



IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT LANDSCAPE: NIGERIA & GHANA

KNOWLEDGE BRIEF

JUNE 2020



Aspen Network of
Development Entrepreneurs



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THE ASPEN NETWORK OF DEVELOPMENT ENTREPRENEURS (ANDE)

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Entrepreneurship to The Point (ETTP) has been a key player in the South African entrepreneurial ecosystem supporting small and growing businesses (SGBs). ETTP was formed 7 years ago under the umbrella of award winning business accelerator programme, Property Point, which was founded in 2008. This key relationship allows ETTP to leverage the data, knowledge and insights gained from Property Point's engagements with entrepreneurs over the last decade to provide relevant content.

ETTP aims to inform, equip and inspire various entrepreneurs across various sectors in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This is done through insightful monthly networking sessions and facilitating access to useful information through their online platforms as well as through workshops and masterclasses for entrepreneurs and other key stakeholders who support them.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their contribution to this study:

The Aspire Coronation Trust Foundation (ACT Foundation) for funding the workshop series and this study.

The Entrepreneurship to the Point (ETTP) team for facilitating the workshop series and contributing to this knowledge brief.

LEAP Africa, ACT Foundation, and Mobile Business Clinic (MBC) Africa for providing insights on their IMM process as part of this study.

Esoko for contributing to the workshop series and providing participants with access to the field data collection tool.

All the survey respondents and workshop attendees for their participation in and input to the study.

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Acknowledgments

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INTRODUCTION

The last decade has witnessed the rise of impact investment—investments made to generate both financial returns and a measurable social and environmental impact—in West Africa, with more than half of regional impact investments deployed in Nigeria and Ghana.¹ With this increase in impact investing, there has been a need to measure and manage the impact created by various stakeholders in the West African ecosystem. Stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem recognize that impact measurement and management (IMM) is crucial, but West Africa is still in the early stages of developing and implementing IMM strategies that fit the purpose for which they are designed. While investors in West Africa have a relatively consistent impact measurement framework, many local fund managers and investees are less consistent in reporting impact and lack the capacity to track and collect impact data.²

This knowledge brief aims to provide an overview of the IMM landscape in Nigeria and draws lessons from organizations who have IMM experience in West Africa. The knowledge brief focuses on providing an understanding of how impact is defined by some organizations, what elements they take into consideration when designing an IMM strategy, why they measure impact, the upsides and downsides of standardization, challenges they face in measuring and managing impact, and how they utilize data to drive impact. The knowledge brief also shares the IMM journey of three organizations: Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT) Foundation, LEAP Africa and MBC Africa, and provides recommendations on implementing IMM.

¹Global Impact Investing Network. 2015. The Landscape for Impact Investing in West Africa. https://thegiin.org/assets/upload/West%20Africa/RegionalOverview_westafrica.pdf

²Dalberg Global Development Advisors. 2015. Impact Investing in West Africa. <https://assets.rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/20150610104900/Impact-Investing-in-West-Africa.pdf>

METHODOLOGY

As part of a project to both capacitate intermediaries in developing and implementing IMM strategies and contribute to the knowledge base, the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) West Africa chapter, in partnership with Entrepreneurship to the Point (ETTP), hosted IMM workshop sessions, sponsored by the ACT Foundation. The first part of the project included a two-day workshop hosted in Lagos, Nigeria on 11 December 2019 with a follow-up session on 5 February 2020 with the theme 'Impact Measurement and Management – A Human-Centered Design Approach.' The second phase of the series aimed to build on the IMM knowledge base in West Africa through the production of this knowledge brief.

The information found in this knowledge brief includes data from a survey carried out before the workshop to gather insights on the current state of impact measurement and management in West Africa, as well as learnings from the workshop itself. Workshop activities and group discussions were designed to be able to gather qualitative information and cross check data provided in a pre-workshop survey. The two-day workshop was open to ANDE members and partners in West Africa and participants were primarily from Nigeria, and to a lesser extent Ghana and Kenya. While the findings are assumed to be largely representative when viewed in conjunction with existing literature on the global and continental trends on IMM, they are meant to provide a high level understanding, encourage further dialogue and form the basis for deeper research in understanding the IMM landscape in West Africa.



