



EVALUATION TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH GUARANTEE PROJECTS

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Evaluation toolkit for Youth Guarantee projects

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Youth Guarantee scheme represents a new approach to policy design and implementation. It entails a structural reform of the way in which the public, private and voluntary sector engage and support young people to complete education and enter the labour market, particularly those young people who are furthest from the labour market.

As the Youth Guarantee is a new way of working for many EU Member States, there is a need to understand what does and does not work in different situations and contexts and for different groups of young people.

The aim of the Preparatory Action is to provide lessons to all Member States in their implementation, evaluation and continuous improvement of national Youth Guarantee schemes. In addition, these lessons learned can inform the programming and implementation of European Social Fund (ESF) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

The overall evaluation of the Preparatory Action will report on the key lessons learned from the pilot projects, and especially the potential to replicate, transfer or up scale the approaches and measures tested. The results of the evaluation of the Preparatory Action are relevant for a wide range of stakeholders, including all EU institutions, national ministries and ESF authorities, youth organisations, social partners etc.

For these lessons learned to feed into the overall evaluation of the Preparatory Action, it is essential for each individual project to undertake an evaluation of its specific actions and outcomes. Indeed, at application stage, pilot projects were assessed on their evaluation plans before being selected for funding.

This short Evaluation Toolkit aims to support your evaluation efforts. It is structured so as to take you through the following steps:

Deciding which 'type' of evaluation is most appropriate (and how to avoid 'pitfalls' common to all evaluation);

- Planning an evaluation;
- Gathering the information required; and,
- Reporting results.

But first, we will briefly define what evaluation is and how does it differ from monitoring

1.1. What are monitoring and evaluation?

Monitoring is checking the progress of your project against what you originally set out to do whilst evaluation is concerned with how the project achieved success - what worked, what did not work and why. Monitoring and evaluation are intrinsically linked as monitoring can provide data that you can use in your evaluation activities. Both monitoring and evaluation should ideally begin at the start of your project.

Defining monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is defined as the ongoing collection of data to allow progress towards the achievement of project aims and objectives to be reviewed on an ongoing basis. It is a quantitative assessment of a project's success.

Evaluation is concerned with how the project has achieved its success. It looks at what worked, what did not work and why. Ideally you should start thinking about an evaluation at the start of a project, to ensure it is built into the planning process.

Please note that throughout the text, we refer to 'evaluation' and not 'monitoring' or 'monitoring and evaluation'. This is partly just semantics; as indicated above we view

monitoring as an integral part of the evaluation process that is mainly concerned with the tracking of a project's inputs and outputs.

1.2. Why evaluate?

When you are already short of time and resources, evaluation may seem like an unnecessary additional task. However it can save you both time and resources by keeping those involved focused on, and working towards, the ultimate goal of the project. If necessary, it can refocus activity away from unproductive or unnecessary work. Evaluation is not only a contractual requirement but a good management practice!

Evaluation can help you to:

- learn from your experience;
- record what you have learnt, and share it with key stakeholders for continuation/replication;
- check your progress and inform project development;
- check whether what you are doing is still relevant and adequate to the needs of your target group;
- identify strengths and weaknesses in your project;
- demonstrate whether you have used your resources – time and money – effectively;
- explain to key stakeholders, and others involved in your work, what you have achieved and how; and
- last but not least, inform the establishment of more sustainable and larger Youth Guarantee schemes.

1.3. Defining the purpose of the evaluation

The starting point is to establish your evaluation objectives and key questions that should be addressed through the evaluation.

The box below illustrates an example of 'key' evaluation questions for pilot projects

Key evaluation questions

- Is the intervention 'working':
 - Is it achieving desired outcomes/impacts?
 - For whom?
 - Under what conditions?
 - At what cost/what resources were required?
- What makes the new approach work?
 - Key components and what makes the difference
- How does the pilot intervention compare to previous approaches?
 - In terms of performance and content
- Potential and requirements for replication:
 - Can the results be generalised?
 - Scalability – are resources available to implement more widely
- What didn't work – and why?

Identifying the purpose of the evaluation is equally as important as identifying the key audience for the results. Ideally, they should be involved in the evaluation process. These two aspects of the evaluation serve as a foundation for evaluation planning, focus, design, and interpretation and use of results.

