

Key resources for putting decision-making at the center

The following are a few practical guides, tools, and other resources for using monitoring, evaluation, and learning practices we found most useful to more effectively put decision-making at the center in your organization.

Organizational learning

- The Strategic Data Project at Harvard University's Center for Education Policy Research has a [Strategic Use of Data Rubric](#) and [Self-assessment Guide](#) that provides elements of effective data use across an organization, with steps to move toward using data more strategically.
- David Garnin et al.'s [Is Yours A Learning Organization?](#) Discusses organizational building blocks and provides a survey instrument for assessing learning within an organization.
- GEO's [The Smarter Grantmaking Playbook: Learn for Improvement](#) offers a range of documents providing guidance on learning, including how to use evaluation for learning, creating a learning organization, and developing a culture of learning for improvement.
- The [Performance Imperative](#) provides a framework to develop high-performing nonprofits that monitor for continuous improvement, have cultures that value learning, and assess effectiveness through evaluation.
- Marilyn Darling et al.'s [Emergent Learning: A Framework for Whole-System Strategy, Learning, and Adaptation](#) includes tools encouraging experimentation around strategies, and supporting whole-system learning, which requires shorter, faster, more rigorous real-time learning and more cross-pollination among peers.
- Katie Smith Milway and Amy Saxton's [The Challenge of Organizational Learning](#) identifies common barriers to knowledge sharing and defines key elements of learning.



Behavioral design and the science of decision-making

- Center for Evaluation Innovation's [How Cognitive Traps Cut Us Short: Cognitive Traps in Philanthropic Decision-making](#) tracks common cognitive traps that impact foundation decision-making and clear step to overcome them for more deliberative decision-making.
- The World Bank's [World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior](#) provides information on what is known about the science of decision-making, with implications for adaptive design and in a development context.
- The UK Government's Behavioral Insights Team wrote [EAST: Four Simple Ways to Apply Behavioral Insights](#) to synthesize the literature and their team's learnings about understanding of behavioral approaches.
- John Beshears and Francesca Gino's [Leaders as Decision Architects](#) reviews behavioral economics concepts and discusses implications for improving decision-making in organizations.
- Michael Quinn Patton's [What Brain Sciences Reveal about Integrating Theory and Practice](#) explores decision-making processes under conditions of complexity.

Key resources for putting decision-making at the center cont.

- Piyush Tantia's [The New Science of Designing for Humans](#) discusses the integration of behavioral science and impact evaluation to test and iterate on new ideas.

Data analytics and technology

- Matthew Salganik's [Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age](#) discusses social research in the digital age, bridging data science and social science.
- Global Pulse's [Integrating Big Data into the Monitoring and Evaluation Programs of Development Programs](#) details the characteristics of big data analytics and provides guidelines for integrating big data into monitoring and evaluation efforts. While it focuses on development programs, it has more general applicability as well.
- The [Data Maturity Framework](#) from University of Chicago's Center for Data Science and Public Policy helps you assess and improve your organizational, tech, and data readiness for data-driven social impact projects.
- The [Principles for Digital Development](#), provides principles for using technologies in development projects through human-centered, contextually appropriate, collaborative, safe, and sustainable design.
- Kopernik's [Impact Tracker Technology \(ITT\) catalogue](#) features a compilation of low-cost, information communications technology-based tools intended to help those working in development collect data, communicate with their clients and measure their impact.

Rapid cycle evaluation and lean analytics

- HHS's [Rapid Evaluation Approaches for Complex Initiatives](#) compares a range of rapid evaluation approaches for projects at different levels of complexity.
- Acumen and Root Capital's [Innovations in Impact Measurement](#) discusses lessons learned from Acumen's Lean Data and Root Capital's Client-Centric Mobile Measurement initiatives, which apply innovations in data collection technology to enable inexpensive and quick-cycle customer feedback on social and environmental performance.
- Code for America lists [multiple resources](#) on iterative development and rapid idea testing.

Capacity building

- The Bruner Foundation's [Project Clearinghouse](#) includes multiple resources on evaluation capacity building, including training, coaching and technical assistance.
- CEP's [Assessing to Achieve High Performance: What Nonprofits are Doing and How Foundations Can Help](#) discusses how nonprofits are assessing their performance and what they need from funders.
- GEO's [How Can We Help Our Grantees Strengthen Their Capacity for Evaluation?](#) provides guidance on helping grantees improve their capacity for measuring impact, improving programs, and better serving communities.
- Jared Raynor et al.'s [Capacity Building 3.0: How to Strengthen the Social Ecosystem](#) discusses capacity building in the broader social ecosystem, new innovations and techniques being used for effective capacity building.

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