age NI

Love later life

Steps to Measuring Impact

A practical guide to measuring the difference that you make

Contents

Foreword

I am delighted to present the Age NI *'Steps to Measuring Impact'* guide. This is a welcome resource as impact practice should be at the heart of everything that we do but requires practical guidance and inspiration to support us to do this even better than we are already. This practical guide aims to increase understanding of impact practice and encourage groups to be aware of and communicate the difference that they make.

This resource will take you through the areas of activity or cycle of impact practice: how to plan for the desired impact, identify how to measure it, collect measurement data, make sense of that information, then learn from it and finally communicate the result. It also offers signposting to various additional learning that will help groups on their journey to demonstrate the difference they make. This guide provides an overview of some of the different methods, products and measurement tools in circulation to support groups to measure their impact, and outlines some demonstration projects to show the practical implementation by groups in the age sector. We have not promoted any one measurement tool or planning process but we do share the learning from the pilot programme that enabled Age NI to work with age sector groups through a process which focused on measuring the difference that the activities and services they provide make to the lives of older people.

Thank you to the groups who provided demonstration projects. These offer a real sense of what you can measure and how that can be used to show what a difference is being made. Age NI will continue to support age sector groups to develop skills, knowledge and capacity, and through this cascade approach, we aim to enable them to show what a huge difference that they make to the lives of older people in Northern Ireland.

Linda Robinson
Chief Executive
Age NI

Acknowledgements

Age NI is grateful to a range of people and organisations.

Inspiring Impact NI is part of the Inspiring Impact UK initiative which aspires to change the way Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) organisations and funders think about impact and to embed impact practice at the heart of their work. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this pilot initiative from Inspiring Impact NI which was developed to support impact practice within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sectors. Age NI has benefited from their support and practice. Special thanks to Aongus O'Keeffe, Programme Leader.

One of the principal strands of Inspiring Impact NI's work has been the development of a VCSE support programme. For this, the Building Change Trust provided awards to enable network/umbrella organisations to promote inspiring impact amongst their sector and to provide support to enable improved impact practice to be developed. Thank you to Building Change Trust for this award to Age NI to prepare the age sector for impact practice.

Age NI has been able to work alongside other participating groups and organisations and we would like to thank them for sharing their experiences, knowledge and insights as they have developed and delivered a diverse range of approaches to champion and encourage impact practice.

Finally, we are grateful to the age sector groups who provided demonstration projects. This booklet is enriched by their contribution. We are deeply indebted to them for their contribution and participation. Special thanks to South West Age Partnership (SWAP), Mid and East Antrim Age Partnership (MEAAP), Armagh Banbridge Craigavon (ABC) Seniors Network, Newry and Mourne Seniors Citizens Consortium (NMSCC) and County Down Rural Coummunity Network (CDRCN)/Down Seniors Forum (DSF).

This resource guide has been compiled by EJ Havlin and Daniel Jack, Age NI Age Sector Development team.

Jargon Buster

Terminology	Jargon Buster
Beneficiaries - Direct & Indirect	Direct beneficiaries are those who gain from involvement in the activity. Indirect beneficiaries are those who do not participate in the action/activity provided but who gain as a result of the involvement of the direct beneficiary.
Evaluation	Use of information from monitoring and elsewhere to judge and understand the performance of a project.
Impact	Difference that you will make (could be benefits or changes). Broad and/or long-term effects of a projects activities, outputs and outcomes.
Milestones	Interim targets (or stepping stones) which show how far you are progressing towards meeting your target goal. Reaching a milestone often signifies the completion of a particular stage of your project.
Monitoring	A systematic way to collect and record information to check progress against plans.
Outcomes	Specific changes that you want to achieve as a result of your work or project. They are the result of what you do, offer or provide.
Outputs	Products, services or facilities that result from project activities.
Impact Measurement	Ways that you work out what difference that you make.
Measurement Tools	Ways you collect information and data such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, case studies.

More jargon busters available at **www.ageni.org/stepstofunding**
The Code of Good Impact Practice:
www.inspiringimpact.org/resources/are-you-leading-for-impact

Introduction

Impact: the broad or longer term effects of a project or organisation's work (also referred to as the difference it makes). This can include affects on people who are direct users of a project or organisation's work, effects on those who are not direct users or effects on a wider field such as government policy. (Excerpt taken from *The Code of Good Impact Practice*)

'*Steps to Measuring Impact*' is a resource for age sector groups to promote, disseminate and embed impact practice with their members. Age sector groups are making a huge difference to the lives of older people and it is increasingly important that the difference being made is demonstrated, celebrated and shared. Working with a range of groups, Age NI took the opportunity to examine the practice of measuring the impact, specific to age sector activities, with the aim of helping groups to become more focused on demonstrating and celebrating the impact of their work. This guide outlines learning and practice, offers signposting to tools and resources and will help groups on their journey towards applying and embedding the practice of measuring impact to their work.

Impact measurement involves looking at the difference that your group makes. This means planning what impact you want to have in the first place, how best to achieve it, collecting information about your impact, assessing what impact you're having, communicating this information and learning from it. This cycle of activities is called impact practice.[1] There are many ways to do this and '*Steps to Measuring Impact*' outlines the application of Inspiring Impact resources to improve understanding and raise awareness of models and practice which could be utilised in practical delivery to measure impact. To show how this practice is implemented or applied in reality, we have shared some demonstration projects and hope that these illustrate how the 'Cycle of Impact Practice' was implemented by some age sector groups to determine the difference that they make.

Ultimately, the aim of '*Steps to Measuring Impact*' is to introduce the processes of impact planning and the best way to achieve this for age sector groups.

