

European Football for



Development Network

EFDN

MEL

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

GUIDE



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE	3
• WHO IS IT FOR?	3
MEL - WHAT IS IT?	4
• HISTORY OF MEL	4
• WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	5
THE ETHICS OF DATA COLLECTION	6
APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF MEL TO OUR PROJECTS	7
• PLANNING OUR MEL STRATEGY	10
• MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS	13
• THEORY OF CHANGE	13
• WHAT SHOULD WE MEASURE?	15
• WHAT DATA DO WE WANT TO COLLECT AND HOW?	16
• DEVELOPING AND MANAGING SURVEYS	19
• CASE STUDIES AND PARTICIPANT JOURNEYS	19
• REPORTING AND STORYTELLING	21
• WHAT DID WE LEARN?	21
• HOW DO WE EVALUATE CHANGE?	23
• TELLING DATA-DRIVEN STORIES	23
• UNDERSTANDING OUR AUDIENCE(S)	24
• HOW TO WRITE A GOOD IMPACT REPORT	25
CONTINUOUS LEARNING	27
WHAT CAN WE DO NEXT	28
RESOURCES	29
GLOSSARY OF MEL TERMS	30



THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This is a joint initiative from The European Football for Development Network (EFDN) and its chosen Monitoring & Evaluation partner, Upshot Systems CIC. EFDN clubs have access to the Upshot MEL system for EFDN's centrally-managed programmes and some also use Upshot for their local work. For more information on Upshot go to: www.upshot.org.uk or see the Resources section at the end of this guide.

In this guide, we introduce the principles of **MEL: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning** and show their practical application in the context of football-related sport for development projects. We will explore the benefits of good impact measurement and use case studies to show the power of understanding how we are doing and then adapting what we do in order to increase our impact.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Across the world, football is used as a tool to address a range of social issues such as social exclusion, health and wellbeing, crime, employability and many more. Football clubs make a huge contribution in this area but are often, due to lack of resources, time or knowledge, unable to showcase effectively the impact they make. MEL is

not a theoretical construct. It is a practical mindset which helps us learn and adapt so that our delivery and our work with our beneficiaries is as effective as it can be.

So this guide is for you:

- Coaches
- Project Managers
- Community organisers
- Session leaders
- Administrators
- Anyone involved in delivery who wants to know what their work is contributing to.

It is not a set of instructions - sometimes delivering the session on time and to the right effect is the best we can do. This guide is for the times when you want to learn a little more about the ideas and terminology of MEL, consider how you currently work, find solutions to common obstacles we all face - it's a sharing of learning and experience.

“ A GOOD MEL PROCESS SHOULD NOT ONLY PROVE THAT AN ORGANISATION IS CAPABLE OF DOING A GOOD JOB, AND WHERE THEY CAN IMPROVE - BUT HIGHLIGHTS THE PARTICIPANTS' NEEDS. MEL ONCE AGAIN, HELPS US 'KNOW WHAT WE DON'T KNOW' AS MUCH AS HELPS US KNOW WHAT WE DO KNOW. ”

- **Justin Coleman**, COO and Co-Founder at Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice -

Throughout we will discuss common challenges and recommended solutions that have worked for many organisations. Once we have the principles of MEL in mind we can try different approaches in different situations, analyse, fail, learn, adapt and try again. Only by doing so, will we best serve the ever-changing needs of our beneficiaries.

MEL – WHAT IS IT?

HISTORY OF MEL

From the 1960's, along with the growth of project management tools and methodologies, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has become increasingly important commercially and in the non-profit sector. Since 2000, as technology has rapidly developed in line with the need to assess return on investment, M&E has become more accessible to all, integral to project management not just an academic pursuit.

In the Sport for Development world, M&E has taken off in a big way: what was once confined to the 'nice-to-have' column on a budget is now a prerequisite. The proverbial 'first name on the team sheet'. Isolated and inefficient spreadsheets have been superseded by technology that has embraced the user-friendly technology age.

When we talk about M&E in Sport for Development, and the wider third sector, we refer to it as the collection of information and data from projects and programmes, used to track results and provide accountability. This, in effect, is monitoring.

Evaluation then is analysing this data to assess the results, processes and contextual factors to inform future practice, decision making and policy. The part that often gets missed out is the Learning – with a capital L! This is where we use the information gathered through M&E to reflect on our experiences, celebrate successes and improve our objectives.



“ CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS BETTER THAN DELAYED PERFECTION ”

– Mark Twain –

Globally, the M&E landscape is changing. Governments and public bodies are placing increasing emphasis on sport's role to deliver against social outcomes. Funders issuing capacity building grants, for the likes of impact measurement, are becoming the norm. CSR and 'corporate global citizenship' programmes need to communicate impact (not just generosity!) to stakeholders, senior leadership, employees, customers and the community.

This iterative approach made adding the 'L' for **learning** to the already established

processes of monitoring and evaluation inevitable. It is a methodology which enables a more shared and open view of results and performance for the benefit of ongoing strategies. In the non-profit sector especially, where resources and investment are traditionally more scarce than in the commercial world, this has led to greater efficiency and avoidance of "re-inventing the wheel". A MEL approach also offers more opportunity to co-design programmes based on the ever-changing needs of beneficiaries.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

To be effective, any organisation should work towards set objectives and manage data, monitor progress, evidence their achievements and learn from what happened.

The objectives need to be defined and communicated ahead of time - before the first whistle, rather than once the game has started. In the non-profit world this is often not the case; whether due to lack of resources, perceived time pressure to “get things done” or other barriers, this can lead to a lack of consistency and understanding of the goal across even the most dynamic organisations.

Measuring the impact of our programmes has never been more important, with more demand for funding, complex challenges and demanding performance indicators.

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to demonstrate the critical role that NGOs and sports charities

in particular, can have in tackling social and economic inequalities. Getting people active again is hugely important as we recover from the health crisis and we need to know that our initiatives are working.

Funders at a global and local level often run new iterations of their programmes in succession. MEL is an important approach

at all levels: collecting data and feedback from beneficiaries can influence programme design and ultimately real social change at the highest level, if the mechanism for sharing insights is available. To do this effectively it is important that all “players in the team” are using the same terminology and that the methodology is understood by all and embedded at every level.