Engaging key stakeholders in the evaluation can have many benefits. In general, stakeholders include people who will use the evaluation results, support or maintain the approaches and measures tested, or who are directly affected by your activities or evaluation results.

Securing stakeholder engagement can help to:

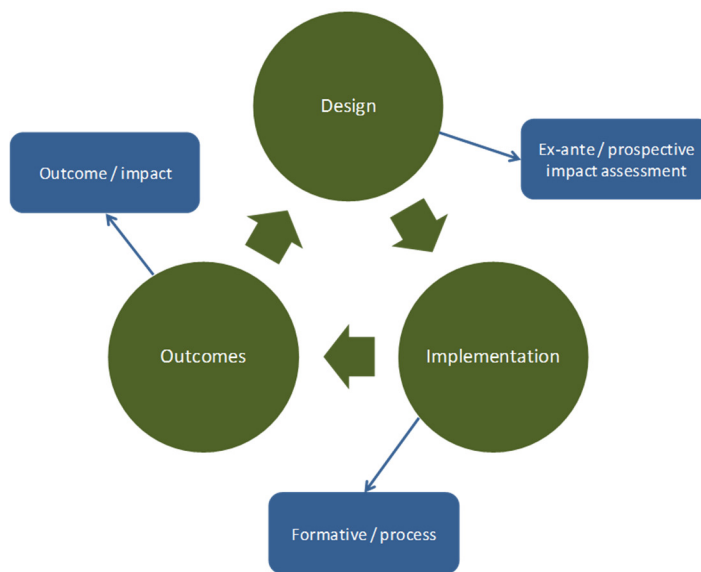
- determine and prioritise key evaluation questions,
- facilitate data collection,
- implement evaluation activities,
- increase credibility of analysis and interpretation of evaluation information, and
- ensure evaluation results are used.

2. WHAT ARE THE MAIN TYPES OF EVALUATION AND HOW SHOULD I CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM?

When you have identified the specific purpose of your evaluation, the first step is to think about what type of evaluation you want to use. You also need to think about the timing of your evaluation and whether it will run alongside your pilot project or continue afterwards.

In general terms, there are three main types of evaluation. These are evaluations concerned with different parts of the project cycle, i.e.: design, implementation and outcomes. This is illustrated in the figure below:


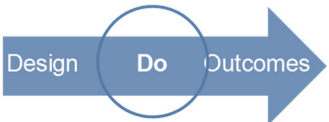
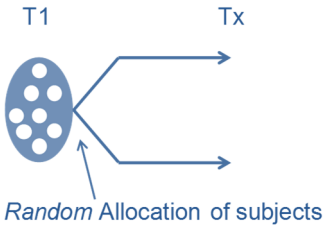
Figure 2.1 *The project cycle provides a framework for choosing your evaluation type*

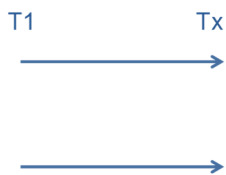




The table below describes these three main types. We anticipate that most projects will be using a combination of formative / process evaluation (as a means of tracking progress, highlighting key issues in putting their work into action) and outcome evaluation (demonstrating the difference that your work has made).

It worth mentioning that these types are not mutually exclusive. More often than not, combinations of the different types come into play as you move throughout the project lifecycle.

Table 2.1 The three main (broad) types of evaluation; those supporting: design, implementation and outcome measurement

