

What you do matters!

Demonstrate your Community Impact

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This publication is the result of a collaboration between UTS and the City of Sydney through its City of Sydney Community Services Grants Program. The core UTS:CCS team consists of Melissa Edwards, Nina Burridge and Hilary Verbury; Allison Heller, Principal, Urban Affect, was a researcher on this project.

This kit was designed by Sai Designs | www.saidesigns.com.au.

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1. Introduction

This tool kit will help you to demonstrate the impact of the work that you do through your community-based organisation. It will guide you through a process, which will help you identify indicators of social impact relevant to the visions for social change held by people in your organisation and its community. You can download the step-by-step Facilitator's Guide for instructions on how to use this tool kit.

Demonstrating the impact of your work is a way of being accountable for this work. Evaluation is an important part of completing a project.

Applying for grant funding often requires evidence of impact assessment and/or program evaluation. Sometimes considered a 'necessary evil,' completing the paperwork involved in a grant submission can be seen as a waste of valuable time. But it need not be that way. This kit will show you that key parts of this process are creative and can be exciting for you to work through as an organisation of committed and passionate members.

Social impact is about imagining the change you want to see in your community and implementing innovative programs and activities. So, the process of identifying social impact can reflect the passion you have for the work that you do.

Demonstrating social impact is about recognising your vision and the big picture impacts of your work, such as improving community wellbeing or protecting the environment. Social impact can help you to understand how your program contributes towards local government strategic plans, such as the City of Sydney 2030 Strategy. But it is often difficult to measure how your program affects community wellbeing.

This tool kit helps you to make the connections between the evaluation of your program activities and the bigger picture social impact vision.

The City of Sydney in partnership with the Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre at the University of Technology, Sydney is offering you and your community organisation an opportunity to get ahead in demonstrating your social impact. By working through this tool kit, people in your organisation will develop skills in demonstrating the social impact of community projects. This will help you to showcase the work you do to funding bodies, potential donors and supporters, and to potential clients as well as to the broader community. It will enable you to increase transparency and boost your ability to get future grant funding.

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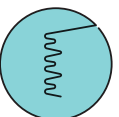
In this tool kit, you will be introduced to the method of Appreciative Inquiry, just one of the many ways you could identify the impact you have in your community. This tool kit takes you through the four stages of Appreciative Inquiry: Inquiry, Imagination, Innovation and Implementation. It encourages you and others in your organisation to engage in four activities, each marked with an icon.



Ideas to read



Material for structured discussion



Links to follow
Other materials and websites, if you want to learn more about social impact and strategies and techniques for measuring it.



Worksheets to complete
Download and print the following worksheets which you will complete in the process of identifying and reporting on your social impact.

There are a number of worksheets to complete. They provide a structured way to record the outcome of your discussions, in the way that you might need for funding applications and reporting. They will give you a clear and logical plan to follow.

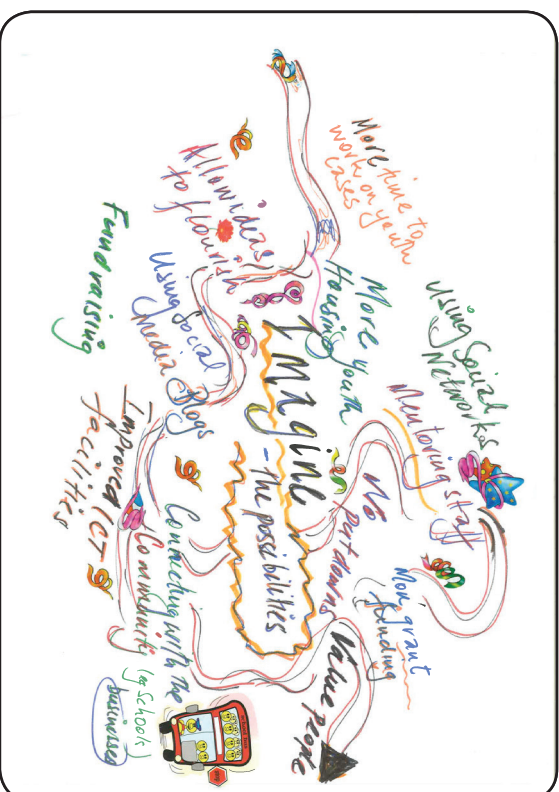
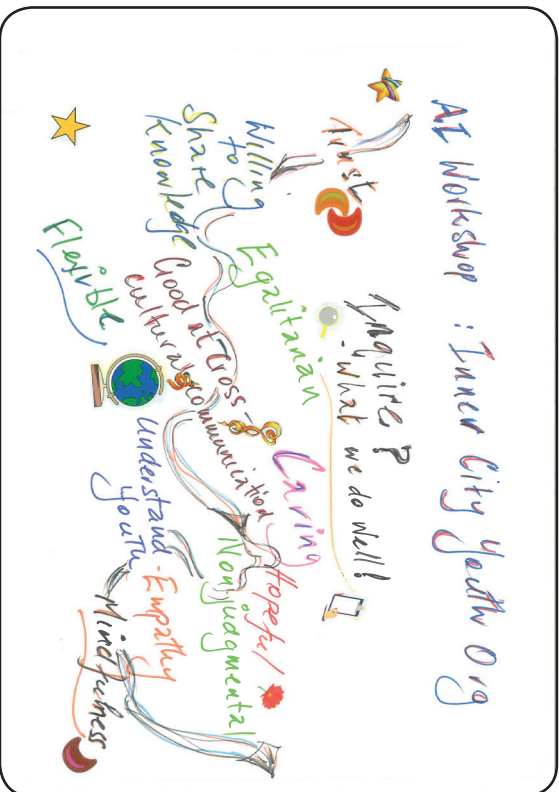


