

The Real Impact of the Social Value Act Enhancement & the Path Towards a Sustainable Future

whatimpact.com
white paper



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A whatimpact.com white paper written
by Auni Siukosaari & Tiia Sammallahti

Edited by Eugenia Grigorieva

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Foreword From our CEO: Change is Possible - but Only if all Parties Commit

When we established **whatimpact.com**, our goal was ambitious but simple: to match organisations based on shared values and goals, enable them to engage in an easy and transparent way and to understand the proven impact they have created together.

Over the past year, **whatimpact.com** has grown immensely and our platform now proudly hosts hundreds of organisations all working towards social value creation. Our mission has remained the same throughout.

We aim to create a space for meaningful, transparent and effective connections with those supporting value organisations (Supporters) and those doing the work on the ground (Recipients) in order to help our society reach our social, economic and environmental goals to create a more sustainable future for all.

Our mission remains more important than ever as it is clear that complacency is no longer an option. As a society we are facing an ever-growing list of challenges and time is of the essence in order to innovatively and collectively overcome them. Even though progress is being made, we're not there quite yet and therefore we must actively keep pushing for change.

The UK government's introduction of the The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and the subsequent Procurement Policy Note (06/20) introduced in January 2021, have laid a promising foundation for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and we believe that there is immense potential for meaningful, large-scale and collaborative social and economic impact in the UK.

Nine months down the line from the government's mandatory policy changes, we wanted to investigate how the space is evolving and how the emphasis on social value delivery on the Government's £284 billion annual tendering is impacting both Supporters and Recipients. This research makes visible the changes and developments in the work of these separate parties as well as reveals the obstacles we have yet to defeat in order to better approach and overcome global challenges.

We also wish to shed light on the proven economic benefits of social value delivery. This will transform company investments in community engagement and social value partnerships from being considered the 'fluffy stuff' into being considered an important part of business growth and strategy. As this white paper demonstrates, Social Return on Investment (SROI) delivered in an efficient manner will lead to Return on Investment (ROI).

We would like to thank the **whatimpact.com** community who have been along for this journey and for all those who shared their experiences and thoughts with us. We also invite all parties to join the conversation and get involved in impact creation, no matter how big or small, as this requires a sustained and collaborative effort from all fronts.

When we come together and support one another efficiently and systematically, real impact can be achieved, lives can be changed and impact can be felt.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to be 'Tiiia'.

Tiiia Sammallahti
CEO & Founder
*whatimpact.com - proven social impact at
the heart of your social mission and CSR*

2. Introduction: Understanding the Big Three Concepts

whatimpact.com has been working in the social impact space for years and during this time we have become aware of the interconnectedness of big concepts and the dangers of treating them in isolation from one another.

Although everyone benefits from social value delivery and everyone is keen to work towards these common goals, the effort remains segmented. Linking together complex concepts and figuring out how they influence one another, whilst difficult, is of utmost importance.

In the context of social impact, there are three big relevant concepts: the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Social Value Act and accompanying Procurement Policy Note (06/20) (SVA & PPN (06/20)) and the Social Return on Investment leading to Return on Investment cycle (SROI to ROI).

These concepts inform one another and link together to form a collective and interconnected whole.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

As a global community we have reached a crucial point of no return, and with under 10 years left of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, strategic, efficient and unified action is more important than ever.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ provide a global umbrella framework for all parties and act as a guide for us to work towards achieving large-scale impact. The drive to make the world a better place and to work towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is strong from all fronts.

Social Value Act 2012 & Procurement Policy Note (06/20)

While the Sustainable Development Goals provide an overall framework and global goals, they are implemented on a national and local level.

