

Advancing Health Equity Through Impact Measurement & Management

This document is a companion guide to the webinar “Advancing Health Equity Through Impact Measurement & Management”, hosted by [Rhia Ventures](#) and [Impact Frontiers](#), August 2023). The recorded webinar is available on the [Rhia Ventures website](#).

This Guide Will:

- Provide an overview of impact measurement and management (IMM), the importance of measuring impact, and understanding the various use-cases of IMM for both internal and external purposes.
- Provide an overview of impact measurement and management, including:
 - The five dimensions of impact.
 - Nuance and applications of impact, outputs, and outcomes.
 - How to utilize impact data to guide strategic decisions.
- Provide an overview of [Rhia Ventures’ Health Equity Assessment and Rating Tool \(HEART\) framework](#) for impact work.
- Introduce a discussion of implementation, potential challenges, and the importance of IMM as a powerful tool to advance health equity.

Impact Measurement and Management: Overview, Importance, and Use-Cases

- Impact Measurement and Management is crucial for:
 - *Accountability*: IMM provides a framework for organizations or investors to be accountable to their stakeholders.
 - *Informed decision-making*: By understanding the impact of their actions or interventions, organizations or investors can make more informed decisions and prioritize their efforts effectively.
 - *Benchmarking*: IMM allows organizations or investors to compare their results against those of similar organizations or against established internal benchmarks, measuring progress over time.

“Impact measurement and management includes identifying and considering the positive and negative effects one’s business actions have on people and the planet, and then figuring out ways to mitigate the negative and maximize the positive in alignment with one’s goals. Impact measurement and management is iterative by nature.” - *Global Impact Investing Network*

Advancing Health Equity Through IMM is a Coordinated, Multi-Sector Effort:



Investors / Funders

Evaluate and invest in innovations and solutions specifically to drive equitable outcomes.



Companies / Nonprofits

Develop evidence-based innovations and solutions to target health inequities.

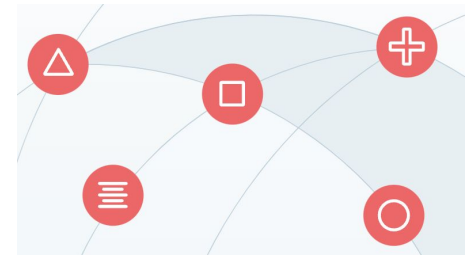


Government / Nonprofits

Share measurement and management (i.e., collective impact) to address most urgent issues in marginalized communities.

The Five Dimensions of Impact

- *What* tells us what outcome the enterprise is contributing to, whether it is positive or negative, and how important the outcome is to stakeholders.
- *Who* tells us which stakeholders are experiencing the outcome and how underserved they are in relation to the outcome.
- *How Much* tells us how many stakeholders experienced the outcome, what degree of change they experienced, and how long they experienced the outcome.
- *Contribution* tells us whether an enterprise's and/or investor's efforts resulted in outcomes that were likely better than what would have occurred otherwise.
- *Risk* tells us the likelihood that impact will be different than expected.



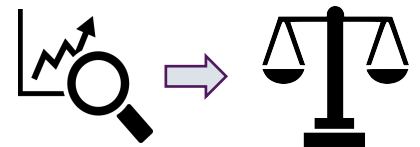
The Five Dimensions of Impact
(<https://impactfrontiers.org/norms/five-dimensions-of-impact/>)

Impacts, Outcomes, and Outputs

- Impact refers a change or flow, representing the degree of change between the baseline outcomes and current outcomes.
- Shifting impact to frame the perspective of stakeholders can be a powerful narrative tool.
 - For example, 'number of patients treated' vs 'long-term health benefits of patients'
- Outcomes refer to a specific level, current condition, or state of affairs.
- Outputs are directly under an organization's control; they can decide to increase or decrease them.
- Outcomes are broader results influenced by many factors beyond an organization's direct control.
 - For example, a company can control the number of living-wage jobs it offers (output) but a can't control whether these jobs reduce community poverty levels (outcome).

Using Impact Data to Guide Decision-Making

- Utilizing IMM authentically as a tool for decision making means engaging with the people and natural environment affected by our investments.
 - Approaching IMM with a decision-making lens helps us to engage authentically, rather than in a performative, 'checking the box' exercise.
- Financial and impact considerations should be considered together, rather than sequentially.



Impact Measurement and Management as a Tool to Advance Health Equity

- Advancing health equity requires intentional addressing of the intersectional nature of barriers and systems of oppression that contribute to health inequities.
- IMM can help us:
 - Identify which populations are most affected by a health condition and how they are affected.
 - Guide interventions and innovation to improve health outcomes for populations who have been historically marginalized.
 - Promote community engagement for internal and external decision-making.

