



Prove, Improve, Practice: Evaluation and Funding Glossary

Vision: A vision defines what your organisation/project ultimately wishes for. In a vision it is essential to think big. A vision, in many ways, would complete the sentence; 'In an ideal world...' For example, 'our vision is that all children have access to spaces where they can play freely and that communities value and understand the benefits of play.'

Mission Statement: A mission statement outlines the purpose of an organisation. It is the reason you exist. It should outline an overall goal and direct your decision making.

Aims: Aims are what you intend to achieve and provide through the work of your organisation or project. Your aims should be derived from the need of the beneficiaries your organisation/project exists to serve.

Outcomes: Outcomes are the changes that do occur as a result of a project or the work of an organisation (these can be both expected and unexpected). The outcomes that you intend to see are changes which suggest you are achieving your aims. It is helpful to set outcomes which you measure in order to monitor whether your work is achieving what is set out to achieve.

Outputs: *Outputs are different to outcomes*, but are often mixed up. Whereas outcomes are concerned with what difference is made, outputs are products of what we do and who we reach. They are a numerical picture of our project and how it operates. They are the context in which outcomes sit. For example, 'project x has delivered 12 sessions, to 8 families in 3 locations' are outputs. That 6 out of 8 families felt better informed about the benefits of play would be an outcome.

Indicators: Indicators simply indicate whether or not a change has occurred. Indicators will inform you of whether you are achieving outcomes, and which outcomes are being achieved- expected or unexpected. Indicators must be neither positive nor negative. For example, if you were measuring the outcome 'children develop through play' an effective indicator of whether this change is occurring might be 'levels of ability and competence at

physical tasks.’ If you were to site ‘increased levels of ability and competence at physical tasks’ this would be an outcome in itself.

Base-line: A base-line is essential to successful evaluation. If you think of evaluation like a before and after scenario then your base-line would be your before. It is the reference point from which you measure the difference your project has made. If it has not been possible to gather a base-line before beginning the project it is possible to gather a retrospective baseline by asking stake-holders and beneficiaries to reflect on the changes the activities have made and by using evaluation methods which track their journey retrospectively.

Impact: The impact of your work refers to the extent and intensity of the changes (outcomes) you have achieved. It is reflective of the levels of change. It is also worth considering sustainability, legacy and ripple effects of change when assessing impact.

Evidence Base: Your evidence base should outline the *need* for your services. What evidence is there to suggest that any intervention is required? What does this evidence say about why you have elected to pursue certain activities in your delivery?

Assumptions: assumptions are those things that within a certain evaluation or funding context you can comfortably assume. We can now assume, for example, that smoking is bad for your health. If you are then running an anti-smoking campaign you might be expected to evaluate the effects of your activities on increasing knowledge on the issue and effecting behaviour change but not on the effects of smoking on one’s health per se.

Situation: Situation is very self-explanatory. The situation is simply where a project or organisation currently finds itself- taking into account, need, assumptions, the external environment etc. The thing to bear in mind is; how does the situation inform your activities? What about the situation creates a need for and directs the delivery of your services.

Stakeholders: Stakeholders are simply any person, group or organisation with an interest in your project. They are not necessarily beneficiaries but do include them.

Clients: Often beneficiaries or service users are referred to as clients in funding applications or evaluation reports. Don’t let this confuse you though, when asked about your clients think of the people you are targeting with your service and who will benefit from it.

Quantitative Data: Quantitative data regards numerical data or *quantity*. For example, 14 people reported... 32 inquiries were made regarding....

Qualitative Data: Qualitative data regards descriptive evidence; observations, anecdotal evidence, quotes, case studies, otherwise *quality*.

Logic Models: A logic model looks a lot like a flow chart. It is used in evaluation to outline the effectiveness of a project in relation to its theory of change. It is a visual representation of the logical links between resources, activities, outputs and outcomes. When constructing a logic model think 'if this happens **then** what?' Refer also to our template logic model for some guidance in making your own!

Weaver's Triangle: A Weaver's triangle is a very simple tool, similar to a logic model. Constructed over three tiers in a pyramid format the triangle includes, from the bottom up, activities, outcomes and aims. The purpose of the exercise is to illustrate how your activities produce outcomes which fulfil your aims. Once again check out our template for guidance in building your own.

Cost/Benefit Analysis: Cost benefit analysis is very much what it says on the tin. It comprises of comparing the total expected cost of a project with the total expected impact or benefit. It is useful to bear this approach in mind with regards to designing activities and to also be prepared for funders to take this approach in their allocation of funds.

Strategic Priorities: Strategic priorities are priorities which have been ranked in order of their importance in achieving set goals. All operational activity should be carried out in consultation with these priorities. Often strategic priorities are linked to a time-scale in which they must be completed.