

# Are You Listening?

## How to Become a More Responsive, Effective, & Equitable Grantmaker

Philanthropy New York

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*Fund for*  
**Shared** *Insight*

# INTRODUCTIONS

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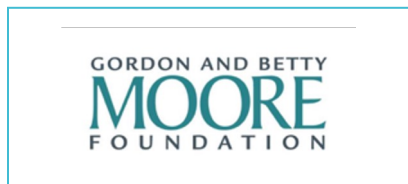
Managing Director  
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# FUND FOR SHARED INSIGHT Funders

## Core Funders



## Sidecar Funders



# GOAL STATEMENT

SHARED INSIGHT'S GOAL:

More leaders and staff in nonprofits and foundations listen, respond, and shift power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities.

# IMPACT STATEMENT

Communities and people most impacted but least consulted by philanthropy and nonprofits are better off in ways they define for themselves.



# What does it mean to listen well?

- Listening with a willingness to change in response to what you hear.
- Listening to a broad range of voices, with specific attention to people and communities not typically consulted by philanthropy and nonprofits.
- Committing to an ongoing process, not a one-time activity, that includes closing the loop by reporting back on what you hear and how you plan to respond.
- Engaging with people and communities as partners throughout the process, from framing the initial questions to making meaning from what you hear to determining how to respond.

## **POLL:**

How well is your foundation listening?

- 1) We are not listening
- 2) We are doing some listening
- 3) We are listening well!
- 4) I don't know ;)



# Tools and Resources to Help Funders Listen, Respond and Shift Power



Fund for Shared Insight

Funder Listening Funder Tools Insights for Change

## Funder Listening Action Menu

Copy Link Print

See what funders around the country are doing to listen well in order to shift and share power with the people and communities at the heart of their work.

Dozens of real-life examples highlight practices and policies that value lived expertise, improve grantmaking, and advance equity.

Get inspired by this collection of insights and ideas to spark the changes you want to see.

Fund for Shared Insight

## Participatory Philanthropy Toolkit

Solidarity, dignity, power, and abundance. These are just some of the benefits that can accrue to the people and communities most impacted by philanthropy's decisions when they have a role in the decision making. That's according to Cicley Moore, senior program officer at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, who represented Fund for Shared Insight in a participatory grantmaking program. Shared Insight ran this one-time program (which focused on involving people affected by climate change in funding decisions around the issue) so we could learn together with other funders committed to listening, participation, and more effective and equitable grantmaking.

Based on the experiences of the participants, consultants, and funders involved, we created this toolkit to inform and inspire philanthropy's journey toward more participatory practices.

Participatory Philanthropy is a term that can include a wide spectrum of participatory practices within philanthropy, and includes Participatory Grantmaking as one approach. This initiative went beyond sharing decision making about grants and centered participation in the design phase of the work. Participants worked on design and grantmaking teams, defining the program's purpose, parameters, and, through a participatory decision-making approach, where and how \$2 million in grant money was disbursed. Participants were also involved with communicating grant decisions, developing knowledge products, and gathering in learning communities to deepen their connections and understand and share the impact of the initiative.

**IN THIS TOOLKIT, YOU WILL FIND:**

- SECTION 1 page 7 Key Insights and Recommendations
- SECTION 2 page 25 Funder Readiness Assessment
- SECTION 3 page 28 Tools for Implementing a Participatory Philanthropy Initiative
- SECTION 4 page 39 How We Did It: Step-by-Step Look at Our Participatory Initiative
- SECTION 5 page 48 Reflections on Power  
The Nuts & Bolts of Participatory Philanthropy

We expect that the content of this toolkit may be changed, updated, or improved over time, as our participatory work is iterative.

# ProInspire's Here to Listen: Listening for Racial Equity Impact

## Self to System



## SELF

### DEMONSTRATING CURIOSITY

Seeking out and creating space  
for other perspectives from  
people with different identities  
and lived experiences

**Intentional Action**

## EXPLORING IDENTITY



### I-STATEMENT

I take time to examine and challenge  
my assumptions by seeking other  
perspectives.



### STOP, THINK, AND DISCUSS

What's something I'm curious about?  
How can I get new perspectives?



