

A SIMPLE MODEL FOR SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN A HARD TO MEASURE AREA

& POTENTIAL LESSONS FOR THE SECTOR

(Value for money & Progressio people powered development)

1. A Social Return on Investment (SROI) Model

Progressio people powered development can bring a social return on investment. Supporting citizens to empower themselves achieving a stronger voice over decisions that affect their lives locally, nationally or even internationally is a complex hard to measure area of development but is essential to citizens achieving their rights living with dignity and free from poverty on a sustainable basis. Progressio has specialised in participatory and accountable governance over many decades especially in fragile states and especially focusing on gender equity including in the PPA extension period.

SROI models for development do exist but are often technical documents for Monitoring and Evaluation Experts who are rarely available for smaller NGOs and especially not for civil society organisations (CSOs) in fragile states. Another related area is 'Development Impact Bonds' (DIBs). Here are some examples of SROI and DIBs:

https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Cabinet_office_A_guide_to_Social_Return_on_Investment.pdf
(55-page page manual)

https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/BOND_VfM_18.10.10_2_without_notes.ppt (Bond model from NEF 2010 – 60 PPT pages) [Value for Money in international development using Social Return on Investment](#) - New Economics Foundation presentation on social return on investment from a Bond workshop on 19 October 2010 (Bond website)

<http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/investing-in-social-outcomes-development-impact-bonds.pdf>
(Center for Global Development DIB model - 120 pages).

This Progressio SROI model draws on the above guidance but seeks to make it more accessible to apply in a hard-to-measure field (gender-balanced participatory good governance in fragile states). It gives one specific case study in Zimbabwe that could be easily adapted to other governance projects.

The model captures the benefits (outcomes) for citizens from the project evaluation and then applies a social return measure from existing research to put a value on those benefits compared with the project costs in order to demonstrate the social return on investment - **The economic benefits of the project are divided by the project costs to arrive at the Social Return on Investment of 4.1:1 i.e. estimated £4.40 economic benefit for every £1 spent on the project.**

2. Case study: How stronger voices for marginalised communities bring a social and economic return on investment

2.1. Introduction

Progressio's special expertise in partnering with Civil Society Organisations to equip marginalised citizens especially women with the power to influence decisions that affect their lives locally, nationally and sometimes internationally:

- is democratic,

- enables them to advance quality of life including by:
 - improving their livelihoods, and/or
 - upholding their rights, and/or
 - preventing sexual abuse and violence against women and girls and/or
 - living with greater dignity
- is economically viable i.e. brings a net return on investment
- makes other aid/government budgets more effective
- strengthens global south partner organisations to be more effective in future

2.2. A case study: Women, power and development – a model for Gender-balanced Participatory Action for Better Governance (GPABG), Zimbabwe – SEE 3. BELOW: CASE STUDY SUMMARY FOR METHODOLOGY

The project measures the social impact/benefit for citizens of 120 repaired bore holes. The repairs were the result of the Parish Advocacy Committee in one parish calling on local decision-makers to prioritise this in the local development budget. The social return on investment/economic value of the repaired bore-holes is estimated applying WHO published research that costs the benefit of a bore hole in a fragile state.

The economic benefits of the project are divided by the project costs to arrive at the Social Return on Investment of 4.1:1 i.e. estimate £4.40 economic benefit for every £1 spent on the project.

| SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT | Women Power and Development - Chachacha parish advocacy committee, Zimbabwe 120 bore hold repairs | NOTES |
|--|---|--|
| Investment (i.e.) Cost: | £19,089 | project cost divided by 10 parishes |
| Net benefit lower estimate (includes social** and economic benefits using a WHO published research method - see link below*) | £83,439 | £1.95 per person x 42,720 people (£1.95 = WHO* benefit of £2.40 per person less £0.45 i.e. Progressio project cost per person) |
| SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT (SROI) per £ invested LOWER RATE | 4.4 | for each £1 spent |
| Economic time saving benefits only – net | £42,428 | £0.99 per person (60% of total £2.40 less cost £0.45 per person) x 42k people |
| **Social/quality of life benefits e.g. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76% of water is carried by women & girls • Productivity benefits - Ave. 4 hours per day time saved not carrying water • Health benefits includes reduced back injuries, reduced sexual assault while out of village carrying water, • School attendance benefits for girls | |

* http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/68568/1/WHO_SDE_WSH_04.04.pdf

3. WOMEN POWER AND DEVELOPMENT

Action for Better Governance – Zimbabwe

A model for gender-balanced participatory local Parish Advocacy Committees

“Women previously could not speak during public meetings but now they can speak... One woman asked the representatives from the Ministry of Health why it took them long to attend to patients at the local clinic.”

