

Guiding Principles and Practices for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Perhaps the single most important question for our Foundation is, “How are we doing?” Because, in the end, we are working to steward the legacy of resources left to us by David and Lucile Packard toward the greatest possible good on a broad range of issues. We care not only about what grant funds accomplish, but also about how we do that grantmaking. Our Program goals are varied, and as such, our approaches to monitoring, evaluating and learning (MEL) vary. The five Principles below are the guideposts directing how we partner with our grantees and those impacted by our work to monitor, evaluate and learn.



CONTINUOUSLY LEARN AND ADAPT. Making progress on tough issues requires continuous feedback, learning, and timely use of information to inform and adapt our strategies. Our emphasis on continuous improvement recognizes that once strategies hit the ground, they are likely to require adaptation as the Foundation and our grantee partners learn about what works and the context changes. To make this happen, we prioritize learning and experimentation within and across our programs, with Trustees, funder partners, and, particularly, our grantee partners.



LEARN IN PARTNERSHIP. We believe in building high quality feedback loops to systematically collect data, act upon it, and share it back with stakeholders. We work to build monitoring, evaluation and learning capacity and design inclusive practices where Foundation staff, funders, and, in particular, our grantee partners and those being impacted by the work are engaged in the design, implementation, and reflection of our combined efforts.



USE A VARIETY OF INFORMATION. We believe we make better strategic choices and better grants when we are informed by a range of information. Therefore, we believe in the importance of program staff and grantee partners tapping into a variety of information sources, including hearing from people doing the work as well as those we seek to help, when designing programs, implementing the work, and evaluating progress.



CULTIVATE INQUIRY. Building a culture of inquiry is essential to surfacing insight into our successes, our failures, and emerging possibilities. We seek to create a culture where Foundation staff and grantee partners question assumptions, share diverse perspectives, and challenge each other's thinking to advance our shared goals.



SHARE LEARNING TO INCREASE IMPACT. We believe that openly sharing what we're learning generates value for our grantee partners and those being impacted by the work, and that it also drives field-level impact. We seek out strategic opportunities to share what we are learning, to co-create insights with our partners, and to use these insights to inform and galvanize change in our fields. We seek to steer a sensible course between total transparency and a respect for our grantee partners' privacy and trust.