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LIZ HAFALIA/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/POLARIS

LIFE EXPERIENCE

At One Degree, led by Rey Faustino, the staff reflects the people they serve: Most are people of color, and nearly half have been poor.

How Millennials Lead

Creativity. Transparency. And higher wages for everyone. Here's what the next generation of CEOs has in store for the nonprofit world.

By HEATHER JOSLYN

Rey Faustino has a résumé any nonprofit leader would envy. Harvard Kennedy School graduate. Echoing Green fellow. Founder of One Degree, a tech-based organization that connects families with the tools and services they need to help pull themselves out

of poverty.

One Degree is supported by big foundations like Kresge and Knight. It serves the entire San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, and Gainesville, Fla., its work reaching more than a quarter-million people thus far.

And at age 36, he's already thinking about his

succession plan.

“I made a personal commitment to the mission for at least 10 years,” Mr. Faustino says. He intends to keep his pledge, but other social-change projects tempt him. “I’m the kind of person who has a running Google Doc with lots of ideas.”

Mr. Faustino’s focus on what’s next is a marked contrast to older generations who have often run the nation’s nonprofits for decades at a time. Now millennials like him — people in their 20s and 30s — are starting to take top leadership jobs at charities nationwide. And with their ambition, tech savvy, and willingness to rethink leadership, power, and even the very notion of an “organization,” the nonprofit world can expect a shake-up.

“Older CEOs sit around and complain about millennials too much,” says Susan Tomlinson Schmidt, 46, and president of Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, which runs college-level certificate programs for people interested in charity careers. But she’s upbeat about the rising generation’s future as leaders. “How exciting is that, if they could all take over and actually do the things we’ve been trying to do forever?”

As changes at the federal level threaten the budgets and missions of many charities, millennials will get more opportunities to prove themselves as leaders and fundraisers, says Frances Kunreuther, 65, co-director of Building Movement Project, which generates research and creates tools to foster leaders at social-change groups.

“There’s going to be far, far less money from government to address social issues,” Ms. Kunreuther says. “We’ll need the millennials to think about who they’re going to tap to help solve those problems in a new way. They’re going to be the ones to do it.”

NO WAITING FOR THE ‘BIG GAME’

Young people often find leadership opportunities early at small or grass-roots organizations. “This idea that we’re all just waiting to be called up to the big game is not entirely accurate,” says Jamie Smith, 33, who leads the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network.

But many millennials who are already leading nonprofits are founders. One reason: It can be difficult to move up in traditional organizations. About 30 percent of leadership jobs at nonprofits are filled internally, compared with about 60 percent of comparable positions at businesses, according to the Leadership-development nonprofit Bridgespan Group and other sources.

Stereotypes about millennials — such as that they feel entitled or that they seek change for the sake of change — are too often used against young nonprofit workers who advocate for themselves and their ideas at traditional nonprofits, Ms. Smith says.

She calls that state of affairs a threat to nonprofits. “There is a lot of potential in this generation, in the sector, that’s going untapped,” she says. “It is tragic to be leaving vast amounts of resources untouched. Not just for those organizations but ultimately for the communities they are trying to make better.”

Leadership experts and millennials who lead nonprofits suggest changes that are likely to follow as the rising generation takes over the charity world:

TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY WILL CHANGE.

Mr. Faustino, from a working-class family of Philippine immigrants, arrived in America at age 8. His background, he says, shapes how he thinks about traditional nonprofits. “A lot of the best practices we are using — the royal ‘we’ — have been passed down to us from for-profit corporate structures,” he says. “Which are inherently colonial. Extracting resources. Growth for the sake of profit-seeking.”

Many millennial leaders like Mr. Faustino say they’re not interested in perpetuating that approach, worrying that it chokes off innovation and encourages the hoarding of information and power at the top.

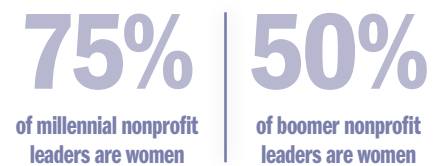
At Young Women Empowered, in Seattle, which provides mentors and creative projects for teenage girls, co-founder Jamie-Rose Edwards, 33, serves as a co-director of a nine-member staff. The charity’s board is also run by co-directors.

“We do solicit and receive a lot of feedback before we make decisions,” says Edwards, who prefers to be identified with the gender-neutral pronoun “they.” “I find that even though the decisions take longer to make, by the time the decision is made, you have buy-in. The decisions tend to be more sustainable and set up for success.”

