



SCOUTS
Creating a Better World

EURO Scout.Doc

Would they notice if we weren't here?

The value of impact assessment in Scouting

Some Scouts were walking through the woods one day when they noticed lots of rubbish. It upset them. Some people obviously had no respect for nature. They talked about it amongst themselves and decided that as Scouts, they should do something about it. They collected the rubbish and cleaned up the area. Next week, when they were in the woods again they found new rubbish. The problem hadn't gone away. They hadn't fixed it. Disappointed, they knew they had to find another way. Simply cleaning up the rubbish wasn't enough. They couldn't do that indefinitely. They needed to find a way to prevent the rubbish being dumped in the first place. They checked the local area to see how many other places in the woods were being used as rubbish



dumps. They made a map of the area and once they had established the extent of the problem, they decided to approach it as a project. When analysing the issue, they realised that they had to do a number of different things including clean up the mess; separate the waste; recycle what could be recycled; and educate the community to do the same. By working with local community leaders they achieved all they set out to achieve...and so much more. They were proud of their success and presented their project and their experience to other Scouts in the country. Many of the others took this idea and tried it themselves. Some succeeded and others didn't. Based on the overall success of this initiative, the National Scout Association renewed its Environmental Programme and included many new elements, not only waste management. Recycling became part of the programme. The local community had been convinced and leaders and members continued their environmental education.

This document is a result of numerous discussions focusing on the following questions:

- How good are we at what we do?
- Do we usually hit the target?
- Are we sure we are doing well?
- Do we really help create a better world?
- Is it all worthwhile?
- Is there more to Scouting than having fun?
- Are we making a difference?
- Why do we bother?

Very often we do things automatically. We don't have a vision of change. We don't think about how our actions will affect our members, the community and the world around us. We just do them for the sake of doing them. Our first reaction is to fix the immediate problem. In our scenario, the Scouts' first reaction was to clean up the rubbish. Then they realised that it was not enough to treat the symptoms; they had to treat the disorder. Otherwise the rubbish would just keep appearing.

This is what we do in Scouting every day, at all levels. We often think only in the short term. We don't identify the cause and effect. We don't really appreciate the value of what we do. Because of this, we are missing out on opportunities. Because we don't evaluate and draw attention the impact that we have, we fail to capitalise on our programmes, our efforts, our leaders, our members, our resources, our ideas, and so on.

Using the 'rubbish in the woods' scenario, this document will take us through the thinking process behind the importance of measuring and evaluating actions and activities and then, use these results to assess whether or not you are making an impact. It is not a recipe for how to measure, evaluate and assess your impact. It simply explains why you should and points you in the right direction. You will need to work out what is best for you.

How does what we do contribute to achieving the Mission of Scouting?

The mission of Scouting is to **contribute to the education of young people**, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to **help build a better world** where **people are self-fulfilled as individuals** and **play a constructive role in society**.

Your Association may have its own mission which relates in some way to the overall Mission of Scouting. For the purpose of this exercise we will be working with the Mission of Scouting as stated by WOSM. When we plan activities the Mission is not foremost in our minds but we hope that once you've read and understood this document, it will be. There are four main components to the WOSM Mission.



The education of young people

Everything we do in Scouting should contribute to the education of young people and it generally does. Where we fall down is that we don't take the time to actually put this education into real terms; to translate our experiences into educational terms. *Take our scenario: the Scouts learned about rubbish, recycling, the environment; they learned about teamwork, lobbying, building consensus; they learned the importance of education.* And as leaders, you should make sure that they know what they have learned and why it is important. How many times have you seen former Scouts fail to realise the extent of the education they received in Scouting? It's not simply about having fun, though this may be the output. It is so much more than that.

To help build a better world

When we talk about building a better world we often make the mistake of thinking of the world at large. But this world is not a shiny ball in space... it is where we live. Each of us can make the world a better place for ourselves, for our unit, for our family, for our community, for our village, or town or city. *In our scenario, the Scouts made the local woods a better place for people to enjoy. They made their local world a better place.* Sometimes, in our programmes, we forget why we're doing what we're doing. Imagine the difference we could make if we consciously thought about it.

