City of Kelowna

Organizational Capacity Development Program Report

City of Kelowna **Impact Measurement Program**

January 2026

IMPACT TOOLBOX

1. Program Overview

The City of Kelowna Impact Measurement Program is designed to help participating organizations deepen their impact measurement knowledge and begin developing and implementing an impact measurement framework for their organizations. The program combines self-paced learning, collaborative workshops, and hands-on project work to ensure participants gain practical skills and develop an impact measurement plan for their organization.

Overall, participant feedback indicates that the Impact Measurement Program was well-designed, practical, and highly engaging. Participants consistently noted that the content flowed logically and translated complex concepts into tools and approaches they could immediately use within their organizations. While the exercises required a meaningful investment of time and reflection, this effort was broadly viewed as worthwhile and necessary to build real understanding and capability.

Cohort Details

Participants were divided into two cohorts. Cohorts had different learning roundtable sessions, but all participants came together for In-Person Gatherings.

Cohort A

- Rotary Centre for the Arts
- Kelowna Museums Society
- Arts Council of the Central Okanagan
- OCCA Communities Association
- New Vintage Theatre Society

Cohort B

- Niteo Africa Society
- Association of Nigerians and Africans in the Okanagan
- Resurrection Recovery Resource Society DBA Freedom's Door
- Karis Support Society
- Kelowna Curling Club

Total Organizations Enrolled

10

Organizations

Key Outcome

The program catalyzed a **3x increase** in data maturity and foundation planning among participating organizations.

Total Duration

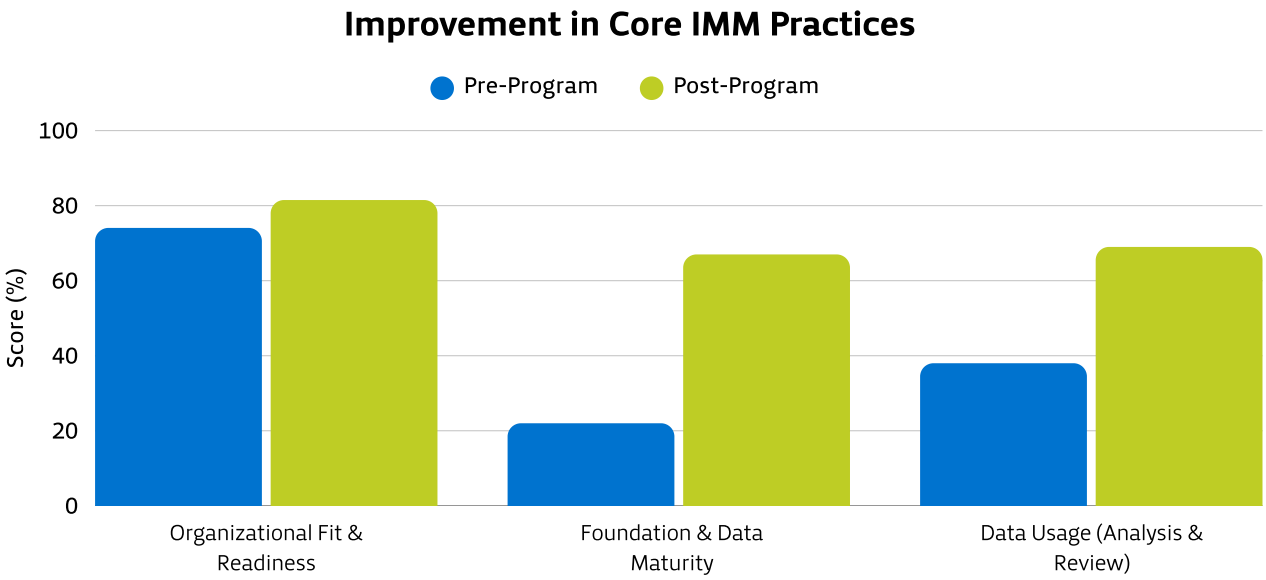
Minimum time commitment was 21 hours over 12 weeks. Most of which are for asynchronous activities, offering enough flexibility to accommodate the busy schedules of non-profit leaders.

**Kelowna Curling Club did not fully participate, while New Vintage Theatre participated, they found the program not as useful due to organizational readiness and fit*

Improvement in Core Impact Measurement Practices

Program evaluation data reveal that participants experienced significant improvement across all three core Impact Measurement & Management (IMM) areas that the program was designed to address.

