

# Operating Archetypes

*Philanthropy's New Analytical  
Tool for Strategic Clarity*



ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY ADVISORS  
THEORY OF THE FOUNDATION INITIATIVE®

### About this Paper

This publication is part of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors' multi-year Theory of the Foundation® initiative, which seeks to enhance the capacity of philanthropies to effectively align their resources for the impact they envision. *Operating Archetypes* is a new tool for action and alignment for funders seeking to optimize their operations and impact. We hope that both established and emerging funders, as well as the broader community of grantees and partners, will find this new analytical framework enriching and beneficial in their pursuit of thoughtful and effective philanthropy.

Visit <https://www.rockpa.org/project/theory-of-the-foundation/> for more detail on this initiative and to read the full range of publications.

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**Authors:**

Olga Tarasov

Melissa A. Berman

Renee Karibi-Whyte

We appreciate invaluable insights and contributions to this work  
from Donzelina Barroso, Heather Grady, Mae Hong, Greg Ratliff  
and Caroline Suozzi.



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# Introduction

Philanthropies around the world face the same question: how to best align their considerable resources—in other words, their operating models—to fulfill not only their missions, but also the promise of philanthropy to provide support to people and communities who need it most.

The answer to this question has become ever more elusive given the seismic shocks caused by the global pandemic, as socio-economic inequities, growing polarization, institutional racism, and climate change challenge the legitimacy and purpose of philanthropy. Also impacting this analysis are the new philanthropic models that are transforming the sector, to some extent in response to these events. Radically flexible and unrestricted giving (exemplified by MacKenzie Scott and Dan Jewett), participatory grantmaking, spend-down philanthropy, crypto donors, decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs), limited liability companies (LLCs), more funder collaboratives, and increased use of impact investing all contribute to uprooting established norms to achieve transformational change.

This moment challenges philanthropies to review not just what they seek to do, but how they accomplish it, and how they engage with grantees, partners, and communities to create that change.

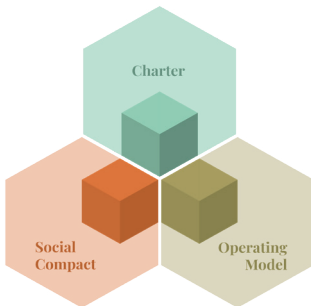
In response, Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA), along with members of the [Theory of the Foundation Learning Collaborative](#) and dozens of funders and thought partners around the world, developed *Operating Archetypes*. This new instrument is intended to provide funders seeking to optimize their operations and impact with a mirror that serves as a tool for action and alignment. We hope this new analytical framework will enrich the field of philanthropy, benefit a diverse range of funders, and provide additional insight for the broader community of grantees and partners.

# Operating Archetypes: an Extension of the Philanthropy Framework

A philanthropy's Operating Archetype articulates how it deploys its resources, capacities, relationships and principles to implement its vision and strategy. An Operating Archetype illustrates what a philanthropy seeks to achieve and how it puts its resources to work.

RPA's Operating Archetypes flow from [\*The Philanthropy Framework\*](#), which was developed in 2019 based on interviews with 75 foundations and dozens of working sessions with more than 200 funders, experts and research partners in the US, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The Framework is comprised of three core elements:



- ***Charter*** - the organization's scope, form of governance and decision-making protocol
- ***Social compact*** - implicit or explicit agreement with society about the value the organization will create, including questions of accountability and legitimacy
- ***Operating model*** - the approach to the resources, structures and systems needed to implement strategy

Together, these elements define a philanthropy's culture, inform its structure and shape how it carries out its strategy—and, along with additional considerations, inform its Operating Archetype.

The Philanthropy Framework was developed to help philanthropic entities better:

- Assess, validate or crystallize identity, structure and approaches.
- Align trustees, board and staff around core concepts and values.
- Manage organizational inflection points, such as leadership transitions, restructuring, change in time horizon, shifts of focus, new strategic direction or a new operational approach.
- Allocate financial and non-financial resources to maximize impact.
- Identify and articulate the current state and future vision of an organization in order to realize aspirational goals.

# Operating Archetypes and Core Attributes

Based on extensive, multi-year global research, RPA has so far distilled eight distinct Operating Archetypes. The descriptive names for the archetypes are intended as metaphors—not literal descriptions—based on familiar organizational concepts.



**Talent Agency:** Seeks out, strengthens, and promotes leading individual or organizational change agents who are closest to the issue, focusing more on their potential than on their programmatic goals or strategies.



**Think Tank:** Applies its in-house expertise and research to design policy or systemic solutions, then introduces/markets/socializes the approach to others, and finds implementers for those solutions.



**Campaign Manager:** Pulls together a diverse set of players (funders, grantees, public sector, other larger system actors) to implement complex, time-intensive solutions that often cross sectors and traditional program areas. Often creates collaborative funding vehicles.



**Field Builder:** Launches or significantly strengthens institutions to fill a gap and create a robust, vibrant ecosystem needed to address a large challenge or to advance an issue area. Grows organizations and movements through steady, largely hands-off, support.



**Venture Catalyst:** Provides early, often unrestricted, funding to organizations or interventions that are new or have little proven track record. Venture Catalysts often use open competitions to source ideas, and rely on extensive networks of external experts to assess and formulate needs/problems, goals, and strategies.



**Designer:** Leverages mainly internal expertise to design programs and approaches. Starting with an understanding of the context based on research and interaction, and with end users in mind, it prototypes, iterates and communicates to engage and influence end-users.



**Underwriter:** An institutional or private funder who provides “big bet” support to major institutions (often cultural, medical or educational), civic groups or favored causes based on long-standing interests, values or personal experience. Financial support can be provided directly or through a range of trusted individuals.



**Sower:** Provides a large number of grants across a diverse range of individual actors and institutions, often exercising responsive, flexible and participatory grantmaking. Sowers bet on the cumulative effect of this approach to seed wide-ranging change.







Each Operating Archetype is defined by several core attributes, including:

- **Reason/Value Proposition.** What do you do and why?
- **Resources/Lead With.** What is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?
- **Key Capabilities/Skills.** What are your top skills, areas of expertise or capabilities?
- **Equity.** How do you include the voices most affected and share power to advance equity?
- **Response/Activities.** What do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?
- **Primary Audience.** For whom do you do it?
- **Community Served (if different from primary audience).** For whom do you do it?
- **Relationships/Alliances.** With whom do you do it?
- **Impact Assessment.** Where do you look for results?




**Reviewing or evaluating an operating archetype, or considering a strategic pivot to a different model, gives funders a method to engage in intentional analysis of operational implications, including prioritization of resources and capabilities.**

Operating Archetypes | Operating Archetypes and Core Attributes





The chart below illustrates the core attributes of each Operating Archetype.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	OPERATING ARCHETYPES			
	 Talent Agency	 Think Tank	 Campaign Manager	 Field Builder
<b>Reason/Value Proposition</b> (what do you do and why?)	Build promising people and orgs closest to the issue	Provide research and position papers to policy makers and implementers	Bring together actors and stakeholders for deeper, more sustainable solutions	Fill gaps and drive advancement
<b>Resources/Lead With</b> (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Instinct	Data Political philosophy	Convening power	Knowledge
<b>Key Capabilities/ Skills</b> (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Identify potential relationships Visible platform/ reputation	Problem definition Analysis Develop possible solutions	Communication Advocacy Convening power Visible leadership	Relationships Vision
<b>Equity</b> (how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)	Ensure that talent identification does not just rely on elite networks	Incorporate frontline voices in defining problems and appropriate solutions instead of relying exclusively on established thought leaders	Empower leaders closest to the issues to design and coordinate campaign strategies	Prioritize the perspectives and experiences of frontline movements, and marginalized communities in supporting/creating organizations.





Operating Archetypes | Operating Archetypes and Core Attributes

CORE ATTRIBUTES	OPERATING ARCHETYPES			
	 Talent Agency	 Think Tank	 Campaign Manager	 Field Builder
<b>Response/ Activities</b> (what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)	Develop leaders Shine spotlights Convene networks/cohorts Communicate via media and website	Study problems Produce research and data Disseminate research via media or directly to primary audience (i.e. policymakers)	Awareness-building Advocacy Convene key stakeholders Communicate via media or directly to primary audiences	Advocacy Convening Capacity-building Direct communication with target audiences via various channels
<b>Primary Audience</b> (for whom do you do it?)	Individual actors	Policymakers Various institutions Sector leaders	Issue/ initiative-specific stakeholders	Institutions
<b>Community Served</b> (if different from primary audience) (for whom do you do it?)	Grantees/fellows	Policymakers and decisionmakers	General public People most affected	Specific sectors General public Underserved communities, sectors
<b>Relationships/ Alliances</b> (with whom do you do it?)	Peer funders Grantees Experts Institutions	Experts Academia	Peer funders Change agents (frontline groups & communities, opinion leaders, media, policymakers)	Experts and opinion leaders Affected communities Peer funders Academia
<b>Impact Assessment</b> (where do you look for results?)	Achievements of grantees, including influence	Acceptance, influence and then adoption of research	Empower leaders closest to the coalition goals (physical entity; policy; opinion shifts) and coordinate campaign strategies	Existence and ongoing viability of critical organizations

Operating Archetypes | Operating Archetypes and Core Attributes

CORE ATTRIBUTES	OPERATING ARCHETYPES			
	 Venture Catalyst	 Designer	 Underwriter	 Sower
<b>Reason/Value Proposition</b> (what do you do and why?)	Risk capital to give on-ramp to voices and actors that may otherwise be unheard or unsupported	Craft and find partners to test models that, if successful, can be copied and scaled	Support causes that are personally important; to leave a legacy	Desire to have broad-ranging impact across many areas in a broad field or specific geography
<b>Resources/Lead With</b> (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Early, flexible funding	Expertise	Big bets	Reach
<b>Key Capabilities/ Skills</b> (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Risk-taking/ experimentation Assessment and analysis Investment	Influence Knowledge/ expertise	Personal conviction Grantmaking	Identifying changemakers Breadth of vision
<b>Equity</b> (how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)	Expand both the network of experts and the “investment” opportunities to include those most affected by the problems	Develop design and implementation processes driven by communities	Explore how key institutions or their programs can reach and center marginalized communities	Establish robust feedback loops for substantive input in decision-making
<b>Response/ Activities</b> (what do you do to tackle the problem and/ or advance a solution?)	Open competitions Research and analysis Seed grantmaking Convening cohorts of experts and partners	Engineer interventions and approaches Commission and disseminate research	Distribute large sums Partner in grantee communications	Provide large quantity of funding Convene cohorts and networks

Operating Archetypes | Operating Archetypes and Core Attributes

CORE ATTRIBUTES	OPERATING ARCHETYPES			
	 Venture Catalyst	 Designer	 Underwriter	 Sower
<b>Primary Audience</b> (for whom do you do it?)	Grantees	Implementing partners	Grantees	Issue/ initiative-specific stakeholders
<b>Community Served</b> (if different from primary audience) (for whom do you do it?)	Broad range of communities and sectors	Issue/ initiative-specific stakeholders	A wide range of cultural, academic or civic institutions	A wide range of underserved sectors or communities
<b>Relationships/ Alliances</b> (with whom do you do it?)	Intersectional experts Advisors Researchers Peer funders	Experts Opinion/sector leaders Peer funders	Advisors Experts Peer funders	Advisors Experts Opinion/sector leaders Peer funders
<b>Impact Assessment</b> (where do you look for results?)	Funded organizations prove their model, additional capital attracted	Implementers succeed in achieving design objectives	Key organizations leverage funding to achieve/expand impact over time	Key indicators of community resilience and well-being improve over time

# Archetype Examples at a Glance\*

We profiled a number of foundations that exemplify different Operating Archetypes. These are featured below.



