The State of Scaling Social Impact: Results of a National Study of Nonprofits

by Cynthia W. Massarsky & John F. Gillespie
The Social Impact Exchange is a national membership association dedicated to building a capital marketplace that scales high-impact social solutions to improve the lives of millions. The Exchange creates the conditions for breakthroughs to go big in order to deliver impact where it is needed most. Together, more than 4,000 Exchange members are making it easier for philanthropic giving to achieve major positive change by supporting strategies that improve lives and change systems. By creating standards to evaluate impact, identifying and tracking highly effective nonprofits, and fostering significant collaborative funding to scale up top social interventions, the Exchange helps foundations, donors, business, and government increase the power of giving to achieve greater social good.

Veris Consulting, Inc. specializes in financial management and survey research for nonprofits and social enterprises. Its outsourced accounting and financial management practice draws upon specialized expertise to improve bottom line results and enable nonprofits to scale and control costs. Veris provides objective, hands-on interim CFO, outsourced accounting, financial assessment and executive search services — helping nonprofits take control of their finances and advance their missions. Its survey research practice delivers valuable insights through benchmarking, compensation and satisfaction surveys as well as industry trends and business intelligence studies.

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Individual donors, independent grantmaking foundations, and corporate philanthropy are increasingly demanding evidence that funded projects produce the benefits they claim. As more funding is directed towards evidence-based programs addressing challenges in our nation’s communities — programs that achieve outcomes benefitting the greatest number of vulnerable populations — the importance of scaling the impact of evidence-based solutions becomes all the more significant and attractive.

In 2012, the Social Impact Exchange set out to determine the state of scaling among nonprofit organizations and initiatives, with the goal of generating baseline data to map the scope, range and extent of nonprofits scaling or intending to scale their impact — so that we might learn more about how to exponentially increase the impact of “social solutions that work.” Such a benchmark survey would:

- Heighten awareness among current nonprofit leaders about opportunities to grow their initiatives and achieve greater efficiency and impact
- Expose nonprofit leaders to best practices that will inform and strengthen their role in strategic and growth planning activities within their organizations
- Provide the field with valuable information about the status and readiness for scaling among nonprofits and their leaders, and the importance of the issue
- Help generate discussions, build knowledge, and increase the flow of capital to support initiatives going to scale

This report details how practitioners view scaling, their motivations and readiness to grow, and the strategies they are deploying to achieve scaled impact. It also serves to highlight the challenges they face as well as the information and support they need to move forward.

**SOME KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:**

1. Nonprofits are heavily engaged in scaling and believe that scaling impact is one of the most important activities to address the social problems they are working to solve. For them, scaling impact is about helping more people in need and facilitating systemic change.

2. Nonprofit scaling efforts are focused on traditional avenues for growth — expanding target audiences or replicating their models — and an overwhelming percentage are past the assessment stage in scaling their initiatives and expect to complete implementation in less than six years.

3. Both funders and nonprofits need more information about the effectiveness and return on investment of various approaches to scaling and growth planning.

4. There is a strong need for better information and more funding dedicated to impact measurement, so organizations can evaluate their programs and scale only those innovations with proof of results.

5. Though often overlooked, investments in nonprofit boards can be highly impactful to strengthen organizations and support their scaling efforts, as they are critical to strategy formation and decision-making.

6. On average, nonprofits require a significant amount of funding to finance their growth, yet raising capital continues to be a challenge. Nonprofit leaders identify securing sufficient capital as most helpful to their growth efforts, with those conducting campaigns having raised an average of only 17% of the funds required.
Few would dispute the invaluable contributions of nonprofits and their potential to help solve society’s most pressing problems. Yet despite all of the important work accomplished by nonprofits, even the most effective mission-driven organizations are facing the daunting challenge of achieving widespread impact. Whether implemented deeply at a local or regional level, or more broadly at a national level, there are literally hundreds of millions of people who would benefit from the changemakers who have pioneered new and effective initiatives that are worthy of scale. Still, while significant numbers of organizations are working to spread their initiatives to help more people in need, many, if not most, are finding it hard to reach their full potential.

Two main challenges described well by nonprofits responding to the survey are: (1) a lack of information about what it takes to scale; and (2) structured, accessible capital that would enable initiatives to evaluate their work and build their operational and financial capacity to support their spread or growth. They believe that high-quality, accessible information about scaling that can be captured, shared, and leveraged is a necessary ingredient for planning and decision-making. Both for those that are scaling as well as those intending to do so, access to growth capital through a fully functioning capital marketplace is also a necessary ingredient for getting their high-impact initiatives to reach full potential. Yet presently, capital for scaling impact is neither structured nor easily accessed by those who need it.

Clearly, the ‘field of practice’ around scaling impact for nonprofits is both essential and continually evolving. The questions of how best to aid nonprofits to manage the challenges of scale are complex and far-reaching: from capacity building to financial modeling, from conducting outcome evaluations and fine-tuning operations to managing policy and advocacy campaigns.

In the current environment, with limited resources and more emphasis on getting big bang for the buck, it is more critical than ever to ensure that reliable information for informed decision-making and sufficient growth capital are available to scale social programs that can maximize impact. The nonprofit sector carries great promise for developing solutions to many of our most intractable social problems — and there is no better time than now to ensure that we spread the most effective of them.
A range of nonprofit leaders responded to the survey — in terms of age, number of staff, mission, and focus of their organization.

Virtually all of the respondents are either in the process of growing their organizations (75%) or intend to scale their impact but have yet to initiate a growth plan (22%). Fewer than 4% (17) of the 436 respondents indicate that they have no intention of scaling or that they had previously undertaken such an effort and are no longer doing so.

These organizations are mature (three-quarters more than 10 years old) and more often national organizations than the average respondent, likely indicating that they have already achieved a certain scale. While the outreach efforts to distribute the survey was fueled by organizations that have attended activities and events related to scaling impact, thus not representative of all nonprofits, it is still clear that growth and expansion is a priority issue for nonprofit leaders. Most of our analysis in this report focuses on the 419 organizations engaged in scaling impact.
Three-quarters of respondents are currently focused on scaling their organizations, programs, or initiatives. Another 22% intend to scale their impact but have not begun to implement a plan.

Age matters — the age of an organization appears to be more of a determinant of scaling than budget or number of employees.

