Category

Data & AI

Data Literacy for Nonprofit & Impact Organizations Playbook

Measuring impact rigorously enough to know it's real, with the resources a nonprofit actually has

- Practitioner
- Intermediate
- Template Included

- Mithun A. Sridharan

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- 4 minute(s)

Overview

A framework for building data literacy within nonprofit and impact organizations — realistic impact measurement design, donor and funder reporting integrity, and resource-appropriate data practices — addressing the specific tension between rigorous impact measurement ambition and the more limited data resources most nonprofits actually have available.

Can nonprofits with limited budgets really pursue rigorous impact

measurement? Yes, but it requires realistic scoping — a small number of well-designed impact measures matched to actual available resources, rather than attempting comprehensive rigorous measurement across every program simultaneously, which most nonprofits genuinely can't sustain.

What's the biggest data literacy risk specifically for nonprofit

and impact reporting? Reporting activity or output metrics (people served, programs delivered) as if they were outcome or impact metrics (lives genuinely improved) — a common conflation that overstates genuine impact evidence to funders and stakeholders.

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Author

Mithun A. Sridharan Thought Leader

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