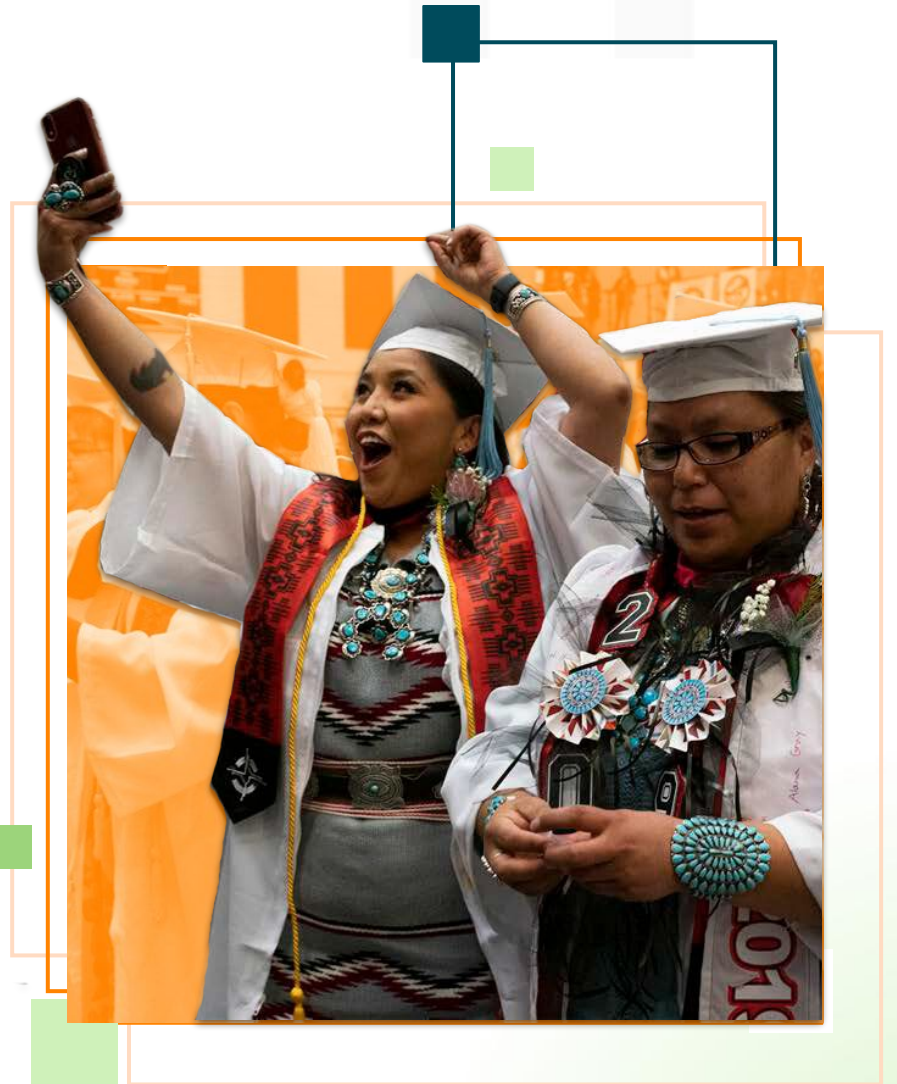


From Outputs to Outcomes:

# Practical Impact Measurement for Foundations



# Hi, I'm Gabe Cohen.

- Leads Growth and Partnerships at True Impact
- 12+ years in the nonprofit/philanthropic sector
- Lives in DC with wife and 3 kids (2 humans, one dog)
- [linkedin.com/in/gabecohen/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/gabecohen/)



# Hi, I'm Sara Ansell.

- Leads Analytics and Innovation at True Impact
- 15+ years in the nonprofit/ philanthropic sector
- Lives in Madison, WI with husband and 4 kids (2 humans, two dogs)
- [linkedin.com/in/sara-ansell/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sara-ansell/)

# What's the impact of a paintbrush?



# Measure What Matters: From *Actions* to *Actual Impact*

## Inputs



Activity metrics like dollars granted, number of grants, etc.

*Example: \$1M investment in local food banks*

## Outputs



How many people you've reached

Trust is earned by proving *impact*, not *effort*.

*Example: 25,000 people served*

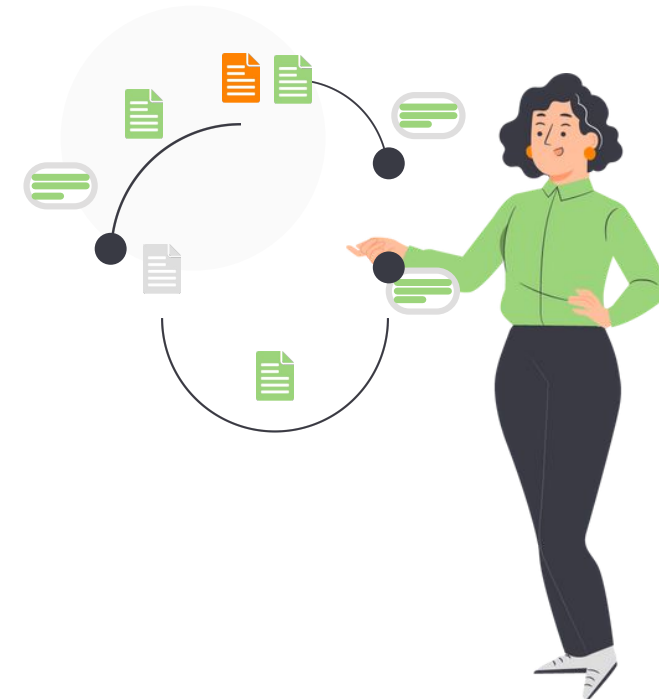
## Outcomes



How many lives were actually improved (aka: Your impact!)



