BOARDSOURCE
Building Effective Nonprofit Boards

Formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards

Perspectives on Nonprofit Board Diversity

Contents

Foreword

More than five years ago, BoardSource conducted the first nationwide study of nonprofit board diversity. The results were published in *Building Board Diversity*, a guide to creating more inclusive boards that has been used by thousands of nonprofit organizations since its publication in 1994. This Board Diversity Project, completed by BoardSource, along with subsequent BoardSource surveys, established baseline data and highlighted the subject of diversity, while at the same time raising a number of questions and pointing out the need for additional study.

In the intervening years, research on the topic of diversity has continued to increase, creating the potential for a richer dialogue and deeper understanding of the many dimensions of diversity, as well as the relationship between inclusiveness in the boardroom and organizational effectiveness. In this publication, we present three studies that focus on aspects of diversity and inclusiveness from a variety of approaches and disciplines:

- Judith L. Miller, a doctoral candidate at the State University of New York at Albany, discusses the significant distinction between diversity and representativeness, with particular emphasis on the importance of choosing board members for their skills and commitment rather than demographic characteristics. Drawing on papers and books from a variety of disciplines and perspectives, she discusses four potential models of representativeness — delegate, trustee, symbolic, and practical — and concludes that meaningful representation cannot be achieved through internal quotas or external mandates.

- Using a case study approach, Kathleen Fletcher, a part-time faculty member at the University of San Francisco, assesses the experience of the Western Region of Planned Parenthood in carrying out a diversity initiative mandated by the national organization. Based on interviews with the executive directors, board officers, and board members of color, Fletcher offers numerous practical suggestions for board diversification.

- Rikki Abzug, a visiting assistant professor at the New School University in New York City, discusses the changing role of women on boards, drawing from a major longitudinal study of boards in six metropolitan areas over a 60-year time period. Surprisingly, she concludes that women have made relatively small advances in the world of nonprofit governance since 1931.

As with all the booklets in this Research in Action Series, our goal has been to present academic research in an accessible, understandable format, with emphasis on practical application. The issue of nonprofit board diversity and inclusiveness is both complex and controversial, with conflicting viewpoints, differences of opinion, and contradictory data. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representative of BoardSource or of the nonprofit sector as a whole. Our hope is that they stimulate dialogue and action for other boards that struggle with issues of diversity and inclusiveness.

Richard L. Moyers, *Vice President, Programs and Services*
February 1999

Managing Board Diversity

The importance of differentiating between diversity and representativeness

BY JUDITH L. MILLER

> *The effectively diversified nonprofit board will be the one whose members effectively represent the organization's constituency. Its members will be chosen for their commitment and ability to further the organization's mission, not solely for their demographic characteristics.*

Managing diversity is one of the most important challenges facing all organizational leaders today. In the nonprofit sector, managers confront the additional task of adequately representing the interests of the constituencies their organizations serve. It is often believed that constituent interests will be adequately represented by mandating demographic diversity requirements for board and staff. These external mandates are most frequently imposed by government and private funding agents. Although the literature on nonprofit governance is growing, few reports have made clear the distinction between diversity and representation. An implicit assumption exists that a diverse board is a more representative board. This simply is not the case. The distinction between demographic diversity and meaningful representation must be insisted upon if either is to be accomplished. Critical examination of the concept of representativeness shows how externally imposed diversity requirements are important but not sufficient to achieve meaningful representation.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY AND THE NONPROFIT BOARD

The topic of board diversity is one of the most critical issues facing nonprofit organizations today. Boards face pressure to diversify their memberships for many reasons. Understanding the complexities embedded in these reasons is important to understanding the push for diversity.

First, the concept of diversity is closely related to community perceptions of a nonprofit organization's egalitarian image and the ideals of fairness. There is an implicit assumption that board composition makes a difference in terms of accountability and accessibility; for an organization to be responsive to a diverse constituency, its board must comprise a diverse membership.

Second, it has been argued that diversity may be related to overall organizational effectiveness in several ways. Among them are the ability to recruit the most talented individuals; the creative problem solving that results when minority group members offer alternatives to standard approaches that come out of a different experience; a higher level of critical analysis as diverse

perspectives and varied approaches are considered; and a reduced emphasis on conformity to norms of the past, which frees the group to think more creatively. Other research has shown that heterogeneity in groups promotes creativity and innovation — that groups whose members have high capabilities and complementary skills and expertise perform better than groups whose members share a homogeneous body of knowledge. Similarly, it has been argued that heterogeneous work teams, as Rosabeth Moss Kanter put it, "create a marketplace of ideas to be brought to bear on a problem." Heterogeneous views give rise to critical analysis, stimulate a thorough examination of assumptions, and generate multiple alternative scenarios useful for decision making.

Third, many nonprofit organizations are under outside pressure to diversify their boards. State and federal governments, funding agents, and service recipients have all articulated the desire to have diverse nonprofit boards so that appropriate representation is established and maintained. While diverse groups may have a broader and richer base of experience from which to approach a problem, simply meeting externally mandated diversity requirements may not be sufficient to achieve meaningful representation.

Achieving meaningful representation on nonprofit boards of directors requires more than an externally mandated diversity policy. It requires a commitment to the benefits of diversity (i.e., creativity, differing perspectives, and innovation) and the pursuit of common interests and values. What is important to remember is that hetero-

> *...boards must look beyond demographic characteristics and examine the unique contribution each potential board member can bring to the organization.*

geneity of opinion can be brought to bear on dimensions of diversity that extend beyond simple demographic characteristics. In recruiting individuals to serve as representatives, boards must look beyond demographic characteristics and examine the unique contribution each potential board member can bring to the organization. Whether the board is looking for an accountant, a senior citizen, or a person with a disability, the emphasis must be on the unique contribution that can be realized when attention is focused on what can be accomplished by a diversity of skills, interests, and perspectives.

Diversity is an abstract concept that cannot be properly captured on surveys and funding applications that require nonprofit organizations to check boxes and count heads. Gender, race/ethnicity, economic status, social class, age, religious affiliation, employment experience, and a host of other demographic characteristics provide an infinite number of dimensions that boards of directors can draw from to aid in the construction of diverse governance structures. While potentially controversial, it may be quite desirable for a nonprofit board to be exclusively homogeneous on one dimension yet diverse on others. Organizations must be free to build diverse boards that best represent constituent interests while also advancing organizational mission and purpose, irrespective of differences in basic demographic characteristics and without deference to externally mandated requirements.

THE REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENT INTERESTS

The goals and objectives of representativeness for nonprofit boards of directors have been neither explicitly stated nor empirically examined. Yet the idea of representativeness embodies the expectation that the representatives will think, feel, and — most important — make decisions in a way that reflects the constituencies they represent. An examination of the underlying assumptions of four normative theories of representation — delegate, trustee, symbolic, and practical — may facilitate a better understanding of how board members might view the representation of constituent interests.

DELEGATE REPRESENTATION

Delegate representation occurs when an appointed agent is granted the authority to act on behalf of a principal. Whatever action the representative takes is considered to be an act of the represented. A. Phillips Griffiths' work focuses exclusively on the functions performed by the representative and argues that the representative's decisions and behavior commit the represented to a course of action. Absent from the notion of delegate representation is a system of checks and balances. Nothing is said about how the represented are consulted, how their interests are presented, or even whether the representative is responsible to those represented.

The theory of delegate representation is neither appropriate nor practical for nonprofit organization governance. Board members are not always elected or appointed to terms of office by those they are expected to represent. Although official appointment to the board of directors may be approved by a majority vote of the organization's membership, board candidates are often nominated by a subcommittee or selected members of the board. The constituency served by the organization is neither consulted nor asked to propose candidates. A second problem with delegate representation is that board members have no legal obligation to act on behalf of the constituency the organization serves. They may have a moral responsibility to conduct the affairs of the organization as public stewards, ensuring that the organization addresses the interests of those it serves; but the board's primary legal responsibility is to provide direction for the organization as a whole and to ensure proper fiscal oversight and supervision.

TRUSTEE REPRESENTATION

Representatives have also been viewed as trustees with an obligation to look after those they represent rather than consult with or obey their wishes. As the term is used here, trustees identify the ways in which the organization has failed to interpret the needs of the constituency and recommend proper action to correct these deficiencies. The problem is that these paternalistic trustees often lack the first-person perspective of the group or viewpoint represented. They are expected to act on behalf of a greater social good, rather than in response to the competing demands of a pluralistic society. Trustees bring valuable information to the governance process so that competing interests are translated into policies drafted and decided on the basis of impartial, technical criteria such as efficiency or effectiveness.

There certainly may be times when trustee representation is appropriate for nonprofit governance, particularly when there is a need for expert knowledge, when the constituencies served are incapable of speaking for themselves, or when the competing demands of a diverse society call

for neutrality in the decision-making process. The Alzheimer's Association, the Humane Society, and Kidspeace National Center for Kids in Crisis serve clientele who, for various reasons, are unable to represent their own interests effectively. Although trustees bring unique technical knowledge or specific professional expertise to represent constituent interests on a nonprofit organization's board, trustee representation is not sufficient to meet the demands of nonprofit governance. Often the constituency served are interested in and capable of discussing the decisions and policies that will affect their lives.

