

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Developing common
standards to reduce the
reporting burden*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

The Common Application is an undergraduate college admission application that applicants may use to apply to more than 700 member institutions from around the world. The Common Application reduces the administrative burden on students for low-value tasks (e.g., data entry), allowing them to allocate more time to high-value tasks (e.g., essays), while still enabling member institutions to collect information core to their decision processes through supplemental information requests.

What would it look like if funders could agree on common standards that eased the reporting burden on grantees?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Crowdsourcing data
collection automatically*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Weathersignal.com is a new way of collecting weather data, using sensors in smartphones to crowdsource weather information. The live updating map of weather conditions is based entirely on information passively shared by users' phones, such as temperature, pressure, light intensity, and humidity. While the initial focus is to accurately "nowcast" localized weather maps, the long-term objective is to be able to use the data to improve weather predictions.

What would it look like to use performance data that could be collected automatically to make reporting easier for grantees?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Automating low-value
tasks to improve data
quality and insights*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

The analytics team at the **Phoenix Suns** worked with the coaching staff and front office to reach consensus on which data would be of most use to the staff along with how to categorize it. This required coaches and front office personnel to acknowledge uncertainty surrounding some of the data being presented, especially in the cases of small sample size and where rules might vary from team to team. This agreement allowed the analytics team to automate low-value tasks, such as tracking the outcome of each possession, which enabled them to use data visualization software to regularly provide coaches and front office with detailed reports analyzing success on a per possession basis.

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits could use technology to automate low-value tasks?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Providing easy access to
"good enough" services*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Retail clinics like are primary care clinics that operate inside of stores. They can diagnose and treat illnesses, provide preventative care, and even offer basic chronic condition management services. By providing accessible healthcare services at competitive prices, with an emphasis on low complexity conditions affecting the majority, retail clinics provide patients with new choices when consuming healthcare services.

What would it look like to do "good enough" evaluation that made the process more accessible and useable for grantees?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Improving capacity by
borrowing resources
from which to learn*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Through **Code for America's** fellowship program, professionals in the technology industry are able to apply their skills to government through a full-time paid year of service. Multi-disciplinary teams with experience in engineering, design, user experience, research, GIS and product management help create technology solutions to government problems and build capacity among local government teams.

What would it look like if there was a widespread effort to embed evaluation expertise in nonprofits?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using technology to
increase access to
specialized expertise*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Project ECHO is an initiative to make specialized medical knowledge accessible regardless of location. Local clinicians are paired with specialist teams at academic medical centers in weekly virtual clinics, to share knowledge and expand treatment capacity, resulting in better care for more people. By using its virtual clinic model, the initiative has now expanded from its original focus on treatment for hepatitis C to now address more than 55 diseases in more than 20 countries.

What would it look like to use technology to spread specialized evaluation expertise to organizations that couldn't otherwise afford it?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Creating a widespread
culture of learning*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Intuit has created experimentation platforms for all their workers, ranging from customer support to logistics and marketing. Workers across the company are encouraged to brainstorm many possible solutions and then quickly test the best ideas, creating an environment where people can rapidly learn and are allowed to fail.

What would it look like if funders built platforms for grantees expressly focused on facilitating experimentation and learning?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Sharing expertise in a
cost-effective manner*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

In the late 1990s, **Bay Area funders** hired “circuit riders”—technology assistance providers who rotated through a “circuit” of nonprofit organizations in a region or field, doing everything from setting up computers networks and creating databases to advising on overall IT strategies. The circuit riders also helped “cross-pollinate” across organizations, transferring insights and tools, and cost-effectively re-using training materials and resources across multiple organizations.

What if funders supported evaluation “circuit riders” who could cost-effectively rotate through a number of nonprofit organizations to provide individualized assistance?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Aggregating data for
real-time decision
making*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Waze is a community-based traffic and navigation app that allows drivers to passively share real-time traffic and road information. Waze aggregates the information it receives to develop a more accurate picture of traffic patterns, which improves the quality of daily commutes. Waze has also begun to move to predict future traffic patterns for “planned drives,” further improving the driver experience and congestion around high density areas.

