Monitoring and evaluating participatory grantmaking
Discussion paper for the Baring Foundation, prepared by Ceri Hutton
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Executive Summary

1. Baring's investment in two participatory grantmaking (PGM), indigenous funds happens at a time of profound shifts to the philanthropic landscape in the Global South. In addition, there are multi-faceted changes underway in Africa and particular complexities about advancing a rights agenda around LGBTI issues which together mean that this is a 'messy space'.

2. Participatory grantmaking is becoming increasingly popular but is associated with definitional challenges. Its value is around both increased effectiveness and a belief that it is 'just' as a mechanism and will, in and of itself, assist with power sharing and shifting. There are some (well documented) challenges associated with it.

3. There are divergent views about whether or not it is costly compared to an onward grant-maker but the main sense is that it is regarded as value for money, particularly as the process itself has agency in contributing to changes (outcomes).

4. Evaluating and monitoring LGBTI initiatives which are being taken forward through a PGM fund has a range of challenges: of security; of sustainability; of timeframes and of proportionality.

5. There is in particular a major challenge relating to assessing aggregate benefits of the fund in a 'project by project' way, making it difficult to adopt a clear 'theory of change' approach. Notably, existing funders interviewed had not developed one for their funds and rather focus on processes and learning what comes from these.

6. The evaluation and monitoring of PGM funding raises two particular questions which non-PGM onward grantmaking does not raise: i) how (if at all) should Baring be monitoring the internal participatory processes (and trying to inform and shape these) and ii) how is the added value of funding through a PGM process assessed?

7. There are a range of ways in which current PGM funds and North-based foundations are assessing and monitoring progress. In particular there is activity around the generation of both a movement and country baseline, though this will not assist in enabling a foundation such as Baring to disaggregate its contribution to this.

8. In addition, there are a variety of interesting indicators for movement building, country building and learning which this discussion paper details.

9. Good practice points emerge around investing more time than is perhaps usual in working out what is needed from evaluation, defining this with the intermediary, developing relationships (by being there), avoiding reporting of any complexity and funding additional evaluation and monitoring if more is needed than the intermediary is already collecting.

10. In terms of collecting evidence on outcomes, moving from a theory of change to outcome mapping model (with associated open-ended exploration and an increased capacity to self-define) may be a useful shift.

11. PGM funds denote a different paradigm of funding and monitoring and evaluation need to be 're-evaluated' in the light of this. The advice is that they need to behave more as a regional investor than a funder and to a substantial extent 'let go'.

12. Some future suggestions for further exploratory work are made.

1.   Introduction

The Baring Foundation has just started funding LGBTI anti-discrimination work in sub-Saharan Africa. The Foundation has a clear aim in doing this: it wants to support positive change in the lives of lesbian and transgender people in that region.

However, though the focus is clear, it was less clear how best to get the funding to where it is most needed and would be used effectively. The foundation felt it needed to proceed: *"slowly and with caution, because we are coming to it new. We also knew this was an area rife with political elements, where the way in which people frame their funding can be subject to significant critique and can be a source of real tension"*[1].

Forging partnerships with two foundations[2] which use participatory grantmaking (PGM) in sub-Saharan Africa has partly been a pragmatic response to this. It was also the case that Baring was interested in the growing movement amongst funders to place decisions and 'agency' in the hands of those who are living in and trying to respond to discriminatory contexts – the activists and beneficiaries.

Having decided to fund in this way for a pilot period, a key question for the Baring Foundation has been how they should most usefully (as well as accountably) approach the evaluation and monitoring of their funding. Amongst the chewy questions articulated during this study were:

- In what way does funding a participatory grant-maker differ from 'normal' onward grantmaking[3], such as the Big Lottery might make to the Baring Foundation?
- What is it that we want to evaluate?
- What is it reasonable to expect the African foundations to do in terms of adaptation and reporting to meet Baring's needs for information?
- Is funding a participatory grant-maker an 'end in itself'?

This paper[4] has been drawn up with the aim of prompting and informing discussions amongst Baring staff, trustees and partners around these and other issues. Its central line of enquiry was: What should the Baring Foundation bear in mind when devising future evaluation and monitoring strategies for work funded through PGM processes?

It needs three health warnings:

1. There was limited time. This is a massive area, and the researcher only had five days to absorb, synthesise and write up the issues raised.
2. There are other perspectives. Though 17 in depth interviews yielded wide-ranging insights, there were other perspectives (notably perhaps from larger funding foundations) which could and should complement the existing analysis. See the final section 7 for suggestions on next steps.
3. This is a complex area. A striking number of skilled and experienced people who were interviewed said they were 'delighted' that this study was happening as they had been trying to get to grips with the issues *"for quite a while"*. As a researcher, this makes one nervous.

2. Complex and evolving context for the work

Two significant contextual points were frequently raised in interviews.