Workshop

Impact Measurement and Management: A Human Centred Design Approach

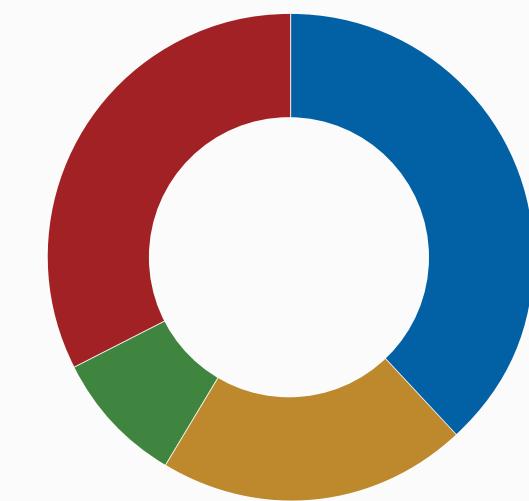
The two-day workshop delivered by ETTP explored an alternative approach to developing and implementing an IMM Strategy utilizing a human centered design approach. Human-centered design is a philosophy that empowers an individual or team to design products, services, systems, and experiences that address the core needs of those who experience a problem. Through this very interactive workshop, ETTP unpacked how human centered design lends itself to developing and implementing an IMM strategy that is fit for purpose. The workshop involved the use of a specially designed IMM puzzle, worksheets, and case studies which guided participants through the various stages of IMM and provided practical ways on how to apply it within their organizations. The two-day workshop is summarized below:

- o **Day 1** focused on designing an IMM Strategy that is fit for purpose by utilizing a human centered design approach. Participants were taken through each stage of the IMM process: identifying the problem, setting objectives, analyzing stakeholders and developing a theory of change.
- o **Day 2** focused on how to implement an iterative IMM strategy that informs decision making processes in their organizations and creates more value for all stakeholders. The participants were also taken through a step by step guide on how to tell their impact story using real life case studies.

OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS

34 of the 55 individuals that attended the workshops responded to the pre-workshop surveys. Workshop participants represented organizations from several African countries, including Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya. Participants also represented a variety of organizational types, including foundations, capacity development providers, investors, and small and growing businesses (SGBs).

Figure 1: Social Impact Ecosystem



Organizational Categories

Capacity Development Providers: Entities that provide business development and advisory services to SGBs.

Foundations: Private foundations and grantmaking nonprofits that provide grant capital to the SGB ecosystem, both to SGBs directly and to SGB intermediaries.

Investors: Funds or financial entities that provide capital to SGBs in developing countries. Investments include debt, equity, and quasi-equity and are generally between \$20,000 and \$2 million USD.

Small and Growing Businesses (SGBs): SGBs are commercially viable businesses with five to 250 employees that have significant potential, and ambition, for growth.