It has been shown that some government aid programs — designed by dominant "expert" groups with the intent to help less advantaged groups — provide an example of a process that, by leaving out a capable constituency, led to the future deterioration of depressed communities, encouraged crime, and increased minority group dependence on public assistance. When

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social policies are not developed in consultation with those who are targeted for assistance, they fail to consider the concerns, needs, and priorities of the individuals and families they are intended to benefit. Such policies have been said to be more frequently designed to "protect" disadvantaged groups than to empower them. Social policies should be geared toward maximizing independence, economic opportunity, and freedom to choose among an array of services. When board members function as trustees, they — like the detached designers of social policy — lack the essential first-person perspective of the constituency they represent.

SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION

When diversity is accomplished simply by adding people with certain demographic or personal characteristics to an organization's board of directors, the representation achieved is symbolic at best. Externally mandated diversity requirements focus on the identity of the representative rather than on the identity of who or what is to be represented. They have the potential to reduce the multidimensionality of experience and demographic variations within seemingly homogeneous groups to one-dimensional social constructions, when in fact modern society is composed of individuals and groups with overlapping memberships. Citizens are neither isolated individuals nor people whose condition in life is determined by the group to which they belong, but rather a bundle of diverse interests and affiliations. Julius Cohen, in his paper presented over 30 years ago at the annual meeting of the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy, stated: "It is as if in sketching the representative, one's eye were glued to a mirror without checking to find out who might be standing in front of it. The mirror image would, of course, be representative of someone. But the question is, of whom?"

Symbolic representatives are merely reflections of the personal and demographic characteristics that the mandating organization would like to see mirrored in nonprofit organizations and governing bodies. Demographic characteristics offer little information about the functions, interests, or behaviors of the representatives; they merely provide superficial information about some of their personal characteristics.

One study by Amitai Etzioni hypothesized that the reasons for an individual's participation in organizations or relationships affect the quality of involvement: Those who act out of "moral commitment will behave differently from those who do it purely out of self-interest." Furthermore, he claimed that committed participants will be more motivated to make greater sacrifices or persist in a course of action despite personal hardships or public opposition than their less committed counterparts. Mandated diversity requirements have the potential to produce representatives who are not committed or participatory.

A related study by researchers Barbara E. Taylor, Richard P. Chait, and Thomas P. Holland examined the relationship between the motivation of college trustees and the effectiveness of their boards. "Effective" boards were densely populated with alumni, relatives of alumni (or former trustees), or individuals who were in some other way intimately connected to the institution. Effective boards were also more likely to have members who were active in alumni affairs and who participated in college activities and special events. According to the study, trustees of effective boards joined because they identified deeply with values and goals intrinsic to the institution. By contrast, 50 percent of the trustees serving on ineffective boards had absolutely no connection to the college before they joined and had agreed to participate because of mild to moderate interest in the institution as an instrument for achieving such extrinsic goals as meeting the needs of the community, the church, or a family member. These findings suggest that a decision to simply increase the number of minority members on a board of directors without considering a candidate's commitment or motivation may actually do more harm than good.

When symbolic representation is achieved through externally imposed diversity mandates and membership in a group has been established, all persons within the group are considered to be equivalent to one another. Any unique qualities they may possess (educational attainment, religious affiliation, or employment experience) are basically lost. These one-dimensional social constructions of diversity are deficient for three major reasons: They ignore the intersection of multiple demographic characteristics; they fail to recognize important variations within seemingly homogeneous groups; and they disregard the many dimensions of experience.

Illustrations of these deficiencies abound. First, the literature on feminism is rich in examples of how socially constructed views of gender marginalize the unique experiences of women and reduce the multiplicity of their demographic characteristics to a single common denominator. One example is that even though the feminist movement was originally expected to unite women against gender-based injustice, it actually divided women along the lines of race, class, and religion. A scathing analysis by bell hooks of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* noted how the specific problems and dilemmas of leisure-class White housewives were not the same concerns facing the majority of American women. By making her own personal plight synonymous with a social condition affecting all American women, Friedan presented a one-dimensional perspective on feminine reality. In doing so, she created a point of departure for those who considered themselves feminists but were unable to see how the major tenets of feminism applied to their own lives. Attention was focused by hooks on the ways in which classism, racism, and sexism interacted to create unique interrelated experiences that defied attempts to isolate simple causal explanations of social reality.

Second, the ways in which important variations within seemingly homogeneous groups are obscured by one-dimensional social constructions of diversity can be found in studies of poverty among Asian Americans and among Hispanic women engaged in industrial home-work. By analyzing a prevalent social problem within a socially prescribed homogeneous group, one study by Sharon Lee was able to identify two distinct but related chains. The analysis suggests that while the route to poverty for Asian Americans is clearly related to immigration and the generational status of Asian families, the effects of poverty also have varied ethnic dimensions because the Asian population is not a single-dimensioned ethnic group but rather a diverse group of various ethnicities. Symbolic representation based on ascribed characteristics would miss the unique perspective that various ethnic groups could bring to a discussion regarding the eradication of poverty among Asian Americans.

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The study by M. Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Anna Garcia of Hispanic women showed how involvement in industrial homework varied based on household composition. Although there were underground garment industries dominated by a female Hispanic workforce in both Miami and Los Angeles, these informal economies were characterized by a considerable degree of variation dependent upon the intersection of culture, norms, and economic factors. The study concludes by arguing that the role played by households and families in the allocation of female Hispanic workers into various segments of the labor market underscores the importance of studying the underground economy as an "uneven and richly integrated spectrum, rather than as a homogeneous phenomenon." This observation again emphasizes the fact that nonprofit boards must recognize the ways in which individuals might reflect homogeneity on one demographic dimension and variability on others.

Third, the multidimensionality of experience can also be found in research that explicitly explores the relationship between multiple demographic characteristics, such as studies that examine the intersection of race and class or of gender and race. With every case, it becomes more apparent that the symbolic representation that is achieved when externally mandated diversity requirements treat complex individual characteristics as single-axis demographic frameworks is insufficient to meet the demands of nonprofit governance. Such a juxtaposition limits the representation of some interests while theoretically erasing others altogether.

PRACTICAL REPRESENTATION

Although it too has its limitations, the fourth normative model, practical representation, may best embody the ideals of representation for nonprofit organizational governance. A historical analysis of the growth of representation shows that those with something at stake in the decisions to be made have a right to participate in the process. These rights date back to early 16th-century England and the formation of a separate House of Parliament where commoners met to present their demands jointly, claiming that they spoke for the people against the King. In the nonprofit sector it is both necessary and desirable to have those served by the organization represented on the board of directors, particularly when the business at hand is of considerable

concern to those receiving services. Constituent opinions, ideas, and judgments are crucial to a board's ability to resolve competing claims for organizational resources and to arrive at a commonly accepted policy, consensus, or cooperative action. Robert L. Woodson's analysis of the success community residents achieved in managing public housing units noted the dramatic changes that might take place when practical representation is applied:

> ...scores of small businesses and hundreds of jobs have been created, crime and vandalism have decreased, teenage pregnancy statistics have been reversed, and fathers and husbands have returned to abandoned families. At the same time administrative costs have been drastically reduced, vacant apartments repaired, and rent collections doubled and tripled. Now operating multi-million dollar budgets, resident managers have turned crime-ridden hell-holes into healthy communities that place a premium on education, family, and self motivation.

Effective representation involves engaged activity. It is not delegated, paternalistic, or symbolic. The substance of the activity is expected to further the interests of those who are represented. The whole idea is to empower the constituency being served by consulting them regarding the social policies that will affect their lives and by creating a safe participatory environment where diverse views are encouraged and appreciated. To incorporate constituent participation in nonprofit organization governance is to take seriously the rights and responsibilities citizens have to influence the policies that will affect their lives.

The mechanism by which citizens are invited to represent their interests and participate in nonprofit governance affects institutional and policy outcomes. The method of integration into the decision-making process cannot obliterate institutional development. Authors have studied how the combined impact of racism and forced integration has destroyed the integrity of Black institutions, affecting Blacks' ability to develop sources of human capital and to direct and control material and institutional resources. Externally mandated diversity requirements as the antecedent to minority participation on a nonprofit board of directors focuses attention on the goals of these mandates rather than on the intent of the goals. The amount and quality of representation occurring in any social arrangement is directly dependent upon the kind of representative structure that is established. Diversity requirements may heighten a board's awareness about the importance of diversity, but checklists are far from what is needed to ensure effective representation. Meaningful representation functions properly only when all members are represented as equals.

CONCLUSION

Because governing boards are important to organizational survival, organizations should pay close attention to the composition and the structure of their boards. Choice of board representatives should be based on a desire to incorporate constituent opinions and ideas. In this way, candidates are invited to participate based on an evaluation of their ability to carry out specified roles and functions in furtherance of the organization's mission, not on narrowly defined demographic characteristics. Boards of directors should be free to look outside the strict confines of gender, race, age, and the like to identify individuals whose dedication and commitment to a greater social good furthers the board's commitment to its core mission, irrespective of differences in basic demographic characteristics.

Community groups and organizations can be a source of access to underrepresented groups on an agency's board. If the goal, for example, is to learn how a specific nonprofit can better serve the senior citizen community, then attracting and recruiting senior citizens to the organization's board might start with a glance through the telephone book to learn of other organizations that serve that constituency. Visiting those other groups, sharing facts and data about the constituency served, presenting information about services provided, and explaining how the nonprofit organization can benefit from their participation are essential first steps.

Effective management means understanding that which must be managed. For nonprofit boards of directors, the objective of managing diversity is to create governance structures in which all members of differing backgrounds can contribute and achieve to their full potential. The goal of representativeness is slightly different. Managing effective representation means that board members act in the interests of those they represent, individual dignity is ensured, and the representatives are held accountable for their actions.

