



THE
Ely Centre

Brooke House Project EVALUATION Proposal

Introduction

Introducing LEXXER Solutions

03

Executive Summary

Looking at the Services and Skills offered

05

Evaluation Theory

Outlining the Evaluation Theory and Practice.

07

Methodology

Outline of the REFLECT Methodology

08

Conclusion

New and easier ways of engaging people

05

Introduction -

LEXXER Solutions is Northern Ireland's first Knowledge Brokerage, and it uses the concept to provide the best in Solutions and Consultancy services to a range of Community based and Commercial Clients. The use of Knowledge Brokerage to produce bespoke products and services ensures imaginative, innovative and immediate results.

Turning Knowledge into Advantage

The aim of an evaluation is to help others get to know what you are doing, as well as building our own knowledge about what has worked well and what can be improved.

Many great projects and services are never properly valued because they do not take the time to evaluate their progress and what they produce.

Many project promoters see evaluations as a funder imposed audit, used to check up on them and catch them out. They are often viewed with fear and resentment and left right to the end like final exams.

At LEXXER Solutions we see evaluations in a very different way, they are not a test and a threat but an opportunity to tell your story and to communicate the truth of what you have achieved.

Putting the Value into Evaluations

To ensure repeat funding, or to develop a project or develop a case for support from the public the ongoing good work of groups needs to be valued. Evaluations allow groups to outline what they have done, and how it meets objectives and produces



positive outcomes. The real impact of the work needs more than simple statistical analysis for hard facts and figures often do not convey the softer, but equally important changes they project has made. Our blend of quantitative and qualitative methods allow you to best convey the real success story behind your work.

LEXXER uses Knowledge Brokerage to locate and recruit experts in the sector to bring experience and insight to bear on the project, and will include a range of academic and consultancy skills as well as the ability to present the findings in line with our VARSITY standards.

From Evaluation to Values led Action

The research we do is action based meaning we come alongside the project promoters and beneficiaries and provide a framework for assessment based on what funders, or policy makers want to see.

It is often hard to convey the work done and the soft outcomes which are a result, to those who see the world in figures and financial terms.

At LEXXER Solutions we help you to tell your story in the language others understand. We then take the findings and help your plan for the future. We believe in action not just words and will help you apply the lessons learnt from the evaluation in action based sustainable plans for the future.

Our evaluations will use cutting edge technology to Engage your members and beneficiaries; it will Inform the decision making of those who fund you or develop the policy for the sector, and will Improve your work and results by building on strengths and learning from the past.

That knowledge will give you the advantage and ensure future success.



Executive Summary

LEXXER Solutions provide professional research and evaluation services using the innovative Dx3 Programme. This Discover-Develop-Disseminate Programme applies the VARSITY Standard which ensure the best quality work which works for you. The methodology used begins with us listening to both the funder and project promoter, to understand what each is saying and even to make sure they are speaking the same language



E-VALUE-ation: Our work will allow you to put a value on the hard work you do, and convince others of that value using a range of methods which do justice to the work involved.

We also pride ourselves in providing value for money and know that our embedded approach will give us the best vantage point to view your work while keeping an eye on the expectations of funders.



E-valu- ACTION: Our work is based on Action Research, which not only looks at your activities and the assets you have but looks to what works well and what can be improved.

We only provide positive critiques which provide action plans and pathways to improve and become models of best practice. Our work gives real feedback with solutions and services to improve things.



E-VALUATION: Our methods combine tradition and rigorous research methods with cutting edge technology and digital solutions. Our surveys and other research is conducted online and in real time, with respondents able to participate from their mobiles or at home on PCs.



EVISIONATION: We will revisit your vision for the project or the entire organisation and not only gauge success and progress against external funder linked criteria but against what the work is doing for your organisation.

We then not only tell external bodies like government departments or funders the results but we speak to you first and ensure the evaluation is of real value to you and your future.

Evaluations are a Journey

The project was wholly reliant on volunteers and community contribution to staff and provide space for the project, and indeed this was one of the real success stories of the project. Their involvement in the local community and role in the Hall, meant that the buy-in from other users allowed them to access not one room as anticipated but the entire facility. This was a welcome problem to have but a challenge none the less.

