

“Nothing about us without us!”

A practical guide to participatory grantmaking (PGM)

By Tyler Dale Hauger

English edition

TINKR



Thank you...

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of the original Norwegian guide (2024), and this English edition (2025), especially Linn Tomasdotter, Janne Dale Hauger, Aurora Nereid, Eilert Rostrup, Luisa van Erven, Inga Ingulfsen, Marion Ravna, Kelly Buhles, Diana Samarasan, Kristian Wengen, Christina Lund, Keratilo Mogotsi, Bhekinkosi Moyo, Ashley Green-Thompson, and Halima Mahomed.

A special thanks also goes to the passionate champions behind the “Participatory Grantmaking Community of Practice,” EDGE Funders Alliance, So-Central, and the Norwegian NGO Innovation Network for their professional support.

This guide is dedicated to my friends in the first African “core group” for the Karibu Foundation’s work with participatory grantmaking - Ogo, Daniel, Anne, Zo, Kolade, Ghislain, and Mercia. And to those members have come afterwards. These creative and courageous changemakers dared to create something new and have helped shift power in grantmaking. I will always be grateful!

By: Tyler Dale Hauger © 2025

Senior Advisor, Karibu Foundation (Norway)

Former Guest Researcher, Center for African Philanthropy and Social Investment (South Africa)

Tyler Dale Hauger is a practitioner-researcher looking at participatory grantmaking. He has written and co-authored scholarly articles on PGM in *Innovation: European Journal of Social Science Research*, *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, and *The International Encyclopedia on Civil Society (forthcoming)*. He also held primary responsibility for implementing Karibu Foundation's (Norway) participatory grantmaking processes.

Editor: Linn Tomasdotter (Tinkr, Norway)

Design: Luisa van Erven (Tinkr, Norway)

Translation: Tyler Dale Hauger, with the assistance of digital tools

Suggested citation: Hauger, T. D. (2025). “Nothing About Us Without Us” – a practical guide to participatory grantmaking. English edition. L. Tomasdotter (Ed.). Tinkr and the Karibu Foundation.

This publication is released under a Creative Commons license and may be freely copied and redistributed at no cost. The names of the publisher and editor must be correctly indicated.



Contents

1. Why PGM: What Is Participatory Grantmaking

5

A. Introduction	5
B. A more democratic approach to grantmaking	5
C. Benefits of PGM	6
D. Core principles of PGM	7
E. Degrees of participation	8
F. It's about innovating	9

2. Setting ourselves up for PGM: How it can be organized

11

A. "Building the road as we go"	11
B. Process model	11
C. Where do we start?	12
D. Different models for different needs	13
💡 Here's how we do it: Karibu Foundation (Norway)	15
💡 Here's how we do it: The Kavli Trust (Norway)	16
💡 Here's how we do it: Norwegian Human Rights Fund (Norway)	17
💡 Here's how we do it: Fund Action (Europe)	17
💡 Here's how we do it: Other Foundation (South Africa)	17
🔧 Tool: Self-Assessment of current participatory practice	18
🔧 Tool: Organizational capacity and "ripeness"	20

3. Planning and design of PGM processes

23

A. Ready to share power?	23
B. Reducing risk for your organization	24
C. Co-creation - more than symbolic participation	24
🔧 Tool: Participation Matrix	25
D. It requires a trust-based practice	26
E. It requires creative thinking to avoid common pitfalls	26
F. Participant involvement - ethical considerations	27
G. Fair and inclusive practice	27
🔧 Tool: How to reduce risks for participants	28
H. Challenges	29
💡 Here's how we do it: An implementation roadmap from Karibu	30
I. Are there situations where PGM is not the optimal method?	31

4. Evaluation and Learning

33

A. How do you demonstrate impact?	33
💡 How we do it: Oxfam-Novib (Netherlands)	33
💡 How we did it: Disability Rights Fund (Internasjonal)	33
B. "Measure what matters"	34
🔧 Tool: "Show it!"	34

5. Five tips to get started

36

6. Resources

39

Forword

“Nothing about us without us!”

A few years ago, my friend Eni Lestari, Chairperson of the International Migrants Alliance, became the first migrant from a grassroots movement to address the UN General Assembly. As a member of a migrant community herself, Eni had a clear message from migrant communities to government leaders: “Do not talk about us without us.” This principle, first championed by disability rights groups in South Africa, has since gained meaning in many circles around the world.

The call for inclusion and participation highlights a deeper challenge: power often rests with a select few, whether in shaping policy or in managing resources. This is particularly visible in grantmaking environments, where closed processes and centralized authority is still very common.

Today, however, there is growing interest among funders in solutions that promote a more co-creative, locally grounded approach. Such a shift is essential to securing lasting impact. This isn't just about improving practice. It is related to larger struggle for justice and equity. For interventions to endure, they must be rooted in local context, community ownership, and multidisciplinary partnerships.

Traditional top-down models are on their way out. It's time to collaborate, rethink our assumptions, and dare to test out new grantmaking models.

Purpose of the guide

This guide is an English version of the original 2024 Norwegian-language edition, which was created for a Norwegian audience when no similar resources existed. While the guide can stand alone, it can also be understood as an English-language companion to its Norwegian counterpart - hopefully facilitating collaboration across languages and geographies. Rather than replacing the wealth and breadth of English-language materials already available on PGM, this guide is

intended to complement and work in synergy with them in order to broaden the conversation on these critical issues.

The guide offers a concise introduction to a forward-looking grantmaking practice known internationally as participatory grantmaking (PGM). PGM aims to redistribute decision-making power related to funding, and by embracing the motto “nothing about us without us,” it ensures that those directly affected by challenges are key to shape the programs that affect them.

This guide therefore aims to provide an overview of what PGM is, how it can be organized, and the advantages and challenges of such models. The guide will also showcase examples of how participatory grantmaking is implemented by both Norwegian and international organizations, as well as offer some practical tools to help you get started. The goal is that it can help provide a foundation for understanding how PGM can contribute to your goals.

In addition, it offers insights into how including target groups and those with lived experience in the development of grantmaking programs can foster innovative thinking and contribute to lasting improvements in society.

This guide is therefore designed for anyone who wants to learn more about how decision-making power can be redistributed—whether you work in an NGO, are a grant maker, or are an activist for social justice.

A wish from the author

My hope is that this guide can contribute to and inspire new thinking and action in grantmaking decision processes, so together we can build a more inclusive and sustainable future for everyone.

Tyler Dale Hauger
Oslo, 2025



1. Why PGM: What Is Participatory Grantmaking

A. Introduction

Imagine a world where decisions about funding social-change processes and projects are made behind closed doors by the few who control the money.

Maybe you're a local organization in the Global South fighting for change in a vulnerable region, or a grassroots leader in Norway who knows the challenges firsthand—but you're still shut out of the critical rooms, with no real influence over what gets prioritized or how funds are allocated.

This is the reality in many parts of the world—including Norway, for which this guide was originally written—where the power to decide on grants too rarely rests with those actually living the challenges. For funders committed to challenging long-standing economic and social injustices, closed grant processes can reinforce skewed power dynamics: one side holds financial resources, while the other has little say.

It also raises fundamental questions about social change: Who sets the terms of partnership? Who defines which problems deserve attention and how to solve them? Who determines the criteria and can demand results? Who decides what counts as change?

Though shifting established practices can be challenging, an increasing number of Norwegian, European, and global funders are experimenting with participatory, power-shifting grant methods—often called “participatory grantmaking.” These models and methodologies rethink and redistribute power in grant systems to center those who truly understand “where the shoe pinches” and foster more sustainable solutions.

This guide is all about these grantmaking practices—and how you can launch innovative processes in your own organization to redistribute decision-making power and enable deeper local ownership.

B. A more democratic approach to grantmaking

Participatory grantmaking (PGM), directly translated to Norwegian as ‘participant-driven grant practice,’ refers to methods and models that shift power from traditional decision-makers to grant recipients.

This means relevant target groups and communities — often organizations, social movements, civil-society groups, or other stakeholders — play an active role in designing, deciding on, and evaluating grants. Rather than governments, private foundations, aid agencies, or other institutions alone deciding fund distribution, participants themselves largely guide the process.

The goal of PGM is to foster more democratic, transparent, and inclusive grantmaking processes that can flexibly adapt to local needs. Participatory grantmaking applies across contexts—from local community projects to international development programs—and seeks to ensure that those with the deepest knowledge of problems also have the greatest influence on solutions.

Participatory grantmaking therefore can be understood as being broader than just a set of methodologies. It can be understood as an ethos that affirms that meaningful participation is essential for lasting social change.

There is no universal definition of PGM, and it can take many forms. Practitioners agree, however, that it's about redistributing decision-making power by:



Emphasizing the message “nothing about us without us”

Groups directly affected should have a central role and ownership in shaping their future, enabling deep and lasting social change.



