

Social Capital Assessment + Learning for Equity (SCALE) Measures

USER GUIDE



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ABOUT THE SOCIAL CAPITAL ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING FOR EQUITY PROJECT

The Social Capital Assessment and Learning for Equity Project (SCALE) - funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation - was launched in January 2020 with the purpose of understanding how social capital and strong peer-to-peer relationships help youth and young adults secure education and/or employment opportunities. Social capital can be defined as the resources that arise from a web of relationships, which people can access and mobilize to help them improve their lives and achieve their goals. Organizations have the potential to promote social capital by connecting youth and young adults to both relationships and resources. One mechanism for centering social capital development in a program's work is to measure how young people experience the relationship-building efforts within the program and to track the resources these relationships facilitate access to. Thus, a key goal of this project was to develop and rigorously test a set of social capital measures and related constructs for youth and young adults that were reliable, valid, and theoretically sound.

COLLECTING VALID AND RELIABLE DATA ON SOCIAL CAPITAL

This user guide provides practitioners with survey-based measures that have shown strong evidence of validity and reliability. The social capital measures presented in this user guide were developed by a team of researchers at Search Institute. Researchers followed a rigorous measurement development process consisting of literature reviews, focus group data collection, feedback from experts such as researchers and program evaluators, cognitive

interviews with young people, and pilot testing.

These measures are presented as a series of scales. Scales are a set of survey items related to a single construct or topic (e.g., relationship-building skills, occupational identity). The scales found in this user guide have been tested to ensure that they have strong validity and reliability metrics across specific contexts and uses.

It is important to remember that measurement validation is an ongoing process. Search Institute plans to conduct more studies and pilot tests of the social capital measures within this user guide over time. These additional tests will help us gather further support for the validity and reliability of these measures across different purposes and populations.

We have accumulated evidence of the social capital measure's current validity through a large pilot effort with six distinct youth and young adult-serving organizations. These pilot tests provide strong evidence for these measures reliability and validity. Namely, the survey-based scales found in this user guide meet specific statistical and psychometric properties. For more information about the validity and reliability of these measures, please see Search Institute's technical manual.

WHO SHOULD USE THESE SOCIAL CAPITAL MEASURES?

The social capital measures can be a useful descriptive tool in a wide range of settings including education and workforce development programs, high schools, post-secondary institutions, and other youth and young adult-serving organizations.

The measures were originally developed for youth and young adults across a range of different racial and economic backgrounds and among high-school youth to young adults. The measures will continue to be tested across diverse populations and in different settings.

While we do not recommend using the measures for accountability purposes, they can be used for a variety of different purposes including research, program evaluation, and to help inform program and/or organizational improvements. For example, many of the social capital measures are well suited for assessing the effects of youth programs, curricula, and interventions that are designed to enhance youth's and young adults' social capital.

USING THE MEASURES

When using the measures, we encourage programs, schools, and organizations to select the topics that are most important to their context and the community of young people they serve. The measures found in this guide are organized around four domains: (a) social capital, (b) mindsets and skills for social capital development, (c) support for social capital development, and (d) program outcomes. Within each of these domains, Search Institute offers several

scales – or sets of questions – that measure specific topics. Choose the scales that work best for your context and program.

The social capital measures that follow are designed to be self-explanatory for respondents. As such, they can be administered individually like any other self-report questionnaire or rating scale. Most respondents require no to little additional explanations other than the standard instructions provided. Measures that require specific instructions are noted. These instructions are often to help set the stage for the scope and content of the items that follow and thus are important to include.

Several of the items can be adapted to include your specific program or organizational name. Places where this is possible are noted in parentheses – i.e., [PROGRAM OR ORGANIZATIONAL NAME]. Otherwise, it is important to use the exact wording provided to maintain the validity and reliability of the measures.



SCORING

All scale items have five response options, scored on an agreement scale from 0 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*). Each point on the scale was labeled with a general orientation from left-to-right of negative (or less) to positive (or more).

Response Scale

0	1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree; Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

All measures can be scored by calculating a mean score – i.e., average score. For example, the occupational identity scale presented below has four items. Each of the items has a range of scores (0, 1, 2, 3, or 4). A response of disagree would be scored as “1” and a response of strongly agree would be scored as “4.” To compute the mean score, add up the items to get a raw sum. Then compute the average by dividing the raw sum by the number of completed items (see an example below). Items that are left blank by a respondent should be ignored when computing the average.