What would it look like if the data infrastructure existed to provide real-time information across a large number of social sector organizations?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using predictive
analytics to anticipate
challenges*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

The **Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement** built a predictive model that yielded a “payment score calculator” to estimate how likely individual parents are to meet their child support commitment. Because the system shows the drivers of a low score, caseworkers can address potential problems —such as explaining the importance of contacting the agency in case of job loss — and suggest programs to help struggling parents.

What would it take to widely use predictive analytics in the social sector?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Setting up systems for
handling and learning
from failure*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

“Online retailer **Zappos** has become a fan favorite by flipping expectations of online shopping: easy returns for shoes that don’t work out, and positive customer service experiences that counter the norms of endless phone call runarounds or pleading to talk to supervisors when things go wrong. By solving for these classic roadblocks and reducing—even eliminating—potential downsides, they make it easy and appealing to do what used to seem unthinkable: ordering shoes online, sight unseen.”

What would it look like—and what would it take—for funders to truly incentivize a learning mindset instead of a fear of failure from grantees?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using new technology
to see large scale
patterns*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

TerrAvion, an aerial image delivery service, makes multiple flights weekly to capture bird's-eye and thermal photographs of farms and ranches. The imagery enables ranches like TomKat Ranch, an environmentally sustainable cattle ranch, to spot early-warning signs of overgrazed areas and invasive species and make decisions about where cattle should graze next.

What would it look like if funders focused on capturing high level patterns across grantees that could be used to inform the work of everyone involved?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Tying a "brand" to an
aspiration*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Harley-Davidson has marketed its motorcycles not just as a means of transport, but as a lifestyle choice. Riding Harley Davidson motorcycles is associated with being rebellious and having the freedom to make your own choices.

What would it look like if the evaluation "brand" were more widely identified with staff "destination" aspirations to deliver impact rather than on "journey" efforts?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Designing a holistic user
experience*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

In 2008, **Disney** developed a way to streamline the experience of their amusement park guests. The “Magic Band” is a wristband with a radio transmitter that is worn by guests and streams data about where guests are in the park and what they’re doing. It enables guests to easily gain access to the park’s attractions, FastPass entrances, and their hotel rooms, as well as automatically purchase food and merchandise without waiting in line. The “Magic Bands” were designed to remove friction from the park experience.

What would it look like if monitoring and evaluation in the social sector were designed to “delight” constituents or grantees?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Encouraging
engagement by focusing
on the fun factor*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Fun Theory's **Piano Staircase** used whimsical technology to encourage people to make a healthier choice. After a subway staircase was turned into a piano by having people "play" different notes by stepping on each stair, 66% more people chose the stairs over the escalator.

What would it look like to make measurement, evaluation, and learning more fun?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Building buy-in through
personal engagement*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

The “**Ikea Effect**” is the term given to the finding that consumers place a disproportionately high value on products they create themselves. The very act of adding one's own labor makes it more valuable to the individual.

What would it look like for philanthropy to better engage stakeholders in measurement efforts as a way of getting them to feel ownership of the process?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Making data collection
and sharing easier*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Sage Bionetworks and University of Rochester Medical Center

scientists created an iPhone app to collect sensor and survey data on dexterity, balance and gait, and memory from Parkinson's patients. More than 60,000 people have downloaded the app, and it has become one of the largest studies of the disease. Participants were able to agree in advance to have their data broadly shared with researchers, providing a new and streamlined way to obtain information for multiple studies without burdening patients.

What would it look like if constituents could easily opt in to anonymized datasets that enabled learning across multiple grantees?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Making data collection
automatic to ensure
data quality*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

AIR Louisville created a database of the city's asthma hotspots by distributing asthma inhaler-attachments with special sensors that track when and where the inhalers are used. The sensors wirelessly sync with the user's smartphone, and the phone automatically captures the data from the sensor whenever it is nearby. With this data, the city was able to better understand and take steps to decrease asthma triggers.

What would it look like for funders and nonprofits to use technology with constituents to automate data collection as a way to ensure data accuracy?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Improving performance
by making behavior
visible*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

The infection team at the **Henry Ford Health System** found that sharing images of bacteria on common surfaces substantially increased the hospital staff's hand-washing rates. The images shared with the hospital staff revealed bacterial growth on items like unused gloves, doorknobs, a mobile phone, and hands. According to a study of the effort, one unit improved its hand-washing rate by nearly 50% after the images were shared.