1) Evaluations that support project design				
Type	Diagram	Summary	Advantages	Drawbacks and Limitations
Ex ante / prospective impact assessment		A problem has been identified and the decision maker needs to work out what to do about it: what is likely to be most cost-effective / feasible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formally sets out a range of options to consider (incl. 'Do Nothing') Can be more / less rigorous in terms of building on existing evidence Provides an opportunity to test approaches with those likely to be affected (informs planning, setting clear objectives etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who decides what range of options might be? Can rely heavily on assumptions
2) Evaluations that support project implementation				
Type	Diagram	Summary	Advantages	Drawbacks and Limitations
Formative / process		The project has been designed and is being put into action. The questions for formative evaluation are: how well? To what extent are the activities being implemented as planned? Should anything be changed to improve delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an opportunity for evaluation to affect the project Success (effectiveness) of projects is very largely defined by how well implementation goes Learning orientated and practical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Unscientific' – collections of opinions and often unclear data Room for interpretation can be wide, requires careful judgements
3) Designs for measuring outcomes				
Type	Diagram	Summary	Advantages	Drawbacks and Limitations
Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)		'Subjects' (e.g. people, areas, organisations etc) are <i>randomly</i> allocated to either receive the intervention(s) or not. Outcomes are measured and the differences (T1-Tx) can be assumed to have been <i>caused</i> by the intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best way of showing net effect Strongest study design (the 'gold-standard') - scientifically high-grade and objective Removes sources of bias and can show causation Great for economic analysis Can review systematically to get better estimates of effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is 'the intervention'? How does 'it' work? What about changes of context? (time and space) – will results 'transfer'? Often expensive Time taken to get results Can raise ethical questions around 'denying' treatment during the experiment

Type	Diagram	Summary	Advantages	Drawbacks and Limitations
'Difference in difference'		<p>Random assignment of subjects is not possible, so a comparator is used – subjects alike 'in all important respects', but not a 'true' control group (known as a 'comparison group')</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lacks ethical challenges of RCTs ▪ 'Natural experiments' often possible and cheaper – e.g. some areas get service before others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to match the groups? What are the important characteristics you will control for? (needs lots of data and good theoretical basis for selection) ▪ More room for other things to cause changes because randomisation is missing
Interrupted time series		<p>Comparator isn't available, so single cohort over time is used. Measures are taken at several points before and after the intervention and the evaluator looks for changes in trends.</p> <p>This is related to a simple two-point 'before and after' design where conditions are measured before the project and then again at the end.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Often practically and ethically sensible ▪ Allows the project / evaluator to design and collect information at relatively low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A range of factors outside the project could cause the observed change (e.g. seasonal effects) ▪ Often the case that the right data aren't collected before the intervention began
Single point in time, no comparisons		<p>No data available for 'before', so you measure 'after' only (and ask participants to hypothesise about what would have happened in the absence of the project)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Easy, quick etc. ▪ Can use modelling and assumptions to estimate impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any reported change could be caused by a wide range of 'other' factors; also relies upon the imagination / memory of key participants

The choice of evaluation design should be guided by consideration of the levels of risk / value of the knowledge involved.

Whatever the approach taken, there are some common pitfalls and problems; these are set out in the table below.

Table 2.2 Common pitfalls and ways of avoiding them

Pitfall	Description	How to avoid it...
Waiting until after the project has started	Evaluation should be integral to project design. By far the most common pitfall is waiting until the end before asking questions about the effect a project has had – by then it is invariably too late and staff, beneficiaries, partners have moved on to the next thing! You won't have access to the information you need and will over-rely on people's memories and impressions.	Integrate evaluation planning into project design. This is often best done as part of a project design – say what your project will achieve and how you will know if it has done so.
No means of measuring change	Evaluation is concerned with change. One of the key questions asked by any evaluation is: what has changed as a result of this intervention?	When you are deciding what information to collect for evaluation, you need to think about measuring change over time – typically starting with a baseline position (see Glossary) and assessing change from there.
Trying to collect too much	Collecting a massive array of data and then: not knowing what to do with it; and / or not being sure of its quality; and / or not knowing what it all means is perhaps the second most common pitfall of evaluation! <u>Overall, you should aim to collect a few things well, rather than a lot of things badly.</u>	As a general rule, when you are planning your monitoring and evaluation system, start with a long list of things that it would be nice to have (a project team meeting is a good place to generate these lists). You should then reduce this list by thinking about what: is practical and possible to collect; will really tell you something; and lastly, will be useful when you analyse the information and report your results.
Reliance on one source	When collecting evaluative information, the more you rely on one source the less sure you can be that you are right. For example, if you were looking at the effect your project has had on the provision of services for young people, then you might want to gather information from managers, employees, users and relatives.	As far as is practical (see above) you should try to use a range of sources and combine qualitative and quantitative information.
Not investing enough	There is no easy rule of thumb when considering the levels of resources to devote to monitoring and evaluation. It will vary according to whether the project is especially innovative or risky, whether there is potentially a wider application of this approach, and the ambitions in terms of sustainability and mainstreaming. These factors mean that resources devoted to evaluation vary from a typically cited minimum of around 3-5% of project resources, right up to more than the cost of the actual intervention in the case of some large-scale evaluations!	The key when thinking about evaluation is to make information collection part of everyday project activity and to be clear about the responsibility for ensuring it is done.
Advocating, not learning	Most people involved in a project are partial; they have reason to think that it is the right thing to do and are committed to doing it. This presents a challenge to self-evaluation: project staff can end up collecting evidence to support	Follow the data and be prepared to find out that things have not worked the way you thought they would. It is important when approaching self-evaluation to be self-