Example: Scoring of Occupational Identity

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?						
I have a clear sense about what careers I am interested in pursuing.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree; Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	2
I see my current life experiences as useful to my future career.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree; Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	1
I know what steps to take to reach my career goals.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree; Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	3
People like me are successful in the careers that interest me.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree; Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	3
Sum/number of items						9/4 = 2.25

DOMAIN 1. SOCIAL CAPITAL

SOCIAL CAPITAL

The social capital measure includes five items that assess developmental relationships and three items that assess resources provided from and through these relationships. A description of each is provided below.

Developmental Relationships

A key ingredient to building strong social capital is increasing youth's and young adults' access to developmental relationships. We define a developmental relationship as a close connection through which young people discover who they are, gain abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to interact with and contribute to the world around them. A developmental relationship is distinct from more generalized notions of positive relationships in that it is defined by the combination of five interconnected elements: express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities. Search Institute created the Developmental Relationships Framework to capture a multidimensional understanding of relationships that has been validated by empirical research and authenticated by the practical ways it has been used by adults working with young people. See Appendix A for full Developmental Relationships Framework.

This user guide utilizes a short-form measure of the Developmental Relationships Framework called the Developmental Relationships (DR) 360°. The DR 360° is intended to give a "snapshot" of a young person's relational web. The DR 360° includes five items, with each one representing one of the five elements of a developmental relationship. The DR 360° is useful when assessing multiple relationships, as the items can be summed to give an overall snapshot of a developmental relationship with several relational targets (e.g., peers, teachers, mentors).

Resources

Social capital includes more than just developmental relationships. Social capital also includes the resources that individuals receive through these high-quality relationships. Resources can include things such as financial or material help, information, skill-building opportunities, guidance, and values and norms. The following social capital measure focuses on three types of resources: access to useful information, new connections, and skill-building opportunities.

NETWORK DIVERSITY AND STRENGTH

While it is important that youth and young adults have developmentally-rich relationships, it is also important that young people have a web or network of these relationships that can provide access to valuable resources. There are several indicators that have been used to understand the quality of an individual's social network, such as network structure, size, diversity, and strength. We created two measures to capture individual's social networks. One measure captures network diversity and one assesses network strength. The network diversity measure includes 4-items that ask young people whether they have people in their network who are from different cultures, racial and ethnic backgrounds, economic backgrounds, and have different skills. The network strength measure includes 5-items that ask young people whether they had people in their network who they could go to for help, trusted, and felt close to, as well as people who they felt less close to (i.e., weaker tie) but who may be influential in helping them

access their goals or may connect them to others. All three social capital scales are presented below.

Social Capital

Instructions: These questions ask about your relationships with people in your life. We are asking these questions because we want to understand the different kinds of support you have from each of these people.

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

Elements of a Developmental Relationship

[RELATIONAL TARGET] show me that I matter to them

[RELATIONAL TARGET] challenge me to be my best

[RELATIONAL TARGET] listen to my ideas and take them seriously

[RELATIONAL TARGET] help me accomplish tasks

[RELATIONAL TARGET] introduce me to new experiences or opportunities

Resources Acquired From Relationships

[RELATIONAL TARGET] provide me with useful information for pursuing my education or career goals

[RELATIONAL TARGET] support me in developing or strengthening the skills needed to pursue my education or career goals

[RELATIONAL TARGET] connect me with other people who help me pursue my education or career goals

Notes. This measure can be adapted to assess a number of different relational targets. The measure could be used to assess relationships with peers, teachers, family members, community members, and other key relationships of interest

Network Diversity

Instructions: The next set of questions ask about your network. By network, we mean the people in your life both within and outside of [Program/Organization Name] who can help you achieve your education or career goals. Think about these people when you answer these questions.

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I have people in my network with different skills that will be useful to me as I pursue my goals.

I have people in my network with many different careers or career interests.

I have people in my network from many different cultures or racial/ethnic backgrounds.

I have people in my network from many different economic backgrounds.

Network Strength

Instructions: The next set of questions ask about your network. By network, we mean the people in your life both within and outside of [Program/Organization Name] who can help you achieve your education or career goals. Think about these people when you answer these questions.

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I have people in my network that I can trust to help me pursue my education or career goals.

I have people in my network that introduce me to others who can help me reach my education or career goals.

I have people in my network who I am close to that help me pursue my education or career goals.

I have people in my network who I am less close to but who are influential in helping me reach my education or career goals.

I have people in my network who help me when they say they are going to help me.

DOMAIN 2. MINDSETS AND SKILLS FOR SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to effectively use social capital to reach one's education and/or career goals, individuals need to have the mindsets and skills to successfully activate and mobilize their relationships and resources in pursuit of their goals. We refer to these mindsets and skills as catalysts. This section includes several measures that capture these constructs. A summary of each is provided below.

