



Knowledge Opportunity Scanning An Essential Strategy Tool for Funders of Change

Are you a grant program or foundation director? Have you ever had the sense that there was more that you could do through your grantmaking – especially for equity and change? Are you really interested in fostering learning but having trouble incorporating it into your strategy? If you answered yes to any of these, a Knowledge Opportunity Scan is for you!

Through this complimentary engagement, you will learn what it takes to adopt a knowledge integrated strategy for change. The process is codesigned with you and can involve staff, board, grantees, and other stakeholders that you want to be involved in the learning process.

You will come away with tangible next steps to embed a knowledge approach into your change philanthropy to increase learning and impact.

What is Knowledge Opportunity scanning?

Knowledge Opportunity scanning brings together grounded understandings about equity and change approaches with the very real pressures and needs of grantmaking. Together, we identify points of synergy between learning and action. Using a framework developed through over 20 years in the field of change and philanthropy, we support you in identifying the places where focused inquiry, research, documentation, or dialogue can move your grantmaking to the next level. We support you in strengthening your strategic giving.

What you can expect from a knowledge opportunity report?

A knowledge opportunity scan includes the following standard categories of analysis plus additional sections as they emerge from the uniqueness of your strategy and context. The scan captures your work in a way that encourages learning and change.

Background: This section captures the basic history, development, and current purpose, strategy, and work of the organization, collaborative, intermediary, initiative, or network. This includes the current approach to learning and sharing.

Operations & Archetypes: This section includes an overview of the activities and configurations of your philanthropic effort and illuminates underlying ideas and frameworks that may be embedded within your work. We reflect this back to your team through writing and graphics. Some examples include: an organizational learning chart, a programmatic diagram, a skill

distribution graphic, a geographic reach map, a or a learning diagram. The emphasis in this section is the function and form of the strategy as it is located within this particular place.

Information sources: This section involves listing the various types of information that are readily created through your existing processes and efforts. The focus here is predominantly on written information but, where available, other sources are included. Videos, email exchanges, and regularly scheduled conversations can all be information sources. One aspect of identifying information is to follow responses to questions like who, where, when and through what mechanisms.

Paths and Spaces: This section provides an analysis that grows from the above descriptions and surfaces shared meaning making as the core of knowledge process. The analysis accounts for programmatic, management, decision-making, and action structures. It provides a scaffold of current knowledge structures and foreshadows the potential for an integrated knowledge strategy.

Possibilities: The remainder of the report is used to share ideas about frames, tools, and resources to consider for increasing effectiveness and impact. This section is not bound to existing barriers but rather takes in all the information that is obtained through the scan and offers emergent insights and opportunities.

A knowledge opportunity scan provides a useful and usable analysis that is grounded in your change investments and your continuous learning. Embracing a knowledge integration approach to your change strategy can be the key to maximizing your efforts and meeting your equity goals.

Our Mission

At Knowledge Designs to Change, we believe that every nonprofit organization, every funder, every civic initiative, no matter what size or monetary value, operates within a network of potential. Each change effort can help build a more equitable, engaged community and contribute to structural change. Figuring out how to change, and how to activate change, is what we call knowledge work.

Brief Bio

Angela K. Frusciante, MRP, PhD is principal and founder of Knowledge Designs to Change, a strategic research and knowledge practice serving philanthropic organizations and the social sector. Angela has over 20 years of experience in the social sector and is dedicated to advancing equity and supporting individuals and organizations in reaching their full potential. As a socio-political scholar, she believes in the power of the social sector to influence larger systemic and social change through knowledge building, civic design, and the effectiveness of public work

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