Co-directorships are becoming a popular way to share power at nonprofits. In 2013, Ms. Kunreuther invited Sean Thomas-Breitfeld, now 38, to help run Building Movement Project. The arrangement has drawn the curiosity of millennials, she says.

For his part, Mr. Thomas-Breitfeld says the track record of shared CEO roles at nonprofits is “mixed,

YOUNG PEOPLE IN CHARGE



6%

of nonprofit CEOs are under the age of 35

honestly.” But the idea of distributed power remains influential, he says: “Look at United We Dream or Black Lives Matter, where there’s very strong national leadership, but there’s less attachment to empire building.”

PRESSURE TO PRODUCE IMPACT WILL INCREASE.

Just as young nonprofit leaders are questioning traditional hierarchy, they’re also asking tough questions about charities’ work.

“Millennials need a very clear idea of why an organization exists for them to feel deeply committed,” says Mark Lipton, professor of management at the New School’s Milano School and an expert on nonprofit founders.

Like young donors, young leaders demand to see impact. They care less about how many meals were served to the hungry than about what is being done to prevent hunger in the first place.

“One big thing I’ve seen is millennials are shifting from outputs to outcomes,” says Philip Dearing, 24, senior associate consultant at Bridgespan Group. “They’re not satisfied with doing the work and having a feel-good story.”

The serial entrepreneur — rather than the social worker — seems to be a model for many millennial nonprofit leaders. Young leaders, like Generation Xers before them, are more inclined than boomers to jump in, work to accomplish a goal, and then take up a new challenge.

“Founders from the 70s and 80s, they would hunker down and not leave,” says Mr. Lipton, describing “founder’s syndrome,” when an organization’s creator struggles to pass the baton gracefully. “The younger people now, they’re moving on: ‘This needs someone with deeper skills.’”

EXPECT MUCH MORE TRANSPARENCY.

Because millennials grew up in an era when information about everything was a mere click away, they resent when their bosses hoard information about their organization. Younger leaders often make it easier for more people to see how the sausage is made.

At Third Sector Capital Partners, a nonprofit that develops innovative financing for social-good projects, CEO Caroline Whistler, 31, believes she can keep employees on the job longer by making sure they are always in the loop. She’s seen friends leave jobs in part because they felt they weren’t trusted with information about the big picture.

“They’re not down for being a cog in a machine,” says Ms. Whistler, who co-founded her organization. “That’s the worst thing you can be: someone who just comes in, does their part, and goes home.”

So she shares compensation data with the entire

staff: “Everyone knows everyone else’s salary.” And after every board meeting, she says, “I share the entire board deck with the entire team and talk them through it. I think it’s valued by my team but also expected.”

MORE PARTNERSHIPS WILL BLOOM.

For traditional nonprofits, more collaboration — among other charities or with government and business — is likely as more millennials take the reins. Today’s problems demand an all-hands-on-deck approach, leaders say.

“Millennial leaders are looking to each other,” says Suhad Babaa, 32, leader of Just Vision, which works to increase visibility for Palestinians and Israelis who do nonviolence work. “They’re really eager to connect across sectors — business, government, nonprofits. Also across movements. We’re realizing that all these issues are deeply linked, and we need each other.”

At California’s Bay Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Zahra Billoo, 34, the affiliate’s leader since 2010, often works with other charities and views them as partners, not competition. She doesn’t feel the need to scrap over credit. “I’m not always rushing to put CAIR’s name on something, because I get that the work can speak for itself.”

And besides, she says, donors “like collaboration because it’s more efficient. We’re not trying to drain their resources.”

At the Kresge Foundation, Michael Shaw, a 35-year-old program officer, has noticed that the vast majority of the social-service charities that seek grants through his division have at least one millennial on their senior leadership teams. The young leaders, he says, approach him differently than their elders do, in a less transactional way. They ask him for advice and cultivate the relation-

MILLENNIAL WORKERS WANT MORE DIVERSITY

75%

of boomers at nonprofits say their organizations pay enough attention to diversity when recruiting new staff

60%

of nonprofit workers under 35 say the same

65%

of boomers at nonprofits say their group pays enough attention to diversity when developing and promoting staff members

40%

of nonprofit workers under 35 agree



NOAH BERGER, FOR THE CHRONICLE

SHARING CREDIT

Zahra Billoo (left), of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, says she sees her group's nonprofit allies as partners, not competitors.

ship before asking about funding.