Funding patterns and approaches are complex and evolving

The traditional paradigm of North-based funders channelling funding to South-based organisations is being practically diversified, and politically challenged, in a range of ways. These include:

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[1] All quotes are taken from interviews, unless otherwise indicated.
[2] UHAI-EASHRI and The Other Foundation
[3] Generally, where a (larger) funder gives a block of money to an intermediary funder to distribute in line with certain criteria/themes but without prescribing the destination for the funds.
[4] The paper was researched and written by an external researcher/evaluator with 30 years' experience in the human rights, LGBTI and evaluation field. Information was gathered through document review and by interviewing 17 key stakeholders (see Appendix A).

- A profound change in the global foundation landscape, with many new foundations based in, and indigenous to, the Global South. UHAI and The Other Foundation are but two of many such foundations.
- Many North-based foundations being explicitly interested in the development of this *"philanthropic infrastructure",* as one informant called it.
- Growing interest and investment in participatory grantmaking[5] *per se.* PGM partly overlaps but it not co-terminous with indigenous grant-makers, as some PGM funds are global (for example, the Red Umbrella Fund), and not all indigenous funders use PGM processes all the time, including UHAI and The Other Foundation.
- Many North-based foundations are both funding activist groups directly and via indigenous foundations, making the situation even more multi-layered.

On top of all that there is a challenge to philanthropy, full stop. *'New funders are emerging with an explicit commitment to justice and rights. They are challenging the dominant philanthropic discourses, and in some instances, are experimenting with radically different practices. In one example of new thinking, a few groups are talking about moving away from sole reliance on foundation support and looking not at discrete grants—but the possibility of tapping small percentages of massive international financial resource flows. Ideas like these point to the role of this next generation of foundations in the South as the likely vanguard of experimentation and learning.'*[6]

Such shifts are inevitably creating changes around what is and isn't expected, acceptable and 'normal' in terms of culture and power dynamics around funding and investment. This extends to evaluation and monitoring where there is a sense that getting 'hung up' on trying to predict or capture the outcome of what is funded is not quite the point. *"You are doing 'wholesale' grantmaking as opposed to retail grantmaking. You are trying to invest in the capacity of movements and the social sector there, and in the same way you are also investing in the philanthropic infrastructure of Africa. Funders who are now engaging with this stuff need to understand that. It is so, so, so important."*

Africa, LGBTI and the 'Messy space'

Funding LGBTI groups in Africa is already, as a trustee observed: *"Enormously complex which is why many orgs have shied away from doing it – [being LGBTI] is possibly illegal, or below the surface."* Activists and their groups are often young, inexperienced and lack social capital precisely because of such illegal status. In addition, Africa is going through seismic changes: *"Part of what is happening right now in Africa specifically is that all of Africa is going through this 'Fifth Awakening' – this next level of change, with global investments tripling every year, infrastructure being built, GDPs skyrocketing, and wealth and income disparity growing in a growing and crushing way. Within that there is this rights environment that is being funded, LGBTI – everything in being placed in this. It is a big, messy space and any funder who wants to get into that needs some kind of appreciation of what they are dealing with."*

3.   Issues around participatory grantmaking

Participatory Grantmaking (PGM) has been around for 30 years but gained significant momentum in recent times. It has become a focus of interest and study. A few issues emerged of relevance to any discussion about evaluating or monitoring of any PGM scheme.

Definitional challenges.

There is broad agreement on what PGM implies: beneficiaries setting the agenda and making decisions about funding. *"It's where the people who are beneficiaries or going to be beneficiaries are charged with the core enquiry as to whether applications constitute a viable approach within the contextual and cultural priorities that they are aware of because they are living it."*

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[5] Involving the beneficiaries (or potential beneficiaries) in the core enquiry around what is needed, and what should be funded
[6] *New Directions in Southern human rights funding* by Christopher Harris, published in openDemocracy 14 November 2013

PGM refers more to a principle than a specific process or mechanism. Key issues raised were that:

- o There are a range of models which fall within the bell curve of 'participatory grantmaking'.[7] All informants acknowledged that there were a number of models out there (and that their model, if they had one, differed from the definition others had of it to some extent)
- o For example, there are a range of views about how important deciding on the actual financial allocations is. For some, this is the central, watershed point (some operate a voting scheme to ensure maximum engagement at this point). For others, the important thing is that there is beneficiary input to inform and shape the fund's priorities and allocations but the actual decisions are steered or made by the board, staff or a combination of the two.
- o For some, what makes PGM processes useful is the needs assessment and strategy design which you can get from beneficiary engagement. *"I had an interesting conversation with Barrow Cadbury about this, and they were saying for them they don't care where the funding decisions are made – what is important is that their strategy is designed by people close to the issues."* This is of course something which also takes place outside participatory grantmaking funds, for instance community foundations.
- o The degree of participation is linked to a fund's focus and purpose. For instance, awarding scientific grants or individual scholarships to students via PGM has a different purpose than awarding funding to sex worker projects via PGM. For the latter, part of the reason for having PGM is to reach, empower and engage as well as signal solidarity and interest.
- o It is not the same thing as peer review, though it can involve elements of peer review.

Interestingly, if you look at UHAI and The Other Foundation's website, the phrase 'participatory grantmaking' does not appear. UHAI calls itself an 'Activist Fund', whilst The Other Foundation does call itself a grant maker but forefronts the 'peer review process' on its website and overall describes itself as 'essentially an LGBTI community foundation for Southern Africa'. It may be that the phrase 'participatory grantmaking' is a useful shorthand for those studying or funding it, but less useful for those doing it.

