### EVALUATING YOUR PARTICIPATION

You should evaluate your participation activities to understand what you achieved, what went well and what could be done differently in the future. This will help you improve:

- 1. the quality of your participation activities,
- 2. the experiences participants have, and
- **3.** how the participation outputs are incorporated into the outputs and decisions of your project or service.

#### Benefits of evaluation include:

Assistance	Evidence of	<b>Critical reflection:</b>	Accountability:	Learning:
with planning:	impact:	Evaluation	Evaluating	Evaluation
Evaluation helps	It can help	provides a tool for	can help to	generates learning
you focus on	measure the value	critical reflection	demonstrate	that can be shared
what you want to	and benefits of	for you and	whether your	with others,
achieve, how you	your activity	the people you	project is	inform future
will achieve it and	and provides a	collaborate with,	delivering what it	activities, and help
how you will know	record of your	and helps improve	set out to do and	you improve your
if you have been	achievements (e.g.	a project	provides value for	processes and
successful	for you and your		money	practice
	team, decision			
	makers, or funders)			
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### PLANNING THE EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

It is important to think about evaluation during the planning stages of your project. Identifying this information at the start of your project will give you a clearer idea of what you are trying to evaluate and the kind of information you will need to collect. This will help you to define what you hope to achieve through your participation and how you will collect the data you need during your project to evaluate this.

Where possible, involve participants in this planning stage.

Things to consider when planning your activities and your evaluation:

Aim What is the purpose of your participation activities and what is the problem you are trying to solve?	Outputs These are the direct products of your activity. What do you plan to do and when? Will there be a report or an action plan? Measuring whether and how these outputs were delivered will help you to evaluate the process of your participation activities	Outcomes These are what will change as a result of your participation activities. These can be short and long term. They should include the experiences of participants as well as the focus of the participation itself. This will give an indication of the impact of your activity.	Measures How will you measure the outputs and outcomes of your participation activities? What indicators will show that you have achieved what you set out to do? How will you collect this data?
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Theory of change template available from Nesta, a leading innovation agency: https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/theory-change/

# DATA COLLECTION

You will need to collect some information from your participants, your team and any collaborators, and on the outputs of your activity. How you do this will depend on the scale of your activity and the measures you are using for your evaluation.

The methods you choose may be limited by practical constraints – for example, time, budget, space, physical environment or digital access – but planning in advance will help you to make the most of any opportunities to collect information you need.

See the Questionnaire Design module for more information about collecting demographic information and a set of standard demographic questions



**Can you see it?** Sometimes you can collect data simply through observation. How many people took part? Was everyone able to contribute?



**Can you find out indirectly?** The information you're looking for may already exist, depending on what you are measuring e.g. improved feedback, increased engagement in a service



**Can you ask it?** If you can't measure it robustly through observation, you may need to ask it and there are various ways to do so, see next slide.

# **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

There isn't one perfect collection method. You will probably need to use a mixture of methods to capture data for all your measures. It is good to think about how you want to analyse your data before you collect it, to make sure you collect what you need.

Quantitative data can tell us what is happening, such as administrative data. It also can give an indication of positive or negative changes and how big a change is if you collect the same data from the same people at more than one point in time (e.g. before and after an activity)

#### can tell us why it's happening. This can be a short response in a questionnaire or in-depth insight gained through interviews and focus groups. Very useful and often essential, but subjective.

**Quantitative data** 

#### Self-reported measures can

provide very specific quantitative measures, but may be subject to bias in who responds and how. This is sometimes a pragmatic solution. **Observation** can be limited in scope and any need for interpretation by an observer can introduce bias Measuring short-term outcomes can require collecting data from participants during a participation activity Follow up measurement some time after an activity can show longerterm outcomes, but participants to respond take part

#### See the Reward and Recognition module for the Council's policy on rewarding participation

#### Examples of collection methods:

Comment cards / postcards Questionnaires Interviews Focus groups Graffiti wall Idea mapping wall Videos or photographs Observations Letters or emails Artwork Case studies or vignettes

You should also think about the best way to present and share your evaluation. For example, this could be a traditional written report, a slide pack, a video or as a case study. Your results will be useful for your team, decision makers and people involved in the activity, and help colleagues undertaking similar work.

# **EVALUATING YOUR PROJECT**

#### Look back at what you planned -

Aim	Objectives	Outputs	Outcomes	Measures
What is the purpose of your participation activities and what is the problem you are trying to solve?	What steps need to happen to achieve your aims?	These are the direct products the activity you are planning. What do you plan to do and when? Will there be a report or an action plan? Measuring	These are what will change as a result of your participation activities. These can be short and long term. They should include the experiences	Measures How will you measure the outputs and outcomes of your participation activities? What indicators will show that you
		whether and how these outputs were delivered will help you to evaluate the process of your participation activities	of participants as well as the focus of the participation itself. This will give an indication of the impact of your activity.	have achieved what you set out to do?
id you meet your ex	pected aims?			
Measures	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outputs</b> What were your	<b>Objectives</b> Did vou achieve	<b>Aim</b> Has your project

Have you collected the data as planned? If not, what barriers were there? If yes, what does your analysis tell you?

#### Did you meet your short term outcomes? Are you on track to meet your longer term outcomes?

What were your outputs? Were these the outputs you planned?

### Did you achieve your stated objectives?

Has your project helped you to reach your original aim?

What lessons can you learn from your process?

## **MEASURING WELLBEING**

Improving wellbeing is at the centre of the council's strategic framework. As well as evaluating our residents happiness & wellbeing through our Residents Survey, we can do it through the interactions we have with residents.

Participating can have a positive impact on wellbeing, as residents may feel more empowered and have more social interactions with others in their community.

When evaluating your participation activity, you can measure changes in wellbeing by asking participants at the start and end of the project:

- Personal wellbeing: Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? (on a rating of 0-10)
- **Community wellbeing:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement that "generally I borrow things and exchange favours with my neighbours"?

You can find other measures of wellbeing you could use in the Newham Outcomes Framework.