To create self-fulfilled individuals

Motivation is very individual. People do things for different reasons. But whatever we do as Scouts should help fulfil us as individuals. The energy we put into our Scouting activities provides the motivation we need to make a difference while having fun. *In our scenario, the Scouts couldn't understand why people didn't respect nature. They were disappointed that their initial idea didn't work out: it didn't have lasting results. So they went back to the drawing board and decided what they needed to do to make a lasting change.*

To play a constructive role in society

Every action makes some change. If we know what change we want to make; if we can envisage what it looks like; then we can make it happen. In making it happen, we can play a constructive role in society. Sometimes, of course, it is not possible to say for sure that what we did was solely responsible for the change. Other factors could also have contributed. But what we can be certain of is that we contributed as well. *In our scenario, the Scouts had a vision of the change they wanted to accomplish. They knew what the environment should look like and they figured out what they had to do to make this happen. They were fortunate that the local community shared their vision and welcomed the initiative. This is not always the case.*

Measuring what matters

When we talk about measurement, we're not simply talking about a technical exercise or the end result. Instead, we're talking about measuring the distance travelled between two points. We start out by getting a clear picture of the situation as it stands. We also need to have a clear vision of the change we want to effect and what this change will look like. As the project gets underway and as we make progress we can, at any stage, measure how far we've come; how much closer we are to achieving our goal. Then, when the project has been completed and afterwards, through continuous monitoring and evaluation we will be in a position to assess the impact of our work. We need to have good planning to be able to benefit from measurement. Just learning from what happened is not enough.

Measurement tells us if we are on the right track; it tells us what we did to be successful; it shows us what worked well and what needs improvement. Measurement contributes to the quality of the work we do. Instead of blindly going along, we are conscious of our efforts and focused on what it is we want to achieve. Measurement is a big part of the reward; feeling and knowing that what we've done has really made a difference. Celebratory parties or certifications cannot replace that feeling.

Components of measurement

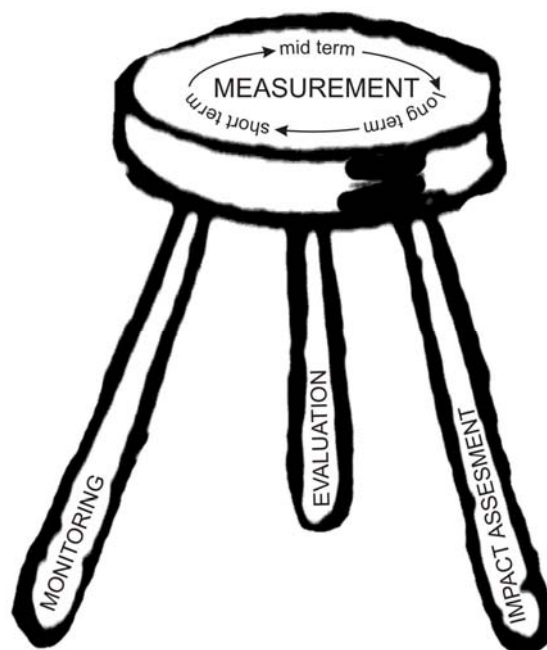
If measurement were a stool, it would have three legs: **monitoring**, **evaluation** and **impact assessment**. On a timeline, these three 'legs' could be seen to represent the short term, the medium term and the long term.

Monitoring

Monitoring is the regular observation and recording of activities (inputs) taking place in a project or programme or simply in everyday life. It is a process of routinely gathering data on key aspects (indicators) of the project. To monitor is to check on how project activities are progressing. It is about making systemic and purposeful observations. The result of monitoring is a set of data that we then use to evaluate our progress.

Of course, we can do without measurement. We can start a project and see it to completion but then, how do we replicate it? How do we repeat the process with the same or better results? Many Associations suffer from high turnover. The leader who ran the project so successfully last year may not be around this year. But if there was a system of measurement in place, then this knowledge would be institutionalised and available for future leaders to use.

In our scenario, the Scouts started off with rubbish in the woods. They cleaned it up. The following week, the rubbish was back. They needed a different approach. As they undertook the re-education of the community, they could track their success by measuring the amount of rubbish littering the woods. As they began their recycling programme, they could measure their contribution to the environment. They then shared their experiences with other units in the Association.



In our scenario, the Scouts monitored the state of the woods. They noted how much rubbish was lying around. They compiled weekly information about how much rubbish was collected. The leaders could see that they were taking initiative and convincing others by their enthusiasm.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an independent objective examination of the observations made during monitoring in order to facilitate better decision-making; are we on the right track or do we have to make changes to get to where we want to go. Are we doing the right things and are we doing things right? All too often we tend to focus on what we are doing wrong. We need to pay just as much attention to what we are doing right.

There are three main stages of evaluation: an initial evaluation at the start of the project; at key stages throughout the project; and at the end of the project (outputs). The result of evaluation is information on which we base our actions. Are we on the right track or do we have to make changes to get to where we want to go?

