



Real Results: Why Strategic Philanthropy *is* Social Justice Philanthropy

by Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski

The crises affecting our nation and the world have prompted philanthropists to become more organized, focused and, perhaps above all, "strategic" in their efforts. The movement toward "strategic philanthropy" has already contributed to greater philanthropic effectiveness. Yet, despite important contributions to education, health, the arts and the environment, it is clear that philanthropy's ultimate impact is still limited. Great disparities along the lines of race, gender, class and other identity markers persist and, in some cases, are even exacerbated.

This suggests that something is missing from our sector's understanding of what makes for truly strategic and effective philanthropy:

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A clear understanding of one's goals includes not only the desired impact but also identifies who will benefit (or not) and how.

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A commitment to evidence-based strategy cannot ignore the tangible, positive impact – and often the necessity – of influencing public policy.

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Keeping a philanthropic strategy on course requires the input of those who stand to gain or lose the most from grantmaking: the grantees and the communities they serve.

Truly strategic philanthropy is social justice philanthropy.

Jagpal and Laskowski draw on common themes seen in a series of reports on [high impact strategies for arts, education, environment and health philanthropy](#) to demonstrate how a social justice approach produces concrete results and society-wide benefits regardless of issue focus.

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