OUR BRIGHT FUTURE PROGRAMME

Evaluating Policy Impact

August 2018

What do we mean by policy impact?

Policy impact is a key aim of the Our Bright Future Programme, alongside outcomes for young people, the environment, and communities. Whatever the focus of your project, it is likely that you are already carrying out some activity which relates to policy or campaigning influence (whether you realise it or not!). This may be through engaging a local business to encourage behaviour change in your area, organising influencing events with MPs, raising public awareness about a key issue, or encouraging external organisations to embed particular ways of working.

When we talk about a 'campaign', this is a time-bound plan with a specific objective to influence an individual or group of stakeholders in some way. To understand what a clear campaign 'ask' would be, you must consider what **reaction** you wish to see and from whom, as a result of your **action.** Whether you are undertaking a campaign already or wish to develop a new campaign ask, it is useful to think about **your desired impact and how you might measure this** as early as possible in the process.
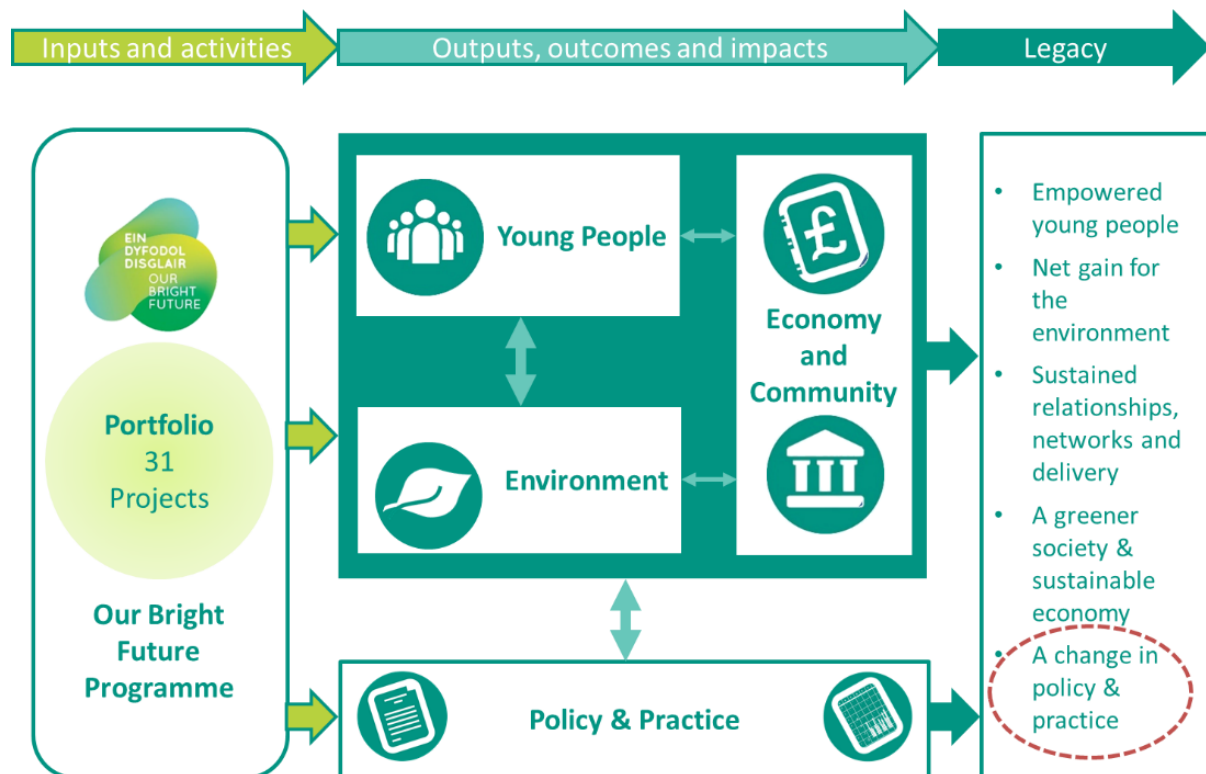

Figure 1: Summary Programme Logic Model

Why is it important to measure policy impact?

