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Governance Futures: New Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance

Under the leadership of BoardSource and in collaboration with the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University, the Governance Futures project seeks to discover, develop, and disseminate innovative governance strategies that vary significantly from conventional practices. The project is based in part on the assumption that some governance problems arise from the very design of our governance models -- not merely from poor execution of those models -- and that we ought to explore the potential of alternative governance designs, even as we continue to help boards perform better with the governance models they now use. A bigger set of ideas, tools, and models may improve governance and thereby enhance the accountability of the nonprofit sector. Governance Futures is supported by several funders, including The Atlantic Philanthropies, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Surdna Foundation.

Survey of NGO Governance Practices in Central and Eastern Europe

In recent years, the governance of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) has become a matter of critical importance. It is the fundamental forum for accountability and transparency in the NGO sector and thus is key to the health and sustainability of civil society as a whole. However, little is known except anecdotally about the practices (as opposed to the legal structure) of NGO governance in most parts of the world. In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Latin America, and Africa, documentation about NGO governance structures and practices is especially meager.

BoardSource is participating in this joint effort with partner organizations in these three regions of the world to make available baseline information about the way NGOs govern themselves, both in individual countries and comparatively across regions. The data will be of value to all involved in developing the sector's organizational infrastructure, whether as trainers, staff, consultants, researchers, partners, beneficiaries, or funders. This research will aid in the design of programs to foster good governance, as well as efforts to measure the outcomes of such programs.

This project will help to publicize the need for good governance among the general public. By providing an overview of governance practices, it will also increase understanding of the structures and processes of governance among NGO staff and board members and will help motivate board members to contribute more to their organizations. The project will also aim to develop a regional network or core community of experts in nonprofit governance.

The Survey of Nonprofit Governance Practices in Hungary is the result of joint collaboration between BoardSource and our Hungarian partner, the Civil Society Development Foundation. This survey was completed by 1,124 out of 2,700 organizations, with a response rate of 42 percent. Thanks to funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, this work has given BoardSource a specific knowledge about the climate of governance within the Hungarian

sector. Read [the report](#)

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