The UK government has truly been a frontrunner in integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into its procurement policy. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 required public authorities across the UK to consider how any given procurement could improve social, economic and environmental well-being and therefore contribute to overall social value delivery.²

This policy was enhanced in the beginning of 2021 with the Procurement Policy Note (06/20) which dictated that social value was no longer to be 'considered', but rather 'explicitly evaluated' in any and all government procurement with specific delivery targets and a rigorous Social Value Model.³

This policy development has brought social value delivery to the center of tenders and procurement projects. In this way, taxpayer money can be harnessed to benefit society beyond service and product delivery. The government will no longer choose bidders offering the cheapest bid, but rather those who deliver social value to the local communities and thus society at large. What the PPN (06/20) and its proposed Social Value Model have made clear is the UK government's stance: social value is no longer optional. We at **whatimpact.com** recognise and thank the UK government's efforts in being a leader in taking social value to the forefront of procurement.

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=33741>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts>

Social Return On Investment

When speaking about social value delivery, public and private companies play a crucial role. The sense of interdependent global responsibility is increasingly reflected in business practices as Company Social Responsibility (CSR) is becoming prevalent and fundamental to business strategy for all sizes and types of organisations.

More and more companies are looking to support social value delivery projects and to implement social value directly into their business practices. In 2019, an estimated 90% of the largest companies in the US published a CSR report which is a significant increase from the 20% in 2011 and demonstrates the growing involvement of firms in achieving social impact.⁴

Besides making positive contributions to society locally and internationally, effective CSR programmes and investment into social value delivery has been academically proven to lead to returns on investment. Effective CSR strategies can increase the market value of a company by 5-11%.⁵

Beyond the benefits for the market value of the company, CSR programmes also benefit other stakeholders such as employees and customers. 77% of consumers are more likely to be loyal to and purchase from companies that are committed to making the world a better place.⁶

This belief system is also spreading among employees as 93% of employees have reported that they believe the companies they work for should lead with purpose.⁷ Therefore

a good CSR programme truly benefits all stakeholders of a company and the business itself, making investing in social value delivery seem like an obvious and logical choice.

Due to these shifts in the business environment, a strict focus on financial performance and profit generation is no longer the only important measurement for businesses who also care about having a positive social impact. Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a method for measuring values that are not reflected in a company's regular financial records and instead highlights the social value delivered to the community or society at large.⁸ This approach became popular because it attempts to capture social value in numerical terms and in a familiar Return on Investment (ROI) framework that the business world already understands.

CSR and social value delivery can no longer be considered 'the fluffy stuff', but rather an integral part of any company's core function and values. There is nothing less 'fluffy' than pursuing responsible and sustainable business practices and building up meaningful community engagement projects. Therefore, CSR needs to be at the center of strategic business development. This is not only beneficial to all stakeholders of a business but also to the growth of the company itself as effective investment into social value delivery will lead to returns on investment for the company.

⁴ 15 Eye-opening Corporate Social Responsibility Statistics, Tim Stobierski, Harvard Business School

⁵ How Corporate Responsibility Can Deliver ROI, Maureen Kline, inc.com

⁶ 15 Eye-opening Corporate Social Responsibility Statistics, Tim Stobierski, Harvard Business School

⁷ Employee Perspectives on Responsible Leadership During Crisis, Porter Novelli

⁸ An Introduction to Social Return on Investment, Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen & David Hoyt, Stanford Business

Connecting Concepts

So how do these three seemingly disconnected and all-encompassing concepts link together and inform one another?

These three big concepts - SDG's, the Social Value Act and SROI - are all linked together in a cycle. The UN SDGs have set up a framework for government policy, which then pushes companies to deliver social value and collaborate with social impact organisations, which in turn takes us closer to achieving the UN SDGs.

The actions of the UK government demonstrate leadership in tackling global issues. However, this also presents an excellent opportunity for companies in the UK to continue to invest into social value delivery, which in the long run will lead to increased international competitiveness and therefore create a positive feedback

loop. Investing into social value delivery (encouraged and demanded by the government through policy changes) will lead to increased investment, thus allowing for more to be invested into achieving social impact. This cycle will continue to repeat and will lift companies in the UK to a higher standard compared to others globally and allow them to contribute a sizable amount towards the UN SDGs.

