

PLANNING YOUR EVALUATION STUDENT-LED VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

It is essential that you evaluate your project. If you don't, you'll have no evidence that you've made a difference, and it will be much more difficult to identify how your project can be improved.

You should have a clear idea about how you're going to monitor and evaluate your project from the very start – don't leave it until the end.

To plan your evaluation, go back to your aim, outcomes and activities. Remember, these are the changes you're planning to make, and what you're going to do to bring about those changes. Then decide how you could measure them – **your measurement tools**. These could include: -

- Handing out a short questionnaire after a session.
- Before-and-after surveys to measure changes in confidence, awareness etc.
- Asking other students to come and observe some of your sessions
- Keeping track of easily counted aspects of your project – e.g. recording how many attendees turn up at each session.
- Having regular meetings with volunteers or your community partners to assess how well you are meeting your aim and outcomes.
- Holding a meeting with some of the beneficiaries to get their views.
- Recording participants' views with a video camera.
- Keeping a diary of your own reflections on the project.

Evaluation shouldn't be something that you leave until the end – you should gather information as you go along.

Once you've decided how you'll be evaluating, you will need to go back to your project plan and add it to your list of actions.

SAMPLE EVALUATION PLAN

With evaluation, you should always start with looking at your outcomes. For the Citizenship & Crime Project:-

Outcome 1: Young people are better informed about criminal justice system	Measurement tool 1: Before and after quiz Structured discussion with young people after session
Outcome 2: Student volunteers' skills at delivering workshops improve	Measurement tool 2: Observation of sessions by Project Leaders Volunteer questionnaires
Outcome 3: Schools are more engaged with need for criminal justice education	Measurement tool 3: Telephone interview with teachers 2 weeks after sessions

Analysis of Evaluation Techniques

Technique	Possible advantages	Possible disadvantages
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal • In-depth • No literacy required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming collecting and analysing • Not anonymous • Requires skill
Paper questionnaire / feedback form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No internet required • Anonymous • Quantifiable but can collect qualitative data too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy required (unless using interviewer) • Inputting can be time consuming
Online Questionnaire / feedback form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick to collect and analyse • Can be anonymous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires internet connection • Representative?
Tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to measure change in ability etc. • Not relying on participants' own perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not appropriate in many instances • May not fit 'tone' of the project
Focus groups / group interviews / discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chance for participants to discuss • Lots of qualitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality / peer pressure • Costs – room use • Time intensive
Interactive exercises / games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be fun and generate energy • Can be simple or complicated • Not always require literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not always in depth • Confidentiality / peer pressure • Analysing data – interpreting
Observation / counting (of neighbourhood / individuals etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify changes people are unaware of • Can integrate into normal work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliant on skill and objectivity
Visual methods e.g. drawing, mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non verbal • Good for children and people with poor literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreting data • How in depth?
Audio recordings / video / photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non verbal • Good for children and people with poor literacy • Good for communicating results to others • Can capture changes in situations if done over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Require technical skills • Credibility / objectivity
Web analysis e.g. number of hits on website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to capture data • Can draw connections between online behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only appropriate to measure web activity!
Diaries / logs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture ongoing changes • Benefit to participants – may reinforce learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis – very time consuming • Ensuring participants keep logs