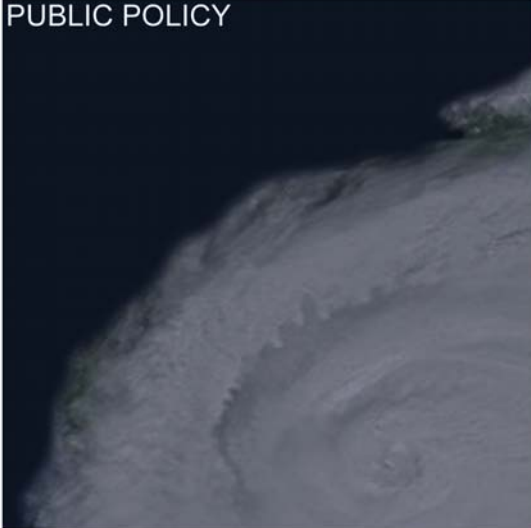


**REFLECTION MEMORANDUM / HURRICANE KATRINA: LOOKING AHEAD**

PUBLIC POLICY



TECHNOLOGY



EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES



COMMUNICATIONS

**FOUNDATION FOR THE MID SOUTH HURRICANE KATRINA MEETING  
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE / SEPTEMBER 15, 2005**

September 15, 2005

## REFLECTION MEMORANDUM / HURRICANE KATRINA: LOOKING AHEAD

RE: FOUNDATION FOR THE MID SOUTH HURRICANE KATRINA MEETING IN MEMPHIS,  
TENNESSEE ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2005.

### PURPOSE

The human, physical, and environmental damage caused by Hurricane Katrina has created the greatest challenge that philanthropy has ever faced. As immense as the philanthropic response and investment will be, the amount of government and business funding will be many times larger. As a result, the philanthropic response must be guided by its values, must be effective in its use of funds, must be more flexible and creative than ever before, must ensure a voice for those who historically are excluded, and must exert considerable leverage over the public and private policies that will be such a major part of the recovery and rebuilding.

To this end, ninety representatives and leaders from across the affected region and the country – nonprofits, intermediaries, and funders – met to determine how they and their organizations can rebuild the areas of the Mid South affected by the Hurricane Katrina disaster. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Mid Southern nonprofit sector to collectively:

- **Share information.** In the wake of the storm, attendees listed the lack of communications and technology as one of the largest impediments to their understanding and in their relief and recovery efforts. The meeting provided an opportunity for those directly impacted by the storm to share their stories, insights, and needs with others from across the region. It also allowed for those in other affected communities to explain the effects the storm had on their communities and how need does not begin and end at the Gulf Coast or along the storm track, but stretches far and wide throughout the Mid South.
- **Develop Relationships.** By convening leaders from the region's nonprofit sector and funders who are interested and care for the region – many of who did not know each other previously – a sense of trust and common cause was begun among those who attended. In a perverse way, Katrina provided a means by which those who care about the issues and the conditions of this disaster can develop stronger ways to work together. They worked to determine the guiding principles, the resources, and the strategies that would help philanthropy shape and guide its work in the region. Also, the group looked at the need for the coordination of individual efforts to compliment one another and to insure that services are not being duplicated.
- **Determine Next Steps and Communications.** For many, a critical outcome of the meeting was the establishment of next steps for communicating both within and outside philanthropy and how it will change the way it works to influence investment and policy to build equitable communities. It is essential that the philanthropic and nonprofit resources not only provide needed services, but that it also have a voice and input on the billions of public funding that will be forthcoming.

## **THE AFFECTED POPULATION SPEAKS OUT**

Those who were from cities located along the Gulf Coast, from rural communities along the inland storm track, and from the communities that have received hundreds of thousands of displaced individuals and families shared how the storm impacted, and is still impacting, their communities. By hearing personal stories and by better understanding the magnitude and the depth of the devastation, the larger group was able to gather facts and dispel the misconceptions surrounding the disaster.

### **Gulf Coast Landfall Communities**

Ben Johnson (president, Greater New Orleans Foundation GNOF – New Orleans, Louisiana) spoke about the challenge of pulling the New Orleans community together again. A huge challenge that New Orleans must overcome is how to begin to reconnect a community whose flaws were exposed so openly in front of the country on national television. With close to 40% of the New Orleans population living in poverty, many feel that there was no response to the poor during the disaster. Nonprofits, in particular, can take a lead role helping people realize that they can take part in rebuilding their community in a way that benefits everyone. Temporarily based in Baton Rouge at the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, GNOF's focus is to rebuild New Orleans and to get people and business back to the city. State leadership will also have to step up to the plate and begin to work on a parish level with a regional focus.

