Social Return On Investment: A practical guide for the development cooperation sector

Description

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by Jan Brouwers, Ester Prins and Menno Salverda (2010) , Utrecht, Context International Cooperation / Creative Commons, 60pp, ISBN 978-90-77526-06-4. Available free online

Description
â??Related to Cost Benefit Analyses and Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation is a new methodology called SROI; Social Return On Investment. As the term implies investments are not made to simply generate financial returns; in fact they create returns in many other areas, including poverty reduction or environmental protection. The SROI process attempts to provide insight in multiple values such that better decisions about investment (development) choices can be made.

The Social Return On Investment (SROI) practical guide, published by Context, international cooperation, provides guidelines and follows nine concrete steps in how to implement a SROI analysis. In this manual, the SROI idea is translated into the practice of international cooperation. What is interesting is that the manual is written in a write shop, where some fifteen SROI practitioners from Africa and Asia have shared and written down their practical experience. This results in a very readable guide with clear examples and practical tips of existing case studies and experiences.

Although SROI conceptualizing and practice should still be considered in its infancy, generally practitioners find that SROI can play an important role in creating awareness and appreciation of different (types of) values. In other words, by using SROI, the landscape of values, previously hidden (or externalised from market values) will change with social, environmental, economic and other values integrated.

Moreover, the communities, the development practitioners and all the related stakeholders, develop a TVC perspective (Total Value Consciousness â?? Economic, Social & Environmental), which helps in shifting mindsets or perceptions to planning and monitoring of development programs. The focus on social & environmental benefits will motivate the communities to participate in the program actively. This in turn creates a shift in the balance of whether a project is considered beneficial, profitable or commercially viable and consequently would lead to opportunities and implementation of new and innovative initiatives that genuinely contribute to positive social change and poverty reduction for all.

For whom?
For anyone interested in (new) methods for planning, monitoring and evaluation of social change or for those who want to try something different. SROI can be applied at an organisation level, at value chain levels or at the level of a more complex initiative at a community level. SROI can be applied in various fields: rural development, health, economic development, environmental economics, leadership programs, physical infrastructure, value of water infrastructure investment projects, etc. â?•

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Date
11/11/2026
Date Created
23/03/2011
Author
admin