

Stephen Lewis Foundation

Impact Assessment Framework

Updated 2023

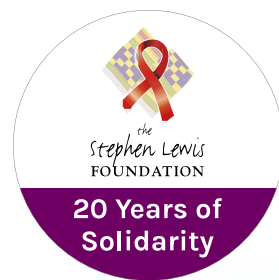


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Introduction

Community is at the heart of the impact we support.

For 20 years, the Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) has challenged traditional power structures in international development and philanthropy by shifting resources to local communities impacted by HIV and AIDS.

Through our flexible, sustainable funding, we put long-term economic power directly into the hands of community-led organizations (CLOs). We work with CLOs in relationships built on mutual trust, support, and learning.

In responding to the HIV epidemic, these organizations are meeting the needs of individuals, strengthening communities, and advancing social change. In the lives of adolescent girls and young women, vulnerable children, grandmothers, and LGBTIQ individuals, SLF community partners are restoring hope, reclaiming rights, fighting injustice, and saving lives.





Immediate needs of individuals are met through investments in treatment, counselling, education, incomes, housing, and nutrition.

Communities are strengthened through investments in outreach, local knowledge sharing, organizational capacity building, referrals, and mutual support.

Social change is achieved through movement building and investments to advance human rights, including gender equality and LGBTIQ rights, and climate change mitigation.

We support holistic approaches as the key to fostering real change in people's lives.

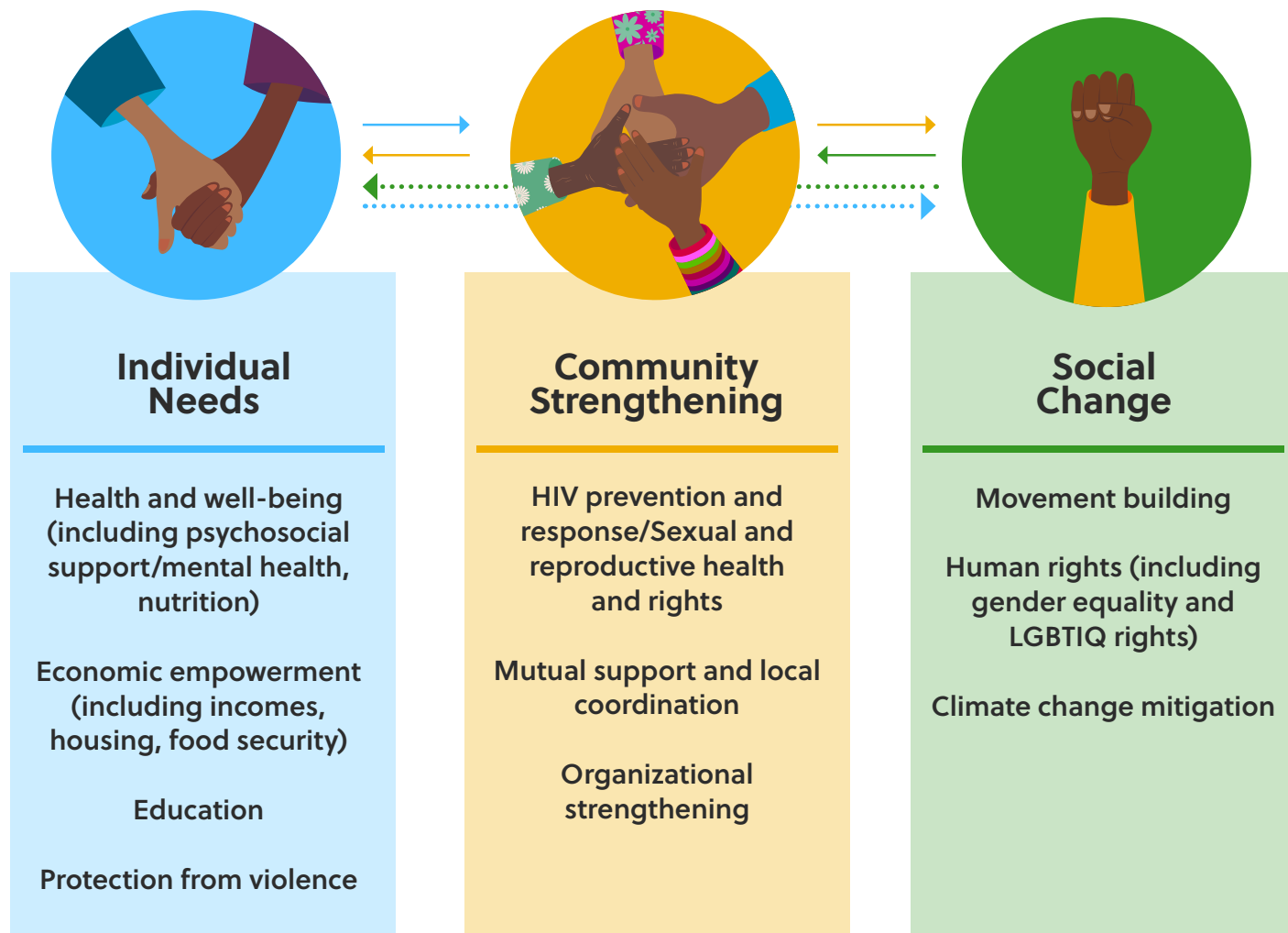
Our CLO partners restore well-being and dignity for people in their communities. Through a holistic approach, they help individuals to build resilience and networks of mutual support. They strengthen the bonds that connect people by nurturing family relationships, and by facilitating child, youth, and granny groups, as well as through community programming. They are committed to gender equality, defending human rights, and working toward a more equal and just future.