A nonprofit organization's social purpose serves as a common goal uniting all who are affiliated with the organization. Emphasizing those qualities that are shared by the board, rather than accentuating those qualities that create boundaries and divide membership along lines of demographic differences, directs attention to what some refer to as "centers of group ethnicity." Boards should not be expected to accomplish meaningful representation by adhering to mandates that define diversity in terms of narrowly prescribed demographic characteristics. They should be free to construct a meaning that has relevance to their organizations, their constituencies, and their communities. The objectives of diversity and representativeness are not necessarily mutually exclusive, yet their goals are not synonymous. When nonprofit organizations and their boards of directors fail to differentiate between the two, they risk running into some of the problems discussed here.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Cohen, Julius. "Commentary: Representation and the Problem of Identity." In J. R. Pennock and J. W. Chapman (eds.), *Representation*. New York: Atherton Press, 1968.
Cohen's discussion of representation focuses on the identity of the represented rather than on the identity of the principal. In this way, Cohen addresses what he refers to as the "problem of identity" in the representation of interests.

Etzioni, Amitai. *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics.* New York: Free Press, 1988.
Citing relevant literature in psychology, philosophy, and sociology, Etzioni develops a comprehensive explanation of human behavior that departs from the dominant neoclassical economic model. His focus on the moral dimension of decision making sharply contrasts the behaviorist assumptions that underlie economic thought (i.e., that human motivation is based on maximization of self-interest). The author's paradigm stimulated a new way of thinking in the social sciences and in areas of public policy.

Fernandez-Kelly, M. Patricia, and Anna Garcia. "Informalization at the Core: Hispanic Women, Homework, and the Advanced Capitalist State." In Portes, Alehandro, Castells, and Benton, *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries.* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
The authors investigate the mechanisms that have led to the growth of the underground economy in an advanced industrial context. Their study examines two different urban settings, Los Angeles and Miami. They focus on the different experiences of Hispanic women working in the garment industry in both cities. The authors show the ways in which involvement in informal production can have multiple meanings based on the type of incorporation into the labor market.

Griffiths, A. Phillips. "How Can One Person Represent Another?" In H. F. Pitkin (ed.), *Representation*. New York: Atherton Press, 1969.
In this article, the author distinguishes among what he calls the "four senses of representation." According to Griffiths, ascriptive representation is exclusively of persons, descriptive and symbolic representation may be of things, while representation of interests occurs when a person is an ascriptive representative of an abstraction, another person, or a group of persons. Griffiths argues that the substance of representation is the activity of representing.

hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center.* Boston: South End Press, 1984.
As a Black woman living "at the margin," hooks argues that feminist theory has largely been developed by "privileged middle-class white women living at the center." Her critique shows the ways in which the feminism advocated by white middle-class housewives failed to acknowledge or integrate the life experiences of women with differing backgrounds.

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. *The Change Masters.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983.
Based on five years of research on innovation, change, and response to external demands on corporations, Kanter challenges corporate leaders to be innovative. She details the ways in which American business has stifled fresh ideas, and she points out the skills required and strategies needed so that "change masters" can respond effectively to environmental demands.

Middleton, Melissa. "Nonprofit Boards of Directors: Beyond the Governance Function." In W. W. Powell (ed.), *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994.
The author contends that the nonprofit board of directors is part of both the organization and the environment. A board performs a boundary-spanning function in which it regulates exchanges of information and secures necessary resources from the organization's operating environment. The author argues that by understanding the nature of the relationships a board maintains with external constituencies, one might begin to determine the relevant influence of that board.

Taylor, Barbara E., Richard P. Chait, and Thomas P. Holland "Trustee Motivation and Board Effectiveness." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Quarterly,* Vol. 20, No. 2, 1991, pp. 207 – 224. In a study of college boards of trustees, the authors describe the relationship between board effectiveness and the motivating factors that influence individual participation on a board of directors. The authors found that effective boards were made up of individuals whose motivation for joining were institution-specific. That is, members of effective boards had a deep affection for and a connection to the college.

Woodson, Robert L. "Black America's Legacy of Entrepreneurship." *National Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 2, 1988, pp. 204 – 224.
This article shows how an "American Black tradition of self-sufficiency" is at the heart of a successful self-help renaissance in the black community. Woodson presents an historical analysis of the social forces that have shaped Black America. He demonstrates that only when policy makers incorporate the abilities and ingenuities of the "underclass" will social policy be developed that inspires economic independence and self-sufficiency.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judith L. Miller is a doctoral candidate in Public Administration at the State University of New York at Albany. Her areas of research are nonprofit governance, administration, and philanthropy. She has taught as an adjunct faculty member at Marist College and SUNY Albany. She has worked as a development professional in the nonprofit and higher education arenas and as a consultant to nonprofit organizations and boards of directors. Her extensive volunteer experience includes board membership, youth sport and Special Olympics coaching, and various community activities.

Building Diverse Boards:

Lessons from a case study of Planned Parenthood affiliates

BY KATHLEEN FLETCHER

> *Bringing on board members who first and foremost embrace the organization's mission, and who have a clear understanding of what is expected of all board members, is a key step. So is effective orientation and rapid integration into the work of the board. For the effort to work well, the entire board must make a real, deep-down commitment to diversity.*

The issue of board diversity has been of great concern to the nonprofit sector since the early 1980s. Many nonprofit leaders acknowledge that, too often, governing bodies do not reflect the communities or the specific clientele their organizations serve. Traditionally, the boards of organizations such as foundations, hospitals, symphonies, and libraries have been made up predominantly of elite White males. Some historians and researchers feel that this homogeneity in traditional governing boards helped establish and maintain a model for class, ethnic, racial, and sex discrimination throughout society. The current drive to diversify boards seeks to change this model. Organizations recognize the need for diversity in order to make effective decisions, to design and deliver appropriate services to minority clients, and to compete in an era of scarce resources.

Although there seems to be agreement in principle that boards make better decisions if diverse viewpoints and experiences are part of their deliberations, bringing together those diverse viewpoints is more difficult than it sounds. Several factors explain why this is true.

First, new board members are typically recruited from among the friends, acquaintances, and business associates of those already on the board. This system, of course, tends to make boards homogeneous. It often takes great effort for board members to reach beyond their immediate circles and bring people of different backgrounds to the table. Inertia and lack of time for board work combine to discourage organizations from expanding their recruitment horizons. While overt or covert racism may appear to be an underlying reason for the lack of diversity in some organizations, often it is simply tradition and lack of effort that keep boards from changing their demographic profile.

Second, the definition of diversity itself is often misunderstood. Many of the nonprofit leaders, funders, and community activists who demand that their boards pursue diverse membership refer to adding persons of different racial and ethnic backgrounds to predominantly (or entirely) White boards. They often overlook the many other categories of diversity, such as social class, sexual preference, religion, disability, age, or area of expertise. Despite the expansive definition of diversity, most discussions of board diversity seem to revolve around race and ethnicity.

Consequently, the goal of adding people of color to the board is the one with which most mainstream boards are struggling today.

Despite the push toward more heterogeneous boards, there is very little knowledge about how diverse boards really are, although statistics may exist at the local level. One of the only national studies was completed in 1993 by BoardSource as part of its Board Diversity Project. The results of this BoardSource survey of 4,208 nonprofit organizations from its membership database and publications mailing list showed that out of an average of 21 members per board, 16.7 were White (80 percent), 2.1 Black (10 percent), 0.7 Hispanic (3 percent), 0.3 Asian American or Pacific Islander (1 percent), and 0.1 Native American (0.5 percent). In addition, 40 percent were women, 9 percent were age 65 or over, 2 percent were disabled, and 4 percent were under age 21. The definition of diversity most often given by these organizations referred to inclusion or representation of racial or ethnic groups and groups that represent different ages and gender. More than one-third of the survey respondents (36.3 percent) said their board had adopted a policy on cultural diversity.

> *While overt or covert racism may appear to be an underlying reason for the lack of diversity in some organizations, often it is simply tradition and lack of effort that keep boards from changing their demographic profile.*

Meanwhile, some useful materials have been developed to help boards diversify their membership. The work from the BoardSource Board Diversity Project, published in 1994, has many practical suggestions, and other national organizations have developed similar materials for their local affiliates. Most of these materials, however, are not based on empirical research into what really works.

Analysis of a real-world situation in which an organization attempts to diversify its board can provide important lessons that might be applied to others' attempts to do so. A case study of the Western Region affiliates of Planned Parenthood Federation of America focuses on which initiatives worked and which did not as they attempted to develop boards that reflected the demographic composition of the communities they served. In an analysis of their experiences, a number of guidelines emerge that nonprofit organizations setting out to achieve board diversification might be well advised to consider.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR DIVERSITY

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) has demonstrated commitment to achieving diversity for many years. At the 1986 annual meeting of PPFA, the delegates voted to amend the Standards of Affiliation section of the Federation bylaws to include the following standard:

> Each affiliate shall implement an affirmative action program, which ensures that minority representation on its board and staff is reflective of the Civilian Labor Force data for its turf.

Affiliates were charged with bringing the percentage of people of color among their clientele and within their staffs and boards up to the level of the percentages of people of color in the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) statistics in their geographical area.

