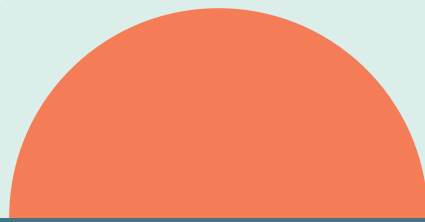


Sharing Insights

Evaluating Fund for Shared Insight,
a Decade of Listening in the Social Sector



ORSIMPACT

It has been an incredible privilege for ORS Impact to be a partner on this journey for 12 years. We do our best work in strong partnership with people who want to learn, improve, and advance equity and justice through their work. Fund for Shared Insight exemplified the kind of context we thrive in, and we hope this work continues to add value to the collaborative and the field.

We write this report with gratitude to many people who provided feedback on our evaluation design and draft report. All of your advice made this work stronger, and any lingering imperfections are ours to own. Thanks to (in alphabetical order):

- Arelis Diaz
- Julia Coffman
- Karuna Chibber
- Meg Long
- Yvonne Belanger

Shared Insight staff also provided feedback and guidance to strengthen this report, including Melinda Tuan, Gita Gulati-Partee, Rick Moyers, Debra Blum, and Michelle Mengel.

This work would not have been possible without the many contributions from Shared Insight core funders over time, who helped us ask good questions, implement strong approaches, and pushed us for good and actionable products, including:

- Former co-chairs Fay Twersky, Hilary Pennington, Kathy Reich, Lissette Rodriguez, Kelley Gulley and Jehan Velji
- Former evaluation subcommittee members Meredith Blair Pearlman, Kim Amman Howard, and Veronica Olazabal
- Former core funders Elizabeth Christopherson, Brian Walsh, and Lindsay Louie

Contents

4 Introduction

- 6 Evaluating Shared Insight's Strategy Over Time
- 9 Report Structure
- 11 Ways to Read This Report

12 Background

- 13 Shared Insight's Strategy and Evolution Over Time
- 14 Core Approaches and Evolutions Over Time
- 22 Overview of Findings**

24 Results

- 26 Outcome: Robust Sustainable Field
- 40 Outcome: More Active Champions and Supporters for Foundation Listening
- 46 Outcome: High-Quality Resources and Examples to Support Foundation Listening Changes
- 50 Outcome: More Leaders and Staff in Nonprofits Listen, Respond, and Shift Power to Those Most Impacted by Structural Racism and Systemic Intersectional Inequities
- 58 Learning About Equity and Power Shifting**
- 60 Outcome: More Leaders and Staff in Foundations Listen, Respond, and Shift Power to Those Most Impacted by Structural Racism and Systemic Intersectional Inequities
- 66 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Within Shared Insight's Strategy: Evolution and Results**

68 Sector-Level Results and Contributions

- 70 Outcome: Nonprofit Norms and Practices
- 76 Outcome: Foundation Norms and Practices

84 Looking Ahead

- 85 Opportunities Ahead
- 86 Nonprofit Feedback Practice
- 88 Funder Norms and Practices
- 90 Overall Observations
- 94 Conclusion

96 Appendices

- 96 Appendix A: Methodology, Strengths, and Limitations
- 100 Appendix B: Theories of Change Over Time
- 103 Appendix C: Bibliography

Foreword by Melinda T. Tuan

Dear Friends,

In the beginning of 2014, when Fay Twersky and Lindsay Louie at the Hewlett Foundation asked if I would be interested in providing support to a newly formed funder collaborative, I had no idea what an amazing journey I was about to embark upon. The (true story) joke is that Fay, who was a founding co-chair, originally said it would be about 10 hours of work a week and involve traveling maybe three times a year. As it turns out, managing Fund for Shared Insight—a 12-year, \$78 million national funder collaborative with the mission of improving philanthropy by helping funders listen to shift power to community—takes a bit more time and travel than expected! And it's been a privilege and pure joy for me every step of the way.

Fay and I had worked together before when I was managing director of REDF (formerly the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund), where her firm served as our evaluation partner and she was embedded as a member of our management team. That experience shaped our thinking about the value of integrating evaluation, so when we launched Shared Insight, we committed to embedding an evaluation partner from the start and selected ORS Impact.

Over the past 12 years, Sarah Stachowiak, later joined by Juan Clavijo, steadily held up a mirror to our evolving theories of change and rigorously evaluated individual initiatives such as Listen4Good, our participatory grantmaking project, and our international efforts. These evaluations will remain available on the Shared Insight and ORS Impact websites to inform the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors.

Shared Insight was never designed to be an ongoing concern. From the outset, we structured the collaborative as a time-bound effort, operating as a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors (RPA), with funders committing in three-year phases. In 2022, when it became clear that our core funders would likely support one final phase, we began preparing for our 2026 sunset. As we planned the wind-down, we knew we wanted to commission a summative evaluation that could capture what we learned and offer it to the field.

In this report, ORS takes stock of what Shared Insight set out to accomplish, what we achieved, and where we fell short, distilling lessons we hope will strengthen future efforts to improve philanthropy. Given the timing of our sunset and the rapidly shifting conditions in the social sector, we chose to focus the analysis on Shared Insight's first decade, from 2014 to 2024.

Ultimately, we believe that listening to community is an essential racial equity and power-shifting practice. In the opening months of 2026, we have seen communities in places such as Minneapolis, as our current co-chair Arelis Diaz puts it, “creating solutions grounded in community voice, love, and solidarity.” As you read this summative evaluation, we hope you will connect the findings to why

this work matters now and always and how it can support funders navigating polarization, community distrust, and democratic fragility.

The work of Shared Insight is not done. Through Listen4Good and Listen to Community, two initiatives born from this funder collaborative, along with other efforts and resources, our goal to make listening to shift power to community standard practice across nonprofits and philanthropy will carry forward.

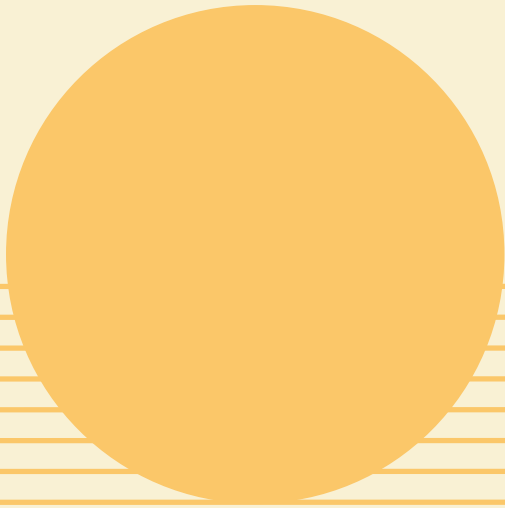
We hope this summative evaluation informs your work and strengthens your resolve to listen in ways that advance racial equity and power shifting. And we hope the lessons from Fund for Shared Insight will live on in your efforts to center the communities at the heart of your work. As Kelley Gulley, former co-chair of Shared Insight, says, “May we all learn to listen deeply enough to be changed by what we hear.”

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melinda T. Tuan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Melinda Tuan, Managing Director

Introduction



In 2014, a group of eight funders decided to pool funds and collaborate around their shared interests in improving the social sector. Fund for Shared Insight (Shared Insight) was thus created with the belief that philanthropy could have a greater impact if foundations and nonprofits listened to the people they seek to help, acted on what they heard, and openly shared what they learned.

Over the next 10 years, Shared Insight contributed \$75 million cumulative dollars toward this north star, refining its strategy and approaches over time, as conditions changed and progress was made. With the plan to wind down the funder collaborative in 2026, we, ORS Impact, Shared Insight's evaluation and learning partner, wanted to stop, reflect, and evaluate:



This report shares the answer to these questions, based on a decade of data collection and reports, along with additional data we collected in early 2025. Importantly, this evaluation covers strategies and progress made toward outcomes between 2014 and 2024. While Shared Insight's work officially concludes in June 2026, we moved up our evaluation and final data collection efforts to early 2025 in light of rapidly changing conditions in the social sector. While this means we cannot include efforts and outcomes for the last year of operations in the evaluation, we believe it is the best way to accurately portray what happened in the preceding decade.



Evaluating Shared Insight's Strategy Over Time

Over the life of Shared Insight, ORS Impact served as the evaluation and learning partner, producing an initial baseline around the goals envisioned for the first three years, annual three-year lookbacks, and several dozen interim products focused on strengthening various aspects of Shared Insight's activities and strategies. This evaluation gave us the unique opportunity to lift up and evaluate Shared Insight's strategy over 10 years, understand what its strategic approaches achieved, and the degree to which Shared Insight contributed to any shifts in sector-level areas of interest. Our purpose is twofold:



To help Shared Insight's funders and staff understand the cumulative impact and efficacy of its work over time



To help a broader audience of funders and nonprofits take lessons away from the strategic approaches undertaken and, for those interested, to build upon the progress achieved thus far

For this effort, we conceptualized strategy, outcomes, and contributions in the following ways:

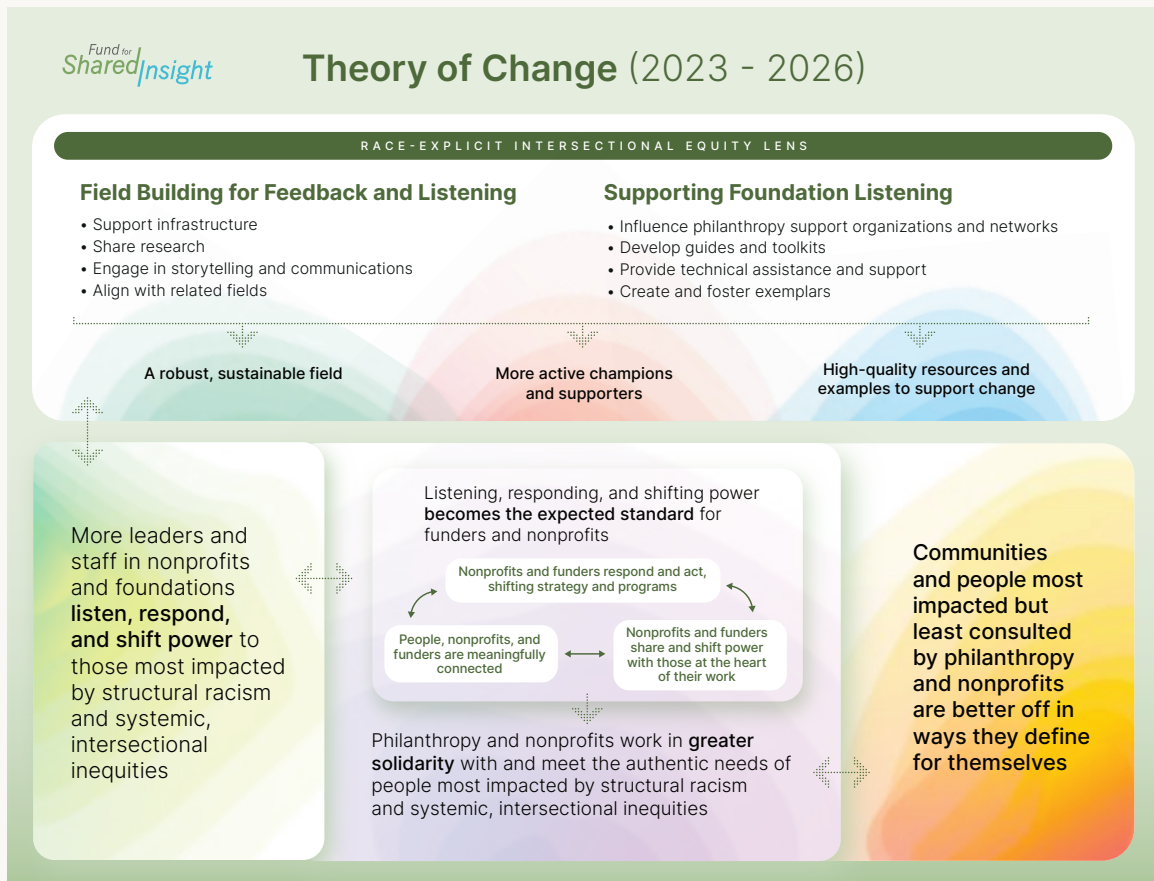
- **When thinking about strategy**, we considered both strategy conceptualization and implementation. Conceptualization included looking at the following: What core approaches were taken? What was the level of effort, and how commensurate was it to desired outcomes? Implementation of strategy needed to consider how well strategic approaches were operationalized and actualized toward Shared Insight's aims.
- **When thinking about outcomes**, we wanted to look both at what Shared Insight achieved among those most proximate to the efforts undertaken, as well as sector-level impacts or influences, including how areas of interest changed at a field level.
- **In thinking about contribution**, we take a broader view than thinking of a sole or primary contributor as the only or most valuable type of contribution possible. Building upon Schlangen and Coe's typology of contribution types across advocates in *No Royal Road*,¹ we believe that roles such as "team contributor" or "important contributor" (i.e., one of many) or "key role player" (i.e., filling a specific, discrete niche) are also valuable. Particularly in assessing contribution to sector-level changes of interest, we use data gleaned from those outside of Shared Insight's team to help make these judgments. This is most relevant for assessing Shared Insight's role in any sector-level changes over time, which are more indirectly and cumulatively connected to their work, as well as more strongly impacted by external factors and other related efforts in the field.

1. Coe, Jim, and Rhonda Schlangen. "No Royal Road: Finding and Following the Natural Pathways in Advocacy Evaluation." 2019. <https://rhondaschlangen.com/no-royal-road-natural-pathways-in-advocacy-evaluation/>.

One interesting challenge in evaluating Shared Insight's strategy over time was deciding what to anchor our assessment on, given shifts in strategic approaches and the theory of change. We chose to assess the cumulative effort and impacts within the current core outcomes of

the current theory of change, adopted by the collaborative in 2023 (Figure 1). We found through lines from the core approaches and outcomes, making this a relevant anchoring point, though implementation against this theory of change has not been fully realized.

Figure 1 | Fund for Shared Insight Theory of Change (2023–2026)



Report Structure

The findings are organized into two key sections:

1. Results

For five outcomes more directly connected to Shared Insight's strategic approaches, we share the overall outcome status and strategy assessment, describe the strategic approaches taken over time, and provide supporting evidence with more detail about findings that support our overall assessment.

2. Sector-Level Results and Contribution

We summarize changes over time in the nonprofit and foundation sector norms and practices related to listening, responding, and shifting power and assess Shared Insight's contribution to positive changes, where they are in evidence.

Table 1 | Findings Section Structure

Results	Sector-Level Results and Contributions
<p>Theory of Change Outcomes Assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust, sustainable field • More active champions and supporters for foundation listening • High-quality resources and examples to support foundation listening changes • More leaders and staff in nonprofits and foundations listen, respond, and shift power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic intersectional inequities (nonprofits and funders are addressed separately) <p>What is Covered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment: Outcome Status and Strategy Assessment • Strategic Approach Over Time • Supporting Evidence 	<p>Theory of Change Outcomes Assessed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening, responding, and shifting power becomes the expected standard for funders and nonprofits (nonprofits and funders are addressed separately) <p>What is Covered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Status and Shared Insight Contribution • Supporting Evidence

To make our assessments, we relied on key data sources:

- Past evaluation reports that use primary data
- Themes from a repeated purposive sample of evaluation directors of foundations conducted in 2015 and 2025
- Comparative sector-level data from The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) surveys
- One-time interviews with sector “bellwethers,” a group of 12 individuals we interviewed as people who have visibility into trends and priorities within the nonprofit and foundation sectors, but who are not direct grantees or closely connected to Shared Insight’s work
- Other available data in the sector, including media, conference programs, organizational websites, and resource download data
- Administrative data from Shared Insight and some of its main grantees

Our ability to triangulate among these different and complementary data sources gives us confidence in the ratings we provide as we assess the different strategies and corresponding results. The Methodological Appendix (Appendix A) provides more details on our sources, approach, strengths, and limitations.

Unsurprisingly, this report won’t be a complete accounting of every activity undertaken and dollar spent. This report takes a higher-level view of Shared Insight’s efforts from 2014 through the end of 2024. This evaluation is one of many products Shared Insight is leaving the field to share its learning and support continued progress. Additionally, other evaluation products, including ORS Impact’s evaluations over the years, exist as stand-alone products that provide greater levels of detail and lessons learned.

Ways to Read This Report

Ten years and \$75 million dollars of investment warrants a thorough examination. You may be very interested and want to read every word of this report. Or, your interests might be more narrow, in which case you can use alternative approaches to reading the report, including:



Focus on the facts:

if you want top-line findings, you can see key takeaways at the front end of each outcome and sector result and skim through headlines and highlighted content to get the gist. If something intrigues you, you can dig in.



Explore specific strategy interests:

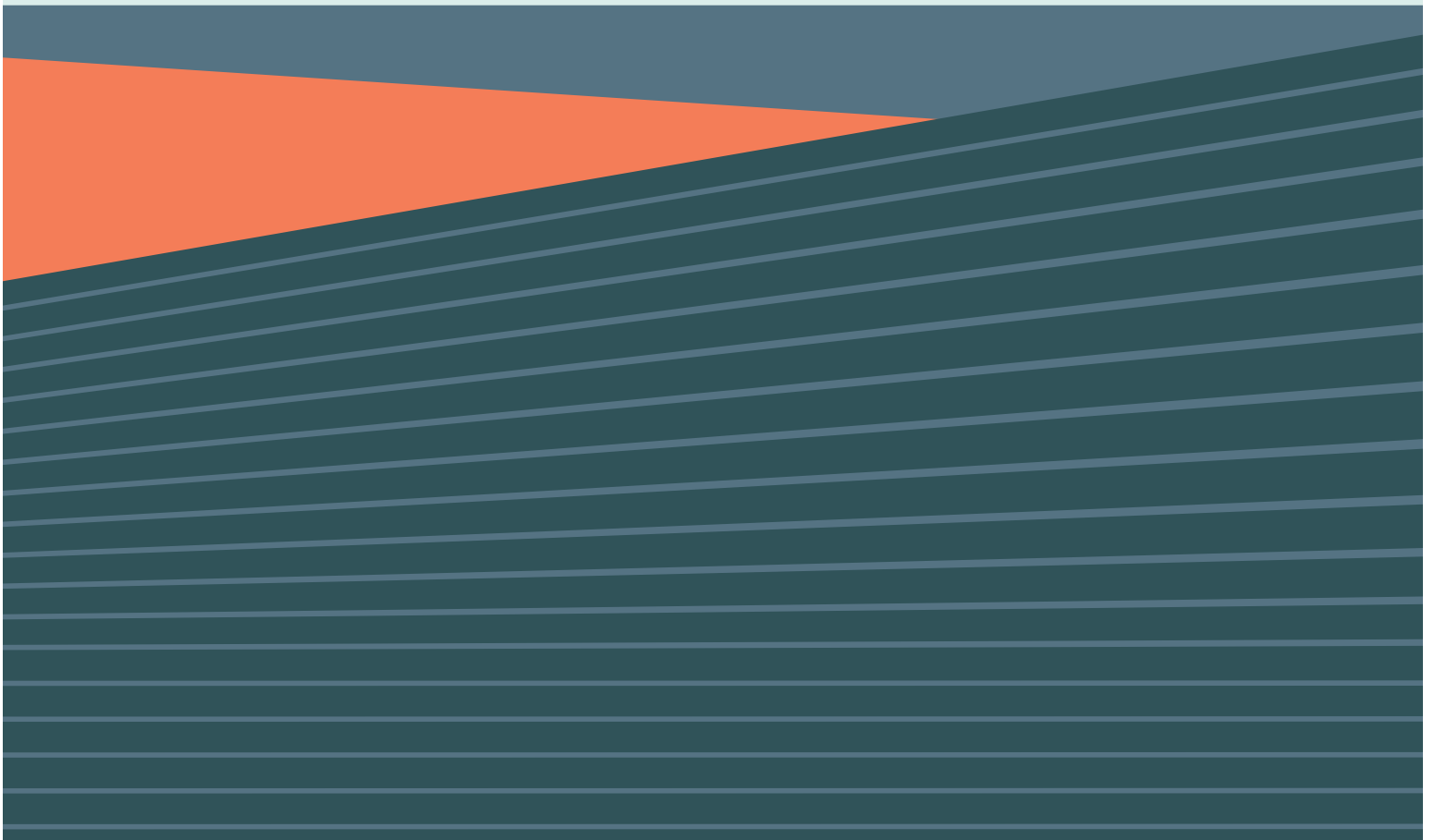
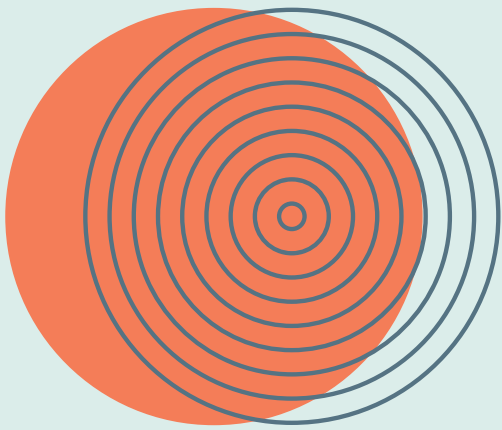
you may be reading this with particular interests, including specific types of strategic approaches (e.g., field building, shifting the philanthropic sector, creating scalable programs). If this is the case, check out the table of contents to find the related outcome area, then you can read about the approaches and results in your area of interest.



Explore philanthropic practice:

you might read this with interest in understanding how strategy shifted over the course of 10 years or how the collaborative embedded equity into its work over time. For the former, the strategy overview and strategic approach sections may provide useful information. For the focus on equity, we have some specific call-out sections and suggest skimming headlines to see where equity shows up in results over time.

Background



Shared Insight's Strategy and Evolution Over Time

Since its founding, Shared Insight has operated and evolved through three theories of change that reflected the priorities, interests, and hypotheses at different points in time. In this section, we cover some of the ways the work of Shared Insight has evolved, as well as how the key aspects of the external context in which Shared Insight has been operating has shifted over time.

Why so much context and background?

To evaluate the efficacy of Shared Insight's strategy over 10 years, it's important to understand how the organization conceptualized its approaches, how they evolved strategies as part of their emergent strategy approach, and how the context in which work occurred may have supported or hindered its results. The strategy was not implemented in a laboratory. Understanding what might be replicable or applied toward other aims or in different times requires situating Shared Insight's work appropriately.

Core Approaches and Evolutions Over Time

Throughout its existence, Shared Insight focused efforts on changing nonprofits’ and funders’ practices around listening and feedback. The balance of effort and specific approaches taken evolved over time, as lessons were learned, funders entered and left the core funder table, and the external context shifted. Ultimately, we categorized Shared Insight’s approaches into key “strategic approach” categories and grouped them according to the sector that they were meant to influence, as shown in Table 2. These approaches are described in more detail in the relevant outcome areas, while Table 4 provides an overview of shifts over time.

Table 2 | Shared Insight’s Strategic Approaches by Target Sector²

Nonprofit-Focused Work	Funder-Focused Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building and strengthening feedback infrastructure Building the evidence base for feedback Building the feedback field Creating large, scalable feedback models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure support Champion identification and support Resource and tool development Direct funder engagement

2. These strategies were meant to influence two very different sectors, with varying influencing factors, incentives, lines of accountability, starting points of practice, and more. While these differences led to varying strategic choices, more detailed description of Shared Insight’s strategy development is not within the scope of this product.

