Effective US Private Foundations: 
Structures, Strategies, and Best Practices

By Samuel Yi

Some of the most well-known and effective private foundations are located in the US. There are both unique and specific reasons as to why these foundations are more renown and/or effective. For example, organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation effectively leverage the founder’s reputation and wealth to enhance its impact whereas others such as the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation develop and spearhead unique, but renown, despite the fact that most Americans do not know anything about the organization’s founders. In both organizations, nether is content to rest on its laurels; these organizations continually utilize other assets—their global networks, transparent practices, clever marketing, etc— to enhance their organization’s reach and recognition.

Accordingly, this document examines some of those structures and best practices of some of the most effective large and small organizations in addition to providing general background information.

By taking note of lessons provided by these foundations, we should be able to ensure that Sany Foundation will be a leading, respected, and effective private foundation, not only in China, but also the world.

I. BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION (BGF)

A. Background:

Originally founded in 1997 as the William H. Gates Foundation, the BGF is the largest private foundation in the US and the largest transparently operated private foundation in the world. Driven by the interests of the Gates family, the foundation operates globally, tackling issues related to healthcare, extreme poverty, and educational opportunities in the US. Based out of Seattle, Washington, BGF is led by three trustees: Bill Gates, Melinda Gates, and Warren Buffett.

- Website: http://www.gatesfoundation.org/

1 Harvard Kennedy School / Walton Business School, June 27, 2014
B. Stats:

- Current number of foundation employees: 1,211
- Asset Trust Endowment: $40.0 billion
- Total grant payments since inception: $30.1 billion
- Total 2013 grant payments: $3.6 billion
- Total 2012 grant payments: $3.4 billion
- Geographic Reach: All 50 US States and more than 100 countries

C. Mission Statement/Vision:

*Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives.*

In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.

D. Targeted Issues:

- Global Health: Discovery/Transitional Sciences, HIV, Malaria, Pneumonia, etc.
- Global Development: Vaccine Delivery, Agricultural Development, Nutrition, etc.
- US Programs: Postsecondary Success, College-Ready Education, Washington State
- Global Policy & Advocacy: Tobacco Control, Charitable Sector Support

E. Methodology:

- Partner with local/specialized non-profit organizations
- Provide grants coupled with ongoing evaluation
- Focus on results by applying business practices
- Employ over 24 strategies across foundation to identify:
  1) What we want to accomplish and 2) Where we can have greatest impact

- **Project Selection/Strategy Development:** A “Lifecycle” - continually collect and share data on progress, reflect on lessons learned, and make corrections via ongoing dialogue with grantees and partners
  
  a. **Phase 1: Concept Development.** Program staff identify ideas that support strategic priorities while consulting with foundation colleagues, researchers, policymakers, and field partners. Phase concludes with internal decision that a concept is aligned to specific strategy and they proceed with development work.
b. **Phase 2: Pre-proposal.** Explore/refine concepts w/ organizers in field. Phase ends with decision to solicit a grant or contract proposal. 3 Types: Direct Solicitation – when organization is well-suited to perform the work, BGF directly solicits early phase proposal. Discussion – BGF invites organization to discuss concept and explore org’s interest/capacity to undertake the work. If org meets these criteria, BGF invites them to submit a concept memo or proposal. Request for Proposal – Used to broaden BGF network or fund multiple organizations for a project; public RFPs posted on website while private RFPs are directed to specific organizations.

c. **Phase 3: Investment Development.** Provide applicants guidelines to develop proposal, budget, and results framework and tracker. BGF program officer reviews submitted materials and works with applicant to recommend changes, while confirming organization’s background (e.g. tax status, how to structure transaction, assess risk, etc). BGF executive makes final decision about funding proposed grant; if grant approved, foundation and partner organization.

d. **Phase 4: Management & Close:** During investment, BGF program officer and partner discuss how to work together and maintain communication to understand progress of project, sharing two-way feedback. Occasionally, BGF program officer/staff will participate on advisory committees or take seat on board of organization. At end of project, partner works with BGF program officer to submit final report on results and lessons learned.

