



## **TCV's impact: Organisational Social Return on Investment summary findings**

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## TCV's impact: Organisational Social Return on Investment summary findings January 2014

**Content:** This report shares the findings of an organisational Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis which was undertaken by TCV in partnership with NEF Consulting (New Economics Foundation).

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## Contents

Introduction from the Chief Executive	4
Summary of findings	5
TCV and its work	7
Areas of work	7
Green Gym	7
Employment Community Engagement	7
Children's activities	7
Biodiversity Action Team	7
Employment and Training Services	7
Who benefited from TCV's work in 2013–2014?	8
Areas of work	11
Outdoor programmes	10
Green Gyms (SROI 1:4.02)	11
Employee Community Engagement (SROI 1:3.86)	13
Biodiversity Action Teams (SROI 1:3.23)	15
Children's activities (SROI 1: 3.52)	16
Enabling greater impact	19
Leadership on impact measurement	19
Building outcomes	19
Improving data quality	19
Conclusion	21
Appendix	22
The SROI methodology	22
TCV organisational SROI approach	22

# Introduction from the Chief Executive



Every day, The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) works across the UK on activities that have a lasting impact on people's health, prospects, and outdoor places. Reporting the impact TCV creates in a clear and straightforward way is of central importance for our organisation to track our performance over time, to attract new volunteers, and to engage and inspire external stakeholders.

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework seemed an effective, practical, and well-established methodology to better communicate the impact of our projects. For this reason, in the last few months, we have embarked on an exciting journey with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) to develop better ways of measuring and evidencing the change we make to people and communities across the UK.

It has been a long and complex process, involving many people across the organisation. We are now proud of the final result: an SROI ratio for TCV and for its key programmes (Green Gyms, Employee Community Engagement, Children's Activities, Biodiversity Action Teams). This tangible and simple figure will help TCV to communicate effectively the enormous value that our work is adding to communities across the UK and I am looking forward to seeing this value growing more and more in the coming years.

Julie Hopes, CEO

## Summary of findings

This organisational SROI reviews the effectiveness of TCV as a whole at creating social value within the communities in which it works across three dimensions: social, economic, and environmental.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an analytic tool that assigns a monetary value to the social, economic and environmental benefits that a project or, an organisation creates. It is a way of understanding how effectively money is spent, expressed by a ratio of outcomes divided by costs.

The research found that in 2013–2014 TCV generated at least<sup>1</sup> £2.38 of social value for every £1 invested in the form of social, environmental, and economic outcomes including health and wellbeing, increased employability, social connections, and CO2 reductions.

This value is experienced by the volunteers joining TCV programmes and activities and the children and families accessing the outdoor spaces that TCV manages and improves. Positive value is also accrued by the state, in the form of savings to the public purse and to the wider society as we will all benefit from less air pollution and reduced effects of climate change.

Highlights of the types and size of the value which TCV produces through its programmes are shown in Figure 1.