*Example: 18,000 people gained food security*



# The Impact of Knowing **Your Impact**

## Prove your Impact



### Drive More Social Value

Make a difference on the issues that matter most to your foundation and your community.



### Substantiate Your Work

Put real numbers behind your efforts to increase trust with all stakeholders.



### Tell Better Stories

Support your nonprofit partners by giving them numbers to pair with their stories.

## Improve your Impact



### Maximize Your Impact

Do more of what works, and fix (or exit) what doesn't.

# At True Impact, we're building a social sector guided by impact-driven insights.

**8,500+ NPO Programs Measured**  
 \$1.5 trillion in nonprofit activities tracked  
 resulting in 314 million impacts



**200+ Funders Supported**  
 Increasing trust and improving their  
 decision making and storytelling



## One Emerging Impact Reporting Network

Charity Navigator



Grants & Volunteer Management Platforms

Other Charity Info. Platforms



# Introducing a Sector-Wide Reporting Network Powered by True Impact

Nonprofits Create One Impact Report



It's Instantly Shared Across Platforms and Donors

Founding Partners



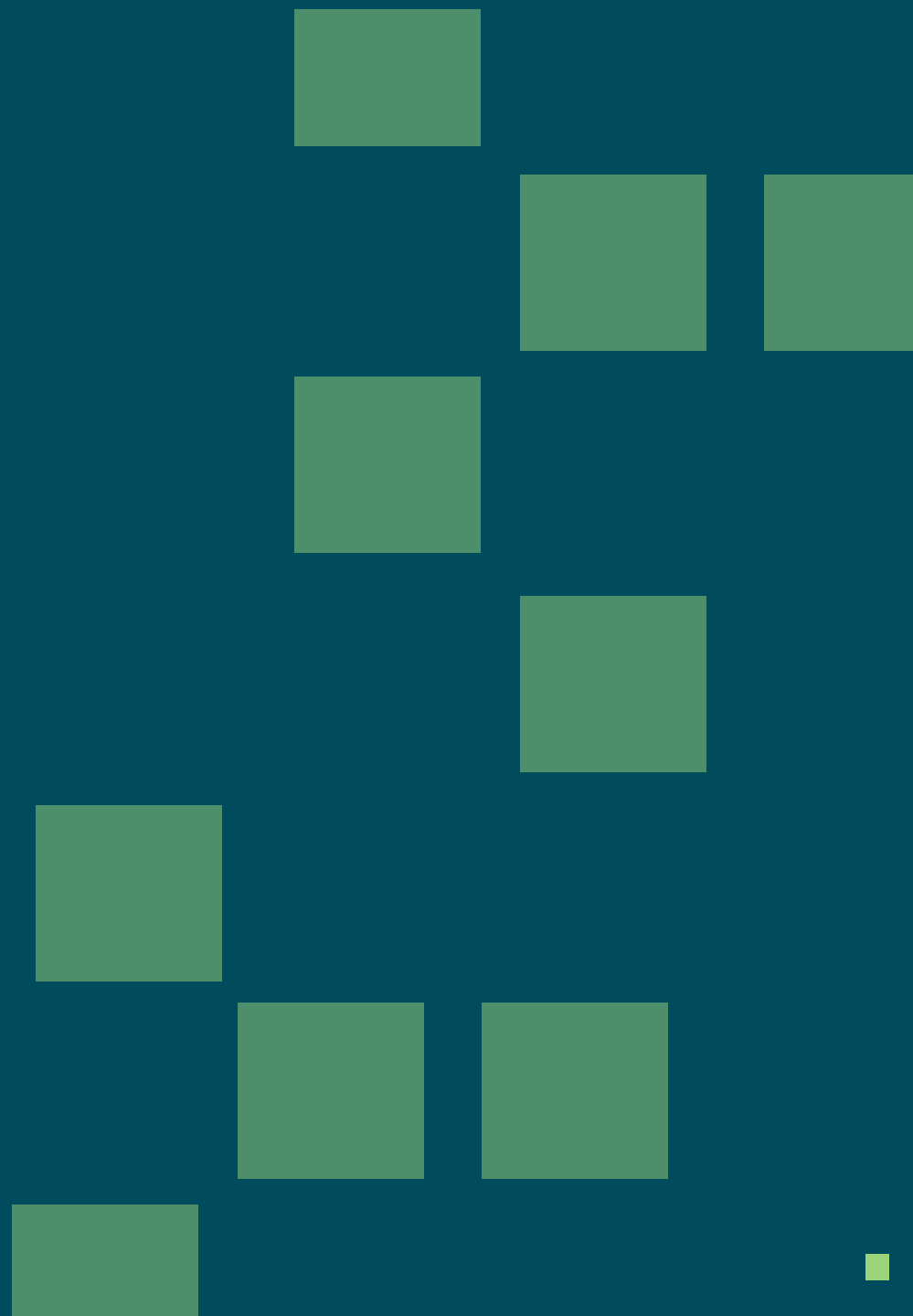
*Addition Networks Partners to be announced soon*

# Poll: Which of the following best describes your current measurement approach?

1. We have dipped our toe into measurement but generally prioritize other other things out of necessity.
2. We focus on measuring a few important metrics and report out on some specific goals.
3. We build measurement into everything we do so so we can use the data for a variety of purposes.