He predicts the grant maker-grantee connection will evolve into “more of a partnership model.”

Already, he says, “our own funding practices have changed — more unrestricted support, more renegotiating grants midstream. We know the world is evolving quickly.”

IT'S ALL ABOUT EQUITY.

Many millennial leaders instinctively turn to matters of equity in their work. “I feel like for the majority of nonprofit leaders it's new information: They are open to it, but they are often new to having their eyes opened,” says Jamie-Rose Edwards, of Young Women Empowered. “But for my generation, we grew up with that language already. I started with those trainings right out of college, when I was an AmeriCorps member.”

Seeking community feedback to help shape pro-

grams designed to serve them is a hallmark of millennial leadership. Young Women Empowered, whose clients are overwhelmingly immigrants or people of color or both, started a program modeled on Big Brothers Big Sisters, with one adult mentor assigned to each girl. When the girls complained about the lack of choice, the program changed to allow them to select the adult they wished to be paired with.

In fact, Edwards says, the girls usually picked more than one adult mentor: “They liked to go to one mentor for family advice and another for school and career advice.”

Mr. Faustino, whose One Degree serves many immigrant and minority families, leads a staff that reflects the people the group serves. Sixty percent are people of color, for instance, and 40 percent have firsthand experience with poverty.

“We know that's a strategic advantage,” he says. “When we have people on our team who are from

the community, we know we can build tools for the community. It's not 'in theory.' It's from our lived experience.”

PHILANTHROPY WILL GROW MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE. OR NOT.

About 80 percent of nonprofit CEOs are white — and that's been more or less the case for the past decade, according to data from the Building Movement Project. About 47 percent of nonprofit CEOs are women, according to the latest compensation study by GuideStar, but the largest organizations are still usually run by men. Will the most diverse generation of Americans change that?

It might, but only with a lot of effort that starts now, say young leaders and other experts.

“We're a generation that's been raised with the idea that equality is supposed to be, and it's just a matter of time,” says Rye Young, 31, executive di-

rector of Third Wave Fund, a grant maker that supports projects by young LGBTQ people and young women of color. “But what our generation shows is that it's not a matter of time, actually.”

Philanthropy is still not investing sufficiently in developing minorities as leaders, says B. Cole,

“This is the moment and time to start backing millennial leaders of color. We have a window of about seven to 10 years to do that well.”

TEAMWORK

The staff of The Third Wave Fund switched to a four-day workweek with no drop in productivity, says leader Rye Young (second from left). He thinks that's a better reward than offering sabbaticals, which benefit mostly people at the top.



BRYAN THOMAS, FOR THE CHRONICLE

founder of Brioxo, a social enterprise that builds online and in-person networks for young professionals of color. And obstacles for them remain.

“The threshold for expertise is much higher for young leaders of color, and the tolerance for risk is much lower,” she says. “Part of the problem is that people aren’t betting on this generation of leaders to do things the way they want to do them.”

She has a message for grant makers and nonprofits: “This is the moment and time to start backing millennial leaders of color. We have a window of about seven to 10 years to do that well.”

A FIGHT TO RAISE WAGES LOOMS.

Slightly more than half of millennials have student-loan debts or expect to incur them, according to Ernst & Young data, and many endured financial setbacks during the Great Recession. For those reasons, along with skyrocketing housing costs in major cities and the increasing professionalism in the nonprofit world, young leaders and their staffs will be less likely than their elders to put up with traditionally pitiful nonprofit pay.

“People say you don’t go into nonprofit work to get rich,” says Jordan Vernoy, managing director of network development at Feeding America. “Well, I didn’t go to college to get a degree in nonprofit management so I could be poor, either.” (His current compensation, he says, helps keep him on the job.)

Low wages represent a significant barrier to making nonprofits more diverse, says Ms. Billoo, of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. “People need a second income or independent wealth to sustain careers,” she says. “Until wages get better or there are shifts in how wealth is concentrated, diversity is a longer-term objective.”

Ms. Billoo has seen her office grow sixfold since she started as director. But everyone in her office is a fellow millennial, and compensation is a key reason. “If someone comes in the door with 10 years’ experience, I probably can’t afford them.”

Paying nonprofit staff a fair wage is “a justice issue” to Aubrey Thonvold, 35, executive director of the St. Paul charity Reconciling Works, which works to get LGBTQ people more involved in Lutheran communities and organizations.

