



SUMMARY

“Historically, community foundations were created to support their communities or specific groups of people rather than make sweeping social change” (Celep, Brenner & Mosher-Williams, 2016, p. 121). Community foundations have made a revolutionary shift in their impact through community leadership. Equity has become a focus for community foundations across the nation that strive to make a bigger impact within the communities they serve and as a result, have a greater responsibility to align their external strategies with their internal culture. The recommendations put forth by this research adds to what is available for community foundations and other nonprofit organizations to begin the of process of becoming more equitable organizations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to understand how equity-focused community foundations are looking inward to pursue internal equity as they pursue equity externally and produce a set of recommendations for other community foundations. As the world continues to become more diverse, community foundations must shift their strategies to include equity, diversity and inclusion in order to be effective community leaders. Research recognizes the importance of an internal culture to support external work. As equity becomes a focus area, community foundations must look inward to assess practices, policies and procedures to ensure alignment.

RESEARCH

Research Questions

1. How do community foundations define and pursue equity externally?
2. How do community foundations define and pursue equity internally?
3. Why is focusing on internal equity important for equity-focused organizations?
4. What are the best practices in promoting internal equity?

Subquestions

1. Do the community foundation’s internal and external strategies align?

METHODS

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to better understand the history of community foundations, the shift that has taken place in the role of community foundations as community leaders and changemakers and the importance of internal culture shifts to support the external work.

Quantitative Content Analysis

A quantitative content analysis was conducted to assess community foundations within the Community Foundation Equity Network through Community Foundations Leading Change (CFLeads).

Expert Interviews

Five semi-structured interviews were conducted with community foundation leaders and experts. Interviewees shared their experiences and professional insights on the field and relevant themes.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

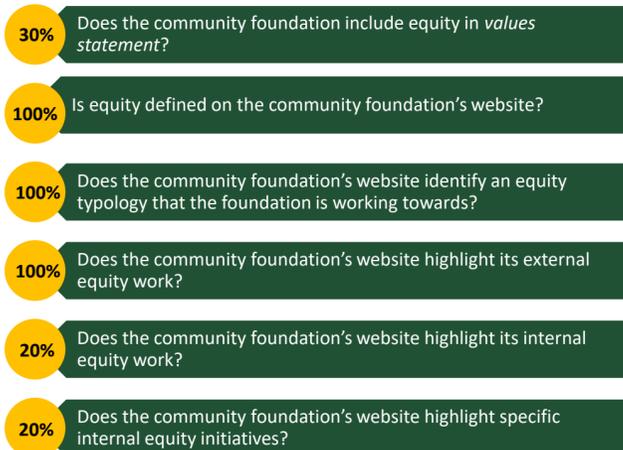
Literature Review



Quantitative Content Analysis

Using the *Framework for Community Leadership by a Community Foundation* (2013), the website of the 10 community foundations within the Community Foundation Equity Network were assessed on their central communication of internal and external equity and principle alignment with the tenants of community leadership outlined in the framework.

The community foundation manifests the values, culture and will to exercise community leadership.



The community foundation accesses and develops the resources necessary to exercise community leadership.



Expert Interviews

The San Francisco Foundation | Galen Maness, Director of Human Resources
The Baltimore Community Foundation | Shanaysha M. Sauls, President & CEO
The Kalamazoo Community Foundation | Susan Springgate, VP of Finance & Administration
Community Foundations Leading Change | Deborah Ellwood, President & CEO

RESULTS

The Importance of Pursuing Internal Equity

- Pursuing internal equity to better support the external work.
- Modeling behavior.

Internal Equity Focus

- Evaluating policies and procedures.
- Authentic work places.

Best Practices

- Staff training.
- Commitment and support from the top.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create clear alignment between external equity and internal equity strategies.
2. Mirror external expectations internally.
3. Regularly evaluate practices and policies to promote internal equity.
4. Continue to explore equity as an organization.
5. Provide opportunities for growth.
6. Ensure senior/executive leadership is in alignment with internal equity work.

REFERENCES

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 Celep, A., Brenner, S., & Mosher-Williams, R. (2016). Internal culture, external impact: how a change-making culture positions foundations to achieve transformational change. *The Foundation Review*, 8(1).
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