

Measure Your Impact with the Social Cohesion Impact Measurement (SCIM) Framework

DOCUMENT CONTENTS:

| | |
|--|---|
| OVERVIEW: A tool to measure the impact of bridging interventions | 1 |
| What can I expect from using SCIM? | 1 |
| How does SCIM work? | 2 |
| Choosing your SCIM outcomes and questions | 3 |
| Menu of SCIM outcomes and survey questions | 4 |
| SCIM users | 6 |
| SCIM case studies and testimonials | 7 |
| Getting started with SCIM | 8 |
| The history and team behind SCIM | 9 |

OVERVIEW: A tool to measure the impact of bridging interventions

In the face of rising political division, hundreds of organizations in the US are actively working to bridge Americans across divides. Although many of these "bridge building" groups have developed measurement and evaluation systems, others may benefit from access to a free, flexible, tested, and easy-to-use platform to measure the impact of their work. Recognizing this, the Goals & Measures Working Group of the Bridging Movement Alignment Collaborative (BMAC), with support from Listen First Project and Civic Health Project, developed the **Social Cohesion Impact Measurement (SCIM)** framework.

We can help you to learn, understand, adapt, and use SCIM for your organization's measurement needs. While the primary purpose of SCIM is to give organizations insights into their own impact, we also aggregate and share anonymized data toward amplifying the field-wide impact of the bridging movement and contributing to the knowledge of best practices across the bridging field.

What can I expect from using SCIM?

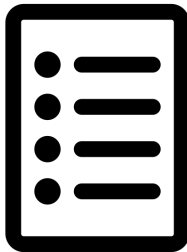
By surveying participants on key outcomes of division before and after a bridging engagement (event, program, campaign, etc.), SCIM can help your organization measure the impact of your work. Groups using SCIM today cite value in **measuring specific programs, learning insights across different communities served, and comparing results across various intervention modes and target audiences.**

| |
|---|
| Measure attitudes between groups. |
| Select questions for your pre and post-surveys to understand how your work affects intergroup attitudes, such as animosity, humanization, and perceived morality. |
| Measure how your community learns to bridge. |
| Select questions to understand how your work increases intellectual humility, value for listening, respect, understanding, and support for pluralistic norms. |
| Measure how your programs drive social cohesion. |
| Work with our team to include additional validated measures and questions around outcomes you seek to have an impact on in your work. |

How does SCIM work?

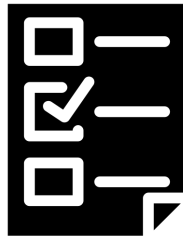
Implementing SCIM in your organization takes three steps.

1.(You) Select Survey Items



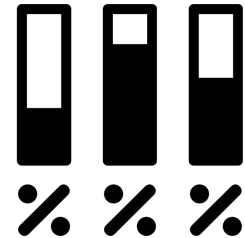
A menu of validated bridging and polarization outcomes.

2. (We) Build and (You) Administer Pre and Post Surveys



Standardized pre and post-surveys for the participants of your events.

3. (We) Build Your Analysis Tool



An analysis tool to see your impact in real-time.

1. Select Your Survey Items: First, we'll invite you to an introductory meeting on SCIM to give you an overview of the measurement tool and talk about your activities and measurement needs. We'll walk through the SCIM menu of questions and discuss which are best suited to measure the impact of your events. We can also discuss what additional questions you may want to include tailored to your organization's needs.

2. We Build and You Administer Your Pre and Post Surveys: After choosing the outcomes to assess your events, the SCIM team will customize your pre and post-survey, which are built on Google Forms. You'll administer a "pre-survey" to the participants of your event before it starts

and a “post-survey” after the event, using links or a QR code. It is possible to administer the surveys in a paper format, but that would require manual action from your organization.

3. We Build and Walk You Through Your Analysis Tool: Once your organization has successfully completed an engagement using the pre and post-surveys, let us know and we’ll **set up your SCIM analysis tool and schedule a meeting to walk you through your first results.** The tool is built on Google Sheets and automatically integrates with your survey responses, so it is able to give you an instant visualization of the impact of your future events.