**F. Organizational Structure:**

- **Leadership:**
  - Management Committee oversees 5 Leadership Teams (Global Development, Global Health, US Program, Global Policy & Advocacy, Operations)
  - Management Committee: Oversees all foundation’s efforts, meeting regularly. Led by Co-chairs Bill Gates, Melinda Gates, William Gates Sr., and Trustee Warren Buffett. Also includes Chief Executive Officer, Chief Communications/Operations, General Counsel, etc. 15 members total
  - Global Development Leaders: 14 Members
  - Global Health Leadership Team: 13 Members
  - US Team: 6 Members
  - Global Policy & Advocacy Team: 10 Members
  - Operations Team (Admin, Logistics, Security): 11 Members

**G. Best Practices/Lessons:**

- **Brand Recognition/Marketing:** Effectively leverage recognized name and best practices for instant credibility
- **Spearhead/Launching Projects:** Before BGF, started off providing countless scholarships for minority high school students with financial need (e.g. Gates Millennium Scholarship) building awareness, credibility, and experience in charitable giving/educational impact
- **Product Differentiation:** Perception amongst public that foundation will apply business practices that made Microsoft “successful”
• **Enhanced Credibility/Network.** Respected, key leaders on board/staff provide additional credibility and perception of transparency (e.g. Warren Buffett)

• **Effective Partnerships:** Utilizing/empowering local Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to tackle issues while evaluating the SMEs and their organizations throughout the process

• **Transparent Practices:** Grantees can also provide feedback via 3rd party service – Ethics point, all financials and practices available on internet. Clearest guidelines on how grants/projects are made/approved. Explicit Declaration of “What We Do Not Fund”

II. FORD FOUNDATION (FF)

A. Background: Initially funded by a $25,000 fit from Edsel Ford, the FF is the 2nd largest private foundation in the US with assets of approximately $10.9 billion. Based in New York City, FF is one of the most influential foundations in the world, making grants to support projects in the US and abroad focused on reducing poverty and injustice, supporting democratic principles, advancing human knowledge, and creativity.

- Website: http://www.fordfoundation.org/

B. Stats:

- Asset Trust Endowment: $10.9 billion
- Total 2013 grant payments: $500 million
- Geographic Reach: All 50 US States and dozens of countries
- Receive 40,000 proposals and make 1,400 grants annually
- NYC Headquarters and 10 Regional Offices (ie Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Beijing, New Delhi, Jakarta, Lagos, Cairo, Nairobi, Johannesburg).

C. Mission Statement/Vision:

*Working with Visionaries on the Frontlines of Social Change Worldwide.*

We believe all people should have the opportunity to reach their full potential, contribute to society, and have voice in the decisions that affect them.
We believe the best way to achieve these goals is to encourage initiatives by those living and working closest to where problems are located; to promote collaboration among the nonprofit, government and business sectors; and to ensure participation by men and women from diverse communities and all levels of society. In our experience, such activities help build common understanding, enhance excellence, enable people to improve their lives and reinforce their commitment to society.

D. Target Issues:
• Educational Opportunity & Scholarship: Higher Education for Social Justice, Transforming Secondary Education, etc.
• Democratic and Accountable Government: Increasing Civic/Political Participation, Strengthening Civil Society/Philanthropy, Promoting Transparent, Accountable Gov’t, etc.
• Economic Fairness: Building Economic Security, Ensuring Good Jobs/Access to Services, Promoting Next-Generation Workforce Strategies
• Metropolitan Opportunity: Access to Housing, Connecting People to Opportunity
• Freedom of Expression: Advancing Media Rights/Access, Diverse Arts, etc.
• Gender, Sexuality, Reproductive Justice: Advancing LGBT/Women’s Rights, HIV
• Human Rights: Advancing Racial Justice/Minority Rights, Protecting Immigrants
• Sustainable Development: Climate Change for Rural Communities, Resources, etc.