Part 1

# Practical Impact Measurement for Foundations



# Why worry about impact measurement now?

Elephant #1:  
Nonprofits +  
Beneficiaries

- Decreased funding
- Increased demand for services

Elephant #2:  
Foundations

- Limited staff and time
- Competing Board priorities
- Increased scrutiny on funding activity

Impact measurement can bridge the gap—helping nonprofits and funders increase trust and accelerate change.



# When it comes to impact measurement and reporting, we've also seen **what doesn't work**.

## Funders

Funders requiring **bespoke reports** or updates on their specific portion of the program.

Evaluations/reporting requirements that lead **the implementation of programs** - cart leading the horse.

Funders unable to **speak to their broader goals** or understand the actual impact of their philanthropy.

---

## Nonprofits

**Over complication** of evaluation and outcome tracking.

The **stifling of creativity** due to a funder-driven implementation requirements.

The **spin** required of NPOs to speak to the priority of their funders.



TODAY'S NORTH STAR

**How nonprofits  
and funders can  
work together  
to tell their  
collective impact  
stories.**





# Focus on **End Outcomes**, Not Process or Vanity Metrics

1

## Inputs

The resources used to run a program.

*Examples:*

- *Cash*
- *Staff*
- *Equipment*
- *Office space*



2

## Outputs

The goods or services delivered.

*Examples:*

- *People Reached*
- *Meals delivered*
- *Training provided*



3

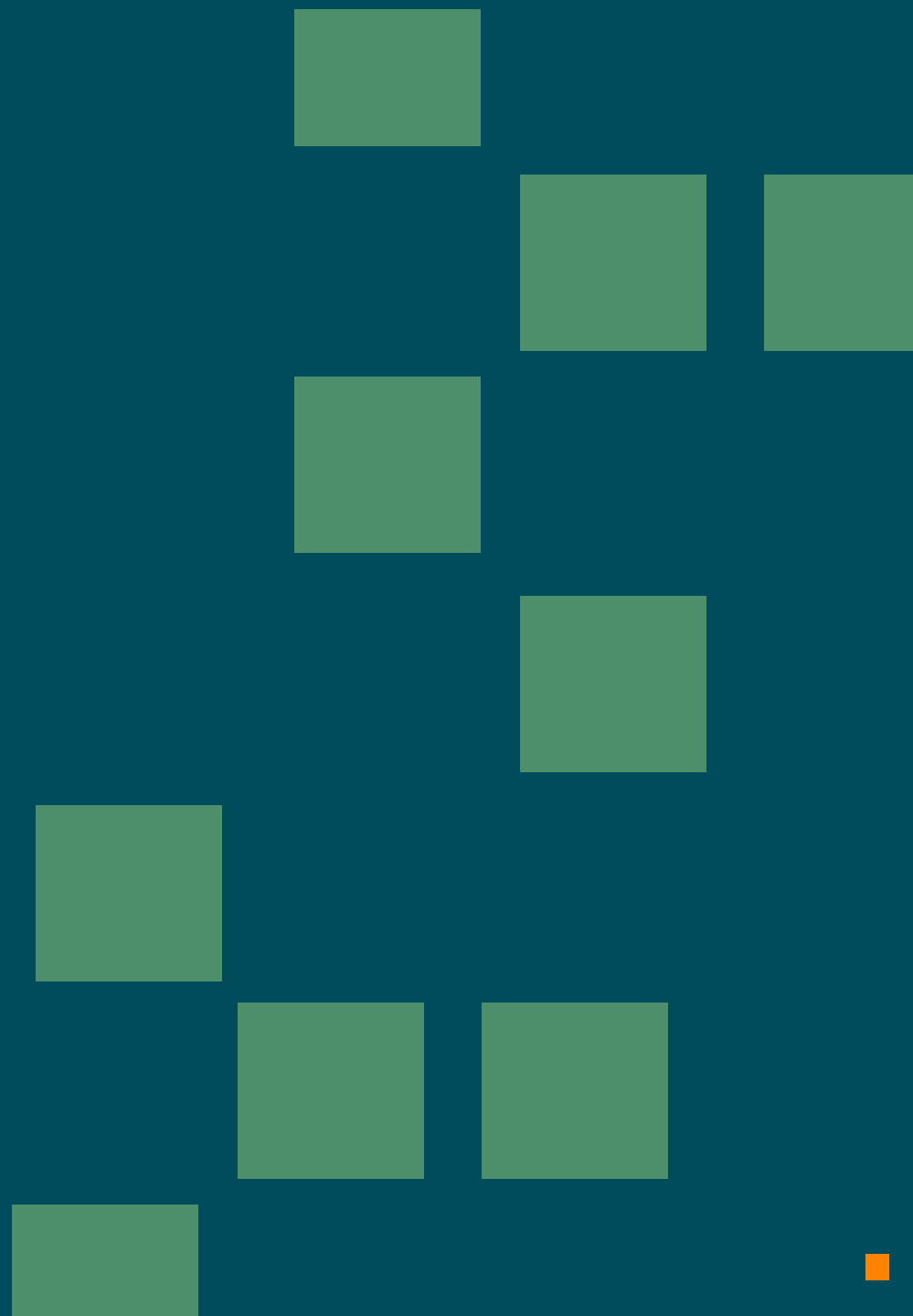
## Outcomes (aka: Impact!)

How people's lives improved as a result.

