

Joy Carey  
Independent Consultant  
*Sustainable Food System  
Planning*

# Why Measure Your Outcomes?

The benefits of  
evaluating your  
project

---



# Things to consider

- What does success look like?
- What is an outcome?
- Why measure outcomes?
- Who needs to know what?
- What can you measure?
- Building it in from the start
- Useful resources

# Is your project a success?

- How do you know?
- What does success look like?
- What has changed?
- How can you prove it?

?





FERAL FARM

CATS LURK





# What is an outcome?

- Specific changes that result from your project (more, less, better, improved etc).
- Outcomes are the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of your work.
- They can be wanted or unwanted, expected or unexpected.
- They can occur in many places and at different levels.



# Why measure outcomes?

- Tell your supporters or clients what happens as a result of all your hard work
- Help you ...?
- Why else....?

?









# Who needs to know what?

- Yourself as project managers and staff
- Your volunteers and apprentices
- Your beneficiaries
- Your clients
- Your funders
- Your supporters
- .....

?



# Bristol urban food growing survey 2014 (for the big picture)

- Aim: To encourage people to cook from scratch, grow their own, and eat more fresh, seasonal, local, organically grown food
- Aim: To promote the use of good quality land in and around Bristol for food production
- 42 community food growing projects

*Aims linked to Bristol Good Food Plan 2013*







# Bristol urban food growing survey 2014: what to measure?

- Social impact v food production
- Size & scale
- Location & spread around the city
- Length of time in existence
- Amount and type of land used
- People involved
- Food produced
- What happens to the food
- Uses of the sites
- Funding
- Achievements
- Future aspirations





# More than just the veg

Growing community capacity through Local Food projects



## MATERIAL CAPACITY

Local Food projects are delivering a range of outputs in relation to land, people and events, which provide the physical infrastructure to enable individual and community potential.

## PERSONAL CAPACITY

Local Food projects are contributing to personal development and empowerment, including by nurturing self-esteem, changing existing lifestyle patterns and developing skills.

## CULTURAL CAPACITY

Local Food projects are increasing social and organisational capacity, as well as fostering wider community awareness, engagement and ownership.

**Every £1 invested in Local Food returns £7 to society**



- Some 700 new people now grow their own fruit and vegetables;
- 8 ha of new food growing allotment sites are available for local residents;
- 178 local households have raised beds.



## Material capacity

Eg land, people, events and the physical production of food.

*"People have learnt that it is easier than they thought to grow veg in raised beds"*



"I have learnt so much. I've never done foraging or used things growing wild like rosehips."

"I didn't know you could use lavender in biscuits or as medicine."

"I enjoyed planting cabbages at the allotment."



## Personal capacity

Personal development and empowerment, including nurturing self-esteem and changing existing lifestyle patterns



"This place has a heartbeat; it's a first step to greener things in Bolton".

"It is opening minds; there is nothing else like this in Bolton. It's a social hub, a community hub. I love coming here".



## Cultural capacity

Encompasses social and organisational capacity, fostering wider community awareness, engagement and ownership.



# Measuring your impacts

- Do you know what types of changes or outcomes you want to see result from your project ?
- Are you being realistic?
- Do you know what will indicate that the change you want is actually happening?
- Do you know the specific extent of your outcomes or changes you wish to see?

# Building it in from the start

- Clear need
- Evidence of the need
- Overall aim of the project
- Outcomes
- Tracking progress
- Activities




*Source: A BIG guide to using an outcomes approach  
Sara Burns and Joy MacKeith 2006*



## Outcome(s) for the project

- Increased participation in environmental activities leading to local people learning new skills
- Increased community involvement in managing and maintaining local green spaces, leading to reduced vandalism and littering
- Improved local environments leading to increased use of green spaces by local people and improved wellbeing in the community

## Tracking progress

Outcome	Indicator	Indicator level	Timescale
Increased participation in environmental activities leading to local people learning new skills	Number of people participating in practical environmental activities for the first time and gaining new skills	Participation of people who have not previously been involved in practical environmental activities: 50	Per year
 <b>LOTTERY FUNDED</b>		People learning new skills through participating in environmental activities: 35	Per year
		Participation of people who have not previously been involved in practical environmental activities: a total of 220, with a total of 50 interested in continuing to participate	By the end of the project

[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding)

# Useful resources

- [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding)
- [www.\*\*biglottery\*\*fund.org.uk/er\\_eval\\_explaining\\_the\\_difference.pdf](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/er_eval_explaining_the_difference.pdf)
- [www.knowhownonprofit.org](http://www.knowhownonprofit.org)
- <https://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/Exploringyourimpact.cfm>
- Local food fund mid-term report & films that illustrate the 3 different 'capacity' impacts  
<http://www.localfoodgrants.org/news?aid=8474>
- Local Food Fund final report  
[www.localfoodgrants.org](http://www.localfoodgrants.org)