E. Methodology:

• Partner with local/specialized non-profit organizations
• Assess effectiveness of work at multiple levels: strategic initiative, general approach, and individual grant
• Provide various types of grants: General, Project, Planning, Competition, Matching, Recoverable, Individual, Endowment, Foundation-administered project, Program-related investment (e.g. long-term social impact investments minimizing risk and helping organizations build fiscal discipline)
• Utilize combination of tools/evaluative methods to assess impact (e.g. If an initiative is in the early stages of implementation, more qualitative and formative methods are consistent with the need for experimentation. For initiatives that are midstream, we use a more mixed approach, drawing insight from other initiatives with similar theories of change)
• Project Selection/Strategy Development: Individuals/organizations make grant inquiry, which is reviewed by relevant program team. If proposed work aligns with the foundation’s priorities and budget limitations, a program officer contacts org to begin the process of developing a formal proposal. While developing a formal proposal, you will meet several times with the program officer to discuss the scope and budget of proposed project. Then submit formal proposal, and the foundation will do an administrative and legal review; it takes about three months from the time a formal proposal is submitted for a potential grant to be fully reviewed.
In a typical year, less than 1 percent of inquiries made to the Ford Foundation result in a grant.
• How FF Monitors Grants: To ensure the appropriate use of our grant funds and compliance with the U.S. tax code and U.S. anti-terrorism laws, the foundation has extensive procedures for making and monitoring all grants. These include the following:

  a. A Pre-Grant Review: All potential grantee organizations and their programs are assessed by a program officer who discusses the proposed work with the prospective grantee and determines the organization’s capacity to undertake it.
b. A Legal Review. All proposed grants and written submissions by the prospective grantee undergo a legal review.

c. Compliance with U.S. Anti-Terrorism Financing Rules. Under applicable law, the foundation checks all prospective grantees against available lists of terrorist groups. These checks also take place throughout the life of all grants.

d. A Countersigned Grantee Letter. This letter establishes a range of grant conditions. Every grantee is required to sign it.

e. One or More Site Visits. A program officer will visit the grantee during the term of the grant.

f. Financial and Narrative Reports. During the grant term, grantees are required to submit reports that are reviewed by a program officer and a grants administrator for compliance with the term of the grant.

F. Organizational Structure:

- Leadership:
  - Board of Trustees. 13 members including the president who govern foundation, all nominated by a trustee committee and appointed by the full board, trustees generally serve two six-year terms.
  - Officers (Executive Management): 8 Members in traditional executive roles (Vice Presidents, COO, etc)
  - Board Committees: 7 committees with differing roles (e.g. Audit, Finance, Executive, Investment, Management & Governance, Program, etc) assisting leadership
  - Grant Makers/Program Officers: 87 in varying roles/locations

G. Best Practices/Lessons:

  - Outstanding Online Presence. Exceptionally intuitive, fluid website with explanatory videos, solid content, and descriptive media
  - Unique Products. Program-related Investment (i.e. PRIs are long-term social impact investments minimizing risk and helping organizations build fiscal discipline)

III. JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION (MAC)

A. Background:

Despite the fact that most Americans do not know who the founders are, the MAC foundation is one of the largest private foundations in the US. Based out of Chicago, MAC supports non-profit organizations and exceptional scientists, artists, and individuals (through “genius grants”) to address a broad range of societal issues. The foundation was founded by John D. MacArthur, a
Pennsylvanian born into poverty who became a successful businessman as owner of Bankers Life and Casualty as well as extensive real estate. His second wife, Catherine T. MacArthur, held several positions within these firms. When MacArthur died in 1978, he was one of the three richest men in the US with a worth in excess of $1 billion USD.

- Website: http://www.macfound.org

B. Data:

- Total Assets: $6.3 billion as of December 31, 2013
- Grants authorized: $228.4 million
- Grant requests: about 6000
- Number of grants: 556
- Range of grants: $7,000 to $5 million
- Range of operations: U.S. and about 50 countries worldwide
- U.S. Programs: $79.1 million
- International Programs: $76.6 million
- Media, Culture & Special Initiatives: $34.9 million
- MacArthur Fellows Program: $11.7 million
- Cross-Foundation Programs: $15.1 million
- Program-Related Investments: $10.4 million
- Staff: United States: 158; Overseas: 27
- Geographic Reach: All 50 US States and about 50 countries
- Headquarters in Chicago, Offices in Nigeria, Mexico, Russia, and India

C. Mission Statement/Vision:

Committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world.

