

5 A DAY • Fruit on Desk
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Evaluating Food Projects



**NORTH WEST FOOD & HEALTH
TASK FORCE**



INVESTING IN
englandsnorthwest



Connecting **Farming** and **Food** in England's Northwest

Why Evaluate a Community Food Project?

Why evaluate a community food project?

Evaluation is about making an assessment of your work, based on evidence from recording activities. This is judging an activity's worth and considering it against the goals the activity was meant to achieve¹. It is simply about measuring what you do, how you do it and therefore how you could do it better.

We need to evaluate projects to:

- assess whether what we do is effective in reaching the aims and objectives of the project and to build the evidence base
- demonstrate to others (and ourselves) how the project is making a difference and justify the investment
- acknowledge and share what has worked well and what has not
- demonstrate how community food projects can be effective in meeting a range of targets
- build sustainability into the work by providing measures of success to gain further funding and commitment for effective practice
- create transparency in what we do
- enable those involved to share their experience and feel part of the project

What can we evaluate?

Points to consider

- not all strands of work can be evaluated fully if you are going to keep an effective balance between delivering the project and evaluating strands of work
- think about what is needed from any evaluation and what is to happen to the information gathered. It is very easy to be carried away with measuring everything without considering how to use the information
- consider how much time you have to collate and analyse the information. Three short questions on a questionnaire may be sufficient to get the answers you need
- try to collect basic monitoring data (number of sessions, numbers of participants, etc) for every strand, but to focus more in depth evaluation on areas that demonstrate that you have met your projects aims
- aim to evaluate some strands in each setting (e.g. school, workplace, community venue) or evaluate across a range of age groups if applicable. Evaluation could address the main themes of the work e.g for 5 A DAY the objectives are likely to focus on changes in awareness, access, availability, acceptability and affordability



How to Create an Evaluation Plan

Example Evaluation Plan

- general guidance is that 10% of your total project costs should be allocated to evaluation ². If you are doing your own evaluation assume it will take 10% of your time and some costs. If you intend to buy in evaluation expertise assume at least 10% of budget will be required. Staff time, development of research tools, piloting tools, printing/photocopying questionnaires, arranging venues and people, collecting and analysing data and writing and printing reports all have a cost. Using a range of methods, being clear about what needs to be evaluated and using volunteers, will reduce costs.
- **look for local expertise to help** - Each PCT will have a research /governance committee that may be able help or signpost to others who could offer advice and specialist knowledge. Use local colleges or universities with public health departments for help.

How do I create an evaluation plan?

Plan early and create a baseline –

Evaluation needs to be built into project plans from the beginning. If you don't have a starting point it is difficult to demonstrate the effect of all your hard work! If you are asking other staff to advise and help with evaluation, they need to be understand what is needed from the very beginning to let them work effectively.

Evaluation needs to be timetabled through the project so that there is:

- a realistic timetable
- clear definition of the information needed
- arrange of methods and indicators* used
*an indicator is an objective measure of something that predicts progress towards the objectives of the study and can be used for comparison. In the example, on the next page, measuring an increased range of fruit and vegetable used in family meals is used as predictive measure (or indicator) of increased consumption of fruit and vegetables in the diet.

Aim: To enable behaviour change by supporting people to increase their skills and knowledge of cooking, preparing, buying and eating fruit and vegetables.

Objective	Indicators	Method used	Date	How to collate/analyse	Dissemination plan
To increase the range of cooking skills with particular emphasis on the use of fruit and vegetables within each of the 6 target estates by running a 6 week cook and eat course	Numbers of people from target areas attending cooking sessions	Sign in sheet for each session including some indication of address on initial meeting*	May - Oct 05	Spreadsheet of numbers attending each session and postcodes* Numbers attending the whole course	Include in final report
	Increase range of items of fruit and vegetables used in the family meals	Pre and post sessions questionnaire of self reported fruit and vegetable usage	May - Oct 05	Collate as numbers of self reported F&V eaten pre and post course + % change	Include in final report
	Participants are using the skills and knowledge in preparing family meals	Focus group discussion built into the final session of each course	June - Oct 05	Video discussions. Develop themes from discussions and use representative quotes	Quotes used in final report
	Participants enjoy attending the courses	Photographic record of each course		Collate electronic photo album	Use photographs to illustrate work in displays/press releases/publicity
	Change in family eating patterns	Encourage group member to be featured as a case study		Personal record	

* Postcodes can be used to identify areas of deprivation. If targeting people living in households on low income or in a particular area you will need to show that your activities are reaching your target group. However it is not always appropriate to ask people for their postcode or income level to identify this. If the venue you are using is within your target area and referrals for the course have come from users of this venue it may not be necessary to collect postcode data.



