

## EVALUATION

Work Integration Programmes (WIP) should be designed and improved based on evaluation data, lessons learned from previous experiences and evidence of what works and what does not.

As some of the [good practices of INWORK](#) show, evaluation is being used to monitor and report on the extent to which WIPs are achieving their objectives; to influence potential supporters, investors and winning contracts; to provide solid evidence to advocate changes in public policy; to produce recommendations for the future.

Moreover, private and public funders, as do the EU directives for 2020, tend to include requirements that render the use of evaluation instruments and skills indispensable. New criteria are pushing projects and organisations with a social mission into proving their impacts.

For WISEs and social enterprises, to evaluate and account for social, economic and environmental results and impacts is not just a matter of responding to the external pressure of funders. It should be at the core of their mission and statement of added value when compared to public and for-profit private sectors.

Evaluation is a powerful instrument and should be embedded in your professional and organisational culture. Besides, the evaluation practices are already part of your daily work, so you should think about it seriously (see: [On the Right Track?](#)). There are three major challenges you should embrace:

### 1. Improve your practices

Evaluation is a process of the human mind that guides daily actions. Hence, to a higher or lower degree of effectiveness, it is already present in your work. The challenge resides in enhancing evaluation knowledge, skills and tools, whether in your own team or by resorting to qualified partners such as universities and experts. Review your practices and identify aspects to improve. Evaluation plays a crucial role at several levels.

#### *Direct work with vulnerable groups*

- It plays a core role in defining the paths towards learning skills, changing behaviours and empowering individuals to shift from vulnerable situations to labour market integration. Demonstrating progress to beneficiaries can boost their confidence.
- If conducted according to adequate and credible methodologies, the process of collecting information from your target groups provides your team with the tools to speak on behalf of those groups. On the one hand, the individuals' experiences and viewpoints, as well as the limitations and successes they face during the process of integration can support your arguments allowing for a better design of projects and policies. On the other hand, it enhances and validates your mission of empowering target groups.

*WIP level*

As any other project, your Work Integration Programme is subject to the cycle of planning, execution, evaluation and re-planning. In this cycle, every stage can be subject to a different form of evaluation:

- [In the design of your programme](#): *what is the state of the art regarding the problems and intervention requirements of your target group and the role of the institutional players? What are the benefits of the professional integration model it proposes? In what way does your programme contribute to improve its beneficiaries' lives, the intervention by institutions or intervention practices in this field?*
- [In the monitoring of the programme execution](#): *Up to what point is the work plan being followed and with what degree of efficiency in the use of resources? What are the obstacles and the factors of success? Are there unforeseen factors that interfere with the implementation? How can you improve your own performance?*
- [In the final stage](#) assessing the effectiveness (to what extent did the programme achieve the results expected) and, more and more often in the impacts. Thus, the effects your Work Integration Programme has in the medium and long term on the living conditions of the vulnerable individuals and the practices of employers, funders, partners and even the community. It is important that you design your Work Integration Programmes based on solid evidence resulting from accrued knowledge and experience and reflect on it both prospectively and retrospectively.

*Organisational management level*

At the level of organisational management, accounting and reporting results to stakeholders is a good practice that provides credibility to your institution and strengthens your Work Integration Programme's sustainability indicators. For example, your programme may benefit from synergy with other projects or from the stability of your organisation or its ability to mobilise a network of partnerships.

*Policy-making level*

If your Work Integration Programmes yields credible results and evaluation products, your evaluation may support proposals and advocate changes, whether at the stage of discussing and elaborating new political measures, at the implementation stage, or even at the final stage of making recommendations for the future.

**2. Catch up with new tools**

Methodologies and indicators for the evaluation of results and social impacts are still a challenge. There are no commonly used tools, nor are there established reference indicators systems. The paths are under construction. If you wish to contribute, just take the instruments you have available and adjust them to your needs.

**Soft indicators** can be a particularly useful tool and often more adequate than hard indicators such as qualifications achieved, number of clients starting training or education or number of job

placements (see the [Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled](#) or the [Guide to Evaluating Employability Programmes](#)).