'Quite often, group volunteers are so engrossed in delivering the work that they don't see the impact that they make to the lives of older people through it. We have been delighted with comments that participants had made when we took the time to ask them and with the positive results of our discussions and evaluations, it is clear that our work is needed and makes a real difference.'

Member of Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium

[1] See Inspiring Impact: *The Code of Good Impact Practice*. Available online at
www.inspiringimpact.org/resources/are-you-leading-for-impact
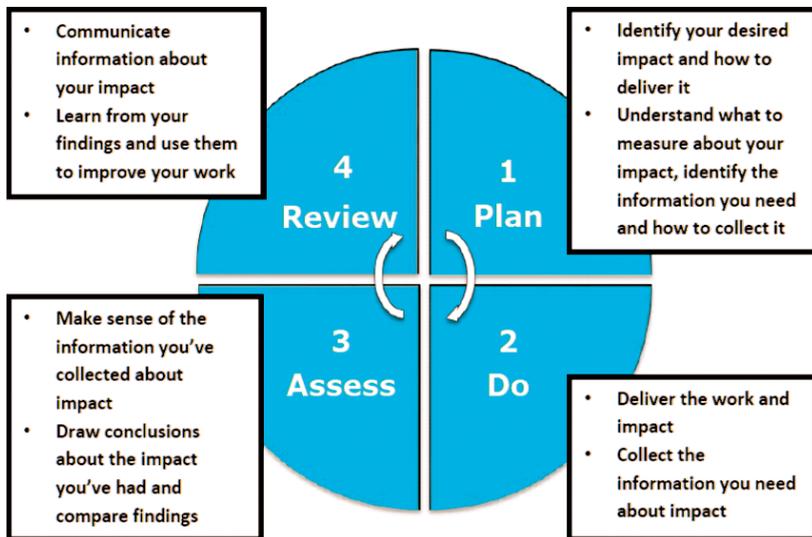
Impact Measurement

The key components of measuring impact and demonstrating the difference you make are:

- Translating and defining what is impact practice – understanding *The Code of Good Impact Practice* (provided in Appendix 1);
- Assessing the baseline of your organisation in terms of impact practice – completing a self-assessment using a 'Measuring Up!' online measurement tool;
- Developing impact practice plans based on the results of the self-assessment;
- Practical implementation through the application of the 'Cycle of Impact Practice'

> Online Resource: 'Measuring Up!' is a step by step online self assessment resource designed to help organsiations review and improve their impact practice – that is the way you plan, evidence, communicate and learn from the difference that your work makes.
> **http://inspiringimpact.org/measuringup/**

There are four main areas of activity that make up impact practice:

- **Communicate** information about your impact
- **Learn** from your findings and use them to improve your work

- **Identify** your desired impact and how to deliver it
- **Understand** what to measure about your impact, identify the information you need and how to collect it

4 **Review**

1 **Plan**

3 **Assess**

2 **Do**

- Make sense of the information you've collected about impact
- Draw conclusions about the impact you've had and compare findings

- Deliver the work and impact
- Collect the information you need about impact

Applying the 'Cycle of Impact Practice' should focus on the four main areas of activity outlined in the graphic above.

[2] Taken from Inspiring Impact: *The Code of Good Impact Practice*

Practical Implementation

Stage 1: Plan

This section of the cycle has a number of clear activities which include defining what you want to address, gather evidence of need, review research including any current activities, design your programme and measurement plan – what difference you want to make, what data you need to collect and how you are going to collect it.[3] Here you set your aims, outcomes and activities as well as ways to collect data.

Aims: To help you set your aim, think about why you offer your particular service/services or why your group exists. What do you hope the effect will be? The overall aim describes in broad terms the change you want to see and is also the summary of how you will explain why your project or organisation exists. For example, the aim is to 'engage older people positively in the community'.

Outcomes: What needs to change for you to achieve the overall aim? What differences will what you do help to make for your beneficiaries (older people)? The answers to these questions are your outcomes. Some of these outcomes might happen quickly, while others may take longer and depend on meeting other intermediate/stepping stone outcomes.

Outcomes are usually described as 'more, better, less, or improved'. In some cases your outcomes may involve keeping something the same, or stopping things from getting worse. Your outcomes should refer to changes, for instance, instead of saying 'older people contribute to decisions about running the project', you might say 'older people are more confident and able to express their opinions'. Start by looking at what activities you intend to do and ask yourself why you are running them. What are the changes that you hope/expect the activities that you deliver will offer or lead?

Activities: Activities bring about the changes that your project wants to deliver. At the planning stage of a project, activities are best identified at a broad level by considering how best to achieve the outcomes, before moving on to specify activity levels and timescales. Once you know the changes you want, you can plan how to make them happen. They are the core of the project planning process, setting out what will happen, how it will happen, who will do it and when. Activities should be specific and measurable, so rather than simply stating 'talks at the lunch club', you might specify 'one talk at the lunch club each month for one year, to an average of 25 older people'.

[3] See *'A Journey to Greater Impact'* published by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC). Available online at www.thinknpc.org/publications/a-journey-to-greater-impact/

Data Collection: There are many ways of collecting information on the outcomes of your work. Some options are case studies, interviews, survey or questionnaire, group discussions or watching people doing activities and recording what you see. Further examples are available at **www.ncvo.ork.uk** or **www.inspiringimpact.org**

Stage 2: Do (and Monitor)

This stage is about implementation – actually doing what you had planned. It involves the real delivery of your activities/project and managing performance while also collecting information on the impact that your group or project is making.[4]

Progressing activities: The progress of your activities is simply about deciding and recording the main tasks that you will undertake, and when these will be completed. Activity milestones help link the main elements of a project to a wider timetable. These milestones let you measure your progress against your plan. It is useful to make sure that they are **SMART**:

Specific; **M**easurable; **A**chievable; **R**ealistic; **T**ime bound.

