



Moving Beyond  
Solidarity Rhetoric  
in Global Health



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# DEVELOPING A SOLIDARITY INDEX FOR GLOBAL HEALTH: INFLUENCER PERSPECTIVES

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report outlines a sub-set of findings from ongoing empirical work being conducted within the [Moving Beyond Solidarity Rhetoric in Global Health](#) (GH-solidarity) project. The project aims to map conceptualisations of solidarity, and to reshape how solidarity is practiced and understood across contexts globally. The empirical arm of the study centres the voices of people on the front lines of global health (GH) work, and includes three main participant groups: leaders within GH civil society organisations, directors or leaders of GH research centres (Research Institutes); and persons in senior roles (“Influencers”) connected to funding allocation decision-making and implementation within the most financially powerful GH funding organisations. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 75 participants across these groups, with a strategy of sampling for optimal diversity, and towards surfacing meanings and practices as lived by those engaged in a range of GH projects and programmes.

In this report, and towards informing the development of one or more tools that can render commitments to solidarity more actionable and measurable, we foreground what we heard from the “influencers” in response to questions about the value, feasibility, and any potential challenges foreseen should major funders and implementors in the Global Sector become subject to evaluation on their performance of solidarity. Findings were summarised for a team meeting held in Oxford in July 2025. With a pragmatic goal of facilitating team discussions, findings are presented with supporting quotes, and organised around “influencer” responses to specific interview questions:

- ❶ **Should Solidarity Be Evaluated?**
- ❷ **Who Should Evaluate Solidarity?**
- ❸ **Defining Metrics: What Should Be Measured?**
- ❹ **What are the Key Considerations and Potential Caveats?**

Participants overwhelmingly supported the idea of evaluating solidarity, citing reasons such as exposing the current lack of solidarity, ensuring the effective use of resources, and holding major GH players accountable for their actions. They recommended that local universities and civil society networks should lead the evaluation, stressing that local community involvement is crucial, and that impartiality requires the evaluation to be conducted by an external party.

In terms of metrics, four key domains emerged: *Stakeholder Engagement*, *Resource Allocation*, *Accountability and Monitoring*, and *Outcomes*. Examples of key metrics in each domain are proposed, with an emphasis on community-driven development. **Although there is considerable enthusiasm for a solidarity index tool, participants warned that the process must carefully address several challenges to avoid unintended harm.** Their cautions centered on three areas: *the inherent complexity of evaluation, the nuances of language, and logistical issues related to tool design.*

These insights have been gathered here to document perspectives on and inform development of a Global Solidarity Index.

# INTRODUCTION

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The language of solidarity is frequently invoked in global health (GH), yet the concept is understood and employed differently across global contexts. Despite ongoing calls for solidarity—particularly in the face of pandemics and GH crises such as COVID-19, challenges remain in defining and operationalising the concept. Designed in response to these challenges, the [GH-Solidarity Project](#), seeks to catalyse more active and meaningful uses of the term, shifting beyond rhetoric alone. Core to this five-year, mixed-methods project, funded by a Wellcome Trust, are two commitments: 1) centering voices that have historically been excluded or lesser-heard within GH conversations, ensuring these perspectives inform any evolving normative calls for solidarity practice in global health; and, 2) attending to solidarity as praxis—with its meanings and impacts dependent on its contextual and relational enactments.

The project is guided by a strong focus on intercultural learning and critical reflection, and employs pluriversality: an approach that embraces the legitimacy of diverse worldviews, knowledges, and realities, and affirms that divergent viewpoints can coexist in constructive ways. The main objectives of the project include the following:

- Develop a more nuanced, actionable interpretation of solidarity that transcends rhetoric;
- Investigate cultural and regional variations in how solidarity is conceived and enacted;
- Elevate underrepresented voices and challenge structural exclusions in global health;
- Establish a measurable index to assess and enhance solidarity practices among global health actors;
- Cultivate emerging scholars through intercultural and interdisciplinary engagement.

Looking ahead, the *GH-Solidarity Project* positions itself as a catalyst for systemic change. Its findings are intended not only to inform scholarly discourse but to shape policy, promote advocacy, and support accountability mechanisms within GH systems.

In this report, we draw on a subset of qualitative findings focused on the perspectives of senior staff (“influencers”) from public and private sector organisations with significant influence over priorities, funding, and implementation in GH. Organisations were selected based on their substantial funding allocations to global health, as identified in the OECD development assistance report and the Donor Tracker. Whilst a primary priority of the project is to foreground voices lesser heard within dominant global health and historically entrenched hierarchies of knowledge and influence, early on in the project, our team agreed it was also important to hear from actors who do hold more recognised power and influence over projects and programming, through their senior positions in major global health organisations. Given that such actors and the organisations that employ them are key to systemic

change, hearing their perspectives on the perceived value, possibilities, and challenges of designing and implementing tools to render solidarity commitments more actionable and measurable is important. In what follows, and based on interviews with 23 senior staff in major global health organisations, we present the views of these “influencers” on solidarity and tools for evaluation.

