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Initiative Impact Documentation Template

Honest impact reporting: outputs vs outcomes, attendance, feedback, limits, lessons and next steps, plus consent rules for photos and stories.

For: For association and initiative teams who want an honest report on their impact for funders, partners and the community, without exaggeration and without compromising the dignity of the people they served.

Level: Intermediate Version 1.0 · 2026-09-21

Why document impact?

Documentation is not photos on social media or a big number in a thank-you post. Good documentation serves three groups: **the team**, who need to know what worked and what did not so they can improve; **partners and funders**, who want to know where their resources went; and **the community** you served, who have a right to know what was done in their name.

Through all of it runs one unbreakable rule: the people you served are not promotional material. Their stories and images belong to them and are used only with their free, informed consent, in a way that protects their dignity.

Outputs versus outcomes

The most common mistake in initiative reports is presenting outputs as impact. The difference matters:

	Outputs	Outcomes
The question	What did we deliver?	What changed for people?
Examples	Sessions held, attendance, parcels distributed, volunteer hours	A new skill, changed behaviour, access to a service, satisfaction, confidence
Who controls them	Largely the team	Shaped by many factors outside the initiative
How to measure	Attendance and distribution records	Before-and-after checks, surveys, interviews, later follow-up
Honest wording	"We ran 12 sessions attended by 40 people"	"28 of the 35 participants who answered the survey said they can now..."

Do not write "we changed 500 lives" if what you know is that 500 people attended. Write exactly what you know, and how you know it.

The method: from data to report

1. **Go back to the initiative plan.** Which objectives and indicators did you set at the start? The report measures what you planned, not whatever later looks good.
2. **Collect outputs from the records.** Attendance session by session, not just the total: how many started, how many finished, where people dropped out.
3. **Collect evidence of outcomes.** Compare before and after if you can. A short survey (3 to 5 questions) beats a long one nobody finishes. Short interviews with a small sample give depth numbers cannot.
4. **Gather feedback safely.** Allow anonymous answers and ask what participants did not like. People who fear losing a service will not criticise it to your face.
5. **State the limitations plainly.** Who did not answer? Are answers self-reported? Could other factors explain the improvement? A report that names its limits is more credible, not less.
6. **Draw the lessons.** What do we repeat, change, or stop?
7. **Set next steps.** A decision with an owner and a date: repeat, adjust, expand or stop the initiative.
8. **Share the results with those concerned,** including participants themselves, in plain language.

Consent for photos and stories

Consent is not a signature grabbed during a busy distribution. Real consent is **free** (never tied to receiving a service), **informed** (the person knows where the photo or story will appear and who will see it), **specific** (consent for an internal report is not consent for social media) and **revocable** (they can ask for removal later).

Consent levels

Use	What is needed
A photo with no recognisable face (hands, backs, the venue)	Tell those present that photos are being taken and let them step away
A photo showing a person, for an internal or funder report only	Recorded verbal or written consent, explaining who will see it
A photo showing a person, for public posting	Written consent specifically for public use, and showing them the photo before posting where possible
An unnamed quote	Consent to quote, and checking that details do not reveal who they are
A story with the person's name or photo	Written consent, their review of the final text, and the right to change or refuse it
Any photo or story of a child under 18	Written guardian consent, the child's own agreement, and no full name, school or home area

Protecting dignity: what we do not do

- We do not photograph the moment someone receives aid or a food parcel with their face visible.
- We do not use images of people in distress or sadness to draw sympathy.
- We do not write stories that cast participants as helpless and volunteers as heroes. People are capable individuals facing hard circumstances.
- We do not ask for consent from someone in a moment of acute need or pressure; we wait for a better time or do without.
- We do not include details that reveal identity in a small community (street, job, number of children, illness).
- We never tie a service to agreeing to be photographed. Anyone who declines receives exactly the same service.
- We remove a photo or story as soon as its owner asks, even after it has been published.

Impact report template

Initiative impact report

Impact report — [initiative name]

Organisation: [...] Period: [...] to [...] Prepared by: [name] Report date: [...]

1) Three-line summary

What we did: [...]

The most important change (based on available evidence): [...]

What we will do next: [...]

2) Objectives as written in the plan

Objective 1: [...] Objective 2: [...]

3) Outputs

[indicator] — planned: [...] — delivered: [...] — note: [...]

Attendance: started [...] — completed [...] — where and why people dropped out (if known): [...]

4) Outcomes

[indicator] — tool: [check / survey / interview] — responses: [...] of [...]

What we found: [...]

5) Participant feedback

What they valued most: [...]

What they criticised most: [...]

Quotes (with consent, nothing identifying): [...]

6) Limitations

[non-response / self-reported answers / small sample / other possible factors / what we did not measure]

7) Lessons

Repeat: [...] Change: [...] Stop: [...]

8) Next steps

[decision] — owner: [...] — date: [...]

9) Resources

Volunteer hours: [...] Partners and donors: [...] Spending summary: [...]

10) Documentation and consent

Images used: [...] — consent level for each: [...]

Where consent forms are kept: [...] Who can access them: [...]

Photo and story consent form

Photo and story consent form

Consent to use a photo or story — [association name]

We, [association], ask your permission to use: ☐ photo ☐ video ☐ quote ☐ story

The material: [short description, e.g. group photo at the final session]

I agree to its use in (tick only what you agree to):

- ☐ the association's internal report
- ☐ the report sent to partners and funders
- ☐ the website and social media
- ☐ printed materials

How would you like to be named? ☐ first name only ☐ no name ☐ no details about me at all

I understand that:

- Saying no does not affect any service I receive from the association.
- I can withdraw consent at any time via [contact], and the material will be removed from the association's channels.
- The material will not be used for any purpose other than those ticked above.

