Sport Unites Evidence and Learning Framework

Module 2

MAYOR OF LONDON

NDTi National Development Team for Inclusion

Module 2. Tools and approaches

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Module 2 contains tools and guidance on how to embed a collaborative approach to evaluation, and to bring the Sport Unites Vision and Outcomes Framework to life. It is designed to be helpful to anyone interested in evidencing the impact of their project, but will be of particular value to those responsible for tracking the journey of those engaged in your delivery and those evaluating the process and impact of sport for development initiatives.

This includes:

1) advice on designing **evaluation questions**
2) guidance on the **overarching evaluation approach and tools** for developing a Vision for Change based on Theory of Change approaches;
3) **how to unpack outcomes** into the different elements that help projects and programme leads to track progress, and to differentiate between inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes; and
4) some **data collection tools** to accompany the Framework, linked to the five layers of evidence, which are light touch and easy for projects to use.
5) **evaluation checklist**

1. Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions are the high-level questions that an evaluation is designed to answer. They work alongside the Vision and Outcome Framework, helping to make sense of and bring to life the outcomes, signs and change and sources of evidence; for instance they help us to decide what data to prioritise and collect, how to analyse it, and how to report it.

They are usually developed and agreed at the beginning of evaluation planning. However, sometimes they are already set in advance by a funder or an existing evaluation framework.

Questions should be developed by considering the type of evaluation being done, its intended audiences and how it is going to be used.

Try not to have too many evaluation questions - **a maximum of 5-7 main questions** will usually be enough. You may have more specific, sub-questions or probes under each of these.

Most evaluation questions focus on one of two main areas:

- **how** a project is working (the process)

- **what difference** it is making (the impact/outcome)

To explore how the project is working, the kind of evaluation questions you could consider include:

- How is the programme/project being implemented?
- How is this different from what is usually done? What are the new or innovative aspects?
- Who is being reached? Who is not?
- How satisfied are participants?

To find out about the project's impact, you could ask:

- How well did the project work?
- Did the project contribute to intended outcomes (in the short, medium and long term)? For whom, in what ways and in what circumstances?
- Were there any unintended outcomes (positive and negative) ?
- To what extent can changes be linked to the project?
- What aspects of the project and/or the context made a difference?
- What other contextual factors either helped or hindered the project?

2. Evaluation approach and tools

The **NDTi Evaluation Wheel** was designed to provide a clear framework for adopting a collaborative approach in change programmes, helping everyone involved to think through the key elements of change. It takes the form of a cycle to illustrate the importance of building this picture collaboratively and iteratively, rooted in a broad consensus of the long term vision that all stakeholders/partners believe is necessary in order to address the commonly recognised issues or problems that exist.

The 6 steps of this cycle set out the key areas of focus and activities that can help all concerned develop a shared understanding of what evidence is needed to demonstrate this change, and for understanding the impact they are having through their work.

This cycle was followed to co-create the Vision and Outcomes Framework for Sport Unites shared in Module 1. The same process can be used at a *project* level to apply the high level statements around long term ambitions and short-medium term goals to the delivery of specific initiatives funded through the Programme (see also Module 3).

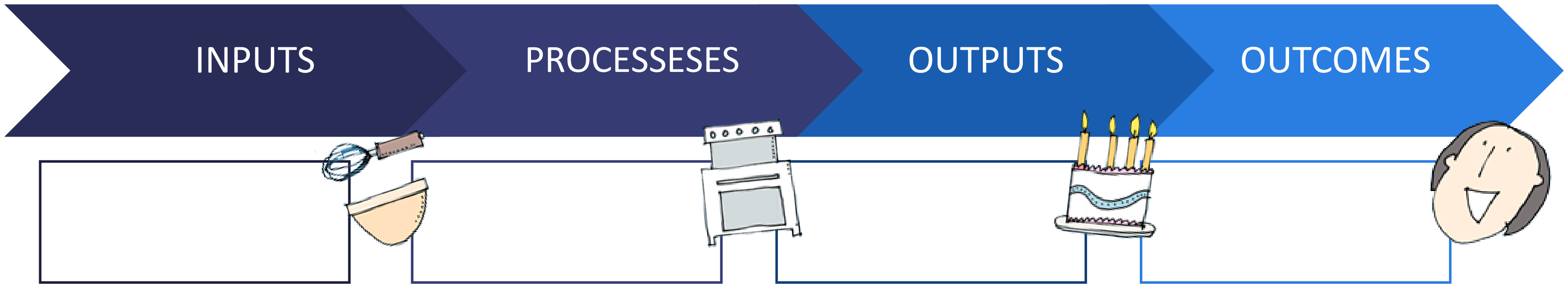
A note about proportionality:

If the work you are doing is multi-layered, multi-faceted, engages diverse audiences in different contexts then this cycle will probably be useful in determining what good looks like and how you know if you're getting there. If your work is more straightforward, taking place mostly in one location or with a specific target audience in mind, you can use the Sport Unites Framework as your guide to evidencing change and illustrating how your work is contributing to the overarching vision: young people in London have better lives, greater opportunities and more hopeful futures through taking part in sport and physical activity. You can also see which of the 5 outcome areas is most closely aligned to your work.

1. **Vision:** imagine how things can be different for the people and communities you are working with, how are the projects funded through Sport Unites transforming the experiences of young Londoners in 5-10 years' time? What's happening? What's different? Who for? Aim for 'big picture', aspirational statements.
2. **Context:** Understanding the context in which you operate is vital. This means the different contextual features which will either help or hinder your work, and progress towards the vision. It includes the politics, the people and the places which are important to consider.
3. **Outcomes:** What changes are needed to reach the overall vision? These are themed and summarized into high level outcome areas which reflect the key changes required to get closer to the vision over the next 1-3 years.
4. **Intervention(s):** This refers to specific activities or opportunities offered/funded through Sport Unites, which can be mapped onto the outcome areas and essentially contribute towards making change happen.
5. **Evidence:** How will we know if we are achieving these outcomes, and that these projects/activities contributed to this change? A key step is agreeing the key signs of change (or indicators) for each outcome area and/or associated activities/interventions.
6. **Impact:** A key part of NDTi's work as the evaluation and learning partner is building and distilling evidence of impact across the Programme; and enabling all those involved to share, reflect and learn about what's working and for whom, and how this has come about. This includes exploring ways of embedding a culture of evaluation and learning, ensuring necessary feedback loops are in place so that useful data is gathered, used and valued.

Outcome chain

Outcome chains can help you keep a focus on the change you're seeking to achieve (the outcome), whilst also paying attention to and tracking the investments (inputs), activities (processes) and immediate consequences or effects (outputs) of your work. The first 3 elements are most commonly used in routine monitoring information and are often volume based e.g. participant numbers, sessions held, increase in specific audiences engaged. Outcomes require a blend of different kinds of information and insights as outlined in Module 1, the 5 layers of evidence. Click here for the Outcome chain template.



Outcome evidence mapping

This practical tool can help you "unpack" your short-medium term goals or outcomes into more specific indicators or signs of change. These can then be mapped onto the sources of evidence that will illustrate if those things are happening and contributing to the overall change you are seeking to achieve.

Finally you can ensure that you have a good blend of different kinds of evidence by checking your evolving map of outcomes and evidence against the 5 layers of evidence – do you have a mix of all layers across the outcomes and sources of evidence identified? Click here for the Outcome evidence mapping template.

Outcome areas: the changes that will result from your activities	Signs of Change: What are the signs that each of these changes is happening, and working well?	Sources of evidence: What information will tell us if these things are happening? What needs to be collected, when, by whom?	Layer of evidence
E.g.			