DESIGN

We work with you to design an evaluation based on your vision and objectives, and the best methodology to reflect your success.

2

START

DISCUSSION

The main problem with evaluations is they do not start at the beginning. To get a baseline against which to measure progress we need to start work before your do.

DATA I

Using rigorous research methods and digital engagement we will audit the benefits and look at quantitative outcomes.

4

3

DISCOVERY

Our research methods will not only look at your project but to the wider sector or stakeholders to get a wider picture.

DATA II

Since statistics can never tell the whole story we will sit down with project promoters, participants and the public to learn what they have gained.

5

FINISH

DISSEMINATION

The final report will be presented not only to the funder in question but to the group first to ensure that lessons can be learnt and best practice ensured.

6

DEVELOPMENT

The qualitative and quantitative methods will combine to give a full evaluation of the outcomes.

Evaluation Theory and Practice

We at LEXXER Solutions like to listen to both the funder and project promoter, to understand what each is saying and even to make sure they are speaking the same language. Our experience of different funders' evaluation requirements have allowed us to develop a unique project development and evaluation toolbox.

The first step was to address the Brief, and with a fair degree of latitude our team prepared an evaluation plan using our bespoke **REFLECT** Evaluation framework. Our approach to evaluations involves a number of clear steps which aim to **prove** the assumptions of clients, **approve** of their methods and outcomes where successful and to ensure they **improve** where necessary. The steps include:



The planning phase looks at what key questions should be asked, to whom, and what indicators assigned to outcomes.

Measure - best methods for best indicators.

Assess - identify outputs, outcomes and impact.

People - key stakeholders, audiences, participants and beneficiaries

Theory of change analysis - explain how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts, using RARE.

Assumptions, underlying the theory, Assets and resources used, and Actions or Activities undertaken.

Listed Outputs to identified beneficiaries.

Known Outcomes - short, intermediate and longterm

The practical and methodological phase of evaluation to prove the theory through quantitative and qualitative research.

Analysis - often desk based research and literature reviews of project material.

Statistics & Surveys - both numerical and verbal data derived from answers to key questions.

Knowledge - gained from interviews, focus groups and other methods.

REFLECT Methodology

The evaluation was based on the REFLECT methodology and utilised a number of methods.

R

Research - the project, its background and those involved with a clear understanding of the logic model underlying it.

E

Evidence - needed to support the premise of the project, using established non-biased transparent methodology, for empirical data.

F

Feelings - using interviews and focus groups to establish qualitative data, on issues such as learning, interpretation, and soft outcomes.

L

Lessons - the difference made and the results observed with impact assessed as outcomes minus natural occurrences.

E

Explanation - the comparison of what the project hoped to achieve against what it did achieve and any reasons for variance.

C

Conversations - the facilitated exchanges between those involved at various levels to ascertain positive and negative aspects of project

T

Timeline - a chronological or structured outline of the actions and activities with inputs and outputs listed.

REFLECT Methodology

Our Evaluations are based on a tried and tested mix of methods with both real-time and on-line collection of data.

LEXXER Solutions is grounded upon quality research, building upon and connecting work from many areas generating new perspectives, fresh insights and innovative methodologies which expand and refine knowledge of a problem providing effective solutions.

We have developed our approach to Research with the **VARSlTY** Concept and Standards which will ensure research is fit for purpose and geared towards impact and application. We mean business about research and together we can make it pay. **VARSlTY** provides a framework for ensuring world class research. It will focus on

1. **VALUE** - in the commissioning and development of research value for money, an intrinsic value in the work and a valuable marketable end product will be ensured.
2. **ACTION** - a clear action plan with measurable milestones and outcomes will take research forward and will ensure that it is fit for purpose and will be put into action.
3. **RELEVANCE** - real world requirements will be applied to ensure that it remains relevant and usable, leading the field with an identifiable objective.
4. **SUSTAINABLE** - research will be required to meet a series of sustainability tests which will ensure that it becomes more self-sufficient and self-promoting.
5. **IMPACT** - the potential impact will be assessed and audited with a clear vision for maximising both the audiences and the applications of the work.
6. **TEACHING** - education and training will be promoted as part of the programme to ensure researchers remain part of a wider academic community.
7. **YIELD** - the profit made will be reinvested into the research work to provide an incentive for further development and a maximiser effect

Our research Team will use a range of methods including

Tallys - Counting volume of engagement and footfall with users counted manually.

