

2021 Year in Review

Although the Central Texas nonprofit community experienced the ongoing impacts of a triple pandemic in 2021 (COVID-19, racial reckoning, and economic instability), Mission Capital successfully managed Good Measure programs alongside a highly engaged Steering Committee. Good Measure continued to build and sustain cultures of data, learning and inquiry to amplify community impact, and shifted focus towards new objectives: intentional inclusion, a pivot to community-driven evaluation, increased access beyond traditional nonprofit grantees of Steering Committee members, and building a community of reflection and shared learning for nonprofit organizations, leaders, and a network of funders. We also continued to pivot our work in important ways in responsive to both the world around us (e.g., ongoing virtual programming) and our commitment to race equity.

Since 2016, Mission Capital has been pleased to provide backbone support for Good Measure. Good Measure is a funder-driven initiative that works with Central Texas nonprofits to creatively and strategically use data to make a bigger impact in the local community. Good Measure's work would not be possible without the support of Steering and Advisory Committee members. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our collaboration.

Steering Committee

Andy Roddick Foundation
Applied Materials
Hogg Foundation
Michael and Susan Dell Foundation
St. David's Foundation
United Way

Advisory Committee

Anderson Family Charitable Foundation
Bill Wood Foundation
Genevieve and Ward Orsinger Foundation
Georgetown Health Foundation
Social Solutions
Webber Family Foundation

The steering committee established four key goals (highlighted in the table below) and works diligently along with Mission Capital Staff to accomplish them through a wide variety of targeted activities.

1. Invest in non-profit data and evaluation training and resources
2. Encourage and equip funders to support grant partners data and evaluation efforts
3. Advocate for community data systems and infrastructure
4. Collectively build and sustain cultures of data, learning and equity

2021 Good Measure Program & Goals Overview	Invest in non-profit data and eval training & resources	Encourage and equip funders	Advocate for community data systems and infrastructure	Collectively build and sustain cultures of data, learning and equity
Data Leaders Academy – picked by alumni, often taught by alumni	X			X
Measuring What Matters Evaluation – external evaluator chosen and led by external review (GM Alumni and two funders)			X	X
Partners in Measurement – shifted to three sessions in 2021 – with mid-year structured interviews and revised plans for 2022 to be discussed in the retreat early 2022.	X	X		X
Monthly Good Measure Newsletter	X	X	X	X
Evaluation Mini-Grants ¹ focused on community driven evaluation – chosen by DLA Alumni – expanded from 3 to 4 to allow smaller organizations to compete. Long term questions on how to ensure less established non-profits can compete.	X	X		X
Good Measure Gathering -codesigned by a group of Good Measure Alumni and focused on community driven evaluation efforts.	X	X	X	X
Good Measure rapid grants activity – first of its kind – gave more funds to smaller organizations to expand community driven evaluation efforts – offered feedback to unsuccessful applicants and ongoing technical assistance to all applicants.	X			X
Data Leaders Academy video to explain Guiding Principles & Equity Shift in a non-written format to increase access.	X	X		X

Advancing equity

Good Measure’s Steering Committee continued their commitment to embed race equity across all offerings. In 2021, we lived into this commitment by making key changes to existing Good Measure programming to advance equity, including:

Intentional inclusion: All participants in competitive programs and selection processes were chosen by review teams made up of program alumni, rather than Steering Committee members and Mission Capital staff. Alumni and partners were recruited both through the Good Measure newsletter and through personal invitation by Mission Capital staff when a few more were needed. Reviewers were thanked with \$50-100 depending on the amount of work required and trainings were held prior to asynchronous review.

Community-driven evaluation: The planned evaluation of Measuring What Matters was competitively bid out and structured as a community driven effort, in which program alumni and coaching staff were included throughout evaluation efforts, Good Measure Community members served on the selection committee and two

¹ Formerly known as Special Projects

options were presented to the steering committee for the final choice. Even the evaluation process itself was reworking in October to allow more space for community input – and the process for gathering that input was adapted in November to give folks deeply committed to the work but overcommitted in their scheduling the opportunity to serve on the community advisory committee in a variety of ways. These increased efforts to make space for community driven work cost us in both time (timeline extended through February to complete work) and resources (increased evaluation costs by \$10,500).

Increasing access: Competitive programs again were opened to nonprofits beyond Steering and Advisory Committee funders’ grantees for the second year in a row – with technical assistance and support to all who requested it. A few examples of the success of this work included:

- Good Measure Gathering Planning Committee included six alumni of Good Measure programs. The group met from June to October to plan an event that would be “much more than another zoom meeting”. The integration of health and wellness was a nod to the stress of the pandemic for non-profits and funders alike, the focus on community driven evaluation spoke to the move toward equity in data and evaluation. The addition of rapid grants with stacked awards (so the smallest non-profits could earn the most funding) speaks to the need to support smaller, community led non-profits.
- Rapid Grants Proposal: at the direction of the Good Measuring Gathering Planning Committee, a rapid grants proposal was held the day before the gathering. Seven organizations competed in the process – four of whom had annual budgets under \$500,000 and two of whom were not Mission Capital members. Four organizations responded to the post-award survey, and generally the responses were enormously positive with all four recommending GM repeat the process. One person’s link to attend the closing ceremony didn’t work and the person found that very frustrating.

Reflection and shared learning: Data Leaders Academy alumni engaged in a six-month process to revisit their guiding principles to embed race equity. New Guiding Principles for Data Leaders were shared widely via the May Good Measure blog, the June Partners in Measurement presentation, and by St David’s Foundation in their July newsletter.

Key 2021 Activities

In 2021, thanks to the commitment of Good Measure funders and the support of a deeply engaged steering committee, Mission Capital continued to manage successfully traditional programs through the ongoing pandemic and staff transitions. Programs that continued in 2021 include: **Partners in Measurement funder learning series, Data Leaders Academy, Evaluation Mini-Grants (formerly known as Special Projects Fund), and the fall 2021 Good Measure virtual gathering.**

We estimate that least **166 unique nonprofit leaders, funders and community members** engaged with Good Measure offerings in 2021. This does not include those who downloaded or streamed content from the Good Measure website, or open rates on Good Measure blog posts and monthly e-newsletters. Not offering Measuring What Matters and less PIM webinars meant numbers served were slightly lower than originally projected.

Mission Capital’s shift to virtual programming impacts our ability to collect post event feedback on Good Measure offerings. We experimented with new measurement approaches, including shorter surveys throughout the November Good Measure convening with continuous feedback on the importance of participation. Survey results will be segmented to understand not only the effects of the daylong effort but how they reenforced ideas highlighted throughout the year on community driven evaluation efforts and other tools to embed equity. Moreover, the Measuring What Matters evaluation offers some feedback on broader Good Measure program goals.

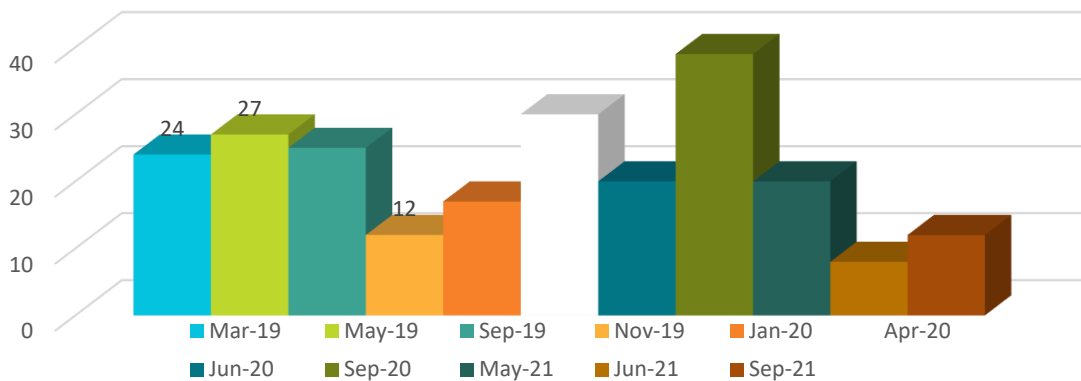
Partners in Measurement

Partners in Measurement (PIM) is a learning series for funders to consider how they can “walk the talk” in supporting grant partners in their use of data for learning and program improvement. 2021 PIM sessions continued to adjust to a virtual format and hosted more intimate groups than prior years. Mission Capital used participant feedback from sessions hosted in early 2021 to adjust programming later in the year. For example, we learned that the virtual format made networking and offline idea sharing more challenging. In response, the September agenda included a single conversation guided by Nichole Aston, which gave participants ample time to talk with one another and share ideas.