The value and cost of participatory grantmaking

The value of pursuing, funding or adopting participatory grantmaking practices boils down to two strong beliefs:

1. That it will result in more effective grantmaking, aligned to what is needed, because communities themselves are most likely to make the decisions that work for them[8]

2. That it will result in increased justice, fairness and power both at an individual and systemic level. As one article put it: *"A just and equal world is not possible if other people make decisions about our lives".*

The first point - that involving beneficiaries in defining and coming up with solutions to the problems will result in better intelligence and, ultimately, investment – is instinctively right, if not new. Many funders in the UK, for example, want to know about how beneficiaries are involved, engaged and empowered to influence decisions within organisations. Community Foundations have been 'out there' consulting and engaging with communities for years. PGM may bring that more to the fore, utilizing the fund distribution process itself as a point of departure for needs definition and

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[7] http://www.alliancemagazine.org/feature/power-sharing-in-philanthropy/ has an interesting overview of different types of models

[8] In *Who Decides?* by the Lafayette Practice eight more nuanced benefits are identified from its review of eight funds which amplify this point. They are: *1)* Is more accountable to intended beneficiaries *2)* Is preferred by intended beneficiaries *3)* Sets priorities well aligned with what the field needs *4)* Can identify grantmaking priorities and grantmaking opportunities that non-participatory models would miss *5)* Makes better investment decisions *6)* Can be efficiently run *7)* Can ensure a dynamic evolution of who participates and leads *8)* Can mobilize additional funding for the field.

assessment, a bit like participatory budgeting does in the community development sphere. In evaluation terms, seeing the impact of a PGM process in a given place would seem to be most easily discerned by having a 'baseline' of what is funded and then noting how this evolves over time.

The second point is more complex. One informant asked: *"Is this a wider narrative about income redistribution?"* and the answer certainly seems to be in part: yes. Noting the 'wholesale vs. retail' point, for some this is about moving money in a different way and loosening, or even removing, the ties or constraints which have traditionally framed development. For those on the ground in Africa (or wherever) this is understandably to be welcomed. For those making the investment with mind sets derived from years of operating a different paradigm, it can feel exciting but also uncomfortable and/or vague. Of course, North-based funders are not a homogenous group and are on a spectrum of 'comfort' around such a concept: some regard themselves as highly committed to being led by those in the South already, whereas for others this is more of a leap. The critical difference about what is happening now may be that PGM has precipitated a debate about funders 'letting go': several people used this phrase in interview.

There were slightly different approaches to the issue of cost (as opposed to value). Some felt that the value of the process is inherent and that PGM is just a cheap, just and sensible way to fund. *"I want to debunk the myth of how expensive this process is – compared to the poor decisions which we would make if we didn't use it, it costs nothing. The decisions are wiser, better thought out, more strategic."* Others feel that there is a more to prove: *"Intermediaries may be expensive, but they are value for money. We want to show donors that this is worth it, and that what you get from this investment is a thoughtful, smart process."*

Challenges or drawbacks to the participatory grantmaking approach

There are some inbuilt challenges to PGM processes which have been well scrutinized and which existing funds are well aware of. I flag these up as they were raised and they have potential implications for both evaluation and monitoring (keeping a weather eye on whether they are happening, the learning around them, and how they might be impacting on a fund's view of its own success). They include:

> **Potential gate-keeping and 'conflict of interest'**

Ultimately any system comes down to individuals taking decisions based on information, but also experience, views (sometimes prejudiced), preferences, partial knowledge, connections, rumour and so on. Some informants reported experiences where the 'deciders' had been clearly biaised against or dismissive of X or Y approach or project for personal reasons, or drawn to work they already knew, and that handling such strong views was part of the challenge. Though all funds seem to have firewalls and conflict of interest policies, though this does not remove entirely a potential for bias. Some informants noted that an interesting by-product (outcome) of a PGM process might be that the process of having to consider other approaches and options fosters a wider appreciation of what makes up a 'movement' - this is considered later.

> **Accessibility of committees**

Often a prerequisite of participation is having connections, time, confidence and expertise. This can favour some types of activists over others, and if new members are elected by the existing committee this can narrow it down still further. How committees are refreshed and recruited to are all potentially indicators that these are being addressed.

> **Sustainability of grants made**

One of the most frequently cited benefits of PGM processes is that they are the first line of funding for many activists, reaching individuals and groups other funds do not reach. The flip side of this, particularly given a tendency not to 're-grant' (repeat grants are rare for some PGM funds), is that

there is little sustainability about what is funded. *"I personally feel that there is a much higher failure rate of grants not working than there would be if there had been an officer in a traditional way"*, was one comment from somebody on the frontline and another: *"the trouble with what we do sometimes is that it feels that it is difficult to build on the investment – there is a new call, and it is like a whole new blank sheet of paper."* One funder was philosophical about this and thought it went with the territory: *"I guess it's like that 100 flowers bloom thing… it would be good to know, though, that 99 aren't dying every time."*

4.   Challenges relating to evaluation and monitoring

Some issues surfaced of particular relevance to evaluation and monitoring of PGM funds, particularly those focusing on LGBTI issues.

