



Measuring Outcomes 2

This workbook was created by Evaluation Support Scotland to help organisations plan and evaluate their work and it has been adapted by Youth Scotland for use by youth groups and organisations. Some people find that they can use the workbook on its own without coming to workshops so it has been made available as a standalone resource. However, if you have any questions or would like help to make sense of things please contact either Youth Scotland or Evaluation Support Scotland.

Further copies of these workbooks and copies of blank templates and forms can be found at

www.youthworkessentials.org



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Measuring Outcomes

Evaluation can help you work out what difference you are making.

But sometimes that's hard to measure.

In Workbook 1 we looked at the differences you make (these are called OUTCOMES). In this workbook we'll start to think about how to measure your outcomes.

This workbook will help you to:

- Recognise when you're achieving your outcomes (using **indicators**)
- Collect information on your outcomes
- Spend less time on evaluation!

Remember, it is useful to have information on the situation you are trying to change before you start (**baseline**) so you can see what difference you have made.

How to use this workbook

The workbook is organised in a logical sequence.

1. Reminder on setting outcomes
2. How to set indicators
3. How to create a monitoring and evaluation plan for your project

Following the sequence is important if you want to avoid the common mistakes of collecting information without being sure why you're collecting it, or using tools (like questionnaires) without being clear on what you want them to tell you about.

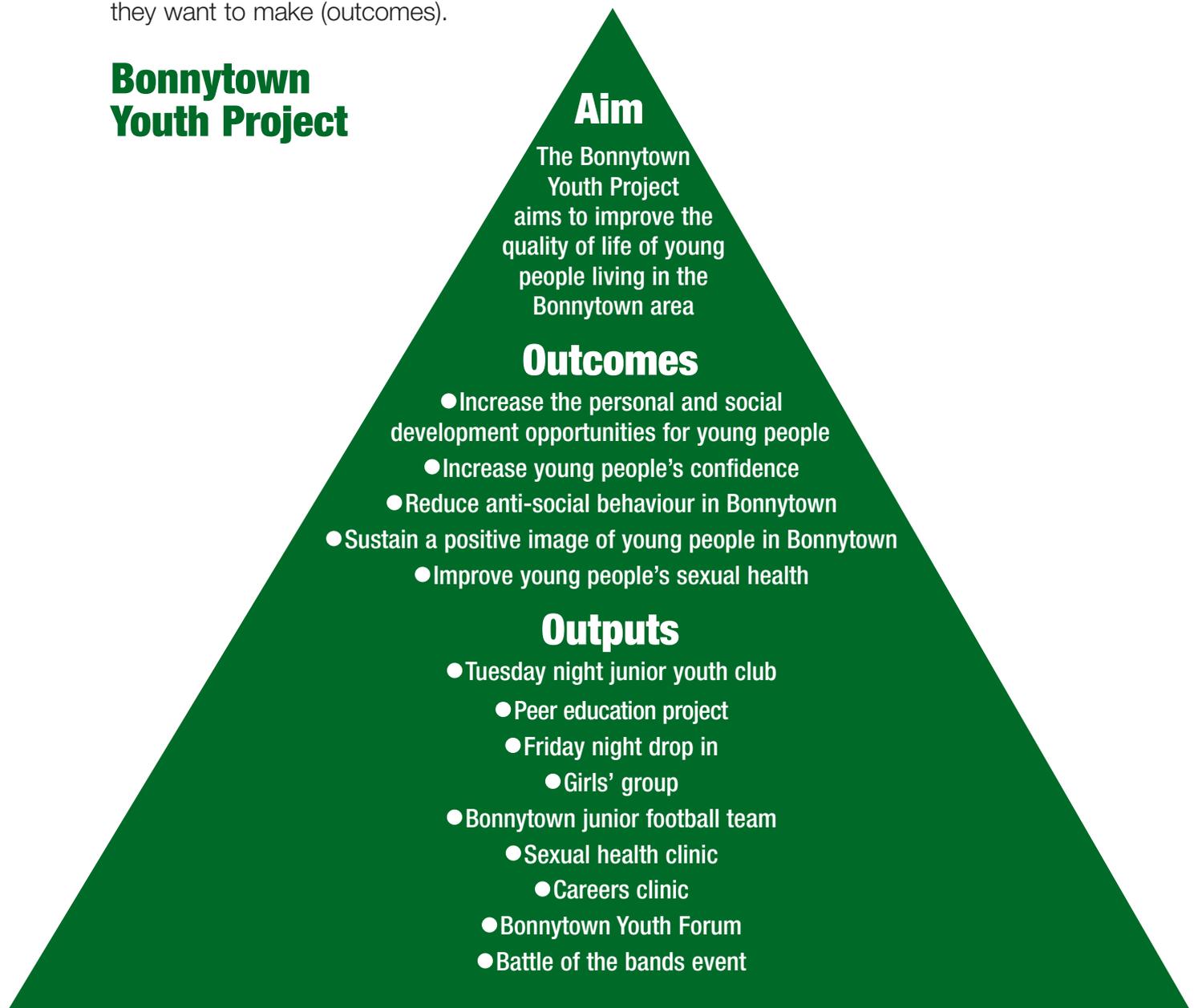
Give it a go!

Throughout the workbook you'll have the chance to work on examples from your own project or organisation. Look out for the **'give it a go'** sections. Feel free to write in the workbook, or to use a separate piece of paper if you prefer.

1. Reminder on setting outcomes

In Workbook 1 we used this tool, the Weaver's Triangle from Charities Evaluation Service. The Weaver's Triangle is useful for planning and evaluating the difference you make. In this example, Bonnytown Youth Project have set out what they do (outputs), and the difference they want to make (outcomes).