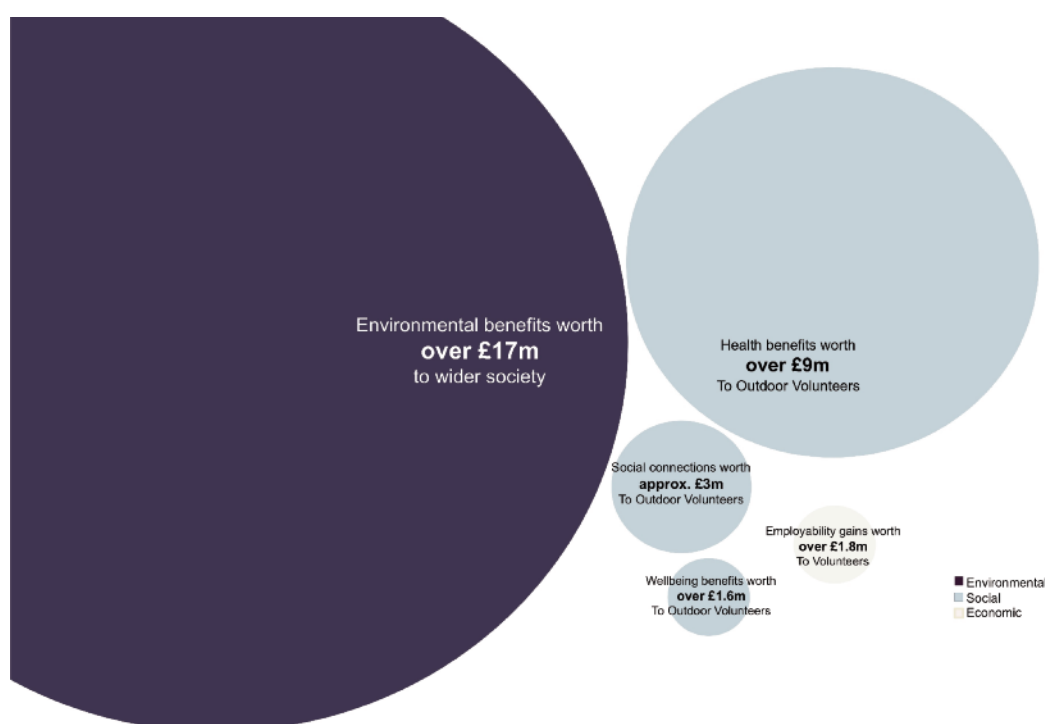


Figure 1. Diagram highlighting some of the most significant areas of social value created

<sup>1</sup> The data on which the analysis is based comes from management information and specific evaluations but does not cover all of the outcomes that TCV potentially delivers. This is a conservative estimate of the SROI.

NEF Consulting concludes that TCV is currently achieving a healthy social return from its charity work. The conservative £2.38 return is expected to grow. This will be achieved with an organisational-wide priority to clarify key outcomes and improve data collection methods. Initial areas of strategic focus will be Green Gyms, Employee Community Engagement and the Employment and Training Services.

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# TCV and its work

TCV works across the UK to create healthier and happier communities for everyone – communities where their activities have a lasting impact on people's health, prospects, and outdoor places.

## Areas of work

Underlying the three broad areas of work of health, prospects, and places, there are a variety of programmes, through which TCV delivers its aims:

- **Green Gym**

Free outdoor exercise where people are not just improving their own health and fitness but also helping to create new green spaces in their communities.

- **Employee Community Engagement**

Corporate volunteers led by TCV leaders on meaningful outdoor activities. As well as working as a team alongside their community, the employees learn new skills and improve outdoor places, creating a legacy for everyone to enjoy.

- **Children's Activities**

TCV's work with children and young people covers a range of activities: School Green Gyms and food growing projects, natural respite for young carers and TCV's new Helping Kids Grow initiative.<sup>2</sup> For more information about TCV Helping Kids Grow activities, please visit: [www.tcv.org.uk/helpingkidsgrow](http://www.tcv.org.uk/helpingkidsgrow) which provides online resources to support children, carers, and schools to discover new ways to enjoy green spaces.

- **Biodiversity Action Teams**

Biodiversity Action Teams (BATs) help manage some of the UK's most beautiful and vibrant sites for nature conservation, as well as creating new pocket parks, allotments, and wildlife gardens for communities and schools.

- **Employment and Training Services**

Welfare to Work and learning programmes help thousands of people each year achieve new skills and qualifications and support them on their journey towards employment.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about TCV Helping Kids Grow activities, please visit: [www.tcv.org.uk/helpingkidsgrow](http://www.tcv.org.uk/helpingkidsgrow)

# Who benefited from TCV's work in 2013–2014?

Overall, TCV created social value for a number of key groups:

- Regular volunteers<sup>3</sup>
- One-day volunteers
- Local community members who live in and around the places TCV work
- Children
- Employers, aiming to maximise Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, and their employees

The benefits that each group experiences is proportional to the amount of time spent with TCV, and the nature of the activities. In addition to these groups, TCV indirectly creates benefit for the state and wider society. Figure 2 shows proportionately how much of the overall monetary value created by TCV is realised by their beneficiaries, the state and wider society.