What would it look like for funders to make the impact of bad performance more visible as a way of promoting better practices and results?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using behavioral nudges
to improve data input*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

The **State of New Mexico's Department of Workforce Solutions** implemented a new system to reduce improper unemployment insurance payments. Potentially problematic cases are identified using predictive analytics. For these cases, the system then uses behavioral economics "nudges" to encourage individuals to report accurately at key moments in the filing process, such as in reporting earnings.

What would it look like to use behavioral "nudges" to encourage more active and accurate nonprofit data collection?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Recognizing the
value of data*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Datawallet, an online marketplace for data that empowers individuals to take control of their own data. Once an individual signs up, Datawallet collects that individual's data, anonymizes it, and produces analyses. When companies buy the data, Datawallet pays the users who generated that data, instead of the revenue being diverted to data brokers.

What would it look like for social sector organizations to recognize the value of constituent data—and to behave accordingly?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Isolating key metrics to
focus on what matters
for decision making*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Lean Analytics, a resource on analytics for start-ups, promotes the iterative use of “One Metric that Matters” to enable quick-cycle learning and adaptation. At any point in time, there’s one metric organizations should focus on improving above all else. This forces the organization to prioritize and enables the team to iterate continuously and learn in a methodical way.

What would it look like if organizations piloted iterative, one-metric approaches to enable key priorities to remain at the center of operations?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Innovating new ways of
creating and sharing
evaluation findings*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Evaluation reports often sit on shelves after they're completed.

What could it look like if "after-the-fact" evaluation reports became obsolete?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Prioritizing the creation
of new knowledge*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

We often talk about “evidence-based decision making.”

What would “decision-based evidence making” look like?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Making learning central
to foundation missions*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Actionable knowledge can be as important to social change efforts as money.

What could it look like if more foundations operated as "learning foundations?"

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Embracing risks by
adopting a venture
capital mindset*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Failure is often frowned upon in philanthropy.

What could it look like if funders adopted a venture capital mindset, spread their bets over more risky investments, and acknowledged that many would fail?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Emphasizing peer
learning for capacity
building*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Nonprofits consistently report needing more assistance with building data-driven cultures.

What could it look like if experienced nonprofits paired with less experienced nonprofits to act as mentors and coaches for monitoring, evaluation, and learning?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Taking capacity building
seriously*

More effectively
putting decision
making at the center

Nonprofits consistently report having insufficient time and money for knowledge-building activities.

What could it look like if nonprofits weren't starved for monitoring, evaluation, and learning resources?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Increasing opportunities
for quick and simple
feedback*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Airports use smiley terminals where passengers press a single button, either a smiling or frowning face, to provide immediate feedback about their experience (e.g. airport security, bathrooms).

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits began to use much simpler, but much more accessible reporting approaches?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Co-creating with users
to discover new ideas*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

LEGO Ideas is an online platform where participants can submit their own designs and discover ideas by other fans. Fans provide feedback on product ideas and vote on design submissions, and the LEGO Review Board evaluates all ideas that get 10,000 votes. Those that are chosen become LEGO products that are sold worldwide. The product creator earns a percentage of the sales and is featured on packaging and marketing.

What would it look like if social sector organizations, as a habitual practice, sought input and ideas from constituents in the design of programming?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Fostering a constituent-
centric culture*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Alex Turnbull, the CEO of **Groove**, spends at least 20 hours each week on customer support. The company's all-hands customer service model—where everyone on the team spends some time responding to customer support requests—helps employees “feel the pain” of the customer and be more empathetic when making product decisions.

What would it look like for funders and nonprofits to build greater global awareness of their respective constituents' wishes and preferences?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Providing a forum for
users to learn from one
another*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

PatientsLikeMe's Open Research Exchange is an open platform for developing, validating, and sharing health outcome measures that better reflect patients' experiences with a disease. Researchers, can get feedback from real patients to test and improve health outcome measures to make them more relevant to a patient's health and quality of life.

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits created platforms where constituents could share their information and learn from one another?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Aggregating user data
in real-time for common
benefit*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Waze is a community-based traffic and navigation app that allows drivers to passively share real-time traffic and road information. Waze aggregates the information it receives to develop a more accurate picture of traffic patterns, which improves the quality of daily commutes. Waze has also begun to move to predict future traffic patterns for “planned drives,” further improving the driver experience and congestion around high density areas.