IMM Practice Area	Pre-Score	Post-Score	Progress
Organizational Fit & Readness This area assesses the "will" and "capacity" of an organization. It measures the internal belief that impact measurement is a strategic priority, the commitment to dedicate consistent resources (time, staff, and budget), and the presence of an internal champion to lead the transition toward a data-driven culture.	74.1	81.5	+7.4
Essential Foundation & Data Maturity (Planning & Collection) This focuses on the foundational elements of measuring impact. It involves documenting a clear theory of change, defining measurable indicators that matter to diverse stakeholders, and establishing procedures for collecting and managing high-quality data across operations.	22.0	66.7	+44.7
Data Usage (Analysis & Review) This represents the "application" of data and insights. It measures how effectively an organization analyzes its data to inform strategic decisions, communicates its impact through structured reporting or dashboards, and maintains a continuous plan to adapt and evolve its measurement practices as it grows.	38.2	68.6	+30.4



The most profound shift occurred in **Essential Foundations of Impact Measurement & Data Maturity**. Before the program, organizations largely lacked documented theories of change or clear indicators. By the end, nearly 67% of organizations had established the structural "backbone" needed for impact measurement. We'll unpack this improvement and the rest of the above data in greater detail in the rest of the report.

2. Program Design
Evaluating the effectiveness of program components

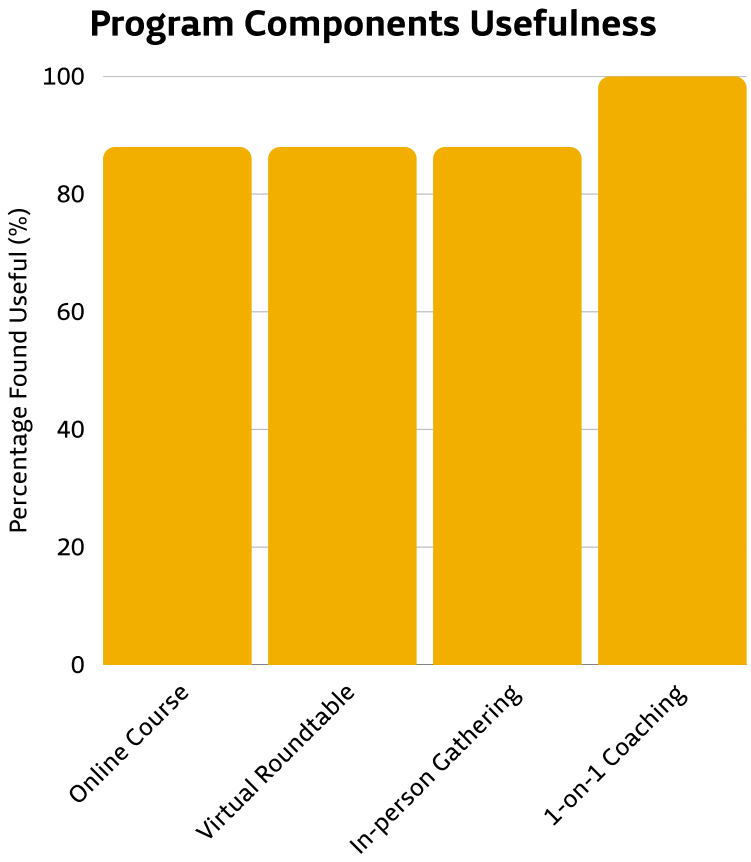
Participants appreciated the program's structure, particularly the combination of asynchronous learning with two more intensive in-person sessions. This design reduced the ongoing time burden for busy nonprofit leaders while still creating space for deep learning, reflection, and peer connection. The vulnerability required in the exercises, particularly when reflecting on impact, beneficiaries, and organizational assumptions, was acknowledged as challenging but valuable, contributing to meaningful learning and insight.

2.1 Usefulness of program components

Participants rated how useful they found the different program components, with a scale of 1 (not useful) to 5 (very useful). The proportion of participants that rated each program component to be fairly and very useful (4 & 5) are as follows:

- **Online Self-Paced Course:** 8/9 (89%)
- **Virtual Learning Roundtables:** 8/9 (89%)
- **In-Person Gatherings:** 8/9 (89%)
- **1-on-1 Coaching:** 2/2 (100% of those who participated in coaching sessions)





2.2 The power of peer and cohort-based learning

Beyond the technical curriculum, the value of the program lay in its collaborative nature. The blend of self-paced learning and in-person gatherings created a unique environment for peer-to-peer exchange.

