

# Back to the Source: How Collaboration Can Transform Online Engagement

by Howard Fisher

edited by Ben Sheldon & designed by Billy Brown





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## I. Introduction

The Transmission Project believes that crowdsourcing could be applied to create more participatory approaches to the design and planning of community projects by generating feedback, critique, and idea refinement. With this report, the Transmission Project surveys current practices in crowdsourcing to offer evidence of how social innovators can benefit from a crowdsourcing process that gives them the power and the space to solicit valuable input from community members and experts to improve their community-focused projects. Drawing on interviews and secondary research, the report also establishes a framework for how funders and organizations can best use crowdsourcing to support innovation and community building. It then uses this framework to lay out a set of practices that will facilitate the creation of projects that improve the life of communities, promote new ways of getting involved in such projects, and foster increased participation throughout a project's lifecycle.

## II. Background

Beth Kanter defines crowdsourcing as “the process of organizing many people to participate in a joint project, often in small ways. The results are greater than an individual or organization could accomplish alone.”<sup>i</sup> In April 2011, the Transmission Project began experimenting with crowdsourcing to help small groups in local communities design projects and mobilize crowd support to improve those projects. The Transmission Project also initiated conversations with technology experts and organization leaders. Largely, conversations reiterated in more concrete terms what other research uncovered. Thaddeus Miles, Director of Security at MassHousing, reported that small community groups with good ideas for social solutions often do not know where to go for funding and are not familiar with grant application processes.<sup>ii</sup> Miles attributes this in part to a lack of writing skills and in part to a lack of fundraising literacy – the ability to fit one's ideas into the framework and mindset of the funding institution. Moreover, groups that do similar work are disjointed rather than tightly networked. In Boston, as just one example, lack of coordinated efforts exacerbates competition with 3,600 other Boston nonprofits all applying to the same handful of foundations.

Foundation structure and the arduous process of applying for funding were understood to be major barriers to improving the long-term health of organizations and implementing community projects. Foundations are not knowledgeable about the communities their grantees serve, nor are they experts in running nonprofits.<sup>iii</sup> Very rarely do foundations assist applicants in navigating the project design and grant writing processes or provide further assistance beyond the grant. When they do, assistance is spread thinly across several areas in ways that do not build the skills or capacity that groups lack.<sup>iv</sup> Barriers to funding thus reinforce themselves by denying groups access to the means of surmounting those barriers.<sup>v</sup> A key premise of research is that approaches to funding require revision. The Transmission Project believes Internet communications technologies – and crowdsourcing in particular – have a role to play in transforming funding processes by providing more groups with access to the networks of people and to the skills they need to successfully design and implement local solutions to their communities' challenges.

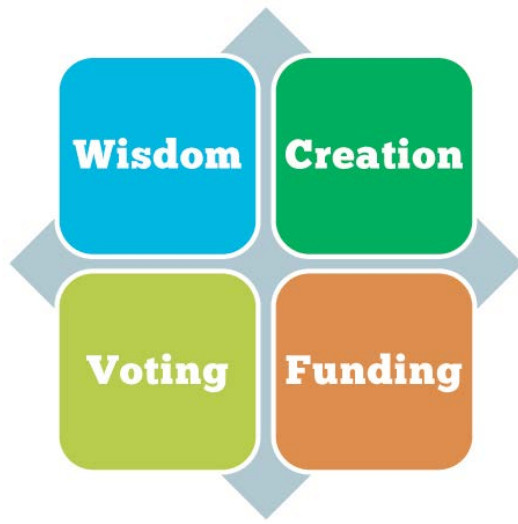
### III. Models of Crowdsourcing in Innovation & Collaboration

Although crowdsourcing is a new concept, a literature about online crowd dynamics already exists. Geoff Livingston discusses crowdsourcing as a means to empower a community:

empowerment assumes that the organization will commit to building a far flung community. In essence, the empowered [online community] members create conversations and ideas that are so extensive they exist well beyond the organization's reach. Instead, the company or nonprofit becomes much more of a host and facilitator, available when called upon. The organization then creates initiatives and helps to sustain the effort over the long term. Crowdsourcing, large-scale events, cause-based initiatives, and loyal customer communities are examples of the empowerment strategy.<sup>vi</sup>

Livingston's explanation serves as a much-needed disclaimer and provides the basis of a framework for transformative uses of crowdsourcing. By no means does crowdsourcing by itself represent a solution to any social challenge. If anything, crowdsourcing requires more work and more investment on the part of funders and organizations alike, as we shall see. At its best, crowdsourcing functions as a platform for community engagement – a new way for people to get involved in decision-making around the future a community.