**Talent Agency:** The Skoll Award for Social Innovation (US) identifies, funds, champions, and amplifies the voices of changemakers closest to issues and/or communities who are advocating for reforms or creating innovative solutions to pressing, often systems-level problems.



**Think Tank:** Arnold Ventures (US) relies on its top-notch in-house team of experts to develop knowledge, support advocacy efforts and interface with policymakers on evidence-based policies and programs that maximize opportunity and minimize injustice.



**Campaign Manager:** Officine Grandi Reparazioni (OGR), Fondazione CRT, (Italy) leverages the leadership, talent, and reputation of the foundation to bring together experts in distinct fields, including private sector, cultural institutions, and public sector, to sustain and advance OGR as a physical space for ideation, innovation, and philanthropic support.



**Field Builder:** Wellcome Trust (UK) strengthens institutions responsible for generating, disseminating, and applying scientific insights, in order to catalyze breakthrough ideas and establish the evidence base for effective health interventions to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone with a focus on mental health, infections disease, and the intersection of climate change and health.



**Venture Catalyst:** Boticário Group Foundation (Brazil) funds unestablished and innovative environmental and nature conservation initiatives via grantmaking and other financial instruments, including an environmental impact acceleration program to strengthen the business community's impact investing capacity.



**Designer:** The William G. McGowan Charitable Fund's NEPA Readiness In Skilled Employment (RISE) Program (US) supports a comprehensive services program it developed by leveraging internal expertise and with input from local partners to facilitate workforce development and job placement in Northeastern Pennsylvania.



**Underwriter:** The Arts in Health Program of the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund (US), shaped by the values, interests, and principles of an engaged and dedicated founder, uses the arts as a vehicle for improving lives and creates opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable New Yorkers to enjoy healthy, fulfilling lives.



**Sower:** Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) Initiative, Ford Foundation (US) supports a diverse set social justice organizations worldwide via multi-year general operating funding and targeted technical assistance, as they clarify their strategy, optimize their operations, and maximize their impact in tackling inequality.

\*Click on the name of each foundation to see the expanded case study. The full collection of case studies is included at the end of [this report](#).

# Archetypes in Practice

As these archetypes are metaphoric, idealized representations, few organizations will fall completely and exclusively within one type. Accordingly, some funders may recognize themselves in more than one archetype, especially where different program areas within their philanthropy use different approaches. Indeed, while many philanthropies that RPA has analyzed clearly fit into a single archetype, others exhibit features from several models. And many funders' Operating Archetypes will change over time, as a field or their approach to impact shifts. For example, as awareness and consensus about an issue grow, a funder may move from Campaign Manager to Field Builder.

However, RPA has found that foundations comfortable with a blurred array of archetypes may be limiting their impact. One foundation we worked with, for example, used a range of program initiatives typical of the Talent Agency, Campaign Manager, Field Builder, Venture Catalyst and Designer across its portfolio. The resulting complexity strained the staff members, who needed to employ disparate skills, activities, and relationships. It also made evaluating impact remarkably difficult.

## OBSERVATIONS ON SPECIFIC ARCHETYPES

Reviewing or evaluating an Operating Archetype, or considering a strategic pivot to a different model, gives funders a method to engage in intentional analysis of operational implications, including prioritization of resources and capabilities. This analysis would also include potential advantages and drawbacks of each model. Some components of this inquiry will be particular to the individual funder. After all, each philanthropy has a unique origin story, set of values, vision, priorities, internal dynamics, tolerance for risk, and preferred communication style. Nonetheless, Operating Archetypes are based on important commonalities. Thinking through defining characteristics of the Operating Archetypes will enable funders to amplify strengths, take informed risks, and make more intentional decisions.



Here are some selected insights from RPA's research and practice:

**Talent Agencies** often use open competitions and talent identification processes to expand the range of changemakers and to raise up unexpected ideas and players previously unknown to the funder. The Skoll Foundation, for example, has been experimenting with new ways of supporting social impact by engaging a diverse range of actors. According to Rachel Flynn, director of Funder Alliances, "Rather than a singular focus on mezzanine stage social entrepreneurs and their organizations, we're now also identifying and making grants to movement builders, organizers, local leaders, and also big international non-governmental organizations..."<sup>1</sup> Lever for Change—another example of a Talent Agency—uses open competitions to find and support solutions to the world's most significant challenges. Lever for Change's method prioritizes full transparency in communicating criteria, evaluation process, timelines, and even the identities of competition judges.<sup>2</sup> Both of these Talent Agencies use internal resources to steward extensive networks of partners and experts, and to continuously expand search activities beyond an elite network bubble.



Communication is a key function for **Think Tanks**, which are typically focused on disseminating findings on complex issues to decisionmakers, affected communities, and the general public. For example, Arnold Ventures, which represents a Think Tank archetype, has an imperative to identify, promote and invest in evidence-based policies and programs that maximize opportunity and minimize injustice. In addition to building the evidence base for effective social policy, Arnold Ventures has begun to invest increasingly in communicating and promoting its findings.<sup>3</sup> As the foundation's vice president Sam Mar put it, "Research and evidence are great and necessary to know what policies work and why but



none of that is sufficient if nobody is aware of this knowledge.”<sup>4</sup>

In addition to exhibiting leadership, **Campaign Managers** often lean on the intangible capabilities of agility, patience, and trust. Having these qualities reflected in their staffing and communications enables them to navigate the broad range of viewpoints, approaches, and theories of change held by the stakeholders across different sectors while building consensus around campaigns. Ramping up communications is important to building trust, as well as relaying goals, and thus to sustaining momentum. Similarly, this archetype may need to invest in relationship building and management, in order to strengthen its core function as convener. Also, when an external context shifts, Campaign Managers use their agility to pivot along with partners and redirect resources to other activities in a timely manner. As a Campaign Manager with a strong appetite for risk, Turin’s Officine Grandi Riparazioni (OGR, one of Fondazione CRT’s signature programs and an international philanthropic hub for innovation and contemporary culture, has developed a deliberately vague innovation category within its annual budget to allow for flexibility and easier flow between art and culture, technology, and programs that incorporate both.<sup>5</sup> This flexibility also makes it possible for OGR to complement its proactive approach with responsive programming.<sup>6</sup> For example, at the height of the first wave of the pandemic, a wing of OGR was transformed into a 100-bed field hospital to relieve overcrowded hospitals.<sup>7</sup> For Campaign Managers, maintaining trust under changing circumstances is central.



In fulfilling their mission, **Field Builders** rely not only on deep internal expertise specific to the target field, but also on an extensive external ecosystem of

experts, implementing partners and target audiences or communities. This helps to build more powerful ripple effects and long-term sustainability, particular concerns when field builders exit the field. To do this more effectively, this archetype increasingly relies on a robust communication function. As a globally recognized Field Builder, Wellcome Trust is dedicated to strengthening institutions responsible for generating, disseminating, and applying scientific insights to catalyze breakthrough ideas and establish the evidence base for effective health interventions.<sup>8</sup> In addition to building knowledge by working with external researchers, Wellcome has invested in deepening its in-house roster of scientific experts and advisors who help guide the organization and communicate research findings to relevant audiences.<sup>9</sup>



**Venture Catalysts** embrace flexibility, experimentation, and risk to help untested, early-stage solutions take root and deliver meaningful social impact. Funders of this archetype have fluency in a variety of funding tools, including grantmaking and impact investment. Additionally, this archetype requires a focus on convening power to bring a diverse chorus of voices to sharpen its lens for discovering and investing in promising early-stage solutions. As a Venture Catalyst focused on promoting and enabling biodiversity conservation in Brazil, Boticário Group Foundation uses a variety of financial instruments, including an environmental impact acceleration program to strengthen the business community's impact investing capacity.<sup>10</sup> To do this, the foundation relies on community leaders, who have lived experience and place-based knowledge, to accelerate innovative programs both within and outside the areas of foundation expertise.<sup>11</sup> According to Thiago Piazzetta Valente, a biodiversity specialist at the foundation, "We realized early on



that... we need to connect with broader ecosystems and use our philanthropic resources as flexible, catalytic capital for impact entrepreneurship.”<sup>12</sup>

**Designers** tend to work in areas where other funder support or solutions are absent. Even in this context, Designers consider how solitary or internally-driven interventions will affect stakeholders. That makes extensive landscape research and assessment—including conversations with affected populations, issue or geographic area experts and other funders—important to ensure that the envisioned program design will tackle an actual unfilled need. When the Chicago-based William G. McGowan Charitable Fund created its Readiness In Skilled Employment (RISE) program in 2022 to tackle the high levels of unemployment in a remote region of Northeastern Pennsylvania, it was not spurred by the belief that funder knows best.<sup>13</sup> Rather, according to the fund’s executive director Diana Spencer, it was driven by the “intense desire to implement comprehensive solutions to a dire need in the community. No other organization was filling the niche.” By thoroughly researching the need to develop a successful, evidence-based intervention, this Designer eventually aims to scale its program through the public sector.<sup>14</sup>



**Underwriters** normally run lean operations that prioritize grantmaking and relationship-building capabilities, and are driven by the values, interests, or personal experiences of the living founder or founder’s legacy. Typically, Underwriters provide long-term, meaningful support to significant or cherished institutions. Effective Underwriters periodically review how their long-term personal convictions, values, and interests can address the challenges of the day, such as, for example, thinking about how to center historically marginalized and vulnerable communities,



including through the elite institutions they support. As an Underwriter guided by the values and principles of an engaged, dedicated founder—Laurie M. Tisch—the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund’s Arts in Health program is committed to learning from others and exercising a responsive approach to programming by focusing on supporting goals defined by field leaders.<sup>15</sup> According to executive director Rick Luftglass, “We weren’t coming up with solutions. We were identifying what’s out there that could be leveraged, tapped, expanded and built upon.”<sup>16</sup>

