Why Measure Your Outcomes?

The benefits of evaluating your project

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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

YOU

YOU

SEE

BEFORE

SEE ME

YOU

GREEN EYES FLASH

THEN GONE
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?

- Yourselves 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 vs 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
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 Bums 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Indicator level</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased participation in environmental activities leading to local people learning new skills</td>
<td>Number of people participating in practical environmental activities for the first time and gaining new skills</td>
<td>Participation of people who have not previously been involved in practical environmental activities: 50</td>
<td>Per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People learning new skills through participating in environmental activities: 35</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>By the end of the project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding
Useful resources

- [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding)
- [www.biglotteryfund.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](https://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/Exploringyourimpact.cfm)
- Local Food Fund final report [www.localfoodgrants.org](http://www.localfoodgrants.org)