Networking and Shared Experiences

Participants valued the opportunity to break out of organizational silos. Meeting stakeholders from other Kelowna-based non-profits allowed leaders to "learn from similar challenges" and share "collective stories," often leading to innovative, collaborative solutions. Hearing that other organizations face similar data hurdles provided validation and helped participants discover new approaches to finding solutions.

The Gift of paid time to focus on strategic organizational development

Participants expressed strong appreciation for the City of Kelowna's support of the program, particularly the value of having dedicated time, permission, and resources to focus on impact measurement. City representatives shared that their hope is to see more meaningful, trust-based impact measurement practices emerge, focused on clarity and learning rather than data for its own sake, and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to support organizations in developing a longer-term, more thoughtful approach to articulating impact.

Expert Guidance

The 1:1 coaching sessions and personalized feedback on assignments gave participants a sense of being "educated, supported, and encouraged." The step-by-step workbooks demystified the complexities of impact measurement.

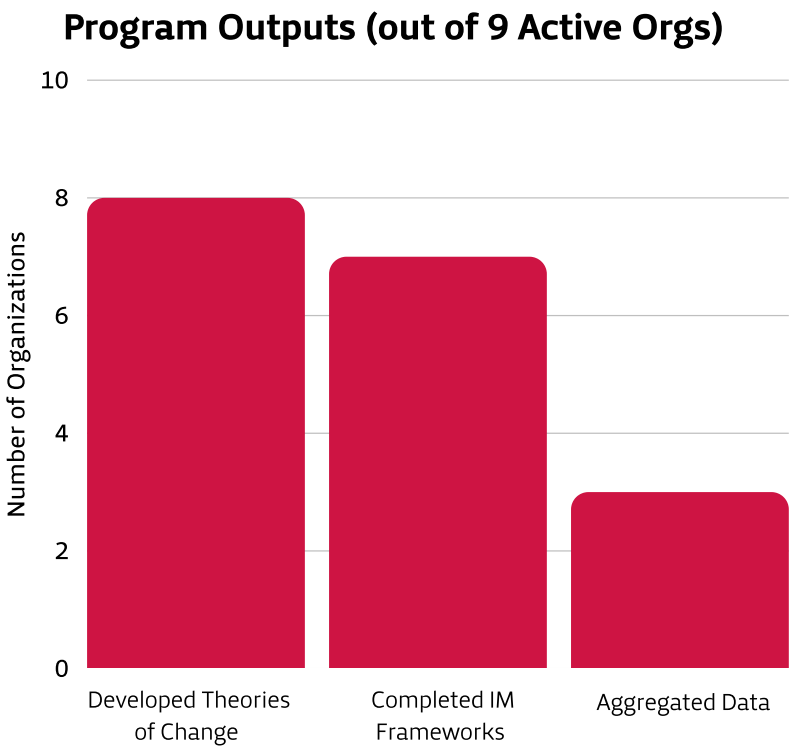
As one participant summarized: *"Identifying the indicators that signal progress... made the impact feel tangible and deeply motivating. Seeing how these pieces connect—inputs, intended change, indicators, and responsible data management—gave me a clearer, more confident understanding of how our programs create lasting outcomes."*

> Thank you, Impact Toolbox, for taking the behemoth of impact measurement and data collection and breaking it down into a cohesive flow and process for any size organization.
>
> The Impact Measurement cohort helped me to move out of "the trees" to a clear vision of impact measurement and data collection for our organization.
>
> The course broke down a very complex and integrated process into manageable steps and shared the information in a way that is easy for myself and my team to understand. Lastly, I appreciated the community-focused method of content delivery, integrating working and sharing with other organizations as part of the process, which made the work less "lonely" and more inspiring as I could learn from where other organizations were at and ideas that we shared together.
>
> **Antonia De Boer, NITEO Africa Society**

3. Key Program Outputs
High engagement and practical deliverables

The program's "project-based" nature ensured that learning resulted in the following deliverables:

- **Active Engagement:** 9 organizations represented by 17 people engaged with 88% of participants reporting a direct increase in their impact measurement knowledge and skills.
- **Theories of Change:** 8 out of 9 active organizations now have a documented roadmap for their intended impact.
- **IM Frameworks:** 7 organizations designed their impact measurement frameworks which includes their indicators, data collection, management, and usage plans.
- **Skills Acquisition:** 3 organizations implemented initial data aggregation & analysis.