When she first sat her two full-time staff members down for their annual reviews, she was startled that they weren’t asking about raises. “I said, OK, we’re going to do some coaching,” Ms. Thonvold says. She directed them to research what their nonprofit peers were making in the local market and come back to her in a couple of days.

“The next year,” she says, “both of them were ready with their documentation to say, ‘This is what I think I’m worth.’” (The employees got raises both years, she adds.)

BRICK-AND-MORTAR OFFICES ARE DOOMED.

A hallmark of the organizations already run by millennials is a fervent embrace of telework.

May Boeve, 33, has led the environmental group 350.org for seven years. The organization, co-founded by Ms. Boeve, six other millennials, and activist Bill McKibben, a boomer, now includes about 120 staff members, spread around the globe.

“People will ask, where’s the headquarters? Well, there isn’t one,” says Ms. Boeve, who’s based in Brooklyn, N.Y. The biggest cluster of employees lives in Oakland, Calif., where seven staff members work together in person some of the time.

In a largely all-remote organization, she says, creating a shared culture takes creativity: “Someone just suggested today that people have lunch together on a video call.”

Alix Dunn, 33, incorporated the nonprofit she leads and helped create, the Engine Room, in the United States. But Ms. Dunn, an American, lives and works in London. Other members of the staff, which helps social-change groups make better use of data and technology, are spread out: Abuja, Nigeria; Berlin; New York; Rome; Santiago, Chile; and other points around the globe.

“The internet is our offices,” she says.

Being all-remote widens the candidate pool exponentially when there’s a job opening, Ms. Dunn says. “We’re able to recruit a much more diverse staff,” she says, “We’re not worried about visa requirements or getting anyone to move somewhere.”

The system, she says, helps the staff of 13 not only live where they want but develop close ties with nearby nonprofits the Engine Room works with and, in some cases, grant makers and other donors.

It can be difficult to explain to donors the group’s budget for staff travel, which allows occasionally for working together in-person. But overall, she says, supporters seem intrigued with the Engine Room’s virtual setup. “I can tell some of our funders are excited by it. It shifts power away from the global north.”

MILLENNIAL CARRY DEBT BURDENS

53%

of millennials are either paying off student loans or expect to be taking on such debt

59%

of those with loans worry about paying it off

OPEN-PLAN OFFICE
 May Boeve oversees about 120 staff members spread around the globe for the environmental group 350.org. “People will ask, where’s the headquarters? Well, there isn’t one.”



ETHAN HILL/REDUX

PERSONAL LIVES MATTER.

Many of the tradeoffs previous generations made in the workplace — long hours in exchange for job security — have been wiped away, especially since the Great Recession. At the same time, laptops, tablets, and smartphones have ensured that people are available to their bosses and others seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Millennial leaders, experts say, are likely to prove better than their elders at protecting their personal time.

“They’re saying, I want to have a quality of life,” says Akaya Windwood, 61, president of Rockwood Leadership Institute. “I want to have experiences. I want to have friendships. I want to be a human.”

Rockwood, she notes, shifted to a 32-hour workweek in 2009. “We’re more productive than we’ve ever been, and our budget has close to tripled since we started this,” she says.

At Third Wave Fund, Mr. Young’s staff now also works a four-day week, with no drop in productivity. It’s preferable to, say, the traditional sabbatical to help staff members recharge.

“Sabbaticals tend to benefit people at the higher levels of an organization,” he says. “What feels more equitable for our staff is to have time off and wellness time built into the organization so that everyone has access to it. Rather than, ‘Here’s your reward for burnout!’”

At One Degree, Mr. Faustino turns off work-related notifications from his cellphone to maintain some boundaries. And he’s instituted a very flexible vacation policy. “The policy was, you need a vacation, take a vacation. We don’t have a set number of

days. And that worked well for a long time,” he says.

But now, Mr. Faustino says, “we’re starting to see the blurred lines: Is it OK for this person to take two months off?” His organization is still figuring out how best to strike a balance.

It’s “almost a given now” that job candidates negotiate work-at-home days as part of their contracts, says Abe Taleb, 31 and vice president at Koya Leadership Partners, an executive-search firm that works with nonprofits. “We’ll especially see that now as more millennials are becoming parents.”

When not on the road, Mr. Verroy is hunkered down not at Feeding America’s Chicago headquarters but at a shared office space in downtown Waterloo, Iowa, where he is raising a family.

