

THE COMMON FOUNDATIONS

Why the Common Foundations, and for whom?

Why the Common Foundations?

By identifying the **Common Foundations of Impact Measurement**, we hope to help social purpose organizations navigate their impact measurement options with greater ease. Social purpose organizations should feel confident choosing any tool or approach that includes these five essential practices, or feel better equipped to improvise their own methods. If all five essential practices are in place, then an organization is doing impact measurement!

A minimum standard

The Common Foundations reflect a minimum standard of impact measurement—not a gold standard. This is intentional. Community is the key ingredient to successful standards. In order to develop the community of active users behind a standard, users must be able to come on board and meet the standard. To make it possible to come on board, a standard must meet people where they are at.

A minimum standard reflects actual practice. In the case of the Common Foundations, our definition of a minimum standard is a standard that reflects the real practices of approximately 60% of social purpose organizations. Our consultations with evaluators suggests that 60% of social purpose organizations are already doing the practices defined by Common Foundations Version 2.0.

Evolution of a minimum standard

As impact measurement practice evolves, the minimum standard will change to reflect this evolution. What is a minimum standard today will no longer be a minimum standard in the future, as impact measurement practice changes over time.

Towards greater engagement with those most affected

The Common Approach is committed to championing an evolving approach to impact measurement practice that is driven by those **whose lives are most affected** by an organization's actions.

The Common Foundations for whom?



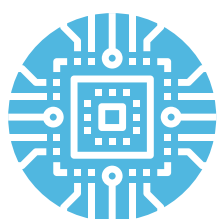
For **social purpose organizations** that are not yet doing impact measurement, the Common Foundations is a good starting point. The Common Foundations will set the organization in the right direction for establishing impact measurement practices that contribute to learning, innovation, demonstrating impact, and being transparent.

For social purpose organizations that are already doing impact measurement, the Common Foundations affirms that these organizations' practices meet a minimum standard of impact measurement. It is compatible **with many other standards** and can be used in conjunction with them.



For **funders**, the Common Foundations provide a minimum standard for how to do impact measurement without prescribing a particular tool or approach. This gives funders the option of requiring social purpose organizations to demonstrate that they are doing all five essential practices while leaving each social purpose organization to choose the tools, approaches and indicators that are most meaningful

to them. Funders can invite (and, ideally, fund) social purpose organizations to embrace impact measurement practice for their own learning and innovation, and lessen the reporting burden on their grantees and fundees.



For those who are **developing tools and approaches to impact measurement**, or already have their own tools and approaches, the Common Foundations serves as a foundational floor upon which to build further. The Common Foundations are complementary to all other tools and approaches. They are essential and basic practices that

undergird other tools and approaches to impact measurement.

We seek to codify the practices that 60% of social purpose organizations are already doing. We invite others to be the set standards and practices that organizations should strive towards. By articulating the floor, we can better work together to shoot for the stars.



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