*How many people improved their health, education, or income, and by how much?*

## Poll: Which one is an outcome?

1. 450 trees planted by smallholder farms
2. Launching a new endowed scholarship funded
3. 93 students participate in equity and inclusion workshops



# Actually...none are outcomes.

1

## Input

2

## Output

3

## Outcome

Smallholder farmers are trained in sustainable planting techniques	450 trees planted by smallholder farms	80 mt of CO2 reduced
A new endowed scholarship funded	15 first generation students receive scholarships	12 students graduate from post-secondary school
Teachers are trained in equity and inclusion best practices	93 Students participate in equity and inclusion workshops	Students report feeling safer and report fewer acts of violence

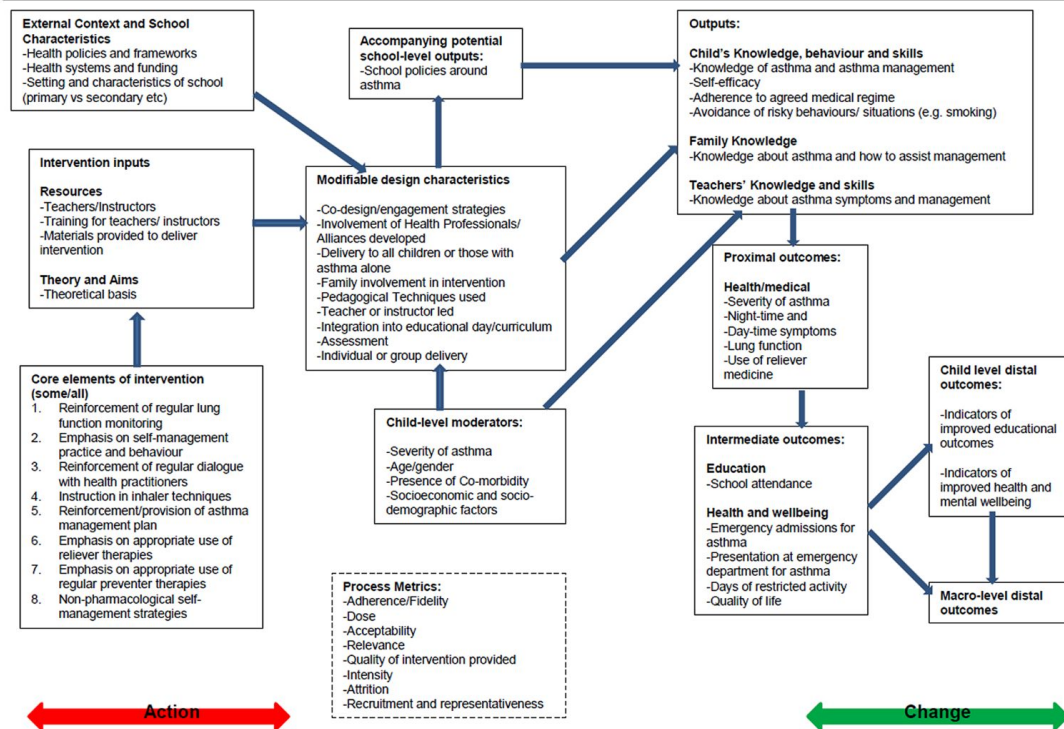


**Why can't we just focus  
on "people reached"?**

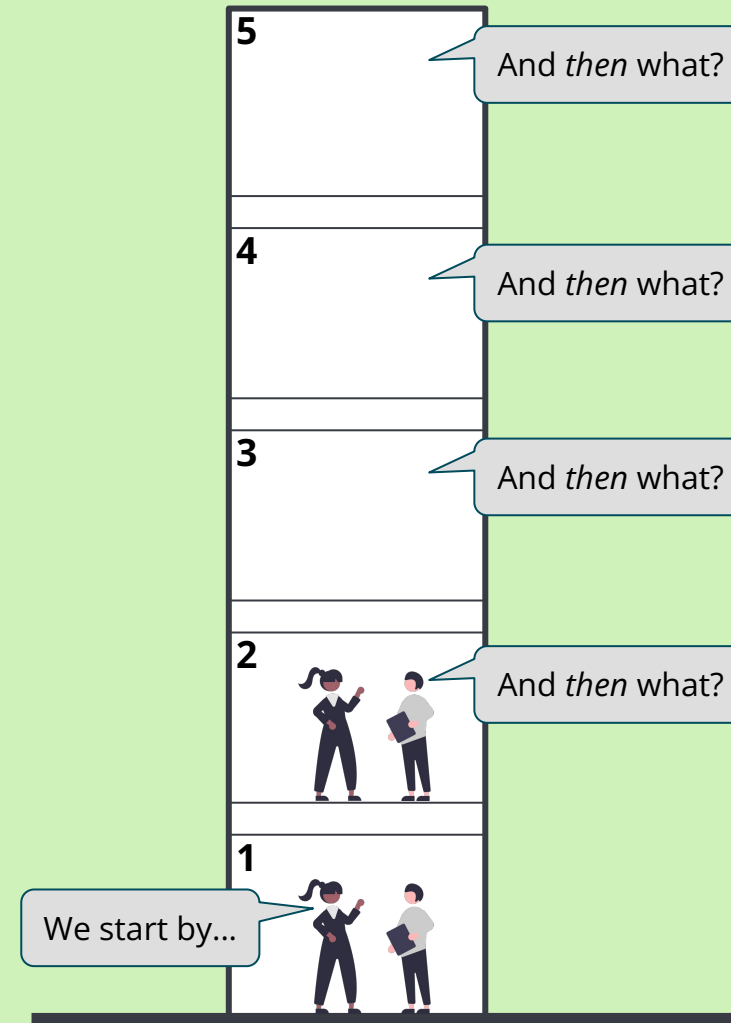
# How to Move from Inputs to Outputs: Logic Models and Elevator Rides

