

Tools for Young People's Museum Project Evaluations

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To discover whether objectives have been met the following methods can be useful:

1 *Observation* – informal note taking of behaviours seen, eg 'engrossed in activity' or vice versa, enjoyment, interactions and any changes of behaviour or attitude throughout the project eg more confident, more distant, more engaged etc

2 *Viewing tangible outcomes* - such as exhibitions, videos or scrapbooks. How entertaining and informative are they? What is the quality and how does that reflect the young people's efforts? What differences do they make? How do other people respond to them? What do the young people think of their work? What is the media coverage like? etc

3 *Informal group/individual interviews* - developing a set of key questions which support the data-gathering about the success or failure of project objectives (ie if looking for skills development, asking if they had learnt to do anything new.) Open-ended questions are usually used to gather qualitative data and will also produce responses/ information that might not have been expected.

4 *Questionnaires/response sheets* – these use more closed questions, but with some open questions too. These are best used only where really necessary and when there is an established relationship with the young people. They are useful to gather particular information or to collect written quotes for reports.

5 *Interviews with other stakeholders* - such as staff, key workers, youth workers, managers etc about what they perceived the young people got out of the programme but also about how well the programme actually ran – what problems there were, what expectations they had and what surprises. (Questions about partnership issues can be key to ensuring sustainability).

6 *Also try:*

- Diaries, especially by key workers, to record feelings and thoughts from earlier in projects before they have changed or been forgotten.
- Reports, minutes, emails, web pages, newsletters, any documentary evidence
- Video tape especially of activities
- One's own project experience – write a diary yourself!
- Creative writing, drama and art work set up to explore and reflect on learning
- Personal meaning mapping
- Other quantitative approaches such as Basic Skills assessment

Using a range of sources should mean that there are some clear conclusions that a number of respondents have agreed upon.

Make sure you look for data that does not fit what you want!

The key to success is taking time to get to know the young people so that they know you, understand the evaluation purpose and have a stake in how it is done. Enjoy their company and learn from them.