

Stanford SOCIAL INNOVATION^{Review}

Books

Strategic Philanthropy Reconsidered

By Katherine Fulton

Stanford Social Innovation Review
Fall 2018

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BOOKS

tims. We must be willing to name and oppose the tendencies of business that perpetuate injustice, regardless of how much it costs or who we offend. We must enable the victims to help shape the solutions. We must hold government accountable to serve the public good. And we must be alert to those subtle but crippling compromises that enable us to combine a life of wealth and privilege with the pursuit of social justice. ■

Strategic Philanthropy Reconsidered

REVIEW BY KATHERINE FULTON

Paul Brest and Hal Harvey's substantially revised second edition of *Money Well Spent* shows they have listened to their own new experiences, their critics, and many other scholars and practitioners.

In 2008, when their first edition was published, Brest was well into his tenure as the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's president, and Harvey was a seasoned Hewlett grantmaker and environmental advocate. They combined forces to explain and defend what had come to be called "strategic philanthropy"—grantmaking that improves the odds of achieving results by focusing relentlessly on goals, evidence, and outcomes.

But where they (and other strategic philanthropy proponents) saw a common-sense need for rigor and discipline, others found plenty to criticize, worrying about top-down strategies that too often ignore the firsthand knowledge of leaders on the front lines. When Susan Berresford, a former Ford Foundation president, reviewed the book's first edition in these pages, she praised the authors but chided them for imparting "little understanding of what it is like to be on the other side of the table."

By 2016, Harvey himself joined the debate, offering an apology in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* titled "Why I Regret Pushing

Strategic Philanthropy." He had moved on from Hewlett to lead ClimateWorks Foundation and then to direct a policy advisory firm, where he experienced the damage done by arrogant funders who assumed they knew best, insisting on overly precise strategies and rigid accountability structures. Meanwhile, Brest left the Hewlett Foundation in 2012, joined the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society (the publisher of *Stanford Social Innovation Review*) as a faculty codirector, and incorporated his own additional learning into his teaching.

It's no surprise that the two authors teamed up to produce this update, which showcases how much they—and the field—have learned from an additional decade of practice, debate, and reflection. The second edition covers the same basics, but in an even richer and more nuanced way. Every major decision a funder must make is explained, from framing problems and developing solutions, to combining tools and structures, to using data and designing evaluations. Particularly enlightening are the expanded examples, including the skillful extended case study on homelessness across several early chapters, and many recent illustrations depicting advocacy strategies.

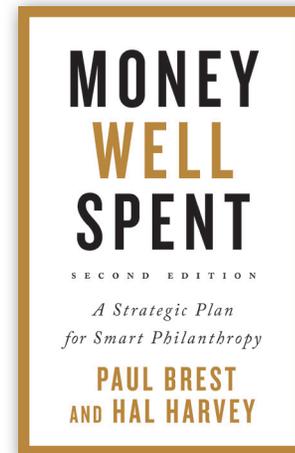
One highlight is their new chapter on "Impact Investing and Mission Investments," a field that has rocketed into prom-

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inence since the first edition. They have somehow managed to distill a complicated subject into a concise and forceful argument that will guide newcomers while challenging experienced investors to set higher standards for success and impact.

Again and again, I found Brest and Harvey stretching beyond the easy stereotypes of past debates. They seem determined not to be misread as providing a simple recipe

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MONEY WELL SPENT: A Strategic Plan for Smart Philanthropy, Second Edition

By Paul Brest and Hal Harvey
392 pages, Stanford Business Books, 2018

for complex decision making, arguing that there is no substitute in the end for judgment and wisdom. And they are clear that good nonprofit leaders should be given the benefit of the doubt.

Readers may still feel, as I did, that the authors' tone can at times feel too pedantic, like a lecture from a professor who can't hide his condescension. For instance, the authors can't help but scold those who "cite the supposed wickedness of problems as an excuse

for avoiding the hard work of strategic problem solving."

My heart longed for the creativity and imagination of the humanist sensibility to go with the social science rigor of *Money Well Spent*. I have learned the hard way that character and courage often matter as much or more than strategy. I have watched as circumstances shift and shift again, making a mockery of linear theories of change. And I

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have witnessed funders foolishly waste time and money as they hold tight to strategic control. I sometimes wonder: Whatever happened to *giving* as a way to approach some of philanthropy, rather than always insisting up front on “money well spent”?