Download and print the following worksheets which you will complete in the process of identifying and reporting on your social impact.

1. Discover Your Strengths
2. Plan and Align your Vision
3. Design your Change Plan
4. Map your Stakeholders
5. Communicate with Different Stakeholders
6. Document your Impact



The process of Appreciative Inquiry can provide a creative way of recording your discussions. Pinned to your noticeboard, your worksheets can be used as a reminder of the passion you have for documenting the social impact of your work. You will find an example of such a recording below.



2. What is social impact?

We know that evaluation is a common part of assessing whether the programs we deliver are meeting their desired objectives and outcomes. But how do you know if project outcomes are having any impact on the social issues you seek to address? Social impact planning offers a way of showing your broader impact. Social impact planning enables you to understand the effects (positive and negative; intended and unintended) of your programs. It may also help you to understand and show how these social outcomes affect social change.

+ Why do we do it?

Social impact reporting can help you show your communities and your funders that the programs you deliver have lasting impacts. You hope that your good work contributes to a better society. Social impact reporting can help you to demonstrate that impact.

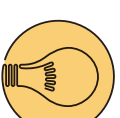
Social impact assessment is different to program evaluation. Program evaluation tells you if the program you have designed meets your stated goals. Social impact assessment helps you think about the social change you want to achieve and helps you track your progress. By following some basic social impact planning techniques outlined in this tool kit, you will be able to communicate your social impact. You will revitalise the vision and passion driving your organisation.

+ Do we need it?

Not all funding bodies require social impact reports.

So why bother with another form of measurement and reporting?

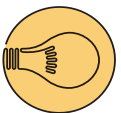
Well, you may already be collecting the type of information you need to demonstrate your social impact, but you need a more systematic way of reporting the impact over time. Or you may find that all you need to do is change the focus of some questions you ask in your standard program evaluation to gather different information. Either way, demonstrating the long term impact of your program is one way to ensure you effect the social change you hope to achieve.



If you are interested in reading more about social impact assessment visit this site for a comprehensive reading list:

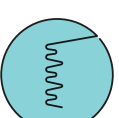
www.socialimpactassessment.net/resources-references.asp

There are many different tools and techniques that you can use to gather information about your social impact. Some of these tools involve extensive social planning and are modelled on accounting techniques. Others are simple tools that you can use to document the stories or narratives of those affected by your programs, over time.



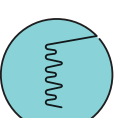
If you want to find out more information about a variety of popular techniques, have a look at the spectrum of some of the most commonly used techniques in the table in [Appendix 1](#)

This kit does not promote any one way of collecting evidence of your actions or programs. Depending on your organisation's capacity you may choose a complex method or you may simply develop your own measurement techniques. This kit has been designed to assist organisations with limited resources to develop their own simple and systematic social impact planning and measurement techniques.



If you want to see a more comprehensive framework, have a look at the New Economics Foundation's Prove and Improve model:

www.proveandimprove.org/



Or try using this workbook prepared by the demonstrating value organisation:

www.demonstratingvalue.org/what-we-offer/our-solutions/tools-and-resources/dv-workbook

3. Setting your agenda through identifying what you do well

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an approach used by groups for analysing 'what works well' in an organisation, and setting an agenda for the future on this basis. It allows organisations who participate to hear individual voices as well as to listen to the collective messages of the group. In open discussion it provides participants with opportunities to work through effective ways to tackle challenges ahead and design pathways for future development.