> **Security**

Activists are clearly at risk in many countries, and collecting and disseminating data about individuals and their organisations (and what they are doing) may pose risks, possibly serious. This links to an accountability issue, as one informant noted: *"What you can say to who is a problem: you can say 'grants were made to this number of countries, but not the specifics of who applied for them – security made that level of accountability a bit of a challenge."*

> **Collaboration, power and learning**

There is everything to gain from having a genuinely 'open enquiry' by a funder about what the outcomes (learning, changes, shifts) of a PGM fund are given that they are clearly difficult to predict. However, several informants noted that power dynamics, however downplayed, are difficult to overcome. *"If you have the money you have the power. I suppose the way you counteract that is by the delegation of power with the money and by investing time in relationships …. which is difficult to do with short-term grants. This is a new area of learning – so it needs to be truthful reflection on this and if the grant-giver is too intrusive people will dress things up so that it looks good."* Building trust takes time. *"Though funders say things like 'we want to know about your failures as well as your gains' the problem is, nobody believes that."* And it is difficult to avoid the fact that focusing on outcomes frames the way people feel about their progress, as a funder observed. *"On the meta level, which may not be the concern for Baring, I do think raising the focus on outcomes and evaluation can be a real difficulty for collaboration. It is almost hard to imagine what the communications would look like if they weren't reporting to funders. We see so much more reporting of wins than acknowledgement of other actors in the picture, for instance."*

> **Time frames**

Evaluating what benefits derive from shifting 'power' (decisions, money) to the South will take time. Funders such as AJWS and Astraea Fund operate on 7 – 10 year time scales in terms of their investments. *"You have to be patient. Very, very patient."*

> **Proportionality and synchronizing with existing systems**

Evaluation and monitoring needs to be developed in collaboration with the PGM partner. Several informants noted that if more information is required than the PGM funder is already collecting then additional funding would be needed to enable specific learning.[9] *"It is very uncommon for large grant-makers to require more than is being produced. If Baring comes to the table they might be able to make a deal with the foundations to gather more, though it's the foundation's call. You are asking a sophisticated, indigenous grant-maker to make changes, potentially significant changes, to protocols and if they want this, a foundation has to pay for it."*

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[9] CIDA is evaluating UHAI, for example, using an external evaluator.

Having a clear sense of what they expect the aggregate value of the investment will be after X or Y years (a clear 'theory of change') is very difficult, people feel, and most funders do not have one. It was striking that most 'evaluation' work around PGM funds has actually focussed on monitoring the processes.[10] This was combined with a slight sense of realising there was a 'theory of change' issue still hanging - whether it was needed, and if so, what it should look like. *"I was excited when I found you were doing this work, as I don't think we have focussed very much if at all on what the benefit is for the movement of having a participatory grant-maker"* was one comment from a funder, whilst another noted: *"We are more interested in the processes they have and how these relate to the movement overall, and how they know these are effective. I think we've struggled a bit with the overall impact stuff."*

For PGM funds in general, the notion of aggregate benefit is often particularly difficult given that they are operating across many countries, some globally. The benefits in such cases are around noting a stronger 'movement' (i.e. stronger, more visible, more sophisticated presence and activity) rather than trying to track often wildly different outcomes 'on the ground' which will have receive knock-backs and boosts from wide-ranging and often random sources. When looking at a fund within a specific region (albeit a huge region), it may be possible to gain a sense of aggregate outcome at a wide level[11] (shifts in culture, legislation and so on) but trying to link that to short term funding interventions was impossible and probably pointless, most felt.

There was a useful insight which compared experiences from onward grantmaking from one informant. *"[Name of fund] used to give out large sums to others to distribute. I would always say that the monitoring and the evaluation of those funds should be primarily for the organisation which is going to use the information. But of course this is a very vexed question higher up the chain as there are accountability issues. So there was often a mis-match between the evaluation which was useful to those nearest the frontline, as compared to what the intermediary needed, and then finally up to the original grant-maker. You have problems of aggregation, problems of diversity and heterogeneity on the ground needing to be somehow simplified, summarized, brought up the chain to prove something. Generally in my view that's pretty problematic. Given that Baring is doing something small and is flexible, this should be surmountable. Their work should be about learning and improvement rather than about extraction to show to the public or tax payer the glorious results of this money."*

➢ **Monitoring and evaluating PGM vs. onward grantmaking**

There seem to be two fundamental questions about the evaluation or monitoring of funds given to a participatory grant-maker as opposed to a 'normal' onward grant-maker.

