

## **Impact Measurement & the Role of Technology: Using Data and Technology for Better Compliance & Reporting**

### **Speakers:**

Aarti Krishnan – Head, India Partner Network, Sattva Media and Consulting Pvt. Ltd.

A seasoned leader with over 20 years of experience driving digital transformation, enterprise development, and social innovation across sectors, Aarti brings her unique perspective on designing sustainable and scalable impact solutions.

Antony Vivek Justin – Fractional CxO, Project Tech4Dev

With two decades of entrepreneurial experience in product development, Antony now works at the intersection of technology and impact, helping NGOs leverage digital tools and AI for governance transformation.

### **Moderator :**

Ananya Samajdar – Deputy Director, Research at Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM)

A policy researcher and academic with extensive experience leading studies for WHO, NITI Aayog, UNICEF, and more. Dr. Ananya brings deep expertise in public policy, evaluation, and M&E, blending academic rigor with practical sectoral insights.  
developer.

---

### **Q1. What does Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mean for social purpose organisations?**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is not merely a donor reporting requirement; it is an organisational learning process. It enables social purpose organisations to understand whether their activities are leading to meaningful outcomes and to make informed decisions. A robust M&E system fosters continuous learning, accountability, and strategic improvement, helping organisations evolve and become more effective.

---

## **Q2. Why is it important to establish M&E systems early in an organisation's journey?**

Embedding M&E from the start helps create a culture of evidence and reflection. Many organisations mistakenly view M&E as something to adopt only once they grow larger. However, the earlier M&E practices are introduced, the easier it becomes to build habits of data-driven decision-making, programme alignment, and adaptive management. Early adoption ensures that learning and accountability are integral to the organisation's DNA.

---

## **Q3. What are the main challenges organisations face when setting up their first M&E system?**

Common challenges include limited budgets, lack of dedicated M&E staff, absence of clear indicators, and difficulty linking activities to outcomes. Often, M&E is pursued reactively to meet donor requirements rather than being embedded in the organisation's own processes. The solution lies in treating M&E as a cultural and strategic function, starting small, using open-source tools, and maintaining consistency through regular data reviews.

---

## **Q4. How can technology enhance impact measurement and reporting?**

Technology streamlines every stage of M&E — from data collection and consolidation to visualisation and insight generation. Tools such as SurveyCTO, KoboToolbox, and data dashboards enable efficient data management and real-time decision-making. However, the key lies in designing systems starting from the desired *insights* rather than from data collection itself. Technology should serve as an enabler, not a substitute for critical thinking.

---

### **Q5. How should organisations ensure data privacy and ethical use of information?**

Ethical data collection begins with obtaining informed consent from all beneficiaries. Organisations should anonymise personally identifiable information (PII) and present it only in aggregated forms. When sharing data externally, they must establish data-sharing frameworks that comply with the *Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act* and internal data management policies. Regular audits and clear governance protocols strengthen trust and compliance.

---

### **Q6. What is the connection between financial data and impact measurement?**

Financial and programme data must be viewed together to gain a complete picture of efficiency and impact. Mapping expenditure against outputs and outcomes helps identify the “cost per outcome” and “cost per output”, providing both donors and leaders with actionable insights. This alignment ensures financial accountability and supports evidence-based decisions on resource allocation and programme sustainability.

---

### **Q7. How can smaller organisations begin integrating technology into their M&E systems?**

Smaller organisations can start with simple tools such as Excel or Google Sheets to track activities, outcomes, and associated costs. The focus should be on tagging transactions and data points to programme outcomes, allowing leaders to trace every rupee spent to its purpose. As capacity grows, organisations can scale to advanced software, but the initial emphasis should remain on clarity and discipline rather than complexity.

---

### **Q8. What role does Artificial Intelligence (AI) play in M&E?**

AI can support M&E by improving data processing, visualisation, and predictive analysis. Tools like Tableau or Julius.ai can suggest relevant indicators or automate data interpretation. However, AI should complement—not replace—human judgement. Strategic intent and contextual understanding must always drive the design and use of AI-based tools for impact measurement.

---

### **Q9. How can organisations foster a learning culture around M&E?**

Institutionalising learning is key. Organisations should hold regular workshops or reflection sessions to review M&E findings and discuss programme adaptations. Summarising lengthy reports into concise digests helps teams absorb insights. The goal is to ensure that data informs decision-making, course correction, and long-term strategy, turning M&E from a compliance activity into a driver of growth and innovation.

---

### **Q10. What can donors and funders do to strengthen M&E practices among grantees?**

Donors play a crucial role by supporting capacity building and not viewing M&E merely as a compliance tool. They can organise training workshops, provide resources for smaller NGOs, and encourage experimentation with new tools and methods. By fostering a culture of shared learning, donors and grantees can jointly ensure that evidence and impact drive the sector's progress.

---