Progressing Outcomes: It is important to think about how changes are being made. The measures that are used to do this are called outcome indicators, because they help to measure how far you are moving towards achieving the overall outcome, perhaps by recording how many people have reached the outcome so far, or how many have reached stages along the way.

Monitor Outcomes: Build monitoring into your work to capture what your project or organisation is achieving. It is best, where possible, to involve beneficiaries as your project is likely to be more effective if it gives the people it sets out to help a genuine say in what it is doing.

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[4] See *'Your Project and its Outcomes'* prepared for the Big Lottery Fund by Charities Evaluation Services (CES). Available online at **www.hcvs.org.uk/resources/yourprojectanditsoutcomes-139-146.pdf**
For more information visit The Big Lottery Fund website which provides good support and guidance resources: **www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/research/making-the-most-of-funding/impact-and-outcomes/measuring-the-difference-projects-make**

Stage 3: Assess

The next stage of the 'Cycle of Impact Practice' focuses on assessing how it all went - your activities and the data/information you have collected from monitoring. This allows groups analyse the information on impact and draw conclusions from your findings.

Analyse your Info: Exactly what this information will look like and how much detail you have will depend on the monitoring you have done. Did the numbers that you expected attend the event? Did you distribute all the leaflets that you produced? What did people say about it all?

Learn from your Info: There are two main uses for the information you have collected and analysed. One is to report to others (funders/neighbourhood/community/council) about the progress you are making towards achieving your agreed outcomes. The other is for your group or project to consider and learn from your findings. This will affect future activities and enable you to celebrate achievements to date.

Stage 4: Review

This stage of the cycle allows groups and projects to share their impact, learn from findings, revise/improve and tell others within your group, other groups, funders, the wider community and even the media, about the difference you make based on facts.

Using your learning: Groups should take the time to consider the findings and use it for your benefit whether for forward planning or making change. The information that you possess will be more relevant and you will be better placed to make informed decisions about the future.

Share your learning: Use your outcomes information to highlight your success. You could distribute a summary of your key outcomes and learning, make it available to your beneficiaries and other stakeholders or groups and use it to apply for funding or to influence key decision makers in your area.

Putting it all together

The relationship between the terms inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact can be represented like this:[5]

1	2	3	4
Inputs	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**	**Impact**

1. **Inputs** are all the resources you put into the project to enable you to deliver your outputs. Inputs may include time, money, volunteers, equipment and premises.
2. **Outputs** are all the products and services you deliver as part of your work. Examples of outputs are support sessions, workshops, weekly events and publications.
3. **Outcomes** are the changes occurring as a direct result of project outputs.
4. **Impact** is the effect of a project at a higher or broader level, or in the longer term, after a range of outcomes has been achieved.

Demonstrating Impact[6]
In conclusion there are a number of specific principles that define what age sector groups should communicate about their impact:

Clear Purpose
● Why do you exist?
● What issues are you trying to tackle?
● What overall impact do you want to have?
● What change do you want to happen?
● What impact do your key stakeholders want you to have?

Defined Aims
● What is your short, medium and long term aims?
● How does achieving these aims help you achieve your overall purpose/impact?

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[5] Taken from the CES publication: *'Your Project and its Outcomes'*. Available online at
www.hcvs.org.uk/resources/yourprojectanditsoutcomes-139-146.pdf
[6] Adopted from the NPC publication *'Principles of Good Impact Reporting'*. Available online at
www.thinknpc.org/publications/the-principles-of-good-impact-reporting-2

Coherent Activities
- What activities do you carry out to achieve your aims?
- What inputs/resources do you use to make these activities happen?
- What are the outputs of these activities?
- How do your activities help you achieve your aims and create change?
- Are your activities part of a coherent/common-sense plan?

Demonstrated Results
- What outcomes/impact are you achieving against your aims?
- What impact are you achieving against the overall change you're looking for?

Evidence
- How do you know what you are achieving?
- Do you have relevant evidence of your outcomes and impact?
- Are you sharing evidence to back up the claims you make?
- Are you seeking feedback, review and input where appropriate?

Lessons Learned
- What are we learning about our work?
- How are we communicating what we learn?
- How are we improving and changing from what we learn?
- What has happened that we didn't expect (positive and negative)?
- Are we allocating resources to best effect?

Overall, to implement the stages of this cycle does require a 'readiness' from groups to be in a position to engage in impact practice both operationally and strategically. Having knowledge and awareness enables momentum, reassurance and encouragement. Impact practice is seen as increasingly important and the process outlined in this booklet can provide a solid introduction to take a group through the cycle of impact practice providing demonstrative examples which have relevance to the wider age sector and an opportunity to disseminate relevant key messages about impact practice.

Age Sector Demonstration Projects

Model 1: Event

Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP) is a member of the Age NI Sub-Regional Networks and was established in 2011 as a local inter-agency based partnership with the aim of improving the lives of older people aged 60 years and over in the Ballymena, Larne and Carrickfergus areas.

This demonstration project looked at event planning and applied the 'cycle of impact planning' to their pre-Christmas 'Happiness Day', a one-off roadshow supported with funding from the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Big Lottery Fund with the desired outcome being:

To host an event for older people in the Mid and East Antrim area to showcase small, simple ways that they can improve their own mental health and reduce social isolation.

Aims:
1. To show older people across Mid and East Antrim area the link between good mental health and happiness;
2. To provide information on services and support available;
3. To showcase positive partnership working between statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

Plan
During the planning period, MEAAP had to demonstrate the need for the event and prepared a project proposal in order to gain support from Good Morning Networks, as the event would primarily target their clients and service users. Another key component of this stage was to identify funding opportunities and submit applications and engage with funders. Included in the application would be transport hire, venue and catering costs as well as identifying complimentary therapies and practitioners.