In what follows, we present the results of the analysis and outline four preliminary domains for a solidarity index tool, emphasising the importance of local guidance and input in shaping relevant metrics.

# METHODS

Findings presented in this report are based on data collected and analysed through an empirical study of “Meanings and Practices of solidarity in and for global health” that is ongoing and was initiated in June 2024. This qualitative study is situated within the broader *GH-Solidarity Project*, and aims to clarify what solidarity involves, produces, and where and how it has failed, in the eyes of diversely positioned global health stakeholders. Sampling for optimal diversity, and while aiming to ensure more representation from historically under-heard voices, interviews have included recruitment of three main categories of participants: leaders within GH civil society organisations; directors or leaders of global health research centres (Research Institutes); and, persons in senior roles (“influencers”) connected to funding allocation, decision-making, and implementation within the most financially powerful global health funding organisations. A breakdown of interview participants (N=75) by category is provided in **Table 1** below.

PARTICIPANT CATEGORY	SAMPLE SIZE
Civil Society Organisations	39
Research Institutes	13
Influencers	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>

**Table 1** Participant Categories

Thematic analysis of all interviews conducted is ongoing. As we prepare publications of those key findings, we have produced this report based on a directed analysis of what the 23 influencers we interviewed had to say in response to specific interview questions aimed at gathering their views on the value, feasibility, and any potential challenges foreseen should major funders and implementers in the Global Sector being subject to evaluation on their performance of solidarity. The full interview questions relevant to content in this report can be found in [Appendix A](#). The present summary and analysis were prepared for a team meeting held in Oxford in July 2025. With a pragmatic goal of facilitating team discussions, findings are presented with supporting quotes and organised around “influencer” responses to specific interview questions, which revolved around the following thematic areas:

- 1 Should Solidarity Be Evaluated?**
- 2 Who Should Evaluate Solidarity?**
- 3 Defining Metrics: What Should Be Measured?**
- 4 What are the Key Considerations and Potential Caveats?**

Ethics approval for this study was obtained from the Health Sciences Research Ethics Board (HS-REB) at Western University (Ontario, Canada), the Ethics Committee for the Humanities at the University of Ghana, and the University of Oxford.



# RESULTS

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The findings presented below are organised into four key sections: the rationale for evaluating solidarity, the appropriate actors responsible for this evaluation, the specific aspects that should be measured, and the essential considerations and caveats. A fundamental underlying principle across all themes is the importance of co-creation and community-led local development. Participants strongly emphasised that **communities and civil society must be involved at every stage**—from determining the relevance of solidarity in a given context to deciding what should be measured and ultimately conducting the evaluation itself. It is also essential to consider who holds the power or has a ‘seat at the table’ in shaping decisions and leading such initiatives. For instance, Participant 023INF called attention to the existing disparity in which relevant community members often do not hold decision making capacity:

*“How many of the people in these rooms holding these leadership roles internally actually reflect the communities in which they work? This is what I mean when I say that the intersection of decolonisation and locally led development is with DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion]. The internal structure and decision making, and leadership of these organisations that shift power, so to speak, they’ve never accurately reflected the communities in which they work.”*

Participant 021INF echoed similar sentiments stating that:

*“I think it’s the most important is to see about the decision-making process. Is it inclusive or not, for example, in the design, how is the representation of the marginalised communities, or even the communities that we want to serve, that, in the governance, or the kind of accessory bodies, how you, kind of discern these voices.”*

**Community self-determination, engagement, and leadership** are not peripheral considerations, according to the influencers, but rather are foundational principles that underpin all subsequent themes explored in this report. They transcend all discussions below on evaluating solidarity and constitute essential precursors to the development of solidaristic practices.

## Why Should we Evaluate Solidarity?

When asked about the importance of evaluating solidarity, participants provided several key reasons for why such measurement is essential. They emphasised that assessing solidarity can help organisations and global health stakeholders gain a broader perspective, encourage development partners to view solidarity as a critical tool for addressing public health challenges, optimise the use of existing

resources, and highlight the current lack of solidarity. For instance, when discussing whether major global health players should be evaluated on their practice of solidarity, Participant 008INF stated: *“Yes, we need to... The development partners and big players are not yet considering solidarity as one of the effective ways of addressing public health issues. In my opinion, this is missing among development partners and funding agencies.”* This response underscored the perception that solidarity is an overlooked but crucial component in achieving more equitable health outcomes.

