

Evaluating your OSHLSP

What is evaluation?

Monitoring and Evaluation are buzzwords in the community development and not-for-profit sectors, but the ideas have been around for a long time. Together, Monitoring and Evaluation (often referred to as 'M&E') ensure that projects and programs continually strive towards improvement and success, through a cycle of observation and intervention. Evaluation has three main components: measuring the success of the project or program; understanding its strengths and weaknesses; and recognizing where to make changes to lead to the desired outcomes.



What is the purpose of evaluating my OSHLSP?

There are many reasons to evaluate your Out-of-School-Hours Learning Support Program (OSHLSP), and many things you can do with the evaluation. Some main ones are listed below:

- ❖ Evaluation allows time for reflection. Designing, delivering and analyzing the evaluation and its results allows you as a team to understand what the purpose of the program is, and the future directions that your program might go. This will also help with planning sessions, as you can identify the gaps that you may need to address, and what strengths the program has that you can capitalise on.
- ❖ Evaluation helps to ensure that the program or project is meeting its objectives, whether these are around engagement figures or meeting community needs.
- ❖ Regular evaluation ensures that your program remains relevant and responsive to the needs of the community that you are helping. These can often change across the lifespan of a project, and should be dynamic.
- ❖ Consistent evaluation is a useful source for reports. This information is also good to share with stakeholders and with your community, through avenues such as newsletters and on your website.



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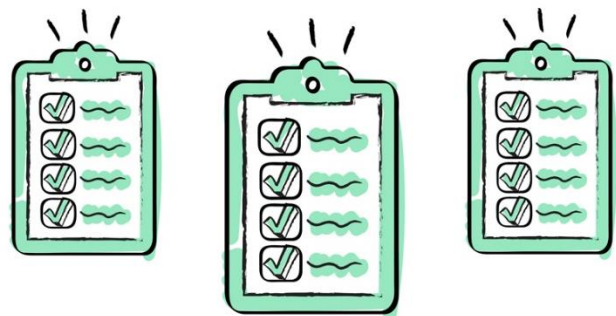
- ❧ Indicators of success, gained through evaluation, can also prove useful when applying for grants or funding. They can indicate program growth, changing demographics and community engagement, which can continue to prove the value of the program or project.
- ❧ Evaluation can also be used for promotional or advertising purposes, to help your club attract new volunteers, students, partners or donors. It may also be used as the basis for media stories, to increase awareness of your program.
- ❧ The findings of your evaluation may also be useful to share with other OSHLSPs, to problem solve and share ideas for potential sharing of information, resources, and successes.
- ❧ Finally, the findings of evaluation should be used as the basis for planning future monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation often raises questions around emerging trends, successes and challenges, which can be further investigated through subsequent evaluation methods.

How can I evaluate my OSHLSP?

Evaluation is often split into two categories of data: quantitative data, which focuses on measurable outputs like attendance numbers, volunteer retention rates, costs, and satisfaction ratings; and qualitative data, which focuses on non-numerical data, which is often subjective and descriptive.

Quantitative methods

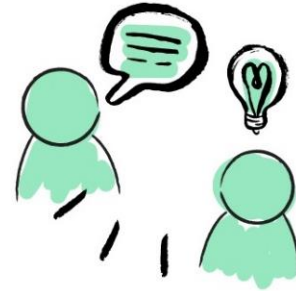
- ❧ Attendance records
- ❧ Volunteer recruitment and retention rates
- ❧ Satisfaction surveys
- ❧ Smile scales
- ❧ Budgets and costings
- ❧ The number of activities being undertaken as part of the program



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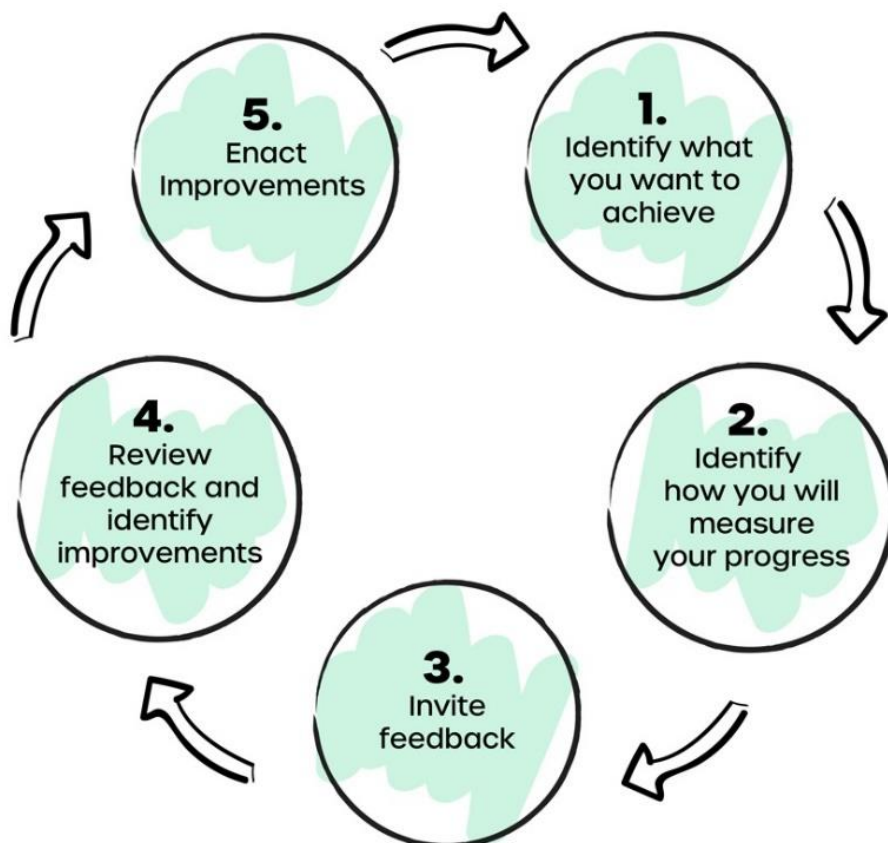
Qualitative methods

- ✦ Focus groups
- ✦ Short-answer surveys
- ✦ Interviews with stakeholders
- ✦ Informal conversations about the program or project with stakeholders



The evaluation cycle

As mentioned above, the process of evaluation is ongoing. It is best summed up in the diagram below.



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Tips for evaluation

- ❖ If you're working with stakeholders that have English as an Additional Language (EAL), such as students or family members, ensure that you have appropriate resources and materials so they can fully participate in the evaluation process. These might include surveys and questionnaires in community languages or simplified English, interpreters, or allowing participants to give oral answers rather than written if that suits them better.
- ❖ Ensure that informed consent is received from stakeholders before engaging in evaluation activities. This should include providing information about how the collected data will be used, and asking if participants agree to being identified or not.
- ❖ Think about evaluation as a series of small, opportunistic moments of reflection, rather than a large project. This will help you spread out the tasks of evaluation, and make changes as they come up, rather than having to make large structural changes.
- ❖ Reach out to other projects which have a similar aim or scale, to see what models of evaluation have worked for them, and what they would recommend trying.



Finally, evaluation can be summed up quite simply:

“Find out what is working and do more of it. Find out what is not working and do less of it.”

- Dr Jess Dart, Clear Horizon