder?

Rachel Leon: When you're in the middle of the action and you're trying to focus every day on achieving goals, it's a very different reality from working at a foundation, where you're trying to look at it from a much broader perspective: "These are the issues we want to fund; here's where we want to see change; how can we best get from here to there?" It was fascinating to me to see the similarities and differences between those two worlds, so I'm really looking forward to delving even deeper into that at EGA. I'll be dealing with the same questions, but this time serving a network of funders focused on the environment.

Rachel G: What brings you to EGA at this point in time?

Rachel Leon: What really drew me to EGA was that it reflected each of the major paths I've been on in my career. I've really liked serving various member organizations. And it was appealing to serve as an executive director again. I like helping to strengthen an organization and helping it become the best it can be, both from a financial aspect and to help bring it to the next level. The idea that I could work with funders again—and on an issue that is so incredibly important—was very compelling to me.

Rachel G: What is your background in environmental issues?

Rachel Leon: Well, my mother would tell you that I did my first speech at age three, calling for more parks, because we lived in a neighborhood that had no open space except for a vacant lot next door that was filled with junk. At the Hunger Action Network, we strove to connect hunger to some of the more organic solutions, such as fighting to get Food Stamps accepted at local co-ops and farmer's markets in urban communities. We looked not only to get direct solutions to poverty and food insecurity from the government, but also to introduce the idea of helping local farmers at the same time. At Common Cause, I worked very closely with environmental groups. There are so many parallels between the problem of monied interests and problems in the environment. Our research, for example, looked at money and politics through the lens of issues such as New York's State Bottle Bill and lead poisoning in New York City.

Rachel G: Which environmental issues are you especially passionate about?

Rachel Leon: Obviously, climate change is on everybody's radar screen. This is going to have to be dealt with or we're going to have to face the consequences. But I'm looking forward not so much to advancing my own interests as to finding out what the members' priorities are and figuring out how we can collaborate. This is an incredibly exciting and scary moment in our history. And if we work together we can really achieve a lot. I hope that I can help both to provide a space for funders to communicate about these very tough issues and to develop some more strategic avenues to achieve our shared goals.

Rachel G: Do you have any other immediate priorities in mind as you begin your work with EGA?

Rachel Leon: At this moment it's really important for EGA to have a successful strategic plan, so I'm looking forward to diving in on that with the Board of Directors and members. I also plan to utilize new and innovative technologies and tools to help foster communication among EGA members and the broader community. The Annual Fall Retreat sounds like it's been wonderfully successful through the years, so I intend to continue that and help it evolve to an even higher level of greatness with staff, board, and members. And I want to

This is an incredibly exciting and scary moment in our history. And if we work together we can really achieve a lot. I hope that I can help both to provide a space for funders to communicate about these very tough issues and to develop some more strategic avenues to achieve our shared goals.

help facilitate a dialogue, from day one, to hear what members want EGA to be, so that we can achieve that together.

Rachel G: How would you describe your leadership style?

Rachel Leon: I like to roll up my sleeves and work really hard as a team. I am also a very good listener, always seeking to find the areas where we can work together, and then helping to build a plan to get there. At all the organizations I've worked with in the last couple of decades, success never came from going it alone. You have to work together. Over the years I've developed the skills to facilitate that.

Rachel G: What excites you the most about taking the helm of EGA?

Rachel Leon: Being able to take all the work experiences I've had to date and put them to work on behalf of the organization. Not to be cliché, but it seems there is a perfect storm building. There are very few issues that have the potential to move as much in the next several years as the environment. But it is going to be a really tough challenge, so I'm really excited about helping funders and those in the movement better work together.

Rachel G: In addition to learning their priorities, are there any additional questions you'd like to ask the membership?

Rachel Leon: I really want to hear anything and everything they want to share with me. But in particular, how do their priorities connect with those of other funders? I'm interested in trying to find out where those commonalities are and where we can coordinate and synchronize our work.

Rachel G: Outside the office, what do you like to do for fun?

Rachel Leon: I love to go to the ocean, which is where I am right now. I love outdoor activities: swimming, running, and biking. I love to read. But spending time with my friends and family in Croton-on-Hudson, New York—my husband David, and children Sophie, who's nine, and Ben, who's eight—is definitely an important counterpart to working really hard. I treasure my family; they're a lot of fun. The other thing that draws me to this job is that I worry about the world my kids are going to inherit when they grow up.

Rachel G: This year's Retreat will be held in Anchorage, Alaska. Have you ever been to Alaska before?