Similarly, Participant 020INF highlighted the need to evaluate solidarity to *“shine a light on the lack of solidarity or the inequity that’s kind of built into these partnerships.”* They suggested that having measurable indicators of solidarity could increase awareness and drive tangible change. An evaluation tool was also seen as essential for providing constructive critiques and actionable steps for improvement as opposed to providing critique without comprehensive evidence: *“People don’t respond well to that kind of critique, but when we have examples and tools, it’s different.”* (020INF). Some participants also pointed out that **defining ways to operationalise and measure solidaristic practices is a necessary exercise for the effective use of existing resources and the acquisition of new ones**. Participant 010INF explained:

*“If we were able to come up with a way to operationalise solidarity, or principles that would define it, we would be much more successful—first, in using the resources that we have, and second, in building an evidence base that could unlock additional resources to tackle the problems we claim to address.”*

Lastly, participants stressed that major funders and implementers in global health often fail to grasp the full implications of their actions and, crucially, that they may have little incentive to measure solidarity themselves. Participant 001GH emphasised that such a tool would necessitate external oversight, which is an important factor to work towards equitable global health outcomes: *“It is not in their interest to analyse it with that depth, so it must be done by an independent or external party.”* In summary, participants strongly support measuring solidarity to optimise resources, expose gaps in current practices, unlock new mechanisms for addressing global health challenges, and to hold organisations and major stakeholders accountable to their claims and actions.

## Who Should Conduct the Evaluation?

When asked who should be responsible for evaluating solidarity, participants identified several key options, including networks of local universities and community members actively engaged on the ground. Participant 001GH suggested that local universities may be best suited for this role, stating: *“So, who can evaluate? I would say if you have a set of universities like yours or a university like yours... in the US, they are best positioned to evaluate the US institutions for solidarity.”* They further noted that governments often have their own interests and incentives, implying that relying on local university networks could help mitigate potential biases.

Additionally, participants emphasised that grassroots organisations and civil society must be involved in both planning and evaluating solidarity efforts, pointing out that they should in fact lead the evaluation. Evaluation should be participatory, ensuring that those directly impacted by systemic

changes have a voice in the process, and are included in the design and leading of such an endeavour. Participant 015GH highlighted the United Nations' "shadow reports" as an example, where civil society organisations submit independent reports to the Human Rights Council on the state of human rights in a given country. They proposed that a similar mechanism could be used to ensure community members are active in the solidarity assessment process.

Finally, the need for impartiality was strongly emphasised. As Participant 018INF put it: *"It's abnormal for the football player to be both the player and the referee."* This underscores the importance of ensuring that evaluations are conducted by external entities with little or no vested interest, reinforcing impartiality and accountability in the assessment of solidarity.

## Defining Metric Domains: What should be measured?

When asked about potential metrics for evaluating solidarity, participants offered insightful responses that can be grouped into four key domains: *Accountability and Monitoring Frameworks*, *Resource Allocation*, *Assessing Outcomes*, and *Navigating Trade-offs*. Each of these themes is explored in detail in the following section.

### Accountability and Monitoring Frameworks

Participants underscored the **critical need for comprehensive monitoring frameworks** to ensure that GH organisations and stakeholders assiduously attend to the agenda items which they set out to fulfill. Participant 023INF highlighted the importance of maintaining trust through accountability:

*"I think that we have the right as stakeholders to expect accountability for these targets that you set, and the reason why is because when they don't set them and there's no consequence, there's a trust broken for any of the organisations that were involved or are committed to doing this work with this true solidarity."*

Participants emphasised that **robust systems are necessary** not only to verify the existence of supportive structures but also to assess their ongoing effectiveness and impact. One participant highlighted the multifaceted nature of accountability, stating:

*"So, I think three main parts: whether they see value, whether there are structures that are there to promote solidarity, and if they are really doing it, whether or not they have a mechanism through which it can be tracked, what are the kind of, additionality, because success will feed on itself. So, whether or not there are mechanisms by which they are able to track whether or not what are the additional gains that are happening in the ecosystem because of solidarity." (009GH)*

This quote illustrates the importance of **tracking both the presence of solidarity-promoting structures and their tangible outcomes**, suggesting that success in one area can reinforce progress in others. Another participant provided historical context on evaluation practices:

*“In terms of evaluating global health organisations, you know, for solidarity, we– umm, uh, there are two ways that historically, you know, this has been done. One is an evaluation that looks at the agenda and see if the agenda is fulfilling, uh, you know, what it claims to fulfill...” (003GH)*

This reflection reinforces the idea that evaluations must critically assess whether an organisation’s stated commitments align with its actual performance, thereby holding it accountable for its undertakings.

Further emphasising the importance of governance, a third participant noted:

*“Who makes decisions? What are the criteria for making decisions? Which questions are looked at? What are the governance frameworks? What are the evaluations of these governance frameworks? What is the distribution of burdens and opportunities? How are problems ordered regarding their importance and their urgency? Those are topics where solidarity shows up or not.” (019INF)*

Here, the focus shifts to the internal mechanisms of decision-making and resource allocation. It is clear from this perspective that the effectiveness of solidarity initiatives hinges on transparent governance and equitable distribution of responsibilities and benefits, which is another key point for developing monitoring and accountability frameworks.