1. Is there a role for scrutiny (monitoring) about the way in which the fund is operated? Some challenges of PGM have already been flagged up (e.g. potential gatekeeping) and funder informants noted that attending events as observers had sometimes raised questions or concerns for them. For example, one person raised a question about how 'participatory' one fund is. *"There is a lot of power that is left in the hands of the staff, and that's a location which is not always scrutinized in the PGM sector."*

    The issue is in part that these processes can be viewed as the activity which is being funded and is designed to produce the change, however broad. But does that make them 'legitimate' areas for scrutiny? They would not be were they onward grant-makers – the systems would be accepted. *"The difficulty with evaluating how a PGM process works is that it is a bit like democracy: it is a given that it is a good thing, it could probably always be done better, but there will be reasons why it is set up as it is."*

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[10] Outcome evaluation tends to be broad-framed and open-ended: What has changed? Rather than 'Has that change happened?'
[11] UHAI's framework is based on five such 'shifts' without linking then specifically to particular projects

2. How is the added value of funding through a PGM process assessed, tracked and evaluated? The basic premise of PGM is that distributing funding in this way brings its own benefits so how do these benefits get defined and then assessed? Several informants noted that this was an interesting area which had been less considered than it could have been. *"In some ways the question is: how can this political, moral and philosophical good feeling be translated to measurable outcomes? How do we assess the feel-good factor?"*

5. Potential evaluation tools

All funders, including the Other Foundation and UHAI, have different outcome and monitoring frameworks and processes. It was not within the scope of this exercise to detail and compare them, but this section summarises some of the main ideas, tools or 'frames' mentioned which may be helpful for evaluation.

Movement building

➢ **Generating a baseline through the grant process**

The Other Foundation are already collecting a large amount of data which will provide both information about what is happening on the ground, and how successful the fund is being in reaching, targeting and supporting activist organisations. *"In both our peer review and our grant application process we collect a lot of data across a number of indicators which relate to geography, race, class, sex, sexual orientation, economic status, education, age."* They are collecting information about both successful and unsuccessful applications *"so that we can monitor what kind of work is happening by whom and monitor the gaps."* This can give a very full picture of who is currently applying, who is and is not getting funded: *" [Baring] could see who took up their grants, which grants failed or succeeded and around what kind of issues. And they could use the first year of that as a baseline and they could see how that shifted over the time – did more people apply, did fewer, what outcomes failed, what proportion failed and so on."*

➢ **Cultural and values shifts around movement solidarity**

One of the criticisms levelled at traditional routes of funding (i.e. individual activist organisations applying directly to foundations in the North) is that these set up competitive approaches between individuals and organisations. *"When you have a pot of money with criteria you end up with projects competing against each other for money – they talk about their unique contribution and positioning whilst their identities and their forms of organising become very standardised, in line with what funders expect."* Several informants agreed that one of the hoped-for results of the PGM process was that it would both enable a wider variety of activism to get funded, and also enable them to see the value of others' contribution to the overall movement. Valuing the contribution of others therefore becomes an aim of the process. *"One goal [of a PGM fund] is that it enables organisations to see the value of connections between different types of group. The community group, advocacy, policy think tank, legal and litigation people etc. – all those have roles to play. I think that value shift is a reachable measure of success."* Indicators of valuing others (working with them, recommending them, sharing resources, referrals, how people speak about others, what they report 'valuing' about others' contributions) can all help explore gradual shifts around this.

➢ **Non-LGBTI allies**

Generally, the extent to which funded groups are working with non-LGBTI allies is an indicator of becoming increasingly connected and gaining traction. It was also interesting however that some funds are distributing funding to non-LGBTI groups doing interesting LGBTI programmes, thereby increasing the active engagement through the funding mechanism itself. The PGM funds are therefore pushing forward a strategic agenda and the evaluation of the impact on context, for example, needs to take this into account.

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➤ **Creation of spaces**

The PGM process creates spaces to a lesser or greater extent (both in person and online), and one line of evaluative enquiry could be about what these are, and what is emerging from them. *"Creating spaces is a huge part of the benefits of PGM. And this is from the PGM meetings to convening even that process, to learning sessions."*

➤ **Reaching the unreached**

FRIDA has funding priorities around funding: grassroots groups; socially marginalised women; issues which have not received funding before; remote, underserved areas and; creative and innovative social activism strategies. PGM funds are collecting information about which groups are applying, which are being funded (and why) and tracking over time who gets funded, where. Monitoring and learning through this information, as well as about the applications which have been rejected, will show movement over time. *"One of the most important questions I ask a PGM fund is: "What are the projects you rejected, and why did you reject them. That gives a way in, and it's possible to see if any of those projects were funded elsewhere by other indigenous funds, for example. It's an enquiry rather than a challenge, and doesn't result in very clear or concrete information, but you get a sense of how a fund is moving and deciding and its 'culture'."*

There are a range of metrics associated with this (and UHAI and The Other Foundation have these), which can extend to asking questions about sustainability: how many examples of re-granting are there, and what is known about the funded organisations after the grants finish.

➤ **Shifts in organisational capacity and effectiveness**

The traditional ways in which organisational capacity has been promoted and measured (policies, procedures) may not all be useful and gets into a level of detail or prescription which does not help. Several funds noted that they have varying indicators for 'capacity' but these vary between types of organisation and creating a tidy matrix to check progress against is not their approach. Mama Cash, for instance, develops individual plans which start from the organisation self-defining where it wants to get to over a given period.