3. Generating Evidence - collecting and analysing different sources of data

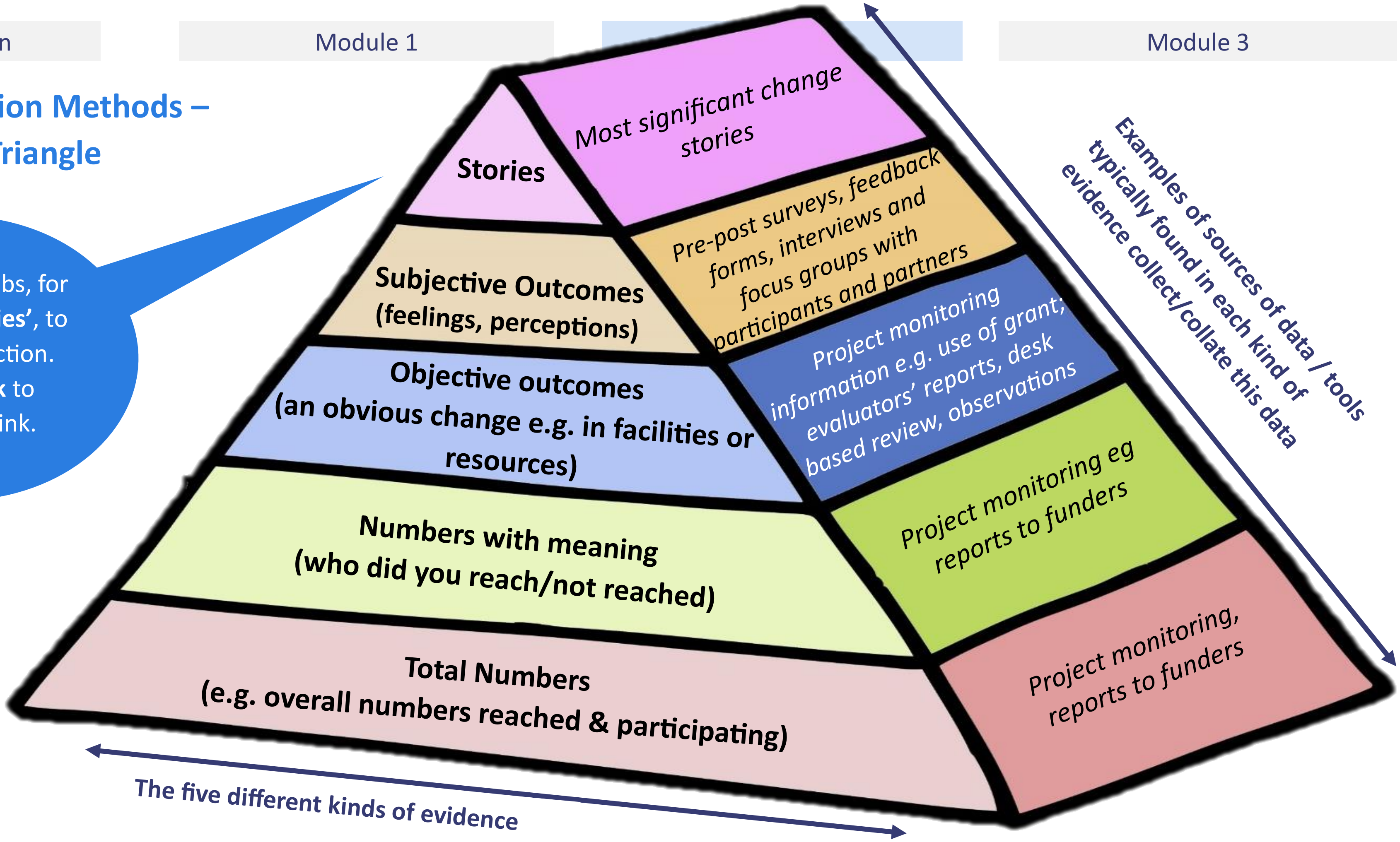
In this section we outline typical methods for collecting different kinds of data which are used to evidence whether agreed signs of change are happening, and to what extent. Many of these will be specific to different organisational processes and the nature of activity being funded, e.g. the types of activity/output data collected and how it is stored. However, there are some common principles which should be considered when thinking about collecting any data. The methods and approaches that follow are linked to the five layers of evidence triangle described on the next page.

Principles underpinning data collection

- Understand why information is needed before collecting it. A general rule of thumb is, "if you treasure it, measure it!". Think about the **core, essential activities, why you are doing what you're doing and who you are doing it for**. What is it about those people/activities (etc) that matter most, that you need to understand or demonstrate to others is being effective?
- **Be aware of data 'overload'**. Start by looking at what data you are already collecting and how that can be used or adapted, and streamline wherever possible. Monitoring should be **proportional to your resources and not overburden anyone**.
- **Less can be more**: having a high number of responses to a few number of questions can be more meaningful than a few responses to a lot of questions. This relates to the points above: what is the key information that you need?
- Be **efficient with people's time and effort**. Before you ask a question, think about what you will do with the response; **if you are not going to analyse and use the data involved, then you don't need to collect it**
- Be considerate about the people involved – this means **paying attention to the ethical issues** involved in how you collect and use people's information / data, including ensuring you have their consent to collect, store, analyse and use their information in a safe and secure way.