Figure 2: Sector of Operation

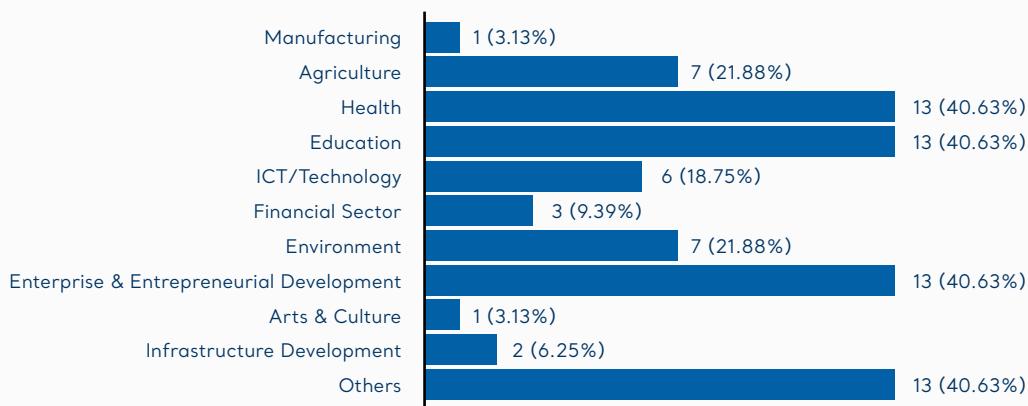
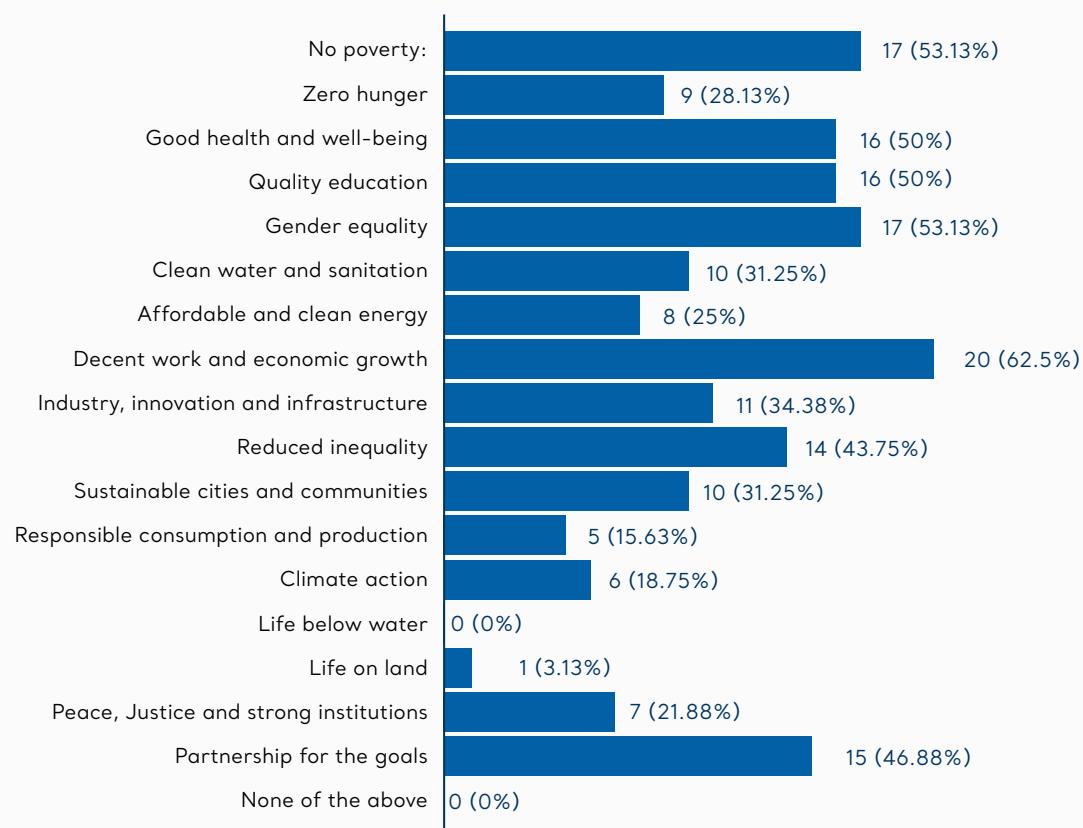
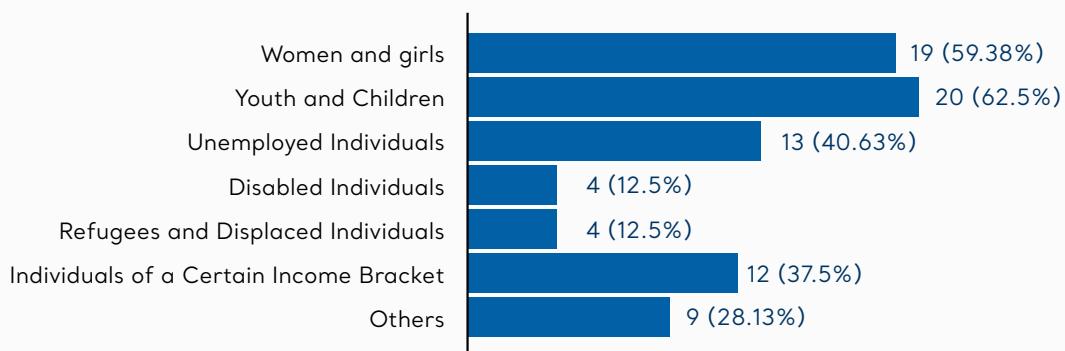


Figure 3: Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are increasingly become a galvanizing force and provides a common ground for previously siloed parts of the market. This has enabled all the development ecosystem players to work together towards agreed upon global goals.

Figure 4: Target Beneficiaries



IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT LANDSCAPE

DEFINING IMPACT

Impact is a multi-dimensional concept; some definitions focus on a very precise and narrow definition on impact while others cast a much broader net. Engaging with organizations through the pre-workshop survey, it was clear that impact means different things to different people and different organizations. One respondent defined impact as:

"Impact is the ultimate change we hope to make happen in the lives of our beneficiaries through our interventions. It is the desired result of lessons learnt from our interventions, the result could be at an individual level, community or institutional level relative to the scope of the intervention." – Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIMBIZ), Nigeria.