So though Baring may want to monitor how a PGM fund is helping to build capacity, the useful learning areas pivot more around questions which show how organisational effectiveness amongst grantees is changing. Are organisations going on to make successful applications for more funds? Are organisations advocating better? Have they developed any non-LGBTI allies? How is leadership and strategy being developed?

➤ **Social capital frame in Northern Ireland**

The Community Foundation in Northern Ireland invested in a complex programme of participatory grantmaking and had similar issues about trying to understand aggregate impact with widely varying groups and processes involved. *"So we did a lot of thinking and used the 'social capital' frame in the end - we cannibalised it a bit".* This is the bonding, bridging and linking elements:

o Bonding capital: is about the increased confidence and capability of marginalised individuals and community to make a difference in terms of their own lives, as well as their ability to act collectively.
o Bridging capital: Where are the links, how are groups connecting up, what are the spaces created, and how far are traditional 'divisions' being bridged? For an LGBTI group, this may be about linking with another geographic group which was originally hostile.
o Linking capital. How is policy changing, or how are people bringing their stories forward to people in power? This is about the quality of relations between communities and decision makers.

"Those three categories gave us three different windows. And within those they were flexible enough to think about how various elements were developing across the piece."[12] The approach stimulated a lot of academic interest and was much more complex than there is space to go into here, but at a broad level offers a potentially useful way of thinking one's way into understanding 'progress'.

Impact on context

> ### Baseline country studies against which to measure impact 'down the line'

Having a country 'map', or prism through which future changes can be understood and discussed is also useful if the aggregate value of activity is to be understood over a period of time. The Other Foundation is developing 13 baseline country studies which map a country focusing on four areas:

Legal Policy Framework • What's on the statute book • Criminalisation issues • Behaviour of official 'forces' around law e.g. police brutality, police harassment. "Not only what is on the book, but how that is being applied"	Public Discourse • Media monitoring • Are LGBTI issues reported on (+ve and -ve) • Evidence from key constituencies: What are political parties; what do major HR orgs report re LGBTI issues
Organisational mapping • What LGBTI organisations exist • What are their members • Who does what? • Where are the gaps? • Who are working with them (allies)?	LGBTI reporting • Experiences and stories from LGBTI communities

Some of these areas – for example 'shifts in public and political discourse' – are explored by PGM funders when trying to assess the aggregate outcome of individual grants as well. Clearly, there are no linear progression routes which could be pre-articulated on such areas, and the exploration has to be highly qualitative. *"We look at what has happened –what leaders are saying, what grantees say, what our own constituencies are doing when they occupy public spaces. It's not that difficult – it is not like people are not verbose about their opinion. You are not going to be having deep seated debates. But you do have to take context into consideration: for instance, increased hostility in the media might be a sign of increased visibility and 'success', at some level. So you have to be circumspect to arrive at an overall view of what is happening. It's not a measurement as such."*

> ### Development of philanthropic infrastructure

"Leveraging and increasing resources for various movements is all part of a global strategy for us." Existing funders are already noting how funding patterns and, more indefinably, cultures are shifting within regions. At one level this is a question of counting (who is receiving what? which funding streams are new? who is funding LGBTI issues who were not before?), but funders are also actors, investing time in attending conferences and events and actively trying to achieve greater investment through, for instance, the Global Philanthropy Project.[13]

Work in partnership with PGM grant-makers

> ### How learning happens

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[12] The success (or otherwise) of this methodology has been researched and discussed in various reports, see for instance http://www.ceni.org/sites/default/files/CFNISOCIALASSETSSUMMARY_0.pdf.
[13] http://www.astraeafoundation.org/global-philanthropy

Without getting too 'meta', it is worth evaluating evaluation to some extent, or at least how the learning is being used. One of the three over-arching outcomes which has been defined for the Red Umbrella Fund is that the learning they gain is overtly collected and shared. "We are conducting an evaluation of the process whereby the Red Umbrella Fund came into place – as a way of sharing the learning. That is something in which we have involved outsiders as well as insiders. This is to document what we are internally now calling the 'ingredients' which made it possible and the lessons for success for PGM from that process."

➢ **Output and delivery indicators for the PGM fund itself**

Some enquiry or monitoring is standard around the PGM fund itself. For example:

o What capacity building support is being given?
o What are the feedback mechanisms for the grant-maker?
o How is accessibility for LGBTI groups ensured and demonstrated?
o How are security issues taken into account?
o What happens to the rejected applications?
o How are individual grantees accounting for the funding?

6. Good practice and emerging suggestions

Forming definite recommendations as to 'the next steps' were not possible within this timeframe. However, there were some emerging principles and practice listed here for the Baring Foundation to take into consideration as it moves forwards with this area.