“ SOCIAL IMPACT IS SUSTAINABLE CHANGE. THEREFORE, WE CAN DRAW BASELINES AND MEASURE THEM ALONG THE PROJECT'S LIFE CYCLES. BUT THE REAL IMPACT CAN ONLY BE MEASURED LATER IN LIFE. THEREFORE, UNDER THESE PREMISES, GOOD IMPACT MEASUREMENT IS REALLY CRITICAL SINCE IT ALLOWS US TO CONTINUOUSLY VERIFY IF WE ARE GOING ON THE RIGHT PATH TO SUCCESS. WITHOUT IT, WE CAN ONLY BELIEVE THAT WE ARE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS. ”

– Jorge Miranda, Director, Fundação Benfica –



ETHICS OF DATA COLLECTION

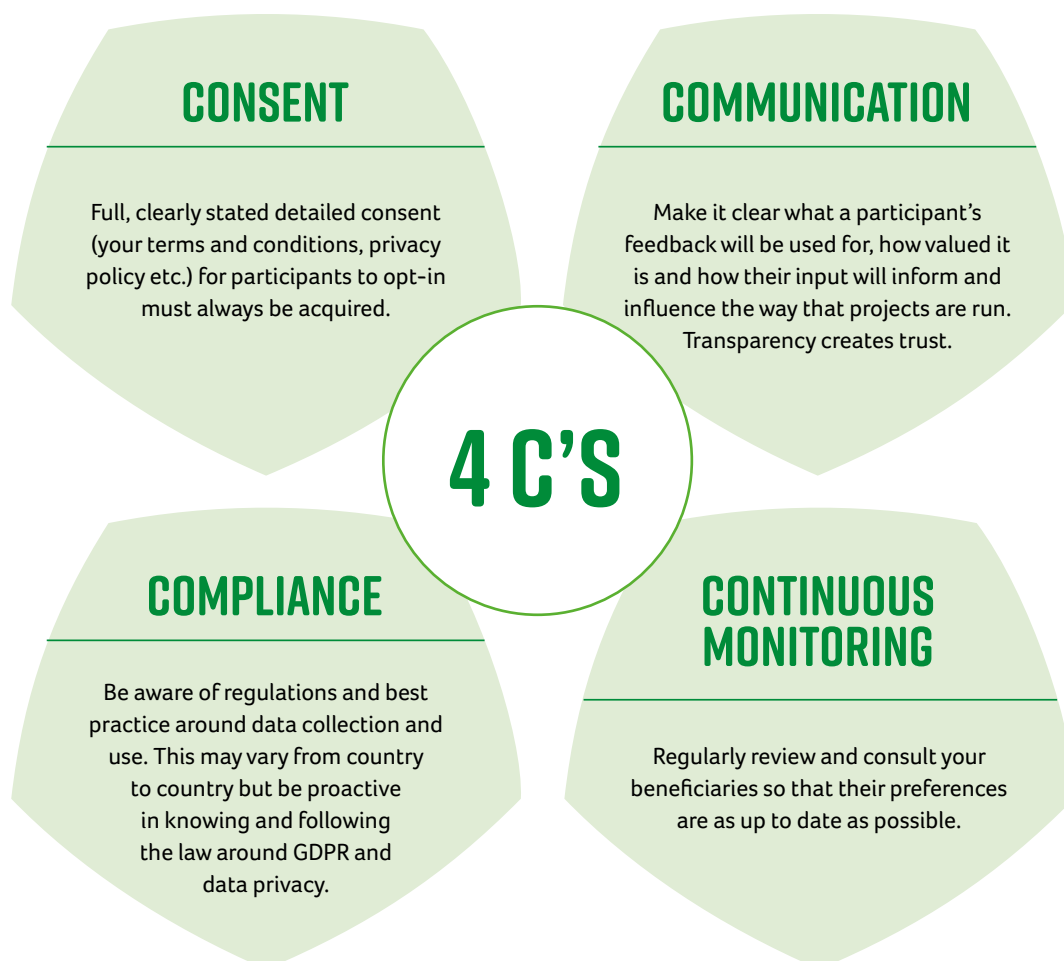
Before we practically apply some of the MEL principles explained so far - there are some important considerations around the ethics of data collection.

Have you personally ever:

- been annoyed by being asked to complete a survey?
- wondered where someone has got your contact details from?
- been asked questions and you have no idea why?
- received too many emails on subjects you are not interested in or you didn't sign up for?
- or felt that your opinions have not been asked for or are not valued?

You know how that feels and these are all very valid concerns. A good starting point is to put yourself in the shoes of the people you are collecting data from and about.

THE 4 C'S - KEY AREAS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN COLLECTING DATA FROM YOUR BENEFICIARIES:



For further information on data privacy, consent and GDPR see Resources section.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF MEL TO OUR PROJECTS



BEFORE WE KICK OFF, THERE ARE A FEW KEY POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND.





PLANNING OUR MEL STRATEGY

THE CYCLE OF MEL (MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING) TO HELP YOU PLAN

PLAN

Decide on the impact you want to make – whether through a Logic Model, Theory of Change, or Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. Decide what you want to measure and assess the measurement tools you have in place.

LEARN

Make decisions about your work going forward based on your evaluation. Share what you have learned and don't be afraid to change as you return to the planning stage. Update your plans, e.g. add new measures, use different tools if required.

MONITOR

Collect the data to show the work you are delivering. Use your measurement tools and record all results.

EVALUATE

Analyse the data you collected. Assess what the information is telling you and make judgements as appropriate.



Planning our MEL strategy is the first step to any project. There are many ways to do this – some simple, others more complex and time consuming to create. If developing your own, it is good to consider how much time and resource is needed – what do our inputs for this programme look like?

Funders such as UEFA, the EU and EFDN may have their own frameworks so that the organisations they support work towards the same outcomes and in the same ways.

One simple way we can start to think about this is to use a 1 page framework

such as this (see blank example to use in the Resources section).

I BELIEVE THAT... MEL UNITED FC COMMUNITY TRUST

ARE...	DELIVER...	SO THAT WE CAN...
<p>Key facts and statistics</p> <p>A football club community trust Working with 700 students across 45 schools.</p> <p>Active in London, Lisbon and Breda</p> <p>Changing the lives of our participants through improving behaviours and attitudes through football, other sport and community activities.</p>	<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football Training programmes • Leadership programmes • Tournaments • Resource platforms • Grassroots Festivals 	<p>End goals, life goals, outcomes</p> <p>Support our young people to develop skills to thrive in life.</p> <p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding exclusion • Develop social skills • Improve physical and mental wellbeing • Increase self confidence
TO GAUGE SUCCESS WE NEED TO...	BARRIERS...	OPPORTUNITIES...
<p>Organisational goals, KPIs and metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help 200 young people become volunteers, coaches and young leaders in the community. • Expand to 100 the network of schools we work in sport and community activities. 	<p>What will stop us achieving these goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underinvestment in internal operations • Lack of support from school partners • High staff turnover 	<p>What opportunities can we take to meet these goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise referrals • Partnerships with impact and delivery experts • Develop new pathways for coaches, first aiders, volunteers...

