



CHAPTER 1

THE BENEFITS OF EVALUATION



I. THE BENEFITS OF EVALUATION



There are many ways to understand evaluation. According to the approach applied in the Youth Impact project, **the main goal of evaluation is to value the project effects in order to improve them**. This assessment is based on evidence that is collected by using social sciences methodology with regard to **the change caused by the project**.

Our approach largely refers to **impact evaluation** in its broad sense (later we use the term **impact-focused evaluation** to underline that we want to embrace not only experimental and quasi-experimental designs). It is an evidence-based reflection on the real (net) effects of a project. It allows you to understand the factors influencing the ongoing and delayed changes and focus on the sustainability of the achieved outcomes as well as the impact of the project that goes beyond its direct participants. This approach to evaluation allows for the formulation of recommendations supporting project management, which contribute to the effective and efficient implementation of its objectives, as well as the organisation's mission.

Our approach is also a participatory one, taking special care about the needs of various stakeholders and engaging them in planning and other stages of the evaluation.

Such an approach to evaluation makes it possible to determine the value of a particular project and to understand the reasons for its successes and failures. It is also a **good management tool** for organisations focused on social mission and other "learning" institutions.

BENEFITS OF AN EVALUATION DONE WELL:

- It allows you to **predict difficulties before the start of your project** (ex-ante evaluation) or notice problems at every stage of its implementation (ongoing or mid-term evaluation), and also allows you to plan actions minimizing identified risks.
- It gives advice on **how to improve an ongoing or completed project** to better meet the needs of its recipients, achieve more useful and durable outcomes, have a wider impact and fulfil the planned objectives using fewer resources.



- It allows you to assess to what extent the expected effects of the project were really **caused by the project activities**. Moreover, it makes it easier to decide whether a particular project is worth repeating, disseminating, or could be adapted to a different target group.
- It **increases the motivation of employees** – involving the project team in evaluation (especially at the design stage and discussing the evaluation findings), increases the sense of agency, emphasises the relationship between the work performed and the planned goals, the organisation's mission and employees' own values.

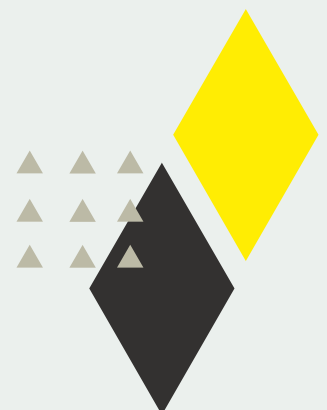
- It **increases the competences of employees** – from issues related to project management to knowledge of the mechanisms of the changes caused by this project.
- It **increases the level of confidence and cooperation with project partners** (also in future projects), thanks to taking into account the perspective of external stakeholders.

Example: When applying for a grant or justifying the need for a project, you can quote the evaluation findings concerning a previous, similar project. Providing reliable data may help you convince funders that your project is worth funding.

- It **serves to promote your organisation.**

Example: Evaluation findings, including case studies, can be used on social media to promote the organisation's activities. These could be stories of young people who, thanks to your support, acquired new competences and then found a satisfying job or successfully run their own business.

Overall, evaluation has many benefits. Introducing it to everyday work can be a very useful support for managing an organisation – strengthening credibility and improving its image, educating and motivating staff, raising funds by showing evidence of project impact, and above all, the effective fulfilment of the assigned mission.



*This possibility is provided by impact evaluation, which is described in chapter 2.4.