Points relating to what to do

➢ **Define what is useful carefully and give feedback**

A major complaint about evaluation is that it is rarely used. Any evaluation and monitoring should be ideally as participatory as possible, and have as its primary audience the PGM fund itself, rather than Baring. Existing funders of PGM processes are already bearing this in mind: *"Every time we ask ourselves: what are we going to do with the responses to their questions? Let's not waste their time. I spend a lot of my time writing reports for funders and I get no feedback except for very, very occasionally. Honestly - I think most funders never read the reports. That is incredibly frustrating. So it is useful for the key funder to really consider 'What do they really need?' What do they really require to have documented, and why?'"*

➢ **Be present and get away from reports**

There was a consensus that evaluation and monitoring involved very light touch reporting, and much more investment in relationship-building and 'being there'. *"One thing I could say as an observation – I definitely notice that these programme officers [from North-based funders] are in Africa every quarter. They go to stuff, they spend time with people – they ask a lot of questions, they do site visits with UHAI. A lot of this learning is relational – they are an intermediary across a big cultural divide, are in a tough spot, having to communicate to multiple stakeholders. I think it's far less about, say, UHAI sending a report every year and far more about honest communication about what is going on, in person."*

➢ **Be patient**

These are complex processes operating in difficult circumstances around marginalised groups. In this context: *"Have a long breath – show patience, show understanding – not just because it is PGM but because it is PGM focusing on movement and social change. You can also do PGM on scholarships to kids and that's easy to show the result of. It's not with this work."*

> **Work with and through the intermediary (PGM) funds**

Working out the timescale, methods, and areas of learning has to happen with agreement from the PGM funders. There were a few examples given where funders (either of PGM or onward grant-makers) had tried to impose their own timetable and methods and this had not worked, and damaged relationships. *"The important thing is not to bypass the intermediaries. I don't think it would be helpful for Baring to be determining too much about the bottom of the chain. They can be supportive, enabling, facilitating – but setting the framework from the top is a bad idea."* An informant who had had a bad experience of funder intervention described it thus: *"It was great to have [funder name] encouraging and funding in particular our monitoring and evaluation processes – just don't dictate how we do it! We wanted to make sure that we had a participatory process to develop our monitoring and evaluation. And [name of funder] kept focusing on the database. We were talking at a different level. And then when we talked about the database because we thought they wanted this, they worried that wasn't participatory. We understand that as a funder you may want to put in your own requirements – but be clear about those, ring fence them, tell us what they need to do and tell them why."*

> **Fund additional evaluation if needed (and/or work with others)**

If more information is needed than is being collected, then funding should be provided to do this. Some funders have commissioned separate learning or evaluation exercises, and joining with other funders around, for example, country-wide mapping exercises could form part of an overall learning and evaluation strategy. But fundamentally: *"If you want them to do additional work, then resource them."*

Points relating to mindset and approach

> **Collecting stories is important, extracting lessons takes time**

Stories are important partly because they can reveal the complexity of a situation 'in the round' but also because they are easier for people 'down the line' to tell honestly and well. *"Most of our partners tell us stories. The difficulty is – now you have told me this how do I fit it into my rubric of monitoring and evaluation? We can fit them, but there has to be labour in between [to extract what we need] and not shift that labour to the organisation, especially if it is a small organisation."*

> **Learning events ('spaces') are key**

Learning events are a way of ensuring that evaluation is participatory, and that the focus is more on outcome than outputs. The Northern Ireland Community Foundation had 'cluster' learning events, The Other Foundation has a bi-annual *kopano,* UHAI has learning meetings, the Edge Fund has 'The Forum for Radical Sharing' and so on. Such events are both about growing and learning about the movement and what it is achieving.

> **Adopting a formative approach**

Any evaluation should prioritise learning and reflection over reporting. A good way forward, one informant suggested, would be to commission (and fund) a formative evaluation which essentially acts as a resource and helps partners reflect. The difficulty with this is that it may or may not be welcomed by partners. But it is an option: *"I'd suggest Baring needs a formative evaluation – reflective processes where people are thinking 'did that work just now' – even at the end of the grantmaking meeting, for instance - building in time to say 'did that work for us'. That seems a sensible model rather than anything which is about summative learning."*

> **Outcome mapping[14] and self-definition**

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[14] http://www.gsdrc.org/document-library/outcome-mapping-building-learning-and-reflection-into-development-programs/

This was mentioned as an alternative to a theory of change approach, and certainly outcome mapping has gained traction around human rights discussions[15]. It casts the net widely and is not constrained from the off in coming up with 'neat' causal links.[16] A lot of the types of questions currently being used to explore progress would fit within an outcome mapping 'frame' (such as: What would you consider your biggest success in the last year?) It starts from the basic of getting people to describe the changes they see in a structured way, rather than asking them to predict those changes and then measure themselves against how far they have achieved them. Outcome mapping also fits with the fact that much of the 'evidence' produced relies on self-definition, so using evaluation methods which enable self-definition of success, failures, progress etc. is vital, as several informants noted.