There was an additional need to identify and invite key agencies to attend in order to showcase the work and position similar events for the future in terms of raising funds, maximum participation and engagement. Volunteer support was considered to be crucial in the event and so engagement and recruitment of people to help on the day needed to be factored in. Getting people to attend the event is a key consideration and the format needed to address this as part of this overall planning. In order to attract people, as well as targeting an identified need, some incentive goody bags and raffle prizes would be sourced and promoted.

Measuring the impact of the event embedded in the planning process and it was agreed to design an interactive survey that participants could complete throughout the course of the event. In order to capture other impacts it was agreed to have photographers present as well as 'vox pop' recordings.

Do

Funding was secured for the event and various parts of the plan could be implemented. A suitable venue was sourced, catering arranged and transport organised. An agenda consisting of four fun/light plus three serious/heavier activities was devised and circulated to network partner groups with a specific emphasis on the Good Morning project as many of the clients and services users can be isolated, lonely and vulnerable. Numbers attending were determined so that final arrangements could be made regarding seating at the venue, transport and catering requirements could be finalised. A photographer was arranged to create a pictorial record of the day. Raffle prizes and goody bags were distributed on the day.

All the activities took place in a sequence which encompassed the fun activities - laughter yoga, story telling, sound therapies and armchair aerobics, alongside those with a more serious message regarding fire safety, alcohol consumption and falls prevention over the holiday period. Participants were encouraged to fill in a 'happiness survey' as events happened in order to maximise the responses. Local media were present and the event featured in the joint Age NI/BBC NI Christmas appeal.

Assess

In terms of assessing the event, the information was collated from the participants 'happiness survey' responses. Additional feedback was obtained from the wider agencies and groups involved. A review of the budget/expenditure would be carried out (see figures below) with the main conclusion emerging that there was a unpredictable participant drop-out rate due to seasonal illness which resulted in the event being over catered for. Case studies would be carried out to look at the impact of the event on individuals and the photos would be used to endorse this. It was felt that early December worked well for this kind of event and so, if undertaken again, would be held at this time of year.

Review

As part of the review stage, it was deemed necessary to communicate the survey results/feedback via funders, social media and newsletters, to demonstrate the value that an event like this can have on individuals, and to showcase the work of MEAAP in the wider public arena. All information will be shared with directors and priority given to similar events, especially in terms of funding allocation. The review found that it was important to keep the positivity focus of the event and there was a need to research new/different ranges of complimentary therapies. It suggested that the agenda was too ambitious with too much content recommending that the seven sessions delivered could be reduced to four in future events. The overall attendance rate was 90%.

![age NI – Love later life]

Happiness Day

Mid & East Antrim
agewell Partnership

Group project aim:

To host a roadshow event for older people in the Mid and East Antrim area to showcase small, simple ways that they can improve their own mental health and reduce social isolation

1. Show older people across Mid and East Antrim area the link between good mental health and happiness;

2. Provide information on services and support available;

3. Showcase positive partnership working between statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

8 volunteers engaged worth 40 hours of volunteering

18 organisations represented including statutory, voluntary & community sectors

78 older people attended

Happiness Day 4th December 2014

"FANTASTIC EVENT. VERY INFORMATIVE AND USEFUL TO SHARE SERIOUS ADVICE IN A FUN WAY"

Funded by the Public Health Agency and the Big Lottery Fund

HSC Public Health Agency

LOTTERY FUNDED

Tea
90 packs of teabags donated by Punjana

Slippers
90 pairs of slippers donated by Council Home Accident Prevention Teams

3 Talks
Fire safety
Alcohol consumption
Falls prevention

4 activities
laughter yoga/ story telling / sound therapy /armchair aerobics

1. Plan
2. Do
3. Assess
4. Review

Cycle of Impact Practice (www.inspiringimpactni.org)

contact MEAAP T: 028 2565 8604

Age Sector Demonstration Projects

The ABC Seniors Network is a member of the Age NI Sub-Regional Networks and was established in 2010 as a local community-based partnership with the aim of improving the lives of older people aged 60 years and over in the Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon areas. The network consists of a core committee drawn from across the catchment area.

To measure impact ABC Seniors Network decided to look at their whole organisation and apply the 'cycle of impact practice', revisiting the core drivers of the network with the desired outcome being:

To enable ABC Seniors Network to represent and influence decisions or policies for the older people in the communities of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon district areas by giving them a voice on issues that impact directly on their health and social wellbeing.

Aims:
1. To give direction and common purpose;
2. To give clear stages of delivery;
3. To ensure organisational integrity.

Plan
In the planning stage, the network members felt there was a need to have a global look at the network in order to give direction and common purpose, to define what the network is, to set aims to achieve, to work together for the same goals, to give clear stages of delivery, to give purpose to their work, to keep a record of why, what and how they operate. They had specific governance issues to consider, such as a review of policies and procedures, and finally a review of where the network is at present in order to go forward and to explain things such as what we are about in one succinct place. Widespread discussion took place around how best to achieve this comprehensive and ambitious plan. The network had a small training budget from funding they had previously secured and this was utilised to support this process by accessing training on strategic planning which would introduce them to the concepts and key processes involved in developing their organisation and ultimately allowing them to articulate the difference that they make.

Do

The strategic planning training introduced key concepts and components of the process. It also allowed for the practical and objective examination of the network. A fundamental question arose as part of the training which was the logic of the existence of the network, which gave members an opportunity to collectively discuss and articulate their purpose to have an impact on older people's issues, to give a voice to older people in the area represented, to provide representation at various platforms and structures, to link in at council level, to pass information on (upwards) and (downwards) to and from the groups at grassroots, to pass information out to older people concerning issues that affect their wellbeing, to express concerns to those in authority who are the decision makers and policy makers, and to give the older community more confidence that their concerns are being addressed. All of these discussions provided a very clear picture to members of the steps to undertake moving forward.