Indicators to use

Be realistic

The long term aims (eg reductions in CHD, Cancer and obesity resulting from increased consumption of fruit and vegetables) should always be considered but:

- you can not measure changes in health as a result of a two year food project
- it will be difficult to measure changes in consumption although this may be possible using an established group (e.g. use of the Day in the Life Questionnaire to assess the impact of work with primary school (KSII) children. See appendix for details)
- you can measure shorter term indicators e.g. change in attitudes, knowledge and skills, numbers of people trained

Indicators to use

Can measure:

Process – how the activity was set up, how many people attended a training session, how many schools have growing clubs, how many and what kind of media contacts have been used etc.

Impact – measure immediate/short term impact of an activity e.g what new skills have people attending learnt, how many cascade training sessions have been run by professionals you have trained, how many small shops are selling an increased range of fruit and vegetables, interviews showing that the perceived value for money of fruit and vegetables has increased

Outcome – the long term measures of the work can reflect changes in consumption e.g using evaluation tools like FACET (5 A DAY Consumption and Evaluation Tool), CADET (child and diet evaluation tool), Lifestyle surveys, Health survey for England (See Appendix 1: Useful Resources for detail) All of these tools for measuring outcome are complex and more appropriate to research projects or large scale evaluation.

Lifestyle surveys commissioned by PCT have not always included questions on food patterns – these questions are being added. It would be useful if all local lifestyle surveys collected information in the same way. If you have an opportunity to add a question to your local lifestyle questionnaire ask other PCTs/Local authorities what questions they have used.

If using any of these tools or a similar questionnaires, you need to allow time to run it to get a baseline well before your initiative starts, and then to repeat at the end. Allow time also for interpretation of the results.

Indicator Table Example

Themes

The main themes of the work for 5 A DAY are likely to focus on changes in

- Awareness
- Access
- Availability
- Acceptability
- Affordability.

Remember that the work may also be able to show an impact/outcome beyond the immediate aims of the project by demonstrating increased skills in the community, improved self esteem.

	Indicator	Theme					
		Awareness	Access	Availability	Acceptability	Affordability	Other - Skills/ improved self esteem
How many training sessions have been run	Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Have people heard about the project	Process	✓					
Does the project get good media coverage	Process	✓					
Are the people who attend the project the ones you are aiming for	Process		✓				
How many new partnerships have been created	Impact	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Is there any/better representation of project on decision making bodies	Impact	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What changes have there been within the community e.g. numbers of shops selling fruit and vegetables	Impact		✓	✓			
How many volunteers have been involved with the project	Impact						✓
How many people have been trained to run a fruit tasting session	Impact	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Has there been a change in fruit and vegetable consumption	Outcome	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
What new skills do people have	Impact	✓				✓	✓

Adapted from: National Five-a-day pilot Programme. Evidence & Evaluation. Annie Anderson, Vanine Morris. Feb 2002



Methods to Evaluate the Project

Interviews and Focus Groups

What methods should we use to evaluate the project?

Evaluation is likely to contain a mixture of methods in order to answer the questions of when, where, what, how many, how often (quantitative data) and the why did you come, how do you feel questions (qualitative data).

1: Surveys using a Questionnaire

Use existing questionnaires where available – check that they have had good responses and have some indication of how they evaluated. Few questionnaires have been validated to measure consumption in absolute terms (i.e. how much an individual ate) but they can demonstrate changes in consumption within a group over time.

