



# Measuring Civic Impact 1



## Challenges in Measuring Impact

- Lack of a common framework for measuring civic impact.
- Importance of identifying and measuring various forms of impact beyond economic factors.
- Need for metrics or ratings meaningful to communities.
- Acknowledgment of the significance of both successful and unsuccessful outcomes in measurement.

## Shared Language and Definition

- The language used by universities may not resonate with the community.
- Importance of communicating in a language understandable to all stakeholders.
- Need for a common language or translator to bridge the gap between academia and community.

## Metrics & Evaluation

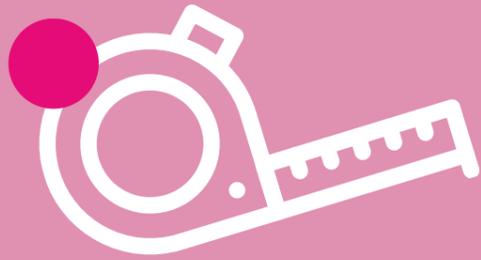
- Challenges in selecting appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track impact.
- Tension between the desire for positive metrics and the reality of impact, especially in research projects.
- Integration of organisation-wide impact with project-level impact.
- Longevity considerations beyond funding periods.
- How can we use existing tools like the Civic Impact framework? TASO MOAT tool?

## Practical Implementation

- Examination of current methods and reasons for data collection.
- Use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques.
- Use case studies and storytelling for capturing impact.
- Use resources like MOAT for standardised outcomes and activities; create outcomes for civic activity.

## Strategic Approach

- Strategic planning for measuring and evaluating civic impact; this ensures a joined-up approach across a university/ partnership.
- Engaging partners in the development of:
  - Clear mission statements
  - Objectives
- Use approaches like Theory of Change and the Most Significant Change approaches.
- Integrate civic impact into institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and strategic plans.



# Measuring Civic Impact 2



## Challenges in Measuring Impact

- A common framework to measure civic impact.
- Understanding data and other information currently collected in universities that could be used to measure impact.
- A case study approach can be limited in its ability to capture impact.
- There is friction in what a university wants to measure and whether it aligns with what communities want to measure.

## Shared Language and Definition

- Discrepancy between academic language and community understanding.
  - There is a need to co-define terminology in partnerships.
- Importance of communicating in a language understood by all.
- Exploring metrics and ratings meaningful to all involved.
- Emphasizing transparency and honesty in reporting.

## Existing Frameworks

- What resources exist that could be tailored to civic activities:
  - Citizen Prosperity Index.
  - CityREDI's Civic Index
  - TASO's MOAT
  - Change Busters
  - Social Value Framework.

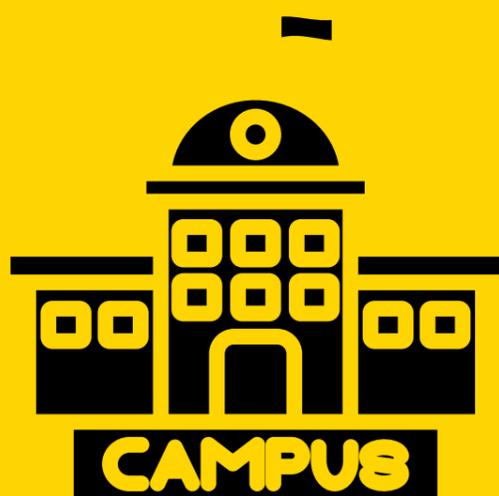
## Practical Implementation

- Be clear about what to measure and how you will gather the information.
- Train staff in informal contexts to support this.
- Use information gathered to produce a resource to tell the story of civic impact.

## Theory of Change

- Use a Theory of Change approach in your partnership.
  - Develop this in collaboration.
  - Return to it periodically and amend it.
  - Use it as a tool to tell a story of change.

# Valuing & Embedding Civic Engagement in Organisational Strategy



## Resource for Civic

- Tight financial environments pose challenges.
- Strategies for making civic activity sustainable within budget constraints:
  - Seek external funding sources.
  - Integrate civic activity into strategic plans.
  - Establish dedicated teams with agency and resources.
  - Build partnerships with external organisations.

