



# Participatory Grantmaking Pilot

An Overview of Peel Participatory Grantmaking Project



World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit social enterprise dedicated to helping international students, immigrants, and refugees achieve their educational and career goals in the United States and Canada. For more than 45 years, WES has set the standard of excellence in the field of international academic credential evaluation. Through WES Global Talent Bridge, the organization advocates the workforce integration of immigrants and refugees who have international experience and training. Its philanthropic arm, the WES Mariam Assefa Fund, supports inclusive economies that help immigrants and refugees thrive in the United States and Canada.





## Our Mission

We help people **learn, work, and thrive** in new places. We help society **recognize the value** of people's education and experience.



## Our Vision

**Everyone** is able to put their education, experience, and skills to work **anywhere** in the world.

# Focus on Four Impact Areas



## Opportunity

Education, Skills, & Training

Employment

Wrap-around Supports



## Wealth

Financial Inclusion

Wealth and Asset-building



## Power

Leadership

Ownership

Worker Organizing



## Justice

Policy and Advocacy for Just Systems

Inclusive Communities

Trusted, Community-driven Media

# Why did WES Mariam Assefa Fund launch a participatory grantmaking project?



## Shift Power to Communities

- What approaches can **truly shift power to communities**, and what approaches might be extractive?
- What are the **key prerequisites** for effective community participation?
- How is the **community's view of its needs** and priorities different from the Fund's initial view?



## Inform the Fund's Evolving Approach

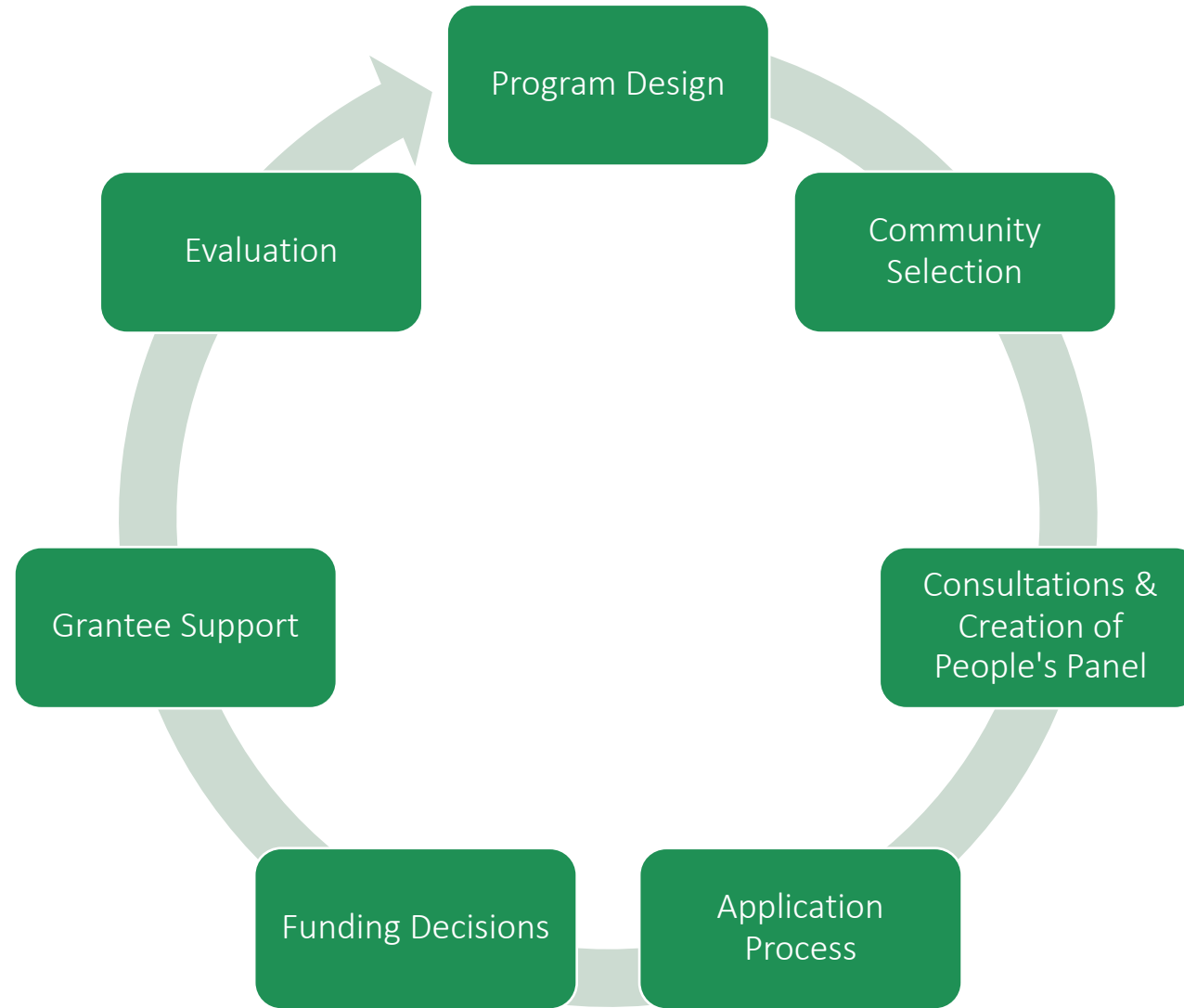
- What approaches can the Fund start using in its **ongoing grantmaking work**?
- What would be required for the Fund **to fully move** to participatory grantmaking?
- What creates an **enabling environment** for this type of work?



