Finding and Flipping Orthodoxies

The statements on these cards were developed to help challenge conventional thinking, and do not represent the positions and opinions of Monitor Institute by Deloitte.
Measuring social impact is too hard

It's too hard to apply lessons learned from one project or program to others

Including constituent voice in M&E is nice, but not necessary

We can't really measure systems-level change

Evaluation is for experts

Data collection and analysis are expensive

Formal evaluation is necessary to judge whether a project is successful

It’s too hard to integrate learning from M&E efforts into our decision making

☐ This orthodoxy exists in my organization

☐ This orthodoxy exists in the field
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>More information means better decisions</th>
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<th>If we have the right information we will make better decisions</th>
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<th>Randomized Controlled Trials are the only real way to know if a program works</th>
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<th>Evaluation is primarily about methods</th>
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<th>Developmental evaluation is the answer</th>
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<th>Developmental evaluation is not the answer</th>
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<th>Establishing causality is the goal</th>
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<th>Good enough isn’t good enough when it comes to evaluation</th>
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Hitting metrics equals success

Evaluation will give us a clear answer

We do evaluation to satisfy our board’s needs

This orthodoxy exists in my organization

This orthodoxy exists in the field

A poor result or lack of impact means failure

This orthodoxy exists in my organization

This orthodoxy exists in the field

Evaluation ends the conversation

Data are quantitative

We care most about attribution

We provide enough funding to allow nonprofits to measure well

This orthodoxy exists in my organization

This orthodoxy exists in the field
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Every grantee needs to provide us with M&E data

We operate in a world of data scarcity

Context makes it too difficult to compare across circumstances

The measurement needs of every foundation are unique

Common data standards are impractical

There is agreement about what success looks like

Funders can't agree on shared metrics

M&E staff are the best judge of what works
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Program staff are the best judge of what works

People on the ground are not the best judge of what works

Constituents do not own their own data

Evaluation is done for the funder

Conducting evaluation doesn't require specialized training

Conducting evaluation does require specialized training

 Constituents are participants, not beneficiaries, of evaluation

 We can impartially judge the results of our own programs

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<th>Outputs and impacts in the social sector cannot be rolled up</th>
<th>M&amp;E should be a distinct function</th>
<th>M&amp;E is the responsibility of specialized staff</th>
<th>M&amp;E is primarily an auditing function</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>We can't share evaluation findings because it might hurt grantees</td>
<td>Collaborating with other funders on evaluation is too hard</td>
<td>Failures are something to avoid or hide</td>
<td>Our strategy should focus on things that are measurable</td>
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M&E and data analytics are distinct

We need numbers to know what works

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INSTRUCTIONS

• Deal out the full deck of 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 orthodoxy described and consider: Does it still hold true for you? Should it be changed? Do you know others—in philanthropy or elsewhere—who are challenging the orthodoxy? What would it look like if you flipped it and did things differently?

• Choose the card with the orthodoxy that is most interesting to you. Why is it interesting? What would it look like if you flipped it—partially or completely?

• “Play” the card at the center of the table. Explain the orthodoxy you chose to the group, and tell why you chose it and what it might look like if you flipped it. Go around the whole table, with each person playing one card. Don’t take more than 30 seconds explaining your card to your group.

• Discuss the cards on the table. Choose or vote on one orthodoxy that the table finds most interesting. Write one sentence directly on the card about why it was so interesting to the group.

• Share back with the full group in 30 seconds or less.

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