Focus on Evaluation

An evaluation framework for SOSN
About the session

- Evaluation framework
- Your ideas and suggestions
- How to ask questions
- Best practice guidelines
An evaluation framework for SOSN

- Develop a common approach to evaluation.
- An evaluation framework would be an obligatory component of the proposed Physics Outreach Programme (POP) but it would also be valuable as a tool to all members of SOSN.
- Each activity is measured against what it is trying to achieve.
- Specific in prompting outreach staff to think about the issues specific to physics outreach.
1. A clear statement of the overall aims of the programme or activity

- Why am I doing this? What do I want to achieve?
- Measurable
- Purpose of the activity is neither overambitious nor purely operational
- If possible, there should be some quantitative element and suitable benchmark data

- An attempt to increase the number of girls taking A-level physics
2. A description of the activity

- **What it is and what is the target audience?**
  - A series of workshops to increase the confidence and resilience of girls in years 9 and 10.
3. Rationale

- Why do you think the activity or the programme of activities will lead to the outcome you desire?
- It is best if the rationale is based on reliable evidence
- As a minimum, there should be some conscious examination of the assumptions made in thinking the activity will satisfy the overall aim

- A known barrier to girls choosing physics is their fear of failure and their lack of confidence in their own ability. This programme aims to build their confidence in their own ability and their ability to cope with failure.
4. Objectives

- What are the specific objectives of the particular activity?
- For a one-off activity, this will be closely related to the overall aim
- For a single activity forming a component of a larger programme, it might be much more modest
- The objectives should be measurable and specific to the activity

- The objective would be that the girls do feel more confident in themselves.
5. Assessing objectives

- Relate back to project aims and objectives
- What do you want to find out?
- How much time, money and staff do you have?
- What type of audience do you need to sample? What challenges will they present?
- Don’t just collect evidence of success!

- At the programme level, the ultimate data are the number of girls choosing A-level Physics. In terms of the objectives, questions would be designed to tease out improvements in confidence levels.
6. Programme evaluation

- Periodic evaluation to consider both whether the individual activities are delivering their objectives and to compare progress against the aims.

- After a few years, the results of the work at the programme level should begin to show in progression to A-level. Before then, the outcomes from the workshops can be assessed in terms of their effect on the girls’ confidence levels. This process might lead to adjustments in the workshops or even the evaluation questionnaires.
7. Dissemination

- Who should the evaluation be shared with?
- Where can it be shared?
- Are there lessons that others would find useful?