

Refugee Livelihood Lab

Our Guiding Compass for Making Decisions

Participatory Grantmaking Initiative of the Refugee Livelihood Lab

The purpose of this is to help put some guideposts and markers in place that can regularly remind us what we are trying to do. We can also refer to these when there is a tricky decision that needs to be made or in case there is lack of clarity or agreement on a decision.

Something different is okay and welcome: A lot of systemic challenges and inequities exist despite the current philanthropic and the social impact sector. Often this sector emulates the mainstream systems it is trying to change.

So it is okay to be different from anything that already exists because a lot of what exists is not working. It is okay to try something different. This applies to both: how we design this grant; and the types of projects the grant ends up supporting.

Reduce barriers and wherever possible, remove barriers: Our goal is to be as low barriers in this process as possible.

Help people feel held and supported: We know that many feel incapable of securing grants due to a lack of grant writing expertise. Granting processes can often feel cold, detached and sometimes even dehumanizing.

Our hope is to hold people's hand through the process but not to oversee. This also applies to what happens after the grants are disbursed - we want to support folks in building their ideas/projects while also supporting them as people [and not just as projects].

Reframe language to focus on inclusion and removing hierarchy: Our desire is to shift towards collaborative language. We want to utilize language that is non-hierarchical and addresses issues like racism directly. In any narrative, language, outreach we want to be able to make as many folks feel that they are welcome to engage and apply and that they do not have to "code switch".

Aim for good and not perfection: At the end of the day we know that we have a pot of funding that we can put to work to create change/impact right away. So the goal is to build a good process, be spacious, while also moving quickly where possible.

We will build consensus and talk through things but also utilize a simple majority voting to make decisions.

Remember our own capacity and resources during the design process: While building this grant program and making decisions, we will also consider our own time and capacity. While some ideas will be great and amazing to implement but our capacity and the limited resources we have might get stretched too thin by them.