

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (Forecast SROI)

‘Farmers at a Crossroads’
Training how to make problems debatable
(Belgium)



to build up the information and add things to previous steps made. That way the journey of change was more like a process instead of a one time event, we could fill in gaps or elaborate more on specific topics.

1.2 Evidencing change

Training how to make problems debatable

In setting up the questionnaire, only small changes were made to the initial survey questions about the training. The training itself was incorporated in the pilot, an inspiration tour on wellbeing by bus. During this day we did 3 field visits with testimonies from farmers and a few social innovations were presented to the participants. 26 female farmers took part on this bus tour. During the day they had to fill out 4 different questionnaires (pen and paper): one long one at the beginning of the day where we combined the questionnaires of 2 social innovations (training & learning network) about the situation now, a second prospective one after they had the training on how to make problems debatable, a third prospective one after they got information about the learning network on wellbeing and a last one at the end of the day to evaluate the bus tour.





So two of these questionnaires were about the training. The day that was planned was very interesting, but the program was also very full with 3 field visits, 3 information sessions on the bus and filling out the questionnaires. We noticed there was a need but not a lot of time for smalltalk. We knew the questionnaires were the least 'fun' or 'interesting' part of the day, but it had to be done. There was not always a lot of time left between other parts of the program to do this and we had the impression not everyone was motivated to fill out all these questionnaires or rather spent this time talking to each other. So we can imagine that not everyone thought about it well when answering the questions, this will probably have an impact on the quality of the data.

The retrospective questionnaire (pen and paper) was done on a later date in February, this was during an activity where the participants of the bustour as well as the members of the learning network were invited. A keynote speaker was invited, experiences were exchanged and there was a brainstorm on how to let men talk about their feelings/problems. Again all participants were women. The issue for the questionnaire was that only 4 women that joined the bustour and thus who got the training were present, which left us with a really small data set for this part of the SROI. Apparently they were very glad it was only one questionnaire this time.

1.3 Valuing change

We are very happy we got responses of 311 farmers, which is about 10% of our target audience. We think this data will be very valuable within the FARMWELL project, but also for Farmers at a Crossroads who can use this as an evaluation and input for the optimization of their program. The social innovation database and case studies can be used as inspiration for farmers organisations activities.

1.3.1 Forecast SROI findings

Training how to make problems debatable

The summative SROI Impact Map for the Training Social Innovation is given in Table 1 below. In this case, impacts over a forward looking 5-year benefit period (2022-27) are generated for 80 farmers and 160 gate keepers through 12 outcomes across three wellbeing impact pathways - with personal and relational wellbeing outcomes accounting for 90% of the value generated.

The findings of the SROI demonstrate that a forecast investment of just under €100K in the training will generate a prospective 355% return to farmers and agricultural communities with respect to wellbeing impacts. Over the benefit period the overall return for each Euro invested is projected to be 3.55 Euros through improvements to wellbeing at an individual and relational level. These are underpinned by substantial improvements in knowledge,





awareness and access to support that provides farmers with a sense of agency and resilience to improve and maintain their wellbeing on both an individual and collective level.

In addition, farm gate keepers are prospected to be important recipients of the SIs, gaining improved therapeutic and counselling skills and wider knowledge around wellbeing. If appropriately channelled (and funded) this could have wider consequences for agricultural and rural communities, not only through their improved knowledge and skill set, but also through their improved understanding and respect for farmers and the challenges faced by them. Taking this set of outcomes together, the training provides a potential model that could be usefully implemented in many other regions of Europe to help improve and maintain the wellbeing, and wider social sustainability of farming communities.

The data and results will be useful for (1) Farmers at a Crossroads who gives this training, to optimise and match the content to the expectations of farmers, (2) for the partners in the project to take the lessons learned about this when they will organise such a training for farmers and/or gate keepers and (3) to provide information for all organisations that work with farmers and/or gate keepers what are the benefits of this training.





