

Factsheet 1

Capturing Progress

This is the first of a set of 4 factsheets to help BME third sector organisations do what they do better.

For more details visit www.voice4change-england.co.uk/performance

Example Scenario

An informal group provides support for asylum seekers and refugees from an African background to meet their mental health needs. They are part of a strong local network of African led groups and also provide a referral service to other relevant service providers. The group receives no funding but is run by a number of volunteers who are also actively involved in a range of other groups.

The group want to be able to show the difference they are making but they are not sure how best to do this. Their main challenge is that most of their communication is verbal in a range of languages and they keep few written records of what they do and how they do it.

Monitoring and evaluation can help this group to capture their progress. Through monitoring and evaluation an organisation can improve the services they deliver whilst developing a strong evidence base on the difference their work makes.



Photo by Adrian White at the Race & the Recession Conference (October 2009)

Monitoring

Monitoring is the *planned* collection of information *for the purpose* of checking progress.

The group already has:

- A register of attendance at every event or activity they do.
- A practice of taking photos of events, training and other activities.

The group could:

- Have regular contact with users to identify what difference the project makes to their lives.
- Consider using camcorders to record activity.

Evaluation

Evaluation is about making assessments using monitoring and other data.

The group already has:

- A system of regularly analysing who accesses their services
- A regular review to establish if they achieved what they set out to do.

The group could:

- Review media and coverage about its work to determine their effectiveness.
- Have a focus group of their users to suggest improvements for future activity.



Capturing Progress: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation can be useful when you want to capture information to help you make an informed assessment about your work. The quality of the data you collect (monitoring) can help you assess (evaluate) how well the organisation is doing.

➤ What is it?

Monitoring is the *planned* collection of information *for the purpose* of checking your progress against your planned work.

Evaluation is using the monitoring information to *make an assessment* about how well you are doing and what else you need to do.

➤ Why is it important?

Monitoring and evaluating your work is vital for you to know how well you are doing and to look at what you could do to improve the services you offer. It can help you to improve your organisation's performance and can inspire new ideas to develop your work. It can also be used to show accountability to your funders, staff and users of your service as it clearly shows what work you do, how well you are doing and how you have used feedback to improve what you do.

➤ How can it help us?

Monitoring and evaluation can help make sure that you know: what you are doing (through the plans you make for your work); how well you are doing (through monitoring); and how to improve your work (through evaluation). By demonstrating this you can highlight the value of your work and build a track record for your organisation. This puts you in a better position to access resources, develop stronger partnerships and deliver a more effective service.

➤ Want to know more about monitoring and evaluation?

**First Steps in Monitoring and Evaluation
(CES 2002)**
[www.ces-vol.org.uk/downloads/
firstmande-15-21.pdf](http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/downloads/firstmande-15-21.pdf)

CES publications
www.ces-vol.org.uk/index.cfm?pg=69
020 7713 5722

V4CE website
www.voice4change-england.co.uk/performance

Charities Evaluation Services
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