Among those currently scaling their impact, 64% have been in operation for more than 10 years, and among those intending to scale, 69% have been in operation for more than 10 years.

**How old is your nonprofit?**

- **> 20 Years**
- **11-20 Years**
- **6-10 Years**
- **< 6 Years**

![Graph showing the distribution of nonprofit ages by current scaling status and intention to scale.]
Yet, though budget size varies across all categories, a sizeable percentage of both organizations that are currently scaling and those intending to scale have budgets under $5 million (70% and 76% respectively) — possibly indicating that a large budget is not necessarily a determinant of whether an organization is currently scaling or intending to scale.

The same appears true for the number of full-time employees, though this is not surprising given the relationship between number of staff and budget size. Typically, the fewer the number of full-time staff, the smaller the budget.
Most sector leaders who are scaling the impact of their initiatives or intending to do so are with human service or education-oriented nonprofits.

Given that scaling impact is frequently associated with initiatives that serve vulnerable populations, it is perhaps not surprising that organizations currently scaling or intending to scale are focused in these two areas. Respondents indicating ‘other’ (26%) say their focus is in areas such as community and economic development, youth development, health and human services, workforce development, civic engagement, and housing.
Nonprofit scaling activity is spread across all geographic areas, with some notable differences among those who are currently scaling and those intending to do so.

Respondents indicate that their focus is local (21% and 39% respectively), regional (22% and 31% respectively), national (37% and 16% respectively) and international (20% and 14% respectively). It may be that a higher percentage of national organizations are currently scaling since scale can help them deliver a breadth of services to larger and more diverse populations.

Also, for a good number of organizations with a national focus, scaling operations to address more local communities is part of their mission. By contrast, it is possible that local and regional nonprofits are still in the planning process because scaling more widely is a new focus or because they have to overcome certain challenges before doing so (for example, funding).
Nearly all nonprofit leaders who are currently scaling (92%) or intending to scale their impact (82%) believe that it is one of the most important activities to address the social problems they are working to solve.

**Sector leaders generally agree on a definition of ‘scaling impact’ — ultimately, it is about helping more people in need.**

Whether they call it ‘scaling,’ ‘growth,’ or ‘expansion,’ nonprofit leaders across the U.S. are engaged in this activity and see it as an important strategy to achieve their goals. Respondents say ‘scaling impact’ is:

### ABOUT GROWTH
- Leveraging core competencies for expansion
- Growing positive outcomes
- Identifying and replicating/adopting the best evidence-based, sustainable models more deeply and widely
- Increasing opportunities for others — reaching full penetration or critical mass
- Growing in a deliberate, measured way to ensure the impact, quality, efficiency, and sustainability of an initiative
- Fostering access, growth, learning, and effectiveness at a global scale
- Implementing a marketplace solution

### ABOUT POLICY & SYSTEMS CHANGE
- Achieving place-based change
- Enabling social innovation to flourish — programs, initiatives and strategies that increase the chances for success
- Demonstrating the effectiveness of an innovative methodology that combines focused implementation, performance management, high standards, partnership development, objective milestones and measurement of results
- Blending service with advocacy
- Influencing the agendas, decisions, and behaviors of the most influential public, private and corporate actors and stakeholders
- Changing public policy
- Reaching the tipping point — bringing about the financial and policy conditions for long-term systemic change
Nonprofits are involved in scaling many types of initiatives.

Nonprofits report they are working to solve a myriad of ‘problems’ — from improving the health and well-being of vulnerable children and families, to reforming school systems in poor neighborhoods; from giving the economically disadvantaged access to credit and a pathway to building assets, to creating programs and policies that provide job skills and opportunities for those who are the most difficult to employ.

THE TYPES OF INITIATIVES NONPROFITS ARE SCALING ARE DIVERSE, SUCH AS:

- A childhood obesity program
- A model that preserves affordable housing
- A summer program for foster youth
- A life skills training program for the formerly incarcerated
- A treatment intervention for traumatized youth with a variety of behavioral health issues
- A language and literacy curriculum for low-income adults
- A universal healthcare program for low-income, uninsured residents
- A technology program for underserved, urban youth
- Free legal services for low-income people
- A career-themed learning academy
- A financial education and counseling program
- A college readiness program
- A clean energy technology program
- A social enterprise that employs people with disabilities
Far and above all other reasons, nonprofit leaders are scaling their impact to increase the number of people served.

Among respondents that are currently scaling as well as those intending to scale, 79% of both groups say that their strongest motivation for scaling impact is to increase the number of people served, followed by a motivation to facilitate systemic change (58% and 50%, respectively) and increase visibility and leverage for the organization or initiative (41% and 51%, respectively). Those intending to scale have a stronger motivation to collaborate with others to share resources and generate greater programmatic and financial efficiency (43%) than those currently scaling (35%).

When comparing results by revenue size, it is promising to see that 43% of nonprofits, regardless of size, are motivated to scale to facilitate systemic change, showing movement across the field towards more ambitious plans with longer horizons.

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**What are your top three motivations in scaling your impact?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Currently Scaling Impact</th>
<th>Intending to Scale Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase number of people served</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate systemic change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase visibility/leverage for initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share resources/collaborate to increase efficiencies</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand best practices through other nonprofits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Change/create market demand</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Influence public policy</td>
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**“79% Are Motivated to Scale to Increase People Served”**

**“43%, Regardless of Size, Are Motivated to Facilitate Systemic Change, Showing More Ambitious Plans & Longer Horizons”**
Twice as many nonprofits (36%) report that their focus is to scale their organization as a whole, while 18% are focused on scaling a specific program.

Survey respondents were asked whether they are focused on growing a specific program, product or service, platform, practice, movement, public policy, systems change initiative, or their organization as a whole. Nearly 36% of nonprofit leaders say they are focused on scaling their organization as a whole. Yet, almost two-thirds of respondents are scaling other aspects, including a specific program, systems change, movement, product or service, practice, platform, or public policy initiative. While this finding may indicate that many nonprofits view their organization as having one core program, it may also indicate that nonprofits find it easier to focus funding and resources on scaling a specific program or other aspect of their organization.
Despite discussions among funders about the many strategies to scale impact, most nonprofits are devoted to the more traditional routes — expanding target audiences or replicating their models.

