

The Social Value of Youth Work

Summary Report

2020

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Introduction

Hemlington Linx Board of Trustees commissioned the Social Return on Investment (SROI) report to demonstrate the social value of youth work. The SROI impact assessment appraises the allocation of resources to youth work to quantify its true value relative to other public and voluntary interventions. It is intended the findings from the research can be used to inform future investment and grant making opportunities by demonstrating the wider social impact of the organisation.

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

The SROI analysis creates a narrative of how an organisation demonstrates value in the course of securing change in the world. It captures social value by identifying inputs (investments) and aligning these with meaningful outcomes (indicators) with a measurable value (financial proxies) to record the impact of change. The outcome of the process is establishing a value ratio which states how much social value (in £) is created for every £1 of investment.

Based on this SROI analysis the social impact value for Linx youth project, expressed as an SROI ratio of £5.50 for every £1 invested.



Stakeholders

The SROI investigation recognises that the key stakeholders for Linx are the young people, as key beneficiaries. It also recognises the contribution of its work to those partner organisations who cooperate and collaborate with the organisation.

Young people - The surveys were completed by 196 young people and are a representative sample for the service users. The feedback data is based on three key themes related to satisfaction rate, which can be summarised as: a) **staff and volunteer support**; b) **social inclusion**; and c) **positive life changes**. The tables below indicate the satisfaction rates for each theme.

Table 1: Staff and volunteer support – Q: We'd like to know what you think of the staff and volunteers who provide services and support and whether you feel challenged, safe and respected.

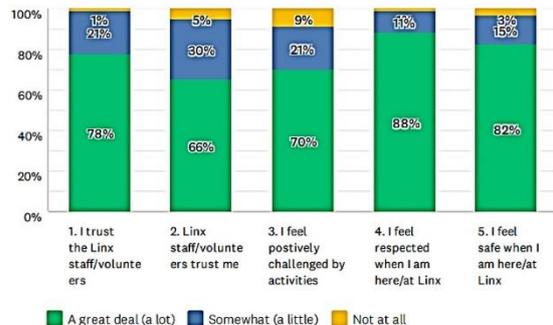
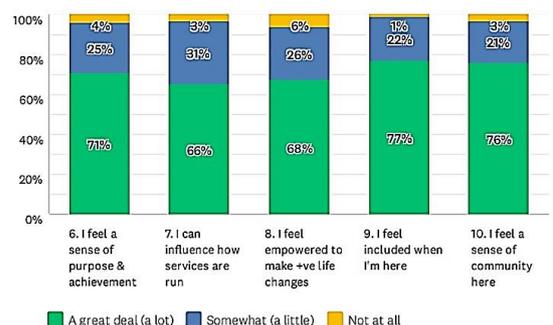
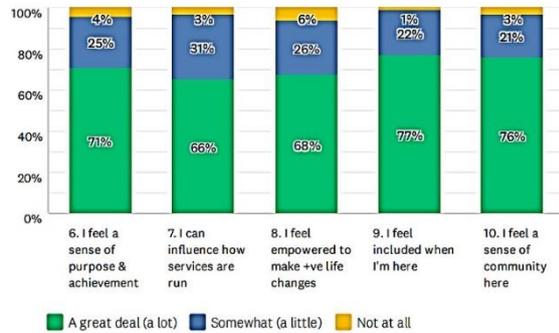


Table 2: Social inclusion – Q: We'd like to know if you feel that your involvement is



worthwhile, whether you can influence things and how included you feel.

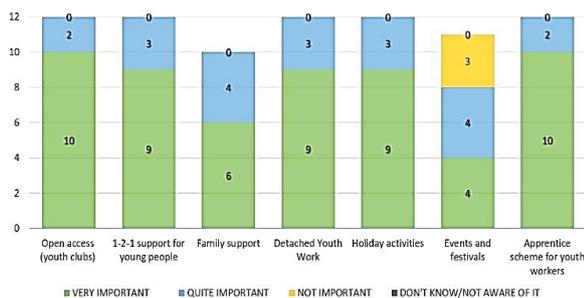
Table 3: Positive life changes – Q: We'd like to know of you feel that your involvement is worthwhile, whether you can influence things and how included you feel.



As the above tables indicate, there is strong evidence to suggest that youth work at Linx is highly valued by young people, it offers sustainability through regular engagement and the high overall satisfaction rates. In particular, young people report in high percentages that they feel respected and safe. They suggest that they trust and value the youth work staff. Moreover, they are able to have a sense of purpose and achievement whilst engaging at Linx. Overall, they feel empowered and confident that they can influence change in themselves and the organisation.

Key Partners - The partner survey was complete by 12 organisations. The feedback shows that Linx was highly valued, with overall 90% satisfaction with Linx’s core services and 83.3% of respondents stating its open access youth provision was ‘very important’.

Table 4: Q: How important do you consider the following services provided by Linx?’



The partner survey data shows that 92% of partners consider Linx to be professional in its work, and similarly 92% considered Linx is capable of securing positive outcomes for young people. Furthermore, the feedback comments from the partner survey indicate Linx is a professional and highly valued local youth service provider.

“I have always been impressed with the quality of work delivered by Linx. Staff across the organisation have a good understanding of the need for youth-focused, person-centred approaches and this has been demonstrated in any of the work I have witnessed. Linx is a critical service to young people in Middlesbrough; absence of its presence would leave a significant gap.”