> **Shifting from grant-maker to investor, and letting go**

Some feel strongly that large part of 'getting it right' around evaluation and monitoring will be whether or not Baring makes a critical shift in its thinking from grant-maker to investor. *"I think it is important for Baring to pivot a bit and understand that they are leaving the world of a grant-maker and moving into a world of very sophisticated regional investors. Once you make that leap – your questions change, you should have different concerns, many concerns you just have to let go of."*

Letting go, *("being humble",* as one informant put it) was acknowledged to be difficult. *"Look, we are a human rights funder, our trustees are a bunch of serious people who like serious approaches. We don't really fund cultural projects. And yet UHAI is saying to people 'you apply with what you think will best drive social change' in your areas – so grantees are coming up with art exhibitions, troupes, demos, and sometimes the objective is so small it seems miles away from the serious change we want to see. But do I really know better than these people in Mombasa? Maybe what I can come up with would work but also move them three steps back. It's about that relinquishing of control."*

7.   Future work

This paper has outlined some highlights but inevitably there were leads to other pieces of work it may be useful for Baring to complete to gain a fuller understanding before reaching a decision. The areas which emerged were:

Further research or communication with key funders in this area

It was suggested that it would be useful to talk with other foundations making major investments through the intermediaries (PGM funds) about what they are doing, and how they know what they are investing in is working. The specific foundations mentioned were Arcus[17], Ford and Wellspring: there may be others.

Advance (in collaboration) work on baseline

Combining with other funders to think about baseline studies (some of which are underway, as indicated) may be useful. *"If a funder is serious about strategy and investment we need to be thinking about baseline – so how do we do that efficiently and well, and make sure we don't all have our own baseline ideas and strategies running in independent furrows?"*

Further scoping on specific PGM funds which Baring has partnered with

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[15] See for instance: https://www.opendemocracy.net/openglobalrights/emma-naughton-kevin-kelpin/when-evaluating-human-rights-progress-focus-also-on-jour

[16] A seminar I attended in 2011 organised by the now defunct IHCRP, which was attended by a wide range of activists and funders, felt that outcome mapping was in many instances much more fitted to human rights evaluations than theory of change. http://www.ichrp.org/files/papers/186/impact_assessment_human_rights_approach_paper.pdf

[17] The researcher fixed an interview with Roz Lee at Arcus to have an exploratory conversation about this but unfortunately this had to be cancelled.

Doing more detailed work to understand and set down

- o   What is currently being gathered by the funded foundations (in detail)
- o   What Baring a) needs and b) wants to know
- o   What the gap is between what Baring wants to know and what they are collecting
- o   What other funders are asking in relation to monitoring and evaluation, broadly, and whether they are funding additional resources, for example.

Comparative table of current monitoring and evaluation methods

It rapidly became clear that there was no time to set out with any accuracy how current monitoring and evaluation practice is being taken forward, but there might be a useful piece of work in just mapping what people are currently doing. That said, the most important principles have been noted in this paper (for instance, that current 'evaluation is mainly about checking on process and seeing what is coming out of this through an exploratory dialogue, rather than through a defined TOC).

Appendix A - Information sources for this paper

List of people interviewed

Avila Kilmurray	Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
Beth Fernandez	Sigrid Rausing Trust
Carla Sutherland	The Other Foundation
Dave Scammell	American Jewish World Service
David Sampson	Baring Foundation
David Cutler	Baring Foundation
Happy Kinyili	Mama Cash
Mariam Armisen	Researcher
Marie Staunton	Baring Foundation (trustee), CEO Plan Canada
Matthew Hart	The Lafayette Practice
Myles Wickstead	Baring Foundation (Trustee), ex DFID
Nadia van der Linde	Red Umbrella Fund
Neville Gabriel	The Other Foundation
Rose Longhurst	Edge Fund and BOND
Sarah Gunther	Astraea Foundation
Sarah Mistry	Bond (previously Big Lottery)
Wanja Muguongo	UHAI EASHRI

Documents reviewed

Articles

Power sharing in philanthropy by Sophie Pritchard, published in Alliance magazine Volume 18, Number 3, September 2013

New Directions in Southern human rights funding by Christopher Harris, published in openDemocracy 14 November 2013

Reports

Letting the Movement Decide: Report on FRIDA Grantmaking by The Lafayette Practice and FRIDA Young Feminist Fund, 2015

Funding Free Knowledge the Wiki Way: Wikimedia Foundation's Participatory Grantmaking by The Lafayette Practice, 2015

We Exist – Mapping LGBTQ Organising in West Africa by Mariam Armisen, 2015

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Who Decides? How Participatory Grantmaking Benefits Donors, Communities and Movements by The Lafayette Practice, 2014

Learning As We Go 1979 – 2012. The role of community philanthropy in progressive social change by Dr. Avila Kilmurray, published by The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, 2012

Taking a Social Justice Approach to Community Development. Report by The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland of three Atlantic Philanthropies funded projects and the learning from them, 2011

Internal information from individual foundations and funds

AJWS: Outcome monitoring form

AmplifyChange: Results Framework

Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice: Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance

Baring Foundation: Various papers framing current funding of PGM in Africa and existing Theory of Change

Edge Fund: Welcome Pack

Edge Fund: Decision Making Process (flow chart)

Red Umbrella Fund: Learning, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Version June 2014)

Red Umbrella Fund: Strategic Plan 2013 – 16

The Other Foundation: Various papers, including Full Proposal Form with outline of current M and E requirements for grantees

In addition, numerous organisational websites were reviewed and searches made.