



## **HIRI's Nonprofit Capacity-Building Projects**

Nonprofits need strong infrastructure to do their work, and to handle the challenges of innovation and change. Capacity building is where vision meets execution, helping nonprofits handle those challenges. Since its founding in 1961, the nonprofit Human Interaction Research Institute has combined research on innovation and change with practical interventions to help nonprofits, and the funders supporting them, wrestle with these challenges. Many of the Institute's technical assistance programs over the years would now be called nonprofit capacity building. HIRI's more recent work on capacity building includes research and information services as well.

HIRI conducted the first national study on capacity building in philanthropy, published in a 2001 book from Urban Institute Press. That study inspired the *Philanthropic Capacity Building Resources* online database of foundation grantmaking and direct service programs, supported by six foundations and now including nearly 500 programs. Research studies using this database have been conducted on foundation financial investments in nonprofit capacity building (supported by Carnegie Corporation) and on lessons learned from evaluations of these programs (supported by W.K. Kellogg Foundation).

A national study of innovations in capacity building, supported by Carnegie, Rockefeller and other funders was conducted by HIRI and resulted in *The Emerging Universe: New Directions in Nonprofit Capacity Building*, published in Spring 2004 by the Alliance for Nonprofit Management. A think tank on the future of capacity building was coordinated by HIRI in 2001, and results published in *The Nonprofit Quarterly*.

As part of its philanthropy work, HIRI completed a national study of perspectives on capacity building of wealthy donors and their trusted advisors. It also conducted a study about how smaller foundations can obtain greater access to resources from the larger nonprofit capacity building arena. Surveys for the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation of capacity building in four communities led to an asset mapping model, since used to create resource directories in Southern, Northern and Central California, supported by a group of foundations.

In 2007, HIRI and its partners (California State University Northridge and MEND) launched Valley Nonprofit Resources, a comprehensive program for building capacity of the more than 4,000 nonprofits in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles. The Institute has helped develop regional initiatives in Upstate New York, South Florida, Charlotte and Wabash County, Indiana; and it conducted a study for the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation about capacity-building needs of youth-serving agencies in Long Beach, California. Also for Knight Foundation, from 1998 through 2002 the Institute coordinated capacity-building services for 11 communities that were creating community-wide collaborations for marketing nonprofit arts. HIRI now supports operation of a capacity-building grantmaking it developed in 2006 for the Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, targeted to youth-serving agencies in Southern California.