> Impact Toolbox gave us the language and structure to clearly articulate the change we already knew we were making — and the confidence to measure it in a meaningful, realistic way. It helped us clarify the difference between outputs and outcomes and build a strong, practical logic model that reflects real systems-level change rather than just activity counts.
>
> The Impact Measurement Program was well organized, clearly supported, and highly relevant to ARTSCO's work. It helped us clarify the difference between outputs and outcomes and build a strong, practical logic model that reflects real systems-level change rather than just activity counts.
>
> Refining our "North Star" was especially valuable, as it connected our public art, artist support, advocacy, and youth programming to a shared long-term vision for a sustainable and inclusive cultural landscape. The tools and frameworks we gained will directly inform our planning, grant reporting, and communications going forward
>
> **Kirsteen McCulloch, Arts Council of the Central Okanagan**

**Samples of frameworks developed by participants are attached in a separate folder for confidentiality.*

4. Key Outcomes

Participants reported a significant shift in how they understand and approach impact measurement. Many entered the program feeling overwhelmed, uncertain, or disconnected from the concept, describing themselves as “on the shore,” “in deep water,” or “lost in the trees.” By the end of the program, participants expressed a sense of having “landed,” recognizing that impact measurement is an ongoing journey rather than a destination to be mastered all at once.

4.1 Increased impact measurement knowledge

88%

8 of 9 participants (88%) explicitly stated that their skills and knowledge regarding impact measurement increased. Another key result of learning was the threefold increase in the essential Foundations of Impact Measurement and Data Maturity (from 22% to 66.7%). Before the program, most organizations lacked clear procedures and tools for data management. By the end, they had documented theories of change and established data flows. Similarly, Data Usage scores jumped from 38% to 68%, indicating that leaders are now equipped to use insights for strategic decision-making rather than just funding compliance.

Key learning outcomes included:

- Greater clarity on the purpose and process of impact measurement
- Increased confidence in identifying meaningful indicators
- A stronger understanding of how impact measurement supports focus, decision-making, and storytelling
- Recognition that incremental progress and “starting small” are both appropriate and effective

“

IParticipating in the Impact Measurement Program was a game-changer for how I lead and scale community initiatives. The structure of the program was clear, supportive, and deeply practical every session felt like it was designed with real-world application in mind.

One of the most valuable skills I gained was learning how to build measurable frameworks around community impact. As someone coordinating multicultural events and youth engagement across the Okanagan, I often juggle passion-driven work with operational complexity. Impact Toolbox helped me translate that passion into systems from outcome tracking to stakeholder alignment.

A standout moment was realizing how to apply theory of change to our Cultural events programming. It sharpened our goals, clarified our metrics, and made our outreach more intentional. That clarity has already helped us secure stronger partnerships and communicate our impact with confidence.
I’m grateful for the experience and I know future participants will walk away with tools they’ll use for years

Samuel Abiodun, Africans in Okanagan



4.2 Skills gained for building internal capacity

The program strengthened internal capacity through three core technical pillars, allowing teams to begin to transform how they see and talk about the impact of their work:

Impact-Focused Analysis

Participants learnt the difference between the product of their actions and the changes that occur in the community as a result. This simple understanding and ability to differentiate between outputs and outcomes immediately transformed how participants think and talk about their work.

As one participant shared, *"What I enjoyed most was how the program transformed our work into a clear, measurable pathway of change. Seeing how inputs, indicators, and data management connect gave me the confidence to show how our programs create lasting outcomes for the people we serve."*

Measuring the "Unmeasurable"

A major breakthrough for many was learning to quantify human experiences and behavioural change. Participants can now identify outcome indicators that reflect progress in areas that often feel abstract and unmeasurable, such as emotional regulation, sobriety, and healing.

One participant noted they now *"understand how to turn something that seems qualitative into something measurable."*

The program has equipped organizations with some skills to measure what matters. By exploring how to integrate tracking of standardized, prescribed, and customized evidence-based indicators into their operations, these teams are now better prepared to start telling stronger impact stories, improve their services, and drive lasting community change.

Systems Thinking and Data Flow

There is now a clearer understanding of the impact of data flow - how information moves from frontline collection to where it is accessed and used regularly for decision-making.