For **Sowers**, flexible and unrestricted financial instruments, reputation, network- and relationship-building, partnerships, and leadership are ranked among top resources and capabilities. These are prioritized by structuring ongoing relationships, including input and feedback loops with grantees. However, Sowers may run the risk of going too broad, becoming overstretched in commitments and focus. Thus, adept Sowers intentionally focus on revisiting strategy and on developing robust evaluation approaches to ensure their strategy produces the envisioned result. As a Sower, the Ford Foundation’s Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) initiative fulfills its mission of addressing inequality primarily by leveraging substantial financial resources, which are augmented by its reputation, influence and leadership.<sup>17</sup> In addition to its flexible grants, partnership and participation are integral to BUILD.<sup>18</sup> According to program director Kathy Reich, the initiative is “constantly seeking grantees’ input, including in development and revision of strategy for BUILD, in all of our technical assistance offerings, and in our evaluation. We make sure there is really meaningful grantee partner voice.”<sup>19</sup>



## EMERGING THEMES

### Trust-based Philanthropy

Although all archetypes can meaningfully pursue equity, the Talent Agency, Venture Catalyst and Sower types are especially well positioned to embrace trust-based philanthropy because they put those closest to the challenges being addressed at the center of their work. These archetypes also lead with similar capabilities, including relationships/networks, flexibility/agility, and knowledge, and maintain more hands-off approaches that allow grantees to envision and drive their own programming. For lasting effectiveness, these and other archetypes invest in communications as a way of enhancing transparency, trust, and more equitable power dynamics.



### Systems Change

In response to complex, interwoven, and escalating challenges, a growing number of funders leverage systems-oriented strategies. While most Operating Archetypes can incorporate systems approaches, Talent Agencies, Think Tanks, Campaign Managers, Field Builders and Sowers are by nature well-equipped to tackle wide-ranging systems change. To do so effectively, these archetypes lean into their internal expertise and knowledge, extensive networks, proximity to target audiences, convening power, capacity-building, and advocacy or communications abilities. For Designers and Underwriters wishing to contribute to systems change it is important to analyze what niche their capabilities can fill in the overall landscape.



### Assessing Impact

Measuring and demonstrating impact is central to all archetypes, although its expression may differ. For Campaign Managers and Think Tanks, assessing the impact of initiatives with specific, time-bound, tangible end products,



this task may be straightforward. For other archetypes, including Field Builders, Designers, Talent Agencies, and Sowers, experimental funding decisions and “big bets” may create unexpected results that require a different type of goalpost for impact assessment. For archetypes such as Venture Catalyst and Sower—that favor unrestricted funding—assessment models, frameworks and metrics can be co-developed with grantees once their work is underway.

### Talent and Recruiting

Operating Archetypes influence the approach to recruiting and talent. For example, the Think Tank, Designer and Field Builder archetypes need specialists with deep issue expertise. In contrast, archetypes like Campaign Manager and Talent Agency may need a more general level of knowledge but a higher level of expertise in building networks and coalitions. Despite some in the sector moving toward hiring generalist talent, many funders still use issue area expertise as the key criterion in recruiting, regardless of what skills the archetype demands for success. Instead, funders may want to consider their talent needs based on their archetype.

This is even more important for those funders who end up transitioning archetypes. Highly specialized Think Tanks, Field Builders and Designers that shift to a more generalist model, such as Campaign Manager, Venture Catalyst, or Sower, need a different constellation of talent and capacities. Deep expertise becomes less valuable. Instead, these archetypes seek generalists who can convene, cultivate networks and build relationships. Career paths and off-ramps may need to be created for talent who are deep issue or technical experts exclusively. This pivot also calls for investing in a more robust communication function to support advocacy, relationship-building and programmatic efforts.



## Scaling Up or Spending Down? How Thinking Through Operating Archetypes Can Help Optimize Operations and Impact

The magnitude of challenges confronting society today, along with shifting social norms, has prompted many philanthropies to embrace the call to act with more urgency. As a result, more funders are increasingly looking to either scale up their ongoing philanthropic efforts in hopes of amplifying impact or to “go all in now” by spending down their resources over a concentrated period of time. However, this process does not simply boil down to choosing a spending rate; rather it involves a careful review of strategy to marshal and leverage the right resources at the right scale and the right time.

While there is no magic formula that will yield the exact path forward, a thoughtful and deliberative Operating Archetype analysis will illuminate important considerations, including what funders are best positioned to do, by what means, and with whom. This, in turn, will help prioritize and sequence scaling up or spending down objectives, and achieve greater strategic clarity, responsiveness, and impact.

**Talent Agencies** looking to scale up often start by increasing unrestricted giving, investing in more staff with key substantial skills for this archetype, and expanding the number of convening platforms. At the same time, scaling up entails expanding the communications function and dedicating more funding to collaborative undertakings with peer funders. Talent Agencies looking to spend down and exit the field might consider thinking through potential partners to continue the work, as well as the legacy and learnings the funder will leave behind. Thus, while programming, staff, and funding will gradually reduce according to the envisioned timeframe, the grantmaking, communications, and learning functions remain until the end.

**Think Tanks** choosing to ramp up operations prioritize scaling up internal expertise, research, and analytical capacity. One critical decision at this juncture is whether to go deeper with current issues, or



broader into new areas. Ensuring that findings have a significant impact will require expanding advocacy efforts—and advocacy talent—as well as investment in communications. For Think Tanks deciding to wind down, it may make sense to increase focus on policy reform as a way of driving systemic change that outlives the organization itself.

**Campaign Managers** scaling up need more staff proficient in advocacy, convening, building coalitions, communications and grantmaking. Campaign Managers seeking to end operations may want to focus on communicating their plans, including timelines, to stakeholders, and to raising awareness of the issue's importance.

**Field Builders** looking to scale up efforts invest in internal knowledge and expertise, as well as in expanding the capacity of external networks of experts, advisors, and institutions. This may entail providing more unrestricted, general support to institutions and movements. To accelerate the intended impact, advocacy and communication capabilities may be ramped up significantly. In spending down, Field Builders undertake serious evaluation efforts to ensure that the organizations, policies, and networks created or supported are viable and will continue to thrive post-exit. Additionally, Field Builders often make big-bet, legacy grants to key institutions to ensure that the field is positioned to achieve impact well into the future.

**Venture Catalysts** scaling up their efforts might prioritize recruiting additional staff with expertise in and proximity to focus issue areas and geographies. Other steps could include expanding the arsenal of financial instruments and building networks along with additional convening spaces. Venture Catalysts looking to spend down may engage in significant efforts to ensure that the organizations with proven viability are able to attract additional funding.

**Designers** looking to ramp up their philanthropic interventions invest in internal research, landscape analysis, program design capacities, and the learning/impact assessment function. Expanding advocacy, communications, and relationship-building, especially with policymakers, can ensure faster adoption and scaling of designed interventions.

When winding down, Designers generally seek to provide support that will ensure that their exit will not adversely affect the sustainability or scalability of the programs, implementing partners or communities served.

**Underwriters** scaling up their philanthropic interventions recruit talent with grantmaking, program design, evaluation, and relationship-building expertise. A bigger investment in external consultants, experts, and advisors, as well as in expanding networks and convening space can also be considered. For Underwriters planning to spend down, it is important to focus on evaluation and learning efforts, as well as communications, in order to solidify the desired legacy. Another technique cited is to provide spin-off legacy grants to key institutions.

**Sowers** looking to scale up their already expansive efforts can increase both the amount of individual grants and the number of grants. This, in turn, entails hiring additional staff for both grantmaking and building strong trust-based relationships. An expanded communications function will facilitate robust feedback loops and disseminate learnings. Additional funding and talent could be dedicated to building networks of grantees and peer funders. For Sowers who choose to spend down, it is important to invest in regular evaluation efforts to ensure the sustainability and resilience of grantees, as well as in preserving and curating insights and learnings.

# Embedding Equity

Funders and grantees have been increasingly vocal about inequitable power dynamics within philanthropy. Many are championing trust-based, flexible, participatory, and inclusive giving. As they embark on this journey, funders across the Operating Archetypes (see table on pages 10-13) note the following factors:

**Financial Resources:** As most philanthropies lead with financial resources, they hold power. Embedding equity in an Operating Archetype involves sharing or ceding this power by engaging in flexible, unrestricted giving; easing application and reporting burdens; and including grantees and members of frontline communities in decision-making.

**Talent:** Most philanthropies consider their staff to be a leading asset. Staff often act as experts, implementers of operating models, and stewards of key resources, frontline work, relationships and knowledge. To center internal and external equity, philanthropies are increasingly hiring people with lived experiences who bring a diversity of perspectives and bridges to communities they are serving. Additionally, staff closest to the field can be empowered to shape programs, and key decisions.

**Governance and Decision-making:** Who sits at the decision-making table matters. Philanthropies looking to embed more equitable practices in their archetypes seek alignment with the board on questions of internal and external equity. Crucially, they aim to ensure that the board represents a diversity of perspectives, lived experiences and communities.

**Communication:** Funders embedding equity incorporate grantee perspectives in a way that

**Who sits at the decision-making table matters. Philanthropies looking to embed more equitable practices in their archetypes seek alignment with the board on questions of internal and external equity.**

is authentic. This entails actively using robust feedback loops and allowing grantees and communities to interact openly without funder participation. It is common knowledge that candor can be muted if a funder is present.

**Networks and Relationships:** Shifting power dynamics requires philanthropies to be mindful about what networks they participate in to avoid the echo chamber trap. Inviting the full range of voices to the table for planning, program design and decision-making also alters the power dynamic.

**Risk:** Philanthropies seeking to integrate equity in all aspects of their Operating Archetype undertake intentional efforts to cede power by embracing risk and learning from failure. This not only enables innovative solutions to come to the fore but also allows for solutions to be driven by those closest to the issues and communities.

