

Thriving in Nature Celebration and Learning Event at Asthall Manor

Workshop notes

Two facilitated workshop sessions took place in small groups, providing space for discussion and collaboration. In session one, funders and grantees had separate discussions. In session two, guests chose one of the fund's three outcomes that was most relevant or of most interest and discussed how these outcomes are being achieved.

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Workshop 1

Funder discussion: Having the biggest impact through grant-making best practice

Flexible and proportionate approaches

- Do your homework first and research grantees before funding
- Ask if grantees have asked for enough money
- Accept different levels of risk with funding
- Monitoring should be an art not a science

Relationships and communication

- Two way feedback between funders and grantees
- Get out from desk and meet people and talk to organisations
- Connecting organisations

Processes and expectations

- Difficulty getting wording right for eligibility criteria
- Commitments and guidelines are a work in progress
- Not wasting people's time and responding to applicants



Grantee discussion: Real-world monitoring and evaluation

Challenges with monitoring and reporting

- Monitoring and evaluation can be time-consuming and involve lots of ticking boxes
- KPIs can tie people in knots and are harder for very small groups
- Fluctuations in outcomes are hard to capture in standardised forms
- It is very hard to measure wellbeing, particularly for some groups

More practical approaches

- Informal chat on the phone or in person
- Questions should be given in advance to help people prepare
- Monitoring can help recap aims of the project and achievements

Capturing impact

- Logging observations and using data relevant to each organisation
- Case studies, photos and videos to show what is happening

Workshop 2

Building mental and physical health

Barriers and support

- Barriers to access and how to reach beneficiaries through communication
- Having enough volunteers and mentors to support people
- Mentors help make the first step less daunting

Monitoring

- Gathering monitoring information respectfully
- Reflections from practitioners, not just beneficiaries

Increasing rural skills

Awareness and access

- Lack of education in schools and no recognition of careers and skills pipeline
- Need to raise profile of these roles

Types of skills

- Observation skills and local knowledge
- Technology expertise and computer skills
- Manual and technical skills within communities

Engaging young people in rural skills

- Timely interventions and awareness of jobs and careers
- Apprenticeship model
- Connecting individuals to opportunities



Improving access to green spaces

Benefits

- Green space brings a sense of calm
- People noticing more green spaces around them
- Benefits for both participants and those delivering projects

Barriers

- Safety and feeling safe in green spaces
- Parks can feel scary and unfamiliar
- Support needed to help people get outside

Approaches

- Bringing nature inside on colder days
- Collaboration between organisations
- Creating safe environments and supporting people to take part

