



THE COMMON FOUNDATIONS

## Engaging with those most affected

The Common Approach believes that it is important that impact measurement is driven by those who are most affected by an organization's actions. We also believe that standards should meet people where they are at.

The Common Foundations aim to articulate practices that at least 60% of organizations are already doing. The consultations that helped us to identify these practices also suggested that 60% of SPOs are not currently engaging meaningfully with those who are most affected in their impact measurement work.

Because of this, engaging with those most affected is not currently a required element of the Common Foundations. Instead, we have identified where we see opportunities for engagement and included these as future-looking practices that organizations can begin to consider and plan for.

We are committed to working with organizations to make engagement a core part of impact measurement practice and we look forward to adding to our minimum standard.

### **Engaging with those most affected by an organization's actions**

Engaging with different people affected by the work of an organization is an essential practice of impact measurement.

The Common Approach believes that it is important that impact measurement is driven by those who are most affected by an organization's actions.

Meaningful engagement is an important first step in working towards impact measurement that is driven by those most affected. Engagement is the right thing to do; it leads to better impact measurement and better impact. Impact measurement should include and be responsive to the people and natural environments most affected by an organization's actions. Impact measurement is more relevant to social purpose organizations when it is attuned to the voices of those most affected.

Genuine involvement of those most affected helps organizations to:

- avoid well-intentioned yet misguided efforts,
- strive for—and achieve—change that is aligned with what is most valued by those directly impacted by the organization's work,
- maximize their intended impact given the resources at one's disposal, and
- create a commitment to accountability to those most affected.

Involving those most affected creates an expectation of follow through. It means maintaining transparency even when efforts fall short.

## **We know that engagement is currently beyond the minimum standard of Version 2.0**

For each of the essential practices outlined in the minimum standard, we have included a section about engaging with those most affected. These explanations encompass practices that *go beyond the minimum standard outlined in [Version 2.0](#)*. We have included this because of the Common Approach's belief that the people and natural environments most affected by the impact should be at the center of impact measurement, determining what is considered important to measure.

A minimum standard describes practices that reflect where most people are at in their impact measurement journey. For the Common Foundations, the minimum standard reflects what most organizations (60%) are already doing. Most organizations are not deeply engaged with those most affected. It is in the spirit of establishing a minimum standard that we are not including engagement with those most affected as a *requirement* in Version 2.0. Rather, we are including suggestions for engagement for each essential practice that will become *future requirements*. These suggestions are a starting point for impact measurement that is centered on those whose lives are most affected by an organization's work.

By including suggested practices for engagement, the Common Approach is inviting organizations on a critical journey towards more culturally relevant participatory impact measurement. The Common Approach will endeavour to support changes in impact measurement practice such that in the future, these practices will be incorporated into the minimum standard as requirements reflecting “where people are at” with regards to their impact measurement practice.

This work is rooted in reconciliation. If we are to engage in meaningful reconciliation work and meet the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), we have a responsibility to engage in impact measurement practices that focus on community-identified priorities, support Indigenous leadership on impact measurement, and prioritize the incorporation of Indigenous world views and realities.

## **We are committed to working with organizations to make engagement a requirement in Version 3.0**

The Common Approach's vision for the next update to the Common Foundations (Version 3.0) is that it will establish a minimum standard for participatory engagement within each of the five essential practices.

The Common Approach hopes to encourage the evolution of this impact measurement practice through the inclusion of engagement practices as *future requirements* in Version 2.0 of the minimum standard. These practices serve to signal to organizations that increased engagement is the expected increased rigour for future revisions of the standard. It is the direction of change in impact measurement practice that the Common Approach seeks to support.

Because engagement is at the core of impact measurement practice, the Common Approach has chosen not to isolate engagement as a separate engagement as a stand-alone practice, but to include it as a cross-cutting practice within each of the five essential practices. Engagement will be integrated into all practices. You can see the direction we are going in the sidebars of the Common Foundations document.

In the meantime, if you would like guidance on engagement have a look at:

- Social Value International's **Involve Stakeholders** standard
- **60 Decibels**
- **Participatory Evaluation**



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