



A Reading List for ISTR Members

[Stanford Social Innovation Review \(SSIR\)](#) is an award-winning publication that covers cross-sector solutions to global problems. It is written by and for scholars and social change leaders from around the world and from all sectors of society, including interdisciplinary communities like ISTR, nonprofits, foundations, businesses, government agencies, and engaged citizens. *SSIR* aims to advance, educate, and inspire the field of social innovation by seeking out, cultivating, and disseminating the best in research- and practice-based knowledge.

The reading list that follows includes a range of *SSIR* articles selected specially for ISTR members, including pieces on measuring social change, how the field is evolving in the face of new political and technological dynamics, and cross-sector collaboration. The articles also examine research and initiatives across a wide variety of countries and regions, and include a variety of article types.

We hope these stories will inform and inspire ISTR members working across the third sector in advance of and beyond the network's 17th International Conference.

[Measuring More and Learning Less](#)

by Marco Di Natale

How an excessive focus on methods has distracted attention from the more fundamental challenge of building rigor and learning overall.

[Ten Reasons Not to Measure Impact—and What to Do Instead](#)

by Mary Kay Gugerty & Dean Karlan

Impact evaluations are an important tool for learning about effective solutions to social problems, but they are a good investment only in the right circumstances.

Decolonize Civil Society Research

by Christopher L. Pallas, Anna Domaradzka, Cristina M. Balboa, Elizabeth Bloodgood, Dipendra KC, Emmanuel Kumi & Patricia Mendonça

Unequal power relations between researchers from the Global North and South undermine their joint pursuit of knowledge.

Paying It Forward in International Development

by Rodrigo Canales, Tony Sheldon, Tory Grieves & Brendan Lehan

Social interventions often fail because the interested parties take a narrowly transactional approach to the collection and use of evidence. Development practitioners must instead build a culture of learning, negotiation, and collaboration, so that the generation and use of evidence are integrated into program design and implementation.

Welcome to the Era of Relational Intelligence

by Isabelle C. Hau

As AI begins to transform education, work, and social life, we need to focus on developing and expanding capacities essential for human flourishing.

The Emerging Field of Political Innovation

by Johanna Mair, Josefa Kindt & Sébastien Mena

Civil society has attended to social problems for decades while intentionally refraining from overt engagement with politics. But a new field of practice seeks to reinvigorate democracy by emancipating social innovation from this stricture.

Navigating Philanthropic Compliance in an Era of Heightened Regulation

by Martha Lackritz-Peltier, Tania Dávila Paredes, Geraldine Moreno & Mark Sidel

This article series examines compliance as a tool not only for control, but also for resistance, education, and opportunity. The articles—including [one by former ISTR President Mark Sidel](#)—explore how compliance shapes philanthropic efficacy and how the sector might do better, particularly in contexts where political decisions or constraints make civil society difficult to support.

The Future of Transnational NGO Advocacy

by Elizabeth Bloodgood, Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken, Nina Hall, George E. Mitchell, Christopher Pallas & Hans Peter Schmitz

Three perspectives on the future of transnational advocacy, and how organizations can adapt to the challenges of 21st-century campaigning.

Preventing Identity-Based Violence from the Ground Up

by Susan Appe, David A. Campbell & Kerry Whigham

Worsening conflicts around the world need more than state actors to resolve them. Community-based organizations are working to heal the social fragmentation at the root of mass atrocity and identity-based violence.

[Making Indian Philanthropy Matter](#)

by Ingrid Srinath

To translate India's robust growth in giving into impact, the sector must find ways to address the roots of inequality, nonprofit dependency on business, and an underdeveloped philanthropic system.

[Collective Impact](#)

by John Kania & Mark Kramer

Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector often focuses on the isolated intervention of individual organizations. Part of *SSIR's* [Essentials of Social Innovation](#) collection, this article introduces collective impact—a framework for effective collaboration where groups from different sectors develop a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.

[The Community Systems Solution](#)

by Rong Wang, Katherine R. Cooper & Michelle Shumate

Better ways of describing how coalitions collaborate exist, and naming these variations can help guide local leaders and the diverse communities they serve.

[Sunsetting in Style](#)

by Alice Hengevoss & Georg von Schnurbein

Foundations can turn the decision to spend down into a long-lasting and impactful legacy.

Special offer: For a limited time, ISTR International Conference attendees can enjoy an exclusive \$15 discount on a 1-year digital subscription to *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, which includes full access *SSIR's* 20-plus year archive. [Subscribe by July 31 with discount code ISTR2026](#).

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