D. Target Issues:

- Arts & Culture in Chicago
- Community & Economic Development
- Conservation & Sustainable Development
- Digital Media & Learning
- Girls’ Secondary Education in Developing Countries
- Housing
- Human Rights & International Justice
- Int’l Peace & Security
- Juvenile Justice
- Media
- Migration
- Policy Research
- Population & Reproductive Health
- Program-Related Investments
• Strengthening American Democracy
• Research Networks
• Special Projects

E. Methodology:

• Aims to address complex societal challenges strategically, drawing on expertise of staff and experts in the field. MAC formulates specific strategies to guide decision about how/where funding can have impact, and reviews/adjusts strategies over time.
• Use Dual-Pronged Approach to Collect Proposals:
  1) Grant-making Guidelines Categories: Only funds applications that closely match three criteria (i.e. topical focus, geographic area, type of funding)
  2) Funding Cycles: MAC accepts proposals on various topics on rotating basis depending on foundations interest/demand (i.e. website clearly describes the topics for which proposals are being accepted)

F. Organizational Structure:

- Leadership:
  • Board of Directors. 11 int’l members including the president who guide foundation
  • Senior Leadership (Executive Management): 11 Members in traditional roles
  • General Staff: approximately 150-200

G. Best Practices/Lessons:

• **Public Support for Recognition.** Small name but well-known presence via support for public radio (i.e. National Public Radio) and the arts
• **Local Base of Support.** Strong base of support in local Chicago community which further strengthens global reach
• **Clear/well-designed Media.** Annual Report, website, and other content amongst most professional and user-friendly
• **Clear Vision.** Clear, catchy, and concise Mission Statement
• **Provide Distinguished/Recognized Programs:** MacArthur Fellows Program aka “Genius Grants.” Draws attention, and provides tangible identity of their “impact” (i.e. specific people. The [MacArthur Fellowship](https://www.macfound.org/fellowships/) is an award issued by the MacArthur Foundation each year, to typically 20 to 25 citizens or residents of the United States, of any age and working in any field, who "show exceptional merit and promise for continued and enhanced creative work." According to the Foundation website, "the fellowship is not a reward for past accomplishment, but rather an investment in a person's originality, insight, and potential." Process for MAC fellowship “mysterious” adding cachet to brand and award: does not accept applications or grant interviews. The foundation relies on anonymous nominators, who submit recommendations to a small selection committee of about a dozen people. The committee then reviews every applicant and passes along their recommendations to the President and the board of directors. The entire process is anonymous and confidential. The first time that a new MacArthur Fellow learns that he or she was
even being considered is upon receiving a phone call telling him or her the news of
the award.

- **Offer Unique Services:** MacArthur Advisory Services is an initiative of the
  Foundation through which MacArthur staff with appropriate expertise advises other
  foundations, corporate donors, and individual donors on a range of issues and
  questions and help connect such donors to other external resources when appropriate.

IV. TOW FOUNDATION

A. Background:

Based in Connecticut, the Tow Foundation is a small family foundation started in 1988 by
Leonard Tow, a successful businessman in the cable television industry. While the grant-giving
program was initially unstructured and based on the personal passions of the boardroom, gradual
experience and systematic questions asked of grantees (e.g. “What is the most difficult thing in
your budget to raise money for? What would you never think to ask a private funder to support”) helped Tow focus their initiatives as well as best utilize their resources. In doing so, Tow focused
its areas on four primary areas: medical research, higher education, cultural institutions, and
juvenile justice. They collaborated with a number of universities, non-profits, and other
organizations to provide funding for research, students, and professors. Most intriguingly, Tow
became incredibly successful at making an impact on juvenile justice and reform, an area in
which none of the board members had a personal connection. The Tow Foundation came to make
a deep impact and play a critical role in building juvenile advocacy infrastructure through a
deliberate and conscious focused on three steps:

1) Specific Targeting: The mission/vision targeted a specific area of public policy;

2) New Ideas/Blood: The next generation of leaders, as well as effective collaboration
with outside stakeholders brought new ideas to the board; and

3) Professionalization: The foundation hired a professional staff/consultant, adds non-
family members to the board, and/or adds a family member with a different operational
vision to successfully initiate strategic planning.

