

Top Tips for Measuring your Impact

- **Start simply.** Just do SOMETHING
- **Apply the “so what?” test.** Think about what you do and keep saying “so what” until you think you’ve really got to the nub of the change you’re trying to make. For example ...

I ran a parenting course. “*So what?*”

I had 20 attendees. “*So what?*”

Those 20 attendees said it was a great course. “*So what?*”

They learned a lot in the course. “*So what?*”

They have implemented what they learned and said that they are better parents because they are doing x, y and z.

- **Be creative.** Don’t worry about how you SHOULD do it, just find something that works for you. You can always tweak your processes later.
- **Don’t agonise about attribution.** It can be really difficult to attribute a change solely to your particular activity. Don’t try too hard to show precisely what part of the change you were responsible for, its okay to say “We helped to ...” or “We contributed to...”
- **Choose a few indicators that are useful** to you and others. Make sure you are clear about what you want to measure, and why.
- **Not everything needs to be ‘countable’.** There’s nothing wrong with taking a more qualitative approach. Case studies and named quotes can be really powerful.
- **Make use of existing tools if they help.** A wide range of tools exist, or you may decide to go ‘freestyle’. Either way, you can use the tools to assist you or to provide inspiration and bright ideas. There are some really simple ideas that you can modify, such as outcomes stars.
- **Prevention activities.** If your main activity is to prevent something (eg. drug use), it can be difficult to demonstrate positive impacts. There’s no perfect solution, but try thinking about what would have happened if you weren’t there?

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) have some excellent ‘tool decider’ and ‘tool comparison’ charts available at <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/entry/proving-and-improving>

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and Charities Evaluation Service (CES) also have some great free on-line resources.