Funders, Engaged Research, and Doing Better by Young People

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https://wtgrantfoundation.org
• Founded in 1936 by William T. Grant

“What I have in mind is to assist, by some means in helping people or peoples to live more contentedly and peacefully and well in body and mind through a better knowledge of how to use and enjoy all the good things that the world has to offer them.”

• Committed to research AND using it

“Some method should be found by which scientific knowledge gained in various fields can be translated into the enrichment of...life.”
How Might Research & Its Use Improve Policy & Practice to Advance Well-Being for All Communities?
1. WHAT DO YOU IDENTIFY AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGED RESEARCH AND ITS USE?
   • To pursue and use knowledge that is positively consequential for communities that have been systematically harmed & excluded by research and researchers.

2. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS CHALLENGES?
   • Rhetoric that is better than practice; underfunded mandates to partner; “either or” outlooks

3. WHAT DO YOU AND FUNDERS NEED FROM THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY?
   • To seriously study how engaged-research shapes (i) a study’s research questions, assumptions, and framing; (ii) what strategies privilege community voice during sensemaking, and (iii) how findings from research affect the experiences and well-being of youth, families, and communities.
   • Measures that allow for such studies

Overarching aim: develop and assess inclusive approaches that value diversity, shift power structures, and contribute to equity
Conditions Associated with the Use of Research Evidence that is Relevant to Youth

Curated portals of research evidence
- Easy to read; easy to navigate; easy to act upon; relevant; of high quality

Constituent needs
- Trust
  - In the source of evidence
  - Work and use conducted in partnership

Experiences of peers
- Professional development
  - Connections via professional networks and intentional networking
  - Skills to engage with and apply evidence
  - Culture that values research and its use

Own experiences
- Evidence Advocates and Brokers
  - People & organizations that engage others
  - Navigators of politics, values, & resource constraints
  - Leverage windows of opportunity, coalitions, and other resources and sources of evidence

Local data
- Organizational infrastructure
  - Time to engage with evidence-informed ideas, tools, programs, practices
  - Relevant technology and data
  - Financial resources to access, engage, and improve evidence use

Politics
- Mechanisms of Knowledge Exchange
  - Routines that allow for discussion and exploration of evidence
  - Informal opportunities for deliberation and sense making
  - Formal structured opportunities for debate and sense making
  - Tools that ease access, familiarity, and use of knowledge (e.g., desk guides, protocols, tech, etc.)

Resources & Capacity
- Structures and systems that affect the norms, incentives, and the what, how, and which of knowledge production and use
Engaged Research: Activating Conditions that Promote Consequential Research Use

Curated portals of research evidence
- Easy to read; easy to navigate; easy to act upon; relevant; of high quality

Constituent needs & aspirations
- Trust in the source of evidence
- Work and use conducted in partnership

Facilitated engagement
- Connections via professional networks and intentional networking
- Skills to engage with and apply evidence
- Culture that values research and its use

Evidence Advocates and Brokers
- People & organizations that engage others
- Navigators of politics, values, & resource constraints
- Leverage windows of opportunity, coalitions, and other resources and sources of evidence

Mechanisms of Knowledge Exchange
- Routines that allow for discussion and exploration of evidence
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Knowledge exchange systems that leverage relationships & routines
- Investments in access to research and data infrastructure
- Tools, programs, practices
- Relevant technology and data
- Financial resources to access, engage, and improve evidence use

Professional development
- Constituents needs & aspirations
- Agreements for working together

Local data experiences of peers

Resources & Capacity

Politics