Evaluation

I.   Overview

Evaluation is a valuable part of running a successful campaign and telling the story of an event. It is the process of critical examination of your campaign, project, or event and involves collecting and analyzing information about your activities. Evaluation falls into two broad categories: formative and summative. Formative evaluations are about process and implementation. They can help you think flexibly and be nimble about the strategies to best achieve your goal. A formative evaluation starts with a question about something you want to know; it is designed to build knowledge that will lead to bigger, more impactful actions. A summative evaluation helps you to look at what you have done and the impact of your campaign. It provides a window into your success and answers the question: Did we achieve our goal? Summative evaluation provides a framework for seeing results and helping you make the best decision for what to do next. The last, and maybe most important, benefit of evaluation is that it offers validation for participants on what they have done as well as why and how it made a difference. This is an important part of your outreach strategy.

II.   Formative Evaluation

Most of us use some form of formative evaluation. There are a number of tips and tricks for getting people in your club thinking before, during and after, about how to make your events successful.

- **Think Pair Share:** Get people together into groups of two or three to talk about how your activity is working. Then share out as a large group. Notice commonalities and outliers. Use the information to plan your next step.
- **Planned Reflection:** Start your meeting with a reflective question, then discuss:
    - What would I do differently?
    - What worked?
    - What did I find interesting?
    - What was hard/easy?
    - What are you curious about?

Windsor High School's Walking School Bus

- **Feedback Cards:** Not everyone wants to speak out. This gives non-verbal thinkers a chance to share.
- **Thumbs Up/Down:** This is a good way to take the temperature on how your club is doing. Ask a couple questions and let participants give a thumbs up or thumbs down as an answer.

III.   Summative Evaluation

Can you say what a 10 percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled looks like? It's difficult. You can do a school or creek clean up and the results are visible but how do you see the results of a transportation campaign? A good data collection, analysis, and extrapolation strategy can make your results visible and help you communicate them to club members, participants, and the community at large. Data collection takes time and effort. ECO2school has developed a number

of data collection tools that optimize your time and help you communicate what you have done and its benefit to the community.
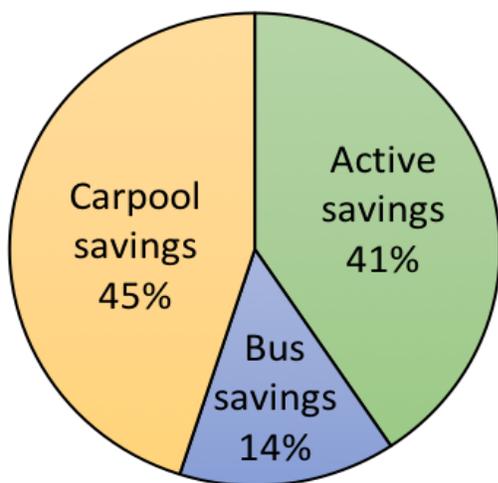
IV. Surveys

In an ideal situation, baseline and follow-up/endpoint surveys should both be conducted. If you are part of an ongoing program, baseline information may already exist. It is up to you to decide if information is accurate or outdated and if new baseline information is necessary. *Use the High School Transportation Survey and the ECO2school Transportation Data Template* for assistance with collection, aggregation, and extrapolation.

Survey Strategy
See the Strategy page on the ECO2school Transportation Data Template.

Overall CO2 Savings by Mode

Work with the teacher champion to identify the survey strategy that best fits the capacity of your group. Decide on the number of students and classes to be surveyed. The larger your sample, the more accurate it will be. Factors to consider in choosing your sample size are: time, number of people helping collect data, and the level of administrative/teacher support. The survey should also be designed to reach a broad cross section of students with relatively equal numbers across grade bands and academic levels. Decide on the classes to survey, ask teacher champions to help with outreach to identified teachers, and make the request to survey at a particular date and time. Data collection does not just take organization; it takes people power. There are several different ways to find help collecting data:

Sample CO2 savings pie chart

- **In-class, applied-statistics project:** Work with a statistics teacher on an applied lesson. This is an opportunity for students to apply the skills they are learning to a real-life lesson. Share raw data with the class so they can practice interpretation and aggregation, as well.
- **A club or leadership class:** There might be other clubs you can team up with. Key clubs like defined projects to work on. Leadership classes have class time and can be helpful if you decide to survey in a specific period.
- **Program staff:** Is there an outside program, like ECO2school, providing technical assistance and support? It might be easier for outside support to come help than trying to get permission to leave class and conduct surveys.
- **Teacher administered:** Drop off the survey with the teacher and ask them to administer it. This is not preferred. Teachers get many requests and have limited time. It is better to administer the survey yourself to ensure consistent and timely results.

Baseline Surveys:

Conduct baseline surveys as close to the beginning of the school year as possible. Ask the program provider or teacher champion for help with printing the surveys. Organize surveys into class sets of about 25 and distribute to the data collection team. Read through the survey as

students take it to answer any questions and make sure everyone is comfortable with the formate. There are a few things it is important to let everyone know:

- There are no right or wrong answers in the survey. It is important that people be honest.
- The data is being used to calculate the school's transportation carbon-footprint. It is part of a larger campaign to increase sustainability and live in ways that are healthier for themselves and the planet. (*Refer to the Outreach chapter's section on Public Speaking to craft your elevator pitch.)* **Hint:** If you have administrative support, ask for student address data. If you can, work with a group that provides GIS (Geographic Information System) support to upload address information. This is more accurate and will save you time.
- Their data will not be shared. Some students are nervous about sharing address data. This is only used to calculate the distance from school.

After collecting the data, enter it into the *ECO2school Transportation Data Template*. Use the data entry Fall page to input most of the data and the Distance from School page for address data. The CO2 and VMT Fall page will automatically populate as will the infographic page. Use the infographic page to share the results of your baseline survey. This will help provide context for the events and activities you choose. Share the results with the classes and teachers who supported you in the collection process, so they can see the results of their labor.

Endpoint Surveys:

Conduct endpoint surveys after your last planned event or activity for the school year. Use the same strategy for data collection in the spring as you did in the fall. If possible, use the same teachers, classes, and surveyors. Follow the same protocol for inputting data onto the *ECO2school Transportation Data Template,* only this time use the data entry Spring page. The CO2 and VMT Spring page should then auto-populate. The page labeled Final Data adjusts fall and spring data so you can see what behavior changes have resulted from the action campaign.

> *A lot of people think that it is harder to bike, walk rather than driving yourself or getting a ride. But the amount of effort that it takes to use active forms of transportation is often exaggerated, since it is a very simple action with quite an amazing impact. The challenge is successful in that it allowed students to recognize the ease in being eco-friendly. -Izzi Rader*

V.   Share your Results

The data is useful if you share it. Data that sits in a folder gathering dust does not help advance your mission. You now have a tool for communicating what a reduction in vehicle miles traveled looks like. Let the people who participated in your events know that they are making a difference. Let them know how many fewer miles they traveled by motor vehicle and the amount of CO2 they prevented from being emitted into the atmosphere. This is what will keep them coming back and doing it again (and then again and again). Incorporate your results into your outreach strategy and into your climate story.

VI.   Supplemental Evaluation Materials

- High School Transportation Survey
- Transportation Data Template (interactive document, only available online at www.eco2school.org/tools--templates.html)
- Evaluation Narrative Sample