## What People See When They Hear "Logic Model"

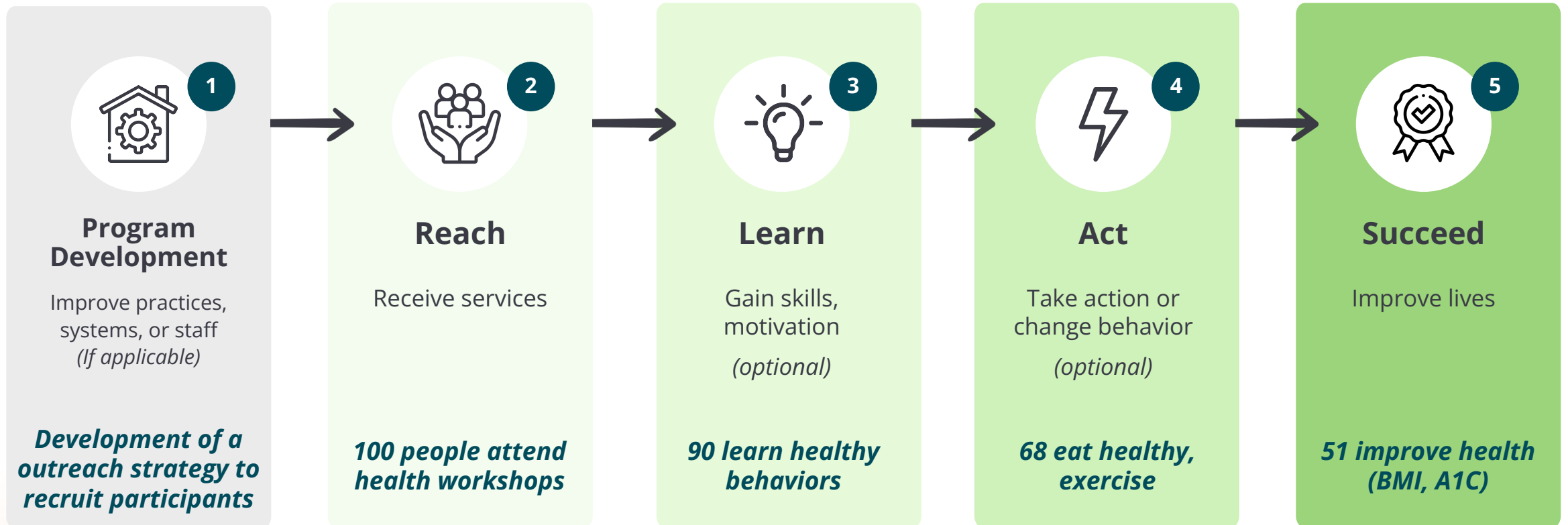
**School-based self-management educational interventions for asthma in children and adolescents:** Of chronic disease in children, asthma accounts for most school absences, emergency admissions, and disproportionately impacts upon children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The school environment, offers an environment to develop self-care strategies among adolescents and children.