Rachel Leon: I have not. I'm looking forward to seeing the rugged landscape and learning more about Alaskan environmental issues, which represent a microcosm of what's happening now in the rest of the world–some of the biggest challenges and some great opportunities all in one place.

Rachel G: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Rachel Leon: Just that I'm very humbled to have this opportunity. I'm looking forward to getting out around the country and meeting a lot of members face to face, starting in Alaska and beyond, as part of my journey to get to know the funders who are part of this network. I'd also like everyone to know that we have an open-door policy. If members are visiting New York, please stop by and say hi! ■

Rachel Leon would love to hear from you! You can reach her at rleon@ega.org.

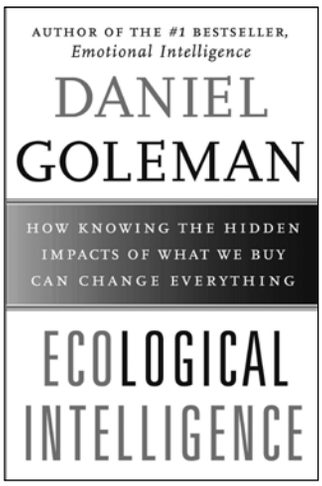
Greening Our IQs

BY MICHAEL LERNER, JENIFER ALTMAN FOUNDATION

Ecological Intelligence: How Knowing the Hidden Impacts of What We Buy Can Change Everything

By Daniel Goleman

Broadway Business Books, 2009. 288 pages



Daniel Goleman is one of the foremost psychologists and science writers of our time. His previous international bestsellers include *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (Bantam, 1996) and *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (Bantam, 2007). In *Ecological Intelligence*, Goleman has written a groundbreaking book that is fundamentally different from his two previous ones. For while *Emotional Intelligence* and *Social Intelligence* were about awareness and management of our internal and social-psychological worlds, *Ecological Intelligence* offers a deeply provocative proposal for the transformative use of information technologies to save the earth.

Promoting "Radical Transparency"

What Goleman advocates is, in effect, a global, grassroots-based, market-focused campaign to alter fundamentally our purchasing habits by making completely transparent the hidden impacts of what we buy. Arguing that we cannot know their hidden ecological and health effects simply from reading product labels, he shows that we consume blindly, never fully comprehending the real costs of each purchase. Thus, the current definition of "green" products is essentially a mirage. To alleviate this cognitive dissonance, we tell ourselves what playwright Henrik Ibsen called "vital lies": "What we don't know or can't see doesn't matter."

Goleman points out that our native ecological intelligence worked for millennia to help us adapt to living sustainably in an extraordinary range of local ecosystems. But modern technological society has deprived us of much of that innate insight.Therefore, we need to develop a new collective ecological intelligence based on three "swarm rules":

1. Know your impacts.
2. Favor improvements.
3. Share what you know.

These rules require a "new math" to assess our individual and collective impacts on the geosphere, the biosphere, and the sociosphere. That assessment in turn requires "radical transparency" about our three-fold impact on all spheres based on the "life cycle assessments" (LCAs) used by industrial ecologists. As befits our high-tech age, the findings of these LCAs would either be transmitted to consumers directly (via bar graphs on products that our cell phones can decode as we shop), or placed by store owners on or near products on the shelf.

Goleman demonstrates that the development of radical transparency is actually in progress. Information technology markets for ecological upgrades are already being created by market-makers like Earthster for individuals and GoodGuide for corporations. New (and renewed) corporations and business associations, like REI, Wal-Mart, and the Outdoor Industry Association, are emerging that have continuous ecological upgrading of their products "in their DNA." These twin developments, says Goleman, can play a key role in saving both ourselves and the earth. Though he is careful to warn that ecological intelligence based on radical transparency isn't a panacea, he argues convincingly that it could make a transformative difference.

A Unique Contribution

Goleman has done more than simply to write an important book. He has envisioned a powerful process that could take current efforts to develop grassroots health,

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A Prescription for the Long-Haul Blues

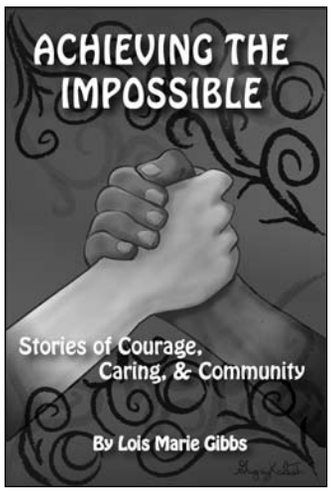
BY DAVE BECKWITH, THE NEEDMOR FUND

Achieving the Impossible: Stories of Courage, Caring, and Community

by Lois Marie Gibbs

Center for Health, Environment, and Justice, 2009.