their view, rather than being neutral and curious.

critical, clear and honest about what works and what doesn't.

2.1. Who should evaluate? Internal vs External?

To answer this question you should consider the resources and expertise available as well as what your evaluation plans. We outline below a brief description of both approaches.

Internal evaluation can be useful to help you identify the strengths and weaknesses of your project and make immediate changes. If you work in a larger organisation you may have a department that can help you with this. Some projects identify one person from a different department to undertake an on-going internal evaluation, and produce reports at interim and final stage. They may attend some partner meetings and look at how the project is working on an overall level, including the project coordination and progress against objectives. If they have knowledge of the field, they may also identify good practices that could be transferred elsewhere. This could be a more cost-effective alternative to having an independent evaluator. On the other hand, such an evaluator may find it difficult to make any criticisms of the work carried out, and, because of their close involvement with the project, may be unable to suggest any innovative solutions to such problems that are identified.

External evaluation: You may wish to involve an external evaluator in your project. An external evaluator can provide the right skills, capacity and capability as well as an independent point of view on your project. This could add credibility for people outside the project (funders, stakeholders). External evaluations can be more costly than internal evaluations.

When commissioning an independent evaluation, please refer to the specific budgetary rules of your grant agreement.

A key aspect to consider when selecting an external evaluator is the type of evaluation and the corresponding role of the prospective evaluator; that is, different types of evaluation will require different sets of responsibilities, roles, and skills for the evaluator.

When drafting the specification for the work, it is important to be realistic about the budget and time available. Below are some examples of relevant information that can be included:

- aim of the evaluation and research questions to be answered
- background and context to the project
- required methodology or approach
- outputs and deliverables
- timetable
- requirements for dissemination
- available budget (this is optional)
- instructions for how to respond to the tender.

Once you have appointed an external evaluator it is recommended to have a meeting with them to go through your expectations, working methods and important deadlines. You should ensure that their outputs are delivered within the project lifetime and on a regular basis so that you can implement any changes.

A potential alternative can be to include internal and external people on the evaluation team. This would combine the benefits of each type of evaluation—that is, external expertise and impartiality can be maintained without losing the benefit of the internal person's knowledge of the project.

The box below outlines ideas of areas that evaluators can look at.

Some examples of areas an evaluator can provide feedback on include:

- Steering groups
- Local implementation groups (if applicable)
- Front line staff
- Target group / participants
- Reports, surveys and presentations that you have carried out

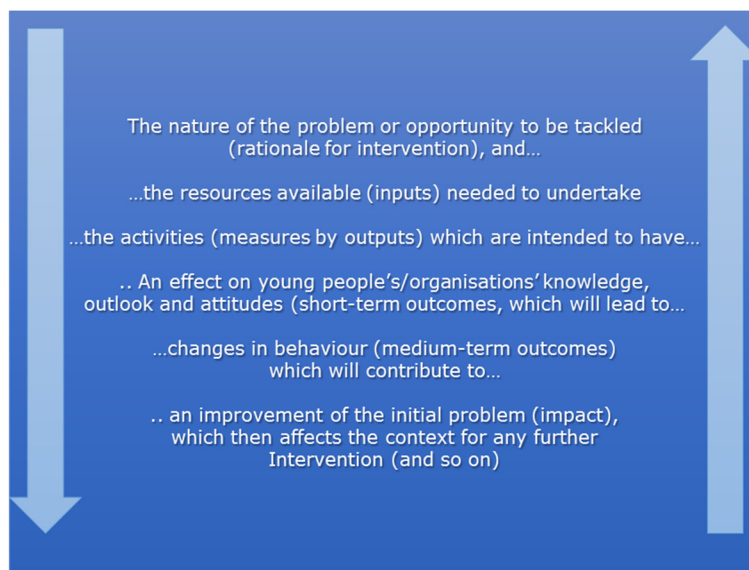
Having set out the main types of evaluation available, and some common pitfalls involved and information on who could conduct the evaluation, we are in a position to offer more detailed guidance in planning the evaluation. This is the subject of the next section.

3. WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO COLLECT?

All pilot projects contain hypotheses. These hypotheses are stated in causal terms – i.e. 'If we do x, then y will result'.

Generally the project activities are logically connected to a broader goal. The task of an evaluation (whichever type you choose) is to set this thinking out in clear terms and then to test it by gathering evidence. ICF's preferred approach to doing so uses a 'Logic Model'. The figure below shows the main components of such a model:

Figure 3.1 Logic Models offer a tool for setting out the thinking behind a project



It is crucial for evaluation purposes (and also for project design and delivery) that you are explicit about what your project is trying to achieve. It sounds obvious, but until you have said what 'success' is there is no way of knowing whether you have achieved it or not.

The figure below shows an example of a Logic Model. It shows each of the components for a project/ initiative – from rationale, to inputs, activities / outputs.

Tip: When you are thinking about the results you are trying to achieve (outcomes), you should think in terms of change.

In doing so, language is important and it is helpful to use words that describe change, such as: *increased, decreased, enhanced, improved, reduced and expanded*.

Outcomes typically relate to changes in situation (employed, unemployed, active), knowledge, outlook, attitudes, behaviour or skills. You should also be clear about who, or what, you intend to have an effect on.

Targets can be set against both outcomes and outputs. For example, you might aim to deliver 15 workshops to a total of 135 young people (an output target) – you might then want 75 of those young people to be more able to perform a specific task as a result (an outcome target).

Context to the Intervention

These are the wider economic, social, environmental, and policy conditions. This is very important – many logic models suggest that interventions take place in a vacuum, failing to take account of the way these factors have an influence.

Rationale for the Intervention

This is the justification for the selected intervention, e.g.: what is the nature and scale of the specific problem being addressed? What will happen if we 'do nothing'? Why this intervention and not alternatives?

Inputs

These are the resources available to deliver the intervention. This may be in terms of specific cash funding or 'in-kind' contributions. It is relatively straightforward to put a monetary value on inputs and, in a framework of costs and benefits, inputs are the costs. Evaluation at this level is about economy and the resources consumed.

Activities & Outputs

These are the things that an intervention does, e.g. provide workshops, practical support, training, etc. Outputs are quantitative measures of this activity, e.g. *No's of: beneficiaries, interviews, referrals, sessions held, placements*. Evaluation at this level concerns implementation and efficiency (the relationships between inputs and outputs).

Short-term Outcomes

It is often useful to distinguish between short- and medium-term outcomes. Short-term outcomes can be defined as changes in knowledge / awareness / attitude – e.g. *'Improve employability and enterprise skills among young people in the pilot areas...'* This is based on a simple model of behavioral change.

Medium-term Outcomes

Medium-term outcomes are changes in behaviour or condition – e.g. *'Increased number of young people supported into employment, education or training'*. In describing any evaluation here, it is about effectiveness. The relationship between inputs and outcomes is the basis for cost-effectiveness / cost-benefit studies.

Long-term Impacts

This is the final, high-level effect of the intervention – e.g. *'Increased employment levels and reduction in ESL and NEET rates'*. This relates closely to the original rationale for intervention. Impacts are subject to a very wide range of other contextual influences (e.g. combinations of other policies, economic conditions), - shown by the very permeable line around this box.

4. HOW DO I COLLECT THE INFORMATION?

Once you have decided what you are trying to achieve - and how it is you intend to achieve it – you can then say what you need to do to track progress. The next step in the evaluation process is then gathering evidence to test the propositions you set out in your Logic Model.