Once we have a clear plan of what we want to achieve, mindful of the resources (sometimes referred to as **inputs**) we have at our disposal, we can plan the data we collect in relation to the outcomes we want to achieve.

PLANNING YOUR DATA COLLECTION

What are we working towards?

OUTCOMES

For example:

- Increase diversity
- Decrease social isolation
- Increase participation

What are we delivering?

ACTIVITIES

For example:

- Workshops
- Mentoring
- Events

What we need to achieve?

INDICATORS + TARGETS

For example:

- 80 female participants in 6 months
- 50 sessions delivered in 12 months
- 1000 attendances in a year.

How are we collecting data?

TOOLS

For example:

- Registers
- Head counts
- Surveys

Who is collecting the data?

COLLECTORS

For example:

- Staff member
- Volunteer Session Leader
- Mentor

How are we going to see the data?

REPORTS

For example:

- Attendance reports – how many?
- People reports – who?
- Notes/events over time – a case study.

MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORKS

This can then be organised into a framework which helps us manage the inputs needed to deliver the project.

Do we have the right people?
Usable systems? Time? Money?

For example you can link up:

- **Impact** or broad overall objective we want to achieve:
- **Global** and Organisation outcomes – the different aims we have – these could be your own organisation’s outcomes or

those of funders or external strategies you are contributing to.

- **Projects and programmes** – how we organise what we deliver. **These** are then linked to specific outcomes. The **activities** are what we deliver – also sometimes called our **outputs**.
- **KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)** - what we want to measure and how will we know if we are successful – with **targets** which give a benchmark to what we are delivering.

- **Measurement Tools** – the data we will gather to feed into our KPI targets.

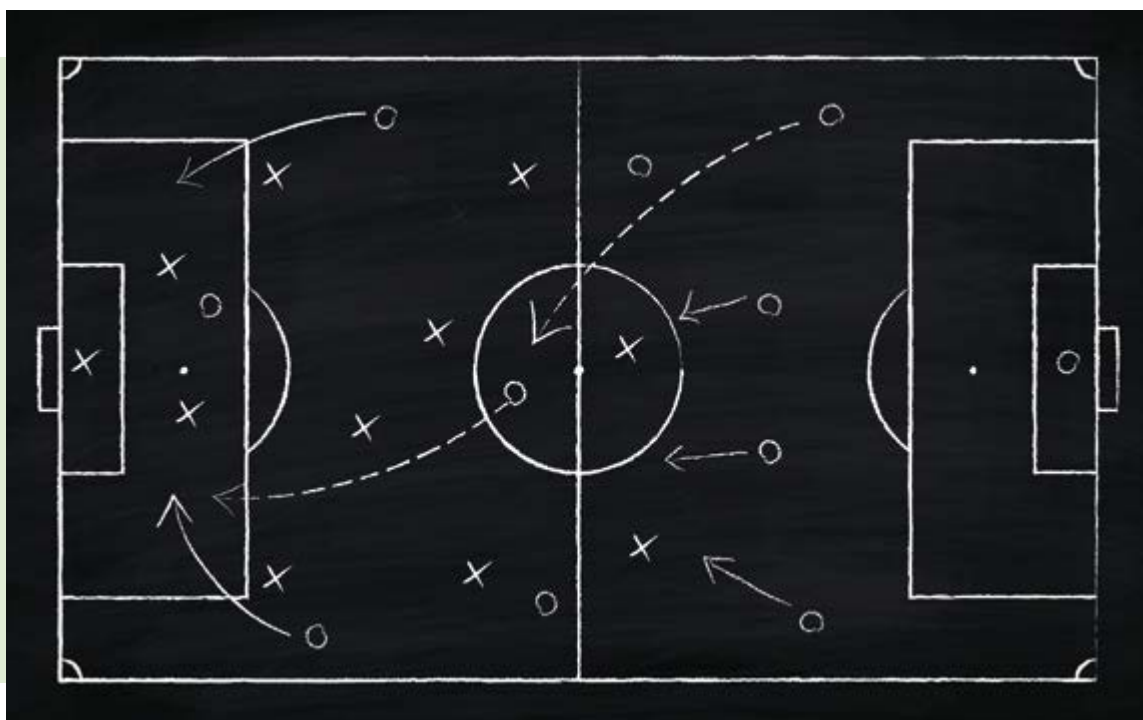
Frameworks help to keep everyone aware of the common goal(s) and rules of engagement. Developing a simple measurement framework or logic model can help organisations manage their work effectively. Contact EFDN or Upshot for help with finding support on this.

THEORY OF CHANGE

One of the most popular types of framework is a Theory of Change (ToC) which helps to show, either for the whole organisation with several programmes or for one programme only, what we want to achieve and how we can all play our part - a bit like planning tactics for a match. But like those tactics a Theory of Change is fluid, reflecting the learnings gained during the project so that methods of delivery, indicators and even in some cases the goals we want to achieve can be shifted based on real-time monitoring.

“ **GOOD IMPACT MEASUREMENT ALLOWS US TO MAKE DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT WE NEED TO SPEND OUR TIME ON TO ENSURE WE’RE CONTINUALLY IMPROVING OUR PROJECTS AND THEIR IMPACT. IT’S AN IMPORTANT PART OF ANY PROJECT LIFECYCLE AND HAVING A GOOD SYSTEM IN PLACE TO SUPPORT THIS MAKES LIFE MUCH EASIER FOR EVERYONE.** ”

– **Innes Shirreff**, Operations Manager, Big Hearts Community Trust –



What is the Theory of Change?



A Theory of Change shows the big picture with all the possible pathways – can be complex just like most organisations! Things are not always neatly aligned but it is a way of tracking what is happening and also what could happen - it is a living, changing representation of how we work and how we

would like to work based on experience and learning.

See the Theory of Change kindly shared by Girls United FA in the resources section - www.girlsunitedfa.org

TOP TIP

At the start of a project or season we could hold a workshop or a meeting for all staff, coaches and volunteers to have a shared view of the outcomes, indicators, activities and data collection plan as it is set out. But remember we want an ongoing live view, so it's always good to ask for feedback: from all especially those you want to collect the data.



WHAT SHOULD WE MEASURE?

Over the course of a football season we measure success based on the number of wins, goals scored and clean sheets - these are the indicators by which we evaluate the season.

Indicators help us decide what we want to measure and targets give us a way of assessing how we are doing in reality. Many programmes will come with pre-defined indicators set by a funder for example. But if you want to create some for your own organisation or project here are a few things to remember.

