TOOL #6: GUIDANCE ON MEANING-MAKING AND REPORTING

1. Meaning-Making

- **Overview:** M&E team will have a meaning-making session with program staff and other key stakeholders about the findings and will discuss how this informs the next steps for program improvement and greater impact.
- Before holding the Meaning-Making session, be clear on the specifics:
    - **When** should this happen in the timeline of each program cycle?
    - **What** are the goal/s of the meaning-making session?
    - **Who** attends the meaning-making session?
    - **What** are the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of program staff and M&E staff in this discussion?
    - **How** does this feedback impact planning for the next cycle of programming?
        - i. Consider a "start, stop, and keep" reflection for next action steps:
            1. What should the program team start doing?
            2. What should the program team stop doing?
            3. What should the program team keep doing?

- **When conducting the internal review / meaning-making discussion, it is recommended to use the following guiding prompts:**
    - What are our current strengths?
    - What are our current growth areas?
    - How does this information inform the next steps?

- **Optional prompts to facilitate discussion**
    - **For more detail, see Meaning-Making Question Bank**
    - Please share any initial reflections/reactions after reviewing the data.
    - What feels like new information? What feels like consistent information we already knew?
    - What are three priority actions for the coming months in response to the data?
    - How can the results be shared back to those most impacted?

2. Reporting

- **M&E Team and/or Program Team** will conduct reporting and program updates to participants, staff, partners, funders, and the community using the considerations discussed in the meaning-making session.
- **Describe the programming reports:** what are they, when will they be submitted, to whom will they be submitted, and what is the purpose of each report (the 'why').

Meaning-Making Session Format

These questions should guide a discussion that follows the conclusion of the program, facilitated or co-facilitated by evaluators or consultants, and engaged in by program leaders. This discussion should occur after any endline surveys have been distributed, collected, and analyzed. In the section below, answer the following questions in the appropriate table as a group. Provide your responses in the responses column and any notes in the note section below.

	Meaning-Making Session Format Check-In	Responses
What	• What do you think you need to do differently in the future, based on your shared understanding of what has happened in the past? • Did the program reach its stated goals / objectives? How and to what degree? • Did the program support the participants' individual goals / objectives? How and to what degree? • What parts of the experience were most meaningful, and what parts were most challenging, for participants?	
How	• How are participants measuring success for themselves? • To what degree are participants' own visions and measurements of success aligned with the program's stated goals and objectives? • How can this information be used to improve programming and share highlights with the community and for reporting? • How do we measure success each year through post-program feedback?	
Why	• What are the specific and nuanced indicators (from this feedback) that can measure program impact?	
For Whom	• Who should be invited to contribute to the meaning-making session? Whose participation is critical?	
By Whom	• Who should facilitate the meaning-making session? Who is best positioned to engage with participants?	

NOTES:

Meaning-Making Question Bank

Guidance: These are sample questions M&E staff can ask when facilitating meaning-making sessions with program staff and other affected parties.

- Did the program reach its stated goals / objectives? How and to what degree?
- Initial reflections/reactions: what jumped out at you from the findings?
- What did you see that you already knew?
- What surprised you? Are there any results that seem off-base?
- What changes has your project or program helped bring about? Why are they important, and what made them happen?
- What have you achieved that you are most (or least) proud of, and why?
- How have changes affected different groups that your project or program works with?
- Are you still on track to deliver your objectives, and are they still the right objectives?
- What work was planned but not done, and why?
- Have any negative, unintended, or unexpected changes occurred through your project or program? If so, what are they?
- Are there expected changes that have not happened? If so, why have they not happened?
- Which problems have been encountered in implementing the program, and how (if at all) have they been overcome?
- Based on your experiences in this project or program, what advice would you give to someone starting a similar project or program elsewhere?
- If you were starting this project or program again, what (if anything) would you do differently?

- What do you think you need to do differently in the future, based on your shared understanding of what has happened in the past?
- What do you think others should do differently?
- How has the external political or socio-economic situation changed? How should your project or program change as a result?
- What are three priority actions for the coming months in response to the data?
- What further evidence or information do you need to produce to make future decisions?
- How are participants measuring success for themselves?
- To what degree are participants' own visions and measurements of success aligned with the program's stated goals and objectives?
- How can this information be used to improve programming and share highlights with the community and for reporting?
- How do we measure success each year through post-program feedback?
- Did the program support the participants' individual goals / objectives? How and to what degree?
- What parts of the experience were most meaningful, and what parts were most challenging, for participants?

Learning, Sharing, and Reporting

These questions should be answered by program leaders. In the section below, answer the following questions in the appropriate table as a group. Provide your responses in the responses column and any notes in the note section below.

	Learning, Sharing, and Reporting Check-In	Responses
What	• To what extent did we reach our program goal(s)? • What are the critical assets of the program? • What are growth areas or curiosities that came out of the feedback? • What will we do differently or similarly for next year?	
How	• How will we protect the confidentiality and privacy of participants in sharing feedback? • How will we center the lived experience and values of critical stakeholders in reporting? • How will we reimagine where influence and power are reflected in sharing and/or storytelling?	
Why	• Why should we engage participants at the end of the fellowship? • What could/did we learn that informs program planning for the next cohort and/or continued alumni engagement?	
For Whom	• Who gets to inform and decide what sharing of feedback and reporting looks like?	
By Whom	• Who will feedback be shared with? What parts of the data will different affected parties have access to?	

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