What would it look like if philanthropy invested in the technology to enable constituents to passively contribute data that is visible to and benefits the community more broadly?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Inviting users to
personalize their
experience*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

The buyers of **Local Motors'** cars, motorcycles, and even electric skateboards can customize their experience at every stage in the process. Using digital technologies such as computer-aided design (CAD) files and 3D printing, Local Motors' customers can participate in initial conception, design creation, and even final production. Any customer who buys the company's flagship car can build the vehicle in the company's factory with assistance from the Local Motors team.

What would it look like if nonprofits and funders provided feedback avenues for constituents to design the services they require?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Connecting people
trying to solve similar
problems*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

An online program called **GeneMatcher** allows clinicians and researchers to enter a gene into a database and search for others in the world who work with patients who have mutations in the same gene. GeneMatcher requires clinicians to enter information about the gene, along with an optional description of the patient's condition, but does not require the patient's name or any other identifying information.

What would it look like if social sector organizations could quickly identify others tackling similar problems?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Creating community
platforms to share
information and foster
collective action*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Nextdoor is a free private social network for neighborhood communities. Nextdoor provides a platform where neighbors can: quickly get the word out about a burglary, coordinate a neighborhood watch group, get recommendations for a babysitter, or find the best house painter.

What would it look like if funders provided nonprofits or constituents with a way to connect and learn from one another at scale?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using real-time data to
integrate and adapt
service needs*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

The city of Helsinki is developing a real-time marketplace that would enable customers to choose among transportation providers to create the fastest or cheapest way of getting to their destination. Bus routes would dynamically change to respond to current demand. Customers would have a personalized travel experience by accessing different options with their phone: a ride-share, an on-demand bus, traditional public transit, or even an automated car. The ultimate goal is a city where private cars aren't necessary to get around easily.

What would it look like if social sector organizations could create integrated platforms that allowed constituents to see comparative data to inform their choices?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Finding creative ways to
overcome biases*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Blendoor is a blind recruiting application that hides candidate names, dates and photos to mitigate unconscious bias in hiring. Employers are provided with only merit-and skills-based data on candidates from which to evaluate their credentials.

What would it look like for funders and grantees to examine the biases implicit in their processes and systems?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Flipping the lens from
deficit framing to asset
framing*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Rather than solely focusing on risk factors for substance abuse among boys and men of color, the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA) highlights protective factors and the unique strengths of populations when developing evidence-based, culturally appropriate and effective prevention solutions. For example, strong ethnic identities, community connectedness and practicing cultural traditions are all associated with lower substance abuse for boys and men of color.

What would it look like if funders took a more asset-based approach when thinking about measures and metrics?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Creating new incentives
and training to drive
accountability for equity*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Abbott links executive compensation to diversity metrics, which includes everything from overall corporate diversity targets to individual goals such as being a cross-cultural mentor. Executives at the top three levels of the company are all trained to participate in a formal cross-cultural mentoring program.

What would it look like if funder leadership were specifically assessed on their ability to increase diversity in monitoring, evaluation, and learning functions?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Enforcing guidelines
that promote equity*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

USA Ultimate, the governing body for the Sport of Ultimate, requires that an equal number of Men's and Women's Division games must be broadcast as part of their media contracts.

What would it look like if funders insisted that grantees use an equity lens in evidence development?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Providing broad-based
cultural competence
training*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)

provides the Tool for Assessing Cultural Competence Training (TACCT) for use in medical schools, to integrate cultural competence in all aspects of medical training. TACCT is a 67-item self-administered tool to evaluate cultural competence content across the entire medical school curriculum, in an effort to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in health care.

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits made cultural competence training a necessary part of their requirements in hiring external evaluators?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Collecting data to
assess equitable
performance*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) now gathers race/ethnicity information from all customers who register for camps and classes, as well as purchase passes to their facilities. This allows PP&R to track how well they are serving the various racial and ethnic groups living in Portland as compared to census data, and to make adjustments to make sure they are serving all members of the community.

What would it look like if social sector organizations across the board used their data to assess whether their programming and processes were truly representative of all of the communities they served?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using data to assess
differential impact*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Oregon's Criminal Justice Commission provides racial impact statements to legislators that assess the different racial impacts of proposed criminal justice and child welfare policies. While legislation may seem race neutral on its face, it can have disparate effects on people of color. The racial impact statements enable legislators to understand the real consequences of proposed legislation on different communities.