This loop works because the individual components link to one another effectively, resulting in a theoretical model that helps us unpack the influences they have on one another. This also begins to unravel the complex interactions between different parties (the Government, Supporters and Recipients) and how decisions made by one party will affect the others.

We wanted to see how these changes in government policy are affecting the different parties in practice and to gain a holistic understanding of the current situation. We believe the current strides by the UK government are taking us in the right direction and that they have the potential to create this loop described above to take us closer to achieving the UN SDGs.

UN Sustainable Development Goals: a framework for change

SROI > ROI
CSR is an integral part of successful business strategy

Government action through policy: Social Value Act & PPN (06/20)

Therefore, we set out to perform a multi-source analysis by surveying both companies (sample of 100 organisations) and social impact organisations (200 charities and social enterprises working with beneficiaries) about the experiences and challenges they are facing. We also conducted in-depth interviews with government officials (both local and central government) working on policy and procurement in order to understand how their work has been impacted by these developments and what their visions are.

This research, combined with the theoretical understanding from above and our experience working with organisations across the sectors for the past few years, has provided us with invaluable insights that we wish to share with you. We also aim to have all experiences heard and reflected in the discussion of how we can achieve a more sustainable future together.

3. Social Value Model & Government

The government has a key role in supporting and enabling social value delivery. Policy is one of the biggest tools at their disposal to affect the direction in which both Supporter and Recipient organisations in the UK are headed.

The Procurement Policy Note (06/20) has most definitely been a step in the right direction as it launched a new model to deliver social value through the government's commercial activities. It makes social value outcomes explicit and standardised across different local councils.

The Procurement Policy Note has impacted our work by sharpening the focus onto communities, and the people that make them up. In response to this, we have aligned priorities to focus on the environment, economic recovery following the impact of Covid, supporting local businesses, community cohesion, upskilling residents and creation of employment and skills outcomes.

Social Value Manager in London ⁹

This progress demonstrates that making social value explicit in policy has a positive impact as it allows councils to restructure the prioritisation of social value delivery and measurement.

However throughout our research it has also become apparent that although this is a great first step, challenges still remain.

Obstacle: Ambiguity for Both Procurement Officials & Companies

What became evident to us is that although social value is becoming more prominent in the public sector, it still lacks maturity as a concept. In its current form, many ambiguities in application and execution still remain.

There is still a limited understanding of how Social Value can be implemented and delivered, which can prevent the full scope of Social Value delivery being realised

Procurement Official in Wales ¹⁰

No Defined Outcome Criteria

This can be seen in the set up of the Social Value Model included in the PPN (06/20). As an example we can take one of the themes: equal opportunity. In the PPN (06/20) guidance, this theme can be satisfied through the incorporation of equal opportunities in internal training and employment within the contract, but it is unclear whether companies can satisfy the demands of this category through also working with organisations who work with issues of equal opportunity on a wider scale (through poverty reduction, for example).

⁹ Quote anonymised from whatimpact.com's Interviews 2021

¹⁰ Quote anonymised from whatimpact.com's Interviews 2021

Since guidelines remain relatively ambiguous, it is difficult for companies to evaluate where their resources are best invested and where the most impact can be created. It would be a shame if Supporters could not work with social impact organisations working towards very important causes simply because they fear they will be losing contracts. Moreover, many incredible organisations would then not receive the support they need to do invaluable social delivery work, in which they are the experts. This ambiguity leaves many companies in a difficult place as they attempt to interpret government guidelines and make decisions about where they can best help achieve impact.

Much more is needed around training public sector workers on Social Value evaluation to ensure the policy is being implemented in all required contracts and suppliers are committed to achieving their original Social Value goals.

*Social Value Manager in Manchester*¹¹

The requirements of the PPN (06/20) and related Social Value Policies presented by the central government require new skills and capacity from government officials, companies and charities. Tens of thousands of procurement officials within local and national government departments need to understand and measure what kind of social value each tender should and could deliver.

Companies are required to become experts of social value delivery and have knowledge of local and nationwide social and environmental issues which they could help solve with their resources.

