COMMUNITY ACTION: MK

Aims, Outcomes and Outputs

It is important that organisations looking to apply for funding can clearly demonstrate value for money and a well managed project. One way in which funders are asking groups to do this is through describing their Aims, Outcomes and Outputs.

What is an Aim?
The 'Aim' is the overall change your organisation is trying to achieve.

What is an Outcome?
- Outcomes are the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of your work.
- Outcomes should reflect your project's overall aim.
- Outcomes should be measurable, so often use words like 'increase', 'decrease', 'improve', 'reduce' to describe the change being made.
- You can have multiple outcomes for your project.

What is an Output?
- An 'Output' is the specific activity or service you will deliver to help achieve your outcomes.
- You can have multiple outputs for your project.

Simple steps in setting aims, outcomes and outputs

Step 1 - Identify the issue and prove the need for your project
- Identify the issue your group will tackle
- Provide evidence to prove how the issue affects your beneficiaries
- Identify the causes and possible solutions to the issue

Stage 2 - Develop your Aims, Outcomes and Outputs
- Decide on an overall aim (goal) for your project
- Decide on the changes you want to make to help you achieve your aim (these are your outcomes)
- Decide on the activities you will undertake to achieve your outcomes (these are your outputs)

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A simple example of aims, outcomes and outputs

Example 1 - Reducing litter in a local neighbourhood
- The **issue** that has been identified is that there is a lot of litter in Green Street in Northampton.
- The **cause** is that there are no bins in the local area.
- The **aim** of the project is to improve the local environment in Green Street.
- The **outcomes** are to improve the aesthetic of the area, to reduce litter, and to improve resident awareness of the litter issue to help reduce future litter levels.
- The **outputs** are to run 3 litter picking days, and to put up 2 bins in the street.

Getting SMART

The best outcomes are 'SMART':

Specific - on what they will achieve
Measurable - able to use metrics and evidence to show a change has taken place
Achievable - set goals which will be accomplished
Realistic - ensure the work is something that can be achieved
Time-based - timescale for activities are included

A simple example of SMART outcomes and outputs

Your outcome is to reduce litter in the neighbourhood. Your <u>SMART</u> <u>outcome</u> would be to reduce litter in the neighbourhood by 50% over the next 6 months. Your SMART outputs are installing 3 bins and holding 1 litter picking day with at least 10 residents attending. You will monitor the amount of litter before the changes are made and after to check that your changes are working.

Measuring Progress with Milestones

To ensure your project is delivering what you planned it is useful to set 'Milestones'. These are targets which monitor the progress of your project.

A simple example of using milestones

A milestone for reducing litter in the neighbourhood could be to install 1 bin by the first month of the project. This can then be measured as to whether it was achieved and whether it is helping to reduce litter.

Further Information & Resources:

Charities Evaluation Service
Big Lottery Fund
Know How Non Profit

Talk to our Support Team for more help
Support@CommunityActionMK.org or call 01908 661623

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