There are many ways to imagine how a foundation could coordinate online group action to benefit communities. Kanter offers a typology of crowdsourcing methods different groups – nonprofits, foundations, governments, corporations, etc. – can use to further their goals. The most highly publicized (and criticized) examples tend to be those that merge voting and funding such as the Pepsi Refresh Challenge. In these high-profile voting contests, a public votes on organizations, and the one with the most votes receives a



monetary prize. However, organizations can also draw on the collective knowledge of the crowd to gather research and inform their grant-writing process. To articulate how the phenomenon of online crowdsourcing can best aid groups with the work of reflection and help funders make more informed decisions, the Transmission Project offers an in-depth analysis of two foundations' attempts to integrate crowd feedback into their grantmaking.

## The 2010 Knight News Challenge

In 2010, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation pioneered the use of open commenting on its Knight News Challenge. The Challenge aims to spur innovation around providing information to communities using digital, open-source technology. Anyone who has access to Knight's website can apply, and last year applicants had the option of applying openly – that is, making their application available to be read, rated, and commented on by visitors to the website. By doing so, applicants might benefit from the public's feedback. Between the time applicants posted their proposals and the December 1 deadline, they could change their proposals to reflect improvements based on others' suggestions. Because Knight's News Challenge drew experience from the crowd in the form of feedback, allowed users to rate projects, and comprised a funding contest, it exemplifies a hybrid model that includes elements of the crowdsourcing approaches Kanter terms *wisdom*, *voting*, and *funding*.

Recognizing the gap between foundations and the work of organizations, Knight director of Digital Media Grants John Bracken says that in crowdsourcing feedback, the foundation saw the opportunity to bring expertise from the field to its technology initiative.<sup>vii</sup> In an online Q&A, Bracken likewise says Knight was looking “to be surprised and see things we haven’t seen before.”<sup>viii</sup> He acknowledges, however, that he doesn’t think Knight executed its crowdsourcing effort well.

In Knight’s case, increased inclusiveness came into conflict with the structure of a funding contest. The Challenge’s website conveys mixed messages about how the public’s feedback influences the review and judging process. On one hand, the site stated as of June 6, 2011 (before winners were announced), “applicants who choose the public option will not receive preferential consideration. Likewise, those who choose the closed option will not be penalized.”<sup>ix</sup> On the other hand, the site elaborated, “the public rating and commenting is by no means the only parameter we use to choose the best projects. We give more weight to our panel of experts,” who gauge projects’ potential impact based on how well it fits into one of the predetermined categories “mobile,” “authenticity,” “sustainability,” or “community.” The website implies that review panelists do give *some weight* to public comments even as it denies showing preference for open submissions. Lack of transparency and intentionality regarding the rating and commenting system limited the benefits Knight could reap from its use of crowdsourcing.

To its credit, Knight reflects on the complications of crowdsourcing feedback in the context of a funding competition. In particular, its FAQ about the section pointed to the bias of users: “We hope everyone is acting in good faith, but we understand that applicants can subjectively rate other entrants’ projects.” This implies users could leave negative feedback on their competitors’ projects in an attempt at subterfuge. Likewise, Knight addresses concerns about viewers stealing participants’ ideas:

It’s the trade-off for having the opportunity to use the wisdom of the crowd to improve your entry...Submitting an ‘open’ application means you are either confident enough in your own abilities and track record that you’ll be chosen to do the work even if others have similar ideas, or that you don’t really care who does the work as long as it gets done.

Here Knight anticipates the central tension that crowdsourcing introduces to a contest. By sponsoring a funding challenge, Knight hopes to drive social innovation by encouraging healthy competition among innovators. However, opening up innovators' ideas to public collaboration would seem to undermine the spirit of competition; even as Knight highlights how crowd wisdom can improve a project and make it a *more competitive* candidate, it instructs applicants to only include the crowd if they “don't really care who does the work as long as it gets done.” In the end, Knight resolves this tension by subordinating the role of the crowd: getting public support is made optional rather than essential to the success of a project.<sup>x</sup> True to its name, Knight's initiative is a challenge first and foremost.

