



Case Study: Hebridean Pursuits Outdoor Learning



What we did

We facilitated two tailored support sessions for Hebridean Pursuits Outdoor Learning (HPOL) after two of their team had been to [Getting Started: outcomes and indicators](#). In the first session (April 2021) we helped HPOL to draft their outcomes based on the need for their work, and then to think about the indicators of these outcomes so that they could be measured. The second session (January 2022) was spent finalising the wording of the outcomes, selecting the key indicators and looking at the ESS [Support Guide on choosing appropriate evaluation methods](#), so that HPOL could concretise their evaluation plan and start to use it.



The difference we made

HPOL needed support with agreeing the wording of the project's need and outcomes, so that the staff and trustees involved could all understand the evaluation plan. We gave clear advice on how to choose suitable wording to minimise misunderstandings about the difference between need, outcomes, activities, and indicators. ESS designed the second tailored support session to cut through any to-ing and fro-ing about wording by making sure the group focussed on answering the question: "Why is the project **needed**?" (In other words, to think about the "problem" their project is trying to solve).



What we learned

It's easy to spend a lot of time debating how things should be worded, particularly when there are several people from various roles involved. Although we promote the principle of embedding evaluation within your team or organisation, ongoing deliberations and misunderstandings about evaluation can mean that a lot of time passes without your evaluation plan being finalised and used. When in doubt, it's best to go back to what the **need** for your work is in the first place – in other words, to ask yourself: "**What is the problem we're trying to solve?**" Thinking about the answer to this question will help you to identify the need for your work and then set outcomes that relate to this need.

Check out [ESS's principles for good evaluation](#) to help you judge if your evaluation is good enough.

June 2022

If you would like ESS's support please contact us at info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk.