****

**1. Why do we evaluate and/or measure change?**

Often it can feel difficult to justify spending any of our limited budget on measurement and evaluation rather than frontline work. This is understandable, but good evaluation should, in fact, benefit our cause, and has a number of the benefits (see below). Research is a way of finding and gathering information in a systematic way.  It can help you to review how you are doing and to plan for the future.

* 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
* You can learn from what has and hasn’t worked
* It assesses the effectiveness of a piece of work, a project or a programme.

**2. Specific reasons for measuring change within a Big Local context**

* Big Local partnerships are accountable to the people who live in the area and it is important to be able to tell the story of what is happening.
* Big Local partnerships have created a vision for what the area will look like in 10 years’ time – they need to know if they are achieving that vision.
* Measuring impact helps improve what partnerships do and how they plan.
* Measuring impact helps other Big Local areas learn about what works.
* Having evidence of what impacts they are creating helps make the case that local people can plan and manage programmes that change their areas – there are still sceptics who are not convinced by this approach.

**3. Scope of evaluation/measuring change**

To some extent the scope of an evaluation will be determined by the aims and objectives of the Programme it is operating within.

Big Local has four over reaching programme outcomes, and any methodology to measure change needs to be mindful of these:

* Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
* People will have increased skills and confidence so that they can continue to identify and respond to local needs in the future.
* The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises.
* People will feel that their area is an even better place to live.

**4. Good principles/rules of evaluation**

Whilst there are many different methodologies that can be used to measure change, there are a number of principles and rules that should guide any

Be a continuous process. not a one off event (guiding what you do, how you do it)

**Be relevant- e.g value the things that matter, including those that** relate to the aims and objectives of the programme, to your Vision

**Be open and transparent- Include all** information, evidence and feedback, to give a true and fair picture thus enabling people to draw their own conclusions

**Be independent and impartial**-whilst a lot of the work can be done ‘in house’ (e.g. collecting the information from stakeholders etc) better to commission an independent body, person to analyse the evidence, data, information you have collected

**Be objective-**whilst some data/evidence will be qualitative, there should also be quantitative evidence,that is not subject to interpretation

**Be proportionate**-whilst evaluation and measuring change should always be an important part of what you do, it is a complex area, and the resources committed to it should not be excessive…..

**5. Problems/challenges**

**Cause and effect/attribution**

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges to any attempt at evaluation, or to measure the change of a project, or group of projects, is Attribution of impact, i.e. to what extent are the outcomes and impacts reported directly linked to your delivery activities? There will almost inevitably be other interventions, investments, processes taking place which might have been the cause of, or at least have partly contributed, to the impact reported?

**Absence of a non investment scenario…**

There will never be what the economists call counter factual information, i.e. a clear idea s to what would have happened in the absence of that project or intervention. To what extent are the outcomes and impacts reported ‘additional’ within the context of your baseline? Would they have happened anyway in the absence of your intervention? Crim may have fallen, but is that down to the recruitment of more PCSO’s, target hardening measures, or simply part of a national trend that has seen crime fall in all areas? Counterfactual: to further demonstrate additionality, what would have happened in the absence of investment. Control group – identification of a control group which replicates as far as possible the context in which the project is located, but which has not benefited from investment. in reality, this is complex to achieve, and is therefore only likely to be relevan

**Additionality/leakage**

Have there been any social or economic knock on effects locally (e.g displacement of jobs from one part of the economy to another, or multiplier impacts)? To what extent are impacts being retained within your local area? Larger projects, in order to assess impact, or accurately measure change, need to consider leakage, deadweight, displacement/substitution impacts and the

However, this approach would be disproportionate to smaller projects, i.e. the kinds of interventions, projects that Big Local Partnerships will be delivering. It is also a reason why Partnerships should, for the most part be focussing on the overall impact of the Programme, rather than individual projects or interventions, which are unlikely to be big enough to effect change on their own.

**Having a baseline**

Establish a baseline, Be as clear as you can about where you are starting from. If you know where you are starting from, it will be easier to assess the distance you have travelled during the project

**6. Gathering evidence**

This is a key part of the evaluation process. You need to find evidence to show whether or not you have reached the goals you set yourself in Annex B (be they short-, medium- or long-term).

Different types of evidence should be collected

* Quantitative, I.e. numbers (for example, the number of people you have reached, the number of people getting work, the number of good stories in the press, changes in crime levels);
* Qualitative, e.g. people’s opinions, views and experiences (for example, people’s stories about their experience on the programme, photos of the area ‘before and after’, people’s views on whether they think they have more influence, the area has improved etc. ;
* Information you already have?