**Prolnspire**

# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu



## Funder Listening Action Menu

# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

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**1. Support grantees to listen well**

**2. Use listening and feedback to inform grantmaking**

**3. Use listening and feedback to inform strategy development**

**4. Use listening and feedback to inform measurement, learning, and evaluation**

**5. Use listening to learn directly from people and communities**

**6. Listen through participatory practices**


**7. Listen by changing the composition of staffs and boards**

# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

## 1. Support grantees to listen well

THE MORRIS & GWENDOLYN  
CAFRITZ FOUNDATION

 The **James Irvine**  
Foundation

- On the grant application, ask grantees how they collect and use client feedback
- Include questions in your site visits about how the nonprofit listens to people and communities
- Sponsor grantees to participate in Listen4Good 
- Collaborate with other funders to learn about listening and feedback

# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

## 2. Use listening and feedback to inform grantmaking



After one of its grantees collected feedback that included concerns about clients' interactions with staff supervisors, REDF created a new funding opportunity for the organization to improve its staff training. Then, seeing similar issues at other youth-serving nonprofits, the funder created a new grant program to pay for different approaches to behavioral-health interventions at six nonprofits.

# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

## 3. Use listening and feedback to inform strategy development

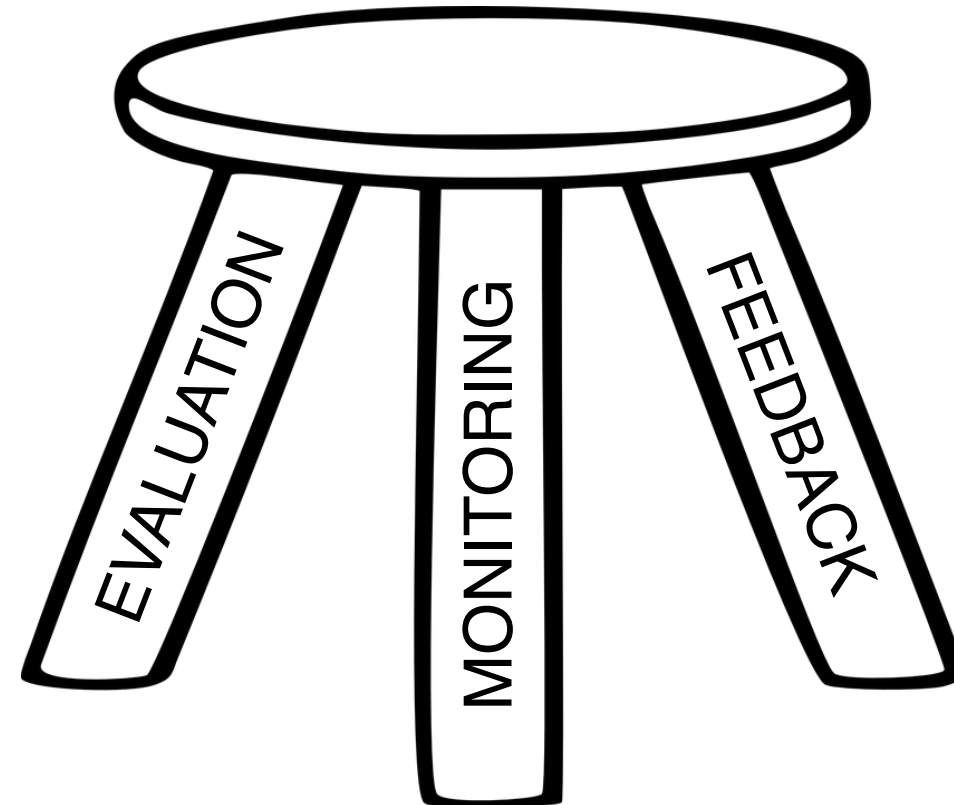
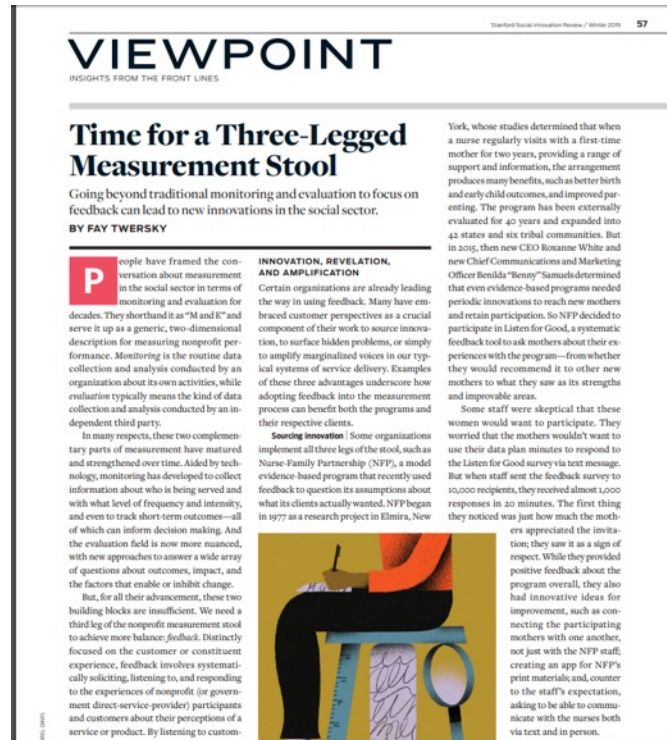


