Nonprofit Policy Forum

Volume 2, Issue 2

2011

Article 1

Editor's Note

Dennis R. Young, *Georgia State University*

Recommended Citation:

Young, Dennis R. (2011) "Editor's Note," *Nonprofit Policy Forum*: Vol. 2: Iss. 2, Article 1.

DOI: 10.2202/2154-3348.1047

Editor's Note

Dennis R. Young

Abstract

This note provides an overview of Volume 2, Issue 2 of *Nonprofit Policy Forum*.

KEYWORDS: editor's note

The papers in this issue address a number of recurrent themes at the intersection of public policy and the nonprofit sector, including advocacy for minority interests, the importance of collaboration among civil society groups, and the design of the interface between nonprofits and government. Each of the papers here explores a frontier along one or more of these dimensions.

The first paper, by Catherine Wilson, examines the central role of immigrant associations in Philadelphia in trying to achieve comprehensive reform of U.S. immigration policy. Although this initiative did not succeed, the lessons learned from the experience will prove valuable to such efforts in the future – including the power of collaboration among local immigrant associations as well as the importance of framing the public debate in a manner that responds to the prevailing political rhetoric.

The second paper, by Samuel Rose, focuses on a different minority group in the U.S. at the other end of the immigration spectrum - Native Americans. This paper raises fundamental questions about the roles of governmental versus private, nonprofit structures and the importance of reforming and expanding the mechanisms through which Native American groups interact with government. In particular, Rose argues that nonprofit organizations can help redress some of the historical weaknesses of the current system which relies on treaties between the U.S. government and sovereign tribes, by exploiting the flexibility and resilience of nonprofit corporations to offer a wider range of services and stronger representation to tribe members.

The third paper, by Lia Versteegh, moves our attention to Europe where the issue is how civil society can effectively engage with the European Union as a whole, given new provisions under the Treaty of Lisbon to develop such engagement. Versteegh describes the complexity of this challenge, given the incompatibility of statutes governing civil society among member states and the vagaries of the treaty.

The fourth paper, by Helen Liu and Jodi Sanford, takes a technological turn, asking how open source, idea competition platforms to catalyze citizen participation can enrich the contributions of civil society in development of public policy. Specifically, these authors examine the Ashoka Changemakers program and how the design parameters of on-line systems affect the robustness of citizen participation.

Our final paper by Madeleine McNamara completes the circle, returning to the issue of collaboration raised by Wilson, more specifically collaboration

among multiple government, nonprofit and private sector organizations, in the very different venue of environmental conservation. In particular, McNamara offers a case study of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program through which she examines, supplements and confirms a set of operational principles and practices from earlier research, that facilitate successful collaboration in public management and policy development and implementation.

We are pleased to offer two special features in this issue. The first is an interview conducted by our associate editor Andrea Bassi, with Prof. Stefano Zamagni of the Faculty of Economics, University of Bologna and President of the Italian National Agency for the Third Sector. Prof. Zamagni, who has been instrumental in shaping and modernizing contemporary third sector policy in Italy, outlines the basic goals around which Italian third sector policy is built and emphasizes the importance of reforms that allow third sector organizations to gain access to necessary resources and to work effectively in partnership with government.

Our second feature is a review by Melissa Stone of a new book by Aseem Prakash and Mary Kay Gugerty on the subject of voluntary self-regulation of nonprofit organizations. As in the case of all the papers in this issue, the central question here is how best to design the interface between government and nonprofits, in this case for the purpose of accountability and regulation of the latter. This question looms large in many countries around the world as the nonprofit sector plays a growing role in delivery of public services as well as in the deliberation and implementation of public policy.

We hope you enjoy this issue and will send us your comments and contributions on the important questions raised by our authors here.

Dennis R. Young
Editor-in-Chief