Defining outputs and outcomes

It can sometimes be difficult to separate your outcomes and outputs the easiest way to define them is '**Outputs are the tangible services and products** created by your organisation and can be quantified'. For example:

- 200 leaflets produced
- 20 people attending training
- 10 people volunteered for 3 hours

Outcomes are the changes or differences as a result of an output and should relate to your aims. These can be both expected and unexpected. They may be negative as well as positive and can be difficult to quantify. For example:

- 20 people attend training and **report an increase in well being**
- 10 people volunteered for 3 hours **and feel more confident**

Outcomes need to be clearly understood, evidenced and measured whether they are: intended, unintended, positive or negative.

Identify your outputs and outcomes

Your outputs are the immediate results of the operational side of your project and would include the tangible things that you deliver (leaflets, training sessions). From this your outcomes should follow, these are the actual changes and impact (personal/ environmental/societal) that have occurred as a result of the outputs**.** These elements create an Impact Chain:

Organisation ➡ **Outputs** ➡ **Outcomes**

Linking your activities to outputs and outcomes provides you with a greater understanding of how impact is achieved as an organisation and forms your theory of change. Essentially it puts forward a process for how your organisation achieves impact and an understanding of how that impact will play out in the lives of beneficiaries and the wider environment.

Deciding on the appropriate Social Value outcome for you

You need to identify what you want to measure and show progress on in order to develop and showcase the work that you do. Don't try to measure everything as this may create too much work, take time to decide on prioritising key factors that give you the opportunity to tell the story of your organisation, and its service users.

- o Enable children and young people to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- o Build community resilience and cohesion within young communities
- o Increase children's and young people's safety or well-being
- o Help develop students' employability and money management skills
- o Provide traineeships and work experience opportunities
- o Involve young people in decision making processes
- o Use volunteers who learn new skills and gain more confidence
- o Make communities or places more environmentally sustainable
- o Use local supply chains to help facilitate local regeneration
- o Improve the mental well-being of employees or volunteers used to deliver a service
- o Reduce anti-social behaviour
- o Increase energy efficiency within local communities

(List courtesy of NVCO Social Value and Commissioning Toolkit 2015)