Dickie Roberts (president, Gulf Coast Community Foundation GCCF – Biloxi, Mississippi) started her testimonial by informing the group that 16 out of her 27 board members lost their homes in the wake of the storm. But they are the 'haves', she said – it is the large number of shrimpers who lost their boats and the casino workers who recently received their severance pay who are the 'have nots'. Even though a representative of the International Disaster Relief Organization declared the devastation in Biloxi as being worse than the devastation caused by the recent Tsunami, Dickie said there are signs that Biloxi will come back. "You know the soul and the heart of the community is coming back when flowerboxes appear outside of nearly condemned homes." GCCF is currently working out of Fairhope, Alabama until they can return to Biloxi.

### **Rural Inland Communities**

Ben Burkett (director, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives – Jackson, Mississippi) is a farmer in Forrest County, Mississippi approximately 80 miles inland from the Gulf Coast. In his neighborhood of 93 houses, Ben said everyone had been affected. In fact, his neighborhood still does not have power two weeks after the storm hit and he doesn't expect to have power until the first of October. His cooperative of farmers sustained a catastrophic loss of their entire crops and the destruction of the casinos in New Orleans and on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, which purchased 70% of their production. With no phones and no communications, Ben said he could not contact FEMA, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, or any other relief organizations; he just waited. "With everything gone and no long-term commitments to our farmers for assistance, I

don't know when we'll come back. I just know I have a bank note due on December 31<sup>st</sup>, and they're going to want their money."

Lorna Bourg (director, Southern Mutual Help Association – New Iberia, Louisiana) is already working to gather assessments of the communities within her service area affected by the storm. Some of the communities were so devastated that they were unreachable by car; Lorna had to assess about a half-a-dozen communities by helicopter. "It is critical to help the communities become self-sufficient again," Lorna said. "Right now, I'm working to determine the best relief staging areas in our communities in anticipation of the money arriving." She also talked about the environmental disaster caused by the destruction of oil storage facilities. She added, "At the present time, this may be the largest toxic waste site in the United States."

### **Communities Receiving Evacuees**

Moses Williams (director, Northeast Louisiana Community Development Organization – Tallulah, Louisiana) and his staff went to work immediately to help the 2,500 – 3,000 people in the community shelters. When he asked for assistance from FEMA and the Red Cross, the organizations urged him to shut down the rural shelters to drive people into urban areas, as they were not equipped to handle the issues of rural parishes. Other evacuees stayed with family in their homes; some, he said, housing 15-20 people. Moses suggested that as the urban areas like New Orleans rebuild that rural communities should take part in the rebuilding process so there can be an economic link between the urban and rural areas.

Jennifer Eplett Reilly (consultant and board member, Foundation for the Mid South and Baton Rouge Area Foundation) informed the group that greater Baton Rouge has nearly doubled in population to an estimated million people. In response, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation has partnered with the Greater New Orleans Foundation to develop resources for relief and recovery. Jennifer shared that the community of Baton Rouge has focused on meeting the needs of more than 20,000 displaced people in identified shelters – not including those who are residing in small churches, hotels and motels, and people's homes. In some cases, shelters are not meeting international standards according to the International Rescue Committee team, which has partnered with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation to provide assessment and response. Jennifer said that there should be a focus on creating temporary communities with the displaced so people are respected and so they can live as wholly as possible with resource assistance, education opportunities for their children, quality food and facilities, adequate safety, and attention to mental and physical health. After the trauma they have endured, people should not have to wait in long lines to receive support and should not have to live in shelters in sub standard living conditions. It is crucial that immediate steps be taken to improve the capacity and quality of the humanitarian assistance response to help the victims.

## **THE PRINCIPLES FOR MOVING FORWARD**

In any successful coordinated effort, it is essential to make sure that all of the players share the same intent and follow the same guiding star from the beginning to the end the process. To meet this objective, the group worked to identify and list a number of principles that would help guide

how they would work together and how their work would best serve the overall effort to rebuild communities in a way that will benefit all people. The list of principles that should be honored included:

- Using philanthropy's influence and resources to make government both responsive and responsible;
- Creating partnerships between national funders and intermediaries and support organizations working on the ground;
- Treating those affected or displaced with dignity and respect;
- Creating a community that will work for everyone;
- Engaging the affected population in rebuilding their community and its infrastructure;
- Analyzing plans or efforts through race, equity, and poverty lenses;
- Clearly defining philanthropy's role in the recovery process and sharing and coordinating its efforts within the sector;
- Developing new systems to meet new demands and needs;
- Providing the affected population access to immediate relief resources and to poverty and equity advocacy organizations;
- Rebuilding the communities better than they were before;
- Encouraging civic participation to open up the political process;
- Changing how philanthropy engages communities – especially rural communities – in the rebuilding process;
- Using a centralized, regional database to help organizations access both data on charitable organizations in the region and information accumulated as a result of the disaster;
- Working with corporations to improve technology to the nonprofit sector and reduce systems failure;
- Supporting and working with grassroots and faith-based organizations engaged in immediate and long-term relief and recovery efforts;
- Providing oversight and accounting for the funds philanthropy is managing and making sure those dollars are being put to good use and towards their intended purposes; and
- Thoroughly analyzing the situation, realistically assessing your organizations ability to serve those affected in the long-term, and clearly stating your level of support.

## **IDENTIFYING THE WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE**

The central question to be answered was “What can the nonprofit and philanthropic community do to make sure that lives are rebuilt and communities restored with equity – with people at the center.” In specific areas where philanthropy can play a key role in the rebuilding process, discussions were held to flesh out ideas to consider, and identify resources to address them. The scope of the discussions were broad and far ranging, but the group mainly focused on the potential of and the need for philanthropy to use its leverage and resources to help where no others can or will help.

- **Rebuilding the physical community.** Philanthropy and the nonprofit sector must have an immediate voice in public policy. Action needs to be taken by the philanthropic sector to gain access to the conversations concerning public policy, tax laws, housing, schools, rebuilding efforts, the environment, jobs, and displaced people are being discussed and the decisions concerning these topics are being made. Since billions of dollars are coming into the region to address these issues, it is critical that action is taken within the next two weeks while the discussions are being held. It is also important that people and organizations with special interests should identify themselves to and coordinate their efforts with the larger philanthropic sector.
- **(Re)building the nonprofit and civic capacity.** Before any substantive rebuilding can take place, it is important that the sector think comprehensively about its needs while also taking thoughtful, short-term action to address its immediate needs. The sector must adopt both a short-term and a long-term commitment to rebuilding its own capacity in the aftermath of this disaster. In the short-term, existing nonprofits need to make sure their infrastructure will survive the immediate crisis and that they receive the financial assistance to both rebuild their capacity, and to expand their ability to support organizations serving evacuees. Suggestions in response to the need for short-term solutions ranged from low-interest loans from regional credit unions to foundations allowing grantees to repurpose their grants in the wake of the disaster. Success in the short-term will be realized if the sector can organize itself to minimize the bureaucracy, form funding collaboratives, and take immediate action on advocacy and public policy.

To help nonprofit capacity for the long-term, the sector needs to work towards the total vertical integration of its organizations and their resources. Throughout the region, nonprofits need to form effective partnerships with other organizations that share similar interests. By doing so, future challenges and opportunities can be better coordinated and assets and resources can be used most productively.

- **Resettling Dislocated People.** The first challenge in attempting to address this need is to identify who the dislocated people are and to find out where they have either gone or have been sent. If a victim cannot be located or contacted, it is nearly impossible for most nonprofits and foundations to help them beyond their most basic, physical needs.

By identifying the resources available at the state, the local, and the federal levels to help track those who have become displaced, not only can they be resettled when the time comes, but information can be made available to them on job, school, and housing opportunities.

- **Shaping a community and a civic culture that benefits everyone, regardless of race, class, gender, and power.** Philanthropy can and should take a lead in the development of equitable communities in the Mid South. By using its power and influence, philanthropy can continue to garner and maintain the public's attention around critical issues by boldly embracing its watchdog and advocacy role. A recent example in regard to the disaster, the NAACP lobbied FEMA to both ensure that recovery centers would be located in minority communities and to alert them that the numerous contracts

that will be issued during the massive recovery effort in the Mid South will be monitored by the NAACP to ensure that minorities are given equal consideration for their bids and for employment opportunities.

Philanthropy must also use its position to equitably distribute funds throughout the region. It is necessary for national and regional funders and intermediaries to invest in existing organizations that can identify those on the ground who can be trusted and can do the work.