Table 1: Belgium-Flanders Forecast SROI Impact Map (SI: Training)

Impact Pathway	Outcome	Stakeholders (No.)	Indicator/s of Change	Outcome Change (%)	Financial proxy (Value €/Unit)	Present Value (€)	Present Value (%)
Personal Wellbeing	Improved awareness of wellbeing in self and others	Farmer (80); farm gate keeper (160)	I have good personal awareness of the symptoms and causes of wellbeing in myself; I have good awareness of the symptoms and causes of wellbeing in others; recognise symptoms	66%	(10) Cost of leadership management training course (€ 1,188 per person)	€ 61,442	47%
	Improved knowledge about the underlying causes of wellbeing	Farm gate keeper (160)	I have a good understanding about the underlying causes of wellbeing	66%	(9) Cost of employability skills training in regular sessions with counsellor / coach (€ 2,474 per person)	€ 57,026	
	Increased resilience and self esteem	Farmer (80)	When things go wrong in my life it generally takes me a long time to get back to normal; in general I feel very positive about myself	63%	(6) Cost of Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to build psychological resilience and self esteem (€ 2,104 per person)	€ 14,174	
	Increased agency to problem solve through knowledge and support	Farmer (80)	I feel able to make difficult decisions or to solve problems in relation to work or my personal life; I feel I am in full control of what I do	64%	(3) Value attributed to positive functioning volunteers based on additional median wages earned (€ 4,589 per person)	€ 27,810	
	Reduced stress and anxiety	Farmer (80)	In general I do not feel worried about my life or business and am able to relax and enjoy life	59%	(26) Mental health service costs per individual (anxiety and depression) (€ 683 per person p.a)	€ 3,618	
	Improved therapeutic and communication skills	Farm gate keeper (160)	I feel competent with respect to my therapeutic and communication skills	62%	(35) Cost of gaining Level 3 (UK) certificate in counselling studies (cpta.org.uk) (€ 1,220 per person)	€ 7,177	





Relational Wellbeing	Increased knowledge and information about organisational support for wellbeing	Farm gate keeper (160)	I have good working knowledge and access to information about organisational support for wellbeing	76%	(9) Cost of employability skills training in regular sessions with counsellor / coach (€ 2,474 per person)	€ 50,230	43%	
	Improved sense of having support for personal matters	Farmer (80); farm gate keeper (160)	I have access to support and information to help with personal matters; if I need help I feel inclined to ask other people	70%	(1) Unit cost of approved social worker (ASW) for community social care (€ 2,241 per person p.a)	€ 31,829		
	Improved access to information, support and resources for wellbeing	Farmer (80); farm gate keeper (160)	I have good access to information, support and resources for wellbeing	64%	(1) Unit cost of approved social worker (ASW) for community social care (€ 2,241 per person p.a)	€ 61,848		
Social and Community Wellbeing	Increased knowledge about challenges facing the agricultural sector	Farm gate keeper (160)	I have good working knowledge about the challenges facing the agricultural sector	65%	(18) Annual price difference of buying food from a farm shop compared to the supermarket (€ 1,917 per person p.a)	€ 9,461	10%	
	Increased sense of trust and belonging and reduced isolation	Farmer (80)	I often meet or converse socially or professionally with friends or colleagues; I feel I can trust people in my local area or network	66%	(4) Value to an individual (25-45) of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood (€ 3,418 per person)	€ 15,255		
	Increased respect for and understanding of farmers	Farmer (80); farm gate keeper (160)	Farmers are well respected and understood by the local community; Farmers are well respected and understood by society as a whole	40%	(8) Valuation for improved emotional well-being arising through the Common Assessment Framework (€ 1,101 per person p.a)	€ 8,939		
						Total Benefits	€348,809	100%
						Total Investment	€98,185	
						Benefit-Investment Ratio (BIR)	€3.55 : 1	

*With an indicative proxy moderator of 0.35 applied reducing the proxy values by 65%, to reflect a Beginner level of support due to the limited time input of the training (1 2 hr class session and 1 bus tour)