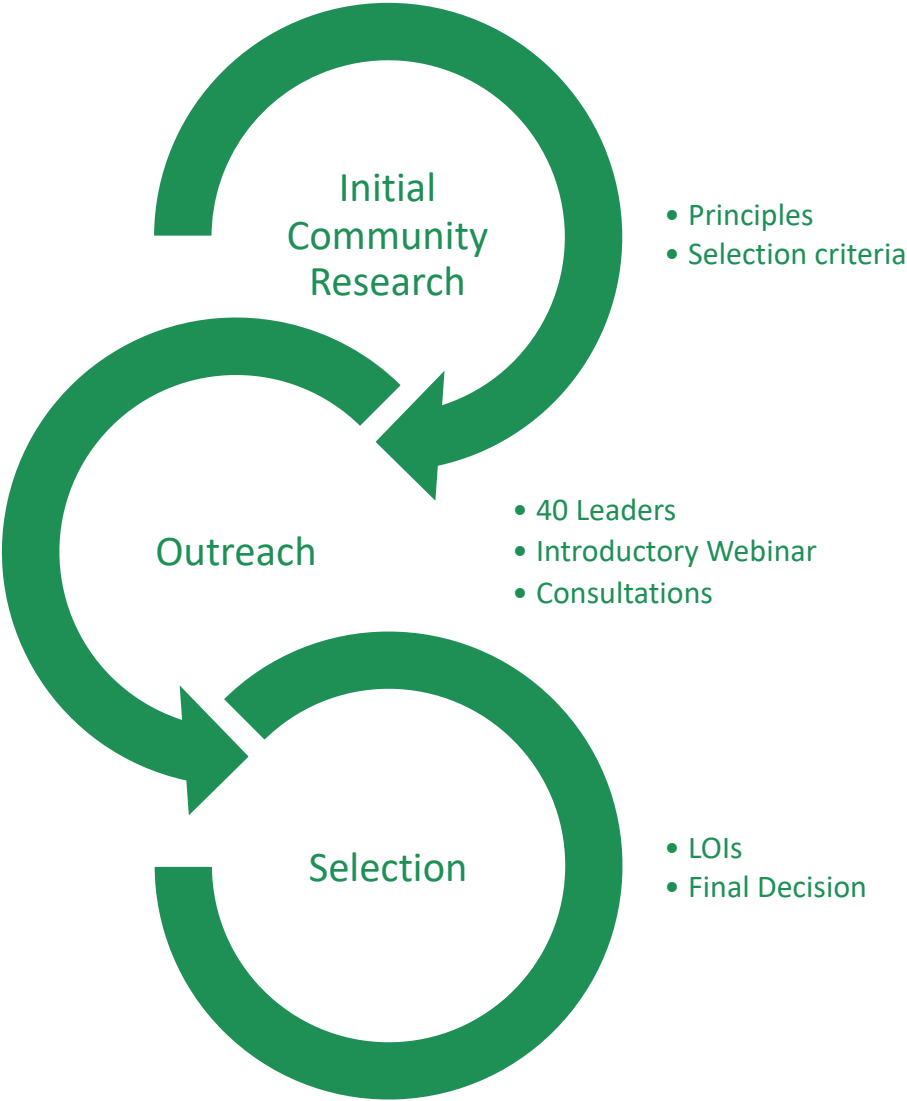
## Build a Movement with Other Funders

- How can the Fund **encourage other funders** to move to participatory grantmaking using this experience?
- What **lessons learnt by the Fund** can be useful for other funders as they move towards more community participation?