**7. Ways of gathering information**

**(i) A questionnaire survey**

A questionnaire survey can be used to find out more about the views and experiences of users, the wider community, agencies, etc. Use tick-boxes or questions that can be answered with a yes or no if you want to survey a lot of people, or ask a lot of questions. Questions that allow people to say more than just yes or no will give you more detailed information, but they take longer to fill in, a lot more time to analyse, and fewer people will fill them in. Responses to questionnaires are often low so think about offering a prize.

**(ii) In-depth interviews**

It is usually best to limit the number of in-depth interviews to those people whose involvement with the project gives them particular insights or valuable experience – but try to talk to a range of people who are likely to have different perspectives and views on your project.

**(iii) Feedback forms**

You can find out whether people have found your training and other events useful by asking them to fill in a short form. Ask them, for example, what they found most and least useful; what they might do differently as a result; what could be improved.

**(iv) Focus groups and round tables**

A ‘focus group’ gathers together about half a dozen people who are broadly similar (for example, they are all single parents with young children) to discuss themes or questions you want to address in the evaluation. A ‘round table’ discussion is a similar idea, which brings together people with different perspectives (for example, teenage parents, teachers, health visitors).

**(v) Press reports**

Gather and review press reports on the area (for example, you could see whether positive reports about the area are increasing).

**(vi) Photographs**

Can be taken over time, to see if you can observe any changes, particularly in the physical environment.

**(vii) Case studies**

In order to make the evaluation manageable, you might want to pick a few pieces of work (case studies) to explore in detail, rather than trying to explore everything. Pick pieces of work that illustrate your main objectives.

**(viii) Peer Review**

**(ix) Evaluation workshops and review meetings**

Hold special workshops/review meetings of people who are involved in your project and use pictures, photographs or models, as well as the spoken word, to get feedback from participants

**8. Choosing Indicators**

Key to any successful evaluation, or exercise in measuring change is choosing the right indicators .They need to be as simple, meaningful and useful as possible, and perhaps most importantly capable of being easily measured. They also need to be grounded in the collective vision/definition of what success looks like for each local community, which in Big Local should be found by looking at the 4 outcomes, your Vision and the aims set out in your plan (s).

We would recommend a mixture/combination of both quantitative, hard, indicators, i.e. things that can be counted, such as footfall in a community centre, visitors to a new play area, attendees at courses, and softer, qualitative indicators there are more about opinions and perceptions, such as how people feel about an area, space, well being, and their opinion on other aspects of community life. They also need to also clearly link back to the overall purpose of assessment….the aims, vision, outcomes etc against which you should be measuring your impact

Well Being

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Indicators**  |  |  |
| **Tools** | Talking to neighbours  | Regularity of social contacts  | Better or worse | Likelihood of staying in the area  | Satisfaction with area  | People get on well together  | Safety  | Personal health  |  |
| Vox Pop |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interview |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Events |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Case studies  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Research  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Photographs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Focus groups  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluation workshop |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Infrastructure

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Indicators**  |
| **Tools** | Quality of play areas  | Places where community can come together  | Quality of public services  | Activities on offer  | Availability and quality of green spaces Quality |  |  |
| Vox Pop |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Structured Interview |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Events |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Case studies  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Research  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Photographs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Focus groups  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluation workshop |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Voice and Influence

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Indicators**  |
| **Tools** | Can influence decisions  | Willingness to act  | Attendance at meetings  | Voluntary activity | Membership of local groups  | How often are they asked their opinion  |  |
| Vox Pop |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Survey (on line, face to face or telephone) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Structured Interview |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Events |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Case studies  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Research  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Video |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Media coverage |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Photographs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Focus groups |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Action Plan

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Indicators**  |
| **Tools** | who | when | where |  |  |  |  |
| Vox Pop |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Survey |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Structured Interview |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Events |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Case studies  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Research  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Video |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Media coverage | all |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Voice and Influence-Results of Evaluation/Baseline/Change survey**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Feedback-score (see also report)**  |
| **Date of evaluation**  | Can influence decisions  | Willingness to act  | Attendance at meetings  | Voluntary activity | Membership of local groups  | How often are they asked their opinion  |  |
| Summer 2019 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Summer 2020 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Summer 2021 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Summer 2022 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Summer 2023 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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**Appendix**

**Different methods (of measuring impact)**

**Social return on investment** (**SROI**) is a principles-based method for measuring [extra-financial value](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Externality#Positive) (such as environmental or social value not currently reflected or involved in conventional financial accounts). It can be used by any entity to evaluate impact on [stakeholders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_%28corporate%29), identify ways to [improve performance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performance_improvement), and enhance the performance of investments.