The challenges of resolving these tensions not only indicate that practical applications of crowdsourcing are still experimental, but also reiterate what experts like Geoff Livingston have said: “While the crowd craves freedom, it desperately needs structure. People need to be told how to participate and the rules of engagement. These rules have to be clear, empowering of the crowd, and directive in their end result.”<sup>xi</sup> Effective use of crowdsourcing requires a great deal of intentionality and structure. Knight provides plenty of guidance for applicants but not for commentators. Moreover, the crowd needs to be the hero. Its contributions would have to equal if not supersede in importance the ideas of innovators as the focus of the funding process. Indeed, Knight's Challenge merely emphasizes what is already true about applying for funding – that it is a competitive undertaking. Adding the crowd to the mix has the potential to transform the nature of competition through increased collaboration.

### **Maine Health Access Foundation's Fund for the Future**

In its 2009 Fund for the Future initiative, Maine Health Access Foundation similarly used crowdsourcing through social media to generate feedback on its grantees' applications. Fund for the Future is a project that looks beyond healthcare access to causal factors in the health of a particular community. Like Bracken, MeHAF program officer Len Bartel recognized that there is “too much of a paradigm in which funders are considered experts.”<sup>xii</sup> Bartel, who spearheaded the innovation, added, “my intention was to really try to tap into that local knowledge and wisdom of other people on the ground—the boots on the ground in those communities—that might have a better sense of what relationships might work in a project and might not.”<sup>xiii</sup> Fostering

conversation around project ideas on Facebook was a first step toward increased engagement for MeHAF.

After approving seven initial letters of inquiry, the foundation posted its applicants' grant project ideas on Facebook with the intent that organizations would incorporate public feedback into their projects. Initially people were slow to respond, and the public comment period had to be extended by two weeks. Bartel attributes organizations' and individuals' reservations to their desire for anonymity: many participating organizations did not have dedicated social media strategies at the time, and their constituents did not want to create Facebook accounts. Much more effective were MeHAF's and its potential grantees' efforts to solicit feedback from communities through email and via a survey distributed through the foundation's e-newsletter. This included not only making solicitations through MeHAF's traditional channels, but also sending requests for feedback through applicants' networks in local communities. Organizations received feedback directly, and MeHAF forwarded responses it received to applicants. While using Facebook for community projects provided the impetus for changing MeHAF's grantmaking process, the effort to reach out to people was more central to success than the use of one specific communications platform.

By drawing on the input of pre-existing networks, MeHAF won concrete results for grantees and for its Fund for the Future. Two of the final three grantees incorporated the public's feedback into their projects in ways that were highly significant: one organization added an evaluative element to its project design and another included a partnership in its efforts. Bartel speaks to the success of the experiment:

I think the real power of social media is for us to begin those conversations with one-to-one and one-to-many, but then to step away and have the many-to-many – the public within the public – start to really build and carry that conversation, and generate and build movements. The ability for these platforms to connect, to coordinate and to drive collaboration has huge potential.

Bartel echoes Livingston's assertion that by engaging with broader publics through crowdsourcing, foundations take on the role of facilitator. In MeHAF's case, crowdsourcing has provided a starting point for realizing foundations' function as helpful conductors of

dialogues between organizations and the communities they serve as well as among community members.

Further comparison of Knight's and MeHAF's efforts reveal where both funders stand in relation to the ideal of more collaboration-based grantmaking. What most distinguishes the Fund for the Future from Knight's News Challenge is the intentionality with which the former sought out community opinion. Even though MeHAF introduced the crowd's perspective at a later stage than Knight (only after winnowing out all but seven letters of inquiry), opening up the project to feedback was a mandatory, central component of the application. Bartel notes, "One of the specific questions in the application is how they incorporated the Facebook comments, if they did, into their proposal and how they think that may have improved it." Attempts to measure the effects of crowd participation reflect a commitment to increased engagement. MeHAF planned to use crowdsourcing from the beginning and consistently promoted it throughout the grant.

