EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION OF THE E-SERVICE LEARNING COMMUNITY IMPACT

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Introduction

Service-learning would not be possible without community involvement. Effective and sustainable service-learning depends on mutually beneficial partnerships between the university and the community. Evaluation of the service-learning community impact is necessary for the university and teachers implementing service-learning to learn what can be improved in the service-learning process regarding the service part and how to provide a higher quality of service in service-learning. Another reason for this evaluation is the possibility of presenting the results and benefits of the university to the community, to the general public, media, and to the donors.

It is essential to understand the concept of "evaluation" as giving value to items. It determines the significance or quality of programme results. Proper evaluation of service-learning will help the university evaluate diverse activities, i.e., those that proved to be practical and those that need to be eliminated or changed. It also helps to point attention to the promising activities to allocate effort and resources for the most significant impact in the future.

Evaluation of service-learning community impact does not have to be too time-consuming. It can be based on one aspect of service-learning implementation or the whole programme. More importantly, it is not just a mere exercise. It should tell you where you are going wrong (and what is working well), foresee potential risks and guide you on improving things.

Undoubtedly, planning the evaluation process is vital. Depending on what you want to find out, you will decide on the most effective tools to use and the best approach. Having the right plan from the start ensures you have all the data you need and only the data you need in the end, so you don't need extra time later to sort out what is relevant. Knowing from the start what to evaluate also helps in choosing the tools you will use that are most appropriate for your course or project.

You can focus on different stakeholders in the community impact measurement and evaluation. You can involve community partners (organisations in which the service-learning projects were implemented), and beneficiaries of the service-learning projects, both within and outside the organisations and the wider community. Not all service-learning projects are implemented in an organisation or institution. Beneficiaries of the service may or may not be covered by an organisation or institution. In the guide, we use the "community impact" to express all stakeholders that can be part of the evaluation.

The following pages are designed to help you develop the plan that is most suited to your needs. The guide is structured into three main sections: one focuses on evaluating and assessing the impact of SL and e-SL on the community and broader society, and the second on how to communicate this impact to raise public awareness of service-learning's value to the communities and society; the last part is offering a selection of concrete tools that can help you measure the service-learning community impact.

We used the term "service-learning" in the guide, including "e-service-learning" in this expression. In the e-service-learning projects, you can focus on the evaluation more specifically on the technology part of the service-learning project or specific outcomes and impact in the area of digital technologies or digital empowerment. Still, the evaluation process is the same as in traditional service-learning settings.

The guide should also help the universities to establish partnerships based on the idea of mutually beneficial relationships and the consideration of community needs.

1. Why evaluate the impact on the community in service-learning projects?

Evaluating the impact of service-learning on the community is crucial for various reasons, as it helps ensure that service-learning programs are effective, sustainable, and beneficial for all stakeholders involved. Here are several reasons why this evaluation is necessary:

Accountability: Evaluation holds service-learning programs accountable for their objectives. It helps you ensure that the resources invested, including time, money, and human capital, are used effectively to benefit the community.

Quality Assurance: Evaluation can serve as a quality assurance mechanism for service-learning programs. It helps ensure that programs meet established standards and deliver meaningful benefits to the community.

Effectiveness Assessment: Evaluation helps you determine whether service-learning activities you are implementing with your students achieve their intended outcomes. Is the community receiving the assistance and support its needs?

Continuous Improvement: Evaluation allows you to identify strengths and weaknesses in service-learning implementation. This will help to make necessary adjustments and improvements over time.

Community Feedback: By evaluating the impact on the community, you can gather feedback from community members themselves. This feedback you can use to adapt programs to better meet the community's needs and preferences.

Sustainability: Understanding the impact of service-learning on the community is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of these programs. If the community perceives little or no benefit, it may be less likely to support or engage with future service-learning initiatives.

Community Engagement and Reciprocity: An evaluation process can involve community members in assessing service-learning impacts, fostering greater community engagement and ownership of the programs. Evaluation helps ensure that service learning remains mutually beneficial.

Long-Term Relationships: Building trust and positive relationships between the university and the community partners is essential. Evaluation can help strengthen these relationships by demonstrating a commitment to accountability and improvement.

Policy Development: Evaluation data can inform the development of policies and guidelines for service-learning initiatives.

Research and Documentation: Evaluation generates data and evidence that can be used in academic research and advocacy efforts.

Visibility: Evaluation can increase the visibility of your university by promoting the assessment findings.

Motivation: Community impact evaluation can motivate already involved students and community partners and attract new ones.

To summarise, evaluating the impact of service-learning on the community is essential for the responsible, mutually beneficial, and effective implementation of service-learning. It benefits the community and contributes to the overall success and sustainability of service-learning initiatives.

2. Approaches and types of evaluation

In assessing the impact of service-learning on the community, we distinguish between monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring describes collecting the facts and figures related to your service-learning courses or programmes. This will include:
- Numbers of community partners;
- The number of beneficiaries served;
- Number of service-learning projects implemented;
- Number of hours spent by students in service;
- Frequency and duration of the service activities;
- The type of work that students do.

Evaluation is using your collected information to answer questions about how well the service-learning programme is doing, identify gaps and improvements you can make, and demonstrate your outcomes and impact, e.g., the difference that participating students make or the added value that participating students bring to the community. It will analyse monitoring information, feedback, case studies, and collected experiences. Monitoring information describes what has happened. Evaluation is one step further – making a value judgment based on this descriptive information – is the impact good enough? Is it worth the resources we put into the programme? To what extent is the impact experienced because of the service-learning programme and the intervention of the students?

There are two general approaches to the evaluation: formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Please take a look at Table 1.

Table 1 Comparison between formative and summative evaluation

	Formative evaluation	Summative evaluation
Aim	Development of service-learnin	Support the decision about the future of service-learning
Purpose	Give feedback for the improvement of the service-learning (if there are many ideas on how we can improve the intervention, it doesn't mean it is an intervention of low quality; the formative evaluation is not focused on the usefulness of the intervention) Correspondence between what is planned and what is done	Give the information based on which we decide about the service-learning
Questions	What works? What do we need to improve? How can we improve it?	What are the results/outcomes? In which conditions do we reach the outcomes? What costs?

Formative evaluation

The formative evaluation provides an increased understanding of the service-learning program and relevant and timely feedback to the university and community partners. The role of formative evaluation may differ for the initial introduction of service-learning or the beginnings of collaboration with a particular community partner, and different for a long-standing service-learning programme or partnership. Indeed, in the case of a new programme or partnership, the role of formative evaluation is quite crucial. It brings significant benefits and considerable added value to all the staff involved, as the early identification of any shortcomings allows for their early correction and minimisation of negative impacts. The importance of formative evaluation in longer-term programmes may be that it allows early and relatively easy adaptation to changing conditions (such as the need to adapt to a situation during a pandemic).

