

# Evaluating community initiatives and programmes using SROI

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# CCRI and evaluation

- Track record of LEADER, ERDP, agri-environment and many other evaluations for UK and EU government and NGO sponsors, by a variety of CCRI researchers, 20+ years
- Economic impact studies of Environmental Stewardship and farm building schemes using an adapted **LM3**\* approach (led by Paul Courtney with Jane Mills and Pete Gaskell)
- Social Value Act and ensuing interest led Paul Courtney to train in SROI\*\*, 2012

*\* local multiplier 3-step approach, \*\* Social Return on Investment method, both pioneered by the New Economics Foundation*

# Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework

- SROI Explores, Measures and Values change
- It is stakeholder-driven and focused on outcomes
- It values the ‘things that matter’ to people
- It tries not to over-claim
- Endorsed by the Cabinet Office
- Used increasingly in public, private and especially third sector evaluations

# SROI – 3 stages

- Exploring (describing) change through stakeholder consultation - **Theory of Change** to identify outcomes and chain of events
- Evidencing (measuring) change - **Indicators** to measure change in outcomes over time (distance travelled)
- Valuing (*monetising*) change - **Financial proxies** to calculate a ratio of Benefit to Investment, and compare impact across outcomes / themes

# CCRI Programme and Project Evaluations using SROI



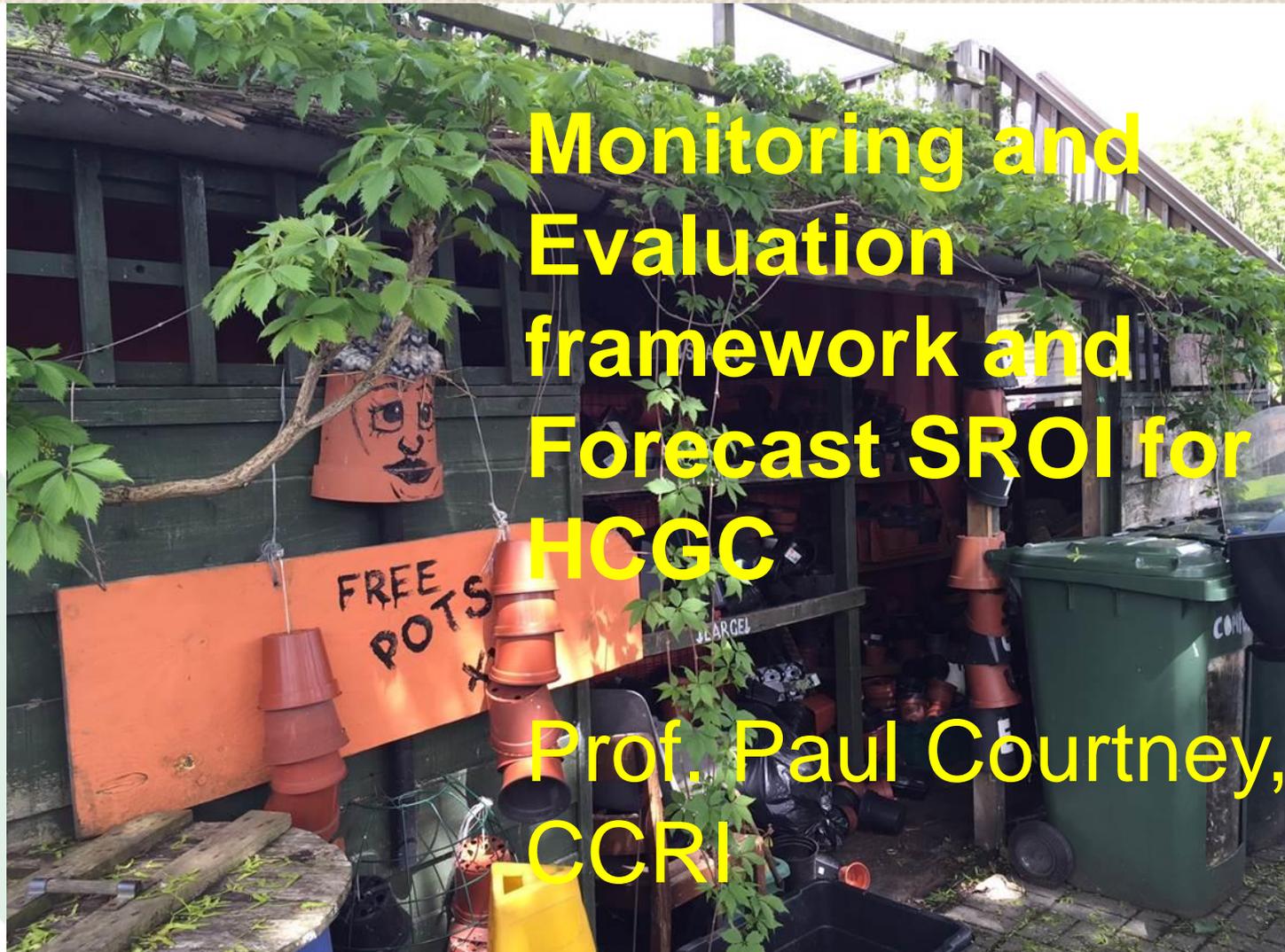
Project	Timing	Funder	Overview
Proving Our Value	2011-13	Lottery (SW Forum)	Action Research to evidence impact of small NGOs and develop impact tools
Evaluation of Axis I and III of the RDPE	2012-13	Defra	Programme Theory and Forecast SROI
SROI: Local Food Programme	2012-13	Lottery (RSWT)	SROI of 3 LF projects and ratio with sensitivity analysis
SROI: Master Gardener Programme	2013-14	Growing Health	Evaluative SROI using longitudinal evaluation data
Monitoring and Evaluation of the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF)	2013-16	Defra and DECC	Develop M&E framework; social programme theory; SROI bolt-on to energy Cost-Benefit Analysis
Evaluation: Podsmead Big Local Community	2014-17	Lottery, (Podsmead Cmm. Group)	Theory of change, forecast SROI, data collection tools and updated SROI