- **Restoring human and environmental health.** Disease control is obviously a large component of this work and needs to take place immediately, but the somewhat lesser talked about issue of mental health is just as important. The trauma experienced by over a million people during the disaster – losing a home, loved ones, pets, possessions, or all of the above – does not go away by simply leaving the contaminated area. Hundreds of thousands of displaced individuals and families, first responders, volunteers, and community leaders have had to endure and cope with some of the most disturbing and dangerous situations ever imagined. It is essential that mental health assistance and medical coverage be provided to the victims of the hurricane.

It is a social imperative to restore the region's environmental health. To begin to deal with the inevitable environmental repercussions of the disaster, a rapid fact finding mission and environmental assessment must occur.

## **COMMUNICATIONS: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL**

As a sector responding to the disaster, philanthropy must communicate effectively to enhance its coordination and to share information internally, but it must also clearly articulate its message and stories in order to get the support and attention of a much broader audience. It is imperative that this be done to have the appropriate level of influence with public and private officials.

To help identify the avenues available to them, the group spent some time analyzing the challenges and weaknesses in the field's communication efforts – both actual and perceived. Because philanthropy has a history of working in silos, it was stressed that internal cooperation and collaboration will be essential. It was recognized that data must be used to drive the investments, and that nonprofits need this data to understand the nature and the scale of their approaches. To increase internal communication within the sector, attention was called to a new web capability that is ready to go online by MDC, Inc. <[www.mdcinc.org](http://www.mdcinc.org)> that will provide information about community philanthropy and a discussion format for ideas and insights on how philanthropy should work towards solutions to the problems caused by Hurricane Katrina. The website URL will be <[www.cpreas.org](http://www.cpreas.org)>.

Philanthropy continually underestimates the strength that it possesses and its potential to be an effective advocate at the policy table. The nonprofit sector in the Mid South has a great deal to offer in terms of experience and insight that the national entities and the policy debate need – otherwise the nation's decision makers will have little contact with or understanding of the actual

conditions that exist. It was noted that the meeting did not include the many political, agency, and institutional leaders who will be a part of the Katrina recovery; however, this initial conversation was seen as the first of many meetings to come which will be necessary to engage and involve a much larger universe of stakeholders.

It was noted that already the amount of contributions to the Red Cross and other large national organizations is beginning to diminish. It is expected that some foundations and corporations are holding some money in reserve during this time of crisis to learn of and fund other worthwhile efforts that emerge. By changing the conversation and expanding it to include others, the opportunities for philanthropy to partner with corporations and front-line entities increase.

A participant suggested that another answer lies in the room. The leaders of these organizations, it was suggested, should be bold and use this opportunity to leverage their power and influence to interest the national media to tell their stories. If there is not space at the table it is time to step up and make one. Partners, funders, and associations either from the region or who care about the region (such as Independent Sector, Entergy, the Ford Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Knight Foundation, and others) should use their established networks and connections in Washington D.C. and the national media to promote the message of philanthropy in the region.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The former governor of Mississippi, William Winter, said that the number of nonprofit organizations that responded to the devastation of Hurricane Camille in Biloxi in 1969 could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The growth of philanthropy in the Mid South over the last forty years is incredible, and the ability of the sector to come together in response to this disaster is a phenomenon. The immediate objective should be to secure and protect the well being of those affected. But the real task – the difficult task – will follow. Politicians have often ignored the sector's role, but philanthropy must insist on being present when the decisions are made and the resources are obligated in response to Hurricane Katrina.

During the time that this meeting was being developed, the president of the Knight Foundation commented that this particular gathering has the potential to do more than any other single entity can do to make a difference in positively dealing with this disaster. If philanthropy is truly free of self-interest, of economic and political ties, and sets the true interest of communities at the center of its work, we must work together to be the voice that calls for the changes in the policies and systems that will allow a better society to emerge out of this terrible disaster. It must be our calling to protect those who are vulnerable and who have been overlooked and to make sure that they are included in the long-term rebuilding and recovery effort to build communities that foster equity.

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**Thanks are given** for the flexibility and commitment of the ninety participants who attended this critically important meeting with little more than a week's notice. The expense of time and travel was considerable. In addition, the Foundation for the Mid South would like to specifically thank the following:

- The Community Foundation of Greater Memphis for providing the meeting space, food, and refreshments for the meeting;
- MACE of Greenville, MS, for agreeing to delay for a half-day the beginning of an important meeting that it was holding of Delta leaders and funders so that many of their participants could attend this meeting in Memphis;
- The BellSouth Foundation for providing the conference call tie-in which enabled several additional key stakeholders to participate by phone;
- Tim Murphy for donating his time to produce maps that were distributed showing the impact of the storm and its aftermath; and to
- The National Rural Funders Collaborative for providing travel expenses for some of the participants.