In addition to these aspects, participants also stressed the importance of monitoring processes themselves. For instance, Participant 018INF stated:

*“I think the thing that is crucial to note is that we should not only focus on the results, but also on the process of whatever practice it is that we deploy. You know, people say, oh, the result is important. The process is more important because it’s the process that actually creates the kind of impact that are longer lasting, you know, whether in terms of capacity strengthening or resilience of a local institution, it is the process, you know, and so you want to make sure that whatever it is, the practice, whether it’s solidarity or collaboration or cannibalistic relationship or et cetera, what is the process and what impact does it leave on the local ecosystem at the end of the day?”*

They called for the establishment of regular review systems and real-time feedback mechanisms that allow organisations to adapt to emerging challenges. This dynamic approach to monitoring ensures that accountability frameworks remain relevant and effective over time, fostering a culture where the pursuit of solidarity is both measurable and continuously improved. Overall, the insights gathered suggest that a multifaceted, dynamic approach to accountability and monitoring is essential for advancing solidarity in global health.

### **Resource Allocation: Tracking the flow of money and other forms of capital**

Many participants underscored the importance of systematically tracking the allocation of both monetary and non-monetary resources. This process involves identifying the sources of these resources,

ensuring equitable distribution, and comprehensively monitoring their flow and impact. In terms of monetary resources, Participant 022INF emphasised that *“where there is money, there is power”*, echoing the sentiment of Participant 001GH who cautioned that *“the most important thing is to follow the money”*. Participants have observed in their lived experience of working in the global health space that money is power, and thus is an essential component to consider when developing domains of measurement. Participants further highlighted the role of resource provision as a key mechanism of solidarity: *“We need to come together, and they need to contribute their resources—the organisation’s contributions—in financial support, human resources, equipment, and more. These contributions serve as tangible indicators of solidarity and commitment within organisations.”* (008INF), emphasising that allocation of resources could be considered solidaristic in and of itself.

## Assessing Outcomes: Primary indicators

In evaluating solidarity, participants identified several *key outcome measures* that must be tracked. These included **reducing inequities**, **generating a positive impact “on the ground,”** **assessing and improving result metrics**, and **establishing tracking mechanisms** for short-, medium-, and long-term impacts.

Reducing inequity emerged as a fundamental outcome, with nearly all participants emphasising its importance. Equally critical is measuring impact “on the ground,” which involves ensuring that all community members have equal access to solutions. As Participant 005GH explained:

*“So, to me, in practical ways, those are how this can be translated...will you see the words ‘solidarity’? No, but at the program level, do I see where they’re trying to make sure that everyone has a benefit from these tools and interventions? So, if I was to evaluate, I would, you know, include that as part of how they are – how it is translated on the ground, right?”*

Participant 015GH highlighted the humanitarian principle of “do no harm” and noted that while many organisations claim to adopt this principle, not all fully adhere to it. This concept can be translated into specific evaluation markers:

*“One is the principle of do no harm. And one is the principle, now and more, and more advocated for by the UN, but commonly adopted, of leave no one behind. So those are principles that can be translated into markers and into concrete tools to evaluate these organizations.”* (015GH)

The principle of “do no harm” also extends to environmental impacts. As several participants noted, unintended outcomes—such as resource wastage and other negative environmental effects—must be measured. Participant 018INF stated:

*“It’s important to look at the process, you know, to make sure that at the end of the day, you know, it has not left any major risk within that environment, you know, both in the long term, in the short term, you know, there are risks that are very short term, but you don’t understand what the long term impact was.”* (018INF)



In addition, one participant recommended a self-measurement tool (011INF) for organisations to evaluate their own environmental footprint, emphasising the environment as a critical and actionable component of global health.

A further point stressed by many participants is the importance of evaluating these measures over time. Assessments should not be a one-off exercise but rather include short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Participant 015GH described this temporal dimension when identifying how project might: *“have spillover effects in the medium-long term or may have unintended negative impacts in the medium-long term.”* Participant 016INF reinforced the need to assess long-term sustainability by asking whether co-created projects remain viable and relevant:

*“And even looking at a longer-term impact in terms of sustainability. So, the projects that were viewed together with the local organisations, are they still viable, are they still in existence, or have they stopped working?” (016INF)*

Ultimately, Participant 018INF emphasised that an evaluation must determine whether the outcomes that were initially stated have been achieved. Determining what these outcomes should be requires a collaborative approach that involves both community input and expert guidance. As Participant 008INF suggested:

*“[W]e could have a brainstorming session, the organisations that are working in similar field, uh, we can, we can try to learn from them, we can try to know their ideas, their opinions, and what they’re thinking, and then we can start working on, uh, de-, developing some indicators.” (008INF)*

Finally, measurable and quantifiable results are essential. Participant 013INF succinctly stated that *“if the results cannot be quantified, then everything else is useless.”* This underscores another critical area: ensuring that organisations have defined policies, training, metrics, or guidance related to the aspects of solidarity being measured.