Consider

- who is going to complete it?
- how are you going to get a representative sample?
- how much time do you have for collating and analysing the information gathered?
- open or closed questions?
- how many questions do you need?
- have you checked it works? Has it been used before? It's a good idea to pilot it on a few participants first

2: Photography, video, artwork and poetry as evidence

All these techniques show the impact of the work and capture emotions that the written word can not. They back up quantitative evaluation by demonstrating the numbers involved in a training session and the effect of the session on users. Video recordings of work can be particularly effective in engaging partners in the work or influencing funders.

They provide a visual demonstration of work for use at events, conferences etc to influence partners/funders

Consider

- getting consent from participants (especially parental consent for children)
- skills needed – local colleges, universities and community arts group may be able to help with equipment and expertise for recording videos.

3: Interviews and Focus groups

These forms of evaluation complement the quantitative methods. You can use interviews or focus groups as a way of identifying what questions you could use in a subsequent questionnaire. Or you may use them after the results of a questionnaire have been analysed to explore some of the issues raised in more depth. Interviews will give an individual's experience and focus groups will record themes identified within a group.

Interviews and focus groups are a good way of identifying people's needs and understanding what they thought about an activity.

Consider:

- you will need to hold several interviews or group discussions, so this method can be time consuming and require the cost of venue hire, refreshments etc to be considered
- a good facilitator is essential to keep the discussion on track, to ensure that all participants are able to express their views
- all the information needs to be recorded on tape (with participants' permission) or in extensive notes – can use flip charts to summarise key points
- need to represent the themes emerging from the discussions and find representative quotes to illustrate the themes
- if you have no experience in these methods then you should seek advice or training from your local research advisers

4: Case studies

(short report on a particular activity or on the effect that activity has had on one person)

These can be powerful and compelling but need to be well structured and clearly written. They can be useful for media stories

5: Diaries

Project diaries can be a combination of photographic evidence, case studies, quotes and quantitative information .

A reflective practice diary can also be useful to a project manager to identify what went well and any additional learning gathered. Reflective practice not only allows you to learn about your own practice, but can also help you gain an insight into the organisation or partnerships with which you are working and may lead you to make changes to the way you or the organisation/partnership do things.

Examples of evaluation tools used in the 5 A DAY Community Initiatives in the North West are available on the North West Food and Health Taskforce website. www.foodandhealthnw.co.uk



Useful Resources

References

1) Linda McKie, Joy Barlow and Paula Gaunt-Richardson (2002) The evaluation journey. An evaluation pack for community groups ASH Scotland ISBN 0 9520673 2 3

2) WHO Regional Office for Europe (1998) Health Promotion Evaluation: Recommendations to Policy-makers. Report of the WHO European working group on Health Promotion Copenhagen

Useful resources:

National 5 A DAY pilot programme – Evidence and evaluation (2002) Annie Anderson, Janine Morris

Self evaluation: a handy guide to sources (May 2003) Ambreen Shah New Opportunity Fund http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/assets/er_self_evaluation.pdf

An evaluation resource for Healthy Living Centres HEA London (Date not quoted) Jane Meyrick, Paige Sinkler

NIHCE (2005) Measuring impact ; Improving the health and well being of people in mid-life and beyond. <http://www.publichealth.nice.org.uk>

FACET Questionnaire

The short questionnaire developed for the evaluation of the 5 A DAY community initiatives provides a simple, practical tool for assessing change in fruit and vegetables consumption in a population. This tool can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of other 5 A DAY interventions. Available on www.5aday.nhs.uk

CADET questionnaire

(used to evaluate the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme) – one of two research tools used with primary age children .

- a food diary, the Child and Diet Evaluation Tool (CADET) to measure food intake over one day,
- a pictorial pupil questionnaire to explore children's attitudes, knowledge and awareness. For details see <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/summaries/evaluation-of-the-new-opportunities-funds-national-school-fruit-scheme.cfm>

Day in the Life of Questionnaire –questionnaire for use with KS 2 children to identify fruit and vegetable consumption through out the day. Pictorial questionnaire aimed to be used as a classroom activity. Permission to use the questionnaire is needed from Dr Laurel Edmunds who did the original work in developing the questionnaire

Copies of the questionnaire and contact details for Laurel Edmunds are available from <http://www.laureledmunds.com/>

Health survey for England

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/HealthSurvey/HealthSurveyForEngland/HealthSurveyResults/fs/en>



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