He is passionate about his organization’s mission, he says. But his dad was very consumed by his job and absent a lot, and he wants to be around more.

“I think there’s a lot of pressure on millennials to not care about work-life balance, because there’s still a lot of boomers in the workplace. I think telecommuting has made it easier for me,” he says, adding with a sharp laugh, “because I don’t see the baby boomers staying until 10 o’clock at night.”

YOUNG WORKERS WANT FLEXIBILITY

64%

of young professionals prefer to choose their work location

69%

prefer to decide when their workday starts and ends

7 Career Lessons From a Veteran Fundraiser

By HEATHER JOSLYN

Mamie Jackson Williams heads development at the D.C. chapter of Planned Parenthood, a job she says is in line with her “moral compass.”



Mamie Jackson Williams learned the meaning of “development” when, as a freshman at Sweet Briar College, she asked the dean what the institution planned to do for Black History Month. “She rightly asked me, ‘What are you going to do?’” Jackson Williams recalls. She left the dean’s office with marching orders: “You need to stop by the development department.”

What’s that? Jackson Williams wondered. “In my mind, ‘development’ meant constructing a building.”

But raising money for Sweet Briar’s Black History Month programming more than two decades ago introduced her to what’s become a life-long career. Jackson Williams, 41, is now vice president for development at Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Her path has been shaped by happenstance, hard work, attentive mentors, management challenges, professional triumphs, and changing personal circumstances. Here are some of the lessons she’s learned along the way.

1. PAY YOUR DUES, BUT THINK ABOUT THE NEXT STEP.

Jackson Williams grew up in Northern Virginia with a mother who worked long hours as a computer scientist. She and her brother routinely sacked out on the floor of their mother’s workplace. “We saw that hard work is not a bad thing,” she says.

In her first postcollege job, as a project coordinator at the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, in Atlanta, Jackson Williams took a starting salary of \$26,000. “My role at the time was very grassroots: doing fundraising and recruiting volunteers for walkathons, bowlathons, you-name-it-athons,” she says. “I thought, What else is out there? Especially when it’s July in Atlanta, and you’re got a bolt of fabric on one shoulder and a rolled-up carpet on the other for a silent auction.”

2. THE BEST PLACE FOR YOU MIGHT NOT BE WHERE YOU THINK IT IS.

As she studied for a master’s degree at what’s now Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Jackson Williams hunted for work at a historically black college but struck out. Instead, she applied for a spot in the development office of Purdue University’s engineering school and, to her chagrin, got it. Purdue’s flagship campus is in West Lafayette, Ind., and she worried she would feel isolated in small-town Indiana. The former philosophy major also knew nothing

about engineering.

But Purdue turned out to be a professional idyll. “I will tout the Midwest all day long: It produces some amazing fundraisers,” Jackson Williams says. Colleague Margarita Contreni taught her how to be part of a team of competitive fundraisers. “She said, ‘Mamie, there’s always going to be someone better and faster than you. And just accept that. But you try to be better and faster than them, and you’ll get what you need to get.’ That’s a mentality I’ve always kept with me.”

Over three years at Purdue, Jackson Williams secured money for a professorship in nanotechnology and raised funds for a nanotechnology building and for minority scholarships.

She considers Purdue the turning point in her career: “If people can see it done right early in their career and know that they’re witnessing it being done right, I think that gives you a great launching pad.”

3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS PART OF THE JOB.

At Purdue, fundraisers were expected to attend conferences. “You’re supposed to network. You’re supposed to know your colleagues at the university and beyond the university,” Jackson Williams says. “I was truly a road warrior. I literally had three suitcases in my house. I would come in, leave one, pick one up, and head out.”

“If people can see it done right early in their career and know that they’re witnessing it being done right, I think that gives you a great launching pad.”

4. LEARN HOW THE BIG DECISIONS ARE MADE.

A few years later, Jackson Williams went to the University of Maryland, helping the institution expand its fundraising among West Coast alumni. Elizabeth Mitchell, her supervisor at the Robert H. Smith School of Business, told her that to understand an organization’s strategy and the politics involved in decision making, “someone needs to let you behind the closed door.”

“Elizabeth let me be a silent partner. She said, ‘Sit in that chair, keep quiet, but listen and take

in what you're hearing and what you're seeing.'"