The Western Region of Planned Parenthood included 29 affiliates in 13 western states, and its regional leadership responded to the standard by forming the Western Region Task Force on Cultural Diversity in 1988. By 1993, the task force had become a standing committee, the Cultural Diversity Committee. The committee was charged with developing a plan each year to assist affiliates in meeting their diversity goals for staff, board, and clients. The committee also assisted the Western Region's nominating committee in identifying and recruiting a diverse pool of candidates for regional and national office. Membership of the committee was selected to include as many different ethnic groups as possible, among them White, Black, Asian American or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic. Members met twice a year, including one meeting during the annual regional conference.

A number of actions supported the goals of the program. Starting in 1990, the Western Region sent out annual statistics informing each affiliate not only of its own progress toward meeting the CLF goals, but of progress made by all other affiliates and by the region as a whole. The regional staff, working with the Cultural Diversity Committee, also sponsored workshops at conferences and developed materials on diversifying boards. In an effort to learn more about the experience of people of color on affiliate boards, the regional office held two focus groups of minority board members who had left the board before their term was up. During 1996, the Western Region staff cooperated fully with the case study presented here, and in 1997, they worked with the funder of the study, the Nonprofit Sector Research Fund of the Aspen Institute, to distribute the results to every PPFA affiliate in the country.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

From 1991 to 1996, the CLF in the Western Region ranged from 65 to 69 percent White and 31 to 35 percent minority. Overall totals for the percentage of people of color on boards and staff and in the client population during this time ranged from a low of 11 percent to a high of 44 percent depending on the category (board, staff, or client).

For the five-year period, the entire Western Region never met the CLF goals for board diversity. Except for a dip in 1995 that resulted in part from mergers between affiliates, however, steady progress was made toward the goals. Beginning in 1993, the percentage of people of color in board officer positions was at least as high as the percentage who were not officers, showing that people of color held their share of leadership roles. Overall staff diversity was closer to the CLF standards than was board diversity, and by 1994 client diversity had met and surpassed the CLF goals. Over the years, however, there was fluctuation in those figures as well.

Records indicated a steady increase in the number of Western Region affiliates that met their diversity goals from 1988 through 1995. Board diversity, however, lagged behind both staff and client diversity in the overall regional statistics. Presumably, it was easier for many affiliates to attract people of color as clients and staff members than as board members. Yet all affiliates made serious efforts, and successes and failures provide important guidelines for other organizations concerned with accomplishing board diversity.

For the purposes of the case study, the Western Region staff selected 15 of the 29 western affiliates of PPFA to participate in interviews conducted over a period from May to August 1996. Included were affiliates in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and Colorado, located in a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas. For each affiliate, phone interviews were conducted with the executive director, a board officer, and a board member who was a person of color.

Some affiliates had been quite successful in meeting their board diversification goals; others had not. Executive directors of the 15 affiliates reported a range of 0 to 50 percent people of color on their 1996–97 boards. Ethnic groups represented included Blacks, Hispanics, Asian or Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and those of mixed race. The total number of board members of color in the entire sample was 108, or approximately 27 percent of the total board population of the 15 affiliates.

LESSONS LEARNED

The executive directors and board leaders interviewed for the study had a great deal to say about both their successes and failures in board diversification. Their comments as to why they valued a diverse board, how they located people of color to volunteer, how they integrated them into the board, and what factors caused turnover are indicative of the challenges inherent in efforts to diversify boards. Equally important are the perceptions of people of color who were then board members in understanding the dynamics created when a board actually achieves more diversity.

DETERMINING THE VALUE OF A DIVERSE BOARD

Although most board leaders interviewed for this study were White, they made a number of positive observations about the value of working with a diverse board. While they felt that achieving diversity was the right thing to do for both ethical and business reasons, they also saw that establishing a diverse board indicates that the organization cares about and is supported by the entire community. The culture of the United States is rapidly changing, and diversifying the board is an opportunity to show leadership in this area. Furthermore, the study showed that diversifying a predominantly White board became a personal growth opportunity for board members and forced them to move out of their "comfort zone" in order to relate to people with whom they might normally have felt constrained.

The study highlighted the fact that diversifying a board consisted of much more than adding some color around the table. Monocultural boards that bring in new groups (whether racial, ethnic, or other categories of diversity) must adapt to the differences if they expect the new members to remain and be productive. They must practice a new level of honesty and allow conflicts to surface. They must be open to the experiences of other people with whom they cannot identify. All of this change adds to the power of the board experience; it's not just about governing the agency, but about learning new things about oneself and others as well.

RECRUITING THE RIGHT MIX

Selecting an effective nominating committee was a common key to success. Almost all of the affiliates included people of color on their nominating committees, and the members of

successful committees had good contacts in a variety of communities. Once an effective nominating committee was in place, affiliates found key strategies that identified and attracted people of color to their boards.

- *Seek people for their interest in the mission.* The board chair of a newly merged affiliate described creating a matrix identifying the types of skills that were needed on the board and refusing to fill vacant positions until people were found who met the profile. The nominating committee worked creatively to uncover resources; they started with referrals from people they knew and then moved to prominent people in the community who were not currently involved with Planned Parenthood. They did both warm- and cold-calling, seeking to find people interested in the affiliate's mission. It took time and hard work, but they succeeded.

- *Explore the committee's network of contacts.* Executive directors and board leaders whose boards were successful in finding members of color generally credited their nominating committees with hard work, diligence, and creativity. Committees used every possible resource — from current board members' contacts in social and political circles, churches, and other nonprofit organizations to groups dominated by or serving primarily people of color. They also considered people with whom members had served on other boards, those who had already volunteered with Planned Parenthood, or people who had expressed strong interest in a relevant issue through a letter to the editor or by calling the Planned Parenthood office.

> *Monocultural boards that bring in new groups (whether racial, ethnic, or other categories of diversity) must adapt to the differences if they expect the new members to remain and be productive.*

- *Target recruitment in the same way you market services.* None of the affiliates reported using a process to recruit people of color that was different from the one they used for Whites. However, it was often more difficult for them to identify people of color than to identify Whites. Consequently, affiliates began to realize the need to cultivate communities and organizations of color over the long term, and not just to suddenly show up on someone's doorstep. They saw the benefit of targeted recruitment focused on various groups to bring in diverse volunteers and board members, a process somewhat similar to marketing their services to these same groups. Networking and making professional connections on the senior staff level with communities of color were also viewed as strategies with great potential.

- *Identify goals and commit to them.* Several affiliates recommended establishing quantifiable goals and sticking to them. One group identified the goal of bringing in one-third of the new board members from six target groups. They felt that without that strongly stated goal, the nominating committee might not persevere. This group's nominating committee were aggressive in asking other board members for names. They also called numerous contacts seeking additional names, and they likened making calls for potential board members to hiring a new employee — you must keep searching for what you want.

- *Be prepared to work hard!* The general message that came out of the affiliates' comments was that the nominating committees that were successful in finding people of color for their boards worked hard and persevered in their goals. They did not give up in the face of difficulties, and they held slots open until they found the right people to enhance the board. Furthermore, they did not seek people just on the basis of color, but they paid close attention to their interest in the mission of the organization as well.

INTEGRATING PEOPLE OF COLOR INTO BOARDS

For the most part, board leadership reported no major problems in integrating people of color into their boards. However, some found that doing the necessary hard work of building community among groups with very broad ranges of backgrounds was challenging. It takes time to develop more open attitudes and a higher level of comfort among diverse members. Experience suggests that changes are evolutionary and that boards require constant stimulation in order to continue to evolve. Educational equality of the members and their common commitment to the mission are important elements that seem to bring people together despite differences in race and ethnicity.

When it came to orienting new board members, there seemed to be little difference between activities directed to people of color and those directed to Whites. A number of affiliates established buddy systems whereby experienced members acted as mentors for newer members. Predictably, these systems provided mixed results depending on the efforts and level of commitment of the mentor. Also, as boards achieved more diversity, they sometimes had to change their expectations of new board members. This fact relates less to race or ethnicity than to the time limitations of business people, younger people, and others who have much less time to devote to board service than their traditional nonworking, often female, counterparts.

> *...it's not just about governing the agency, but about learning new things about oneself and others as well.*

The difficult issue of whether members of color were expected to represent their entire community was a common problem reported by study participants. Although nominating committees told people of color that they were not expected to represent their community, in practice they were actually asked to do so. And while boards articulated respect for the position taken by people of color who said they could not represent their entire community, they naturally turned to those members when they needed to hear the viewpoint of that community. Realistically, the expectation should probably be that people of color speak only for the communities they feel they can adequately represent.

As for the people of color themselves, the study revealed a certain amount of resentment on their part about the perceived expectations that they represent their respective groups. They felt caught between their sense of responsibility to represent their community and their desire to blend in as just another board member. People of color on the board, in fact, did not represent their low-income constituencies any more than Whites did. Although board members may have been familiar with the Planned Parenthood patient groups through their work, they themselves were not from that population. Raised but not answered was the question of whether low-income groups served by the program should be represented on the board.

Some obstacles to the integration of different groups surfaced during the process. Boards with only one or two members of color were perceived as being less hospitable to people of color than those with more diversity. This circumstance gave rise to the idea that a "critical mass" might be important in making people of color more comfortable on boards. Cultural and religious conventions also came into play, as they were identified as major factors in deterring older generations of Hispanics from joining Planned Parenthood boards, although younger, better-educated Hispanic women did show interest. The lack of social interaction outside the board meetings proved to be yet another obstacle to successful integration. Fortunately, board activities often include opportunities to interact, and some groups addressed this need by planning more social events. Some invited new members and their mentors to a dinner hosted by the former board chair, while others planned cocktail parties at their annual meetings for members and their spouses or partners.