Name: [...] Date: [...]

For under-18s: guardian's name and signature: [...] Did the child agree? [yes/no]

Worksheet

What objectives did you set in the initiative plan? Copy them exactly.

Which outputs were delivered against plan, and where did people drop out?

What is your evidence for outcomes? Who answered and who did not?

What did participants criticise most, and how did you gather that criticism safely?

What are your report's limitations? What can you not say with confidence?

What will you repeat, change and stop?

Which photos or stories do you plan to use, and what consent level applies to each?

Completed example

Illustrative example

The initiative: "Key" (مفتاح), a basic digital-skills course for job seekers run by Qantara Youth Association (جمعية قنطرة الشبابية) in Tripoli, in three cohorts over three months. Each cohort: six two-hour evening sessions. **Report prepared by:** Jana, the initiative coordinator. **All figures are illustrative.**

1) Summary

We trained three cohorts in email, CV writing and applying for jobs online. 34 of 45 participants completed the course. In the final practical check, 29 of them completed all three required tasks. We will repeat the course with a schedule that suits part-time workers.

2) Objectives as written in the plan

- At least 36 participants complete five or six of the six sessions.
- Two-thirds of completers can create an email account and a CV and send a job application without help.

3) Outputs

- Sessions: 18 planned, 18 delivered.
- Attendance: 45 started, 34 completed (target 36, so slightly below plan).
- Drop-out: 8 of the 11 who left did so after session two. In a follow-up call, 5 of them said the timing clashed with evening work.
- Volunteer hours: 6 volunteer trainers, about 130 hours of preparation and training.

4) Outcomes

- **Practical check in the final session** (three tasks): 29 of 34 completers did all three without help, more than two-thirds. Objective two was met.
- **One-month follow-up** (short message): 21 of 34 replied. 17 of them said they had sent at least one online job application since the course.

5) Participant feedback (anonymous survey, 30 responses)

- **Valued most:** practising on their own phones, not only on the hall's computers.
- **Criticised most:** the pace of session three, and too little time for individual questions.

- **Quote (with consent, unnamed):** "First time I know how to send my CV from my phone without anyone helping me."

6) Limitations

- The trainers ran the check themselves; it was not independent.
- The one-month follow-up relied on what participants reported, and 13 did not reply; those who did may be the most active.
- We did not measure employment, and cannot attribute any job to the course alone.
- We do not know the skill level of those who dropped out, because they left before the check.

7) Lessons

- **Repeat:** practising on personal phones, and the final practical check.
- **Change:** add a weekend-morning cohort alongside the evening one, and split session three in two.
- **Stop:** the theory lecture in session one; move straight to practice.

8) Next steps

- Schedule cohort four with both time slots — owner: Jana — before the end of next month.
- Share a plain summary with participants and the host centre — owner: Fadi — within two weeks.

9) Resources

About 130 volunteer hours. The hall was provided free by a neighbourhood social centre. Spending was limited to printing and simple refreshments, detailed in a separate financial annex.

10) Documentation and consent

Two images were used in the report: hands on a keyboard (no faces; those present were told about the photo) and a group photo of cohort two, with written public-use consent from everyone in it. No session was photographed without prior notice. Consent forms are kept in a closed file held by Jana. One participant later asked for the group photo to be removed from the association's page, and it was replaced with a cropped version.

Common mistakes

- **Mistake:** presenting attendance as impact. **Fix:** separate outputs from outcomes and give evidence for each outcome.
- **Mistake:** measuring new objectives because they look better. **Fix:** start with the objectives as written in the plan, then add discoveries as extra notes.
- **Mistake:** hiding drop-out or missed targets. **Fix:** report them with an explanation; that is what makes the report useful and credible.
- **Mistake:** "we changed people's lives" with no evidence. **Fix:** state exactly what you know: how many people, which tool, who did not answer.
- **Mistake:** photos of people receiving aid. **Fix:** photograph the activity, the place and hands, and get specific consent for any face.

- **Mistake:** one general consent for every use. **Fix:** specific consent per use, with the right to withdraw.
- **Mistake:** collecting named feedback in front of the team. **Fix:** an anonymous survey with a direct question about what participants did not like.

Completion checklist

- ☐ The report starts with the objectives as written in the plan.
- ☐ Outputs and outcomes are clearly separated.
- ☐ Attendance is broken down: who started, who finished, where people dropped out.
- ☐ Every outcome has evidence, a tool and the number who responded.
- ☐ Feedback was collected anonymously and includes criticism.
- ☐ Limitations are stated plainly.
- ☐ Lessons are split into repeat, change and stop.
- ☐ Next steps have an owner and a date.
- ☐ Every photo or story has consent at the right level for its use.
- ☐ No photos of aid being received, and no identifying details.
- ☐ Guardian consent and the child's agreement for any material about a minor.
- ☐ Consent forms are stored securely and people know how to withdraw consent.
- ☐ A plain summary was sent to participants themselves.

About the author — Mohamad Charafeddine is an entrepreneur from Tripoli, Lebanon: founder of the Passion digital marketing agency, president of Takaful Youth Association, and founder of digital platforms. He trains individuals and teams in applied AI and marketing.

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