For each measure of progress (indicator), it will be important to find out what information you have already, what additional information you will need to collect, what methods you will use to gather it, who will take responsibility for collecting the information, and the timescale.

This information is often – but not always - collected in the form of a performance indicator, which enables you to present **quantitative information**. These indicators can be attached to any element of your Logic Model - e.g. 60% of training participants gained new skills (an outcome indicator), or 170 people accessed online learning modules (an output indicator).

You can also use your Logic Model to structure the collection of **qualitative information**. For example, you might want to use in-depth interviews with staff to find out what they learnt from sessions you provided, whether they have put their learning into practice (and why / why not) etc. As noted previously in this toolkit, using a range of different types of sources helps increase confidence in your findings; it also enhances the explanatory power of your evaluation.

The table below shows some of the most common ways of collecting evidence for your evaluation:

Table 4.1 There are a wide range of methods for gathering evaluative information

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Things to consider
Case studies	Can examine a situation in greater depth than other methods and show the context and process of change. Useful to illustrate specific points and providing a 'human' element to reporting. Can be used to combine various sources of data on a specific case	Generally tells individual / single organisational stories, difficult to generalise findings	Use to illustrate specific points, e.g. to show an improvement in a particular setting. Case studies are often best used in combination with other methods that can provide broader quantitative information.
Community / large group consultations	Get the views of large numbers of people, e.g. by voting on issues. Can raise awareness of your project amongst wider stakeholders	Can be dominated by vocal minorities. Can be hard to 'manage' so that feedback is useful	Consider your location and timings. Be clear about what you want – perhaps have specific options to choose from. Give feedback wherever possible and provide refreshments!
Creative expression	Can be an interesting way of engaging specific groups of beneficiaries, e.g. using art, photographs, and video diaries. Useful where people may have literacy / communication problems	Interpretation may be difficult and relies on subjective judgements	Consider combining this approach with methods that will provide quantitative data – such as surveys of relatives

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Things to consider
Diaries	Records information as people go through your services. Collects good information at individual level to show change in people's lives – a good source for case studies	Could be time consuming. Can be hard to interpret / pull out relevant information	Perhaps use with a sample of beneficiaries. Again, useful to combine with other approaches that provide quantitative data
Document review	The information already exists. Does not require primary research and so often cheaper. Can be useful for exploring the context of a project – e.g. policy developed in this area / previous research	The documents you'd like may not exist! Some documents may be sensitive and therefore difficult to gain access to	You need to think carefully before you ask for any documents – often you can end up with a great deal of information and no way of prioritising. Using a set series of questions can help this
Focus groups	Can allow for better input from people with poor literacy skills. Can be used to explore areas of agreement and divergence / also to allow groups to come to a consensus on ways forward	Needs good facilitation and may not gain individual feelings. Can be difficult to arrange	Think about the numbers involved (typically 6-8 is ideal) and likely group dynamics. Have a set of key issues to work on and try to end by discussing ways forward. Having another person to take notes is helpful
In-depth interviews	Can get a lot of rich and detailed information. It is possible to clarify and probe issues. Excellent where topics might be sensitive / difficult	Time consuming. Interviewers need appropriate skills. Sometimes hard to interpret a lot of qualitative information	Clarify what the interviewee means in responses. Give the interviewee feedback on results. Be very clear about confidentiality and the basis and purpose of the interview before you begin
Internet message boards	Can provide anonymity and allow people to share feelings that they may not do in a group or one-to-one setting	Relies on computer access. Need to ensure that the people writing on the message board are the target audience.	Use a moderator to ask relevant questions to the target audience. You could also use a traditional comments box (!)
Photographs / video	Visual and can be used to get different groups of people to give their perspective. Can be very powerful in reporting	May need permission to use images. Can be difficult to interpret	Consider using to show physical change in an area. 'Big Brother' style diary rooms or video diaries can be good for engaging young people
Observations of activities	Looks at actual behaviour rather than interpretations of it	Observer has to make some subjective judgements. Risks of observer influencing the activities being observed	Use a checklist for observations: what is it you want to know? What specific things / behaviours are you looking for?
Peer evaluation (getting young people to be the evaluators)	Provides young people with new skills and confidence	Relies upon the motivation of those being trained	Use the opportunity to boost skills/esteem of young people involved. Involve young people in the design of their role