What would it look like if funders routinely estimated the racial impacts of their programming to assure that they were promoting equity with their giving?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using positive data to
make the case for
diversity, equity and
inclusion*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

HR units in the corporate sector are actively using positive data to make the case for increasing the focus on diversifying company talent. Companies within the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity, for example, are 35% more likely to experience above-average financial returns.

What would it look like for philanthropy to begin collecting data assessing the positive impact of diversity on philanthropic teams and decision making?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using data analytics to
level the playing field*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Deloitte UK is using “contextualization” in its screening process to mitigate social mobility disparities. In addition to masking where an applicant went to school, the company uses a comprehensive algorithm that positively credits students who have overcome tough situations. For example, the algorithm will recognize applicants who did well in school in spite of being the first in their family to obtain a university degree.

What would it look like if social sector organizations truly acknowledged preconceived biases and broadened the focus in hiring for monitoring, evaluation, and learning?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Identifying and tapping
into exceptionally
inclusive leaders*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Pinterest analyzed employee engagement data to identify elements of manager inclusiveness and created a single inclusiveness scale. These included questions like “I feel safe speaking up” and “I feel like I’m part of the team.” They are incorporating these learnings in trainings and a comprehensive playbook based on the behavior of their “exceptionally inclusive” managers.

What would it look like if funders deliberately measured diversity and inclusiveness in their own organizations and identified exemplars to lift up as learning examples?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Identifying high-priority
user needs with data
analytics*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers has used the power of geospatial analysis to find patient “hot spots.” Their analysis revealed that a relatively small number of patients, often in the same geographic locations, account for a disproportionate share of health-care spending: In Camden, N.J., residents in just two buildings accounted for nearly \$30 million in services. Through efforts to better coordinate the health care of these patients and address their social needs, the Coalition cut these health care costs in half.

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits used big data analytics to see patterns in usage and adjust the way their programming was targeted?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Creating comprehensive
user experiences*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

In 2008, **Disney** developed a way to streamline the experience of their amusement park guests. The “Magic Band” is a wristband with a radio transmitter that is worn by guests and streams data about where guests are in the park and what they’re doing. It enables guests to easily gain access to the park’s attractions, FastPass entrances, and their hotel rooms, as well as automatically purchase food and merchandise without waiting in line. The “Magic Bands” were designed to remove friction from the park experience.

What would it look like if funders and grantees tracked the constituent experience from inception to conclusion?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Allowing users to
choose what's most
relevant to them*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Hipmunk, an online travel search engine, enables users to sort options by “agony” in addition to traditional filters like takeoff time and price. The “agony” metric combines price, flight duration, and number of stops, providing customers with a fuller picture of the emotional experience of their flight choices.

What would it look like if we shared social impact data in ways that were more responsive to the (emotional and human) factors actually used in philanthropic decision making?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Developing a holistic
view of user needs*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

ChildStory is an information technology system in Australia that places the child at the center of their story and enables sharing and coordination by their network of family, careers, caseworkers, and service providers to make sure they are safe. Each network member will be able to access information about the child and tools for every stage of the child's journey, including the child him/herself.

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits developed constituent-centered, integrated platforms that allowed the tracking and coordination of services for constituents across organizations?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Experiencing the users'
perspective*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Adobe's employees participate in the company's Experience-a-thons as product users to obtain a customer's perspective. Employees provide immediate feedback as they engage with different aspects of the product. "There is such an opportunity to have our employees experience our products and services firsthand before we offer them to customers," says their executive vice president of customer and employee experience. "By combining employee and customer experiences, we are able to create rich customer experiences through high levels of employee engagement."

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits tested their services on themselves before working with other constituents?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Deliberately seeking
different perspectives*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

The Mayo Clinic was the first academic medical center to assemble a diverse set of doctors, designers, and project managers to drive innovation efforts in the organization. The center transformed health care delivery and the experience of patients with this interdisciplinary group by testing hypotheses, observing interactions between patients and medical staff, and developing new ideas about ways to provide care.