In summary, boards identified the following needs when attempting to achieve integration of people of color into their boards:

- Recognize the value of a diverse board.

- Recognize that change is evolutionary.

- Discuss and agree on expectations for board members before recruitment.

- Use the same orientation procedures for everyone and make them effective.

- Do not expect people of color to represent their entire ethnic community.

- Provide opportunities for social interaction.

EVALUATING TURNOVER OF PEOPLE OF COLOR ON BOARDS

For the most part, the survey revealed that turnover of board membership was no more a problem for people of color than for Whites. There were, however, some factors related to board members of color that had an impact on the reasons they left the board. Factors that influenced turnover included the following:

- *The small pool of potential candidates.* There was a high demand in most communities for people of color to serve on boards. Prominent people of color were asked to join many boards, and if they were not absolutely comfortable with Planned Parenthood, they were likely to go elsewhere.

- *The perception that the affiliate operated in an insular manner.* A number of minority board members felt that affiliates did not have enough involvement with other minority organizations in the community and therefore did not understand their priorities. There was a sense that, although Planned Parenthood was trying to recruit people of color onto its board, the organization seemed unwilling to consider reciprocal representation on boards in minority communities.

- *Competing time commitments.* Because of the smaller pool of qualified candidates for board membership, high-profile people of color often lacked time to devote to board service, or they were overcommitted because of their involvement with other causes. Many found

the scheduled meeting times inconvenient and were therefore unable to attend. Some left boards of their own accord or were not reelected after a first term.

- *Unrealistic expectations of how fast the board could diversify.* One person, described as a "difficult member," resigned because the board had not achieved total diversity.

- *The lack of engagement in organizational mission and board activities.* Affiliates learned that it did not always work to recruit people for their color first and then cultivate them for Planned Parenthood. Boards were more successful when they first engaged people in the activities and mission and then brought them on the board. Involvement in committee work prior to joining the board was one successful strategy.

- *The lack of a "critical mass" of people of color on the board.* Some people left because they felt like tokens rather than part of a well-integrated board. On the other hand, others seemed to be quite comfortable with being the only person of color (or one of only a few) on the board. This level of comfort may have been related to how well the board integrated and oriented new members, or it may have resulted from similar past experiences.

LISTENING TO PERCEPTIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS WHO ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR

Thirteen of the 15 boards made a person of color available for an interview for this case study. While the comments of those interviewed were not necessarily consistent, they did provide observations, insights, and suggestions useful to boards striving for successful diversity.

Several people noted a gap between the younger, newer members of color and the traditional affiliate board membership — made up of wealthy White housewives. The gap manifested itself in several ways. The inflexibility of the scheduled meeting time was a stumbling block; because most people of color serving on boards tended to be professionals, noontime meetings made their participation more difficult. Some younger members complained that they were still expected to be active in spite of the fact that the traditional board members, who had more time to devote to board service, ran most board activities. Of course, this problem was not confined to people of color. Younger, professional Whites would probably have had the same complaints.

While expectations concerning fundraising and giving were not generally perceived as major problems, some board members took issue with them. For example, expectations about giving led some to feel that their contributions could never be appreciated because they were small in comparison to what others on the board could give. And while many Black professionals could afford the minimum amount prescribed by their respective boards, there remained the related lack of sensitivity as to venues for fundraising events, because there were still places in the community where Blacks felt uncomfortable.

Despite the issues cited above, those interviewed felt it was relatively easy to integrate people of color into their boards because the people selected were generally of the same level of education and social class as the other board members and many had experience working with diverse groups of people on other boards or commissions. In fact, low-income people — those who would better represent the affiliate's clientele — were not represented in the board's composition. This was true for Whites as well as people of color. Social class was an important issue, especially because the desire for economic diversity interfered with the need for large donations from members of the board.

Differences in backgrounds showed themselves in other ways. There were often differences in political opinion between the wealthy White board members and the members of color. White board members in general had not experienced the kind of social realities the minorities had, and their political views were more conservative. This is another place where commitment to mission is crucial. It is possible for boards to maintain a healthy ability to respect such differences while maintaining their focus on the mission.

Even though most minority board members felt they were not expected to be representatives of their entire community, both because they would not allow themselves to be seen in that way and because the board was aware that they were not able to do so, the issue sometimes surfaced when there was a crisis. For example, a board turned to its Hispanic members when the issue of undocumented immigrants affected services to this community.

Language was also cited as an issue for minority members, particularly as it related to insensitivity on the part of White board members. Subtle differences arose, for instance, when Whites referred to clients as "them," while board members of color used the term "us." The distinction was not deliberate, but nonetheless it was real, pointing out the need for Whites to realize how language affects people of color and to refrain from making judgmental or paternalistic statements. Racist or stereotypical remarks also surfaced during search committee deliberations for a new executive director of one organization. Training, cited as an important component of board diversity, can be especially helpful in these situations. Exercises designed to elicit both overt and unconscious attitudes can be helpful for both people of color and Whites, because such activities heighten everyone's awareness.

"Comfort zones" were cited as one of the barriers to the acceptance of people of color into affiliate boards. Many Whites have trouble recruiting beyond their immediate circle of friends and acquaintances and may feel uncomfortable with people of different races and backgrounds. Focusing the search on the shared belief in the organization's mission might be one way to improve the process. In other words, Whites could challenge themselves to increase their comfort zones by seeking out people who believe in the mission and just happened to be people of color. To do this, they must become creative in recruitment and see diversity not as altruism, but as good business for Planned Parenthood.

For the most part, those interviewed felt that members of color should be judged by the same standards as their White counterparts. This becomes much easier if expectations of all board members have been discussed and agreed upon beforehand. Then, for example, if board members are expected to attend all meetings, anyone who fails to meet that expectation would be asked to leave the board. If scheduling of meetings is a problem for working board members, the board will have to attempt to become more flexible.

Equal application of board standards does not mean failure to recognize differences. On the contrary, boards need to heighten awareness of differences as well as likenesses. When Whites make a comment like "I don't think of you as different," they may think they are paying a compliment when in fact the person they are addressing may perceive the comment as patronizing.

The importance of an ongoing board commitment to diversity and the necessity for full board involvement were viewed as critical to success. Diversity must be made a priority of the entire board, not just of the nominating committee. It is not uncommon for boards to raise objections to diversity, such as the fear of losing fundraising capacity, fear of creating divisions on the board, and simple fear of the unknown. Consequently, the executive director seeking board diversity must make a true commitment to diversity and become a role model of that commitment for both the board and staff.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVERSIFYING NONPROFIT BOARDS

The Planned Parenthood case study research relates well to the real world of nonprofit board composition, particularly in light of the rapidly changing cultural mix in the United States. In fact, the results of the study have a number of practical implications for nonprofit organizations attempting to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of their boards. Following are some actions such boards could consider:

- *Agree on reasons for seeking diversity.* Tying diversity to the mission of the organization rather than to compliance with external requirements is important for long-term success. For the effort to work well, the entire board must make a true, deep-down commitment to diversity.

- *Staff the nominating committee with as much diversity as possible.* Include people who have contacts in a variety of communities. Set diversity goals and stick to them, rather than settling for less diversity in order to fill board seats.

- *Seek candidates who not only are members of the target group but are committed to the organization's mission.* Putting in the time and effort to find the right people of color, to involve them in the organization, and to make sure there is a fit between their interests and the organization's mission is crucial for member retention.

- *Define expectations for all board members, and discuss them with each potential recruit before an invitation is issued.* Boards should look at their current policies regarding meeting times, fundraising expectations, and other issues to determine whether changes are needed to attract and retain a diverse board. All members, both old and new, should be held to the same expectations. Whatever those expectations, they should not come as a surprise to any member once he or she is on the board.

> *...the executive director seeking board diversity must make a true commitment to diversity and become a role model of that commitment for both the board and staff.*

- *Establish a system for orienting new members and for continuous development of board members and the board itself.* A mentor system often works to get new members involved. A session with the executive director and key staff to go over the goals and current program initiatives can help. Assignment to appropriate committees and early involvement in committee work can be useful too. Everyone is a potential resource, and a creative board can find ways to develop all its resources.

- *Reach out beyond immediate circles to find potential candidates.* Real work is often required to make contacts in communities of color. Unless a board is truly willing to make the extra effort, successful board diversity probably will not be achieved.

- *Understand the pitfalls of expecting persons of color to represent all the people of their cultural or ethnic background.* Board members want to be resources to the organization, but unrealistic expectations of what they can bring to the table can create negative feelings on both sides.

- *Foster an atmosphere of openness, honesty, and tolerance for conflict.* People of color on boards need to speak up if offensive language or stereotypes are used. Whites must be willing to learn about their own attitudes and take seriously the experiences of minority groups. Cultural awareness training can help create a positive climate.

- *Demand leadership from both board officers and staff.* Leaders must see diversification as a priority and keep promoting it to the rest of the board and the organization. If crises occur, be aware that energy required to diversify the board will probably go elsewhere. Even if the effort falters for a while, it should never be abandoned and should be resumed as quickly as possible to maintain momentum.

CONCLUSION

The strongest implication to be drawn from the study of Planned Parenthood affiliates is that, even with the prodding and support of a national organization, board diversification at the local level is just plain hard work. There are no magic "seven steps to board diversity" or any other quick fixes. It takes real commitment over time, constant flexibility and openness, and a true desire to succeed for the good of the organization rather than for the approval of out-siders. The reason board diversification is difficult is that many organizations do not yet have the requisite desire or commitment. If they develop it, they will find the effort truly rewarding, and they will succeed.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Austin, D. Mark, and Cynthia Woolever. "Voluntary Association Boards: A Reflection of Member and Community Characteristics?" *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, Vol. 21, 1992, pp. 181 – 193.
A study of the relationships between community characteristics of race, status, and population, with corresponding attributes in the general membership and board membership of affiliates of a national human service organization.