Examples of the questions for the formative evaluation:
1. How do you see the implementation of the service-learning PLACE mode, from the beginning until now?
2. What works?
3. What doesn't work?
4. What do you think should be improved?
5. How can we improve it?

Summative evaluation

Summative evaluation is used when it is necessary to assess the achieved results and to decide on further continuation or discontinuation of the service-learning programme. In this case, the evaluation aims not to look for suggestions for improvement, but to state and certify the achievement or non-achievement of the set objectives.

According to the subject of the evaluation, a distinction is made between process and effect evaluation.

Process evaluation

Process evaluation focuses on how a given intervention, in our case, service-learning, is implemented in a particular organisation. Process evaluation focuses on the context (context evaluation) or the implementation itself (implementation evaluation). Context evaluation looks at how the context influences service-learning and identifies what helps or hinders the implementation of service-learning. Implementation evaluation focuses on how service-learning is implemented in the concrete practice of the organisation.

Effects evaluation

The effects evaluation (also called results or outcomes evaluation) is focused primarily on describing, exploring, and determining changes in the target group or other stakeholders due to the intervention (Fitzpatrick, Sander, Worthen, 2004). The primary purpose of this evaluation is to analyse changes in the target group's behaviour after their participants were exposed to the intervention. In our case, the effects evaluation is focused on the effects that service-learning brings to the communities, community partners and beneficiaries.

3. Explanation of concepts in service-learning community impact evaluation

We often use concepts such as input, output, outcome and impact as they would be interchangeable, without understandingnding their differences. When deciding to implement an efficient impact assessment process, it becomes essential to clearly understand these concepts, both independently and with each other, referring to servicee-learning community impact.

Figure 1 Community impact evaluation model in service-learning
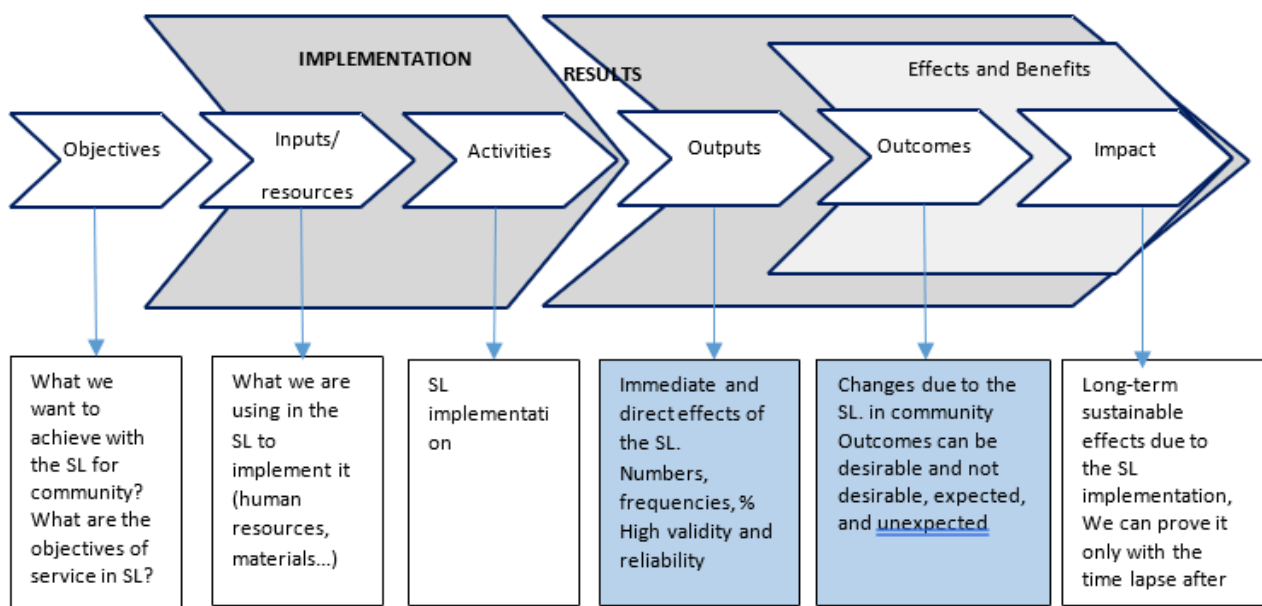
However, understanding the expected impact and clearly defining the difference you want to generate as a university, can be challenging. Still, it is highly recommended to have a controlled and predictable process that, in time, will consolidate your role in the local community.

Table 2 Conecpts in SL impact evaluation

Concept	Explanation	Examples
INPUTS	Defines all the resources of the university and community partners devoted to SL. Resources can be financial, but inputs also involve the time of staff, teachers, and students.	• number of staff members involved in the organisation during SL implementation • number of hours spent by staff in the organisation with students or with SL implementation • number of hours spent by students in service in SL • equipment and materials used in SL project • technology needed for SL implementation
OUTPUTS	Direct elements produced or generated by the SL project. Products and services provided through the service-learning to the community. Outputs are measurable and determined accomplishments of the SL project.	• number and type of activities in the SL projects • number of beneficiaries involved in the SL activities • number of community partners involved in SL • number of materials produced thanks to the SL project
OUTCOMES	Refer to the SL's benefits generated in a defined period, usually after the SL project implementation.	• number of satisfied beneficiaries • number of new beneficiaries in a specific program • raised awareness about the issues • new connections and networks • increase the social contact for beneficiaries • increased access to local services for the families
IMPACT	Changes induced by the SL implementation in the community over extended periods.	• increase of community partners' visibility in the local community • the improvement of the service • reduced social isolation • improved life chances of children

4. Different models for the assessment of service-learning impact on the community

Several theoretical frameworks were developed to evaluate the impact of SL on the community. Working with these models can help you find your evaluation's theoretical foundation.

Gelmon et al. (2018) suggested a twofold classification of the effects of SL on community partners: (1) effects on community partner organisation and (2) effects on university-community partnership. While the first one includes economic and social benefits and the ability to accomplish the organisation's mission, the latter consists of effects on the relationship between community and university – i.e., quality of university-community interactions and satisfaction and sustainability of the partnership. The authors also offer a helpful assessment matrix for the community impact assessment (Table 3). You can also find the tools prepared in line with the matrix assessment in the section, related to tools.

Table 3 Matrix for the community assessment

What do we want to know? (concepts)	How will we know it? (Indicators)	How will we measure it? (methods)	Who/what will provide the data? (sources)
Variables about community partner organisation			
Capacity to fulfil the organisation's mission	Types of services provided Number of beneficiaries served Number of students involved Variety of activities offered Insights into assets and needs	Survey Interview Focus groups Documentation review Critical incident review	Community partner Students Faculty Advisory committees Governing board
Economic benefits	Identification of new staff Impact on resource utilisation Identification of funding opportunities	Interview Focus groups Documentation review	Community partner Students Faculty Governing board
Social benefits	New connections and networks Number of volunteers Impact on community issues	Interview Focus groups Documentation review	Community partner Students Faculty Governing board
Variables about community-university partnership			
Nature of community-university partnership	Creation of partnership Kinds of activities conducted Barriers/facilitators	Interview Documentation review Critical incident review	Community partner Faculty Governing board
Nature of community-university interaction	Involvement in each others activities Communication patterns Community awareness of university programs and activities University awareness of community program and activities	Interview Focus groups Documentation review	Community partner Students Faculty Advisory committees
Satisfaction with partnership	Perception of mutuality and reciprocity Responsiveness to concerns Willingness to provide feedback	Survey Interview Focus groups	Community partner Faculty Governing board
Sustainability of partnership	Duration Evolution	Survey Interview Critical incident review	Community partner Faculty Governing board

Source: Gelmon et al., 2018

Lau & Snell (2020) propose the Conceptual Framework of Community Impacts Arising from Service-Learning. In this tripartite model, the community impact of service-learning is analysed from three perspectives: the community partner, the end beneficiary, and the service-learning intervention itself.

Figure 2 Tripartite Model for Assessing Community Impact
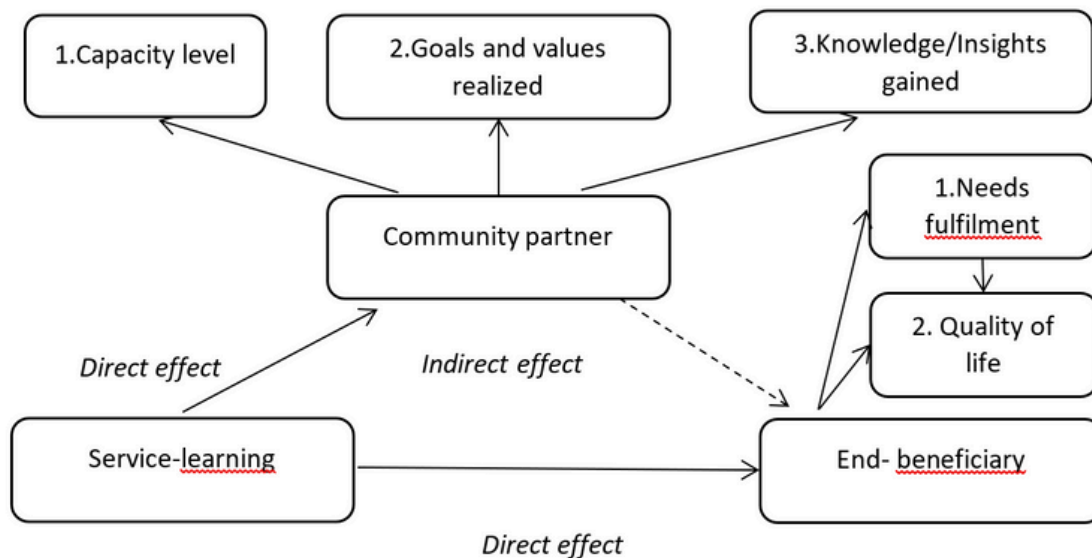
Source: Lau & Snell, 2020

The model in Figure 2 identifies three domains of impact on the CPO: (1) increased capacity, (2) furtherance of goals and values, and (3) knowledge/ insights gained. The model also identifies (a) needs fulfilment and (b) quality of life as two broad impact domains for end-beneficiaries. Lau and Snell (2021) also prepared a Community Impact Feedback Questionnaire based on this model, which you can find in the tool section.

Inspiring community impact assessment in service-learning can also be a model to measure the impact of volunteering. This model focuses on different target groups for which volunteering can make a difference: volunteers, volunteers involving organisations, users/beneficiaries, and the community. In our case, we included only the last three groups in assessing the SL impact on the community. The model also identifies different ways in which volunteering can make a difference and includes **dimensions:**
- Human capital - people's knowledge, skills and health;
- Economic capital - benefits or costs with a financial value;
- Social capital - more cooperative relationships between people;
- Cultural capital - a sense of individual identity and understanding of other's identity.

The table below shows how each stakeholder, mentioned above, can be impacted in each dimension. Undoubtedly, the impact may vary from organisation to organisation and from one SL project to another SL project. Still, the table can help you decide which aspects to assess and communicate.

Table 4 Impact measurement matrix based on the different types of capital and stakeholders

	Human Capital (people's knowledge, skills, attitudes, health)	Social Capital (more cooperative relationships between people)	Economic Capital (benefits of costs with a financial value)	Cultural Capital (sense of own identity and understanding of others' identity)
Organisation	• increased personal development and skills of staff • increased motivation of staff to develop professional skills • increased staff satisfaction and retention	• improved organisational working procedures • more significant income for the institution • job creation • improvement of human interaction relationships within the organisation • increase of the organisations' visibility	• increase the financial value of the organisation's activities (higher impact for the exact costs)	• services are more reflective of cultural diversity within the community • greater diversity in the organisation
Beneficiaries	• increased personal development (self-esteem, empathy, optimism) • increased skills and abilities • improved physical and mental health • more significant sense of well-being among beneficiaries	• new friendships, contacts and network • greater involvement in local activities, groups, or clubs • increased level of empowerment for acting	• increased access to services that they would otherwise have to buy • increased employability opportunities due to newly developed skills and personal development	• more significant sense of belonging to a group, taking part in culture, and expressing values • increased understanding of others' cultures and values • increased opportunities to practice or express trust • development of desirable behaviours • improvement of civic activism (beneficiaries can become volunteers)
Community	• improved skills and a more productive workforce • increased personal development • increased level of awareness of the local community regarding local problems	• increased social networks • enhanced trust and participation • more organisations working together	• enhanced value for the money in public services • increase of investment • financial value (higher impact for the exact costs) • reduced anti-social behaviour	• volunteering is recognised, promoted, and practised as a desirable behaviour model • new values are being • promoted within the community - solidarity, human dignity, human rights

Source: Bere, Bere, & Pintea, 2019

5. Service-learning Community Impact Assessment and Evaluation: Step-by-step

Service-learning community impact evaluation is a process that consists of several steps. Based on the research on evaluation and measuring the service-learning impact, we offer a list of simple steps to guide you. You can see the steps in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Steps of service-learning community evaluation
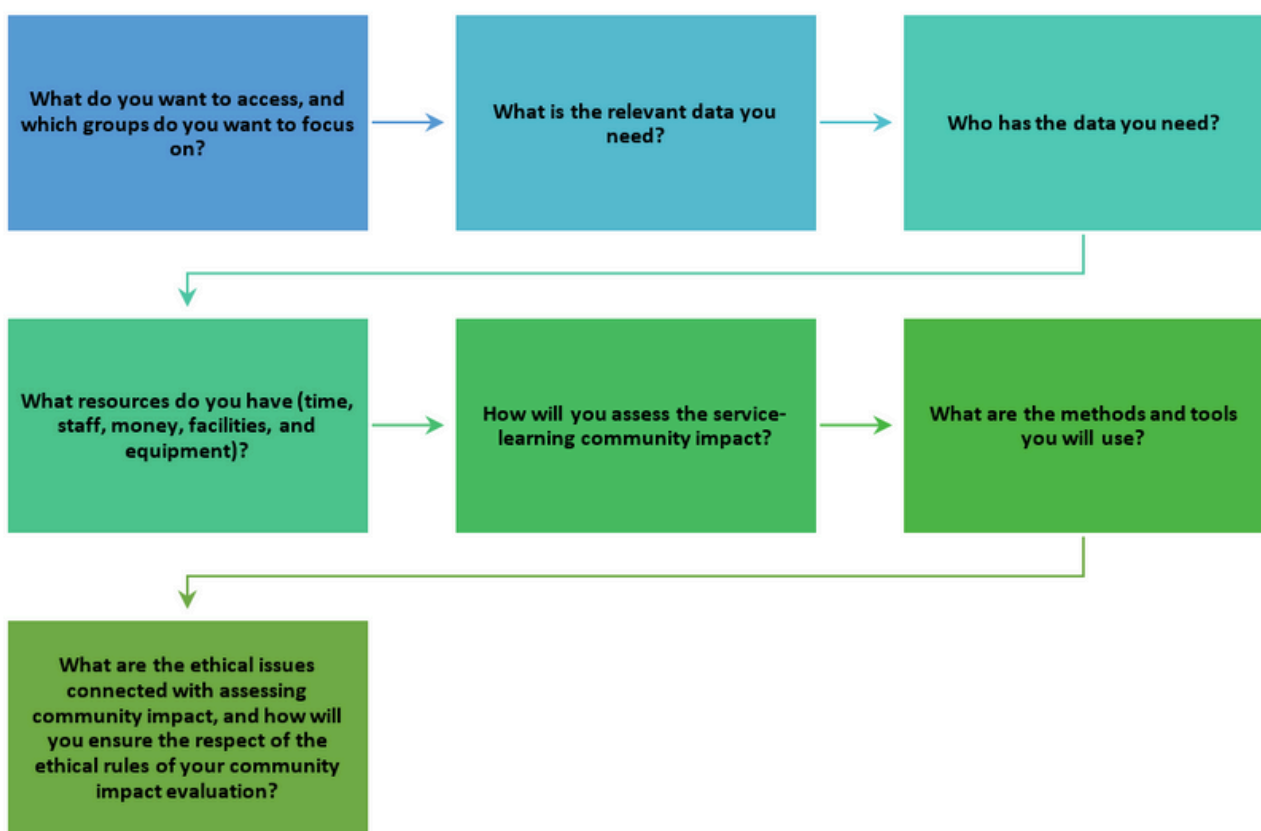
5.1. Planning and designing the evaluation

The first step in the evaluation process is planning the evaluation. In this step, you first need to identify why you want to assess service-learning community impact and who the assessment is for and design the evaluation based on the answers. You can use the tool to plan the evaluation of the service-learning community impact provided in this manual.

Understanding the purpose of the evaluation

You must clearly understand how the information from the evaluation of SL community impact will be used. The information could be used, for example, to:
- Support for SL institutionalisation;
- Show the successful stories to the university or faculty management;
- Account for funding;
- Provide evidence to support a funding application;
- Showcase achievements;
- Gain the visibility of SL benefits to the community;
- Develop a SL programme or activity;
- Identify "what works";
- Understand the community impact that SL brings.

Your answer to the questions: **Why do you want to assess the SL community impact?** and **Who is the assessment for?** will explain what questions you ask, who is involved, what type of data is collected and how it is communicated. For example, if you use the information to account for funding, describe changes experienced by those participating in the activity or project. Suppose you want to use the process to help develop the SL project or course. In that case, you will need more information about how specific activities or actions led to those impacts or focus on evaluating the whole process.

Designing the evaluation

The second step is designing the evaluation. In this step, you need to answer the questions in Figure 4

What do you want to access, and which groups do you want to focus on?

After setting up the aim and beneficiaries of the service-learning community impact assessment, you should identify and prioritise the groups to focus on and what you want to evaluate. The assessment models offered in the previous chapter can help you answer this question and organise your assessment. Think also about the groups and stakeholders and related service-learning, that make a difference in the community. You can further focus on community partner organisations, beneficiaries, community, or community-university partnerships.

What is the relevant data you need?

For the evaluation of the service-learning community impact, you will need two types of data: quantitative (also called outputs, or "hard") data and qualitative (also called outcomes, or "soft") data. A good evaluation uses quantitative and qualitative measures to present a complete picture of the SL community's impact.

Quantitative Data

Quantitative data describes information in numbers. There is a variety of data you can obtain, such as:
- number and type of activities in the SL projects
- number of beneficiaries, involved in the SL activities
- number of community partners, involved in SL
- number of materials, produced as a result of the SL project
- number of student hours invested
- the economic value of students' hours spent in service
- number of staff working with students and the extent of their involvement

Qualitative Data

Many aspects of service-learning community impact cannot be easily quantified. These data are referred to as qualitative data. They include the more intangible benefits or outcomes, for example, improved community relations, increased interest in programmes, increased beneficiaries' satisfaction, improved well-being, and increased community involvement. Qualitative data are contained in narrative accounts, interviews, observations, testimonials and organisational reports. These "soft" data will probably play a more significant role in your evaluation process than "hard" data, although facts and figures are essential, too.

Who has the data you need?

Suppose you want to point out the difference a service-learning program makes in the quality of life of service beneficiaries/service users. In that case, you will probably ask them, or their close family members, not the students, or staff. If you want to understand how the service-learning programme is helping to fulfil the community partner mission, you will likely collect your data from staff.

A vital issue in engaging the community partners in assessment is respecting their time, obligations, and resources. Students should spend substantial time writing a reflective journal, but you must expect a different commitment from community partners.

What resources do you have (time, staff, money, facilities, and equipment)?

As all service-learning impact assessments require some investment, for a shorter or longer period, you should always take into consideration the resources that you have available for the entire process:
- **Time**. What is the allocated time for implementing the assessment? Are there any limitations (deadlines, events, etc.)?
- **People**. Who can be involved in the process, and what skills can they offer? Who will collect the data?
- **Money.** What are the costs for the assessment (printings, working hours for staff members, travel costs for participants, etc.) and the budget limitations?
- **Facilities and equipment.** What specific resources might you need (recorder, microphone, etc.)?

Further, suppose you are implementing a service-learning community impact assessment for the first time, and do not have much experience in the field. In that case, it will be more feasible to focus the process on a limited number of actors and analysis levels.

How will you assess the service-learning community impact?

There are two common ways of measuring SL community impact:
- **Before and after** (sometimes called "pre and post-test"). This is an excellent approach if you can plan to measure impact before the group experiencing impacts begins the activity. For example, if you want to find out the impact of service-learning on skills or the well-being of the beneficiaries, you could ask them a suite of questions before they are involved in service-learning activities with students (pre) and again after they have been involved for a while (post). Then, you can look at their responses' differences to measure what change had happened. If you use this approach, think about the likely impact timing. Some impacts might be immediate, others mid or long-term. Plan when you would collect data accordingly.
- **Retrospective or post-test.** Unless we are very good at planning "ahead" for measuring impact, you often need to measure it after an activity has started. In this case, you need to ask whether they feel they have changed due to the service-learning project after or during the activity. For example, you could ask beneficiaries whether they feel their skills or well-being has increased due to participation in service-learning activities. This approach is not considered as robust or reliable as the before-and-after, but it is often the only option for assessing the service-learning community impact.

What are the methods and tools you will use?

There are several methods and tools of service-learning community impact assessment. Although there are practical advantages and disadvantages to different methods, it is important that the choice of method is driven primarily by the question you want to ask, but also think about practicalities – plan how the data will be analysed when it comes back. It is not good practice to ask people to give up time and personal information if you cannot process and use what they have given you, so make sure you can analyse what comes back.

To design an adapted approach to measuring service-learning community impact within your university, it is vital to consider a set of criteria that will help you tailor the design according to its aim and institutional profile. The most important criteria to have in mind are:
- **Comparability** – make sure you are capturing the same phenomenon/aspects in the same way, in different moments
- **Feasibility** - ensure that all the assessments can occur in a specific place and time. You can focus your efforts on what is possible.
- **Cost-effectiveness** - ensure that the resources you invest in the assessment are proportionate to the results you achieve. When determining satisfaction, a short game or form might be enough, so you will not use an extensive interview with each participant to measure it.
- **Efficiency** - maximise your results and minimise the resource investment of all types. You can use one method or tool to reach more than one desired result.
- **Reliability** - ensuring that the process can yield reliable results. For the results to be valuable, you must ensure the process is transparent and can be trusted. Even at a closer look, there should be no questions about whether your final assessment reflects reality (ILO, 2011).

You can use:
- questionnaires for community partners, service beneficiaries, community members or other stakeholders;
- observation;
- interviews;
- focus groups;
- reports.

What are the ethical issues connected with assessing community impact, and how will you ensure the respect of the ethical rules of your community impact evaluation?

In the evaluation process, you should also address the ethical issues of your assessment. Evaluation of ethical aspects of assessment should not be implemented only when involving certain at-risk groups. Considering the implications of your evaluation should be a part of any research that involves people and their actions. The ethical principles of evaluation are formulated in general terms; their specific application is always a matter for the person responsible for the evaluation.

The key information to remember is whether your participants have given full informed consent and agree to participate in the evaluation with full awareness of the assessment and its use. You must consider anonymity when reporting the evaluation results, not revealing the identity of someone whose words you use in the reports or presentations. Anonymity is particularly important when participants are encouraged to give honest feedback on something or talk about personal issues. Another rule is to secure confidentiality, meaning the data will only be available to a limited set of named individuals. You also need to ensure that you are in line with the General Data Protection Rules that provide clear guidelines on how to deal with and store the information. You may not need to collect personal data in your assessment, but if you do so, you must keep the information secure.

If you plan to use the data from the evaluation for research purposes or publish it in the research paper, do not forget to ask for the approval of the responsible body, for example, the ethical committee, at your university before you start collecting the data.

5.2. Collecting the data

After setting up a suitable design for your evaluation, you must collect the relevant data. You should only collect information and data, that is necessary and relevant. You can also use existing data and information, where available and reliable?

One method of collecting the data involves students implementing service-learning projects. For example, information about the outputs of the service-learning projects can be a part of the student's reports on service-learning projects. You can also include it in the structure of the report feedback from the community partner or beneficiaries.

5.3. Analysing and reviewing collected data

All the data collected within the previous stage of the process needs to be collected and analysed to extract the relevant information and to draw conclusions. As mentioned, collected data can be expressed in numbers (quantitative) or words (qualitative). Each type of data requires a slightly different approach to analysis.

5.4. Concluding and recommendations

You may need to write up your conclusions based on the evidence you have found. When interpreting information, consider if there are any other possible explanations for your findings. Once you have identified gaps, you need to focus on improving them. These goals need to be realistic, specific, and achievable. This may be an excellent opportunity to review targets for outputs and outcomes and plan more realistically for the service-learning program.

5.5. Communicating the results of community impact evaluation

To make sure you get the best possible value from all the hard work that you, stakeholders, and participants have put into the process, think through how the process and results will be communicated amongst those who have taken part, stakeholders, other organisations, groups and funders who could learn from what you have discovered. You may find that the information you have collected, the results and what you have learned during the process have a range of uses, not just the primary purpose identified at the beginning. Finally, gathering feedback and recording what worked well and what you would do differently next time is best practice.

5.6. Learning from the evaluation and improving the service-learning program

In the final step, you should actively use the findings from your evaluation to learn what is working well and identify areas that need to be improved. This is the most important reason to evaluate service-learning community impact. You should also consider the evaluation process, its usefulness, and what you can do differently next time.

5.7. Tips to guide your service-learning community impact evaluation

- Consider service-learning community impact evaluation as a collaborative process with the community partners. Think also about who else needs to be involved from the beginning.

- Try to collect only information you can use to evaluate or communicate service-learning community impact.

- Consider ethical issues and risks of the evaluation.

- Consider whether you want to assess the service-learning community impact, whether you want to put a value on that information or whether a change should be rated as, "good" or "inadequate".

- Consider how much time and resources you have to evaluate the impact.

- Choose the appropriate model, approach, and tools for assessing the impact, considering the purpose of the work, why you are evaluating the impact, how it will be used, and available resources.

- Find out whether there are existing tools which you can use to measure impact, which can save time. You can find some in this guide.

- Draw on the expertise of others, professionals, colleagues, groups, or organisations who have undergone a similar process.

- Think through how the process and the results will be communicated internally and externally, including a plan to celebrate completing the process.

6. How to communicate the impact of service-learning on the community *

Communicating the results of a service-learning community impact evaluation allows various interested stakeholders to understand better the changes your university is making in the local community. Having this understanding is one of the most essential aspects when it comes to increasing the level of motivation among all of them to get involved or support the service-learning at your university in different ways.

There is a wide variety of ways to communicate your evaluation findings. Choosing one or the other should be determined by the following criteria: aim of the communication, target group, type of data presented, resource availability (human, financial, time), and context of the communication.
Based on these elements, you can choose to generate:
- internal reports
- leaflets/info-graphs for different stakeholders
- summary on webpages, blogs and social media
- press releases
- annual reports
- promotional videos
- presentation at different events.

Communicating the results does not require complicated procedures and highly professional PR departments; it can be done simply by anyone involved in the impact evaluation process.

6.1. Target groups of your communication

There are two main categories you can divide your audience into. Those who are directly involved in service-learning implementation and already have a direct connection to your programme and university, and those you would like to attract to start the foundation of a relationship with.

You can communicate the results of the community impact evaluation within the organisation to the management of the university, teachers, other staff and students. The results can also be interesting for the community partners involved in the evaluation and beneficiaries. The management of the university or faculty will be interested in the benefits, including the material and human resources involved in the service-learning programme and the quantity and quality of services offered to the community. Students will be interested to see how their work impacts the lives of the beneficiaries and the staff they work with. On the other hand, you can use the assessment report as an educational tool, to provide any of the groups with the big picture, showing them the results, they can achieve by working in service-learning. You can also attract new teachers and students to join the service-learning courses at your university. Communicating the results of your evaluation to the people you have involved in the process will also help them to be part of it again.

When communicating the service-learning impact on the community outside the university – to the existing and potential community partners, future students, donors or other stakeholders, you can increase the visibility of your university and your work but also engage them in your efforts in the future.

6.2. Ways to communicate results

There are many ways of communicating the impact of your service-learning on the community, to different interested actors. Depending on the target group of your communication you can use different ways or proportions, to communicate the findings of your assessment process.

Communicating service-learning community impact through facts

Use your website, targeted emails, newsletters and social media accounts to share charts, graphs and reports that quantify your community impact. Offer fact-based reports that answer the following questions that different stakeholders could have about the results of your service-learning, for example:

- How many community partners have you involved?
- How many beneficiaries have you Involved?
- How many service-learning projects have you implemented?
- How many new services for the community have been put up in a certain period?

Communicating service-learning community impact through stories

Another way of communicating the impact to your relevant stakeholders is to share stories, photos, and videos that illustrate how, through your service-learning project, you are changing the community. Use your website, blog, newsletters and social media accounts to spread these stories:
- invite community partners to write guest blogs or testimonials that share their stories;
- share videos of successful events;
- share photographs of students in service-learning projects;
- share testimonials from beneficiaries.

See, for example, videos from the service-learning projects implemented as a part of the e-SL4EU project:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC5csVL9Tjk&t=92s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZogF5HhM34I&list=PLfkgarsFZKyWsJKdT-RgsVF5DAj685JQ_&index=13

6.3. Channels for Communication

There are now many channels to help you reach your target audience. The good news is that the best way to get the message through to the target inside your university – management, teachers, students, and other staff is the way you usually communicate other messages. Your target audience is already used to getting messages from your institution this way. Some of the most popular tools are:

- news/announcements inside your university (emails, newsletters, university journal/newspapers);
- periodic activity reports;
- regular staff meetings;
- year evaluations or annual reports.

Reaching your target groups outside the university can be more challenging as you don't always have a direct communication channel. Therefore, it is excellent to try to develop an active channel to constantly keep different stakeholder categories informed about your activity and results. The most used channels are:

- online newsletter;
- blog;
- vlog;
- updates on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram);
- media articles;

outdoor advertising (posters, banners, etc.).

6.4. Several recommendations for the communication of service-learning community impact

The way you are developing the content and structuring your evaluation outputs into communication and PR material is crucial for its reach within the targeted group. Considering some critical aspects of communication strategy can determine whether your material reaches its target.

Be relevant - try to be aware of what is trendy among your followers, because if something is in trend, it has the highest chance to be significant to a considerable proportion of your audience.

Know your audience - is essential for a successful communication approach, as different audiences reclaim different approaches and content. Donors and financing bodies generally want data, statistics, complex interpretations and quantifiable results; members of the local community want stories and facts presented in a narrative-engaging way, without any technical aspects.

Include visuals - the human brain is wired for images; we process images a lot faster than text and are more likely to share a post that includes a photo, increasing its reach. Free tools like Canva (www.canva.com) or Piktochart (www.piktochart.com) are straightforward to use since they are created specifically to create beautiful designs without needing prior skills or knowledge.

Make it easy - time limitations increasingly challenge us in each moment of our lives; therefore, transmitting simple messages is vital for ensuring their real reach.

Use a call-to-action - often, people need an impulse to make a step; giving them an example of how they can contribute to your cause and inviting them to do it can give your audience a specific example of how they can also take action and be part of the generated change.

Tools for the assessment and evaluation of community impact in SL and e-SL projects

Tool 1 Questions for planning community impact evaluation

Question	Answer
Why do you want to assess the SL community impact?	
Who is the assessment for?	
What do you want to access, and which groups do you want to focus on?	
What is the relevant data you need?	
Who has the data you need?	
What resources do you have (time, staff, money, facilities, and equipment)?	
How will you assess the service-learning community impact? (pre-test-post-test or post-test)	
What are the methods and tools you will use?	
What are the ethical issues connected with assessing community impact, and how will you ensure the respect of the ethical rules of your community impact evaluation?	

Tool 2 Formative evaluation questions for the community partner in SL*

1.How do you see the implementation of the service-learning from the beginning until now?

2.What works?

3.What doesn't work?

4.What do you think should be improved?

5.How do you think we can improve?

Tool 3 Service-Learning Evaluation Form for the Community Partner (Example 1)*

University …………….
Course: ……………..
Course professor: …………………..
Academic year …
We wish to thank you for your participation and support in the project Service Learning, specifically in the part of the Course……………..during the academic year … at the Faculty ………………..

This years' experience of working with you and our students will improve the curriculum's new elements in the following years. Therefore, we invite you to complete the evaluation below and contribute to improving the quality of preparation and work for the next generation of students (this evaluation does not affect student rating). I appreciate your cooperation, and we look forward to meeting you again.

You can deliver this evaluation by giving it to students that you worked with, or you can send it by e-mail.

Thank You.

1. Name of the organization:

2. Name of the representative:

3. Circle one of the answers that best suits your attitude and thinking.
(1- I disagree entirely, I have a very negative attitude; 2 - I disagree, I have a negative attitude; 3 - I do not agree or disagree, 4 I agree, I have a positive attitude; 5 - I agree entirely, I have a very positive attitude):

1.	Are you satisfied with the project results?	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Have the students met their obligations as agreed?					
3.	How would you grade students on:					
	• Communication					
	• Seriousness of approach					
	• Competence					
	• Willingness to learn and to devote to the project					

*Brozmanová Gregorová, A. et al. (2019). Service-Learning for Teachers in Higher Education. Banská Bystrica: Matej Bel University.

4. Are you willing to cooperate with the students of the …………. on Service-Learning project in the following year?
   a) YES
   b) NO

5. How much will your work benefit students' project results?

6. Have there been any difficulties or doubts about the project's performance (please describe how you/they dealt with them and how you solved them)?

7. What would be your suggestions for improvement of the Service-Learning project:

a)   in the segment of organisation and preparation. Please explain.

b)   in the segment of mutual communication. Please explain.

c)   in the segment of work with students. Please explain.

Additional notes/comments

Thank you for your time and effort

Tool 4 Service-Learning Evaluation Form for the Community Partner (Example 2)*

1. Name of the organisation

2. Project name

3. Before starting this project, Did the organisation or you have any previous experience in university volunteering and/or service-learning (SL)?
a) es
b) No

4. Please rate how accurately your organisation's expectations were discussed/communicated with the university at the beginning of the project.
a) were not at all clear
b) clear enough
c) very clear

5. Please rate whether the community's needs/problems were adequately/successfully addressed in the project.
a) Not at all
b) Successfully enough
c) Completely successful

6. Please assess the adequacy of the duration of the project:
a) Too short
b) It was too long.
c) Was just what I needed

7. Please rate the support offered by your organisation to the project/students (OR... reflect on your support to the project/students...).
a) too little
b) too much
c) just right

8. Please explain your answer to the above question.

9. Please rate the support offered by the university coordinator/s to your organisation in the context of the project (reflect on the support offered by the university coordinator(s) to your organization)
a) too little
b) too much
c) just right

10. Please explain your answer to the above question.

11. Given your experience in university volunteering or SL projects, is your organisation interested in continuing to participate in similar projects related to your service area?
a) Yes
b) No
c) I don't know

*FLY program.

12. Was the project manageable regarding the resources available in your organisation?

13. Do you consider that the presence of students in the project in your organisation has contributed positively in terms of...

14. If your organisation recognises any additional contributions, write them down and explain them:

15. List three positive aspects/points of collaboration in the project.

16. What kind of additional support would your organisation need to continue collaborating in university volunteering or SL projects (e.g. training on SL, additional financial resources, partner search services at the university level, support for organisational policy development, etc.)?

17. Would you recommend university volunteering or SL projects to other community organisations?
a) Yes
b) No

*FLY program.

Tool 5 Community Impact Feedback Questionnaire*

Please choose the appropriate scores (1 very little, 10 very much) to indicate the extent to which you think the service-learning project has created the impact described in the following statements. Please choose the option "N/A" if the impact described in the statement did not apply to the service-learning project

Achieving project goals to further the CPO's mission

To what extent has the service-learning project...		Very little				To some extent			Very much			N/A
1	advanced my organisation's mission	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
2	provided helpful outputs (e.g., books, curriculum, new service, etc.) for my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
3	enhanced the service quality of my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
4	helped promote the image of my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
5	enabled my organisation to serve more clients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

Augmenting resources of the CPO

To what extent has the service-learning project...		Very little				To some extent			Very much			N/A
6	created economic benefits (e.g., savings, extra revenue) for my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
7	provided extra human resources for my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
8	been worth the effort that my organisation put into it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
9	helped promote a positive work culture in my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
10	expanded my organisation's network	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

Acquiring knowledge, insights, ideas and technique

To what extent has the service-learning project...		Very little				To some extent			Very much			N/A
11	inspired us with new ideas, insights and/or strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
12	stimulated my organisation to review our usual work practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
13	transferred new knowledge from the university to my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
14	Enabled us to gain new experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
15	Helped enhance our work techniques	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

Impact for service recipients (if the service-learning project had not involved any service recipients, please skip it)

To what extent has the service-learning project...		Very little				To some extent			Very much			N/A
16	Brought benefits to service recipients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
17	Improved well-being of service-recipients	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

*Lau, K. H., & Snell, R. S. (2021). Community Impact Feedback Questionnaire: The User Manual. Office of Service Learning, Lingnan University.

Overall assessment (1= strongly disagree, 10= strongly agree)

		strongly disagree							strongly agree			N/A
18	Overall, the service-learning project created a positive impact on my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
19	Overall, the service-learning project made us want to continue partnering in service-learning in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99
20	I will recommend collaboration in service-learning to other community organisations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

PCommentary Section:

21. What changes could be made, if any, to make the service-learning project more valuable in the future?

22. Any comments, please specify…..

Tool 6 Questionnaire to the community partners*

1. What type of organisation you are representing?
2. What is the focus of your organisation?
3. When was your first experience with students?
4. How many students worked in your organisation and when?
5. What did the students do for your organisation?
6. Would you think the community project of the students prepared them for their future careers? If so, how?
7. What were the benefits of having the students involved in your organisation? Please explain.
8. Were the goals for the student's project apparent to you? Please elaborate.
9. Were the students prepared to fulfil their assigned roles? If not, elaborate
10. Did participating in the project make the students more aware of the needs in the community? Please explain.
11. Did the involvement in the project have valuable social and economic benefits for your organisation? Please explain.
12. Explain how you see your relationship with the students.
13. Based on your experience with the service-learning programme, what are your most pressing concerns about serving as a community partner?
14. Any other comments you have about the module.

*Jordaan, M. and Mennega, N. (2022). Community partners' experiences of higher education service-learning in a community engagement module. Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, 14(1), 394–408. https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-09-2020-0327

Tool 7 Protocol of Questions for Community Partners in Individual Interview*

1. Please describe your involvement in the project.

2. Please discuss your motivation to participate in the project.

3. Please discuss the partners' initial receptiveness and commitment to the project.

4. Please describe the resistance encountered and the methods you used to overcome them. Please be as specific as possible, providing us with anecdotes or stories. (We do not need to know the specific individuals' names.)

5. Please discuss any strategy that helps initiate, implement, gain commitment from the partners, and, in general, further the project's goals.

6. Please discuss any recognition you might have received for your role in the project.

7. Please discuss the personal and organisational risks associated with the project.

8. Please discuss your perception of your effectiveness in carrying out the project.

9. Please identify factors contributing to the success or failure of the project.

10. Please discuss your experience with previous service-learning projects

11. Did your previous experience influence your behaviour in this project? How? Can you give an example? (It is a follow-up question to the previous one.)

12. Please discuss your relationship with the members of this partnership and how it influenced your behaviour in this partnership.

13. Please say something about how successful the project was.

14. Please indicate any ways in which you think the project failed.

15. What factors contributed to success and failure?

Tool 8 Community-Based Learning Community Partner Survey*

We would like to understand better the impact of community-based learning on our community partners. Please assist us by taking 5 to 10 minutes to complete this survey, and return it to……………

A. First, we would like some information about you.
1. How long have you been working with our university?
☐Less than one year   ☐ 1-3 years   ☐ More than 3 years

2. What is your organisational status … the status of your organisation?
☐ Public   OR   ☐ Private
☐ For profit   OR   ☐ Non-profit

3. What are the benchmark areas addressed by your organisation? (Check all appropriate)
☐ Education
☐ Housing
☐ Safety
☐ Health
☐ Environment
☐ Public Services

B. The next set of questions relates to your most recent experiences with our university.

4. How did your interactions with the university influence your capacity to fulfill the mission of your organisation? Mark any that apply.
☐ New insights about the organisation/its operation
☐ Increase in the number of clients served
☐ Enhanced offerings of services
☐ Increased leverage of financial/other resources
☐ Changes in organisational direction
☐ Increases in the number of services offered
☐ New connections/networks with other community groups
☐ Other influences (specify)
☐ No influence

5.   What are some of the challenges you encountered? Mark any that apply.
☐ Demands upon staff time
☐ Project time period insufficient
☐ Mismatch between course goals and organisation
☐ Little contact/interaction with faculty
☐ Students not well prepared
☐ Number of students inappropriate for the size of organisation
☐ Students did not perform as expected
☐ Other (please specify)

6. What were some economic effects of your work with the university? Mark any that apply.
□ Increased value of services
□ Increased organisational resources
□ Increased funding opportunities
□ Completion of projects
□ Identification of new staff
□ Access to university technology and expertise
□ Identification of additional volunteer expertise
□ New products, services, and materials generated
□ Other (please specify)

7. In what ways do you believe that you are able to influence the university as a result of your connection with one of our courses? Mark any that apply.
□ Influence on course content
□ Influence on university policies
□ Influence on faculty awareness of community
□ Influence on student learning experience
□ Other (please specify)

8. Due to your connection to this university course, how has your awareness of the university changed? Mark any that apply
□ I learned more about university programs and services
□ I know whom to call for information and assistance
□ I am more involved with activities on campus
□ I have an increased knowledge of the university resources
□ I have more interactions with faculty and administrators
□ I have taken or plan to rake rate? classes at the university
□ Other (please specify)

9. Do you plan to continue working with the university on this or another activity?
□ Yes
□ No

C. Please rate your level of satisfaction with your connection to a university course in the following areas:

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10.	Overall communication with students and faculty	□	□	□	□	□
11.	Level and quality of interaction with students/faculty	□	□	□	□	□
12.	Quality of student work	□	□	□	□	□
13.	Feedback and input into the planning of experiences	□	□	□	□	□
14.	Scope and timing of activity	□	□	□	□	□
16.	Level of trust with faculty and students	□	□	□	□	□

17. How did you handle the logistics of your community-based learning course? Please mark the most accurate response.
□ I made the arrangements and placements.
□ The faculty member made the arrangements and placements.
□ We handled the arrangements and placements collaboratively.
□ Students handled their own placements.
□ A graduate student made the arrangements and placements.

18. What was the best aspect of this experience for you?

19. What aspects of the experience would you change?

20. Please add any other additional comments.

Thank you for your comments.

Tool 9 Community Observation Protocol*

1. Describe the setting: observation date, location, space arrangement, environment, mood, pace, and other factors.
2. Describe, who is present and what are their apparent roles.
3. What actions are students taking (observer, leader, participant)? What actions are faculty taking? What actions are the community partners taking?
4. Describe the communications/interactions and indicate the categories of individuals involved (e.g. students, partners, clients).
5. How does the community activity end? What sort of summation occurs ("next time, we will do some ...,"goodbye," or nothing)?
6. What accomplishment(s), task(s), or service did you observe?
7. Were concerns expressed by students? By faculty? By community partner? What were they (provide descriptions of situations)?
8. Please add any other relevant observations.

*Gelmond, S. B., Holland, B. A., & Spring, A. (2018). Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. Boston: Campus Compact.

Tool 10 Community Focus Group Protocol*

Introduction

The purpose of the focus group is twofold: to understand the impact of the partnership on the community-based organisation and to collect positive and negative feedback that will assist the university in improving partnership activities in the future. The discussion is recorded to capture details, but all comments are confidential and never attributed to individual participants. As participants, you can make the focus group successful by being candid and specific when discussing different issues. A candid focus group will help the university document the effects of its efforts, recognise the strengths and weaknesses of its outreach efforts, and identify areas where it can improve. As a facilitator, I will offer no opinions; my role is to guide you through a conversation based on relevant questions. I will ensure that everyone participates and that no one dominates the discussion. Please speak one at a time so the recording will be clear. During this discussion, please be brief and specific. You should talk about your different perspectives where there is disagreement, but we will not spend time pressing for consensus or reaching an agreement. The purpose is not to reach a common view, but to learn about all the possible views.

Questions

1. Please introduce yourself and briefly describe the nature of your partnership with the university. (10 minutes)
2. What went well? What factors contributed to successful outcomes? What was the most important factor in achieving success? (10 minutes)
3. How would you describe the benefits of the partnership from your perspective? Any economic benefits? What was the value of the outcome? Any new insights into operations? Was there any impact on capacity to serve clients? (10 minutes)
4. How would you describe the partnership's burdens (if any)? (Probe: Demands on time or staff.) (10 minutes)
5. What obstacles or barriers affected the partnership? [Probe: How did you cope with these?) (5 minutes)
6. What would you do differently next time? What one thing would you change? (5 minutes)
7. What might the university do differently next time? What would you change about the university if you could? (10 minutes)
8. What do you know about the university you didn't know before? What do you wish you knew more about? (10 minutes)
9. How would you describe this experience to a colleague in another community organisation or agency? What would you emphasise? (10 minutes)
10. The final thing we will do is encourage you to reflect again on your experience working with the university. Reflect back over the project period and over this discussion, What's the most important thing you'd like the university to hear from you? What have we not discussed? (10 minutes)
11. Are there any other comments you would like to share?

*Gelmond, S. B., Holland, B. A., & Spring, A. (2018). Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. Boston: Campus Compact.

Tool 11 Community Partner Interview Protocol*

Let's begin with some basic information:

1. Please provide a brief overview, from your perspective, of the partnership project in which your organisation participated.
2. Why did you get involved in this partnership? How did it come about? Let's talk about the outcomes of the project:
3. What were your expectations? Did you have specific goals? Were your expectations met?
4. What would you say was the key to success? What went particularly well, and why?
5. What obstacles/barriers did you encounter, and how did you deal with them? We're interested in the impact of the project on your organisation:
6. What were the benefits to your organisation (social, economic, impacts on staff, insights about operations, capacity to serve clients)?
7. Knowing what you know now, what would you do differently to improve the partnership?

Thinking about the university's role in the partnership:

8. What should the university do differently next time?

The final thing we will do is encourage you to reflect again on your experience working with the university. Reflect over the project period and over this discussion:

9. What is the most important thing you'd like the university to hear from you?
10. What relationship, if any, do you anticipate you will develop/maintain with the university in the future?

*Gelmond, S. B., Holland, B. A., & Spring, A. (2018). Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. Boston: Campus Compact.

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Evaluation methodology and materials for the assessment and communication of the e-service-learning community impact

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