PROJECT MANAGEMENT –
FINAL EVALUATION: Stage 5

Purpose of monitoring and evaluation
Monitoring, evaluation and measuring outcomes are critical processes in the work of community organisations and should be included in the design stage of any project. Organisations should learn from the projects they carry out so that future projects can be more successful, and to also increase the accountability of the organisation. Monitoring and evaluation also helps to gather evidence of further need that might help to bring in future funding. Monitoring is the ongoing oversight of projects as they are run to ensure that you are achieving your outcomes. Evaluation is the deeper analysis at specified points of time relating to the outcomes that should inform any significant changes to your project plan. For example, if you are promoting exercise amongst Muslim women's groups in Westminster, you might want to monitor attendance and fitness levels to see if you are achieving the outcome of Muslim women in Westminster with improved health. However, focus group discussion might be an evaluation technique to find out the complex issues behind why Muslim women might not be improving their health, or evaluating what is working in achieving your outcomes and therefore inform any changes to your project.

Concepts of monitoring and evaluation
In order to relate changes in people's individual lives to broader society, it is important to be able to track outcomes (or changes) at different levels. Usually these are the individual and society levels, though your project will determine these. For example, if your project is an advocacy project, you may not need to evaluate the individual level, but rather look at society or policy level impact. If your project is with Muslim women and health, you may well consider the individual and community levels.

 When planning your project, you could consider the following levels:
- individuals i.e. changes in men's, women's, boys' and girls' lives
- society as a whole, specific communities or target populations in the UK. For example changes in the community of Muslim women

If you work in partnership with another organisation, it might also be worth considering the changes in your own and other organisations from the process of collaboration.

If you have done a comprehensive needs assessment in the design phase, much of the society level information about your particular beneficiary group will be there, and this data (qualitative and quantitative) will be useful for your baseline study. Baseline is the information you collect relevant to your project before it starts, and end line is the information you collect at the end of your project – usually you will collect the same type of information so that you can accurately measure, compare and indicate changes.

Tools for monitoring and evaluation
Some tools that you might like to use for monitoring (ongoing) and evaluation (periodically) might include:
- feedback forms, questionnaires
- mural/collage of people's comments
- focus group discussions with beneficiary group
- statistical data on a broader level

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- interviews with beneficiaries
- pictures/diagrams or scales indicating change – for example, Muslim women might mark how much they exercised before the project started and at the end of the project.
- internal reviews and evaluation methods such as internal reflections with staff and volunteers, partner organisations, peer reviews, action learning
- videos and photography

The most important guiding principle of monitoring and evaluation is that you do not avoid the hard questions about outcomes, successes and failures. Allowing mistakes and shortcomings to be aired and examined openly is crucial for your organisation to learn, individually, in teams, and increase your organisational expertise. Also, don't forget about any unexpected outcomes – it is important to highlight where you think the project has benefited your users, even if it wasn't planned. Thinking back to the action/reflection/learning/planning cycle in stage two, it is important to also consider and document how you will take this learning forward – there is no point in doing a monitoring and evaluation framework and undergoing the processes of learning if you are not going to use it.

Note: Don't forget to include, in the project's design stage, time to think about who will undertake this monitoring and who will coordinate and implement the evaluation. Many organisations get to the end of their projects and then think about monitoring and evaluation and by then it is too late.

Involving Stakeholders
In assessing the outcomes of your work, looking back on your stakeholder analysis list (from your design stage), it is most certainly worthwhile to include some (or all) of these stakeholders in your monitoring and evaluation process. Those who are ultimately supposed to benefit must be centrally involved in the process of assessment. This is critical to both enriching your understanding of changes in the lives of your target group and will help to inform future projects. It also contributes to your legitimacy and accountability as a community organisation. Furthermore, perhaps partner organisations or other government bodies might have different perspectives on the project and provide different information to help learning. Lastly, you might consider having an external review of the project, which aims to give an objective view of how the project has run. Whilst this might throw up issues you may not like, it will help you to improve projects in the future.

Some best practice tips for monitoring and evaluation
These core questions go to the heart of why community organisations exist and are worth considering when planning, delivering and concluding a project. They can be divided into three levels: individual, organisational and community:

Individual level
- What significant changes have occurred in women's and men's, boys' and girls' lives and to what extent are these likely to be sustained?
- How effectively have those we seek to benefit been involved at all stages through the process?

Organisational level
- How effectively and efficiently have our resources been used?
- How effectively have we worked with others and involved them in all stages through the process?
- To what degree have we learnt from this experience and shared the learning with others and ourselves? What will we now do differently or what will we do more of?

Community level
- What changes in policy, practice, ideas, beliefs and attitudes have occurred in specific institutions or groups as a result of our project?