



MP4 Stakeholder workshop
24th of November 2011



Workshop 5

Dealing with Evaluation



Several approaches in evaluation (1): Overview



- Measurement of place-keeping is difficult
 - many indicators measure the quality of open space, not place-keeping itself
 - many indicators measure results of PK rather than processes
 - the question of the unit of measurement: how to measure less tangible aspects of place-keeping? (e.g. commitment, sense of ownership)
- Atomistic vs holistic measurement
- Objective vs subjective measurement
 - If subjective measurement, who should carry out the measurement? Experts or users?
- Ongoing vs ex-post vs one-off measurement



Several approaches in evaluation (2): Existing Indicators



- Some indicators widely used in measuring the quality of open, green and public spaces:
 - Awards (e.g. Green Flag Award, UK)
 - Competitions
 - Surveys of users' satisfaction
 - Surveys of public space use
 - Community involvement
 - Evaluation of procurement and contracting
 - Value for money
 - Cost-benefit analysis
 - Staff retention and skills development
 - Vandalism and crime statistics



Several approaches in evaluation (3): Specific comments from our pilots



- VLM1: a high level evaluation mainly of environmental parameters, but limited socio-economic parameters have been added as well. For the land development plan Nieuwenhove Gruuthuyse, this methodology has not been applied yet
- VLM2: investments with an impact on high quality biodiversity are usually monitored during several years. Other effects or not monitored. This monitoring can reveal that the realisations don't meet the original goals, which can be caused by inappropriate maintenance or unrealistic goals.
- Sheffield SV: (a) The park site is very open with many entrances it has therefore been difficult to get quantitative information on use changes. (b) Satisfaction surveys will be carried out in the future
- LF1: The project is a relative small one, therefore it is not necessary to have a special evaluation system.
- Emmen1: Evaluation was carried out together by specialists and residents at several moments during the process. Evaluation will take place again with the same group, after the project site has been used for several months.
- Gothenburg: evaluation is consistent



Several approaches in evaluation (4): Generic feedback from our pilots



- Evaluation is mostly not done yet because projects understand evaluation as a look at results not at processes
- Envisaged techniques like footfall surveys, user surveys, statistics on crime and vandalism, photo documentations, interviews
- Ex-post evaluation instead of ongoing evaluation and monitoring
- Evaluation in a sense of talking together (between policy, administration and community)
- Evaluation from transnational partners is seen as useful (e.g. Through peer reviews, critical presenting, workshops, Learning Labs)
- Basically very little evaluation beyond the usual measure needed for funding requirements seems to be undertaken. Very little ongoing monitoring / evaluation beyond life of this project/grant funding – why?

Pitfalls: comments from our pilots

- Stakeholders seem to be afraid of evaluation
- Economic benefits are difficult to evaluate – distinction between direct and indirect benefits and impacts
- VLM1: Monitoring is an expensive activity, and is often reduced because VLM's first priority is site investments.
- LF: perhaps we would try to have a budget more obligatory.
- Emmen: Frequent evaluation with residents leads to comment on too many details which disturbs plan development.
- Sheffield SV: the nature of the space and transient nature of the population would make it difficult to capture a baseline to judge improvements against; however, pre development satisfaction surveys may have been useful to illustrate a base level of change.



Successes: comments from our pilots



- LF: we would take the same approach once again.
- Emmen: Frequent evaluation with residents creates commitment
- Sheffield FoFP: voluntary residents' associations can provide on-the-ground monitoring of open spaces

Conclusions

- To ensure place-keeping is taken seriously and is funded we need evidence to show what happens if place-keeping is /is not undertaken. This requires ongoing evaluation.
- For evaluation to be meaningful it needs to be carefully considered – what, how, why, how often etc. What will the data be used for – is it the right data, is it robust data, how will it be communicated, to whom, why, what is the desired outcome from collecting the data. It is just for PR – if so then it should be transparent.
- Economic benefits are difficult to evaluate – distinction between direct and indirect benefits and impacts
- Distinction between ongoing evaluation/monitoring and ex post evaluation is useful
- Emmen: In future we will evaluate the process with gouvernors so successes can be better implemented in the municipal organization.
- Effects of reduced public budgets should be monitored to know more about the consequences on the ground

Key questions

- Very little ongoing monitoring / evaluation beyond life of this project/grant funding – why?
- What are/could be the benefits of evaluating PK process rather than results?
- What aspects could/should be monitored ‘ex-post’ and what ‘ongoing’?
- What data to collect – qualitative or quantitative?
- Which methods of evaluation offer best VFM?
- In-house or commissioned evaluation?
- What happens to data if it is collected – what can it be used for, can it be used, would it change the way things happen?
- Emmen: Could results of evaluation be used to interest governors in the place-making process?