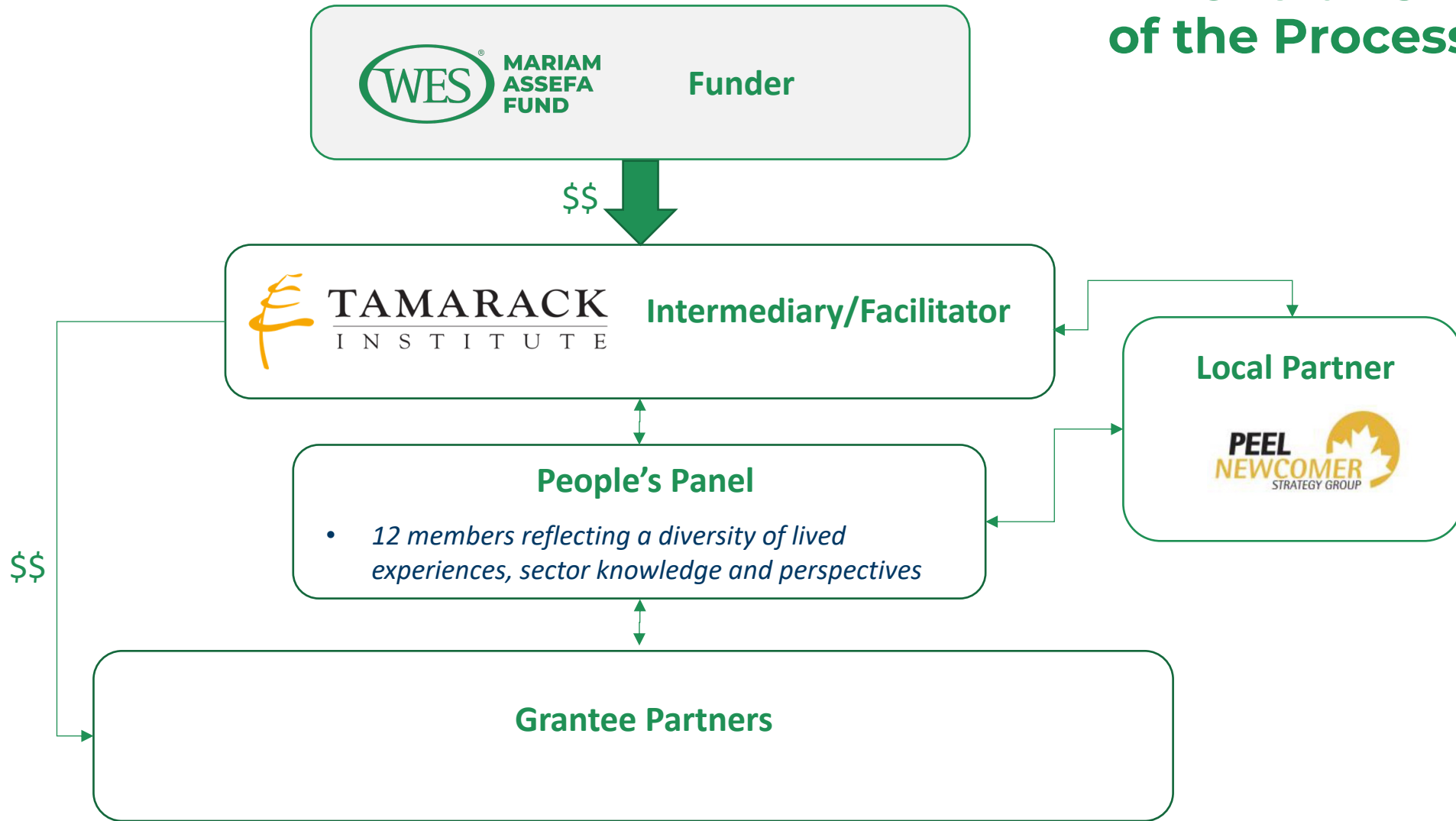
# An Overall Project Map



# Program Design and Community Selection



# An Overall Snapshot of the Process





## Initial Community Consultations

Initial virtual session  
Identifying needs at different levels  
Lived experience and diversity

## Launch of the People's Panel

Call for applications  
Recruitment of members

## Roles and Responsibilities

Panel members' responsibilities  
Peel Newcomer Strategy Group  
Community animator

**Community  
Engagement**

# Pre-Funding Engagement of People's Panel

**1** Engage **industry and employer** to position marginalized immigrants and refugees' skills to emerging labour market needs.

**2** Develop **entrepreneurship skills and job readiness** while aiming for **system change to create self-employment pathways** for marginalized immigrants and refugees.

**3** Implement the holistic integration of **mental health supports** into settlement and employment services.

**4** Align **service navigation and accessibility** to the marginalized immigrants and refugees' perspective and experience. For example, including access to **targeted and wrap-around services** to prevent and address issues that create barriers to employment (e.g. worker exploitation, housing needs, obtaining status, etc.).