Shifting power in resource distribution

Involve—or even hand decision authority to—the people most impacted by challenges on the ground.



Strengthening and creating space for agency

Local actors should be in a position to set priorities in their own contexts.

C. Benefits of PGM

Both researchers and practitioners have highlighted a range of benefits of PGM¹. In recent years, there has been a notable increase in research on the effects of PGM. Some of the most frequently cited advantages include:

- It promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion—both in the process and in the outcomes.
- It contributes to a more thoughtful and well-informed decision-making process.
- It creates space for participants to share information, build networks, and develop collaborative projects with one another—strengthening the broader movements they're involved in.
- It enables funders to identify new initiatives and to be bolder in taking risks.
- It represents concrete steps toward localizing decision-making power and decolonizing international grantmaking systems.
- It can serve as a source of innovation and fresh thinking across other parts of the organization.

PGM is about innovative thinking og power-sharing in grantmaking in order to create sustainable solutions.

It seeks to center the voices of those with firsthand knowledge of the challenges.

¹ PGM has received increasing attention and in recent years has become a much more familiar topic internationally, but the original version of this guide was the first Norwegian resource on the subject. In this sense, there are several English resources that can be useful for further exploration. A good place to start would be the first English guide on PGM, prepared by Gibson (2018), where many of these points are elaborated. You can then deepen your understanding with additional resources and guides, many—but not all—of which are listed in Chapter 6.

D. Core principles of PGM

To understand how participatory grantmaking works in practice, it's important to know its key principles:

Democratization of power

In traditional grantmaking, decision-making authority is often centralized in a small group that determines how funds are allocated. Power imbalances become even more apparent when Global North donors support movements in the Global South. Participatory grantmaking breaks down this concentration of power by moving decision authority in those who know the challenges best—local communities, representatives of vulnerable groups, or field-based experts.

Co-determination and inclusion

A central principle is to ensure broad participation. This means every relevant group has a voice in the process, especially those who've been traditionally marginalized or overlooked. It creates a more inclusive approach that values representativeness and incorporates diverse interests, needs, and experiences.

Transparency

Participatory grantmaking emphasizes openness at every stage—both in how decisions are structured and how funds are distributed. Transparency is crucial for building trust between funders and participants.

Flexibility and local adaption

Flexibility allows initiatives to be tailored to local conditions and needs, which is vital in dynamic social processes involving multiple actors. This builds trust among stakeholders and yields more sustainable solutions aligned with on-the-ground realities.

Capacity building and agency

Participatory practice in this context is not only about grant recipients being decision-makers, but also about creating space for their agency and opportunity to make good decisions. This should be a mutual capacity-building process, in which grantmakers must also recognize that they need new skills to facilitate genuine participation.

PGM draws on decades of experience with participatory development models dating back to the 1960s and '70s. Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1970) articulated the participatory ethos that continues to shape today's practice. Sherry Arnstein's "ladder of participation" (1969) outlines a spectrum from manipulation to full citizen control—a framework widely used by PGM practitioners. The core idea is that deeper, meaningful participation leads to better community outcomes. Without genuine power redistribution, participation remains superficial.

Being stuck on the lowest rungs—where manipulation and token involvement prevail—means target communities have little real influence over decisions affecting them. Superficial participation excludes marginalized voices, reinforces power imbalances, and often results in ineffective, unsustainable decisions that fail to meet community needs.

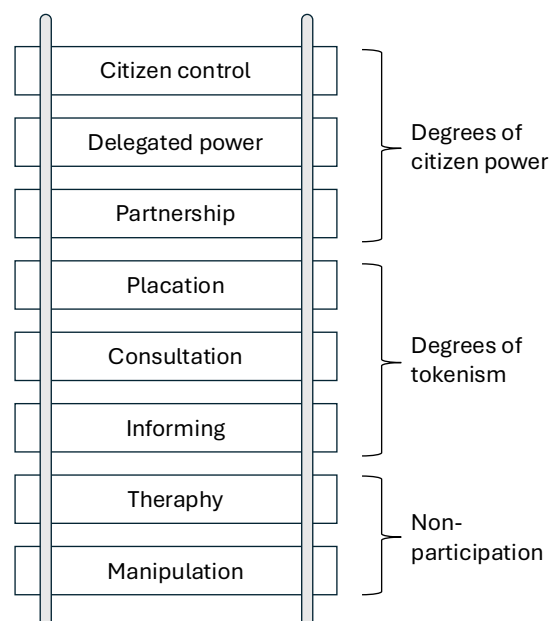


Illustration of Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, as it appeared in the Journal of the American Planning Association (1969).

E. Degrees of participation

A model adapted from Arnstein's ladder—known as the “Framework for Participatory Grantmaking” (Ford Foundation & Cynthia Gibson, 2018)—is often used to assess the degrees of participation in grantmaking from informing to deciding together. The required

level of involvement may also vary depending on the phase of the process.

It is also important to note that the need for different forms of involvement may vary depending on the phase of the process.

See more about this on [page 25](#).



Deciding together / Co-creation:

Two-way collaboration leading to joint decision-making before, during, and after funding decisions. The goal is genuine power redistribution

Jointly developing the application process, decision-making criteria, and guidelines; jointly deciding which applicants or initiatives receive funding; designing and participating in peer reviews of applications; reviewing grantees' evaluations, reports, and/or activities.



Involving:

Two-way communication that allows both parties to listen, understand, and discuss a range of perspectives.

More in-depth discussions, where conversations are more nuanced, substantive, and comprehensive. Discussions, dialogues, or working groups that involve both funders and external parties (grantees, target audiences, etc.) who are affected by the decisions..



Consulting:

Local partners share insights; funders gather feedback.

Surveys, brainstorming sessions, and focus groups used by grantmakers in their work. There is no guarantee that the input will be included in the resulting plan or process.



Informing:

Funders provide information; local partners receive it.

Websites that provide information on grant guidelines; information campaigns designed by grantmakers.

F. It's about innovation

PGM is considered a form of innovation in grantmaking practice, which is important because it provides more sustainable and inclusive solutions at a time when new approaches are urgently needed. It can also pave the way for further innovation as a result of the work itself. For example, Hauger (2023) shows that PGM represents four types of innovation, illustrating how these new approaches are changing the way resources are allocated:

01.

It's about social innovation/ social value creation

Social value creation focuses on initiatives that have a real impact on society. This is important for funders who want to see concrete social improvements, not just financial outcomes. By involving communities and target groups in the process, solutions are developed that better meet their needs and generate value in a more meaningful way.

02.

It's about process innovation

PGM changes the way funds are distributed. For those working with grantmaking, this means improving how services are delivered and ensuring that resources are used in the most relevant way.

03.

It's about user-driven Innovation

User-driven innovation means that grant recipients, target groups, or communities themselves help shape how funds are allocated and what they are used for. This yields solutions that are better tailored to local needs and ensures that initiatives are truly useful for those affected.

04.

It's about both incremental and radical innovation

Innovation can occur through small, gradual improvements or through more extensive transformations. PGM can serve as a way to tweak existing practices little by little or to implement larger changes that fundamentally alter how an organization and its sector operate.

Discussion Questions



1. What thoughts come to mind when you hear the phrase “nothing about us without us”?
2. In what ways have you previously involved grant recipients and target groups in decisions about grants and funding priorities?
3. Can you identify concrete situations in your current grantmaking work where you have experienced the four different degrees of participation—informing, consulting, involving, and/or co-creating?





