

Walking the Tightrope

How Foundations Can Find a Balance Between Learning and Accountability Lenses

March 7th, 2023

A photograph showing a person's legs and feet as they walk a tightrope. The person is wearing dark trousers and brown leather shoes. The tightrope is a thick, white, ribbed rope that curves across the frame. In the background, a cityscape with various buildings is visible under a hazy sky.

Do Good. Do Better.

01 – Introduction to webinar and Community of Practice

02 – Key insights from the second year

03 – Panel and Q & A

Introducing the speakers



**Leonora
Buckland**

Co-author of the report
and Senior Researcher
at the Esade Center for
Social Impact



**Lisa
Hehenberger**

Director of the
Esade Center
for Social Impact



Savi Mull

Senior Evaluation Manager
at Laudes Foundation



Jeremy Nicholls

Assurance Framework
Lead for SDG Impact
Standards at the United
Nations Development
Programme



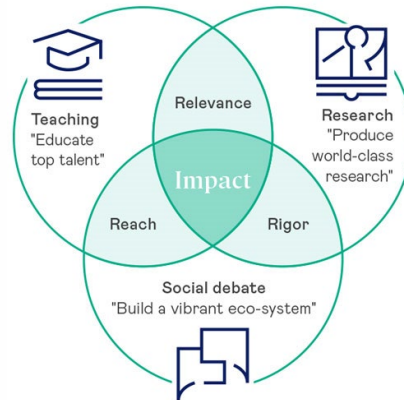
Tinne Vandensande

Senior Programme
Coordinator and Head of
Evaluation at the King
Baudouin Foundation

Esade Center for Social Impact (ECSI)

ECSI works toward a world in which people and organizations have the capacity to better understand and solve complex global challenges to regenerate the environment and reduce social inequality.

Our synergetic model



What does the ECSI do?

We develop research with rigor, reach, and relevance about and for social impact

What is social impact?

Social Impact is the positive or negative changes experienced by people or the planet as a result of one or several activities

Research areas

- Impact investing
- Impact entrepreneurship
- Impact measurement and management (IMM)

What do we mean by Impact Measurement Management - IMM?



Source: Impact Management Project, own elaboration

Principles and objectives



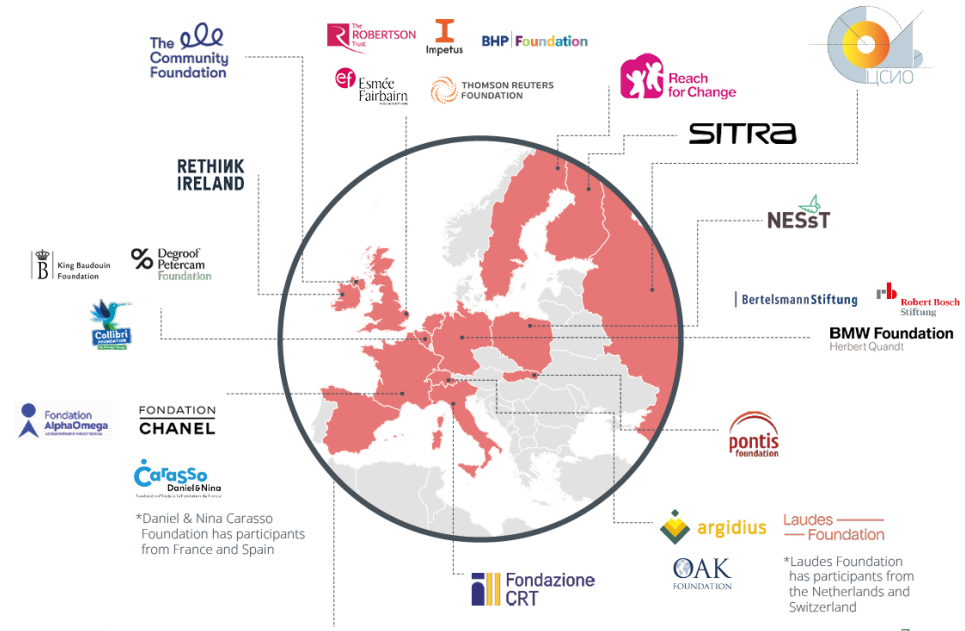
Objectives of the Esade-BBK

Communities of Practice

- To cultivate transparency, knowledge-sharing, and peer exchange on the subject of IMM
- To create a safe space where foundations can share struggles, concerns, even 'failures'
- To jointly move the Europe foundation sector forward, through dialogue and the output of the community
- To facilitate collaborations between foundations

All Community of Practice members on the European map

Foundations from Spain:



01 – Introduction to webinar and Community of Practice

02 – Key insights from the second year

03 – Panel and Q & A

Navigating your way through impact measurement and management

01 Impact management is a journey

We believe that this mindset is essential for foundations – impact management is not a problem to be solved, or even a set of skills to be acquired, but rather a path to set out on.