Woman on Parish Advocacy Committee, St Pius Donga

70% of Zimbabweans live in extreme poverty but here is one example of how some citizens with specialist advocacy training are making advances. The successful pilot, the “Action for Better Governance” project **enabled ordinary Zimbabweans to achieve concrete advances in their livelihoods by influencing local and provincial government by targeting informal and formal power-holder/decision-makers (government officials, traditional chiefs and faith leaders) to address the most important needs of local citizens.** Progressio’s advocacy specialist trained local partner staff at the Zimbabwe Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJPZ) who worked together to train women and men from the local community in setting up and running Parish Advocacy Committees (later called REFLECT circles).

Project aims: to tackle one of the root causes of poverty – a lack of power over decisions that affect citizens’ lives – and improve local governance so that it is:

- a. informed about and more responsive to the greatest needs of its citizens, like access to clean water for drinking and for growing food to improve diet and livelihoods,
- b. held accountable to the people for its local budget decisions and actions
- c. participatory - listens to the voices of women as well as men and takes account of the priority needs of the whole community regardless of faith and gender

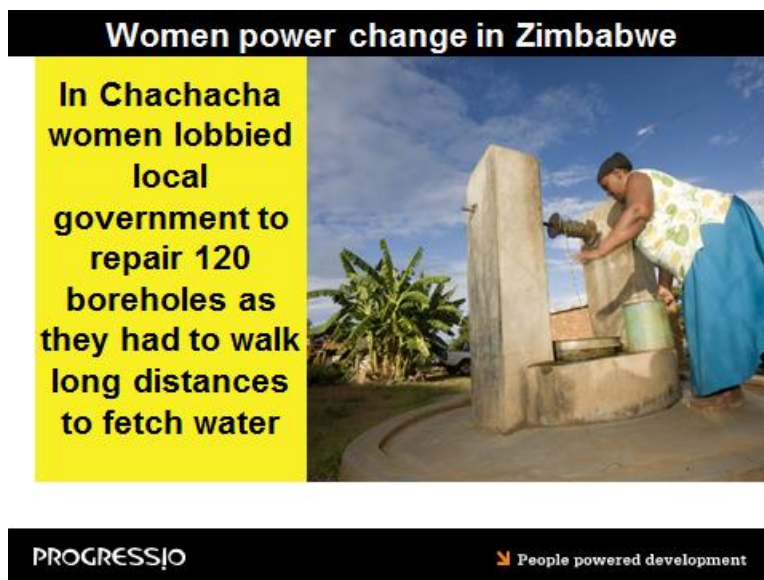
i.e. to help create more democratic structures that address poverty and injustice

The pilot was independently evaluated (*Ford Foundation, CCJP and Progressio Action for Better Governance Project Evaluation Report March 2014*) and recommended the successful approach is replicated in other areas. Improvements included local government decisions that made a lasting difference to poor communities.



“There is further evidence demonstrating that the project prioritised issues affecting women and this can be exemplified by advocacy with the District Development Fund (DDF) in Chachacha on the need to repair non-functioning boreholes.

This was prioritised as women reportedly shouldered the responsibilities of fetching water where they had to walk long distances as boreholes in their communities were not functioning. Advocacy efforts resulted in the DDF sourcing funding from other partners and **120 boreholes ended up being rehabilitated.**” *Extract from independent evaluation*



The Chachacha parish serves an estimated 70,000 people so the potential benefits of the renewed access to water reach a large population

<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dgwer.html> - population of Gweru diocese 2.2M across 32 parishes

As well as the initial achievements, the successes are set to continue year on year at little or no extra cost because through new locally run advocacy committees Zimbabwean women and men have set up the means to continue influencing change to improve their lives.

“Everything is glaring for all to see the impact of the work of CCJPZ supported by Progressio in transforming our communities and capacitating them to demand good governance from their leaders.

Before, no one would dare question a councillor, MP or even the Chief on why development is not taking place in their area. Following the workshops we have had with CCJPZ we are now fully equipped to deal with issues of bad governance in our area. Any leader who loses focus on what the people want risks being removed.”

Chief Nhema

Mark Lister, Chief Executive

For more information please visit www.progressio.org.uk or contact: mark@progressio.org.uk