Scale	Number of Items	Description
Catalysts to Mobilize Relationships and Resources	4	The degree to which an individual has different relationships that help build their self-awareness, confidence, relationships-building skills, and possible selves. Similar to the social capital measure, this measure can be adapted to assess multiple relational targets (e.g., family members).
Self-Initiated Social Capital	3	The degree to which an individual actively builds relationships and uses the relationships and the resources they have to reach their goals.
Relationship-Building Skills	4	The degree to which an individual is able to build positive relationships with others.
Networking Skills	4	The degree to which an individual purposefully uses relationships within their social network to reach their goals.
Personal Identity	3	The degree to which an individual has a clear sense of their personal identity
Racial and Ethnic Identity	4	The degree to which an individual has a clear sense of their racial and ethnic background and what this identity means to them.
Sense of Purpose	3	The degree to which an individual has a clear sense of their life's purpose.
Self-Efficacy for Reaching Life Goals	4	The degree to which an individual feels they can successfully reach their life goals.

Catalysts to Mobilize Relationships and Resources

Instructions: These questions ask about your relationships with people in your life. We are asking these questions because we want to understand the different kinds of support you have from each of these people

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

[RELATIONAL TARGET] help me imagine new possibilities for my future

[RELATIONAL TARGET] make me feel confident that I can reach my education or career goals

[RELATIONAL TARGET] help me understand my own strengths and weaknesses

[RELATIONAL TARGET] show me how to build and maintain strong relationships with others

Notes. This measure can be adapted to assess a number of different relational targets. The measure could be used to assess relationships with peers, teachers, family members, community members, and other key relationships of interest.

Self-Initiated Social Capital

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

When working towards my education or career goals, I ask for help when I need it.

I go out of my way to meet new people in order to reach my education or career goals.

I form strong relationships with people who are useful for helping me reach my education or career goals.

Relationship-Building Skills

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I am good at building relationships with others.

I communicate well with others.

I work well with others in a group or team.

I know how to solve and manage conflicts with other people.

Networking Skills

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I build relationships with people in my network who can help advance my education or career goals.

I find ways to pay back people in my network for helping me out.

I use my current network to meet new people.

I am able to use the resources I gain from my network to pursue my goals.

Personal Identity

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I am comfortable with who I am.

I know myself well.

I know my strengths and weaknesses.

Racial and Ethnic Identity¹

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I have a clear sense of my racial/ethnic background and what it means for me.

My racial/ethnic background matters to me.

I think about how my racial/ethnic background affects my life.

My racial/ethnic background is an important part of who I am.

¹ Some items adapted from Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004.

Sense of Purpose¹

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I put a lot of effort into making my goals a reality.

I understand what gives my life meaning.

It is important for me to make the world a better place in some way.

¹ Items adapted from Bronk et al., 2018.



Self-Efficacy in Reaching Life Goals¹

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I can achieve the goals that I have set for myself.

I feel prepared to reach my goals.

I can succeed at tasks that I set my mind to.

I can successfully overcome many challenges.

¹ Some items adapted from Chen et al., 2001.

DOMAIN 3. SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Youth and young adults receive support for building social capital through a number of means including any participation in afterschool and/or out-of-school time programs and/or through their school or college campus environments. Thus, we developed several measures that capture the type of support an individual may receive in a program or organization designed to support social capital growth (e.g., sense of program community, volunteer support). A summary of each of these measures is found below.

Scales	Number of Items	Description
Program Support for Social Capital Development	4	This degree to which an individual reports receiving forms of support as a result of participating in a program that is believed to promote social capital (e.g., skill building, increasing network size).
Sense of Program/School Community	4	The degree to which an individual feels a sense of community within their program, school, or organization.
Psychological Safety	4	The degree to which an individual feels their program or organization provides a safe space for them to express who they are as an individual.
Volunteer Support	4	The degree to which an individual perceives that volunteers in their program or organization have provided them with social capital support (e.g., useful information, new connections).
Seeking Volunteer Support	4	The degree to which an individual actively seeks social capital support from volunteers within their program or an organization (e.g., asks for information, guidance, and other forms of instrumental support).
Seeking Teacher/Professor Support	4	The degree to which an individual actively seeks social capital support from teachers, professors, and other campus staff (e.g., asks for information, guidance, and other forms of instrumental support).

Program Support for Social Capital Development

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

As a result of my participation in [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME],

I have more people I can go to to help me pursue my education or career goals.

I have access to more useful information for pursuing my education or career goals.

I have developed or strengthened skills needed to pursue my education or career goals.

I am connected with more influential people who are useful for pursuing my education or career goals.

Sense of Program Community

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I feel a sense of community at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME].