Despite these advances, both foundations used crowdsourcing as an additional step in what remained a rather traditional grant process. When participants comment, they comment on a project that has been largely determined ahead of time. Even though Knight's innovation categories reflect widely recognized needs, calling upon community members to comment on innovations within these categories seems too prescriptive an approach to benefit from increased participation. While comments played a role in the review of applications in Fund for the Future's case, the final funding decision remained the privilege of foundation officials. As Bartel candidly states, "That's as much power as we were willing to give up on hat first try." While both Knight's and Maine Health Access Foundation's crowdsourcing efforts represent important first steps for their organizations, they have introduced greater participation into their grantmaking processes without making them truly collaborative.

## Stack Exchange's Area 51

Looking to applications of crowdsourcing outside of foundation use illustrates further steps toward transforming the grantmaking process. Beth Kanter discusses artistic crowd creation, such as crowdsourcing the plot of an opera, but crowdsourcing creation rarely receives attention when it comes to community-based organizations and foundations. Crowds are just as capable of collaborating to create a plan of action. Stack Exchange's Area 51 showcases the online groups' ability to produce cohesive projects. Stack Exchange is a network of free, community-driven Question & Answer websites, and its Area 51 is a platform for soliciting new online Q&A forums built around specific topics or themes.<sup>xiv</sup> Participants propose topics that new forums will address, and proposals are taken through a three-step process. In the first step, users collectively define a discussion topic through a rigorous process of vetting sample questions. While a single user provides the initial topic suggestion, the community works together to set the priorities of the forum-to-be – for instance, whether the community will cater to novices or experts in its area of focus. In step two, participants commit to being part of the core community of users who will lend their expertise and field questions. Finally, having defined its purpose and garnered enough support, the site goes through two stages of beta testing, including a private test involving those who committed in step two and a public test. If the community is robust enough to make it through both beta tests, the Q&A forum is launched as an independent website. Like many approaches to crowdsourcing used by foundations, Stack Exchange collects opinion and allows users to share knowledge, but both are oriented toward co-creation.

An emphasis on collaboration distinguishes Stack Exchange Area 51 from sites aimed only at gathering constituents' perspectives. Each participant has a say in the future Q&A site from the beginning of the process, and the developing website comes forth little by little as participants articulate their shared purpose. The person who submits the original topic may have a particular idea in mind, but what comes out of the process may prove completely different – tailored always to the needs of the people involved. The value of collaboration on Area 51 is that it empowers people to shape the online forum from which they will presumably benefit once it is fully realized.

Most notably, investment in a shared project is enough to sustain participation on Stack Exchange Area 51. No monetary prize drives participation. Instead, the Area 51 rewards participants for their involvement in a site's creation and maintenance. People accrue credibility in topics in which they have addressed other users' questions. Greater involvement gives people access to more privileges, such as the ability to edit others' posts to make them clearer or to flag sample questions as irrelevant to the proposed topic. In this regard, rewards always follow from participation and always lead toward more, diversifying forms of participation. Unlike foundations' applications of crowdsourcing, activity on Area 51 has no goal in offline communities. However, by giving participants more to do, it lends its members more agency than many crowdsourcing efforts that just collect opinions. Rather than asking, "Do you want to comment on this," Stack Exchange asks, "Do you want to be a part of this?" By giving members the opportunity to participate in a site's creation, Stack Exchange's Area 51 empowers people to shape the terms of their own involvement. Introducing a similarly collaborative approach to grantmaking could help address the challenges associated with funding public sector work.

#### **IV. Framework**

Knight's News Challenge, MeHAF's Fund for the Future, and Stack Exchange's Area 51 contribute to a framework for what defines effective, transformative applications of crowdsourcing in funding. The Transmission Project has applied this framework in constructing an actionable process that leverages crowd knowledge to improve community projects before they receive funding. Existing literature on crowdsourcing emphasizes the following lessons and serves as a useful starting point for a framework:

- In order to drive participation, the crowd has to care. This requires not only rewarding active users, but also understanding a particular public's needs and habits, i.e., how they prefer to be communicated with.
- Crowdsourcing efforts require a structure that guides participants toward a common goal but also gives them agency to pursue that goal by providing appropriate outlets for group action.