## Leadership

- Characteristics of effective civic leaders:
- Ability to convene and facilitate collaboration.
  - Empowerment of colleagues.
  - Track impact, articulate achievements and celebrate success.
  - Manage perfectionism
- Challenges in navigating organisational structures and cultural norms:
- Timescales and complexity.
  - Siloed working.
  - Inequity in staff valuation.
  - Emotional labour and well-being toll.
- Develop evaluation frameworks to monitor and communicate civic activity.
- Work with partners to co-create this.
  - Use the outputs of this work to champion civic activity.

## Working in Partnership

- Strategies for building and sustaining partnerships:
- Establish shared language and goals.
  - Proactively engage with what the community and partnership organisations need.
  - Invest in networking, community listening and relationship building.
  - Foster reciprocal relationships and share resources.
  - Discuss power dynamics and resource disparities.
  - Set up structured rules of engagement/guidelines and training for staff across organisations so they are clear about university priorities.

## Strategic Alignment

- Strategies for integrating civic activity:
- Incorporate social impact and place-based projects into teaching.
  - Align with strategic plans and KPIs.
  - Understand the link between participation in civic activities and student outcomes or research income.
    - Be able to communicate this effectively to university leaders.
  - Foster a culture of civic responsibility and social impact. with staff by celebrating and raising the profile of the work.

## Creating an Culture of Civic Responsibility

- Have clear processes for gathering and sharing civic activities across a university.
- Establish networks, training and communities of practice to support staff to develop their understanding and approach to civic work.
- Work across departments to ensure civic activity is credited within progression structures.



# Building and Maintaining Effective & Equitable Partnerships

**Engagement Strategies**

- Sharing working contexts.
- What does equitable engagement look like in our context?
- Incorporating community voices in decision-making; on funding panels and in co-creation of services.
- Assessing project necessity; are we the right organisation to do this project or is there a better fit in the community?

**Navigating Organisational Silos**

- Risk of overlapping work.
- Understanding community relationships and the importance of who holds the relationship.
- Awareness of other departments' activities.
- Making funding decisions equitable across a university.
- Universities internally have unbalanced equity to navigate.

**Equitable Practices**

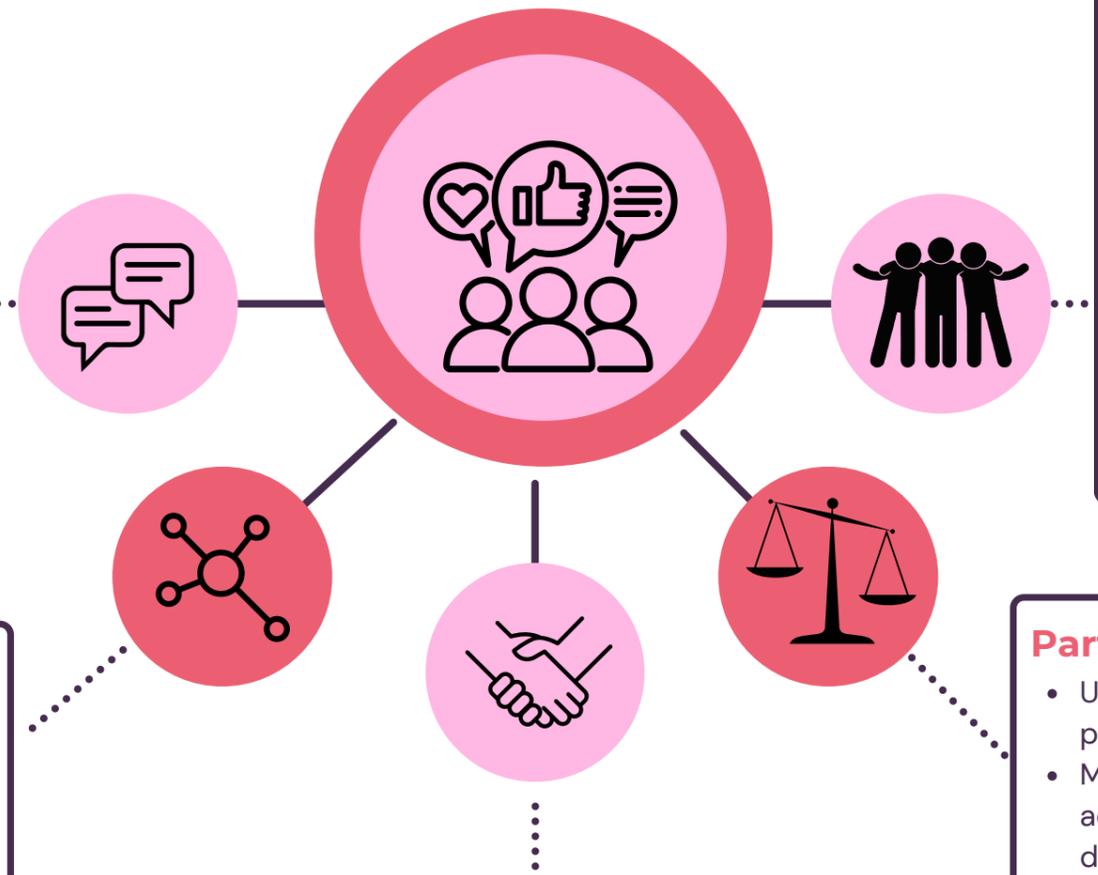
- Trust, inclusion, and openness.
- Valuing all opinions and diversity of knowledge.
- Balancing organisational priorities within the university and with external partners and organisations.
- Co-designing projects with partners; from the start at the point of initial outline through to delivery and evaluation.
- Making effective use of governance structures within a university and across a partnership.

