BOOK REVIEW: TAPPING PHILANTHROPY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Reviewed by

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INTRODUCTION

Venture philanthropy is a type of institutional gift giving. The benefactors invest in causes that they support while maintaining a direct connection to the programs and leveraging additional support from other donors. Other than the known big established philanthropists, there are growing smaller, family managed private foundations and individuals who are giving funds or planning to give funds to courses they believe in.
The private philanthropists expect high standards of project drive and accountability and they always want to influence how their money is spent. Programs that wish to benefit from these private philanthropists must, therefore, understand these expectations. This book review on Tapping Philanthropy for Development is written based on a story of such a program and shares the lessons leant.

The program was initiated in Iowa State University (ISU) by two established donors: Gerald A and Karen A Kolschowsky. The donors pushed the University to get involved in a grassroots anti-poverty program in a developing country. This forced ISU to develop a program with a clear idea of what they would engage in, which was based on Centre for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL) idea. ISU settled to have the program in Uganda, Kamuli district area and identified two partners to work with: Volunteer Efforts for Development and Makerere University.

Based on the analysis of the CSRL story, nine steps were identified. For each step, a summary of the challenges that a program like this is likely to encounter was provided. Then followed the CSRL experience to deal with the challenge and concluding with lessons leant from the CSRL experience.

This book review, at least, will hopefully stimulate a new thinking on the part of leaders of philanthropic organizations and especially those intending to link with US and international Universities.

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES
Opportunities do not just come as the donors need courtship to develop trust in your ventures. The donors need time to ascertain if the interests are the same or not and to harmonize the interests if there is any difference. This also gives time for the fund raising members to identify potential donors. Philanthropic institutions that work for the interest of the common good, need to ascertain that the donation will be directed to the right activity and the funds are accounted for. The fund-raising officer is needed in place to ensure the funds are directed to the right activity and accounted for accurately. The office is also required to identify potential donors based on the history of the institutions and based on the laws of a particular country.

The Kolschowskys who were the principle donor, floated the idea to Iowa State University (ISU), giving the institution an idea which was directed to College of Agriculture and Live Sciences (CALS). This gave an opportunity for the management to look to it to develop a proposal. The management team consisted of diverse professionals from six different campus units which included College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Business, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Human Sciences, the Greenlee School of Journalism, and the ISU Foundation. This made the team complex and more effective.
The team started developing the proposal without knowing whether or not they would get funding. The first proposal developed by the team was not clear with no location for project and no clear vision. This made the Kolschowskys reject it but gave them a gift of 1 million USD to enable them sit for one year to come up with a more defined proposal. This also enabled sharing of the idea with others within and outside the organization
Once the Kolschowskys gave the first gift, the relationship was taken to the next level, to a bond of trust and accountability. Care was taken though to prevent bombarding the donors with inexhaustible flow of new requests for more funds. Constant communication should be made with the donor as the proposal is developed to enable synchronization of the ideas. To respond to the donor's inputs, the management team visited Malawi, Kenya, and Uganda to enable identify the developing County in which to implement the idea to. This led to Uganda being picked as the appropriate county.

Once this was established, the Kolschowskys gave the initial capital of $ 1 million to initiate the Center for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL). They also began to put parameters around the use of their gift which included commitment to demonstrate impact by using standard metric for evaluation. Based on this first gift, the CSRL programs were started in CALS.

To initiate the CSRL, stake holders met in Uganda and included the delegation from ISU, the Kolschowskys, Makerere University (MAK), and Volunteer Effects for Development Concerns (VEDCO). This enabled signing of collaborative agreement with both partners. The Kolschowskys expressed uniqueness in their desire to meet regularly with the organization and program leadership for strategic discussions about the directions and

accomplishments of the project. This necessitated the formation of executive committee which met at least twice annually with the Kolschowskys

Once the CSRL secured funding from the Kolschoswskys, they asked for permission to enable them seek funding from other donors; some were granted while some were denied, and some were from private donors while others were through competitive grants.

