

**Bigger payouts won't ensure risk-taking**  
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To the Editor:

Pablo Eisenberg's opinion piece ("As It Seeks a New Leader, Council on Foundations Must Take Risks," July 28) urges foundations to increase their payouts and the diversity of board members.

While those steps are important, they may not necessarily support the ability of philanthropy to take risks or be more accountable and better address the pressing issues facing the communities we serve.

I would suggest two different lenses through which to view this complex issue of risk-taking in philanthropy. A recent study by the Pew Charitable Trusts shows that the wealth gap between whites and African-American and Latino minorities has widened considerably in the past quarter of a century.

Foundations can invest in narrowing this gap through greater investment in education and health-care access for communities of color, as well as in policy advocacy.

Second, the challenges facing communities and nonprofit organizations across the developing world are staggering in scale and the level of need: 2.5 billion people don't have access to sanitation and one billion individuals don't have access to water. Around the world one person dies from hunger every 3.5 seconds. Foundations can increase their support globally to ensure good governance, human rights, and strong civil societies.

Foundations are often guided by donor intent, mission statements, historical precedents, and economic fluctuations.

Now is the time for a collective conversation about how best to tackle the world's problems in a way that brings together governments, businesses, philanthropy, and civil society. Philanthropy could play a pivotal role in convening such a critical conversation.

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