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The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and the Foundation Center Partner to Share Knowledge on Foundations Spending Down

New Blog Series Brings Transparency to a Little-Explored Topic

New York, NY — September 23, 2013. The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies (ACBP) and the Foundation Center launched a new blog series today, “Making Change by Spending Down.”

The series will share lessons and perspectives of ACBP as it spends down its endowment by 2016. Decision makers across the social sector will benefit from the first-hand knowledge and community of learning created by the collection.

[ACBP](#), established in 1985, is dedicated to transparency and documentation of the spend-down process to produce knowledge assets for its peers. [GrantCraft](#), a joint service of the Foundation Center and the European Foundation Centre, will serve as the central repository of writings by and interviews with ACBP staff, trustees, family members, grantees, and others around different aspects of the spend-down process. As part of GrantCraft’s mission to improve the practice of philanthropy by harnessing the practical wisdom of funders worldwide, “Making Change by Spending Down” will become a resource for other foundations weighing the pros and cons of sunseting and, more broadly, will provide an uncommonly transparent look at this process for the entire social sector.

“A philanthropy phasing out grantmaking is a relatively new phenomenon,” said ACBP Chairman Charles R. Bronfman and ACBP President Jeffrey Solomon in an open letter to the philanthropic community. “There has been little written about the dynamics, challenges, and choices that need to be addressed. For those reasons, we will transparently document our process as it unfolds. We will also take responsibility for stimulating a wider and deeper conversation among donors and professionals in the philanthropic community about the philosophic, strategic, and day-to-day considerations that are involved, and our learning and experiences along the way.”

The "[Making Change by Spending Down](#)" blog series kicked off today with a video interview and blog post by ACBP Chairman Charles R. Bronfman on the reasoning behind ACBP's decision to spend down. New posts on related issues by various ACBP stakeholders will be posted each month and include multimedia content.

Contributors will explore how a foundation's decision to spend down affects a broad range of aspects, from its mission, employees, and grantees to its investments and legacy. The series will run for a year or more; will be disseminated through the Foundation Center's [PhilanTopic](#), [Transparency Talk](#), and [GrantCraft](#) blogs; and ultimately be archived as a complete collection at GrantCraft to remain accessible into the future.

"We are thrilled to host a dedicated space where the lessons of ACBP's spend down can be shared for the benefit of the whole field," said Bradford Smith, the Foundation Center's president. "We join ACBP in bringing greater transparency to how foundations choose to use their precious resources."

"We look forward to this ongoing collaboration and its positive and permanent contribution of intellectual capital to the philanthropic community," Solomon added.

The Foundation Center's 2009 report, [Perpetuity or Limited Lifespan? How Do Family Foundations Decide?](#) found that more than a third of family foundations are either uncertain about lifespan or expect to spend down. The research was the first to benchmark the intentions, practices, and attitudes of nearly 1,100 active family foundations, most of which had been created since 1980. "Making Change by Spending Down" will shed light on what is behind the numbers for those foundations that choose to close and what it takes for them to get there.

This partnership marks GrantCraft's first curated blog series and aligns with the Foundation Center's priorities to empower donors with the knowledge they need to be strategic and to encourage greater foundation transparency, as outlined in its [Foundation Center 2020](#) plan.

"Making Change by Spending Down" content is available free of charge at [GrantCraft.org](#).

About the Foundation Center

Established in 1956, the Foundation Center is the leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide. Through data, analysis, and training, it connects people who want to change the world to the resources they need to succeed. The Center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. and, increasingly, global grantmakers and their grants — a robust, accessible knowledge bank for the sector. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level. Thousands of people visit the Center's web site each day and are served in its five regional library/learning centers and its network of more than 470 funding information centers located in public libraries, community foundations, and educational institutions nationwide and around the world. For more information, please visit [foundationcenter.org](#) or call (212) 620-4230.

About The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies

ACBP operates and supports programs in Canada, Israel and the United States to strengthen the unity of the Jewish people, to improve the quality of life in Israel and to promote Canadian heritage. Ultimately, ACBP seeks to span the separations created by geography, culture, and the requirements of daily life with a bridge built on the willingness of individuals in search of community, identity, and meaning. We operate in a framework of continuing innovation, have an ability to bear risk, and continually emphasize quality, value creation and building sustainability. For more information: [www.acbp.net](#)