2. Setting ourselves up for PGM: How can it be organized

A. “Building the road as we go”

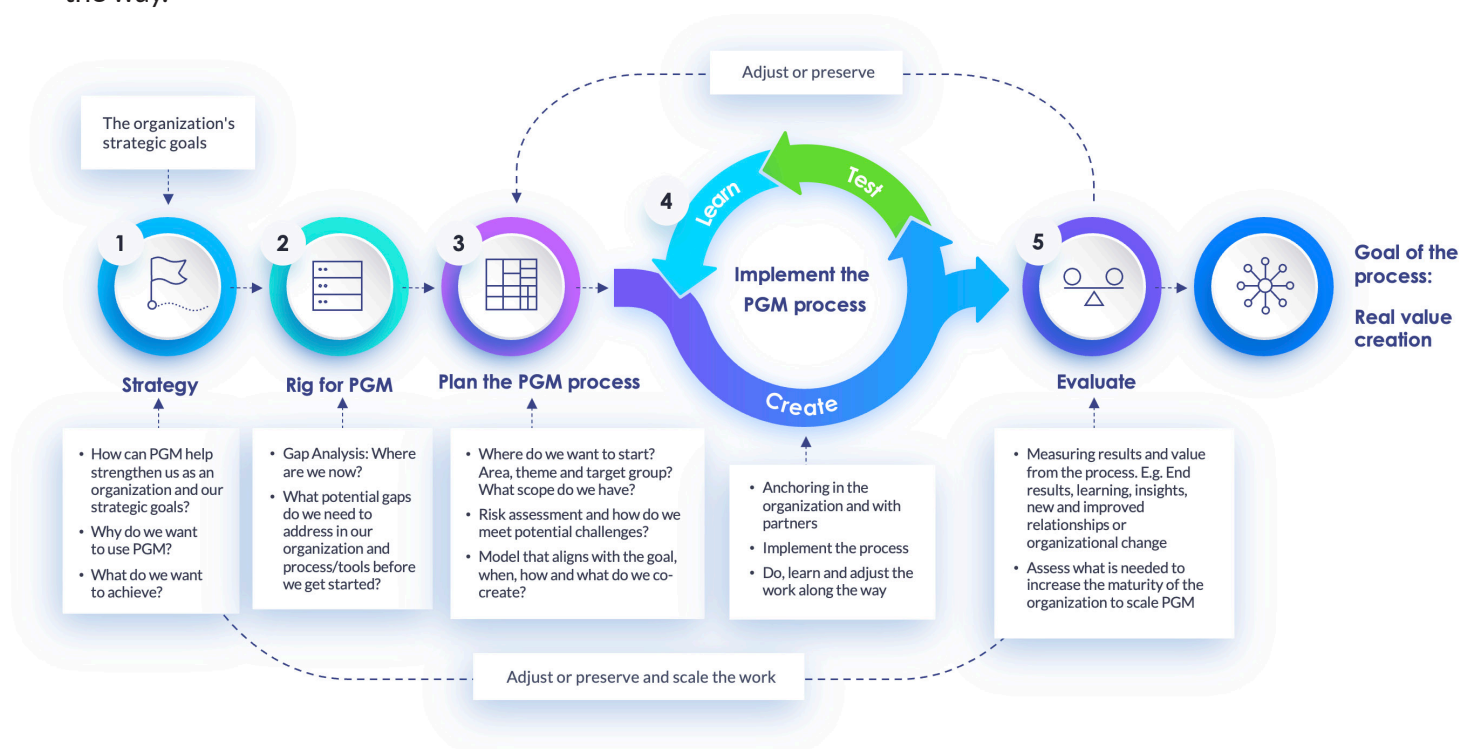
There is no simple, one-size-fits-all model for implementing PGM. For many early adopters, a “we’re building the road as we travel” mindset has been essential, combined with a deliberate focus on genuine power-shifting. It’s about creating something new while also letting go of old routines, structures, and mindsets—which often proves more challenging than it sounds.

B. Process model

Since PGM in many ways is about innovation work, we have drawn learning from the field of innovation. The model below, developed in collaboration with Tinkr, can serve as inspiration and a useful tool for how you can structure and facilitate the work. In processes where decisions are to be made collectively, it is especially important to base them on broad participation and to allow the exact values and outcomes to take shape along the way.

A well-designed process and structure provide a framework that contributes to increased transparency, openness, and accountability at every stage. It also ensures that decisions are anchored in the organization’s strategic goals and that solutions are based on the experiences and insights of all parties affected by the decisions.

Each step in the model suggests questions to support a thorough, dynamic process. The initial phases focus on your strategic objectives, how PGM can help achieve them, and what you need to consider to get ready for PGM. Subsequent phases cover practical implementation—testing, learning, and iterating—followed by evaluating results and the real social value the process has generated. The model highlights the importance of continuous learning and adaptation to develop a working approach tailored to your organization’s mission, goals, partners, and context.



C. Where do we start?

At the start of the process, there are some fundamental questions to ask:

01

Why do we want to start with PGM?

Identify the motivation behind implementing PGM. What drives us go on this journey with these approaches? What do we expect to achieve? What falls within our sphere of influence, and what lies beyond it?

02

Where are we now?

Assess the current situation, including existing processes and relationships. Where is there room for improvement? Use for example the tool on [page 18](#).

03

Does the organization have the necessary capacity and "ripeness" for this process?

Assess whether your organization has the resources and capabilities needed to implement a PGM process authentically and effectively. Use for example the tool on [page 20](#).

D. Different models for different needs

Various models and methods can be applied in practice, depending on purpose, context, and the stakeholders involved.

The choice of model depends on factors such as a funder's objectives and how much decision-making power they're willing to share. And perhaps most crucially, it depends on what target communities view as the best structures for their context. Practical con-

siderations—geographic distance, participant availability, budget limits, and time constraints—also play a key role in selecting the right approach.

Below is an overview of the most common PGM models in use globally. Many other models and hybrid approaches are continuously being developed and tested. This mapping was first conducted by Lani Evans (2015) and later expanded by Katy Love (2023). Illustrations are by Hannah Patterson (2020), mer coordinator of the Participatory Grantmaking Community of Practice.



Representative Participation

Sector experts, individuals with lived experience, or community members sit on decision panels, committees, or boards.

Decision-makers include representatives from target groups or the local community alongside traditional decision-makers.



Community Boards

The majority (or all) of committee members come from - or represent - the target group the work aims to reach.

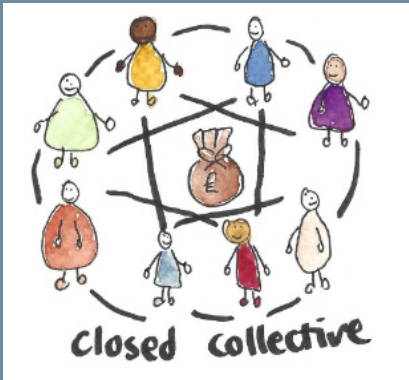
These might be people from a specific neighborhood, a membership network, or marginalized groups.



Open Collectives

Anyone interested can vote. Often structured around collective learning, where different groups discover each other's work.

Applications and funding decisions are made through a collaborative group process with equal power for all participants. Peer review of applications is frequently built into the process.



Closed Collectives

Funds are distributed within a defined geographic area or group, with organizations deciding among themselves how to use the money.

Another variant has all applicants review each other's proposals and determine allocations via collective voting.



Rotating Collectives

Those who receive funding become the decision-making committee for the next funding cycle.

Emphasis is placed on bringing in new recipient groups and passing lessons learned from one group to the next.



Open Voting

Funds are allocated based on votes from local communities or target groups.

Voting can cover everything from selecting strategies and themes to determining which applicants receive support.

Discussion Questions

1. Do any of these models resemble practices your organization already uses? What similarities do you notice?
2. What stands out to you in these different models? Are there recurring patterns?
3. Which elements of these models do you find most challenging? Which inspire you the most?





Here's how we do it: Karibu Foundation (Norway)

Since 2021, Karibu Foundation has worked closely with PGM as a model for its grantmaking. Through its African Grantmaking Program, (also known as the “Karibu New Realities Grant”) decision-making power has been moved out of Karibu’s boardroom and into the hands of civil-society representatives on the African continent.

A core group of activists and civil-society organization members from several African countries designed a grantmaking program that now serves as the basis of all grants made to African groups.

This group developed all the program’s main elements (application format, reporting requirements, etc.) and decides which groups will receive funding under this program. For legal reasons, each grant must still be formally approved by Karibu’s board.

The model—which in many ways resembles a “community board”—is built around four key elements:

A. Core Group:

“The Core Group” is the decision-making body responsible for drafting the guidelines and procedures for grantmaking, incorporating continuous learning from previous rounds, and deciding which initiatives and groups will be supported in each cycle. They also participate in evaluation and reporting.

B. Reference Group:

An advisory body composed of current grantees, former grantees, and/or Core Group members. This group offers technical advice to the Core Group when needed, and mediates any potential disagreements between the Core Group and Karibu’s board.

Photo: Brain Builders Youth Development Initiative (BBYDI) is a youth-led organization in Nigeria that has organized campaigns to mobilize young Nigerian voters in the national election. This photo is from Kwara State in Nigeria. Photo credit: Adeyefa Pete.

C. Karibu's Board

Formally—and for legal reasons—gives final approval to grants, with a commitment to uphold the Core Group’s decisions as fully as possible.

D. Grantee partners

Play an important advisory role for the Core Group by identifying lessons learned, needs, and priorities on the ground.

For Karibu, this has been a vital process for shifting power—and ensuring that voices from the Global South are truly heard. “Participatory grantmaking has taught us invaluable lessons, and there’s no going back to the old administration routines after this,” says Aurora Nereid, Karibu’s Executive Director. “Moving power from Northern donors to grassroots civil-society actors is crucial for our legitimacy and effectiveness.”

The process was also experienced as something “different” by the recipients of the grants. Ashok Kumar Subron from Mauritius, whose network received support in 2023, described it this way: “This program represents the future of grantmaking—where decision-making power is brought closer to the work we activists do on the ground in Africa.”





Here's how we do it: Kavli Trust (Norway)

In 2016, the Kavli Trust, with professional support from Foundation Dam, took the initiative to redistribute power in the decision-making processes related to allocating funds for research into children's psychiatric needs.

