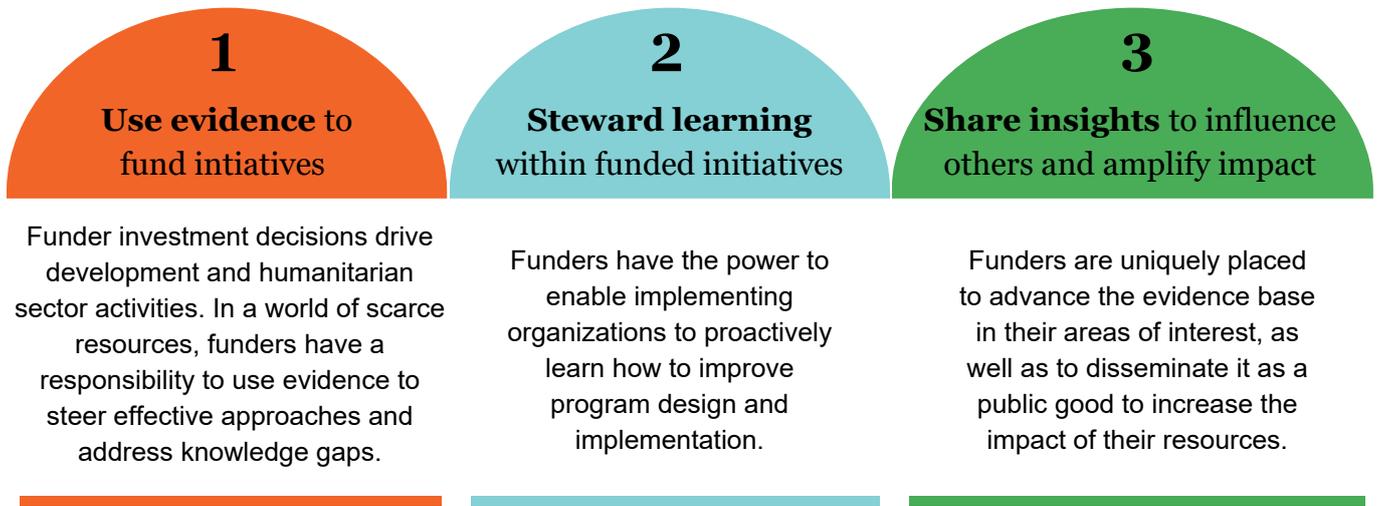**IPA** Innovations for Poverty Action

Maximizing Funder Impact with the Power of Evidence and Learning

Funders face the challenge of ensuring their limited resources have the greatest social impact by funding the most cost-effective initiatives, and then sharing their knowledge to make sure their resources have a catalytic effect. The use of evidence by funders and their implementing partners is key, yet the habitual use of evidence remains a challenge, leading to unfulfilled impact potential.

For funders to maximize the impact of their portfolio and achieve influence in the development and humanitarian sectors, we recommend three key actions:

1
Use evidence to fund intiatives

Funder investment decisions drive development and humanitarian sector activities. In a world of scarce resources, funders have a responsibility to use evidence to steer effective approaches and address knowledge gaps.

2
Steward learning within funded initiatives

Funders have the power to enable implementing organizations to proactively learn how to improve program design and implementation.

3
Share insights to influence others and amplify impact

Funders are uniquely placed to advance the evidence base in their areas of interest, as well as to disseminate it as a public good to increase the impact of their resources.

Our Offerings to Funders

Funder Portfolio Design

Common Needs:
- Evidence to design impactful initiatives
- Enable program and portfolio-wide learning, balanced with accountability

Our Services:
1. **Evidence-Based Initiative Design:** Apply existing evidence to inform design
2. **Portfolio Learning Agenda and/or MEL framework:** Prioritize credible, actionable learning for the portfolio
3. **Operationalize with Grantees:** Optimize RFPs, reporting asks, etc. to align grantee programs / MEL with portfolio goals

Right-Fit Evidence (RFE) Unit:
IPA's specialized technical advisory team rooted in IPA's philosophy of putting evidence to action and advancing what works to improve the lives of people living in poverty. RFE supports implementing organizations, government agencies, and funders on how to better use data and evidence to maximize impact.

Portfolio Learning

Common Needs:
Improve use of evidence generated across the portfolio, for future portfolio activities and for others in the community

Our Services:
1. **Evidence Use Diagnostic:** Review evidence use across portfolio and identify improvements
2. **Portfolio Evaluation and Learning:** Aggregate/synthesize program evidence for portfolio-level use
3. **External Dissemination:** Strategic sharing of evidence with key stakeholders, for broader use

Grantee(s) Program Learning

Common Needs:
- Quality research/ learning by grantees and others, including evidence use
- More learning and sharing among grantees

Our Services:
1. **Technical Assistance:** Hands-on MEL support, for evidence use
2. **Complementary Evidence Generation:** Selective independent research activities to complement grantee MEL (impact eval, process eval, etc.)
3. **Communities of Practice:** Cross-grantee learning infrastructure