Choosing your SCIM outcomes and questions

The SCIM outcomes were selected from conversations and surveys we conducted with dozens of bridging groups to understand the impact they hoped to have. The survey questions that measure those outcomes are drawn from academic studies and have been pre-tested to optimize reliability and accuracy.

When choosing your SCIM outcomes, consider:

Survey length: To make it easy for your participants to complete the surveys, we suggest you choose between **3 and 6 of the SCIM survey outcomes.** (Note: Most outcome measures use two survey questions.)

Adding your own questions: At the end of your surveys, you can include additional questions of interest to your organization, including demographic questions.

Polarization Vs. Bridging Questions: In our discussions with bridging groups we learned their goals were not only related to improving attitudes between specific polarized groups, but also to nurturing views and skills conducive to bridge building. For this reason, **our outcomes are organized into two categories, “PQ” and “BQ”.**

| | Polarization Quotient (PQ) | Bridging Quotient (BQ) |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Goal | The survey items are related to improving intergroup attitudes and feelings. | The survey items are either related to building bridging dispositions or they adapt PQ questions to be group neutral. |
| Group Classification | If you include a PQ item, you will specify which “groups” participants identify with before answering the questions. E.G: “conservative” / “liberal”, “Democratic” / “Republican”, “Pro-choice” / “Pro-life”, “Christian” / “Muslim”. | If you choose a BQ item, you will not need to identify which “groups” the participants identify with. |
| Questions | The PQ questions will ask about the appropriate “outgroup” in the text. For example, those who identify as “liberal” will be asked about their feelings toward “conservatives”. | BQ questions either do not refer to “others” at all or, when they do, broadly refer to people with other political views. |

The following section displays the menu of SCIM outcomes. **The outcomes that are labeled PQ/BQ can be used to either:**

- measure change in attitudes between specific groups you identify (PQ version) or
- measure change in bridging outlook more generally (BQ version, cross all participants).

Menu of SCIM outcomes and survey questions

| Highly Recommended (Select at least 2) | | |
|---|----|--|
| Affective Polarization (intergroup animosity) | PQ | Please indicate how you feel toward [outgroup] using the scale below. 10 means that you feel very favorably or warm toward them, 0 that you feel very unfavorable or cold, and 5 are neutral. How comfortable are you having friends who are [outgroup members]? |
| Intellectual Humility | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I accept that my beliefs may be wrong. • When others have different beliefs than me, I feel like I'm being personally attacked. |
| Respect/ Understanding | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if I don't agree with them, I understand people have good reasons for voting for their candidates. • I respect others' opinions even when I do not agree. |
| Respect/ Understanding | PQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if I don't agree with them, I understand people have good reasons for voting for [outgroup] candidates. • I respect [outgroup members'] opinions even when I do not agree. |
| Pluralist Norms | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who disagree with everything I stand for should still have a chance to talk in a public forum. • It is easier to solve problems in the country if there is input from people who are different from each other. |
| Democratic Norms | | |
| Democratic Norms | BQ | How important to you is it that elected officials make compromises across political divides to solve important problems? How likely would you be to vote for a candidate who said they would ban extremist groups from rallying on the state capitol grounds? |
| Democratic Norms | PQ | How important to you is it that [ingroup] elected officials make compromises with [outgroup] elected officials to solve important problems? How likely would you be to vote for a [ingroup] candidate who said they would ban [extreme outgroup] group rallies on the state capitol grounds? |
| Additional Intergroup Beliefs | | |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------|--|
| Humanization | PQ | How often do you think [outgroup members] experience the following emotions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hope. • Admiration. |
|---------------------|-----------|--|

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| Morality | PQ | Would you say that [outgroups members] are generally good people? |
|-----------------|-----------|---|

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|--|
| Intergroup Empathy | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find it difficult to see things from others' points of view, particularly people with different political beliefs. • It's important to understand Americans with other political views by imagining how things look from their perspective. |
|---------------------------|-----------|--|

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|---|
| Intergroup Empathy | PQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find it difficult to see things from [outgroup members] point of view. • It is important to understand [outgroup members] by imagining how things look from their perspective. |
|---------------------------|-----------|---|

Community Norms & Connection

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|---|
| Belonging | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel emotionally connected to my local community. • People in my local community include me in activities. |
|------------------|-----------|---|