Appreciative Inquiry has four phases: each one builds on the other to create enthusiasm and commitment to shared goals among members of the organisation and its community.

Through effective documentation of what the group or organisation has done (Inquiry phase); what it wants to do (Imagination); how it will do it (Innovation), and how it will implement it (Implementation), the organisation

is able to identify and plan for the social change it wants to effect in a community. In doing this it is able to document its social impact as a community group. This process provides evidence of the social impact for key stakeholders such as local councils and other government bodies. It can highlight the true worth of an organisation.



1 Inquire

In the Inquiry phase you pose questions to explore the core of what you do and what you are most proud of. This phase allows you to identify what you are good at and what works well.

Some starter questions could include:

- What do individuals value most about the work of the organisation?
- What is the most important thing for us about our individual involvement?
- What are we proud of and why?
- How do we feel about our own roles in the organisation?

2 Imagine

In the Imagination phase you imagine what you could do in the future. You might ask questions to raise excitement and support for moving in new directions or to take a fresh look at your involvement in current projects.

Starter questions here could be:

- If you had three wishes for our organisation what would they be?
- What do you feel the organisation could focus on in the future?
- What were we known for three years ago and what do we want to be known for in three years' time?

3 Innovate

In the Innovation phase you consider how you would put the outcomes of your Imagine phase into practice. You think about how things might work in practice and document some of the possibilities, keeping the focus on creative methods and strategies that you are good at.

Useful questions here would revolve around how you might achieve the vision for the future. They might include: 'What could be achieved through new partnerships among members', and 'What new strategies might contribute to the success of new ventures'.

