

# IMPACT PRACTICE: DEFINING YOUR OUTCOMES

Create a road map for measurement and evaluation with strong outcomes



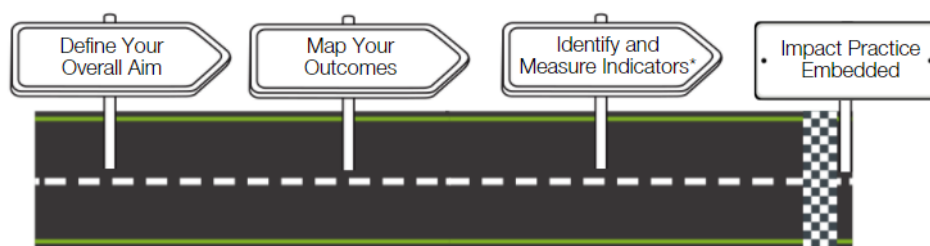
Developing a plan to achieve your goals and outcomes is an important process for any group. Just like you'd consult a road map before starting a road trip, it's important that everyone in your group is clear 'what direction you are going' and 'where' you'd like to end up/what you are working to achieve.

Think of your "Theory of Change" as a road map to achieving your outcomes. Your Theory of Change is a simple, clear strategy that will explain your:

**Overall aim** – your desired impact or change you would like achieve

**Outcomes** – long-term changes needed to achieve the overall aim

**Indicators** – a well-defined measure which will show whether something has happened or not



\* Explained in How-To Guide Impact Practice: Measuring Your Impact

## Defining your overall aim

Your overall aim is the main change that your programme is trying to make.

As a member of Sported, we know you are using sport to make a number of positive changes to the lives of the young people you're working with. For the purposes of defining your overall aim, think about the people you want to benefit and the primary need you want to address. Clarifying your overall aim focuses your organisation and provides clarity for external stakeholders, including funders.

The Sport for Development Coalition, Outcomes and Measurement Framework (2015) has identified some questions to ask yourself, in order to help you clarify the overall aim:

- What problem or need are you trying to address?
- What is the ultimate change you would like to see?
- Who needs to be targeted? (age, demographic, community, gender, etc.)
- What barriers exist and what difficulties are you trying to address?
- Are you aiming for too much/not enough?

Example of an 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.

Your overall aim will be the long-term outcome you are trying to achieve. The below table is a non-exhaustive list of Sport for Development outcomes identified by the Sport for Development Coalition, based on evidence suggesting sport's impact on individuals and their communities. It may be helpful to refer to this when defining your outcome.

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## Individual achievements and behaviours:

- Increased physical wellbeing
- Improve mental wellbeing
- Reduced anti-social behaviour
- Improved attitudes to learning and attendance to school
- Improved educational attainment and achieving qualifications
- Enhanced career prospects

## Benefits of society:

- Less need for health services
- Contribution to economy through participation to the labour market
- Not subject to the criminal justice system
- Less dependence on welfare

## Social, emotional and cognitive capabilities:

- Self-belief in ability to achieve goals
- Self-esteem
- Motivation
- Managing emotions
- Resilience
- Social skills

## Inter-personal relationships:

- Increased social capital and trust
- Increased volunteering within community
- Increased community cohesion and spirit

## Mapping your outcomes

Once you have defined your overall aim, it's important to consider the steps your group will take to bring about this change. If your Theory of Change is a road map, your 'outcomes' are the key 'landmarks' or things you would see along the way to your destination. You should create a logical 'outcomes pathway', explaining these specific changes. It can be helpful to work backwards and think about the changes you would need to see in order for something to happen.

For example, if your overall aim is around increasing education attainment, your outcomes pathway may be:



Once you have mapped your outcomes, you should 'sense-check' these:

- are you able to deliver on all of these?
- does the 'pathway' make logical sense?
- do they enable your group to move towards your overall aim?
- are they realistic given your capacity and resources?

You can then use your Theory of Change to identify what you need to measure in order to demonstrate the difference you make (i.e. identify indicators). See guide 'Impact Practice: Measuring your Impact'

## 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](https://www.sported.org.uk).