COURTING PROSPECTIVE PARTNERS

A good partnership does not come easy. It is reached through ample homework, diligent networking and consistent communication. This provides an opportunity to learn each other's motives, interests, experience and capabilities. Most privately supported programs are likely to encounter some challenges when identifying partners. The four main challenges identified include:

1. Getting organized to start the search

To get started, gathering colleagues together to explore a potential development program should happen as fast as possible. To achieve this, key challenges that have to be overcome include: determining who should be involved in the initial management team; building a strong base of high-level institutional support for the management team and the program development processes that it is attempting to spearhead; leveraging initial institutional support for the start-up costs such as office space, equipment, and program-related travels.

2. Gathering and processing planning information

Institution with personal contacts of partners are better placed since partnerships are all about trust. To generate new partners, the issues to be considered include: identifying an initial list of qualities that the management team would like to see in new partners; getting as much information as possible about the potential partners and; conducting follow-up visits to obtain a more in-depth appreciation of the strengths, capabilities, and core values that the partner would likely bring to the new partnership. A major way of identifying partners is to organize a think tank composed of external members. This will help the management team identify partners who may have worked with the external think tanks and can be referred.

3. Making the shift from potential to actual partners

Once a list of potential partners has been developed with their potentials, the next crucial stage is to narrow down to partners that will be engaged. This will be based on criteria that will be developed to enable identify the most suitable partner. Once the final decision has been made, but before activities start, communication has to be made to all the partners that were considered. Iowa State University was able to pick two partners in Uganda that they considered to have the capability to help them realize sustainable livelihood in Kamuli. The partners were Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns and Makerere University. Once the partners had been identified, partnership agreement was signed between the partners to formalize the partnership.

4. Keeping the partnership

The only way to keep the partnership alive is through communication. Though technology has made communication easy, face to face communication remains the most effective means to maintain communication. This was ensured through a Project manager who was based in Uganda to effect the communication and travelled from time to time to USA. Also, the donors traveled to Uganda to meet the partners and see the progress of the project activities.

GETTING STARTED

It is always a challenge determining how to run a program and who to put at the helm. This makes the first program manager identification and hiring the most difficult. In addition, establishing the first office, defining the roles of the program manager and institutionalizing the program's manager position were also a challenge.

Identify the program manager

The management team should draft the position description and discus it. The partnership usually involves many partners and therefore the ability of the program manager to listen and learn from other partners will help build true partnership. To enable a smooth working relationship, the program manager should command the needed respect. This position was filled by a Kenyan, Dr. Dorothy Masinde, who was considered an outsider yet a friend, who brought good neutrality for the development of the project. Masinde had the much needed experience to enable her work in the position and gained the trust and confidence of the project partners.

Establishing the first program office

It is usually important to have an office where the program manager works from. This can be decided before the manager is hired or in consultation with the hired project manager. For the CSRL, the location of the office was a challenge but it was decided to have it within Uganda, first in its headquarters, Kampala, but later in Kamuli to enable close links with the project activities. At first the offices were housed by VEDCO but later the project manager decided to have the offices stand alone. Operating the CSRL office became challenging since CSRL was not registered; this led to money for office operation being wired directly to the project manager's account, which was an informal way of doing this but the most viable option at the time.

Defining the role of project manager

The roles to be played by the manager should be set and agreed on by all partners before the manager assumes office, to enable easy communication. For the CSRL, the roles of the project manager were not communicated, which made it a little difficult at the start for the project manager to communicate with other partners as they did not have clear policy on this. This made the manager to look more of a supervisor to the partners especially VEDCO, which was the partner responsible for field activities. This was ironed out as the project progressed through discussions between the project manager and the partners.

Once the office was established, the project manager embarked on working to develop new networks to enable identify resources through contacting institutions in Uganda which could benefit the CSRL. These included Makerere University, National Agricultural Research Organization, National Agricultural Advisory Services. These were important in bringing technical support to the initiative. Through this networking, new opportunities for improvement arose but with other challenges such as finance to fund the additional activities that were not budgeted initially.

Institutionalizing the program manager's position within the partnership
The CSRL had no blueprint to enable institutionalize the program manager's position; this brought flexibility within the partners. The program manager should develop documented procedures and policies that impact the program, and ways to manage them for the benefit of all. This can take time to enable agreement on them by all partners. The ISU had a challenge institutionalizing the position and hence changed the contract for the program manager to private contractor to enable easy human resource operation.