## Navigating Trade-offs

Participants recognised that actions have subsequent consequences and stress that it is important to navigate what that might look like in any given context. For instance, participant 001GH stated that:

*The country prioritises X, what does it mean about Y? Right? So, to look at, you know, global public goods together, health, education, economic growth, income equality, gender equality, look at them together and how they interact with one another, and how the prioritisation of one and actions in the other affect the other, because resources are limited and it is within, you know, a finite... resource amount that you’re addressing these problems, and you cannot look at them separately. (001GH)*

To understand trade-offs, it is critical to conduct a wholistic evaluation in which indicators such as health, economic growth, gender equity, and others are looked at in tandem to understand what pooling resources in one area does to another. Emphasising that by focusing and allocating resources to certain

areas, you inherently take them away from others, Participant 001GH stated that: *“if you decrease the people who are dying from HIV—again, I don’t want to sound outrageous—at the expense of, at the expense of, hunger of food sufficiency, is it a worthy trade off to make?”*. Thus, **in an evaluation of solidarity and solidaristic action, we must look at who is benefiting from these resources and who is not**. This applies at an international level as well. Participant 018INF emphasised that addressing global issues has local impact, stating that *“you also want to make sure that it does not cannibalise the local ecosystem. You see, every time an agenda is pursued in the interest of whether it’s solidarity or collaboration or whatever, you know, you must be very careful that the local ecosystem is not cannibalised at the expense of that external system”*. Thus, trade-offs and action-reaction systems are a key domain that participants see as important to measure when aiming to evaluate solidarity.

Alongside the four domains presented above, some participants offered preliminary examples of how such metrics might be measured suggesting process evaluations (e.g. 009GH), using a score-card approach in which key domains of solidarity could be included (e.g. 015GH), and lastly, impact evaluations (e.g. 001GH, 003GH).

## What are the Key Considerations and Potential Caveats?

Evaluating solidarity presents both conceptual and practical challenges that must be carefully considered in the development of any assessment tool. While the need for such an evaluation is widely recognised, several key factors complicate its feasibility and implementation. These include the fundamental complexity of measuring solidarity within the current global order, the role of language in shaping and interpreting solidarity, logistical challenges in designing an effective tool, and the question of who ultimately benefits from and seeks such an evaluation.

The following subsections delve into these considerations, outlining the structural, linguistic, and logistical barriers that must be addressed, as well as the motivations and interests of potential users of a solidarity evaluation framework.

### Evaluation as complex and potentially impossible in the current world order

Though many participants agree with the need to understand and incorporate evaluations of solidarity into practice, some present concerns related to implementing this type of tool in the current world order, where solidarity is frequently utilised as “lip service”, as put by Participant 010INF. For instance, Participant 001GH emphasises the tendency of individuals to co-opt solidaristic language rather than deeply engage with its principles:

*“I know once you put out the word there, even the people who should be assessed and, you know, and should you know, approach and should be more solidaristic, will start using the word as a justification for the existing things that are being done.” (001GH)*

Further, Participant 010INF identifies fundamental shifts in discourse and thought which might be needed before bringing solidarity into practice, given that in the current world order, we tend to

*“blame poor countries for being poor” (010INF)* as opposed to looking at the historical, geographical and political forces which need to guide day-to-day practices. Participant 011INF even emphasised that

*“I think solidarity is not enough. It’s maybe a first step you could say. Maybe it’s a first moral step for people to go in the direction of, there’s something that is bigger than me, but I think it’s probably not enough.” (011INF)*

Driving home the point that solidarity, alone, might not be enough to create change within the current world order.

## Using solidarity and solidaristic language

Participants overwhelmingly emphasised the importance of not being overly fixated on the term solidarity itself. While the word may not resonate universally, its underlying principles can and should be defined locally to align with different cultural and contextual understandings. While participants acknowledged the power of language, they stressed that the focus should be on translating these concepts into concrete action, rather than rigidly adhering to terminology. As Participant 005GH cautioned: *“We shouldn’t be too ‘wedded’ to the language of solidarity, as it risks watering down the process by stripping it of community relevance. What truly matters is how we translate these words into action on the ground.”* Expanding on this point, they added:

*“When you’re translating into action on the ground, you’re not overly concerned with what it’s called. The focus should be on defining the key action items necessary to achieve solidarity—ensuring support, equitable access, and quality services for underserved communities. That’s the dimension I am coming from.” (005GH)*

This perspective underscores the idea that **while language plays a role in shaping discourse, true solidarity is ultimately demonstrated through tangible efforts and impact** rather than terminology. While the word “solidarity” itself may not always be explicitly used, the underlying principles must remain at the core of any efforts undertaken. Some participants advocated for a standardised definition of solidarity to ensure a shared understanding across different contexts. For example, Participant 016INF stated:

*“I think it would be good to have, if possible, like a standardised definition or a common understanding so that, you know, wherever the word solidarity is used, it means the same thing to different people rather than having it have different meanings to different people.”*

However, others questioned whether establishing a common definition was worth the effort, arguing that overarching principles might be a more effective approach. Participant 005GH expressed skepticism about rigidly defining the term, stating: *“The juice is not worth the squeeze” (005GH)*. Instead, they suggested that focusing on shared values and principles could provide a more adaptable and culturally relevant way to harmonise solidarity efforts across different languages and communities. Several participants voiced concerns about the risk of solidarity becoming a co-opted term, used rhetorically by those who should be held accountable, rather than meaningfully integrated into action. This concern highlights the need to ensure that solidarity is not just a symbolic or performative concept but is instead backed by meaningful action and accountability mechanisms.



