



EMPOWERING ABILITIES: FUELING GROWTH INITIATIVE

## **UNITI: End of Engagement Report**

*Elevating Data-Driven Decision-Making and  
Community Leadership Through Strategic  
Organizational Alignment*

March 31, 2025



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## THE EMPOWERING ABILITIES: FUELING GROWTH INITIATIVE

UNITI was one of seven Social Purpose Organizations chosen from across the country to participate in LIFT Impact Partners' *Empowering Abilities: Fueling Growth Initiative* (EAFG), funded in part by Employment and Social Development Canada.

### Project Objectives

- Strengthen the ability of SPOs to deliver measurable impact, secure diverse funding streams, enhance operational efficiency, and effectively communicate their outcomes to stakeholders.
- Improve social inclusion and employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
- Foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective advocacy to drive innovation and systemic change within the disability sector.

# The Opportunity

The UNITI-LIFT partnership sought to elevate UNITI’s leadership, by enhancing its recognition, relationships, and resources and fostering an inclusive community through innovation, responsiveness, and a collaborative approach. To achieve this, UNITI identified key areas for growth:

Strategic Focus	Impact Measurement	Revenue Diversification	Communicating Impact
<p>UNITI has created the framework and systems for fostering mentorship, teaching, and leadership for people we support.</p> <p>UNITI has flexible systems for communication and accountability throughout the organization and shares best practices across departments.</p>	<p>UNITI’s impact measurement methods have clearly defined purposes, are relevant, meaningful, and streamlined, and the information gathered is shared and used.</p>	<p>UNITI has the resources (enhanced capacity, collaboration, accessible and streamlined technology, and living and reliable information systems) to be responsive to funding opportunities and proactively strategize the right ones to pursue.</p>	<p>UNITI has an accessible and streamlined means of capturing and communicating UNITI’s impact story, both internally and externally.</p>