Indicators (KPIs) are:

- linked directly to the goals and state the **outputs** - information, products, processes, services or results you hope to produce that will support attainment of the goal.

- reflect what you hope to produce by undertaking a specific activity. For example: You decide you want to train people (the activity) then the objective will relate to the knowledge you have increased.
- usually reflect a result achieved in a relatively short-time period (0-2 years).

In some tools, such as Upshot, indicators are split into 2 types:

- Measured Indicators** are set up to ask the question of how many and in what timeframe.
- Evidenced indicators** can be set up to collect evidence through deliverables which confirm our work once achieved: the annual report, 5 video testimonials, 100 social media posts etc.

Sharing targets and aims increases the involvement and motivation from all

involved and we should always be open to feedback from our team, stakeholders and our participants.

- Are the targets realistic? What do our deliverers think is achievable?
- Can we increase our number of participants?
- How many sessions can we run this month?
- How many coaches can we see trained and gaining a qualification?

What kind of feedback do we get from participants? What would they like to see more/less of? Consider inclusivity and diversity in terms of your team and your beneficiaries - are you getting different perspectives that can help think of a variety of ways to deliver, what success might look like, how barriers to participation might be overcome.

For more information about Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity see resources.

TOP TIP

Indicators are best when they are

SMART:

- S**pecific: 50 new coaches trained in 6 months
- M**easurable: By trained we mean passed a specific coaching qualification.
- A**chievable: We have the resources in place and it is realistic given the time period, working conditions, interest etc.
- R**elevant: Working towards the defined outcome - increasing employment opportunities for refugees through football coaching.
- T**ime-bound: From 1st Jan to 30th June - 6 month period measures only those qualifications achieved in that time.

“ FERENCVÁROS, AS PROJECT PARTNER SO FAR DELIVERED OVER 200 ACTIVITIES IN 2 ONGOING PROJECTS COORDINATED BY EFDN. AN EFFECTIVE M&E TOOL, SUCH AS UPSHOT HIGHLY CONTRIBUTES TO THE TRANSPARENCY, THE REPORTING AND THE PROOF OF RESULTS OF SUCH COMPLEX PROJECTS WE DELIVER TOGETHER TO CHANGE LIVES THROUGH FOOTBALL. ”

– **Bálint Máté**, head of International department –



WHAT DATA DO WE WANT TO COLLECT AND HOW?

Now that we have linked our outcomes, indicators and planned our data collection – what kind of data do we want to collect?

Quantitative data is measurable:

- how many sessions
- number of participants
- number of attendances
- number of accreditations gained
- survey data such as scale questions, “how many?” questions
- number of people engaged who have a specific demographic characteristic (gender, ethnicity, location, medical condition, disability...etc.)

Qualitative data is subjective and descriptive, it refers to things that are observed rather than counted:

- quotes – “I loved the football session because it made me feel part of a team”
- notes/observations – “the participants were really lively today, lots of smiles”
- Open questions in surveys (see surveys section) – “In your own words, what did you like about the programme?”

DIFFERENT TYPES OF DATA TO PROVE IMPACT

PARTICIPANT DATA

The **demographics** of your participants.

It’s important to know if you are reaching who you aim to reach.

ATTENDANCE DATA

The attendance or **engagement** of your services and activities.

It’s important to know who is turning up, when, what they’re attending and how many times.

FEEDBACK DATA

The **quality** and perception of the services and activities you are delivering.

It’s important to know what stakeholders, including participants think of your delivery.

OUTCOMES DATA

The **difference** that is being made through your services and activities to participants’ lives.

It’s important to know what changes are happening to participants as a consequence of your delivery.

IMPACT DATA

The **difference** that has been made in the long-term.

It’s important to know whether services have made a long-term difference to the participants, families or wider communities they are there to serve.



source: UPSHOT – upshot.org.uk

Participant data

What personal data do we need from each participant? How does this relate to our outcomes? For instance, if our aim is to increase female participation, we will need to ask the gender of the participant. If we want to measure how many people from each school attended our sessions, we need to ask

the question which school are you from. It is also very important to define the terms and conditions associated with us holding this data – what are the participants agreeing to?

It is also worth considering the types of data fields that will help us in our reporting.

Text fields allow participants to express themselves – but Tickboxes, Yes/No answers, Single or Multiple-choice options will help you quantify more easily.

The image shows a registration form with three main sections:

- Basic details:** Includes text input fields for 'First name', 'Last name', and 'Nickname'. Below 'First name' and 'Nickname' is the text 'A first name or a nickname is required'. There is a 'Gender' dropdown menu and a 'Date of Birth' field with a calendar icon and the example 'e.g. 26/05/2001'.
- Equalities details:** Includes three dropdown menus for 'Disability', 'Ethnicity', and 'Sexual orientation', each with a 'Select...' option.
- Permissions:** Includes three checkboxes:
 - Has consented for us to use photos or other media of them
 - Is happy to receive surveys via Upshot
 - Has consented to receive emails via Upshot

 For more guidance on GDPR and personal data see the resources section.

Attendance data

Once participants are registered with the club, recording when individuals attended sessions enables us to build up a view of an individual's engagement through quantitative data by completing registers when they attend.

It is a good idea to consider how registers will be taken, by who and some of the barriers to collecting this important data. For instance, there are tools which make it easy for a coach to click on their phone to confirm or edit a draft register

If we do not have people registered, can we collect the number of participants as just a **head count** i.e the fact that 30 people attended? It is also possible to add more detail to head counts – for instance asking the 30 people who attended but we do not have signed up -

- “ Hands Up! How many live to the north of the club - or to the south?”
- “ For how many of you is this your first time playing football?”

“ Arrange yourselves in age order – who's the oldest and who is the youngest?”

It's a busy role being a coach - with many participants for example in a school session, but there are many ways to collect data – if the coach or session leader can build this into the session and see the benefits, data collection becomes part of the fun of the delivery.

MEL BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE:

SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD – CLUB BRUGGE



For Club Brugge, as for many clubs, it was not possible to have the individual details of the school children they were delivering to. So they devised a way of using a unique number for each child - this enabled much richer data than just collecting head counts; including comparisons of surveys (pre and post project to show change over time), identify age ranges of participants and frequency of attendance without linking to personal details.

REFERENCE:

<https://www.efdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FINAL-VERSION-PP-CONFERENCE.pdf>

Feedback Data

Having a coach as an observer making notes on another coach's session.

A feedback box or smiley faces options at the session

In real time - participant feedback sessions "Tell us what you think!"