The SLF has made a very considered choice in selecting grassroots, community-led organizations as its primary partners.

CLOs are best positioned to understand the needs of people affected by HIV and AIDS. Even more importantly, the CLOs themselves are an integral part of affected communities. They are one of the ways in which communities have been organizing to manage and rebuild their lives, and, as such, they are critical agents of change. The SLF does not just see CLOs as effective delivery mechanisms for project results, but recognizes CLO strengthening as an end in itself. Especially in sub-Saharan Africa, strong CLOs are an essential part of strong communities.

Impact Areas

With CLOs at the centre, the SLF is investing in impact at three levels: individual needs, community strengthening, and social change. For the purpose of impact assessment, all initiatives supported through the SLF are grouped into sub-categories under these mutually reinforcing levels of impact.



Impact Indicators

The SLF recognizes that impact is understood not simply by the number of people engaged through CLO partner initiatives, but the sustainable changes that occur for people and communities as a result of this engagement.

In order to better understand these changes, we have designed a series of global indicators for each level of impact. These indicators quantify changes in capacity, behaviour, and experience. They are not to be imposed on partners; rather, partners are invited to select the global indicator for each level of impact most relevant to their work.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

of PLHA with improved capacity in nutrition for positive living

of participants supported in developing income activities with improved monthly incomes

of households achieving year-round food security (2 meals/day for all)

of clients with new vocational/ technical skills for income generation

OVCs completing primary/ secondary school

of grandmothers able to afford school fees for OVCs

COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

of community members accessing voluntary counselling and testing

of community health workers/volunteers with improved knowledge of EMTCT

of women and adolescent girls educated about their sexual and reproductive health and rights

of client referral networks (ongoing/new)

of clients referred for additional support/services through other CLOs/partners

SOCIAL CHANGE

of community leaders/ decision-makers sensitized about human rights for PLHA, LGBTIQ, or OVCs

of women reporting decision-making autonomy regarding SRHR

of women reporting equal participation in household decision-making

of clients with improved knowledge of importance of educating girls

of women and girls with an increased understanding of SGBV and their rights

Where appropriate, these global indicators have been designed to align with the stated outcomes outlined in the African Union's Agenda 2063, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. These enable us to demonstrate to interested stakeholders how our investments are contributing to broader regional and global efforts.



Improvements in living standards:

of participants with improved monthly incomes by at least 1/3

of households achieving year-round food security (2 meals/day for all)

Empowered women, youth and children:

women with increased understanding of SGBV and their rights



(1) End poverty

of participants supported in developing income activities with improved monthly incomes

(2) End hunger

of PLHA with improved capacity in nutrition for positive living/ # of households achieving year-round food security (2 meals/day for all)

(3) Ensure healthy lives

clients reached with HIV education/ # of clients accessing testing/ # educated about their SRHR

(4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education

OVCs completing primary/secondary school



Education:

female OVCs completing primary/secondary school

Gender equality & empowerment of women and girls:

of women's organizations supported through organizational strengthening

Growth that works for everyone:

of women reached with activities to support incomes

Inclusive governance:

women with increased understanding SGBV and their rights



In addition to the global indicators, partners are invited to introduce indicators from their own impact assessment measurement they feel exemplify the impact of their work in their communities. These **local indicators** provide the SLF with a view of impact that is unique to the people and places where each CLO works. It also recognizes that many partners are working with their own internally defined ways of monitoring and understanding impact.

The SLF has also developed a series of **partnership indicators** to help understand the impact of SLF partnerships in strengthening organizations, a key contributor to advancing the efforts of CLO partners. These complement the global and local indicators to provide a complete view of the impact created through SLF investments. These indicators also provide actionable information that the SLF uses to inform supports for and investments in organizational strengthening within its network of CLO partners.