“With 66% Scaling to Expand People Served & Replicate Models, Nonprofits Believe There’s Strong Demand for Existing Programs”

Nearly evenly divided, nonprofit leaders describe their primary growth strategy as expanding their audiences to provide their initiatives more frequently or in greater quantity to current or new people (34%) or as replicating successful models in other geographic locations (32%). When describing a strategy that incorporates both geographic and audience expansion, responses are similar to this one:

“Our strategy is to grow and strengthen the core — we will scale our direct services to serve 2,500 students annually by 2016. We will open up in three new cities and expand within them … as well as develop the ‘million person model’ — design and pilot alternative program models that can grow rapidly to serve many more young adults across the U.S.”

The survey indicates that far fewer nonprofits are promoting their model for adoption by other organizations (9%). With 66% of scaling devoted to expanding audiences and replicating models, it is reasonable to assume that these respondents feel confident that they have a solution that works, there is strong demand for it, and they are the ones to do it best — a growth scenario where they can build on core competencies and have a higher probability of successfully reaching more people in need. Given limited resources, nonprofits may also want to consider building alliances with like-minded organizations as a cost effective way to scale impact.

It is worth noting that some nonprofits are employing other strategies. Twelve percent (12%) of those scaling are establishing or expanding a social movement that influences public opinion and policy. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has grown a successful, highly recognized organization built on this strategy. By focusing on implementing stringent drunk driving laws across the U.S., MADD helped bring fatalities down to 10,000 in 2010 from 35,000 since its founding in 1980 (71% decrease). Using policy to influence behavior and affect life-saving change has proven successful for MADD and could be a strong tool for other social causes as well.¹

What is your strategy to scale your impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Currently Scaling Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand audience served</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replicate successful model in other locations</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish/expand social movement to</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote model for adoption by other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby/conduct advocacy campaigns to</td>
<td>5%</td>
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¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; MADD

THE STATE OF SCALING SOCIAL IMPACT: RESULTS OF A NATIONAL STUDY OF NONPROFITS
Organizations that are scaling by replication to new sites are using branching or a franchise-type model of opening chapters in new locations.

Among those that are replicating to new sites, 24% are using branching by opening chapters in new locations that are managed locally but under the parent organization’s oversight and control; 14% are using an affiliate model by forming new, independent 501(c)(3) organizations or integrating the initiative within existing organizations that share the same goals and principles (may be done via a licensing arrangement); and 10% are using a hybrid model that leverages both chapters and affiliates to expand operations. A majority of responses in the ‘other’ category (18%) are using a combination of branching, affiliates, and similar models. Another 33% answered ‘not applicable’ because they are not replicating to new sites.
Nonprofits that are currently scaling their impact have a strategy to create impact beyond the specific people they serve.

More than 78% of those currently scaling their initiatives are planning to create impact beyond the specific people they serve. Among them, 45% are using policy approaches (creating broad systemic change, influencing public policy or developing an advocacy campaign) and 44% are focusing on partnering with others (collaborating with other nonprofits or building a coalition). Respondents indicating ‘other’ (11%) cite that they are using all of the strategies above: collaborating with nonprofits, government and business; partnering with academics to share findings and knowledge with the next generation; influencing key decision-makers and policymakers; utilizing mobile apps to monitor impact and metrics; and leveraging social media (including Facebook and YouTube) and newsletters.

Also, a greater percentage of smaller nonprofits with budgets less than $1 million are focused on collaborating with other organizations (47%) than those with budgets more than $5 million (25%). Larger nonprofits are more focused on sophisticated strategies to create systemic impact and influence policy — reflecting a broader change agenda given their expanded human and financial capacity. Similarly, more local nonprofits are leveraging collaboration as a strategy while a greater number of national organizations are focused on policy-related strategies.
An overwhelming percentage of nonprofits (90%) are past the assessment stage in scaling their initiatives.

While only 10% of respondents are in the assessment stage, the remainder of respondents are evenly dispersed: 32% are in the second stage defining their strategy for scaling and developing a growth business plan, 32% are in the third stage securing capital to finance their growth plan, and 26% are in the fourth stage rolling out their scaling plan.

Nonprofit leaders aptly note that the scaling process is an iterative one — that they find themselves either in the midst of one or more stages simultaneously or going back to various stages throughout the life of their programs or initiatives. As one sector leader puts it:

“Our business plan calls for beginning to scale while simultaneously securing the financing for this work. Costs will increase as we grow, and as such we anticipate continuing to grow our funding model while simultaneously scaling our programs.”

The knowledge that nonprofits are simultaneously scaling and raising capital for it implies that the sector is under-resourced and doesn’t have an effective system for financing growth. This is quite different from the way in which the private sector operates, where venture capitalists and private equity firms put rounds of capital into companies that can be counted on to grow.

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**At what stage are you in scaling your initiative?**

- **Stage I: Assessment** — securing evidence that model works & ready to scale
- **Stage II: Defining strategy** for scaling & developing growth business plan
- **Stage III: Securing capital** for growth plan
- **Stage IV: Implementing growth plan**

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*Currently Scaling Impact*
Nonprofit leaders believe in the importance of developing a growth business plan.

“92% Recognize the Importance of Developing a Business Plan”

Forty-two percent (42%) of nonprofit leaders indicate they have completed a growth business plan and 33% are in the processing of developing one. Another 17% intend to write one within the next six months. These results appear to validate the opinion of many experts that developing a growth business plan — taking a deep dive into industry trends, demand from the target population, competitor profiles, core capabilities, and feasibility assessments, among others — is an important prerequisite for scaling impact. As one respondent puts it:

“Going forward without a business plan is like building an airplane while flying, which can prove to be more costly and a risky approach riddled with stops and starts.”

Most organizations expect to implement their scaling plans in less than 6 years and nearly half within 1-3 years.

Eighty-eight (88%) percent of nonprofits that are currently scaling expect to complete implementation within 6 years: 42% expect it will take 1-3 years and 46% predict 4-6 years. Nearly 10% project a longer time horizon of 7-10 years, and 3% expect it will take more than 10 years. These organizations appear to have reasonable expectations about the time it will take to reach their goals but may be viewed as moving slower than corporate counterparts who have greater access to funds and resources to support faster growth.
With only 39% of nonprofits currently scaling having evaluated the impact of their work and 59% using self-reported studies, there is a strong need for funding dedicated to impact measurement.