# CCRI Evaluations using SROI

## (2)



Project	Timing	Funder	Overview
Gloucestershire Active Together Programme	2014-16	GCC	Application of SROI to Community Health programme
East Riding Volunteering and Employment project	2014	European Commission	Development of SROI impact assessment tool (With Rose Regeneration)
Fair Shares Gloucestershire	2015-18	Fair Shares	Application of SROI to timebanking; focused around well being and resilience
Monitoring and Eval'n framework, Hulme Community Garden Centre	2015-16	Tudor Trust	Forecast SROI M&E framework and development of outcomes tool.
Validation of CCRI-Hulme Tool	2016	UoG	Statistical validation with sample from Growing Health



# Monitoring and Evaluation framework and Forecast SROI for HCGC

Prof. Paul Courtney,  
CCRI



## **Three-fold aim:**

- Help HCGC understand its impact and articulate its value through SROI evaluation
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework plus an 'outcomes tool' to track ongoing impact
- Provide both HCGC and the Growing Health network with an adaptable and replicable tool to assess the impact of similar organisations /projects



## Stages:

- Scoping and Theory of Change to explore and map outcomes (May – Aug)
- Development of tool questions and collection of pilot data to refine them and populate forecast SROI (Sept-Nov)
- Forecast SROI, finalise tool, make recommendations for HCGC and Growing Health (Dec-Feb)