- Website: [http://www.towfoundation.org/](http://www.towfoundation.org/)

B. Data: Financial Data not disclosed

C. Mission Statement/Vision:

*The Tow Foundation envisions a society where all people have the opportunity to enjoy a high
quality of life and have a voice in their community.*
We strive for this by supporting and influencing nonprofit organizations and the systems that affect them to help vulnerable populations and individuals to become positive contributors to society for the benefit of themselves and others. We pursue our vision by funding projects and creating collaborative ventures in fields where we see opportunities for breakthroughs, reform and benefits for underserved populations. We feel it is our obligation to help others achieve success in their own lives, to alleviate pain and suffering, and to offer opportunities for joy. We hope to provide leverage and make possible far greater things than we could achieve alone.

D. Target Issues:

- Juvenile Justice Initiative: Vulnerable Children & Families, Juvenile Justice, Youth Development, etc.
- Medical Research: Neuro-muscular diseases, cancer, humanism in medicine, etc.
- Higher Education: Fellowships, Professorships, Scholarships, etc.

E. Methodology:

- Focuses on two key priorities: Juvenile Justice Initiative & Invited Projects (projects funded by invitation only)
- Seeks to find projects that other funders ignore (e.g. when funding arts, support a playwright or composer that is unknown....when supporting medical research, support projects that would never happen otherwise)
- Once need is identified, charge staff to research/personally visit projects they will fund, meeting and collaborating with stakeholders and SMEs to identify, connect, and fill in gaps

F. Organizational Structure:

- Leadership:
  - Trustees & Officers. 10 members including the Chairman and President who guide foundation
  - Staff: 5 Members including President, who serves as Executive Director, run the day-to-day operations

G. Best Practices/Lessons:

- **Identify Urgent/Unified Cause.** Selecting an urgent, single cause helped to remove focus from individual passions and interests within the boardroom/organization and provide greater satisfaction for Tow as it enabled them to see immediate impact
- **Execute Focused Giving.** Even small sums of money can make a huge impact in people’s lives if the giving is focused and immediate
- **Find Champions/Collaborate Effectively.** Rather than jump in to random causes as outsiders, learn about background issues meeting with current stakeholders in established system across various organizations to avoid negative perceptions and confrontation. Often times, doing so will help bring in other key players who will champion the same cause and provide support at critical moments.
• **Utilize Professionals and “Outsiders”:** At key points, employing professional staff, consultants, and/or advisors help to bring in fresh ideas and maintain efficiency/accountability for the organization. These perspectives may also be employed to overcome obstacles or disagreements over thorny issues within a board or leadership.

• **Manage Perception of Endowment.** If money is in foundation, the leadership, board, and organization must remember that it now belongs to the public (aka “it’s not your money anymore”). Doing this will help maintain accountability, efficiency, and commitment to various causes as they feel obligated to serve the public good. If the organization does not wish to acknowledge this, it’s best to just keep the money and simply write checks to charities with personal meaning.

• **Manage Self-Perception/Role.** Particularly for smaller organizations, the leadership must remember that the role of the foundation is not to simply provide funding. To make a tangible impact, it must be willing to play a variety of roles as necessary (e.g. Tow Foundation acts as a researcher, facilitator, partner, convener, etc).

V. HAROLD & KAYRITA ANDERSON FAMILY FOUNDATION (HKA)

A. Background:

Based in Atlanta, GA, HKA started in 2001 when Harold Anderson read a newspaper article about child victims of prostitution in Georgia. Overwhelmed with outrage that this was occurring in his home, he decided to make a difference by writing checks to support a fund for victim’s services. When Harold and his wife, Kayrita Anderson, failed to see dramatic change, they made a $1 million grant and created an anti-trafficking initiative known as “A Future, Not a Past” in 2007 by joining forces with the Atlanta Women’s Foundation and the Juvenile Justice Fund. Amongst many successes, HKA was credited with playing an instrumental role in pressuring Craigslist to shut down its adult-services listings in the US.