Assess

The training created the space and context for the identification for areas of work. Matters identified were the need to re-examine governance structures and how to best engage with other networks and forums, to clarify the network purpose and aims, to identify a centralised location to accommodate the network reports/records including finance, to establish a database of existing membership and access other potential members to develop and grow the network. Communication with older people on the ground was identified as a key issue as was sustainability/funding. Profiling the network was acknowledged as a priority especially if the network was to increase its role in local government.

Review

The review of the work enabled the network to prioritise areas such looking at structure and representation, clarity around its vision and mission statement, communication and database development, seek funding support to increase sustainability, and meeting the requirements of charitable registration. The network identified the benefits of having an action plan to enable them to plan and measure their progress thus reflecting on the impact of their work.
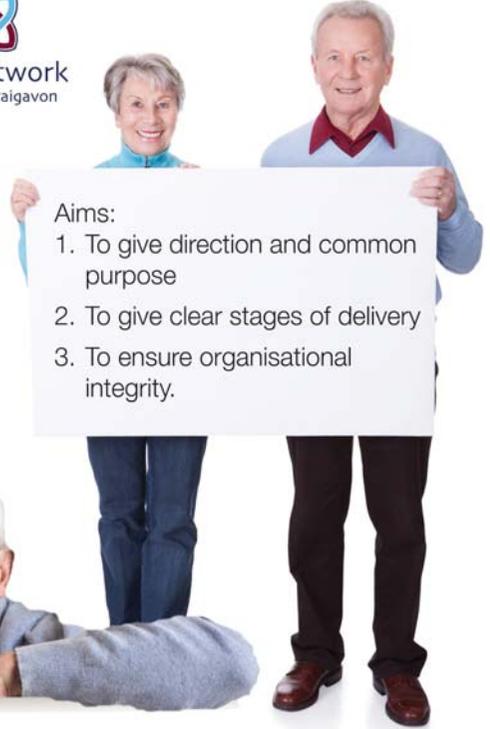
Applying the Cycle of Impact Practice

In looking at measuring impact ABC Seniors Network decide to look at their organisation and applying the cycle of impact practice, to revisit the core drivers of the network with the desired outcome being:

To enable ABC Seniors Network to represent and influence decisions or policies for the older people in the communities of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon district areas by giving them a voice on issues that impact directly on their health and social wellbeing.

Aims:
1. To give direction and common purpose
2. To give clear stages of delivery
3. To ensure organisational integrity.

1. Plan
In the planning stage members felt the need to have a global look at the Network in order to give direction and common purpose. Widespread discussion took place around how best to achieve this comprehensive and ambitious plan.

2. Do
A fundamental question that arose as part of the training was why does the Network exist? Members were able to collectively discuss and hence articulate the purpose as being so that they can have an impact on older peoples issues, to give a voice to older people in the area represented.

4. Review
The group identified that area where they perhaps need to look at overall following this process is devising a specific time bound action plan that will allow them to plot their progress and measure the impact of their work.

3. Assess
The training created the space and context for the identification for areas of work. Matters identified were the need to re-examine governance structures and how we feed in to other networks and forums, to clarify the networks purpose and aims

Age Sector Demonstration Projects

South West Age Partnership (SWAP) is a member of the Age NI Sub-Regional Networks. It was established in 2010, following the rebranding of the Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizen's Consortium, as a local inter-agency based partnership with the aim of improving the lives of older people aged 60 years and over in the Fermanagh and Omagh areas. SWAP is supported by funding from a number of different sources.

The demonstration project looked at programme delivery and applied the 'cycle of impact practice' to their 'Active Living Programme'. This is run annually with support from WHSCT, Big Lottery Fund and Arts Council and involves age sector groups across the catchment area with the desired outcome being:

To run an active living programme of activities engaging older people across the Fermanagh and Omagh area to improve their quality of life, impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as reduce social isolation.

Aims:
1. To give a voice to local older people;
2. To improve older people's health and wellbeing;
3. To provide activities to reduce social isolation.

Plan
During the planning stage, the board of SWAP met to examine the feasibility and capacity involved in providing this ambitious programme. The elements of the programme were dependent on securing funding but by operating within the 'predicted' levels of funding, resources were allocated in line with a tight budget. Engagement with groups and clubs was paramount at this stage as it shaped what activities would be sourced. Following this, tutors, providers and suitable venues were sought. Access was a key consideration, not only in terms of entering the building but also in respect of location due to the mainly rural setting. Appropriate insurance was a prerequisite for the programme to commence followed by the recruitment of providers who are able to fulfil the requested programme. It was also imperative at this stage to identify if there were any likely shortfalls in terms of budget for which match funding or an aligned amendment to the proposed programme would be required. Capacity of staff and volunteers was also taken into consideration and where appropriate, training etc. was undertaken. Data capture which looked at, a number of different approaches were considered and a range of suitable methods utilised during the lifetime of the project. Finally a timeline was devised for programme delivery.

Do

Having secured all necessary funding and recruited all tutors and providers, SWAP began implementing its programme with groups. Participating groups were engaged and commencement dates agreed. Standardised recruitment forms were circulated, with information regarding beneficiaries being collected. Local autonomy was an important element of this programme but SWAP had a key role to play regarding the coordination and monitoring of the programme. Risk assessments were carried out regarding premises etc. before any of the events or activities took place. Focus groups with participants/service users were an ongoing feature of the programme that allowed for feedback and data capture, alongside the opportunity to make suitable amendments. Other information was sought through questionnaires and monitoring returns as required by the funder.