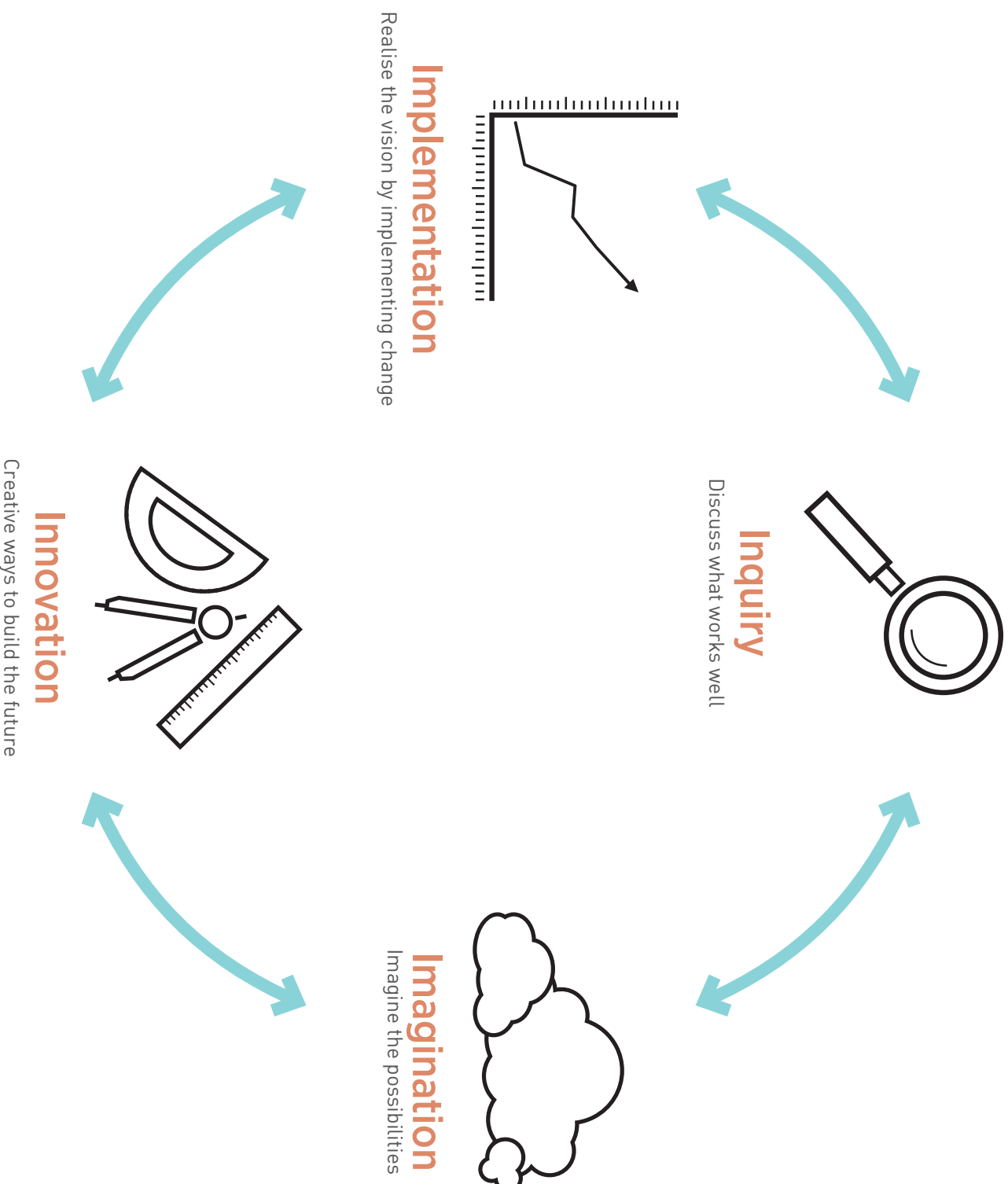
4 Implement

In the Implementation phase, you use your innovative and creative ideas, your past successes and experiences, and your new approaches to collaboration to work towards the outcomes you identified in your Imagine phase.

Useful questions here could include:

- How will we keep our focus on the change we are working towards?
- What evidence will help us to show that we have been successful in putting into practice our vision for change?

Appreciative Inquiry Cycle

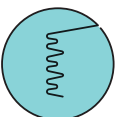




In the next section of this tool kit, you will work through each of these stages, using a series of worksheets and activities designed to guide you through this process.

Once you have worked through the four stages with your team, fill in [Worksheet 2: Plan and Align your Vision](#)

- Begin by identifying your strengths. Record your answers on [Worksheet 1: Discover your Strengths](#)
- Work through the questions of the four phases. You can record your answers and reactions in words, pictures, symbols: use any method that inspires you.
- Now use that information, to complete [Worksheet 2: Plan and Align your Vision](#). In the first column record your 'imagination,' in the second column record your 'innovation' (that is, the program/activities you are 'planning'), in the third column, 'implementation,' record the big picture changes you are aiming for.



The following links will help you to understand aspects of the Appreciative Inquiry process and how it may be applied in your organisation.

+ Appreciative Inquiry Australia

<http://appreciativeinquiry.com.au/>
A good site with local examples and contacts

+ Mellish and Associates:

<http://www.mellish.com.au/> or
http://www.mellish.com.au/content.php?page_id=50#appreciative
A commercial site with good examples of the Appreciative Inquiry process

+ Appreciative Inquiry Commons

<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/>
This site acts as a hub for AI with lots of information on AI and links to other site

+ A Positive Revolution In Change: Appreciative Inquiry

<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/whatisai.pdf>
A subsite of the above with good case studies and other resources



4. Communicating your plans for social change

Plans for social change are usually based on previous work and experience. The answers to the questions in the previous section can highlight your successes and failures. In your discussions, other questions may arise, and considering these community views of your plans will help you to set your agenda. This internal agenda must be shared and made public when you seek support from others.

When you clarify your objectives and document your activities, it's important to be aware that you will often use the language you are comfortable with, without thinking about the difficulties this may cause for your stakeholders, in particular the community and granting bodies.



Have you documented community perceptions of your plans? Complete the questions in [Worksheet 3: Innovate](#)

The answers to these questions will give you an insight into how your community might value the programs you offer.

Now it is time to identify those people in the community who may be affected by your social change plans. These are your stakeholders.



Now you are going to consider your stakeholders. Have you identified the stakeholders for your project? Use [Worksheet 4: Map your Stakeholders](#) to identify and prioritise your stakeholders.

- On page W4a list all of the groups, people and organisations that have some direct effect or who are directly affected by your organisation in terms of the social impacts you are trying to achieve.
 - In the inner circle map all stakeholders inside your organisation.
 - In the middle circle map those that you have frequent contact with (that is about one a week or at least once a fortnight).
 - In the outer circle list those who you have least frequent contact with (this may be only once a month or once every few months, biannually or annually).
- Once completed, think about a specific current project, or a project you would like to work on in the near future.
- Now in relation to that project think about which of the stakeholders you have listed will be most important in terms of that project. Number the most important stakeholders from 1-15.
- On page W4b, draw a stakeholder map of those ten stakeholders with your organisation situated in the middle.

You may find that some funding bodies were listed in your top ten stakeholders, although these are usually not the same stakeholders who will benefit most in terms of your social impact.

Demonstrating your social impact to funding bodies is important to maintain the long-term benefits of your project. But you don't want to lose the meaning of what you do just to fit in with funding bodies' schemes.

To ensure you don't become too focused on trying to please the funding body, remember that all of your stakeholders are important for your program delivery.