It's also useful to understand five key ways Shared Insight's work evolved over time:

- 1. Shared Insight initially focused more on influencing nonprofit feedback practices. Influencing foundation listening practices evolved more and grew over time.** In 2014, Shared Insight began with an explicit focus to put 80% of its efforts toward nonprofit feedback practice and 20% of its efforts toward foundation listening and sharing. While the pendulum of effort swung in more recent years, with most of the effort, time, and resources going toward funder practice change, it does mean that work on nonprofit practice had a longer time to solidify, mature, and advance in a more consistent way over time than the funder practice work. Additionally, work to change funder practice had varied foci over time, evolving from "openness" to "listening and sharing" to "listening, responding, and shifting power." Early efforts also focused on how funders could increasingly support and promote nonprofit feedback practices as well as changing their own practices internally.
- 2. Shared Insight's role evolved from primarily grantmaking to a more diversified approach that increasingly emphasized convening, communications, and staff-led implementation.** As shown in Table 3, during Phase 1 the sole approach for achieving change was through grantmaking. As time went on, Shared Insight deployed a mix of resources, using its convening power and voice in Phases 2 and 3. In the final phase, Phase 4, grantmaking has been a less-used approach, with more resources supporting staff implementation of strategic approaches, alongside ongoing communications and voice work, particularly around efforts to change funder practice.

Table 3 | Total Investments

	Key Inputs for Nonprofit Feedback Practice	Key Inputs for Funder Practice Change
Phase 1 (2014–2017) ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$12.5M 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.4M
Phase 2 (2017–2020) ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$9M in grants • \$5.2M in supports⁵ and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ 135,260 invested in supports,⁶ no new grants
Phase 3 (2020–2023) ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.5M in grants+ • \$7.9M in supports (Listen4Good (L4G), consultant support, Feedback Champions program, research dissemination, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.8M in grants+ • \$1.8M in supports (Participatory Grantmaking, international work, Funder Listening Community of Practice)
Phase 4 (2023–2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4.4M in grants • \$78,330 in supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1M in grants • \$1.4M in supports (events, sponsorships, Listen to Community initiative, staff allocation)

3. ORS Impact. Fund for Shared Insight: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned from the First Three Years, 2014–2017. ORS Impact, 2017. https://orsimpact.com/docs/evaluating_the_accomplishments_lessons_learned_from_the_first_3_years_2018.pdf

4. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned, 2017–2020." ORS Impact, 2020. https://orsimpact.com/docs/accomplishments_lessons_learned_2017-2020.pdf

5. Includes coaching, central staffing, web app, SurveyMonkey, third-party efforts, including business plan, UX consulting, market research, and data analysis for Phase 2.

6. This includes specific outreach and engagement-staffing support but does not include other staff time that contributed to this area of work.

7. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Accomplishments and Reflections from Phase Three, 2020–2023." ORS Impact, 2023. https://orsimpact.com/docs/accomplishments_reflections_from_phase_three_2020-2023.pdf

- 3. Shared Insight’s work was guided by three theories of change during this period: In the first three years, Shared Insight operated with logic models across its three priority areas.** After the initial three-year phase, they developed a theory of change that guided the work for six years (during Phases 2 and 3). Based on progress and shifts in interest and foci, the theory of change was updated for the final three-year phase (Phase 4). That means that, within this decade, one theory of change was in force for the majority of the time, and the most recent theory of change has had less time to be implemented. See Appendix B to review the theories of change over time.
- 4. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) became increasingly central to Shared Insight’s work over time.** In Phase 1, EDI was not an explicit part of Shared Insight’s theory of change. However, early conversations and explorations gave way to increased commitments during Phase 1, where one of the first steps that Shared Insight took was to define EDI for itself. This, along with emergent examples of equity in nonprofits’ feedback work, motivated Shared Insight and core funders to turn their focus more explicitly on the ways in which equity and feedback are connected. In 2017, core funders brought on Gita Gulati-Partee to help bring a more consistent EDI lens to the work, beginning with baking EDI into the updated theory of change for 2017 to 2020 and documenting it as one of the core values of Shared Insight. In 2023, this evolved into a “race-explicit intersectional lens” across all efforts and outcomes oriented toward “listening, responding and shifting power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities” and an expectation that changes in practice could lead to philanthropy and nonprofits working in greater solidarity with the communities their work is intended to benefit.
- 5. Shared Insight raised the bar in alignment with its values over time, setting higher expectations for power shifts in the final phase.** For the purposes of our evaluation, Shared Insight remained consistently focused on a core goal: changing the “expected standard” for listening and feedback among foundations and nonprofits. In 2023, however, the theory of change bumped up the expectation from “high-quality feedback and listening practices that reflect equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations” becoming an expected standard among foundations and nonprofits to “listening, responding, and shifting power” becoming the expected standard.

Table 4 | Overview of Evolutions Over Time

	Phase 1	Phase 2	
	2014–2017	2017–2020	
Goal	Philanthropy grows increasingly effective at contributing to social and environmental change.	The people and communities we seek to help, especially those whose voices are least heard, are better off in ways they define for themselves.	→
Resources Spent	\$21.1M	\$21.5M	
Core Approaches: Nonprofits	Feedback practice Feedback research	Build nonprofit feedback practice Build a feedback field	→
Core Approaches: Foundations	Foundation openness to foundation listening and sharing	Build foundation feedback and listening Core funders walking the walk Experiment and innovate	→
Shared Insight's Approach	Primarily grantmaking	Grantmaking with increased use of convening and communications role	
Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Approach	Started more implicitly but more explicitly discussed and articulated by the end of this period	Equity, diversity, inclusion lenses built into theory of change and explicit in all work, EDI consultant added to team, development of principles and practices for advancing equity	

	Phase 3	Phase 4
	2020–2023	2023–2026 ⁸
--->	<i>continued from Phase 2</i>	Communities and people most impacted but least consulted by philanthropy and nonprofits are better off in ways they define for themselves.
	\$21.4M	\$10.8M
--->	<i>continued from Phase 2</i>	Build a field for feedback and listening
--->	<i>continued from Phase 2</i>	Support foundation listening
	Grantmaking with increased staff work to create products and supports, alongside communications work	Less grantmaking, more focus on staff leading elements of the work
	Made equity essential to the definition of “high-quality feedback”; overall, assessed as more embedded, less “bolted on”; more delineation of diversity, equity and inclusion aims and how they are expressed in strategy, grants, and outcomes	More explicit and earlier expectation that leaders and staff in nonprofits and foundations listen, respond, and shift power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities; race-explicit intersectional equity lens embedded in TOC

8. The final phase extends through June 2026 although this evaluation focuses on efforts through 2024.

Experiment and Innovate: Exploring Opportunities

After the early years of “startup” for the collaborative, core funders still had interest in exploring new areas of potential work. In the 2017 theory of change, the strategy of “experiment and innovate” was included to incubate additional ideas, which, if built out, Shared Insight could take into the strategy overall. The work resulted in two concrete areas of exploration:

Advocacy and policy change:

At the start, this work began with an interest in exploring how nonprofits that didn't have direct service constituencies, such as groups engaged in advocacy and policy change, might still engage in feedback that would serve their work in meaningful ways. This initially resulted in Shared Insight commissioning the Aspen Institute's Planning and Evaluation Program to conduct a [landscape scan](#),⁹ exploring whether and how U.S. funders and nonprofits focused on advocacy and policy seek to meaningfully connect with the people and communities their work is intended to benefit. This work eventually evolved into the Participatory Climate Initiative, which became more of an effort to change funder behavior by experimenting with power shifting through a participatory grantmaking process.

International:

A group of funders explored several options for expanding work outside of the U.S., first by conducting landscape scans to see if other geographies would be ripe for a local version of Listen4Good or other nonprofit feedback field building. Ultimately, the focus of the committee shifted to locally led development, which seeks to shift power, resources, and decision making from the Global North to Global South/local organizations, groups, and leaders. There is no evaluation data about this latest approach, and thus, it isn't included in the evaluation.

Interestingly, both started as explorations into expanded ways to support nonprofit feedback practices and shifted into a focus on changing funder behavior. Indeed, in the 2023 through 2026 period, engaging funders in these working groups was deemed to be a way to change those funders directly. Ultimately, “experiment and innovate” was an important part of the story of how Shared Insight engaged funders and operated, but it is not itself a strategic approach for our evaluation.

9. Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program. “Landscape Scan: Meaningfully Connecting with Communities in Advocacy and Policy Work.” Fund for Shared Insight, 2019. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/evaluation/landscape-scan-meaningfully-connecting-with-communities-in-advocacy-and-policy-work/>.

External Context

Listening to and collaborating with community representatives was a key way foundations advanced equity, especially during COVID-19 and the racial reckoning.

Shared Insight shifted and evolved over time. Changes in the external context during this period also shape how we understand what was accomplished and how Shared Insight contributed to broader sector changes.

In retrospect, Shared Insight implemented its strategies in a generally favorable environment. Significant external events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning and uprisings in 2020, while socially disruptive, provided a ripe environment for advancing Shared Insight's work that focused on listening, equity, and shifting power. In this period, the philanthropic sector's increased focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion opened windows of opportunity to examine and address power dynamics in the sector and question the extent to which communities had any influence on what foundations decided on their behalf. Listening and working in a stronger partnership with community representatives was one way in which foundations operationalized their focus on equity, which became stronger in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning.

Additionally, other areas of momentum within the sector aligned with Shared Insight's interests. For example, Trust-Based Philanthropy describes itself as "advance[ing] a just and equitable society by alleviating the inherent power imbalances between funders, nonprofits, and communities. With a commitment to shifting power, advancing equity, and building mutually accountable relationships, the Trust-Based Philanthropy Project positions funders as collaborators working alongside nonprofits to meet the needs and dreams of communities who are most removed from conventional power structures." Similarly, during this period, the Equitable Evaluation Initiative (EEI) gained momentum in its efforts to position evaluation and evaluative work in service of equity. EEI asks critical questions about how historical and structural decisions contribute to the conditions being addressed, how strategies affect different populations and the systemic drivers of inequity, and how cultural context shapes both structural conditions and the change initiative itself.¹⁰

10. The Equitable Evaluation Framework™ : May 2023 Expansion (Equitable Evaluation Framework and Equitable Evaluation Initiative, May 22, 2023), https://www.equitableeval.org/files/ugd/21786c_aab47695b0d2476d8de5d32f19bd6df9.pdf.

Overview of Findings

Results



Outcome:

A robust, sustainable field

Outcome Assessment:

WEAK MIXED **STRONG**

The nonprofit feedback field strengthened and further matured.

Strategy Assessment:

WEAK MIXED **STRONG**

A clearer and more focused long-term strategy, coupled with effective implementation, resulted in strong results over Shared Insight's tenure.



Outcome:

More active champions and supporters

Outcome Assessment:

WEAK **MIXED** STRONG

Philanthropy Infrastructure Organizations (PIOs)¹¹ are in greater alignment but with less progress in identifying other champions.

Strategy Assessment:

WEAK **MIXED** STRONG

There was strong design and implementation with PIOs, less strong implementation for individual champions, and less clear strategic focus early on.



Outcome:

High-quality resources and examples to support change

Outcome Assessment:

WEAK MIXED **STRONG**

Shared Insight made significant strides in building a well-recognized, highly utilized knowledge base that serves as a resource for field actors.

Strategy Assessment:

WEAK MIXED **STRONG**

Investing in staff time to create specifically aligned and well-targeted materials paid off—Shared Insight's contribution to the field in this respect is clear.



Outcome:

More leaders and staff in nonprofits listen, respond, and shift power

Outcome Assessment:

WEAK MIXED **STRONG**

Increased demand for technical support with feedback practices signals growing efforts by nonprofits to listen, and Listen4Good (L4G) successfully supported growing numbers of nonprofits.

Strategy Assessment:

WEAK MIXED **STRONG**

Creating scalable feedback models, and particularly, incubating L4G as a high-quality, capacity-building organization had strong results.



Outcome:

More leaders and staff in foundations listen, respond, and shift power

Outcome Assessment:

WEAK MIXED STRONG

There have been some shifts in values and understanding, but changes in actual funder practice have been limited and inconsistent.

Strategy Assessment:

WEAK MIXED STRONG

Early efforts were categorized as “light touch” and did not add up to more than the sum of their parts. It is too early to tell whether new strategies will result in stronger outcomes.

11. Philanthropy infrastructure organizations are also known as philanthropy support organizations (PSOs).

Sector-Level Results and Contribution



Outcome:

Nonprofit norms and practice

Field Status:

Increased alignment in practice and norms:

While most nonprofits report collecting feedback, practices largely seem to align more with Shared Insight's aims. Norms have remained high around listening to community.

Shared Insight Contribution:

An influential actor.

It is likely that the work advanced by field actors, including Shared Insight, has influenced the conversation, sustained momentum, and secured increased funder support for nonprofit practice.

Shared Insight was likely one influential player among many others in shaping changes in the nonprofit sector for norms and practices.



Outcome:

Funder norms and practice

Field Status:

Improved norms, less practice change:

There is increased interest in and momentum behind funder listening and progress toward listening becoming an expected standard, but there are important gaps between discourse and practice.

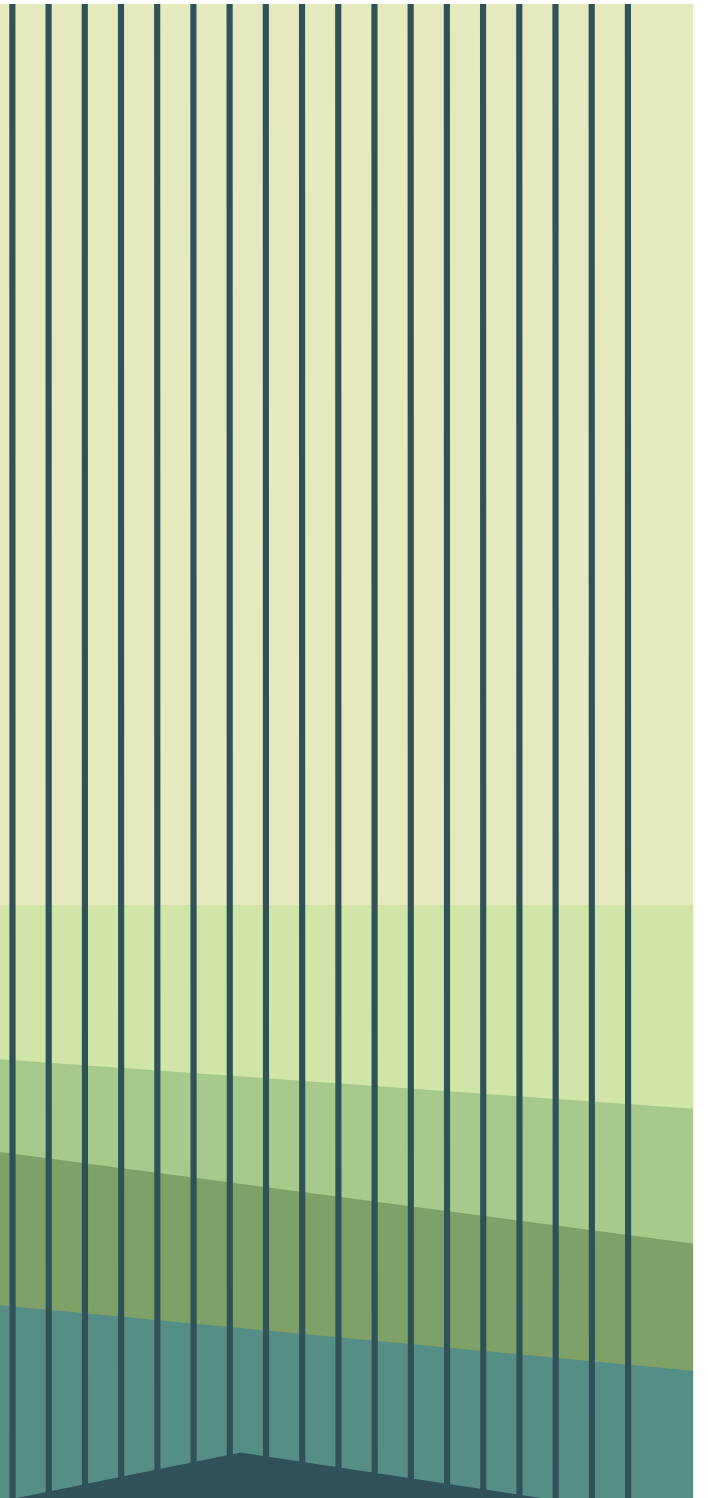
Shared Insight Contribution:

Other more visible contributions in a favorable environment.




While Shared Insight likely contributed to an increased value of listening, there were other, more visible contributors to these changes, and the work happened within a favorable environment.

Other organizations and seismic political and cultural events likely led to a beneficial convergence of related efforts and aligned actors.

Results



Over ten years, Shared Insight sought to make progress on five key outcomes represented in the current theory of change: a robust sustainable field; more active champions and supporters; high-quality resources and examples to support change; more leaders and staff in nonprofits listen, respond, and shift power; and more leaders and staff in foundations listen, respond, and shift power. For each outcome, we provide:

 Assessment: the outcome status and our assessment of Shared Insight's strategy relative to that outcome	 Strategic Approach Over Time: the types of approaches Shared Insight used over time to achieve this outcome	 Supporting Evidence: additional information on data and findings that led to our results assessment
--	--	--



Outcome: Robust Sustainable Field



Assessment

Outcome Status:

STRONG

The nonprofit feedback field strengthened across all facets of the Strong Field Framework in aligned ways over the past decade and further matured as a field. There is a stronger infrastructure, a more robust research base, and an embedded commitment to equity across actors, standards, and products.

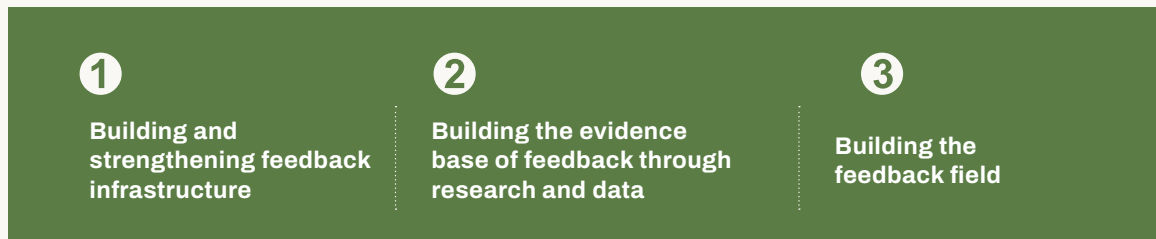
Strategy Assessment:

STRONG

Shared Insight's initial focus on "systems for hearing from the people we seek to help" led to early support for infrastructure groups and a focus on how to scale high-quality practice. The intentional adoption of the Strong Field Framework helped strengthen strategic partnerships and provide clarity about the ways Shared Insight could use its leadership and convening roles to participate in and advance the field beyond its grantmaking efforts. This understanding of its role in supporting and strengthening the field allowed Shared Insight to influence different elements and actors, thereby shaping the field's development. A clearer and more focused long-term strategy, coupled with effective implementation, resulted in strong results over Shared Insight's tenure. While there were other aligned field actors and efforts to work with and build upon, it is unlikely the field would have progressed in the same ways and at the same speed without Shared Insight's various contributions. Shared Insight's support played a key role as an important funder, in convening actors, developing infrastructure organizations (serving as an incubator for Listen4Good (L4G) and heavily supporting Feedback Labs and YouthTruth as they strengthened their position in the field over time), and through partnerships with individual organizations and collaborative efforts such as the Irritants for Change.

Strategic Approach Over Time

The strategy to strengthen the nonprofit feedback field has changed over time but generally included three approaches:



1 Build and Strengthen Feedback Infrastructure

Beginning with its first round of grantmaking, Shared Insight made infrastructure grants to provide resources to different segments of the nonprofit market. Over time, these grants explicitly became part of the field-building strategy:

- ▶ **Feedback Labs:** Feedback Labs supports the nonprofit and philanthropy fields in the United States and around the world by helping providers listen to and act on feedback from the people at the heart of their work in high-quality, equitable, and inclusive ways. Feedback Labs provides practical guidance and support to nonprofits and philanthropies on how to implement high-quality feedback loops. They collaborate with others to motivate and support nonprofits and organizations to listen well, curate feedback tools and offer trainings, and convene the feedback community to learn together.¹²
- ▶ **YouthTruth:** YouthTruth harnesses student perceptions to help K-12 school leaders, school system leaders, and foundation

leaders accelerate improvements so all students can learn and thrive. Through research-based surveys, wraparound support, and tailored advisory services, they partner with schools, districts, states, and funders to enhance learning for all students.¹³

- ▶ **Listen4Good:** Listen4Good was created in 2016 by Shared Insight as a capacity-building program to advance high-quality listening and feedback efforts across the social sector. L4G helps organizations gather, interpret, and respond to feedback from the people they serve. This unlocks opportunities for client perspectives to influence improvements in program design, strategy, and equity across both the short and long term, supporting more than 1,124 individual nonprofits cumulatively between 2016 and 2024. They also partner closely with grantmakers to advance their strategic priorities through the sponsorship of grantees to participate in L4G programs. (L4G development captured on page 45 in “Create Large, Scalable Feedback Models.”)¹⁴

12. Feedback Labs. “Feedback Labs.” n.d. Accessed March 4, 2026. <https://feedbacklabs.org/>.

13. YouthTruth. “YouthTruth.” n.d. Accessed March 4, 2026. <https://youthtruth.org/>.

14. Listen4Good. “Listen4Good.” n.d. Accessed March 4, 2026. <https://listen4good.org/>.

2 Build the Evidence Base of Feedback Through Research and Data

Shared Insight invested in research grants, funding and convening research partners, and building out net promoter score (NPS) research to create a benchmark that nonprofits could use to implement high-quality feedback loops. They sought to create more high-quality knowledge about best practices and understand if and when feedback practices connected to better program outcomes. They also sought to embed ideas about feedback among researchers and influence them, along with funders and nonprofits, about the importance of feedback work through research and lessons learned.

Shared Insight's initial strategy focused on generating knowledge about feedback practices and their impact, funding research to define quality feedback, and exploring feedback's role as a leading indicator of change. This work included efforts with Innovations for Poverty Action to incorporate feedback into existing research studies to explore the connection between feedback and outcomes and CalYouth in the Loop, a project Chapin Hall did in partnership with a communications firm called "i.e., communications" to collect feedback from foster youth to inform state advocacy efforts. Once field building became a formal strategy, research grants contributed to a growing link between feedback and equity. Throughout, equity has emerged as a driving force in how feedback is valued and applied.

While other field actors contributed to progress, the field likely would not have advanced as quickly or in the same ways without Shared Insight's input.

