Project Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

Questions about monitoring and evaluating your project.

How will you monitor your project?

How will you know if you have achieved the project’s objectives? Once you’ve broken down your objectives into key activities, you need to define *how* to track the results of these activities as well as the main impact of your project. This is called monitoring and it should be done from the beginning of the project. It is crucial because it’s a mechanism that will provide the evidence required to show that the project actually accomplished what it was designed to do. Therefore, you need to identify a mechanism for *measuring* results; these are often called indicators.

You should define indicators for the different activities (which you identified in the *Project Implementation and Coordination* phase) in order to help you measure how well the project is reaching the established objectives. Keep in mind that the monitoring plan is designed before starting the implementation of your project. Finally, once you have your monitoring plan ready, and actually start implementing your project don’t forget to regularly monitor (a suggestion can be every 3–4 months).

Do the Stakeholders require reports?

Before you start implementing your project take into consideration the information that you will be required to submit to the stakeholder(s) once your project is finalized. Then, determine how you will capture this information throughout the project. Actually, you can also add this to your monitoring plan. Take into consideration that some stakeholders might have mandatory report templates and/or formats that you will be asked to submit upon finalization of the project. Reports for donors can include both a financial summary as well as the results achieved by the project.

How will you document and evaluate the project’s results?

Once the project concludes you (and your team) should write down the results of the project. In as much detail as possible try to answer, what did the project accomplish and *how*? As indicated above project reports might be required by donors, but if they aren’t, you should still go ahead and draft one. Reports are communications tools, which are useful to share with the community and local/national authorities. Likewise, they are valuable inputs for future projects.

Regarding evaluations, these are usually carried out at the end of a project. The purpose of an evaluation is to determine if there was a significant impact or change generated by the project. This, usually, can only be measured in the long-run. Therefore, evaluations are recommended for projects that last at least more than two years. If your project is long, consider carrying out an evaluation. This also has financial implications, since an external expert has to be hired to lead the evaluation, and you’ll have to include that in your budget.

Have you identified 5 lessons learned and 5 recommendations?

What can others learn from your experience? How can others avoid the challenges that you faced? Once the project is completed, it is important to document the difficulties you encountered throughout its implementation and what you did to solve them. Try to share what worked well and what didn’t, and what you would recommend other project teams do differently. You can include them in your project’s final report. This information can help other youth organizations trying to undertake similar initiatives and it can also be useful for future projects of your organization.