
Evaluating your Inspired Futures project – some basics

1. Why evaluate your project?

This Evaluation Toolkit provides advice and resources to help you evaluate your Inspired Futures project, so that you can see how it is progressing, celebrate success, and keep track of anything which may need to be altered if necessary, and make your project strong and sustainable. You can use the evidence you gather to support future funding applications, because you can show a demand for the new project you are applying for, and demonstrate your track record of what you have done already. The evaluation from each church's project will feed into the main Inspired Futures evaluation, and will provide useful lessons which other churches, in other parts of the country, can use. Inspired Futures is the first of this type of project which the Heritage Lottery Fund has funded, so this is a great opportunity to showcase the churches' projects.

2. Measuring success – the foundations

The foundations of your Inspired Futures project are all the activities set out in:

- the Action Plan
- the Heritage Activity Plan

They set out the:

- Activities which will take place
- Audience – who will take part
- Benefits for people and heritage
- Intended outcomes
- Resources required (personnel, advice, etc)
- Costs
- Timetable
- Targets and measures of success
- Methods of evaluation

The Evaluation Toolkit gives ideas of how to gather, analyse and report on the necessary information to show whether the intended outcomes are being met and whether any unexpected outcomes have occurred. The evaluation will also show how partnerships are developed, and the impact that the church has on the wider community.

Outputs = things which your project achieves, such as a Churchyard Wildlife event; putting in a ramp to improve access

Outcomes = what happens as a result, e.g. people learn about wildlife in the churchyard; people volunteer to maintain the church yard; people can enter the church more easily

For learning and participation activities, you can use the **Generic Learning Outcomes** which are recommended by HLF as a way to measure learning in cultural heritage places.

At the end of Inspired Futures, the Heritage Lottery Fund will ask about the:

- Number of events which you carried out and how many people attended
- Number of visitors to your church
- Number of volunteers involved
- Number of people who received training as part of the project
- Number of staff employed in your project (if any)
- Age group, gender, ethnic background, socio-economic group and disability, for visitors, volunteers and trainees

This is so that HLF can ensure that the projects they fund are reaching a wide range of people.

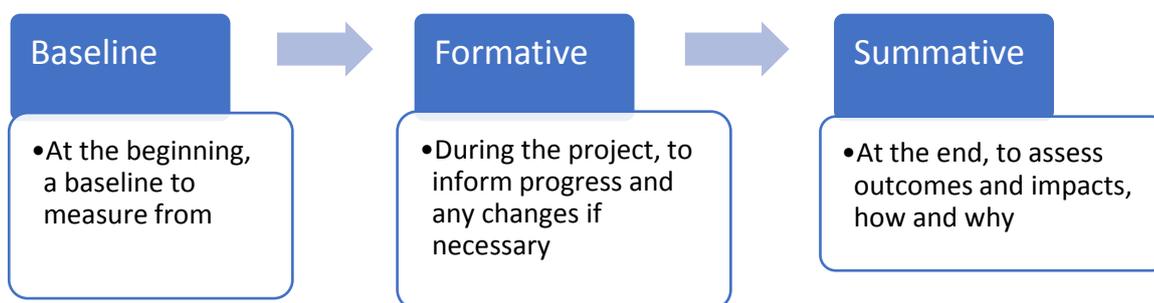
By making an evaluation plan (see Section 3 below and the **Evaluation Plan template**) which sets out what information you need to collect, when, how, and from whom, it makes the whole evaluation process quite straightforward.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring = recording e.g. the number of events, number of participants, and checking whether or not the numbers are in line with the original plan

Evaluation = telling the story of how and why the events, etc, have been effective (or not), and assessing the outcomes and impacts

Evaluation takes place throughout the project:



Each church has already done (or should have!) its **baseline** evaluation, using the baseline evaluation spreadsheet provided by the Inspired Futures team. This shows the church's position at the start of the project, so progress can be measured from there.

Evaluation is a cyclical process: start with planning the activity, then do the activity, evaluate it, review what was successful, what could be improved, what new things you might do as a result, and then plan future activities accordingly – **formative** evaluation.



At the end of the project, you will write a report reviewing the whole project – **summative** evaluation. See “Reporting on the evaluation” for more details

3. Creating an Evaluation Plan

The Evaluation Plan sets out:

- What information you need to collect
- When to collect it
- Who to collect it from
- How to collect it
- Who is responsible for collecting it
- Analysing and reporting on the data

See the [Evaluation Plan template](#). Adapt it as appropriate for your church’s project.

4. Choosing methods

The methods you choose will depend on the activity and the people taking part, e.g:

- Visitors’ book in the church for visitors’ comments and postcodes
- Short question cards for participants at events
- Drawing / creative / participatory evaluation activities for children and families at family events – see more below
- Paper or online surveys
- Discussion sessions, focus groups and interviews for more detailed insights
- Social media – but see the [Social Media](#) section of the toolkit for specific advice on this
- Application / registration forms for new and existing volunteers, annual reviews (can be very informal), informal interviews if volunteers leave

The **Methods** and **Making Good Surveys** sections give more details. The Heritage Lottery Fund Evaluation Guidance <https://www.hlf.org.uk/evaluation-guidance> , Section 5, lists different evaluation methods, their advantages and disadvantages.

5. How many people to ask?

You need to need ask enough people to be sure that you get robust evidence. See the **Making Good Surveys** section for more details.

6. Analysing the data

Once you have collected your data, you need to analyse it. Read all the completed surveys at least once before you start the analysis, so you have an idea of what people's responses are.

If you are using paper survey forms, you can either enter the data into spreadsheets, or manually enter the data into a Survey Monkey survey (see the **Making Good Surveys** section).

Analysing qualitative data

Responses to open questions (e.g. Please describe what you have got out of today's event) are qualitative data. Copy and paste all the responses from your Excel spreadsheet, or from Survey Monkey, into a Word document. Read all the responses to identify emerging themes, and code them to see how they match up with the outcomes you are evaluating.

See **Analysing and Reporting** for more details.

7. Reporting the results

It is a good idea to analyse and report on your data regularly. For example, write up the evaluation of each activity shortly after it takes place. That way, everything is fresh in your mind, it doesn't take too long to do, and the results will inform your planning for the next activity. Reviewing the results from the evaluation at least every quarter makes sure that the project is on track and responsive to any changes which are necessary.

The evaluation report at the end of the project will:

- Review the whole project,
- Asses to what extent the outcomes were met,
- Record things which were successful and less successful
- Make recommendations for the future

As well as written reports (illustrated with photos), you can produce shorter versions for church and community newsletters, for example. If you are doing a presentation to other people outside the project, you could make a Powerpoint presentation or a film.

After the end of the project, HLF will ask for quantitative data about number of events, visitors, etc, and demographic information about participants. This questionnaire is in Section 9 of the HLF Evaluation Guidance.

Once your evaluation report is completed, use it to:

- Publicise and celebrate the successes of your Inspired Futures project
- Plan what you will do next
- Provide evidence to support future funding applications

See [Analysing and Reporting](#) for more details.