145 pages



Achieving the Impossible is a collection of stories from activists, scientists, and leaders in the grassroots environmental movement. It reads easily, with short stories of from two to five pages. The voices vary, from names we know, such as Ralph Nader's and Lois Gibbs', to those of newer authors, including local activists and attorneys, scientists and truck drivers, housewives and hunters.

Many begin something like this: "I began my lifelong journey by going door-to-door talking to my neighbors to find out if any of their children were suffering from severe illnesses like my children" (Lois Gibbs); "I met Dionne [a high school dropout] when I was doing some work at a church in the North Side of Pittsburgh" (Dianna Wentz); "As a frightened mother of three young sons living adjacent to a Superfund site, I joined an eco-crusade that would change my life" (Susan Varlamoff).

They include tales of great humor in the face of actual or potential tragedy. My favorite is set at a public hearing where the people of Sulfur, LA were prepared to fill a fish tank with well water that stank and was cloudy with mysterious stuff. The city officials objected (falling right into their cleverly baited trap). "Stop that, you can't kill those fish," they demanded. "Aren't you environmentalists that care about fish?" The hearing went wild, with citizens chanting "Kill the fish, kill the fish!" The story was covered widely, blowing officials' pseudo-scientific excuses out of the water, as it were. The testing the activists wanted began the next day.

There are plenty of other charming stories: about citizens dressed as the Simpsons, following New York Governor Mario Cuomo around and serving fake three-eyed fish to passersby in an effort to fight nuclear waste-disposal plans; about neighbors who—having looked up the types of mutations contaminants found in their soil might cause—held a "Mutant Pageant" with contestants dressed up as a one-eyed smiley face or a cow with her udder on her back. A lot of fun is had, and powerful points are made.

Other moments in these stories made me stop and say, "Wait a minute, what?" These include a variety of outrages: breast cancer rates among women in one community at 67 percent; a school built on a hazardous-disposal site where staff and children were sick all the time with rashes and respiratory illnesses; poisons left unattended in open barrels marked "Non-hazardous materials"; kids who had grown up going to a certain school turning up as infertile or with genetic disorders.

All these stories, in the end, are about the transformation of pain into action, of individual suffering to community mobilization, of local distress into better public policy.

This little gem of a book tells stories of courageous, persistent action by regular people in spite of improbable odds and terrible obstacles. They don't always win, but they're in it to win it. ■

Achieving the Impossible can be ordered at CHEJ's webstore, http://shop.chej.org

* Full disclosure: Reviewer Dave Beckwith serves on the board of CHEJ.

Fisheries, continued from page 8

Among other things, grantmakers can fund pilot programs to set up and maintain medium-sized commercial systems in interested communities, and/or demonstration projects featuring tours and training opportunities. Research is also needed into alternate natural protein sources to feed RAS-raised fish, such as worms and algae; methods for reusing waste products; alternate energy sources to power RAS operations; and additional fish species that can be raised using RAS.

The future of aquaculture will be charted in the next few years. We must not repeat the mistakes made by industrial agriculture ("factory farming") that have led to environmental degradation, species loss, and human health risks. ■

Consumer Demand, continued from page 19

The business community has the scale, drive, innovation, and resources (both people and capital) to make a significant environmental impact. As a business consultant, I hear companies say that they are willing to make more investments in green products and services, but that their customers aren't asking for it. Therefore, increasing consumer awareness, and thereby demand, can significantly influence corporate behavior.

The tipping point of this demand will depend on many factors, including product category, access to information, and demographic variables such as age, income, education, gender, and ethnicity. Environmental grantmakers can help push that tipping point by funding:

- Progressive voices, such as Climate Progress.org and Desmogblog.com, that are standing up to those who deny the reality of the science
- A Climate Media Center, a "war room" tasked with building a values majority for the environment by undermining the Deniers and reframing environmental threats in a way that connects with Americans' daily lives. The Media Center would aggressively provide information and resources to media, corporations, and NGOs to counter the $208 million in advertising that legacy carbon interests spent in the first half of 2008, according to an estimate by ecoAmerica's American Climate Values Survey.
- Consumer-oriented websites that promote individual actions by consumers and by citizen activists. We must inspire people by demonstrating that individual actions do matter.

