



Social Return on Investment (SROI) for community food growing projects



Community food growing:
A natural part of the health service
learn, network, share

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What is SROI ?

social outcomes can be difficult to assess in money terms, but in practice they often have to be compared with financial returns

tools to measure social and environmental outcomes have been developed, **social return on investment (SROI)** is one of them

How to use SROI ?

- a) Get a external consultant
expensive - you don't learn from the method...

- b) or do-it-yourself (DIY)
is this possible? Potentially cheaper – learning from the
approach of the method

DIY - SROI

- Benefits to all stakeholders are accounted and valued
- Outcome focused
 - understanding and value changes of a project or programme
 - captured in a 'theory of change'
mapping short, medium and long term outcomes

DIY – SROI: Four Steps



1. Identifying stakeholders - materially affected?
2. Mapping the outcomes ('theory of change')
3. Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value (using proxies)
4. Calculating the ratio

DIY – SROI: Calculating the ratio

$$\text{SROI ratio} = \frac{\text{Present Value of benefits}}{\text{Value of investment}}$$

adjusting for e.g.

- inflation
- duration of the outcome
- what would have happened anyway
- what can be attributed directly to the project

health & happiness



Growing for health and happiness

The health, social and environmental impacts of Master Gardeners



1. Identifying stakeholders



Table 1b: Stakeholder groups and numbers included in the SROI

Stakeholder group	Numbers used	Numbers not used
Master Gardener Programme – Local Food		
Project Coordinators	4	
Master Gardener volunteers	474	
Mentored households	2,092	
Mentored people in households (adults and under 16 years olds)		4,809
Mentored children in households (under 16 years olds only)		1,697
People in the wider community		58,222
Community groups	812	
Website visitors (five domains)		70,073

2. Mapping the outcomes



Short-term outcomes	→→ Medium-longer term outcomes
1. Health and wellbeing	
New friends and connections and integration into a community	Improved ability to consider new life and work options, leading more control over life, resilience and self-esteem
Leading to a reduced social isolation and sense of belonging, and improved self-expression for those with specific issues	And a greater sense of confidence to initiate life change, security and self-worth,
An improved knowledge and skills in food growing and horticulture	leading to improved mental health and wellbeing including increased competence, engagement and purpose, and increased sense of trust and belonging and further out a reduced dependence on the state for benefits and health services
Increased access to healthy food, leading to an improved and more knowledgeable attitude towards food and diet Increased physical activity through growing, horticultural and related community activities	Leading to increased physical health and vitality

3. Evidencing outcomes



Outcome	Proxy Outcome / Composite	Indicator	Master Gardeners
Increased life satisfaction	Change in life satisfaction	Proportion of stakeholders reporting a change in life satisfaction to 'some extent' as a result of involvement in the programme	0.84
Increased trust and belonging	Improvement in personal relationships / Increase in time spent with friends and family	Proportion of 1) respondents reporting an increase in satisfaction relating to personal relationships / 2) an increase in time spent with friends and family	0.18
Improved physical health	Consumption of fruit and veg / Satisfaction relating to health	Self-reported change in 1) fruit and veg consumption / 2) satisfaction relating to health over the life of the programme	0.49
Improved mental health	Change in life satisfaction / time spent growing food	Proportion of stakeholders 1) reporting a change in life satisfaction to some extent / 2) an increase in weekly hours spent growing food	0.64