4. Data Collection Methods – The Evidence Triangle

Click on the Tabs, for example **'Stories'**, to go to that section. **CTRL + click** to follow the link.



The shape of the pyramid suggests the amount of each kind of data that might be gathered. However, the relative amounts of each type of data is something that should be discussed and agreed for each project. For example, if it is felt that story and experience-based data are likely to be the most powerful, the pyramid might be inverted.

Other dimensions to think about include *who* and *what* each of these 5 layers relates to, for instance:

- individuals (e.g. those participating in sport-based activities or benefiting from improved access to facilities/coaching etc);
- groups of people with shared characteristics (e.g. young people from a specific background or with protected characteristics etc);
- geography/context (e.g. what's available or experienced in a particular borough).
- time - when and how often different kinds of information are collected and pulled together in order to know what's happening and changing over time. Some data will be collected routinely and frequently (every month/quarter); other data will be routine but less frequent e.g. every 6 months; other data will be occasional or more ad hoc, e.g. once a year.

NUMBERS

Total numbers and numbers with meaning (Routine, frequent monitoring information)

What is it? Basic quantitative data to describe 'what' happened, involving whom *(e.g. collected by Sport Unites projects and funded organisations)*

When would you use it? To describe 'what' happened (e.g. 456 young people attended a football training camp); to conduct trend analysis (e.g. over time, monitoring information has shown that more girls aged 16-18 are engaging with the project)

Examples:

- **Reach** – who are the different target groups and how have they been reached and engaged (e.g. via different publications, promotions and networking opportunities)?
- **Engagement levels and profiles** – who responds to the above, e.g. registering interest, joining clubs, attending a taster session?
- **Participation** – attendance records tracked over time to give an indication of take up rates and profiles of who engaged and participated
- **Demographic data and profiles** – detailed information (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, faith, residence, etc) about who is engaging and/or participating. This can also highlight gaps, i.e. who isn't engaging/participating?
- **Use of grants/other resources** – how are resources being used to offer/provide opportunities for engagement?

Other monitoring information

Although the following examples are usually less frequent, they can still be considered routine monitoring data, e.g. collected on a 6 or 12 monthly basis.

Examples:

- Feedback from participants and partners
- Experiences of participants and partners
- Immediate consequences or results (e.g. more girls participating, more sessions held)
- Longer term impacts (e.g. loneliness, wellbeing and health scales and scores, social inclusion measures and indices)
- Changes to infrastructure, services and systems (e.g. provision/use of facilities or venues, doing things differently as a result of working in different ways).

OUTCOMES

Subjective/ objective outcomes

Secondary data

What is it? Quantitative or qualitative information which is collected as part of a programme's operations usually in the form of a desk-based review (i.e. not primary data collection). There are many potential sources of secondary data, dependent on your organisation.

When would you use it? Collated and analysed on a less frequent basis (e.g. annually) to provide context to inform wider evidence and learning.

Examples:
- Projects' progress or interim reports
- Minutes of decision making meetings ()
- Notes from youth council forums
- Mapping information/intelligence, e.g. population data or borough specific information
- Other research conducted to better understand the characteristics of specific audiences or issues that need to be addressed

Qualitative primary data

What is it? Rich, personal accounts, experiences and/or opinions, captured on an individual and/or collective basis e.g. through interviews, focus groups, change stories, testimonials/case studies.

When would you use it? To complement/challenge/explain quantitative findings; to answer the question 'why' or 'how' something has happened; to generate stories of change as a result of an activity or intervention.

Examples:
- ***Testimonies and case studies:*** typically case studies help to show how an approach or interventions has worked for an audience/area and includes a range of different sources of evidence e.g. a mini version of the 5 layers of evidence to give a rounded picture of impact for that group or location. They may include 2 or 3 short stories (vignettes or testimonies) to show how individuals have been impacted through a particular project or approach. Case studies are therefore different from and not the same thing as change stories.
- ***Change stories:*** these are often used as part of the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach and are designed to encourage people to think about what has changed for them as a result of involvement in a project/activity, rather than just what happened. They are part of the 5 layers of evidence in Module 1.