- Rules need to be either enforced or adapted; in either case, the organizing body that facilitates the process needs to be intentional and open about why they have chosen to go one way or the other.
- Crowdsourcing requires a lot of management and time. Organizations and foundations must play an active role as facilitators and connectors. As Livingston says, “Crowdsourcing innovation does not mean outsourcing human resources, just the innovation.”<sup>xv</sup>

In addition to these points, the Transmission Project offers five guiding principles specifically addressed to funders who want to use crowdsourcing to transform their grantmaking processes.

1. **Community engagement is a prerequisite to effective crowdsourcing.** MeHAF’s ability to connect its applicants to useful recommendations depended on those organizations’ already having access to the ideas, opinions, and feeling of local communities. Rather than trying to create engagement from scratch, crowdsourcing allows foundations to mobilize and focus communities’ insight for the benefit of their potential grantees.
2. **The crowd’s work must make a difference, and the public should be involved from the beginning.** Previous crowdsourcing efforts have used public opinion largely as a filter for ideas that were born in organizations or among an innovative elite. The perspectives of community members should be taken into account not just in the testing of ideas, but also in their original formulation. Crossing barriers between organization and community is central to the work of engagement.
3. **Including the crowd requires restructuring of the grant application process.** Adjustments in the timeline and the role foundation staff plays are just two examples. MeHAF found it had to amend its approach to soliciting feedback and extend its deadline to allow enough time for participation to build. As a result, MeHAF found itself playing a facilitatory role. It conducted the flow of dialogue between organizations and the people who responded to its solicitations. At the same time, foundation staff retained their function as decision makers. Every funder will make alterations according to its values, its motivation for doing crowdsourcing, and the comfort level of staff.

4. **Giving a greater degree of agency to the crowd does not mean eliminating the role of experts.** Experts in a particular field of knowledge should have a place among the crowd and the opportunity to weigh in on different projects – noting how they could be improved or substantiated with further evidence or support from communities. Funders can assure that each application has the benefit of expert advice – and that applicants have a chance to act on that advice – before a project is submitted for foundation view.
5. **Not only should community feedback matter in deciding which projects get funded, but communities should be a part of putting projects into action.** When people have been involved in a project that has bearing on their future, the benefits of a project go far beyond the end results. People come together as individual agents in a collective endeavor and leave recognizing themselves as members of a community in which they have a common stake. More concretely, collaboration helps community members strengthen important skills through interactions with those around them who are more experienced and by bringing in insight from outside the community.

## Foundation of a Collaborative Practice

Using the framework outlined here, the Transmission Project proposes a project design process that addresses barriers to the development of well-researched, community-supported solutions by providing an alternative to traditional grant writing. More than a specific tool, this process comprises a series of practices that will help innovators develop better solutions to their communities' needs by providing a series of steps that give them access to the feedback of experts and community members whose perspectives they may not otherwise consider or have access to. By the same token, it gives community members and experts the opportunity to contribute feedback, criticism, research, and support to the solutions that will impact their communities *while those solutions are being developed* rather than simply evaluating solutions after they have been formulated.

Having taken potential solutions through a series of critiques that filter and refine them, groups will be better prepared to take their ideas to a funder. The process thus reduces the burden of evaluating proposals because foundation officers and potential funders know that every project already has the support of a network of innovators, community members, and experts in the field. Much like Stack Exchange's Area 51, the entire design process would be available for consideration even after it is completed. The process therefore allows foundation officers to make more informed funding decisions because innovators can approach funders with a detailed narrative of how the particular solution was determined to be the most effective. For everyone involved, it will mean projects with well-defined needs and timelines that are based on conversations in which all stakeholders have taken part from the early stages of project planning.

The Process entails three steps. In the first stage, the project leader provides a statement of need and a corresponding solution. Proposed projects are particular to a local community, and while anyone can participate, the tool aims to facilitate feedback from locals and outside experts. Community members, organization staff, and foundation officials make up the crowd, and they are all involved from the beginning. Participants comment on whether the solution is appropriate to the particular problem, whether it would prove feasible in the specific community, and whether it is articulated clearly. Users could draw upon outside resources to support their opinion. The project leader could easily integrate user suggestions into the proposed project. Users can also flag projects as redundant with others. After the project's weaknesses and points of contention have been addressed, it moves onto the next stage.