The more consumers insist on better environmental and social performance from the brands they use, the more companies (and governments) will be forced to respond. The environmental grantmaking community can play an important role in funding the types of communications that awaken consumers to act before it is too late. ■

Greening IQs, continued from page 25

environmental, and social-justice marketing campaigns to an entirely new level. The power of market campaigns to change markets for foods, forest products, consumer products, and manufacturing processes has been demonstrated repeatedly over the past decade. But nothing like the integration of metrics and openness that Goleman proposes has been achieved to date. Part of the power of his book lies in his ability to make the successful evolution of these tools, and their intended impact, seem almost inevitable. But in the current climate, even the inevitable could benefit from some highly strategic exploration and foundation support.

Ecological Intelligence is not only a great book. It is a great proposal. Grantmakers concerned with health, environment, and justice should think together about how we can act on his powerful vision. Goleman has demonstrated that radical transparency, product life-cycle assessments, and information technologies can fundamentally transform our power as value-driven consumers in the global marketplace. Let's make it so. ■

COMING THIS FALL! EGA'S NEW PUBLICATIONS

PUBLICATIONS

Environmental Grantmakers Association 2008 Annual Report: A Tapestry
EGA's first annual report provides a clear and concise synopsis of our membership composition, programs and services, publications, events, financials, and members' contributions to the community. It will be released at the 2009 Fall Retreat.

Tracking the Field Vol. 2: A Thumbnail Sketch
This 2007 update of EGA's 2005 tracking report provides a more in-depth exploration of US environmental philanthropic giving. EGA examined nearly 10,000 grants made by its members and partnered with the Foundation Center to analyze data from non-member foundations, providing a larger context for understanding environmental grantmaking. Readers will gain insight into the issues, regions, and some of the groups funded by EGA members and non-members. "Tracking the Field Vol. 2" will be unveiled at the 2009 Fall Retreat.

Green Beyond Grants 3: Cutting Travel
The latest edition of the "Green Beyond Grants" series provides specific steps and resources to help foundations reduce their travel-related carbon emissions. Among other topics, readers will learn about new technologies that offer possible alternatives to travel, including videoconferencing, webinars and podcasts.

Climate 101: Funding Strategies in Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
This white paper is a follow-up to a regional meeting at the Council on Foundations Conference held in May 2009 in Atlanta. It provides readers with a broad understanding of climate change; offers the presenters' perspectives on mitigation and adaptation strategies; and discusses investment opportunities for environmental funders interested in supporting climate-change-related initiatives.

Funding Trends in Environmental Education
A research paper exploring the present status of environmental education in the United States, this publication identifies the trend away from support for traditional environmental education (school-based curricula and outdoors programs) and toward funding youth organizing as a means to engage school-aged youth in the environmental movement.

Environmental Giving for Indigenous Issues
Written in partnership with International Funders for Indigenous People (IFIP), this EGA research paper helps environmental grantmakers better understand the history of giving to indigenous communities and concerns.

All publications are free of charge. To order, email publications@ega.org, with the report title in the subject line.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS IN YOUR REGION:

Regional Meet-and-Greets
During Fall 2009 and early 2010, EGA's new Executive Director, Rachel Leon, will be traveling around the country to hear from and get to know members. She will also be seeking input on the organization's proposed strategic plan.

2010 State of the States Briefing | February 23 & 24, 2010 | Omni Parker Hotel | Boston, MA
At this biennial meeting, grantmakers will come together to focus on environmental opportunities and challenges at the state and regional level and discuss how philanthropy can rise to the occasion. While much attention is being paid to federal issues, it is the states, for the most part, that must implement federal policies, innovate on issues, prioritize and disburse economic stimulus monies, and grapple with budget deficits. Funders will have an opportunity to learn, share, and collaborate on the best ways to allocate grants and develop strategies to address competing demands.

2010 Retreat | October 6–9, 2010 | Asimolar, California

For more information, email events@ega.org with the name of the event in the subject line.

EGA Journal **is published twice a year as a service to our members. The views expressed are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of EGA.**

We welcome your contributions and feedback on articles. (Deadline for the Spring 2010 issue to be announced.) Send your materials by e-mail to: editor@ega.org

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CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS!

EGA Journal wants you to join our conversation! Pick the level of participation that suits your interests and schedule. We are seeking:

Letters to the editor: Send them to editor@ega.org; please limit to 250 words.

Article submissions: Proposals for the Spring 2010 issue will be due this winter. Check the EGA website and listserv for the Call for Submissions.

Book reviewers to write short reviews of books, reports, and other worthy reading for *EGA Journal*'s "Words for Thought" department.

Editorial Committee members to help plan issue contents, identify writers, and contribute articles. Previous experience in publishing or communications highly desirable.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Rachel Leon at rleon@ega.org (for committee work) or editor@ega.org (for reviews and written submissions).

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