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH ACCOUNTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The partnership involved was complex since it involved links across cultural boundaries and vastly different types of institutions. Some of the most frequently encountered challenges include: building partnership capital; managing people and money; shepherding joint planning and reporting.

Building partnership capital
This enables the partners learn each other, their vision and shared values. Learning each other in a partnership is important and can be achieved through joint planning. Each partner usually brings different competencies, goal, and priorities which are of concern to the partnership. For the CSRL, visits between the Ugandan partners and ISU played an excellent role in fostering personal relationships and hence protected the partnership. The visits also included middle-management, which acted as encouragement to them. The field visits enabled better understanding of the Kamuli station and hence some activities which were not initially on the program were added as they were deemed appropriate.

Managing people and money
ISU has well established procedures for accounting and did not have enough flexibility to accommodate other partners' accounting procedures. As such there were challenges with partners' accounting. Since ISU was carrying their activities through VEDCO, money had to be channeled through them. Accounting time, receipts and account operation were among the challenges ISU had with other partners. This at times necessitated delay in release of funds by ISU to enable VEDCO finish accounting. The donor understood this challenge with developing countries and encouraged them to work it out over time.

To ensure risks are taken care of, ISU ensured that all vehicles under them had comprehensive insurance cover and that only drivers with driving or riding permits were allowed to drive or ride. They also ensured equitable enumeration of the employees

including those who were volunteering. To achieve better results, trainings were organized for the trainers and highly qualified personnel hired. This was also achieved through competitive enumeration.

Shepherding joint planning and reporting
The contracts between the partners should be focused on deliverables, with clear indicators to enable monitoring and evaluation. The CSRL have internal tracking done by field M&E staff and included indicating the activities in the field. External evaluation focused on the impact of the activities and was done by MAK consultants and ISU faculty member. The two reports were not linked and hence could not all be used for feature planning hence, the field E&M staff were trained on a better tool: tracking tables.

STARTING WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE

International agencies usually fund projects with activities already laid out in the project document. This leaves little room if any for adjustment. For the CSRL, flexibility was allowed to enable the project to start with activities that better suited the position the people of Kamuli were.

Program start up
A program should be developed that will ensure local ownership as opposed to the locals seeing the project as imposed on them. When developing the program, the focus should not be the technologies but the people. This, therefore, necessitates proper thought on how to enter the community. Centre for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL) entered through farm groups since they wanted to improve livelihoods through farming as one of the major activities. To identify the needs of the people, a participatory rural appraisals (PRA) were conducted with the group leaders. Also, Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis was done by the CSRL to determine which activities to start with and what to improve in them. The activities involved incorporating indigenous knowledge and technology and how to improve on them. This will accelerate adaption as seen by CSRL when they improved banana, a crop which was grown by the locals but pest was nearly facing it out. Training community-based educators from the start also enabled the locals to own the project and will enable exiting easy and still the projects imitated sustained. Centre for Sustainable Rural Livelihood (CSRL) trained rural development extortionist and community nutrition and health workers. To avoid over dependency of the locals on the donors, CSRL initiated shared cost, taking care to make the initiated projects self-sustaining for the locals and affordable.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation:
Once a key action plan had been developed, focused, practical and tangible targets were made through PRA. Through the PRA, members agreed on flexible methodology, and capacity was built to enable use of both staff and community leaders. This gives the community members' confidence in articulating their needs.

Targeting household vulnerability
This is central to food security and livelihood system research and development. These were households that did not have access to basic resources they needed to participate in

the mainstream food and income security mechanism programs by CSRL. This was because of either their age, gender, health, disability, or ethnicity. In selecting the vulnerable households, a simple consistent methodology was used.

Capacity strengthening
For sustainability of the new technologies introduced, the new technological skills must be taught to the locals. Some of the capacity building include: technical and human development; having local level trainers and training institutions; technology and service access capacity; technology and knowledge transfer capacity; market access capacity; and capacity to organize.

Program exit strategy
It is important to start a project with exit strategy in mind to ensure that once you as a donor exits the scene or redirects the resources, the programs established will be sustainable by the locals. This was achieved by CSRL through: encouraging the local communities to develop and monitor action plan; developed a network of local trainers; developed simple, user-friendly training modules; and building the capacity of producer groups.

LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN TO EMERGING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Due to the imperfect nature of humans, any project design will overlook possible constraints or new opportunities. Fixed funded programs will most likely not be able to respond to such emerging issues. But for CSRL, which had a flexible funding from the private sponsors, they were able to respond to new challenges and opportunities. This provided the opportunity for strengthening of the program. Challenges faced in adjusting to the new emerging opportunities and constrains which are common in most programs includes: Identifying new constraints and opportunities; pilot testing initiatives to address the new opportunities; scaling up the new initiatives with additional funding; integrating the new enhanced initiative with other program components.

Identify new constrains and opportunities
There are program activities that could be part of the plan but when getting to the field, their implementation becomes difficult. In such cases the program should find innovative means to deal with it. The CSRL experience was similar when they could not get qualified staff from the partner who was providing human capital. For this, the program could not start on nutrition implementation. This made the program realize that this must be attended to as most children were malnourished, hence leading to poor health of these children.

To respond to this challenge, a pilot activity was initiated with ten children. Protein enhanced porridge based on locally available ingredients was prepared. A number of nutrition and health workers trained to help promote this formulation. This resulted in great success. Based on this success, a reason was given to look for funding to enable enlarge the program. This was started by students who visited the Kamuli and realized the need to help the community. The program was then scaled up to include more children.

Scaling up the new initiatives with additional funding
The impressive results and reporting on the nutritional activities first resulted in some small grants which supported school lunch programs. With good results of these small grants, private donors expressed interest in funding more activities on nutrition activities.

Integrating the enhanced initiative with other programs components
Integrating new programs on already existing programs has several challenges which include:

1. **Financial systems:** new funding to support new programs, the funds need to be channeled to separate accounts to ensure easy accounting of donors' money.

2. **Senior staff recruitment and retention:** with new programs, senior staff has to be hired to work to see to its success. This could be challenging due to lack of enough funds since it was initially not part of the program. Getting qualified staff within a short time could also be a big challenge.

3. **Monitoring and evaluation:** monitoring and evaluation tools are usually developed at the beginning of the project to ensure consistency. Integrating new M&E tools mid-way is usually a challenge, making it difficult to tract the success of the new program within the project.

LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN TO NEW BENEFICIARIES
New needs are likely to emerge as the project continues. This will most likely be accompanied by changing its priorities and goals. The main focus of CSRL was Kamuli families through farming. To achieve this, the CSRL team realized students in schools would enable a wide reach of their programs. This led to partnering with the local schools. To impact this, a service learning program was established which provided an opportunity for the students from MAK and ISU to participate in the programs as they came in to educate students, teachers and parents. The program was given support by the donors who were at the time looking for the next big idea to include in the project. When the CSRL finally gave the idea of student participation, it was all welcomed.

To include the students, an initial needs assessment was done to determine the start-up resources needed, what organization consideration would strengthen the project impact and the potential constraints which may be faced during the execution of the plan.

To be able to bring in students to participate, ISU had to develop a curriculum that would support the students in the program and how the students would be funded. For MAK university students, the students were required to complete an internship and so participating in the Kamuli program satisfied this requirement, making it easy for their students. But for ISU, this was not in their curriculum and so the efforts had to be made to incorporate it in the program. This had to include training and orientation of what to expect and what the program was about. For the first set of students, accommodation was a challenge as they were housed in a place without electricity, running water and internet. This was, however, improved later.

Monitoring and evaluating the service learning program was developed by the ISU Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. The M &E for the service learning was majorly academic in nature and was not integrated into CSRL.

Through the service leaning program, the lunch program was improved and shifted from being fully funded by CSRL to cost sharing between the parents, school gardens and CSRL. The school garden also improved the diversity of the school lunch program indicating the potential it can have on the nutrition benefits to the students.
The service learning also impacted on the students' motivation to further their learning based on the challenges they observed during the field activities at Kamuli.

TRACKING THE PROGRESS AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Success is needed in any program started. This success can best be established through tracking of the program activities. In tracking, some of the fundamental questions that must be asked and be answered include: which elements of the project are working and which ones are not working; which elements should be expanded and strengthened and which ones not to.

