

# Evaluation: Accountable Learning

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# Evaluation: Accountable Learning

First ask:

- Accountability to what or whom?
- Learning for whom?

Answer:

- Granting agency
- Grantee's organization incl. management and board

# Evaluation: Accountable Learning

Three guiding principles:

- **Principle 1:** Accountability and learning are compatible
- **Principle 2:** Projects are occurring in systems – natural, political, economic, and social
- **Principle 3:** Accountability and improvement start not with evaluation but with program design and grantee selection

# Evaluation: Accountable Learning

## **Principle 1:** Accountability and learning are compatible

- a) Success is partially defined by whether or not grantee can demonstrate or account for desired outcomes
- b) Success depends on learning and using those lessons in order to improve
- c) Effective nonprofits and foundations do both

# Evaluation: Accountable Learning

**Principle 2:** Projects are occurring in systems – natural, political, economic, and social

- a) These influence and are influenced by the projects
- b) Without learning and being adaptive, projects will miss opportunities, and will be unable to respond (or respond less than optimally) to unforeseen and unforeseeable systems-level issues thereby reducing likelihood or degree of success

## Evaluation: Accountable Learning

**Principle 3:** Accountability and improvement start not with evaluation but with program design and grantee selection

“The bane of evaluation is a poorly designed program”  
– Ricardo Millett

- a) Evaluation is part of a dynamic learning loop that contributes to refining programmatic and grantee strategies by building on gained knowledge (Figure 1)
- b) Effective grantees demonstrate ability to account for their efforts, and to adapt to changes in the systems – LOOK FOR SUCH ORGANIZATIONS



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## Conclusion

### Ask Four Questions

- What is happening? – *accountability*
- What impacts are those events having? – *accountability*
- What are you learning? -- *improvement*
- How are you using those lessons to improve success? -- *improvement*