02 The journey is about steady, intentional progress

Often foundations want to buy an off-the-shelf solution, both technically and otherwise. However, quick wins may not be possible and impact management, like social change, is mostly a long-term game. So, in a mission-oriented organization such as a foundation there is no other choice than to set off on this impact management journey, find fellow travelers, and learn by doing.

03 Managing impact requires a subtle dance between learning and accountability lenses

Foundations need to find the meeting point between these two distinct but not necessarily mutually exclusive agendas. Each is important and necessary.

04 A multitude of stakeholder voices need to be included in impact management

There are multiple stakeholders, voices, and influences relevant to proper impact management which creates opportunity but also complexity. Are the voices of people or communities whose lives are affected by philanthropy incorporated into impact-related decision-making?

05 Philanthropy has some blind spots which must be addressed to futureproof philanthropy

Futureproofing philanthropy means incorporating a diversity and inclusion lens in impact management and cultivating impact transparency. A clear and highly-functioning governance process is needed to ensure foundations are reaching their impact goals, however governance has often been a blind spot for philanthropy.

Figure 5. Navigating your way through impact measurement and management. Source: Documental

1. Impact management is a journey

Impact management is not a problem to be solved, or even a set of skills to be acquired, but rather a path to set out on.

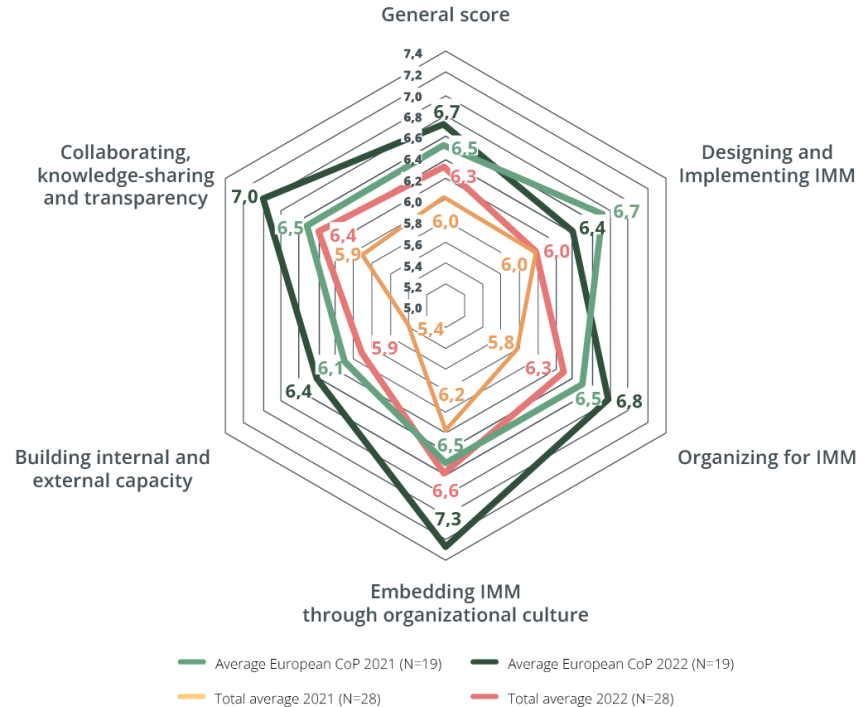
In an earlier study, we identified 5 key themes:

1. Designing an impact management approach
2. Resourcing and organizing for impact management
3. Embedding impact management through organizational culture
4. Building internal and external capacity to manage impact
5. Collaborating, sharing knowledge and being transparent to support impact management



2. The journey is about steady, intentional progress

Average score per theme of the Impact Management Learning Journey Roadmap for Foundations (2021-2022)



Source: Results of diagnostic survey, foundations self-assessment, data from European and Spanish CoPs (2021-2022).

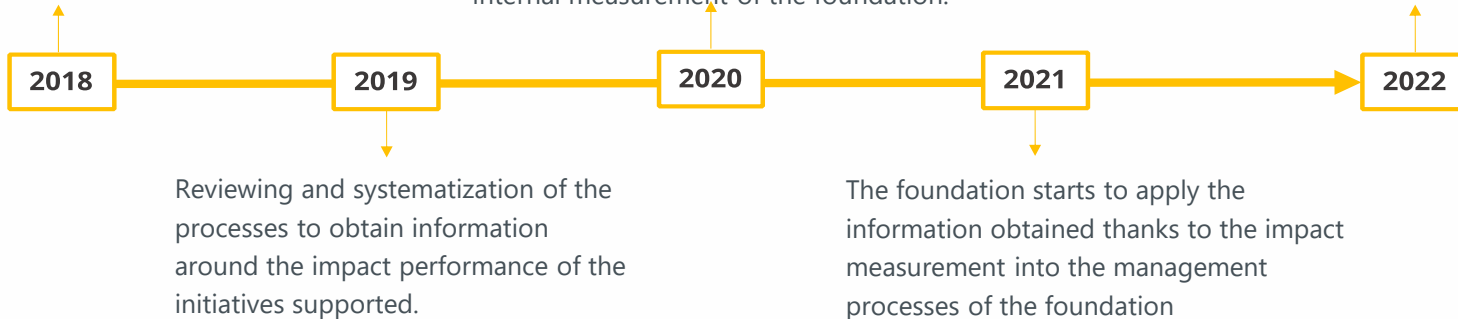
Note: Sample includes only those who filled out the survey both in 2021 and 2022 for comparative purposes. Those foundations who only filled out the survey in one year (either 2021 or 2022) are not included in this sample.

