

The Salvation Army
International Social Justice Commission

An Impact Measurement Initiative – a summary for Donor, UN and FBO partners
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BACKGROUND: The Salvation Army works in 127 countries around the world with a wide array of social programmes – including homeless shelters, schools, hospitals, emergency services, older persons care, community development projects, clothing recycling and sales, anti-human-trafficking, food banks and feeding programmes, agriculture – in addition to 15,000 congregations involved in serving their communities as well as evangelical, worship and discipleship activities.

For the past 3 years I have been part of a working group at The Salvation Army's International Headquarters developing a unifying framework for measurement. We worked with The Bridgespan Group based in San Francisco. The initiative was motivated by a number of concerns:

1. Existing measurement systems were not capturing the outcomes and impact of our work.
2. The quality of data was variable and the definitions used were inconsistent.
3. Existing measurement systems did not result in learning but were viewed simply as reporting requirements.
4. Theory of Change methodology was being introduced in some parts of The Salvation Army but it appeared to lack a theological dimension.

The Salvation Army has always measured what we have done – our activities, programmes and outputs – using statistics. The purpose of this new initiative is to measure the **transformative change in people** – that is the outcomes and impact of our work, and to learn from the data.

AIM: The Impact Measurement Initiative set out “to increase the transformative change The Salvation Army works towards with people and communities through measurement and learning. This will be achieved by improving the quality and effectiveness of Salvation Army programmes around the world by measuring progress towards a shared purpose using a unifying framework for results measurement and learning.”

PRINCIPLES: We recognised this was not simply a measurement re-tooling exercise. Seeking to understand “impact” exposed organisational tensions around purpose and highlighted the importance of strengthening a culture of accountability across The Salvation Army. Therefore, we looked for ways to build our theory of change while strengthening the accountability culture as we introduced impact measurement. The following principles joined these issues together:

1. The Salvation Army’s desire to see the world restored to the perfection God intends.
2. The Salvation Army’ commitment to be good stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us.
3. The Salvation Army’s commitment to quality and integrity in our work and ministry.
4. The Salvation Army’s commitment to measurement and ongoing learning being primarily for self-assessment on the journey.
5. The Salvation Army’s commitment to a reflective, faith-based way of working (Faith Based Facilitation is a process we have used for the past 6 years to encourage a more relational and theological way of working www.salvationarmy.org/fbf).

JOURNEY: Most of the people who work or serve on Salvation Army programmes are turned off by complex theoretical language. Therefore, we sought ways of using theory of change concepts without using the language. After much discussion, we agreed to use ‘journey’ as the metaphor to connect measurement, accountability and theory of change. Journey is a familiar concept in Christianity – life has often been described as a pilgrimage, walk, quest, mission, march, etc. Impact Measurement is therefore understood to be a **system** that helps people on the journey to have greater impact and be more accountable.

Five key dimensions on the journey were identified:

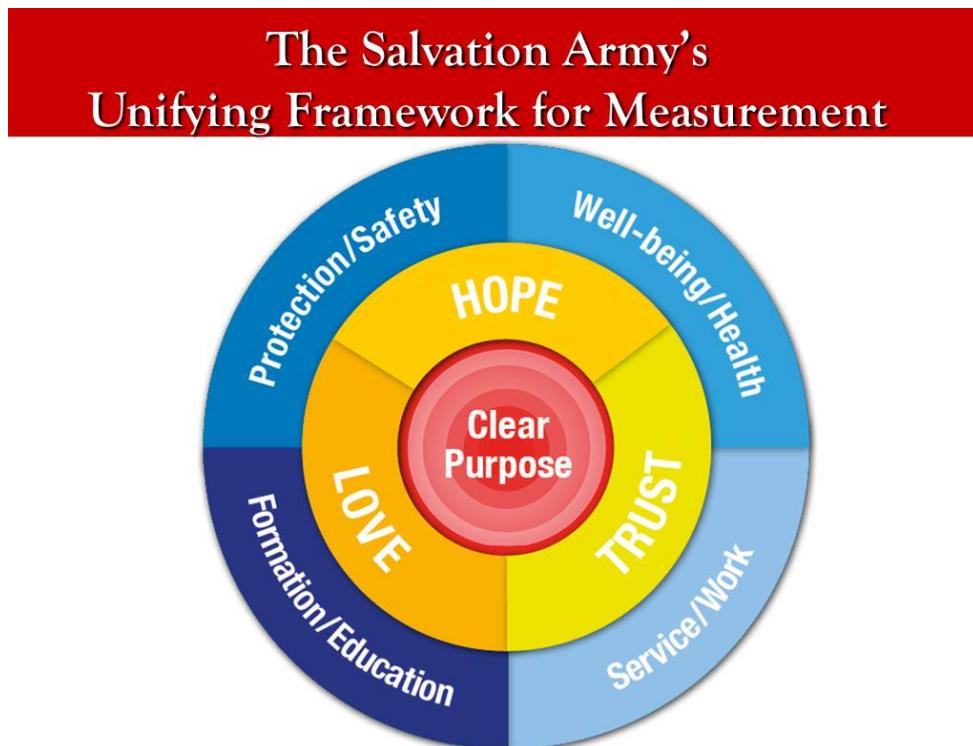
- **People** – Who is making the journey and how are their relationships?
- **Purpose** – What is the reason for the journey? (A shared vision of impact was proposed for all parts of The Salvation Army: “*Around the world, people experience life in all its fullness as they engage in transformative relationships with God, others and all creation.*”)
- **Passion** – Where do we get our energy for the journey? (This is an important dimension for faith based organisations as it is an opportunity to recognize spiritual factors on the journey wherever appropriate).
- **Plan** – What is the plan to achieve the purpose and the outcomes we seek?
- **Progress** – How do we track progress and learn from experience?

The sixth dimension of “Processes” includes management tools and systems for finance, personnel, risk and impact measurement. It is essential that these processes are fit-for-purpose – the purpose should not be the servant of the process.

MEASUREMENT: The “Unifying Framework for Measurement” is used in the “plan” and “progress” dimensions. The framework measures all Salvation Army work by measuring seven “people” outcomes – four contextual and three relational. Not every programme or activity needs to measure all seven outcomes. The programme implementers decide which outcomes is relevant to the change sought in the people in that particular context.

This Unifying Framework for Measurement identifies four “contextual” categories of outcomes that can be tracked in the lives of all people anywhere in the world:

- Protection/ Safety
- Well-being /Health
- Formation /Education
- Service/ Work



A Salvation Army location might be seeking some, all, or none of these in the lives of the people they are engaging with. Each local unit will decide which contextual outcomes they seek.

One of the goals in planning this initiative was to have comparable data. This proved very difficult given the different contexts in which The Salvation Army works. It was therefore decided not to try to have one set of impact measurement tools for all parts of the world. It was recognised that there are a number of pre-existing impact measurement tools available that track aspects of person's (or group of peoples) health/wellbeing; work/service; education/formation; and safety/protection.

It was decided not to try and standardise the contextual outcomes as it was not seen how the data generated could be compared with any legitimacy. The priority was on the programme users (clients and employees/volunteers) having confidence in impact measurement tools appropriate in their context that could be used within one of the four contextual categories as defined. The definitions were based on theological understandings of how God intends people to live.

Four Outcomes – people in their context



Safety/Protection : Children and adults are free from abuse, discrimination, hunger, homelessness, and fear and find sanctuary and security in their lives.

Isaiah 40:31 “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint”.



Well-being/Health: Children and adults live well. This includes physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being seeking a life that is in harmony with God, with each other and all creation. *John 10:10 “I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full”*



Service/Work: Wherever children and adults are – at home, school, field, factory, office, church or community – their time, talents and abilities are used in work and service. *John 9:4-5 “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me.”*



Formation/Education: Children and adults develop into compassionate people of integrity and character with the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve their full God-given potential. *Mark 8:34 “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me”*

The 32 contextual tools that have been developed align with each of the desired outcomes identified within Safety/Protection; Well-being; Service/Work; and Formation/Education. These tools have been developed in such a way that the user may:

- Use them on their own, if this is the only outcome they are interested in and do not already have a way to measure this outcome
- Combine them together to create a unique tool set that meets their needs
- Append them to already existing data collection tools

Relational outcomes: It was hoped, however, that some internationally comparative data could be generated by measuring relational characteristics. Our work depends on our faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. The result of faith is evidenced by increased hope, trust and love in people's attitudes, relationships and actions. These are three of the characteristics evident when people experience "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). Therefore, there are common outcomes that should characterise relationships in all parts of the world.