Participants also emphasised that the term solidarity holds different levels of significance across global contexts. In particular, Participant 018INF highlighted differences between the Global North and Global South, stating: *“While solidarity is a popular concept within global health, practitioners in the field—especially those working with partners in the Global South—are more accustomed to terms such as ‘collaboration’ and ‘partnership’ rather than ‘solidarity.’”* This suggests that using locally resonant terminology may be more effective in certain contexts, rather than insisting on a universal use of the word solidarity itself.

Similarly, Participant 020INF expressed concern that the term solidarity is often associated with activism and political movements, which could turn away some stakeholders:

*“My only concern would be that it could turn some people off or scare people or get people in the mindset of like, ‘Oh, it’s those people who are like activists, and I’m not really into that.’ It could turn them off. So, I think it’s really important to use language that, as much as possible, is neutral and not usually critiqued.”*

This highlights the need to balance using language that is appropriate but potentially more neutral to support the adoption of such a framework. Participant 020INF emphasised the importance of using *“language that fits within a broader set of paradigms”* to avoid unnecessary resistance or misinterpretation.

While much of the discussion centered on the language of solidarity, some participants also raised concerns about the term evaluation itself. Participant 014INF noted: *“I’m shying away from just using this word ‘evaluating’ and targeting individual components, because I think it should be more broad and encompassing than that.”* They emphasised the need for a dialogical and participatory approach, rather than a rigid assessment framework. One participant proposed using the term “examination” instead, suggesting that it might be perceived more constructively: *“Evaluation is more like marking someone’s homework.”* (014INF). This perspective reinforces the importance of framing the evaluation process in a way that encourages collaboration and reflection rather than judgment and scrutiny. The discussion around language highlights the complexity of defining and evaluating solidarity across diverse global contexts. While some advocate for a standardised definition, others caution against rigid terminology, emphasising the need for locally relevant principles. Concerns about co-option, regional variations in terminology, and the framing of evaluation itself further underscore the importance of ensuring that language serves as a tool for action rather than an obstacle to progress. **Ultimately, the challenge lies in striking a balance between clarity, inclusivity, and practical applicability in how solidarity is conceptualised, communicated, and measured.**

## Designing the Tool: Logistical considerations

Participants outlined several logistical considerations for designing a measurement tool for solidarity. Their suggestions centered on adopting a phased approach to development, co-creating the tool with a diverse range of stakeholders, and integrating the evaluation into existing frameworks rather than developing a stand-alone instrument.

A phased approach was widely recommended for both developing and rolling out a solidarity index tool. Participants emphasised the importance of assessing solidarity at various stages of program development and implementation. For instance, Participant 016INF explained:

*“Look at the involvement of local organisations and local communities, look at the practice of solidarity before any intervention. You know, while at the design phase or proposal stage, as well as the initiation and implementation phase, also see how it’s being practiced. And then by the time any interventions or projects are closing, I was also seeing, you know, also evaluating and checking to see if the solidarity is still being practiced, right?” (016INF)*

In addition to a phased implementation, there was strong support for co-creation of the tool. Participants stressed that the development process should involve both inter-professional experts and community members. As Participant 013INF noted:

*“It will require set of some like-minded people who think on the same level or have different experiences to develop these particular blocks where we can build this framework. But alone, I don’t think so. I have the experience, the capability, and the skill sets to, to come up with the framework myself. I can imagine what the framework might look like and result to, but not essentially develop it.”*

Finally, several participants, including Participants 003GH and 005GH, emphasised that the evaluation of solidarity might be more effective if it were integrated into existing evaluation tools rather than designed as a separate assessment. Participant 005GH elaborated:

*“I feel there are certain core principles that should be part of an evaluation, and I don’t know that it should be a standalone evaluation, I think it should be rather integrated into evaluations and there- I think they’re certain entities that look at donors and things like that. ... I would rather, once again, look at what are those near or core links to solidarity, such as, you know, equity, respectful partnership, it’s got to be the core elements as opposed to solidarity.” (005GH)*

Together, these insights highlight the need for a development process that is iterative, collaborative, and potentially integrated into existing evaluation practices.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on the emerging themes and participant insights, we propose the following recommendations for developing a Global Health Solidarity Index tool that is both globally coherent and locally relevant:

## Affirm the Need for Measurement

All participants supported the evaluation of solidarity, with none opposing its measurement. This broad consensus underlines the importance of assessing solidarity to highlight deficiencies, optimise resource utilisation, and hold global health organisations accountable.

*Recommendation:* Despite seeing enthusiasm in relation to the design and uptake of a solidarity index, it is essential to reaffirm the need for and importance of such a tool when applying it to local contexts in the future.

## Establish Core Guiding Principles with Flexible Terminology

While the core values underpinning solidarity globally are currently being elucidated through qualitative analysis of all study interviews, participants noted that the term “solidarity” might not resonate in all cultural contexts. For instance, some participants referenced concepts like “Ubuntu” as being more intrinsic in some African cultures.

