



SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI)

Empowering women in farming communities (Romania)





The Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Valuing change

The summative SROI Impact Map for the Saschiz Women's Association Social Innovation is given in Table 1 below. A range of wellbeing impacts over a 5-year benefit period (2017-22) were generated for the 30 members of the Women's Association (WA), 50% of whom are farmers, together with 75 other women in the community and 125 family farm members who are deemed to have materially benefited from the social innovation.

The SROI findings demonstrate the success of the WA in deriving positive outcomes for members with respect to empowerment, confidence, self-esteem and quality of life – with just under 20% of all value relating to these impacts on personal wellbeing. This reflects both the nature of the WA activities, and the commitment of the members to it. WA activities have also been successful in deriving health benefits for members through more varied diets and secondary economic wellbeing impacts through improved life and work skills, and a greater prevalence for adding value to local produce. Over the longer term, both likely generate substantially more value for farmers and the wider community than is demonstrated here.

However, while such impacts on individuals and farm businesses are significant, the majority of value created relates to social and community wellbeing. The SROI serves as evidence of not only the ability of the WA to generate greater community cooperation and cohesion, but also the value this has with respect to wider community development, and related social wellbeing impacts that are felt collectively. While in part this can be explained by the nature of WA activities described above, it also relates to the culture of the WA in engendering a spirit of cohesion and cooperation that is reaching out into areas of the community where historically women have not experienced the agency to drive their community forward. This has significance for the social sustainability of a local farming community, and in particular for the role of women in shaping it.

And alongside this spirit of community cohesion and cooperation, involvement in the WA has successfully built trust between its female members, and with it, generated a sense of belonging which – while important in itself both collectively and individually - is likely to underpin the increased retention of women in the community, and the reduced sense of fragmentation in the community resulting from the decline in out-migration.





Table 1: Romania Evaluative SROI Impact Map (SI: Saschiz Women's Association)

Impact Pathway	Outcome	Stakeholders (No.)	Indicator/s of Change	Outcome Change (%)	Financial proxy (Value €/Unit)	Present Value (€)	Present Value (%)
Economic Wellbeing	Improved life and work skills	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Enhanced life and work skills scale (Composite)	0.82	(9) Cost of employability skills training in regular sessions with counsellor / coach (€ 720 per person)	€ 25,042	4%
	Increased value added of local produce	Farm businesses (10)	Extent that farming practices have become more efficient	0.76	(5) Value of increased and safeguarded sales for agriculture and forestry through LEADER (€ 580 per farm)	€ 1,786	
Health and Wellbeing	Improved physical health and wellbeing through more varied and healthier diets, and health testing	Female farmers (15); farm family members (125); female community members (90)	Physical health scale	0.46	(11) Cost of reduced health care to maintain good physical health (€ 108 per person p.a)	€ 17,741	3%
Personal Wellbeing	Improved self-esteem and self-worth	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Measure of self-esteem and self-worth - Rosenberg SE scale	0.92	(6) Cost of Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to build psychological resilience and self esteem (€ 612 per person p.a)	€ 92,169	19%
	Engagement and purpose	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	ESS engagement and purpose scales	0.85	(10) Cost of leadership management training course (€ 345 per person)	€ 12,513	
	Improved self confidence	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Agency scale - as a proxy for self confidence	0.46	(23) Cost of self-esteem course (€ 105 per person p.a)	€ 7,858	
	Empowerment of women - in the community and in their personal and professional lives	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Independence / empowerment scale (Composite)	0.84	(30) Cost of Empowerment for Women coaching programme (€ 214 per person)	€ 7,635	





	Improved quality of life	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Wellbeing measure	0.02	(31) Earnings differential realised by completing a HND / HNC qualification (€ 982 per person p.a)	€ 3,227		
Social and Community Wellbeing	Increased retention of women in the community	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Sense of purpose / belonging	0.89	(25) Annual membership of The Future of Women online community for connection, learning and leadership. (€ 605 per person p.a)	€ 88,935	74%	
	Increased respect and understanding of farmers in the community	Female Farmers (15); farm family members (125); female community members (90)	Farmer Respect scale (Composite)	0.83	(2) Wellbeing valuation of improved autonomy and control (€ 618 per person)	€ 47,577		
	Improved community cooperation and cohesion	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Collaboration / networking scale (Composite)	0.82	(28) Average annual household spend on recreation and culture (€ 1,473 per h.h p.a)	€ 197,642		
	Reduced fragmentation of farming communities through less out-migration	Local community (district) (1)	Measure of impact on out-migration.	0.92	(14) Cost estimate for Local Authorities of implementing proposed duty to promote local democracy (€ 21,011 per district)	€ 7,844		
	Increased sense of trust and belonging	Female farmers (15); female community members (90)	Trust and belonging measure	0.93	(4) Value to an individual (25-45) of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood (€ 994 per person p.a)	€ 151,056		
								Total Benefits
						Total Investment	€ 244,652	
						Benefit-Investment Ratio (BIR)	€ 2.70 : 1	

