

Girlguiding Scotland: Understanding the 'why' as well as the 'how' of evaluation

This case study is about *how to embed evaluation across an organisation who are dependent on volunteers.*

Read it if you are a *third sector organisation aiming to embed evaluation across the whole organisation.*

It will tell you *how to ensure your staff and volunteers understand the 'why' to evaluate as well as the 'how'.*

Introduction

Girlguiding Scotland has more than 50,000 members across Scotland and our mission is to inspire and empower girls to be anything they want to be through regular meetings and a range of activities.

As an organisation we decided that we wanted to have a more consistent approach to evaluation and to use our evaluation process to reflect on our current strategic plan.

What we did

We commissioned ESS to facilitate a tailored support session with 8 team members from Girlguiding Scotland (GGS). The session took the form of a mini-workshop (the idea being to have

consistency in everyone's understanding of evaluation basics as well as the opportunity to learn about mapping project outcomes to strategic outcomes). ESS also provided some resources such as the [embedding wheel](#) from [Making it Stick](#).

"Thanks again for a great session on Saturday. You have certainly given us lots to think about. I thought your session was excellent and gave us a great grounding to enable us to take forward." Carol Morwood, GGS



Challenges and successes:

Participants used the [Big Picture](#) exercise to identify GGS's evaluation challenges. These included: evaluation being done in isolation and outcomes not being 'used'; mainly asking if people liked an event; being unsure about the difference between feedback and evaluation. During the session we identified that we needed to set outcomes and indicators at the start and build in measurement into the activities.

The group worked together on setting outcomes, and one that they came up with was - 'Volunteers feel more supported in their GGS roles'. They also considered what would indicate this outcome happening, and whittled their ideas down to some key indicators that they could measure.

After learning about these steps during the session, one participant said: *"This will help us understand WHY we're doing something."*

The difference we made

GGs had been keen to have all team members involved in the session so as to *'[review] evaluation across the organisation at a more strategic level'* and help get around their concern of individual projects evaluating 'in isolation'. Learning about evaluating project outcomes helped them understand how these could map to strategic outcomes, and one participant said at the end that she was

"Clearer on how to evaluate the strategic plan."

Another said she would now see evaluation as something

"...for improvement and the bigger picture."

Six weeks after the session GGS told us that they hoped (lockdown-dependent) to

"develop some of this work at our trainer event in August" Carol Morwood, GGS

What we learnt

ESS helped us set outcomes and indicators by encouraging us to use 'everyday' examples, such as, the **need** being hunger, the **activity** being to eat biscuits and the **outcome** being 'the team will be less hungry'. One GGS participant then applied these principles to her being too cold (**need**), turning up the heater (**activity**) and being warmer (**outcome**). A discussion followed about what would **indicate** if she was warmer (teeth chattering, wearing her scarf or not, etc). Explaining the concepts using simple principles like this helped us apply the same thinking to our work, and to plan our evaluation at the start of a project (by thinking about *why* we're delivering the activity and how we'll know if we've succeeded).

Contact details

If you want ESS's support please contact Evaluation Support Scotland

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