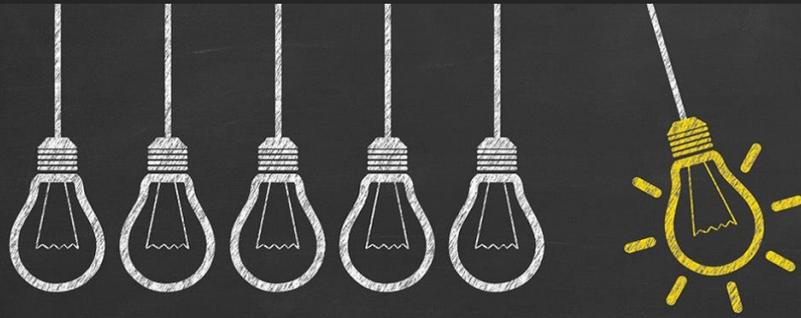


# The Greenlight Approach



Group Discussion

## What Does Good Impact Look Like?

“What do we notice about our concept of impact and that of other organisations?”

“Is there only one definition of impact?”

“How do we know if impact is good?”



**When the plans and activities we engage in results in a set of measurable outcomes, i.e. when we can evidence/see impact.**

**Impact is about movement** – we want to see it! If we can't see it, we have to go back to the drawing board.

**It's good when it aligns with the original objectives that we set;** and even better when it surpasses them!

**It's good when we didn't have to move heaven and earth to achieve it,** i.e. the effort and resources utilised were commensurate with what was achieved.

**It's good the results show that people are taking ownership for their lives and journeys** – there is decreased dependence and increased dignity.

**We need to recognise that in many of our programmes we are probably feeding dependency without meaning to.** Are we brave enough to look in the mirror and change this in order to get the impact we want and that South Africa needs?

**Good impact may be harder to achieve in some circumstances than others** – there is deep trauma within our country, a deep level of injury that needs to be dealt with ... we can't just say “pull up your socks and get on with it!” Many are immobilised or frozen by high levels of trauma or lack of self-worth and that's why good impact has to have a component of social healing involved.

**If we are achieving good impact, we need to be documenting it** so that it informs policy – this will lead to system change.

**For us, good impact is the consequence of shifting philosophy** – from “how can we help?” to “how can we help you to help yourself?”

**Many funders are short-term in their thinking and encourage us to report only on outputs.** We need to push back and educate them about what good impact looks like and inform them as to how impact assessment should be done. But we also need to balance the long-term perspective with what needs to be done today. Got to be realistic.

**Donors are most often driven by numbers.** Can we work with them to move the conversation from quantity to accountability, which is underpinned by qualitative data?

**Impact throws an anchor into the future** that then creates hope and activates our core muscles for future efforts.

**If you want good impact, don't start with your solution.** Assumptions are the mother of all ... (you know the saying!) Listen to needs on the ground and align engagements accordingly – it's not about your aspirations, but theirs.

**When you achieve good impact, it's a powerful thing** ... it changes the mindset of your beneficiaries, your organisation, your funders, and yes, eventually the authorities.

**Looking at a person holistically requires 2 lenses** – soft and hard. What will motivate them to change? (can I do this, is it worth it?) What do they need regarding knowledge and skills? Transferring hard skills is useless without dealing with the internal trauma or social healing that is required – the seeds will fall on bare ground and not fruit. True social development that results in sustainable impact is a long-term process that requires patience.

**There are primary and secondary successes to be had.** Don't assume that if someone hasn't made it through your programme that they were not suited/committed/motivated or that you failed. Look to see where they are now and you might just find that your engagement with them, no matter how brief, activated something inside them to make a choice and go out to make a better life for themselves ... it just wasn't with you.

**Impact is everybody's business, including government, business and civil society.** We cannot sleep contentedly until we know that everyone's basic human rights are important.

**What is your idea of GOOD impact?**