OUTCOMES

Interviews

interviews can be conducted with a wide range of stakeholders and generate very rich qualitative data. Interviews are more resource-intensive than other forms of data collection, and given that a smaller number are usually conducted, findings are not able to be extrapolated to the whole population of interest. They are useful if you are looking for depth of information over breadth, and can be indicative of a wider demographic group. If sensitive information is being discussed, interviews can be a more appropriate format for data collection than focus groups. They can be carried out face-to-face or remotely. NDTi will be conducting fieldwork with some Sport Unites Projects, with a sample of people identified through working closely with the GLA and the relevant project/funded organisation. Other projects who have their own evaluation arrangements in place may have interviews organised as part of their own fieldwork activities.

Tips about asking questions in interviews:

- Ask open ended (rather than yes/no questions) – this way you find out more about the person in their own words and encourage them to speak.
- Don’t ask “leading” questions e.g. asking, “How was your experience of accessing the project?” is better than “Was the project difficult to access?”
- If you would like the person to say a bit more “really?”, “yes?”, “mm”, “could you say a bit more about that?” can all work.
- If you don’t know what the person means or would like to know more, follow up with further questions.
- Use terms that the person you are interviewing can understand, given their knowledge, language skills, cultural background, age, gender, etc.
- You will naturally have your own views and opinions and they may not be the same as the person you are interviewing – remember, the interview is about capturing their views, so it is important not to influence them.

Tips on asking sensitive questions:

- Don’t start with the most sensitive questions – find out about them and their life first, build up some rapport and trust so that people feel comfortable with you.
- Before asking questions that could be considered sensitive/personal explain why it is you’re asking the questions
- Make sure people realise they don’t have to answer. If they appear to be feeling uncomfortable, reiterate this and check whether they are happy to answer or whether they would like to move on to another question or stop the interview all together.
- It may be useful to remind the person during the interview that the interview is confidential.
- Make sure the person realises that you are not judging them.
- Ensure whoever is doing the interview is aware of the relevant referral pathway in place if safeguarding issues emerge.

OUTCOMES

Focus groups

Facilitated discussions used to collect information from a small group of people. Focus groups usually take place with people of a similar background or who have specialist knowledge or interest in a topic, e.g. programme delivery team or parents of children involved in a programme. Focus groups need to be carefully facilitated to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak and it is not influenced by hierarchies within the group. Focus groups can be useful in understanding the perceptions and attitudes of a defined group of people, though it is not a suitable arena for discussing sensitive issues. Focus groups will be undertaken by NDTi as part of their field visits to identified Sport Unites projects.

Surveys and questionnaires

These can be useful for collecting and recording information from multiple people and can be administered electronically to reduce resources or through paper forms. If you have a reasonable number of surveys, findings can also be quantified (e.g. 85% of respondents were satisfied with the activity) though unless you used probability sampling to identify respondents you won't be able to generalise your findings to the entire population of interest. Useful online resources for collecting surveys include Survey Monkey, Microsoft Forms and ODK (for mobile data collection).

Observation

This is one of the simplest forms of data collection, and involves recording and analysing what is seen. Observations are usually used in parallel with other data collection methods, and for some projects will be undertaken by NDTi as part of their fieldwork visits to agreed areas.

CHANGE STORIES

Change Stories

- Change stories are powerful ways of evidencing what change looks like for different people and illustrating the range of experiences and outcomes experienced by different people relating to the same intervention.
- These accounts can be at an individual, community, service or system level, and can tell us what types of supports, activities, approaches or actions worked in what context and for whom they worked, and how and why they were important to individuals.
- The key is that a change story is from one individual perspective; they are *personal* accounts of change.
- The MSC approach involves a group of key stakeholders jointly reviewing and analysing the change stories and agreeing which are the most compelling in conveying what is working (or not working) and how that is happening.
- In Sport Unites, everyone is being encouraged to capture, collect and share change stories as outlined below. They are recognised as an important and rich source of qualitative data for demonstrating the personal impacts of opportunities funded and delivered through Sport Unites.

Change stories focus on:

- What happened, for whom
- Why/how it happened
- How this felt
- What difference it made (the outcome!)