The SROI method as it has been standardized by the Social Value UK provides a consistent quantitative approach to understanding and managing the impacts of a project, business, organisation, fund or policy. It accounts for stakeholders' views of impact, and puts financial 'proxy' values on all those impacts identified by stakeholders which do not typically have market values. The aim is to include the values of people that are often excluded from markets in the same terms as used in markets, that is money, in order to give people a voice in resource allocation decisions.

Some SROI users employ a version of the method that does not require that all impacts be assigned a financial proxy. Instead the "numerator" includes monetized, quantitative but not monetized, qualitative, and narrative types of information about value.

A network was formed in 2006 to facilitate the continued evolution of the method. Over 700 globally are members of this network called Social Value UK (formerly the SROI Network).

The origins of SIA largely derive from the [environmental impact assessment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_impact_assessment) (EIA) model, which first emerged in the 1970s in the U.S, as a way to [assess](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evaluation) the impacts on society of certain development schemes and projects before they go ahead

# theory of change

A theory of change shows how you expect outcomes to occur over the short, medium and longer term as a result of your work. It can be represented in a visual diagram, as a narrative, or both.

A theory of change can be developed at the beginning of a piece of work (to help with planning), or to describe an existing piece of work (so you can evaluate it). It is particularly helpful if you are planning or evaluating a complex initiative, but can also be used for more straightforward projects.

It is beneficial to involve a variety of stakeholders when you develop a theory of change – you could include staff, trustees, beneficiaries, partners and funders. The development process, and the thinking involved, is often as important as the diagram or narrative you produce.

A theory of change should be:

* **credible** – based on previous experience and insight from your different stakeholders or relevant research where appropriate
* **achievable** – you have the necessary resources to carry out the intervention
* **supported** – your stakeholders will be involved in defining and agreeing your theory of change

Examples provided in this How To are based on a [hypothetical theory of change](https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/impact/plan-your-impact-and-evaluation/identify-the-difference-you-want-to-make-1/example-theories-of-change) for a youth unemployment project.

**Theory of change**:A graphic representation of the change process that also expresses causal connections between action and results but, rather than describing the outcomes of a programme, focuses on attaining a particular change and developing approaches to achieve this. (Fromhttp://www.theoryofchange.org/)A theory of change articulates underlying assumptions and describes a process of desired social change by making explicit the way wethinkabout a current situation or problem, its causes, the long-term change we seek, and what needs to happen in society in order for that change to come about

Draft questions for Questionnaire

Willingness to act indicator

would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my neighbourhood. In the last 12 months, have you taken any of the following actions to try to get something done about the quality of your local environment? To what extent do you agree or disagree that people in this neighbourhood pull together to improve this neighbourhood

Ability to influence

In the last 12 months, has any organisation asked you what you think about... do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting you local area?How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

Social investment assessment



### Describing and analysing your findings

<http://localtrust.org.uk/library/how-to-guides/how-to-check-your-progress/>

<https://www.inspiringimpact.org/getting-started/>

. 1.Participation Indicators: engagement, involvement and ownership of local people and stakeholders in what's happening.

(Who).

2.Progress Indicators:track actions taken to achieve local visions and goals. (What happened).

3.Performance Indicators:track effectiveness of processes, infrastructure and frameworks in place to achieve local visions and goals. (How/how well).

5.Population or People Indicators:changes in wellbeing outcomes for local people.(What's changed).

6.Policy/SystemsChange:tracks impacts and changes on bigger picture thinking, funding, policies, approaches that local CLD efforts have contributed to. (Now being done differently)

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6.Policy/SystemsChange:tracks impacts and changes on bigger picture thinking, funding, policies, approaches that local CLD efforts have contributed to. (Now being done differently)

outcomes are understood as changes in behaviour, relationships, activities or action of people, groups and organisations with who an initiative works directly. These outcomes can be logically linked to the initiative but are not necessarily caused by them

There are a number of approaches which can be taken to do this:- Self-reported by beneficiaries – Surveying business and individual beneficiaries to report on what would have happened to their situation without the support. - Self-reported by project manager – Project managers to identify scale of uplift. note this is the least reliable of the three methods and should only be used where alternative methods are not possible. -