## Instead of Logic Models , Think About Elevator Rides

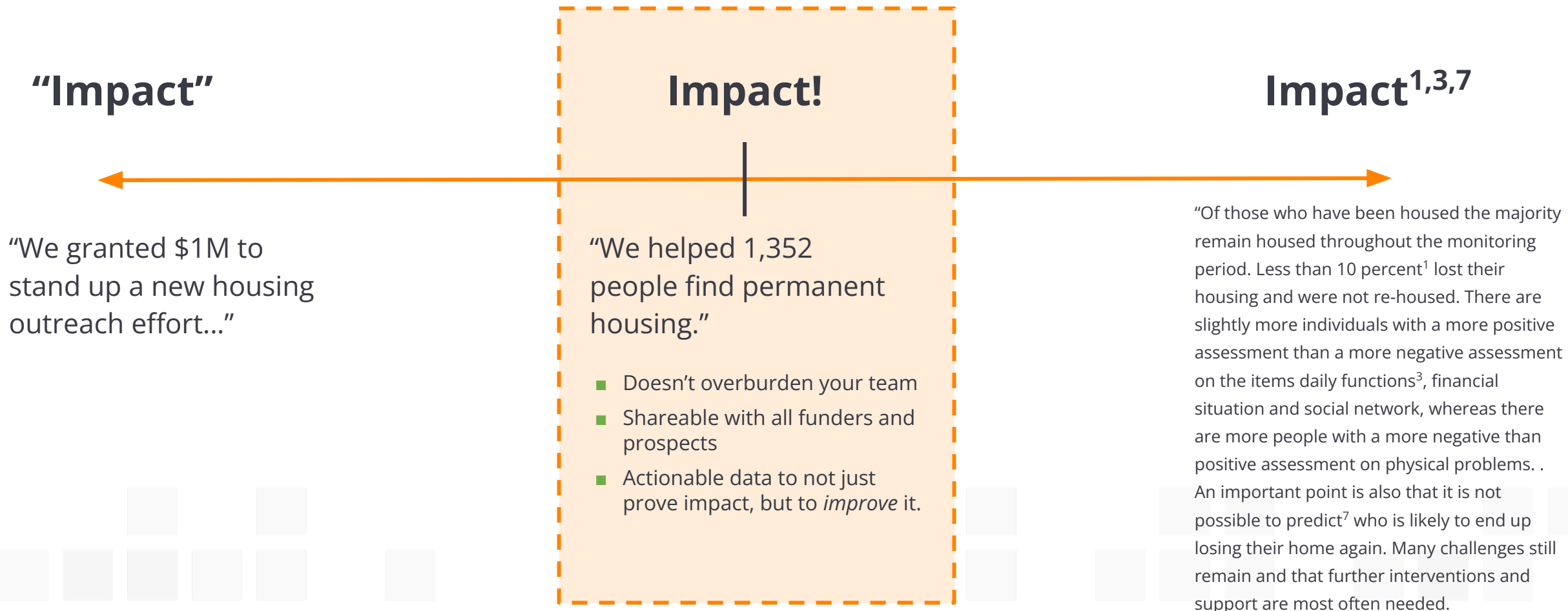


# From Elevator Rides to Logic Models



# Think about The Impact Continuum

Find the sweet spot between unimportant and impractical.



# 4 Golden Reporting Rules for Funders



1

## Keep it Simple

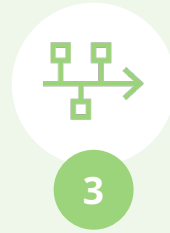
- Count what counts (impact!)
- Allow grantee to tell their story, not yours



2

## Keep it Timely

- Align reporting with the program cycle
- Provide adequate time (no surprises!)



3

## Keep it Uniform

- Provide concise instructions with explicit definitions
- Standardize your reporting template



4

## Keep it Supportive

- Allocate funds for capacity building
- Emphasize learning and improvement

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a bright yellow safety vest over a dark t-shirt, is smiling broadly and holding two small plants in black pots. She is wearing blue work gloves. In the background, other people in safety vests are working in a field. The image has a semi-transparent green overlay on the right side with several green squares of varying sizes.

# Funder Best Practices

(When in doubt,  
just be a good human.)



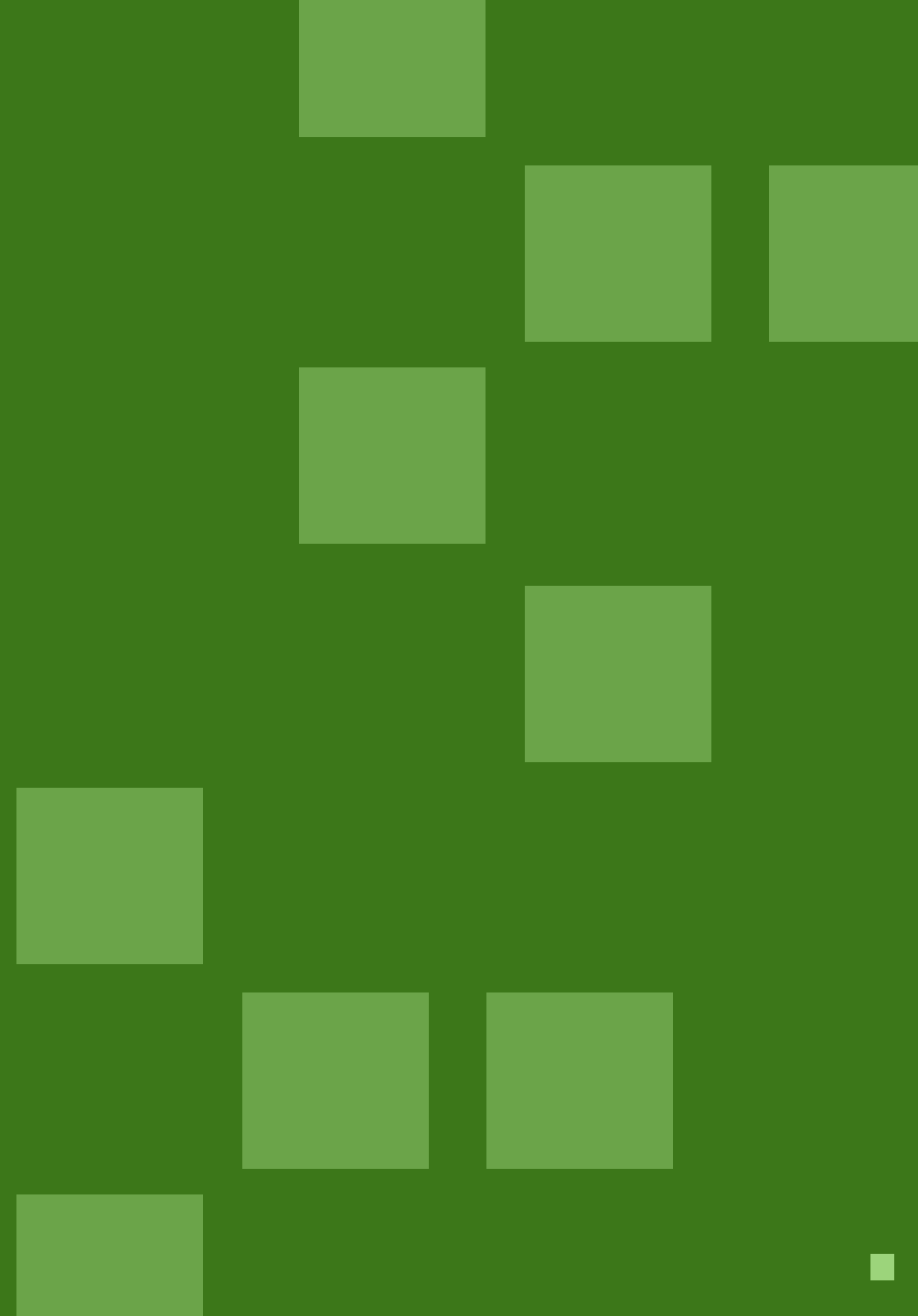
# What we will cover today

How to work best with your nonprofits in three phases of work:

- 1 **Prior to Reporting**
- 2 **During Reporting**
- 3 **Post-Reporting**

FUNDERS - PHASE 1

# Before Reporting Begins

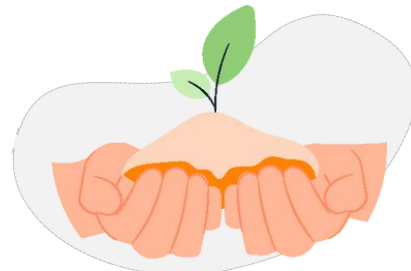


# Know your Who, What, and Where and then trust the experts (nonprofits) to figure out the How.



**Who** do you want to help?

- Ethnic/racial groups
- Age group
- Gender
- Socioeconomic status
- Occupation



**What** ways do you want to help them?

- Issues
- UN SDGs
- Specific outcomes



**Where** do you want to focus your support?

- City
- County
- Country
- Continent
- Diverse locations

Your goal is to know the problem you want to address, not the solution to that problem.

**Your partners are best positioned to offer potential solutions**

# Start the conversation about impact **as early as possible.**

This could be during the grant application process or immediately upon award.

## Why ask *before* the work is done?

- Asking early confirms alignment (who, what, where)
- Opens the door to capacity building conversations BEFORE the work is complete
- You get forecasted impacts for reporting and accountability

# Start with a conversation.

- Explain why you are prioritizing impact
- Discuss roles, responsibilities, and timing
- Explain the benefits to THEM of reporting impact
- Make space for input and questions from the nonprofit, aim to understand their reporting needs and challenges
- Offer constructive feedback to highlight strengths and suggest improvements

If done well:

**Impact Measurement**  **Trust Based Philanthropy**





FUNDERS - PHASE 2

# During Reporting



# Ask for the Nonprofit's Whole Story, Not Just the Part You Funded

Allow your grantee to report out on the full impact of their program, not just the amount you funded.

**Focus on the art not the paint brushes.**

This empowers your nonprofit with a comprehensive impact report and allows us to get closer to a **universal reporting framework.**



# Standardize Your Impact Reporting Template



1

**Program  
Description  
and Mission**



2

**Intervention**  
(Focus and  
Activities)



3

**Community  
Details**  
(Demographics &  
Geographics)



4

**Implementation  
Period**



5

**Theory of  
Change**  
with Specific  
Impacts



6

**Measurement  
Approach**  
w/ Data Backups



7

**Program  
Cost**



8

**Success  
Stories and  
Lessons  
Learned**

## Resources

No need to write these down, you can find them here:

[trueimpact.com/  
funderresources](https://trueimpact.com/funderresources)



Review what you are asking of nonprofits and follow this rule:

**If you ask for something that you don't use for a specific reason, stop asking for it!**



# The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly of Claiming Impact

## The Bad

*underclaiming impact*

Funders not claiming any impact because they are worried about taking credit for nonprofit's hard work.

## The Good

*just right*

Funders claiming an appropriate amount of impact and sharing the stories of their nonprofits (a win, win!)

## The Ugly

*overclaiming impact*

Funders claiming to entire impact of any organization they fund, no matter how much they contributed.

### \*Takeaway\*

If you are claiming all of the impacts of all of your nonprofit partners, STOP THIS NOW!



# Keep It Simple with a Contribution Claim

## Percent Funded = Percent Claimed

### Program's Impact

How many people's lives were improved?

### Your Contribution

You funded 50% of the program

### Contribution Claim

50 % funded = 50% claim (most common)



50%

# Three Metrics to Determine Your Claim of Impact

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{Overall Program Impact} & \times & \frac{\text{Your Contribution}}{\text{Total Program Cost}} = \text{Your Claim} \\ \textit{(The nonprofit helped 300 people improve their health)} & & \textit{(\$1 million)} \\ & & \textit{(\$3 million)} \\ & & \textit{(you helped 100 people improve their health)} \end{array}$$

# Maximize Your Investment with Catalytic Funding

More substantial, targeted donations may create social ripple effects, creating additional impact beyond those impacts you are directly funding.

## How to Be Catalytic

- Support programs in a “foundational” capacity (*as determined by the nonprofit*)
- Serve as a “seed funder” and attract other donors
- Fund a new program or model that is then replicated in the future
- Increase the capacity of an organization that results in a sustained and defined net gain in impact



# Catalytic Claims

## Sometimes Your Impact Goes Further

### Program's Impact

How many people's lives were improved?

### Your Contribution

You funded 50% of the program

### Contribution Claim

50 % funded = 50% claim (most common)

### Catalytic Claim

Only applicable if you activated additional indirect gains



50%



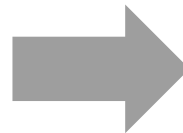
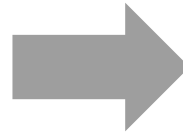
±100%



# Always Make Sure You Can Trust Your Data

## Trustworthy Data

- Accurate
- Verifiable
- Robust
- Standard
- Well designed



## 3 Questions to Get Trustworthy Data

- What is your definition of success (impact)?
- How much impact did you create?
- How do you know?

### **\*Takeaway\***

Create chains of evidence- “receipts” of your impact - that will hold up to auditing, comms, and legal teams.