Parent feedback - what change or reaction do they see in their child?



DEVELOPING AND MANAGING SURVEYS

To survey is to use a mechanism and the tool used is termed a survey. A questionnaire is a set of questions. Completing surveys can be a good way to show change over time – compare responses at the start of a programme, part way through, at the end, at regular intervals.

For EFDN’s centrally-managed programmes there are specific surveys for each. If you do want to create your own questionnaires/ surveys - don’t reinvent the wheel! There are many accredited surveys available, created by academic and subject matter experts and these are a good place to start. Using these widely- deployed, accredited tools, allows you to benchmark your delivery against those in similar programmes to yourselves or against other sectors. – See Resources section.

To do an effective comparison - don’t move the goalposts! Ask the same people the same questions at different points in time – a starting point (baseline or pre-project) and for example 6 months, 12 months later.

Use a mixture of quantitative questions (On a scale of 1-5 how do you feel about....) these are closed questions where a choice of answers is defined and qualitative or open questions (Tell us how you feel about))

TOP TIP

Think about the place, time and situation of the person filling in a survey. For example, if you are running a pre or baseline survey at the start of your project - are the participants so excited to take part that they are feeling super happy! If so you may not have space to show fairly the impact on their thoughts and feelings in the post survey- at the end of the project.

You will have data to compare over time for individuals and cohorts of people, and some great quotes to use as evidence.

Surveys can also be used anonymously and so not linked to an individual participant’s profile. In some ways because when the responses are not linked these are less powerful as evidence.

However, anonymity can encourage more honest and interesting feedback. When you want to gain real uninhibited feedback - for example asking how participants rated a session, consider the best option and one which may lead to more responses is the anonymous survey.

Sometimes it is not possible to survey individual participants at all whether collecting linked responses or anonymous ones. In this case you can still gain a pre and post comparison by making one general link available to all - before and after the delivery of the project.

The non-personalised, aggregated data can still be compared for example by %.

Pre – 25% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they felt they were able to lead a training session

Post – 85% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they felt they were able to lead a training session

“ AT UPSHOT WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS CRITICAL THAT SPORTS ORGANISATIONS GET BETTER AT EVALUATING WHETHER THEY ARE ACHIEVING THEIR OBJECTIVES. USING DATA TO MEASURE OUTCOMES SHOULD BE AT THE CENTRE OF WHAT ALL ORGANISATIONS DO. BY COLLECTING, RECORDING AND ANALYSING REAL-TIME DATA THROUGH UPSHOT THEY CAN DO THIS MORE EASILY THAN EVER BEFORE. ”

– Preeti Shetty, CEO Upshot Systems –

CASE STUDIES AND PARTICIPANT JOURNEYS

Recording milestones, achievements or changes in circumstances can form a powerful narrative about the impact a project can have on an individual. Over time, when we have gathered enough evidence about individuals and recorded individual milestones, this data can be aggregated across a cohort or a programme to show overall impact. It is also a good way of showing evidence of achieving outcomes, whether with a micro individual lens, or from a wider macro viewpoint.

TOP TIP

Build a narrative from different perspectives. When adding milestones to someone’s journey include (with permission) input from different people in the club - coaches, mentors, players, volunteers to give a rounded 360 degree story. Where possible obtain quotes directly from participants to give real meaning to the narrative.

MEL BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE:

WELCOME THROUGH FOOTBALL – FOUNDATION BENFICA



On the 1st of October, the captain of the Afghanistan women’s football team Farkunda Muhtaj was welcomed by the club first at the Estádio da Tapadinha, a 4,000 seater stadium in Lisbon, where she was the recipient of a personalized Benfica jersey, before heading to the world-famous Estádio da Luz, where the young Afghan girls trained with the club’s players and received kits for the U15 and U16 teams. By doing so, Muhtaj became the first Afghani woman to train with the senior squad of the Benfica women’s team. This was an opportunity granted by the Welcome Through Football project that has its main objective to integrate and help refugees and migrants.

“ I WANT TO THANK BENFICA FOR ALL THEY HAVE DONE FOR THE AFGHAN WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM, AN INCREDIBLE GIFT – THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR THE AFGHAN NATIONAL YOUTH TEAM TO PLAY AGAINST THE YOUNG BENFICA PLAYERS. I WAS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO TRAIN WITH THE FEMALE SENIOR TEAM. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT, GENEROSITY AND KINDNESS. ”

– Farkhunda Muhtaj, Afghanistan women’s national team captain –

Media also helps to bring your evidence to life! If you are able to collect this and store centrally, those people in your team who will be doing the reporting can easily find media to illustrate the project.

Video is a great way to record feedback direct from participants – a short video of someone saying how happy a football session has made them compared to before, can be a very powerful addition to the story which engages stakeholders emotionally as well as logically. Media can bring sessions

to life and be very effective evidence. It is important to ensure that participants have given consent for media to be used – see Ethics of Data collection. Using mobile technology, we can take photos and videos on site and in real time; keeping a live, ongoing record of our delivery.

REPORTING AND STORYTELLING

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

If our football team keeps playing with exactly the same tactics and keeps losing matches - are we learning from our experience? Evaluating what has worked and what has not, helps us make meaningful change in order to see if we get different results - it is an ongoing process.

Examples: Surveys done at the start of the programme and at the end show by comparison that this group overall, increased the amount of physical activity they do in a week -

For example, the change between the two surveys was less in female participants? Can we ask them why - what can we learn from this - what can we change?

What are the participants' thoughts and aims going forward after the programme? What can we provide to sustain this change in physical activity?

Example: In one of our videos, a participant says she has loved the chance to play football at the school but now in the school holidays she will be unable to travel to

sessions? Learning: can we provide sessions in more areas, can transport be provided or shared?

What else can we learn from our beneficiaries and what can we feed back to funders about the design of the programme and resources needed?

There may also be unexpected outcomes or even negative outcomes – these provide vital learning. If we do not have a clear picture of what is happening, how can we learn from these and change?