Experience has taught us that there are a number of requirements to scale successfully. At the Social Impact Exchange this is referred to as ‘scale-worthy’ and ‘scale-ready.’ ‘Scale-worthy’ is proof that the initiative works as intended — that there is evidence of a positive impact on the people it is intended to serve. There is much discussion these days about the role of evaluation to assess the value of an initiative. ‘Scale-ready’ refers to an organization or initiative’s operational, human resource, and financial capacity to scale.

To learn more about the status of nonprofits in this regard, we asked how nonprofits measure their results, whether they have conducted studies to evaluate the effectiveness of their work and, if so, the types of studies they conducted.

Nonprofits use various methods to measure their work.

A tally of all nonprofit leaders who responded to the survey reveals that nearly 43% are identifying outcomes, i.e., positive change or improvement that can be attributed directly to or caused by the intervention, such as an increase in a target population’s credit ratings as a result of helping them with budgeting and restructuring their loans. Another 32% of all respondents report that they are measuring outputs, i.e., results that can be measured by the initiative, such as counting the number of graduates of a program or the number of people served. By contrast, 5% are merely identifying and counting inputs or activities designed to produce impact, such as the number of training programs held. Another 19% measure their work through a combination of tracking activities, outputs and outcomes.

Yet not all initiatives that are in the process of scaling have evaluated the impact of their work.

Industry trends are heading towards encouraging more rigorous methods for evaluating impact, as donors and other stakeholders seek more meaningful ways to evaluate the results and impact of the organizations they support. When asked if the nonprofits currently scaling have conducted evaluations of the impact of their work to date, only 39% indicate that they have, though this number goes up to 53% among larger organizations, presumably those with greater capacity. This percentage decreases to 14% among those nonprofits who are intending to scale but have not begun yet.

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2 See Appendix B for a due diligence framework for evaluating replication-oriented scaling.
Further, among those that have done evaluations, a majority (59%) report they conducted a self-reported study (i.e., collected their own data), while only 12% have conducted a third-party outcome study, 13% a quasi-experimental study (i.e., comparison group but no control group), and only 2% a randomized control trial. Almost all of the ‘other’ responses (15%) indicate a combination of two, three or four of the studies with one nonprofit utilizing its own research and evaluation department.

Given the importance that funders place on quality evaluation, it is worth commenting on the large number of respondents that are using self-reported studies to report impact, the rigor of which remains unclear — perhaps not surprising given the very high cost of performing evaluations and grantmakers’ typical negative response to funding them. Other factors likely responsible are the bureaucracy involved in getting approvals to collect data or the belief that an organization may not yet be at a stage in its scaling trajectory to conduct a more rigorous evaluation. Nevertheless, we would be remiss if we neglected to suggest the potential consequence of few rigorous evaluations. Organizations, programs or initiatives being scaled may not necessarily reflect interventions with positive proof of results. And some may even have adverse effects on the population served, or at best, no effect at all.

**Not surprising, nonprofits that are currently scaling identify securing sufficient capital as most helpful to their growth efforts, followed by developing a feasible model for scaling.**

Nonprofit leaders have a wish list of items that they believe would help them to scale successfully. Of greatest importance is help in securing sufficient capital. In addition, nonprofits rank as priorities developing a feasible model for scaling, substantiating stakeholder interest, and developing a sustainable long-term plan, followed by securing sufficient infrastructure-related resources, identifying and cultivating the right partners and networks, and identifying and securing qualified management and staff. Nonprofits intending to scale are most interested in developing a feasible model for scaling and receiving knowledge about how to scale, followed by securing sufficient capital.
Nonprofit leaders identify their board of directors as the #1 resource in informing their strategy and decision-making on scaling impact.

The survey also asked what resources and types of information about scaling nonprofit leaders have accessed as well as what other resources would help them succeed. Though nonprofits turn to a variety of resources for information and advice, 78% of those scaling rely on members of their board to inform their strategy and decision-making on scaling. This finding may reflect, in part, the need to secure approval and commitment from the nonprofit’s board prior to moving forward with a scaling strategy. Nevertheless, nonprofits’ strong reliance on their boards for strategic direction underscores the importance of investing in board development and diversification. Critical to making the best and most informed decisions is ensuring that the board represents a broad cross-section of relevant industries, is adequately informed about the status of the organization and the environment in which it operates, and is fully engaged in developing its growth business plan.

Others resources these organizations turn to in the business planning process are websites, publications, articles and other sources for information (63%) and conferring with consultants or using the results of an evaluation study (58%). Consultants play a more significant role for nonprofits with budgets over $5 million that are engaged in scaling activities — 72% report using consultants to inform their decision making and strategy compared to 50%-60% for smaller nonprofits. For the largest organizations with budgets over $25 million that are intending to scale, it is interesting to note that evaluation studies play a more significant role than the board, though one might expect the importance of the board to increase after the decision to scale has been made.

Respondents also cite these other resources as important: legal counsel (26%), accountants and financial advisors (23%), and ‘other’ (25%) including feedback from staff, participants, supporters, partners and volunteers; benchmarking with peers, funders and strategic advisors; and relationships with sector thought leaders.
Current scalers and those intending to scale would find it most helpful to have sources of capital and financing for scaling (79% and 74%, respectively) and sources of funding for evaluating impact (76% and 76%, respectively) — reinforcing a perceived and likely scarcity of funding options. As one nonprofit leader puts it:

“In launching … two field offices … we found that we needed to demonstrate our model/presence before we received sufficient local funding; however, we needed seed money to establish that presence.”

This sentiment is noted by numerous respondents who struggle with the conflict of needing to prove program effectiveness, but requiring additional funding to grow to the level where an impact evaluation would be significant. Many others also express difficulty in simply identifying funders who would support an impact evaluation.

Other areas of interest among those scaling and intending to scale include information on strategy development, financial planning and legal requirements (54% and 60%, respectively), creating a business plan or prospectus for potential funders and investors (50% and 63%, respectively), in-person training sessions or webinars (40% and 38%, respectively) and newsletters, articles or other publications (32% and 37%, respectively) — reinforcing that the “how-to’s” are as important as the financing, especially for those intending to scale. A handful of ‘other’ responses (4% currently scaling impact, 10% intending to scale) include best practice case studies, information on evaluating funding options, access to industry mentors, human capital consulting, and technical assistance.
On average, nonprofits require a significant amount of funding to finance their growth.