## Co-designing funding process

- Community needs & priorities
- Expected impact
- Models of funding
- Application guidelines and process

# People's Panel's Funding Decisions



# Meaningful Participation: Insights from the Evaluation Phase

## Building Legitimacy

- Community inputs at each step
- The example of community engagement

## Activating Diverse Voices

- Creating an ecosystem of actors
- Ongoing engagement and conversation

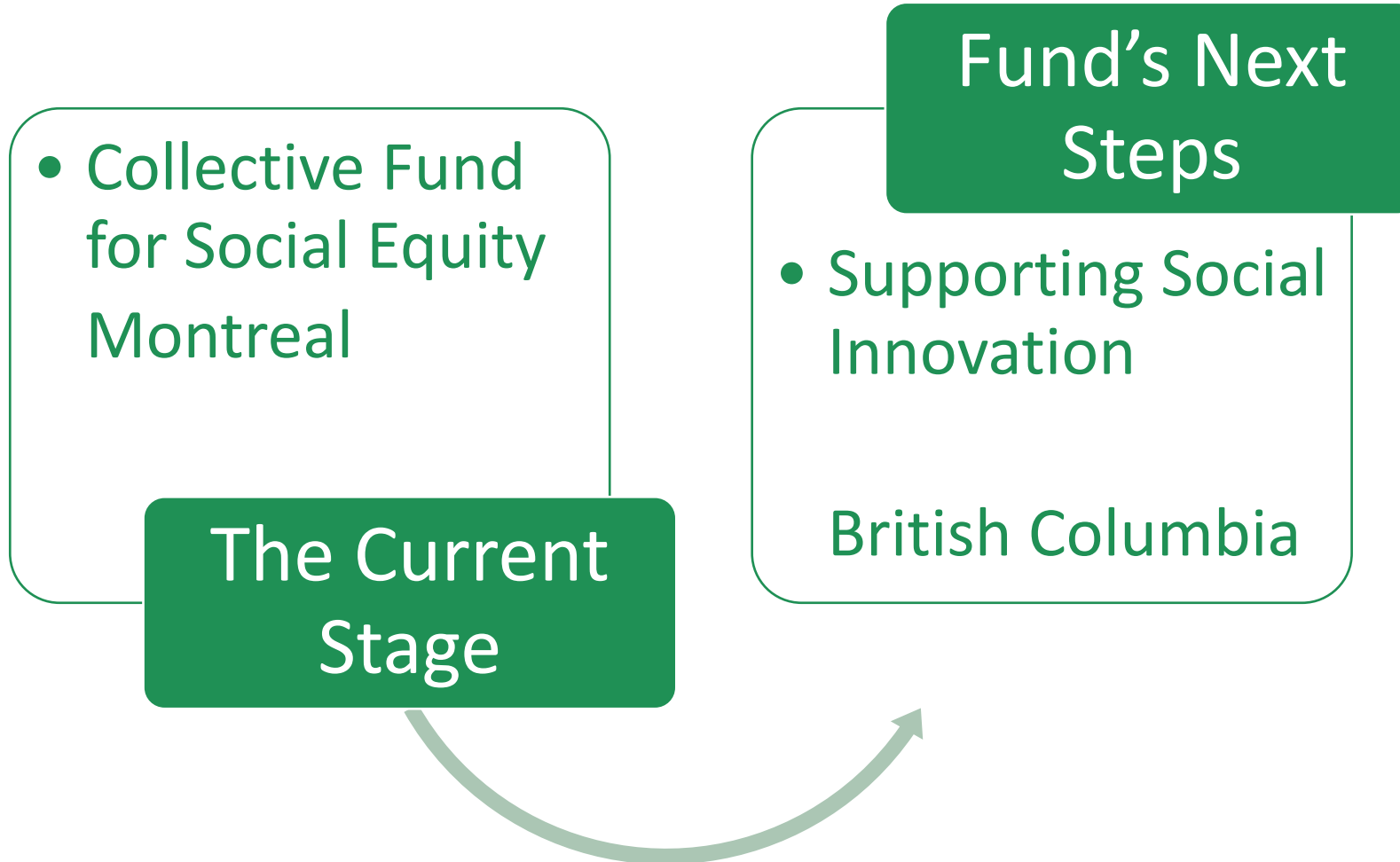
## Safe Spaces and Effective Facilitation

- Creating trust
- Importance of facilitation design

## Bridging Power Differences

- Connections with the community
- Neutral voice

# The Way Forward





**Thank you!**