## Value by stakeholder

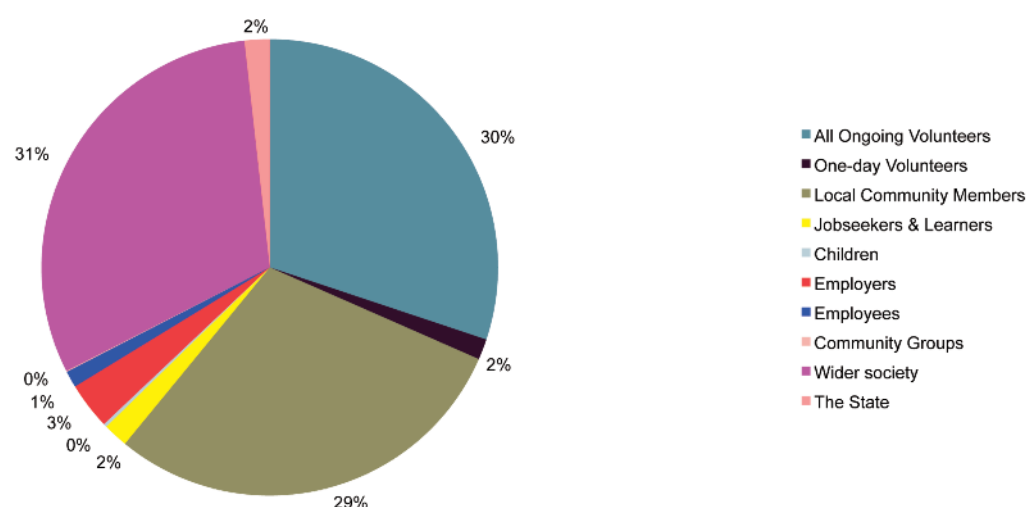


Figure 2. Pie chart showing distribution of value between material stakeholders

This chart represents the total value of all TCV activities, but the impact is conservative for some beneficiaries, such as Community Groups and Children, for which the impacts are not fully measured and captured. By utilising the measurement framework provided we expect the value of TCV activities to increase, impacting all beneficiaries in the forthcoming years.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this study our volunteers were categorised as either One-Day (i.e., those who attend one event or one activity annually) or Regular (i.e., those attending more than one event or activity per year).

### Regular Volunteers: value by outcome

The biggest stakeholder group, which cuts across all programmes, is Regular Volunteers, and they benefit significantly from participating in TCV activities. For these volunteers, their health increases along with their personal and social wellbeing, social connections and their knowledge of nature, biodiversity, and green space maintenance. In addition, the experience gained from participating in TCV's activities enhances their employability. Individually, this is worth over £4,600 in social value to each Regular Volunteer.

Figure 3 shows the total monetary value that TCV created for Regular Volunteers, categorised by outcome. These volunteers are likely to gain a significant improvement in outcomes and are also more likely to maintain the positive outcomes.

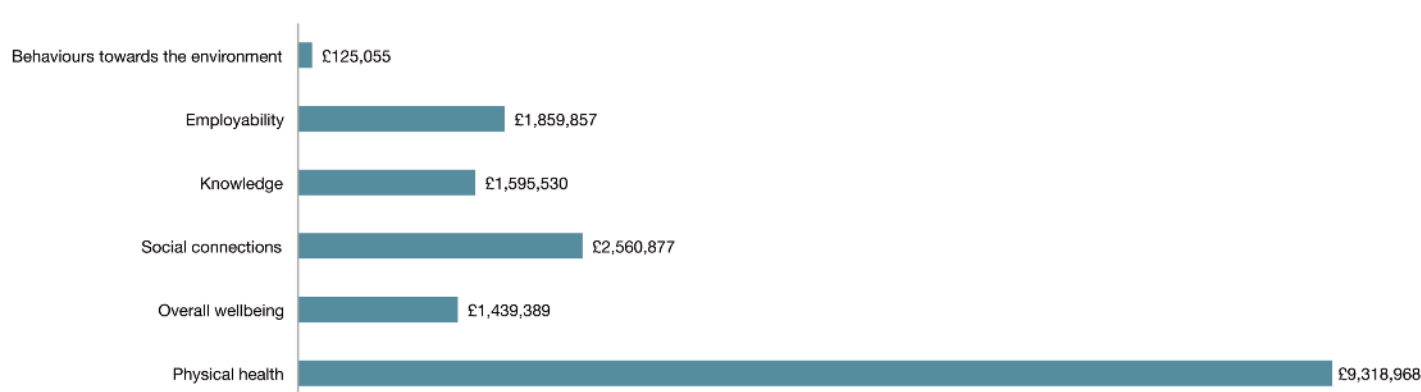


Figure 3. Graph of the value created for Regular Volunteers

### Case study: Vicky Peet

After a period of massive upheaval in her life, Vicky was suffering with depression, anxiety, and panic attacks.

Under the guidance of the Green Gym Project Officer, her abilities and confidence grew. She gained valuable transferable skills, work experience and was able to successfully apply for a job.

In April 2014, Vicky applied for the position of TCV Schools Project Assistant and got the post. She now works part time delivering outdoor conservation-based education sessions to schools and the local community.

Vicky arranged her working week to allow her to continue volunteering at the Green Gym. TCV and the Green Gym in particular have been essential in her social development and mental health recovery. By continuing to volunteer she hopes to offer others the same opportunities she received.

*Vicky, Volunteer from Waltham Forest Green Gym, now TCV Project Officer.*

### Case study: Peter's Green Gym journey

After dropping out of university and undergoing several career changes, Peter struggled to get employment, so decided to gain some experience by volunteering. The best option available was Camden Green Gym as it was easy to access and the sites were local.