Organizational Capacity Building (a component of community strengthening)

REACH INDICATORS:

- # of partners funded (by type)
- # of partners funded for admin/overhead
- # of partners participating in trainings/networking/peer-learning opportunities etc.
- # of staff roles funded

IMPACT INDICATORS

- # of partners indicating support through the SLF is unique (funding, networking, events, capacity building)
- # of partners indicating capacity-building support through the SLF is beneficial
- # of partners reporting receiving capacity-building support responsive to their specific needs

SOLIDARITY INDICATORS

- # of partners indicating that 'feeling part of something bigger' was a valuable part of their experience of partnership in the past year
- # of partners rating the SLF as having lived up to its stated values about solidarity
- # of grandmothers groups active in mutual support, community engagement (in Africa and Canada)

Complementing these indicators, we also provide open space for feedback from partners on their experience of partnering with the SLF. These questions will evolve over time as we seek to deepen our understanding of partner experiences and interests.

In order to understand the relationship between diverse identities and participation, experience, and impact, reporting against indicators will include disaggregation of data by gender, age, LGBTIQ identification, and other relevant identities, such as grandmother. These disaggregation requirements will be clearly identified in the data collection and reporting tools for ease of understanding and accuracy of reporting.



Information Collection & Reporting Tools

The SLF recognizes and values diverse ways of knowing and sharing information.

Data collection tools have been designed to clearly and succinctly capture the information needed to monitor investment funds as outlined in Agency Agreements with CLO partners. Tools have also been designed to allow space for open reflection and sharing of information in ways that are appropriate, relevant, and most conducive to understanding the impact of each CLO.

Data and information needed to assess impact is collected through five primary tools: the **Semi-Annual Progress Report, Annual Narrative Report, and Annual Impact Survey** submitted by partners in accordance with their respective Agency Agreements, and the **Annual Field Representative Survey** and **M&E Visit Reports** completed by SLF Field Representatives.

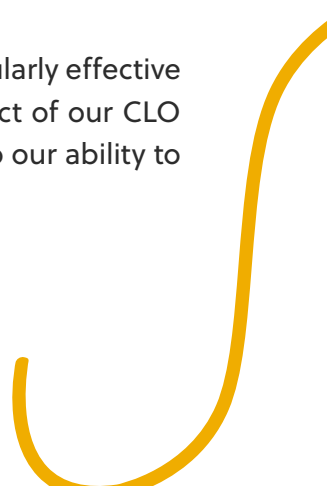
Each tool is designed to assess impact through different approaches to:

- inform learning
- provide actionable information for SLF staff to inform work with partners
- and to develop a comprehensive understanding of partner relationships, impact in partner communities, and impact of SLF investments (see graphic on page 9).

We recognize the importance of exploring contextual factors that influence knowledge and experience.

All information collection/reporting tools provide opportunities for reflection on changes to the local context and context-specific factors which may support or pose a risk to progress on activities and achieving impact.

All tools also emphasize and make space for storytelling, which we recognize as a particularly effective means for articulating and sharing the nuance of experiences, perspectives, and impact of our CLO partners and their community clients. These stories are also an important contributor to our ability to communicate impact.



Semi-Annual Progress Report	Changes in local context and progress on activities per Agency Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted in WORD template Reviewed by Project Managers Informs follow-up and responsive support
Annual Narrative Report	Changes in local context, progress on activities per Agency Agreement, reflections on approaches and impacts achieved, stories of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted in WORD template Reviewed by Project Managers, summarized using digital tool for compilation in searchable database Informs follow-up and responsive support Supports overall learning and identification of trends Supports content for communications
Annual Impact Survey	Reach numbers, types of clients reached, reflections on partnership with SLF, trends and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted in digital survey template Dashboard roll up of data against internal global indicators Supports identification of trends and opportunities
Annual Field Representative Survey	Observations of trends and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted in digital survey template Dashboard roll up of responses
M&E Visit Reports	Reflections on organizational status of CLOs and opportunities for capacity strengthening, observation of community contexts, clients, and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted in digital survey template Dashboard roll up of responses Uses CLO Self-assessment tool* as basis for conversation with Field Reps and reporting on organizational status Reviewed by Project Managers Highlights presented in dashboard

The ***CLO Self-Assessment** is an optional and completely voluntary tool used to track organizational strengthening over time and is used in the M&E visits by Field Representatives. Designed to be a reflective process of self-assessment by CLO leadership, it is discussed with the Field Representative during Zoom meetings in advance of an in-person visit. The tool contains prompts for partners to reflect on what is working well for them, and to identify areas where they would like to consider changes to strengthen their approach and more effectively meet their internal needs and/or the needs of their community. This process helps partners and the SLF to identify opportunities for capacity-building support, including through peer-learning connections within the SLF network of partners.

