



The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations gratefully recognizes the contributions of individuals in Edmonton's nonprofit community who participated in discussions about

Accelerating Impact

ECVO has compiled highlights from these discussions into a series of five resources.

Shared Measurement

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

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Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

Moving to Action



Introduction

This resource is the result of a community conversation about the second condition of Collective Impact, Shared Measurement. Members of the Edmonton nonprofit community participated in this conversation in March 2014. The first conversation on Common Agenda took place in December 2013. Three additional conversations, one for each of the remaining conditions of Collective Impact will take place later in 2014.

- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communications
- Backbone Organizations

Each conversation explores a local Edmonton case study followed discussion questions. The responses to these questions are summarized in a resource similar to this document. If you are interested in collecting the series of resources, please visit the ECVO website and look under programs/*Moving to Action*.

“How would shared measurement benefit efforts you are involved in?”

By offering a common language to describe success, shared measurement systems support meaningful discussion about impact. Participants recognized that the results of shared measurement systems will drive a new narrative that will build buy-in and support collaboration.

Shared measurement systems can provide information to partners and stakeholders that will:

- Improve alignment across sectors (nonprofit, for-profit and government)
- Support informed decision-making

- Provide opportunity for more focused and intentional program design and service delivery
- Improve understanding of systems and how outcomes in one area enhance and support others.

Further Reading

[Shared Measurement](#). Presentation slides by Charles Levinson

[Collective Impact: Getting to Shared Measurement](#). Webinar by Liz Weaver and Maureen Gillon.

“What are the biggest challenges of Shared Measurement?”

Creating shared measurement systems is a long and complex process. Participants agreed that developing common outcomes and establishing shared language takes time. There is tension between the time necessary to allow for this process and the ongoing need for reporting and accountability.

Existing reporting systems are well-entrenched and there are risks and fear associated with changing indicators, measures, processes and technology.

- We use logic models to translate our stories and build government buy-in. How do we balance the funders' systems with partner systems?
- How do we ensure that what is being measured is important to all partners? The outcomes may not be useful enough for all

- There are challenges when tying actions to specific outcomes; they may not be flexible enough for all partners or all funders.
- What if we make the investment in adapting and adopting our practices and processes and this a passing fad? “Is this a phase?”
- Primary prevention and social services are downloaded to community and community organizations. We are pushed to collaborate; is collaboration always in the best interests of our organization and our clients.

Further Reading

[Collective Impact & Shared Measurement: Tough But Necessary](#). Mark Cabaj.

[Collective Ideas to Collective Impact: A Guide to Data Collaboration in Communities](#).

Further Reading

[Getting to We Series](#)

[Challenging the Outcome of Outcomes](#).

Mark Holmgren



Further reading

[Driving performance in a multi-agency partnership using outcome measures: a Case Study](#). Maurice Atkinson and Valerie Maxwell.

[Data Collaborative Readiness Assessment](#).

[Developing Community-wide Outcome Indicators for Specific Services](#).

[Striving for Change: Lessons from the Front Line](#). Geoff Zimmerman

“Consider the challenges of **developing** shared measurement systems.”

Participants identified resources, culture and process as the main challenges groups encounter when engaging in shared measurement activities. Shared measurement systems require investments of money, time and commitment.

- Resources (dollars) are not always available to deliver shared measures.
- Developing systems is costly, as is analysing the results and making them useful for partners, funders and community.
- Cobbling funding together from different government sources raises concerns as to whether the shared measures will/will not meet everyone's requirements.
- Thinking in silos creates barriers to shared measurement exercises.
- Internal thinking and not collective thinking can work against efforts to develop shared measures.
- Individuals and organizations can get stuck in how things are done and as a result may be unable to think about bigger, shared impacts.
- Failure to establish a common agenda will hamper the development and uptake of shared measurement systems.
- Thinking needs to shift in order to adapt to shared measurement processes.



Further reading

[Blueprint for Shared Measurement](#). Eibhlin Ni Ogain, Lucy de Las Casas, Marina Svistak, New Philanthropy Capital.

[Using Data in Multi-Agency Collaborations: Guiding Performance to Ensure Accountability and Improve Programs](#).

[When to Manage for Shared Outcomes: An Agency Resource](#). Government of New Zealand.

“How would you encourage your partners to consider developing a shared measurement approach?”

Shared measurement is a mechanism that provides proof that a model works by showing results e.g. co-locating service providers works as a model of efficiency, reduction of duplication of services and knowledge transfer through organic conversation.

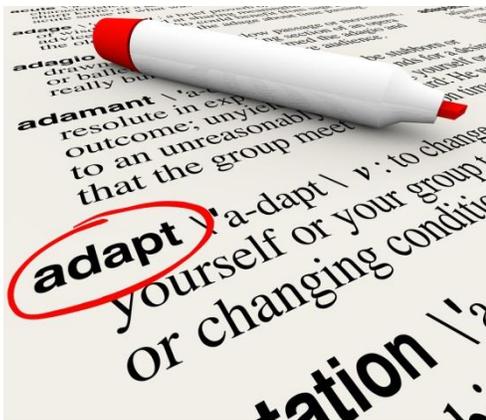
- Work to minimize the administrative burden of shared measurement activities.
- Dedicate the necessary time, up-front to identifying real shared “outcomes”.
- Determine how you will demonstrate your collective impact.
- Challenge whether it is really possible to demonstrate change if goals, outcomes and shared impact are not established.
- Actively address the fears of small organizations that their interests will be swallowed up by large organizations.
- Draw visual roadmaps to help partners see the way.
- Maintain strong leadership.
- Maximize the contributions/skills/personalities within the group understanding.



“ How do groups move beyond measurement as reporting and towards measurement as an adaptive tool? ”

Groups move beyond measurement as reporting and towards measurement as an adaptive tool by building trust among participants. In an adaptive learning scenario, there are no penalties for failure, rather measurement is used to start conversations and identify improvement. Adaptive learning requires time, financial resources and staff assigned to pursuing collective impact.

- Collaboration is always taking place. If we don't measure, we will never hear about them and will continue to work in silos.
- Collaborations can support joint, large-scale applications to funders.



“ What tools or resources do you recommend to assist groups developing and maintaining shared measurement systems? ”

- Groups need to have financial resources to invest in shared measurement technology.
- Look to resources that are already developed and adapt them. Recognize the process is iterative.
- There is not a recipe – learn from what you are doing.
- Find expertise of others that can be shared.

Resources

[Striving for Student Success: A Model of Shared Accountability.](#) Kelly Bathgate, Richard Lee Colvin and Elena Silva. Education Sector.org

[Making Shared Measurement Work.](#) Nathalie Jones. fsg Blog.

[Shared Outcome and Impact Measurement Wiki.](#) fsg Social Impact Consultants.

[Breakthroughs in Shared Measurement.](#) Kramer, Parkhurst and Vaidyanathan. fsg

[Calgary HMIS Initiative.](#)

[A Shared Approach for Smallholder Performance Measurement: Description of Community of Practice.](#)

Tools for [Collaboratives](#)
The Centre for Nonprofit Excellence



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