Each stakeholder can provide you with useful information you need to demonstrate the impact of your program. Once you have determined the social indicators of your project, return to this list of stakeholders to determine how each one can provide you with information you need to measure your social impact.

5. Identifying indicators of social impact

Being able to measure social impact means that you need to be able to identify changes, express them in ways that others understand, and present evidence for these changes. To do this, you need to develop simple indicators, or measures, that you can refer back to over time. Social impact indicators help you demonstrate your social contributions over time because they are not tied specifically to program outputs.

The next stage is about translating your imagination into language that can help you to secure funding and to demonstrate the impact of your programs. To do this you need a 'tri-focal' approach to communicating your impact, which helps you to think about your impact from the perspective of: 1) your participants, 2) your organisation, 3) the broader community.

A key purpose of community consultation and of applying guidelines from funding bodies is to empower members of the community to 'speak the language of planning'. You can find this language in the guidelines for filling in grant application forms and in the forms themselves, as well as in any forms you are required to use to report your outcomes.



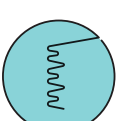
Can you use their language?
Grant writers in effective community groups are tri-cultural. Can you:

- Communicate in the language of your community and understand their motivations and behaviours?
- Communicate in the language of your organisation and explain its members' motivations and behaviours?
- Communicate in the language of external bodies (eg Council) and understand their motivations and behaviours? Sometimes people talk about this as 'understanding the big picture'.



For the City of Sydney, you can find the big picture in the [2030 strategy planning document](#)

Checking if your project fits with one of the ten strategic directions listed on page 23 of the planning document is a good place to start if you are looking at the City of Sydney as a potential funding source.



This document outlines current City of Sydney's Community Grant policy <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Council/documents/policies/GrantSponsorshipPolicy.pdf>

When you state your intended outcomes, you also need to 'use tri-focal lenses'. These allow you to focus on the participants in your programs, your organisation and the wider community. Stating your intended outcomes also allows you to better understand current practices, the end of the project, and the effect of the project in the longer term.

Consider each of these from the perspective of these three key stakeholder groups: 1) those taking part in your activities, 2) those in your organisation, and 3) stakeholders in the wider community. A matrix showing the tri-focal lens looks like the table below.

	Participants	Organisation	Wider community
Current practices	How participants are involved in the project	How the project is managed	How the community is involved in the project
At the end of the project	What happens to, or for, participants through the project	What happens as result of the project	What happens to or for the community through the project
In the longer term	What happens to, or for, participants in the long term as a result of the project	What happens in the long term, as a result of the project	What happens to, or for, the community in the long term as a result of the project



Can you complete the matrix in [Worksheet 5: Communicate with Different Stakeholders](#) for the participants in your proposed activity? Then for your organisation? Then for the wider community?

The responses in your grid for Worksheet 5: Communicate with Different Stakeholders, are the basis to determine your indicators of social impact.

The first step is to turn the statements of intended outcomes on the lines 'At the end of the project' and 'in the longer term' into something that can be tested and measured. This will help you to demonstrate your social impact and to collect evidence of your achievements.



When you are deciding what to measure, you need first to think about the social impacts you hope to see. Ask yourself: Why is this important? When can we expect to see a change? How will we know if the change has happened?

We can think about our programs in terms of:

- activities – what you actually do
- outputs – what was immediately achieved as a result of your activities
- outcomes – a change, usually longer term than outputs: 'How will you know if a change has occurred?', and then
- social impact – big picture changes, links with vision: 'What are you contributing?'

In **Worksheet 5: Communicate with Different Stakeholders**, you identified the type of social impact you are trying to achieve.

The next step is to record the indicators for the social impact you imagine. You can also start to think about the evidence you will need to demonstrate the impact of your program.



Examples from the project reports produced by other people may help you to document some indicators for your project. Here are two simple examples:

- Aim:** A better quality of life for youth in Glebe
- Indicator:** Youth in the program that their life is better
- Evidence:** Health reports indicating an improvement in wellbeing
- Aim:** Increased recognition of local diversity
- Indicator:** Attitudes in local community regarding social diversity
- Evidence:** Participants report greater value of cultural diversity



Record your social impact indicators in column 1 of [Worksheet 6: Document your Impact](#). Ensure that each indicator is connected with a specific program activity and desired big picture change (columns 2 and 3).

Experiment with these indicators to start measuring your social impact without having to use a complex accounting technique.

It is important to revisit your indicators every six months to see if they need to be updated, or swapped for other measures as your organisation's work changes over time.

Next we consider how you might measure these indicators and some simple steps you can put in place to gather this data.