3 Build the Feedback Field

Although a field focus was not explicit in Shared Insight's first three years, it became a core strategy in 2018. Since then, Shared Insight has sought to influence the feedback field through communications, dedicated staff time and energy, and continued support for key institutional players and research. It also worked to promote shared definitions of quality, standards of practice, and a stronger focus on equity. For example, Shared Insight:

- Developed blogs and op-eds to drive increased attention to and interest in feedback among nonprofits and foundations. Early reports included a definition of Perceptual Feedback through L4G,¹⁵ CEP research among nonprofits and foundations,¹⁶ and a Harder + Company data-mining project.
- Presented in at least 32 sessions, webinars, or conferences with a philanthropy audience since 2020. While data on participants at these events is imperfect, Shared Insight's communications updates show that at least 900 people participated in these sessions.

- Participated in the Irritants for Change group—which includes organizations such as Candid and Charity Navigator—which had been working to make feedback a standard practice in the social sector and to develop incentives for nonprofits to use high-quality feedback practices.
- Participated in the Feedback Incentives Learning Group convened by Feedback Labs to promote support for feedback among funders.

In 2023, Shared Insight shifted its focus toward strengthening “standards of practice” as well as field alignment around those standards based on connections among feedback, equity, and shifting power. This commitment to advancing equity was reflected throughout the strategy: in efforts to advance a shared vision for listening to those most affected by structural inequities, in support for other actors' equity-related work, and in the collaborative's ability to leverage growing sector momentum to center equity.

15. Ekouté Consulting, *Perceptual Feedback: What's it all about?* (Ekouté Consulting, updated May 2021), <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Perceptual-Feedback-2021-final.pdf>.

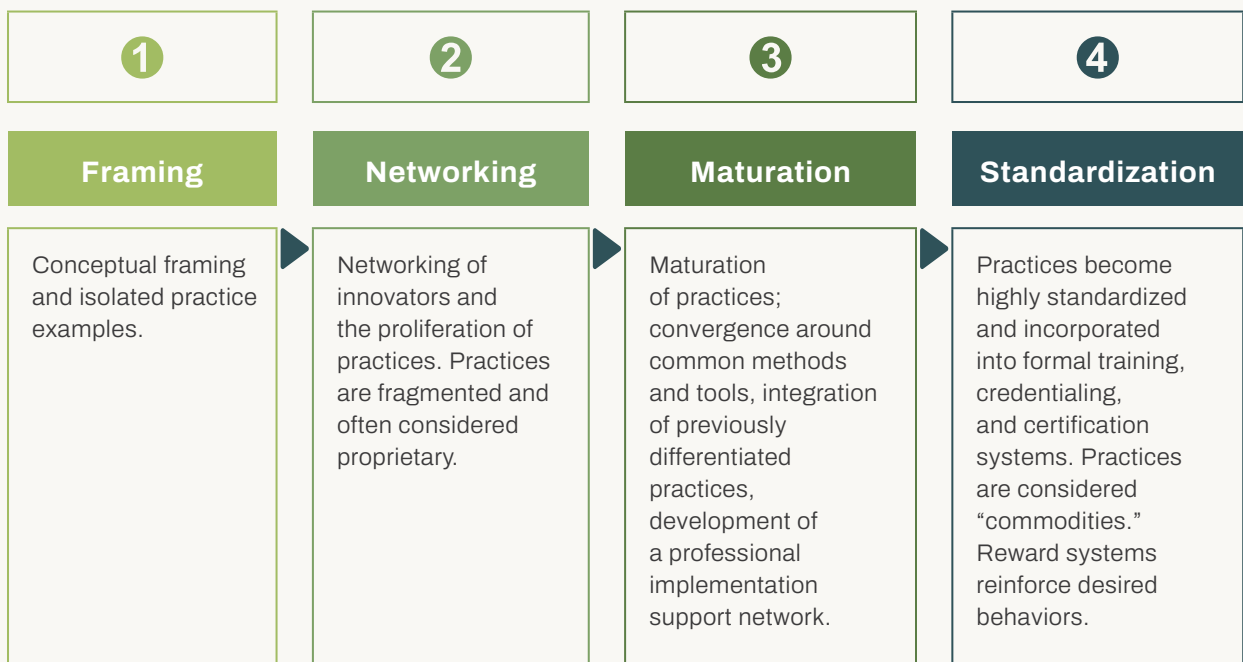
16. Buteau, Ellie, et al. *Hearing From Those We Seek to Help: Nonprofit Practices and Perspectives in Beneficiary Feedback*. Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2014. <https://cep.org/report/hearing-from-those-we-seek-to-help-nonprofit-practices-and-perspectives-in-beneficiary-feedback/>.

Supporting Evidence

The nonprofit feedback field strengthened and matured since 2014, progressing along all elements of a strong practice field.

In 2018, we found that the field was in the framing stage but moving toward the networking stage as described by Pete Plastrik and John Cleveland (Figure 2). The field was progressing from conceptual framing and isolated practice examples to increased networking and a proliferation of fragmented and sometimes proprietary practices. At the time, infrastructure organizations were developing a shared agenda, language, and standards of practice, while the knowledge base was more nascent and funding was limited to a few core actors, including Shared Insight as the main funder.

Figure 2 | The Evolution of Practice Fields¹⁷



17. Figure adapted from: Innovation Network of Communities, 2009, www.in4c.net.

In 2024, the field was in the networking phase, with some evidence of progress toward maturation. Specifically, since 2018, innovators and field leaders coalesced around shared language, definitions, and quality standards and developed joint initiatives to advance feedback practice that showed convergence of concepts and methods while maintaining proprietary tools that supported different segments of the nonprofit sector. Infrastructure organizations such as L4G, Feedback Labs, and YouthTruth, in partnership with service providers such as SurveyMonkey, developed a professional implementation support network, with increased engagements with nonprofits, foundations, and public sector partners over time.

Notably, the conversation among field leaders has expanded to include a broader array of listening practices under an umbrella of increased proximity with communities at the heart of the sector's work. This broader tent poses both opportunities for expanded and improved practices and potential challenges in continued alignment among leaders about standards of practice and the field's overall goal. Table 6 shows a comparative description of the status of the feedback field in 2018 and in 2024 using the Strong Field Framework.¹⁸

18. The Bridgespan Group, *The Strong Field Framework* (The James Irvine Foundation, June 2009), <https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/16a72306-0675-4abd-9439-fb6c0373e9b/strong-field-framework.pdf>.

Table 6 | Comparative Feedback Field Assessment in 2018 and 2024, according to the Strong Field Framework¹⁹

Field Element	2018 Status	
Shared Identity	A sense of shared identity was the strongest aspect of the field at the time. There was general alignment across an array of actors around the definition and goals for the field. The field was still coalescing around terminology. There was an inconsistent but, in some cases, strong basis from which issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) could continue to develop.	
Standards of Practice	There was consensus that creating standards was the next area of focus for fieldwork. Some related resources already existed in the field to support nonprofit practice, providing a base for continued work to build upon. There were opportunities to further embed EDI across practice standards.	
Knowledge Base	This was a ripe area for growth to support high-quality practice. There were opportunities to make existing research more accessible and available while building further evidence.	
Leadership	There was a small set of known key leaders who were recognized for pushing the field forward at the time. Broader engagement and support among other actors was growing but still nascent.	
Funding and Supporting Policy	Shared Insight was described as the main funder in the field , and there were concerns about this funding structure's ability to support field development. This was a less developed area at the time, as a majority of nonprofits reported not receiving direct funder support for feedback efforts.	

19. The Bridgespan Group. "The Strong Field Framework" The James Irvine Foundation, 2009. <https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/16a72306-0675-4abd-9439-fb6c0373e9b/strong-field-framework.pdf>.

2024 Status

The field coalesced around a shared goal to advance feedback, while the conversation expanded to include a broader array of listening practices under an umbrella of increased proximity with communities at the heart of the work. The connections between feedback and equity were clearer, at least among a subset of field leaders. Some field leaders, including Shared Insight, moved the goalposts by including shifting power as a goal, but the field has not adopted that additional element as part of its shared identity.

There was evidence of various resources and leaders working to establish standards of practice for nonprofits, some of which intentionally center shifting power. There was growing agreement among key leaders about the importance of standards of practice in the field, but the application of high-quality practices continued to vary greatly in the nonprofit sector. Meanwhile, standards for funder listening practices were more nascent.

The knowledge base in 2024 was stronger than in 2018. There were more resources available, more contributors to knowledge products, and readily available information was relevant to the feedback field, including peer-reviewed research and practice-focused frameworks and guides.

There was a core set of recognized field leaders who knew and collaborated with each other in different ways. New nonprofit organizations and funders engaged with the field, broadening the group of influential and interested actors.

More funders were engaging with feedback infrastructure organizations to support nonprofit practice, and new incentives for feedback were developed. However, a majority of nonprofits continued to report not receiving direct funder support for feedback efforts.²⁰ At a field level, field leaders saw project grants supporting nonprofit feedback but were less optimistic about continued funding for field infrastructure. Leaders questioned whether current structures could support the uptake of feedback practices on a larger scale, and there was a growing concern about the availability of funding, especially looking toward Shared Insight's sunset during a time of dramatic shifts in funding priorities and practices in the sector. Some infrastructure actors also expressed some fear of competition from for-profit organizations who provide listening support and may have competing values to those that have driven field development up to that time. Meanwhile, incentives and support for funder listening were much more nascent, but there was growing interest among individual funders and some PIOs in participatory philanthropy methods.

20. In 2014, a CEP nonprofit survey revealed that 54% of surveyed nonprofits did not receive financial or non-monetary assistance for beneficiary feedback from

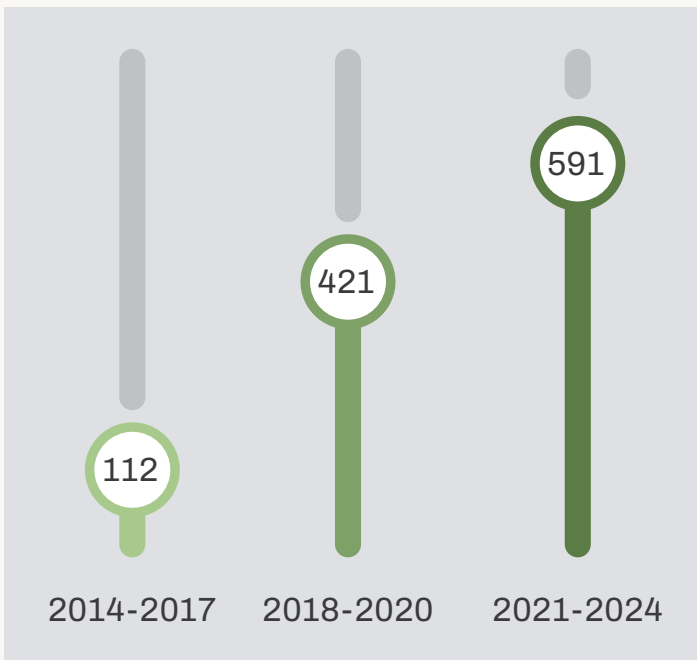
funders. A similar survey in 2024 showed consistent results, with 56% reporting not receiving support.

The creation, incubation, and spin-off of Listen4Good was an important contribution to the field, creating an equity-focused feedback platform that supports high-quality feedback practice for nonprofits.

After an initial pilot and steady growth over time, a strong number of participating nonprofits improved their feedback practice by participating in L4G’s programming. As of December 2024, L4G had supported the work of 987 organizations (mostly nonprofits) to amplify over 240,000 community voices nationwide.²¹ As of 2024, L4G’s impact and reach had led them to think about how their work was contributing to the creation of feedback ecosystems in specific

geographies where they worked. For example, L4G could now aggregate and report out on feedback data from across organizations in a given geography or issue area. L4G’s director described this expansion when reflecting on their work in Arizona: “[The] idea [is] moving from building individual capacity to look at [the] aggregate [to identify] opportunities and learnings for systems-level actors like funders.”

Figure 3 | Growth of L4G’s Supported Nonprofit Partners Over Time²²



21. Listen4Good, unpublished monitoring data, accessed March 2026.22.

22. Nonprofit partners are nonprofits that participate in L4G’s programs. The 987 organizations reflect unique organizations supported in this time period. Some organizations participated in L4G more than one time, resulting in a higher cumulative count.

In addition to supporting nonprofits, L4G also became a leading actor in the nonprofit feedback field, supporting the field's development in a variety of ways. Through research, publications, conference presentations, and discussions with other field actors, L4G helped the field arrive at shared definitions, agendas, and standards of practice. For example, their "Getting on the Same Page: Defining Perceptual Feedback"²³ provided a consistent and practical definition of the term "perceptual feedback," while the five-step feedback process, which resembled other field actors' frameworks, provided a clear definition of high-quality feedback loops. L4G also strengthened the field's knowledge base by publishing their own or amplifying others' research about feedback in the nonprofit sector and recently creating a resource library to collate different kinds of resources for the field.²⁴ Finally, L4G served as a bridge for funders, providing a way for them to both support feedback practices among their nonprofit partners and become users of feedback to inform their own work.

L4G became a leading actor in the nonprofit feedback field, supporting the field's development in a variety of ways.

Other core feedback field infrastructure groups have increased their reach among their key constituencies and fostered high-quality practice in the field.

Beyond the incubation and spinout of Listen4Good, Shared Insight also supported core feedback infrastructure organizations, specifically, YouthTruth and Feedback Labs. Since 2017, all organizations have grown, and Shared Insight's investments continued to stabilize infrastructure organizations.

Feedback Labs: From 2017 to 2025, Feedback Labs increased their members from ~300 to 600, became an independent 501(c)(3), managed a CEO transition, and increased their summit attendee numbers, as shown in Table 7. In the past decade, Feedback Labs has convened approximately 1,100 organizations at summits. The organization also clarified its role in the field and the kinds of support and resources it can provide to organizations. In a recent infrastructure interview, when reflecting on the growing feedback community as an accomplishment, the organization's leader described, "[The] idea of 'these are my people' or 'this is my community' was certainly not present 10 years ago, five years ago even." They also discussed the growth and diversity of philanthropy in attendance at Feedback Labs Summits as a notable accomplishment. They said, "The first year, I think there were 12 people, and this year we had to close off registration because the room was too full. [It's] feeling like this is a community interested in learning more and engaging, which is really something I'm proud of."

23. Threlfall, Valerie. Getting on the Same Page: Defining Perceptual Feedback. Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2017.

24. Listen4Good. "Resources: Take a Deeper Dive Into Our Work," Listen4Good, accessed 2026, <https://listen4good.org/resources/>.

Table 7 | Feedback Labs Summit Attendees Over Time

Year	Number of Organizations Attending	First-Time Attendees	Returning Attendees
2025 (Bozeman)	132	55%	45%
2024 (Denver)	128	73%	27%
2023 (Atlanta)	114	68%	32%
2022 (Jacksonville)	121	<i>Not available</i>	
2020 (San Juan)	112	73%	27%
2019 (New York)	119	70%	30%
2018 (Washington, D.C.)	86	64%	36%
2017 (Washington, D.C.)	130	67%	33%
2016 (Washington, D.C.)	92	62%	38%
2015 (Washington, D.C.)	75	<i>Not applicable</i>	

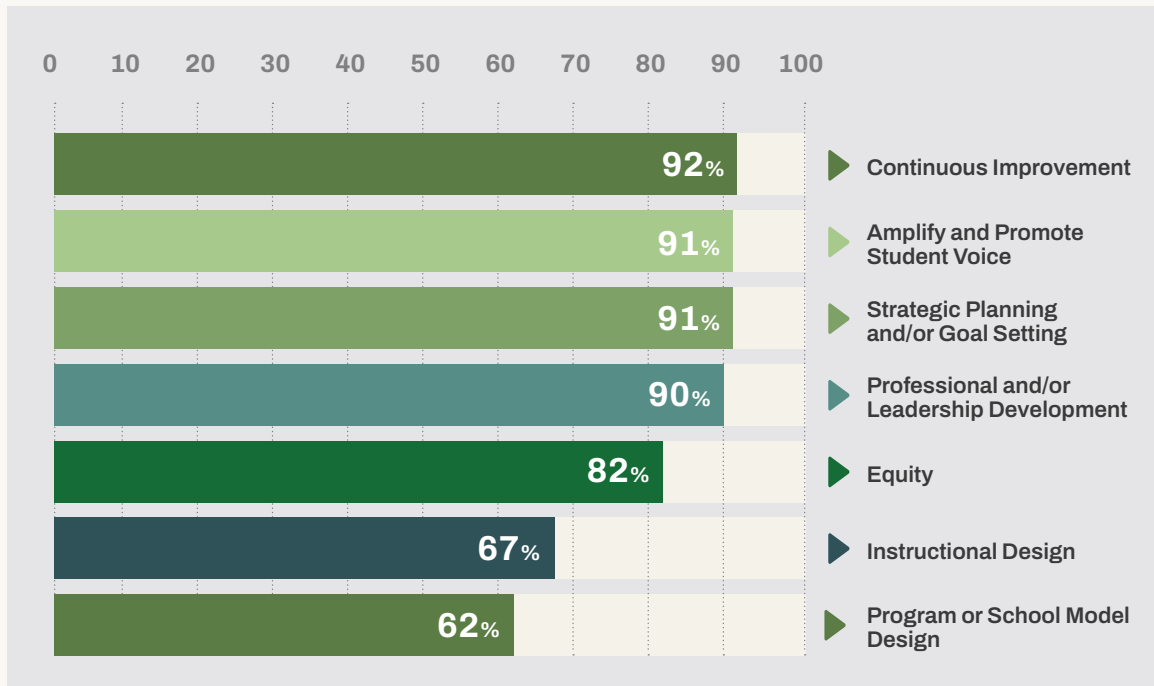
YouthTruth: To date, YouthTruth has collected anonymous feedback data from 3.2 million youth, an increase from the 1.5 million before the pandemic. They also worked with 831,000 school staff and families across 39 states to improve school and academic outcomes, which included working with a growing number of nonprofits to collect, make meaning from, and integrate student voices into school systems.

YouthTruth conducts an annual client feedback survey that asks if schools use the student feedback that they receive to make changes and data from 2024 to 2025 revealed that 95% of survey respondents initiated change based on survey results. Figure 4 shows the percent of schools making changes based on feedback across different domains.²⁵

25. YouthTruth, "24-25 YouthTruth Client Feedback Survey." Unpublished resource, March 2026.

Collectively, Listen4Good, Feedback Labs, and Youth Truth have supported various nonprofits and worked to convene field actors to shape the discourse around feedback practices.

Figure 4 | Percent of Schools Making Changes Based on Feedback Across Different Domains



YouthTruth exceeded earned and contributed revenue targets and, for the first time in 2019, went from being subsidized by CEP to generating revenue for CEP after meeting their fully allocated costs.²⁶ In recent interviews, staff described their *Youth Civic Empowerment Report* as a proud accomplishment. They said, “[It] was a real watershed moment ... largely because it was timed around the election [and was set] to be released around the election. It got enormous pickup in the field, so it got over 600 media hits.” Their regional partners have used reports like these to inform health

policy and emergency response plans. On occasion, lawmakers have contacted them to debrief findings. A YouthTruth spokesperson said, “Getting to the point where our data is recognized as powerful, valid, reliable [has been an accomplishment]; respected insights are important and can start to inform civic systems.”

Collectively, Listen4Good, Feedback Labs, and YouthTruth have successfully supported different types of nonprofits and worked to convene field actors and shape the discourse around feedback through research, publications, conferences, and collective efforts.

26. YouthTruth pivoted when COVID-19 and school closures meant suspending planned surveys. For example, in mid-May 2020, they launched a free, national survey to gather insights from sixth- to twelfth-grade students about their

learning experiences, social and emotional development, and wellbeing while their school sites were closed and released its findings from more than 20,000 students: “Students Weigh In: Learning & Well-Being During COVID-19.”

Gathering and responding to high-quality feedback correlates to better outcomes for individuals, and just the act of giving feedback can also lead to better outcomes.

New, high-quality knowledge exists that clarified and confirmed the value of high-quality feedback practice.

In 2019, Shared Insight awarded grants to six nonprofit organizations to conduct feedback research. They found that gathering and responding to high-quality feedback correlates with better outcomes for individuals, and the act of implementing high-quality perceptual feedback, in and of itself, can lead to better outcomes. Findings from each of the six organizations described the impact of feedback work on their organization. A few key examples include the following:

- For the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), the act of providing feedback, in and of itself, is associated with better outcomes. Those who provided program feedback were 5 to 10 percentage points more likely than those who did not provide feedback to be employed 90-180 days after initial employment.
- For YouthTruth, student perception is predictive of academic performance; that is, more positive student perceptions mean higher student academic performance.²⁷

In addition to focused research project grants, Shared Insight supported additional reports and studies from ORS Impact to better understand how nonprofit feedback works. This research found the following:

- **Engaging in any kind of feedback practice pays dividends to nonprofits.** ORS Impact found an additive effect where the number of feedback practices an organization engages in is positively correlated with experiencing impacts ($r = .33$), gaining insights ($r = .24$), and making changes ($r = .20$).²⁸ This is promising evidence for the use of high-quality feedback loop practices and shows that the more nonprofits engage in any kind of feedback practice, the more they learn and experience the benefits of hearing from their clients.
- **The value-add of collecting perceptual feedback is twofold.** An ORS Impact report found that (a) gathering and responding to high-quality perceptual feedback correlates with better outcomes for individuals and that (b) the act of implementing high-quality perceptual feedback loops, in and of itself, can lead to better outcomes.²⁹
- **Collecting feedback doesn't only benefit nonprofits; it also benefits their clients.** In 2019, ORS Impact found that most (92%) interviewed clients felt that their voice mattered, and they were happy with the opportunity to provide feedback to nonprofits. In addition, clients said they felt valued by the organization when giving their feedback, even if the organization failed to close the loop to tell them what they had done with the feedback. The feedback process also helps clients feel more confident about engaging with the nonprofit in the future.³⁰

27. Huang, Penny. "Feedback Research Projects Find Links to Client Outcomes." Fund for Shared Insight, 2023. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/research/feedback-research-projects-find-links-to-client-outcomes/>

28. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Feedback Practice Analysis." ORS Impact, 2023. https://orsimpact.com/docs/listen4good_feedback_practice_analysis_technical_supplement_may_2023.pdf

29. ORS Impact. Fund for Shared Insight: Learning From Feedback Research Grantees—Beyond Research Findings: The Value-Add of Perceptual Feedback. ORS Impact, 2024. https://orsimpact.com/docs/learning_from_feedback_research_grantees_beyond_research_findings_mar_2024.pdf

30. "Exploring Clients' Feedback Experience." ORS Impact, 2019. https://orsimpact.com/docs/listen4good_exploring_clients_feedback_experience.pdf

Field actors effectively embedded equity into various elements of the field's development, shaping standards of practice and the overall vision for feedback and listening in the sector.

The growing focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion in the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors over the past decade shaped how the feedback field developed over time. Early efforts centered on understanding how feedback and equity intersect and clarifying implications for individual actors, the practice, and the field.

