

Bookshelf

Corporate Philanthropy

Published by the Council on Foundations, 1982, Washington, D.C., 160 pp.

REVIEWED BY CHRISTINE LEE*

Recent social and political developments in the United States resulted in the government of that country reducing its financial support to the arts, community and health care services and to education. At the same time, President Reagan issued a challenge to the private sector to bridge the gap by means of increased corporate philanthropy.

This publication addresses the need of corporate grantmakers to evaluate their philanthropic policies and programs in order to achieve more effective corporate giving. There is enormous diversity in the manner and degree to which companies provide support to their communities. The range of ideas and approaches provides ample material for this book. Unfortunately, the articles are brief and generally provide only a superficial treatment of the subjects.

The publication begins with a collection of major policy analysis papers by leaders in the field of philanthropy and by chief executive officers. A variety of views is presented; most echo the theme that businesslike standards and practices must also be applied to philanthropic endeavours.

The second section deals with the management and organization of a program of corporate philanthropy. In the third section, there is an examination of recent issues and some of the trends developing in response to these issues. The fourth section focuses on the future of corporate philanthropy in the United States. There is an attempt to predict patterns of giving and the changing, expanding role of those with responsibility for corporate donations. The fifth section provides the reader with background and resource material in the field of philanthropy. This information would be particularly valuable to someone who is a novice in this field or to a company undertaking a major review and restructuring of its program.

Although this publication is primarily written for the business leader and corporate philanthropist in the United States, it is also of value to the fundraiser and executive from the non-profit sector. The articles dealing with tax considerations, changing government policies and budgets and the list of sources of information and resources are specifically directed to the American reader, but with those exceptions most of the material is equally applicable to corporate philanthropy in Canada.

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Voluntary Agencies in the Welfare State

by Ralph M. Kramer

Published by University of California Press, 1981, Berkeley, California, 334 pages

REVIEWED BY BRENDA MCQUAID*

The author brings 25 years of experience as a social worker, executive, planner and board member of voluntary agencies to what is probably the first cross-national, empirical study of its kind. His academic background includes an appointment as Professor of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley and a current appointment as Visiting Fellow in Yale University's Program on Non-Profit Organizations.

The book provides a comparative analysis of 75 organizations serving the physically and mentally handicapped in four countries – Israel, The Netherlands, Great Britain and the United States. This analysis is divided into three parts: the historical and socio-political environment of voluntary agencies in the four countries; a study of how organizations are structured, governed and financially supported and how government funds are used in each country; and the role of voluntary organizations in each society and in relation to each government.

In Part One the author shows how the ideology of each country has profoundly affected government/voluntary relationships. In Part Two he outlines and discusses his theory that size—of budget, staff, clientele—provides the principal distinction between government and voluntary social service organizations. Although perceptions of the role of volunteer boards vary considerably among the countries studied some surprising similarities in the membership and behaviour of such boards in the various countries are revealed. In Part Three the author attempts to answer the questions raised by governments' increasing support of voluntary agencies and concludes that it is not government but the increasing professionalism of agency staff that most threatens the traditional role of the volunteer.

The book concludes with the author's perception of the "crisis of the welfare state" and a discussion of various alternatives for the future of voluntary organizations in it. The entire volume will be of interest to anyone in government or the voluntary organizations who is responsible for public policy or the direction and day-to-day activities of social service agencies.

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Managing Nonprofit Organizations

Edited by Diane Borst and Patrick J. Montana

Published by AMACOM & Prentice-Hall, New York, 1977, 326 pages

REVIEWED BY VICTOR MURRAY*

This book was first published in 1977. From the perspective of the last five years of development in the area of management theory and research, it seems more than a little out of date. The volume is a collection of some 30 papers by a variety of American authors including members of the faculty from various business schools, practising managers in non-profit organizations and consultants, politicians and freelance journalists.

The articles are grouped under five headings: a general introduction describing the unique aspects of managing non-profit organizations; a section on how to engage in systematic long-range planning; a section on management by objectives; one on "project management and participatory management"; and a final section of articles addressing special problems in particular types of non-profit organizations such as art museums, fund-raising agencies, universities, the courts, the armed forces, even the U.S. presidency.

The editors have performed a useful service at the front of each section by providing a chart listing all articles in the section and checking off which types of non-profit organizations (government, education, health, religious and charitable and "associations and others") are likely to derive benefit from each article. There is also a decent index and many articles contain useful bibliographic references.

To say that the book is "very 70's" is to point out that it was in this period that the idea of effective management as an ultra-rationalistic process reached its apogee. "Systems theory", "strategic planning" and "management by objectives" were the latest words. If one could just adequately analyze one's environment, develop plans which would reflect the threats, opportunities and priorities which solid empirical research would reveal and design a structure and motivational system to both reflect that external reality and create an internal dynamic to implement the rational plans, success would be guaranteed. These ideas came directly from research on private corporations done primarily in the late 60's and felt to be easily transferable, with a little simple adaptation, into the not-for-profit sector.

And the point is that to a certain extent the writers in this volume are right. Insofar as you are part of a voluntary organization which seems disorganized, unclear about what it wants to do, lurching crazily from one crisis to the next with people

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getting increasingly frustrated at such a chaotic state of affairs—then you may well find a number of the articles in this book quite useful. Most are written in a very uncomplicated, practical style with uplifting little successful case histories to add verisimilitude.

Sad to say, however, systems theory, planning and management by objectives have shown themselves to be wanting, especially in the world of government and voluntary organizations. Everything must still be done in the name of rationality to be sure, but to believe that a super-rational approach to management will make one a great manager is to believe what is just not true. Indeed, management research so far in the 80's has most often been devoted to describing and theorizing about such subjects as: organizational politics, feuds and rivalries, the power struggles behind decisions, the virtual impossibility of “proving” the validity of any given point of view on major policy issues and therefore the inevitability of conflict and the relative unimportance of the “real”, concrete environment as opposed to the subjective interpretation of reality.

The image of the successful manager that is now emerging is that of someone with an intuitive appreciation of the nuances in a situation, an ability to diagnose and understand power structures, a knack for painting word pictures which capture a vision which engages people's imaginations, a consummate politician who knows how to manipulate issues and to implement programs and one with skill in negotiating in bargaining sessions with staff, board members, funding agencies, clients and suppliers. In general, we see a totally different person from the model described over and over again in *Managing Non-Profit Organizations*.

Nowhere in this book do we see *any* extensive discussion of how to handle such tricky problems as lazy or interfering boards of directors, a hostile and miserly external environment, the squabbling of various unions and inter-professional rivalries, the special problems of recruiting and motivating volunteers, the dilemma of lovely new controls systems or the difficulties arising when targets and quantified objectives turn from means for achieving ends into ends in and of themselves, or any number of other real-life management problems of the 80's.

In sum: get this book if your organization is a 60's style disorganized mess; it may help bring you into the rationalistic super-organized 70's. But you'll have to look elsewhere for help with the equally important problems of the political and non-rational aspects of management.