How impact is defined and used has a significant effect on the design, management, and evaluation of development programs.³ Where there is no common understanding of what impact is and who it is being created for, particularly between investors/funders and investees, expectations and the IMM process itself will be disjointed.

The Impact Management Project has described five dimensions of impact:⁴

- What tells us what outcomes the enterprise is contributing to and how important the outcomes are to stakeholders.
- Who tells us which stakeholders are experiencing the outcome and how underserved they were prior to the enterprise's effect.
- How much tells us how many stakeholders experienced the outcome, what degree of change they experienced, and how long they experienced the outcome for.
- 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.

³Hearn S. & Buffardi. A. L. 2016. What is Impact, ODI Method Lab. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10352.pdf>

⁴The Impact Management Project. 2019. Five dimensions of Impact. <https://impactmanagementproject.com/impact-management/impact-management-norms/>

WHAT IS IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT?

Alnoor Ebrahim, Professor of Management at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, noted that measuring impact has become a mantra for creating social change and claims about making a difference is no longer enough; rather, evidence of how much difference you're making is now required.⁵ Impact measurement was initially regarded as an accountability and compliance tool focusing on monitoring and evaluation of programs. Over the years, the sector has evolved to encapsulate the importance of managing impact as a process of driving social change based on an iterative data-gathering process that allows for continuous feedback and learning.⁶

The Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), for example, defines IMM as a continuous process of understanding the people and planet, setting financial and social goals, and defining intentions and constraints—to be able to deliver and improve impact (mitigate the negative and maximize the positive in alignment with one's goals).⁷

⁵Ebrahim A. 2013. Let's Be Realistic About Measuring Impact. <https://hbr.org/2013/03/lets-be-realistic-about-measur.html>

⁶Global Impact Investing Network. 2017. The State of Impact Measurement and Management Practices: First Edition. https://thegiin.org/assets/2017_GIIN_IMM%20Survey_Web_Final.pdf

⁷Global Impact Investing Network. 2020. The State of Impact Measurement and Management Practice: Second Edition. https://thegiin.org/assets/GIIN_State%20of%20Impact%20Measurement%20and%20Management%20Practice%20Second%20Edition.pdf



REASONS FOR MEASURING IMPACT

There are multiple reasons to measure and manage impact, and they vary across organizations and stakeholder groups. In the survey, 91% of participants indicated that they have an IMM strategy in place. Respondents indicated that their major reasons for measuring and managing impact include:

- Meeting objectives: Impact is measured and managed to ensure that organizations are meeting their objectives, keeping track of progress to get the right agenda and having direction for the future, tracking performance and level of impact, and assessing the effectiveness of their interventions. Measuring and managing programs helps ensure that organization can identify strengths, weaknesses, and efficiencies. It also helps organizations determine the inputs that bring desired results and reduces waste in human and financial resources.
- Informing decision making: IMM plays a crucial role in determining areas of progress or failures, which organizations can learn from to improve project execution, remove inefficiencies in operation, make necessary adjustments for future projects, and provide insights for strategy and decision making.
- Managing risk: IMM helps mitigate negative impact and amplify positive impact.
- Ensuring accountability to funders: IMM ensures that funders are aware of an organization's progress and achievement of outlined objectives.
- Increasing sustainability and securing more funding: IMM ensures that organizations can prioritize funding towards activities that create the most impact and attract additional funding.

Nine percent of the participants indicated that they do not measure and manage impact. The main reasons cited included that they depend on donors or their clients to measure and manage impact. It was also highlighted that it was difficult for them to have an IMM strategy as they did not have a clear organizational structure that could help inform the strategy.

KEY ELEMENTS OF IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Organizations such as GIIN and Social Value UK outline key elements to consider within an iterative IMM strategy . Most frameworks have six key elements they consider which include understanding the problem; setting objectives, analyzing stakeholders, measuring results, verifying and valuing impact as well as monitoring and reporting reflected in Figure 5. The framework below was adapted to incorporate telling impact stories as a key element, based on our observation of organizations in the social sector utilizing impact stories as part of their broader organizational strategy to communicate their impact.