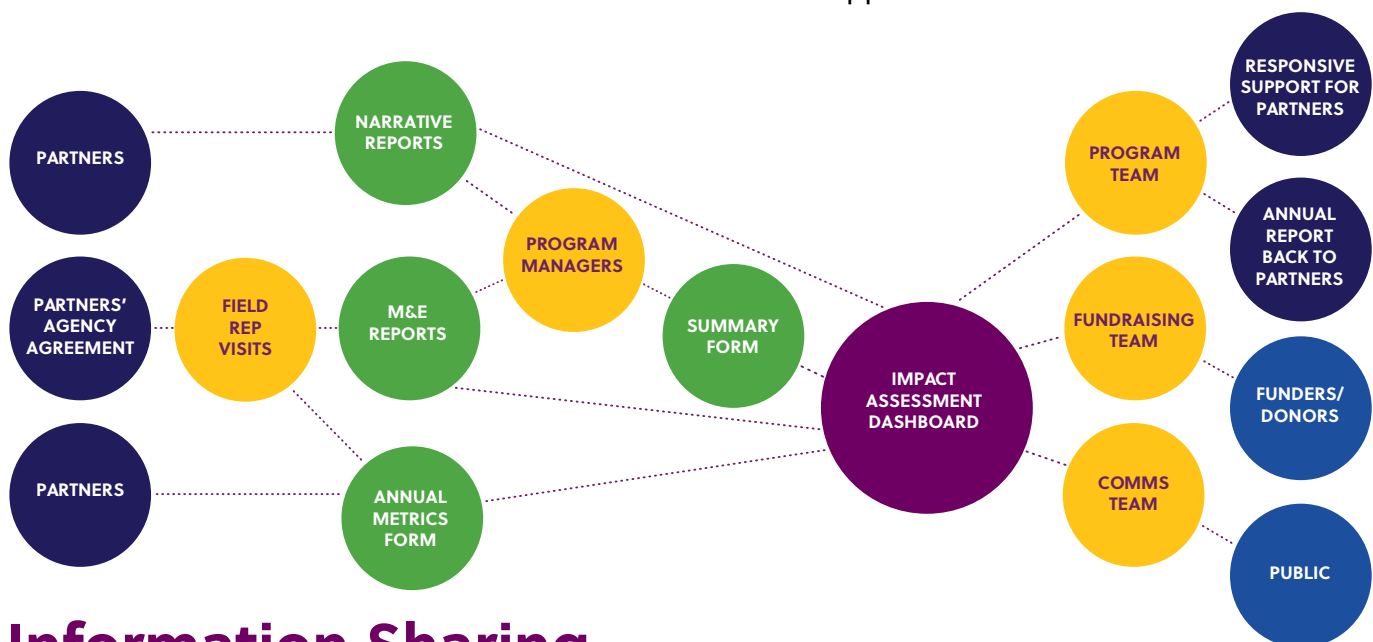
Information Flow

Recognizing the broad use of impact information by all staff teams, including programs, communications, and fundraising, it is crucial that information received be made available in an accessible manner for ease of access by all staff on demand.

To this end, we have developed a system of review and sharing key information into a shared database for access by all staff as needed.

When Project Managers receive Annual Narrative Reports or M&E reports, they are responsible for conducting a full review of the information provided. Full versions of all reports are saved in a shared drive for access by all staff as needed. Project Managers then share a top line summary of the Annual Narrative Reports using Google Form templates. These summaries automatically populate shared Google Sheets Databases along with content from digital tools.

All staff are then able to view the summary for information received and are able to consult full reports for additional details and full narrative content as needed to support their work.



Information Sharing

We recognize that knowledge is power and that we have a responsibility to share actionable information and key learnings with our partners, along with our other stakeholders.

In addition to the use of impact data and information to inform our work and to communicate our impact to donors, funding partners, and other stakeholders, we also synthesize and share information back to our network of CLO partners on an annual basis.

Through this partner-focussed **Annual Collective Impact Report** we highlight trends, common challenges, lessons learned and emerging best practices, and inspiration. This is a component of organizational strengthening. It also provides partners with the opportunity to identify for themselves opportunities for collaboration or peer learning.

The content of the **Annual Collective Impact Report** is informed by annual reflection and learning discussions within the programs team which include consideration of information and data received through all tools over the course of the previous year.

All of our information-generating tools are highly interactive and we commit to evolving our tools and approaches based on what we continue to learn. We will always be guided by the information gathered in collaboration with our partners to ensure that we encourage meaningful conversation, are responsive to new information, and that we maintain an ongoing organizational awareness of emerging needs.

Championing health and human rights with community-led partners to respond to the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa.



Photo Credit: PENAF

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