Q1: I've been feeling optimistic about the future *

	First survey	Second survey
Scale		
1	2 28.57%	0 0.00%
2	4 57.14%	0 0.00%
3	1 14.29%	1 14.29%
4	0 0.00%	4 57.14%
5	0 0.00%	2 28.57%
Median	2.00	4.00
Median change		+2.00

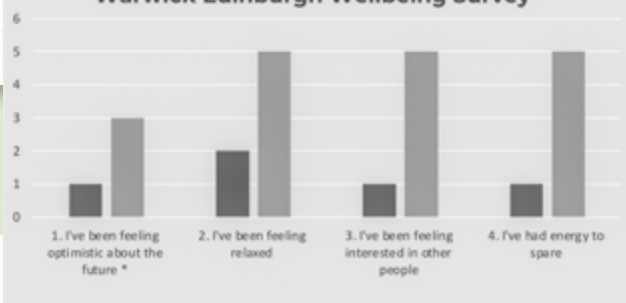
Q5: I've had energy to spare

	First survey	Second survey	Change
None of the time	3 30.00%	0 0.00%	-3 -100.00%
Rarely	3 50.00%	0 0.00%	-3 -100.00%
Some of the time			
Often			
All of the time			

Sarah a

Question	First survey	Second survey
1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future	Some of the time	All of the time
2. I've been feeling useful	None of the time	Often
	Rarely	Often
	Rarely	All of the time
	Rarely	All of the time
	Rarely	All of the time
	Rarely	All of the time

Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Survey



 Showing change over time for individuals and cohorts of people

OUTCOMES: DIFFERENT TYPES



TARGETED OUTCOMES

Positive changes you hoped for.

They need to be achievable, measurable and specific to the context you are working in. Ensure your tools and methods enable you to capture to what extent you achieved the outcomes you desired.

How do your findings match against the outcomes you have targeted in order to achieve your longer-term impact?

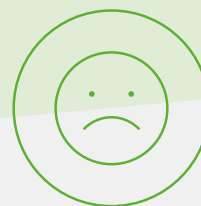


UNINTENDED OUTCOMES

Changes you did not foresee (positive or negative).

By asking open-ended questions to beneficiaries and those around them you can gain insight into what changes have happened in their lives and how much of that change resulted from your services.

Make sure you give space for information from your staff and volunteers too. How are you collecting this?



NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

Undesirable changes that happened.

We must accept that it is possible for organisations, however well-meaning, to cause adverse effects as well as improvements. Make sure you are open to all feedback and make the expression of complaints and concerns accessible to all.

Be brave and ask beneficiaries directly if anything has got worse for them as a result of your work - embrace the chance to learn and improve.

HOW DO WE EVALUATE CHANGE?

One way of evaluating change is to view the **distance travelled** of a participant. This can effectively be viewed through a narrative journey or case study with milestones and events added to a person's unique timeline from different contributors.

A starting point might be that they have joined our club. The evidence would be the recorded milestones added over time such as:

- Applied to take part in a coaching course.
- First assisted a coach in delivering a football session
- First time they have planned and delivered football session solo
- Passed accredited coaching course.
- Volunteered at a local club
- Employed as part time coach

It is also possible to add to this narrative and record the comments of an individual on their journey, either as answers to surveys or comments and notes taken when interacting with the participant. Always ensure consent is given for these details to be recorded.

Clearly defined outcomes and SMART indicators can help us evaluate and see change - whether that is with an individual or a community. While we have a timeline or case study which tells the story we can add a quantitative measure to this which helps to evidence our work towards a specific indicator which in turn is linked to one or more outcomes.

For example:

Indicator = The number of refugees achieving coaching qualifications.

Target = 30 in the time period 1st June - 30th September 2021.

Outcome = Increase employability opportunities for refugees in our community.

Evidence

- Recorded individual case studies, with notes, comments and narratives with the milestone of gaining employment as a coach.
- Number of accreditations gained by a cohort of participants in a specific time frame which increases the opportunities to become employed.

In many Sport for Development projects around the world, the outcomes that are aimed for are often linked to social issues such as improving physical and mental health, increasing community cohesion, increasing personal confidence, reducing social isolation and decreasing violence and crime.

Projects such as these can be incredibly impactful and important in their communities and for the individuals taking part. However, it is really important to consider the external influence of factors outside of the scope of the project in both a positive and negative sense. Being very transparent about the impact, but also the barriers to effectiveness, our delivery may have, is part of the MEL approach and provides important learning for ongoing programme design and project delivery.



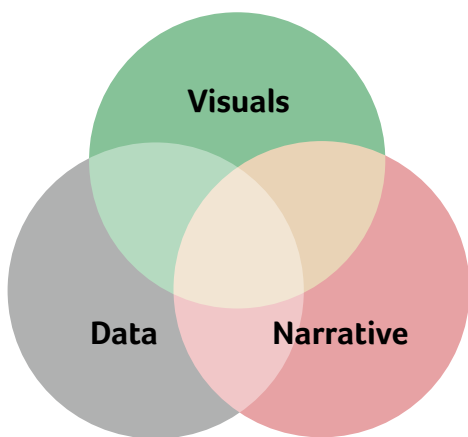
TELLING DATA-DRIVEN STORIES

Telling a story about our project without using the data we have collected would be like a football match report that does not include the number of goals, who scored, when they scored, attendance, who was player of the match.....

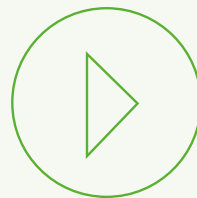
Having collected the Who, What, When, Where details, use it to engage with your chosen audience. Visuals such as charts, graphs, infographics will help give substance to your story.

USING DATA TO TELL YOUR STORY

Data Storytelling is a way of communicating the insights you have from the data you have collected. There are 3 main elements:



Engage and entertain your audience with a **narrative** – the story of Who, When, What, Where and How – featuring easy to process **visuals**.



Enlighten your **data** with **visuals** which depict meaning and context beyond just the numbers!



Explain what is happening by referencing your **data** in the **narrative** for context and emphasis.



Visuals are processed

60,000 x

faster than text.

source: UPSHOT – upshot.org.uk

UNDERSTANDING OUR AUDIENCE(S)

It is not only important that we know what content we include in our stories, but also who will be interested in them – and one will influence the other.

For example, are we talking to the EU/UEFA – governing bodies? Are we talking to the fans of the club? What will they be most interested in? What do we want to say to a wider audience – via social media perhaps?

And what is the reason for telling our story – to create a good image/reputation? To encourage support and funding? To gain a specific grant for a specific

programme? While a good story has a beginning, middle and end, as for many aspects of MEL it is always good to start with the end in mind.

“ WE NEEDED A SYSTEM FOR ALL OF OUR PROJECTS TO INDICATE WHAT THE RESULTS ARE. FOR THE COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS LEAGUE WE DID USE UPSHOT, BY USING THE SAME APPROACH ACROSS ALL OUR PROJECTS WE CAN BE CONSISTENT IN OUR MONITORING AND EVALUATING THROUGHOUT THE ORGANISATION. ”

– Ilse Kleinjan, Afdeling MVO, NAC Maatschappelijk –

HOW TO WRITE A GOOD IMPACT REPORT

Tell your story, show your impact:

WHAT

- **Need:** What is the problem that we are trying to address?
- **Activities:** What are we doing to address this?
- **Outcomes:** What are we aiming to see happen as a result of our activities?
- **Evidence:** How will we know what we have done?
- **Lessons learnt:** What did we learn? And how will we change our work to improve?