The challenge has come in identifying tools that can measure characteristics such as “trust” and capture the richness of the meaning to an experienced Christian disciple. There was a negative reaction to many of the questionnaires developed as they were perceived to be measuring a thin, inadequate description of a Christian virtue.

Despite this criticism a relational tool has been developed using questions from the World Values Questionnaire. This tool is about to be piloted.

Relational Outcomes

“We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(1 Thess 1:3)

For example:



Faith & Trust

Faith in God is the foundation of trust. Trust binds us in relationship with God and others as we seek transformation in our lives and communities. (John 15:9)

*Completeness
Acceptance
Self-worth
Transparency
Honesty*



Hope

God is our source of hope for the future. This hope gives us strength, energy, inspiration, and joy for the journey. (Romans 8:24, Romans 5:5, Acts 26:6)

*Persistence
Courage
Resilience
Faithful
struggle
Inner strength*



Love

Love is a gift from God. This love can be the foundation of all relationships, restoration, reconciliation, and redemption. (Proverbs 3:5, Corinthians 13)

*Compassion
Acceptance
Forgiveness
Graciousness
Humility*

IMPLEMENTATION: The Bridgespan Group assisted in developing the following which will be included in the pilot testing sites:

- A document outlining data collection guidelines to ensure integrity of data collection
- An electronic “Survey Monkey” module that provides robust data storage and analysis for the relational tool as well as for each of the 32 contextual tools.
- A document intended for a measurement expert within The Army outlining the technical background to the creation of each of the measurement tools as well as providing clear guidance on what would be required to validate the relational tool for wider use across The Salvation Army.

A full time technical measurement expert – based at International Headquarters in London – has just been appointed to oversee the implementation of this system.

Communities of practice for learning: An important way of strengthening measurement and accountability is by learning from each other. The Salvation Army is seeking ways of encouraging knowledge sharing between all its units. Therefore, a key outcome will be the creation of “communities of practice” where people facing similar contexts can share experience and strengthen the Army’s work with people and communities to strengthen impact.

NEXT STEPS: Progress has been much slower than anticipated and internal resistance to change has been even stronger than expected. As noted at the beginning, impact measurement discussions are very good at unearthing internal tensions. Therefore, the impact measurement initiative has been included in the wider accountability movement across The Salvation Army. Therefore, the change process also includes reviews of governance, strengthening of financial systems and better safeguarding children and adults in our programmes.

FOR DISCUSSION WITH DUF COLLEAGUES:

- Is the bi-focal approach to measurement helpful – looking at both contextual and relational?
- Are there other relational impact measurement tools that could be used rather than the World Values Survey?

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Appendix 1: Definitions and Terms used by The Salvation Army

Activities and programmes: The work and service we do with and for people to help bring about transformation.

Inputs: The resources (people, buildings, money and materials) required to run the activities and programmes.

Outputs: The immediate results of our work usually recorded with statistics such as the number of people served, number of meals prepared, the number of hours given by volunteers, number of people attending a Sunday morning meeting, etc.

Outcomes: The enduring results – the things that make a difference to people in their lives and communities. The Salvation Army wants to measure two types of outcomes. **Contextual:** Those that need to be related to the particular programme in its context. **Relational:** Those that are about the quality of relationships that our work develops.

Impacts: The wider effects of what we have done, socially, economically, environmentally and spiritually. We have to accept in humility that others may have contributed to these wider effects. In most contexts it will be sufficient to measure the outputs and the outcomes and to seek to understand what the impacts may be. In other contexts it will be necessary to measure the wider impacts.

Purpose: The Salvation Army's purpose is to participate in God's mission for the world. The change we seek is to realise God's vision for his world. To make this vision a reality, we need to have a clear purpose and be able to describe what it will look like when we arrive. To be held accountable, it is essential that each person and programme in The Salvation Army can answer the following "purpose" questions: Why is it important to take this journey? What will change because of this journey? What would happen if we did nothing?

Unifying Framework for Measurement: An overarching explanation of how The Army will measure the transformative impact it seeks; the anchoring and essential ingredients that will be common across the globe.

Communities of practice: A group of people who, while sharing a common concern or question, seek to deepen their understanding of a given topic by learning together as they pursue their individual work. These communities are based on the notion that peers exchange knowledge, acquire skills, and change their practice in and through social relationships.