Even so it took Peter a week or so to pluck up the courage to go along and join in his first session. He was encouraged by seeing another enthusiastic volunteer start the volunteer leader training and decided to get more involved. 'I started spending days in the office learning about data entry and progressing from there. I'd never done a day's office work in my life – it was all completely new to me, and I loved it. I was really well supported by TCV staff and volunteers and I learnt an incredible amount.'

In 2013, TCV received a grant from Volunteer Centre Camden to set up a new Green Gym to engage young volunteers, aiming to create a self-sustaining resilient community group. Peter began working on developing the new Green Gym. This experience stood him in good stead for the future.

Peter says: 'Eighteen months later a job came up as a project assistant with TCV. I applied, not feeling confident, as it was the other side of London in an area I had no local knowledge of, but it was a great vote of confidence when I was offered the job. More recently I have moved back to my local area as Camden Green Gym Project Officer. Helping other people and seeing their development is incredibly rewarding, with people like myself coming out of their shell, and people with severe depression starting to regain control of their lives. We work with so many different people from all walks of life. It's why I love my job – expanding the reach of the project and being able to help more people, communities and wildlife.'

*Peter, Volunteer from Camden Green Gym, now TCV Project Officer.*

### One-day Volunteers: value by outcome

In addition to the Regular Volunteers, there are also more than fifty thousand volunteers who participate in one-day activities. The impact for these volunteers is smaller, because of the nature of their interaction. However, there are still many benefits for those attending: an increase in overall wellbeing, social connections, and some incremental changes in pro-environmental behaviours, as shown in Figure 4.

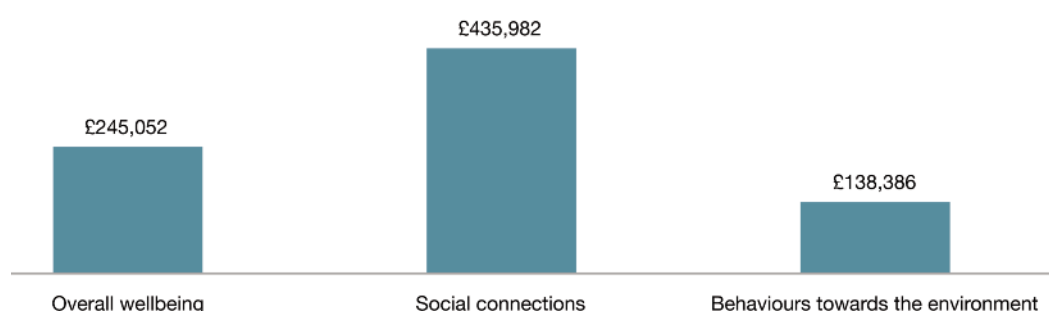


Figure 4. Graph of the value created for one-day volunteers

# Areas of work

## Outdoor programmes

TCV delivers a number of outdoor programmes, working with different groups in outdoor spaces. These programmes, with their Social Value ratios, are detailed below.

### Green Gyms (SROI 1:4.02)

Green Gym is a refreshing approach to outdoor exercise, designed by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to improve people's health and wellbeing and make a positive impact on the local environment. During each session a leader will guide participants through exciting conservation activities which could include managing woodland, food growing, creating wildflower gardens and wildlife ponds, planting trees, making pathways and so much more.

Green Gyms tackle essential conservation jobs in the great outdoors, working together in friendly teams to transform their local area. Participants also pick up new practical skills for life and the workplace, make new friends and improve their overall wellbeing.



*Bromley Green Gym taking part in the Big Green Weekend*

Getting out in the fresh air, doing something positive and meeting like-minded people has a dramatic effect on the way participants feel.

The Green Gym programme is unique in that it uses a social action setting to support and empower communities and to improve the local environment through practical activities that leave a lasting impact. Green Gym participants represent the whole spectrum of the local community: old, young, working, retired, and unemployed.

Green Gyms (as with all of TCV's programmes) are run in a highly inclusive way and engage successfully with a very wide range of volunteers, including those whom other organisations may struggle to attract, i.e. participants from very deprived backgrounds, those at risk of developing physical and mental health problems, and those who are socially isolated.

***'I'm delighted to announce our investment in Green Gyms through the Centre for Social Action. Thanks to the Cabinet Office and NESTA, this funding will create over 600 Green Gyms nationally supported by a network of dedicated staff, helping to create healthier and happier communities.'***

*Rob Wilson, Minister for Civil Society*

The Department of Health has recognised that Green Gyms have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of those who take part. In early 2015, TCV was awarded a government grant, working with its charity partner, Nesta, and the Cabinet Office.