PHASE 3

# Post- Reporting



# Four KPIs to Guide Strategic Management and Reporting



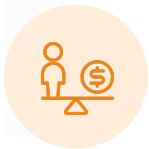
## 1. Impact

*How much are you improving people's lives and wellbeing?*



## 2. Alignment

*Does it match your goals?*



## 3. Efficiency

*Are you doing it well?*



## 4. Data Quality

*Can you trust the data?*



**Share** your impact with internal and external stakeholders to get the credit you deserve



**Target** resources to better aligned causes, demographics, and geographies



**Benchmark** similar programs to learn what works best and share results across all grantees



**Improve** data quality to strengthen insights and increase trust between you, your nonprofits, and your stakeholders



For everyone

**Tell your story**



Proper Data-Driven Storytelling

**No stories without numbers, and no numbers without stories.**



# How to Tell Your Story To Do More Good (Funders and Nonprofits)

Get more resources, and more autonomy, to do more good!

Share Your Story, Internally

Reach new stakeholders and build their trust

Focus on your shared language: Impact

Share Your Story. Externally.

Build trust through alignment with foundation goals, donor priorities, community needs

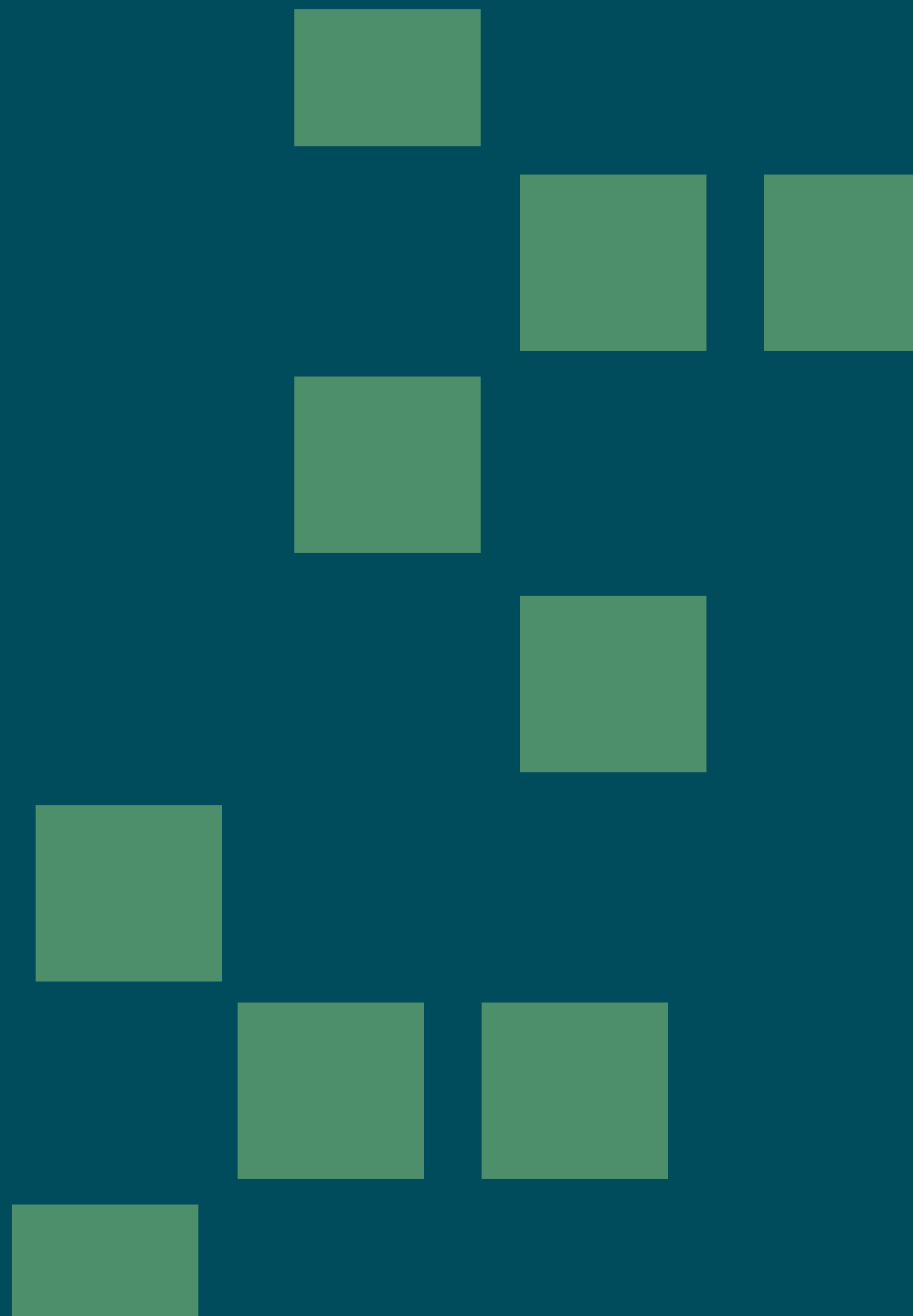
## **\*Takeaway\***

Once you've built a confident foundation internally, move to targeted external impact-based storytelling.

Part 2

# Open Conversation & Listening Session

- What feels unclear, heavy, or frustrating in reporting today?
- How could impact data better support your board, donors, or mission?
- What tools or integrations would truly add value?



**Question:** In a dreamworld, what does the perfect impact measurement process and results look like to you?



# Questions (and maybe some answers)



**Thanks! Let us  
know when you're  
ready to find out**

**what your impact really is.**



**trueimpact.com**