When asked whether their strategies for data collection and analysis were clearer, all participants responded affirmatively. They reported increased confidence in their ability to gather useful information, make sense of it, and apply it to decision-making and storytelling.

4.3 Advancing a culture of impact measurement - strategic shifts in perspective

Throughout the Impact Measurement Program, participating teams started to transition from viewing data as a mere reporting requirement to utilizing it as a vital strategic asset. The program facilitated a fundamental rethink of measurement philosophy, moving organizations away from strictly grant-driven models toward mission-centric, community-impact-focused ones.

By bridging the gap between mission statements and real-world results, participants developed a "clearer pathway from mission and vision to real impact," ensuring that daily program activities are directly linked to long-term outcomes.

A primary progress made by participants is the alignment of measurement goals with broader organizational strategies. Therefore, several important perspective shifts emerged across the cohort:

- A clearer focus on beneficiaries and outcomes, rather than organizational activities or internal assumptions
- Recognition that meaningful impact measurement often begins by asking beneficiaries what matters to them
- The ability to distinguish between personal motivations for impact and the organization's collective mission
- Movement from abstract, conceptual ideas of impact toward tangible, realistic measures
- Greater appreciation for qualitative data and story-based insights as valid and powerful forms of evidence
- Adopting a "common language" (e.g., outcomes vs. outputs) that allowed teams to articulate their value more clearly to funders and the community
- Moving away from grant-driven data towards data that supports strategic planning and organizational decision-making
- Developing a "determination to work through software" and technical barriers to ensure consistent data flow
- A shift from ambiguity about impact measurement to an unbiased self-assessment and view of their current impact measurement maturity.

> The Impact Measurement Program turned our work into a story I could finally measure, understand, and confidently share.
>
> Going through the Impact Measurement Program felt like stepping into a more organized, supported version of the work I already cared deeply about. The structure was clear, the facilitators were responsive, and even when the fall season made the time commitment feel heavy, I always felt guided rather than overwhelmed. The most valuable skill I gained was learning how to connect our intended change to meaningful indicators; and understanding how those indicators align with the SDG measurement system. That knowledge alone has already made me feel more prepared and confident when thinking about future grant writing.
>
> There was one moment that really stood out: while mapping the outcomes for the 90-Day and Next Steps programs, I suddenly saw how our existing data could be aligned with SDG targets in a way that funders would immediately recognize. It felt like a light switching on. For the first time, I wasn't just collecting information; I was translating it into a language that demonstrates global relevance and long-term impact. That moment helped me complete a draft section of a grant proposal with clarity I didn't have before, and it reminded me why this work matters and how powerful it can be when we measure it well.
>
> **Shirley Green, Resurrection Recovery Resource Society DBA Freedom's Door**

5. Recommendations
For future cohorts

City of Kelowna

Participants readiness

Impact measurement requires a baseline of organizational readiness to be effective. In this cohort, one of the participating organizations did not find this program useful. Unlike the other 8 participants, they felt “the learning was not meaningful to them” and could not relate the content with their work. Self assessment data revealed that the organization had a score of 0 for readiness and fit.

To ensure future participants can fully leverage the curriculum, we recommend integrating the following readiness filters into the application process:

- Is there now a stronger belief within your organization that impact measurement is a good fit and that investing resources in an IM approach will yield positive results?
- Will your organization dedicate the necessary resources (a few hours a month, money, and a team member) to develop and implement an impact measurement plan?
- Is there someone on your team who is willing to lead, champion, or take ownership of your organization’s impact measurement efforts?



Program timing and logistics

The end and beginning of the calendar year are “peak” busy seasons for nonprofits due to budgeting and grant application cycles. Scheduling the program during these high-pressure periods led to some participants feeling disengaged. Sessions on Thursdays proved challenging for others, as they coincide with peak operational days for certain organizations. Furthermore, programs running past 5:00 p.m. clashed with previous evening commitments, community events like the Chamber Gala, and travel schedules. Participants suggested a lunch-hour format or multiple shorter gatherings to better accommodate busy schedules.

Additional learning support

Recognizing that impact measurement is a new concept for most participants, they suggested providing pre-reading materials or a concise cheat sheet and glossary of terms. This would help them quickly revisit the meanings of key definitions. Additionally, they recommended offering 1:1 coaching sessions before group roundtables to establish a stronger foundation for those new to the concepts.

