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Editorial

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DEAR READERS

This unthemed issue covers a broad range of topics, but each article highlights ways in which grantmakers are moving beyond programmatic funding to have a deeper impact on the issues that they care about. While the idea of using a broader toolkit is no longer new, there is still much to be learned about how to effectively deploy tools and approaches beyond the grant.

Menashi, Behan, and Noonan evaluated the Annie E. Casey Foundation's (AECF) efforts to improve system performance and outcomes in child and family services. The Casey Strategic Consulting Group, an operating group of AECF, used the concept of "catalytic combinations" to identify levers for changing systems. Promising results in several states demonstrate the potential of both the conceptual approach and the operating structure.



Several articles in this issue highlight results of capacity building programs. The California HealthCare Foundation and the California Pipeline Program implemented practice-management consulting to promote the sustainability of California's safety-net dental practices. **Lo, Nolan, and Finocchio** report that most clinics made measurable improvements in increasing net revenue, reducing expenses, enhancing payer mix, and increasing patient visits.

While much foundation capacity building has been focused on individual non-profit organizations, coalitions can also be the target. **Strong and Kim** evaluated the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's *Consumer Voices for Coverage* initiative that supported consumer health advocacy coalitions in 12 states. The targeted approach used by the foundation contributed to observed increases in five capacities.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation's *Cultures of Giving* initiative worked to build philanthropic capacity within communities of color. **Jackson, Washington, and Jackson** describe how learning from evaluations progressed the theory of change and modified the approach over time. Building leadership and creating communities of practice were identified as two key strategies.

Paige, Bourcier, Cahill, Hsu, and Kabel report on results of the Northwest Health Foundation's efforts to address social determinants of health. The foundation opted to support a variety of approaches — short- and long-term, large and small — over the five-year period for a total of \$12.4 million. The authors suggest that this breadth had both benefits and costs, with the latter including a lack of deep impact in any given area.

The Paige et al. article highlights one of the critical on-going issues for philanthropy and philanthropists: Is their goal to develop new models that others can then scale or is it to have a real impact on a specific community? Different foundations and philanthropists will answer this question differently – but it is an important one to ask. In her reflective practice piece, **Brown** describes the work of one foundation that has clearly landed on the side of having a deep impact on their community and is using the full range of tools at their disposal. Detroit's Skillman Foundation has adopted a changemaking role that draws upon and leverages its knowledge, networks, and civic reputation to supplement its grantmaking investments. This stance has required the foundation to build new strategic competencies and challenge the way they have traditionally carried out their work.

The articles in this issue provide some evidence that capacity building and direct engagement with both grantees and the broader community are ways in which foundations may be able to increase impact. The field will benefit from more research and reflection on how these approaches may support different roles for foundations – as model-builders or changemakers, direct intervenors or funders.



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