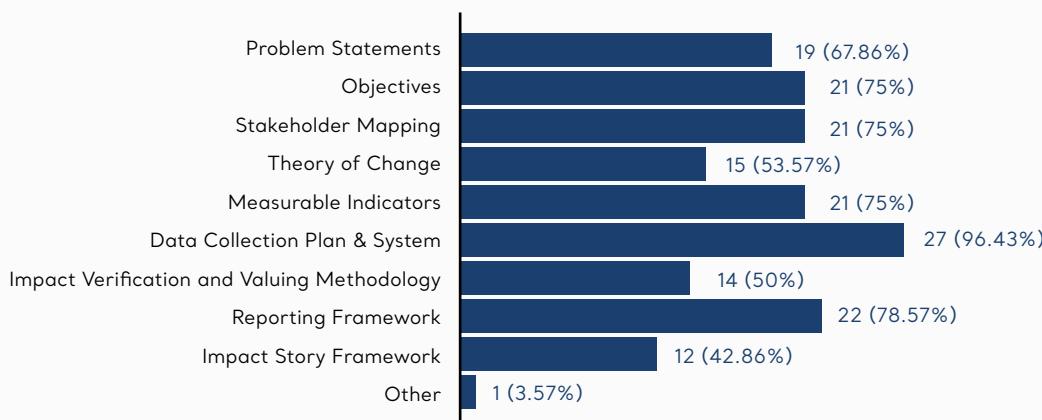
Figure 5: Key Elements of Impact Measurement and Management (adapted from Social Value UK, 2017 and GIIN,2020)



⁹Social Value UK. 2017. Impact Management Principles. http://www.socialvalueuk.org/app/uploads/2017/09/Impact_Management_Principles.pdf and GIIN (2020) , An Introduction to Impact Measurement and Management, Available <https://iris.thegiin.org/introduction/>

Looking more closely at the various stages of IMM, we sought to understand whether organizations were taking the above elements into consideration when they developed their strategy. Figure 6 shows that most organizations have not gotten to a stage of putting together a holistic IMM strategy that drives and supports impact, with fewer organizations having a theory of change, verifying and valuing their impact as well as telling their impact stories.

Figure 6: Elements Considered in Designing IMM Strategy



BENCHMARKING AND STANDARDIZATION

The IMM landscape is becoming increasingly more sophisticated globally. Organizations venturing into developing and implementing an IMM strategy are faced with a myriad of definitions, standards, principles, frameworks, models, conventions, measurement methods, and indicators. Standards and benchmarks can be classified into three main categories, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: IMM Standards & Benchmarks (Source: Harji, 2019)



In the survey, 52% of respondents indicated that they benchmark their IMM strategy against recognized global standards such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Donor Community for Enterprise Development (DCED), Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), World Health Organization (WHO), and Poverty Index, while 48% indicated that they did not use benchmarks or standards to inform their IMM strategy. The workshop participants agreed that benchmarking and standardizing IMM strategy was important because it provides a reference framework and ensures that you have a rigorous measurement framework that allows for consistency in tracking progress of programs and projects. It also allows for uniformity and comparison of impact across the social impact sector. Finally, it helps to create credibility and global recognition which attracts funding.

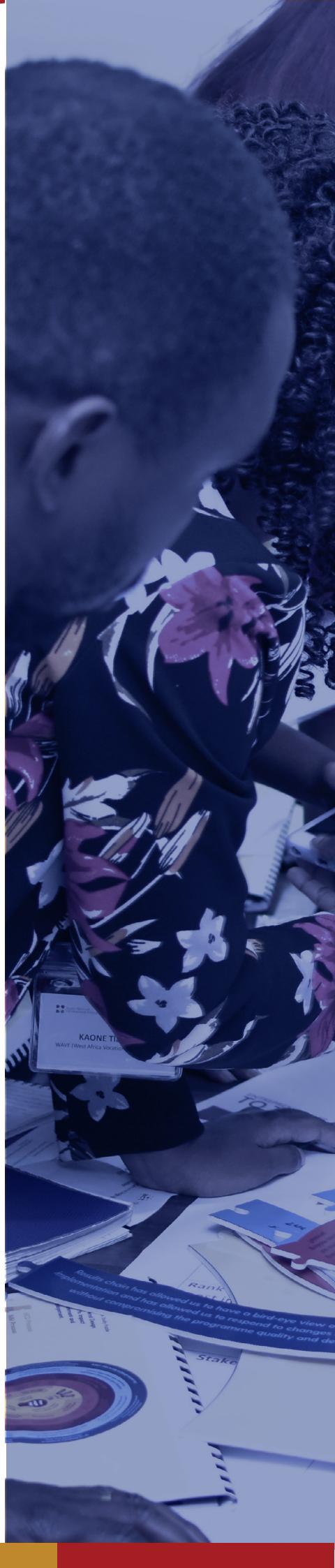
However, participants noted some downsides to standardization, explaining that it was difficult to find the right benchmarks to fit their organizational objectives and better understand their on-the-ground results. Standards are often donor-driven and may not apply to intermediaries. In addition, many pointed to the high cost of carrying out a thorough IMM process and the fact that organizations may not have the skill set to manage the process. Some suggested the possibility of finding a balance between practice and benchmarking through open communication and continuous dialogue. Overall, they agreed in the need for more flexible, adaptable standards and more simplified frameworks as current standards can be very technical and complicated; they also rarely allow for more qualitative or narrative data.

IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT PAIN POINTS

Responses from the survey and interactions from the workshop revealed some of the pain points organizations encounter as they plan and implement the IMM process. These are outlined below:

- Differences in defining impact: Stakeholders have different perspectives about what impact is. This makes it difficult to come to a consensus on a common IMM strategy. Although investors or funders expect impact to be managed, measured, and reported, they provide little guidance on what their expectations are. Therefore, organizations measure what they can, without planning or using a rigorous methodology.

- Data collection and verification: Organizations find getting real time-data challenging for varying reasons. Beneficiaries may be unwilling to fill surveys, or there may be too many beneficiaries to gather feedback from efficiently. Many organizations lack access to government or other common data, which would be useful to businesses and allow for comparison of businesses in the same sector. Finally, it is challenging to verify, analyze, and utilize data to support decision making.
- Limited human and financial resources: Many organizations lack the internal capacity to develop and implement an IMM strategy. The cost associated with collecting data is often a stumbling block to implementing and managing impact.
- Limited knowledge on the IMM process: Respondents indicated that they had limited knowledge on how to develop and implement an IMM strategy. They noted that they struggled with the right questions to ask at each stage of the IMM process and how to define a clear path to determine whether the interventions implemented lead to overall impact.
- Standards and benchmarks: Respondents indicated that they found it challenging to identify which standards to use and setting the right benchmark for their programs.
- Multiple value chains: Respondents indicated that they worked across multiple value chains, which made it difficult to have a single IMM strategy to assist them in measuring and managing impact across the various value chains.





DATA-DRIVEN IMPACT

The IMM process is not a linear process, but rather iterative in nature. It allows us to not only gather and analyze, but also to learn from collected data to improve upon practices and create more value for stakeholders. Data utilization can be categorized into two elements:

- o Data for action: Using data to respond to today's needs to better manage our teams and improve our efficiency.
- o Data for impact: Using data to establish that interventions lead to lasting change.

Participants were asked how they use data to influence decision making process in their organization. Some of the mechanisms highlighted include:

- o Monitoring and evaluation system: Having an efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation system is crucial to ensuring timely reporting of information required for decision making. This constant data review informs their planning and course correcting processes.
- o Four guiding principles: It was noted that four principles guide the data utilization and management approach which includes that data should be credible, viable, practical and relevant. This assists with embedding data collected within their decision-making process.
- o Soliciting feedback: Participants also indicated that part of the data used in their decision-making process is the feedback from the beneficiary to ensure that the objective of the intervention is realized.

Organizations in the social sector report to multiple stakeholders—the community being served, staff, donors, and policymakers. It is therefore crucial to engage stakeholders and ensure that data is not just flowing in one direction from the beneficiaries to the funder, but that that data can also guide the beneficiary's decision-making process. Participants were asked how they encourage beneficiaries to utilize data in their decision-making process, some of the mechanism utilized included:

- Sensitization workshop: This includes workshops to sensitize participants about how data affects change and showing current beneficiaries the end results of successful individuals who have gone through the program was helpful. This usually results in the beneficiary then driving the change process and embracing the utilization of data.
- Advisory and capacity building services: This involves providing tailored advisory services to beneficiaries to help them use data to make informed and realistic decisions and to show beneficiaries how by utilizing data to drive decisions they can reduce costs.
- Advocacy site visits: Participants indicated that during their routine site visits they inform beneficiaries of key findings in their data and engage them on critical policy issues and decisions.