# The Growth

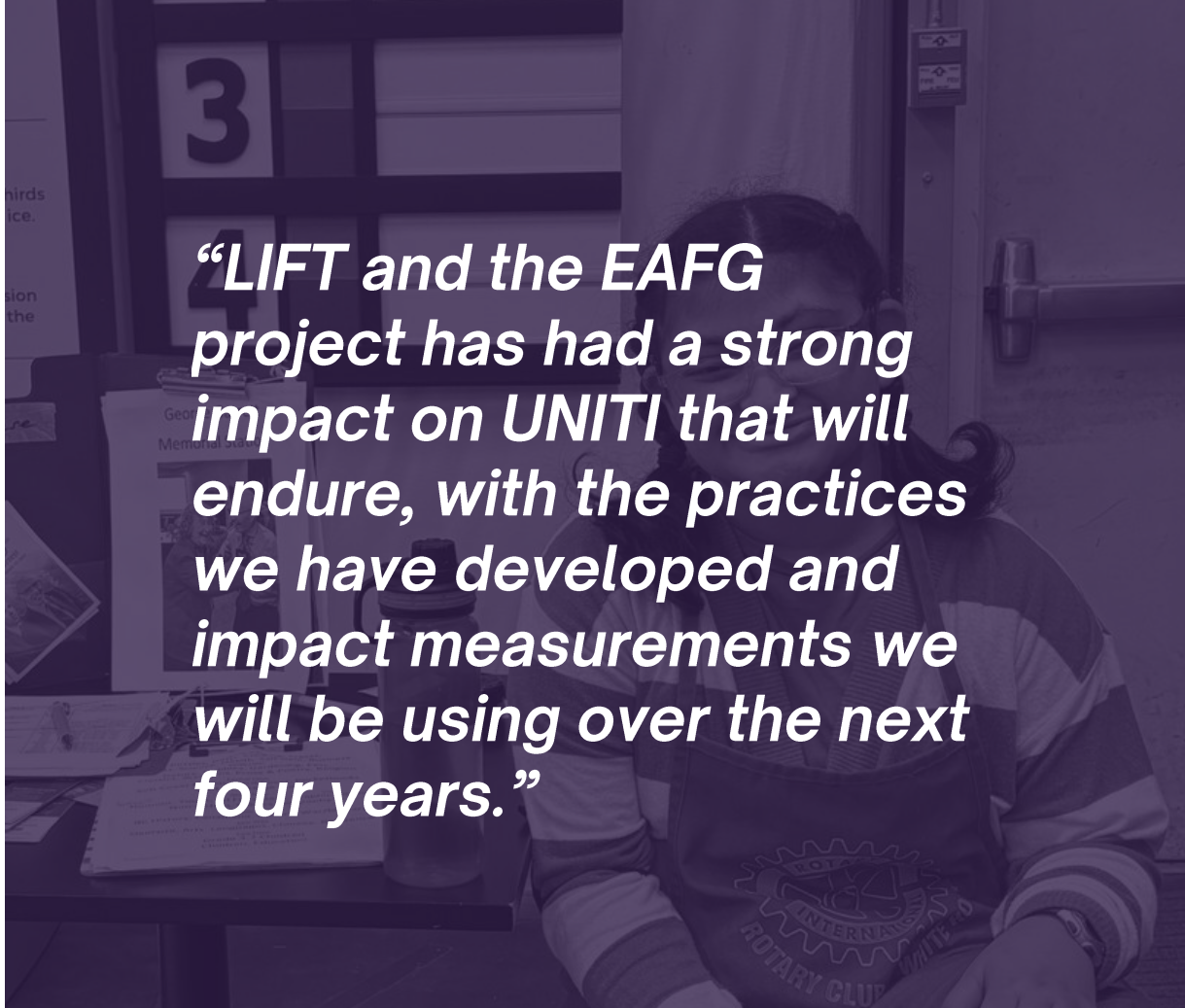
## Strategic Focus

UNITI has achieved remarkable progress toward its strategic focus goal, aligning practices and systems to drive greater impact. Strengthening cross-functional communication, alignment, and impact measurement has created a more unified, data-driven, and accountable organization, ensuring every decision and action is guided by meaningful insights.

Furthermore, at the heart of UNITI's mission is a shift in the perception of leadership. UNITI recognizes that the people it supports are not just beneficiaries - they are leaders in their communities. This perspective has catalyzed intentional efforts across all programs to create opportunities for leadership development, with a shared language and commitment to surface and implement innovative practices that empower people to lead. One of the most notable examples of this leadership in action is the Self-Advocates (SAS) group, which has gained significant influence and recognition for its contributions to the community. Through their dedication and advocacy, SAS members have collectively:

- ✔ Volunteered over **1,000** hours in the community
- ✔ Fundraised **\$15,000** for community-based causes
- ✔ Established and maintained **10+** ongoing community partnerships

This momentum reflects not only the growing leadership capacity within UNITI but also the organization's broader commitment to fostering an inclusive and empowered community.



*“LIFT and the EAFG project has had a strong impact on UNITI that will endure, with the practices we have developed and impact measurements we will be using over the next four years.”*

