

What is Participatory Grantmaking?

Participatory Grantmaking (PGM):

- ➔ involves **community members** or **stakeholders** in funding decisions
- ➔ enables **collective decision-making** between grantmakers and grantees
- ➔ aims to **dismantle power dynamics**
- ➔ it **empowers** those directly impacted to control resources

The SJI is dedicated to promoting social justice and mobilising resources for a fairer society. Our services for donors and funders include:

- ➔ **Advice** and **knowledge sharing**
- ➔ **Grantmaking**
- ➔ **Strategy development** and **insights**
- ➔ **Donor-advised funds**

Types of PGM & Examples



Representative Participation

Sector experts or lived experience inform decisions.

Examples
The Three Rivers Foundation
The North Star Fund



Rolling Collective

Grantees become part of the allocation committee.

Example
The Thankyou Charitable Trust



Closed Collective

Area-specific organisations decide on funding collectively.

Examples
The Twigger Trust (JOYYA TRUST)
UHA East Africa



Open Collective

All stakeholders, including applicants, participate in decision-making.

Examples
The Wikimedia Foundation
FRIDA the Young Feminist Fund



Direct Transfers

Direct cash transfers based on set criteria, without intermediary organisations.

Examples
Innovations for Poverty Action
Give Directly



Crowd Funding

Uses social networks to raise funds.

Example
Donors Choose

Since 2014,
we've mobilised over

R250M

supporting

60+

organisations

across all nine provinces,
focusing on:



Access to Justice



Transparency



Governance

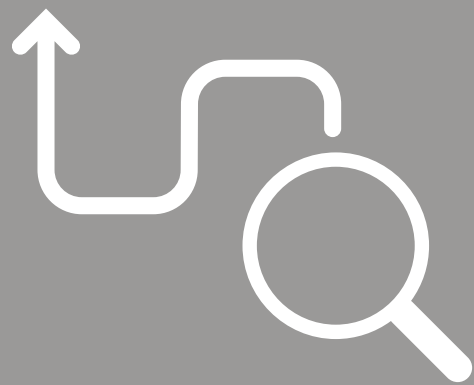


Accountability

PGM Research

In 2023, SJI commissioned research on PGM to explore a potential fund supporting gender justice organisations.

The study was led by Dr Keratilo Mogotsi and Dr Asabea Ahwireng-Obeng (University of the Witwatersrand), with contributions from Benita Moolman (University of Cape Town) after engaging directly with gender justice organisations.



Research Methodology:

- ➔ Literature review of global PGM practices
- ➔ Semi-structured interviews (Jan 2023)
- ➔ Surveys with South African grantmakers
- ➔ Seminars with 30+ organisations in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West, KZN, and Eastern Cape

Full report available [\[here\]](#).

Key Findings



Benefits of PGM

- ➕ Informed Decision-Making - Engages stakeholders for more thoughtful, community-led funding choices.
- ➕ Builds Trust - Strengthens credibility between donors and communities, fostering lasting relationships.
- ➕ Promotes Equity - Encourages diversity and inclusion by involving those directly impacted in decision-making.
- ➕ Facilitates Collaboration - Creates networks among participants, helping to strengthen social justice movements.
- ➕ Encourages Innovation - Supports risk-taking and the discovery of new initiatives aligned with grassroots needs.

Limitations of PGM

- ➖ Resource-Intensive - Requires substantial time and effort from staff and participants, making it costly.
- ➖ Safety Concerns - Vulnerable groups may face risks during the participatory process.
- ➖ Conflicts of Interest - Potential for disagreements among participants over priorities and allocations.
- ➖ Representation Challenges - Ensuring genuine inclusivity and authenticity can be difficult.
- ➖ Bias Remains - Participant biases may not be fully eliminated, affecting decisions.
- ➖ Institutional Misalignment - Decisions might not always align with the funder's objectives.
- ➖ Community Engagement - Risk that funders may take community participation for granted.
- ➖ Challenges Measuring Impact - Difficult to assess the effectiveness and long-term outcomes of PGM.
- ➖ Not Universally Applicable - May not suit all funders or contexts, especially where quick decisions are needed.

Feedback from Gender Justice Organisations

Concerns about Traditional Grantmaking (TGM)

- ➔ Power Imbalances - Centralises decision-making, limiting the autonomy of marginalised groups.
- ➔ Rigid Structures - Imposes strict priorities, stifling genuine engagement and trust.
- ➔ Top-Down Approach - Funder-driven agendas often overlook grassroots needs, reducing impact.
- ➔ Limited Grassroots Support - Small organisations struggle to access funding, reinforcing inequities.
- ➔ Perceptions of PGM
- ➔ Promotes Mutual Respect & Transparency - Prioritises respect, inclusivity, and community-led solutions.
- ➔ Has Challenges – Including time-intensive processes, conflicts of interest, and the need for trust-building.



Suggestions for Improving PGM

- ➔ Inclusive Decision-Making - Include those directly affected; selection via applications or nominations.
- ➔ Clear Roles - Assign responsibilities to ensure accountability and shared decision-making.
- ➔ Conflict Management - Address personal agendas and differing stakeholder goals to avoid tensions.