Over time, infrastructure organizations began building equity into their program offerings. For example, L4G embedded equity into its guides and resources, including ways that client voice could be elevated and amplified beyond a survey, and coaches and staff included power analyses in their conversations about feedback and client engagement with nonprofits. L4G also developed a best practices guide that established a clear link between client engagement and the quality of a feedback system. In addition, L4G articulated a pyramid of client engagement as a framework to support nonprofits in identifying other ways of engaging clients and shifting power, contributing to a broadening conversation about client engagement mechanisms in the sector. Feedback Labs also changed their program offering, embedding equity into their feedback trainings such as the Feedback Champions cohort and Feedback Crash Course. In 2024, Feedback Labs published the “Core Principles of High-Quality Listening and Feedback,” which focused on equity and power-sharing.³¹

As these organizations shaped their own practices, they continued publishing resources that added to the field's knowledge base and influenced its development. With a clearer focus on equity among infrastructure organizations

and at Shared Insight, the field's identity began to shift and broaden beyond feedback to include power, inclusion, participation, and other related concepts. Key resources about equity and feedback created included:

- “Core Principles of High-Quality Listening and Feedback” by Feedback Labs³²
- “Insights from an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Journey” by The Center for Effective Philanthropy³³
- “A New Framework That Advances Equity” by Listen4Good³⁴
- “Feedback and Equity: Connecting the Dots” by ORS Impact³⁵
- “Feedback's Role in Shifting Power to Those Least Heard” by Listen4Good³⁶

In 2019, Shared Insight launched the #feedback4equity campaign aimed at strengthening the connection between feedback and equity work. The racial reckoning and shifting context of 2020 created more openings for conversations about power dynamics, racial inequalities, and the recognition of the agency of those most harmed by current systems. As a result, equity was more explicitly embedded throughout Shared Insight's updated theory of change and conversations about shifting power became more prominent. These shifts resulted in the collaborative's adoption of a new long-term goal encompassing both nonprofits and foundations and that called for increased listening, responding, and shifting power in the sector.

31. Feedback Labs. Core Principles of High-Quality Listening and Feedback. 2024. <https://feedbacklabs.org/core-principles/>.

32. Ibid.

33. Center for Effective Philanthropy, “Insights from an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Journey,” accessed March 4, 2026, <https://cep.org/blog/insights-from-an-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-journey/>.

34. Threlfall, Valerie. “A New Framework That Advances Equity.” Listen4Good, 2022. <https://listen4good.org/resource/a-new-framework-that-advances-equity/>.

35. ORS Impact. Feedback and Equity: Connecting the Dots. ORS Impact, October 2021. https://orsimpact.com/docs/feedback_and_equity_connecting_the_dots_oct_2021.pdf.

36. Threlfall, Valerie. “Feedback's Role in Shifting Power to Those Least Heard.” Listen4Good, 2022. <https://listen4good.org/resource/feedbacks-role-in-shifting-power-to-those-least-heard/>.



Outcome:

More Active Champions and Supporters for Foundation Listening



Assessment

Outcome Status:

MIXED


Overall, progress toward cultivating champions and supporters of foundation listening has been mixed, with notable positive momentum among Philanthropy Infrastructure Organizations (PIOs) and steady visibility in field discourse but slower advancement in building a broader bench of champions. Philanthropy Infrastructure Organizations (PIOs) have increasingly internalized and promoted ideas around listening and shifting power in alignment with Shared Insight's aims, and related sector publications have slightly increased over time, with sector leaders describing listening as more prominent and increasingly aligned with sector values. Finally, while some allied voices have promoted related ideas, there's not yet a broader, coordinated bench of champions directly supporting Shared Insight's aims.

Strategy Assessment:

MIXED

The mixed results in this outcome area also represent mixed contribution by Shared insight. PIO engagement work has continued into Phase 4 with the launch of the Listen to Community initiative in partnership with Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Feedback Labs, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, National Center for Family Philanthropy, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, and Native Americans in Philanthropy. The initiative is a "new resource and engagement hub for funders ready to listen, respond, and shift power to impacted communities." The time and effort to engage through co-creating the Listen to Community initiative created a foundation of shared language, understanding, and trust to buck sector norms about collaborating across organizations to engage in this project. It seems unlikely that this kind of collaborative, aligned work would be happening without Shared Insight's investment in grants and staffing to resource the connections, shared thinking, and more.

At the same time, other PIOs have also shifted language and programming in alignment with but without explicit, direct connection to Shared Insight's efforts. This signals a sector trend that is related to but broader than Shared Insight's work. Finally, it's less clear that Shared Insight has helped to create new or more active individual champions in this timeframe. This may be the result of less focused implementation over a shorter timeframe rather than a flaw of strategy.



Strategic Approach Over Time

Shared Insight's focus on champions and supporters for funder listening became paramount in the 2023 to 2026 theory of change, building upon the widespread field belief that funders are most likely to listen to other funders they think are like them: in similar roles, geographies, types of foundations, types of strategies/focus areas, and so forth.

1

Engaging Infrastructure Support

2

Champion Identification and Support

1 Engaging Infrastructure Support

Over the life of Shared Insight, a strategic approach for this work has been via key philanthropy infrastructure organizations (PIOs) as agents of change who could expand the reach and widen the audience for listening practices. To accomplish these goals, Shared Insight staff coordinated with field actors around foundation listening in different ways. For example, Shared Insight made initial tool and resource grants to PIOs and later established the Funder Listening Community of Practice in 2020 with eight PIOs. The original goal of the community of practice was to *“develop, disseminate, and champion toolkits and guides to help foundation staff and principal decision makers build their feedback and listening practices with the people and communities they seek to help, and especially those whose voices are least heard.”*³⁷

It had an added secondary goal to *“challenge and change norms in the sector—such as siloes and competition—and build trusting relationships to leverage our respective strengths to accomplish this body of work and also as a catalyst for other collaboration.”*³⁸ Ultimately, the purpose evolved to *“building a sense of shared identity and purpose among PIOs working to promote funder listening.”*³⁹

During the Funder Listening Community of Practice's second iteration in 2023, six of the original eight organizations along with six new ones continued under a refined set of goals: (a) *Influence and support funders to develop high-quality listening and feedback practices in service of equity*, and (b) *engage in collective conversation, learning, and purposeful activities*

37. Fund for Shared Insight, “Launch meeting participant agenda,” unpublished meeting notes.

38. Fund for Shared Insight, “FLCP Update,” unpublished meeting notes, July 2021.

39. Fund for Shared Insight, “Field Building Update,” unpublished meeting notes, November 2021.

centered on the role(s) that each member can play in advancing funder adoption of listening and feedback practices.

In 2024, six organizations (including five former community of practice members) were strategically selected to participate as core strategy partners in Shared Insight's Crossing the Chasm Campaign (now known as the Listen to Community initiative), with the goal of "making

listening, responding, and shifting power to people and communities at the heart of our work standard practice in the philanthropic sector."⁴⁰ Shared Insight also directly connected with leaders from organizations such as Trust-Based Philanthropy, CEP, and the Equitable Evaluation Initiative to align around shared opportunities to advance funder listening through their materials, resources, and overall priorities for sector change.

2 Champion Identification and Support

More recently, Shared Insight sought to identify, develop, and support champions. Champions were defined as individuals or groups within foundations who are (a) listening to shift power; (b) willing to share their stories and lessons through Shared Insight and other platforms; and (c) able to use their voice and influence with peers to lift up the importance of listening, responding, and shifting power. Staff sought to identify qualifying individuals who would represent diverse foundations (e.g.,

geographies, focus areas, foundation type) and help amplify their voices. In addition, Shared Insight used its communications capacity to highlight existing champions/exemplars of foundation listening by sharing and amplifying their stories in blogs, webinars, conference presentations, and the like. Shared Insight's identification and selection were informed by its equity focus, prioritizing diversity and inclusion among champions and internal staffing.

⁴⁰. Fund for Shared Insight, "Crossing the Chasm Campaign Update," unpublished meeting notes, July 2024.



Supporting Evidence

Broadly, PIOs have more deeply embedded a focus on listening to shift power, amplifying and advocating these ideas among a bigger and more diverse audience of funders.

PIO website and conference content demonstrate alignment with Shared Insight. To assess alignment between these organizations and Shared Insight, we examined website content for 14 organizations that aim to improve philanthropy, using a similar process to an effort we conducted with 15 similarly positioned organizations in the sector in 2014. 86% of PIOs (12 of 14) speak about their work in ways that align with what Shared Insight is advancing, even if they use slightly different terminology, compared with 67% in 2014.

Since PIOs often engage their audience through conferences, we also reviewed conferences that took place between 2023 and 2024 to see how many offered sessions related to feedback and listening. Among the 25 conference agendas still available for review, half of them included

sessions related to these topics, and many included multiple sessions, for a total of 33 sessions related to feedback, listening, voice, and power. We also reviewed conferences that took place between January and June 2025 to see if the trend continued over time and found similar numbers. This suggests that conference sponsors see related content as relevant and important to include within the limited session spots available.⁴¹

PIOs have increasingly spoken about their work in ways aligned with Shared Insight's approach.

⁴¹ We did not collect this type of data in our baseline work in 2014. At that time, most conferences did not keep their conference agenda and/or blogs about content posted once the conference was over.

Bellwethers said listening to community has become more prominent, though gaps between conversation and practice in the sector remain.

There is limited but sustained and aligned content about listening and feedback in field discourse and coming from other field “standard setters.”

With the 2023 theory of change, Shared Insight staff and funders more clearly focused on the importance of embedding ideas around listening, responding, and shifting power into the ongoing fabric of the sector through “standard setters” to sustain Shared Insight’s progress and momentum. Standard setters were defined as philanthropy experts, philanthropy-focused media, philanthropic education programs, PIOs, regional associations of grantmakers, and consulting groups that influence practice standards in the sector.

Through the evaluation, we explored how this type of content has become embedded among standard setters in the philanthropic space and found the following:

► **Steady rates of related “chatter” and more advocacy in relevant sector media:**

As part of our baseline work in 2014, we looked to see how much relevant and aligned content we could find in a targeted set of blogs, periodicals, and reports. At the time, our focus was on aligned content for nonprofit feedback. In 2025, we repeated our process but expanded the key terms used to include “listening,” “power,” and “voice.” Because of changes in the media landscape over the last ten years (e.g., a big decline in blogs, exclusion of social media), strong comparisons over time are challenging. However, a few interesting trends emerged.

Our repeated process found 126 instances of relevant chatter compared to 90 in 2014. We also found that 27% of relevant content advocated for the use of feedback and listening in 2025, compared to 13% in 2014.

In our analysis of sector conferences (described in the last section), we found that Shared Insight, Feedback Labs, or a core funder were involved in seven of the 33 conference sessions related to feedback and listening documented in 2023 and 2024, showing that most related sessions were facilitated by field actors other than Shared Insight.

When we talked to bellwethers about what they hear about listening to community and how the conversation has changed over the past few years, they reported an increase in field discourse related to funder listening. Five people sensed that people working in the sector talk about listening to community as a practice that is values-aligned with how the sector should operate, particularly within foundations focused on social justice. Half (6) of them noted that listening to community has become more prominent over the past few years, although one mentioned that there is a gap between the level of sector conversation and the amount of uptake of practice in the sector.

► **Related content across key standard setters:** 26 different organizations published aligned content in 2024, including many

standard-setting organizations other than Shared Insight and its main funders. These organizations include the following:

Alliance Magazine	GiveWell	Nonprofit Quarterly
Blue Avocado	Global Philanthropy Forum	Philanthropy News Digest (Foundation Center)
Bridgespan Group	Grantmakers for Effective Organizations	Philanthropy Roundtable
Candid	Independent Sector	Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
Center for Effective Philanthropy	Inside Philanthropy	Stanford Social Innovation Review
Charity Navigator	National Center for Family Philanthropy	The Foundation Review
Chronicle of Philanthropy	National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy	The Nonprofit Times
Council on Foundations	Nonprofit Management and Leadership	Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support
Exponent Philanthropy		
FSG		

Less progress has been made on cultivating a broader bench of champions.

In addition to working with PIOs, Shared Insight sought to develop a set of champions around funder listening to shift power. We found that there was a lot of variability in how team members were conceptualizing what a champion was, what the ask was, and what supports would be available. When taking stock of progress in 2024, some staff saw champions as people in foundations who are doing long-term, deep, meaningful, committed work with deep values alignment. Others saw champions as those who are more closely aligned with the original

definition: people in foundations who will speak publicly on these topics and are at least walking the walk *enough* to be credible. Others focused more on influencers as the key lever for changing behavior, which didn't necessarily require them to be currently doing the practice in a foundation (e.g., recently retired leaders or field thought leaders). As discussed later in this report, there are other people in the field doing related work that publicly champion aligned ideas (e.g., Trust-Based Philanthropy). Ultimately, little progress was made in this area by the end of 2024.



Outcome:

High-Quality Resources and Examples to Support Foundation Listening Changes



Assessment

Outcome Status:

STRONG

Shared Insight made significant strides in building a well-recognized, highly utilized knowledge base that serves as a resource for field actors. While earlier grantmaking efforts faced mixed uptake, more recent tools show clearer signs of broader uptake, resulting in field actors' recognition of Shared Insight's role as a valuable knowledge resource.

Strategy Assessment:

STRONG

While the initial investment in partner-developed tools showed mixed results, Shared Insight's choice to develop its own tools and resources proved successful in driving broader uptake among a growing audience and contributed to the availability of more relevant tools. Investing in staff time to create specifically aligned and well-targeted materials paid off. Shared Insight's contribution to the field in this respect is clear, and opportunities exist to ensure continued availability and use of resources once Shared Insight sunsets.

Aligned and targeted tools represent a clear field contribution by Shared Insight.



Strategic Approach Over Time

Shared Insight has long valued the development of tools, resources, and other materials to help funders learn and shift their practices, supporting efforts to create such materials through grants, contracts, and direct staff effort.

Resource and Tool Development

In 2015, Shared Insight provided grants to five organizations focused on a variety of ways to advance philanthropic transparency, including creating a set of “Philanthropy Lesson” videos, write-ups to support philanthropic giving opportunities, development and dissemination of principles for open-knowledge sharing, a report on transparency, and a repository of open licensing resources.

In 2016, to further bolster this area of work, Shared Insight gave grants to six additional organizations to create various products, reports, and tools to “increase foundation openness in service of effectiveness.” These products included research on philanthropic investment in Native communities, creating an evaluation “vertical” within IssueLab, prototyping mechanisms to share beneficiary feedback at GuideStar (now Candid), creating a “Transparency Assessment and Planning Tool,” and analyzing openness,

accountability, and transparency practices across women’s foundations.

In a shift in its approach, Shared Insight began producing more of its own tools and materials after 2020. Shared Insight’s tools, as well as the research it supported in the field, were heavily influenced by its commitment to equity, embedding special attention to power dynamics within tools, and supporting equity-focused research to clarify the connection between feedback and equity. Over the ten years of Shared Insight’s strategy to shift funder practices, the collaborative became a key promoter of resources for foundations seeking to adopt stronger listening practices, sponsoring conference sessions, hosting webinars, and advancing communications designed to influence the narrative and conversation about feedback and listening in the sector.



Supporting Evidence

Shared Insight developed a well-recognized knowledge base, publishing and funding content, tools, and resources with high uptake in recent years.

We have limited evaluation data on the longer-term results of early grantmaking efforts to create tools and resources. Most of the items were created and developed as expected. However, grantee interviews conducted in 2018, near the end of the 2016 grant cycle, suggested some field resistance to the topic of more openness, with fewer downloads in some cases of published materials, specific resistance to messages about low levels of Native funding, and one grantee's decision to not pursue development of a Transparency Assessment and Planning Tool given low membership readiness for adoption and uptake.

This is in contrast to more recent Shared Insight resources to promote stronger listening practices among funders, including high uptake of these materials relative to other items produced and available on the website:

- ▶ **Participatory Philanthropy Toolkit:** Since 2021, Shared Insight and its partners have published several reports on feedback, funder listening, and equity and released the Participatory Philanthropy Toolkit to provide funders with targeted resources on how to approach listening to shift power through participatory practices. Resources related to participatory philanthropy, including participatory grantmaking, are the most downloaded resources from Shared Insight's website, with almost 900 downloads and consistent traffic since 2023.

Shared Insight was the most frequently cited resource for funders learning about listening, demonstrating its reach in the field.

- ▶ **Funder Listening Action Menu:** Shared Insight concretized a set of tools in its Funder Listening Action Menu that gave funders clear examples of how to incorporate listening and feedback into their work. The Funder Listening Action Menu continues to be a relevant resource. In 2024, it was viewed over 2,000 times and accounted for nearly 10% of all of Shared Insight's website views.
- ▶ **Landscape of community listening practices:** In 2019, Shared Insight commissioned a report by the Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program to explore the landscape of community listening practices among policy advocacy organizations and uplift observations on how funders can more meaningfully connect with the communities they serve. Evidence suggests that funders were engaging with these ideas, as the report was downloaded more than 100 times since it was published.

Notably, most bellwethers and foundation evaluation directors interviewed in 2025 named Shared Insight as the most frequently cited resource for funders seeking to learn about listening, demonstrating its reach in the field. Other institutions mentioned include Feedback Labs, Stanford Social Innovation Review, California Endowment, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, and the Center for Effective Philanthropy, most of which have connections to Shared Insight as well.



Outcome:

Nonprofits

More Leaders and Staff in Nonprofits Listen, Respond, and Shift Power to Those Most Impacted by Structural Racism and Systemic Intersectional Inequities



Assessment

Outcome Status:

STRONG

Increased demand for technical support with feedback practices signals growing efforts by U.S. nonprofits to listen and respond to client feedback. L4G data suggests that nonprofits that engage in feedback programming experience capacity gains, improved programs, and continue feedback practices over time. Additional research suggests that feedback can shift power, even if data cannot establish whether this was achieved within a broader set of nonprofits. Efforts to expand feedback work to nonprofits outside of the U.S. generated valuable learning but did not translate into sustained expansion.

Strategy Assessment:

STRONG

Shared Insight's initial strategy entailed creating incentives for nonprofits to engage in feedback and supporting existing capacity-building organizations. While the core components of this approach continued over time, Shared Insight pivoted to working with a broader array of field actors to shift norms and incentives while developing a new capacity-building organization, L4G. Increased demand for L4G's services and the organization's financial sustainability shows that this strategy was fruitful in creating a scalable model to support nonprofit feedback practice. It is unlikely that this level of progress, both among L4G nonprofits and within the broader nonprofit sector, would have happened without Shared Insight's direct contribution through funding, thought partnership, and influence.

The progress among L4G nonprofits and the broader nonprofit sector likely would not have been possible without Shared Insight's direct contribution.

Strategic Approach Over Time

The strategy to strengthen nonprofit feedback practices started with efforts to create large, scalable feedback models. Advancing the practice of nonprofits using feedback loops was one of three primary foci at the start of Shared Insight’s work, though the focus of work shifted in 2023 to primarily supporting the feedback field. The influence of Shared Insight’s equity focus was evident in how the language in this area of work adapted over time, from “centering client feedback” to “listening to voices least heard and most impacted” to the current focus on “shifting power to communities.”

Create Large, Scalable Feedback Models

In the first round of grantmaking, Shared Insight gave grants to five feedback loop practice grantees who had rigorous feedback practices and a national presence. The belief was that these organizations’ experiences would be scalable across their networks and the most compelling models would be taken up by other nonprofits. Shared Insight built the approach on the assumption that some examples of strong feedback practices already existed and could be expanded with additional financial resources.

Additionally, grants were provided to organizations seeking to provide large-scale models to different segments of the nonprofit sector:

- ▶ **GlobalGiving:** An online fundraising community that gives social entrepreneurs and nonprofits around the world the opportunity to access money, information, and ideas they need to improve their communities; their grant supported pilots to establish a new norm in the social sector in which organizations systematically listen to those they seek to help and meaningfully incorporate those voices into their work.

- ▶ **Keystone Accountability:** A consulting firm to NGOs that specialized in setting up Constituent Voice™ feedback loops, received a grant to further develop an online Feedback Commons where organizations could access curated questions/tools/resources and contribute to generating comparative datasets.

Early on, Shared Insight realized that replicating models based on different individual organizations’ efforts or expanding multiple types of systems and platforms was unlikely to achieve scale in the way desired. Shared Insight’s approach evolved into launching a simple tool that could be used on one platform across many different types of “customer-facing” nonprofits. In 2015, this concept was realized through Listen4Good, an incubated initiative turned independent nonprofit, created to help organizations systematically conduct high-quality listening and scale feedback practices in the nonprofit sector. Table 8 shows an overview of key outputs and activities across L4G’s development.

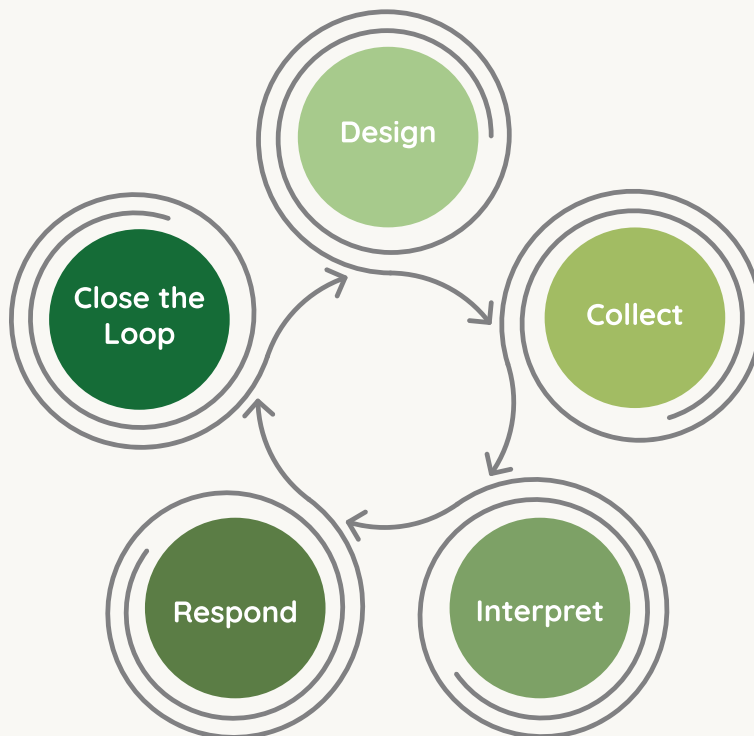
Table 8 | L4G's Key Outputs and Activities

L4G Development Stage	Key Outputs and Activities
Proof of Concept (2014–2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4.8M in grants for participating organizations • 112 nonprofit partners supported in pilot cohorts • Established partnership with SurveyMonkey
Model Refinement (2018–2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 421 nonprofit partners supported • Built support systems through trained L4G staff • Launched Interactive L4G web app • Embedded EDI into L4G guides and resources • Tested models to lower costs and ensure service quality • Conducted international pilot experiments
Expansion (2021–2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 591 nonprofit partners supported • Tested funding models, including implementation of fee-for-service model • Adjusted staffing and funding to ensure sustainability • Achieved L4G spinout from Shared Insight as an independent entity

Since 2016, L4G has supported nonprofit partners in implementing a five-step feedback process designed to ensure high-quality feedback loops that lead to meaningful change. The five steps include (1) designing the survey, (2) collecting the data, (3) interpreting the data, (4) responding to the data, and (5) closing the loop with clients (Figure 5). To gather this feedback, L4G nonprofit partners use a semi-standard survey instrument, including the Net Promoter System (NPS®), as a

simple, systematic way of listening to the people at the heart of their work. Organizations analyze and interpret their data using the SurveyMonkey platform. With Shared Insight support, L4G has also piloted efforts with a few nonprofit partners outside of the U.S. L4G grew into the collaborative's largest effort and a core part of the field's infrastructure for nonprofit feedback. It continues to operate today.