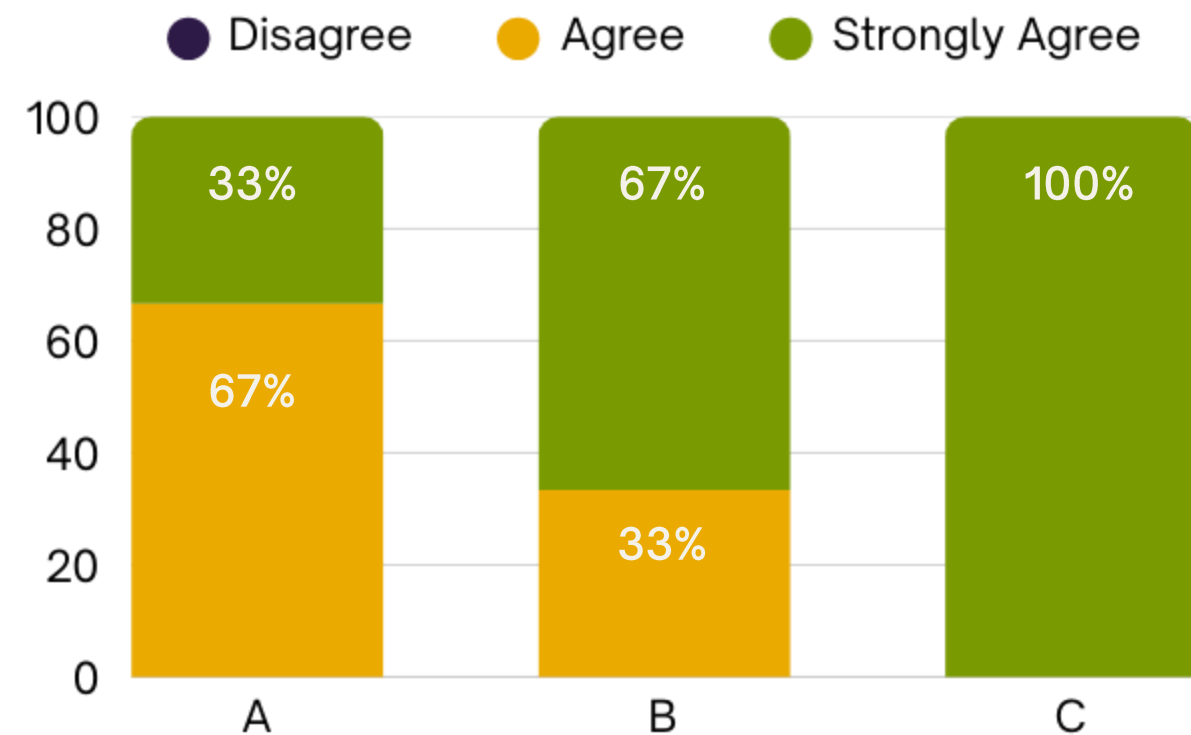
# 100%

of UNITI survey respondents strongly agree the organization is thinking and acting more strategically.

# 100%

of respondents agree they are more effective and efficient.





- A.** *We now have a clear understanding of the ultimate impact we seek to make and how our programs lead to that impact.*
- B.** *We have gained deeper insights into collecting, analyzing, and utilizing impact data to inform decision-making and improve our results.*
- C.** *Overall, we are better able to measure our impact as a result of LIFT's support.*

## Impact Measurement

Historically, UNITI's approach to data collection was largely compliance-driven, designed to meet accreditation requirements. Through the partnership with LIFT, UNITI has transitioned toward a data-driven culture, empowering teams to take ownership of their data needs. A key milestone in this transformation has been the integration of internal systems, enabling smoother data movement across departments. UNITI has unlocked new data extraction capabilities, enhancing its ability to track impact, tell its story, and make data-informed strategic decisions. The development of impact dashboards has further reinforced accountability, providing directors with clear insights into performance and progress.

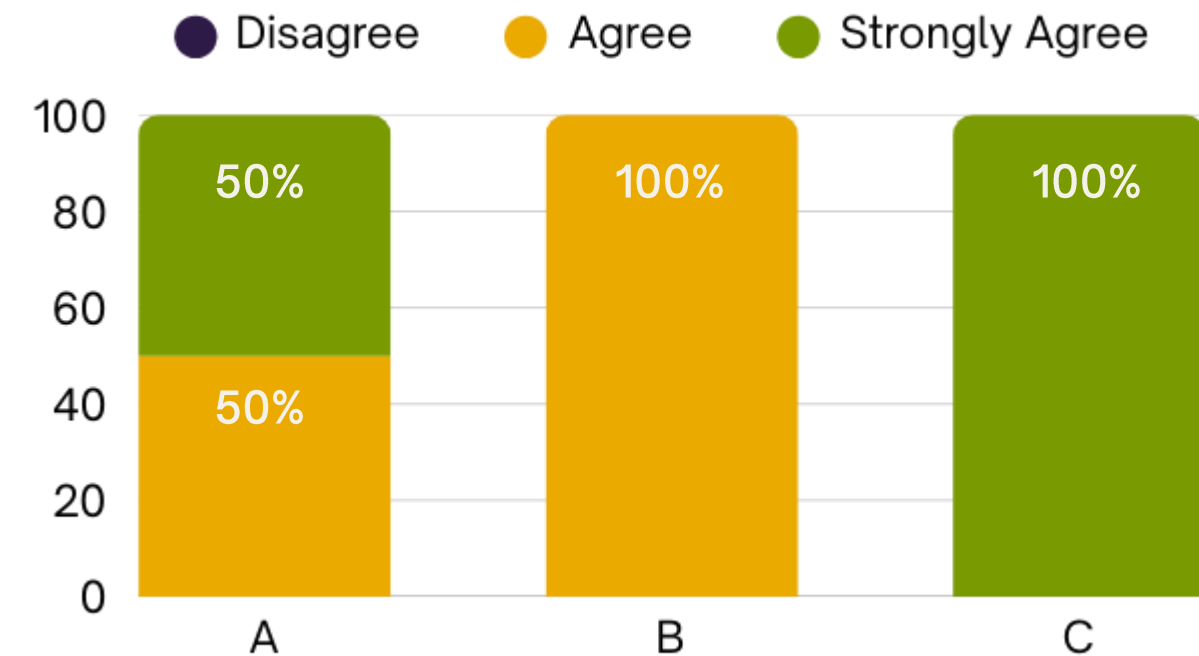
Furthermore, by developing meaningful indicators tailored to UNITI's mission and aligned with UNITI's Ends, staff have strengthened their ability to interpret data on its own terms and apply it to informed decision-making. These indicators have been shared with the Board and Self-Advocates, who now play an active role in assessing whether UNITI is delivering on its commitments. This shift has fostered a deeper understanding of impact across the organization, marking the first time UNITI has established cross-boundary impact metrics that unify all departments, self-advocates, and the Board in a shared vision.