Cox, Taylor, Jr. *Cultural Diversity in Organizations: Theory, Research & Practice*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 1993.
A review of diversity research that points out reasons why diversity may be related to organizational effectiveness and discusses potential problems in diverse groups.

Fletcher, Kathleen. *Building Board Diversity: A Case Study of the Western Region Affiliates of Planned Parenthood Federation of America*. Washington, DC: Nonprofit Sector Research Fund of the Aspen Institute, 1997.
The full report of the 1996 study summarized in this booklet. Contains additional analysis of data and interview protocols.

Rutledge, Jennifer. *Building Board Diversity*. Washington, DC: BoardSource, 1994.
A resource to help boards examine issues of diversity. Includes step-by-step suggestions for launching a diversity initiative and tools boards can use throughout the process.

Widmer, Candace. "Minority Participation on Boards of Directors of Human Service Agencies: Some Evidence and Suggestions." *Journal of Voluntary Action Research*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1987, pp. 33 – 44.
A study of boards of 10 human service agencies in upstate New York, with emphasis on similarities and differences between African-American and White board members.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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A Diversity of Board Women:

A study of nonprofits in six cities over a 60-year time span

BY RIKKI ABZUG

Women have made relatively small advances in the world of nonprofit gover-nance over a 60-year period. Women who do serve on nonprofit boards are more likely than their male counterparts to be single, persons of color, Democrats, and volunteers, and they are likely to be less well-educated than male trustees. The women who serve on all-female or female-dominated boards, those of the YWCA and the Junior League, tend to differ from each other in both social class and approach to trusteeship.

This study of differences in women's experience with membership on nonprofit boards over the past 60 years focuses on the types of women who are involved in the governance of non-profit institutions, first in comparison with men and then in comparison with one another. It looks first at evidence of differences between male and female trustees and then explores different cultures of trusteeship that women themselves initiate in response to both male trustees and other women's cultures of trusteeship.

WOMEN AND MEN ON BOARDS: THE THEORIES

The organizations of the nonprofit sector provided women with a voice in community and economic affairs long before commercial enterprises opened their doors. Before most women ever saw the inside of a for-profit boardroom — other than to clean it — men and women sat in relative equality on the boards of major community-based nonprofit institutions. Or did they? The research reported here, motivated by conflicting theoretical expectations, attempts to reveal the similarities and differences between men and women in nonprofit governance over time.

Human capital theory suggests that when men and women are to be found in positions of like economic power, such as nonprofit trusteeships, the investment that women have made in human capital will resemble that of men — we would expect men and women who wield economic and political power through nonprofit organizations to share salient back-ground characteristics.

On the other hand, a growing feminist and power structure research literature has suggested that for women to occupy power positions similar to those held by men (and the same might be argued for Blacks occupying organizational positions similar to those of Whites), these women would have to make a greater investment in human capital than that expected for

men (the Superwoman phenomenon). Economists might suggest that this would occur in part because of the lower return on these investments that marginalized groups often face. Therefore, it may also be possible to expect that in some cases women might be more accomplished or more elite than their male counterparts on boards.

Still a third possibility is that because women have long been denied access to certain levels of status that have been open to some (clearly not all) men, their human capital investment will never match that of men of the same class. We might expect that women would be able to find their way into positions of organizational and economic power only as a result of tokenism, quotas, or external pressure. These women would not be as accomplished or elite as their male counterparts on boards.

Each of these theories expects different mixes of characteristics for men and women on boards. It is that perplexity that we now address.

J. Allen Whitt and colleagues explored the social background, current economic and social status, and board service differences between a select group of "big linking" male and female trustees (trustees whose service on more than one board "links" organizations together) in Louisville, Kentucky, in the early 1990s and found that family backgrounds of male and female trustees differed very little, although there were some differences in age, education, employment, and current family status. Specifically, their study showed that female trustees were older, less likely to hold graduate degrees, less likely to be married, less likely to be Protestant, less likely to be in paid employment, and less likely to hold seats on corporate boards than their male counterparts. We have tested some of these same differences in a study of the largest, most prestigious nonprofit organizations in each of six U.S. cities over a 60-year period, 1931 to 1991, that includes the years of revitalization of the feminist movement. Our purpose was to explore three basic research questions:

- Do women and men on boards share similar background characteristics over time?

- Do women on male-dominated boards share similar background characteristics with women on all-female or female-dominated boards?

- Do female board members of the Junior League share similar background characteristics with female trustees of the YWCA over time?

The "over time" dimension is particularly intriguing because we hypothesized that over the 60-year period, women would come to make up a larger proportion of this trustee population. We might then expect that different types of women would be recruited to take up the newly opened slots for their gender.

DATA AND METHODS

The data for this study come from the six-cities study of the "Changing Dimensions of Trusteeship" project administered through the Yale University Program on Nonprofit Organizations. Biographical data for organizations' boards and for individual trustees have been collected for 15 nonprofit organizations in six U.S. metropolitan areas — Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Philadelphia — at three points in time: 1931, 1961, and 1991. In each of the six cities, the study follows the boards of the largest secular, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish hospitals; the largest fine art museum, symphony orchestra, higher educational institution, and community foundation; the United Way, the Junior League, the YMCA, and the YWCA; and the largest secular, Catholic, and Jewish family/human service organizations. The Junior League and the YWCA represent the female-dominated boards in the populations.

Data were gathered from public record sources including *Who's Who*; the *Social Register*; *Standard & Poor's Registry of Executives, Directors, and Corporations*; organizations' annual reports; 990 tax forms; obituaries; NEXIS media searches; local archives; oral histories; and interviews. This process resulted in usable data for 8,596 trustees serving on 287 boards.

PARALLEL AND SUBORDINATE POWER STUCTURES/CULTURES OF TRUSTEESHIP

Historian Kathleen McCarthy has noted the importance of philanthropy in understanding women's impact on institutional development. McCarthy distinguishes a "women's culture" surrounding the creation of voluntary institutions and identifies different women's strategies. McCarthy suggests that as donors and supporters of cultural institutions, women were able to follow one of three paths: assimilationist, segregationist, and individual giving. Our task was to graft her models of philanthropy onto women's potential cultures of trusteeship.

McCarthy suggests that some female philanthropists were able to create "parallel power structures" of voluntary associations and specialized nonprofit institutions that "sometimes challenged, sometimes complemented, but rarely precisely replicated the 'nonprofit corporations' built by men." McCarthy calls them "separatist strategies" and contrasts them with the assimilationist strategies employed by women "who worked within the context of male-dominated professions and institutions." What McCarthy's analysis did not do was to systematically evidence differences in the types of women who chose one strategy over another. Our study, then, was aimed at understanding the differences in background characteristics, social status, and achievements of women who followed segregationist cultures of trusteeship, serving on all-woman or woman-dominated boards, compared with women who followed assimilationist cultures serving on male-dominated boards.

DIFFERENTIATING WOMEN'S CULTURES

In addition to looking at the gender split — male-dominated versus female-dominated boards — our research broke down the female-dominated board by organizational type or ideology. In this particular population, we were interested in the types of women who choose or are

recruited to serve on the boards of Junior Leagues versus those who choose or are recruited to serve on the boards of YWCAs.

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

Despite its stated historical commitment to social change, the Junior League has served, for much of its history, as an indicator of upper-class status for its all-female membership. Research by Susan A. Ostrander and Arlene Kaplan Daniels has suggested that the role of the Junior League includes justifying members' status while providing the social networks and physical settings to encourage class exclusivity. Although in recent years, Junior League chapters have been known for their progressive community service programs, the place of the Junior League in history, literature, and the public imagination suggests that women who volunteer for board work in this organization might demonstrate more of the trappings of status than other board women in the population.

THE YWCA

The YWCA, also a female-dominated organization, provides an interesting ideological contrast to the Junior League. Recent research indicates that in the early decades of this century, the Young Women's Christian Association, as the third largest independent women's organization in the country, was conceivably the only White-dominated women's association that had noticeable Black participation. Nancy M. Robertson notes that White women in the organization stated a commitment to racial justice as evidenced by interracial staffs, boards, and convention seatings, all of which preceded similar steps by other White-dominated organizations (including the YMCA). By the 1930s and 1940s, members of the YWCA were testifying before Congress on behalf of anti-lynching legislation. Although Robertson acknowledges that White women of the YWCA may have shared similar values with the more socially prominent White women of the New Deal, she reports that the YWCA was instrumental in fostering ties between women that crossed racial lines. This dynamic provides a direct contrast to that of the Junior League. Over the same historical period, the Junior League was instrumental in strengthening upper-class women's exclusive ties and networks, which were well integrated with those of men of their class.