Social impact organisations, many of which have no previous experience in collaboration with commercial organisations or in measuring outcomes and impact in a rigorous manner, now also face a steep learning curve.

As this policy is still in the early stages, more training is necessary so that a unified approach can be taken to evaluating and formulating tenders.

Proving Actual Impact

Another recurring problem that became apparent in the interviews was time pressure. Officials are working to integrate sustainability and social value into their procurement practices all while working on tight schedules to deliver projects, especially in the era of Covid-19 recovery.

Therefore, we see an alarming trend of estimate or proxy driven evaluation of social value delivery being favoured. This contradicts globally recognised SROI principles and gives room for companies to perform social value delivery as a box-ticking exercise with no proven or accurately measured impact. We believe this to be a dangerous path for this policy to head down because ultimately numerical evaluation can only describe estimates and often obscures the real impact achieved. This is an obstacle in differentiating high-quality bids from lower quality bids and also in achieving long-term sustainable impact.

Numerical proxy-driven ratings allow you to compare apples with pears. Qualitative reporting demonstrates the social value stories behind a number, providing context to a social value outcome whilst elaborating on the benefit created. This ensures that social value is not simply a tick-box exercise, and requires actual positive impact to be made which will leave a long-lasting impression on communities.

*Social Value Manager in London*¹²

¹¹ Quote anonymised from whatimpact.com's Interviews 2021

¹² Quote anonymised from whatimpact.com's Interviews 2021

Opportunity: Foundation for Long-term Change

It is essential for any credible impact data that the Recipient organisations, as the ones delivering the social value work on the ground, do the measuring and reporting of their outputs, outcomes and longer term impact with evidence. This cannot be done by a company funding the beneficiary organisation by using SROI related calculation methods.

There always has to be evidence of delivery and outcomes of the project, which requires qualitative data. Each social impact organisation has a different impact due to their different approaches, theories of change, demographic differences amongst their beneficiaries and other causal differences. For example, each contractor working for the government who donates a £100,000 grant for a homelessness project will have a different impact, which cannot be captured by the same monetary proxy value.

Therefore we believe numerical evaluations or proxies can be used when evaluating possible causes or projects to invest in. They can provide a useful indication for a company to help them decide where they ought to provide their support. However these numerical evaluations can not be used to evaluate the actual impact after the investment has taken place. This measurement is too complex to be captured in proxy values.

It is very important to bring to light these obstacles that have arisen from the initial implementation of the PPN (06/20) in order to make sure we collectively head down the right path from here. There still exists a large gap in understanding how to evaluate and report the work of social impact organisations, as well as the requirements necessary to satisfy these outcomes in tender applications. If ambiguities remain it is possible that the original goals of this policy enhancement remain unattained and that change remains stagnant. Therefore, investigating these problems is the first step and figuring out where to go from here is the next.

Policy developments have gone a long way to placing social value at the heart of service delivery to enable positive change to deliver smarter, more thoughtful and effective public services and to promote better collaboration across all sectors; public, private, 3rd and residents/citizens.

*Social Value Manager in London*¹³

We believe that the PPN (06/20) has been the right first step and what is required now is some finetuning. Going forward, it is crucial for ambiguities to be cleared and for the focus to be brought back to the real impact felt in the communities of social value projects.

Through a centralised plan, the Government can adopt a unified approach that is easily understood by both Supporters and Recipients. Also, it is important that the government evaluates social impact measurement and reporting tools and does not take a shortcut by supporting only proxy reporting methods which contradict global SROI principles. The government's role is key in paving the way for a cohesive and collaborative path for all parties to engage with each other in order to achieve the UN SDGs.

¹³ Quote anonymised from whatimpact.com's Interviews 2021

4. Social Value Model & Companies

Companies play a key role in the delivery of social value because they are often the ones with resources and expertise to give. Our survey revealed that **91% of companies surveyed engage with social impact organisations**¹⁴ (either charities or social enterprises) either through donations, volunteering or long-term shared value partnerships. It is promising to see that the drive to engage with Recipients is high from the private sector, but we also wanted to understand what challenges companies are facing in engaging in social value delivery.