"That's when I realized I could be an executive," she says. "I was watching her moves, thinking, Oh, that was a good decision, or, Maybe I would have done that a bit differently."

"You can't always come in with a big stick. If you want people to follow you, you have to meet people where they are."

Giving junior employees exposure to the board or other leaders is the responsibility of individual managers, not the organization, Jackson Williams says. "The manager has to be confident in who they are and that they can see themselves as being a coach or mentor," she says. "You have to have that confidence to not think, Oh, someone's on my heels."

5. BE A LEADER, NOT A BOSS.

In 2009, Jackson Williams snagged that long-coveted dream job at a historically black higher-education institution. At Spelman College, while being considered for a position as associate vice president for development, she attended a convocation ceremony and still gets emotional recalling it.

"To see these young women who looked like me, that were coming up along the line, hearing their stories. Jennifer Holliday performed — they always get amazing people. I thought, I gotta be here."

But the dream job gave way to a challeng-

ing reality. "Spelman is where I developed my skill sets on managing people. Fifty percent of my job was hanging out in HR, and 50 percent fundraising," she says ruefully. The takeaway: "You can't always come in with a big stick. If you want people to follow you, you have to meet people where they are."

6. KEEP YOUR CONNECTIONS CURRENT.

While in Atlanta, Jackson Williams married a man who lived in Washington. In 2012, she followed him to D.C., taking a position as an associate director of development at the Smithsonian Institution. About a year later, her former boss at the University of Maryland got in touch, offering her a spot as executive director for development at George Washington University's School of Business. "That's why you always have to treat people right," Jackson Williams says. "You never know how things will come back around."

7. CHOOSE A MISSION IN LINE WITH YOUR VALUES.

While at George Washington, she gave birth to a baby girl. "When major milestones like that happen, you start to think," she says. "I knew I had to work, but I wanted to work in a place that aligns with my moral compass." She also wanted to justify the time away from her daughter by working somewhere with a mission that deeply resonated with her. So she pursued her current job at Planned Parenthood, in part because "its services changed the lives of many of my friends."

In the role now for two years, Jackson Williams is happy with her choice. "This is probably the best decision I could have made in being back centered again, balancing my home life and work," she says. "Because working here, I know I'm working for my little girl."

How Foundations Can Support Nonprofit Leadership Development

By LISA SCHOHL



Most nonprofit leaders can't spend a lot of time away from their daily demands to think deeply about how to fix big social problems. Along with handling many other responsibilities, they're expected to keep overhead low and show donors that their support is producing measurable results.

But the growing emphasis on measuring a charity's impact in ways that can be counted, such as services delivered or people helped, has stunted leadership development, experts say. Although private companies routinely invest in building employees' skills to stay competitive, only 1 percent of all foundation giving goes to leadership training, according to data from the Foundation Center.

"There's such a dearth of supply in leadership development [at nonprofits]," says Carrie Avery, president of the Los Angeles-based Durfee Foundation, "that it really feels like a great opportunity for funders" to make a big difference.

Since 2007, the Durfee Foundation has taken an experimental approach to supporting local leadership development. Through its Stanton Fellowship Program, it supports proven leaders in Los Angeles's nonprofit, public, and private sectors to explore an open-ended question about a complex social challenge faced by those in their fields. Over the course of two years, fellows receive \$100,000, take at least three months' leave from their jobs to pursue their line of inquiry, and test solutions.

Fellows have tackled and "reimagined" some of the city's toughest social challenges: air pollution, homelessness, and poor graduation rates, among others. At the end of the program, participants must share their findings with colleagues so others can learn from and build on that knowledge.

The foundation recently shared a report that outlines benefits and lessons learned from the first 10 years of the fellowship. Based on the report and an interview with *The Chronicle*, here are some useful steps foundations can take to support nonprofit leadership development:

TAKE CALCULATED RISKS TO EFFECT CHANGE.

Don't shy away from risk, but do your homework to make sure it's a calculated one, says Claire Peeps, executive director of the Durfee Foundation. For example, the Stanton Fellowship has applicants submit a clear pro-

posal for how they'll use the time and money to pursue their inquiry. A review panel asks questions to determine whether the leader, organization, and timing are right to take on a particular issue.

Peeps says, "There needs to be a willingness to step back and also to take risks." Keep in mind that a line of inquiry is rarely straight, but stepping back or changing direction may lead to a more successful outcome.

TAKE A LONGER, BROADER VIEW OF IMPACT.

