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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

DEAR READERS

In reading the articles in this issue, I was struck by the richness and complexity of the work done by foundations and their partners. Regardless of the size or type of foundation, working with grantees to improve conditions in communities requires foundation staff to have a variety of tools in their kits.

Work in communities requires the ability to learn and adapt to changing conditions and circumstances. **Snow, Lynn, and Beer** have developed frameworks to help foundations think about and design adaptive strategies and their evaluation. They take into account the need to balance adaptability with accountability and flexibility with consistency.



One approach that has gained a great deal of attention by foundations is supporting networks, rather than (or in addition to) individual organizations. **Taylor, Whatley, and Coffman** share new and practical knowledge about how to build and support effective networks. Their framework highlights the need to consider the role of the network in order to assess its success and identify the right network metric to use in evaluation.

While foundations have begun to actively engage in many forms of change work beyond grant-making (advocacy, convening, etc.), **Brook and Fitz** identify a new role: publisher. Either through funding of external research or authoring their own research and evaluation, many foundations are now great repositories of information. The authors describe advances in publishing practices, such as open licensing, digital object identifiers, open access repositories, and Schema.org, that together might help foundations and the social sector more broadly to create better access to this “grey” literature.

Not the least among the challenges in philanthropy is working in culturally appropriate ways. **Kintopf, Villaluz, Martínez, Schillo, and Rasmussen** share what they learned about working in American Indian communities. Issues of sovereignty, historical trauma, poverty, epidemic disease, isolation, and mistrust mean that what works in the general population may not in Indian Country. While this article focuses on tobacco use, the authors suggest that it could be useful to organizations attempting to reduce disparities for American Indians in health, substance abuse, economic equity, and more.

Finally, **Warner** highlights the unique position of community foundations to focus on community challenges and stimulate other nonprofit organizations and funders to develop local solutions. The Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region used a combination of funding, partnership with grantees, creative use of evaluation, and design of advocacy tools to promote and strengthen youth arts programming. The author offers eight insights for others interested in using innovative methods to lead large initiatives designed for broad community impact.

We hope the practical knowledge embodied in these articles helps you to improve your own practices in navigating the complexities of your role!



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EDITOR IN CHIEF