MEASURING THE IMPACT OF YOUR WORK

Overview and glossary

because sport works

Measuring the impact of your work

Do you know how well you're doing?

Sported was set up to help small community clubs and other organisations using sport for development to grow and become more sustainable, letting them make a difference in their communities well into the future.

A big part of growing and becoming more sustainable is being able to prove the impact you're having. Most obviously, it's essential when looking for funding, but you shouldn't just be gathering information because funders tell you to! Knowing how well you're doing – and where you can do better – lets you ensure you're doing the best you can for the young people you work with. You might even find you're doing better than you thought, or that your work is having a positive impact on something you never even thought about.

Looking at the work you're doing and the impact it's having doesn't need to be time-consuming or difficult – we've put together some resources to make sure it's as easy as possible to get you started.

Tips

1. **Think about what you're trying to achieve.** The best place to start is by thinking about *why* you're doing what you're doing. What are you working towards? Why do you think what you do is the best way of getting towards this goal? This is sometimes called a 'Theory of Change' – we've provided a template in the resources section to help you work this out, because though it may seem obvious, having a clear idea about this information can be really useful.

2. **Monitoring and Evaluation is for you.** Lots of groups only do monitoring and evaluation at first because they have to – because funders or other partners require them to – but being able to evidence the impact your work is having, as well as being able to see where changes are needed, can be invaluable.

3. **Think about what you need to measure, and when.** Don't waste time collecting information you won't ever do anything with. Think carefully about what information you need to be collecting and why it's needed. There may be facts and figures you have to collect for funders or other partners, but that shouldn't stop you from collecting other information you know to be relevant.

4. **Plan how you'll collect information.** Collecting information is going to be much easier if you've thought about how you're going to get that information from the beginning, and planned it around your activities. You should think about when information should be collected, and gather this information on a regular basis. Leaving things to the last minute is never a good idea!

5. **Get everyone involved.** If someone's involved in your project, they should be involved in monitoring that project – everyone should know the value of their work and be involved in proving it.

6. **Share your findings.** If you've done something worth shouting about, tell everyone! Sharing success stories with the people who made it happen shows them how important what they do is. On the other hand, being open about what hasn't gone so well can help people come up with solutions to make things better, and fosters trust throughout the organisation.

Glossary

A

Aims
Why your organisation exists – the change you want to see.

Auditing
A check that certain standards are met and controls in place. This can be done either internally or by an outside agency, and can cover a range of areas, not just financial controls.

Activities
The things you're doing in order to achieve your outcomes, e.g. boxing training, reading classes, mentoring, team building sessions, sports leadership courses etc., and the people who engage with them

B

Baseline
The situation at the beginning, before any work has been done by a project that hopes to change this situation. For example, a project hoping to reduce anti-social behaviour might look at the levels of anti-social behaviour before they start – the baseline – and then compare this to the levels after they have been working for a certain amount of time to see if their work has had any effect.

E

Evaluation
Using monitoring and other information to make judgments on how an organisation or project is doing.

F

Factor
An independent variable affecting a person's position or social outcome such as their educational performance.

H

Hard outcomes
'Hard' outcomes, as opposed to 'soft' outcomes, are easily measurable bits of quantitative information showing how well a project is doing. An example might be attendance numbers, or your organisation's income.

I

Impact
The difference projects make, through achieving outcomes for individual young people, both directly on those young people and on the broader community.

Indicator
Well-defined information which shows whether something is happening.

Inputs
Resources put into an organisation to carry out an activity. Inputs may be human, material, financial or expressed as time.

M

Monitoring
The routine, systematic collection and recording of information about a project mainly for the purpose of checking its progress against its plans.

O

Objectives
The planned areas of activity by which a project is going to achieve its aims.

Outcomes
The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of services and activities provided by an organisation. Funders will often ask you to measure outcomes.

Outputs
Details of your activities and the people who engage with them, such as the number of sessions you undertake and the number and type of people who are engaging with them.

P

Performance indicators
Well-defined qualitative or quantitative measures that show how well an organisation or project is performing.

Q

Qualitative information
Information that tells you the nature and impact of your work. Unlike quantitative information, this tends to be written information, such as case studies, or comments from users, and so will probably vary a lot from instance to instance.

Quantitative information
Usually numerical information, or information that can be expressed in numbers, which can be easily added up or analysed to see clear trends.

R

Register
A log of participant attendances at sessions.

S

Self-assessment
A process by which people within an organisation make judgements about their organisation's performance, usually against a set of quality standards.

Soft outcomes
Outcomes that are less easy to observe or measure, or which involve some form of change inside people, such as a change in attitude or a change in the way they see themselves.

Stakeholders
The people who have an interest in the activities of an organisation. This includes staff, volunteers, users and their carers, trustees, funders, purchasers, donors, supporters and members.

Sport for Development

Where sport is used as a vehicle to deliver wider social benefits than the pleasure and satisfaction of involvement in sport for its own sake.

Sportworks

Sportworks is an online impact measurement tool that uses your project information to assess its impact and forecast the societal cost savings it is generating, helping you demonstrate the value of your work and showing how your organisation can become more effective.

Light Tool

A simplified version of Sportworks that does not rely on use of the Views project management and impact reporting platform and requires less data collection and entry.

T

Targets

A defined level of achievement which a project or organisation sets itself to attain in a specific period of time.

Theory of Change

A description of the change you want to make and how you think your work will make this change will happen.

V

Variables

Measures of data that may vary from time to time or participant to participant, e.g. the time of a session or age of a participant.

Views

An online project management and impact reporting platform developed and managed by Substance which is fully integrated with Sportworks.

Vision

The ideal state a project or organisation wants the world to be in. What the world will look like if the project or organisation is successful in achieving its mission.