Obstacles: Three Challenges Companies are Facing

We asked companies to rank the challenges they are facing and to share how these are apparent in their CSR or social value delivery projects. These three themes emerged as key obstacles across the field.

1. Finding Partnerships / Matches

44% of Companies Reported this as their Biggest Challenge¹⁵

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The lack of connections to potential or suitable Recipient organisations was ranked as the most recurring problem for companies engaging in social value delivery.

These were some of the things companies are struggling with:

- **“I wish it was easier to find partners with relevant goals and values and to match our volunteering programme”**
- **“I hope to identify a single long-term, strategic charity partnership with clear communicable returns”**
- **“We need to find organisations with similar values and that are making a considerable impact”**¹⁶

In our work we have seen the expertise of social impact organisations go to waste. For example, some companies wish to set up food banks as a part of their social value delivery plan which is both time consuming, requires a lot of staff to run the operation and necessitates long-term planning for sustainability. Instead, this motivation for helping the community could be put into supporting the thousands of food banks that already exist in the UK that are ready to expand in more cost effective ways with the help of Supporters in funding, volunteering and product donations.

Continuity is key for long-term change in our society and therefore supporting collaboration between companies and local and nationwide social impact organisations with expertise and missions is central in social value delivery.

Given the inherent value of implementing CSR programmes and pursuing social value, facilitating connections between companies and social impact organisations is of utmost importance to make sure the resources and expertise that companies have can be distributed to the most impactful charities and social enterprises in the most efficient manner. It is important that companies find efficient methods of finding and matching with social impact organisations so that their budgets are not spent mainly on this process, but rather on the social value delivery.

2. Budget Constraints

29% of Companies Reported this as their Biggest Challenge¹⁷

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The second most common problem was the lack of resources and time dedicated to CSR and social value delivery programmes.

Companies stated that:

- **“I need more budget allocated to our CSR programmes”**
- **“We need to get business in a good place post covid so that CSR is higher on the agenda!”**
- **“I am hoping for better business growth so in the future we can set up more rigorous CSR programmes”**¹⁸

¹⁴ Findings based on responses from whatimpact.com’s Surveys 2021

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

investment into CSR programmes is often an excellent way to win more business and leads to returns on investment for the company.

Whether that be through pleasing internal stakeholders, attracting or retaining customers or by winning government tenders, investment into CSR pays off. There needs to be large-scale mindset change at board level so that key decision-makers realise the opportunities for growth and immense benefits of investing in social value. Therefore the links between supporting rigorous CSR programmes and the benefits this will have for the company needs to be emphasised.

3. Reporting / Measuring Impact

21% of Companies Reported this as their Biggest Challenge¹⁹

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The third most important problem was the difficulty in reporting on impact after social delivery projects are completed.

Companies stated that:

- **"We need pragmatic reporting tools"**
- **"I hope to find a better way to track SROI and our CSR progression towards our goals to know where more work and effort is needed"**
- **"I want to be able to see and report on the direct impact of the company's CSR goals. E.g. knowing our donations went to x y and z and that x was the outcome"²⁰**

Difficulty with reporting is an understandable problem and without access to the right resources it is likely for companies to gravitate towards simple fixes such as calculation-driven impact reporting methods.

However all of these methods face the same shortcomings: numbers can not capture the real impact. Calculations are prone to overvaluation and subjective proxies. They also are unable to account for lagged outcomes or to capture

complex or unobservable causality. A social value project can have unsuccessful project outcomes or, on the contrary, a positive impact exceeding all expectations, but numerical proxy evaluations are unable to capture this.

In order for society to reach the UN SDGs, it is essential that companies support those social impact organisations that make the biggest impact. Investing in a cause does not automatically have a positive impact and companies need to understand who is delivering the biggest impact - these organisations are not necessarily the biggest or most established organisations. We at **whatimpact.com** believe it is the actual impact that matters and therefore an overreliance on numerical proxies should be a tool of the past. Therefore it is important companies have access to reporting tools that are easy to use and understand.