By asking:

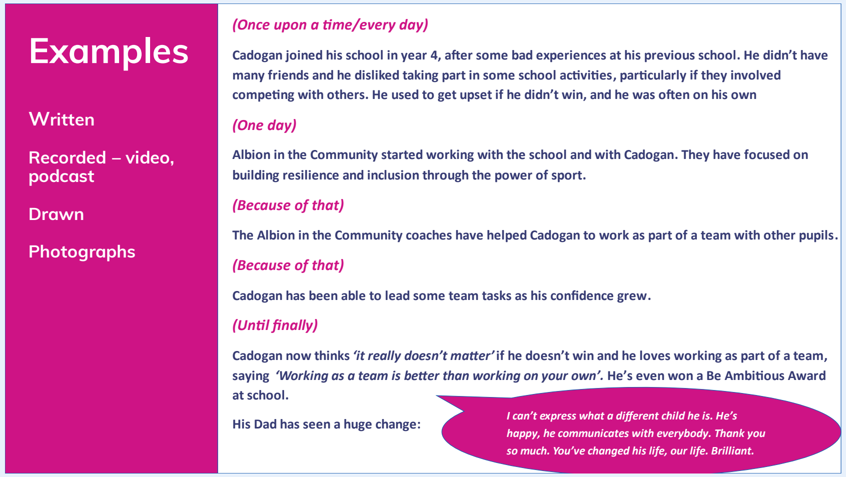
- What changes have been brought about for you/this person through their involvement with a Sport Unites project or specific opportunity?
- What has been the most significant change for this person, and why do they see it as significant?
- How did the change come about?
- How is life different for them now?

CHANGE STORIES

Tips when writing a change story:

- Remember, an outcome is not about what someone did but what changed as a result (ask yourself ‘so what?’)
- It can be helpful to frame a change story along the Pixar story arc – ‘In the beginning… Every day…. One day… etc
- When capturing a story, don’t assume that the person who reads or analyses it will know as much about your project and the people involved as you do. Give some brief background information, but don’t lose them in un-necessary detail or personal information.
- Direct quotes are especially powerful.
- Keep it simple and be clear who you are talking about.
- Use to share the journey that someone has been on as a result of their involvement, i.e. what happened and changed over time & how.
- They do not always have to be positive.

Examples of change stories:



Change story – Laburnum Boat Club

When Child A first attended Laburnum he often struggled with managing his emotions and reactions to external stimulus. This presented as him frequently refusing to engage with others and often crying without being able to articulate how he was feeling. As a result, he struggled to form friendships within the club.

However, as he spent more time at the club and learnt the expectations we have of our young people and got to know the coaches he began to form positive relationships and started to be able to express his issues and concerns. As a result, he started forming friendships with other young people, boosting his self esteem and providing him with people who he could talk to when he found other interactions more challenging.

Child A is now much better at coming to the staff team to when presented with a situation he doesn’t know how to navigate and as a result his listening and interpersonal skills are improving.

5. Evaluation Checklist

This checklist is designed to be used when designing a new project, programme or initiative or when developing a new evaluation or monitoring framework.

Aim of this checklist:

- To help ensure all projects and any project specific monitoring and evaluation frameworks are aligned with the overarching evaluation framework and key outcome areas.
- To encourage more joined-up working across the Sport Unites Programme, as well as the GLA more broadly, with the aim of evidencing the impact of the Programme more effectively.
- To reduce duplication of effort and make the evaluation process more streamlined and efficient.

✓ Have you identified the core vision and outcomes of the project/programme? Have you coproduced this with relevant stakeholders including the community/people/organisations you hope to engage?

✓ Have you identified which outcome area(s) in the overarching Vision and Outcomes Framework your project fits into? It might be that your project fits more into the detail of the outcome area (i.e. signs of change). Have you spoken to anyone else for ideas or support?

✓ If creating a monitoring framework, have you consulted with the GLA Team, who have oversight across dashboards/KPIs?

✓ Have you checked for crossover in data sources/outcomes with other, existing monitoring frameworks that exist or could apply?

✓ Does your framework include different types of evidence (see the 5 layers of evidence triangle)?

✓ Before creating new data sources, have you considered proxy indicators that might be readily available?