Over the next five years, support from TCV partners and funders will allow TCV to grow significantly the number of Green Gyms it can offer and make huge strides towards its ultimate aim: a Green Gym within ten minutes of every UK home.

***'In 2013–2014, Green Gyms supported 3,217 volunteers: 1,160 had been involved with Green Gyms for over a year, and 2,057 were new volunteers. When comparing the outcomes Green Gyms delivers to the investment it receives, it delivers a very healthy return of over £4.02 of social value per £1 invested'***

Key results for the volunteers include:

- Increasing the physical health of volunteers by an average of 33%, worth £2.6 million to volunteers.
- Reducing social isolation: over 80% of volunteers felt closer to local people in their area, worth over £700,000 in social value to volunteers.
- Increasing personal wellbeing<sup>4</sup> through offering the chance to 'give back' and giving volunteers the chance to have fun. This is worth over £400,000 to volunteers.

For the wider community and society, it is estimated that Green Gym activity saves 5.4 tonnes of greenhouse gases being sequestered into the air and 148 tonnes of particulate matter captured, and resulting in 115 tonnes less of nitrous oxide being expelled into the air. This is worth £4.9 million to local communities across the UK.

<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that not all of the indicators which contribute to a holistic understanding of the personal wellbeing of TCV's volunteers are currently collected. This is planned in the coming year; therefore any representation of an increase in personal wellbeing is a conservative estimate.

## Employee Community Engagement (SROI 1:3.86)

Employee Community Engagement (ECE) are bespoke team-building projects, giving corporate volunteers the opportunity to carry out practical work to achieve a positive impact on communities and outdoor spaces.

Seasonal projects in locations across the UK range from creating habitats such as ponds or meadows, improving access to public green spaces by building new paths and steps, learning traditional skills such as coppicing or hedge laying, or creating spaces for communities to grow food.

*'We believe that engaging delivery partners with specialist knowledge and experience is key to providing the tailored approach needed for our healthy lifestyle programmes, which is why we selected The Conservation Volunteers to lead the community element of our Health for Life programme. New growing spaces have been created in locations around our manufacturing sites, allowing even more of our employees to volunteer. Plus, through local networking, the TCV team has increased involvement and interest in Health for Life in the community, generating successful outcomes, which we have been able to share both with our local stakeholders and across the company's global network.'*

*Kelly Farrell, Community Affairs Manager, UK & Ireland, Mondelēz*

*'In 2013–2014, 3,500 employees from 20 employers attended ECE outdoor activities at local TCV sites. Companies that chose TCV for their community engagement and team building activities in that period include RBS, Mondelēz, PwC, Asda, HSBC, CISCO, Intu and Blackstone Group. The programme provides £3.86 in benefit for every £1 invested.'*



*RBS taking part in a TCV Employee Community Engagement Day*

TCV is currently revising its approach to evaluating the effectiveness of ECE; therefore all of the following results are derived from empirical research and interviews with key TCV members of staff and present the possible social value that TCV could create, should it perform against industry averages.

For employees, participating in outdoor team activities which have tangible results can have a number of positive outcomes. First, by taking part in a project which directly supports their local community, as well as supporting a team to bond, it is estimated that employee engagement will increase. On average, such programmes have been found to increase employee engagement by 9%.<sup>5</sup> In addition, there is an increased sense of wellbeing resulting from a sense of achievement, having fun, and feeling closer to colleagues. Finally, as many of the organisations who use ECEs are based in offices, taking part in TCV's activities increases their physical activity levels for the day.

Assuming the benefits of attending an ECE last up to two weeks, over £600,000 of social value is created for employees, over £180 per person.

There is value created for employers as well. As well as a happier workforce participating in local activities can also have a positive impact on their reputation. Research has found that engaging in local activities can have a significant impact on an organisation's reputation, up to 15% change. When applied to the 20 firms that participated in TCV activities, this is worth over £1.8 million in social value, over £90,000 on average per organisation.



*OpenX taking part in a TCV Employee Community Engagement Day*

5 Brewis, G. (2004). Beyond banking: lessons from an impact evaluation of employee volunteering at Barclays Bank, Voluntary Action Journal, 6(3), 9. Retrieved from [http://www.ivr.org.uk/images/stories/Institute-of-Volunteering-Research/VA-Documents/VA6\\_3/article1\\_brewis.pdf](http://www.ivr.org.uk/images/stories/Institute-of-Volunteering-Research/VA-Documents/VA6_3/article1_brewis.pdf)

### Biodiversity Action Teams (SROI 1:3.23)

Biodiversity Action Teams (BATs) help manage some of the UK's most beautiful and vibrant sites for nature conservation, as well as creating new nature gardens for communities and schools. BAT teams offer a full-day volunteering experience working on larger projects. Projects can include woodland management, habitat creation, pond maintenance, and invasive species control as well as some environmental construction activities including building ponds, dipping platforms, boardwalks, fencing, paths, natural play equipment, and a range of habitats.