## **Philanthropy's License to Operate: the Importance of Reflecting on the Intersection of Accountability and Legitimacy**

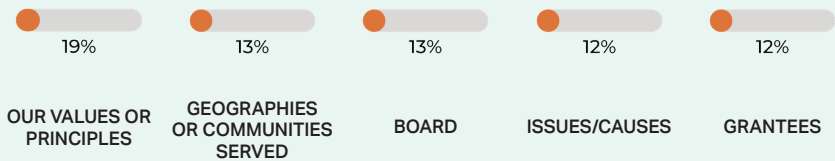
The question of legitimacy has gained increased attention in the last few years as stinging critiques of the philanthropic sector have emerged from outside observers and within. Accountability has similarly been under the microscope, particularly as more voices point out that philanthropy remains largely unaccountable. As a result, many funders are becoming more open and concerned about the imbalance of power inherent to philanthropy. These funders, along with nonprofit leaders, are also becoming more conscientious and vocal about the need to recognize, call out and abandon extractive, exploitative or performative practices vis-a-vis grantees and communities. Nonetheless, for many philanthropies, to whom or what they feel accountable is often unconnected to what they consider to be the sources of their legitimacy. This discrepancy shines a spotlight on an underexplored

and underappreciated interrelationship between accountability and legitimacy.

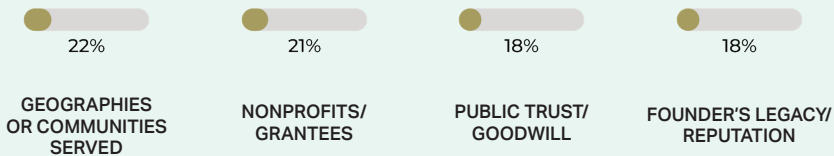
Why is this intersection important, and how can a thoughtful examination of it lead to more balanced and equitable power dynamics? In a reciprocal sense, a philanthropy should feel accountable to the sources that grant its interventions legitimacy and license to operate. To an extent, sources of legitimacy serve as formal or informal goalposts of accountability. Demonstrating accountability through transparent communications, participatory approaches to grantmaking, external equity, inclusion and racial justice efforts, and public evaluations can all help build legitimacy.

In 2021, RPA launched an [Online Self-Assessment Tool\\*](#) based on the Philanthropy Framework and designed to help funders better understand how their processes align with external actions. To date, the tool has been self-administered by nearly 400 respondents around the world. These contributions provide illuminating insights into how the intersection of legitimacy and accountability remains philanthropy’s blind spot.

When asked to specify top three entities to whom they feel accountable, most respondents ranked as their top choice:



However, when asked to list their main sources of legitimacy, respondents listed as top choices:



Significantly, among respondents who cited “Geographies or Communities Served” as one of top three sources from which they derive legitimacy, less than half felt accountable to the same category. Also noteworthy is that only 2% of funders feel accountable to staff, which has implications for internal equity, inclusion, and power dynamics.

These divergences call for both attention and action. Ideally, this process should also include building accountability mechanisms and feedback loops with staff, grantees, and partners. Failure to do so could contribute to fractured trust, credibility, and reputation, and could also exacerbate internal and external inequities.

\*You can access the tool and contribute your insights [here](#).

## Conclusion: Leveraging the Benefits of Operating Archetypes

Focusing on an Operating Archetype allows a funder to articulate how it uses its resources, instruments, and capacities to fulfill its vision.

Archetypes can help funders better understand **where they are** (current state), **where they want to go** (aspirational state), **how they compare** to other players in the field, and their **unique position** in the ecosystem of other philanthropies and partners. Understanding Operating Archetypes enables a philanthropy to:

- Better align existing resources, skill sets, and approaches
- Map potential gaps in internal capabilities or external changes that must be addressed
- Allow for thoughtful strategic pivots, including scaling up or spending down operations
- Ensure the different Operating Archetypes employed by an organization compliment one another

## Operating Archetypes | Conclusion

- Illuminate and eliminate tensions in how a philanthropy views itself and how it actually works
- Address issues of equity and inclusion
- Design impact assessment methods that link to the funder's operating approach

And, like its Philanthropy Framework, a philanthropy's Operating Archetypes can (and should!) be revisited as conditions shift.

As philanthropies apply this instrument, their insights will contribute to more powerful impact for our sector as a whole. We are grateful to the Theory of the Foundation Learning Community and all our thought partners for their commitment to advancing the practice of philanthropy.

# Operating Archetypes in Action: Foundation Case Studies



Source: skoll.org



## TALENT AGENCY

### The Skoll Award for Social Innovation, Skoll Foundation

**Location:** United States

**Year founded:** 1999

**Foundation type:** Independent or private endowed foundation

**Grantmaking budget:** \$140 million/year

**Operating budget:** \$100 million/year

**Focus areas:** Climate, racial justice, pandemics and health systems strengthening, effective governance, inclusive economies

**Staff size:** 65

The Skoll Foundation's flagship program, the Skoll Award for Social Innovation (SASI), is a paradigmatic example of the Talent Agency operating model. Talent Agencies seek out, strengthen, and promote trailblazing change agents, focusing more on potential for future impact than on current operations. Under this Skoll program, selected social innovators determined to be poised to generate significant impact each receive unrestricted funding over three years to scale up their work and

further support their respective ecosystem. The funding is just one part of the Skoll Foundation's three-pronged strategy, which the organization expresses as "invest, connect, and champion." Thus, Skoll's impact is based not only on monetary awards (invest), but also on convening social impact practitioners



(connect) and on spotlighting social impact talent (champion), thereby helping promising changemakers win recognition and support from other potential funders and collaborators.

To implement its Talent Agency operating model type, the Skoll Foundation relies on a deep approach to its programming, which is focused on the Skoll Award as one of the organization's central initiatives. The Skoll Foundation invests considerable resources in maximizing the visibility and influence of the Award and chooses to be quite disciplined in following the implementation blueprint. This blueprint includes rigorously vetting candidates and showcasing awardees at the Skoll World Forum, an annual convening of global leaders of social change initiatives. Yet disciplined does not necessarily mean dogmatic or static; the Skoll Foundation has been experimenting with new ways of identifying and supporting social impact talent. Rachel Flynn, director of Funder Alliances at Skoll, explains that the foundation has begun undertaking a more systems-oriented strategy for addressing social and environmental problems, which involves engaging a diverse range of actors: "Rather than a singular focus on mezzanine stage social entrepreneurs and their organizations, we're now also identifying and making grants to movement builders, organizers, local leaders, and also big international non-governmental organizations in a way that represents a significant shift from who we were funding—and how we were funding them—in the past."

One of the distinguishing attributes of the Talent Agency operating model is the recognition that individuals and organizations with direct exposure to the issues they aim to solve often bring unique insight and capabilities. The Skoll Foundation demonstrates this awareness in its programming. As Flynn points

**Skoll prioritizes  
"finding those  
proximate leaders with  
lived experience in  
the communities and  
regions experiences the  
challenges they've set  
out to solve."**

**Rachel Flynn**  
Director, Funder Alliances,  
Skoll Foundation

out, Skoll prioritizes “finding those proximate leaders with lived experience in the communities and regions experiencing the challenges they’ve set out to solve.” This readiness to defer to those with direct experience with the social challenges they are tackling reflects a relatively decentralized approach to decision-making, whereby key strategy and design input comes from partners, not exclusively from organizational leadership. Decentralized decision-making, in turn, informs Skoll’s proactive approach to identifying thematic priorities and helps Skoll staff and leadership to determine target issue areas for funding.

Though funding is obviously a major boost to the awardees who receive it, the benefits of the Skoll Award extend beyond money. Being recognized as a Skoll Awardee—indeed, even as a finalist—is a clear sign to other funders of an organization’s potential to effect major impact. In recognition of this value, the foundation relies on a highly networked operating approach to relationships to deliver this talent-signaling benefit. Flynn and her colleagues at Skoll spend much of their time talking to other funders about the organizations they have engaged through the Skoll Award. Still, even though collaboration is central to this Talent Agency’s work, the Skoll Foundation builds much of the resourcing for the Skoll Awards internally, engaging external consultants only in limited and targeted elements of program execution. In doing so, the organization ensures that the Skoll Awards maintain fidelity to founder Jeff Skoll’s vision and a Talent Agency’s central mission of recognizing leading agents of social impact.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	
Reason/Value Proposition (what do you do and why?)	To invest in, connect and champion promising social innovators and change agents
Resources/Lead With (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Financial resources and flexibility Reputation Networks
Key Capabilities/Skills (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Identifying leading agents of social impact Learning Collaboration

**Equity**

(how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)

Does not exclusively rely on organizational leadership for strategic and program design, instead intentionally seeking out and deferring to input of community leaders with lived experience in focus areas

**Response/Activities**

(what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)

Significant unrestricted funding  
Convening social change agents  
Helping changemakers obtain recognition and support from funders and members of the ecosystem  
Engaging a diverse range of actors from a variety of sectors

**Primary Audience**

(for whom do you do it?)

Promising social impact changemakers  
Partner funders  
Systems-change ecosystem

**Community Served**

(*if different from primary audience*)  
(for whom do you do it?)

Communities impacted by climate change, socio-economic inequities and systemic injustices  
Philanthropic ecosystem/partner funders

**Relationships/Alliances**

(with whom do you do it?)

Peer funders  
International nonprofit sector  
Grantee partners/supported changemakers

**Impact Assessment**

(where do you look for results?)

Proven successes of supported changemakers' interventions, support of award finalists and winners by other funders, and adoption of systems-change best practices by peer funders and other partners in the ecosystem



Source: [arnoldventures.org](http://arnoldventures.org)



## THINK TANK

### Arnold Ventures

**Location:** United States

**Year founded:** 2010

**Foundation type:** Family-led philanthropy

**Grantmaking budget:** \$400 million/year

**Focus areas:** US domestic policy in the areas of healthcare, criminal justice, public finance, education, democracy, immigration, climate, opioids, housing, organ donation, access to contraception, evidence-based policy

**Staff size:** 110

The work of Arnold Ventures is driven by an imperative to identify, promote, and invest in evidence-based policies and programs that maximize opportunity and minimize injustice. To put this estimable mission into action, Arnold Ventures leverages the Think Tank operating archetype, which describes philanthropies that apply expertise and research to design systems-changing solutions and then promote these solutions to stakeholders that can implement them.

Arnold Ventures takes a mostly deep, as opposed to broad, operating approach to its operations and grantmaking. The organization drives change across its distinct policy domains by developing knowledge of what works best and then supporting advocacy efforts to advance those solutions. Implementing this model requires substantial resources for reviewing research, communicating findings, and interfacing with policymakers. While Arnold Ventures buys—or outsources—some of this capacity through external grants to researchers, much of its non-grantmaking activity occurs internally. Indeed, Arnold Ventures' top-notch in-house team of experts is one of its greatest assets, and one of its defining attributes as the Think Tank operating archetype.