The Rhia Ventures Health Equity Assessment and Rating Tool (HEART) Framework

- Adapted from the [Racial Equity Asset Lab \(REAL\) Framework](#), HEART is an impact measurement and management tool to advance health equity
- Adaptations for investors, companies, and nonprofits address the unique perspectives of evaluating health equity within a product / service, investment strategy, or organization
- HEART helps us evaluate the ‘how’ and the ‘how well’.
 - What are we doing to advance reproductive and maternal health equity?
 - What additional strategies should we consider?
 - Who are we centering in our work?
- The HEART Framework is a tool that supports organizations with:
 - Operationalizing an organization’s journey to advance health equity.
 - Measuring the incorporation of an intersectional approach (e.g., health, race, gender, socioeconomics).
 - Learning how equity can be applied to organizational practices.
 - Guiding decision making.
- *Key Equity Constructs* across an organization are rated on a continuum from “Equity-Blind” to “Equity-Focused”.

HEART Framework Key Equity Constructs

- Stated Commitment
- Equity-Informed & Equity-Explicit policy
- Accountability Mechanisms
- Data Practices & Disaggregated Data
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Outcomes Oriented
- Narrative & Communications
- Learning Culture & Community of Practice
- Systemic Change
- Access and Affordability of Care



HEART Framework Example Key Construct for Impact Measurement and Management: Learning Culture of Practice

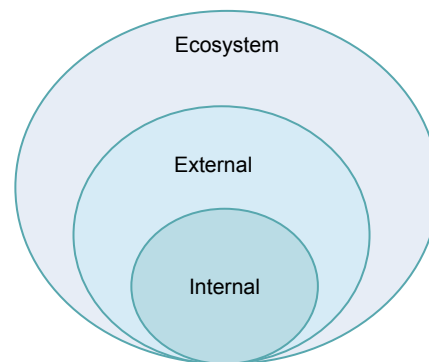
- What is a ‘Learning Culture of Practice’?
 - Process of learning and understanding the historical contexts and current social factors and challenges that guide your organization’s overall strategy or mission.
 - Requires intentionally planned and continuous engagement to foster a ‘culture’ of learning.
 - Utilize content that is collaboratively sourced.
- Why is this an important ‘metric’ to measure and manage to advance health equity?
 - Addresses unique needs of communities that have been historically marginalized requires an iterative understanding of solutions that advance health equity and where challenges still remain.
 - Shares organizational knowledge serves as an ongoing check for accountability
 - Sets standards for organizational knowledge and how to apply it to the work
 - Ensures an intersectional lens is applied through the work

Key Takeaways

- Tools such as the [HEART Framework](#) can be used by organizations to measure and manage health equity work both internally and externally.
- Advancing health equity is a multi-sector effort and buy-in is needed across organizational levels and throughout parts of the healthcare ecosystem.
- The future of IMM involves tools such as the HEART Framework to set standards and thresholds in the field.
- There is a business and moral imperative for investors and companies to invest in innovations that embed a health equity lens and set clear expectations for advancing health equity in the broader ecosystem.

Challenges

- There is a lack of standardized metrics in IMM. Tools such as HEART and other industry-specific frameworks allow customization to meet your organization’s needs while still providing standard metrics to assess progress.
- To avoid the pitfall of a ‘checking the box’ mentality with regard to IMM, engage authentically by approaching from an organizational decision-making perspective.
- The definition of ‘positive impact’ can be subjective and may vary among stakeholders. Ensure that your group of stakeholders is diverse and includes members of the group most affected by your work (i.e. end users) and they are involved in defining and evaluating your impact.



IMM is best utilized both internally and externally, and across broader levels of the ecosystem to advance health equity.

[Impact Frontiers](#) is a peer learning and market-building collaboration, developed with and for investors. They facilitate peer-learning communities and create practical tools that support investors in managing impact and integrating impact with financial data, analysis, and processes. Impact Frontiers also stewards the norms and consensus-building practices pioneered by the Impact Management Project. They use practitioner experiences to jump-start consensus-building in areas of practice where standards and guidance do not yet exist, and synthesize and share the results of these collaborations with the field at large.

[Rhia Ventures](#) is a women-led nonprofit seeking to advance reproductive and maternal health equity by intentionally leveraging capital to center the needs, experiences, and perspectives of historically marginalized people in decision-making. The Rhia Ventures [Ecosystem Building](#) program supports early-stage reproductive and maternal health entrepreneurs and investors with building and growing in a way that incorporates a health equity lens and a culture of impact management and measurement.