When it comes to raising capital for scaling activities, many nonprofit leaders say that the process is ongoing. As the U.S. economy struggles to rebound, nonprofit organizations are feeling the pressure of competition for limited funds as governments, foundations, corporations, and individuals cut back on funding. One nonprofit expresses the challenges reiterated by multiple survey participants:

“It is a difficult funding environment generally, and we struggle between securing sufficient funding for core services of the organization to make up for funding cuts and diverting resources to scaling our training initiatives for larger impact.”

People involved in scaling impact generally agree that financing is one of the most important prerequisites for scaling impact. To learn more, the survey asked nonprofit leaders about the amount of money they require to finance the growth of their initiatives and the status of their capital campaigns, both in terms of the dollars they have raised to date, the number and types of donors, and whether they are working with intermediaries.

Nearly 25% of nonprofit leaders need $5 million or more in growth capital to implement their scaling plan, and 9% require $20 million or more.
Interestingly, not all nonprofits that are scaling have initiated growth capital campaigns.

Only 24% of nonprofits that are currently scaling (and 36% of those with budgets over $5 million) have initiated a growth capital campaign; 55% have a fundraising goal but have not yet begun a campaign; and 21% have neither a fundraising goal nor initiated a campaign. So taken together, 76% of respondents are not actively fundraising, with an even higher rate among smaller nonprofits (89%).

Given that 325 leaders who responded to the survey say they are scaling, why have only 24% of them initiated a growth capital campaign? Perhaps, it is because they consider scaling as part of their regular operations and thus do not need a separate fundraising goal or campaign. Or perhaps, it is because 58% of respondents have not yet developed a written business plan, a document that is considered critical to initiating a campaign. Yet, given nonprofit leaders’ concerns about financing, as indicated in their responses to the other questions in the survey, it is more likely because the sector lacks an effective system for financing growth — there is a need for a consistent and reliable marketplace that makes it easier for nonprofits to access the capital they need to grow.
Those organizations that are scaling their initiatives and currently conducting a growth capital campaign report they have not raised the funds they need to scale.

Unfortunately, there is only a small number of respondents who have made significant progress towards their total fundraising goal, with only 8% having raised over 50% of the capital required, 52% having raised 1%-50%, and 39% having raised no funds to date.

“Nonprofits Conducting Capital Campaigns Have Raised Only an Average of 17% of Funds Needed to Scale”
Individual donors represent the most common source of funding for scaling initiatives, with funds often coming from 10 or more donors.

With the economy in its current state, nonprofits are relying less on government funding — previously the traditional source of capital — to finance scaling activities. Nonprofit leaders report that their most common source of funding for scaling is from individual donors (72%), followed closely by grantmaking foundations (69%), with 50% of the funds coming from five or fewer grantmakers. Respondents also report that 54% of their growth funding is derived from corporate giving or sponsorships, 39% from internal resources, and only 37% from government. And nonprofits with budgets less than $1 million are likely feeling the strain from government budget cuts the most — only 28% receiving funding for current scaling initiatives, while 80% report receiving financing from individuals. Approximately 9% of respondents report receiving growth capital from lines of credit, 7.5% in loans from social investors, 5% from bank loans, and less than 2% from community bonds or mortgages on fixed assets — indicating that these ‘non-traditional’ sources are not in the mainstream and may still be considered as risky.

Clearly, nonprofits are looking to individual philanthropists and grantmaking foundations to make up the difference. Perhaps they have found that individual donors readily see the value of scaling what works — much as they would with successful private sector businesses — and that grantmaking foundations share this view and have taken a lead over government sources that, traditionally, would have supported such endeavors. It is also interesting the percentage of nonprofits that are funding their scaling through internal resources. It is possible that these nonprofits are using non-restricted funds because it is the simplest route or due to the perceived or real difficulty in raising capital designated specifically for scaling.
Despite some success in raising growth capital, nonprofit leaders report significant challenges in raising funds for scaling.

The importance of the financing stage of the business planning process cannot be downplayed. Nonprofit leaders report that their funding-related challenges include:

- Identifying and engaging visionary funders — foundations and individuals — who are willing to invest in spreading an innovation
- Fighting a general lack or urgency
- Fundraising in an area with little philanthropic tradition — most funders do not have a grantmaking division focused on ‘scaling’ or flexible funding
- Inadequate human resources — a person with expertise who is dedicated solely to raising the money required to expand
- Raising capital for scale given the challenging economic climate and adversity to risk among funders
- Increased competition for grants
- Government cutbacks
- Educating local or regional grantmakers that scale can also mean increasing impact more broadly within a given geographic area
- Developing a funding base in a new community
- Limited multi-year funding — the difficulty in securing growth funding from each source over a longer term than one year
- Avoiding cannibalization — raising capital simultaneously for expansion and existing work
- The sheer amount of capital required that, realistically, would have to come from multiple sources
- Educating funders and managing their expectations about the complexities involved in scaling
- Greater difficulty in raising capital for a systems change initiative than for a direct service program
- Limited opportunities within banking for opening lines of credit, especially for smaller nonprofits

Though there is not statistical significance in this study among survey respondents that are not pursuing a growth strategy, the vast majority in this category cite funding challenges as one of the largest obstacles they face in scaling. Several organizations report that failing to project available growth capital or being too dependent on one or two large funders proved terminal for their scaling efforts. Ensuring a sound financial model in the business planning process may help overcome these shortfalls. Evaluating projected expenses, sources and diversification of revenue, and long-term sustainability can also aid nonprofits in creating a less vulnerable financial plan for their scaling efforts.
Most nonprofits that are scaling are not working with an intermediary.

One approach that has strong potential to help nonprofits scale the impact of their initiatives is the use of intermediaries. Intermediary organizations — such as REDF and Venture Philanthropy Partners — usually have a portfolio of organizations that are scaling and play a large role in raising the capital required for growth.

“Intermediaries play an important role in ensuring that funding from all sources is effectively invested and that practices are in place to maximize the potential of the organizations in their portfolio. At VPP, we utilize existing relationships to access and mobilize funds from a broad network of investors, conduct comprehensive due diligence, provide ongoing guidance to nonprofits, report on performance milestones, and facilitate alignment and overall communications between funders and the nonprofits.”