The Kavli Trust invited patients, relatives, and mental-health professionals working with children and young people to join and influence which research projects would receive support from Kavli Trusts' health research program in 2024.

The process consisted of three steps:

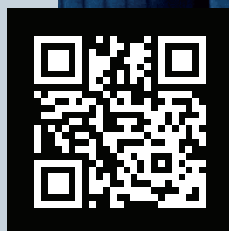
1. First, an expert committee was established to identify 49 knowledge gaps.
2. Next, a vote was opened among users (organizations, patients, relatives), allowing them to select the eight topics they deemed most important. Based on several thousand responses, the topics to be funded that year were identified.
3. The resulting list was then sent to a professional body that made final decisions from a research perspective. Users also participated in drafting the applications, ensuring that those with first-hand knowledge of the challenges were closely involved.

For the Kavli Trust, this represents a form of user participation in which the user group had direct influence over what was supported. The model is often called "community votes"—a form of open voting.

Photo: The Kavli Trust

"Patients, relatives, and health professionals are invited to vote on the knowledge gaps they believe should be prioritized. Those with the most votes form the basis of the call for proposals," says Jan-Ole Hesselberg, program manager in Kavli Trust's health research program, on the Kavli Trust's website. "This means that applicants must address one or more of the knowledge gaps identified in the call."

"By involving patients, relatives, and health professionals in this way, Kavli Trust takes user participation one step further than most other funders," Hesselberg concludes.





Here's how we do it: Human Rights Fund (Norway)

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF) works with local consultants who are human rights activists with experience in grassroots organizations across multiple countries. They provide both input and advice on selecting initiatives and partners, and they play an active role in decisions about grant allocations.

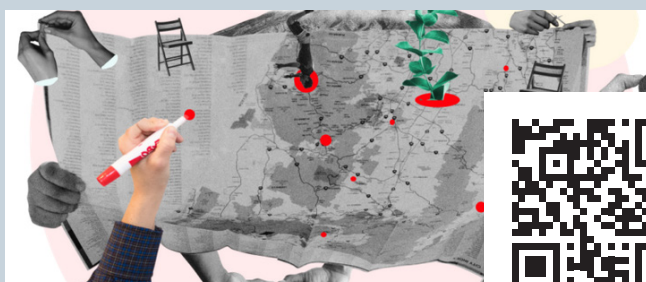
This setup represents a form of “representative participation.”



Here's how we do it: FundAction (Europe)

FundAction is a participatory grantmaking program designed to shift decision-making power over funding to community actors and activists throughout Europe. Based on a set of shared criteria, groups and activists can join the system and submit proposals for funding needs. Members then vote on which initiatives should receive support. Top-ranked proposals proceed to a peer review process for final decisions.

This is an example of what's called an “open collective.”



Here's how we do it: Other Foundation (South Africa)

The Other Foundation advances the rights of LGBTI individuals in Southern Africa through a participatory grantmaking process. It begins with an open call for concept notes, after which 10–14 participants (primarily past grantees) from LGBTIQ communities are invited to a workshop in Johannesburg. There, they conduct peer reviews and recommend projects for funding. Those recommendations are then submitted to the board for final approval.

This model exemplifies a hybrid approach combining a “community board” with an “open collective.”





Tool: Self-assessment of current participatory practice

In recent years, several international tools have been developed to evaluate participatory practice—among them the “Advancing Participation” tool (APPT) created by Diana Samarason and Katy Love (2023). These tools offer insights into participation across different work areas and support internal dialogue and goal-setting. The APPT is useful both for beginners and for organizations seeking further development. For some, participant-driven processes represent a gradual improvement of existing practices; for others, they are a radical shift. The most important thing is to start where you are.

How to use this tool

The tool can facilitate reflection for individuals, teams, or entire organizations to generate ideas or drive change. While a single person can use it, it works best with multiple participants. Use it to discuss and compare results, then develop a plan for concrete steps to take both immediately and over the longer term. Specific questions can kick-start conversations, and the full tool (50+ questions) is available on the APPT website.



1. Who determines who is eligible to apply for grant funding?

Little or no participation:	Some participation:	Substantial participation:	Full participation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation (e.g. funder) determines all eligibility and due diligence criteria.	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation seeks some input on eligibility and due diligence criteria from community via focus groups or surveys but does not report back about what they did and why.	<input type="checkbox"/> Together with community, foundation determines details of eligibility and requirements for due diligence, within legal parameters.	<input type="checkbox"/> Community determines eligibility criteria and due diligence procedures, within legal parameters. Foundation engages in advocacy to change restrictions in legal or fiscal environment to pursue a more just and equitable society

2. Who sets the parameters for grant application and reporting?

Little or no participation:	Some participation:	Substantial participation:	Full participation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Governance sets parameters, including grantmaking budget, priority areas, grant terms, and grant amounts available, and outlines application and reporting processes.	<input type="checkbox"/> As foundation develops parameters and processes for grant application and reporting, community input is requested. Foundation decides what input is used.	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation works alongside community to develop parameters for application and reporting processes	<input type="checkbox"/> Community decides parameters for grantmaking and what information is required for application and reporting.

3. Whose risk is considered?

Little or no participation:	Some participation:	Substantial participation:	Full participation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus is on protecting foundation assets from perceived risk.	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus is still on risk to foundation, but discussion has started about conceptions of risk.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is much less focus on risk to foundation. Foundation prioritizes support to grantee areas considered low capacity rather than penalizing grantees for such areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus is on risk to grantees and community; identified areas of risk lead to changes in how foundation operates.

4. How complicated and time-consuming is it to apply for and report on grants?

Little or no participation:	Some participation:	Substantial participation:	Full participation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Application and reporting templates are extensive, time-consuming, and burdensome, requiring detailed information and no flexibility on format or timing, even for repeat grantees. Applicants directly shoulder significant burden, with no guarantee of funding.	<input type="checkbox"/> Applications and reporting take significant time, but there is some flexibility, especially for repeat grantees. Forms and templates may be available in multiple languages and accessible to people with disabilities. Applicants and grantees bear most of burden.	<input type="checkbox"/> Applications and reporting are flexible, accessible, multi-lingual, and straightforward, with a split burden on foundation and community. Foundation may accept grant applications or reports aligned to other foundations' requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/> There may be no application or reporting forms at all; goal is to minimize burden on community and maximize grant terms and flexibility. Eligible applicants who seek funding may be compensated for their efforts.

5. Who makes grant decisions?

Little or no participation:	Some participation:	Substantial participation:	Full participation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant decisions are made by governance; no input is sought before, during, or after those decisions are made.	<input type="checkbox"/> A community advisory body may review a small portion of applications and provide thoughts to staff. Foundation makes all final decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most grant decisions are made by a community body, which has substantial formal authority. This may be a group of people with lived experience, or eligible grant applicants, or a broader community group. Decisions are made through scoring, voting, deliberations, and/or consensus. Issues of equity and inclusion are prioritized, and power dynamics in group are addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundation does not select decision-makers directly; others nominate or select decision-makers, with priority given to people closest to grant issues and with most marginalized or vulnerable people holding most power. Careful consideration is given to ensure a diversity of voices, and there is commitment to regularly invite new voices to this group, with rotating membership.

6. Who decides what gets measured and how?

Little or no participation:	Some participation:	Substantial participation:	Full participation:
<input type="checkbox"/> Governance sets indicators of "success" and "impact," based on traditional evaluation criteria.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff determine indicators of "success" or "impact." These may be shaped by input from grantee reports, surveys, or other interactions, but priority is not on creating knowledge that would benefit community.	<input type="checkbox"/> Community and foundation work jointly to define indicators of grantee "success" or "impact" and collectively agree how and when to measure it and who will conduct data collection	<input type="checkbox"/> Community and grantees together decide metrics, methods, and approaches for all MEL activities.

