

Toolkit for social enterprise

Impact Indicators

 **GUIDE + CANVAS**

Choose indicators to measure, and understand your true impact!

Use this tool to:

- 1. Understand what an indicator is, including indicator sets.**
- 2. Understand how to use indicators to measure the impact you are having.**
- 3. Create an indicator plan for your social enterprise.**

How to use this tool

This tool is a guide, with a canvas, that will allow you to work through and identify an indicator plan for each of your key outcomes on your impact model.

Use this process to understand the true impact you are having, positive or negative, and improve and adjust your operations or impact model.

You don't want to measure everything, so it's important to identify the few key outcomes in your impact model that will give you the most useful information.

We recommend choosing indicators after you develop an impact model. You will need to use the outcomes you identify through that process, in this tool.

Definitions used in this tool

Impact	The positive social, cultural or environmental changes, or outcomes, that happen as a consequence of an activity
Impact model	A visual representation of the logic of how an activity will lead to social or environmental change. The framework identifies the intended causal links between activities, and outcomes over a length of time.
Outcome	A change happening because of an activity. In an impact model these can be expressed as short, medium and long term.
Strengths based	The practice of recognising the positive attributes of a person instead of negative ones, and using this to frame an approach.

What is an Indicator?

Indicators help you observe whether or not change is happening.

They can be used to show that a certain positive social, environmental, cultural or economic outcome is being achieved (or impact).

Indicators are clues, or measurable markers that show whether progress is being made on a certain condition or circumstance. Different indicators are needed to determine how much progress has been made toward a particular output, outcome or impact.

The most important thing to remember is that indicators should be linked to an outcome on your impact model. Linking indicators to your impact model will help you measure the impact you have had.

What makes a good indicator?

Specific

A good indicator should make it clear what you are measuring. It should be measuring something that you think you have directly influenced.

Measurable

It should be written in a way that allows something to be counted or measured.

Relevant

Each indicator should relate to one of the outcomes on your impact model.

Time

It is clear how often you need to collect data on this indicator and when it should be.

Positive

It's good to phrase your indicators using a strengths based approach.

Outcome focused

Indicators that measure the outcomes of your activities will be far more useful. For example, it's better to be able to demonstrate the number of people in employment (outcome) rather than the number of people who attended a course (activity). This allows you to tell your impact story more strongly.

Storing and managing your indicators

Storing your indicators can be as simple or as complicated as you want it to be. If you want to keep it simple you can just store them in a written document or spreadsheet. If you want to get fancy you might use your existing customer relationship management software (CRM) or a specialised database.

How complicated and in-depth your indicators need to be will depend on how you intend to use them. Some sectors and funders require a higher level of evidence than others. Your indicators and data collection will evolve over time. Focus on getting a small list of really good indicators to start with, rather than a long list that you might struggle to maintain.

Where can I find good indicators?

If you are already evaluating your work, you are probably already collecting data. This is a great place to start. If you want inspiration, there are a number of places you could look.

[Indicators Aotearoa](#)

Indicators Aotearoa is being developed by the New Zealand Government to create an indicator set for New Zealand. Many of the indicators are high level, but some, like those relating to education may be useful for non-government organisations.

[Global Reporting Initiative \(GRI\)](#)

GRI is generally used by large companies but can be used by anyone. Their indicators are especially useful in the waste and emissions space.

[Global Value Exchange \(GVE\)](#)

GVE is a crowd-sourced database of indicators. The indicators are not independently vetted so they are of variable quality, but can be useful for inspiration.

[NPC Outcomes Maps](#)

NPC have released 13 outcomes maps that include indicators for different impact areas.

[Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)

The SDGs are a very useful group of goals with a number of indicators that link to them. If you are using the SDGs it's important that you can make an authentic connection to them. Don't just add them because you feel you should. Many of their indicators are population level so can be hard for individual organisations to use.

[GuideStar Common Results Catalog](#)

The GuideStar Catalog has hundreds of indicators that relate to social and environmental change. Many of the indicators measure activity, rather than impact so think carefully about which you might use.

Impact Specific Indicators

The impact areas you work in may have common indicators in use. For example, UNICEF maintains the WASH database for data relating to water, sanitation and hygiene. You may have to do some exploring for indicators that relate to your impact area.

Using the indicator canvas

We've created the indicator canvas to help your social enterprise take the next step in your impact management journey. Use the canvas to identify 4-5 key indicators to start with, depending on the complexity of your impact model you may need more or less. You could also use a spreadsheet. Follow the process below (also on the canvas) for each outcome.

Step 1. Select your outcomes

Each indicator should be linked to a key outcome that you have in your impact model. Have a spread of short, medium and long-term outcomes. Think about what your funders or partners want you to measure, and how realistic or feasible it is to get the data you need.

E.g More people are in long term employment.

Step 2. Select your indicator

Write down the information you want to collect. It will usually be expressed as a number or percentage.

No. of programme participants in full-time employment 24 months after the programme.

Step 3. What questions will you ask to get information about the indicator?

If you will learn about the indicator by asking someone a question, write the question you would ask and who you would ask. If you will be asking the question in a survey, record the format. (e.g. a 5-point scale, free-text or selecting from a list)

Are you currently in full time employment? Yes/No survey question

Step 4. Who/where can you collect the data from?

Write the source that your data will come from e.g. survey or organisational records.

Survey

Step 5. Is there anything you can compare the data with?

If you have taken your indicator from a framework such as Indicators Aotearoa then record that source here. If someone else is collecting this data and you could use their data as a comparison to yours, note that down to compare your data against others.

Ministry of Social Development employment data

Step 6. How often will you gather the data?

Record how frequently you will gather this data.

Every six months, before and after someone participates.

Step 7. How will you store the data?

Record where the data is stored in your organisation so that when you go to collate it, it is easy to find.

On our Google Drive, saved securely under "Participant Survey Data."

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Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs

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