2021 PIM sessions:

- Reflections on COVID relief funding opportunities and lessons learned, co-sponsored by Good Measure and Central Texas Evaluation Funders – May 6, 2021 (24 registered, 20 attended)
- Reflections from Data Leaders Academy participants on revising the Data Champion Guiding Principles to embed equity – June 17, 2021 (17 registered, 8 attended)
- Tools you can use for equitable funding & evaluation practices – September 30, 2021 (13 attended)

Partners in Measurement Attendance History



After the first two PIM sessions in 2021, the Director of Collective Impact interviewed three partners who had attended the first two sessions and three partners who had attended in prior years but *did not* attend the first or second session. These brief phone interviews helped us gather real-time feedback on the PIM model. Key learnings included:

- Zoom can’t compete with conversation over breakfast tacos
 - “The best part of PIM was standing over a breakfast taco with a colleague from another foundation and sharing ideas and stories. Someone would mention they were trying new software and a month or two later you’d ask – how did it go? Should we consider it” this participant also noted – “PIM over zoom can’t compete with meeting over breakfast tacos.”
- COVID forced us to change our priorities – very quickly.
 - “Foundation work is already one step removed from the people we are trying to help – that’s where I need to invest my time since COVID began – in those people. We are working so hard to shift how we do the work, and who we do it for – I don’t have time to talk about the work – I need to do it every day.”
- Foundations are so busy. They don’t have time to consider and think -- just to do.

- o “I know philosophically that we should have more space because the work of driving from place to place is gone. But somehow that has made things more constricted – not less.”

Interview insights were shared with steering committee members over the summer months and were used to formulate the last session, which focused on time to share and engage with one another and concrete tools to use in their own work. As we plan for 2021, we are giving thoughtful consideration to how this model works best in a virtual setting.

Data Leaders Academy

The Data Leaders Academy (DLA) is a multi-session series designed for nonprofit staff who are interested in building their capacity to champion data and evaluation to amplify impact and build an organizational learning culture. DLA uses the Principles for Data and Learning Champions and the *Great Nonprofit Evaluation Reboot* to guide learning, including additional resources centering leadership and responsive to participant needs.

The 2021 DLA series saw 17 applications, with 19 leaders representing 14 organizations ultimately participating in the program. Seven virtual monthly sessions were held from May – October. Only 14 people completed the program. Based on this year, program facilitators recommend shortening the overall engagement. Participants left the program for a variety of reasons (dropouts, job changes, packed schedules) over the six-month period. We propose considering shorter alternatives: three-hour weekly meetings over eight weeks or a spring/fall semester model. We will conduct focus groups of DLA members to discuss future plans in January and share lessons learned with the steering committee.

In March 2021, Good Measure released its refreshed **Guiding Principles for Data Champions**. The refreshed guidance is a product of Data Leaders Academy participants and alumni’s work to embed equity throughout the principles and center community voice in the data and evaluation process. The new principles represent an important, and ongoing, evolution in Good Measure’s work and commitment to equity. Read more about the revision process on [Good Measure’s blog](#).

Principle 1: We advocate for prioritizing equity centered program-level data that can be used to improve our work and strengthen our mission.

Principle 2: We are dedicated to amplifying community voice and lived experience through transparent conversations in our organizations about the complexity of defining and achieving outcomes, and the cost of measuring impact.

Principle 3: We are committed to co-creating a culture of learning in our organizations, from front-line staff to the board, which centers the voices and experiences of the priority populations we work with.

Principle 4: We work to establish equitable processes and systems for evaluation.

Principle 5: We ask critical learning questions at all stages of the project and levels of the organization.

Principle 6: We commit to bringing our full selves to this work; to be brave and open to listening to all perspectives, and to be vulnerable and willing to unlearn harmful or inequitable practices.

Principle 7: We recognize we can’t do this work alone; together we build a diverse network of data & evaluation allies with colleagues and peers in the nonprofit sector.