Program duration and cohort experience

Some participants felt the 18-hour estimate was an understatement. They found the volume of learning and the need for reflection and practical exploration of organizational changes to be difficult within such a short timeframe. The short duration of the program, with fewer sessions than other Impact Toolbox cohorts, limited peer-to-peer interactions and shared learning.

To address this, future cohorts should follow the structure of other Impact Toolbox sessions. This would include eight biweekly group coaching sessions led by an expert coach, providing more opportunities for participants to interact, learn from each other, and receive guidance from the coach.



Bridge to implementation

While seven organizations completed frameworks, only three aggregated data. Future iterations could include follow-on support or workshops focused on data analysis and visualization. Many participants reserved their coaching sessions for later to discuss implementation, indicating a need for additional support as they begin implementing their impact measurement plans.

More voices from the cohort

Impact Toolbox taught us how to turn good intentions into measurable actions, real impact, and smarter decisions with limited resources. Practical and useful.

Participating in the City of Kelowna Impact Measurement Program and using the Impact Toolbox was an absolutely worthwhile experience. The program was well structured and clearly guided, making complex impact concepts practical and easy to apply.

I gained valuable skills in connecting mission and vision to concrete outputs, outcomes, and evidence-based indicators. Being able to quantify program results helped me move beyond compliance toward using data for learning, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

Overall, the tips and knowledge gained from the program have strengthened our ability to plan, measure, and communicate impact clearly for the coming year, and they have already influenced how I approach program management and evaluation in my work.

Cindy Chen, OCCA Communities Association

Impact measurement gave us a common language to clearly articulate our value, strengthen our support case, and make better decisions grounded in evidence. The program was well-structured, well-paced, and supported by knowledgeable facilitators who understood the realities of nonprofit operations. The tools and templates provided were immediately applicable and designed to be used, not shelved. The most valuable outcome was learning how to clearly define outcomes and translate program activity into meaningful impact measures. It has strengthened our grant applications, reporting, and board-level conversations.

Participating in the City of Kelowna's Impact Measurement Program through Impact Toolbox was both practical and affirming. The program was well-structured, well-paced, and supported by knowledgeable facilitators who understood the realities of nonprofit operations. The tools and templates provided were immediately applicable and designed to be used, not shelved.
The most valuable outcome for our organization was learning how to clearly define outcomes and translate program activity into meaningful impact measures. The program helped us move beyond counting participation to articulating real community outcomes, which has strengthened our grant applications, reporting, and board-level conversations.

One particularly valuable moment was applying the framework directly to our core programs and seeing how our existing data could be refined into clearer indicators of success. The program reinforced the importance of impact storytelling backed by data, giving us the confidence to communicate our value more effectively to funders, partners, and the broader community.

Colleen Fitzpatrick, Rotary Centre for the Arts

6. Conclusion
And key lessons

Participants consistently emphasized that the program made impact measurement feel safer, more accessible, and more achievable. Rather than striving for perfection, organizations are left with a solid foundation, clear next steps, and confidence that they are “on the path.” The program helped participants move from feeling overwhelmed to feeling focused, understanding that impact measurement is a practice that evolves over time and grows stronger through reflection, collaboration, and use.

Participants particularly valued support in pacing their learning, prioritizing which outcomes, programs, or indicators to focus on first, and understanding that near-term, observable changes are often the most feasible and valuable place to begin.

The program also revealed that many organizations had limited usable data, not due to a lack of impact, but because data had not previously been structured, captured, or recognized as valuable. Through the program, participants gained clarity on what data they already had, what was missing, and how both quantitative and qualitative data could be used more effectively.

The impact measurement workbook, while initially intimidating, became a standout tool. Once participants understood the underlying concepts, they found the structure helped them organize their thinking, see patterns, and make meaning from their data. This reinforced a key insight for many participants: impact measurement is not an activity done at the end of a program, but something that can be integrated organically at the beginning and throughout delivery, often using existing organizational processes and resources.

Together, participants' feedback affirms that the pilot program supported learning, built practical capacity, and shifted mindsets toward impact measurement as a meaningful, integrated part of organizational work rather than a burdensome reporting requirement.

> I had very limited knowledge of what impact measurement actually entailed when I first started the course, so really getting to understand the depth of it was good for me and will support me in my work and grant writing, and hopefully lead to increased success!
>
> **Philippa Douglas, Karis Support Society**



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