



# Philanthropy on Steroids

Professional givers—philanthropists, have been focused on the notion of impact for some time now; looking to move the proverbial needle with the grants that they and their boards make to nonprofit organizations. Just this month in fact we saw the Ford Foundation, one of the nation's largest private foundations; make moves towards a more mission-aligned investment portfolio where impact becomes a greater focus than the actual financial return. It is difficult to measure this somewhat elusive notion of impact—How can it be measured? By which metrics? How do the philanthropists know that their largess is being put to good use? In many of these foundations there are a cadre of professional staff focused on doing a deep dive and measuring (or at least attempting to) impact and in turn, report back to their foundation's board members. But what about those foundations with no staff? Or “Mom & Pop” philanthropists that use a Donor Advised Fund or even a simple check book to disburse their philanthropic funds to worthy nonprofits? How do these givers measure their impact?

Cause-related giving is not new; in fact it is probably as old as philanthropy itself. The concept is to make donations to non-profit organizations whose focus and mission statement is tied to specific cause. Those causes can range across a wide spectrum—from medical research to studies that produce policy changes (from think tanks and academic organizations). These causes can be domestic or global as well as streamlined (i.e. research on the genomics of a specific disorder) or wide-spanning (i.e. climate change and the effects on the global environment). The key here is that the giver, be it a professional giving organization like a private foundation or a charitably-minded family that uses a Donor

Advised Fund, is attempting to measure impact via their donation to a targeted cause or issue.

So far we have identified the issue of measuring - or needing to measure—impact with respect to charitable gifts. We have also identified that many charitable organizations which provide grants or donations (“givers”) are focused on causes—specific issues or areas of interest where they would like to see the aforementioned and somewhat elusive notion of impact be enacted and made front and center to their giving results. Well wouldn't it be great if we could merge these 2 concepts into one platform? Permitting givers to focus and do a “deep dive” on specific cause related issues and then receive back from those gifts front-line data and correspondence that they can use to measure impact? Enter Benefunder.

We have found Benefunder to be a unique funding channel providing givers with a targeted platform to make smarter and more impactful gifts in specific areas. Benefunder is essentially an online marketplace bringing together researchers and givers which allows for greater transparency and impact. Benefunder seeks to provide a scalable platform which connects givers with researchers—actual researchers in labs (not the non-profit organization under which they are housed) and in doing so provides donors with a more effective way to support their passions. Researchers from more than 50 of the nation's top medical and technical schools are represented on Benefunder's platform, focusing on research and innovation in life sciences, technology, the environment and the arts and humanities.

So let's say that you are a giver—perhaps you sit on the



board of your family's foundation or you have used a donor advised fund to make gifts over the years, and you have been wondering about how much impact your gifts have made the specific cause. You reach out to the non-profit organizations focused on that cause (charities) that you have supported and the fine professionals (mostly over-worked and under-compensated folks) at that 501c3 (the IRS code for tax exempt charities) provide you with a bunch of data about how they, thanks to your gifts over the years, have made progress in this area or that area. You review the info and perhaps ask follow up questions—but in the end of the day are you satisfied? Maybe you need more info - more in depth analysis—and perhaps you want to get that info straight from the proverbial horse's mouth. This is where Benefunder comes in—you can actually search

their proprietary database of hundreds of researchers in labs around the country focused on specific issues and then fund that actual research at his lab doing that specific work. Targeted giving; philanthropy on steroids. Furthermore, for those givers who are more active and control oriented, this provides a direct line of communication to that specific researcher—and as such the giver can receive updates and make direct inquiries to gain a better understanding of the actual impact that their gifts are making. We encourage givers to do their own research and due diligence on Benefunder to determine if synergies exist with their giving protocols.

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