Each of these contributions was an important one and added immeasurably to the quality of the Memphis meeting. Again, thank you.

**FOUNDATION FOR THE MID SOUTH HURRICANE KATRINA MEETING**  
Memphis, Tennessee / September 15, 2005

**ATTENDEE LIST**

**Community Foundations**

Arkansas Community Foundation	Pat Lile
Baton Rouge Area Foundation	John Davies
Black Belt Community Foundation	Felicia Jones
Community Foundation of East Mississippi	Roman Herrington
Community Foundation of Greater Jackson	Linda Montgomery
Community Foundation of Greater Memphis	Gid Smith, Patti Smith, Melissa Wolowicz
Community Foundation of Shreveport-Bossier	Paula Hickman      Tem McElroy
Community Foundation of Southern Alabama	Tom Davis <i>By phone</i>
CREATE Foundation	Mike Clayborne
Greater New Orleans Foundation	Ben Johnson      Tony Recasner
Gulf Coast Community Foundation	Dickie Roberts      Ray Crabbs
Union County Community Foundation	Elise Drake <i>By phone</i>

**Regional Foundations and Funders**

Baptist Community Ministries	Luceis LeDoux
Carrier Foundation	Sherece West
Chisholm Foundation	Jay Lindsey
Entergy Charitable Foundation	Kay Arnold      Dan Baw
Frueauff Foundation	Sue Frueauff      David Frueauff
Huey Wilson Foundation	Greg Cotter
Maddox Foundation	Michael Ward
Munro & Company Foundation	Brad Williams
Pennington Foundation	Lori Bertman
Phil Hardin Foundation	Tom Wacaster
Womens Foundation for Greater Memphis	Ruby Bright

**Intermediaries**

Center for Rural Strategies	Dee Davis
Corporation for Enterprise Development	Bob Friedman
Corporation for National and Community Service	Mike McKay
Enterprise Corporation of the Delta	Bill Bynum
Federation of Southern Cooperatives	Ralph Paige
Independent Sector	Diana Aviv      Jeanne Ellinport
Hands On Network	Andrea Valenzula
LISC	Anna Ginn
Louisiana Association of Nonprofits	Melissa Flournoy
Louisiana SERVE	
MDC	David Dodson
Mid South Delta LISC	Glenn Nishimura
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives	Ben Burkett

**Intermediaries Cont'd**

Mississippi Center for Nonprofits	Mark McCrary
Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service	Marsha Meeks Kelly
NAACP	Derrick Johnson
National Rural Funders Collaborative	Jim Richardson, Bettie Hodges, Athan Lindsay
Philanthropic Ventures Foundation	Bill Somerville
Rural LISC	Jeff Moseley
Southeastern Council on Foundations	Martin Lehfeldt
Southern Development Bancorporation	Ben Steinberg
Southern Good Faith Fund	Angela Duran
Southern Rural Development Center	Bo Beaulieu
Southern Rural Development Initiative	Debby Warren
William Jefferson Clinton Foundation	Joyce Willis

**Regional Community Leaders**

Economics Institute	Richard McCarthy	Catherine McCarthy
MACE	Howard Boutte	
Northeast Louisiana Delta CDC	Moses Williams	
Quitman County Development Organization	Robert Jackson	
Rauch, Inc.	Willie Gable	
Southern Mutual Help Association	Lorna Bourg	<i>By phone</i>

**National Foundations and Partners**

Arthur M. Blank Foundation	Barbara Saunders	
Bert and Mary Meyer Foundation	Hubert Sapp	
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Craig Cramer	<i>By phone</i>
C. S. Mott Foundation	Benita Melton	
F. B. Heron Foundation	Sharon King	
Fannie Mae Foundation	Joan Wilson	
Ford Foundation	Linetta Gilbert	
Hazen Foundation	Lori Bezahler	
Home Depot Foundation	Fred Wacker	
John and James L. Knight Foundation	Katherine Loflin	Alfredo Cruz
Jessie Ball duPont Fund	Mark Constantine	
Marguerite Casey Foundation	Cynthia Renfro	Luz Vega
Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation	Gayle Williams	
Ms. Foundation	Sara Gould	
National Economic Development & Law Center	Tse Ming Tam	
Oxfam America	Bernadette Orr	
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Jane Isaacs Lowe	
Rosie's For All Kids Foundation	Sandra Cobden	Margaret Egan
Surdna Foundation	Ed Skloot	Kim Burnett
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Gloria Dickerson	

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