Assess

The assessment stage was quite robust and the evaluation data was disseminated and discussed at board level. Engagements were held with funders and continuously with the participants/service users. A summative/end of programme report was compiled collating all the quantitative information (figures, numbers engaged, activities that took place). This allowed for comparisons to be made with previous years and a record of the learning and future development required for future practice.

Review

The review highlighted the need for the levels of funding required to deliver the programme which highlights the need for a structured process of forward planning for future programmes. Data capture was underlined as an area which needed a specific focus to enable longer term impact to be captured, measured and articulated. This includes a specific tutor evaluation that would capture data from the session providers as well as the participants. More emphasis would be placed on maximising the opportunities provided by the focus groups to shape future programmes. The importance of individual engagement emerged as a recommendation for action in addition to the focus group discussions, although it was acknowledged that this had implications on resources.

Measuring Impact

Group project aim:

To run an active living programme of activities engaging older people across the Fermanagh and Omagh area to improve their quality of life, impact on physical & mental health and wellbeing as well as reduce social isolation.
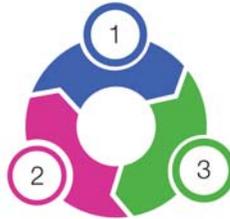
1. Give a voice for local older people

2. Improve older people's health and wellbeing

3. Provide activities to reduce social isolation

Active Living Programme April 2014 – Mar 2015

April – June 2014
47 Activity events held

July – Sept 2014
18 Activity events held

October – December 2014
47 Activity events held

January – March 2015
29 Activity events held

Funded by Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHSCT)

Contact SWAP T: 028 8225 1824

4. Review
1. Plan
2. Do
3. Assess
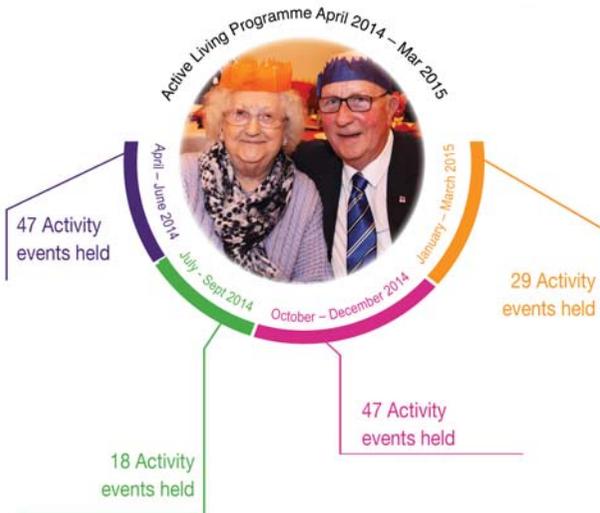
Cycle of Impact Practice
(www.inspiringimpactni.org)

1,344
Total participants older people

SPINNING   SWIMMING   TRAINING   AEROBICS   COMPUTERS   BOCCIA   IPADS   SINGING

Age Sector Demonstration Projects

Model 4: Core Organisational

Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium (NMSCC) was established when representatives of Senior Citizens Clubs in Newry and Mourne came together with Newry Volunteer Bureau and Newry and Mourne Health and Social Services Trust. The group was constituted in May 1996 and since then has represented the interests of senior citizens groups throughout the wide area. The Consortium provides a range of support services to its member groups including capacity building, training, support to access funding and assistance to develop fundraising strategies. It also provides information and advice to member groups and lobbies extensively on behalf of older people and their groups.

Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium operate under a strategic framework:
- To promote the concept and practice of active ageing;
- To create an effective platform for the participation of older people;
- To combat ageism and improve the quality of life opportunities for older people.

Key objectives for NMSCC are to encourage local age sector groups to improve the quality and range of recreational, social and cultural activities for their members, to foster links with other groups and agencies and provide networking opportunities, to look at funding sources, to increase the number of older people participating in sport/physical exercise and adult education and finally, to support older people to lobby for improvements on a range of identified issues.

This demonstration project looks at the 'cycle of impact practice' relating to the overall programme of work carried out by NMSCC.

Aims:
1. To give a voice to local older people;
2. To improve older people's health and wellbeing;
3. To provide activities to reduce social isolation.

Plan
During the planning stage, NMSCC looked at its strategic framework and built upon work previously carried out, engaging with groups to assess current need. Looking at three broad categories, the impact of the work carried out by NMSSC looks at support for older peoples groups, the number of older people engaged in initiatives and the financial leverage accrued. The current operating environment was factored into the work and a particular emphasis would be placed on funding support and sustainability for groups due to the potential for difficulties in this area.

Do

NMSCC carried out the support programme over the year and came into contact with a large number of groups reflecting a wide reach to older people throughout the Newry and Mourne area. A number of new groups were engaged and AGMs were facilitated to ensure good governance. As a result of the experience of measuring impact, further organisational reviews were carried out with member groups to ensure effective planning and to look at the difference that they make to the lives of older people in their area. Emphasis was also placed on training, capacity building, funding and sustainability of groups.

Assess

Assessing the programme entailed collecting data on the number of groups engaged and supported, numbers attending workshops, AGMs facilitated, organisational reviews carried out, participation in training and capacity building, volunteers recruited and the financial leverage achieved as a result of work carried out with groups. This information was collected and presented to the Board of Trustees and to group representatives at the Consortium AGM.

When member groups questionnaires were completed the results were analysed with the group, which was a rewarding process to both parties as it became clear that people valued the services, support, friendship and the time that volunteers put into running and leading the groups. Everyone became acutely aware of the difference that each group made within their communities through supporting older people.