These obstacles are all important to keep in mind as they hold companies back from reaching their full potential with their CSR programmes. Mitigating the impacts of these will help us move towards sustainable solutions.

¹⁹ Findings based on responses from whatimpact.com's Surveys 2021

²⁰ Ibid



Opportunity: The Drive to do More is There

What became apparent in our surveys was the fact that there have been positive developments in companies' interest to engage with social impact organisations. Although challenges remain, there seems to be a positive trend in the drive to want to participate in societal change and achieve economic, social and environmental impact.

The top three reasons to do community work were listed as

1. part of company mission
2. employee engagement
3. to increase customer loyalty.²¹

39% of companies reported an increased interest in volunteering and 19% reported an increased interest in long-term collaboration with social impact organisations²²

What is interesting is that only **5% of companies reported an increased interest in donations**, which is a significantly lower number than the increased interest in other contributions.

This seems to indicate that there is a trend of companies wanting to engage more closely and personally with social impact organisations.

A large increased interest in volunteering is a fascinating trend. Volunteering can be incredibly impactful, but doing it right is challenging.

Community engagement is often still seen as an HR practice to motivate staff, so the budgets given to social value delivery are guided to cover the paid volunteering time. It is, however, the fact that basic, non-skilled volunteering is not the most impactful method of support. Uncoordinated, one-off and non-consistent non-skilled volunteering programs are unlikely to cause lasting impact, while strategic and sustainable skills based volunteering or service / product donations are likely to be consequential in their impact and save a significant amount of money and time for social impact organisations.

For example, employees engaging in general volunteering (for example in the form of helping at local animal shelters) can be very valuable to the community, but the real impact of their work is not comparable to the organisation of targeted and strategic skills based volunteering. This type of volunteering allows social impact organisations to gain access to skills and expertise to lift their organisations to the next level, which otherwise they could not have afforded or had access to. Therefore we at whatimpact.com endorse long-term multiresource collaboration, where companies support strategic partners with skills, expertise and product/money donations.

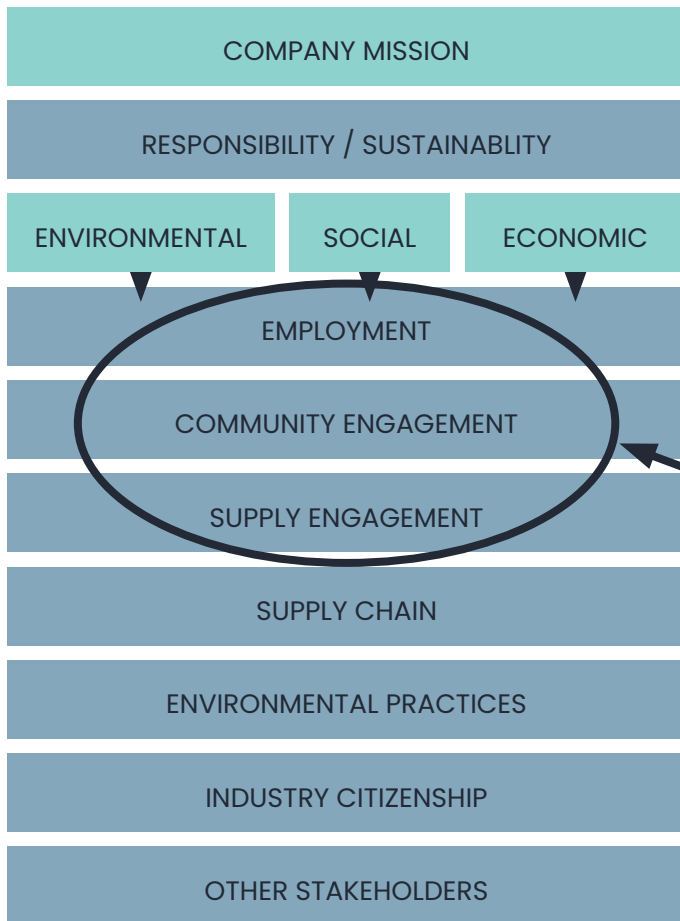
Therefore it is more important than ever that CSR programmes are set up in a strategic manner. This requires a clear company mission, understanding of the different pillars of CSR and a robust tactical plan to partner with social impact organisations supporting company goals.