# Theory of Change

Interviews,  
Storyboard  
Workshops

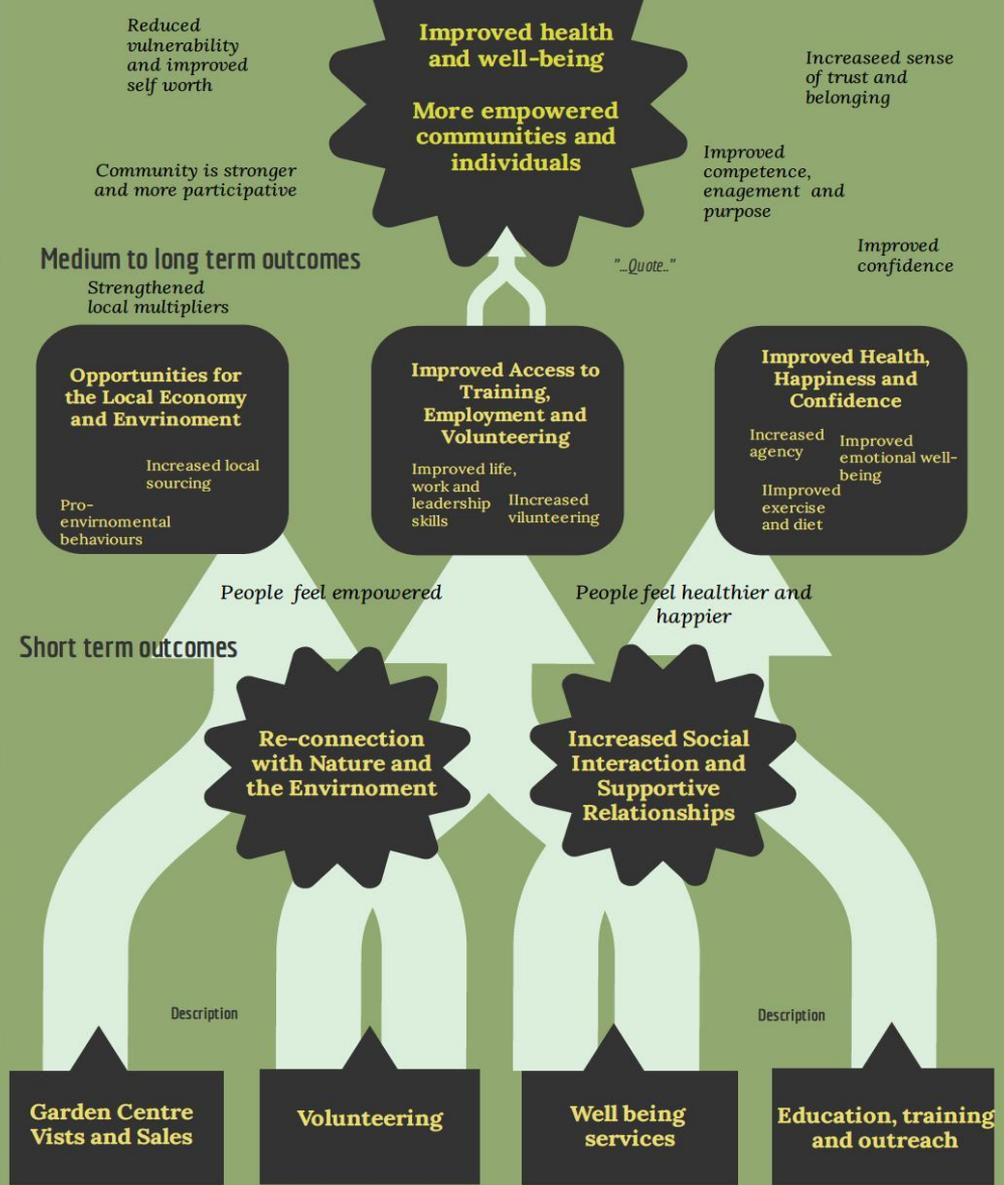
(Videoed)  
interviews with  
volunteers



# Hulme Community Garden Centre

## Theory of Change

Consequences  
Conditions  
Pathways  
Gateways



# Next steps with the method



- Papers currently in process:
  - Re-conceptualisation of social value for NGOs
  - Critique of SROI & its use alongside broader evaluations
  - Framing work in community psychology & innovation
  - Happiness theories, re-framings of social economy & community health
- Refine SROI for use in programme evaluations, wider health programmes
- Apply to private sector and large charities as part of CSR toolkit (i.e. housing, education)
- Statistical validation to standardise and enable wider uptake (potential strong outreach)

# Final thoughts

- The value of the method is its attempt to capture what matters to those who directly experience an intervention / programme (not just the pre-conceived goals of funders)
- The steps in the process are as valuable as the monetised outcomes – suggesting causality, discussing additionality, considering deadweight
- The tool can be attractive to small groups, providing a potentially respected validation of their impact using a recognised approach, so long as it is done carefully and by people who understand its implications

BUT

- If used inappropriately, it can produce completely inappropriate figures and ratios: training is important