

IMPACT PRACTICE: MEASURING YOUR IMPACT

Track your success by identifying a strong set of indicators



What are indicators?

In order to determine whether your group is progressing towards your intended impact, you will need to identify an "indicator" for each outcome. **An indicator is a well-defined measure which will show whether something is happening or not.**

Having a clear plan around 'what' and 'when' you are going to measure will be crucial in order to provide evidence that you're achieving your outcomes.

WHAT are you going to measure?

You should identify an indicator for each of your outputs and outcomes. Think of your Indicators like those on your car - simply put, an Indicator is something that shows the 'direction of travel'. How will you know you're achieving your outcomes, or that you're moving in the right direction"?

Some indicators may be obvious. For example:

Outcome – Improved education attainment ————— Indicator – Increased attainment in school exams

Other outcomes may be softer outcomes that don't involve tangible results but can still be measured - for example, an increase in confidence. 'Softer' data may be captured through case studies, recorded verbal feedback, questionnaires, and surveys. When possible, use validated questions and questionnaires. These are tools that have been verified by fellow researchers as effectively measuring what they are designed to measure. Spotted can help you identify appropriate questions and questionnaires, through Spotted volunteer support via [the Spotted Hub](#).

Outcome – Improved attitudes to learning & attendance in school ————— Indicator – Extent to which participants report change in attitude to learning on a 'validated' survey.

WHEN are you going to measure?

You may wish to get a one-off snapshot of your participants, in which case it's ok to ask questions at just one point in time. If you are aiming to demonstrate your impact (the change your programmes have made), you should collect data at the start and end of their project or intervention and compare these. Think about each of your individual outcome indicators - are these best measured/compared monthly, quarterly or annually? For example, you might want to measure attainment in school exams annually, but track participants' confidence on a monthly basis.

WHO will you ask?

It's important to think about who you will ask to complete surveys/provide data, dependent on what you are trying to measure/demonstrate.

- If you have a large number of participants (over 50), you may choose to collect data from a smaller group of participants (a "sample"). Try to ensure your sample is not biased towards a certain group (e.g. only asking those who happen to hang around at the end, or only asking those who are well behaved.)
- If you want to focus on a particular project or session, you can choose to survey only those participants for specific outcome indicators.
- If you are doing a before-and-after comparison, you should ask the same participants the second time around.



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Data collection Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- ⊕ Spend time ensuring you are collecting the right data
- ⊕ Ensure you are storing your data in line with GDPR
- ⊕ Be aware of the environment in which the data was collected, and make sure this is consistent if you are collecting multiple times
- ⊕ Use validated surveys if possible
- ⊕ Ensure participants are aware of what will be expected of them, so it doesn't come as a surprise

Don'ts

- ⊗ Try to collect information about everything
- ⊗ Collect information you won't analyse or report later
- ⊗ Collect information on a very biased sample, but claim it representative of a much bigger group
- ⊗ Try to not make your participants feel uncomfortable, or take up too much of their time
- ⊗ Don't overclaim. Your findings are probably a good indication of change, but you can't claim that they are 'proof'

Measuring & reviewing your data

The following table can be used as a measurement plan for each of your indicators and allow you to track your progress towards each of your outcomes (example included).

Overall Aim: Improved educational attainment for 11-18 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds who have been identified by schools as at risk of exclusion or dropping out of education.					
Outcome (i.e. specific change)	Activities to effect change	Evidence that these activities are effective (i.e. indicators)	How is this evidence gathered (i.e. survey tools)	Assumptions	Opportunities to improve
Improved attitudes to learning & attendance at school.	Participate in 6 month boxing programme	Extent to which participants report change in attitude to learning	Informal interview with participants pre and post programme. Attendance survey completed by school.	Boxing intervention is primary reason for change. No other major influences.	Create opportunities within programme to address attitudes directly.
Outcome #2					

Sported Tip: Important data collection information

Remember that when it comes to data collection, you need to ensure that you are compliant with the EU General Data Protection Regulation. You have a responsibility to your participants (and when relevant guardians/parents) to explain what data you intend to collect and how you will use/share it.

The Sport and Recreation Alliance have produced a free GDPR toolkit for the UK Sports Sector. It is a set of templates, resources and guidance notes to help organisations across the sector, from national organisations down to grassroots clubs meet the requirements which came into force on 25 May 2018. Visit sportandrecreation.org.uk/gdpr

Need more guidance?

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to develop your outcomes further with a volunteer who specialises in impact practice, [visit the Sported Hub](#).