Nonprofits are trained to "demonstrate that every penny spent is going directly to services," Peeps says, "but what we're doing is a lot of quick fixes." Instead of thinking about quarterly, or even one- or two-year results, donors should ask how nonprofits are making progress toward solving bigger problems in the long term. "When funders create very strict measurable outcomes and expectations," Avery says, "they're actually constraining nonprofits from discovery and a longer arc."

INVEST IN INDIVIDUALS AND FOSTER NETWORKS.

In the end, it's people who are doing the work, not organizations, Avery says. The Durfee Foundation intentionally supports individual leaders — and brings them together. It has found that, although most Stanton fellows are drawn to the program for the chance to focus on a particular issue, "at the end of the two-year program, they say the value has been in the peer network," says Peeps. As people move throughout their careers, they stay in touch and share what they learn along the way, she says.

ASK, LISTEN, AND LEARN.

Grant makers should check in regularly with the leaders and organizations they support, as well as be responsive to their needs. To stay in touch, ask what they're learning, what's working, and what they've had to tweak, Peeps recommends. And rather than thinking about what you can teach nonprofit leaders, create spaces for peer-to-peer dialogue and relationship building.

Nonprofit leaders "have a tremendous amount of knowledge to share with each other and with us too," Peeps says.



Nonprofit Workers Under Stress: How Leaders Can Respond

By MONISHA KAPILA, CEO of ProInspire

Nonprofits face unprecedented challenges and new opportunities driven by the political landscape, social movements, and an increased desire to change the status quo.

Although this moment may remind people about the importance of their work for social change, it can also feel exhausting and frustrating — especially because the months ahead will be full of new changes with tax and budget changes from Washington, not to mention the potential impact of stock-market ups and downs on donors, endowments, and retirement plans — and such other issues as health care, immigration, sexual harassment, and racial equity that affect nonprofit missions and organizations.

That's why nonprofit leaders need to pay attention to keeping their staff members invigorated and energized or risk losing the key people who fuel our missions. Here are five key steps to take:

FOCUS ON ALLEVIATING STRESS AND BURNOUT — FOR MANAGERS AND WORKERS.

The past year was filled with stress for many nonprofit staff members, primarily driven by rhetoric and actions from the federal government. Whether it's uncertainty over the fate of the Dreamers, natural disasters, or other concerns, the list of funding threats continues to grow as does the need for services for people affected by government actions.

People who work at nonprofits experience high levels of anxiety every day about their own safety and civil rights, their clients' needs, health care benefits, and much more. These sources of stress will continue to shadow employees at home and at work; the longer the stressors endure, the more they will make it tougher for staff members to stay resilient.

Nonprofit leaders must make it a priority to find ways to reduce stress for themselves and their teams to manage the challenging year ahead. Executive leadership plays an important

role in setting tone in the organization.

Executive directors should establish their own priorities for what kind of self-care is essential, share them with employees, and ask all staff members to develop plans that will keep them energized.

Pratichi Shah, chief executive of Flourish Talent Management Solutions and a ProInspire board member, said that one action organizations are taking is reminding employees of the mental health benefits covered under the organization's insurance and benefit plans.

Some groups are also making mindfulness practices, such as physical activity and calming exercises, available throughout the office and at group meetings.

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Shah also has seen an increase in requests from managers and others for help in building their ability to conduct healthy, supportive conversations with staff members. She says that is a wise step for organizations to take.

Leaders interested in other steps may want to take this list from Nonprofit HR, an employment and talent company, to learn additional ways to minimize burnout and encourage self-care.

WORK TO CLOSE THE RACIAL LEADERSHIP GAP.

Recent reports by BoardSource and Building Movement Project highlight the racial leadership gap throughout the nonprofit world.

According to BoardSource's Leading with Intent: 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices, 90 percent of CEOs and board chairs and 84 percent of board members were white — far higher than Pew Research Center's finding that whites accounted for about 60 percent of the labor force.

In its 2017 report *Race to Lead: Confronting the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap*, Building Movement Project notes that this gap is not caused by differences in education, skills, and interest for people of color. Instead it is driven by outright bias.

This data is spurring a movement among foundations to invest in their own understanding of racial equity and to support grantees in similar work. The Annie E. Casey Foundation has documented its journey in a publication called *Operationalizing Equity*, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has published *The Business Case for Racial Equity*, quantifying the cost of racism in the United States.