What would it look like for funders to deliberately expose themselves to contrarian ideas and information that would challenge their thinking?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Enabling users to
submit data to learn
about themselves
and others*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

The American Gut project is a crowd-funded citizen science project. Participants can learn about their body's own microbes while also contributing to the broader understanding of how the microbiome affects everything from autism to alcohol consumption. American Gut is a project built on open-source, open-access principles, as participants have access to their own data and de-identified data is publicly available.

What would it look like if constituents could share their data and have the ability to compare their information to, and learn from, other constituents?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Protecting how sensitive
information is shared in
public spaces*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

YouTube enabled face blurring in videos to protect the identity and other identifying information of activists documenting human rights violations. Users are then able to delete the original video hosted on the platform. The tool protects activists and victims of human rights abuse who wish to speak out in situations where they may be personally at risk.

What would it look like if funders invested more resources to ensure constituents and their data are appropriately protected?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Promoting personal data
ownership*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

Datawallet, an online marketplace for data that empowers individuals to take control of their own data. Once an individual signs up, Datawallet collects that individual's data, anonymizes it, and produces analyses. When companies buy the data, Datawallet pays the users who generated that data, instead of the revenue being diverted to data brokers.

What would it look like if funders and nonprofits provided constituents with more authority over how their data is used?

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by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Safeguard the privacy of
user data*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

DuckDuckGo is a search engine that doesn't collect any personal information or track what users search. Most other search engines "leak" searches, or send personal information to all the sites you click on; they also use user information to show users more targeted advertising. More importantly, search engine information that is stored is vulnerable to being hacked, accidentally made public, or given to law enforcement.

What would it look like if philanthropy consistently offered constituents a way to protect their online profile from being targeted by predatory institutions?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Lifting up cultural
competence by
requiring proficiency*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

There are few requirements for evaluators to demonstrate cultural competence proficiency during the selection process.

What could it look like if clear evidence of proficiency were a standard part of evaluator selection?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Considering data as a
stronger currency than
money*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

In the private sector, data is now the most important asset for many companies.

What could it look like in the social sector if data were seen as the most valuable asset?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Giving constituents
control of their data*

Better empowering
constituents and
promoting diversity,
equity, and inclusion

The proliferation of digital information that's easily transferred, monetized, and hacked has raised important questions about data privacy, control and benefit.

What could it look like if constituents clearly owned their own data and had control over how it was used?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Building a culture that
embraces failure*

More productively
learning at scale

Every year, **Engineers without Borders Canada** (EWB) publishes a Failure Report in conjunction with its Annual Report. The Failure Report includes cases written by leadership and staff members who describe national office failures, venture failures, and chapter failures, along with their lessons learned. By publically celebrating failures, EWB increases incentives to share information, take risks, and be creative.

What would it look like for social sector organizations to collectively share failures in an open way and create systems for learning from them?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Recognizing that failure is
an inextricable part of a
portfolio*

More productively
learning at scale

Venture capital investors

recognize that many of their investments will fail. In fact, the industry rule of thumb is "40-40-20" – 40% of VC-backed companies fail outright, 40% break even, and 20% are "home runs."

What would it look like if funders saw their grantmaking as a portfolio and specifically dedicated some of its resources to high-risk, high-reward investments?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Enabling independent
verification of the
information of others*

More productively
learning at scale

Provenance, a UK-based company, is using new blockchain technology to stamp out illegal fishing. Blockchain is a digital ledger originally used for the currency Bitcoin. It enables local fishermen to send SMS messages to register their catch on the blockchain, and the identification of the fish is then transferred to a supplier at each stage along the supply chain. Information about the complete journey of the fish can be accessed and verified by end buyers using their smartphones.

What would it look like if philanthropy leveraged technology to make its data and results more transparent so others could learn from or confirm findings?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Embracing radical
transparency as a way
of life*

More productively
learning at scale

Buffer, a social media management company, embraces the principle of “default to transparency.” Buffer publicly shares all financial information, including individual salaries, real-time revenue, and where each cent of a purchase goes. All of their code is open source, and each email sent can be seen by any member of the team.

What would it look like if social sector organizations shared their results and learning by default, making exceptions when necessary, rather than the reverse?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using third parties to
mediate data sharing*

More productively
learning at scale

The Yale School of Medicine Open Data Access Project

(YODA) serves as an independent scientific reviewer for requests from researchers seeking access to Johnson & Johnson's clinical trials data. The project promotes cooperative learning while maintaining scientific standards and protecting the data.