Once you have developed indicators, check:

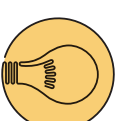
Are your indicators Action-focused? Does knowing about this issue help your organisation or its key stakeholders to do things better or more effectively? Is it within your organisation's power to influence it?

Are your indicators Important? Are they relevant to your organisation? Are they a priority for a core stakeholder or group of stakeholders?

Are your indicators Measurable? Can you get information that tells you something about the effects you've had?

Are your indicators Simple? Is it clear and direct enough to be understood by all stakeholders? Is it easy enough to get information without expert assistance if none is available?

SOURCE: Walker, P. Et al (2000) Prove it: measuring the effect of neighbourhood renewal on local people @ nef (the new economics foundation) London.



For more examples, refer to the New Economics Foundation's Indicators bank, which provides sample indicators for:

Individuals:
<http://www.proveandimprove.org/meaim/individuals.php>

Communities:
<http://www.proveandimprove.org/meaim/SocialIndicators-Communities.php>

The environment:
<http://www.proveandimprove.org/meaim/environmentalindicators.php>

Economic indicators:
<http://www.proveandimprove.org/meaim/economicindicators.php>

6. Documenting your social impact

To document your impact, you will need to gather information. It might be:

- Narrative information that describes clearly what has been done; which will be backed up by stories from participants, photos, audio and video recordings
- Quantitative data, which give the countable facts and figures about what has been done – the statistics
- Qualitative information, which tells us what stakeholders think about performance and about the impact of your organisation – their voices

Good social impact plans use different methods or tools to gather evidence of the changes brought about by your program. The quantitative (numerical) data is important for demonstrating trends in the social change you are hoping to achieve. The qualitative data (stories, pictures, interviews) is important to capture the feelings.

Now it is time to start developing a plan for the data you will need, when it will be available and who will be responsible for collecting it.





Brainstorm ideas for the kinds of data you might want to collect.

You can record ideas in many ways, on butchers' paper, on the computer, in words or pictures, in colour or black and white. Remember to take into account the expectations of your different stakeholders about what your organisation should be doing or achieving. Consulting with each of these stakeholders regularly ensures you are delivering the social impact you hope to achieve.

- For each of the top ten stakeholders you identified in worksheet 4, fill out column 4 in Worksheet 6, ensuring you have identified impacts for your top ten stakeholders at minimum. Think about how you would communicate your social impact to this stakeholder.
 - How would you consult this group?
 - Why would you consult this group?
 - What information can they provide you to help you establish the social impact of your activities?
- When you think about how to consult the stakeholders (column 5) ask yourself: What information can this stakeholder provide to our organisation to help us demonstrate that we are working towards achieving our dreams?
- You can use this information to generate the evidence you need to demonstrate your social impact.

Some funding bodies may expect you to have quantitative data, whereas some community members may prefer to read the stories of participants (qualitative data), and the media may want to use photos or audio or video recordings. The important thing is to use consistent data-gathering tools between time periods, so that you can compare and track changes over time. If you use a participant survey of perceived wellbeing for one program, for example, use the same survey for all your programs and activities.



When you have finished your brainstorming, it is time to turn those creative ideas into a plan which will help you to support your claims for change. If you haven't already done so, fill in columns 4 and 5 of [Worksheet 6: Document your Impact](#). Now complete column 6 in Worksheet 6 to commit to a timeframe for data collection and to assign responsibility.

Be imaginative about the evidence you may be able to collect to show your social impact. Be creative about where the evidence should come from. Some may only be available from participants, but other evidence can come from other sources. Evidence can be collected by a range of people – from organisation members to participants to stakeholders.

Now that you have a clear picture of your social impact, it is time to think about how this needs to be set out in the form required by a funding body.

Consider how you will report your impact to the funding body, using the form provided by the funder. Check that your data collection plan allows you to collect the data within the timeframe you will need to report to your funder.

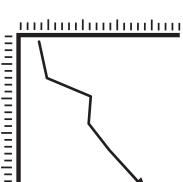
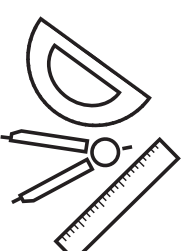
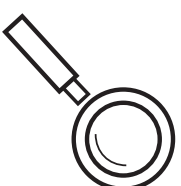
Download the reporting form that your funding body will expect you to submit at the end of the program. We have supplied some suggestions for measurements you could use for if you are applying for the City of Sydney Community Grants at [Appendix 2](#).

Now that you have completed the social impact planning process you will be able to see how over time your reporting against these outcomes will give you a storyline of how your program is delivering social impact.