The Guiding Principles were turned into a video (shared at the Good Measure Gathering) to provide more accessible content in a three-minute, five-minute, or 30-minute time frame. The full video is [available online](#), and we will track views and shares in this new format for sharing our work. Good Measure will continue to seek new ways to make its learnings more easily accessible to diverse communities.

Evaluation Mini-Grants

The 2021 Evaluation Mini-Grants program (formerly Special Projects Fund) focused on community-driven evaluation to enhance program efficacy and impact. Good Measure promoted and managed the application process in summer 2021. Once again, grants were scored by Good Measure Alumni, with added questions in the scoring rubric to highlight organizations that were led by (board and executives) or staffed by the communities they serve. We modeled our questions on those used by Steering Committee foundations members, but the process had unexpected outcomes. A grant writer at one non-profit serving LGBTQ community requested the sexual orientation and gender identity of her board via email. The move to valuing voices of lived experience must be navigated with caution. We disbursed \$100,200 to selected grant recipients, who also received coaching sessions and an open-door policy for continued technical assistance and support. While historically the mini-grants are offered to two or three organizations, the largest organizations scored the most highly again this year. The Good Measure Steering committee chose to extend the awards to the top four organizations and plans to have real conversations about equity and accessibility at their 2022 retreat. Each of the four organizations proposed different methods to engage their clients in a process to evaluate and formatively improve ongoing program work.

2021 Evaluation Mini-Grant Recipients

Communities in Schools - \$32,000

Texas State Independent Living Center - \$30,000

Boys & Girls Clubs - \$22,500

Hill Country Ride for AIDS - \$15,700

Good Measure Newsletter and Website

The Good Measure Newsletter went out eight times in 2021. We were able to introduce new staff (Kristin duBay Horton in February and Ashika Raval in September), new work (revised guiding principles for Data Leaders Academy in March), new focus on community driven evaluation in a step toward more equitable data and evaluation efforts in April, May, June, August. Moreover, we were able to generate volunteers to serve in decision-making efforts to make our programming more community driven. In 2021 our blogs had 1,109 views, and our newsletters had 4,062 opens and 944 clicks. These rates continue to improve as we enliven our website with less text heavy materials, audiovisual content, and tool sharing which can be accessed more quickly.

Measuring What Matters

As anticipated, Measuring What Matters (the longest-standing Good Measure program) was not offered in 2021 so that a comprehensive program evaluation could be completed. After a competitive bidding process, Good Measure selected Knology to conduct the evaluation. The community-based, participatory evaluation effort included a co-design session on July 28 for alumni, coaches, Mission Capital staff, and Steering Committee members, and staff from the selected evaluation consultant, Knology. A second co-design session was held in late October, with volunteers from the two sessions serving as an advisory committee throughout the evaluation.

Knology’s co-design and participatory process has already revealed powerful feedback about Measuring What Matters’ impact and potential for evolution.

One of the co-design participants eloquently discussed the role of program evaluation to work toward continuous improvement in the programming she oversaw stating that "want to live in a world where philanthropy and nonprofits don't need to exist." The idea of nonprofit programming that seeks to empower communities to put themselves out of a job

“I started working at my agency for \$10/hr with a lot of people [with histories and experiences] that looked like me. Measuring what Matters helped me move up personally within my organization -- it helped my own personal trajectory to a place where not a lot of people look like me.... but I wonder if it also perpetuated a system where a high school degree (instead of a GED), a college degree, a master's degree became key to success. I wonder if Measuring What Matters can build a system that undoes the white supremacy in rewarding that sort of background and accomplishment.”

is refreshing -- and scary. We look forward to ongoing conversation about how the Central Texas nonprofit sector might work itself out of a job, and how data and evaluation might make that occur even more quickly.

Good Measure Gathering 2021: Exploring Community-Driven Evaluation

This year’s Good Measure gathering, taking place in an off year, convened more than 100 alumni and community members. We used the Whova virtual event platform to deepen the participant experience and offer additional ways for them to connect throughout the day -- whether through meetups, job postings, opportunities to talk about the best coffeehouses in Austin, or your favorite neighborhood remote working location. More than 53 participants took advantage of these connection and networking tools.