In the second stage, users collectively articulate in detail the needs and timeline of the project that they defined in the first stage. Needs could entail materials, space, costs, necessary steps toward project completion and time necessary to fulfill each, and the different roles people would play in the project. This step benefits from the diverse perspectives of the crowd because participants will bring to bear their unique experience in determining what a project demands. Community members can also make connections with local vendors to get materials donated or purchase them at a reduced rate. Once the crowd has defined what the project needs in order to be successful, they graduate to the third and final phase.

Before the project can be executed, people need to commit to fulfilling the roles identified in the second stage. Here the networks that participants bring to the project take center stage. Participants volunteer themselves reach out to dedicated community members with the necessary skills. This stage also marks the transformative potential of the process. Internet users first become participants in creating a plan and then they become agents in executing it. By the time participants have taken the original idea through the three stages, they will have a well-articulated plan with which they can approach funders or put into action themselves.

## V. Final Analysis and Conclusions

Having proposed a crowdsourcing tool, the Transmission Project will hold its own ideas to the same rigorous critique to which it has held the ideas of others. First, like all online tools, the Transmission Project's creates barriers to accessibility. Many poor communities, which the tool proposes to include in the project design process, do not have easy access to the Internet. Online tools that claim to impact groups affected by poverty must mitigate this gap by including members of those communities in other ways. By providing a space online for conversations that are oriented toward a plan of action, the Transmission Project's approach can include community members who do have access *and* create opportunities for participation and inclusion offline.

No tool can be all things to all people. The practices laid out here would likely prove superfluous for larger, well-engaged organizations that can call upon community constituents and allies in the field to support their work. However, it would provide much-needed assistance to small groups of innovators of low-cost, high impact solutions whose ideas might not otherwise get fully fleshed-out because they do not have access to a large network. It could also help those who want to tackle traditional barriers between foundations, organizations, and people in the communities they serve. Its focuses on shared wisdom, consensus-building, and volunteerism all facilitate this work. Rather than attempting to appeal to as large an audience as possible, the process takes a highly-focused, intentional approach to allowing more people to participate at an earlier stage in the design of a project.

Despite its transformative theory of change, the process remains precisely that: a set of untested practices. However, the Transmission Project can draw on its experience to make recommendations as to how they should be implemented. To actually achieve the network effects that would bring more perspectives to a project, a critical mass of participants is necessary. As opposed to trying to conjure a cohesive community out of the aggregate of internet users, focusing on a particular geographic area would allow existing groups to bring their local networks to a project, much as MeHAF has done. An effective approach to crowdsourcing will engage people on issues they care about and recruit participants through channels with which they are comfortable.

Large voting contests like Chase Community Giving and Pepsi Refresh have been the targets of vehement criticism for their tendency to turn attempts to more democratically fund social good into tests of which nonprofits can mobilize massive networks to vote on their behalf.<sup>xvi</sup> Smaller efforts in which the crowd's feedback contributes to decision-making are not immune to gaming. An individual or organization could go through the process relying only on the favorable feedback of people they already know. However, the proposed process does not reward gaming in the same way because success has not been framed in terms of how much positive feedback a particular idea generates. Rather, success hinges on the richness of the conversation that builds around a solution to a community's needs and on the project leader's ability to recognize valuable contributions and integrate them appropriately into the design. Because the process captures everything from the statement of need to people's signing on to the project, the precise quality of the support people show is transparent. This transparency grants the process greater credibility than simple voting contests.

In exchange for a more participatory and transparent project development process, one commits more time and effort. Because the process outlined here does not conform to grant application windows, groups would likely not find it helpful in preparing an application for a specific grant. The process abandons deadlines as a useful way to identify well thought-out ideas in favor of using engagement as a measurable factor of a community project's success. This mentality has precedent among some funders. The Center for Effective Philanthropy upholds the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving as a prime example of an engaged funder. The Hartford Foundation keeps no application deadlines;

applications are accepted year round. Vice President of Planning Christopher H. Hall says, “The idea is not to create a bureaucratic hurdle, but to foster a personal relationship from the very beginning. The conversation creates an opening to begin talking about broader issues in the agency and how we can be helpful.”<sup>xvii</sup> While deadlines allow funders to better manage their grants, they create barriers to funder-grantee engagement by limiting opportunities for dialogue before an application is due for review. As a platform that serves primarily to increase engagement between traditionally partitioned groups, crowdsourcing resists the deadline structure.