Hopefully you are already familiar with the benefits of evaluation for both your **project** and the **Programme.** Evaluation allows us to understand the **outcomes and impacts of different activities and can provide valuable learning**, as well as generating supporting evidence to 'shout about' the value of your projects, and what the programme is achieving as a whole. It's important to think about evaluating your campaign as early as possible (i.e. when you are developing your campaign idea). One reason for this is that thinking about evaluation can help you to check any assumptions you are making in terms of what you expect to happen as a result of your activity. It also ensures you **don't miss any opportunities to collect evidence alongside delivery of your campaign.**

How can you measure policy impact?

Similarly, you may already be familiar with the 'Logic Model' tool. The components of a logic model are shown below. Broadly, a Logic model allows you to trace the links between what you put into your campaign (time, resources, £), the activities you carry out (e.g. an event, a promotional campaign, an activity day) and the resulting outcomes and impacts (i.e. change that has happened as a result of your activity). It therefore helps you to **demonstrate and measure** policy impact.
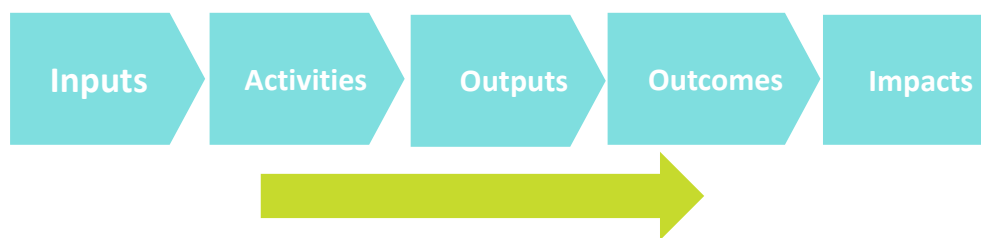

Figure 2: Components of a Logic Model

Evaluating policy change doesn't have to be complicated - it can be useful to think about **what data you collect already** or how data collection might fit into your existing processes, before you explore whether you might need to add something new. Generally, it is best to plan for a range of quantitative and qualitative data, and to balance breadth with depth of data gathered. **Evidence of change** is where you should focus your resource.

Developing your Campaign Logic Model

At the end of this guide (Annex 1) we have included a **blank logic model template**. This is to act as a useful tool to use within your project team or with young people, both when developing and evaluating your campaign. Below we have broken down particular components of the logic model with some examples, which may help to focus your planning. We have listed the stages in the order they appear on the logic model, but as an alternative you may prefer to start with the 'impact' you hope to achieve and work backwards - some people find this approach to be helpful.

Campaign Evaluation: Objective

At the top of the logic model template is a space for your campaign objective or campaign ask. In many ways, developing a good campaign ask is similar to setting project objectives; it can be helpful to ensure your objectives are SMART, i.e. **Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound.** This may involve thinking in more detail about a) who you want to influence and b) what you want them to do differently.

As an example, in the image below, Greenpeace are asking supermarkets to "*Ditch throwaway plastic packaging*". Part of their campaign is to gather a high volume number of names on their e-petition to demonstrate public appetite for this ask.
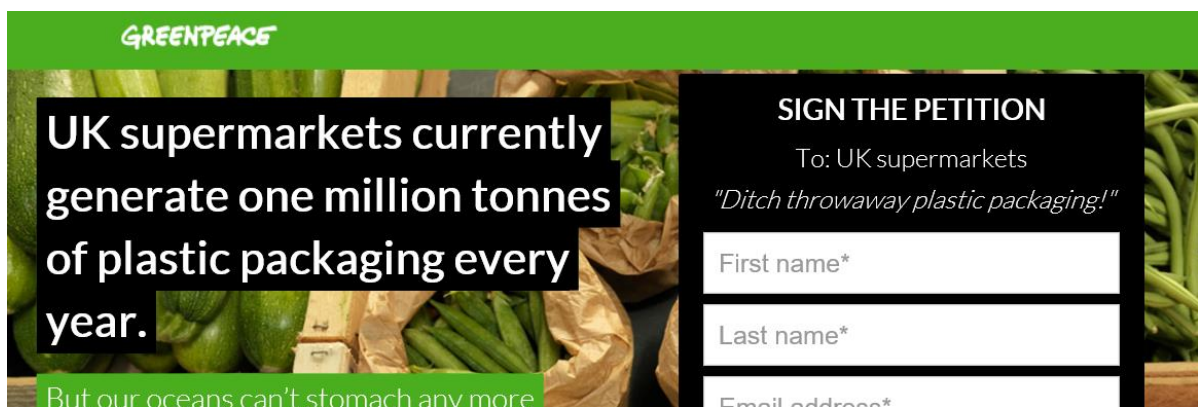

