

VIRTUAL SUMMIT ON IMPACT

What is the best way to measure the impact of a programme or project? How and when is impact best measured? What are the best practices? What is the impact of different measurement strategies themselves? Can new applications of technology improve impact measurement?

The Virtual Summit on Impact 2020 brought together more than 30 speakers over 4 days and 8 sessions to build a common framework for assessing, understanding and maximizing impact.

HIGHLIGHTS | DAY 1

European funder for impact Launch Event

Day one began with the opening remarks from Frédéric Forest, president of the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme, and Delphine Moralis, CEO of the European Foundation Center.

Frederic Forest reminded us that there is a huge need to be sure that resources provided to grantees are used in smart and efficient ways, and to identify opportunities to improve outcomes in subsequent funding rounds. At present, he noted, there is as yet no common understanding or agreement among funders, grantees or target populations about the best ways to measure impact. The goal of the Summit, which he is pleased to support, is to explore whether it is possible to develop common frameworks for assessing, understanding, and improving impact.

Delphine Moralis announced the launch of the European Funders for Impact initiative under the aegis of EFC. Although significant attention is currently and understandably directed to immediate responses to COVID-19 pandemic, the real value of philanthropy resides in its ability to achieve long term results and focus impact on a more distant horizon. Grantmakers are now more than ever concerned about identifying effective strategies for social impact and acting as catalysts for continuous constructive social change.

The opening keynote panel discussion focused on defining **the meaning and measurement of impact**.

Paul Brest, the former president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, outlined the elements of his preferred theory of change, noting how difficult it can be to link changes achieved with their causes. In some cases, outcomes targeted by philanthropy might have occurred without the provided support. As such, organizations and their funders should pay careful attention to impact assessment in order to understand whether their actions made a difference and to make sure scarce

resources are used as efficiently as possible. Different types of impact evaluation are useful in different contexts. There are contexts such as service delivery where statistical tools can be easily implemented to measure impact and others such as policy advocacy where an accurate evaluation is much more elusive.

Saskia van den Dool, Managing Director of the Adessium Foundation, noted that impact assessment data can be limited in cases where the benefits of a funded activity remain clear and obvious, such as how support for investigative journalism contributes to a free, open democratic society.

Cristina Chiotan, Evaluations Manager of the European Climate Foundation, agrees that impact assessment can face many difficulties and complications. In the case of climate change, she pointed out that social networks can provide a useful analysis tool and how changes in attitudes created or accelerated by a public advocacy intervention can be effective.

Marco Demarie, Head of Planning, Research and Evaluation Dept at the Compagnia di San Paolo, states that in the area of service delivery it is often possible to “pay for success” by clearly identifying targeted outcomes that generate the provision of additional resources. In all cases, he noted, the quality of impact measurement can be improved by relying on third party evaluators who are not paid directly by a funder, which helps avoid confirmation bias.

More information on
<https://virtual-summit-on-impact.canalchat.fr/>