Many foundations have more work to do to bring their crowdsourcing practices into alignment with the values they espouse. Although not without weaknesses, the process the Transmission Project sets forth here supports a theory of change that is reflected in each step. At the center of this theory is the belief that technology is only useful if it serves as a platform for radical transformation of people’s everyday lived experience – in this case of the way communities, organizations, and foundations interact. Only by bringing the spirit of collaboration that underlies crowdsourcing into the grantmaking process will social innovators produce profound effects. The Transmission Project hopes others will experiment further and take from its framework and the lessons it has gleaned from the field as they do so.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Beth Kanter, “Crowdsourcing: Measuring the Impact of the Crowd in Funding and Doing,” *Beth’s Blog*, December 16, 2010, accessed April 29, 2011.

<http://www.bethkanter.org/crowdsourcing-impact/>.

<sup>ii</sup> Thaddeus Miles, interview, May 10, 2010.

<sup>iii</sup> Dan Pallotta, “Stop Giving Donors What You Think They Want,” *Harvard Business Review Blog*, February 15, 2011, accessed May 1, 2011,

<http://blogs.hbr.org/pallotta/2011/02/stop-giving-donors-what-you-th.html>.

<sup>iv</sup> Ellie Buteau, Phil Buchanan, Cassi Bolanos, Andrea Brock, and Kelly Change, “More than Money: Making a Difference with Assistance Beyond the Grand,” Center for Effective Philanthropy (2008), 8-10.

<sup>v</sup> The Transmission Project has discussed elsewhere the culture of Best Practices that keeps organizations from investing in overhead. See, “Honest Practice: How the Public Sector can Look at Itself,” Transmission Project (2011),

<http://transmissionproject.org/current/2011/4/honest-practice-how-the-public-sector-can-look-at-itself-new-article-in-resources>.

<sup>vi</sup> Geoff Livingston, “The Four Primary Types of Social Media Strategy,” September 1, 2010, accessed May 5, 2011, <http://geofflivingston.com/2010/09/01/the-four-primary-types-of-social-media-strategy/>.

<sup>vii</sup> John Bracken, interview, June 10, 2011.

<sup>viii</sup> “A Q&A with John Bracken,” accessed May 25, 2011,

<http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2010/11/5/knight-news-challenge-2011-a-q-and-a-with-john-bracken/>.

<sup>ix</sup> “Knight News Challenge,” accessed June 6, 2011, <http://knightfoundation.org/funding-initiatives/knight-news-challenge/>.

<sup>x</sup> While Knight only made demonstrating an idea to have been tested in a local community a central piece to the application process in the “community” category, Bracken stated in the Q&A that “you’ll get an extra thumb on the scale if your mobile or authenticity or sustainability project has a tie-in to a defined geographic area.” “A Q&A with John Bracken,” accessed May 25, 2011, <http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2010/11/5/knight-news-challenge-2011-a-q-and-a-with-john-bracken/>.

<sup>xi</sup> Geoff Livingston, “Some Truths About Crowdsourcing,” September 22, 2010, accessed May 5, 2011, <http://geofflivingston.com/2010/09/22/some-truths-about-crowdsourcing/>

<sup>xii</sup> Len Bartel, interview, June 22, 2011.

<sup>xiii</sup> Larry Blumenthal, “Need Wider Feedback on Proposals? Try Facebook,” *Open Road Advisors*, September 29, 2009, accessed April 29, 2011,

<http://larryblumenthal.wordpress.com/2009/09/29/maine-foundation-turns-to-facebook-for-feedback-on-grant-proposals/>.

<sup>xiv</sup> “Area 51,” accessed June 6, 2011, <http://area51.stackexchange.com/>.

<sup>xv</sup> Geoff Livingston, “Some Truths About Crowdsourcing.”

<sup>xvi</sup> Beth Kanter, “Should We Just Blow Up Nonprofit ‘Vote for Me’ Social Good Contests?” March 29, 2010, accessed April 29, 2011,

[http://beth.typepad.com/beths\\_blog/2010/03/are-proxy-vote-for-me-tactics.html](http://beth.typepad.com/beths_blog/2010/03/are-proxy-vote-for-me-tactics.html).

<sup>xvii</sup> “More Than Money: Making a Difference with Assistance Beyond the Grant,” 21.