—CAROL THOMPSON COLE
PRESIDENT & CEO
VENTURE PHILANTHROPY PARTNERS

Of the nonprofits engaged in scaling, only 11% are utilizing intermediaries, though this number is higher for organizations with budgets over $5 million. The small percentage of organizations working with intermediaries as well as the disparity between the proportion of small and large nonprofits using them may reflect the scarcity of intermediaries who exist to do this work and that they are very discriminating about nonprofits selected for their portfolios. It may also suggest that intermediaries are primarily focused on funding more established organizations, and that there is limited awareness of the role intermediaries play in raising capital and likely much more limited among smaller nonprofits.
To be clear, scaling impact is not easy. But scaling impact — defined as providing more services to people in need — is what nonprofits say they are about. Nonprofit leaders have learned much about the opportunities and challenges in scaling the impact of their organizations and initiatives. At a minimum, they know it takes a significant amount of visioning, evaluation, planning, and financing. It also typically involves bringing in new management with the talent for handling an expansion plan, coupled with the understanding that implementing such a plan takes time.

Perhaps not surprising, nonprofit leaders have learned that lack of capital remains the greatest barrier to scaling, or at least scaling most efficiently and effectively. Yet in order to receive financial support, more and more funders require evaluation studies verifying that a nonprofit’s program model really works. Both costly and time consuming, nonprofits report that few funders are willing to finance them — thus putting their organizations in a double bind.

As one leader puts it:

“It is critical to keep a balance between looking forward, reflecting in the rearview mirror and checking the gas tank for enough resources to make progress and ultimately reach one’s goals.”

Nevertheless, nonprofits are moving forward and are using a variety of strategies to scale — from replicating their programs and collaborating with other organizations to influencing public policy and creating broad systemic change. They are continuing to seek out information to learn from others, and identifying allies and investors with whom to partner in the journey. Since nonprofits say that scaling impact is one of the most important activities they can do to address the social problems they are working to solve, it may be that the greatest service we can provide is to join in the development and sharing of knowledge that will help them, and to design an effective system of financing nonprofits that are both worthy and ready for scale.
Veris Consulting, Inc. conducted survey administration on behalf of the Social Impact Exchange. An online survey was distributed by email in February 2012 and made available to all Social Impact Exchange members as well as promoted through various newsletters, listservs and social media. All 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations based in the U.S. were eligible to participate and surveys were completed by senior leaders with knowledge of their organization’s plans for scaling impact. The survey closed in May 2012 with 436 completed surveys. This comprehensive report of key findings and implications to nonprofits scaling impact was published in January 2013.
Due Diligence Framework for Scaling Through Program Replication

Developed in Collaboration with the Alliance for Effective Social Investing

The intent of this framework is to provide funders with guidelines on basic topics to consider when conducting due diligence on a scaling initiative. By collecting the information identified in this framework, a funder should be able to make a more fruitful investment. These guidelines are not intended to replace funders’ existing due diligence or grant review processes, but rather to suggest additional analysis associated with scaling initiatives — to distinguish nonprofits that are high-performers and have a strong opportunity to generate scaled impact. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of topics — it is focused on the main categories related to scaling impact. Analysis of the framework’s effectiveness will be ongoing and results will be used to continuously improve the guidance it offers.

A. Scaling Goals & Market Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Impact Goals</th>
<th>1. Are the nonprofit’s scaling aspirations (including growth and impact goals) clearly stated?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry/ Field/ Ecosystem</td>
<td>1. What are the main strategies being employed in the field to address the problem? Which are the most effective? Which have scaled successfully? How large is the target population?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What does the comparative landscape look like (e.g., market share, players by geography)? How does the funding flow in this field? Are there significant potential funds, available for scaling?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

B. Social Impact and Levels of Evidence

| Self-Reported Data | 1. Is the program’s Theory of Change (TOC) based on evidence and/or knowledge that have been gathered by the field? |
|                    | 2. Is a strong system in place to track individual participants’ outputs and outcomes before, during, and after program participation? Is the same data collected consistently from all program sites? |
|                    | 3. How does this data trend over the last three years? |
|                    | 4. Is the data compared to baseline data (target population’s “outcomes” prior to the intervention)? |

| Third-Party Evaluations | 1. Were the evaluations well designed and conducted? |
|                        | 2. What were the results regarding program outcomes (immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes) and impacts? If outcomes differ substantially between different participant segments, then why and what did you do to address this? How do your outcomes correspond to state of the art knowledge regarding what is most helpful for the group(s) you serve? How closely do these outcomes align with the organization’s social impact goals, TOC and core program? |
|                        | 3. Were unintended outcomes considered? |
|                        | 4. Were program recruitment and selection processes reviewed for skimming and motivational bias? Did the evaluation consider the rate of pre-mature program dropouts? |
|                        | 5. Have program completion rates for various subgroups been analyzed? Are there any relevant groups that are unlikely to complete the program? And have appropriate adjustments to the program been implemented? |
|                        | 6. What difference does the program make beyond what would have happened without it? |

| Quasi-Experimental Studies | 1. What were the results of any quasi-experimental studies? |
|                          | 2. Are outcomes stronger than what happens without an intervention? |
|                          | 3. How similar a population was the comparison groups? |
Randomized Control Trials (RCT)  
1. Is an RCT appropriate for this program?  
2. If one was performed, what increased impact did the program have compared to the control group(s)?  
3. What are the limits of what the RCT(s) proved?

Other Impact Indicators  
1. Are there multiple early indicators and/or proxies that give a strong degree of confidence that the intervention results in the desired outcomes?  
2. How consistent are the outcomes or impact across program sites?  
3. What are the economic savings to society based on the program outcomes?  
4. Do the reported outcomes reinforce the validity of the organization’s theory of change?  
5. Is the level of evidence commensurate with the nonprofit’s stage of growth and capital request?  
6. How does the organization understand how its primary constituents see it?

Broader Impact  
1. What strategies are in place to scale impact beyond the people served by the nonprofit itself? (e.g., policy initiatives, catalyzing a broader movement or coalition, training executives from other nonprofits, creating a market-based solution, forging a public/private partnering model, leveraging systemic change and implementing a broad-based communication strategy)  
   a. Does the organization have clear goals for these strategies?  
   b. How effective have these strategies been? How does the organization measure effectiveness?  
2. Does the organization seek to partner/collaborate with others where appropriate? How does it assess and improve its relationships with third parties?