I care about what happens at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME].

I reach out to my [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] community for support.

I feel known and valued at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME].

Psychological Safety

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

[PEOPLE IN PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] create a safe space for me to express who I am and who I want to be.

[PEOPLE IN PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] acknowledge and respect who I am and my background.

[PEOPLE IN PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] create a safe space to talk about inequities and other systemic issues.

[PEOPLE IN PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] believe I am capable of achieving my goals, regardless of my background.

Volunteer Support

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

The volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] provided me with useful information for getting a job.

The volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] made me feel confident about applying for a job.

The volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] helped me develop new skills needed for getting a job.

The volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] helped me build connections with others who can help me get a job.

Seeking Volunteer Support

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I reach out to volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] to update them on my job search.

I ask volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] to introduce me to other influential people.

I ask volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] for important information about their career or the organization that they work for.

I reach out to volunteers at [PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME] for additional support.

Seeking Professor/Teacher Support

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I ask [TEACHERS/PROFESSORS] to introduce me to others who can help me reach my educational goals.

I ask [TEACHERS/PROFESSORS] for information about school resources (e.g., advising, tutoring, mental health services).

I ask [TEACHERS/PROFESSORS] for guidance or advice on major life decisions.

I ask [TEACHERS/PROFESSORS] for additional educational support (e.g., homework, tutoring).

DOMAIN 4. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Many organizations and programs focused on social capital, hope to advance youth's and young adults' progress towards reaching their education and/or career goals, while also inspiring, and creating space for, young people to do the same for others. To capture both of these important program outcomes, we created measures of young peoples' progress towards education or career goals, their collective efficacy to change systems, and their commitment to paying-it-forward for others. We also created measures of occupational identity and job-seeking skills. A summary of each of these measures is found below.

Scales	Number of Items	Description
Progress Towards Education or Career Goals	4	The degree to which an individual reports making progress towards their education or career goals.
Commitment to Paying-it-Forward	4	The degree to which an individual engages in behaviors that demonstrate a commitment to paying-it-forward to others.
Collective Efficacy to Change Systems	3	The degree to which an individual feels that they can work with their program or organization to change employment and education systems.
Occupational Identity	4	The degree to which an individual has a clear sense of their occupational identity.
Job-Seeking Skills	5	The degree to which an individual engages in behaviors that may lead to securing employment.

Progress Towards Education or Career Goals

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I have made a plan to reach my education or career goals.

I have already sought out people who can help me pursue my education or career goals.

I am making progress towards my education or career goals.

I have already taken important steps towards pursuing my education or career goals.

Commitment to Paying-it-Forward¹

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I do things to help others achieve their goals.

I invest in people around me by helping them access valuable resources.

I pass on my knowledge and skills to others.

I help others by introducing them to new people or connections.

¹ Items inspired by Christens, 2012's work on relational empowerment.

Collective Efficacy to Change Systems

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

Working with [OTHERS AT MY PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME], we can create new education and career opportunities for people who might not have otherwise had them.

Working with [OTHERS AT MY PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME], we can improve education or employment systems by using the resources we have gained from the program.

Working with [OTHERS AT MY PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION NAME], we can increase access to education or career opportunities for other people like me.

Occupational Identity

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I have a clear sense about what careers I am interested in pursuing.

I see my current life experiences as useful to my future career.

I know what steps to take to reach my career goals.

People like me are successful in the careers that interest me.



Job-Seeking Skills

How much do you disagree or agree with each statement?

I know how to find information about open job positions.

I know how to network.

I know how to prepare a job resume.

I know how to complete a job application.

I know how to get ready for a job interview (e.g., how to research the company, practice interview questions).

Appendix A. The Developmental Relationships Framework

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they experience developmental relationships with important people in their lives. Developmental relationships are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them. Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people's lives.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
1. Express Care Show me that I matter to you.	Be dependable Listen Believe in me Be warm Encourage	Be someone I can trust. Really pay attention when we are together. Make me feel known and valued. Show me you enjoy being with me. Praise me for my efforts and achievements.
2. Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.	Expect my best Stretch Hold me accountable Reflect on failures	Expect me to live up to my potential. Push me to go further. Insist I take responsibility for my actions. Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.
3. Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.	Navigate Empower Advocate Set boundaries	Guide me through hard situations and systems. Build my confidence to take charge of my life. Stand up for me when I need it. Put in place limits that keep me on track.
4. Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.	Respect me Include me Collaborate Let me lead	Take me seriously and treat me fairly. Involve me in decisions that affect me. Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.
5. Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.	Inspire Broaden horizons Connect	Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. Introduce me to people who can help me grow.

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