

Methods

1. Choosing appropriate 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 – see [Making Good Surveys](#)
- Discussion sessions, focus groups and interviews for more detailed insights
- Photos and film – take plenty of photos throughout the course of the project, and make sure you have written permission from people to use their photos
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- 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 Heritage Lottery Fund Evaluation Guidance <https://www.hlf.org.uk/evaluation-guidance>, Section 5, lists different evaluation methods, their advantages and disadvantages.

Your evaluation will include **quantitative data** and **qualitative data**.

Quantitative data:

- Things which can be counted, e.g. numbers of visitors, numbers of events
- Things which can be expressed as a number, e.g. 94% of respondents enjoyed the activity; 89% of respondents agreed that the new refreshment point was of great benefit to the church

Qualitative data:

Open-ended responses which provide reasons for people's opinions, e.g:

- "I enjoyed the churchyard wildlife event very much because I found out about some plants and insects which I had never seen before."
- "The churchyard wildlife event would have been better if the grass had been shorter because it was wet and my feet got cold and wet."
- "Now that we have the coffee machine in the church, it's easier to have conversations with visitors."

- “The refreshment point is an intrusion in the church. People can go to cafés nearby if they want a cup of tea or coffee.”

2. Ideas for creative and participatory evaluation activities

- Drawing – ask people to tell you about their picture, so you know what they have drawn
- Photography – people can take photos with their phone or camera, to show things they like or don’t like
- Voting on suggestions, statements, ideas – use suitable tokens such as buttons, milk carton lids etc and put into appropriately-sized containers
- Writing on post-it notes or luggage labels, stick them onto a large piece of paper or tie them onto a tree branch, for example

There are lots more ideas in the Evaluator’s Cookbook:

http://www.bath.ac.uk/marketing/public-engagement/assets/the_evaluators_cookbook_participatory_evaluation_exercises_for_young_people.pdf

3. Practical examples of how best to use different evaluation methods:

Visitor counters

- Consider installing a visitor counter which will automatically count the number of people coming into the church
- Use a hand-held clicker to count people, when a member of the project team is present

Visitors’ books

- Include columns for postcode (so you can see where people come from, and it is also a proxy for socio-economic data) and number of people in the group, as well as comments

Comments cards

- Think carefully about the questions on the comments cards, so that you get more focused responses than “Lovely church!”

Short sets of questions, e.g. after an activity

- Print on A5 or A6 paper or card (can be double-sided, in which case put “continue overleaf” or similar – less intimidating than A4)
- Give one to everyone to complete before they leave
- Make sure you have enough pens / pencils

Participatory activities

- Make evaluation activities part of your event (e.g. a churchyard wildlife event)
- Use e.g. voting for statements, writing comments on post-its, luggage labels tied to a branch, drawings (ask people to write a caption, or ask children to tell you about their drawing, so you know what it represents)

Longer surveys

- If possible, avoid the A4 clipboard approach

- Print on A5 if practicable; use a bulldog clip to fasten the survey form to an A5 notebook so you have something firm to write on. (Use A4 if necessary)
- Keep a refusals log of people who don't wish to complete the survey. Make a note in the notebook of any reasons they give, and things like their (estimated) age, whether they are in e.g. a family group or not, to see if there is a pattern of who does not want to complete the survey
- If there is wifi available, or a good enough mobile phone signal, consider using a tablet or mobile phone to carry out the survey, using Survey Monkey or Quick Tap Survey. This enters all the survey responses into the software which does the analysis for you and saves a lot of time
- Give visitors the link for the online survey and they can complete it on their phones or later at home
- Visitors can scan a QR code to get the survey and complete it on their phones. See <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5tTeCcmtIobREMzRXRvcVBpNIU/view> for instructions on how to create a QR code