C. Program

Program Elements  
1. How much training and expertise is required to deliver the program? How customized is the program to a specific location and population? Will the program be difficult to standardize, and therefore, does it present a greater challenge to replicate?  
2. Has the program identified Key Elements that need to be held constant to achieve outcomes?  
3. Have aspects of the program that lead to outcomes been examined (e.g., intensity, dosage, recruitment process, level of participation and completion, quality of materials, experience of staff)?  
4. Does the nonprofit know which factors lead to poor outcomes and how to improve weak sites?  
5. Can the program adapt to local conditions? Is it clear which program elements can be customized as the program enters new communities or targets new populations?

Program Standardization  
1. Are program processes and elements standardized and documented?  
2. Is there a complete and thorough operating manual? Is it suitable for use in scaling efforts?  
3. As the organization has scaled-up, has it maintained fidelity to the key elements of its program model? Does it have performance data to demonstrate this?

Training  
1. What is the quality of initial and on-going training for staff, management and site leaders?  
2. Are their training tools and curricula that can be rolled out during scaling?

Quality and Performance Systems  
1. Is the organization quality and performance driven? Does it have systems and standardized processes in place to ensure consistent outcomes? Is it focused on continuous improvement?  
2. Is there a “performance scorecard” in place? Are short- and long-term goals and metrics clear?  
3. Are systems and people in place to gather, analyze, and act on the right data in a timely and strategic manner?  
4. Has the organization considered how its processes and systems need to evolve as it grows?  
5. Does the nonprofit have an on-going performance management and evaluation strategy with staff and resources dedicated to it?
### D. Organizational Strength & Capacity

| Management | 1. Has an assessment of the nonprofit leader been conducted? Have references been checked? How experienced is the leader in raising money, thinking strategically, motivating and directing staff, and cultivating a learning environment? |
| Board of Directors | 1. What is the board’s level of engagement and strategic competence? Is the board committed to assuring sufficient operating revenues? What is the board’s level of involvement in developing growth capital and revenues? |
| Governance | 1. What is the relationship between the national office and local sites (e.g., legal structures, decision rights, agreements in place to govern quality standards, services, fundraising, etc.)? |
| Operations | 1. How strong and scalable are the nonprofit’s non-program operations (e.g., finance, accounting, IT, HR, knowledge management, public relations, volunteers, government relations and marketing)? |

### E. Readiness to Scale

| Organizational Structure for Growth | 1. What is the nonprofit’s growth structure (e.g., an affiliate model)? How effective has it been to date? |
| Scalable Process | 1. Are there standard RFPs and criteria for selecting new sites or expansion partners? |
| Demand | 1. What is the market demand for the program? Is there a backlog of requests for the program? |
| Market Entry and Ramp Up | 1. How long does it take to get new sites established? What are the major impediments to site start-up? |
| Commitment to Growth | 1. Are the board, management, employees and other constituents committed to scaling? |
| Brand Equity                                      | 1. How strong is the nonprofit’s brand equity among constituents who are important to successful growth (e.g., foundations, donors, public officials and partners)?  
|                                                | 2. Are there plans to protect the brand equity during (potential) scaling challenges? |
| Growth Planning                                 | 1. Has a high-quality, multi-year growth plan been developed that includes growth and outcomes targets, strategies, interim goals, operational plans, and capital requirements?  
|                                                | 2. Is there a prioritization of goals in case resource constraints require scaling back the plans?  
|                                                | 3. Has the nonprofit engaged the appropriate partners for scaling?  
|                                                | 4. Are projected growth, revenue, and cost targets realistic? Have the main assumptions been tested?  
|                                                | 5. Were alternate scenarios evaluated?  
|                                                | 6. Have risk factors been identified? Is there a contingency plan? Are enough funds being raised? |

### F. Economic Model & Sustainability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial/Expense Review</th>
<th>1. What are the major categories of expenses? How are these expected to change with scale?</th>
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</table>
| Financial/Revenue Stability | 1. What percentage of national and local revenue comes from private contributions, fee for service income and government funding? What portion of private contributions comes from each of the following: foundations, individuals and corporations?  
|                          | 2. Are the revenues consistent, reliable and adequately diversified?  
|                          | 3. Does the organization dedicate sufficient resources to revenue generation?  
|                          | 4. Will the revenue model be able to scale in line with the projected growth of the organization?  
|                          | 5. Will scaling require the nonprofit to have additional reserves?  
|                          | 6. What percentage of contributions is unrestricted? |
| Capital Structure        | 1. Does the organization distinguish between growth capital and operating revenue?  
|                          | 2. Is capital being raised via the growth plan for support of ongoing operations, or to support the costs of expanding the operation and establishing the infrastructure to manage at scale?  
|                          | 3. Is the nonprofit investing in its ability to generate increased revenue to support a scaled up organization? |
| National Office Growth & Sustainability | 1. Is there an achievable plan for sustaining the national office at scale with reliable revenues?  
|                          | 2. Does the nonprofit’s plan include earned income to support scaling? If so, do they have a track record of doing so, and the capacity to increase their earned income?  
|                          | 3. Has the national office attracted growth capital in the past? Have national funders expressed strong interest in funding increased national office capacity to manage growth? |
| Local Program Start-up and Sustainability | 1. Is there a demonstrated model and ability to raise start-up capital for local sites?  
|                          | 2. Is there a track record of local sites becoming sustainable? Can local sites become sustainable in the future without ongoing fundraising assistance from the national office?  
|                          | 3. Where does sustainable funding for local office operations and growth come from (e.g., philanthropy, earned income, reliable third-party payer, state government contracts)? |
Below is a selection of resources on scaling impact. For a more comprehensive reading list, visit www.socialimpactexchange.org/exchange/knowledge-center.

**Asset Building for Social Change: Pathways to Large-Scale Impact, Ford Foundation, February 2004**

This report published by the Ford Foundation shares what the foundation has learned and what still needs to be understood about pathways to scale. The report discusses strategies the Ford Foundation and its grantees use to achieve scaled impact; particular pathways that may be taken; what each pathway’s factors for success may be; “how to” design solutions and build capacities for “scalability;” and addresses some of the many questions that remain about the process of scaling up.