*Recommendation:* Develop a set of overarching guiding principles that capture the essential characteristics of solidarity. Allow local communities to adopt or even create terminology that best reflects these principles within their cultural and geographic contexts. This flexibility acknowledges that while the label may vary, the core objectives remain consistent.

## Adopt a Wholistic Approach to Evaluation

Participants suggested that the evaluation of solidarity should encompass a wide array of factors such as global public goods, education, economy, income, gender, and environment that interact to shape local realities.

**Recommendation:** Construct the index tool with key domains defined by the “core characteristics” of solidarity. Simultaneously, include mechanisms that enable communities to tailor the specific metrics and labels to their unique contexts. Although this may limit direct comparability across regions, prioritising local relevance over uniformity may ultimately yield more meaningful insights.

## Co-Creation as a Necessary Pre-Condition

The value of co-creation emerged as a crucial theme. Participants emphasised that effective evaluation depends on active community involvement—not only in defining metrics but also in determining whether the tool is relevant and effective locally.

**Recommendation:** Embed co-creation as a fundamental aspect of the tool’s design and implementation. This means engaging stakeholders at every level to collaborate on both the establishment of core guiding principles and the adaptation of these principles to local contexts. Such an approach ensures that the evaluation process is both inclusive and reflective of diverse perspectives.

# POTENTIAL DOMAINS OF MEASUREMENT

Based upon core recommendations from participants around what to actually measure, four preliminary key domains of measurement are proposed below. The domains are meant to be adapted to local contexts, and the core metrics would be community-defined. In *Figure 1: Global Health Solidarity Index: Key Domains of Measurement*, four domains to focus measurements on are proposed. These domains are based upon the results from the key theme of *Defining Metrics: What should be measured* and include the following sub-categories: 1. *Stakeholder Engagement*, 2. *Resource Allocation*, 3. *Accountability and Monitoring*, and 4. *Outcomes*. The domains and examples of proposed measurements are further unpacked below.

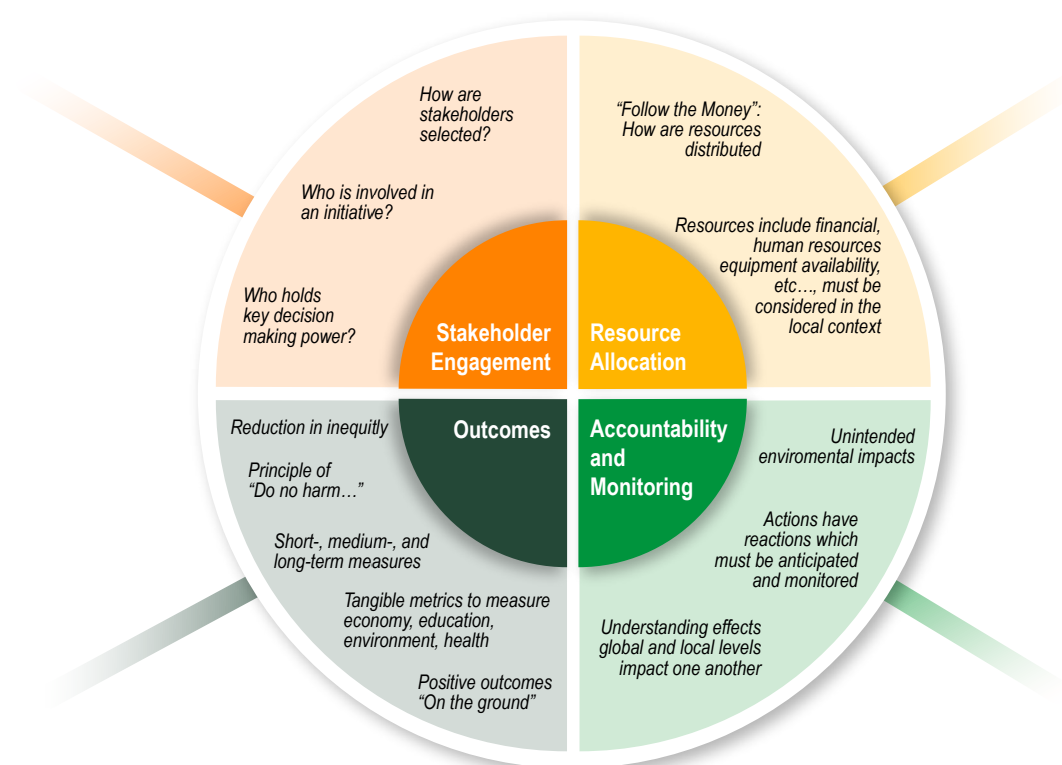


Figure 1: Global Health Solidarity Index: Key Domains of Measurement

In developing a Global Health Solidarity Index, we advocate for a balanced approach that upholds rigorous, globally applicable principles while remaining responsive to local contexts. Thus, ideas for metrics in each of four domains are proposed below, with the understanding that the metrics need to ultimately reflect the need of a given community and be community-directed. As depicted in figure 1, the first evaluation domain, *Stakeholder Engagement*, highlights the critical role of identifying and

involving key stakeholders in a project to effectively foster solidarity. Equally important is assessing the transparency of decision-making processes and resource allocation, ensuring that these are clearly documented and openly shared with stakeholders. Participants emphasised that genuine solidarity requires initiatives to be designed and implemented in ways that shift power to the community. Therefore, it is essential that community stakeholders have meaningful opportunities to hold key decision-making authority.