You should define your own set of indicators based on an initial evaluation of each individual in your target group. In other words, you should draw the baseline or the starting point of their personal, social and professional background and accurately define the behaviours, knowledge and skills which you will build upon. Soft indicators help to demonstrate the progress made, thus providing a measure of your programme's relevance. Indicators such as:

Personal development	Confidence, self-esteem Motivation, increased feelings of responsibility Higher personal and career aspirations
Social skills	Relationship with peers and authority (Basic) interpersonal and communication skills Team work
Basic Work Skills and Attributes	Basic literacy (reading, writing) Basic numerical skills, including ability to manage money Timekeeping, reliability Ability to complete forms, CV writing Presentation
Core Skills	Communication Numeracy ICT Problem solving Interpersonal
Personal Effectiveness and Aptitude	Planning Prioritising Verbal reasoning Numerical reasoning

Source: <http://www.proveandimprove.org/documents/EvaluationGuide9.pdf>

There are several [evaluation](#) and [impact measurement](#) methodologies designed for organisations with a social mission. These can be equally useful to your Work Integration Programme. These tools are aimed at strategic management, quality management, environmental management, community regeneration, measuring local economic impact and, of course, evaluating results and social impacts (see the [quality & impact toolkit for social enterprises](#) or Mind Tools' [essential skills for an excellent career](#)).

Many of these instruments are very simple, or step-by-step, and focus on adjusting to the resources available to your programme. Others are quite demanding. In any case, it is useful to know and consult these tools as they include many pedagogical and operational resources.

**The Outcomes star** is a methodology that measures the progress made when working with people. By using your key indicators as the points of the star and applying scales to measure the progress made by each of the individuals (or average values in order to evaluate the group), you are able to present a star chart (graphic output) of this measurement, thus clarifying the progress made. This methodology already has several outcomes stars dedicated to particularly vulnerable groups: drug and alcohol users, the homeless or people recovering from mental illness. The work and learning

star, for example, integrates seven outcomes (seven points of the star) – challenges, job-specific skills, stability, job search skills, basic skills, aspirations and motivation, social skills for work.

[Social Accounting and Audit \(SAA\)](#) is a methodology for monitoring, evaluating and accounting aimed at internal (board of directors, workers, volunteers) and external (partners, local communities, funders) stakeholders of organisations. Built based on the organisation's mission, values and objectives, this methodology allows accounting for performance, economic, social, environmental and cultural results. It proposes an approach based on the participation of different stakeholders over regular time periods, comparable to other organisations and verified by accredited external auditors. There is vast support with pedagogic material for all the stages and it is under constant development with real cases from the Social Audit Network, which is expanding significantly within the Commonwealth.

[Social Return On Investment \(SROI\)](#) is a methodology for a monetary evaluation and quantification of economic, social and environmental results of the activities developed by a given organisation. It is based on the traditional cost-benefit economic and financial analysis. It determines the return each 1€ effectively invested represents to the communities or to society, translating the results and social impacts of the activities into monetary indicators (€). It involves mapping and evidencing outcomes, establishing impacts and applying its own calculation method. SROI helps with strategic management, stakeholder engagement and exploring new ways to define contracts with investors, always using a language the latter are familiar with.

### 3. Collect clear evidences of social impact

For some years now, the requirements for funding of Work Integration Programmes tend to value the criteria of sustainability and dissemination of results, together with the classic criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. Today, under the influence of the school of [social innovation](#), the tendency is to add replication and scalability to these criteria as a means to guarantee a larger social impact. Many funders are focused on supporting projects with these characteristics.

Moreover, social innovation plays a central role in the new [European Strategy for 2020](#) and the European Commission has launched [a report](#), which is useful when establishing operational tools and evaluation metrics.

Keep in mind that the assessment of social impacts implies a specific analytical approach and credible methodologies. It involves tasks that can range from daily routines of monitoring data to resource-intensive evaluation. [Impact measurement](#) involves answering questions such as:

- *What impact is your programme trying to achieve – at individual, organisational and community levels or at a broader scope in society (economic, political or physical environment changes)?*
- *What degree of influence do you expect to achieve? Limited influence over beneficiaries and grant holders? Influence over the government, policy-makers and other funders?*
- *Is the idea and/or methodology underlying your Work Integration Programme replicable and liable of being scaled-up to change the lives of a larger number of beneficiaries?*

- *Which actual changes took place as a direct or indirect result of our work?*

The Outcomes Star, SAA, SROI are some of the tools you can use to measure your programme's impacts.