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Things to consider
Project administrative records	Systematic and readily available. Useful for monitoring project activities	Will not capture qualitative changes and so unable to answer key evaluation questions	Keep information in a standard way wherever possible
Standard administrative data	Is being collected already. Data is generally robust and will cover a number of years	The changes you are trying to achieve may be too small to show up in these figures	Combine with measures of smaller changes
Surveys / scales / feedback forms	Cheap and easy to administer and analyse. Good for 'before and after' comparisons. Provides quantitative information. Can be done in a number of ways – face-to-face, phone, post, email (depending on questions asked).	May be inappropriate for certain groups. Need for careful design to ensure accessibility. Surveys may have poor response rate. Literacy and interpretation of questions may be an issue	Explain why the information is needed. Limit the number of questions - what will each answer really tell you? Use a mix of tick and comment boxes. Pilot the survey before use. Perhaps provide incentives for completing. If using scales, consult any guidance / instructions for administration and scoring

Other points to consider when deciding which methods to use include:

Can you use information you are already collecting for monitoring and evaluation purposes? Very often, projects are keeping things such as individual plans that are useful sources of information and require no additional effort to collect;

- Initial assessments – carried out by many projects when someone first engages with the project/ accesses a service – are an excellent source of baseline information and should form a key part of your evaluation system.
- Can you use information that is already collected by other people? Are there any services (PES, education authorities etc.) already working with your beneficiaries that may have useful information?
- Don't rely too heavily on one source of information. A proven approach is to mix more creative methods – e.g. video diaries, poems and stories, photo-journals etc. – with more established methods, such as using administrative data or surveys.
- Again, change is all important. If you are trying to show the difference you've made, then you need to show what the situation was before your project started. It would be useful to follow up with some young people after you have finished working with them, e.g. take a small sample of people you worked with and contact them six months or a year later to see how their situation has changed in the longer-term.
- Test the methods you decide upon (using a small number of young people) to make sure that they are appropriate. For example, if you use a survey with young people then make sure that the language is clear and questions are written in a way that they understand.
- Make it someone's job to collect the information. This need not be a mundane requirement – you could use this to develop job roles to include responsibilities for research, monitoring and evaluation. The table below shows a useful way of allocating responsibility for collecting the information set out:

Element of project	Indicator / information required	How is this collected?	When is it collected?	Who is responsible?
Inputs	€ spent by quarter	Financial records	Each month	Finance officer
Outputs	No. of people attending workshops % of people 'satisfied' with workshops	Feedback sheet after workshops	After each session	Project officer
Etc.				

Having shown a range of ways in which information can be gathered, we are now in a position to examine ways in which results can be collated and reported.

5. HOW SHOULD I REPORT MY RESULTS?

This section covers the all-important topic of reporting your results: bringing together all the information you have collected and letting other people know what you did and how you got on.

As noted in the previous section, one of the criteria for thinking about what types of information to collect is to consider the ways in which it can be analysed and reported on. Ideally you should have a mix of quantitative information (which can be used for tables and figures) and qualitative information (which can provide narrative and explanations).

Most evaluations have some sort of written report; the main sections typically include:

- **Introduction and Method.** An explanation of what is contained in the report and the process / methods you used to gather the information. You should also explain the context for your work (what was the problem / opportunity you set out to address) and the services you provided.
- **Results.** Here you should set out the information you have collected. It is usual to start with your outputs: showing the scale of what you did (e.g. numbers of events / sessions held; beneficiaries by age, gender), before moving on to your outcomes: the effects of your project.
- **Conclusions and Recommendations.** You should use this section to reflect on what your results mean: what have you learnt by doing this work? What seems to be effective in addressing the problem you originally identified? Does the original problem still exist? If so, (how) has it changed? What recommendations would you make to others in considering the best ways of addressing these issues?

