



Understanding Nonprofit Data & Impact

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What is Impact?

Impact is the measurable change that is the result of an action(s) and/or service(s).



Nonprofit programs focus on participant and programmatic outcomes.

Types of Nonprofit Outcomes

Programmatic Outcomes

Outcomes are the intended benefits to clients from participation in a program, and by which program effectiveness is documented.

Participant Outcomes

Outcomes focused on the change in the individual as a result of programming and services, can be outside of programmatic goals

Near-Term Outcomes

Outcomes achieved soon after intervention or service delivery, typically measured 3-6 months after program exit.

Long-Term Outcomes

Outcomes realized following program exit or receiving services, can be years (2-5 years) after engagement with the organization has ended

The Elements of Nonprofit Programs



The resources needed to plan for and run a program.

For example:

- Material resources
- Time & People
- Information & Technology

An action completed by an individual in a program.

For example:

- Attending a skills training
- Resume building and review
- Interview prep

The direct result of completing an activity.

For example:

- Attendance record
- Number of resumes built or reviewed
- Number of interview prep sessions

The measurable change that completing a program's plan of activities will hopefully lead to.

For example:

- Gaining employment
- 10% increase in wages/salary
- Increased proficiency in computer skills

Why do Nonprofits collect data?

Different purposes, reporting requirements and audiences require different data collection and planning

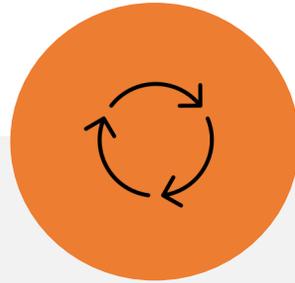


Donor/Funder Requirements

This answers the question:

“What does my grant or donor require?”

Donors and funders typically have specific reporting requirements, and these are not always outcomes.



Program Monitoring

This answers the question:

“Is my program being delivered as planned?”

Monitoring data is more about the inputs, activities and outputs of a program.



Program Evaluation

This answers the question:

“Is my program delivering the intended benefit/outcome/change?”

Outcomes are captured within the evaluation data and planning of a program.

How do Nonprofits measure outcomes?

The key is data collection and planning.

Assessments



Evaluate progress towards goals

Assessments are data collection tools that are used to measure or assess a person or population at a point in time. Assessments should be used at multiple points in time to show change over time. Common assessments are baseline and endline.

Surveys



Participant perspective of progress

Surveys are data collection instruments that are used to collect data from a population of people and can be given multiple times. Surveys usually involve collecting data about the participant's perspective, views and experience.

Indicators



Provides a measure of a concept

An indicator is something that points to or measures a specific concept or outcome. For example, kindergarten readiness is an outcome that could be measured through multiple indicators: reading comprehension scores, emotional independence, etc.

Common Challenges Nonprofits Face



Organizational Capacity

As organizations mature they are able to do more as they grow their staffs, boards, funding streams and reach.



Technology

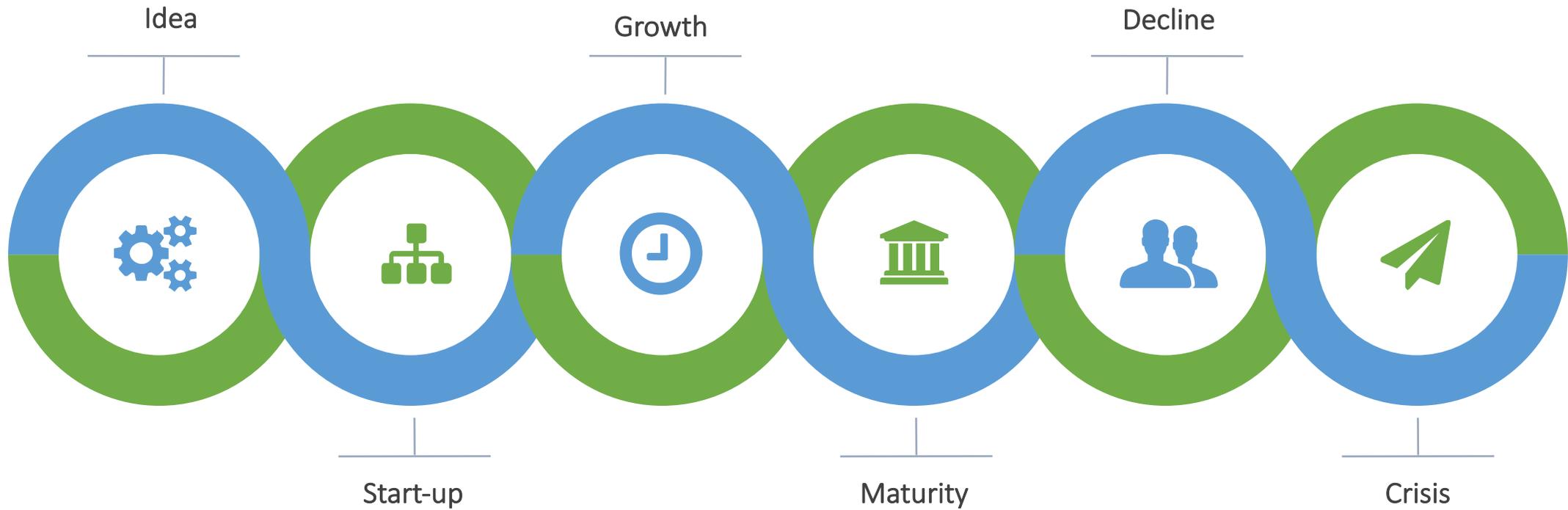
Establishing a technology stack that meets the needs of funders and internal stakeholders can be a challenge as it is a time consuming and expensive process.



Equity

Equitable data collection practices – bias in assessments
Who gets to determine requirements
Historical access to funding and outside support

Nonprofit Lifecycle



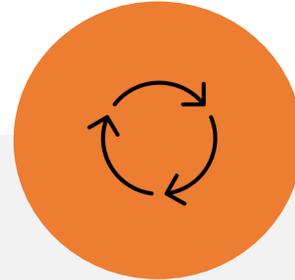
How funders can better participate in the Nonprofit Ecosystem



Learn about the Nonprofit

“What is the mission of this nonprofit?”

The mission of the nonprofit and its evolution over time will tell you about the goals of the organization and the participants it serves. Where the org is in the nonprofit lifecycle will give insight into its capacity and scale.



Learn about the participants

“Who are the people served by the nonprofit?”

In order to understand the outcomes an organization is striving for, you must understand the basics of the populations they are serving.



Review Funding Requirements

“Are the requirements adding an additional burden to organizations we fund?”

Funders have the ability to influence nonprofits; are requirements in alignment with the mission of the funder and the fund recipient?

Additional Resources

Nonprofit Lifecycle

- <https://gcn.org/the-nonprofit-lifecycle-a-model-for-making-smart-decisions/>
- <https://socialimpactarchitects.com/nonprofit-lifecycle/>

Trust Based Philanthropy

- <https://cep.org/the-impact-of-large-unrestricted-grants-on-nonprofits-a-five-year-view/>
- <https://www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org/overview>