Figure 5 | L4G's Five-Step Feedback Loop



As L4G developed and matured, Shared Insight's focus on equity informed L4G's coaching and work with nonprofits. L4G adopted practices such as disaggregating data, examining who nonprofits were hearing from (or not hearing from), and intentionally lifting up voices and perspectives that might otherwise go unheard.



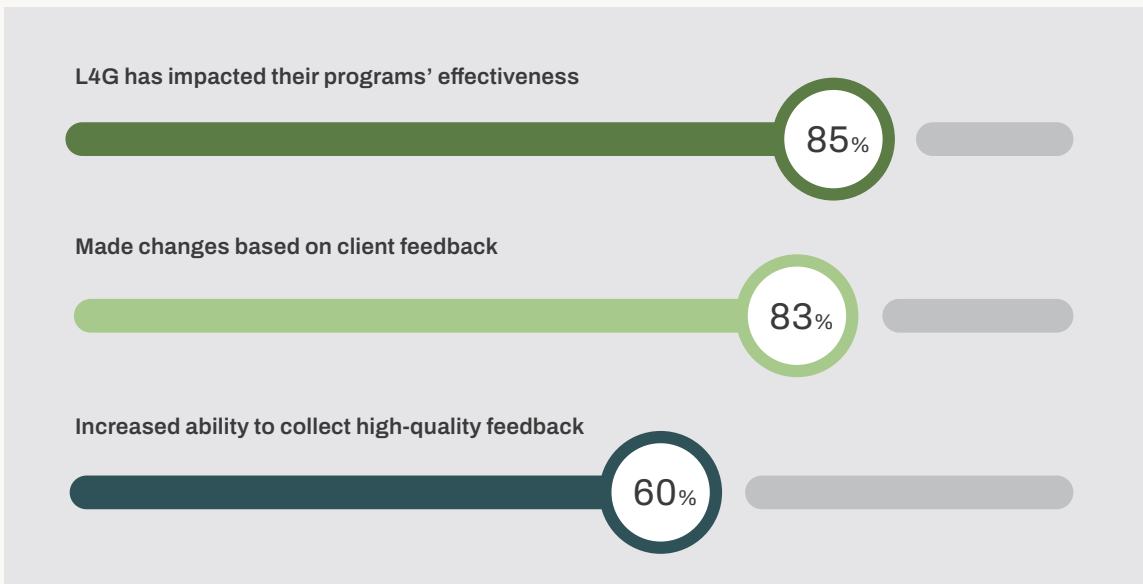
Supporting Evidence

L4G has effectively built nonprofits' capacity, enabled changes in response to feedback, had a positive impact on program effectiveness, and increased demand for feedback practice support across nonprofits.

After L4G's initial pilot phases with small cohorts of nonprofit partners, demand continued to grow for its services, and L4G worked with 987 organizations as of 2024 to amplify over 240,000

community voices nationwide.⁴² ORS Impact's evaluations⁴³ have found that a majority of L4G nonprofit partners report positive impacts on different aspects of their organizations (Figure 6).

Figure 6 | Percent of L4G Partners Reporting Different Types of Organizational Impacts



42. Listen4Good, 'Amplify Community Voice,' Listen4Good, accessed 2026, <https://listen4good.org/>.

43. ORS Impact, 'The Listen4Good Journey So Far: Lessons and Findings From Three Complete Cohorts' ORS Impact, 2020. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-L4G-Journey-So-Far-ORS-Impact-Final-3.23.20-002.pdf>.

Moreover, L4G nonprofit partners maintained or expanded high-quality feedback practices developed through L4G, suggesting sustained impact. Evaluation reports found that at program completion, all L4G partners between 2016 and 2018 *planned* to continue feedback efforts, and about half planned to increase the amount of feedback collected. Almost three-fourths (71%) of organizations had expanded to collect feedback in additional ways, including from other stakeholders (staff, board, volunteers), clients in other programs, or different clients in the same program L4G is supporting. Half of the organizations were also engaging clients in new ways beyond L4G surveys, such as through focus groups and advisory groups, committees, and councils.⁴⁴ A follow-up report from L4G in 2022 showed that most L4G nonprofits (60%) maintain feedback practices following the conclusion of their engagement with L4G, and 115 organizations have participated in their programs more than once, signaling commitment and value for feedback practice.⁴⁵

⁴⁴. Ibid.

⁴⁵. Listen4Good, unpublished monitoring data, accessed March 2026.

Evidence exists to demonstrate that when done well, feedback practice can shift power to communities served.

ORS Impact's 2021 report, "Feedback and Equity: Connecting the Dots", explored how feedback practices among six nonprofits can advance equity and shift power to the communities they serve by acting as a catalyst, mirror, and compass to make meaningful organizational change. It found that collecting and acting on feedback from those most affected by programs—especially marginalized groups—can help dismantle power imbalances and foster more inclusive decision making. To shift power effectively, the report underscores the importance of intentional design, transparency, and accountability in feedback loops, building trust and improving impact in ways that center equity. The report also showed that feedback and listening contribute to organizational shifts from having *power over* clients to *building power with* clients.⁴⁶

Efforts to explore international engagement with nonprofits enabled learning and showed some opportunities but did not materialize into sustained, longer-term efforts or outcomes.

Through the international committee, Shared Insight supported three pilot efforts to expand L4G with partners in Australia and Singapore in 2019 and in Israel in 2022. The initial 2019 pilot allowed L4G to identify key success factors, such as having strong local funders as partners, establishing accountability mechanisms, ensuring that implementing nonprofits have high organizational capacity, and that staff can communicate with L4G in English. L4G also identified key considerations to inform decisions about international expansion—such as mission alignment, scope, model fit, local partnerships, opportunity costs, boundaries, and roles—and its own infrastructure needs to effectively engage with an international audience. In 2022, L4G piloted a third international project, this time in Israel, which showed that implementing organizations saw similar outcomes to U.S. organizations: There was an increase in commitment to feedback; organizations made changes in response to feedback; and they faced challenges in closing the loop. The L4G model appeared to be portable and adaptable to different contexts, and this pilot helped further identify the model's strengths and challenges while providing a window into how country-specific dynamics can affect implementation.

⁴⁶ ORS Impact. "Feedback and Equity: Connecting the Dots." ORS Impact, October 2021. https://orsimpact.com/docs/feedback_and_equity_connecting_the_dots_oct_2021.pdf

The L4G model proved adaptable across international contexts, with pilots further demonstrating the influence of local dynamics on implementation.

While L4G continues to consider opportunities to partner with nonprofits and funders internationally, its focus has remained within its U.S. portfolio. The experiments have not yet materialized into sustainable, longer-term international partnerships, but they did yield valuable insights about what it would take to expand services.

The International committee also supported Feedback Labs' Feedback Accelerator, a one-year program designed to support a community of burgeoning feedback tools in the Global South through community connections, grant funds, and technical support. The Accelerator funded seven organizations working to build feedback infrastructure and systems in the Global South. Unlike L4G, Feedback Labs had prior experience working with international partners. An evaluation of the program found that, overall, the program successfully supported grantees in strengthening their tools and approaches, leaving them better equipped to provide more effective and impactful services to the different constituents they serve. In addition, it brought these new players into the feedback support network, which strengthened the international feedback field. While Feedback Labs continues to support and partner with organizations outside of the U.S., Shared Insight did not continue funding the Feedback Accelerator given competing priorities for its funding that were more focused on feedback efforts in the U.S.

Learning About Equity and Power Shifting

Throughout the years, Shared Insight was willing to explore real questions about the degree to which their work was advancing equity through efforts to use feedback, listen, and shift power. Here we lift up some key lessons about power shifting among nonprofits and funders.

Nonprofits: Feedback Can Advance Equity With Intentionality

Results from ORS Impact evaluations showed that L4G had strong, positive impacts on nonprofits, but it left us wondering: What about the people giving feedback? Is this approach truly building greater connection, trust, and power between organizations and the people it serves?

In 2019, we conducted eight focus groups with 83 clients across seven organizations who were building their feedback practices and regularly listening to their clients.⁴⁷ These clients generally felt that their voice mattered to the organization, but they also had some questions around the impact and power of their feedback on the organization. They discussed the limitations of how much change they could achieve through their feedback, given the organization's decision-making structures, which depended on who heard their feedback or what power dynamics were at play.

In 2021, we partnered with six nonprofit organizations that had participated in and implemented high-quality feedback loops through Listen4Good to ask the question: "How do organizations leverage feedback and listening

practices to share power with clients within their organizations, giving them more control over resources and decisions?" Through 32 interviews with executive directors and leaders, staff, board members, *and* clients, we sought to understand (a) what organizations do to advance equity for clients and (b) how organizations relate to and share power with clients in ways that contribute to more equitable outcomes. We wanted to go beyond assessing whether people feel good about the process to see how the work could realize its potential for shifting power through resources and decision making. We found examples across the organizations where the insights from feedback as well as the practice and act of listening led to changes in organizational programs and services, as well as in culture and practice. We also saw that power shifting, like equity, does not happen on its own—it requires intentional focus, effort, and design.⁴⁸

Power shifting requires intentional focus, effort, and design.

Foundations: Engagement Is Improving, but Power Shifting Is Often More Nascent

From 2019 to 2022, Shared Insight funded and supported a Participatory Climate Initiative, a time-limited participatory grantmaking effort that *specifically* sought to shift power to those most

vulnerable to and impacted by climate change. Their charge ultimately was to make \$2 million in grants to "*grassroots groups that implement climate justice or environmental justice work in*

47. ORS Impact. "Exploring Clients' Feedback Experience." ORS Impact, 2019. https://orsimpact.com/docs/listen4good_exploring_clients_feedback_experience.pdf

48. ORS Impact. "Feedback and Equity: Connecting the Dots." ORS Impact, October 2021. https://orsimpact.com/docs/feedback_and_equity_connecting_the_dots_oct_2021.pdf

their communities that centers traditional and/or local ecological knowledge and connection with Mother Earth. The work of these groups will demonstrate approaches to adaptations that may also be applied in other contexts and influence policy.” Shared Insight’s subcommittee members and broader set of core funders felt, at the time, like they had ceded a lot of the power they typically held, agreeing to change the purpose statement, values, guidelines, and parameters for the initiative, doubling the amount of money available for grants, and having limited representation in the process.

While community members who served on the Design and Grantmaking teams—people also of the communities most affected by climate issues—appreciated these changes, they did not necessarily experience these actions and decisions as meaningful power shifts. Many participated in the initiative out of a desire to change how institutional philanthropy operates. Others sought greater solidarity and collective strength with funders to address the scope of the problems facing their communities on the front lines of the climate crisis. They wanted this to be a start of building power for collective liberation, not a transactional process to give out grants. Shared Insight sought to be transparent and clear about the aims and boundaries of the initiative. Participants still raised important questions about who gets to decide, how much power is enough, and what kind of power matters.⁴⁹

In 2024, we engaged in a second exploration to understand funder listening and power shifts. We sought to replicate the approach we had

used with nonprofits talking directly to the people funders say they are listening to so we could hear how they experience efforts to listen, respond, and shift power. We examined how 11 different funders that were believed to have strong listening practices in place were perceived by the people to whom they were listening. We found that many of these foundations were listening to a wide range of stakeholders they believed to be proximate to their work: nonprofit leaders, grantees, other funders, business leaders, and city officials. The stakeholders to whom they were listening were a mismatch with Shared Insight’s emphasis on listening to people and communities most harmed by systemic racism and intersectional inequities. We also found that a majority of the foundations were listening in a consultative manner, which is an earlier stage approach to listening to shift power compared with collaborating or deferring to others for decision-making power. Our conclusion was that even for foundations with a reputation for listening well, while community engagement is increasing, there is a gap between current practice and Shared Insight’s definition of listening to shift power.

The Participatory Climate Initiative’s community participants raised important questions about who decides, how much power is enough, and what kind of power matters.

So What?

Across these different explorations, we see the importance of understanding how well “intent” matches “impact.” In some cases, we found mismatches between what nonprofits and funders were aiming for and what people experienced in practice. Recognizing and learning from these gaps creates opportunities to strengthen resources, supports, and organizational efforts so that aims around power shifting and greater solidarity can be more fully realized.

49. Stachowiak, Sarah, and Juan Clavijo. “Evaluating Efforts to Shift Power Through Listening: Defining Power and Listening to All Sides.” *The Foundation Review* 17, no. 2 (2025). <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/vol17/iss2/10/>.



Outcome:

Foundations

More Leaders and Staff in Foundations Listen, Respond, and Shift Power to Those Most Impacted by Structural Racism and Systemic Intersectional Inequities



Assessment

Outcome Status:

WEAK

Shared Insight's work with funders has led to some shifts in values and understanding among those most directly engaged, but changes in actual funder practice have been limited and inconsistent, with only a handful of them translating learning into concrete behavior changes.

Strategy Assessment:

WEAK

While Shared Insight began with a mission to improve philanthropy, it took time for Shared Insight to put more focused energy, effort, and resources toward this work. Early efforts were categorized as "light touch" and aimed at increasing discourse, providing tools, and funding exemplars to serve as role models in the sector. These efforts did not synergistically add up to more than the sum of their parts. While broader sector efforts since 2020 aimed to produce more content and build momentum, Shared Insight's direct engagement with funders did not result in widespread changes within or across even the most engaged foundations. This lack of progress is likely both a result of flawed strategy and flawed implementation. First, early conversations about how to influence practice change among funders did not yield a clear, effective approach. Shared Insight's light touch engagement with funders through conversations with individual program officers did not result in organizational changes except for a few examples. More recently, Shared Insight pivoted to couple individual engagement with foundation staff with a broader campaign to increase momentum in the field, but it is too early to tell whether this initiative has borne fruit.

Shared Insight's direct engagement with funders did not result in widespread changes within or across even the most engaged foundations.



Strategic Approach Over Time

When Shared Insight began as a funder collaborative, it clearly identified improving philanthropy as its north star. However, it took time for the collaborative to identify what aspect of philanthropic practice it would focus on, define the practice, and develop strategies to influence uptake. Between 2014 and 2017, Shared Insight focused on increasing foundation openness and sharing, under the hypothesis that if funders shared lessons more openly with each other, they would more quickly develop and implement effective initiatives and grantmaking processes. In addition, efforts from this period included a focus on funder support for *nonprofit* feedback practice rather than funders examining their own practices. In 2018, Shared Insight's focus shifted toward foundations listening and working in greater collaboration with grantees and the communities at the heart of their work. Influenced by external factors, including COVID-19, the racial reckoning and uprisings of 2020, and growing critiques of philanthropy, as well as its own efforts to center equity, Shared Insight sharpened its focus on listening, particularly listening to shift power. Direct funder engagement proved to be the strategic approach used, with differences in the funders focused on, tactics employed, and actors taking the lead in efforts over time.

Direct Funder Engagement

Shared Insight's staff and partners were well positioned to leverage connections to specific foundations and individual staff who were interested in listening and improving their practice. Over the decade from 2014-2024, Shared Insight engaged different funders in different ways:⁵⁰

- ▶ **Grants for funder cohorts and other direct engagement and learning experiences:**
In 2016, Shared Insight disbursed grants to facilitate funder gatherings and enable shifts in funder behavior. Using these resources, four organizations—Exponent Philanthropy, Collective Impact Forum/FSG, United Philanthropy Forum, and Grantmakers for Effective Organizations—engaged in a range of activities to promote feedback and listening practices, including hosting regional convenings and strategy sessions and leading cohort-based learning labs.
- ▶ **L4G co-funders:**
Fundors who supported nonprofit L4G participants in early Shared Insight phases of the work were presumed to have an interest in supporting more nonprofits to use L4G or receiving feedback themselves. They were variably engaged with Shared Insight and other efforts, including through convenings and communications efforts.

50. In Fall 2025, Listen to Community was launched, a joint effort of seven organizations committed to community-centered philanthropy grounded in listening: Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Feedback Labs, Fund for Shared Insight, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, National Center for Family Philanthropy, the National Committee for Responsive

Philanthropy, and Native Americans in Philanthropy. Listen to Community's goal is to have more leaders and staff in foundations engage in listening practices that shift power to impacted communities. Because the evaluation focused on achievements gained by the end of 2024, this effort is not included.

► **Walking the walk with core funders:**

Core funders engaged in thrice-yearly meetings that created space for learning and reflection. These gatherings also included EDI-focused learning journeys in Montgomery, AL and Phoenix, AZ; support for funders to make commitments to advance listening within their own organizations and “walk the walk” on what the collaborative was advocating; and opportunities to explore related work through groups focused on policy and advocacy and international efforts.

► **Sidecar funding opportunities:**

Not all interested funders could or wanted to give at the level of a core funder. From the beginning, Shared Insight recruited some foundations as “sidecar funders” (providing multi-year funding less than the required minimum for core funding), which gave them additional exposure and invitations to Shared Insight learning events and working groups.

► **Working groups:**

Subcommittees and working groups began as a way to do the work of the collaborative (e.g., communications and evaluation subcommittees). However, over time, membership was broadened, and the focus of engagement turned toward engagement for the purpose of promoting behavior change. Examples of subcommittees and working groups included the following:

- **Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee:**

This subcommittee initially wondered whether advocacy and policy organizations could adopt a feedback mechanism similar to Listen4Good. This resulted in a landscape scan by the Aspen Institute’s Planning and Evaluation Program which explored whether and how U.S. funders and nonprofits focused on advocacy and policy seek to meaningfully connect with the people and communities their work is intended to benefit. The learnings and reflections from this landscape scan resulted in the committee deciding to launch the Participatory Climate Initiative, which started as an effort to explore feedback and advocacy related to climate

issues but shifted to ultimately explore, assess, and share learnings about participatory grantmaking and provide a steppingstone for funders to learn and adapt their practices for shifting power.

- **International Subcommittee:** While Shared Insight explicitly focused on efforts in the U.S., many of its core and sidecar funders had active portfolios and partnerships in other countries, fueling interest in exploring international work. This subcommittee originally focused on nonprofit feedback by exploring the potential expansion of L4G with international clients. The committee also supported Feedback Labs' Accelerator for a year, then shifted its focus to funder engagement. Shared Insight contracted with consultants in Brazil, India, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines, and Tanzania to conduct landscape scans of the current state of the feedback field in their country and offer recommendations about whether and how additional funding from Shared Insight might advance feedback

and listening practices. The committee, later renamed the Global Engagement Committee, further adapted its work to connect Shared Insight's U.S.-focused work on "listening to shift power" with the international localization and community-led development fields.

- **Listening, Learning, and Evaluation Group:** In an effort to continue building the feedback field and support foundations in walking the walk, Shared Insight convened evaluation and learning officers from core funder and sidecar funder foundations to discuss how listening and feedback can inform and be integrated into foundations' evaluation efforts.⁵¹ The group met virtually 14 times over two years, between late 2021 and late 2023.
- ▶ **Ad hoc, one-on-one support:** Shared Insight staff over time met with many individual funders and groups of funders to share lessons learned, answer questions, and seek to engage them in Shared Insight resources and opportunities.

51. Penny Huang, "Update on Listening, Learning, and Evaluation Group", 2022, Fund for Shared Insight core funder meeting materials.

Defining “Listening to Shift Power”

More recently, Shared Insight articulated what quality practice looks like for funders, defining power shifting as “movement toward self-determination and ownership for communities most impacted by structural racism and systemic intersectional inequities.” In relation to this work, that means de-centering the outsized power of funders by enabling community members to directly influence the decisions foundations make about their resources, strategies, and practices. Shared Insight offers four guiding principles that can help foundations assess their listening efforts and identify opportunities to improve how they shift power to community. Funder listening to shift power:

1. **Is an ongoing practice:** Listening should not be a one-time activity or exercise but an ongoing process reflecting a commitment to the five steps of a high-quality feedback loop, which includes closing the loop—circling back to those who shared their perspectives to let them know what you heard and how you are planning to respond.
2. **Is relationship-based:** Listening processes that are most effective at advancing equity and shifting power involve being in relationship and partnership throughout the process—from framing the initial conversations to making meaning from what is heard to figuring out how to respond. These relationships are built on open channels of communication, mutual accountability, and authentic partnership, such as through shared decisionmaking.
3. **Engages in an explicit power analysis:** Funders have historically exercised outsized power, and that dynamic, if not taken into account and addressed, can result in funder listening that is extractive, transactional, or just reinforcing what funders want to hear. Funders should approach listening with a clear understanding of how power currently operates and with specific attention to people and communities most impacted but not typically consulted by philanthropy and nonprofits.
4. **Advances equity:** This kind of listening offers an opportunity for funders to hear from—and work shoulder-to-shoulder with—diverse communities and people who are experts in their own lives and have myriad assets and capabilities. It engages multiple forms of listening—such as systematic feedback loops, participatory processes, and community-driven practices—to make lasting systemic change.

52. Melinda Tuan, “What Is Funder Listening to Shift Power,” Fund for Share Insight, October, 22, 2024, <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/viewpoint/what-is-funder-listening-to-shift-power/>.



Supporting Evidence

Funders that engaged directly with Shared Insight showed some evidence of changes in values and understanding but only sporadic changes in practice.

Shared Insight engaged most closely with its core funders as well as funders supporting nonprofit practice through L4G between 2016 and 2019. Among Shared Insight's *core funders*, engagement was more intentional between 2017 and 2023. Core funder representatives engaged in structured efforts to reflect with each other about how their foundations were walking the walk to listen to community and were supported in making commitments about practices they could champion and begin to shift within their organizations. When mapping core funder activities to Shared Insights' Funder Listening Action Menu, we found that in 2022, all of the nine core funders who reported on their practices were engaging in listening and feedback activities that fell within the menu's categories. Nevertheless, when thinking about the source of the information gathered, only about half (4) of the core funders were listening directly to the people and communities they serve, instead of relying on grantees to provide them with those insights. We did not find any evidence of change among *sidecar funders*, a group that was more tangentially involved and less directly engaged in efforts to influence practice.

Among *L4G funders*, early data showed that four of the first 28 co-funders changed their own foundation's approach to feedback and listening by encouraging nonprofits to listen more and soliciting feedback on their own work. Data from 52 funders across L4G's 2016, 2017, and 2018 cohorts showed similar shifts in value over practice. L4G co-funders increased their understanding of how feedback can support their own work and the work of their grantees—though most had not translated this learning into new practices at the time of data collection.

Data from early 2016 grants resulted in little data on practice change, given the focus or timing of efforts and evaluation follow-up. We did not evaluate the impact of sidecar funders' participation in Shared Insight's subcommittees and funder working groups.

L4G co-funders deepened their understanding of how feedback can support their work and that of their grantees, though most had not changed practices.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Within Shared Insight's Strategy: Evolution and Results

Fund for Shared Insight openly acknowledged that when it was founded in 2014, the funder collaborative did not have equity, diversity, or inclusion (EDI) as core principles or values guiding its work. However, since 2016, Shared Insight has undergone a significant journey in its focus on EDI. Over time, the collaborative recognized equity, diversity, and inclusion as core values, created a set of equity-centered operating principles, and advanced EDI through how Shared Insight operated and what it sought to achieve in the world.



