

# #THINGS2CONSIDER

*Measuring Success*

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- ★ How do we know our program is a success?
- ★ How is our program doing?
- ★ Are we meeting the needs of youth?

Youth programs are working to unify the voices and causes of youth at the local and national levels. There is benefit to sharing program efforts; however, these efforts must reflect measurable results that support overall program achievement. Evaluation of your program can assist!

## MEASURING PROGRAM SUCCESS

Many programs offer activities that empower youth to use their voices to create change through sharing of personal stories, training others, advising professionals, connecting with peers, and developing mental health awareness. Each time your group is asked to participate in one of these activities, you are broadening the reach of who is informed about your cause. You can capture these efforts by measuring your program's **reach**. But you can't forget to look at the success of your efforts, also known as **impact**.

## MAKE THE DATA YOU COLLECT WORK FOR YOU!

Use reach and impact data to:

- Assure you are meeting your program goals.
- Track successes over time; record what you have learned, and share critical information with stakeholders.

- Improve program quality, inform program development, and alert you to whether participants are getting the most out of your program.

Identifying questions you would like answered or what your funders want to know will help you track your program's reach. Examples include: Who visits your website; how many people provide feedback via surveys, or comments received on social media. Data you collect can help you market your project, event, or program! Reach and impact data can give your program the perfect elevator speech in just a few sentences.

## UNDERSTANDING REACH

What is reach, anyway? Reach is the extent to which a program or project engages their intended audience. Reach is calculated using a simple formula. The numerator (top number), represents the actual number accessed, while the denominator (bottom number), represents the potential number accessed. For example, you host a training and 200 people register. On the day you conduct the training 100 people show up (100/200), so you have reached 50% of your target audience. The ultimate purpose of reach is to maximize awareness of your program, project, and message.

## UNDERSTANDING IMPACT

Reach and impact can be confused to mean the same thing. However, while they are closely related, impact reflects the effect that an activity, project, or program has on people, organizations, or systems. Impact measures the direct shift in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs or actual behavior as a result of your program. Using



### Reach Formula

$$\frac{\text{Actual Number of People Participated}}{\text{Potential Number of People Participated}} = \text{Percentage of Reach}$$



the training scenario above, reach reflects the number of participants you engaged, while impact reflects whether or not those participants learned anything as a result of the training. Impact can be measured through learning about the experiences of participants and how they may use the information they have gained from participating in your training. Understanding their perspective helps you know if you achieved your intended goals for the event. Impact can be measured through the use of pre and post surveys, for example.

Identifying your reach and impact answers the questions:

1. How do we know our program is a success?
2. How is our program doing?
3. And are we meeting the needs of youth?

It highlights the value of your program to community stakeholders, funders, and participants, in a data driven way and allows you to capture your program's achievements and progress toward overall goals.



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