Arnold Ventures' vice president Sam Mar notes that the organization has opted for a more proactive than responsive approach to selecting the policy issues on which it focuses. As Mar points out, deferring to outside experts on grantmaking strategy runs the risk of losing strategic direction: "The risk is that we get attracted to the person who presents the best or who sounds the smartest or who has a lot of titles, rather than developing our own point of view first and then seeking out people that align with that strategy." At the same time, as Mar goes on to explain, this allows Arnold Ventures to be responsive to current events. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the criminal justice team pivoted to the problem of overincarceration in prisons, where high infection rates pose a threat to public health.

In taking this proactive approach, Arnold Ventures has also maintained a highly centralized system of decision-making, where the board weighs in on most of the grants that the organization makes in order to maintain strategic coherence among the organization's various teams. Mar explains that "we want to make sure that we are in alignment and in agreement with where the board sees the direction of Arnold going forward." This centralized model stems partly from the organization's charter and the way it remains closely connected to the founders, Laura and John Arnold, who are actively engaged in the organization's overall direction and daily operations.

Although building the evidence base for effective social policy remains core to the operating archetype of Arnold Ventures, this Think Tank has begun to invest increasingly in communicating and promoting its findings on which policies work. "Research and evidence are great and necessary to know what policies work and why," says Mar, "but none of that is sufficient if nobody is aware of this knowledge."

**"Research and evidence are great and necessary to know what policies work and why, but none of that is sufficient if nobody is aware of this knowledge."**

**Sam Mar**  
Vice President,  
Arnold Ventures

In recognition of the need to advocate for, not merely discover, evidence-based policy, Arnold Ventures transitioned from a 501(c)(3) foundation to a limited liability company (LLC) in 2019, thus availing itself of grantmaking options—most notably giving to political advocacy—that are closed to 501(c)(3) foundations. This transition is an excellent example of a creative operating approach to flexibility, whereby an organization adapts its structure and programming to achieve its mission. Recounting the decision to restructure, Mar describes how “we realized that we were letting the tax code dictate our structure, and not the strategy and the objective.” In other words, while the 501(c)(3) designation entailed certain tax advantages, the restrictions it placed on advocacy activities were preventing Arnold Ventures from achieving maximal impact as a Think Tank dedicated to promoting and supporting evidence-based policy.

In addition to changing its organizational structure, Arnold Ventures has placed growing emphasis on a networked approach to relationships, particularly within the policymaking ecosystem. Such relationships are key to taking policy ideas from white papers to legislation. Accordingly, as Mar points out, “the relationships we have with policymakers matter because we want to be able to provide data, evidence, and recommendations to the people that are making these decisions in real-time, whether in the federal government or in the states.” By cultivating such relationships, supporting and advancing effective policies and focusing on communication and dissemination of knowledge, Arnold Ventures ensures that by utilizing the Think Tank operating archetype it achieves impact not only through theoretical ideas but also through concrete action.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	
<b>Reason/Value Proposition</b> (what do you do and why?)	To identify, promote, and invest in evidence-based policies and programs that maximize opportunity and minimize injustice
<b>Resources/Lead With</b> (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Financial resources Research and data Expertise (human capital)

<b>Key Capabilities/Skills</b> (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Identifying innovative, potentially scalable solutions Building knowledge and evidence base for effective social policy Communications Relationships with policymakers
<b>Equity</b> (how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)	Ensures diversity of voices, viewpoints and experiences among leadership and experts who articulate strategic direction and shape work on particular policy issues
<b>Response/Activities</b> (what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)	Data analysis and research Pilot programs and rigorous evaluation in partnership with academic community Developing evidence-based model policies Supporting advocacy Implementation and legal defense
<b>Primary Audience</b> (for whom do you do it?)	Policymakers and staff Research and advocacy community General public
<b>Community Served</b> ( <i>if different from primary audience</i> ) (for whom do you do it?)	Communities and populations most affected by current and historic and systemic injustice
<b>Relationships/Alliances</b> (with whom do you do it?)	External experts Policymakers Advocacy partners, co-funders
<b>Impact Assessment</b> (where do you look for results?)	Policy change at the state and federal levels Improved outcomes for individuals due to the policy change being implemented Improved evidence base of what works and what doesn't





Source: Luigi De Palma



## CAMPAIGN MANAGER

### Officine Grandi Riparazioni (OGR Torino), Fondazione CRT

**Location:** Italy

**Year founded:** 2017\*

**Grantmaking budget:** Approximately \$6.3 million (€5.5 million)

**Focus areas:** Contemporary arts and culture, technological research and innovation

**Staff size:** 40

*\*All statistics cited pertain solely to the OGR initiative, not Fondazione CRT as a whole.*

With visionary and financial support from Fondazione CRT, one of Northern Italy's most prominent foundations, Turin's Officine Grandi Riparazioni (OGR) was transformed from a defunct 19th century industrial complex and train repair depot into one of the foundation's signature programs and an international philanthropic hub for innovation and contemporary culture. Today, with its two wings dedicated to culture and technology, the OGR initiative

embodies the Campaign Manager operating archetype by pulling together a diverse set of partners, funders, grantees, and public sector representatives to implement work that crosses sectors and traditional program areas.

In its operating approaches, the OGR chooses to be mostly broad and creative and as a result implements a wide variety of business acceleration, data and research programs, along with programs that focus on the arts and performances, including the opera. Massimo Lapucci, Fondazione CRT's Secretary General and the CEO of OGR, describes this diverse programmatic makeup as "a toolbox engineered to promote education about and provide meaningful support in innovation, culture and arts." To accomplish its ambitious goals, OGR leverages the leadership, talent, and reputation of Fondazione CRT



to bring together experts in distinct fields under one roof, which is a defining attribute of a Campaign Manager. One example of this approach is a program OGR developed in collaboration with the European Commission, titled Science Technology and the ARTS. This alliance of technology and artistic practice awards a prize for the most pioneering collaborations and results in the field of creativity and innovation at the intersection of science and technology with the arts. International partnerships from diverse fields are also central to the work of the Technology wing of OGR, which houses start-ups, corporate entities, and leading international financial partners (e.g. Microsoft, Techstars, Endeavor). As a result, OGR acts as a convener of these varied actors on topics including smart cities, blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, gaming and education technology.

The OGR believes that the physical proximity the hub facilitates between art and technology allows program specialists to experiment and innovate. Current programs include cross-pollination between art and gaming such as NOW/HERE, a videogame produced by OGR, that has a digital universe inspired by the world of contemporary art. Future programs are also looking to embrace more crossover topics between art and technology. As a result, according to Lapucci, this Campaign Manager opts for a more proactive approach and aims to be “an experimental ground and a tangible bridge to new initiatives and new acceleration programs in different fields.”

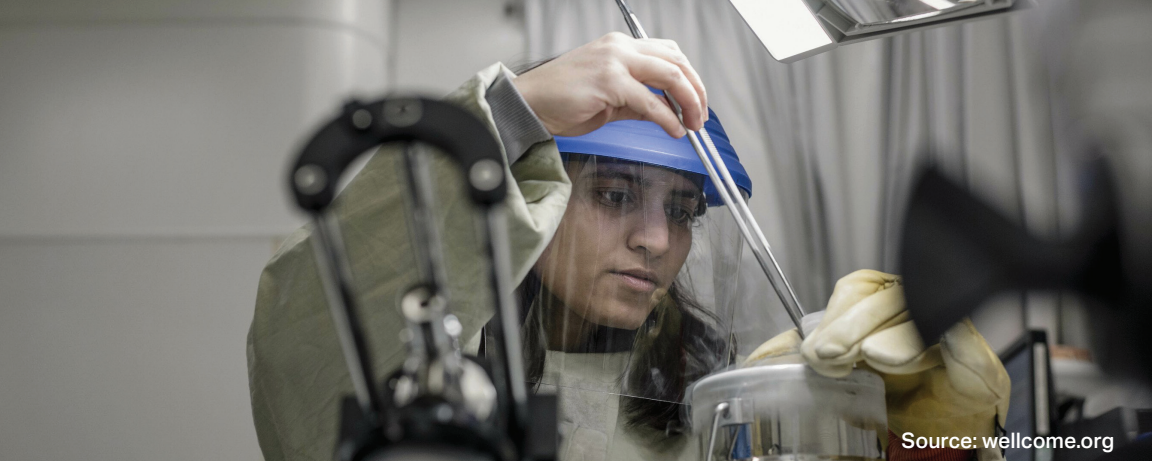
As the OGR grew into the multifaceted identity inherent to many Campaign Managers, the initiative placed a growing emphasis on communications. Since this institution occupies a unique niche at the intersection of a museum, a research center, and a foundation, it has intentionally invested time and

**Massimo Lapucci, Fondazione CRT's Secretary General and the CEO of OGR, describes this diverse programmatic makeup as “a toolbox engineered to promote education about and provide meaningful support in innovation, culture and arts.”**

resources to hone and communicate the public persona of the OGR. According to Lapucci, the OGR deeply appreciates and leverages the power of effective communication “to define how we want to appear, how we want to communicate our messages.” As a result, the OGR uses a “build” operating approach to bolster this key function internally and has leveraged the Fondazione CRT communications team to maintain clear, consistent, and reliable ways of communicating with the public and other stakeholders. In its desire to bring together varied groups in typical Campaign Manager style, OGR also understands the importance of not just clear and transparent communication, but also of meeting partners and populations served where they are. This includes working through partnerships with major museums, such as The Tate Gallery, Secession e Wiener Festwochen, Onassis Stegi, and la Caixa, as well as effectively using social media and engaging with the next generations through dedicated educational programs. This method has proven to be successful in the OGR’s recent Regio Metropolitano opera program that aimed to make opera more accessible and effectively used digital advertising to build a large audience of young people. The Opera Show project of Accademia Perosi uses similar approaches to increase its reach and engagement with young people. These targeted communications allow this Campaign Manager to further amplify the artistic and technological innovations the OGR has made more accessible in Europe and across the globe.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	
<b>Reason/Value Proposition</b> (what do you do and why?)	To create an international hub for innovation and contemporary culture
<b>Resources/Lead With</b> (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Reputation and influence Leadership Talent Research and data

<b>Key Capabilities/Skills</b> (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Building networks Stewarding relationships Internal talent Knowledge and expertise	
<b>Equity</b> (how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)	Convening diverse perspectives and areas of expertise in one location to encourage intersectional innovation that incorporates different points of view	
<b>Response/Activities</b> (what you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)	Convening Building Networks Co-creating solutions with partners Grantmaking	
<b>Primary Audience</b> (for whom do you do it?)	Artists Scientists Innovators Communities at risk	Peer funders Policymakers/government officials
<b>Community Served</b> (if different from primary audience) (for whom do you do it?)	Communities that otherwise would not have this level of access to art and contemporary culture Communities that will benefit from innovations created at the OGR	
<b>Relationships/Alliances</b> (with whom do you do it?)	Researchers Scientists Artists Non-governmental organizations	Entrepreneurs Peer funders Universities Press Art institutions
<b>Impact Assessment</b> (where do you look for results?)	Innovation Increased accessibility to contemporary culture Increased global exchange of ideas Increased intersectionality between technology and art	



Source: wellcome.org



## FIELD BUILDER

### Wellcome Trust

**Location:** United Kingdom

**Year founded:** 1936

**Foundation type:** Independent or private endowed foundation

**Grantmaking budget:** Approximately £1.1 billion

**Operating budget:** Approximately £1.6 billion

**Focus areas:** Medical research – open curiosity-driven discovery, infectious disease; mental health; climate change and health

**Staff size:** 700

As a globally recognized titan in the field of health and scientific research, Wellcome Trust's mission is to support science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone. Maintaining a committed systems-level perspective, Wellcome embodies a Field Builder operating archetype, which seeks to launch or significantly strengthen institutions to fill a gap and create a robust, vibrant ecosystem needed to address a large challenge or to advance an issue area. In the case of Wellcome, this field-building function relates to strengthening the institutions responsible for generating,

disseminating, and applying scientific insights, in order to catalyze breakthrough ideas, establish the evidence base for effective health interventions. Reflecting on this scope and nature of these effort, director of strategy Ed Whiting notes that the main objective and challenge is "to set a frame for the field of health research as a whole. This includes identifying what is needed, what is missing, and what problems require a systemic level fix."

To fulfill its mission as a Field Builder, Wellcome relies both on outside resources and internal capacities. In addition to building knowledge and understanding of scientific developments by working with external researchers, the institution has invested in a deepening in-house roster of scientific experts and advisors who

help to guide the organization and communicate research findings to relevant audiences. “We have a range of both senior executives and board members who are leaders in their fields,” notes Whiting. Equipped with this in-depth knowledge, Wellcome targets its grants at scientists working on the cutting edge of the most important worldwide health challenges.

With a focus on mental health, infectious disease, and the intersection of climate and health, Wellcome uses a broad operating approach, taking an interdisciplinary track that crosses traditionally siloed research areas, in promoting research on the complex challenges addressed by health researchers. Such a multifaceted approach naturally depends on a diverse ecosystem of external partners. As a result, a highly interconnected and networked operating approach is core to Wellcome’s role as a Field Builder, and the organization’s social compact. “Science is an inherently global and inherently networked enterprise,” Whiting observes. The organization is thus in continual contact with a variety of experts to track novel findings, trends, and gaps in knowledge across its varied areas of interest. This, in turn, helps Wellcome stay a largely responsive grantmaker, funding the needs and challenges that researchers identify. Attention to networks further translates to a pronounced emphasis on conferences and other opportunities for “people to come together and work together,” explains Whiting.

At the same time, Wellcome is acutely aware that in order for effective solutions to be recognized as such and adopted broadly, particularly in today’s atmosphere of distrust and disinformation, its interactions must extend beyond scientific networks. Thus, the institution has made significant effort to build robust communication channels with

**In addition to building knowledge and understanding of scientific developments by working with external researchers, the institution has invested in a deepening in-house roster of scientific experts and advisors who help to guide the organization and communicate research findings to relevant audiences.**

policymakers and the general public. “Advocacy and communications are key tools for us, and we are dedicating more resources to it,” notes Whiting, referring to the growing importance the organization places on spreading the word about the research it supports and making sure that “scientific evidence is presented in a way that is clear, unambiguous, and stimulating.”

Despite its deep expertise in health research, Wellcome makes sure to limit its involvement to a strictly supportive role, leaving key scientific efforts and considerations to the scientists themselves. This approach is consistent with the tendency of the Field Builder operating archetype to keep support relatively hands-off. For example, commenting on the question of whether health research should rely more on non-peer-reviewed academic preprints (which offer faster circulation of findings but without the quality check provided by the peer review process), Whiting describes Wellcome’s role as providing platforms and incentives (often in coordination with other funders) to enable open access to knowledge. This demonstrates that Wellcome prioritizes building a strong, vibrant and independent scientific research community without inserting itself into the work that scientists are best qualified to lead. By striking this balance between being an active supporter and respecting professional boundaries, this Field Builder plays a leading role in enabling and growing rigorous, independent, and impactful research on global public health challenges.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	
<b>Reason/Value Proposition</b> (what do you do and why?)	To support science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone
<b>Resources/Lead With</b> (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Financial tools Leadership Reputation and influence Networks
<b>Key Capabilities/Skills</b> (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Knowledge/expertise Identifying needs and gaps Communications Advocacy Grantmaking

**Equity**  
(how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)

Supports engagement activity through core scientific grantmaking, including engagement with lived experience experts  
Works to identify and remove barriers to access to Wellcome funding for minoritized groups

**Response/Activities**  
(what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)

Grantmaking  
Advocacy  
Building robust communications channels  
Convening

**Primary Audience**  
(for whom do you do it?)

Society at large; in particular the communities most affected by the urgent health challenges facing everyone

**Relationships/Alliances**  
(with whom do you do it?)

Academic and scientific institutions  
Peer funders  
Research ecosystem  
Public policymakers

**Impact Assessment**  
(where do you look for results?)

Progress on the generation and uptake of scientific tools and intervention that could help to address the health challenges facing everyone  
Supported by sustained growth of a vibrant global ecosystem of scientific research needed to address multifaceted public health challenges, broad acceptance and adoption of research by the general public and governments





Source: [fundacaogrupoboticario.org.br](http://fundacaogrupoboticario.org.br)



## VENTURE CATALYST

### Boticário Group Foundation

**Location:** Brazil

**Year founded:** 1990

**Foundation type:** Corporate foundation

**Grantmaking budget:** Approximately US\$ 4.2 million (22 million Brazilian Reais)

**Focus areas:** Biodiversity, conservation and sustainable development

**Staff size:** 60

Since its founding by Miguel Krigsner, the chairman of the board of directors of Grupo Boticário and chairman of the board of trustees, the Fundação Grupo Boticário (Boticário Group Foundation), has evolved into a leading corporate foundation driven by a mission to promote and enable biodiversity conservation in Brazil. Embodying the Venture Catalyst operating archetype, which seeks to provide early, often unrestricted, funding to organizations or

interventions that are new or have little proven track record, Boticário has funded over 1,600 innovative environmental initiatives primarily via grantmaking and other financial instruments. Most recently these have included mentoring and implementing an environmental impact acceleration program to strengthen the business community's impact investing capacity. According to Thiago Piazzetta Valente, a biodiversity economics specialist at Boticário, "We intentionally avoid funding mainstream organizations, opting instead to support and invest in smaller, innovative groups and enterprises with sound scientific ideas related to nature conservation and its socioeconomics benefits."

As a Venture Catalyst, Boticário often relies on an extensive network of external experts from the nonprofit and public sectors to help it assess and formulate needs, goals, and strategies for interventions. Piazzetta Valente stated that the foundation "is unique because its 30-year record and strong relationships



have resulted in access to government, NGOs, entrepreneurs, universities, and people from rural communities to distill and implement the best, most interesting and innovative solutions.” The foundation’s longstanding reputation and a robust ecosystem of collaborators and supporters are thus central to the foundation’s networked operating approach.

Although regulations governing foundations in Brazil restrict Boticário to a more centralized operating approach for decisions on funding, the foundation intentionally collaborates, co-creates and incorporates input from partners while developing and implementing initiatives. One such project is the Viva Água Movement, which brings together actors from different sectors to address water safety and climate change adaptation through nature-based solutions in the Miringuava River basin and the Guanabara Bay Hydrographic Region, two major Brazilian metropolitan areas.

Additionally, the foundation relies on external input from community leaders who have lived experience and place-based knowledge to facilitate and accelerate innovative programs in issue areas both within and outside the foundation’s expertise. “We are building multi-stakeholder movements with solid and trusted governance for specific territories,” says Piazzetta Valente. “We realized early on that to do so effectively and to achieve our mission, we need to connect with broader ecosystems and use our philanthropic resources as flexible, catalytic capital for impact entrepreneurship.” This broad, inclusive coalition representing a wide range of sectors, experiences and approaches is integral to Boticário’s social compact and identity as a Venture Catalyst. Building trust and legitimacy with external partners, as well as reinforcing its capacity to take risks and fund

**“We intentionally avoid funding mainstream organizations, opting instead to support and invest in smaller, innovative groups and enterprises with sound scientific ideas related to nature conservation and its socioeconomics benefits.”**

**Thiago Piazzetta Valente**  
Biodiversity Economics  
Specialist,  
Boticário Group  
Foundation

innovation, is central to how the foundation fulfills its operating archetype.

While Boticário works in a defined thematic area of biodiversity conservation, its operating approach to programming within this sphere is broad and responsive, enabling it to leverage the built-in experimentation and flexibility of the Venture Catalyst operating archetype. For example, the foundation has been working at the intersection of biodiversity conservation and fields of economic development, gastronomy, nutrition, tourism, health, education and more. According to Piazzetta Valente, investing in entrepreneurial ideas related to quality-of-life issues, and finding links between them and biodiversity conservation, has allowed the Boticário to "...not only support unexpected solutions and ideas of promising but little-known enterprises, but also to build a vested community dedicated to the cause."

Closely connected to trust and in line with the Venture Catalyst identity, Boticário leverages transparency and communication as essential components of its social compact and operating behavior to further promote awareness about biodiversity, source new ideas and strengthen trust within target communities. It helps to be crystal clear and demonstrate how biodiversity conservation impacts community members' general well-being. For these reasons, the foundation broadly shares information about its work and learnings on social media, in local news outlets, and through other avenues depending on the initiative, and uses accessible language to do so. Boticário's sterling reputation is partially a result of this longstanding transparency, which enables the foundation to leverage its influence, networks, and relationships as a Venture Catalyst.

Tackling such intersecting systems challenges requires not just a risk-embracing, entrepreneurial and connected approach to funding today, but a long-term strategic outlook to foresee the issues and solutions of tomorrow. As



Source: [instagram.com/fundacaogrupoboticario](https://www.instagram.com/fundacaogrupoboticario)

a true Venture Catalyst, Boticário is able to straddle both funding early-stage entrepreneurial projects and providing flexible, longer-term financial support to achieve sustainability of important initiatives and meaningful impact over a longer trajectory. Utilizing the Venture Catalyst operating archetype has allowed the foundation to not only leverage cutting-edge ideas and unexpected intersections between sectors and thematic areas, but also to center its partners and grantees in developing solutions to combat the loss of biodiversity and related negative impact on communities in Brazil.

