

Evaluation - measuring outcomes: how can we show what we've achieved?

Intro

- Structure of session, a conversation.
- No easy answers, but good questions.

Taking the temperature: who's done this before?

- A show of hands.
- The good, the bad and the ugly.

Gamekeeper turned poacher: a bit about me and my experience

- The Active Community Unit / Office of the Third Sector / DCLG
- More than my fair share of terrible research/evaluation

Understanding the jargon: Inputs, Process, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact

- Jargon:
 - Inputs: staff, volunteers, income.
 - Process: events run, bums on seats.
 - Outputs: qualifications achieved, user satisfaction.
 - Outcomes: jobs secured and held, debts stabilised.
 - Impact: communities regenerated, lives turned around.
- Theory of change:
 - More than a list of lists.
 - Opportunity to test hypotheses.
 - Not fixed in aspic.

Keep It Simple Stupid: who, what, why, where, when and how?

- It's worth just taking a second to observe how easy it is to over-complicate this whole theory of change thing.
- Every budding journalist knows there are five parts to every good story: who, what, why, where and when.
- It's not so different for evaluating a project:
 - Who do you want to help?
 - Where are they based?
 - What are you doing to help them?
 - Why do you think this will make a difference?
 - How will know you have been successful?
- Deceptively easy questions, but if you can't answer these questions, perhaps you need to think again.

Reinventing the wheel: and how to avoid it

- It's one thing knowing what you want to measure, quite another knowing how to measure it.
- Temptation is to measure the easy stuff: inputs and process.
- Lord Victor: The soft stuff is really hard.
- But the good news is that some really bright people have already thought about this.
- **BSC Outcomes Matrix.**
 - Not perfect but much, much better than starting from scratch.
 - And might even allow you to benchmark against others.

Resistance is futile: the reality of social investment

- Question to ask: why **not** use the Outcomes Matrix?
- As less and less public money is available for social change, there will be more and more focus on social investment.
- And private investors are not as easygoing as government with doling out cash.
- They want to know what financial return they are getting and what social return.
- Just look at the latest BSC deal-level data published before Christmas.

Any questions? Group discussion