

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

What is monitoring?

Monitoring is continually checking progress against your plans by routinely collecting information – for example: - how many events have you organised? How many members do you have? How many people attended a group or activity? What are their ages, sex, ethnic origin, postcode...

The type of information you will need to collect will depend on what your aims are.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is about making an assessment of your work, based on evidence,

It is judging the effectiveness of a piece of work, a project or a programme by considering it against the goals that the activity was meant to achieve. Done well it will help members of a project or organisation learn from what they have done. It can also highlight whether your project is moving steadily and successfully towards achieving what it set out to do, or whether it is moving in a different direction.

Why evaluate?

Although evaluation may seem like an additional task, especially if you are already short of time and resources, it can save you both time and resources by keeping participants focused on, and working towards, the ultimate goal of the project.

If necessary, it can refocus activity away from unproductive or unnecessary work.

Evaluation can help you to:

- learn from your experience;
- record what you have learnt, and share it with other stakeholders;
- check your progress;
- check whether what you are doing is still what local people want or need;
- identify strengths and weaknesses in your project;
- create a basis for future planning;
- demonstrate whether you have used your resources – time and money – effectively;
- explain to funders, and others involved in your work, what you have achieved and how successful it is.



Key principles of evaluation

Evaluation is most effective when:

- ✓ it is a continuous (rather than one-off) process informing planning and delivery as the project develops;
- ✓ it involves all those with an interest in the project in defining the questions they want answered;
- ✓ it uses imaginative and creative approaches, which engage those involved;
- ✓ it helps projects to be more accountable to the wider community;
- ✓ it highlights and celebrates successes and achievements;
- ✓ it encourages an honest appraisal of progress, so that you can learn from what hasn't worked as well as what has.