Review

As part of the review stage it was felt that the process had been highly beneficial and that the cycle of impact practice had allowed for the easy articulation of the work carried out by NMSCC. Feedback from funders, trustees and member groups was all positive. The review also led to the identification of the need for the knowledge and application of impact practice to be disseminated to member groups and partners so that a deeper demonstration of the difference that the consortium makes to lives of older people and their groups could be articulated further. By engaging in a process of measuring their own impact, NMSCC has in turn assisted groups it works with and supports to assess and measure the difference they are making. This is an area of focus that NMSCC wishes to continue with and will mainstream into their day to day work, continuing to re-assess the ways that they measure their own impact and the difference their work makes within the community.

Newry & Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium

age NI
Love later life

Group aim:
To improve the quality of life of older people living in the Newry & Mourne Area by promoting social inclusion and preventing older people from becoming socially excluded.

Newry and Mourne Senior Citizens Consortium is an umbrella organisation supporting 66 older people's groups throughout the Newry and Mourne area.

100 attended Keep Safe event

216 older people from 14 groups surveyed

5 new member groups

11 AGMs supported

52 organisational reviews

9 monthly updates

66 local age sector member groups engaged with NMSSC

96 Falls Prevention training

10 Linking Generations

13 new volunteers

12 IT training

10 volunteer recruitment

10 capacity building sessions

19 Funding clinic

12 Food Safety

16 Charities Commission

3 funding workshops

48 attendees

54 applications

£60,363 in financial leverage

NEWRY & MOURNE
Senior Citizens Consortium
Ballybot House, 28 Cornmarket, Newry. BT35 8BG

Age Sector Demonstration Projects

County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN) is a voluntary umbrella body set up and managed by community groups across County Down. Its vision is of confident connected communities throughout County Down with an organisational mission to enable and motivate people to help themselves to enhance and improve lives.

Operating under a strategic framework of:
- Empowering, connecting and strengthening communities;
- Supporting and enabling a strong community voice;
- Providing services to our members;
- Developing an adaptive and sustainable organisation.

As part of the overall programme for CDRCN, specific work with older peoples' groups across the catchment area has been identified as a particular need. Taking into consideration available resources and capacity across the area, a strategic decision for sustainable advances in this work was through establishing Down Seniors Forum.

The demonstration project looked at the 'cycle of impact practice' relating to the establishment of the Down Seniors Forum.

Aims:
1. To engage with older peoples' groups across County Down;
2. To create opportunities for collective work;
3. To fFormally launch Down Seniors Forum.

Plan
During the planning stage, CDRCN mapped out a programme to work with older peoples' groups in the catchment area. The overall focus of the programme was to work towards positive outcomes on social isolation, physical health, mental health and emotional well being as well as encouraging benefits and services uptake, and the development of multi-agency relationships. A key output of the programme is the establishment of a Down Seniors Forum. The purpose of the forum is to bring older peoples' groups together, build capacity and connectivity while providing a mechanism for information sharing and best practice exchanges, networking opportunities, training, highlighting common areas of concern, establishing support structures and providing a collective voice for older people. Inputs to achieve this were formulated which included identifying and registering groups, conducting a

mapping exercise, carrying out a needs audit, hosting an inaugural meeting with groups, delivering capacity building training, organising a good practice exchange, holding an awareness raising session on Age-Friendly potential and finally, formally launching the Down Seniors Forum.

Do
CDRCN began engaging older peoples' groups across the area and registering independent bodies. A mapping exercise was carried out to identify gaps in membership. An audit of registered groups was completed to identify capacity levels and assess needs. This information progressed to an inaugural collective meeting with registered groups to facilitate a consultation to identify key organisations to join a potential forum. A good practice visit to Age North Down and Ards was arranged to exchange learning with a similar group, with additional training opportunities to increase capacity. A seminar was organised to raise awareness of Age-Friendly and its potential to deliver positive change for older people in the newly aligned council boundary. Linked to this potential development was the need for older people to input and increase their voice, so a structured forum was a the chosen means to achieve this. Groups engaged were aware of the merit of developing a forum and a formal launch was held.

Assess
In assessing the programme each of the outcomes were examined. In terms of social isolation, older people were engaged in programmes and activities which brought them into contact with other people addressing their isolation. People participated in physical health activities through a range of appropriate sports activities, e.g. boccia and the development of walking groups allowed for increased mobility and fitness levels. Both of these themes also had positive impacts on mental health and emotional wellbeing. People engaged in the programme are better linked to beneficial services through exposure to the multi-agency approach. Through the development of the forum, groups are better resourced with increased capacity and have established connections which increases the presence of the age sector across County Down.

Review
During the review stage a number of areas were reviewed e.g. looking at the numbers of groups registered with Down Seniors Forum, the numbers who have attended training, practice visit, Age-Friendly seminar, various events and social outings and participation in activities.

Measuring Impact
Down Senior Forum Launch

32 groups celebrated the launch of the Forum which aims to provide a voice for older people living in Down District and promote their health and wellbeing.

Social Isolation / Financial Well-being

Partnership Development

Physical health & Emotional Well-being

Participants 110

Cups of Tea 220

Stew & Wheaten bread 110

Warm home packs 110

84 questionnaires completed

Caring Communities

"The event was a fantastic opportunity for informing older people on what Caring Communities Safe & Well service is and what services are available within their area"

Good Morning Down

"We were delighted to be able to include GMD call recipients who thoroughly enjoyed it."

Down Community Transport

"DCT was approached by residents of a rural hamlet that found it difficult to access public transport. DCT will now be working with them to address this."

County Down Rural Community Network

84 questionnaires completed establishing a baseline and profile of senior forum groups in relation to the 8 themes under the Age Friendly Agenda.

