

Recommended practices for implementation:

How to get started:

- ✓ Establish what your organisation has done to date in terms of data gathering.
 - This involves monitoring and evaluation processes, conversations with community stakeholders, impact assessments, or post-funding reports.
- ✓ Embrace creating a data strategy as a journey.
 - Define an organisational aspiration and develop a roadmap that builds up from what you are realistically able to do now based on your current data collection models (if any).
- ✓ Identify key priority areas where data can have the most impact and focus on how to collect and store data in a manner consistent with your values, the change you seek to create and regulations.
- ✓ If your foundation lacks the internal capacity to pursue data collection, collaborate with partner organisations or data experts to leverage existing data structures.
- ✓ Dialog with and learn from peer organisations in philanthropy.
 - Consider joining a data collective for data sharing amongst allies.
- ✓ Evaluate outcomes comprehensively, ensuring consideration of programme-wide impact over project-specific interventions
- ✓ Tell compelling, human-centric stories and tangible narratives of impact to expand reach, increase empathy and inspire support.
 - Lead by example in sharing positive stories that might not otherwise be heard.
- ✓ Commit to continuously increasing transparency and accountability through data and evidence.
- ✓ Invest in building the organisation's data capacity by training staff about data collection and use and raising awareness of their role in these processes.
 - Ensure that data collection does not become an extractive or burdensome process for partners and grantees.

To go beyond:


- ✓ Design and build philanthropy interventions based on data analysis.
 - Use evidence-based approaches to identify specific market needs and gaps before intervening.
- ✓ Enhance monitoring, evaluation and learning methodologies to move from output to impact-based assessment.
- ✓ Collaborate on research with other like-minded organisations to develop and enhance data-driven monitoring, evaluation and learning methodologies.
- ✓ Consider pooling funds with other philanthropic peers to focus on data points that can create collective impact in a specific geography or thematic area.
 - Share these stories of collective impact within a specific geography or thematic area.
- ✓ Manage data as a valuable asset by investing in organisational capabilities to effectively collect, store, share and use data responsibly.
 - Build better practices for data quality, completeness, accountability and protection of sensitive information, especially for vulnerable constituents.
- ✓ Apply a strategic perspective that prioritises long-term impact, beyond only immediate results, using data to provide visibility.
- ✓ Consider other ways on how data can not only be an enabler for measurement and decision-making, but also as an intervention or solution itself to drive impact.
- ✓ Consider investing in the digital infrastructures and skills your grantees, partners, and their communities need to achieve digital equity so that all data can be represented.
- ✓ Invest in digital and data infrastructure, and in organisations that develop data.


Potential obstacles




Suggested solutions





 Data collection is often a long, time and resource intensive process which is discouraging for philanthropic organisations that must produce regular upward reporting.


 Cultures around robust data collection methods in philanthropy are steadily improving. Use examples of best practice to demonstrate to stakeholders that patience is key. Consider how to combine different methods of data collection, such as surveys, interviews, existing data sets, and observations.

Organisations like TechSoup, 360 Giving, Feedback Labs and DataKind can also help foundations organise and leverage their data.

 Collecting data on programmes may reveal that a long-running philanthropic intervention is not nearly as impactful as anticipated, damaging reputational clout and future funding opportunities.

 As explored in Principle 2, embracing failure and unexpected results should be an integral part of your organisation's strategy. There will inevitably be times when the data demonstrates that an intervention was less effective than planned, but this serves as an opportunity to refine and improve the programme. It reinforces philanthropy's role as a risk-taker and enables organisations to embody this role fully.

 Low-resource organisations will be unlikely to have data-collection expertise or analysts on hand to provide the needed support.

 Where possible, organisations can hire fixed-term personnel to support data-collection activities from specialist organisations, use existing available data sets, or enrol in a number of training programmes. Barring this, organisations can pool resources with peers in the space to bring in external researchers or reach out to internal experts within the network.

Resources

AVPN (2015). [Big Data at AVPN: Mapping the Social Investment Universe in Asia Using Member Data.](#)

Barr Foundation. [Impact and Learning.](#)

Candid. [Use our data.](#)

Chronicle of Philanthropy (2016). [Listening To Beneficiaries Helps Nonprofits Learn What Doesn't Work.](#)

Connect Humanity. [The Digital Equity Data Dashboard.](#)

East Africa Philanthropy Network. [East Africa Philanthropy Data Portal.](#)

Fund for Shared Insight. [What is Feedback?](#)

Institute of Fundraising (2015). [What's Data Got To Do With It?](#)

Laudes Foundation. [Measurement and Learning Approach.](#)

Philanthropy Circuit (2023). [Best Practices for Data Collection and Management in African Philanthropy Organizations.](#)

REDF. [Measure. Evaluate. Learn. Improve. Repeat.](#)

Twersky, F. and Reichheld, F. (2019) Harvard Business Review. [Why Customer Feedback Tools Are Vital for Nonprofits.](#)

Vodafone Foundation and UNHCR. [Instant Network Schools.](#)

Vodafone Foundation (2022). [How Vodafone Foundation's New m-Mama Apps Use Technology To Provide Lifesaving Care.](#)

WINGS (2017). [Global Philanthropy Data Charter.](#)

[WINGS Knowledge Hub.](#)