In our scenario, when, by monitoring the situation, the Scouts realised that their initial clean-up wasn't effective, they used this information to figure out what it was they actually needed to do to make a lasting change.

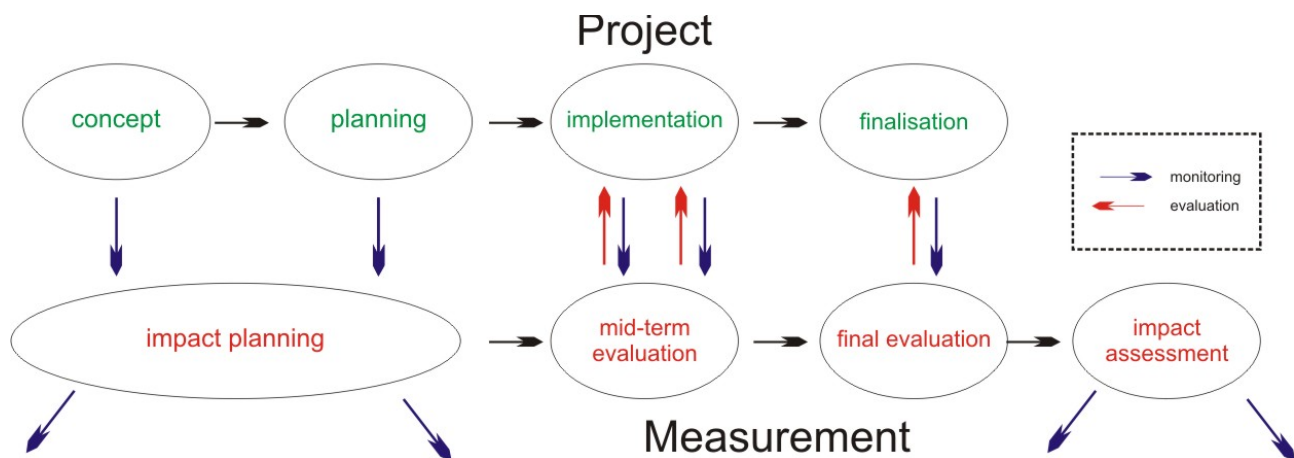


Impact assessment

The long-term evaluation of results is known as impact assessment. The result of impact assessment is a clear understanding of the changes we have effected (outcomes). We can then use this knowledge to replicate our success. Impact assessment helps us measure and present relevant evidence on the positive and negative effects of our work. It refers to changes to individuals, organisations and communities due to an action taken. It is here that we learn the effects of what we have accomplished. And as B.-P. said: 'The test of success in education is not what a boy or girl knows after examination on leaving school, but what he [or she] is doing ten years later.' The test of whether or not we are achieving the Mission of Scouting is not how good our Scouts are in pioneering, orienteering or camping, but in how fulfilled they are as individuals and how they contribute to building a better world by playing a constructive role in society.

Measurement doesn't happen by accident. We need to plan for it. We need to decide at the start what it is we want to measure. In order to do this we need to have a clear idea of the change we want to make and what it will look like. We can collect data about everything that happens. What is important is that we collect data that will help us evaluate whether or not we have made the change we want to make. These are what we call key indicators.

The first measurement we take is of the situation at the beginning before anything happens. All additional measurements will provide us with data about the changes that have taken place since we began the project. We measure different things at different stages in a project. Some data that we collect may not be relevant to a particular stage but could be needed at the end of the project. When working on a project we are bound by the project's aim and objectives. We may concentrate too much on these and fail to observe and measure those indicators that contribute to the final impact and at achieving the Mission. It is very important to start from the Mission when planning and to keep it in mind throughout the project.



In our scenario, examples of key indicators are: how many sites in the local community were cleaned up; how many people participated in learning activities; how many articles were published in local or national papers; how many kilograms of waste were taken for recycling (by category); how many people participated in clean-up activities; how many different community groups were involved, etc. There are a number of inputs and outputs. For instance, the action of cleaning the site (input) resulted in a clean

environment that everyone could enjoy (output) which created more responsible behaviour in the community. People no longer littered (outcome). Another example: by presenting their success to the other Scout units (input), this resulted in other units doing the same and the Association adopting a new environmental programme (outputs) which created more environmental awareness in Scout units and a higher profile of Scouting throughout the country (outcome).