# Revenue Diversification

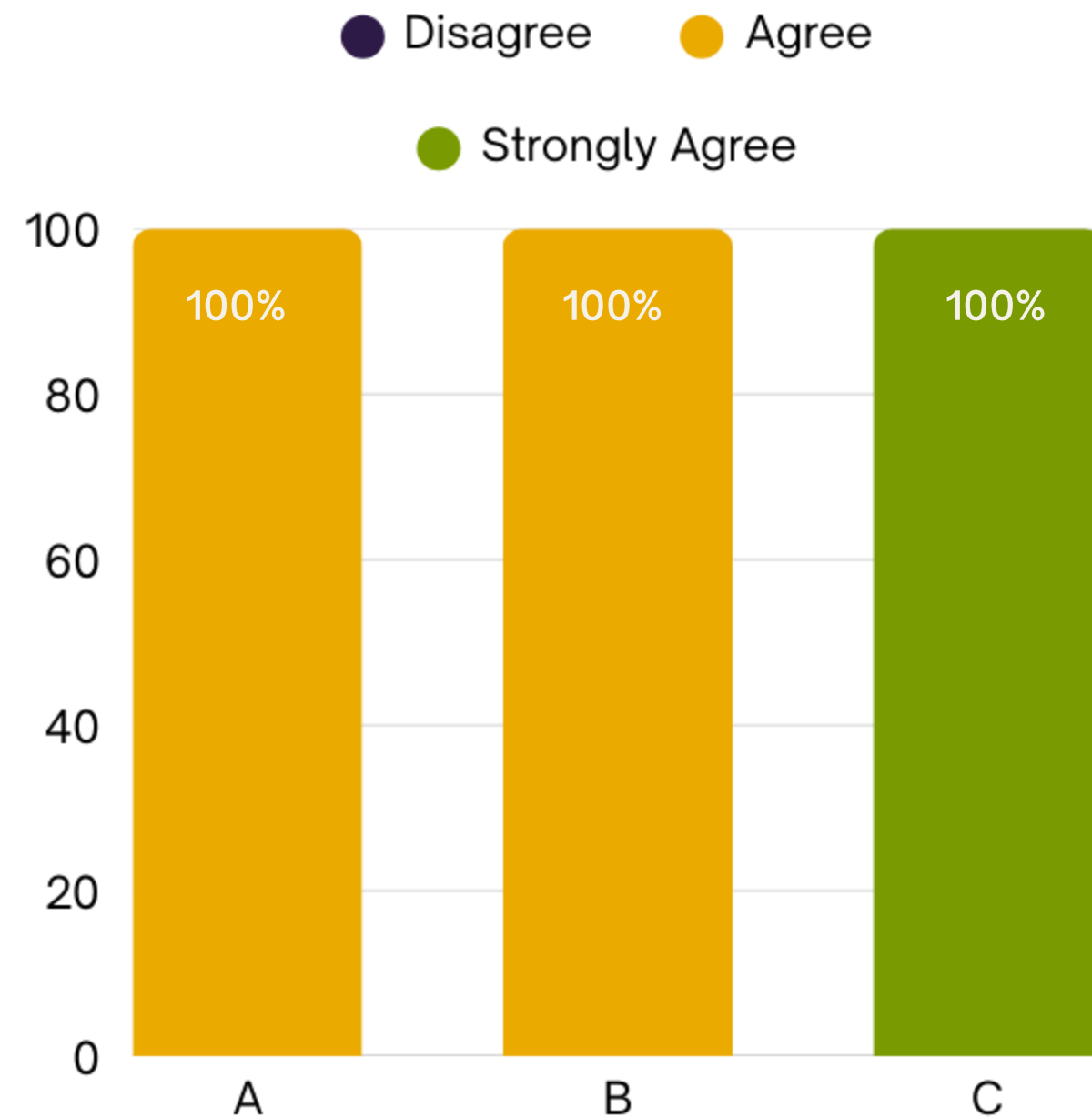
LIFT’s *Revenue Diversification* workshops and coaching support have deepened UNITI’s understanding of revenue opportunities in the sector while advancing its goal of developing a diversified funding strategy. A key milestone has been the strengthened collaboration between departments. This internal synergy serves as a crucial foundation for the long-term success of UNITI’s funding diversification efforts.