Figure 3: Greenpeace Online Petition[1]

Campaign Evaluation: Activities

The first steps in the logic model are inputs and activities. This is the stage to consider:

> ▪ What are the **activities** in your campaign plan? And what **resources** do you have to carry out those activities?

Inputs are the resources needed to make your campaign activities happen. This may be staff time, young people's time, or money (you should also allocate resource to undertake data / evidence collection).

Your activities can be wide-ranging, and may involve: public demonstrations; meeting 'influencers'; letter writing; an online campaign; a community action; an art installation; or, whatever you can dream up! The key is thinking about what is attainable with resource available, and which activities are most likely to **reach, engage, and activate** your target group to instil the change you wish to see.

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[1] Greenpeace website, accessed 150818: https://secure.greenpeace.org.uk/page/s/plastic-free-supermarkets

Campaign Evaluation: Outputs

Outputs are the measures and metrics associated with the campaign actions or activities. These are how you measure what proportion of planned activity has taken place. You may wish to set target outputs, however, it is important to remember that the focus should be on quality rather than quantity. For example:

- The *activity* is developing online or social media resources such as a humorous video / e-petition; the *output* is the number of shares.
- The *activity* is approaching an MP for a meeting; the *output* is the meeting.
- The *activity* is attending an event (e.g. festival) to gather signatures; the *output* is the number of signatures.

Please note that outputs can also be qualitative.

Campaign Evaluation: Outcomes

Campaign outcomes signal **progress towards achieving the campaign aim**. These are (generally) associated with someone else championing your message / ask or making a commitment to do something. Outcomes should usually be achievable within the timescale of your campaign (i.e. not require a significant amount of time to pass before the desired change is realised). Outcomes might include, for example:

- An **MP raising a question in parliament**;
- **Media coverage** of a campaign activity (note: press release = output; coverage = outcome);
- Teachers trained in environmental issues (output) **integrating environment into curriculum** (outcome);
- **Public awareness is raised** on a behaviour or attitudes have changed e.g. a greater proportion of the community aware of a particular issue;
- **Businesses making a commitment** (e.g. public pledge) to reduce plastic waste.

Outcomes may be local, regional, national level. For example, efforts to reduce the use of plastic straws can be seen at a local, regional and national level:

- One **local restaurant** has committed to switch to paper straws;
- **A region or area:** Evening Standard are championing a campaign across London;
- **National company** JD Wetherspoon (UK & Ireland): has made a commitment to stop using plastic straws.

Campaign Evaluation: Impacts

Your campaign impacts involve achieving your campaign ask! This is evidence of the overall change you are seeking to achieve.

Example Quote: Ms. Smith, senior director of Global Sustainability, says company X was moving towards reducing single-use plastic already, but that the campaign "really did provide a catalyst for our work and positively impacted our progress".

In terms of evaluation evidence, it can be very difficult to attribute a change to your campaign (i.e. to confirm that the change happened as a **direct result of your campaign**). A quote like the example above is ideal, but really quite rare. Usually a pragmatic approach is to evidence the policy change. We can also talk about 'contribution', where your campaign can be identified as **one of the factors** leading towards an overall change. This is perhaps particularly important when talking about collective action.

In summary, thinking about how you might evaluate your campaign activities in advance can help you to plan your activities and also to evidence the change you have achieved. It can be useful to revisit your logic model as your campaign progresses and update it in response to any changes or developments.

ANNEX 1: Campaign Logic Model Template

Objective				
What is your campaign ask?				

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Project time, money & resources.	What are the activities in your campaign plan?	How could you quantify or evidence the outputs of your campaign activities?	E.g. What evidence do you have of your target audiences championing your cause?	How will you know you have achieved your goal?