What if a third party intermediary served as a responsible gatekeeper to increase accessibility to and safeguards for key social impact datasets?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using content analysis to
find information gaps and
patterns*

More productively
learning at scale

Quid provides text-based data analysis of millions of documents, including news articles, blog posts, company profiles, and patents. It offers insight by visually organizing the content of these documents so that users can identify patterns, commonalities, connections, and gaps. Quid also allows users to identify the most frequently discussed individuals, organizations, topics, and terms.

What if philanthropy could use technology to conduct analyses that would identify unseen patterns across grant reports, research, and other important datasets?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Mapping data gaps to
determine where to focus
efforts*

More productively
learning at scale

Earth Microbiome is a crowd-sourced open science effort to analyze microbial life on the planet that includes the mapping of “dark matter” as part of its efforts. Up to 99% of microbial organisms are deemed unknown dark matter, which biologists can’t culture in a lab due to limited knowledge or insufficient growth conditions.

What if funders could broadly map out existing knowledge to help identify where there are critical gaps in information that need to be addressed?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Establishing brokers of
knowledge to facilitate
information sharing*

More productively
learning at scale

The National Basketball Association (NBA) acts as a broker of knowledge between its 30 franchises on topics such as, marketing, strategy, and data analytics. On monthly calls, franchise representatives from these functions share lessons learned and best practices, and discuss the results of new analytics software being pioneered and implemented across individual franchises.

What could it look like if funders and nonprofits within an issue area established more frequent, but light-touch, cadences to share information?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using big data to generate
usable insights*

More productively
learning at scale

Earth Genome, an integrated platform of tech and digital resources, is designed to make “big” environmental data usable by overcoming its overwhelming quantity and complexity. Earth Genome aggregates datasets from myriad public and private sources and provides decision tools that visualize, translate and interpret the datasets for end users. Earth Genome enables decision-makers to use big data insights to analyze the consequences of potential activities on natural systems.

What if an intermediary focused on aggregating social impact datasets in order to provide decision makers with higher quality information from which to make informed decisions?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Using the Internet of
Things to aggregate data
"exhaust"*

More productively
learning at scale

The city of Barcelona has deployed responsive technologies to remotely sense and gather data from public transit, parking, lighting, and waste management systems. Through its open source platform, data is managed and shared with city workers and citizens. Barcelona City identified areas for intervention and improvements have already saved money and substantially decreased resource use. For example, Barcelona estimates that IoT systems have helped save \$58 million on water.

What would it look like if funders made an effort to tap existing connected devices or invest in the Internet of Things as a way to produce useful data for broadly measuring social impact?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Launching a "moonshot"
data effort to improve
understanding*

More productively
learning at scale

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded grants totaling \$40 million to map the human brain's connections in high resolution through **The Human Connectome** project. This coordinated effort uses state-of-the-art tools and technologies to better understand the structure of the brain for improved diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders. All data are available to the research community.

What would it look like if philanthropy launched a "moonshot" collective data effort in a specific field?

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by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Creating data commons to
enable large-scale
collective learning*

More productively
learning at scale

The Genomic Data Commons

is a unified data repository that enables data sharing across cancer genomic studies in support of precision medicine. With 4.1 petabytes of data, it includes some of the most comprehensive cancer genomics datasets in the world. Given the complexity of lifestyle, genetic and environmental factors, large sample sizes will help researchers study which combinations of drugs are effective against which combinations of mutations.

What would it look like if philanthropy promoted common repositories for multiple issue areas?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Aggregating individual
data on collective
platforms*

More productively
learning at scale

PatientsLikeMe's Open Research Exchange is an open platform for developing, validating, and sharing health outcome measures that better reflect patients' experiences with a disease. Researchers, can get feedback from real patients to test and improve health outcome measures to make them more relevant to a patient's health and quality of life.

What would it look like if funders aggregated data so that it could be made more accessible and useful for informing the day-to-day work of grantees?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Enabling systems
interoperability*

More productively
learning at scale

While widespread **ATM** installation occurred in the 1980s, the ability to use the ATM card of one financial institution at an ATM machine of another financial institution was not originally possible. In the early 90s national electronic funds transfer (EFT) networks were completed, which enabled the ATM cards of a financial institution in a network to be used at ATM machines that belonged to another network member.