Tracking system will include: monitoring and plan development which is flexible to enable scale up or down as new partners, activities or interventions emerge; defining the baseline information needed to measure future program impact; objective measurement and assessment of the program outputs based on five main aspects and interventions which include programs effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability; reporting the results may sometimes be different since different audiences may require specific information about the program; and setting up and maintaining program documents to ensure future reference.

The CSRL experience in developing the M&E plan involved baseline participatory rural appraisal. The data collected included information about the local community access to agriculture, nutrition and health services. Centre for Sustainable Rural Livelihood M&E was done through three broad activities which included: field activity monitoring which was reported on a monthly basis; participatory monitoring and evaluation system which focused on organization of a series of stakeholders meeting; and external evaluation and quantitative surveys. A list of indicators was developed for each program component and used to track the execution of the activities.

Through monitoring and evaluation, the CSRL project was able to inform decisions to better improve CSRL which included: paying the volunteers a monthly salary; improving livestock service provision; including field days to enable learning of all participants; focus the agricultural activities to few manageable ones.

Reporting some CSRL activities was difficult. Such activities included training, which clearly was effective, but to say to what extent which families could graduate from such teachings was difficult.

The reporting was also majorly individual case study to donors, which though was appropriate for the donors did not answer all the questions as to whether there has been improvement from the previous year, or one community is better than another on achievement of the project objectives.

CAPITALIZING ON IMPACTS AND CSRL'S MULTIPLIER EFFECTS

Partnership works especially when the partners see potential benefit in it. The partners/ institution staff who get involved will be able to get exposed to new networks, knowledge and resources. There will emerge opportunities that were never anticipated to come to members.

For institution to participate in a partnership and be able to participate fully and take advantage of the unexpected opportunities, a few challenges/strategies will have to be put in place which include: each institution to conduct a honest baseline analysis to establish the strengths and weaknesses to enable development of a plan to improve on the weaknesses; develop a strong solid flexible plan to build the capacities that the institution needs to execute the program as it evolves; develop a plan to enable sustain the institutional capacities already developed. Once the funding ends, use partners' capacity to ensure multiplier effects benefits to develop the institution further.

In a partnership with funding, the institution partners are likely to be affected in four areas as seen in CSRL which included: human resource development to supply the technical skill required; institution service delivery to the partnership as agreed; strengthening the management and financial system of the institution to confirm with the requirement of the donor and other partners; increase in financial resources of the institution through the direct funding and the multiplier effects

The partners who came together to ensure the execution of CSRL were mainly three: VEDCO, MAK and ISU. Each of these went through a transformation by being involved in the project.

Volunteer Effects for Development Concerns (VEDCO)
Through partnership with ISU, VEDCO was able to increase its annual financial returns from $400, 000 to $2,000,000. This was through about 8 different donors.

Before the partnership, VEDCO relied mainly on volunteers who did not have enough qualifications to ensure effective working on the project. In addition, VEDCO had not participated in community-based nutrition activities. The accounting system of VEDCO was also poor and not up to date, with delays or receipts missing.

Volunteer Effects for Development Concerns (VEDCO) improved by hiring more qualified staff who were paid competitively to ensure effective execution. VEDCO has also strengthened its services and has enabled it participate in Nutrition programs by the government.

The biggest challenge for VEDCO is to develop an independent resource base to enable it to sustain its programs without relying fully on donors.

Makerere University (MAK)
The institution had its junior staff lacking PhD. The institution also lacked expertise in community nutrition

Through the partnership, some of the junior staff were able to get scholarship and pursue their PhD to completion in USA. Also the partnership enabled MAK get funding from EU to support PhD within its institution. The college was also able to modify their curriculum to enable them to offer this learning model to their students. The college was also able to introduce BSc in human nutrition focusing on community nutrition to enable them offer the service to communities.

Iowa State University (ISU)
The same transformation has been felt by ISU through the partnership. The university staff had only a few of them having hands-on experience in working with African countries. Their students also had not been involved in studies in Africa. The university also had no curriculum for studying abroad. This partnership enabled the university change its curriculum to enable studying abroad as their students were involved in the CSRL program in Uganda.

CONCLUSION

The book review only highlights the lessons leant from practical livelihood project implementing. It is worth reading the whole book to get in-depth knowledge on community project implementation and donor relations.