- Website: http://www.hkafamilyfoundation.org/

B. Data: Financial Data not disclosed

C. Mission Statement/Vision:

*From Outrage to Outcomes*

The Harold and Kayrita Anderson Family Foundation provides funding to worthy grantee organizations seeking to better the lives of others. We operate under these six guiding principles:

• We are bridge builders – from outrage to outcomes
• We lead by example
• Passion drives everything we do
• “It can’t be done” is not in our vocabulary
• Our definition of “change” is “result”
• Oversight and accountability is the key to our credibility
D. Target Issues:

- Anti-trafficking: Support for Child Sex Victims, Foster Care, etc.
- Amputee Support & Research: Military veterans, MRSA infection research, etc.

E. Methodology:

- Focuses narrowly on priorities and limited projects
- Supports/Partners with other organizations and stakeholders to leverage existing networks

F. Organizational Structure:

- Leadership:
  - Senior Leadership: 2 members - Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
  - Staff: 1 Full-time staff member

G. Best Practices/Lessons:

- **Leverage Strength of Small Organization.** Small foundations tend to be nimble and flexible, so they can respond quickly when a need arises. HKA can write a foundation check to support a cause immediately without having to wait for board approval; this flexibility allows the foundation to act quickly.
- **Narrow Focus and Execute.** Impact is result of ability to focus narrowly on end result and executing with discipline.
- **Collaborate to Magnify Resources.** Small foundations may lack the financial or manpower resources to effectively tackle intractable problems. Therefore, by partnering with other organizations and inviting volunteers, interns, and advisors to participate, small foundations can magnify the impact of each dollar and individual staff member.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Enhance Credibility:** Sany Corporation is a highly respected brand in the private sector within China; we should leverage this to not only enhance the foundation’s credibility domestically, but also abroad. We can do so through a number of methods:
  1) **Employ the highest international standards of accountability/transparency as soon as feasibly possible.** This is especially critical to build credibility abroad. From providing up-to-date information regarding the foundation’s activities (e.g. primary programs, grant-making process, leadership, etc) to general reports regarding the foundations financials, we should follow the lead of global organizations and go beyond minimal requirements for transparency by making our information accessible to the public online (of course, we will protect any necessary sensitive information regarding the foundation). Once the organization matures, Sany
Foundation may want to employ third-party firms to provide feedback and auditing services for grantees and best practices.

2) **Employ professional staff and if possible, an international team of trustees, board of directors, and advisors;** this will not only fortify the organizations’ global credibility, but also provide the foundation with access to the respective networks of the board of directors and advisors, ultimately enhancing the reach of Sany Foundation.

- **Spearhead/Launching Projects:** Like the Gates Millennium Scholarship, we can utilize a program such as the high school scholarship program to begin building awareness of the Sany Foundation. By leveraging traditional as well as social media, we may draw regional and national attention to the impact the foundation is immediately making. Moreover, this launching platform will also give Sany Foundation much needed information and experience in implementing social impact programs.

- **Utilize Clever Marketing:** We should leverage clever marketing to create brand recognition. Similar to the MacArthur “genius grants” (see John D. And Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation background info below for further description), Sany Foundation should utilize a clever name for the scholarship program (e.g. Sany Scholars, Sany Century Scholars, Sany Future Scholars, etc).

- **Clear, Concise Vision and Mission Statement:** The MacArthur Foundation provides another great example of the potential strength of a compelling mission statement to solidify its presence in the minds of the public. The statement should not only concisely capture the goals of the organization, but to whatever degree possible, capture the essence or culture of the foundation as well. It may help to discuss the goals, passions, vision of the foundation with Sany leaders.

- **Manage Self-Perception/Role.** Particularly important for smaller organizations, the leadership must remember that the role of the foundation is not to simply provide funding. To make a tangible impact, it must be willing to play a variety of roles as necessary (e.g. Tow Foundation acts as a researcher, facilitator, partner, convener, etc).

- **Effective Partnerships:** Utilizing/empower local Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to tackle issues while evaluating throughout the process. We may want to also collaborate with existing NGOs and private foundations. Just as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and MacArthur Foundation offer advisory services to other foundations and non-profit groups, Sany may also consider providing advice and or access to its non-profit network to build trust and partners across the industry.

- **Offer Unique Services:** MacArthur Advisory Services is an initiative of the Foundation through which MacArthur staff with appropriate expertise advises other foundations, corporate donors, and individual donors on a range of issues and questions and help connect such donors to other external resources when appropriate.