***'In 2013–2014, BATs supported 5,002 volunteers: 1,667 who had been involved with BATs for over a year, and 3,335 new volunteers. SROI analysis shows a substantial positive impact created by BATs. The programme provides £3.23 in benefit for every £1 invested.'***

Key results for the volunteers include:

- Increasing the physical health of volunteers, worth £4 million to volunteers.
- Reducing social isolation: volunteers felt closer to local people in their area, worth over £1.1 million in social value to volunteers.
- Increasing personal wellbeing<sup>6</sup> through offering the chance to give back and giving volunteers the chance to have fun. This is worth over £600,000 to volunteers.

For the wider community and wider society, it is estimated that BATs activity saves 8.4 tonnes of greenhouse gases being sequestered into the air and 231 tonnes of particulate matter captured, and results in 180 tonnes less of nitrous oxide being expelled into the air. This is worth £7.4 million to local communities all across the UK.

***'Thanks to you and your team for delivering the restoration of Benhill Road Nature Garden. The professional way this project was managed and delivered is a credit to you and the team. Given the loose brief and small budget, the quality of the hard and soft landscaping installed exceeded our expectations and should stand the test of time. I would also like to congratulate you on the inventive use of materials, problem solving, and the facilitation of volunteers. All of this resulted in a quality nature garden returned to public use. Once again, well done.'***

*Jonathan Best, Ecology Officer – Southwark Council*

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that not all of the indicators which contribute to a holistic understanding of the personal wellbeing of TCV volunteers are currently collected. This is planned in the coming year; therefore any representation of an increase in personal wellbeing is a conservative estimate.

### **Case study: Eardley Road Sidings Nature Reserve Restoration wins Heritage Lottery Fund support**

An overgrown Streatham nature reserve is set for a major makeover, thanks to a £100,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) has been given the money to restore the 3.4 acre Eardley Road Sidings Nature Reserve. As well as the providing an oasis of woodland in an urban setting, the site is also a part of the capital's railway heritage.

TCV and Lambeth Council will work in partnership to undertake the restoration of the former sidings through an activities and volunteer programme combined with path and entrance improvement works. The project would be delivered over 18 months working with and training over 200 volunteers and participants.

The project is also being supported by the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), a corporate partner of TCV. Contributions towards the project include RBS staff volunteering to deliver the physical changes such as the path works.

Eardley Road Sidings Nature Reserve is currently an overgrown and neglected green space which has one of three acid grassland sites within Lambeth, which is rare in London, and this habitat is decreasing rapidly across the UK. It is also an interesting part of London's railway and industrial history acting as support for Victoria Station for over 50 years.

Commenting on the award, Cllr Jane Edbrooke, Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods at Lambeth Council, said: 'This is fantastic news for local people and the environment. The funding creates real opportunities for people to enjoy the benefits of being active and learning new skills while creating an important shared green space.'

Stuart Hobley, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: 'From trees to trains! This is a great project that will give hundreds of volunteers the chance to transform this overgrown local greenspace into a real community asset that will encourage involvement in the natural world and local heritage. We're pleased to invest National Lottery players' money in this endeavour.'

### **Children's Activities (SROI 1: 3.52)**

There has been an increasing amount of research in recent years underlining the lack of contact and experience with nature among modern children. Some have argued that this is having a negative impact on their health, education, and behaviour.<sup>7</sup>

TCV is passionate about connecting children with nature. Taking part in TCV sessions, the children are outside as much as possible, learning in small groups through games and hands-on activities, such as pond dipping, mini-beast hunting, outdoor games, and natural art. The sessions include some extremely well designed activities that imaginatively deliver aspects of the national curriculum and the days are much appreciated by visiting teachers.

<sup>7</sup> McGrath, M. (2013). Just one in five children connected to nature, says study. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-24532638>

All of this offers hands-on interaction with a world many children do not get to experience, as most children TCV works with live in heavily built-up urban areas. So many children live highly structured, enclosed lives in a man-made environment with little access to the natural world and therefore places like TCV sites are vital for nurturing a child's innate empathy with nature. In line with the inclusive TCV approach, these sessions are accessible to all and are particularly valuable for children who have emotional or behavioural difficulties and who tend not to thrive in a classroom situation.