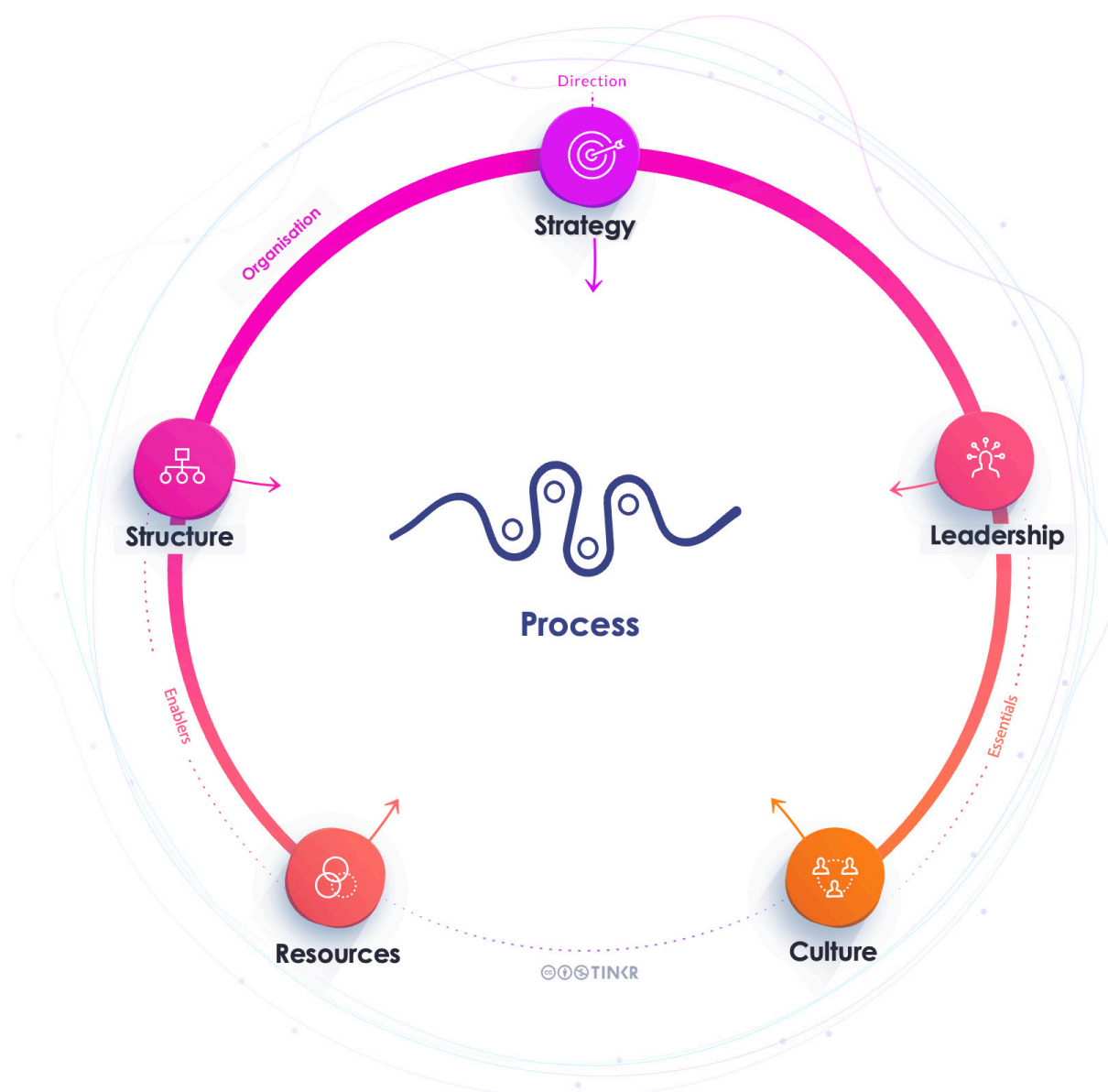


Tool: Organizational capacity and "ripeness"

At its core, participatory grantmaking rests on the belief that new social value is created when grantees are active partners in the process rather than mere recipients. It is also grounded in the conviction that a lack of innovation in traditional grantmaking can, in fact, reinforce unequal power dynamics. The tool below—developed in collaboration with Tinkr—is an internal reflection exercise intended to help assess your organization's "ripeness" for PGM. It maps the readiness of the various parts of your organization that are essential for making genuinely participatory processes work in practice. Are all the necessary people and resources in place to begin?

How to use this tool

Focus on your organization, department, or working group. Rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means you strongly disagree and 5 means you strongly agree. Reflect on your scores and note key words that explain your reasoning.





Resources

Score

- We have the necessary resources to carry out the desired activities within participatory grantmaking.
- We have strong expertise in how to work with participatory grantmaking.



Leadership

Score

- Leadership values and has clearly communicated a desire for participatory, equitable partnerships and initiatives.
- Leadership is willing to take the necessary steps to ensure that decision-making power can be shifted.



Structure

Score

- We have defined responsibilities/mandates for working with participatory grantmaking.
- We have strong and effective structures in place to implement and follow up on participatory grantmaking.



Culture

Score

- We have a culture that values participatory ideas and new perspectives.
- We have a culture characterized by openness to change and more equitable partnerships.
- We have a culture of equal collaboration and sharing.



Strategy

Score

- We have a clear understanding of our strategic need for, goals around, and commitment to participatory grantmaking.
- Initiatives related to participatory grantmaking are well anchored in the organization's strategy.



Partnership

Score

- We have credibility and legitimacy among our partners when it comes to equitable partnerships.
- We have access to local groups that can be engaged in this work.

Question for discussion



1. What score did you give each category, and why?
2. Based on your evaluation, your experiences, and group discussions, what do you think are the organization's strongest and weakest aspects when it comes to launching a more participatory innovation process related to PGM?

Remember, there is no single "right" answer—only personal assessments. The greatest value lies in the discussion and reflection that help identify the strengths and weaknesses to address.





3. Planning and design of the PGM process

A. Ready to share power?

Sharing power is the essence of participatory grantmaking—therefore, a fundamental prerequisite for a PGM process is the ability to speak openly about power dynamics in allocation processes. Although such discussions can often be uncomfortable, they are absolutely necessary. There is a significant difference between asking people for feedback or consulting them, and being willing to give up decision-making power.

It is also important that an organization engages in several fundamental discussions to ensure a successful and genuinely participatory process. There are several concrete questions that should be considered before getting started, including:

01

What potential challenges might arise, and how can we address them?

Identify possible barriers and plan solutions from day one. Learn more on [pages 26 and 29](#).

02

How can we ensure the process is realistic, healthy, and genuinely participatory?

A well-structured process provides a framework that fosters clarity, transparency, and accountability throughout. See more on [page 11](#).

03

What are the real limits of what participants can do?

Think critically and thoroughly about whether it is appropriate to invite people to co-create a solution or participate in the work if they cannot meaningfully influence the process or the outcome. If a decision has already been made, or you know which areas do not allow for genuine input, be clear from the outset about what participants can—and cannot—affect. Without this transparency, you risk achieving the opposite of your intention, leading to lower ownership and reduced trust in the work.

Some practitioners suggest using a model with “red lines” (where there is no real room for action), “yellow lines” (where there is space for dialogue), and “green lines” (where participants can create freely) as a practical way to clarify the actual scope for influence.

Note: Dare to challenge which areas are truly “red”—could they actually be “yellow” or “green”? Also use the tool on [page 25](#) to assess the real room for influence.

04

Have we considered whether PGM is optimal for our needs and those of our partners?

There may be situations where PGM isn't the best fit. How else might we ensure affected voices are heard? More on [page 31](#).

B. Reducing risk for your organization

Practitioners of PGM often note that concerns about risk have two sides: a legitimate worry about real risks and a more hidden reluctance to give up power (Patterson, 2020). There's no evidence that PGM is more or less risky than traditional methods; in fact, many PGM processes apply stricter standards than conventional allocation routines. Local knowledge strengthens due diligence, and conflict-of-interest and loyalty guidelines are often developed internally—surfacing issues that traditional grant processes may overlook. PGM groups tend to ask rigorous questions about impact and applicant credibility, which can reduce financial risk for the organization.

It can be a useful thought experiment to flip the question: what risks emerge if you *don't* involve those who know the biggest challenges best?

At the same time, donors have legal and ethical obligations to ensure funds are used responsibly. Most PGM processes find robust ways to combine existing due diligence with new approaches—for example, routing allocation decisions back through the organization's standard compliance mechanisms for further consideration.

Another concern is that PGM groups might make “wrong” decisions. This often reflects the unfounded assumption that traditional processes always yield the 'right' choices. PGM decisions can surface different priorities and methods rooted in local realities rather than in conventional grantmaking norms. Such choices may reveal al-

ternative solutions and support perspectives that would otherwise go unnoticed. It's also important to accept that locally driven decisions won't always align perfectly with donor preferences. In an iterative, participant-driven process, learning to navigate those differences is part of the journey.

To practice PGM in line with the principles outlined on [page 5](#), open conversations about risk must start early. This should happen together with a willingness to rethink what counts as risk.

C. Co-creation - more than symbolic participation

No matter the format, remember that PGM is about genuine engagement. The approach rests on the belief that more robust and sustainable solutions emerge when you involve those closest to the issues and leverage community resources across traditional boundaries.

Benefits include more durable solutions, broader use of collective resources, access to deeper knowledge, and greater ownership and commitment among participants. These processes strengthen communities and build systems better equipped to tackle complex challenges.

The degree and form of involvement should match your project's goals, values, and scope. Some initiatives require deep co-creation at every stage, while others may only need to inform or involve participants during select phases.

It can be an interesting thought experiment to consider risk from a different angle: What risks arise if you *don't* involve those who know the biggest challenges best?