MISSING DATA AND THE INVISIBLE WOMAN PROBLEM

As mentioned earlier, data from this study were gathered mostly from published sources. For two of this study's three main sources of data, the percentage of women not listed was significantly lower than that of men not listed. Only 3 percent of women in this population were listed in the *National Who's Who* (compared with 28 percent of men), for instance, and only 1 percent of women trustees were listed in *Standard & Poor's Registry* (compared with 29 percent of men). This overall lopsided listing by gender resulted in more educational and occupational data missing for women than for men. As testament to how women are remembered through the public record, we actually have more marital status data on the female trustees (76 percent) than on the male trustees (69 percent). This report of missing data should be taken into account in interpreting the results.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN ON BOARDS

Tracking this population of trustees exposes the relatively surprising consistency of proportion of women on these boards from 1931 to 1991. In 1931, women represented 28 percent of this population. The percentage dipped to 27 in 1961 but rose to 35 percent by 1991. Although the increase was statistically significant, it does not seem to represent the magnitude of social and cultural change wrought by the intervening 60 years. Certainly, with the proliferation of nonprofit organizations beginning in the 1960s, more board slots were open to a larger public and board membership was itself extended to more previously disenfranchised people, including women. The more interesting question may very well be what accounted for the relatively high proportion of women on these nonprofit boards in 1931 and 1961. Women constituted around 30 percent of this population at a time when women occupied almost no comparable positions in the corporate world. Although the argument should be made that this mirrors the situation in 1991, the surprising fact is that women were so prominent on boards in 1931. This fact again raises the issue of what types of women are found on which boards, to which we return below.

> *...female trustees were significantly more likely to be people of color. This seems to be an indication of the double-count whereby a woman of color might represent the satisfaction of two affirmative action norms.*

Another way to make sense of this descriptive statistic is to disaggregate the board-level data by industry. When we pull out the Junior League and YWCA boards, whose memberships were more than 98 percent female at all three time periods, we note that the male-dominated boards were only about 15 percent female in the study's early periods (1931 and 1961) but statistically significantly higher at 28 percent by 1991. An argument could then be made that while the overall female percentage in the trustee population did not increase greatly, a significant increase can be noted by 1991 for the more male-dominated board subset.

TYPES OF WOMEN ON BOARDS — THE MALE/FEMALE COMPARISON

Data on trustees' marital status, *Social Register* listing, professional degrees, race, political party membership, and volunteer status were analyzed to address the three research questions about differences in subpopulations over the three time periods.

Marital Status. Across all time periods, male trustees were significantly more likely to be married than female trustees (although both sets were overwhelmingly likely to be married, 93 percent of male trustees were married compared with 82 percent of female trustees). Because we might have expected that female trustees, as guardians of upper-class family values, would be more likely to display the picture of traditional domesticity in earlier years, we broke out the results for each time period. This association of men and marriage holds at all three periods. The phenomenon might be a "widow effect" — unmarried women on boards (perhaps especially in earlier time periods) may well have been widows who had inherited the money and power to place them on prestigious boards. That most board women were identified as "Mrs. [insert husband's name]" on trustee lists at this early time period suggests that we may indeed be noting a "widow effect." Another explanation would be a possible

"nun effect," given the large number of (obviously) unmarried nuns serving on boards, especially during the study's early years. Not so. Only 12 percent of the total number of unmarried trustees were indeed nuns, which suggests that the other 88 percent were unmarried for reasons other than religious mandate.

Social Register **Listing.** As one proxy for elite standing, we chose to explore gender differences in *Social Register* listing. Because Minneapolis/St. Paul did not have a *Social Register* at the first two time periods, trustees from these cities were dropped from this part of the analysis. Across time periods, there is no statistically significant difference in such listings by gender, which, of course, may be explained by the very family-oriented nature of the *Social Register* itself. And if the upper class is a network of families, we should not be surprised that eliteness is not distinguished by gender. Yet when we disaggregate the data by time period, we observe an interesting relationship in the earliest time period. In 1931, the female trustees in the population were actually more likely to be listed in the *Social Register* than their male counterparts. This finding, too, may be the result of a "widow effect" in the study's earliest years. There were no statistical differences in any of the other time periods.

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Professional Education. Education was broken down into professionally degreed (J.D., M.D., Ph.D.) and not professionally degreed to distinguish the highest achieving trustees from the others. While human capital theory might suggest that women and men who end up in the same positions of economic power would be equally degreed, the data do not bear out this assumption. Indeed, across and within all time periods, male trustees were significantly more likely to hold professional degrees than their female counterparts. What is interesting about these data is that the proportion of trustees who held professional degrees increased for both men and women over the 60-year time period. While the proportion of female trustees with professional degrees more than doubled (from 11 percent in 1931 to 24 percent in 1991), the proportion of male trustees with professional degrees merely rose from 36 percent to 42 percent.

Race. Although we might have expected that over this particular 60-year period the empowerment of people of color might have led to a radical change in the racial composition of prestigious boards with no discernible gender pattern, quite the opposite is observed. Across time periods, the percentage of male trustees who were White statistically exceeds that of female trustees, but all of that difference is accounted for by the 1991 period. In 1931 and 1961, the boards of these 15 organizations in each of the six cities were so predominantly White (99.9 percent in 1931 and 98.74 percent in 1961) that differences between male and female trustees are insignificant. The picture changes for 1991, when only 86 percent of trustees were White, but female trustees were significantly more likely to be people of color. This seems to be an indication of the double-count whereby a woman of color might represent the satisfaction of two affirmative action norms. Interestingly, when we recognize the YWCA's historical commitment to eradicate racism and we remove the six YWCAs from the 1991 sample, we note that only 11 percent of the trustees of all the other boards were people of color. The YWCA boards, by 1991, were 56 percent people of color, which is statistically different from the 11 percent of other boards.

Political Party. Although the potential gender gap in politics has long entertained the American imagination, it did not really materialize until the past two decades. Studies have shown, though, that within the upper class, women may indeed harbor more liberal attitudes and postures. When party identity is broken down into Democrats and others, female trustees of this population were significantly more likely to be Democrats in the 1991 period. Although there was no significant gender difference in party identification in 1931 and 1961, the difference was quite large in 1991, with more than half (55 percent) of these female trustees of elite institutions identifying themselves as Democrats, compared with only 33 percent of the male trustees.

Labor Market Participation. The notion of "Lady Bountiful" was predicated on the image of the volunteer dilettante. Conceptualized during a period of American history when the work of volunteering was seen to be the sole province of women with little else to do, the "Lady Bountiful" image also evoked a seemingly endless source of money (if not paternalism) to good causes. Changes in the societal position and evaluation of women over the past 60 years would suggest that "Lady Bountiful," to the extent that she ever existed, is now a historical relic. The six-cities data show a significant gender gap in likelihood of not being in the labor market. This finding parallels Arlene Kaplan Daniels' notion of the "invisible careers" of upper-class women volunteers. While this gender difference in likelihood of being a volunteer rather than in paid employment is observed for all time periods, it is interesting to note that the proportion of female trustees not in the labor force dropped from a high of 80 percent in 1931 to only 28 percent in 1991. (The corresponding numbers for male trustees were 2 percent in 1931 and 7 percent in 1991 — suggesting a slight jump in male volunteers over the same period.)

In answer to Research Question 1, then, women constitute a minority of trustees (from about 15 percent to 30 percent) of prestigious nonprofit organizations; this proportion was consistent over 60 years. Female trustees are more likely to be single (conceivably widowed), persons of color, Democrats, volunteers (not in the labor force), and less well-educated (having fewer professional degrees) than male trustees.

TYPES OF WOMEN ON BOARDS — COMPARING YWCA AND JUNIOR LEAGUE BOARD MEMBERS WITH WOMEN SERVING ON MALE-DOMINATED BOARDS

Research Questions 2 and 3 have been combined in the following analysis, which concentrates on the differences in backgrounds, social standing, and achievements of only the female trustees in the study population.

Marital Status. In 1931, YWCA board members were statistically more likely to be married than either Junior League board members or women who served on male-dominated boards. By 1991, the opposite was found. In both 1961 and 1991, the women on the Junior League boards were significantly more likely to be married than women serving on YWCA or male-dominated boards. What might be happening is that widows of great wealth and prestige were likelier to be on the more elite boards in 1931 (resulting in a greater proportion of still-married YWCA board members), but by 1961 the "widow effect" was overshadowed by the connection of eliteness to intact marriage on the Junior League boards.

Social Register **Listing.** In both 1931 and 1961, women on the Junior League boards were significantly more likely than their counterparts on the YWCA or male-dominated boards to be listed in the *Social Register*. This association highlights the mutuality of the listing and Junior League service as indicators of upper-class status for the study's early years. By 1991, the proportion of women listed in the *Social Register* was so absolutely small (3 percent) that the fact that women on the male-dominated boards were slightly more likely to be listed than their Junior League counterparts (but not the YWCA board women, none of whom were listed in 1991) may not have much meaning and, indeed, is not statistically significant.

Professional Education. In all three time periods, board women of the Junior League were less likely to hold professional degrees than their counterparts serving on the YWCA or male-dominated boards. In fact, in 1931 and 1961, no Junior League board member reported having earned a professional degree, while about 13 percent of both members of male-dominated boards and YWCA board members in 1931 and 16 percent in 1961 had such degrees. By 1991, the women serving on male-dominated boards were significantly more likely than their YWCA counterparts to hold such degrees (29 percent did), and 3 percent of the Junior Leaguers reported holding professional degrees.

Race. In 1931, all the board women in this population were White. By 1961, there was a statistically significant difference such that YWCA board members were more likely to be women of color than their Junior League counterparts. Looking back to Robertson's historical work, we might posit that the YWCA's rhetoric about racial equality remained just that regarding the local boards in 1931, but this situation had changed somewhat by 1961. By 1991, the YWCA rhetoric of the 1930s finally began to take effect, with a statistically significant and striking absolute difference between board members of the YWCA and both Junior Leaguers and women sitting on male-dominated boards. By 1991, more than half (55 percent) of the YWCA board women were women of color, compared with only 7 percent of the Junior Leaguers and 17 percent of the women serving on male-dominated boards.

