

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy

Triangle Trust 1949 Fund wants to understand more about the difference our funding has helped to make. We want to be able to talk about the contribution our grants have made to changing young people's lives: we want to know more about the types of changes that have happened as well as the scale of those changes, including the numbers of people that have been supported.

Our Theory of Change also commits us to learning from the work that we fund. We want to support grant holders, and collaborate with other funders and relevant stakeholders, to understand how and why change happens and how we can best support that. Understanding what works best, under what circumstances, will enable us to use all of our resources to the greatest possible effect.

This document provides an overview of our monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) strategy. More detailed information on our reporting requirements for grantees are provided as part of our assessment process and are available on our website.

1. Reasons why we need a MEL strategy

As a funder that wants to make best use of the money and wider set of assets that we have available. To do this effectively we need to base our aims, strategy goals and the decisions we make about what applications to support and which organisations to work with, on learning, our existing knowledge and where possible evidence.

This evidence can either be our own based on what our grantees are showing us, or produced by others, and we will use it to look at how and why change happens, and how this change can be sustained and potentially replicated. We are interested in this at both an individual, local and national level and will aim to support work that helps us to do this. We also want to be able to share with other funders and stakeholders what our funding has achieved to both raise awareness of the issues we support and shine a light on gaps and opportunities for partnership working. This might be between funders, policy makers and delivery organisations. Just as importantly, this evidence and learning will help to support our own understanding of the issues we support and improve our approach to supporting work in these areas. This will help us to make the most of the limited assets and resources that we have.

Generating evidence about work that takes place plays an important part in making a case for support, designing new projects and informing the ongoing delivery of current projects. The process needs to be proportionate to the size and capacity of funded organisations though and our MEL strategy needs to support grantees to be able to manage and develop their approach to MEL in a robust but ultimately individual way. We need to ensure that our approach to MEL enables grantees to ask the right questions about the work they do to help them understand their contribution to impact in a way that is useful to them. As part of recognising the size of organisations and the resources that they have available to them, we will aim to only ask for information that is useful and will be used for more than just grant management purposes.

2. Our core beliefs

As a funder that aims to be supportive and enabling, our overarching principle for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning is that our systems will be rooted in only asking grantees for information we need and will use. We will frame our reporting requirements in a way that isn't overly onerous but also helps grantees to reflect on their work and adds value to their project delivery.

Developing relationships with grantees is an important part of a MEL approach and these relationships should underpin a trust-based approach. We will acknowledge reporting that is submitted to us and feedback to grantees about their reports as a way of helping to identify challenges, ask questions and celebrate successes.

3. Strategy aims

In order to ensure that our approach reflects the intentions above, we have linked our monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy around three key elements of our overall grant strategy. This underpins our strategic commitment to supporting work that focuses on young people in contact with, or at high risk of contact with, the criminal justice system and reducing reoffending rates and the number of first convictions received.

2.1. Project and strategic grants made to organisations supporting young offenders and those at high risk of offending

This area remains the key activity of the trust and alongside funding great work that makes a difference to the lives of young people, we want to improve the quality of evidence about what is being achieved.

We want grant holders to feel confident in taking ownership of their MEL, and able to engage meaningfully with project beneficiaries to ensure their MEL is accurate and effective. We want to support them to do this and do it well. This means ensuring those we support have the capacity to provide robust evidence of the difference they make, and of what works, to enable them to prove and improve their work.

We will do this by providing grantees with access to Upshot, an easy-to-use online system for funders and deliverers of all sizes to monitor, evaluate and learn from their data. This will provide an opportunity for grantees to become more insight led, and particularly for smaller organisations, to manage their output and impact data in a more effective way.

As part of our investment in small organisations we will provide access to Upshot for the whole organisation, not just our grant monitoring and reporting, for the duration of the funding. For organisations who already have a MEL system in place they will be able to use Upshot to upload their reporting.

This will cost a maximum of £500 per grantee per year as well as a license fee of approximately £1,200 per year. This will be paid for out of the annual grants budget.

2.2. Share learning of what works widely

We want to demonstrate the difference our funding makes in order to raise awareness of the issues we support to other funders and stakeholders, and help grantees to evidence the impact they are making.

We will use Upshot to help us understand the data that grantees give us across all of our funding. A consistent set of social impact areas and indicators have been identified for the 5-year strategy that was launched in April 2023. (attached as appendix 1). These provide a pre-identified set of changes (across individual development, health and well-being, education, employability and social and community cohesion) recognised as being crucial to addressing offending behaviour in young people.

The data that we receive from grantees around these social impact areas, alongside the case studies and other information they share, will be used to highlight our work. We will continue to share data with 360Giving but also look for opportunities to speak at events and sector meetings. We will contribute to consultations where appropriate and share reports on any evaluations that are undertaken. We will use our website to also share the work that we have supported, providing examples of case studies alongside other qualitative data and quantitative data. This will help to provide an overall picture of what needs are being addressed, the numbers of people being helped and the changes that are occurring in their lives.

We may also commission our own evaluations when we need further evidence of the difference our funding makes to support specific cohorts of grantees, sectors or approaches. We may also use our funding to test new or existing approaches and will link this funding with effective ways to show others the results of this work.

2.3. Networking opportunities between grantees supported

As part of our wider grant offer, we are committed to helping grantees make the most of the natural connections that exist between their organisations, projects and the wider work they are doing. We want to provide opportunities for grantees to share their challenges and achievements with each other and to learn from each other. As part of our grant making strategy, we are working with Cranfield Trust to deliver the Spark Programme, a funder plus offer that provides consultancy support, mentoring and networking opportunities to grantees. The Peer 2 Peer Exchanges we run with cohorts of grantees provide valuable opportunities for staff to meet each other and build supportive and collaborative relationships. Alongside this we will through the life time of our grants provide other opportunities for grantees to interact with each other with the express intention of helping them to refine their programmes and increase their likelihood of delivering successful interventions. The MEL information collected by grantees will play an important role in helping them to understand the impact they are making and share this with their peers.

4. How Triangle Trust will deliver this strategy

We will:

- Provide support, resources and systems to help grantees to develop robust and appropriate MEL frameworks and to increase organisational MEL capacity. We will do this through providing support during the assessment process, providing Upshot to grantees (who provide training around MEL frameworks as well as a monitoring and reporting platform) and through the Spark Programme via consultancy opportunities and webinars etc.
- Invest in our staff's knowledge to ensure that they have relevant and up to date knowledge and skills on MEL.
- Where appropriate, and where it will add value, we may commission thematic evaluations to understand what has been achieved through our funding and what has been learnt across similar projects.
- Track and share the data that we collect on spending against our priority areas, such as target groups, types of organisations, geography of awards and types of interventions being

supported. We will use this information to inform our decision making, advertising of funding opportunities and future grant making focus.

- Review how and when we use the data we collect at least every two years to ensure that we are a) collecting the right information, b) collecting it in the right way and c) that we are using it as we have committed to.
- Use the aggregated data we collect to inform the content of our annual report in terms of reporting back on the grants we have made and the impact we have contributed to.
- Seek feedback from grantees and applicants on our grant making and our ongoing grant management.