IMPACT STORIES

The impact stories below share the voices of selected ANDE members who participated in the survey and the workshops. They highlight each organization's definition of success, impact measurement process, biggest IMM learnings at this time, and reasons for measuring impact.

ACT FOUNDATION

About the Organization

Aspire Coronation Trust (ACT) Foundation is a grant making nonprofit organization established in 2016 to support local, national and regional non-profit organizations working to address challenges and associated vulnerabilities across the African continent.

Measurement Process

The ACT Foundation practices a step by step approach with the aid of globally recognized standards used in measuring and managing impact. The following standards have been deployed:

- a. Social Return on Investment (SROI)
- b. Multidimensional Poverty index
- c. Social Development Goals (SDGs)

Success Factors

The ACT Foundation measures impact through the following metrics:

- o Direct beneficiaries of programs funded
- o Communities reached
- o Organizations funded

We Measure Impact To ...

- o Ensure that interventions are sustainable.
- o Promote an impact driven ecosystem.
- o Promote the growth/sustainability of NGOs and organizations within the ecosystem.
- o Build a verifiable data management system, which helps to position the foundation as a thought leader.

MBC AFRICA

About the Organization

MBC Africa is a one-stop boutique that provides an enabling environment for businesses in Africa by providing the business services they need to grow. MBC Africa's role is to identify, nurture, and develop a critical mass of viable growth-oriented businesses as a pipeline for sustainable and impactful investment in selected African economies, including Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali.

Success Factors

MBC Africa defines and measures its impact based on the following metrics and indicators from their supported businesses:

- Organizational capacities: formalized business, governance policies, finance management system, HR policy
- Funding leverage: additional funding secured
- Accelerator's objectives: improved operational efficiency; increase in market share/sales; increase in corporate and financial profitability, job creation, supply chain, investment readiness)

Measurement Process

MBC Africa internally develops a theory of change before implementing a project. As the project unfolds, Business Development Associates (BDAs) collect data through surveys and report these to the Project Officer. The Project Officer collects these financial/performance data and carries out a first-level analysis with the help of the Project Finance Officer. A quality check is done upon submission of the data reports to the Project Manager, who reviews this and reports to the Executive Director, who finalizes the report and sends to the funders.

We Measure Impact To ...

- Objectively determine project performance
- As part of Funders' requirements
- To measure validity of intervention model adopted

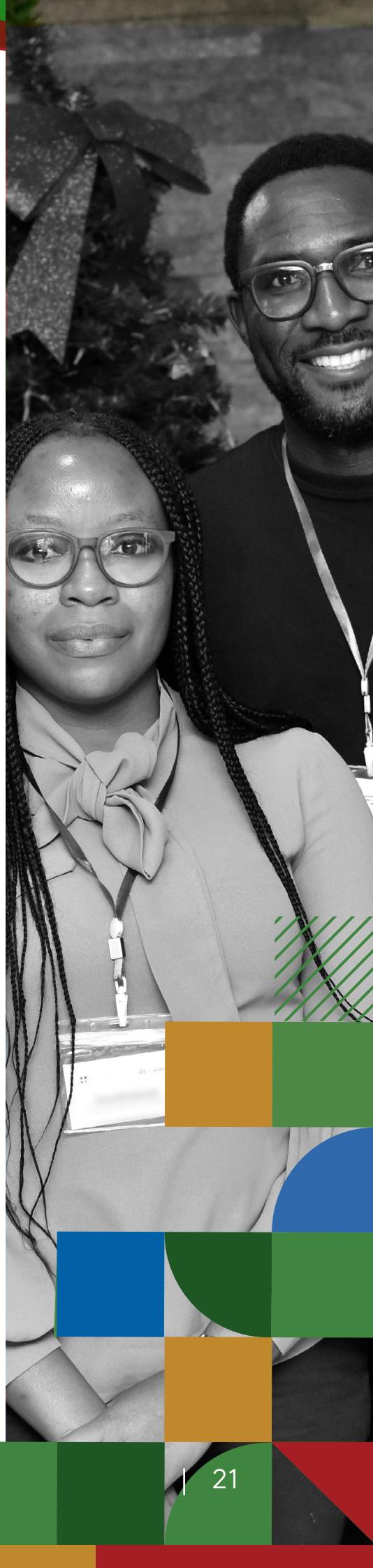
LEAP AFRICA

About the Organization

Leadership Effectiveness, Accountability and Professionalism (LEAP) Africa, established in 2002, is a non-profit committed to developing dynamic innovative and principled African leaders. They recognize that raising leaders is critical to nation building and wealth creation. Over the years, LEAP has inspired and equipped youth, business owners and social entrepreneurs to lead ethically while implementing initiatives that transform their communities and organizations for better; sustaining livelihood and contributing to national development. LEAP achieves this through its training programmes, publications, and e-Learning. LEAP also actively conducts extensive research, and this forms the basis for their books and leadership training curricula which are action-oriented guides to creating positive and lasting change in individuals, organizations and communities.

