

# Factsheet #7: Monitoring and Evaluation

There are many instances of good quality children and young people (CYP)'s participation, however, it is often difficult for those directly involved in its development and delivery to garner support from stakeholders. The theoretical benefits of participation are well known, but monitoring and evaluation provides good quality evidence to show the impact that participation has in practice, as well as helping to improve future practice.

## What is Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)?

Monitoring: assessing progress on an ongoing basis, e.g.

- A quick RAG rating activity at the end of each participation group meeting to see how included each CYP feels.
- A debrief after each formal meeting CYP attend with a 1 -5 scale on accessibility.

Evaluation: an assessment of a project at specific points in time, e.g.

- Reviewing the changes made to the local offer website after a CYP-led consultation.
- Reviewing changes to travel training a year after CYP input.

In both instances, the focus should be on outcomes and impact (what has changed?) as much as on outputs (what have we done?).

## What does Monitoring & Evaluation have to do with participation?

As with any project, M&E is an important part of the participation cycle to ensure that a programme or activity is effective. Good M&E can help you:

- Confirm that your organisation is fulfilling its duties regarding CYP voice and identify areas for development.
- Confirm that all relevant stakeholders are engaged in participatory activities, or identify those who are missing.
- Check if participation is actually working, and if positive change is being made.
- Identify and showcase good practice.
- Identify areas where further support or resources are needed.
- Evidence the benefits of participatory techniques.

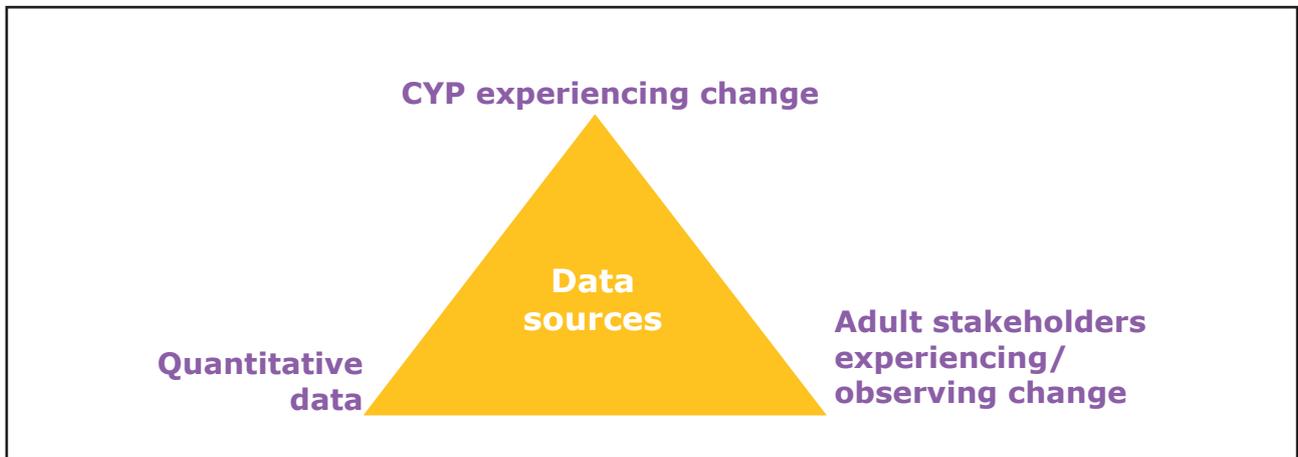
For more information, see [Factsheet #3: The Participation Process](#)

## Good Monitoring & Evaluation...

- Is planned from the beginning of a project or activity.
  - But is flexible and adaptable to changes in the context or programme



- Is based on good indicators, which have been co-produced with CYP.
- Uses multiple data sources (see an example below).
- Results in learning and change in practice and processes.



## What should be Monitored and Evaluated?

### The participation environment

Good participation starts with having well-embedded processes and structures to support participatory activities. By monitoring and evaluating the foundations of participation in your organisation or local area, you will be able to strengthen these processes and structures, and promote good participation practice throughout. This should be closely related to your participation strategy.

For support with developing or building on a participation strategy, see Making Participation Work's [Participation Strategy Exemplar](#)  
 For a framework for evaluating the structures and processes in place for participation in your local area, see our [Participation Audit Tool](#)

### Participatory projects and activities

Participatory projects and activities vary widely in scale and complexity; they could be anything from an individual child contributing to their Education, Health and Care plan, to a local authority-wide project on commissioning short breaks.



The approach to and depth of M&E procedures will vary depending on the activity, but should consider:

- Scope
  - When in the participation process were CYP involved?
  - Which CYP were involved?
  - To which degree were they involved?
  - How were a broad range of perspectives included?
- Quality
  - Was the participation activity inclusive, meaningful and effective?
- Outcomes - these will differ depending on the project or activity, and CYP should be involved in their development. Consider:
  - What change has been made/ will be made...
    - For the stakeholders directly involved in the project or activity?
    - For other stakeholders impacted by the result of the project or activity?
    - For processes and procedures?
  - Sustainability – does the change last?
    - Ideally, monitoring and evaluation will continue beyond the participation activity to identify resulting impact further down the line.

- For more information on degree, see [Treseder's Degrees of Participation](#)
- For more information on quality, see VIPER's [Ingredients of High Quality Participation](#)



Consider the changes made at individual, organisational and strategic levels.

**Individual:** What skills or understanding have individuals gained? How have their lives been impacted? Include CYP, adult professionals, parents etc.

**Organisational:** What changes have taken place across organisations? Include local authorities, CCGs, schools, voluntary sector organisations etc.

**Strategic:** What changes have been made regarding strategic decision-making at the local authority level as a result of this activity?

Tangible outcomes such as changes to policies or services and intangible ones such as skills development and rights awareness are equally valid and valuable outcomes. Both should be considered in your M&E processes.

- Feedback
  - Was timely and useful feedback given to CYP on how their input has been used?
  - Was the feedback honest and transparent, including areas where CYP recommendations have not been followed?

When considering these issues, ensure CYP perspectives are sought and included, as their perspectives on being involved may differ from adult expectations.

## Learning

Finally, M&E should facilitate learning and further change. Rather than being the end point of a participatory project, the data gathered through M&E should inform future participatory activities, and help shape participatory structures and practices themselves. Consider:

- What went particularly well?
- What could be improved?
- Could anything be done to increase the impact of CYP voices?
- Are there any other stakeholders whose support would be valuable for participation work?
- Would CYP or adult stakeholders benefit from further support or training?



Useful resources:

[Artworks \(2012\), Creative Evaluation Toolkit](#)

[Save the Children \(2014\), A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation](#)

Participation Works (2008), Hear By Right Self-Assessment Tool

Participation Works (2008), Evaluating Participation Work: The Guide

Participation Works (2008), Evaluating Participation Work: The Toolkit