Political Party. At all three time periods, board women of the Junior League were less likely, although not significantly so, to be identified as Democrats than their YWCA and male-domi-nated board counterparts. While in the two early time periods the proportion of Democratic women on the YWCA boards and the male-dominated boards remained quite similar (about 27 percent in each year), by 1991 the differences became more marked, with a full 75 percent of the YWCA board members calling themselves Democrats, compared with 54 percent of the women serving on male-dominated boards and 20 percent of the Junior League board members.

Labor Market Participation. At all three time periods, the board women of the Junior League were statistically significantly less likely to be part of the paid labor force. In 1931, women who sat on male-dominated boards were more likely than the YWCA women, as well, to be in the paid labor force. By 1991, it was the YWCA board women who were statistically most likely to be in the paid labor force.

In answer to Research Questions 2 and 3, then, much of the significant differentiation among female service strategies is not between women who serve with men versus women who serve only with other women, but rather between women who volunteer on the Junior League board and women who volunteer on both the all-female YWCA boards or the other

male-dominated boards. Women trustees on Junior League boards are significantly more representative of stereotypes of upper-class women (listed in the *Social Register*, White, volunteers, Republicans, less degreed) than their YWCA counterparts, who resemble more the women on male-dominated boards. Only certain types of segregationalist women (in this case, the Junior Leaguers) do, then, differ somewhat from assimilationist women serving on male-dominated boards.

CONCLUSION

Although in 1991 men and women sat on some of the same prestigious nonprofit boards of directors, the women's movement may not find as much reason to rejoice as might be expected. Women constituted, at most, 35 percent of the elite boards in this population (and a much smaller percentage when data from the all-female boards are suppressed), and these percentages changed very little over 60 years. Although nonprofits and concerned policy-makers can point to women on boards by the end of the 1990s, it cannot be called a great advancement when we take into account the comparative historical record. Over 60 years, women made relatively small inroads into the world of nonprofit governance of elite institutions. This statement, however, masks a great deal of variation among the boards in this population — variation that may be accounted for by regional cultures of trusteeship, industry norms, and faith traditions regarding the roles and values of women leaders. Future research might take up questions of where women have made relatively more dramatic progress and what supports were needed for such achievement.

Women who serve on these boards do differ in educational, occupational, and achievement-related characteristics from their male counterparts. Human capital theory is a less robust predictor of relationships between personal investment and nonprofit governance outcomes than are sexism and discrimination in society. Women who serve on boards are less accomplished than their male counterparts, reflecting women's relative achievements vis-à-vis men's in the society at large. Our research has also supported trends in different cultures of women's trusteeship that mirror such differences in women's philanthropic giving. Future research may broaden the organizational population studied and attempt to identify cultures of trusteeship based on varied areas of differentiation.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Abzug, Rikki. "The Evolution of Trusteeship in the United States: A Roundup of Findings from Six Cities." *Nonprofit Management & Leadership,* Vol. 7, No. 1, Fall 1996, pp. 101 – 111. This article reports on the major findings from the six-cities study of the Yale University Program on Nonprofit Organizations' "Changing Dimensions of Trusteeship" project. The article lays out a broader context of the changes in trusteeship, which serves to frame "A Diversity of Board Women."

Bordt, Rebecca. *The Structure of Women's Nonprofit Organizations.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.
A short, provocative book arising from the author's sociology dissertation that explores the question of what women's contemporary nonprofit organizations look like. The author explores the preconditions of the following women's organizations: bureaucracies, professional organizations, pragmatic collectives, and pure collectives.

Bradshaw, Pat, Vic Murray, and Jacob Wolpin. "Women on Boards of Nonprofits: What Difference Do They Make?" *Nonprofit Management & Leadership,* Vol. 6, No. 3, Spring 1996, pp. 241 – 254.
This article explores the impact of the proportion of women and the gender of the CEOs on board effectiveness, structure, and process. Highlights of individual findings include the fact that the presence of women on boards, or as CEOs, had no relationship to reported organizational effectiveness, but that the higher the proportion of women on the board, the lower the board's prestige.

Daniels, Arlene Kaplan. *Invisible Careers: Women Civic Leaders from the Volunteer World.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
One of the first treatises to promote women's unpaid labor as volunteers to the status of work, this sociological study is particularly concerned with the lack of social support for such volunteer work. Daniels interviewed 70 women civic leaders who primarily see themselves through the lens of wife and mother, but who nonetheless engage in extensive volunteer work befitting what they see as their status.

McCarthy, Kathleen. *Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830 – 1930.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
A historian's analysis of the different strategies women used to make a difference in the art world from 1830 to 1930. McCarthy elaborates on three distinct philanthropic strategies: separatism (characterizing antebellum and Gilded Age female entrepreneurs), assimilation (women working within male-dominated institutions), and individualism (personal philanthropy that challenged both women's institutions and the male establishment).

Ostrander, Susan A. *Women of the Upper Class.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.

Part of the *Women in the Political Economy* series, this book attempts to chronicle the activities of upper-class women. Ostrander interviewed 36 women with an emphasis on the meaning that these women attribute to their day-to-day activities, which include clubbing and community service. The author concludes that the lives of women of the upper class are structured by both class and gender processes.

Ostrower, Francine. *Why the Wealthy Give: The Culture of Elite Philanthropy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.
A study of New York's elite philanthropy, this book, based on the author's sociology dissertation, weaves together almost 100 interviews of wealthy donors to understand the motivations behind giving. Reviewed by Brooke Astor, the book also explores gender and religious differences in giving by wealthy New Yorkers.

Preston, Ann E. "Women in the Nonprofit Labor Market." In T. Odendahl and M. O'Neill (eds.), *Women and Power in the Nonprofit Sector.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
A book chapter that analyzes the labor market status of women in the nonprofit sector over the period 1969–1991, Preston's material looks at female labor force participation and wage rates across sectors and with an eye toward racial differences as well. The study finds that white women have been increasingly able to secure high-quality employment opportunities in the sector over the study period.

Robertson, Nancy M. "The New Woman, the New Negro, and the New State: Education, Legislation, and Justice in the 1920s and 1930s." Paper presented at conference on Private Action and the Public Good, Indianapolis, November 1993.
A short historical conference paper that outlines the YWCA's growing commitment to issues of gender and racial equality in the early part of the century.

Whitt, J. Allen, Gwen Moore, Cynthia Negrey, Deborah White, and Karen King. "The Inner Circle of Local Nonprofit Trustees: A Comparison of Attitudes and Backgrounds of Women and Men Board Members." New Haven, CT: *PONPO Working Paper No. 192,* Program on Non-Profit Organizations, Yale University, 1993.
A working paper report of the findings of the Louisville, Kentucky, study of male and female trustees of nonprofit organizations. Using a network analysis, the study identifies the central players ("big linkers") of Louisville civic leadership, with particular focus on the role of gender in influence networks.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rikki Abzug is a visiting assistant professor at the Milano Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy at the New School University in New York City. Prior to her work at the New School, she served as Assistant Professor of Management at the Stern School of Business at New York University and was the Associate Director of Yale University's Program on Nonprofit Organizations. Dr. Abzug has been a management and research consultant for more than 15 years and has provided consulting services on nonprofit and board development to groups in the United States, Poland, and the Ukraine. Among the publications she has written for are *Organization Science, The Corporate Board,* and *Voluntas: The International Journal for Third Sector Research.*

Dr. Abzug, who received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Yale University, has served on the boards of several nonprofit organizations and currently lives in New York City.

Suggested Resources

GOVERNANCE

Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards provides a succinct overview of the core areas of board responsibilities examined in The Governance Series.

Nonprofit Board Answer Book is organized in an easy-to-follow question and answer format and covers almost every situation you're likely to encounter in nonprofit board governance.

Nonprofit Governance Steering Your Organization with Authority and Accountability takes an innovative look at governance and describes ways that boards and board members can add value to the organizations they serve.

BOARD RECRUITMENT AND ORIENTATION

The Board Building Cycle features nine-steps for your board to follow through the board development process.

Meeting the Challenge, hosted by Ray Suarez, is ideal for use as a board orientation tool.

Presenting: Board Orientation is an easy to use presentation template for your next board orientation or recruitment session.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Driving Strategic Planning will set you on the right path towards initiating a sustainable and dynamic long-term strategic planning process that will grow with your organization.

The Nonprofit Board's Role in Setting and Advancing the Mission shows how board members can actively contribute to the creation of mission.

FUNDRAISING

Fearless Fund-Raising will help you motivate and involve your board to become active fundraisers.

Speaking of Money, hosted by ABC News journalist Hugh Downs, is an inspiring way to introduce board members to the critical responsibility of fundraising.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL

Understanding Nonprofit Financial Statements will help your board members to ensure that adequate resources are available and effectively managed.

Legal Obligations of Nonprofit Boards explores the legal and ethical responsibilities required of

your board members.

COMMITTEES/BOARD STRUCTURE

The Committee Series, published in 2004, is a compilation of six books that provide a fresh look at how board committees are structured.

These bestselling products are just a selection of the products that we offer. Visit www.board-source.org/bookstore to view a greater selection of our products.

Membership

Nonprofit leaders use our resources and services to find solutions, leadership tips, and knowledge about board-related issues. BoardSource membership provides you with:

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LEADERSHIP FORUM

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