Furthermore, with LIFT’s support, UNITI has refined and advanced its revenue diversification strategies, using the EAFG initiative to validate its direction and optimize its approach. The successful launch of a Capital Campaign marked a significant step in its strategic funding efforts, alongside progress in developing a sustainable business model for social enterprise work. Surveys completed by UNITI during the LIFT partnership reflect this evolution, capturing the progress and growing impact of these initiatives:

- A. *We have a clearer understanding of our organization's strengths, capacity, and risk profile to diversify our revenue streams.*
- B. *We now have a roadmap outlining how to pursue and implement at least one new revenue generation or diversification idea.*
- C. *Overall, our organization has improved its ability to attract additional funding and resources.*



*“We learned a great deal from the Revenue Diversification sessions. We gained a deeper understanding of the importance of staying true to our mission and values in fundraising, ensuring we communicate our story in a way that resonates with the community. We also learned a great deal from the cohort, particularly about fee-for-service and social enterprise - two areas where we see significant potential for growth.”*



## Communicating Impact

Through the LIFT partnership, UNITI has sharpened its ability to effectively communicate its impact, clearly defining its target audience to ensure key stakeholders understand its value and leadership in the sector. UNITI has set clear communication goals, key metrics, and a plan to maximize its reach. The upcoming annual report will serve as a key opportunity to showcase this refined approach to impact communication. Additionally, a strong foundation in data collection, reinforced by the EAFG initiative, will further enhance UNITI's storytelling capabilities, enabling more compelling and data-driven narratives.

- A.** *We now have a clear understanding of our target audiences and our value propositions to those audiences.*
- B.** *We have gained a better understanding of communication best practices, channels, tools, and resources.*
- C.** *Overall, our organization is better able to communicate its impact.*



# The Impact

## Capacity Growth

100%

of UNITI participants strongly agree the organization is stronger and making a bigger impact as a result of the project.

100% 

of UNITI participants strongly agree they are more innovative and have a stronger growth mindset.

100%

of UNITI participants strongly agree the organization is in a better position to address challenges and leverage new opportunities.

## Operational Growth

40%

Increase in clients served.

85 → 100

Increase in partnerships formed to advance UNITI’s mission and strategy.

## Social Impact

80% 

of employment program clients successfully achieved employment-related goals, demonstrating enhanced job readiness and career advancement.

96%

of employment program clients report greater confidence.

↑ 40%

Increase in clients reporting an improved quality of life.



UNITI

**“The innovative practices shared by LIFT and the cohort have enhanced UNITI’s ability ... allowing us to accurately assess and achieve our Ends.**

Across all departments, we now have more effective performance measurements and a stronger, shared understanding of our impact.”



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, featuring a winding road that curves through a patchwork of agricultural fields. The fields are divided into various shapes and sizes, some appearing to be planted with crops like corn. A few scattered trees are visible, including a small cluster in the lower-left and a few more in the upper-middle. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark purple filter, which serves as a background for the white text.

# Looking Forward





# Looking Forward: UNITI’s Continued Path to Achieving its Ends

The EAFG initiative has propelled UNITI toward a future of sustainable impact, deeper organizational alignment, data-driven decision-making, and community leadership.

As UNITI looks to build upon the progress made, the following roadmap outlines the key strategies and capacity-building areas for further investment, co-created with the UNITI team. LIFT also encourages each SPO to continue fostering connections, leveraging the cohort as a supportive space for collaboration, shared learning, and collective growth.

 [View Full Document](#)



### Engagement Roadmap – Progress Updates

Picture of Success (Change for the Organization)

By being innovative, responsive, and taking a common, collaborative approach, UNITI is a leader and has the recognition, relationships, and resources to support an inclusive community.