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|--|
| Collaboration Norms | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in my community make frequent and meaningful efforts to collaborate with people who are different from them/who they disagree with. • The number of people in my community who believe it is important to collaborate with people who are different from them/who they disagree with is increasing over time |
|----------------------------|-----------|--|

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|---|
| Respect Norms | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People in my community respect others who do not share their values. • The number of people in my community who believe it is important to respect others who do not share their values is increasing over time. |
|----------------------|-----------|---|

Bridging Efficacy, Skills & Disposition

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|---|
| Value Listening | BQ | How important is it that you have the following skills? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen carefully when someone you disagree with is speaking. • Are an attentive listener when someone you disagree with is talking. |
|------------------------|-----------|---|

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|--|
| Personal Agency | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can make a positive difference in my community. • I am capable of taking action to influence the things I care about. |
|------------------------|-----------|--|

| | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| Self-Efficacy: Creating a Bridging Community | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have confidence in my ability to help shift social norms about how we engage with others who are different from us/who disagree with us. • I have the ability to contribute to a community that promotes collaboration between people who disagree. |
|---|-----------|--|

| | | |
|--|----|---|
| Self-Efficacy: Being a Bridge-Builder | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am confident in my ability to have fruitful conversations with people I disagree with, even when I disagree with them on matters I deeply care about. I can collaborate well with people I disagree with, even when I disagree with them on matters I deeply care about. |
| Openness to Sharing and Learning About One's Own Group | BQ | How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing stories and experiences of my groups with others matters a lot to me. As I learn more about other groups, I find myself wanting to learn more about people of my own group. |
| Bridging Behavior (Note: for long-term engagements) | BQ | When you see people having a tense or polarizing discussion in your community, how often do you take steps to encourage mutual understanding? |
| For High Conflict Groups | | |
| Perceived Threat | PQ | Would you say [outgroup members] are a serious threat to the United States? |
| Anger | PQ | How angry do you get just thinking about [outgroup members]? |
| Identity | PQ | How much do you agree with the statement "if I met someone who is a [member of ingroup], I'd feel connected to that person"? |

Why we "highly recommend" those four outcomes

While you should select the outcomes from the menu above that are most relevant to its work, we highly recommend the four outcomes - Affective Polarization, Intellectual Humility, Intergroup Empathy, and Pluralistic Norms - because **they are either currently broadly used or we believe they have the greatest potential for adoption.** Our reasoning is simple; the more groups adopt and use a similar set of items, the more the field will be able to learn about its impact and groups will be able to learn from each other.

SCIM users

To date, thirty+ institutions and bridging organizations have adopted SCIM. They include:

- #100 Coffees
- Abortion Talks
- America Talks
- American Public Square
- Better Together Film Festival
- Braver Angels
- BridgeUSA
- Building Bridgers
- Children's Services Council of Leon County, Florida
- Common Ground Committee
- Courageous Leadership

- Crossing Party Lines
- Deliberations.us
- Element3 Church
- FixUS
- Florida State University
- Iowa Civic Dialogue Initiative
- Knight Creative Communities Institute
- Leadership Tallahassee
- Living Room Conversations
- Meeting of America
- Middle Ground School Solutions
- More Perfect Union
- Mormon Women for Ethical Government
- National Week of Conversation
- North Carolina Campus Engagement
- Power of WE
- Serve Ohio
- Summer Book Club of the Commons
- The Village Square
- Urban Rural Action

SCIM case studies and testimonials

America Talks

[America Talks](#) is one of the largest bridging interventions tested to date using the Social Cohesion Impact Measure (SCIM). More than 600 event participants responded to the pre-and post-event SCIM survey, and aggregate survey results showed a statistically significant change, an aggregate reduction in “affective polarization”, i.e. political animosity. Specifically, survey respondents reported a **7 percentage point reduction in feelings of animosity** towards people with different political perspectives.

Capturing demographic data on America Talks 2022 participants also allowed event organizers to observe that Democrats reported somewhat steeper reductions in partisan animosity than Republicans, and that African-Americans reported the steepest aggregate reductions across all racial groups. Fine-grained demographic insights like these enable program leaders to tune invitations, messaging, and conversation prompts to elevate results across all social groups.