TCV works with children and young people and covers a range of activities: environmental education days for children, School Green Gyms, school food-growing projects, projects to give young carers a natural break from their daily responsibilities, and the new TCV Helping Kids Grow initiative which provides online resources to support children, carers, and schools in discovering new ways to enjoy green spaces.

**'TCV worked with over 16,000 children in 2013–2014. Children's Activities provide £3.52 in benefit for every £1 invested.'**

Due to the nature of its work with children, the results are derived from empirical studies as TCV develops appropriate and proportional ways to measure the changes that children experience as a result of taking part in outdoor activities. The following results are therefore a conservative estimate of what TCV can achieve. The main outcomes that children experience are having fun learning, increasing the enjoyable time that they spend outdoors, and increasing their knowledge of nature and biodiversity. These outcomes are worth around £133,000 in social value to children – around £8.30 per child. This assumes children only participate once, and therefore the cumulative effects for any children who return to participate further are not shown.

### Case study: Under 5s Nature Explorers at Lloyd Park

TCV delivers a monthly Nature Explorers session aimed at the under 5s and their parents/carers. These sessions encourage children with their parents to have fun in the park whilst learning about nature.

The session starts with a simple art/craft activity such as colouring, followed by a walk around the park focusing on a different topic each month (e.g. Seeds and Harvest, Animal groups). At the end of the exploring, the group has a healthy fruit snack and reads some stories related to nature. The stories are interactive and children are encouraged to join in.

The aim of the sessions is to engage local families in using and caring for the park, their local community, and the wider environment.

Feedback from parents highlights the positive impacts of these sessions.

*.....the sessions are great practice for school as they need to listen and there is lots of opportunity for them to explore and answer questions. The sessions are also really good for encouraging children to care about the wildlife around them (and I learnt a few things too!)*

*Taya's mum*

*.....It gives my daughter so much confidence being out getting messy in nature rather than being nervous about it.*

*Elizabeth's Dad*



# Enabling greater impact

## Leadership on impact measurement

TCV is a large organisation which has developed its activities across multiple locations and with many partners and funders. The SROI analysis was instigated by the Board, who offered leadership and lent scrutiny to the process to ensure that the resulting model aids them in their role of guiding and challenging the organisation.

NEF Consulting has been encouraged by the considerable investment of time and expertise from staff at all levels of the organisation. In undertaking this process, an organisation-wide team and communication network has been instrumental in supporting the development of a deeper and broader evidence base.

## Building outcomes

In developing an organisation-wide SROI, the first challenge was to undertake an extensive mapping exercise of the common outcomes experienced across different programmes for all the different stakeholders. Gaining an understanding of what TCV currently delivers and what it aspires to deliver has been used to develop a wide, yet focused, understanding of the outcomes that should be measured.

With a clearer understanding of where and what kind of changes TCV is currently achieving, the organisation can strategically plan to maximise these outcomes. Resource and programme design decisions can be made in a way that prioritises the changes which are most valuable to stakeholders, such as physical and mental health and community resilience.

## Improving data quality

In addition to mapping the common outcomes, gathering broad and robust data across a large organisation also has its challenges. Undertaking the intensive SROI process has highlighted the areas where TCV has excellent data, and areas where it needs more time to truly understand the impact it is having.

Key to gaining a deeper understanding, and where necessary refining delivery approaches, is to gather broader data about the outcomes that are achieved.

There are three main approaches to this planned for 2015/2016:

1. The results so far relate to TCV's charity work, but additional work (currently in progress) will expand the SROI approach to also cover the Employment and Training Services (ETS), TCV's trading arm, and develop the way in which soft skills development and the achievement of 'good' jobs are measured through ETS activities. ETS would benefit from gaining a greater insight into how it supports clients to develop the softer skills and resilience needed to effectively move into, and stay in work.
2. As part of the scaling process of the Green Gym programme, TCV is working with NEF Consulting and NESTA to pilot and roll out new approaches to measuring its health and wellbeing benefits. This work aims to standardise

the approach to measurement and align data collection with the needs of a diverse range of funders and commissioners. These tools are being piloted in Autumn 2015.

3. Finally, TCV would like to expand its understanding of the outcomes it creates for employers and employees through ECE and has re-developed its data collection and evaluation forms accordingly. We expect the new evaluation to be adopted in 2016.

In summary, these additional data collection activities, alongside the existing data which is routinely captured will provide an insightful analysis in future reports. We anticipate that, using the measurement framework, recommendations and guidance provided, TCV will better demonstrate the true and, hopefully, increased value to all beneficiaries over the next 3–4 years. Additionally both TCV and NEF Consulting are confident that using the SROI methodology will continue to support organisational and programmatic development, as data collection becomes more focused on outcomes over outputs and more inclusive.