Ultimate Outcome (Change for the Community/People Served)

People with Disabilities \* live lives of their choosing in the community.

Strategic Focus	Impact Measurement	Revenue Diversification	Communicating Your Impact
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<div>What You Have Accomplished</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strategic discussions at leadership level, then across Community Services. Populated custom <a href="#">ideation tracking tool</a>, identified: Ways to foster leadership opportunities; Barriers and solutions; Priorities to pilot across CS for 2025; Measures to track what is already being done.</li><li>Adopted co-creation approach – staff seeking out leadership development opportunities for people UNITI serves, and tracking existing practices.</li><li>Enhanced systems in IT, HR, Finance, Program Data Tracking &amp; Communications. Set regular check-ins across IT, HR, Finance, and Programs to ensure work advances, building data-informed decision-making focus.</li></ul>	<div>What You Have Accomplished</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Crafted <a href="#">Results Chain</a> with outcomes aligned to your ENDS. Not replacing ENDS statements, but augmenting with focus on measurable, short- and medium-term Impact Outcomes.</li><li><a href="#">PME</a> tool to house roadmap to data collection needs.</li><li>Narrowed the vast amount of data collected to a set of priority indicators to manageably focus org-wide efforts and tell a strong impact story.</li><li>Reviewed Data Collection needs – identified ways to integrate priority indicators into ShareVision platform.</li><li>Reviewed some data collection tools to find ways to add priority impact questions.</li></ul>	<div>What You Have Accomplished</div> <p>Using your <a href="#">Revenue Diversification Workbook</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assessed organizational culture, community, and capacity.</li><li>Gained insights on sources best suited to current CCC.</li><li>Three significant Revenue diversification ideas/expansion identified.</li><li>Drafted initial Action plans for new/expanded RD streams.</li><li>Launched Capital Campaign</li></ul>	<div>What You Have Accomplished</div> <p>Using prompts in <a href="#">Communicating Your Impact Workbook</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identified 2 target audiences.</li><li>Created value propositions for each target audience.</li><li>Created targeted messages for each.</li><li>Identified communication goals &amp; Key Metrics.</li><li>Articulated comms plan for target goals.</li></ul>
<div>Recommended Next Steps</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build in review process for leadership development to keep focus across org, and innovation continues.</li><li>Create data review in 3 months – what can we learn from it? Are we creating the leadership development opportunities we think we are?</li><li>Set targets and implement new ideas based on initial findings.</li><li>Systems group (IT, Comms, HR, Program Data) build in regular reflection practices to support data-informed decision making.</li></ul>	<div>Recommended Next Steps</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Each department will select a minimum of 3 indicators they can measure. Leadership to review as whole to ensure coverage across all 13 priority areas – assign additional as required.</li><li>Update ShareVision to include questions for the prioritized set.</li><li>Set a review process in 6-12 months to assess how data collection is going and make adjustments.</li><li>Id Key Analytical Questions for data analysis – consider which of the data points most tell the impact story, and which data points indicate next areas for program development.</li></ul>	<div>Recommended Next Steps</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure you have moved RD Workbook into your own Google Drive or internal server.</li><li>Complete Action Plans for revenue generation.</li><li>Pull together insights into strategy overview [Tab 16].</li><li>Continue to work on developing Business Model Canvas for Tidy A Lot.</li></ul>	<div>Recommended Next Steps</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure you have moved CYI Workbook into your own Google Drive or internal server.</li><li>Select the 3-5 Impact Measures to showcase in communications plan, to tell UNITI story.</li><li>Create Impact Dashboard.</li><li>Consider how you might conduct regular review of Impact Measures that align with current strategy and incorporate in updated communications strategy.</li></ul>

## Leading with Purpose and Possibility

UNITI has achieved impressive organizational alignment through its partnership with LIFT, elevating the organization's capacity and impact, along with its leadership team. It has been a privilege to collaborate with such a dedicated and high-performing team. LIFT is excited to continue following UNITI's journey as it achieves its Ends.

Concepts like “soaring to new heights,” “stronger together,” “bridging the gap,” and “a lighthouse for the community” were used by UNITI staff to describe the impact of the EAFG project. These reflections echo the capacity growth LIFT observed throughout the partnership. By strengthening cross-functional communication, enhancing its capacity for data-driven decision-making, and fostering innovation to remove barriers to leadership opportunities for those it supports, UNITI is well-positioned to drive meaningful change both within the organization and throughout the communities it serves.