The second domain, *Resource Allocation*, focuses on the distribution of both monetary and non-monetary resources within organisations. To effectively measure this domain, some recommendations include analysing the proportion of funds dedicated to solidarity-driven initiatives, performing in-depth reviews of budgeting practices, and conducting periodic financial disclosures. It is equally important to assess whether resource distribution aligns with stated equity goals and stakeholder priorities by employing ratio analysis against established equity benchmarks.

The third domain, *Accountability and Monitoring*, underscores the necessity of a robust infrastructure to track organisational progress and uphold accountability. Ensuring adherence to the core principles and plans established at the outset of an initiative is essential. Key recommendations include evaluating the clarity, accessibility, and public availability of mission statements and codes of conduct that explicitly commit organisations to solidarity and equity. Additionally, it is vital to assess the frequency and outcomes of internal and external audits, along with the transparency of public reports detailing resource allocation and key performance indicators.

Participants emphasised that initiatives often produce unintended consequences—every action prompts a reaction. To act in true solidarity, we must continuously monitor and address any unintended harms which may occur because of our initiatives. In this regard, recommendations include systematically documenting and evaluating adverse environmental impacts, such as shifts in pollution levels or waste production, as well as collateral effects on community well-being and public health. Conducting a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis—one that carefully weighs the benefits of an initiative against any negative externalities—is essential for determining its overall effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

The final domain, *Outcomes*, is centered on evaluating community-defined outcomes that reflect meaningful impact. For example, initiatives targeting vaccine equity could be measured by tracking access rates, uptake percentages, and changes in disease prevalence. For broader initiatives, metrics may be developed to assess improvements in education, environmental quality, economic growth, or a combination of these areas. Importantly, outcomes should be monitored over short-, medium-, and long-term intervals, incorporating baseline measurements and periodic evaluations to capture trends and ensure the sustainability and relevance of programs.

Collectively, these recommendations provide a comprehensive preliminary framework for measuring and monitoring solidarity in global health. They ensure that the index not only captures key metrics across accountability, resource flows, primary outcomes, and trade-offs but also honours the cultural and contextual nuances of the communities it is designed to serve.

## CONCLUSION

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This report has explored the feasibility, necessity, and complexity of evaluating solidarity in global health through the lens of “influencers”. Through insights gathered from in-depth interviews, several key conclusions have emerged. First, there is clear consensus among participants that assessing solidarity is valuable. However, the task of evaluation cannot fall solely on a single entity, nor can it rely on self-assessment, as such approaches lack both the impetus and accountability necessary for meaningful measurement.

Second, four foundational domains have been identified as essential to a Global Health Solidarity Index: *Stakeholder Engagement*, *Resource Allocation*, *Accountability and Monitoring*, and *Outcomes*. These domains offer a structured approach to assessing solidarity in a way that is both comprehensive and adaptable.

Despite seeing enthusiasm regarding developing an index, participants also highlighted significant challenges and caveats. Solidarity is a complex and context-dependent concept, and its evaluation may be constrained by existing global structures. Additionally, language itself presents a challenge—what is understood as “solidarity” in one context may not translate directly to another. Rather than being rigidly attached to the terminology of solidarity, it may be more effective to focus on the fundamental principles underpinning this concept, allowing for contextual flexibility in naming and framing the tool.

Finally, any evaluation framework must consider practical and logistical constraints. A **phased approach beginning with co-creation and iterative refinement** will be crucial to ensuring both feasibility and local relevance. Moreover, **integrating this tool into existing measurement frameworks** may provide a pragmatic pathway to advancing the design and implementation of a solidarity index tool.

Moving forward, challenges lie not only in defining and measuring solidarity but also in fostering the global commitment necessary to make this evaluation both meaningful and actionable. Participants in the “influencers” category agreed that solidarity in global health must move beyond rhetoric: it must be measured, strengthened, and, ultimately, embedded in practice, all whilst paying close attention to community relevance and context. This report is part of ongoing empirical research aimed at fostering dialogue on and developing actionable strategies to support the practice of solidarity in and for global health.

## APPENDIX A: RELEVANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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Participants took part in semi-structured interviews which covered domains that are outside the scope of this report. Thus, listed below are the specific interview guide questions on which we are mainly drawing from in this report:

- 1 Imagine big players in global health – major funders, private donors, and agenda-setting bodies such as the WHO – could be evaluated for their practice of solidarity: What would you recommend evaluators look at?
- 2 Do you think evaluating big funders and implementers in global health on their practices of solidarity is a good idea? Why or why not?
- 3 Do you have any concerns about the use of solidarity or solidaristic languages in global health?





Moving Beyond  
Solidarity Rhetoric  
in Global Health

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