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## Conclusion

TCV has embarked on an ambitious journey to measure the organisation's total impact in an integrated way. The conservative ratio of £2.38 of social value for every £1 invested indicates that TCV creates excellent social value across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. This is close to the kind of values and ratios we have seen for similar, much smaller outdoor health, wellbeing, and educational projects. Given TCV's national size, this is a healthy baseline figure.

The research has enabled us to paint an initial picture of the value that TCV creates and explore some of the unique outcomes that were previously unquantified. The emphasis on data collection and outcomes is currently tipped towards health and wellbeing. This is partly a reflection on the fact that TCV's data collection on broader environmental outcomes is less pragmatic. However the emphasis reveals the power behind TCV's model of using the environment as a catalyst for social good.

Some of the distinct findings which TCV should be proud of include:

- The significant direct benefits to volunteers as a result of increasing their physical health, social connections, and personal wellbeing.
- For local community groups, TCV creates direct economic benefits. For our wider society, there are huge environmental benefits that result from the creation and maintenance of quality outdoor space in our communities.
- In addition to direct benefits for those who participate, TCV generates value for the partners it works with: employers who choose to use TCV for their CSR activities benefit from not only the increased reputation, but also from increased engagement.

TCV's overall value (and SROI ratio) is expected to grow as the quality of data available increases, enabling more outcomes to be included in the ratio. NEF are confident that TCV has the tools and commitment to further finesse the understanding of the impact it creates for all its many beneficiaries.

# Appendix

## The SROI methodology

Social Return of Investment (SROI) is a form of cost-benefit analysis recognised by the Cabinet Office in the UK.<sup>8</sup> The method helps organisations manage the intangible, hard to measure, social and environmental value they create. Rather than simply focusing on cost savings, the methodology takes into account the full range of impacts that matter to the main stakeholders; TCV's volunteers (adults, employees, and children), ETS clients, members, employer partners, local communities, and the state.

The SROI methodology includes all the stages of a robust, outcomes-based, impact evaluation. Its stages and guiding principles are summarised in Table 1. It surpasses conventional reporting frameworks, which tend to start by focussing on outputs; things that can be easily counted. Instead, SROI seeks to measure the actual changes experienced by key stakeholders.

Once the key changes have been identified, they are valued by providing an equivalent monetary value for the social and environmental benefits (or costs). By putting all the outcomes into the same metric it is possible to measure across different domains of value, in a common and relatable form.

The stages of an SROI analysis	SROI guiding principles
1. Establishing scope and identifying stakeholders	■ Involve stakeholders
2. Mapping outcomes	■ Understand what changes
3. Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value	■ Value what matters
4. Establishing impact	■ Include only what is material
5. Calculating the SROI	■ Avoid over-claiming
6. Reporting, using, and embedding	■ Be transparent
	■ Verify the result

## TCV organisational SROI approach

Drawing on the stages and principles outlined in Table 1, the following activities were undertaken to inform the measurement approach:

1. Development of a Theory of Change: this is an understanding of how TCV as an organisation creates change for stakeholders. This was undertaken by
  - a. engagement with key staff members through workshops.
  - b. an online survey of staff to ascertain the key outcomes they see with the people they support, how they would know change has happened, and a materiality exercise to understand the extent to which they perceived the common outcomes identified by strategic staff as key to understanding change for different client groups.

<sup>8</sup> For full details of the SROI methodology, see the Cabinet Office guide to SROI: [www.neweconomics.org/publications/guide-social-return-investment](http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/guide-social-return-investment)

- c. a full review of existing documentation and evaluations for specific programmes, such as the Green Gym.
- 2. Development of an organisation-wide measurement plan: How do we know change has happened for different stakeholder groups? This included mapping existing data within programmes and regions, and developing suggestions for future measurement that can be incorporated into TCV's programmes and activities.
- 3. Development of an insight into the net impact: understanding attribution, deadweight, and displacement.
- 4. Analysis of the data gathered through the existing data collection systems. Where data was not currently available, a literature review of other programmes provided an estimate of what could be achieved through TCV's work. This acts as a 'budget'/ projection, which can be reviewed against actual performance at the end of next year.
- 5. Presentation of the results: The results of the analysis are presented in the model in dashboard format, for TCV to use with internal and external stakeholders.

For more information on SROI, please see the Cabinet Office guidance:  
[http://www.thesroinetwork.org/publications/doc\\_details/241-a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment-2012](http://www.thesroinetwork.org/publications/doc_details/241-a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment-2012)