The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation considers itself an experienced donor in the field of family planning, yet when its Gender Equity and Governance Program was refreshing its strategic plan, the foundation turned to design thinking, a way of problem solving by deciphering what people really want through watching and listening. Hewlett brokered a partnership between IDEO.org and Marie Stopes International to engage adolescent girls in Zambia in project design. The result was a new approach that better connected with teenagers around issues of reproductive health.



# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

## 4. Use listening and feedback to inform measurement, learning, and evaluation



# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

## 5. Use listening to learn directly from people and communities

**Satterberg**  
*foundation*

 The **James Irvine**  
Foundation

**SV2** Silicon Valley  
Social Venture Fund

- Convene community members
- Conduct community listening sessions
- Commission community research
- Get proximate to people

# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

## 6. Listen through participatory practices



**BROOKLYN ORG**



**LIBRA  
FOUNDATION**



Fund for  
**Shared Insight**

- All strategic grantmaking conducted in partnership with community
- “Brain Trust” of seven BIPOC women decide on grantees
- Individuals impacted by climate change designed participatory climate initiative

# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

## 7. Listen by changing the composition of staffs and boards

The logo for ReWork the Bay features the words "ReWork" in a large, black, cursive font, with "the Bay" in a smaller, teal, cursive font below it.The logo for the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation consists of a blue square with a white diagonal line, the name "Conrad N. Hilton" in a cursive font, and the word "FOUNDATION" in a small, black, sans-serif font below it.The logo for the Samuel S. Fels Fund features a green spiral icon on the left and the text "SAMUEL S. FELLS FUND" in a green, sans-serif font on the right.

- **Leadership:** 17 “proximate leaders” compose leadership of funder collaborative
- **Staffing:** Hire interns, employees, and consultants who have relevant lived experience
- **Governance:** Bring people with relevant lived experience onto your board and/or advisory boards



# Listening & Feedback: A Funder Listening Action Menu

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**6. Listen through participatory practices**

**7. Listen by changing the composition of staffs and boards**

## **POLL:**

How much do you know about participatory philanthropy?

- 1) I don't know anything at all
- 2) I have heard of it and know some things
- 3) I know it very well!

# Participatory Philanthropy Toolkit

The screenshot shows the landing page for the Participatory Philanthropy Toolkit. At the top left is the logo for Fund for Shared Insight. The top right navigation bar includes links for Funder Listening, Funder Tools (which is highlighted), and Insights for Change, along with a search icon. The main heading is 'Participatory Philanthropy Toolkit' with a subtext: 'Learn how to integrate participatory practices that shift power, trust, and decision making.' A 'Download full toolkit' button is positioned to the right. Below this is a horizontal menu with buttons for 'Toolkit' (with a home icon), 'Intro', 'Readiness Assessment', 'Key Insights', 'How We Did It', 'Resources & Tools', and 'Hot Topics'. The main content area features a paragraph: 'Explore the toolkit to learn how to design and implement participatory grantmaking programs.' followed by a descriptive paragraph: 'When high-quality listening opens up opportunities for more participatory practices, you can be ready. Here you will find discussion guides about launching a participatory philanthropy process, concrete tools to help you design or improve your grantmaking, and reflections on how power shifts can happen in your philanthropy.' At the bottom, there are two highlighted sections: 'Introducing the Toolkit' in a green box and 'Funder Readiness Assessment' in a yellow box.



## POLL:

How interested are you in learning more about participatory philanthropy?

- 1) I'd love to attend a session on June 20th!
- 2) I'm not sure, tell me more
- 3) I'm not interested

Questions?