Despite all this interactivity, only 32 participants filled out the pre-event survey and 21 completed the post-event tool. Roughly 30% of participants completed the brief tools between breakout sessions. This once again raises the question of how to garner meaningful engagement around evaluation of events in a virtual world. Given the enormously small sample size and the bias within it – it is difficult to get a good sense of people’s conference experience. A few key comments from participants capture the themes of the feedback:

- “Meme Styles was fire! I wish I’d brought more of my staff.”
- “Cortney was amazing – great to learn from her.”
- “Whova app made it so easy to keep track of sessions and stay in touch with participants.”
- “I’m looking for inspiration from the plenary speakers.”
- “Wondering how to use data to drive engagement and improve programming – hoping I can learn that here.”
- “Thank you so much for this powerful and inspiring event. Hearing the voices and passion of those who are pursuing change was an invigorating experience and truly inspiring.”
- “I want to take away specific ideas I can bring to my team about building community leadership more deeply and authentically into our work. I want to take away specific ideas I can bring to my team about building community leadership more deeply and authentically into our work.”

Good Measure Governance and Staff

In 2021, the Good Measure Steering Committee remained highly engaged and provided ongoing support and guidance. Mission Capital provided backbone support to the committee by facilitating monthly, virtual

committee meetings and ensuring regular group communications. The next Good Measure Steering Committee retreat will take place in early 2022 so that the completed Measuring What Matters evaluation can inform planning. In the coming year, the Steering Committee plans to rethink its structure and to consider adding members to diversify perspectives in the thinking behind the work.

The Good Measure Advisory Committee likewise played an important support role, meeting three times in 2021 and participating as external reviewers across programs. In 2021, Good Measure saw the addition of a new Advisory Committee member (Social Solutions) and the departure of another member (Notley Ventures).

We also cannot understate the vital role of numerous partner organizations that shared in decision-making throughout 2021 programming. The many leaders who volunteered or engaged for a stipend demonstrate the Good Measure community's deep commitment and willingness to work to support its continued growth.

Mission Capital's backbone team had several staff changes in this past year -- and the addition of new staff has brought in new ideas and skillsets. [Kristin duBay Horton](#), our new Director of Collective Impact, brings 20+ years of community driven evaluation experience, as well as ample experience in collective impact from a variety of perspectives. Kristin joined the Mission Capital Team in January. After a long search for a Good Measure Consultant, we filled the role internally from March through June. **Amanda Miller** came to Mission Capital after being a part of a Data Leaders Academy Class. Though Amanda left Mission Capital in June she continues to lead the Current Data Leaders Class. We are currently recruiting for a Consultant to fill that role. Additionally, a new Collective Impact Program Specialist, [Ashika Raval](#), brings both a recent graduate degree from the UT School of Social Work Master's program and front-line evaluation experience from previous work at Communities in Schools. As we continue to build our Dream Team, we are using proven measures (like Solutions for Success) to design structures and communication strategies that will continue to move the work forward. Moreover, January we will be welcoming a new Good Measure Senior Consultant. We look forward to sharing their skills and experience – but the hiring team, which included a Good Measure Steering Committee member, was unanimous in their choice.

While staff transitions have created unanticipated knowledge and relationship transfer challenges, they have also created new opportunities. Under Kristin's leadership the team is working to elevate the voices of lived experience in all work, and to seek opportunities for continuous learning within the team. We were able to launch a new training this fall to offer to Good Measure partners: Community Driven Evaluation: What's Life Got to Do with It. This hands-on course has teams work together to consider how they could shift their efforts to engage those they serve in their evaluation and to strategize about the barriers that this shift might pose and to problem solve around them.

Looking Ahead

In early 2022, the Good Measure Steering Committee will convene for a planning retreat that spans the January and February committee meetings. The retreat will focus on lessons learned in the Measuring What Matters Evaluation, 2021 program shifts, and evolving plans for 2022. The committee will also explore how we might 1) best work within our existing budget, 2) expand the reach of our work, 3) evaluate which shifts made due to Covid 19 (e.g., virtual programming also available on-demand) should be made permanent, and 4) new communication channels such as better use of video.

We began extending invitations to our Partners In Measurement events to education funders in Central Texas and offered opportunities for the advisory level group to engage more fully -- through community review of applications for Data Leaders Academy and the Measuring What Matters evaluation. We hope this may spur further investment from those partners.