BridgeUSA

[BridgeUSA](#), a student-led organization that manages chapters and hosts dialogues on college campuses about controversial political issues, uses SCIM across nine universities (so far) to measure the impact of their interventions on college students.

“We wanted to ensure that our discussions and events had a measurable effect on participants. We also wanted to compare this impact between different communities and event types.”

– **Ross Irwin**, Chief Operations Officer of BridgeUSA

Results obtained at their events demonstrate that their chapters had a statistically significant impact on understanding and trust dimensions of cross-partisan interactions, with participants showing a four percentage point aggregate improvement in reported respect and understanding for others with opposing viewpoints.

The Village Square

“At The Village Square we've been doing pre and post-assessments of the impact of our programming for at least a decade. SCIM is the most powerful evaluation tool we've ever used.”

– **Liz Joyner**, Founder & President of The Village Square

Based in Tallahassee, The Village Square is a non-profit organization dedicated to bridging divides through discussion and spirited disagreement. In 2021, its team started implementing SCIM to measure multiple activities. Their events are characterized by meaningful variables that are reflected on the SCIM analysis tool, such as the difference between in-person interventions and online events or the “approach” of the event.

Data collected in the pre-and post-series surveys reported that respondents experienced a statistically significant reduction in feelings of animosity toward people with different political perspectives and an increase in their respect and understanding for people with political views different from their own.

Meeting of America

[Meeting of America](#) applied SCIM to its Fall 2021 pilot and again to a larger programming rollout in Central and Eastern Kentucky in Summer and Fall 2022. An active program that is continuing to roll out across the country, Meeting of America’s results to date show a smaller -yet statistically significant- **three percentage point decrease in animosity between self-described liberals and conservatives.**

Getting started with SCIM

The Listen First Goals and Measures Program is interested in helping you set up the tool for your organization. That support involves:

- **Needs:** Discussing your measurement needs as it relates to your projects and program.
- **Outcomes:** Reviewing the outcomes and questions that may be important to your work.
- **Surveys:** Tailoring the pre and post-surveys to use for your events or incorporating the questions into your existing survey structure.
- **Analysis Tool:** Setting up your customized analysis tool to visualize and assess the impact of your events.
- **Training and Follow-up:** Training the organization in the (minimal) upkeep of your surveys and analysis tool.

Get started by contacting measure@listenfirstproject.org or

[scheduling a time to meet with the SCIM team.](#)

The history and team behind SCIM

SCIM results from a powerful, long-term collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and funders seeking greater insight into the efficacy of bridge-building and social impact interventions.

In 2021, a working group of 20+ grassroots bridging practitioners formed around three central questions: “**Why** should we measure bridging interventions, **what** specifically should we measure, and **how** should we do it?” To answer these questions, the working group sought input and support from social science researchers, leading practitioner organizations, and institutional funders.

Over time, the efforts of the working group crystallized into the [Bridging Movement Goals and Measures Program](#), which offers SCIM as a flagship resource for bridge-building and other civic organizations.

Contributors to the Bridging Goals and Measures Program and SCIM include past and current working group co-chairs, rotating working group members, and the many academic advisors whose research enabled us to validate the recommended SCIM outcomes and questions. Past and current funders include New Pluralists and Civic Health Project.

Currently, the working group, program, and SCIM are led by these core team members:



Kristin Hansen

CO-CHAIR, BRIDGING GOALS & MEASURES WORKING GROUP

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CIVIC HEALTH PROJECT

[LinkedIn](#)



Karissa Raskin

PROGRAM MANAGER, BRIDGING GOALS & MEASURES PROGRAM

DIR. OF COALITION ENGAGEMENT
LISTEN FIRST PROJECT

[LinkedIn](#)



Mike Murphy

CO-CHAIR, BRIDGING GOALS & MEASURES WORKING GROUP

SENIOR VP, CRFB and CHIEF OF STAFF | DIRECTOR OF FIXUS

[LinkedIn](#)



Julia Kamin, PhD

PROGRAM ADVISOR, BRIDGING GOALS & MEASURES PROGRAM

RESEARCH CONSULTANT
CIVIC HEALTH PROJECT

[LinkedIn](#)