CORE ATTRIBUTES		
Reason/Value Proposition (what do you do and why?)	To promote and perform biodiversity conservation in Brazil for greater resilience and quality of life in society	
Resources/Lead With (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Reputation and influence Networks and relationships Strategies aligned with national and global biodiversity conservation priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Talent	
Key Capabilities/Skills (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Building networks Stewarding relationships Internal talent Grantmaking Subject matter expertise	Communications (especially via social and regular media channels)
Equity (how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)	Co-creating innovative programs by incorporating input from frontline communities and leaders with lived experience and place-based knowledge	
Response/Activities (what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)	Grantmaking Convening Building Networks Disseminating insights and learnings to peer funders	Co-creating solutions with partners Promoting discussions on important environmental agendas

<b>Primary Audience</b> (for whom do you do it?)	At risk communities in Brazil Peer funders Policymakers/government officials	
<b>Community Served</b> <i>(if different from primary audience)</i> (for whom do you do it?)	At risk and marginalized communities in Brazil	
<b>Relationships/Alliances</b> (with whom do you do it?)	Government agencies Non-governmental organizations Entrepreneurs Peer funders	Universities Impacted communities Press Environmental institutions
<b>Impact Assessment</b> (where do you look for results?)	Achieved sustainability of key initiatives, organizations and impact Funded initiatives supported by a robust ecosystem of collaborators and peer funders Increased trust in mainstream partner institutions	



Source: [williamgmcgowanfund.org](http://williamgmcgowanfund.org)



## DESIGNER

### NEPA Readiness In Skilled Employment (RISE) Program, the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund

**Location:** United States

**Year founded:** 2022\*

**Grantmaking budget:** Approximately \$2.8 million

**Focus areas:** Education

**Staff size:** 6

*\*All statistics cited pertain to the NEPA Rise initiative, not the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund as a whole.*

The William G. McGowan Charitable Fund launched its NEPA Readiness In Skilled Employment (RISE) Program in 2022 as comprehensive, wraparound services program dedicated to workforce development and job placement. The work of NEPA RISE is place-based in Northeastern Pennsylvania and was developed with input from local human services providers, universities, nonprofits, and other key players in the

community. In creating the NEPA RISE program the McGowan Charitable Fund exemplified the Designer Operating Archetype as it leverages internal staff's expertise to understand the context and need via research and interactions with key stakeholders to design, prototype and iterate the program, as well as to communicate in order to engage and better serve target communities.

Typical of the Designer Operating Archetype, when developing and tailoring the NEPA RISE program, the foundation leveraged its internal capacities, including vast experience, internal talent and expertise, data and research, and relationships. However, even in the case of designing its own initiative, the McGowan Fund felt it was imperative to operate as a responsive, place-based funder due to its close proximity to the geographies and populations it serves. According to Diana Spencer, the executive director of the McGowan Fund, the creation of the program to tackle the economic hardships and high levels of

unemployment in a remote region was not spurred by a hubristic belief that the funder knows best but rather by the “intense desire to implement comprehensive solutions to a dire need in the community. No other organization was filling this niche. We were waiting for this idea to emerge out of responsive grantee proposals but it never did.” By thoroughly researching the need and developing a successful, evidence-based intervention, this Designer eventually aims to scale its program through the public sector.

While it relied on internal forces to gain contextual understanding of the need and the landscape, the McGowan Fund also recognized the importance of external knowledge, perspectives and experiences and included these as key building blocks in designing NEPA RISE. A heavy emphasis was placed on intellectual humility and the importance of input from local issue area experts, academics and frontline leaders that live in and intimately know the community. “Being an active part of an ecosystem is critical,” says Spencer. “You need to understand the landscape to be able to understand who fits where into this puzzle that will ultimately create a successful solution. Our grantees and local partners are the experts. We are not—we are generalists. They know what needs to be done.” Thus, anchoring its work in local knowledge, the foundation’s program design process included not just discovery research but extensive strategic conversations and public communications with a wide coalition of human services, data, and education experts, as well as community representatives. As a Designer that intentionally centers grantees and partners in the design and implementation of the NEPA RISE initiative, the McGowan Fund actively created and welcomed opportunities for feedback, in order to help the initiative retain the agility to pivot, course correct or iterate. As Spencer notes, “Presence of equal voices

**The creation of the program to tackle the economic hardships and high levels of unemployment in a remote region was... spurred by the “intense desire to implement comprehensive solutions to a dire need in the community... We were waiting for this idea to emerge out of responsive grantee proposals but it never did.”**

**Diana Spencer**  
Executive Director,  
McGowan Fund

on the team and removal of barriers to authentic, candid conversations are critical elements to the success of this initiative.”

In addition to honest conversations, the McGowan Fund assigned a particular significance to data and learning in the design and implementation process, as evidenced by its engagement of an internal director of learning and impact, as well as an external evaluation firm in designing and implementing the NEPA RISE initiative. In alignment with NEPA RISE’s focus on community leaders, this evaluation team has extensive regional expertise and participates in all strategic conversations.

As a Designer, engaging and influencing end-users is always top of mind. This is especially true for the McGowan Fund and NEPA RISE as a place-based funder with close ties to Northeastern Pennsylvania, including some of the fund’s trustees who are members of the community. According to Spencer, “Our trustees live there. They are engaged with grantees because they see them at site visits and at the grocery store alike. That passion, shared vision, and love of community are what makes this work possible.” This philosophy and deep commitment to centering communities served enables this Designer to design transformative initiatives with the goal of scaling them up to effect far-reaching change.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	
Reason/Value Proposition (what do you do and why?)	To create a comprehensive, wraparound services program dedicated to workforce development and job placement in Northeastern Pennsylvania
Resources/Lead With (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Financial resources Place-based reputation and relationships Experience
Key Capabilities/Skills (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Talent Data and research Flexibility Project management



**Equity**

(how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)

Emphasizes and practices intellectual humility and centers input from local issue area experts, academics and frontline leaders that live in and intimately know the community  
Intentionally centers grantees and partners in the design and implementation of the initiative, and creates opportunities for feedback

**Response/Activities**

(what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)

Creates program and solutions to fill a programming gap  
Forms cross-sectoral (private-public) partnerships  
Convenes place-based and issue area experts  
Conducts detailed studies of landscape

**Primary Audience**

(for whom do you do it?)

Local communities and the unemployed in Northeastern Pennsylvania  
Academic partners  
Government/public service officials

**Community Served**

(*if different from primary audience*)  
(for whom do you do it?)

Communities impacted by climate change, socio-economic inequities and systemic injustices  
Philanthropic ecosystem/partner funders

**Relationships/Alliances**

(with whom do you do it?)

Place-based experts in Northeastern Pennsylvania  
Academic institutions and experts  
Grantee partners  
State/local government and policymakers

**Impact Assessment**

(where do you look for results?)

Reduces unemployment and greater job placement  
Adoption of the program by public programs/government  
Improvement in economic well-being of local communities





Source: thelmtif.org



## UNDERWRITER

### Arts in Health Program, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund

**Location:** United States

**Year founded:** 2018\*

**Foundation Type:** Family-led philanthropy

**Grantmaking budget:** \$10 million commitment over several years at approximately \$2-2.5 million per year

**Focus areas:** Addressing health issues, including mental health, through arts and creativity for people in historically marginalized and vulnerable New York City

**Staff size:** 3

*All statistics cited pertain solely to the Arts in Health program, not the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund as a whole.*

The Arts in Health program of the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund (Illumination Fund) creates opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable New Yorkers to enjoy healthy, fulfilling lives. It exemplifies the Underwriter operating archetype, which provides support to institutions or civic groups based on long-standing interests, commitments or personal experience.

Through decades-long engagement with New York institutions such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Children's Museum of Manhattan, the Illumination Fund's founder Laurie M. Tisch has

demonstrated a longstanding leadership in the city's nonprofit sector and strong dedication to the arts as a vehicle for improving lives. She started the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund in 2007. Driven by her values, the Illumination Fund's grantmaking does not solely focus on large, prominent institutions but also intentionally encompasses key community-based arts groups, and has supported programs in healthy food access, national service, and Jewish life. In 2018, this personal commitment motivated the Illumination Fund to launch the Arts in Health

program, a \$10 million multiyear effort to support organizations in New York City that utilize art and creativity to raise awareness and promote healing for mental health stigma, trauma, and aging-related diseases, particularly in marginalized communities.

The foundation's innovative work at the intersection of arts and health programming demonstrates a creative approach to programmatic flexibility. "Arts funders typically don't fund health, and health funders typically don't fund the arts, so we had to try to figure out what those intersections might look like in a grantmaking context," explains the Illumination Fund's executive director Rick Luftglass, reflecting on the initial discussions he had with Tisch during the program's early development.

According to Luftglass, the process of creating the Arts in Health initiative began with landscape research, review of evidence-based practices, and conversations with experts and practitioners in the arts and healthcare fields to understand current needs, promising practices, and common challenges. "We are highly, highly networked, so talking to a lot of people was very helpful. One person leads you to someone else, and then to someone else," notes Luftglass, illustrating the foundation's networked approach to relationships. This commitment to learning from others also speaks to the Illumination Fund's responsive approach to programming, meaning that the funder focuses on supporting goals defined by field leaders. "We weren't coming up with solutions. We were identifying what's out there that could be leveraged, tapped, expanded, and built upon," says Luftglass. Grantees in the first cohort included Gibney, a dance organization that holds movement workshops for survivors of domestic violence and Arts & Minds, which partners with museums to provide visual arts programs for

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**Rick Luftglass**  
Executive Director,  
Illumination Fund

people with dementia together with their caregivers. Other groups supported were Community Access, a mental health and supportive housing organization that developed an international filmmaking competition through which young filmmakers combat mental health stigma; and New York City Health + Hospitals, the city's public hospital system, which uses the arts to address staff burnout and fatigue. Through this work, this Underwriter also, in part, performs an important Field Builder function in a developing programmatic area.

Although much of the Illumination Fund's programmatic work is driven by what it learns from its network, as an Underwriter, the Arts in Health program ultimately channels the values, passions and interests of its founder. Accordingly, like other parts of the Illumination Fund, this initiative shows a centralized approach to decision-making, in which Tisch makes final decisions about the program's philanthropic interventions. For this reason, much of the work is conducted in-house with only few tasks outsourced to consultants, in accordance with a "build" rather than "buy" approach to resourcing.

One exception to the Arts in Health program's "build" orientation is communications. The organization works with a communications consultant to raise media coverage of the important work grantees do to address health issues through the arts. Indeed, communications makes up a key priority for the Illumination Fund generally, both in how it relates to external stakeholders, such as news media, policymakers, and public agencies, and in how it interacts with its own grantee partners. This allows the program—as well as the foundation—to center its grantees and communities served and fulfill its commitment to equity, the guiding principle its overall work.