Success Factors

Through a stakeholder mapping exercise, LEAP Africa constantly identifies and engages their stakeholders, which include funders, government agencies, teachers and school administrators, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), parents and guardians, students, and development partners. To ensure that they are constantly meeting their stakeholders' expectations, they also organize regular meetings for co-creation and learning. They conduct monitoring visits, prepare reports and synthesize drafts to facilitate engagement. LEAP Africa utilizes theory of change to articulate its strategy and measures key indicators e.g. number of LEAP students taking up leadership roles in schools.





Measurement Process

Leap Africa deploys a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, photovoice, observation, interactive games and documentary studies. Data collection happens on a consistent basis from baseline to midline and end line. In between, LEAP Africa also asks beneficiaries to do regular reporting to track attendance and learning outcomes.

The main data users include LEAP Africa's Programs Unit, funders, teachers and school administrators, the Ministry of Education, and other development partners. LEAP Africa has a unit dedicated as a knowledge broker and ensures that there are institutional learning processes based on evaluation findings and contributes to knowledge management at the organization. This is done by providing evaluation findings for the planning process and for replicating innovative approaches. It ensures beneficiaries attend dissemination meetings and shares copies of periodic newsletters.

Biggest IMM Learning

The will to measure impact is crucial to the success of impact measurement and management strategy; it should not be an afterthought. This should be matched with resourcing monitoring and evaluation units with staff that have technical competence as well as the tools for data collection and analysis.

We Measure Impact To ...

First, promote accountability and demonstrate integrity. Second, promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned internally and with partners as a basis for decision making on policies, strategies, program management, projects, and programs; and finally, to improve performance.



RECOMMENDATIONS

IMM is still in early stages. Most organizations have not gotten to a stage of putting together a holistic IMM strategy that drives and supports impact. The result from the survey and discussions from the workshops indicate that although there is still a long way to go, many organizations are thinking earnestly about measuring and managing their impact. To take IMM forward in West Africa key ecosystem players will have to take some decisive steps in dealing with issues of funding constraints, data collection challenges and gaps in IMM capabilities and capacity.

INVESTORS/FOUNDATIONS

- Clearly articulate what needs to be measured, managed and reported on.
- Increase funding towards supporting the development and implementation of IMM processes, tools and technologies.
- Include a percentage of funding for the IMM process in investments offered.
- Increase awareness of the importance of IMM by partnering with organizations to conduct training on the development and implementation of IMM processes.

SMALL AND GROWING BUSINESSES (SGBs)

- Ensure that systems are in place to continuously collect relevant and quality data.
- Ensure that data collected can help inform key business decisions such as revenue, operational efficiency and effectiveness, strategic alignment, risk mitigation as well as for marketing purposes.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS

- Develop an IMM strategy before the implementation of the program (at the planning and program design stages).
- Utilize input from funders on their expectations in designing the IMM strategy.
- Articulate to beneficiaries the need to provide relevant and accurate information and guide collection of same.
- Utilize lean data approaches and the use of low-cost technology to collect data. This allows for narrowing in on the most useful metrics as opposed to a laundry list that could be costly to collect and can dilute the overall impact.
- Include more qualitative data, such as impact stories, beneficiary feedback, and pictures to express their impact in different ways.
- Capacitate beneficiaries on how to collect quality data and how to utilize it in their decision-making process.
- Improve the feedback loop to ensure an iterative response to the changing needs of beneficiaries.
- Develop an IMM strategy with all stakeholders involved to ensure that the expectations of the entire value chain are captured.

RESEARCHERS OR ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

- Conduct in-depth research on the IMM landscape across West Africa, including interviews with various organizations at different stages of their IMM journey.
- Develop case studies from organizations in West Africa with IMM experience, from which other organizations can learn.



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