Tool: Participation matrix

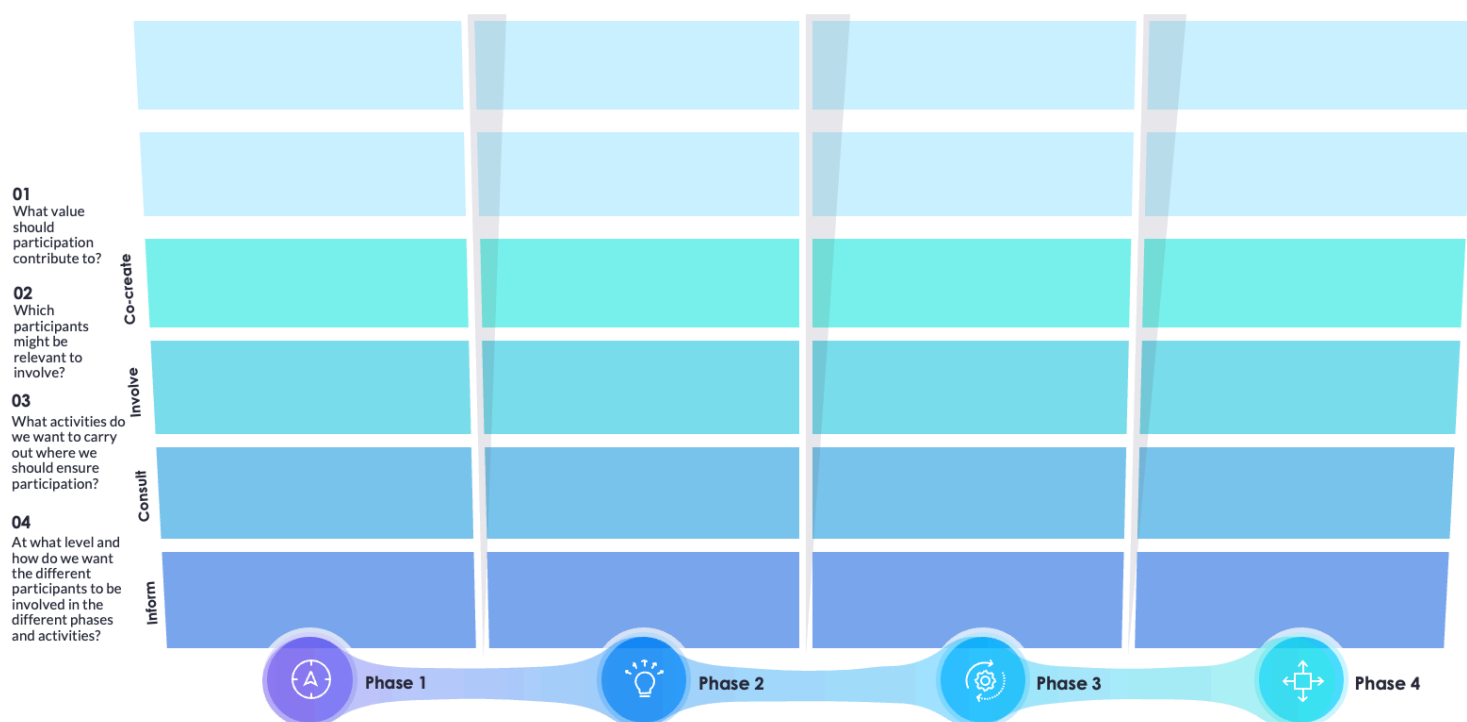
In a PGM process, we should always strive to involve relevant participants and stakeholders throughout the work. However, the degree, timing, and form of participation may vary depending on objectives and constraints. In some processes, it makes sense to co-create in every phase, while in others it may be more appropriate to inform in certain phases and co-create in others. The most extensive form of co-creation—called co-production—means that stakeholders work as equal partners throughout the entire process and share responsibility for the solution even in the implementation phase (Kobro et al., 2018).

The participation matrix below, developed by Tinkr with inspiration from the co-creation field, shows how you can tailor the level of participation in different phases or activities of a process.

How to use this tool?

Start by identifying the main phases and activities you've outlined in the process. Then reflect on what you want to achieve, your needs, any knowledge gaps, what can or cannot be influenced, and the degree of ownership over the outcomes you aim to secure. The next step is to outline the appropriate level of participation in different parts of the process to meet these goals—from informing, consulting, to deeper involvement or co-creation as equal partners. Use the matrix to adjust participation along the way—this too must be adapted to your learning process. The tool provides a structured approach to reflect on how you can ensure participation happens in the right way, at the right time, with the right participants.

Tip! Look back at [page 8](#) for Gibson's model of degrees of participation from a PGM perspective.



Source: Tinkr, inspired by Kobro, L., Andersen, L. L., Espersen, H. H., Kristensen, K., Skar, C., & Iversen, H. (2018) and "Gorud user involvement model."



D. It requires a trust-based practice

PGM demands a deliberate, trust-based approach grounded in relationship-building, learning, and mutual accountability. In this context, it is also essential to continuously reflect on one's own power and privileges—especially in the role of funder (Salehi, 2021).

This raises the question: Does the way we channel funding help “lift” a process, or does it create more stress and anxiety for grantees?

It calls for new thinking around rule-driven approaches to grants. How can we become more conscious of identifying and reducing power imbalances in our work and the problems we aim to solve?

E. It requires creative thinking to avoid common pitfalls

Researchers and practitioners in participatory processes—such as co-creation—remind us to watch out for common “deadly sins” of co-creation. By acknowledging these in advance, we can better navigate challenges and find pragmatic, workable solutions.

- The process can be perceived as (or actually become) a “the deliberate rejection of responsibility”—we push responsibility away so we don’t have to make difficult decisions or take on risk.
- Poor accountability may unintentionally create unclear roles or even “partnership fatigue,” where one party withdraws from the collaboration.
- The process can reinforce existing inequalities, since stronger actors can still exert power over weaker ones—even in a new format. New rivalries or power dynamics may emerge, and wealthier or more educated participants often dominate because of their greater social or cultural capital.
- Increasing “professionalization” of social processes can dilute grassroots engagement and threaten genuine community involvement.
- It can introduce implicit demands or psychological expectations of reciprocity (“I’ll help you if you help me”).
- There are no easy fixes, and inflated expectations of the process can breed mistrust among co-creation partners. Clear objectives and boundaries are essential.

Source: Steen, T., Brandsen, T. and Verschuere, B. (2018)

F. Participant involvement – ethical considerations

In participant-driven processes, it is crucial to address a range of ethical considerations to ensure a fair and inclusive approach. There are several tools and guidelines that cover these issues.

The Research Council of Norway in collaboration with multiple European research and innovation councils, has developed ethical guidelines for involving citizens in innovation and research in a responsible way.



Save the Children (Norway) highlights the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which has established nine principles for fulfilling children's right to participation.



The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation has published a guide outlining principles and good examples for public participation in planning processes.



Stanford Social Innovation Review identifies five ethical principles for humanitarian innovation.



G. Fair and inclusive practice

When it comes to fair and inclusive participation, experts recommend carefully considering the following key principles:

- Open processes for identifying and selecting a diverse group of participants, with particular focus on those who have historically been most affected or excluded. Take active steps to avoid replicating traditional power structures in new forms.
- Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, benefits, and expectations for all participants. Whether set out by the funder in advance or developed through co-creation, ensure that participants' mandates and power structures are transparent before starting PGM.
- Fair compensation and recognition of participants' time. Ensure that workload and responsibilities are proportional to any remuneration, benefits, and professional development opportunities provided, so as not to exploit partners or participants in the name of equity.
- Inclusive and accessible methods for fair participation in activities, which take into account different needs such as digital access, financial challenges related to travel and participation, language difficulties, etc. This also involves considering different cultures and ways of communication between individuals and between various groups.
- Thorough preparation and facilitation during group meetings—ideally co-designed—including agreed ground rules, a commitment to raising and addressing conflicts, awareness of power dynamics, and clear decision-making processes and tools.



Tool: How to reduce risks for participants

An important challenge is ensuring safe spaces for participants throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation of participatory grantmaking processes. It is crucial to protect everyone involved from various forms of harm—whether intentional or unintentional.

Grantmakers must also ensure that they have built sufficient safeguarding measures into their planning. The risks in PGM depend on the context, who is invited, the scope of involvement, and—critically—the visible and invisible power dynamics at play in those relationships.

The resource '[Safeguarding and Participatory Grantmaking](#)' from the Global Fund for Children can be a valuable tool. It provides concrete examples of how to strengthen safety in different situations. The resource covers:

- Physical and psychological safety
- Complaints and reporting mechanisms
- Participant expectations
- Internal codes of conduct
- Time management and burnout prevention
- Privacy and data protection



The [PGM "Community fo Practice"](#) has organized a webinar addressing key participant-safety questions.

The webinar offers practical tips on creating a safer environment for everyone involved and helping to prevent potential threats.