**Challenges in Partnership Building**

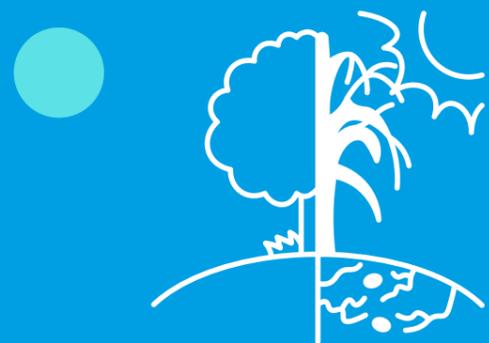
- Relational roles are often undervalued and this leads to high staff turnover.
- Trust is eroded when staff change.
- Divide between academic and professional staff.
- Integrating non-university representation.
- Balancing community, corporate, and university involvement.

**Partnership Dynamics**

- Understanding perceived and actual power imbalance by discussing it.
- Motivations for partnership; acknowledge alignment and difference.
- Management of staffing and funding.
- Differences in university and external partner working styles.
- Maintaining partnerships during staffing changes.
- Making use of existing resources e.g. NCCPE partnership cycle and partnership planning resources.



# Collaborating with Communities to Address the Climate Agenda



## Supporting and Building Local Climate Action Networks

- Universities can act as a convenor for local climate action networks.
- Link research with community organisations and need.
- Universities can build internal climate action networks.
- Supporting local climate action networks to work with councils and other organisations.

## The Role of a University in the Climate Crisis

- Integrating climate literacy programmes into university curriculum, e.g. Climate Fresk.
- Demonstrating value against Sustainable Development Goals in all courses.
- Embedding the skills needed for 'green jobs' within courses.
- Leading the way in modelling sustainable solutions to infrastructure and buildings.
- Leading engaged research into sustainable technologies.

## Engaging Communities and Stakeholders

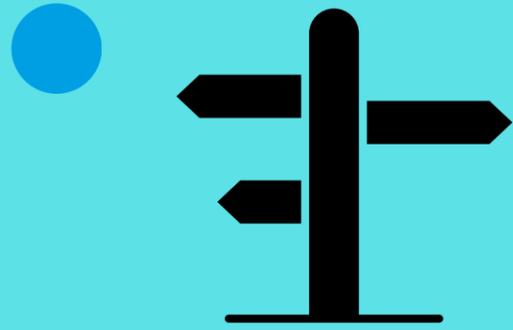
- Leveraging universities' convening power for collective action.
- Use a range of communication techniques to communicate with communities about climate change.
- Meeting communities where they are and avoiding a deficit model of education.
- Combining events on the climate agenda with issues that are more pressing e.g. cost of living.
- Ensuring diverse attendance and events and strategies to do so.

## Transition to Net Zero

- Initiatives to increase biodiversity and including the community within these activities.
- Working on citizen science projects on climate change.
- Challenges and opportunities in addressing climate change within heritage cities.
- Working with international students to give them a sense of belonging.

## Sustainable Procurement and Energy Challenges

- Exploring sustainable procurement opportunities and challenges.
- Addressing barriers to green energy procurement and supply chain emissions.
- Working with supply chains to reduce emissions.
- Being transparent about scope 3 carbon emissions.