Bonnytown Youth Project



Now they know their outcomes, Bonnytown Youth Project need to find out if these have been achieved.

But how do you measure something like 'Increased confidence'? If your answer is 'do a survey', slow down! First of all we need to know what 'increased confidence' actually means. Then we can find out if it's been achieved. This involves using **indicators**.

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To help find useful indicators, try thinking of it this way...

First, take each of your outcomes, for example we'll use the Bonnytown Youth Project outcome: **'Improved confidence'**.

Next, ask yourself 'What would it look like if you had achieved it?' Allow yourself to come up with as many ideas as you can think of—it helps to be specific.

These are your potential indicators. For example...



You might find it easier to write indicators in the first person (using 'I' or 'We') as it could help see things from the young person's point of view; 'What would have changed for me?'

Of course, the best people to tell you what your outcomes would 'look like' are the people who benefit from your services!

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Give it a go!

Take a few of your outcomes and think of some potential indicators for them. Remember: what would the outcome look like if you achieved it?

Outcome	Outcome indicator
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

We promised that all this would help you spend less time on evaluation! So far it looks like extra work! Don't worry.

The next step is to trim your list so you are left with the best, or most easily measured, indicators.

Give it a go!

Go back to your list of indicators. For each outcome, pick the 2 or 3 indicators that most clearly show what your outcome looks like. If it helps, include some that will be easy for you collect information on.

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Your **indicators** are the things you need to collect information on. That's why you don't want too many, just the best ones.

Before you rush off and start collecting lots of evidence, to save you time later on, what information do you already collect?

Maybe you already collect useful information for other purposes (e.g. attendance sheets, feedback and quotes from young people). Can it be adapted to give you evidence of the difference you make?

Give it a go!

What information do you already collect? Why?

Make a note below.

What we collect E.g. young people's details	Why E.g. contact + monitoring

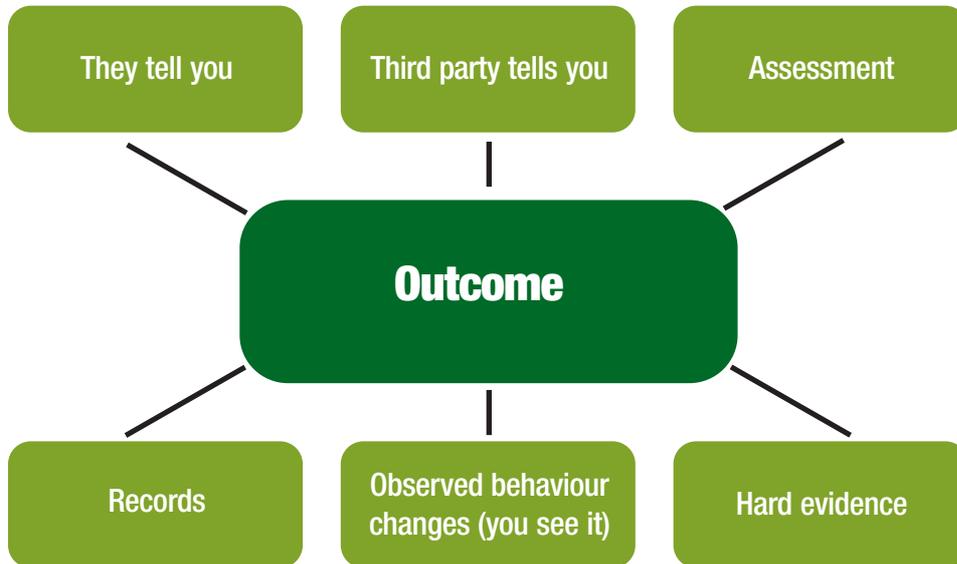
We will come back to this once we have thought about different ways of collecting evaluation information.

Where can you get new information from?

It's easy to assume that the only way to find out about an outcome being achieved is to ask the individual or group concerned...and that the only way to do this is a questionnaire. No wonder nobody likes filling them in! We'll think about this question on the next page.

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This diagram can help you think about where else to get information from; we often don't get past 'They tell us'! Getting information from more than one source can help you avoid burdening the people who use your services, and make your evaluation more valid.



Once you have good indicators, they will give you a clue about what tool to use to get the evidence you need. For example, if your indicator relates to an observable change in behaviour, you might need an observation form or staff notes of activities. See below for more ideas.

Source	How to get information
They tell you or third party tells you	Record casual feedback. Questionnaire. Interviews. Focus groups. Diaries (inc.video). Visual evaluation tools.
Behaviour changes (you see it)	Observation notes. Witness statements. Case studies
Records	Attendance sheets. Records of activities.
Hard evidence	Tracking what happens. Comparing statistics.
Assessment	Awards. Tests. Quizzes. Quality Standards. Qualifications. Badges. Rating Scales.

3. Create a monitoring and evaluation plan for your project

Give it a go!

You are now ready to create a **monitoring and evaluation plan**. It sounds complicated, but a simple tool like the one below will help you save time, spot gaps and make better plans.

Outcome (change or difference you want to make)	Indicators (what the outcome would 'look like' once it's been achieved)	How to collect information about the indicator (e.g. interviews)

If you'd prefer a typed version, you can download an electronic copy of the triangle from www.youthworkessentials.org

Remember to contact Youth Scotland if you need help to think through any of these stages!

What next?

Evaluation becomes a lot easier once you have a plan like the one we've shown you in this workbook. You spend less time on evaluation and more time making a difference for young people! Especially if you work out ways to collect information as part of your everyday work.

'Evaluation' is then about making sense of that information and learning from it.

We look at these topics in **workbook 3: Analysing Outcomes**.



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