Collateral success

We can't always predict how successful a project will be or the degree of long-term change it will bring about no matter how much we plan, monitor and evaluate our projects. We cannot predict everything. It is also good not to plan everything. We need space for innovation, for combining existing acts and thoughts. Impulsive ideas and realisations often lead to the same goal, sometimes even without us knowing. They open new pathways in thinking and acting which are impossible to plan. It's a matter of finding the right balance between the planned part and the open space for (r)evolution.

There will always be things that shall happen, things we couldn't have imagined. Things we do will trigger new actions and it is impossible to predict which way they will go. These unexpected successes or outcomes are what we call **collateral success**.

Collateral success is not completely accidental. The success of our work creates experience that in turn creates new success and generates new ideas. It generates enthusiasm and engages others in what we are doing. Good work results in better quality. Even failures can produce future success. Just imagine how much more we could achieve, how much bigger an impact we could have if we plan, work, monitor, evaluate and learn from what we do. We will automatically increase the chances of what we do by instinct hitting the target.

Our scenario started a long time ago and today we still see the impact of what, at that time, was just a small group of Scouts who thought that there was too much rubbish in their area. The Association still has a good environmental programme. A few years later, they participated in a cross-border environmental project and transferred their experiences to other neighbouring associations. The leaders of the

group founded a company that is operating quite well in the environmental field. One of them is a key trainer for environmental issues in the region, and the other was director of a large international NGO and is now managing the national environmental agency. That day when they led a group of Scouts into the woods and spotted the waste, they certainly couldn't have imagined the paths their lives would take.

Conclusion

By taking the time to envisage the change we want to make and to recognise what that change will look like, we are ensuring that what we do has an impact. Our projects and activities will better align with the Scout Mission. There is more to measurement than simply evaluating the return on monetary investment.

By planning the impact we want to have, we will recognise the steps we need to take to make it happen. By establishing the indicators we need to measure, we will create an evidence base that we can use in the future to share our success with others. By continuously monitoring our progress, we can make sure we are on the right track and, if not, make the decisions we need to refocus. By evaluating our performance, we get a better picture of what we are doing and why we need to do it.

By assessing the impact our work has both in the short term and in the long term, we create an awareness of how Scouting is educating our members; an awareness of how they are being fulfilled as individuals; an awareness of how we are making a better world; and an awareness of how we are contributing to society.



Personal reflections

- Do you know why you are doing what you are – according to the Mission?
- How many times have you looked back at a project wondering why you didn't see the challenges coming?
- What did you learn from your last projects/scouting experience?
- Did you share the learning with others? If not, why not?
- Are you constantly re-inventing the wheel?
- When did you last use experience gained from someone else's project? Or use resources from another association or NGO?
- Do you translate Scout activities into educational experiences?
- Do you use the knowledge you have gained in Scouting in your everyday life?
- If one of your friends asks you what have you learned in Scouting, what would you say?
- Do you believe that through Scouting you are helping to create a better world?
- Can you name a person whose life has changed because of something you did as a Scout?
- What kind of changes have your projects brought about in your Scout association?
- How many high profile people in your community have been Scouts? Do they publicly acknowledge it?
- Would society miss Scouting? Would they notice if we left?

Additional resources

Theory and reports

nef (the new economics foundation)

<http://www.neweconomics.org/programmes/valuing-what-matters>

<http://www.neweconomics.org/projects/value-work> – to be published soon

<http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/seven-principles-measuring-what-matters>

<http://www.proveandimprove.org/new/meaim/index.php>

Dare to Share

www.daretoshare.ch

Tools

nef (the new economics foundation)

<http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/tools-you>

<http://www.proveit.org.uk/downloads.html>

Dare to Share

http://www.daretoshare.ch/en/Dare_To_Share/Knowledge_Management_Toolkit/After_Action_Review_AAR

http://www.daretoshare.ch/en/Dare_To_Share/Knowledge_Management_Toolkit/Experience_Capitalisation

http://www.daretoshare.ch/en/Dare_To_Share/Knowledge_Management_Toolkit/Lessons_Learnt

Scoutlands Centre for Excellence in Volunteering

<http://www.vds.org.uk/ManagingVolunteers/ImprovingWaysofWorking/ImpactAssessmentToolkit/tabid/138/Default.aspx>

Outcomes star

<http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/an-example-st-mungos/>

This material was produced by the Adult Resources Core Group, WOSM - European Region. We thank Tomaž Strajnar, Annesofie Bjaere, Mary Murphy, Pieter Willems and Milutin Milošević for contributing.

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© February 2010

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