

Measuring impact - resources for Pro Bono OR volunteers

There is an enormous amount of material available on this topic. If your project requires impact measurement, outcomes measurement or evaluation, you should first review as much of the material below as you have time for – the charity may well be aware of it, even if you aren't. There is now a lot of importance attached to impact measurement and evaluation.

Outcomes, impact, evaluation

Some organisations use these terms interchangeably, some don't – there is not much consistency. Several useful guides to the terminology are available:

- Inspiring Impact provide a jargon buster to clarify the most commonly used terms in impact practice <https://www.inspiringimpact.org/what-is-impact-practice/>
- Social Value International provide a glossary of social value terms <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60dc51e3c58aef413ae5c975/t/6108fbef0d9b1f345c009478/1627978735922/Glossary-of-Social-Value-terms.pdf>
- The European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA) provide a glossary of terms related to impact <https://evpa.eu.com/glossary>

HMT Green Book

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government>

The Green Book is a guide to best practice appraisal (before investment) and evaluation (post-implementation) of public sector initiatives, which applies equally well to any initiative where there is no market value of the outcome.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/consultancy/ncvo-charities-evaluation-services/about-ncvo-charities-evaluation-services>

NCVO have useful material on planning for monitoring and evaluation, and outcomes and outcome indicators

The National Lottery Community Fund

Outcome Frameworks and Standalone Measures

Small and medium-sized charities, community groups and voluntary organisations can access free support to help monitor and measure their impact. The National Lottery Community Fund has made available an [index tool](#) of existing outcome frameworks and standalone measures as an open resource for the sector.

Compiled by Social Value UK, the tool puts the most popular and relevant outcome frameworks and standalone measures around social issues all in one place – making it accessible and easy to use. Outcome frameworks are useful as they provide consistency in impact measurement, while standalone measures provide information on how much of an outcome has happened or is expected to happen.

The National Lottery Community Fund has also published a [guide](#) to accompany the tool, providing information on the methodology used to compile the list, the rationale for inclusion of outcome frameworks and standalone measures, and an explanation of the data fields.

Tools to help you gather and use evidence and learning

The National Lottery Community Fund have also compiled a [list of tools and resources](#) they've funded to help charities and community organisations to improve their ability to capture, process, use and share data and evidence.

New Philanthropy Capital Impact measurement and 'theory of change'

The social impact think-tank New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) has been instrumental in sharing the importance of impact measurement. Its methodology, based on the idea of a 'theory of change' (a mapping of actions to outputs and outcomes which should be a familiar way of looking at the world to an OR professional), is now widely accepted. It is described in:

<https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/understanding-impact/>

Inspiring Impact

Inspiring Impact was a coalition of organisations aiming to improve impact practice across the sector, (including the NCVO's Charities Evaluation Service, and New Philanthropy Capital). It has an extensive resource library <https://www.inspiringimpact.org/resource-library/> and [step-by-step guidance](#) to help third sector organisations plan for impact, carry out measurement, assess their data, and review their work.

Social return on investment (SROI)

SROI is a principles-based method for measuring extra-financial value (i.e., environmental and social value not currently reflected in conventional financial accounts) relative to resources invested. It can be used by any entity to evaluate impact on stakeholders, identify ways to improve performance, and enhance the performance of investments. Useful introductions are:

- <https://www.socialvalueint.org/guide-to-sroi>
- <https://socialvalueuk.org/resource-library/>
- Social Value UK also provide a blank value map with pre-set formulas to help you calculate your impact <https://socialvalueuk.org/resource/blank-value-map/>

Pro Bono Economics

<http://www.probonoeconomics.com/>

Pro Bono Economics matches volunteer economists with charities to address questions around measurement, results, impact and value. Volunteers produce a full, peer-reviewed report on each project, which are published on the website, constituting a valuable resource.

Support for specific types of charity

If your charity works with offenders or their families, you should be aware of **Clinks**:

<https://www.clinks.org/clinks-resources-evidence-and-evaluation>

If your charity works with young people, you should be aware of the **Centre for Youth Impact**:

<https://www.youthimpact.uk/impact>

If your charity is involved in overseas aid or development, you should be aware of the **Logframe** (logical framework) approach: <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PW77.pdf> and https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253889/using-revised-logical-framework-external.pdf

If you come across any resources that you think will be useful for other volunteers, that are not referred to here, please get in touch with ProBonoOR@theorsociety.com.