2014–2017

Not part of original theory of change, grew in importance beginning in 2016

Evaluation Findings:

Equity, diversity, and inclusion were more natural fits with nonprofit feedback practice at the start, given the focus on listening to “voices least heard.”

In the Foundation Listening and Sharing area, many grantees struggled to connect ideas of foundation “openness” with “DEI.”

Reflections:

Key voices around the core funder table, as well as investment in an external EDI consultant, laid the groundwork for more explicit and intentional EDI focus in future years. This early orientation helped bake these principles and values into field building, nonprofit practice, and Shared Insight's operations.

2017–2020

“Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lenses” and practices with EDI considerations in the theory of change

Evaluation Findings:

Listen4Good built internal capacity and explicit supports in their model to promote EDI and shifts in power among the nonprofits they worked with. Most L4G clients saw the connection between feedback and EDI but had room to grow in the degree to which they were responding to feedback and shifting power. Feedback ORS Impact collected from clients showed there was room to grow in terms of clients feeling like they were being taken seriously and that their feedback was making a difference. At the field level, there was increased focus on EDI as well, though there was room to diversify who was part of the field.

Most of the organizations who received funding to influence funder behavior change did not start with a specific equity focus, and the original request for proposals did not make it explicit. As a result, this area lagged in more deeply incorporating EDI lenses compared to nonprofit work.

Reflections:

Tailwinds from COVID and the racial reckoning in 2020 supported the incorporation of EDI into social sector efforts. The focus in this time period seemed primarily oriented toward diversity (who is present) and inclusion (are diverse participants welcome and able to contribute) rather than equity (shifting systems and conditions so those who have been excluded or oppressed benefit and become empowered agents of the change they seek). The clearer fit within nonprofit feedback practice materialized in more concrete changes in that area of the work compared to funder practice.

53. ORS Impact. Fund for Shared Insight. “Accomplishments & Lessons Learned 2017–2020.” ORS Impact, 2020. [Fund-for-Shared-Insight_2017-2020-Lookback-Evaluation-Report-Nov-20.pdf](#). (adapted from Open Source Leadership Strategies).

By design and original intent of the founding funders, Shared Insight’s operations as a funder collaborative have not been a focus of our evaluations. Therefore, we have limited evaluative data and insights to offer about Shared Insight’s EDI journey. However, we do have reflections on the collaborative’s efforts over time. In the timeline below we reflect on what we found through our evaluations and share reflections across the different phases of Shared Insight’s work.

2020–2023

Same theory of change

Evaluation Findings:

L4G continued to embed equity into all its curricula and coaching, diversified its staff, and promoted feedback as a tool to advance equity. The evaluation found that feedback and listening could help advance equity and power shifts in organizations.

Funder work through the Participatory Climate Initiative and with the Funder Listening Community of Practice had explicit foci on EDI in their design and implementation.

Reflections:

In this period, EDI felt more embedded, less bolted on, and occurred across all strategies and audiences. There was more explicit grappling with power and equity, moving beyond the earlier primary emphasis on diversity and inclusion.

2023–2026

“Race-Explicit Intersectional Equity Lens” and focus on shifting power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities

Evaluation Findings:

While this work is still in process beyond the period of this evaluation, we found a strong EDI focus in the feedback field, an emphasis on finding diverse and aligned champions to support funder behavior change, and an emphasis on EDI in resources and materials produced by Shared Insight. Some evaluations in this period suggest there is still room to grow in listening to those most impacted but least consulted, and efforts within foundations to shift power to community still seem nascent at scale.

Reflections:

This phase had the most explicit and consistent focus on power shifting and fundamental equity issues around resources, decision making, and who gets to decide what is needed and desired.

Sector-Level Results and Contributions



As suggested, by having strategic approaches, such as building a field and creating large scalable models, Shared Insight hoped to have a broader impact in the sector than just achieving results with the relatively small number of organizations they could directly fund or engage. In this section, we look at how norms and practices around feedback and listening have changed over time more broadly for the nonprofit and philanthropic sector and assess in what ways Shared Insight has contributed.



Nonprofit Norms and Practices



Foundation Norms and Practices



Outcome: Nonprofit Norms and Practices



Assessment

Field Status:

INCREASED ALIGNMENT IN SOME PRACTICES AND OVERALL NORMS

Shared Insight wants more leaders and staff in nonprofits to listen, respond, and shift power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities. Field-level data, key informants from infrastructure organizations, and bellwethers with purview of the social sector suggest that nonprofits are listening and increasingly responding to the people they serve. We aren't able to say whether those efforts have yet led to shifts in power, as we don't have data about which constituents nonprofits are listening to.

Shared insight also wants listening, responding, and shifting power to become an expected standard among nonprofits. Ongoing use of feedback among nonprofits suggests that feedback continues to be an expected practice. Increases in frequency of nonprofits responding to feedback alongside sector conversation focusing more on improved quality of practice suggest that expected standards for how nonprofits operate have moved into greater alignment with Shared Insight's aims.

Shared Insight Contribution:

AN INFLUENTIAL ACTOR

Reported practice in the field has remained stable, and there is evidence of shifts over time to focus more on responding to feedback and other markers of quality that align with Shared Insight and other feedback field partners' shared definition of high-quality practice. While we don't have definitive data to ascertain contribution, it is likely that the work advanced by field actors, including Shared Insight and Shared Insight-supported organizations, has influenced the conversation and standards of practice in the sector, sustaining momentum for feedback practice and securing increased funder support for nonprofit practice. Importantly, political events and sector trends created tailwinds for feedback practice, which Shared Insight and its partners recognized and leveraged in moving their work forward. The presence of these contextual factors and their influence on shifting the sector writ large likely mean that Shared Insight was one influential player among many others in shaping changes in the sector.

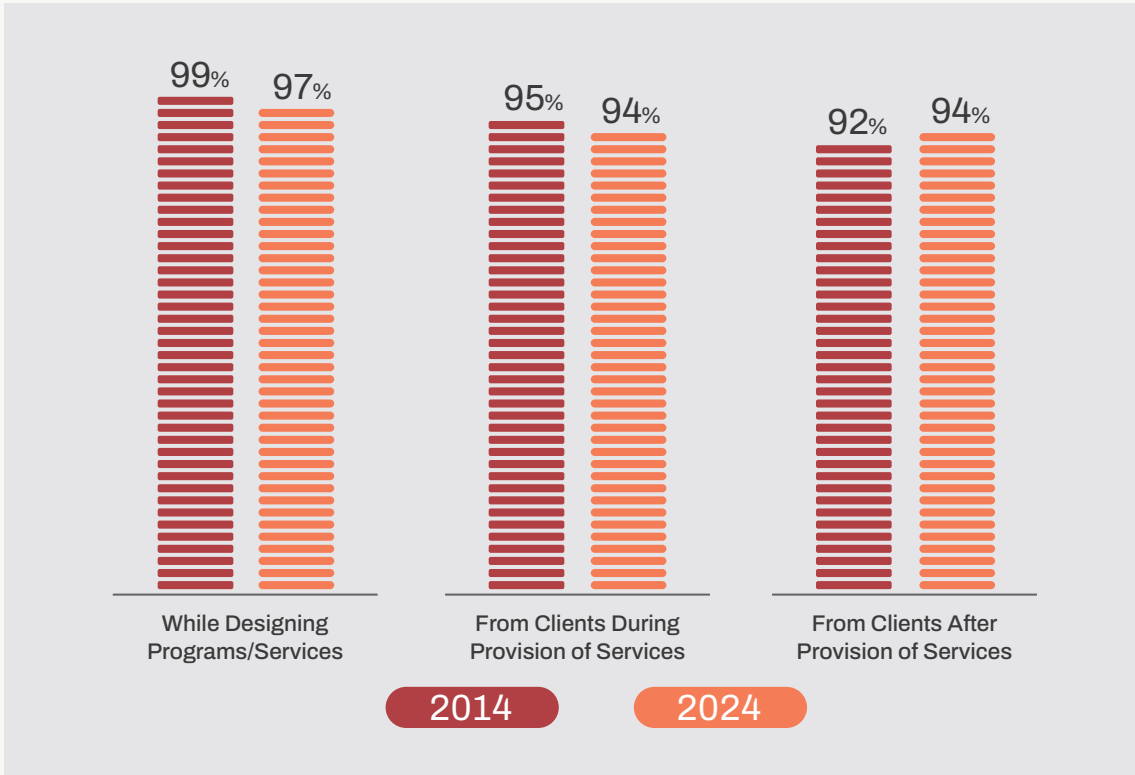
Supporting Evidence

At a field level, nonprofit feedback data collection remains consistently high yet slightly less systematic. While more nonprofits are making changes in response to feedback, closing the loop continued to be challenging.

CEP survey data from 2014 and 2024 show a consistently high trend for collecting feedback among nonprofits overall. As seen in Figure 7, 97% of nonprofits said that their organization seeks to understand the perspectives of those

they serve when designing their program and services in 2024 compared to 99% in 2014. There were similar high percentages of feedback for nonprofits while and after their clients were engaged in their programs.

Figure 7 | Percentage of Nonprofits Collecting Feedback at Different Times in Service Provision^{54 58}



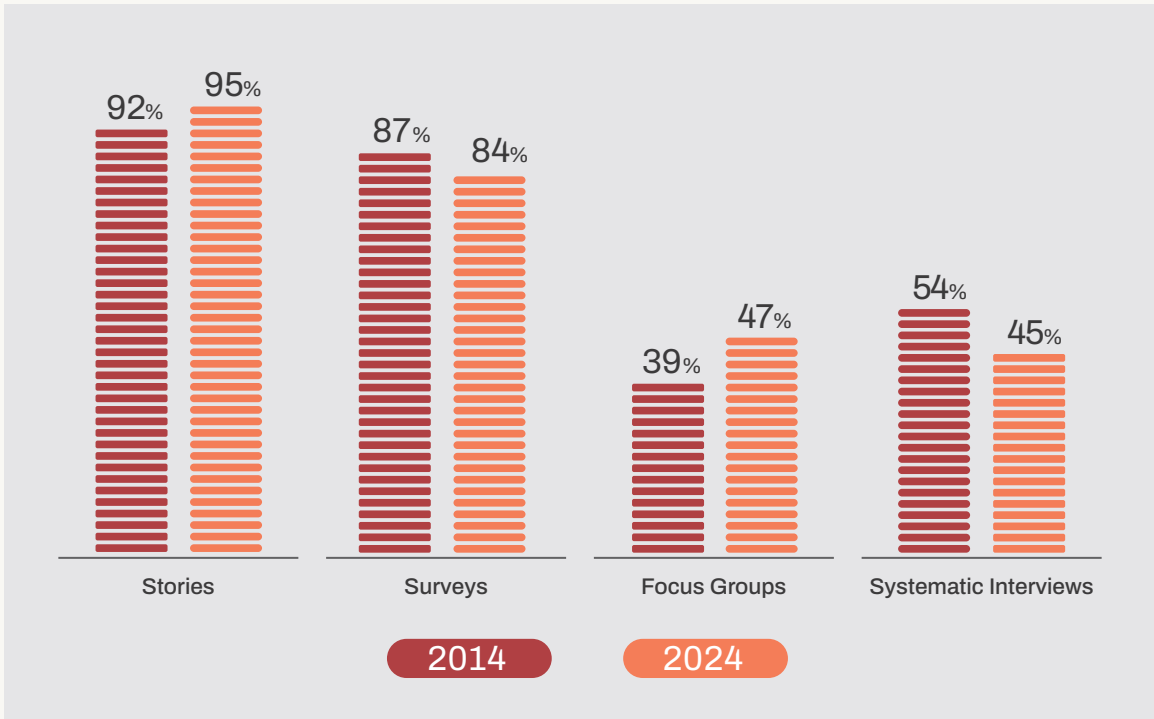
54. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al. "Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025. <https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/>.

55. Buteau, Ellie, et al. "Hearing From Those We Seek to Help: Nonprofit Practices and Perspectives in Beneficiary Feedback." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2014. <https://cep.org/report/hearing-from-those-we-seek-to-help-nonprofit-practices-and-perspectives-in-beneficiary-feedback/>.

When thinking about other quality aspects of feedback practice, some data do show, however, a slight decrease in *systematic* feedback data collection. According to the 2024 CEP survey, while stories and surveys remained the most

frequent type of feedback data collection, there was a slight increase in stories and decrease in the use of surveys and systematic interviews, a change that could potentially result in lower-quality data (Figure 8).

Figure 8 | Percentage of Nonprofits Collecting Feedback Through Different Methods⁵⁶



Shared Insight and groups they supported influenced the feedback field, sustaining momentum for feedback practice.

56. Ibid

The same CEP surveys show that slightly more nonprofits report using of feedback, or responding to their constituents, than in 2014. CEP survey data from 2024 show that 65% of nonprofits use feedback to improve their work, compared to 61% in 2014. Moreover, 80% reported adjusting existing programs, and more than half provided new services, changed staff communications, or made internal changes to policies and practices in response to feedback. In 2014, 70% reported making some type of change to programs or services (Table 9).

Finally, closing the loop is the least commonly practiced step of the five-step process defined

by L4G. While we don't have field-wide data to compare over time, we do see in 2024 that only 19% of respondents report always closing the loop, while almost 70% say they sometimes engage in this practice. This finding is unsurprising given that this step of the feedback loop had been challenging even for nonprofits partnering with L4G during its pilot phases.⁵⁷ YouthTruth data also reveals challenges in closing the loop as schools most commonly share survey findings with staff (92%), while 69% share results with parents and 58% do so with students.⁵⁸

Table 9 | Percentage of Nonprofits Using or Making Changes in Response to Feedback^{59 60}

	2014	2024 ⁶¹
▶ Use Feedback to Improve Their Work	61%	65%
▶ Make Changes in Response to Feedback	70% made changes to programs or services based on feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% adjusted existing program offerings • 59% provided new services or programs • 52% reported changes in how staff interact and communicate • 52% reported changes to internal policies and practices

57. ORS Impact. "The Listen4Good Journey So Far: Lessons and Findings From Three Complete Cohorts." ORS Impact, 2020. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-L4G-Journey-So-Far-ORS-Impact-Final-3.23.20-002.pdf>.

58. YouthTruth, "24-25 YouthTruth Client Feedback Survey." Unpublished resource, March 2026.

59. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al., "Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025. [https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-](https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/)

[and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/](https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/).

60. Buteau, Ellie, et al. "Hearing From Those We Seek to Help: Nonprofit Practices and Perspectives in Beneficiary Feedback." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2014. <https://cep.org/report/hearing-from-those-we-seek-to-help-nonprofit-practices-and-perspectives-in-beneficiary-feedback/>.

61. The change in response options between the 2014 and 2024 surveys does not allow for direct comparison. However, the overall trend indicates some positive change in ways aligned with what Shared Insight hopes to see among nonprofits.

“The listening to community piece is big for nonprofits as well. Making sure services ... [and] things they’re doing are reflective of community voice and community needs.”

Community listening and engagement are considered important practices of good nonprofits, and high numbers of nonprofits sharing about their feedback practices suggest they see these practices as valued and valuable.

When asked about the top five practices of good nonprofit actors, sector leaders described ten different practices, with community listening and engagement among the top three most frequently listed topics. One interviewee said, “The listening to community piece is big for nonprofits as well. Making sure that the services that they’re providing, the things that they’re doing are reflective of community voice and community needs.” Staff wellbeing and retention ($n = 5$), strategic clarity ($n = 5$), and the ability to zoom out and collaborate with other ecosystem actors ($n = 5$) were the other three most frequently discussed practices.

We also know that nonprofits recognize the importance of collecting feedback from the

people they serve. Candid is a nonprofit organization that supports the social sector through data, research, and tools. In 2019, Candid added the “How We Listen” tool to promote feedback practices and transparency in the nonprofit sector. This optional feature incentivizes nonprofits to publicly disclose that they engage in these practices. More and more nonprofits have voluntarily completed this information on their profiles, and as of January 2025, nearly 40,000 of 1.9 million nonprofits in the United States indicated they collect feedback from their clients via the “How We Listen” section of their Candid profile, suggesting they see value in collecting feedback and sharing their practice publicly.

Sector conversation related to nonprofit feedback and listening is more focused on how to do it well than on making the case for the practice.

When reflecting on how the conversation on feedback has changed in the nonprofit sector, 7 of the 11 bellwethers we talked to about this saw feedback being framed as more important than in years past (n = 3) and saw more discussion on available tools, resources, or other elements related to strengthening the practice (n = 4). Additionally, one bellwether talked about nonprofits being more flexible and diversifying their offerings as a result of community feedback, and another bellwether talked about sensing a deeper level of community empowerment to give feedback to nonprofits and say no to certain things. Similarly, Shared Insight's infrastructure grantees mentioned the shift in conversation toward centering community voice and perspective and a greater level of sophistication with the practice of feedback, with varying degrees of quality. One interviewee described, *"I will say about the importance of centering community voice and community members, the concepts of lived expertise. These are concepts that ... were not seen as core to how people operated. And I do think there is a growing awareness and commitment to those concepts."*

"Community voice and ... lived expertise—these are concepts that ... were not seen as core to how people operated. I think there is a growing awareness and commitment to those concepts."



Outcome: Foundation Norms and Practices



Assessment

Field Status:

IMPROVED NORMS, LESS PRACTICE CHANGE

Shared Insight wants more leaders and staff in foundations to listen, respond, and shift power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities and for this to become the expected standard for funders. Collectively, data suggests increased interest in and momentum behind funder listening and that progress has been made for funders in listening becoming the expected standard.

However, there seems to be a gap between discourse and practice, with sporadic evidence of individual or organizational-level change. Less progress has been made in funders listening to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities, the degree to which they respond, when and how they shift power, and how embedded practices are in organizations.

Interest in funder listening has grown, and progress has been made toward it becoming the expected standard. However, there is a gap between discourse and practice.

The philanthropic sector's shift toward listening was mostly tied to other influential organizations and factors.

Shared Insight Contribution:

OTHER MORE VISIBLE CONTRIBUTORS IN A FAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT

Shared Insight had implemented its strategies in a generally favorable environment until 2025, with tailwinds that propelled its work forward or at least generated favorable conditions for the type of changes it sought among funders. Specifically, the philanthropic sector's increased focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion opened windows of opportunity to examine and address power dynamics in the sector and question the extent to which communities had any influence on what foundations decided on their behalf. Listening and working in stronger partnership with community representatives was one way in which foundations operationalized their focus on equity, which became stronger in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning and uprisings in 2020. Since then, aligned efforts such as Trust-Based Philanthropy and the Equitable Evaluation Initiative became more prevalent in the sector, leading to a beneficial convergence of related efforts and aligned actors.

While it is likely that Shared Insight contributed to an increased value of listening in the sector through its efforts to develop tools, expand its reach, and elevate discourse, interviewees identified other factors and influential organizations as key contributors to these shifts. In addition to the factors external to the sector such as the COVID-19 pandemic and racial reckoning in 2020, which interviewees identified as catalytic events that influenced changes in the sector, interviewees also mentioned a variety of organizations in the sector that have promoted aligned practices over the past decade and have influenced philanthropic practice. These organizations included Trust-Based Philanthropy, the Equitable Evaluation Initiative, the Emergent Learning Community Project, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, Center for Effective Philanthropy, and peer foundations championing the practice, among others. Shared Insight was not among the top-mentioned organizations contributing to these shifts. Given Shared Insight's lack of focus on funder listening in the earlier years and the recent shift in the short term, it's not surprising that there has been less progress and they have been a less strong contributor to the changes seen around listening to shift power in the philanthropic sector.



Supporting Evidence

Foundations are increasingly valuing listening to community, and evidence suggests listening has become an expected practice.

In 2016, CEP found that 69% of foundation CEOs thought that “seeking to learn from the experiences of those they are trying to help, *held a lot of promise*.” Interview data with a sample of 28 foundation evaluation officers in 2015 found that 85% agreed that the ultimate constituents for their work were the people and communities they sought to help. At that time, only one-third described institutionalized examples of listening to these ultimate constituents for strategy development and refinement. Findings at the time suggested that the practice of listening was valued but aspirational, as two-thirds of the respondents shared visions for stronger future practices and half discussed creating more listening processes in the next three years.⁶²

In 2025, CEP published a follow-up study to understand foundations’ practices and found that 97% of foundations who responded were actively working to understand the needs of people and communities they seek to benefit. In addition, 89% identified information provided directly by those the foundation seeks to benefit as information they find useful in shaping their work, second only to grantee expertise (92%).⁶³ In addition, a recent GEO survey of

U.S. foundations showed that 42% of funders are engaging in participatory grantmaking,⁶⁴ and the international participatory grantmaking community continues to grow since it began in 2020.

Key sector informants also perceive a shift. Three-quarters said funders have moved toward working in greater proximity and solidarity with nonprofits and communities. Half mentioned that listening is a norm in the sector now, is more prevalent, or is making its way to becoming a norm. As one noted:

“I think it’s a larger conversation now. I think that the general idea of being more accountable to and listening to community has increased a lot over the past several years. I think there’s some questions about what listening [looks like]? Who is community? There’s maybe some confusion about that in some cases, but in general, that topic is much more prevalent.”

62. ORS Impact. “Feedback Loops and Openness: A Snapshot of the Field: Baseline Report.” ORS Impact, 2015. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/FundforSharedInsightBaselineReport3-31-15-2.pdf>.

63. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al. “Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support.” Center for Effective

Philanthropy, 2025. <https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/>.

64. Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. “2025 National Study of Philanthropic Practice.” Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2025. <https://grantmakingstudy2025.geofunders.org/#introduction>.

“Feedback and listening, as well as trust-based philanthropy generally, used to be further out in the periphery ... Now... [even] philanthropies that have classically not been as social justice-oriented are interested”

Moreover, several interviewees identified a shift in the nature of the conversation related to listening to community, moving from whether it is good practice to focusing on how to do it well. One mentioned that, “We’ve definitely been seeing more feedback across the board—nonprofits to funders, community to nonprofits, community to funders,” and another added that the practice has become expected practice: “It’s not: ‘wouldn’t it be nice if we had feedback from those who are most impacted?’ Now, if you’re designing something, this is what you should be doing.” Another interviewee shared that: *“feedback and listening, as well as trust-based philanthropy generally, used to be further out in the periphery. Now, it’s not just the philanthropies that explicitly purport to be social justice philanthropies, but philanthropies that have classically not been as social justice-oriented are interested in learning and are recognizing the need for this engagement to design programming and/or evaluate.”* Yet another interviewee reflected that these concepts are now embedded in the sector: *“So many of these different frameworks and movements have [listening] as a core practice. And now you have organizations that [specialize in] how you listen to your grantees, how you listen to community.”*

Across the sector, foundations are increasingly engaging in listening, though more with grantees than with directly impacted communities.

Across the sector, foundations are listening, but more to grantees and “intermediaries” than directly to communities most impacted.

Broad sector data from CEP suggests that most foundations are listening in order to gather information about the communities at the heart of their work: In 2024, 79% of CEP survey respondents reported that they collected feedback from the nonprofits they fund, an increase from the 67% of funders who, in the 2016 CEP survey, said their foundation was “seeking to learn from the knowledge and experience of grantees.”^{65 66} Similarly, interviews with foundation evaluation directors show that most (81%) of foundation interviewees in 2025 reported listening to grantees, compared to 71% in 2014.

