Stage 5: Evaluation
The purpose of evaluation

Evaluation is the asking of three key questions once a project is completed or a significant point in the Umoja process has been reached:

• Did we do what we said we would do?
• Did we make a difference?
• Could we have used our skills and resources more effectively?

There are two main purposes to evaluation:

• Accountability to community members who are receiving a service and to project supporters who are providing money or other resources.
• Learning how we can improve what we are doing

1. Accountability

It is important that the community members that the project is intended to help are able to hold to account those managing the project so that:

• they can have a voice about how the project has been run
• they can comment as to whether the project or service is making a difference
• they are empowered and not just treated as passive receivers of assistance.

It is important that the project is also accountable to those supporting the project through the giving of money, resources, skills and time, in order to:

• demonstrate the money is being well used
• provide evidence of positive change and impact
• honour the partnership between the supporter and the project.

2. Learning

It is important to learn from our experiences and to gather lessons for how we could improve the way we work in the future

Questions and tools for doing an evaluation

The three key questions of evaluation

When we evaluate a project, before going on to the next one, we adapt the three key questions that we use while monitoring the project.
1. Did we do what we said we would do?

To answer this question, the LCG needs to look at the original plan for the project. In addition, they should look at the information gathered around the problems that the project seeks to address. It is important that the group takes time to familiarise themselves with the plans and the information so that they can adequately compare and contrast the changes that have taken place since the problem was identified.

One useful tool to help answer this question is a timeline. On a large piece of paper, ask the group to draw a straight horizontal line across the middle. Put the date the project started at the beginning of this line and the current date at the other end of the line. Then the group should draw another line from one date to the other marking the highs of the project above the line and the lows below it. As a group, look at the highs and lows on the timeline and discuss the question, “Did we do what we said we would do?” You could also explore any major changes that were made to the project and why this was. It is important to keep a record of the timeline to present to various community committees and beneficiaries to demonstrate accountability.

2. Did we make a difference?

To answer this question, the LCG needs to think about tools which will gather evidence that will show that a difference has been made.

a) Stories of significant change

This method enables everybody to contribute their experience of a community project and the changes they think it has made. Each person in the group is encouraged to talk about how they have experienced the project and what difference it has made to their lives. The process of doing this needs to be fairly structured to give everyone who has a story to share enough time.

After each person has shared a story, ask them to give the story a title and say why it is significant. Write this on a large piece of paper or card. Then stick it on the wall for everyone to see.

When all the stories have been told and given a title, invite the group to rank which they think are the top three or five stories that best reflect the change that has happened in their community. These stories should then be written out in full and used as evidence in a report.
3. Could we have used our skills and resources more effectively?

a) The resource triangle

This is a good activity to look at what resources were used in setting up the community project.

- Did we use any outside help and what did it consist of?
  - For example: advice from local authorities or local organisations on water and sanitation and agriculture.

- What other community groups did we work with and what resources did they share with us?
  - For example: other denominations or religions who shared their experience and resources such as buildings and equipment.

- What did we do by ourselves and with what resources?
  - For example: dig wells, plant fields, build storehouses with our own labour and materials.

Draw the triangle on a blackboard or a large piece of paper and write the questions in each of the segments shown above. Then invite the group to brainstorm their responses to each of the questions. These responses can be written either on to the blackboard or piece of paper or on to small pieces of paper and then stuck on to the triangle. Then summarise the responses and invite the group to think about what they would do differently next time.

b) Community mapping

At the end of the project, ask the LCG to draw a map of the community and compare it to the map they drew before the project started. Has the map changed as a result of the project? (For more details about how to do the map, see page 70.)

c) Use of local statistics

An important part of the evaluation is gathering local statistics of how things have changed. These are usually available from official records in government offices or in local health clinics. The LCG should compare the statistics from the time before the project started to the statistics for when the project was completed. Key things to look for are changes in improved health, increased agricultural production and improved attendance in local schools.

The LCG should look at all these statistics and come up with a summary statement of what change the statistics show in a particular area. This should be included in the report and accompanied by the relevant statistics.
b) The box analysis

This activity is good for thinking how the overall community project has gone and can be used to ask the question about whether the resources are used effectively.

**Tips for doing a box analysis**

1. Break the group into small groups. This works best if you divide the group according to the different roles they played in the process.
2. Ask each group to draw a picture of a form of transport which best represents how they think the project has gone.
3. Give each group coloured cards labelled Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Ask them to brainstorm their thoughts and opinions on the project, writing their comments on the appropriate cards.
4. Ask each group to present their mode of transport picture and their box analysis to the whole group.
5. As a group discuss the common themes and write them up on a large sheet of paper.
6. Discuss what short term actions need to be carried out to improve the project (next 6 months).
7. Discuss what long-term actions need to be carried out to improve the project (next 12-18 months).

Celebrate the achievements that have been highlighted in the exercise.

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**Drawing lessons from Umoja**

Before presenting back to the community all the findings, it is important for the LCG to review the lessons they have learnt through all the different stages of the programme. This could be done by looking at what they have written up for the learning and reflection part of each stage (see pages 53, 107, 130 and 153), or as a general discussion using the timeline, which may be easier to do as it is visual.

*‘The one real purpose of learning is to leave a person in the condition of continually asking questions’*

Bishop Creighton (1843-1901)

**Feeding back to the community**

Once the LCG have gathered all the information, it should be shared with the community to check its accuracy and to get any last minute insights or reflections. This is an important thing to do as it helps the community have ownership of the information and helps them share in the achievements of their project.
Structuring a Report

Once all the information has been gathered from the three key questions, and reviewed by the community, you can now put it altogether in a report. Below is a structure which you can use to write the report. The report should be kept as a community record of what took place, as well as submitted to local authorities to keep them informed.

**Evaluation Report**

**Key headings:**
- Name of community project
- Purpose of the community project
- Start date
- Finish date
- Total budget including local contribution
- Findings

1. Did we do what we said we would do?
2. Did we make a difference?
   - statistics
   - stories of change
   - before and after maps
3. Could we have used our skills and resources more effectively?
   - review of budget and expenditure
   - feedback from the local co-ordination group
4. Lessons learnt
   - remember to draw on lessons learnt from stages 1 to 4
5. Conclusions
6. Recommendations

**What is next?**

Having completed the evaluation it is important to celebrate the achievements and think about how the lessons learnt can be applied to starting a new project.

The following things need to be considered when starting a new project cycle:

1. Do we have a list of things we have learnt from working together in the last project?
2. Do we need to look at other priorities listed by the community during the analysis stage?
3. Can we still use the baseline information we gathered at the beginning of the first project, or do we need to do this again?
4. Can we still use the same project co-ordination group or do we need to ask others to form a new group?
5. Do we need any new additional support or training to do the next project?

Once everyone has discussed the questions, look for ways of celebrating what has been achieved. For example, this could be a community feast.
Final Thoughts

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.

Isaiah 61:1-3

Prayer

Christ our light, Your love burns in our hearts and builds in us a thirst for justice. Jesus, light of the world, you taught us how to reach out to others, open our ears to the stories that beg to be heard. You who are light and warmth, banish the darkness and bring us hope. Jesus, light of life, enfold us all with your love and incline our hearts to the leading of your healing spirit.

Amen