2. The journey is about steady, intentional progress



The Open Value Foundation's assessment of progress along the impact management journey

- First Theory of Change (ToC) of the foundation.
- First tool to evaluate the impact initiative according to their ToC.
- Training workshop and collaborative review of the foundation's ToC by the team.
- Scoreboards are set by area, improving the internal measurement of the foundation.
- Digitalization process of the IMM tools.
- Alliances with partners who offer external evaluations to measure the improvement of the quality of life of the beneficiaries.



3. Managing impact requires a subtle dance between learning and accountability lenses



The primary role of evidence is to be useful to the organizations we fund and are doing the difficult work. Evidence has to be at the service of this work.



It is easy to fall into the accountability trap and to miss out on learning, resorting to a tick-boxing exercise.

4. A multitude of stakeholder voices need to be included



The relational capital of King Baudouin Foundation

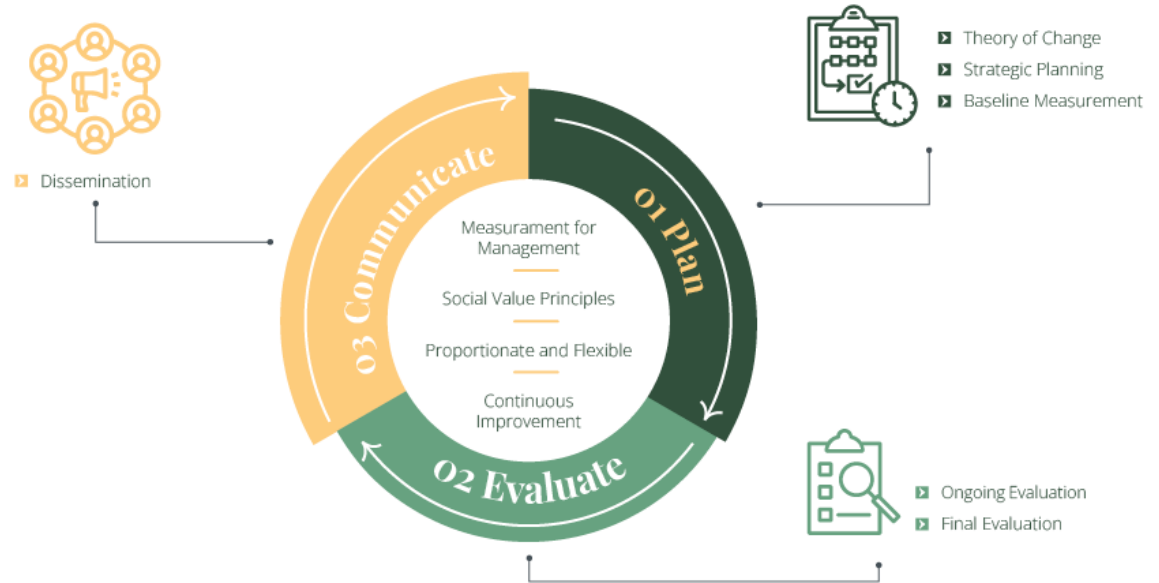


Source: Slide by the King Baudouin Foundation at the face-to-face event of the Community of Practice in October 2022.

4. A multitude of stakeholder voices need to be included

RETHINK IRELAND Our Social Innovation Fund

Elements of Rethink Ireland's Impact Management Approach with its awardees



5. Philanthropy needs to address its blind spots

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
- Impact Transparency
- Governance of Impact



There is always more work to be done on diversity. Diversity is difficult in the governance system because it implies ceding some power.



Everyone should be involved - IMM should be mainstream in all processes, this is key for efficiency, IMM should create value, to do this is to link it to decision-making.



01 – Introduction to webinar and Community of Practice

02 – Key insights from the second year

03 – Panel and Q & A

Introducing the panelists



Savi Mull

Senior Evaluation Manager at
Laudes Foundation



Jeremy Nicholls

Assurance Framework Lead for
SDG Impact Standards at the
United Nations Development
Programme



Tinne Vandensande

Senior Programme
Coordinator and Head of
Evaluation at the King
Baudouin Foundation

Thank you!