Theory of Change

Linx adopts a *Theory of Change* underpinned by the process of personal and social development, providing opportunities for young people to develop social and emotional capabilities, including determination, self-control, persistence and self-motivation. These capabilities are also referred to as ‘soft skills’ and play a vital role in ensuring both a positive sense of self-worth, and contribute achieving other ‘hard outcomes’, i.e. success at school, securing jobs, good health or avoidance of offending behaviour.

Outcomes

Linx records the development of young people's social and emotional capabilities in both group sessions and one-to-one work. The key outcomes are **self-esteem and confidence, health and wellbeing; learning and achievement; communication and groups; futures and life skills; and community and social action**. These can be described as 'clusters of capabilities'¹ representing a matrix of skills and competencies that securing change in young people's immediate life experience and contribute to the potential for wider changes and future action.

Examples of capabilities developed by youth work

Curriculum Theme	Learning Outcomes for Young People
Self-esteem and Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand what things makes me feel resilient, empowered and positive about themselves I can express opinions and feelings in a clear and assertive manner
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand my own body and what things keep me healthy I can use different approaches to cope with stress (or other difficulties in my life)
Learning and Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand different learning styles and my learning preference I can play an active role in in my learning, meeting targets and celebrating success
Communication and Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand how groups work, including group stages, different roles, tasks and achieving a goal I recognise my own role in achieving success and supporting others
Community and Social Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand communities are changing and cultural diversity I can make a positive contribution and co-operate within their community
Futures and Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand my life choices and options, e.g. courses, jobs, housing etc. I am able to recognise challenges and problem solve to tackle them

¹ McNeil, B., Reeder, N. and Rich, A. (2012) *A framework of outcomes for young people*, London: The Young Foundation, p.4 <https://youngfoundation.org/publications/framework-of-outcomes-for-young-people/>

Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes

Investments (inputs)

For the financial year 2019-20 Linx's total income was £371, 846.15. The core investment was £287,249 from the National Lottery's Youth Investment Fund (YIF)². Other sources of funding include Middlesbrough Borough Council and commissioned work from Police and Crime Commission (PCC) and Thirteen Housing Group.

Activities (outputs)

These investments have enabled the delivery of a range of high-quality youth work services and interventions. These included open access youth clubs, one-to-one support and guidance work, detached youth work, schools-based work, school holiday programmes and social action work.

In 2019, Linx engaged with a total of 964 individual young people ages 10-19, delivered 220 youth work sessions, including 184 hours of one-to-one support and 710 hours of detached work. Overall, there were 7,420 staff hours dedicated to quality youth work, with 2799 young people participated in youth activities during the course of the year.

Changes (outcomes)

The following changes were identified during data analysis. These changes have been allocated a value, using relevant and up-to-date sources on unit costs (financial proxies). The key outcomes used were:

- Increased self-confidence** - Number of young people attending youth activities who talked positively about what they did and learnt at the project and confirmed that they felt safe and enjoyed the experience.
- Physical wellbeing improvements** - Number of young people participating regularly in sports activities within youth

² National Lottery Youth Investment Fund (YIF) <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/youth-investment-fund>

club programmes and whose physical health had improved as a direct result of attending the project.

- **Mental wellbeing improvement** - Number of young people developing positive mental health through engagement in health awareness and mindfulness activities in youth projects
- **Pro-social behaviour** - Number of young people desisting from participating in anti-social incidents through a) active engagement in detached youth work + b) completing the Key social action projects
- **Enhanced employment and careers** - Number of young people supported into work, training or education through one-to-one mentoring and intervention work.
- **Reduce crime** - Number of 'at-risk' young people with complex needs referred through CAF and other referrals to one-to-one support and case work management. and referrals through one-to-one mentoring and intervention work.
- **Teenage pregnancy prevention** - Number of young people accessing specialist sexual health and contraceptive advice provided by the youth work team, including C-Card registration, sexual health information and support services.
- **Reduced A&E admissions** - Number of young people engaging with the service with alcohol-related problems that were prevented from entering A&E hospital units for emergency intervention and treatment services.
- **Drugs prevention** - Number of young people engaging with the service with drug-related problems that were prevented from entering A&E hospital units for emergency intervention and treatment services.
- **Improved education engagement and school exclusion prevention** - Number of young people supported to improve school attendance, remain engaged in education through mentoring work of the project.



Calculation of Social Return

The SROI is expressed as a ratio of the social impact value divided by the total investment.

The formula used for calculating the SROI ratio is:

$$\text{SROI ratio} = \frac{\text{SIV}}{\text{IIV}}$$

SIV = social impact value (present value)

IIV = initial investment amount (value of inputs, e.g. financial investments/grants)

Following the SROI investigation which included the process of identifying key stakeholders, defining theory of change, identifying measurable outcomes, agreeing quantity and duration of change, allocating moderate financial proxies and making reasonable adjustments for deadweight, attribution and drop-off.

The calculation of the return on investment is based on the **social impact value (SIV)** identified as part of the SROI analysis which calculates the impact value of youth work as £2,046,148. This is divided by the **initial investment amount (IIV)**, Linx total income for 2019-2020 which was £371,846.15.

The social impact value for Linx youth project, expressed as an SROI ratio 1:5.5, or £5.50 for every £1 invested.



Further information

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The full version of the SROI Report is available
at: <https://www.hemlingtonlinx.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Linx-SROI-Analysis-Report-FINAL-180620.pdf>