HOW

- **Clarity:** 'The reader can quickly and easily understand the organisation through a coherent narrative that connects aims, plans, activities and results.'

- **Accessibility:** 'Relevant information can be found by anyone who looks for it, in a range of formats suitable for different stakeholders.' See considering your audience(s).
- **Transparency:** 'Reporting is full, open and honest.' Some of the best impact reports reflect failures as well as successes.
- **Accountability:** 'Reporting connects with stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries to tell them what they need to know, and provide reassurance.' Impact reporting is all about being accountable for your work. In our report we should be upfront about our commitment and motivations.
- **Verifiability:** 'Claims about impact are backed up appropriately with both quantitative and qualitative evidence, allowing others to review - whether by informal stakeholder review or external evaluation.'

“ NO NUMBERS WITHOUT STORIES, NO STORIES WITHOUT NUMBERS ”

– New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) –

- **Proportionality:** 'The level and detail of reporting reflects the size and complexity of the organisation, and the complexity of the changes they're trying to bring about.' Brevity is always welcome but some topics warrant more detail - how can we summarise for those looking for a quick overview of your work.'



MEL BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE:

COME ON LET'S PLAY – SHAHKTAR SOCIAL



REFERENCE:

<https://www.efdn.org/blog/resource/15th-efdn-conference-shakhtar-social-come-on-lets-play/>

And tell the story of your project with the same passion you show when delivering it!

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

During the Covid-19 pandemic across the world people were forced to think differently and try new ways of working, socialising and living. Organisations had to change the way they communicated and provided vital services - new things were tried and many did not work. What was invaluable is that through that experience we truly know more about how to improve. What is the alternative to continuous learning? Doing the same thing and, not surprisingly, getting the same results. If we want to improve we must not fear the **F-Word**.



FIRST ATTEMPT IN LEARNING

Culturally, it is difficult to accept failure and yet some of the most powerful changes for the better come from sharing information about what went wrong. The 'black box' approach in the airline industry has saved countless lives. Failings are shared openly across the industry in order to provide improved passenger safety.

Some examples of open questions to consider when looking back on the project:

- How did our online sessions go compared to our face-to-face work? What can we learn?
- Did everyone complete the questionnaire? What can we learn about the barriers?
- How many people attended one session but did not return? What can we learn from them?
- Did the timing of the sessions work - too long, too short - were there people who could not attend - why?

“ AS AN ORGANISATION, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW TO MAKE YOUR STRATEGY MEASURABLE, TO RECORD IT, AND THEN TO LEARN FROM IT. IT ALSO HELPS TO COMMUNICATE CREDIBLE FIGURES TO YOUR STAKEHOLDERS. FOR THE LONG TERM, IT HELPS TO DETERMINE YOUR FURTHER STRATEGY. ”

– Hubert Rovers, CEO EFDN –

WHAT CAN WE DO NEXT

Data helps give context and emphasis to the stories we want to tell to all of our different audiences - our successes, our unexpected outcomes, the targets we achieved, the ones we missed and crucially what we learned.

Now imagine a football club in another part of the world is embarking on their own project - buoyed by support from the same funder, excited to start delivering their sessions.

If we have shared our findings in an impact report and given a true reflection of what worked and what failed, our funder will be able to advise other clubs about what we learned. Even more importantly, our funder may decide to modify the programme and its focus based on our learning. This is where MEL can make a difference both locally and on a worldwide level. In turn this can make more clubs interested in running the programme and so the ripples of our MEL best practice continue...

On a worldwide level, MEL is a mechanism that can influence policy and influence change. Linking our outcomes - for instance on social inclusion - to globally acknowledged standards such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) gives our club a connection to a worldwide movement for change



and better lives for individuals and communities.

For instance, EFDN's Scoring for Health programme promoting awareness of healthy eating and exercise is linked to the SDG 03 Good health and well-being.

One of the things we could do with the data collected is to partner with an evaluator. Evaluators are professional, academic agencies who can interpret your data and impact report to analyse independently where your learning sits in the larger scale of research and development.

This can be done on a small scale - for instance benchmarking how the project compares to others in your country and any new approaches that have worked or not.

On a larger scale at the height of best practice an evaluator can provide a Randomised Control Trial (RCT). This essentially compares the impact of the project versus what would have happened without running the project. All these services add credibility to our project - and your project contributes to improved understanding of how change happens.



RESOURCES

Presentations and case studies from EFDN and member clubs go to:

<https://www.efdn.org/resources/>

For more general information about Upshot go to:

www.upshot.org.uk/resources

For guidance on good impact reporting from New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) go to:

www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/result-what-good-impact-reporting-looks-like

For guidance on creating indicators and M&E toolkits from Better Evaluation go to:

<https://www.betterevaluation.org>

For guidance on GDPR in the UK from Information Commissioner's Office go to:

www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr

For guidance on GDPR in the EU from the European Union go to:

www.gdpr.eu

For guidance on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion from The National Council for Voluntary Organisations go to:

www.knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/get-started-with-equity-diversity-and-inclusion

For an example of a Theory of Change for football-related programmes go to:

<https://www.girlsunityfa.org/about-us>

GLOSSARY OF MEL TERMS

Activities – what an organisation delivers, i.e. your events, trainings and interventions.

Attendee – a participant in your activities, those who attend. Also sometimes called participants, beneficiaries, service users.

Data – facts, statistics and information collected together for reference or analysis.

Distanced Travelled – the measured change between an individual's starting point and where they are today in different criteria.

Evaluation – analysis of data to assess results, processes and contextual factors.

Evaluators – professional agencies or academics who can interpret your data, analyse independently and in a wider context to tell you if your intervention has worked

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation – a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information from individuals who live in the European Union (EU).

Head counts – a register that records number of people attending rather than personalised data.

Impact – The positive and negative, desirable and undesirable, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention which can be direct or indirect, intended or unintended.

Indicators – An indicator is a pre-defined variable which helps to identify (in)direct differences in quality and/or quantity within a defined period of time. As a “unit of measure” it allows to judge if an intervention was successful or not. Also known as KPIs – Key Performance Indicators.

Inputs – Any resource that is put into a programme to carry out an activity. These can be units of time, staff, money, equipment, know-how, ideas, etc. used by an organisation to produce the outputs and consequently outcomes of a planned programme or project.