# Navigating Complex Local & Political Geographies



## Working Together

- Understanding the different organisations within a place:
  - How do they operate?
  - What are their strategic aims?
  - Where can we work together?
  - How do our skills and resource compliment each other?
- Prioritising the development of reciprocal relationships.
- Developing governance and decision making processes.

## Challenges within a University

- Internal complexities within universities can monopolise time and can reinforce conflicting interpretations of civic/social impact.
- Need for informal internal structures to facilitate attendance at external meetings.
- Managing tensions between academic freedom and political decision-making.
- Be open about being a large organisation with internal bureaucracy.

## Strategic Approaches

- Identifying mechanisms for policy influence and building relationships with policymakers; locally and nationally.
  - Align this with research agendas.
- Ensure attendance at key local meetings for anchor institutions, these may be facilitated by councils, NHS trusts or other convenors.
- Network with key local stakeholders e.g. businesses, councils to identify areas where a university can meet a need in the locality e.g. skills development, net-zero, consultancy.

## Power & Decision Making

- Find out where political power is held in your place.
- What decisions are they able to make locally?
  - How does this affect a university?
- What governance structures could be used across a partnership to facilitate decision making and share power?

## Partnership Contexts

- Understand that all organisations have their own internal complexities and approaches to managing external partnerships.
- Discuss potential conflicts between university activities and local business/community interests.
- What are the challenges present in a place?
  - How are they being addressed currently?
  - What unique services could a university bring to this work?



# Mobilising Knowledge



## Knowledge Exchange for Civic Impact

- Internal university mapping of what relationships currently exist.
- Create opportunities to link researchers and communities.
- Champion the good practices already going on.
- Value all types of knowledge (within and outside a university).
- Use creative facilitation techniques to work with communities.
- Maintain relationships between funding rounds.

## Community Listening

- Use community listening techniques to identify common challenges and knowledge.
- Challenges with increased connections;
  - There is limited resource available, there needs to be a mechanism for saying 'No'.
  - Agree on some common goals to help prioritise and focus activity.
- Co-develop strategies with community input - Go where they are
  - Move away from doing-to and the control culture of universities.
  - Acknowledging there is a balance between the need to listen with the need to be action focussed.



## Relationship Building

- Participate in existing community & anchor institute networks, meetings & boards.
- Establish clear partnership goals.
- Be clear and articulate with partners what the university can bring to a partnership.
- Be open and transparent about what a university wants from a relationship and inviting partners to do the same.
- Develop a shared language.
- Clarify the route to the connector role and valuing this role.

## Community Wealth Building

What is the role of a university in community wealth building?

- Be explicit about what you can offer e.g. training, research, knowledge exchange, and facilities.
- Support social enterprises & small local suppliers to access procurement systems, procure for social value & locally.
- Work together with social enterprises to share resources and expertise.
- Support students and graduates to start social enterprises & stay in the area.
- Support local people into work.

## Tracking Impact

- What is the impact of networking and community listening activities?
  - How can we track this over time?
- Understanding the motivations for impact for universities and partners.
- How are they similar and different?
- What are the anchor narratives for the universities strategic aims and how does this relate to knowledge exchange and community engagement?



# Balancing Needs of the Locals / Local Communities, Staff & Students



## Overcoming Bureaucracy & Silos

- Create opportunities for working across teams and departments, staff and students within universities.
- Co-ordinating within a university to ensure effective community engagement across the departments and schools; reducing duplication of effort and the likelihood of overburdening the same communities.

## Authentic Engagement

- Emphasizing transparency, authenticity, and passion in community interactions.
- Understanding power dynamics and fostering inclusive participation.
- Using commonalities and shared experiences to build connections and trust.

## Leveraging HR & Other Structures

- Exploring HR's role in promoting staff volunteering and participation.
- Using HR processes, and others (e.g. students union), for tracking and supporting volunteering efforts.
- Positioning staff and student volunteering to use their unique skill set e.g trustee positions, school governors etc.

## Co-designing Solutions

- Co-designing inclusive behaviours and language to facilitate meaningful engagement.
  - Create opportunities to do this with community partners, staff and students,
- Applying principles of participatory action research to shape civic activities.

## Empowering Student and Staff Involvement

- Encouraging involvement of staff and students beyond the usual suspects.
  - Create accessible opportunities e.g. online, specific time commitment.
- Overcoming hierarchical perceptions of universities to foster inclusivity.
  - Creating opportunities to discuss and develop strategies to address it.
- Addressing challenges in reaching "hard to reach" communities and coordinating activities across institutions.