County Down Rural Community Network
40 Killough Road
Downpatrick
BT30 6PY
028 4461 2311

HSC Public Health Agency

HSC South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

REVIEW 1 — PLAN 2 — DO 3 — ASSESS 4

Cycle of Impact Practice
www.inspiringimpactni.org

References

Inspiring Impact: *The Code of Good Impact Practice.* Available online at
www.inspiringimpact.org/resources/are-you-leading-for-impact

A Journey to Greater Impact published by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC).
Available online at www.thinknpc.org/publications/a-journey-to-greater-impact/

Your Project and its Outcomes prepared for the Big Lottery Fund by Charities
Evaluation Services (CES). Available online at
www.hcvs.org.uk/resources/yourprojectanditsoutcomes-139-146.pdf

Principles of Good Impact Reporting published by NPC. Available online at
www.thinknpc.org/publications/the-principles-of-good-impact-reporting-2/

Further Reading

Inspiring Impact NI - www.inspiringimpactni.org
- Code of Good Impact Practice
- List of Measurement Tools and Systems
- VCSE Shared Learning Paper
- Are You Leading for Impact
- Building a Movement

Community Evaluation Northern Ireland - www.ceni.org
- Prove and Improve: A self evaluation resource for Voluntary and Community Organisations
- An Approach to Outcomes for Voluntary and Community Organisations
- A Review of Evaluation Practice in the Voluntary and Community Sector

NCVO Charities Evaluation Services - www.ncvo.org.uk
- Consultancy
- Training courses
- Free information to help with impact and evaluation

New Philanthropy Capital - www.thinknpc.org
- Creating Your Theory of Change: NPC's Practical Guide
- Principles of Good Impact Reporting: For charities and social enterprises

Evaluation Support Scotland - www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk
- Support Guide Series

Appendices

Appendix 1: The 'Code of Good Impact Practice'

The Code of Good Impact Practice provides broad, agreed guidelines for focusing on impact. It sets out a series of high level principles to follow. Each principle includes a brief description of how your impact practice would look if you were applying the principle, an explanation of why it is important and some ideas about how to implement it.

1. **Take responsibility for impact and encourage others to do so too.**
   Impact is embedded in the culture of your organisation. All staff and volunteers see it as their responsibility to create impact through their work, to play their part in showing how their work makes a difference and sharing what they learn from it with others. Leaders of your organisation see delivering impact as their primary responsibility and duty.

2. **Focus on purpose.**
   You're clear about your purpose as an organisation: the difference that you exist to make. You're able to explain your expected impact in meeting this purpose. You can describe how you will create this impact, plainly and in ways that everyone can understand.

3. **Involve others in your impact practice.**
   At all stages of impact practice you look for appropriate opportunities to involve others. As a minimum this includes involving those with direct experience of the organisation's activities. It could also include other organisations doing similar work or funders.

4. **Apply proportionate and appropriate methods and resources.**
   You're realistic in your impact practice - you apply time, effort and methods proportionate and appropriate to the scale and scoop of the work. If necessary, you keep things simple and do what you can to focus on impact. You choose methods that fit with the values and ethos of your organisation, and you're clear about the purpose of collecting impact information, who will use it and for what.

5. Consider the full range of the difference you actually make.
You keep in mind that you might have an impact beyond your intended beneficiaries, a negative as well as a positive impact, or impact that you hadn't planned. You acknowledge that in some cases you have to balance positive impact on your beneficiaries with negative impact on others. You seek to understand if your work is having a longer term or wider impact than anticipated. Equally, you know that changes you see may have occurred without your involvement, be short term, or be the result of the work of others.

6. Be honest and open.
You're honest and open about the impact you plan to have, and your findings on the difference you have or haven't made, as well as what you have learnt from these findings and how you will act on these lessons. You're also honest and open about the scope of your impact practice. You and your funders discuss what hasn't gone so well and learn from it.

7. Be willing to change and act on what you find.
You're ready to change as a result of finding out what impact you are or are not having, and to accept you may not be having the impact you intended. You commit to learning from your impact assessment and you actively use it to inform planning and action. Your funders are also willing to learn and change.

8. Actively share your impact plans, methods, findings and learning.
You communicate your impact plans, methods findings and learning to ensure other know what you're trying to achieve and to contribute to a wider view of what does or doesn't work. You share appropriate information inside and outside the organisation. You acknowledge the limitations of your findings.

Appendix 2: Age NI 'Steps to Funding' programme

Steps to Funding

Impact Assessment Jan 2014-Dec 2016

age NI — Love later life

COMIC RELIEF

The Steps to Funding Programme is a three-year programme providing capacity building training and information for age sector groups delivered across N.Ireland. The programme is funded by Comic Relief.

The Programme aims:
- To increase awareness and accessibility to funding opportunities for older people's services and activities;
- To increase the capacity of older-person led groups to secure funding for local service delivery;
- To increase the collaboration and networking by older person-led groups.

Session 1
Preparing and Planning for Small Grants
12 workshops
109 participants

Session 2
Making the Approach – Sources of Funding
16 workshops
171 participants

Session 3
Understanding Applications
17 workshops
195 participants

Session 4
Development Workers Master-Class
5 workshops
93 participants

Sustainability Seminars

Inspiring Impact / Charities Info / Tendering / Governance / Participation : 588 Participants

Resources, Information, Guidance

Funding Ezine 36 editions 'Steps to Jargon Busting' guide

Dedicated Web Resource

www.ageni.org/stepstofunding
5405 site visitors (Jan-Dec 2016)

1156 Participants

Networking   **Signposting**   **Meet the Funders**

Community Pharmacy Project, Comic Relief, Ireland Fund, Halifax Foundation for N.Ireland, DSD, Garfield Weston Foundation, Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council for Northern Ireland, Older People's Fund, Awards for All, District Councils, Big Lottery Fund

Financial Leverage

JAN 2012 DEC 2013	JAN 2014 DEC 2015	JAN 2016 DEC 2016
£120,218.40	£198,380.00	£138,486.15

Total since Jan 2012
£457,084.55

Notes

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