Other, more general, points to consider at this stage include:

- Use the analysis / reporting stage to *develop your organisation*. Producing your results can give you a really good opportunity for getting together with staff, partners (and beneficiaries?) and reflecting on what went well and what needs to change.
- Consider the level of *resources* needed. Remember that you will have to devote resources (money, staff and time) specifically to reporting – especially if you are planning to run events to spread your message.
- Consider a range of *products*. A written report may not always be the most powerful way of conveying your message. There are other methods – e.g. video, website, large event or conference, press releases, community newsletters – that you may also want to use.
- Think about your *audience*. What you produce must be suitable for the people you are targeting and the impact you want to have on them. For example, senior policy makers will want very concise key messages so that they can make a decision, whereas practitioners will need more detailed information about how you actually did the work.
- Consider the *timing* of your reporting. This is especially important if you are looking to influence other people working in the same area – are there any key conferences/ government papers/ consultations that your reporting could influence? What are the opportunities for you to share what you have learnt?

Lastly, reporting gives you a really good opportunity for getting together with partners and reflecting on what went well and what needs to change in future. It's also a brilliant opportunity for the young people involved to make their views known: what effect has the project had on them? What have they learnt? What messages do they think people need to hear?

6. CLOSING REMARKS

An effective evaluation plan is more than a column of indicators added to your pilot project's work plan. It is a 'living document' that should be updated on an ongoing basis to reflect changes over time.

Your evaluation efforts could play an important part in the establishment of effective Youth Guarantee Schemes not only in your country but across Europe.

Good practice suggest that you should start planning your evaluation at the start of your project to ensure it is built into the planning and delivery of your project, but it is never too late to get started. Please keep us informed and feel free to contact us for advice on your evaluation by email ([yg@ghkint.com](mailto:yq@ghkint.com)).

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Glossary

Every area of practice has its jargon and evaluation is no different (if anything it may be worse than other areas!). We have therefore provided some quick definitions of key terms used in monitoring and evaluation:

Activities - The things your project does, e.g. provide a training service.

Baseline - The situation at the start of your project, e.g. rates of people dying in hospitals. Usually compared with the situation at the end of the project to show a change.

Context - The general economic, social and policy conditions within which your project operates.

Evaluation - An in-depth study which takes place at a discrete point in time, and in which recognised research procedures are used in a systematic and analytically defensible fashion to form a judgement on the value of an intervention.

Indicator - A sign that a change has taken place, e.g. young people can name local services would be an indicator of increased knowledge of these services. (Smoke is an indicator of fire).

Inputs - The resources at your disposal to run the project. Wherever possible, inputs should be given a monetary value.

Logic Model - An illustration of how the impacts of a project or programme are achieved. Logic Models show the links between inputs, activities, outcomes and impacts within the context in which the project or programme operates.

Milestone - A means of tracking the progress of your project by setting a date for achieving a specific target. This can either relate to outputs (e.g. 'we will deliver seven sessions by June'), or outcomes (e.g. '120 young people will have improved their skills by August').

Monitoring - The process of recording your activities in a systematic way, e.g. the number of sessions you ran, how many people took part, their gender/ age/ ethnicity/ postcode. Monitoring typically records Outputs (see below).

Outcome - The changes that you want your project to achieve. This might be at a range of levels, e.g.: for individual people, organisations, families, local services. Outcomes typically describe changes in knowledge, skills, outlook, attitudes and behaviour, e.g. increased knowledge of social care services.

Outputs - A quantitative measure of your activities, e.g. the number of people you have worked with, the number of reports produced, number of sessions run, number of posters produced etc. Typically recorded by monitoring systems.

Qualitative - Narrative information, typically giving people's views, opinions, ideas or attitudes. Qualitative information is often used to answer questions about why and how things have happened the way they have.

Quantitative - Numerical information, describing things using facts and figures, e.g. the number of people accessing a service; the percentage of young people who re-enter training after participating in the Youth Guarantee scheme etc.

Rationale – The justification for your project. This is typically described in terms of a problem to be addressed but may also be described in terms of an opportunity.

Stakeholder - Individuals, groups or organisations with an interest in, and / or influence over, your project.

Sustainability – Refers to the continuation of the project's activities, or the outcomes achieved, once the funding has ended.

Target - A means of keeping your project on track by making a statement about progress about one or more of your Indicators. Targets should be S.M.A.R.T – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

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