H. Challenges

Participatory grantmaking is not a quick fix that can resolve all the problems and dilemmas associated with power sharing.

There are several challenges in implementing PGM—among them that it can require more time and resources than traditional top-down funding decisions, much like most in-depth democratic and participatory processes. Those working with PGM strive to find pragmatic methods to address these challenges, but it's important to start thinking about them before you begin.



New competencies

PGM may demand a new set of skills that the organization doesn't yet possess. It can be especially difficult for traditional funders to shift to a PGM approach



Difficulty “going back”

Existing structures or routines—the “old way” of doing things—can become obstacles. Conversely, once you start PGM, it can be hard to revert to traditional ways of working and thinking.



Assessing Resources

Time constraints, lack of human or financial resources, and the need to carry out other critical functions (especially in small organizations) can make PGM efforts challenging. More on this on [page 20](#).



Risk

For many, the question of increased “risk” becomes central. It's important to remember that risk considerations must include both risks to participants and risks to the organization.



New challenges in innovation

Involving grantees in innovating the grantmaking process can bring additional challenges for all parties involved:

- Need for new staff competencies
- New interpersonal dynamics between funders and grantees (and among grantees within the PGM process)
- Unexpected conflicts of interest / loyalties
- New technological requirements
- Practical challenges related to communication and engagement
- Practical challenges around defining roles



Measuring results

PGM can be difficult to measure in terms of “success.” Both process innovation and social innovation often depend on less visible indicators. Impact management related to monitoring and evaluating the process itself is still evolving. More on this on [page 33](#).

Many of these challenges, and others as well, are further articulated in resources such as Gibson (2018) and Ang et al. (2023).

I. Are there situations where PGM is not the optimal method?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to when PGM is not optimal, especially since levels of participation can vary across stages. You should always consider the common challenges of PGM (see [page 29](#)) regardless of context.

However, practitioners have highlighted scenarios where it may be wise to question whether PGM is the best approach. Hannah Paterson, former coordinator of the global PGM Community of Practice (2020), identified these examples:

- Acute needs or rapid funding: Deep, genuine participation takes time. In emergencies, less participatory mechanisms may be necessary to disburse funds quickly. Target groups and local partners can still help define criteria and needs for this support.
- "Stuck" or gridlocked situations requiring an outside perspective: Sometimes external expertise is needed for fresh evaluations beyond local contexts. Be mindful of power dynamics in such an approach and maintain transparency about whose perspective is driving decisions
- When participation cannot be carried out effectively: If participation cannot be done well, one might ask whether it could actually do more harm than good—and lead to further challenges. You can read more about this on [pages 27](#) og [28](#). PGM is challenging, and sometimes we may unintentionally end up causing more harm to local communities than the problems we are trying to solve
- Highly technical scenarios requiring specialized expertise: Fields such as advanced technology, medicine, science, or digital systems may require expert decision-makers. Still, it's important to note that defining what counts as "highly technical" is itself shaped by power dynamics. Participants can still be involved in shaping requirements, strategies, and impact measurement—see Kavli Trust's example on this [page 16](#).

Additional situations to consider:

- When there is not already a high degree of trust between grantmakers and local partners: Participatory grantmaking is not effective if the relationship between grantmakers and partners lacks trust and legitimacy.
- When grantmakers are not willing to allocate the necessary time, resources, and leadership support to make it happen: See [page 20](#) for a self-assessment of organizational capacity and readiness for PGM.

Despite these challenges, you can take targeted steps to ensure that those closest to the issues play a meaningful role in shaping the terms of the funding.

Questions for Discussion



1. How do you define “risk” in grantmaking, and is there room to rethink this definition?
2. Where do you see the biggest challenges—and opportunities—in planning a potential PGM process within your organization?
3. What steps have you already taken toward a more fair, equal, and inclusive grantmaking practice? How can you build on these efforts?





4. Evaluation and learning

A. How do you demonstrate impact?

Learning and evaluation are vital elements in any grant program. Practitioners and researchers generally agree that measuring and evaluating PGM can be challenging and requires creativity. Because participatory grantmaking is more process-oriented, iterative, and relational than traditional grant management, it's harder to codify outcomes or reduce them to quantitative metrics.

Participatory approaches also demand two distinct sets of results

1. The impact of the PGM process itself
2. The impact of the funds disbursed

Each requires different evaluation methods.

In PGM, it's especially important to emphasize that the process is as significant as the outcome.

Participatory grant programs are about more than deciding how funds are allocated. Local groups should help define what success looks like and participate in measuring it. From a PGM perspective, it can be crucial to begin with critical questions about power dynamics in evaluation before you start. PGM practitioners Love and Samarasan (2023), for example, recommend considering:

- Who defines goals and "success"?
- Who decides what gets measured?
- Who oversees the evaluation process?
- Who has access to the lessons learned?
- Where do those lessons go?

PGM itself can be a tool for rethinking these questions.

It is possible to include PGM in a traditional results framework for those who wish to do so, especially for those channeling funds from a donor who requires such frameworks. This can be done both at the process level (the PGM process) and in terms of the

effects of the work supported by the grants. Here are some examples:



How we do it: Oxfam-Novib (Netherlands)

Oxfam Novib has channeled funds through multiple participatory grant processes in partnership with other organizations. In their logframe, they distinguish between activity indicators and outcome indicators:

Data on grant inputs (e.g., number of partners or funds disbursed) serve as activity indicators and do not directly affect the main framework's outcomes.

Process data aren't always explicitly reported unless a project requires them, but they emphasize "participation" and "local ownership" as key premises for their results management.

How we do it: Disability Rights Fund (International)

The Disability Rights Fund uses PGM processes to distribute funds. The participation of persons with disabilities in grant-making decisions follows the global disability slogan, "nothing about us without us" as well as the mandate of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which the Fund aims to advance.

Option to track outcomes occurs in a logframe: DRF measures the ongoing participation of grantees in influencing laws, policies, and government programmes to better protect and promote rights. The process of participation of persons with disabilities in legal changes itself is, thus, tracked as a key result. Participation is also measured by the percentage of funding going to women and other more emergent and marginalized sections of the disability community over time.

B. “Measure what matters”

When designing evaluation mechanisms for PGM, focus on what truly matters to local communities. This means ensuring evaluations don’t just collect data but create meaningful metrics that reflect the actual needs and interests of those affected.

The report *Measuring What Matters* (Doan & Knight, 2020) presents four broad categories of criteria for assessing success in locally anchored, participatory processes—taking a wider view than just PGM. These build on the critical questions from [page 33](#).

01

It will be useful and used:

Metrics must be integrated into organizations’ work. Avoid creating measurements that merely prove an approach; they should also help those implementing the work on the ground. The approach must be inspiring and motivating, not just technical.

02

It will adapt easily to different contexts and interests:

Evaluations should flex to fit varied contexts while also addressing shared and individual needs. This flexibility enriches measurement.

03

It will inspire rather than standardize:

Prioritize inspiration over rigid standardization. For example, choose favorite indicators and pair them with stories that give depth to what matters most. This paints a fuller picture than numbers alone.

04.

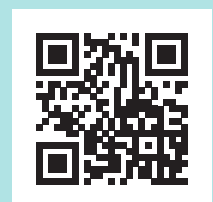
It will be accountable and amplify influence:

Evaluations should center the experiences, needs, and voices of the people and communities providing the data. The process must not feel extractive, and insights must be shared back to local groups to strengthen their influence and work.

Tool: “Show It!”

Many tools help demonstrate the impact of social processes and participation. [Show it!](#) is a free (Norwegian language) digital tool developed by “[Norway Unlimited](#)” that guides social entrepreneurs through step-by-step community-impact measurement. It’s adaptable to diverse evaluation needs—especially for those wanting to assess the effects of participatory processes.

Show It! leads users through three stages to uncover and visualize a project’s real impact. It maps assumptions and illustrates the change process, enabling clear and engaging communication of results.



Questions for Discussion



1. Where do you experience challenges in evaluating social change in current practice?
2. In what ways do we involve local groups or target populations in today's evaluation processes?
To what extent do they have real influence in the evaluation?



5. Five tips to get started

Now it's your turn to shift power!

Participatory grantmaking is about redistributing decision-making authority to those who understand where the pressure points are, in order to foster fairer, more inclusive, and more effective solutions. By involving local partners in funding decisions, grant programs can be tailored to address their real needs.

PGM requires time, energy, and creativity, and the process can be demanding in many ways. Yet the potential payoff is significant—both in how we understand and discuss power, and in how we recognize people's ability to shape their own futures. While giving up control can feel unfamiliar, experience shows that this approach often leads to deeper, more lasting results. It offers both funders and local partners the opportunity to drive sustainable social change and unlock innovative solutions.

Starting small can help build momentum—test methods, adjust as you go, and treat each experiment as a learning opportunity. These approaches are flexible and adaptable to different contexts, so identify the steps that work best for your situation.

