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Want to Make an Impactful Grant? Consider Independent Media Outlets.

New Harvard study reveals impact of independent media is strong.

November 10, 2017—With coverage in such publications as the [New York Times](#), [Boston Globe](#) and [L.A. Times](#) a study published yesterday in [Science](#) magazine and funded primarily by Voqal is getting attention – but are philanthropic organizations taking note?

The study by Harvard University’s Institute for Quantitative Social Science was led by Professor Gary King and demonstrated that even small news organizations can have a significant impact on the issues Americans discuss.

Philanthropic organizations working diligently to expand democracy and influence the national conversation on key issues should take note – independent news sources with a median outlet size of 50,000 subscribers have a significant impact on the national conversation.

Specifically, the study found that if just three outlets write about a particular topic, it can increase public discussion of that topic across social media, boosting traffic on the subject by 63 percent over the course of a week, as compared to a typical day’s traffic.

A long-time proponent of the power of independent media, Voqal was pleased to support this cutting-edge work. Philanthropic organizations know inherently that democracy thrives on an informed and engaged public. What Professor King’s study indicates is that quality independent journalism has an impact. “Dr. King’s team scientifically established that real journalism is influential,” said Voqal president John Schwartz. “Grant-makers and others should take note that when we support the coverage of important issues, it produces real results.”

According to Jo Ellen Kaiser, executive director of The Media Consortium, over 60 percent of the participating outlets were small, independent news outlets including such publications as Truthout, In These Times, Ms. Magazine and The Progressive.

“In this era of fake news and decreasing trust in corporate media, trust in independent news is strong,” said Kaiser. “If we want to foster robust

conversations about national policy, we need to continue to support independent news outlets.”

Voqal is a national collaboration of EBS (Educational Broadband Service) licensees that work to advance social equity by building an educated, empowered and engaged public. Voqal provides grants and investments for organizations and individuals, affordable mobile internet and wireless spectrum advocacy. Our efforts center around using media and technology to increase access, community and knowledge.