

# Measuring Horizontality: The methodological development of a new instrument to measure behavioral change in community philanthropy organizations in Africa

Susan Wilkinson-Maposa, University of Cape Town

## Abstract:

While performance measurement has been a focus of international development practice for the last decade, the body of literature detailing practical examples of how measures, indicators and instruments are constructed is relatively deplete. Furthermore, practice suggests that the process of development is not transparent or subject to scrutiny by the academic or practice community rather developed in house by development agencies. Their world view is the reference point and standard measures replicable in diverse contexts are the norm. Typically metrics are "handed down" rather than jointly developed or negotiated and become an issue of compliance applied within monitoring and evaluation exercises. Yet another possibility for construction exists. Performance metric can be customised to context, be informed by a local world view and advance the aspirations and long term goals of an implementing organisation.

This paper recognising that an evaluation industry has emerged in the field of philanthropy (Knight B. 2010) considers the case of community philanthropy organisations (CPOs) in Africa. A CPO, exemplified in a community foundation, is a non-governmental organisation that gathers, manages and redistributes financial and other resources for a community's wellbeing ([www.wingsweb.org/information\\_and\\_resources\\_glossaries.asp](http://www.wingsweb.org/information_and_resources_glossaries.asp)). Typically CPOs considers community knowledge and leadership to be their strategic advantage and central to how they work yet practically there is often a gap between "what they say and what they do". (Bernholtz et al 2005) This paper considers the development of a metric that can monitor, as part of an organisational development process, the behaviour change of a CPO toward the achievement of this aspiration. A central question concerns how to gauge change in CPO behaviour away from its own bias and favoured ways of working (verticality) and toward the norms and conventions familiar to individual and collective action and agency for self help and mutual assistance (horizontality).

This paper demonstrates that it possible to gauge whether changes in CPO behaviour favour endogenous or exogenous philanthropy and that this can be done using the endogenous rather than exogenous as the reference point. The author documents the process followed to construct such a metric. This approach builds on: (i) a previous inquiry undertaken by the author in 2003 -2005 which generated empirical evidence on endogenous or "horizontal philanthropy" in four southern African countries; (ii) the practical insights and experience of an effort taken by the author in South Africa, in 2006 to 2009 to jointly develop indicators and measures with CPOs and finally; (iii) relies on the categories provided by organisational change literature.

In this paper, we will first detail the five dimensions of the horizontal philanthropy framework. The five dimensions that make up the 'horizontal' system of self help are distinct from the 'vertical' system of CPOs in terms of 1) resource base, 2) networks 3) norms; 4) guiding principles and 5) motivation. (Wilkinson-Maposa S and Fowler A 2005; 2009) Then we will explore the four system elements of an organisation directing attention to 1) formal organisational arrangements; 2) informal social arrangements; 3) ways of converting inputs to outputs and finally; 4) physical set up. (Porras and Hoffer 1986) Next the paper illustrates how the five dimensions of horizontal philanthropy are combined with the four system elements of an organisation in order to develop 20 indicators informing a new performance metric called the horizontality index. Finally, the experience of applying this instrument as part of a PhD study, its utility, limitations and potential contribution to the organisational development efforts of a CPO is discussed.

## REFERENCES

Bernholz, Lucy, Fulton Katherine, and Kasper, Gabriel, 2005, On the Brink of New Promise: the future of U S Community Foundations. Blueprint Research and Design Inc. and the Monitor Institute  
[http://www.blueprintrd.com/text/foc\\_FINALfutureofcommunity\\_complete.pdf](http://www.blueprintrd.com/text/foc_FINALfutureofcommunity_complete.pdf) March 28.  
Knight, Barry. 2010. "Beyond faith and charity" Alliance Vol 15 No. 4 December 2010.

Porras, J. and Hoffer, S., 1986, "Common Behavioural Changes in Successful Organisation Development Efforts", the Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 447-494.  
Wilkinson- Maposa, S and Fowler A. 2009 The Poor Philanthropist II: A new approach to sustainable development, Cape Town: The Centre for Leadership and Public Values.