7. Summing up.... Focusing on the big picture

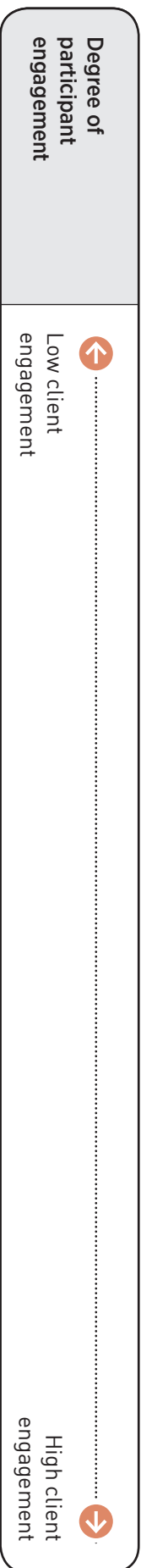
All of this may seem daunting. You may already feel time poor and wonder why impacts are important? Just keep returning to the 'big picture' dreams you outlined in the agenda-setting phase in [Worksheet 2: Plan and Align your Vision](#) and ask yourself: Do we really feel we are fulfilling these dreams if all we ever focus on are our current activities?

When you ask the questions this way, social impact becomes most important. Lining up your activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts is bringing you full circle to implement what you imagined.

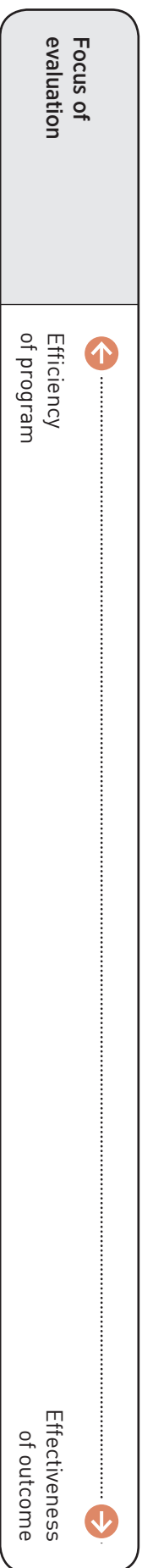


Appendix 1

Evaluation Spectrum



Research basis	Quantitative and Quasi-Survey techniques	Descriptive – Qualitative & Quantitative	Qualitative Models	Participant models
Technique Examples	SR01	TBL	Social Network Analysis	Stakeholder approaches
	Cost Benefit Analysis	Social Accounting & Audit	Secondary data review	Complexity
		LogFrame	Needs Assessment	SARAR
		ISO 26000	Interviews/focus groups	Beneficiary Assessment
		Social Capital		



Appendix 2



Examples of what to measure for reporting - the City of Sydney Community Grants form

Activity & Outcomes	Reporting & Evaluation - how will you report progress on your outcomes			
Activity	Outcomes	Participants	Community	Evidence
<p>What specific things will you be doing through the project?</p>	<p>What will happen as a result of these specific things?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of participants in program Improved health and fitness (lost weight, learned to cook nutritious meals, fewer days off school because of illness etc.) Cultural event or activity held Satisfaction with program/Perception of learning Involvement in other council programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of new volunteers in community projects New skills developed Increased knowledge of healthy living Improved health and fitness Strengthened aboriginal community Increased community participation for people with disabilities Learning outcomes in school improved/Rates of Absence from school decreased Better environmental outcomes Promote appropriate role models for youth Respect the rights of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counting number of participants Evaluation survey for participants Interview data Letters of support Photos/videos/audio Newspaper reports Artefacts made Data from other stakeholders in community, eg schools, health clinics, community centres

Worksheet 1: Discover your Strengths



Documenting what you do well: Inquiry

1. What do individuals in the community value most about the work of our organisation?

2. What do (unknown) others think we do well and why?

3. What is the most important thing for each of us about our individual involvement?

4. What are we proud of and why?

5. What do we say we do well? How do we know? Who do we tell?
How do we tell them?

6. Are there parts of this dream we do not have the resources to achieve?
Do we have current capacity to achieve all functions of your project?

Promotions:

Finance:

Project management/governance:

Evaluation of project:

Design and implementation of services and/or products:

7. Who can we collaborate with to achieve these dreams?



Worksheet 2: Plan and Align your Vision

Imagine, innovate and implement

Imagine

eg. Increased number of youth receiving employment training

Innovate

eg. Program to teach job interview skills and resume writing

Implement

eg. Improved quality of life

Worksheet 3: Innovate



Design your Change Plan

1. What is new?

1a. Is this a new venture for one organisation? If so, what is new or different?

1b. Are we trying new strategies? What are they?

1c. Are we working with new partners?