MEL – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – applying knowledge gained from evidence and analysis to improve outcomes and ensure accountability for the resources used to achieve them.

Milestones – events that happen in a narrative about an individual's journey – achievements, experiences, changes in situation.

Monitoring – ongoing collection of information and data from projects and programmes and the action of tracking results, trends and performance.

Outputs – The direct results of your activities – often a quantitative summary e.g. 20 coaches trained.

Outcomes – Outcomes are changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of services and activities provided by an organisation. Outcomes can be positive or negative, expected or unexpected. Outcomes relate to specific aims/ purpose but are all the changes that may actually occur when you carry out activities to achieve a specific aims.

Measurement Frameworks – structures which enable organisations to map out how they will work and what they will work towards. Types include: logic frame, theory of change, outcomes framework.

Questionnaires – a defined set of questions used in surveys

RCT Randomised Control Trial – a method of showing what would have happened without running the project such as a trial in which subjects are randomly assigned to one of two groups: one (the experimental group) receiving the intervention that is being tested, and the other (the comparison group or control) receiving an alternative treatment

Registers – method used to record attendance. Usually records named individuals but see also Head count registers.

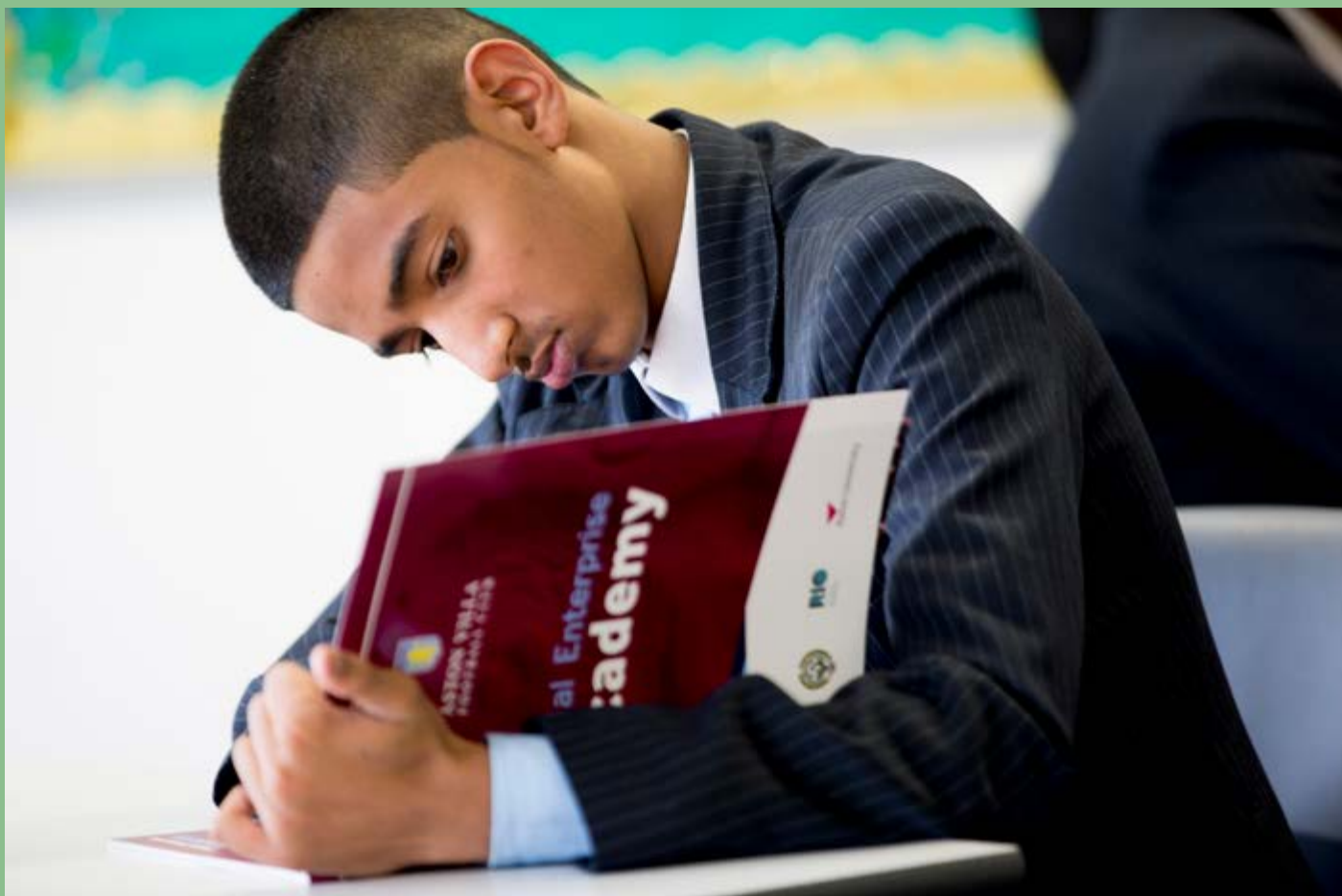
Registration form – a set of data fields defined by an organisation and filled in by participants about themselves in order to take part in activities. Contains demographic information

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals – a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”. The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

Survey – the act of using questions and questionnaires to gain quantitative and qualitative feedback or responses from participants.

Strategies – a collection of outcomes

Theory of Change – a type of measurement framework to show how an organisation seeks to achieve goals and work towards outcomes.



ABOUT UPSHOT

Upshot is an online system which helps over 1000 organisations in the UK and worldwide better manage their data, track progress and report against outcomes – all with the aim of evaluating their impact. However, Upshot is more than a system; as an independent social enterprise with an acknowledged expertise in the field of impact measurement in football, sport and in the wider non-profit world, Upshot is dedicated to helping all organisations become better at Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL).

Upshot was initially built by The Football Foundation, the UK's largest sports charity, in 2012. As a funder, the Football Foundation wanted to understand the impact of its investment into projects and put outcomes at the heart of insight, monitoring and evaluation. Over the years, Upshot has grown to become an expert in the field

of impact measurement, supporting sectors far wider than originally thought. Since 2021, Upshot is now a non-profit social enterprise – Upshot Systems CIC (Community Interest Company) supporting organisations tackling a range of social issues, providing a range of services around the world.

At Upshot we support organisations large and small: some are just learning about how to plan their outcomes, indicators and collecting data – others already have some pieces in place – all want to measure and evidence their impact effectively in order to tell their story to funders (existing and potential), stakeholders and beneficiaries. Upshot works with EFDN at a programme level and supports EFDN member clubs across Europe to implement their local projects.





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