Organizations should focus on making race equity a strategic and leadership priority, shifting organizational culture, and investing in staff capacity to drive equity and minimize bias.

Equity in the Center, an effort to increase racial equity at nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, has a useful resource called *Building a Race Equity Culture* that shows how to combat social inequities inside and outside of an organization.

Leaders can start by holding open conversations on race and racism, and by identifying champions for spearheading this work at the senior-leadership level.

Change Philanthropy, a group of grant makers, offers resources for foundation officials, and the nonprofit resource center Race Equity Tools offers a plethora of information for individuals and organizations.

EXPECT TO SEE MORE POLITICAL DEBATES IN THE OFFICE.

The #MeToo campaign, #TakeAKnee protests, and the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville have brought sensitive issues into open conversation. If a subject is being discussed in the news or social media, then employees are thinking about it at work.

Yet many leaders don't know how to talk about topics that may seem political or divisive. More

than ever, nonprofit leaders must speak up about what will and will not be tolerated, and create an environment where people feel they can be themselves at work.

Nonprofit leaders are taking a range of approaches to help staff members. One nonprofit executive director whose employees and program participants are directly affected by possible changes in the federal rules that protect the Dreamers sends messages to her staff nearly once a week to acknowledge the uncertainty and fear her staff members are facing about what will happen to people they know and serve.

Black college graduates hold nearly twice as much student debt as their white counterparts, which affects their ability to afford the low salaries many nonprofits provide to early-career workers.

Other executive directors focus on highlighting organizational values and reiterating their commitment to uphold them in this divisive environment. Darren Walker, head of the Ford Foundation, has been a model for other chief executives with his writings. Another set of great examples can be found in this article from *Fast Company* that shows how nonprofit leaders have been taking steps to open the lines of communication on difficult topics.

ANTICIPATE INCREASED COMPETITION FOR TALENT.

Multiple factors are converging that will increase competition for talent and that also make compensation and benefits a bigger priority for nonprofit employees.

Low unemployment, rising health care costs, skyrocketing student loan debt, and uncertainty about public service loan-forgiveness programs mean that employees will be more concerned about compensation and benefits.

The disparity in the amounts of student-loan debt accumulated by blacks and whites has implications for who can afford to enter and remain in

the nonprofit workforce. Black college graduates hold nearly twice as much student debt as their white counterparts, which affects their ability to afford the low salaries many nonprofits provide to early-career workers.

Charities may face struggles increasing wages because they are worried about whether to expect significant declines in donations because of the new tax law, but they must realize that failing to pay fair salaries will make it harder than ever to keep talented staff members.

As a way to keep nonprofit workers challenged and loyal, a growing number of nonprofit organizations are focusing on leadership development and employee engagement. Fund the People, a nonprofit that encourages grant makers to key in on employee needs, has a tool kit that highlights top reasons to invest in nonprofit talent, including improved performance, impact, and sustainability.

This activity parallels data from the corporate world, which shows that “high-impact” companies spend significantly more on training than average. We are seeing more nonprofits dedicate resources by providing employees a budget for learning activities, taking advantage of local nonprofit support centers that offer training, and making professional development a part of regular employee discussions.

SHIFT WORK METHODS TO FOCUS ON CHANGING UNDERLYING SYSTEMS THAT CAUSE SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

Systems change may seem logical to many nonprofit leaders, but how organizations do this work is less clear and requires the development of new

skills throughout the organization. Nonprofits must change the way we approach our work, shifting from an organization focus to a results focus. This requires us to develop networks, collaborate with other organizations, mobilize constituents, and influence systems beyond the services we provide.

Schwab Foundation found that organizations often must hire people or train current staff members to build skills to transform the way systems work. StriveTogether is a well-known example of a network that has focused on improving all the systems connected with schools to make sure that all students are learning what matters. StriveTogether network members have invested in building the capacity of leaders to focus on results, showing them how to handle groups of people with different skills and needs, manage data, and carry out other key functions to support systems change.

In the months and years to come, we can expect to see a rising demand for individuals with experience in advocacy, movements, and coalition building as nonprofits and foundations give priority to systems change. Organizations will also need to invest in altering their strategies, supporting staff members, and recognizing the effort needed to do this complex work. In these uncertain times, investments in staff capacity to bring about transformative, systems-level change will enable nonprofits to meet their ultimate goal of serving the common good.

Monisha Kapila is founder and executive director of ProInspire, an organization that works to develop leaders at nonprofits.

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