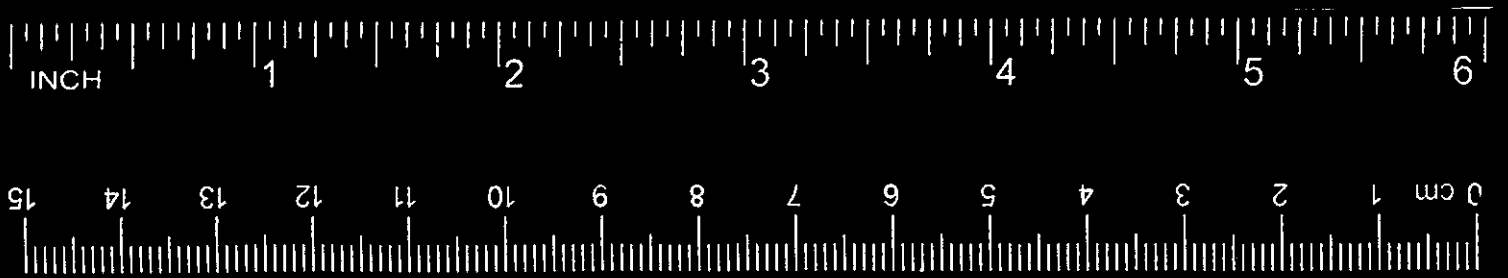


SROI

– Measurement For The Future?



Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a relatively new, but extremely robust, method of measuring an organisation's added value. By calculating the social, environmental and economic benefits of your enterprise, you can attribute a financial value to it. For example, if a visit to the GP costs a local health board £100 and, after taking part in your project for 12 months, a participant has visited their doctor less frequently due to increased wellbeing, you can calculate how much money your project has saved the NHS.

The Vodafone UK Foundation, which has put a lot of money into social change, is funding a pilot here in the UK and Thames Valley Partnership was invited to be part of this work by Vodafone. Thames Valley Partnership was one of about 6 or 8 organisations who took part in the trial and is small in comparison with the other participants which included the National Childrens Home.

Thames Valley Partnership was one of only two organisations to complete the pilot – the others found it just too involved. Thames Valley Partnership chose its project carefully to ensure it could extract the information it needed from its partners. A full report on the process is being finalised by Thames Valley Partnership and will be ready soon. Thames Valley Partnership say they are not sure yet where the future for this work lies. They have been linking in with the Corporate Citizenship organisation www.corporate-citizenship.co.uk on this and they plan to put a toolkit on their website in due course.

Thames Valley Partnership say that SROI is based on a lot of assumptions which you have to buy

into. Also, the people who invest in the process do not usually reap the financial rewards at the end of the day. This is fine by most people but may be a sticking point for some.

Case Studies:

- Tania Wickham, has been working for Thames Valley Partnership on the trial. In the case of the Urban Beatz project at Beaconsfield School (featured in *Arts at the Heart, Spring 2007*), for example, even a conservative estimate shows that for every pound put into the project, nearly £3 of social costs has been saved. The calculation is based on setting the cost of the intervention against the monetary impact of doing nothing – if, as in this case, one can demonstrate that there has been a substantial improvement in pupil attendance and effort, this can be set against the costs to the education system of exclusion and truancy, the costs of unemployment between 16 and 18 and so on; although Tania did not include them in this study, crime and healthcare costs could also be factored in.
- Impact Arts has recently carried out a SROI with amazing results. For every £1 invested in their Fab Pad project in North Ayrshire, a social return of £8.38 was realised. ●

Sources: Thames Valley Partnership, Voluntary Arts Network from VAN Briefing 117 <http://www.voluntaryarts.org/uploaded/map6853.pdf>