

Monitoring and Evaluation

Many funders ask groups how they will measure the success of their work. They want to know what difference their funding will make to the people who use your group's services or take part in the activities you provide.

Thinking through how you will monitor and evaluate your group's activities is an important part of planning your work. It can help you learn what works and what doesn't so that you can change or improve future activities or repeat things that you know went well.

Monitoring and evaluating what you do does not have to be complicated. It's an activity that we all do constantly without thinking about it. For instance, when you organise a bonfire party you will ask yourselves afterwards 'was it a success?' 'Did people enjoy themselves?' 'Was there enough food?' 'Was it safe enough for the children?' 'Would we do it again?'

What is monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring means collecting and recording information about what is happening. Activities can be monitored in different ways, you can record figures such as the numbers of people attending an event or you can ask people what they thought about the activities.

Evaluation means reviewing how things went by looking at the information that was collected and assessing how worthwhile it was. You might ask questions like:

- Did the activity or project achieve what we wanted it to?
- Who benefited from it?
- What did people think of it and did it make any difference to them?
- Could we have done it better?
- What changes will we make next time?

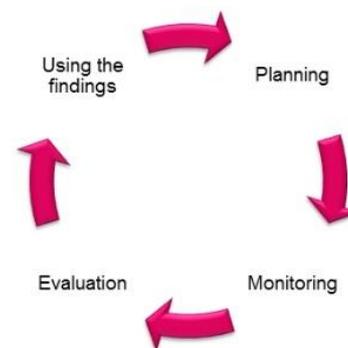
You need to make sure that you collect useful information that will help you to decide if the activity has gone well. You also need to collect any particular monitoring information that your funder has asked for.

What to monitor and evaluate

To decide what to monitor and evaluate, you need to think about the following:

- What does our activity or project aim to do or achieve?
- What information will help us to see whether this has happened?
- What methods can we use to collect the information?
- Who needs to be involved in the evaluation?
- What monitoring has our funder asked for?

There are four stages in the monitoring and evaluation process



What do you monitor?

Inputs: As well as monitoring expenditure, some organisations will monitor other inputs, such as staff and volunteer time.

Outputs: These will be specific products or elements of service provided by the organisation, such as advice sessions, training days or publications.

Outcomes: These are related to the changes or difference made as a result of the organisation's outputs.

Impact (s): These are related to longer-term or broader changes. These might be more difficult to monitor on a routine basis.

Setting indicators

Once a broad framework for monitoring has been set up, making clear the planned outputs and outcomes, some realistic indicators should be identified, against which information can be collected.

Indicators are specific, observable characteristics that can be assessed or measured to show the quality or quantity of aspects of the organisation, its resources, its process, or the results of its activities.

The most common indicators relate to outputs and outcomes and you will need to distinguish between the two.

Output indicators: these demonstrate the work the organisation does and show progress towards meeting its objectives.

Outcome indicators: these demonstrate changes which take place as a result of the organisation's work, and show progress towards meeting specific aims.

You may want to set targets against your indicators, and your monitoring will demonstrate whether these have been achieved.

Indicators can be quantitative (numerical) or qualitative (related to people's perception or experience). They are usually developed when setting aims and objectives, although you can set them later on if necessary.

Sources and Resources:

South Yorkshire Funding Advice Bureau (SYFAB) <http://www.syfab.org.uk/>
Impact and outcomes
Evaluating faith projects

About monitoring and evaluation
<http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/about-performance-improvement/about-monitoring-evaluation/index>

Monitoring and evaluation
http://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/policies_procedures/info_pdf/monitoring.pdf

Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations
The Maple Centre
6 Oak Drive
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 7HN

Tel: 01480 420601
Web: www.huntsforum.org.uk
Twitter: @huntsforum

Registered charity No. 1114926
Company No. 5795877

Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service
2 Regents street
Cambridge
CB2 1AX

Tel: 01223 464696
Web: <http://www.cambridgecvcs.org.uk/>
Twitter: @cambridgecvcs

Registered Charity no: 1074947.
Company no: 3731848.