



CS&TC Impact Assessment Roundtable
November 1, 2017
Summary Notes

Introduction

After self-introduction by all of the attendees, the session started with an introduction by Bonnie Koenig of the Civil Society and Testing Change project. She briefly described the CS&TC project as (1) **Focused on the operational changes that many civil society organizations (CSOs) will need to make to stay relevant** amidst some major external changes; (2) Designed to be a **multi-year testing of ideas**, with a lead organization (such as CIVICUS for youth engagement and GlobalGiving for impact assessment) for each issue area; and (3) Having **working groups** that are global and diverse. Over the life of the project it will probably **have 4-5 working groups** to keep the project holistic and create synergistic learning across the issue areas.

She also noted that the having a **roundtable** before starting a working group was added to ensure a topic identified by the Steering Group is a topic area that needs this kind of attention, and to try and identify where some of the learning (framework) and gaps (opportunities) are.

Britt Lake of GlobalGiving shared that the diversity of GlobalGiving's membership should help some of the learning from this effort to be applicable to a wide range of other groups.

What we have learned thus far

During the first part of the roundtable, participants were asked to share examples of where they have seen impact assessed in innovative ways, or at least new and exploratory ways.

Britt shared a multi-year process that GlobalGiving has begun of looking at how to measure impact. They are looking at changes in organizational learning behaviors to see if learning organizations obtain impact faster. Member organizations can get points for learning activities and these points can be used for rewards such as higher visibility in GlobalGiving's platforms and networks for their funding efforts.

Elsa Peraldi of Global Integrity shared an exploratory project they have to track how behavior may be changing among some of the groups they are working with.

Andrew noted that it is important to stipulate how you are defining impact, and whether your purpose is to validate your impact and/or to improve it.

Blair shared the importance of building community in their work; Ilana of peer networking, Linda of making sure that the focus on people and relationships is not lost in the process of using technology, and Jenny of the need to build trust in order to be truly inclusive. It was noted that cultural interpreters can help to involve a greater diversity of people/stakeholders.

Jenny shared that the Global Fund for Philanthropy is beginning to look at social capital indicators – who comes to meetings? who contributes? what local assets are being mobilized? as ways to demonstrate engagement that will lead to impact.

A discussion ensued about the importance of recognizing that many of the systems we are working within are broken or poorly aligned with goals of inclusivity and that we need to work hard at creating opportunities for true engagement and power sharing. Some important questions to ask include: Who is part of the community? How do we equalize roles? What conversations should we be having? Why does [x] matter to us? When we take the time to build trust and co-create we get insights into how and why contributions are made to the good of the community, assets are mobilized, and what can be effective and sustainable pathways.

Since impact can be hard to assess, can we use proxies such as trust and learning to try and get at impact?

Challenges

Some challenges that were raised:

- Our language and processes can put up barriers to engagement.
- How not to get overwhelmed by large amounts of data and learn how to analyze it and use it towards meaningful action.
- Different donors often request organizations to look at different indicators – how does an organization align potential indicators in the most effective way to assess its impact?
- Who does impact assessment have to come from to be credible?

Opportunities and Ideas to pursue

- Synthesize and align different types of learning.
- Way to better communicate learning to (and with) all constituencies and donors.
- Look at more creative types of reporting.
- Explore ways to make large caches of stories targeted enough to be useful ways to assess impact.
- Explore the potential of indicators such as behavioral change, social capital indicators, and a menu of options. (Buy-in can be measurable)

- Create incentives to connect and community build on a platform such as GlobalGiving.

Some take-away comments

- Data can be used to keep the status quo or upend it – we should keep our focus on changing paradigms.
- Keep focus on impact, however a group defines it.
- Potential of proxies (such as learning and trust) for assessing impact.
- Need to find better ways to give communities more voice and co-creation authority in the process.

Some additional resources suggested

- The work of Slum Dwellers International
- Transformational Change Leadership
- Sharing of indigenous peoples from Australia and Canada

Participants (in alphabetical order)

1. Alison Carlman, GlobalGiving
2. Blair Glencorse, CS&TC Steering Group, Accountability Lab
3. Jenny Hodgson, Global Fund for Community Foundations, CS&TC Youth Working Group
4. Bonnie Koenig, CS&TC founder and project manager
5. Britt Lake, GlobalGiving
6. Andrew Means, ImpactLab and Uptake
7. Elsa Peraldi, Global Integrity
8. Linda Raftree, MERL Tech network
9. Ilana Shapiro, USAID LEARN

Other resources previously shared

“Measuring Impact isn’t for everyone”

http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/measuring_impact_isnt_for_everyone

Why Measure? <http://www.twaweza.org/go/learning>

Good enough guide to impact-measurement – You can download the report here

<http://www.alnap.org/resource/8406>

Outcome Harvesting (trying to get from activities to outcomes to impact)

<https://usaidearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/Outome%20Harvesting%20Brief%20FINAL%202012-05-2-1.pdf>

Listening to Those Who Matter Most, the Beneficiaries:

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/listening_to_those_who_matter_most_the_beneficiaries

Ned Breslin TED Talk on Impact https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVSyV_IybBM

A Guide to Actionable Measurement <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/documents/guide-to-actionable-measurement.pdf>

State of Evaluation 2016 (U.S.) https://stateofevaluation.org/media/2016-State_of_Evaluation.pdf

Re-envisioning the final report <https://www.peakgrantmaking.org/time-rethink-final-report-create-meaningful-feedback-loop/>

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