While this increase shows a change in how funders communicate and partner with grantees, it also suggests that most funders continue leveraging grantees as the main way to learn about communities, which was also true in 2014. In the 2024 CEP survey, 92% of funders reported that grantees were the main way in which they learn about communities.⁶⁷ While 81% of interviewed funders listened to grantees, only 43% reported engaging directly with community members through focus groups, site visits, community members hired as staff, and community-wide surveys.

When exploring listening practices among eleven funders thought to be listening well,⁶⁸ ORS Impact found that even when funders were listening to community members, they were rarely engaging with the most directly impacted people. Of the fifty distinct listening practices we identified across the 11 foundations, only 6 (12%) targeted the most directly impacted community members. In contrast, 36 (72%) centered on engaging a broad range of representatives of community interests, including grantees, foundation staff with lived experience, community consultants, nonprofit/local leaders, and general community members.

While some grantee organizations do represent those most impacted by structural racism and systemic intersectional inequities, these data show a likely gap in funder listening practices. In 2014 and 2024, only about a third of nonprofits surveyed by CEP thought most or all of their funders had a deep understanding of beneficiaries’ needs.^{69 70} The difference between who funders generally listen to and the communities and people most impacted by philanthropy could be contributing to this perceived disconnect among nonprofit leaders.

65. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al. “Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support.” Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025. <https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/>.

66. Buteau, Ellie, et al. “The Future of Foundation Philanthropy: The CEO Perspective.” Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2018. <https://cep.org/report/future-foundation-philanthropy-ceo-perspective/>.

67. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al. “Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support.” Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025. <https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/>.

68. ORS identified 27 funders engaging in community listening efforts through

direct outreach to Shared Insight and ORS foundation contacts. Through initial, exploratory interviews, ORS assessed listening efforts across these foundations and invited a subset to participate in follow-up interviews. Eleven ultimately agreed to participate in the study.

69. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al. “Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support.” Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025. <https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/>.

70. Buteau, Ellie, et al. “Hearing From Those We Seek to Help: Nonprofit Practices and Perspectives in Beneficiary Feedback.” Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2014. <https://cep.org/report/hearing-from-those-we-seek-to-help-nonprofit-practices-and-perspectives-in-beneficiary-feedback/>.

Among funders who listen to community, there is still room for growth in the degree to which they are responding to what they hear and how embedded the practice is within their institutions.

Once foundations listen to community, 2024 CEP data show that only half (56%) of funder respondents “always” incorporate that information into their foundations’ work, suggesting room for improvement among the 45% who only incorporate learnings “sometimes.” Our interviews with a sample of foundation evaluation directors showed similar patterns. Some foundation evaluation directors use information from community listening efforts, including designing or refining strategies (7) and defining impact (2). Two others mentioned that community feedback is processed by foundation staff to find ways to incorporate it, and another mentioned that the information is used to refine existing programs but not to develop new strategies. Regarding closing the loop, most (73%) either don’t close the loop or only do so sometimes.

Furthermore, foundations that have adopted listening practices report inconsistent practices and room to improve how they listen. Most (81%) of the 16 foundation evaluation directors we interviewed reported that listening practices vary within their foundation, either in who they listen to, when they listen, or how they use that information, pointing to inconsistent approaches. Among them, only three reported that there is a foundation-wide

listening effort with a standardized or similar structure to how each team within their foundation approaches listening. Upon reflecting on their foundations’ listening practices, all evaluation directors said their foundations could listen better, and several identified areas for growth, including the following: shifting decision-making power to communities, getting board buy-in; designing evaluations that center community questions, not funders’; making listening a more standard part of the strategy design process across the foundation; closing the loop; changing how their foundation designs its next strategic plan; shifting enabling conditions internally to support more listening; and ensuring that listening becomes an ongoing practice among program officers.

Five bellwethers confirmed in their interviews that people working in the sector talk about listening to community as a practice that is aligned with their values and how things should be, but they face different challenges in putting it into practice. These challenges include identifying who should represent community, the extent to which program officers have the power to influence practice change within foundations, and differences in what it takes to practice listening among different types of foundations.

Among funders we spoke with who are actively trying to listen, many saw a connection between listening and shifting power, but practices that shift power are still more of the exception than the norm.

While sector data suggests that foundations are listening in order to gather information about the communities at the heart of their work, interviews with 11 foundations that are listening to community suggest that foundations are listening to *receive input* from community members to inform program design and implementation. Many of the interviewed foundations did see an explicit connection between listening and shifting power. Seven of the eleven funders identified shifting power⁷¹ from their foundations to other stakeholders as a core purpose of their listening practices.

Seven of 11 funders identified shifting power as a core purpose of their listening, however, many of their current practices did not yet align with this intention.

However, most of their current practices did not match this intention.

Nevertheless, there are indications that foundations are increasingly experimenting with other grantmaking practices that shift power more intentionally. For example, as noted earlier, 42% of U.S.-based foundations reported engaging in participatory grantmaking practices in a 2024 GEO survey.⁷² While participatory grantmaking involves listening to community members, it also enables inclusive and shared decision-making processes. In this context, listening is likely one component of a broader array of practices that enable power shifts. Reflecting on this relationship, one foundation evaluation leader we interviewed mentioned that the conversation in the sector is moving from listening to shifting power, although that shift has not become a standard yet:

“Field dialogue is moving beyond purely listening or consulting to more engagement with community and allowing them a certain amount of control. However, I do think that’s probably much more the exception than the rule.”

71. Fund for Shared Insight defines power shifting as movement toward self-determination and ownership for communities most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities. In relation to this work, that means intentionally reducing the outsized power of funders by enabling community members to directly influence the decisions foundations make about their resources, strategies, and practices.

72. Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. “2025 National Study of Philanthropic Practice.” Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2025. <https://grantmakingstudy2025.geofunders.org/#introduction>.

Looking Ahead



Opportunities Ahead

While this evaluation examines the overall arc of Shared Insight’s work, the work is not over and its outcomes are still unfolding. Here we highlight forward-looking opportunities identified by partners in the field that others may wish to advance, building on Shared Insight’s decade of work and investment.



Nonprofit Feedback Practice



Funder Norms and Practices





Nonprofit Feedback Practice

Challenging times in the sector may put nonprofit feedback practices in peril.

While we've found in this decade (2014-2024) that high proportions of nonprofits collect feedback—suggesting that listening has become an embedded value—changing conditions may threaten this progress, limiting uptake and dampening benefits for communities and people most impacted but least consulted by philanthropy and nonprofits. A 2024 CEP survey reports that the biggest challenge for nonprofits when it comes to understanding the needs of the people they seek to serve is lack of staff hours or capacity to collect feedback.⁷³ With the hardships that nonprofits are facing today, including loss in

revenue, staff retention, and increased community demand, organizations may address those needs over collecting client feedback right now.⁷⁴ Additionally, risks related to client immigration status, collecting demographic data, and data security among other concerns have already caused many nonprofits to be cautious about what they ask, collect, and store about their clients or constituents. Changed times may require new innovations and approaches for how nonprofits can ethically and responsibly listen, respond, and shift power.

Support a greater breadth of nonprofits and communities, beyond just those providing direct service.

One strength of Shared Insight's strategy was its focus on direct-service nonprofits, where there was clear potential for accountability to the people they serve and had regular engagement with. While there were some efforts to explore

how feedback might apply to other parts of the sector, such as advocacy nonprofits, more work could be done to expand the ethos of listening, responding, and shifting power across a broader swath of nonprofits and affected communities.

73. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al. "Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025. <https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/>.

74. Fallon, Katie et al., "Nonprofit Leaders Top Concerns Entering 2025." Urban Institute, 2025. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/Nonprofit_Leaders%E2%80%99_Top_Concerns_Entering_2025.pdf

Maintain and build upon feedback field gains.

As Shared Insight—which has led and supported field efforts through funding, research, alignment, and collaboration—exits the field, important challenges remain regarding how to sustain the progress made thus far.

Infrastructure grantees surfaced several barriers to sustaining feedback field accomplishments, with the primary one being a lack of field infrastructure funding to match the need for increased adoption to reach a tipping point for sector-wide influence. This concern is stronger now as Shared Insight sunsets and the current political climate shifts funder priorities away from equity and feedback work.

Other opportunities include the need to continue to strengthen the research base. While the research/knowledge base of the feedback field has improved, there is room to do more. One grantee said, “I think that [the Shared Insight] research portfolio has ... given us the ability to ... cite ... research that [demonstrates that] feedback is related to outcomes. That has really been helpful, and it used to be a gap.” Another grantee said, “[the field] doesn’t have a strong theoretical body of literature that undergirds it. I think that we’ve got cases and we’ve got tools ... we’ve got action frameworks, but we don’t

have knowledge frameworks.” A challenge to establishing a robust research base for feedback work, the grantee added: “feedback work falls between disciplines, so research may differ depending on the field (e.g., education, policy).”

Another challenge is to make sure the work to develop collective language, framing, and incentives continues. One interviewee said, “We need the research base, which is important. But frankly, even more, we need collective language to talk about why and how we [engage in feedback work] for collective good.” While efforts have been underway to strengthen field incentives for nonprofit feedback practice, that work is incomplete. One interviewee said, “I fear a bit that [feedback is] still a nice to have and not seen as a must-have component of how organizations think about their work. I think the incentive development is slow. It may be happening in pockets, but I’m worried it’s not moving quick enough to really shift the field.”



▼ Funder Norms and Practices

Take a multi-pronged and targeted approach to changing funder practice.

As noted previously, Shared Insight has continued to expand its aims, particularly around encouraging funder practices that listen, respond, and shift power. This included the creation of a new initiative, Listen to Community, which aims to make listening, responding, and shifting power standard practice in philanthropy.

Launched in 2025, Listen to Community builds on lessons from Shared Insight's earlier work and focuses on moving a defined share of foundations toward these practices. The initiative concentrates particularly on about 1,300 funders—community foundations, health conversion foundations, local, regional, and national funders, including family foundations, with place-based work—that may be more likely to embed listening, responding, and shifting power because of their proximity to specific communities.

Drawing in part on theories of diffusion of innovations, the initiative seeks to “cross the chasm” of practice change through storytelling, resources, and peer connections. While this focus was conceptualized as part of the final theory of change in early 2024, it was not implemented in time to be included in this evaluation. Looking ahead, many opportunities exist for others to support and engage with the initiative so that philanthropy better supports the self-determined goals and needs of the communities it seeks to serve.

Foundation
leaders
emphasized
listening as
increasingly
important in
the current
challenging
landscape.

A changed and challenging landscape poses threats to what has been achieved but opens opportunities for courage and perseverance for those who truly believe that philanthropy and nonprofits can work in greater solidarity with, and meet the authentic needs of, people and communities most impacted by inequities.

In mid-2025, we asked foundation and sector leaders to reflect on how the socio-political landscape within which Shared Insight and philanthropy more broadly are operating has changed in the past year. In their reflections, leaders noted what they perceived as mostly negative implications, including increased legal threats, reduction in resources, lack of government resources, loss of valuable data, and risks of funders scaling back or ending risky efforts.

However, within—and perhaps because of—the challenges in the current landscape, half of the foundation leaders we spoke with emphasized the growing importance of listening. They pointed to a variety of reasons: gaining foresight into emerging needs and how philanthropy might adapt, navigating uncertainty together with grantees and partners, and fostering greater solidarity and stronger relationships between program officers, grantees, and partners. Some

also expressed hope for more participatory and trust-based philanthropy practices, changes in boards' influence over strategy, and improved relationships and trust with communities. One interviewee noted that donors to community foundations continue to say proximity to community is the core reason why they invest in a community foundation in the first place, while another funder identified an opportunity to broaden listening practices so they include groups that philanthropy has not traditionally engaged. The moment of crisis may also create a need for sector actors to work in greater solidarity with each other, particularly as funders consider their role in supporting change in the absence of government support. A handful of the respondents looked to the future with optimism, seeing opportunities to rebuild the sector in stronger ways, with greater proximity and less dependence on government support.



▼ Overall Observations

As the embedded partner to Shared Insight since its beginning, we, the evaluators, have the benefit of a long-term view and deep insight into Shared Insight's strategy over time. Here we take advantage of that vantage point to offer a few of our own observations about the strategy and results overall.

Shared Insight raised the bar for itself in 2023.

From 2017 to 2023, Shared Insight aimed its work on a key midterm outcome:

“High-quality feedback and listening practices that reflect equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations become an expected standard among foundations and nonprofits.”

Given our findings through 2024, we'd rate the achievement of this outcome more fully than the current target outcome, which has been strengthened but fulfilled variably across its elements: “Listening, responding, and shifting

power becomes the expected standard for funders and nonprofits.” The inclusion of “responding and shifting power” strengthens and aligns to Shared Insight's overall aim around feedback and listening, but it is a higher bar and one that moves beyond a technical or tactical change within organizations. While this was the goal Shared Insight hoped to achieve through its work in this final phase, it was probably more of a stretch goal requiring a longer runway than the planned three-year period. This shift also potentially leaves some of the current work in process without clear homes, champions, and resources to see through the gains and efforts to date.

Shared Insight advanced a vision of feedback and listening that went beyond technical aspects to support transformative change for organizations, clients, and the sector.

Greatest successes coincided with clear focus and strong strategy conceptualization and implementation.

When we look across the results and contributions, areas of particular success benefited from strong strategy conceptualization and implementation, as well as effective leadership and staffing. These included supporting the feedback field, strengthening nonprofit practice through Listen4Good, and creating high-quality resources and tools to support funder practice change. Undoubtedly, other factors were at play—including favorable tailwinds and promising starting conditions. The confluence of these external factors, alongside Shared Insight’s approach, combined for strong results in these areas of work.

However, as described earlier, there was a less clear and less focused strategy for a longer time around funder practice change. During the first six years or so of the collaborative, 80% of funding and effort supported building the nonprofit feedback field, while only 20% focused on influencing funders’ practices. With lower focus came less clarity on which approaches could work with funders, and most internal champions continued to lead efforts to support

nonprofits. While core funders hoped that a light-touch approach could still contribute toward shifts among funders, there is little evidence that the tools, resources, and convenings supported in early years led to practice shifts among funders. This pattern was internally described as “the fallacy of light touch,” as funders and staff realized that 20% of effort and investment were unlikely to move the needle.

Even as Shared Insight gained greater focus on its strategies and expected outcomes among funders over time, the audience for its efforts was less clear throughout most of these ten years. Unlike its nonprofit work, where Listen4Good quickly honed in on supporting direct service nonprofits and YouthTruth worked specifically with school systems, the initial approach to funder practice change lacked that kind of precision, aiming instead to influence philanthropic practice writ large. Core funders often discussed whether their own institutions were a target audience for the work, while tools and communications efforts were developed for all funders alike.

Shared Insight's equity, diversity, and inclusion focus shaped its strategy and vision as it focused on shifting power and provided a transformative vision for what feedback and listening could enable in the sector.

EDI was not originally baked into Shared Insight's strategy, and core funders and staff wrestled with what it meant to intentionally and meaningfully focus on EDI. Over time, Shared Insight changed its work to more fully align with this focus. Importantly, the EDI and race equity focus shaped how Shared Insight thought about and framed feedback and listening work. Shared Insight understood that there were technical aspects of feedback and listening practice, such as data collection and analysis, and many efforts sought to make feedback practice a more feasible endeavor for nonprofits and foundations. However, Shared Insight's vision for listening went beyond the technical aspects, advancing a vision of feedback and listening that was meant to be transformative for organizations, their clients, and the sector.

This transformative framing informed its strategic approaches and its articulation of a

long-term vision. For example, Shared Insight changed its funder engagement efforts with core and sidecar funders around EDI, prioritizing learning experiences that would drive personal, organizational, and cross-institutional shifts in understanding, values, and practice. Shared Insight's expected outcomes moved from foundations learning from and with each other through greater openness to "foundations being more meaningfully connected to the people they seek to help and more responsive to their feedback." The expected outcome then moved to funders "listening, responding, and shifting power to those most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities." This evolution reflects how deeply Shared Insight's race-explicit intersectional equity lens focus influenced its work, going beyond internal processes and trainings, to fully determine its mission and related strategies.

Some things mattered that weren't necessarily in our evaluation data.

ORS Impact staff had the unusual opportunity to have a seat at the table from very early on in Shared Insight's development. This allowed us to observe strategic discussions and decisions, share back and embed data into conversations, and use this vantage point to ask questions and produce evaluations that could advance the vision in ways a more traditional, external evaluation could not. Because in many ways we were part of Shared Insight, it was never in our role to evaluate the functioning and operations of the collaborative. But we feel it would be remiss not to share a few observations about things that we believe made a difference in how this collaborative was able to achieve the outcomes and progress we describe in the bulk of this report:

- Highly competent staffing and capacity:** Shared Insight started with a seasoned managing director and a significant amount of staff time from one of the founding foundations. Having this embedded depth of experience, wisdom, expertise, and time meant things could move quickly, effectively, and with strong alignment to the funder table. This continued over time as new types of staff roles were needed, whether that was finding a person to lead the development of Listen4Good or building out communications, EDI, and participatory grantmaking capacities. Despite the changes in staffing and roles over these ten years, Shared Insight benefited from having the dedicated staff and/or funder time to design and implement strategies well, once those strategies became a priority for the collaborative.
- Value for relationships and growing together:** Shared Insight started with a series of regular in-person meetings. These meetings would include dinner, speakers, site visits, and other ways for the core funders to have shared time, ideas, and experiences that they could bring into the work. Building these relationships and trust meant that the work could happen expediently, but it also

meant that the group could hold and handle hard conversations and disagreements that arose along the way.

- Orientation to learning and staying oriented to the overall goal:** In addition to the shared experiences previously noted, the collaborative asked and sought answers to questions about their approach and strategy, absorbed the findings, and used those learnings in ongoing strategic and tactical efforts. This orientation allowed them to respond to new opportunities and pivot as needed without losing the thread or spreading themselves too thin. This orientation to learning largely drove changes in Shared Insight's theory of change over time, as the funders collectively processed and responded to what they were learning about their strategy and implementation, changes in the external context, and the implications for their goals.

It is hard for us to imagine that the results Shared Insight achieved would have been possible without these “ingredients” (along with surely more), and we hope others who want to engage in collaborative work can be inspired not only by what was achieved but also by how the work was undertaken.⁷⁵

75. A more descriptive account of Shared Insight's history and development as a funder collaborative is available at: Fund for Shared Insight. “Listening, Learning,

and Letting Go: History and Impact of Fund for Shared Insight, 2014–2026.” Fund for Shared Insight, 2026.



Conclusion

In the early days of Shared Insight, the core funders talked about making feedback (and listening) the right thing, the smart thing, and the feasible thing for organizations in the sector to engage in. Over ten years of investment and effort, Shared Insight has accomplished a lot. New and strengthened infrastructure, a stronger more robust feedback field, and many tools and resources have helped make listening and feedback more feasible than before. Research has shown that nonprofit feedback, at least, is the smart thing, helping nonprofits achieve outcomes and shift power. And, since the early days, feedback and listening as the “right” thing has centered a justice orientation, based on the belief that people, no matter their circumstance, privilege, or needs, deserve dignity, respect, and agency. Shared Insight contributed to advances of this belief among funders at a sector level and contributed to nonprofits listening better: with higher-quality approaches and more responsiveness to what they hear.

Shared Insight is concluding at a tumultuous time in America, when this work probably matters even more than before. Nonprofits and foundations themselves have been under federal attack through Executive Orders and Congressional inquiries. Federal funding cuts, ICE raids, National Guard occupation of cities, democratic fragility, and more are negatively impacting communities around the country, especially people who are most impacted by structural racism and systemic, intersectional inequities. Too much power is concentrated among too few people and many people feel unheard.

There is an alternative: People—from the community, funding organizations, and from other public and private-sector groups—bringing their expertise, perspectives and resources together to solve problems, absent the power dynamics that too often get in the way today.

Social problems being solved as affected community members, nonprofits, funders, and others work collaboratively on solutions and implementation. Nonprofits and community members working hand in hand to address immediate challenges while also tackling the structural conditions that created the challenges in the first place.

Continued efforts to listen, respond, and shift power can help make this a reality. We hope that the positive sprouts Shared Insight has tended in this decade can continue to be fostered and flourish so that philanthropy and nonprofits increasingly work in greater solidarity with the people and communities most impacted by their work and who too often are least consulted about what they want and need to improve their quality of life.

Appendix A

Methodology, Strengths, and Limitations

This 10-year summative evaluation sought answers to four related but distinct questions:

- **Conceptualization of strategy:** What core approaches were taken? With what level of focus and what level of effort relative to the outcomes sought?
- **Implementation of strategy:** How well were strategic approaches operationalized and actualized toward Shared Insight's aims?
- **Results among those most proximate to the efforts:** What did Shared Insight's work result in? How well were desired outcomes achieved?
- **Sector-level impacts or influences:** How did areas of interest change at a field level? To what degree do data suggest Shared Insight contributed to field-level changes?

To answer these questions, we leveraged primary and secondary data sources, which provided information about the status of strategies and outcomes at the time of data collection, along with historical context and progress between 2014 and 2024. We conducted primary data collection in May 2025 and leveraged secondary data throughout our analysis process. This appendix summarizes our approach and data sources, which was designed independently from Shared Insight staff and reviewed by an evaluation advisory committee made up of evaluation leaders from The Barr Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and Blue Meridian Partners.

Considerations in Design

To evaluate accomplishments over 10 years of a complex, systems-change initiative such as Shared Insight, we developed an approach that allowed for the following components, which we believed would yield a robust, comprehensive assessment:

- **Evaluating strategy and outcomes:** Shared Insight used a variety of strategies over time that aimed to accomplish a set of outcomes that also shifted in goal and target audience over time. Our approach aimed to evaluate progress toward expected outcomes while also assessing how the different strategies were developed and implemented. Therefore, this evaluation contains elements of both outcomes and strategy evaluation to provide lessons to the sector about what was accomplished and how Shared Insight went about its work.
- **Current status and comparative data over time:** The data we collected had to allow for an assessment of the current status of expected outcomes, while allowing us to compare with past data to assess change over time. While replicating the exact data collection from the baseline was not feasible, we maintained consistent methods and sampling approaches so that our results were as comparable as possible, and we worked with Shared Insight partners in this process as well, particularly providing feedback on CEP's 2024 nonprofit and funder surveys.
- **Contribution assessment:** Because Shared Insight sought to influence sector-level change, we knew we needed data that showed changes occurring beyond individual organizations. However, many factors influence sector-level change, so we also developed ways to assess Shared Insight's contribution to the observed changes.