Tools - The more substantial audit of participant information through survey.

Talking - The use of focus groups comprised of

***PROMOTERS** -Committee and Project Promoters

***PARTICIPANTS** -Volunteers and Trainees

***PUBLIC** - Community, Beneficiaries and Participants

Technology - Gathering feedback on digital resources saves time and money and engages those interviewed in new ways.

LEXXER Solutions has used its knowledge brokerage model to draw together the best evaluation principles and practice using the models and methodologies advocated by a range of funders and universities.

These include the range of Lottery Fund and PEACE good practice guidance papers, which in turn point to best practice across the sector. Having reviewed the various

theoretical approaches and frameworks with methodologies and examples we developed our own set of frameworks and tools to measure impact.

Using the knowledge and experience of HLF, the Arts Council England with their Generic Social and Learning Outcomes and the Office of National Statistics we based our Evaluation on the agreed principles, definitions and approach of these and other funding organisations, while making a distinct and more applicable framework for evaluations of this nature.



The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council – ‘Inspiring Learning for All’ provides a method for using what people say about their learning experiences in community based settings to provide evidence of impact. It uses a framework based on a range of Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs) to create a common language for aggregating evidence of project benefits across services and service points. This was useful in the construction of our own BLESS outcomes framework which fed into our LAW Impact assessment.

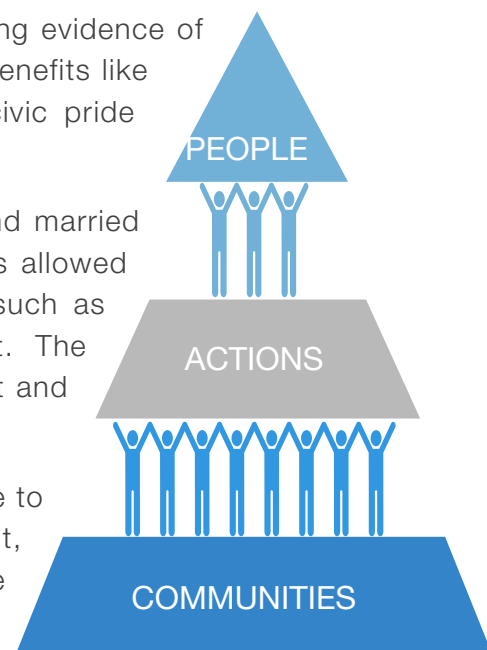
This allows the evaluation team to look at the impact on people, namely the project promoters, the volunteers and active members of the project team, service users and audiences, as well as individuals impacted by the project.

Then the Community impact was assessed looking at the Office of National Statistics definition of social capital ‘describes the pattern and intensity of networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks. Greater interaction between people generates a greater sense of community spirit.’ being used.

Generic Social Outcomes which assist in measuring and providing evidence of the wider impact of project activities, such as wider-community benefits like social cohesion, health and well-being, building partnerships, civic pride amongst others.

The Generic Social Outcomes (GSOs) were therefore adopted and married with other outcomes in the VARIOUS Outcomes Framework. This allowed for the study of the development of social capital and issues such as empowerment with the progression from audience to activist. The planning and development of a project to inform, include, interest and integrate the wider community.

This process allows projects to develop the community as a whole to build social capital and assist in wider goals such as development, regeneration, diversification, reconciliation and cohesion. The impact of this was then assessed using our SEED Impact Assess.



LEXXER Solutions provide value for money evaluations which best express the real value of your work. It is a journey we make with you which gives us the best perspective to properly reflect your success and to provide solutions where you face problems. So speak to one of the Team today!