To create a future with a more equitable distribution of power, we must be open to new paths. By testing PGM, we take steps to ensure that “nothing about us without us” truly resonates. We hope this guide, and its original Norwegian version, has sparked fresh ideas in that direction.

Ready to take action? Here are five concrete suggestions:

01

Conduct a critical self-evaluation and take concrete steps forward

Use one of the tools in this guide (for example, the APPT tool or the organizational "ripeness" tool) to see where you stand today. A series of small steps can lead to big impacts. You may already be doing more participatory work than you realize!

02

Start with a pilot

A pilot lets you test new approaches and learn in real time. It demands thorough preparation and planning, but this guide and other resources can help you create a solid framework.

Approach the pilot with an experimental mindset—build the road as you travel.

03

Channel funds through other donors

If you're not ready to launch a process within your own organization, consider partnering with funders who already have PGM expertise. Collaborating with seasoned practitioners lets you draw on their lessons and reduces the risk of missteps, increasing your chances of success.

04

Join a PGM community of practice

"Participatory Grantmaking Community of Practice" is a global network of funders, community groups, and activists advancing PGM. Through workshops and collaboration, members share experiences and best practices to ensure that those affected by funding decisions have a real voice.



05

Learn more!

Identify what you still need to know and engage with others. PGM is iterative, and new questions will always arise. Continuously seek out fresh knowledge and insights. Start with the resources listed on [page 39](#). There are many more resources about PGM beyond these, and new ones are constantly emerging—so there's always more to learn!

PGM is about continuous learning and sharing, and we're still on the journey toward shifting power. We must keep searching for new solutions—and sharing them—while building the road as we go.

Feel free to contact the guide's author (tylerhauger@gmail.com) and/or the organizations mentioned in the guide for more information!

Closing questions for discussion



1. What do you find most inspiring or exciting about participatory grantmaking?
2. What questions do you still have after reading this guide, and how might you explore them further?
3. What concrete steps can you or your organization take to begin redistributing and shifting decision-making power in your grantmaking practice?



6. Resources and References

General resources on participatory Grantmaking

- **Ang, C., Abdo, M., Rose, V., Lim, R., & Taylor, J.** (2023). *Participatory grantmaking: Building the evidence*. Centre for Evidence and Implementation.
- **Gibson, C.** (2018). *Deciding together: Shifting power and resources through participatory grantmaking*. J. Bokoff (Ed.). Grantcraft, Foundation Centre.
- **Hauger, T. D.** (2023). *Nothing about us without us: Innovating grantmaking processes with participatory methodology*. Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 36(4), 631–651.
- **Hauger, T. D.** (2023, 6th September). "We have to date to test out new grantmaking methods" (in Norwegian: Vi må tørre å teste ut nye tildelingsmetoder.) *Panorama News*. Retrieved from <https://www.panoramanyheter.no/afrika-lokalisering/vi-ma-torre-a-teste-ut-nye-tildelingsmetoder/329220>
- **Salehi, S.** (2021). Tips for adopting a trust-based philanthropy approach. *Blackbaud Blog*. Hentet fra <https://blog.blackbaud.com/trust-based-philanthropy-tips/>
- **Model Wrobel, B., & Massey, M.** (2021). *Letting go: How philanthropists and impact investors can do the most good by giving up control*. Independently published.
- **Mogotsi, K. S., & Hauger, T. D.** (2024). Exploring participatory grantmaking in Sub-Saharan Africa: Current landscape, practices, and power dynamics. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 1-12.
- **Nereid, A.** (2024, 16th October). Hva skjer når man flytter makten til partnere i Sør? *Transit Magasin*. Retrieved from <https://www.transitmag.no/2024/10/16/hva-skjer-nar-man-flytter-makten-til-partnere-i-sor/>
- **Paterson, H.** (2020). *Grassroots grantmaking: Embedding participatory approaches in funding*. Winston Churchill Fellowship Report.

Planning and Design of PGM

- **Kobro, L., Andersen, L. L., Espersen, H. H., Kristensen, K., Skar, C., & Iversen, H.** (2018). "Let's do it together! Handbook for local collaborative social innovation".
- **Samarasan, D., & Love, K.** (2023). *Advancing participation in philanthropy tool*. Retrieved from <https://www.advancingparticipation.com/>

Implementation of PGM

- **Conversations on African Philanthropy.** (2024, 7th November). Exploring Participatory Grant-Making. [Podcast/YouTube video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_0e01cTGs
- **Karibu Foundation.** (2024). *Moving power in grantmaking*. Retrieved from <https://www.karibu.no/moving-power-in-grantmaking/>
- **Norsaac og Transform Trade.** (2023). *South Meets North in Power Shift: A Participatory Grantmaking (PGM) Model*. Retrieved from <https://rightscolab.org/practical-resource-south-meets-north-in-power-shift/>

How PGM Can Be Organized?

- **Buhles, K.** (2021, 2nd November). A primer for participatory grantmaking. *Nonprofit Quarterly*. Retrieved from <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/a-primer-for-participatory-grantmaking/>
- **Evans, L.** (2015). *Participatory philanthropy: An overview*. Winston Churchill Fellowship Report.

er-shift-a-participatory-grantmaking-pgm-model/

- **Participatory Philanthropy Toolkit** (n.d.). *How we did it: Shared Insight's participatory climate initiative*. Fund for Shared Insight. Retrieved from <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/funder-tools/participatory-philanthropy-toolkit/>
- **Steen, T., Brandsen, T., & Verschuere, B.** (2018). The dark side of co-creation and co-production: Seven evils. In *Co-production and co-creation* (p. 284–293). Routledge.

Learning and Evaluation

- **Chakma, T., Johnson, R., & Booth, G.** (2024). Expanding our understanding of evidence for meaningful participation. *Porticus*. Retrieved from https://prd-control-multisite.maneraconsult.com/media/5auckd2z/porticus_participation_report-2024_.pdf
- **Doan, D. & Knight, B.** (2020). Measuring what matters. A consultation paper. *Candid, GFCF & Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace*. Retrieved from <https://globalfundcommunityfoundations.org/resources/measuring-what-matters/>.
- **Love, K. og D. Samarasan.** (2023, 9th October). An Evolution of Evaluation in Grantmaking With a Participatory Lens. *Blackbaud Blog*. Retrieved from <https://blog.blackbaud.com/an-evolution-of-evaluation-in-grantmaking-with-a-participatory-lens/>
- **Participatory Grantmaking Community of Practice.** (2021, 22nd January). Evaluating participatory grantmaking. [YouTube video]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_Oe01cTGs

Other References

- **Arnstein, S.** (1969). A ladder of community participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216–224.

- **Arnstein, S.** (2012). A ladder of citizen participation. I A. Cornwall (Red.), *The participation reader* (p. 3–18). Sage.
- **Tinkr Tools.** (n.d.). Hentet fra <https://tinkrtools.com>

QR Code Links

- **page 15: Karibu Foundation**
<https://www.karibu.no>
- **page 16: Kavli Trust**
<https://kavlifondet.no>
- **page 17: Norwegian Human Rights Fund**
<https://nhrf.no/>
- **page 17: FundAction:**
<https://fundaction.eu>
- **page 17: The Other Foundation**
<https://theotherfoundation.org>
- **page 18: Advancing Participation in Philanthropy Tool**
<https://www.advancingparticipation.com>
- **page 27: Norwegian Research Council / Ethical guidelines**
<https://www.forskningsradet.no/nyheter/2024/nye-retningslinjer-for-etisk-innbyggerinvolvering-i-forskning-og-innovasjon>
- **page 27: Save the Children Norway / Ethical principles**
<https://www.reddbarna.no/vart-arbeid/barn-i-norge/barn-og-unges-medvirkning-og-innflytelse>
- **page 27: Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation / Participation**
https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/kmd/plan/medvirkningsveileder/h2302b_veileder_medvirkning.pdf
- **page 27: Stanford Social Innovation Review / Ethical principles**
https://ssir.org/articles/entry/five_ethical_principles_for_humanitarian_innovation

- **page 27: Global Fund for Children / Safeguarding**
<https://globalfundforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Safeguarding-and-Participatory-Grant-Making-April-2023.pdf>
- **page 27: PGM Webinar / Safeguarding**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWxIVhLW-zG4>
- **page 30: Implementation map, Karibu Foundation**
<https://www.karibu.no/moving-power-in-grant-making>
- **page 32: Disability Rights Fund**
<https://www.disabilityrightsfund.org>
- **page 32: Oxfam-Novib**
<https://www.oxfamnovib.nl>
- **page 34: "ShowIt!" Norway Unlimited**
<https://www.visdet.no>
- **page 37: PGM Community of Practice**
<https://www.participatorygrantmaking.org>

A practical guide to participatory grantmaking

Published in collaboration with:

TINKR