Luftglass points out that "We're in touch with the grantees constantly. It's not like 'send me a report each year.' It's very active dialogue and learning. We have



Source: theImltif.org

grantee cohort meetings every two to three months.” The frequent two-way communication and feedback loops allow the foundation to stay current on the evolving needs of its grantees and communities, as well as track effectiveness and impact of its programming. As Luftglass explains, “this process really gives us the pulse of things changing in real time.” Additionally, by convening cohorts and creating important opportunities for knowledge sharing and cross-pollination of different areas of expertise, the Illumination Fund is building an interconnected ecosystem of organizations working across the traditional lines of arts and health. With the benefit of this continual flow of information, cross-learning and co-creation, this Underwriter makes sure that it can pursue its founder’s bold and ambitious mission effectively.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	
<b>Reason/Value Proposition</b> (what do you do and why?)	To create opportunities for marginalized and vulnerable New Yorkers to enjoy healthy, fulfilling lives
<b>Resources/Lead With</b> (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Financial resources Knowledge and expertise Leadership
<b>Key Capabilities/Skills</b> (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Networks and relationships Reputation and influence Research and data
<b>Equity</b> (how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)	Relies on knowledge and lived experience of leaders in the field closest to the issue in shaping programs. Supports established cultural institutions to become more accessible and focuses on supporting community-based arts groups Intentionally invests in strong communications to center its grantees and communities served, and fulfill its commitment to equity, the guiding principle its overall work

<b>Response/Activities</b> (what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)	Grantmaking Regularly convenes grantees and other stakeholders Communicates externally about grantee's work
<b>Primary Audience</b> (for whom do you do it?)	Organizations working in the fields of arts, health, and social/human services
<b>Community Served</b> <i>(if different from primary audience)</i> (for whom do you do it?)	Policymakers and public agencies Media New Yorkers from marginalized and disadvantaged communities affected by mental health issues Arts and creativity nonprofits Philanthropic ecosystem/partner funders
<b>Relationships/Alliances</b> (with whom do you do it?)	Grantee partners Policymakers Peer funders
<b>Impact Assessment</b> (where do you look for results?)	Increased awareness mental health issues Increased access to mental health services for members of marginalized communities Recognition of nonprofits working at the intersection of arts and health





## SOWER

### Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) Initiative, Ford Foundation

**Location:** United States

**Year founded:** 2016\*

**Grantmaking budget:** Approximately \$120 million

**Focus areas:** Inequality

**Staff size:** 10

*\*All statistics cited pertain solely to the BUILD initiative, not Ford Foundation as a whole.*

As a large, multifaceted philanthropic institution, the Ford Foundation leverages a variety of operating archetypes to advance its programmatic goals and overarching mission. One of its relatively recent programs, Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) initiative, exemplifies the Sower archetype which focuses on providing a large number of grants across a diverse range of individual actors and institutions,

often through responsive, flexible grantmaking. BUILD is designed to support social justice organizations as they clarify their strategy, optimize their operations, and maximize their impact in tackling inequality. Designed to be a time-limited, 12-year program, BUILD is now in its second phase of supporting Ford grantees with multi-year general operating funding combined with targeted technical assistance.

Having funded nearly 350 grantees in diverse focus areas and geographic regions, BUILD's broad approach to programming exemplifies the scale and scope at the center of the Sower archetype. "It's an extraordinarily diverse set of organizations and networks," explains program director Kathy Reich. "They're in 32 countries. They have budgets anywhere from half a million dollars a year to tens of millions a year. They're as diverse as you can possibly imagine."

BUILD fulfills its mission of addressing inequality primarily by leveraging substantial financial resources, which are augmented by its reputation, influence, and leadership. In addition to its focus on providing a large number of flexible grants, partnership and participation are integral to BUILD's charter and social compact, demonstrating how building networks is central to the program's operating approach to relationships. Grantees engage with the program as active collaborators instead of passive beneficiaries. This cooperative ethos speaks to a deeply responsive operating model, whereby a funder supports goals and initiatives defined by leaders, rather than by the funder itself. According to Reich, BUILD is "constantly seeking grantees' input, including in development and revision of the strategy for BUILD, in all of our technical assistance offerings, and in our evaluation. We make sure there's really meaningful grantee partner voice." In the spirit of the Sower archetype's participatory approach, BUILD funding is unrestricted, allowing grantees near total discretion in how to allocate the funds they receive.

As part of its community-building function, BUILD strives to keep the focus on its grantees rather than on itself. Reich notes that BUILD works to "provide a platform and provide resources" but not "to be in the middle deciding and curating all the time." This relatively decentralized approach to decision-making reflects BUILD's mission to promote equality and to practice more equitable power dynamics in philanthropy. Rather than centering the Ford Foundation, BUILD emphasizes the role of its grantees in advancing social justice, with BUILD acting, in Reich's words, "more as a coach than as a taskmaster."

BUILD's community-building extends to other grantmakers as well. The program regularly

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make sure there's  
really meaningful  
grantee partner  
voice."**

**Kathy Reich**  
Program Director,  
Ford Foundation

disseminates lessons from its work through a variety of outlets, ranging from newsletters to an evaluation roundtable providing a forum for funders to trade insights and experiences. In this way, BUILD acts as a changemaker itself to sow innovation in philanthropy.

The trust-based relationships BUILD maintains with its partners reinforces its operating approach to programmatic flexibility, which is based on being creative and adaptive in implementing strategies rather than adhering strictly to a prespecified blueprint. Enabling greater appetite for risk and innovation is central to this approach, providing grantees the latitude to experiment without being penalized for potentially lackluster results. Reich underscores this point in her overview of BUILD: “This is about giving our partners space to experiment, space to innovate, space to plan for the future, and even space to try some things that don’t work.” Indeed, of the approximately 350 grants it has made, BUILD has ended fewer than 10 early, a clear indication of how BUILD’s focus on trust and acceptance of risk have produced meaningful results in sustaining a durable and meaningful community of practice.

BUILD requires substantial organizational capacity to facilitate its grantee community, conduct ongoing evaluations, and stay up to date on issues related to inequality. As a result, the program relies not only on internal talent and expertise but also on external consultants and grantee input, thereby leaning toward a “buy” rather than “build” approach to resourcing. Such external support enables this Sower to maintain its innovative and highly impactful work in catalyzing efforts to combat inequality across the globe.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	
<b>Reason/Value Proposition</b> (what do you do and why?)	To strengthen key institutions around the world that are dedicated to fighting inequality in all of its forms—political, economic, and cultural—in service of the foundation’s larger goal of ending inequality
<b>Resources/Lead With</b> (what is the primary asset—financial or non-financial—used to fulfill mission?)	Financial tools/grantmaking Reputation and Influence Leadership



<b>Key Capabilities/Skills</b> (what are your top skills, expertise or capabilities?)	Building networks Stewarding relationships Internal talent Grantmaking
<b>Equity</b> (how do you include the voices most affected and share power?)	Intentional trust-based relationships with grantees Engage grantee partners as active collaborators Enable initiatives defined by leaders in a field or community, not by BUILD Seeks grantee partner input in the development and revision of BUILD strategy and evaluation efforts via robust feedback loops
<b>Response/Activities</b> (what do you do to tackle the problem and/or advance a solution?)	Grantmaking Convening networks of grantee partners and peer funders Building Networks Disseminating insights and learnings to peer funders
<b>Primary Audience</b> (for whom do you do it?)	Nonprofits battling inequality Marginalized communities Peer funders
<b>Community Served</b> <i>(if different from primary audience)</i> (for whom do you do it?)	Marginalized communities Nonprofit institutions addressing inequality
<b>Relationships/Alliances</b> (with whom do you do it?)	Grantee partners Peer funders
<b>Impact Assessment</b> (where do you look for results?)	Increased sustainability and resilience of organizations to tackle inequality Existence of a vibrant, visible ecosystem of social justice organizations globally Sustaining a durable and meaningful community of practice

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Conrad. N. Hilton Foundation	Mercator Foundation
Constanter Philanthropy Services	Nathan Cummings Foundation
Dalio Philanthropies	National Center for Family Philanthropy
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Newman’s Own Foundation
Episcopal Health Foundation	NoVo Foundation
Esmee Fairbairn	Oak Foundation
F.B. Heron Foundation	Porticus
Daniel & Nina Carasso Foundation	Rasmuson Foundation
Fondazione Cariplo	Realdania
Fondazione CRT	Robert Bosch Foundation
Ford Foundation	Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Hewlett Foundation	Rockefeller Foundation
Houston Endowment	S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
Institute of International Education	Schusterman Foundation
Jacobs Foundation	Simons Foundation
John Templeton Foundation	Schmidt Futures
King Baudouin Foundation	Skoll Foundation
Kresge Foundation	Surdna Foundation
Lever for Change	TIAA-CREF Institute
Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland	Tiffany & Co. Foundation
Lumina Foundation	Wallace Foundation
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur	Walton Family Foundation
	Wellcome Trust
	William Grant Foundation
	ZeShan Foundation

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Operating Archetypes Case Study, the Skoll Award for Social Innovation, Skoll Foundation, April 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Lever for Change, "Competition Process," accessed April 7, 2022, <https://www.leverforchange.org/what-we-do/competitions/>.

<sup>3</sup> Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Operating Archetypes Case Study, Arnold Ventures, April 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Operating Archetypes Case Study, Officiale Grandi Reparazonioni (OGR), Fondazione CRT, January 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Operating Archetypes Case Study, Wellcome Trust, April 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Operating Archetypes Case Study, Boticário Group Foundation, April 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Operating Archetypes Case Study, NEPA Readiness In Skilled Employment (RISE) program, the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund, April 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Operating Archetypes Case Study, Arts in Health Program, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, April 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, Operating Archetypes Case Study, Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) Initiative, Ford Foundation, April 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

## **Operating Archetypes**

### ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY ADVISORS

Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA) is a nonprofit organization that currently advises on and manages more than \$400 million in annual giving by individuals, families, corporations and foundations. Continuing the Rockefeller family's legacy of thoughtful, effective philanthropy, RPA remains at the forefront of philanthropic growth and innovation, with a diverse team of experienced grantmakers with significant depth of knowledge across the spectrum of issue areas. Founded in 2002, RPA has grown into one of the world's largest philanthropic service organizations and has facilitated more than \$3 billion in grantmaking to more than 70 countries. RPA also serves as a fiscal sponsor for more than 100 projects, providing governance, management and operational infrastructure to support their charitable purposes. For more information, please visit [www.rockpa.org](http://www.rockpa.org).



