

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPACT MANAGEMENT

CASE STUDY

Halogen Foundation Singapore

In this case study, Halogen Foundation Singapore (Halogen) shares their experience on developing an impact management¹ framework for a youth entrepreneurship programme in Singapore. Their approach has helped them improve the programme, measure change more accurately and be more accountable to partners and funders. Keys to their success include contextualising existing tools, working with others, and continually revising their approach.

About Halogen Foundation Singapore

Founded in 2003, Halogen is an Institution of Public Character (IPC) charity that believes in every young person's innate potential to influence and lead, and to become positive change agents. Halogen is dedicated to building the character, mindset and skills of young people through leadership and entrepreneurship development.

Context

This case study focuses on Halogen's experience on developing an impact management framework for the 'Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship' (NFTE) programme – a year-long initiative that promotes youth entrepreneurship. Being a partner of the U.S. based non-profit organisation NFTE, Halogen holds a license to run the NFTE programme in Singapore. Since the programme's inception in Singapore in 2014, Halogen and its stakeholders have invested substantial time and resources to the programme (e.g. the programme for each cohort of youth is 60 hours over the course of a year). This has motivated Halogen to increase their emphasis on impact management for the programme.

Selecting the Right Tools

- To understand how best to measure the impact of the programme, Halogen built on existing knowledge and practices. They **took advice from partners** and **reviewed a range of academic material and approaches** used by other similar programmes.
- They **"curated" indicators from three existing measurement tools** that they felt were most suited to NFTE in the Singapore context and what they wanted to measure.
- One of these measurement tools was the **Entrepreneurial Mindset Index (EMI)**, provided by NFTE from the U.S., which Halogen agreed to use as part of their partnership.
- While Halogen did not change the essence of any of the indicators they used, they **localised** some of the language.

Data Collection

- Halogen has been collecting feedback from participants on their programmes since even before the NFTE programme. But they wanted **more information** on how their activities could affect the most change.
- They **expanded the use of surveys** from just programme feedback to also collecting data on NFTE programme outcomes and demographics.
- They introduced a **participant survey before and after the programme** to better track changes and for comparison across participants and placements.
- Having previously only relied on self-reporting, Halogen also included **observational reports of behaviour from third parties** (teachers and partners).

¹ We use the term 'impact management' to describe the cycle of continuous learning and improvement based on data collection.

Results

- Tracking how results change over time and across locations had allowed Halogen to **calibrate the programme on an ongoing basis for strengthening of impact**. For instance, Halogen was able to identify the most appropriate variable modules to be added to the programme based on results from the pre-programme surveys.
- Comparing pre- and post- programme survey results provided **additional insights** to Halogen on what has changed through the course of the programme. This would not be possible if data was only collected from post-programme surveys.
- Having a defined impact management framework had allowed Halogen to **better communicate with their donors and partners on the impact of the NFTE programme**. This also gave Halogen the opportunity to work alongside donors and partners to interpret the data and discuss the findings collaboratively instead of consuming them at face value.

Challenges

- Halogen found that longer surveys led to **survey fatigue**. So they responded by breaking down the surveys into shorter versions, administered over a longer period of time. However, this also imposed a greater strain on Halogen’s administrative resources.
- There was a need for **personal data privacy and protection**. One way Halogen has been responding to this ongoing challenge is to move towards the use of a Halogen-issued unique ID as opposed to using participants’ ID card (e.g. NRIC) numbers.

Key Learnings

- Taking an **iterative approach**. Halogen continues to try and test different models and approaches to data collection and this has helped them better select the most appropriate tools for their programmes.
- A **practical and contextual approach**. Assessing the pros and cons of different options has helped Halogen ensure that measurement tools remain consistent with their programmes.
- **Engaging stakeholders and donors**. Halogen was able to solicit ideas from other organisations and had also brought funders along with them on this journey of developing improved approaches to impact management.

Looking ahead

- **Syncing programme assessment and length**. Ideally, time taken to collect and interpret data should match the length of the programme. For instance, shorter programmes should require lesser data gathering.
- **Applied learning**. Halogen wants to apply some of what they have learned from measuring impact for the NFTE programme to other areas of their work, namely five “keystone” impact areas they have identified that run throughout their organisation.
- **Standard metrics for youth development**. Halogen is interested in developing and standardising tools that can be shared with and used by other youth development programmes in Singapore.

Note & Caveat

This document was produced by Just Cause based on information kindly shared by Halogen Foundation during a “Community of Impact” event held in Singapore on 26 September 2018 and in conversation thereafter. Facilitated by Just Cause and Conjoint Consulting, the Community of Impact is an informal knowledge-sharing network of representatives from local non-profit organisations, government, intermediaries and funders who are working on impact management in Singapore.

This case study is provided as an example of how one organisation has approached impact measurement in one particular context. Please note that readers should not interpret it as “best practice” as there are many valid approaches in any given context. The information has been kindly shared by the organisation to help others in the sector learn more about what worked well and the challenges faced with the different approaches to impact management.

For more information on Halogen Foundation’s approach, please contact them at partnership@halogen.sg. For further information about the Community of Impact or impact management please contact Just Cause carol@justcauseasia.org or Conjoint Consulting info@conjointconsulting.org.