



Youth Work Ireland

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VFM Submission

Section 2: Questions about the submission

- 1. With reference to the document titled “Open Call Invitation for Submissions”, how can you help DCYA with measuring effectiveness? (Please limit answers to a maximum of 200 words)**

Several tools and instruments have been used by Youth Work Ireland members in examining effectiveness. Generally, a logic model approach has been dominant in recent years particularly related to planning and efficiencies and this has been linked to the application and other processes. It is also related to a theory of change approach. Particular types or variations of tools are sometimes used in different areas. In the field of mental health and well-being the Spence Scale has been used and is the tool for our national Friends Programme promoting resilience and well-being. These will involve interviews, before and after questionnaires, evaluations and 18 month follow ups.

We are very much in favour of tools that involve young people simply and explicitly cover the seven outcomes in the VFM Report but also combine the high-level

outcomes under BOBF. We have used the Grit Score focussing on passion and perseverance particularly in the field of employment and training as it is well suited here examining orientation and commitment. The Rosenberg Scale and other tools related to psychometric testing may also be used to look at global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. As some programmes are local or relate to other funders other tools are also used. An effective method for measuring effectiveness in youth work is through qualitative methodologies such as interviews, action research or focus groups.

In reality 200 words is not enough to fully outline this work amongst our members.

2. With reference to the document titled “Open Call Invitation for Submissions”, how can you help DCYA with measuring efficiency? (Please limit answers to a maximum of 200 words)

Various efficiency metrics are used to examine the efficiency of our work at the moment. There are challenges to this area. Much of the approach has been shaped by the reporting mechanisms put in place by successive Departments in the field of Youth Work. The measurement of longitudinal results is always challenging although the Growing Up In Ireland Survey does this it cannot disaggregate youth work outputs. While straightforward head counts may not be sufficient they have been dominant in the past. One area that needs specific attention is the qualitative nature of intervention. Some interventions are intense and time consuming and others can be brief. In many respects these are not distinguished and could still be counted as one unit. We also need to consider throughput in counting. Similar Maslow’s hierarchy or equivalents need to be considered. Certification is also another area where more progress could be made particularly in relation to informal learning. To evidence good work in organisations a performance governance approach can be helpful.

Generally, there is an attempt to move towards electronic collection and submission of data. Tools include CRM type solutions, but hard copy is still used. Products used include Salesforce modules, Microsoft 365 forms, Google forms, Jot forms and the CDYSB developed tool.

Short surveys could be administered and/or a final evaluation focus group conducted. Youth workers through reflective practice can also provide valuable information on the intervention in terms of ‘what works’ and ‘what doesn’t work’.