Data Sources

This assessment included the following eight primary and secondary data sources, some of which were comparable to past data collected by ORS Impact or other sources:

- **Primary data:** Data collected directly by ORS Impact between May and June 2025.
 - **Foundation evaluation director interviews:** Interviews with a purposive sample of 16 evaluation directors of foundations. We created a random sample of senior staff most closely associated with evaluation and/or strategy at foundations who participated in the 2023 Evaluation Round Table. Interviews were recorded with permission, transcribed, and coded for relevant themes using Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software. These interviews were comparable with those conducted in the baseline evaluation with a sample of 28 foundation evaluation directors in 2015.
 - **Bellwether interviews:** Interviews with sector “bellwethers,” a group of 12 individuals who have a purview on trends and priorities within the nonprofit and foundation sectors but are not direct grantees or closely connected to Shared Insight’s work to help triangulate findings from other data sources.
 - **Key grantee interviews:** Interviews with Listen4Good, Feedback Labs, and YouthTruth leaders as key Shared Insight grantees who also have purview into sector-level status and changes to build upon past findings from our most recent field assessment.
 - **Sector priority analysis:** Website review of purposive sample of subset of philanthropy infrastructure organizations (PIOs), including an assessment of alignment of content from home page, resources, strategy, and about us pages. Website content was coded for frequency, prominence, and alignment of topics promoted by Shared Insight. This process replicated work done in the 2015 baseline for comparison over time.
 - **Online content analysis:** Analysis of readily available search results from Google and Google Scholar for keywords related to feedback and listening. Coding of entries from blogs, reports, articles, and so forth, to assess alignment with feedback/listening and Shared Insight’s messaging. This process replicated, with some modifications, work done in the first few years of the evaluation to allow for comparison over time.
- **Secondary data:** Existing data leveraged by ORS Impact for this evaluation
 - 2014, 2016, 2024 CEP foundation and nonprofit surveys
 - Shared Insight and key grantee administrative data
 - Past evaluation reports and other Shared Insight publications, cited in Appendix C.

Our Positionality

ORS Impact became Shared Insight's evaluation and learning partner in 2014. Since then, we have been involved in different ways, evaluating strategies, programs, and progress over time, while also providing thought partnership on various aspects of the work. Through these positionality statements, we aim to transparently state how our positional power, influence, and knowledge of the collaborative, its members, and partners, influence our research and assessments for this evaluation.

I, Sarah, have been working as an evaluator for more than two decades and come to this work as a white, cisgender woman. I've also been leading the ORS Impact partnership with Shared Insight since it began in 2014. My decades of work in the field provide some benefits of experience and wisdom, but they also mean I was mostly steeped in white dominant evaluation practice and training that was seen as more "neutral." At ORS Impact, we committed to making race equity foundational to our practice in 2016 and have sought to bring culturally responsive, equitable evaluation, and equity-advancing motives to all of our work, including our work with Shared Insight. With Shared Insight, I definitely saw part of my role as helping to strengthen the work of the collaborative through evaluation questions, frameworks, considerations, and recommendations.

In turn, I, Juan, have been working in evaluation in the United States since 2018, a time when equity, diversity, and inclusion were gaining traction as key tenets among many nonprofits, foundations, and evaluators. I began working with Shared Insight in 2018 and have become increasingly familiar with and embedded in the collaborative since then, working on evaluations of Listen4Good, research efforts about feedback and equity, and assessing progress over time according to the collaborative's theory of change.

Both of us participated in core funder meetings, working groups, management team meetings, and staff retreats during our tenures with the project. Though we have been "embedded" in the work, we always understood our roles as critical friends who could hold up a mirror and support Shared Insight in understanding assumptions and impact so it could improve strategies and maximize its impact. This lens influenced our approach for this summative evaluation, where we seek to describe Shared Insight's accomplishments, shortcomings, strengths, and challenges as accurately as possible, strengthened by the deep knowledge that came from being embedded in the work for such a long time.

Strengths and Limitations

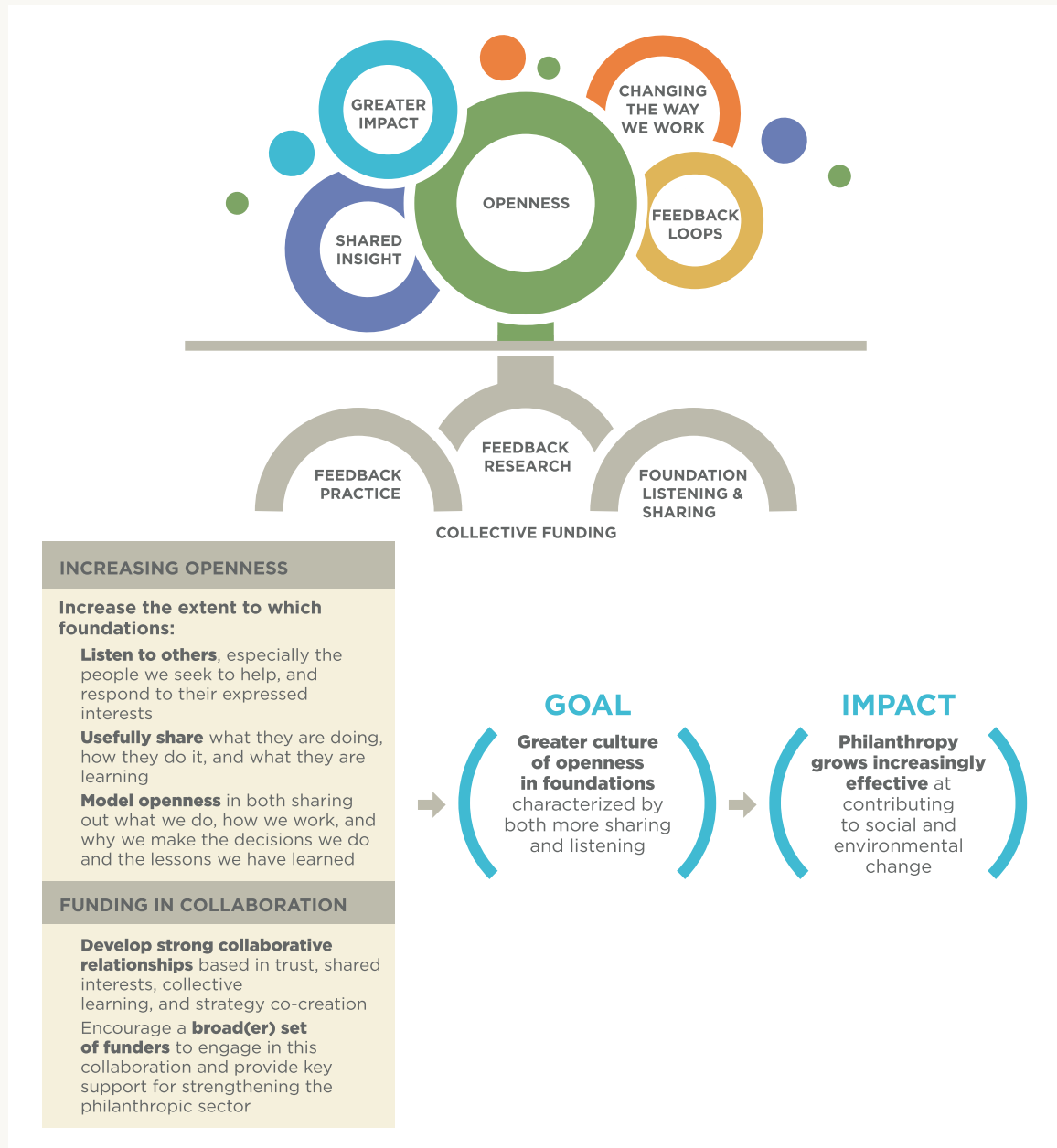
As we designed this evaluation, we made decisions in partnership with the evaluation advisors that had implications for the strengths and limitations of the overall design. Following, we summarize these decisions along with their implications.

- Intentional design for internal validity:** Designing an evaluation of a 10-year sector-change initiative required an intentional grounding on purpose: to explore, assess, and understand what took place over this time period in connection with Shared Insight's work. The goal of this evaluation was to accurately describe Shared Insight's work rather than evaluating the extent to which its approaches or outcomes were generalizable to other fields, contexts, or sectors. As such, we feel confident that the methods, data sources, and approach to assess both strategy and outcomes were an effective way to ensure internal validity. However, this design does limit our ability to assess the generalizability of our findings.
- Timeline of data collection:** While Shared Insight's work officially concludes in June 2026, we decided to conduct data collection in early 2025 in light of rapidly changing conditions in the social sector. This approach allowed us to better capture changes between 2014 and 2024 than if we waited longer to collect data, but it also means we did not capture strategic developments or additional progress toward expected outcomes during the last year of Shared Insight's work.
- Data comparability:** Our ability to compare sector-level data over time provides a unique opportunity to assess change over time in ways that point-in-time data would not enable. Comparing the perceptions of foundation leaders and bellwethers, sector-level data from CEP surveys, and trends in grantee administrative data enabled this assessment of change over time. While we reported the trends and changes where we felt we had sufficient data to ensure internal validity of the findings, we ran into a few limitations in this approach, which limited our ability to support other claims, which we did not include in this report. For example, the comparability of the Online Content Analysis and media assessment data was limited due to changes in web search terms, field boundaries, keywords, and search engine algorithms. It is difficult to know whether the difference between the number of relevant entries in 2025 and 2015 is a result of a difference in the prevalence of feedback and listening or if it is due to methodological changes (but triangulation helps in this respect—see more following). Similarly, although we provided extensive feedback on the 2024 CEP surveys, ultimately, the data were less comparable than expected, which limited our ability to draw more or broader conclusions about sector-level changes. Moreover, our analysis was limited to the data CEP published in their reports, as detailed data tables, which would have enabled more nuanced analysis, were not available to us for the 2014 and 2016 surveys.
- Data triangulation:** A variety of methods and data sources were used, without over-reliance on any one type to draw conclusions and make assessments. Triangulating different data sources was a way to counteract limitations of any one source, as we looked for ways in which data complemented, supported, or contradicted each other.

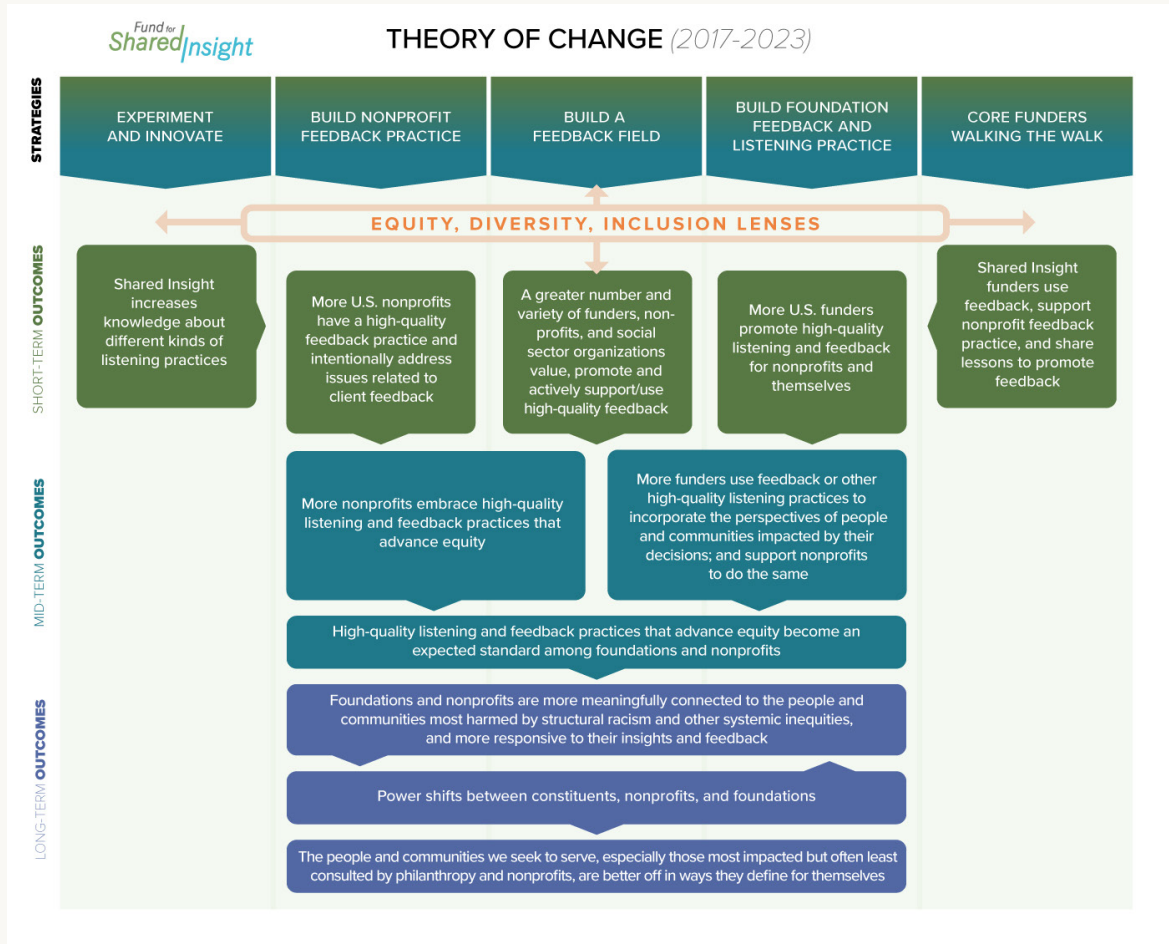
Appendix B

Theories of Change Over Time

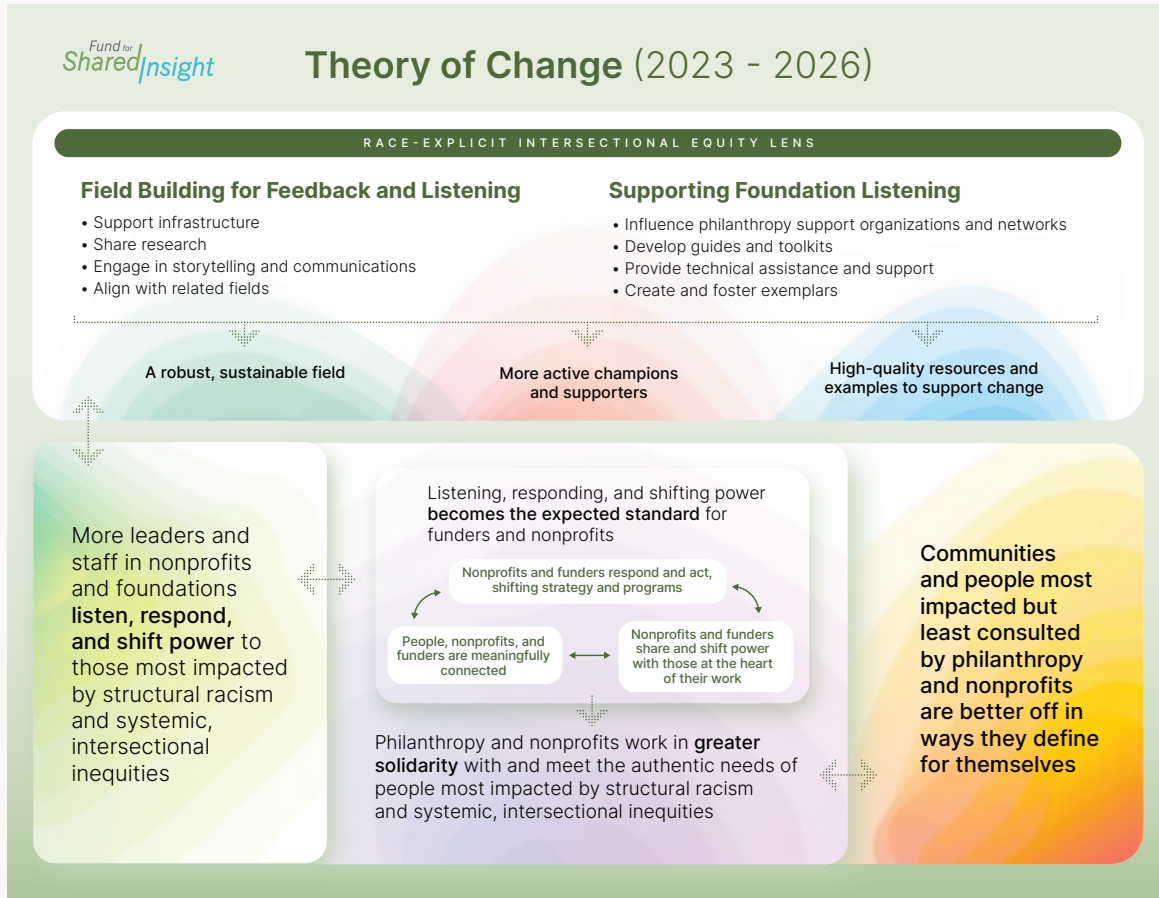
2014–2017



2017–2023



2023–2026



Appendix C

Bibliography

1. Aspen Planning and Evaluation Program. "Landscape Scan: Meaningfully Connecting with Communities in Advocacy and Policy Work." Fund for Shared Insight, 2019. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/evaluation/landscape-scan-meaningfully-connecting-with-communities-in-advocacy-and-policy-work/>.
2. Buteau, Ellie, et al. "Hearing From Those We Seek to Help: Nonprofit Practices and Perspectives in Beneficiary Feedback." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2014. <https://cep.org/report/hearing-from-those-we-seek-to-help-nonprofit-practices-and-perspectives-in-beneficiary-feedback/>.
3. Buteau, Ellie, et al. "The Future of Foundation Philanthropy: The CEO Perspective." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2016. <https://cep.org/report/future-foundation-philanthropy-ceo-perspective/>.
4. Coe, Jim, and Rhonda Schlangen. "No Royal Road: Finding and Following the Natural Pathways in Advocacy Evaluation." 2019. <https://rhondaschlangen.com/no-royal-road-natural-pathways-in-advocacy-evaluation/>.
5. Fallon, Katie et al., "Nonprofit Leaders Top Concerns Entering 2025." Urban Institute, 2025. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/Nonprofit_Leaders%E2%80%99_Top_Concerns_Entering_2025.pdf
6. Feedback Labs. "Core Principles of High-Quality Listening and Feedback." Feedback Labs, 2024. <https://feedbacklabs.org/core-principles/>
7. Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. "2025 National Study of Philanthropic Practice." Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, 2025. <https://grantmakingstudy2025.geofunders.org/#introduction>.
8. Grundhoefer, Seara, et al. "Voices That Matter: How Nonprofits and Foundations Engage With the Communities They Support." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2025. <https://cep.org/report/voices-that-matter-how-nonprofits-and-foundations-engage-with-the-communities-they-support/>.
9. Huang, Penny. "Feedback Research Projects Find Links to Client Outcomes." Fund for Shared Insight, 2023. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/research/feedback-research-projects-find-links-to-client-outcomes/>.
10. Listen4Good. "Client Engagement Pyramid." Listen4Good, 2020. <https://listen4good.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/L4G-Pyramid-Regular-Vertical.pdf>.
11. Listen4Good. "Amplify Community Voice," Listen4Good, accessed 2026, <https://listen4good.org/>.
12. Listen4Good. "Resources: Take a Deeper Dive Into Our Work," Listen4Good, accessed 2026, <https://listen4good.org/resources/>.
13. ORS Impact. "Exploring Clients' Feedback Experience." ORS Impact, 2019. https://orsimpact.com/docs/listen4good_exploring_clients_feedback_experience.pdf
14. ORS Impact. "Feedback and Equity: Connecting the Dots." ORS Impact, October 2021. https://orsimpact.com/docs/feedback_and_equity_connecting_the_dots_oct_2021.pdf
15. ORS Impact. "Feedback Field Assessment." ORS Impact, 2018. https://orsimpact.com/docs/feedback_field_assessment_findings_nov_2018.pdf

16. ORS Impact. "Feedback Loops and Openness: A Snapshot of the Field: Baseline Report." ORS Impact, 2015. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/FundforSharedInsightBaselineReport3-31-15-2.pdf>.
17. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned from the First Three Years, 2014–2017." ORS Impact, 2017. https://orsimpact.com/docs/evaluating_the_accomplishments_lessons_learned_from_the_first_3_years_2018.pdf
18. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned, 2017–2020." ORS Impact, 2020. https://orsimpact.com/docs/accomplishments_lessons_learned_2017-2020.pdf
19. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Accomplishments and Reflections from Phase Three, 2020–2023." ORS Impact, 2023. https://orsimpact.com/docs/accomplishments_reflections_from_phase_three_2020-2023.pdf
20. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Learning From Feedback Research Grantees—Beyond Research Findings: The Value-Add of Perceptual Feedback." ORS Impact, 2024. https://orsimpact.com/docs/learning_from_feedback_research_grantees_beyond_research_findings_mar_2024.pdf
21. ORS Impact. "Fund for Shared Insight: Feedback Practice Analysis." ORS Impact, 2023. https://orsimpact.com/docs/listen4good_feedback_practice_analysis_technical_supplement_may_2023.pdf
22. ORS Impact. "Some Lessons from Participatory Grantmaking and Meditations on Power for the Field." ORS Impact, 2022. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/evaluation/some-lessons-from-participatory-grantmaking-and-meditations-on-power-for-the-field/>.
23. ORS Impact. "The Listen4Good Journey So Far: Lessons and Findings From Three Complete Cohorts." ORS Impact, 2020. <https://fundforsharedinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-L4G-Journey-So-Far-ORS-Impact-Final-3.23.20-002.pdf>.
24. Stachowiak, Sarah, and Juan Clavijo. "Evaluating Efforts to Shift Power Through Listening: Defining Power and Listening to All Sides." *The Foundation Review* 17, no. 2 (2025). <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/vol17/iss2/10/>.
25. The Bridgespan Group. "The Strong Field Framework." The James Irvine Foundation, 2009. <https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/16a72306-0675-4abd-9439-fbf6c0373e9b/strong-field-framework.pdf>.
26. Threlfall, Valerie. "Getting on the Same Page: Defining Perceptual Feedback." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2017. <https://listen4good.org/resource/getting-on-the-same-page-defining-perceptual-feedback/>.
27. Threlfall, Valerie. "A New Framework That Advances Equity." Listen4Good, 2022. <https://listen4good.org/resource/a-new-framework-that-advances-equity/>.
28. Threlfall, Valerie. "Feedback's Role in Shifting Power to Those Least Heard." Listen4Good, 2022. <https://listen4good.org/resource/feedbacks-role-in-shifting-power-to-those-least-heard/>.
29. Tuan, Melinda. "Insights from an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Journey." Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2019. <https://cep.org/blog/insights-from-an-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-journey/>.

ORS Impact is a woman-led and woman-owned evaluation and strategy consulting firm based in Seattle. For more than 35 years, we have partnered with philanthropic, nonprofit, and public-sector organizations to clarify strategy, assess impact, and apply insights from data to support more equitable outcomes. Our team has served as Shared Insight's learning and evaluation partner since 2014.

Lead Authors: Sarah Stachowiak and Juan Clavijo, ORS Impact
With contributions from Cecilia Borges Farfan, Jasmine Burnett, Emma Paulson, and Leonor Robles, ORS Impact

We are also grateful to the additional current and former ORS Impact staff that contributed to the evaluations we used in our analyses, including: Anne Nsimbi, Cameron Hostetter, Melissa Howlett, Mia Shigemura, Paula Rowland, and Scott Campanario.

Recommended citation:
"Sharing Insights: Evaluating a Decade of Listening in the Social Sector."
ORS Impact, 2026. <https://orsimpact.com/directory/Sharing-Insights.htm>.

