

## Factsheet

# Measuring the Impact of Volunteering

It is increasingly important to be able describe the impact that volunteering has on a) volunteers themselves, b) the organisation / group, c) the beneficiaries / community.

### Key Words

**Impact:** the change that occurs as a result of a programme / activity / project

**Monitoring:** the process of collecting data and information during the programme

**Evaluation:** analysing the information gathered to draw meaning and inform future approaches

### Why is measuring impact so important?

- **Accountability;** assures stakeholders how resources and funds are being utilised and the impact of this work, often a requirement of grant funding
- **Learning & Improvement;** providing volunteer managers with insights into what works well within their programmes and where improvements can be made to enhance future outcomes
- **Financial Planning;** supports informed decision making around allocation of budget, resources, and staff / volunteering efforts
- **Volunteer Recruitment & Community Engagement;** sharing stories strengthens community support and understanding around the importance of volunteering, and can inspire involvement
- **Recognition;** celebrating the impact of volunteering, builds motivation and demonstrates appreciation for your volunteers, strengthen the volunteering culture

### What can we measure to demonstrate the impact of volunteering?

#### A) Quantitative Data

- Number of volunteers
- Volunteer hours
- Cost-saving calculations
- Number of beneficiaries impacted
- Volunteer turnover
- Starter / leaver surveys

#### B) Qualitative Data

- Feedback / observations from volunteers, beneficiaries, project leads about their experience, changes observed, perceived impact etc.

## What tools can we use to do this?

- **Surveys & Questionnaires**; use closed-ended (yes / no) and open-ended (free text) questions, as well as likert scales (i.e. 1 – 5)
- **Interviews & Focus Groups**; structured interviews can be helpful to compare experiences and gain a deeper understanding, open and non-judgemental environments will allow for rich detail to be obtained
- **Case Studies**; detailed case studies highlight individual journeys and the substantial change / progress observed - they can be hugely emotive
- **Social Media**; online platforms allow for stories to be shared in alternative formats i.e. video, photos, reels, stories and can encourage wider community engagement

## Top tips for best practice

- **Be Realistic & Practical**; set clear objectives and define specific measurable indicators that will be informative and will help to guide improvement
- **Engage Stakeholders**; gather diverse perspectives around impact measurement to ensure that you develop an inclusive and accessible monitoring process
- **Use a Variety of Metrics**; combine quantitative data with qualitative insight to develop a comprehensive and holistic understanding of impact
- **Regular Monitoring & Sharing of Findings**; monitoring should be an ongoing process to really track progress, and findings / updates should be communicated at regular intervals

## Additional Resources

- Scottish Volunteering Forum (2018) – [So What? Volunteering Impact Measurement Report](#)
- Institute for Volunteering Research – [Monitoring Volunteers: a guide to collecting and using data](#)