What would it look like if funders invested in the technological infrastructure and standards that made data sharing and comparisons easier?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Promoting common
standards for usability*

More productively
learning at scale

We have common **time zones** as a result of the transcontinental railroad. Railway clerk William F. Allen was so exasperated by the chaos caused by the 8,000 local times zones in the U.S. that he fought tirelessly to standardize time into four zones. The time zones follow common train hubs, which is why they're not straight lines.

What would it look like for philanthropy to broadly agree on common outcome standards to enable consistency across organizations?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Creating space to test the
methods themselves*

More productively
learning at scale

The **Lime Street experiment** dismantled assumptions about the cause of arson. The experiment carefully re-staged a fire that had recently occurred, outfitting a nearly identical house nearby with similar furniture. The crime analyst was able to demonstrate that “signs of accelerant use” were possible, even when an accelerant had not been used. The ATF Fire Research Laboratory, an experimental facility dedicated to understanding fire behavior, was created to conduct forensic fire science and engineering tests, including large-scale fire replications.

What would it look like if philanthropy had an intermediary that could serve as a central clearinghouse to test the relevance of new methods and data analytics approaches to the social sector context?

Monitor Institute
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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Collectively assessing
different theories of
change*

More productively
learning at scale

Different approaches to solving the same problem are generally evaluated separately.

What could it look like to coordinate the evaluation of multiple approaches addressing the same problem?

Monitor Institute
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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Overcoming the focus on
individual assessments*

More productively
learning at scale

Nonprofits are typically evaluated individually.

What could it look like if funders grouped nonprofits working toward the same goal and evaluated common elements that were effective across multiple interventions?

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by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Promoting data
infrastructure development*

More productively
learning at scale

Foundations and nonprofits often don't have sufficient or high-quality data to answer their questions about impact.

What could it look like if data infrastructure was sufficiently built out for a given issue area out to dramatically improve data quality and enable learning at scale?

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte.**

Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

Focusing less on "what works" and more on implementation and context

More productively
learning at scale

“What works” clearinghouses have been criticized by some for being overly narrow in program and methodology focus.

What if we worked on developing evidence bases to better understand implementation effectiveness, likely effectiveness under different contexts and with new populations, and interactive strategies rather than single programs?

Monitor Institute
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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Convening social scientists
and data scientists to
bridge differences*

More productively
learning at scale

The role of data scientists in the social sector is likely to grow substantially over time, yet data and social scientists have very different training, knowledge and assumptions.

What could it look like to bring together data scientists and social scientists in a systematic effort to define a common, integrated approach (or complementary approaches) to evidence creation in the social sector?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

*Specifying the roles of
funders and nonprofits in
developing evidence*

More productively
learning at scale

Nonprofits don't generally have the resources, skills or incentives to rigorously evaluate impact.

What could it look like if foundations were responsible for testing the quality of broad ideas (e.g. does microfinance work) and nonprofits were only responsible for assessing the quality of their implementation (e.g. monitoring)?

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Adjacencies & Hypotheticals

Instructions

INSTRUCTIONS

You can flip through this deck yourself to spark ideas or use it for group brainstorming. For group brainstorming:

- **Identify a monitoring, evaluation, and learning challenge** for which you'd like to brainstorm solutions.
- **If the challenge clearly falls under one of the Three Characteristics, use only those cards.** Otherwise, you can use them all.
- **Deal out the cards around your table.** It doesn't matter if people have slightly different numbers of cards in their hand.
- **Look at your hand of cards.** For each card, think about the adjacency described and consider: What are the key attributes of the adjacency? How is it similar to your challenge?
- **Choose the cards with the adjacencies that are most interesting to you.** Why is it interesting? How could you adapt the solution to your challenge?
- **"Play" the cards at the center of the table.** Explain the adjacencies you chose to the group, and tell why you chose them and what connection they have to your challenge. Go around the whole table, with each person playing their cards. Don't take more than 30 seconds explaining each card to your group.
- **Discuss the cards on the table. Identify solutions related to each adjacency.** Record key insights and potential solutions on a flip chart.
- **Share back with the full group** if you've broken up into different groups.

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