**Beyond Sustainability: Identifying the Right Resource Mix for Growth, Woods Bowman, Nonprofit Quarterly, December 2011**

The long-term success of an organization depends on sustainability, but sustainability is not sufficient for maximizing the impact of an organization. The key to growth, explains the author, in large part lies in finding “the right revenue mix,” which, depending on the organization, may involve multiple funding sources of concentration on one source type.

**Billions of Drops in Millions of Buckets: Why Philanthropy Doesn’t Advance Social Progress, Steven H. Goldberg, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009**

In this book, author Steven Goldberg explores three critical questions: Why does the social sector need more effective capital markets? What would robust nonprofit capital markets look like? How can such markets be created? Goldberg addresses how the nonprofit market should be structured to best allocate funds in support of high-performing organizations that deserve additional resources to achieve optimal scale.


This article reports on the work done by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, which measures programs at three levels of effectiveness: “apparent,” “demonstrated,” and “proven.” By employing these performance assessments, donors can better fund programs that truly work.

**Citizen Schools: Creating a Strong Program Locally As a Basis for National Expansion, The Bridgespan Group, October 2004**

In 2001, when Citizens Schools was finally ready to expand, it grew along three dimensions: extending the program in Boston, developing a training program for other organizations, and expanding to other cities. This case study shows that by maintaining clear outcomes and investing in key talent along the way, Citizen Schools was able to improve its quality as it has grown.

**Laying a Solid Foundation: Strategies for Effective Program Replication, Geri Summerville with Becca Raley, Public/Private Ventures, July 2009**

This report was designed as a guide for policymakers, practitioners and philanthropists who are interested in a systematic approach to program replication. It clearly lays out the key structures that should be in place before wide-scale replication is considered, as well as the steps needed to ensure the replication’s success.
Pathways to Grow Impact: Philanthropy’s Role in the Journey, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, February 2013

Based on a collaborative research project with Ashoka, Social Impact Exchange, Taproot Foundation and TCC Group, Pathways to Grow Impact illustrates several strategies to grow nonprofit impact, identifies the kinds of support nonprofits need to achieve the greatest impact and explores practices that grantmakers are using to meet those needs.


Conversations on scale and innovation continue to dominate philanthropic discourse as the social sector forges new ways to achieve greater impact with limited resources. This collection pulls together the best thinking, research and actionable approaches to growing impact as well as provides additional resources for grantmakers on topics including talent development, financial sustainability, evaluation and more.


The effectiveness of nonprofits organizations matters greatly to those who believe in the power of the social sector. For foundations, nonprofit effectiveness is particularly relevant. The extent to which foundations make a difference in society depends on the effectiveness of the nonprofits they fund. This report by the Center for Effective Philanthropy surveyed 300 nonprofit organizations on their experience working with foundation funders and contains results about how nonprofits and foundations can better work together to support effective solutions.

Scaling Impact, Jeffrey Bradach, The Bridgespan Group, Summer 2010

This article poses the question, “How can we get 100x the impact with only a 2x change in the size of the organization?” It identifies some tools and strategies that expand the impact of organizations well beyond what their size would seem capable of (e.g., using web and social media to expand networks, using intermediaries, developing talent, etc.).


This report documents and analyzes the literature on scaling, in order to both highlight the best set of resources available that are useful to funders actively pursuing grantmaking strategies around scaling impact, and to shine a light on what still needs to be studied and explored.


This article provides an overview of challenges of scaling, strategies to overcome these obstacles, and lessons learned. The authors describe emerging mechanisms for scaling impact beyond organizational growth; they identify “open source changemaking” (or open innovation) and “smart networks” as key pathways for spreading social innovations.
Scaling Your Social Venture: Becoming an Impact Entrepreneur, Paul N. Bloom, Palgrave MacMillan, June 2012

When should social entrepreneurial ventures scale? What should they try to understand about the ecosystem in which they operate? What steps can be taken to assess the organization’s unique situation and determine the most effective scaling strategies? In this book, Bloom outlines the SCALERS model for building an organization’s capacity to scale.

Scaling What Works: Implications for Philanthropists, Policymakers, and Nonprofit Leaders, Nancy Roob and Jeffrey L. Bradach, The Bridgespan Group, 2009

This article offers four critical lessons about scaling nonprofit programs, including the need for rigorous impact analysis to distinguish promising programs from proven ones, new funding patterns, capacity building support, and ongoing research and evaluation, as guidance for government investment and for partnerships with philanthropy.


In the private sector, financial markets provide the infrastructure, information, and incentives to help move capital based on performance. This article discusses the importance of social impact markets to the nonprofit sector and their emergence as essential mechanisms to enable individuals or institutions to provide financial, volunteer, or in-kind resources with the expectation of those resources resulting in social impact.

The Equity Capital Gap, Clara Miller, Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2008

For-profit businesses can efficiently and quickly raise large amounts of money to fund growth and innovation by tapping equity capital — money that people invest in a company in return for ownership and a share of profits. The nonprofit world has no corollary, making it difficult, costly, and time-consuming to raise money. In this article, the author explores ways that nonprofits and funders can create their own version of equity capital, and, just as importantly, develop an equity approach to doing business.

The Growth of YouthBuild, Ayse Gucle, supervised by J. Gregory Dees and Beth Anderson Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University, February 2004

This case study highlights the strategic decisions made in the scaling process of YouthBuild. YouthBuild combined both replication and advocacy efforts to effectively scale its impact. Learn about the challenges it faced, how it got legislation passed and partnered closely with the federal government to support its expansion.


By drawing in interviews with national experts, past research on organizational effectiveness and evaluation of advocacy projects, this report outlines a model for evaluating organizational capacity for advocacy organizations and describes the characteristics that are critical to high-performing advocacy organizations and how their interrelate.

The S&I 100 Index, An Initiative of the Social Impact Exchange, Launched November 2012

The S&I 100 is the first-ever, broad index of U.S. nonprofits with proof of results and readiness to grow. This web-based platform shows donors which nonprofits consistently deliver impact — featuring 100 top-performing nonprofits and nearly 16,000 local affiliates that are implementing their solutions. The resource allows donors to learn from and leverage the knowledge and practices of leading philanthropic experts.