1d. How will participants react to our plan for change?

1e. How will we feel about the plan for change? Are we excited? Daunted?

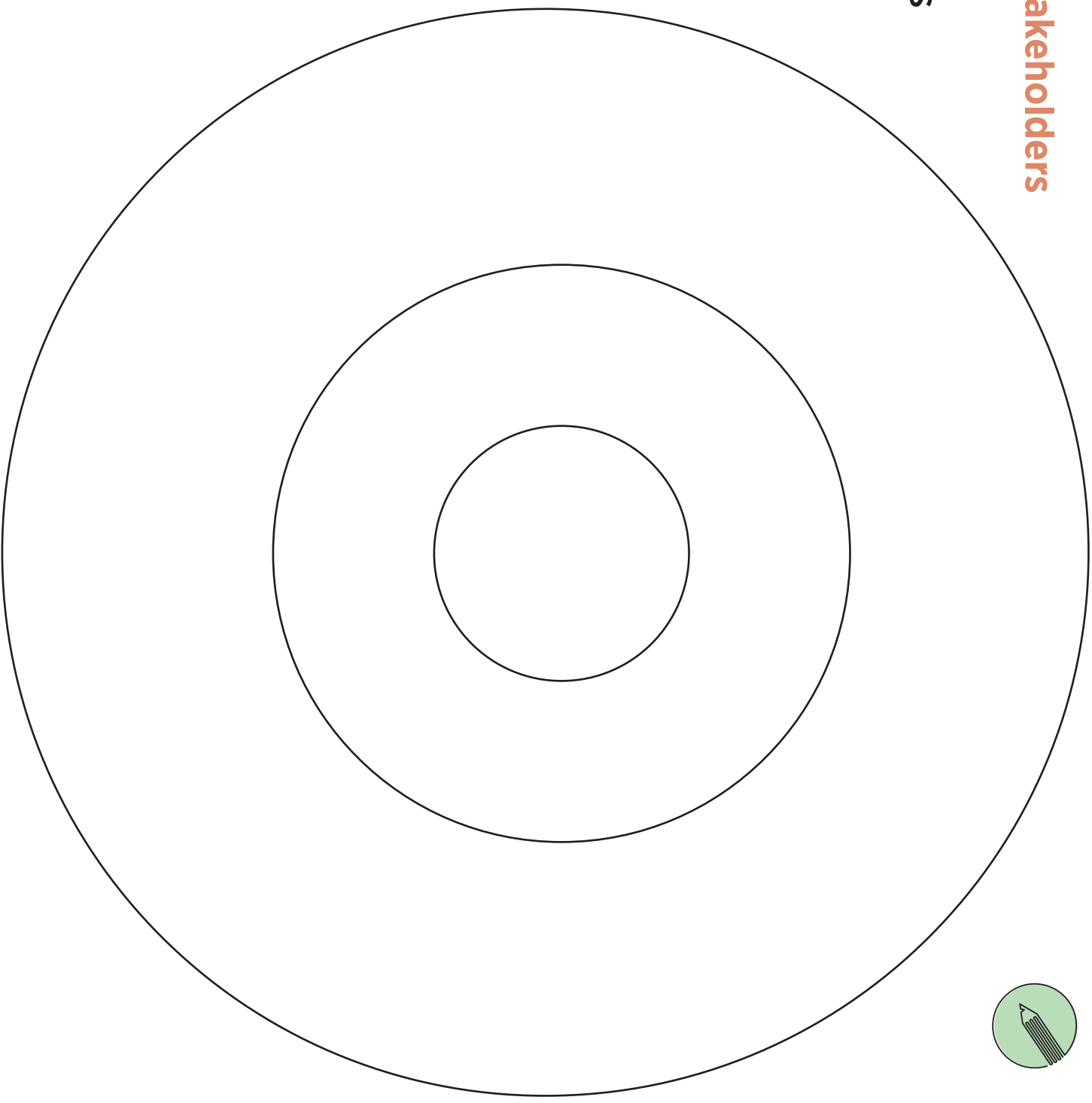
2. How do we plan to pass on what we learned from our Change Plan?

Worksheet 4: Map your Stakeholders



1. Identifying stakeholders

- 1st Circle – Organisational stakeholders
- 2nd Circle – Primary stakeholders
- 3rd Circle – Secondary stakeholders
- Outside – Any others?



1. Identifying stakeholders

Draw your stakeholder map in the space below



A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for drawing a stakeholder map.



Worksheet 5: Communicate with Different Stakeholders

Trifocal reporting language

	Participants	Organisation	Wider community
Current practices			
At the end of the project			
In the longer term			