4. Calculating the ratio



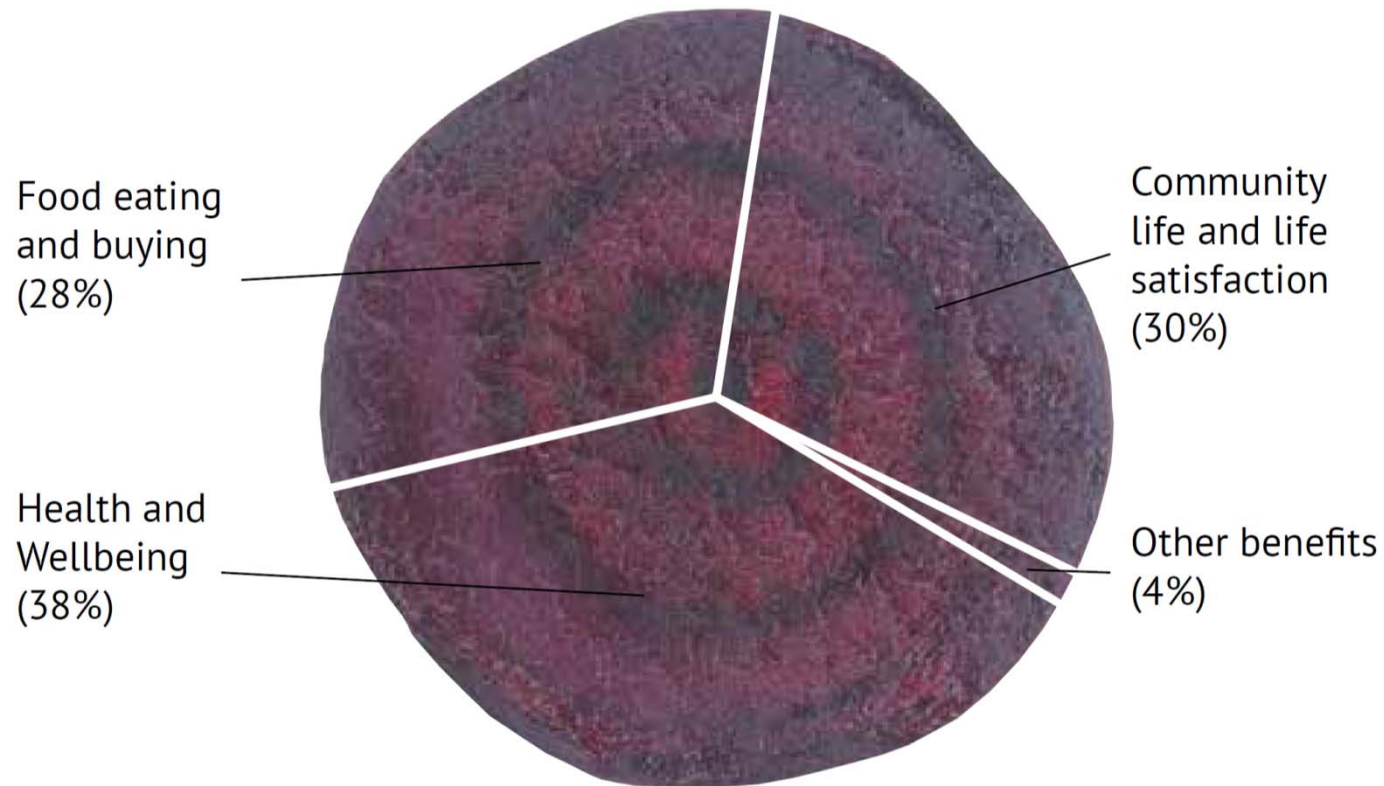
Stakeholder	No.	Outcome	Indicator description	Indicator	Outcome incidence	Dead weight	Attribution	Incidence after	Financial proxy	Proxy value
Project coordinators; Volunteers; One mentored person per household	2,891	Improved mental health	% stakeholders 1) reporting a change in life satisfaction to some extent; 2) satisfaction relating to health over the life of the programme	0.69	2007	0.47	0.40	383	Mental health service costs per individual (anxiety and depression)	£942

Master Gardeners

SROI ratio 1:10 (1£ : £7.5-£11.2)



How the benefits add up



Outcome group	Outcomes in group	% benefit
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved physical health • Improved mental health 	38%
Community life and life satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased life satisfaction • Increased trust and belonging • Increased community participation 	30%
Food eating and buying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased food affordability • Reduced income leakage through food expenditure 	28%
Skills base and employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased employability / financial security • Increased competence, engagement and purpose 	4%
Food recycling and composting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon reduction through sustainable behaviours 	0.03%

Detailed social returns

Improved physical health	30%
Increased trust and belonging	21%
Increased food affordability	19%
Reduced income leakage through food expenditure	10%
Improved mental health	7%
Increased life satisfaction	5%
Increased community participation	4%
Increased employability/financial security	3%
Increased competence, engagement and purpose	1%
Carbon reduction through sustainable behaviours	0.03%

DIY – SROI, Conclusions

1. don't double count

2. Try to be the best critic of your own project

3. be conservative

4. don't over claim

leaving out benefits in the SROI, means your are on the safe side



Thank you