Brest and Harvey wisely do not try to relitigate these and many other doubts about strategic philanthropy. Instead they focus on making their own updated case in the most compelling way. By all means, take the time to understand the context surrounding their work, which was thoroughly presented in an April 2015 “Up for Debate” package on SSIR’s website, “Strategic Philanthropy and Its Discontents.” But also give Brest and Harvey the benefit of the doubt. The second edition of *Money Well Spent* is an indispensable addition to the growing genre of philanthropic advice. ■

Domesticity’s Gross Product

REVIEW BY ALYSON COLÓN

In *Equality for Women = Prosperity for All*, Augusto Lopez-Claros and Bahiyyih Nakhjavani explore the many economic and social implications of global gender inequality. They delve into the current precarious position of women, who endure extreme rates of violence and reduced access to education and employment, and caution that the rapidly worsening effects of inequality will have devastating consequences for everyone if they continue unabated. Moving beyond purely ethical arguments, the authors contend that gender inequality is not just a moral failing; it is a waste of resources. In doing so, they lay out the case for making gender inequality a serious focus of economic planning.

Lopez-Claros and Nakhjavani address numerous modes of women’s subjugation, including population growth and female infanticide; violence against women in its many forms; work; the role of culture; rights, freedoms, and the legal system; and educa-

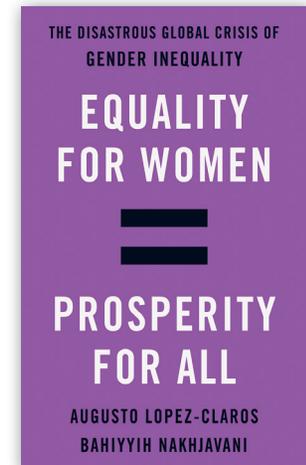
tion for girls. In the final chapter, they connect the pieces of this puzzle to explore the true costs of these deficiencies.

The strength of *Equality for Women = Prosperity for All* is that it pushes the reader to think of economic efficiency from a new perspective, and to see the significant contributions that women make to the health and well-being of their countries. The book argues that costs to our global economy and our society “will mount calamitously” if we continue to ignore the oppression of women, a central barrier to economic prosperity. The authors explore the implications of leaving women out of the equation and quantify the costs, both social and economic, of the injustices waged against women.

While it may seem crass to put a price tag on sensitive issues such as female genital mutilation, domestic abuse, or murder, the authors cogently argue that quantifying the real cost impact of such atrocities can motivate the adoption of larger budgets to address these issues. To be sure, the book could have provided richer, more nuanced examples of the experiences of individual women to illustrate the subjects covered. But in the absence of individual accounts and experiences, it provides a more comprehensive, global view of policy and practice.

In a chapter titled “The Culture Question,” Lopez-Claros and Nakhjavani challenge skepticism about interventions relating to gender and culture. Here they unpack the fear of confronting the cultural origins of gender inequality that so frequently silences any push for progress.

As so often happens, when a discussion of human rights is linked to women, the focus shifts to the preservation of culture. The authors deconstruct this tendency, offering insights into how we can redefine culture through a lens of economic incentives, and cite the diaspora experience as an example. Once removed from country-specific economic constraints, many diaspora communities flourish, with women taking the lead in social and economic positions. This phenomenon demonstrates the important role that economic incentives



**EQUALITY FOR WOMEN =
PROSPERITY FOR ALL:
The Disastrous Global Crisis of
Gender Inequality**

By Augusto Lopez-Claros and Bahiyyih Nakhjavani
320 pages, St. Martin's Press, 2018

play in shaping cultural expressions of gender norms. Lopez-Claros and Nakhjavani’s arguments in this chapter can empower policymakers to push back against the culture argument when attempting to institute system-wide change.

The authors do not provide a how-to guide for making change, nor do they delve into solutions for the issues that they articulate so effectively. I would very much like to read a follow-up that examines the various policy interventions that can create the transformation that Lopez-Claros and Nakhjavani are championing, in order to unlock the economic potential they herald.

This is an ideal book for policymakers who need to understand the broader picture of gender inequality and its impact. The authors use clear and expressive language, peppering the text with examples and cases from around the world. For individuals who may not have experience applying a gender lens to development issues, this book provides insights into the many ways that the oppression of women is tied to economic stagnation and too often shielded from policy interventions by arguments of national or cultural sovereignty. ■