

## **Ensuring Sustainable Community Foundations—Using the US Experience to Assist in Developing a Strategy and a Range of Tools to Help Community Foundations in Australia and the United Kingdom Achieve Sustainability through Local Philanthropy**

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### **Abstract**

Marion Webster looks at the challenges of sustainability that community foundations face as they seek to promote civil society and improve the well-being of their communities, particularly in under-developed countries and small rural communities. She identifies two main approaches taken by community foundations—donor focused and community focused—that may affect the ways community foundations define and carry out their missions. Regardless of where a foundation chooses to position itself on this continuum, Marion Webster argues that a successful community foundation needs to develop a locally-raised permanent endowment (as ultimately this will give the foundation both independence and credibility). In addition to endowment size and the dollar value of its grantmaking, she identifies other measures of community foundation success, including, but not limited to:

- establishing a high level of trust with both donors and grantees;
- a Board reflective of the makeup of the community, and a CEO and staff that champion community needs;
- the ability to add value to donors' gifts through knowledge of the community, research capabilities, and staff expertise;
- evidence of a leadership and public convening role; and
- an organization's ability to bring about positive social change within its community.

Ms. Webster also discusses the importance of building a culture of giving within one's community and finding new ways of working with professional advisors and commercial charitable gift funds. While arguing that clarity of mission and strategic planning will help many community foundations achieve sustainability over time, she raises concerns about the impact of those that fail upon the credibility of the community foundation concept as a whole.

To request the full version of the paper, please click [here](#)

