



**EU Programme
for Peace and Reconciliation**

Informing Practice

MEASURING CHANGE

Baselines, Recordings, Monitoring & Evaluation



An Intermediary Funding Body as part of
the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

Measure 2.2 “Developing Children and Young People”



Southern Education and Library Board
(IFB - Lead Organisation)
Belfast Education & Library Board
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.
North Eastern Education & Library Board
Northern Ireland Youth Forum
Western Education & Library Board



YouthNet
(Sectoral Partner - Youth)
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta.
Governing Bodies Association
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education
South Eastern Education & Library Board
Youth Council for Northern Ireland

BASE LINE

It would be wise to establish some form of '*Base Line*' from which to begin to "*measure*" beneficiaries progress or otherwise. We recommend this type of information is captured when the beneficiary enters the project - and is updated as part of regular reviews of their progress.

One way of establishing a Base Line is through a detailed pen picture of the individual beneficiaries, detailing and describing a range of characteristics, knowledge, skills and abilities, including where appropriate – and amongst other things:

- Essential Skills Levels, e.g.
 - Literacy
 - Numeracy
 - Language Skills

- Key Skills Levels, e.g.
 - Communication
 - Problem solving
 - Team working
 - Ability to use ICT

- Personal & Social Skills levels, e.g.
 - Judgement
 - Assertiveness
 - Initiative
 - Self confidence

- Awareness of Local Systems and Structures, e.g.
 - Knowledge of their community, local facilities and services
 - Knowledge of relevant institutions, organisations and agencies
 - Understanding of rights and responsibilities re: the above

- Recognition of Diversity
 - Experience of activities including people of diverse backgrounds, etc
 - Knowledge of and sensitivity to others
 - Ability to engage with others of different opinions, backgrounds, traditions and cultures

RECORDING

Keeping a record of what takes place is something that you must do from the beginning of the project. For each aspect of your need to sort out the following – **NOW!**

- WHO will do the recording?
 - all beneficiaries;
 - volunteers, project workers, tutors / facilitators; and
 - possibly an independent person(s)

- WHAT will be recorded?
 - who met - numbers, gender, background, etc;
 - what took place during meetings / interventions;
 - the dates of 'sessions', how long you met for and where;
 - if beneficiaries are '*happy*' with the way the project is going;
 - if beneficiaries have left or new beneficiaries have joined;
 - how willing/able beneficiaries are to engage in sessions, discuss issues, share opinions as well as listen to those of others;
 - what you think beneficiaries have learned through the project;
 - what you see beneficiaries are better able to do;
 - if appropriate, what qualifications have been achieved.

- WHEN will this recording take place?
 - each time beneficiaries meet / an intervention takes place;
 - weekly and/or monthly.

- HOW will what's taking place be recorded?
 - staff diaries / time sheets / sessional record sheets;
 - ongoing staff / tutor observational recordings;
 - one-to-one interviews or questionnaires;
 - beneficiary self-evaluation forms;
 - sessional programme plans / beneficiary portfolios / 'scrapbooks';
 - video footage / photographs / audio recordings.

All of this information should be collated at regular intervals and presented in an agreed format to the appropriate person(s) and committee(s) in your organisation in order that they may review and monitor the work of the project. All reports should refer to the agreed targets and anticipated outcomes of the specific piece of work and overall project in such a way as to 'flag up' concerns as well as identify those methods and processes that appear to work best.

It is **ESSENTIAL** that adequate time is built into the operation of your project to keep and maintain records and that as many young people and other stakeholders as possible be involved so that the ownership of and responsibility for the piece of work and overall project is shared.

MONITORING

Monitoring is not something you tag on at the end of a piece of work or when a project is nearly over. Like recording, monitoring also starts when the project starts.

Monitoring is about reviewing records, checking out your progress or otherwise and may involve making judgements about the effectiveness of a method or activity.

This type of monitoring and reviewing takes places all the time. For example:

- as a result of key staff having participated in an activity;
- during and after a conversation with beneficiaries:
- by observing and listening to what takes place and what is being said in and about the project by beneficiaries, staff, management committee, parents and other stakeholders.

However, effective monitoring is that which takes place consciously, following active reflection and dialogue with and between all those involved in the project, i.e. beneficiaries, staff, management, funders and other stakeholders.

Having considered the information and data collected, judgements can then be made on:

- which methods and activities were most or least useful / effective;
- whether all involved are working toward shared objectives or not;
- whether internal systems for recording are adequate and/or effective;
- if the best use is being made of time;
- if resources are being used effectively and efficiently;
- if expenditure is taking place in line with the agreed budget.

Adjustments to the delivery and operation of the project can then be agreed and implemented if required.

Establishing base lines, along with regular recording and monitoring will make life easier when it comes to writing reports for a management committee, completing monitoring returns for funders and drawing up future programme plans. More importantly it gives you some sense of your achievements and progress, which in turn helps maintain the enthusiasm, motivation and commitment of everyone involved.

Again, it is ESSENTIAL that adequate time is built into your project for reviewing and monitoring your work. This should involve regular, planned meetings that are inclusive of a range of stakeholders - in particular young people. Thinking ahead; it is these type of systems and information that will help build your case for future funding from other sources, if required.

EVALUATION

Evaluation can also be a continuous process comprising a combination of informal processes (e.g. intuitive judgements about own and others' work, changes in behaviour), **and** systematic information gathering via recordings (topics covered at training sessions, numbers, learning, change and development).

Evaluation should be inclusive of all stakeholders in the project. Simple evaluation systems should include feedback from staff, volunteers, committee members, parents, other significant adults and especially the beneficiaries themselves.

Interim or formative evaluations can take place at various stages in the lifecycle of an project and involve making judgements of the worth, value, quality and impact of the work at that time, which in turn effects the next stage of the project. The other and perhaps more common format is a final evaluation report. This too places a value on the effectiveness, quality and impact of the work and it does so by looking back over the work carried out throughout a period of funding and assesses progress against the objectives and targets agreed at the outset. It enables you to draw conclusions about the outputs and outcomes that you have achieved. In turn this informs your future and strategic plans.

Either form of evaluation needs to be carried out by an appropriately skilled member of staff or other person associated with the project. Alternatively, a person or company independent of or external to your organisation may be commissioned* to carry it out.

Evaluations may also be commissioned by YESIP and as part of these your project may be invited or nominated to participate.

*Further guidance on commissioning an External Evaluation is available from YESIP.