²¹ Findings based on responses from whatimpact.com's Surveys 2021

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

STRATEGIC LEVEL:



TACTICAL LEVEL:

Causes and organisations to work with:

1. Industry / expertise aligned causes
2. Geographical approach to selecting causes
3. Taking ownership of a societal challenge

whatimpact.com provides resources to build a robust CSR implementation plan

whatimpact.com
focuses on these
three blocks of CSR

It is great news that the interest for social value delivery remains high as it means collaborations in the social impact space are becoming more interconnected and tight-knit than ever.

However it is also important to note that in order to harness this momentum it is crucial to facilitate strategic partnerships that make sense in the long-run and to measure real impact in order to support the organisations making the biggest difference. With these things in mind, a big and sustained impact is possible.

5. Social Impact Organisations Collaborating with Companies

Ultimately, the social impact organisations are the ones on the ground, at the grassroots in our communities fighting for and working hard to achieve meaningful social impact.

Obstacle: The Effects of the PPN (06/20) are not Being Felt Yet

When we surveyed social impact organisations about the changes in their relationships with companies over the last year **56% reported no change**.²⁴ This seems to indicate that although the drive for collaboration exists from Supporters, it is not yet felt by Recipient organisations.

We asked social impact organisations to rank the challenges they are facing:

1. **Lack of connections to potential or suitable partners (64%)**
2. **Lack of time / resources (43%)**
3. **Lack of brand recognition (42%)**
4. **Lack of interest from the private sector (40%)**²⁵

Social impact organisations are operating on limited resources and funding and they rely on making efficient choices in order to maximise impact. As one respondent explained, they often wish **“for more companies to be proactive in their support of charities”**, because currently they **“have to put in a lot of work to engage companies and don’t always receive a commensurate return.”**²⁶

Similarly to companies, in the social impact organisations’ responses there was also a focus on sustained partnership creation as many organisations wished for a **“long-term partnership with one company with relevant skills to our charity.”**²⁷ Our experience is that matching much wanted skills can be a difficult way of supporting social impact organisations, but when done right, it is incredibly powerful.

Currently long-term partnerships and collaborations are difficult to achieve and approaching companies is very time consuming for social impact organisations. Therefore, Recipient organisations will benefit immensely from the proactive approach of companies.



²⁴ Findings based on responses from whatimpact.com’s Survey 2021

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

Opportunity: Change is Possible if we Uplift the Voices of Recipients

We believe that a push towards long-term and sustainable partnerships between companies and social impact organisations is possible but it requires us to uplift the voices of those working at the grassroots. It is not only for social impact organisations to know what resources they need and what kind of partnerships they want, but also for companies to have a strategic approach to distribute their inputs and resources. If companies start adopting strategic social value approaches, we will see more niche causes and local organisations getting the support they deserve.

We at **whatimpact.com** are strongly against funder-led reporting methods that do not include reports or the voices of those actually delivering the social value. One should not be able to claim impact they can not prove and therefore the inclusion of reporting by charities and social enterprises is vital, as ultimately they are the only ones who witness the impact achieved.

The main purpose of impact reporting and social value measurement should be such that social impact organisations can improve their methods of social value delivery in order to continue to maximise the impact they are delivering. This way we can all continue to

develop our approaches in order to find the best ways of making the world a better place.

Throwing money and resources at a problem will no longer suffice and therefore we believe that facilitating sustainable and long-term connections is the only reasonable path forwards. One off donations and general volunteering are all great initiatives, and every little bit helps in taking us towards change. However long-term, multiresource and strategic partnerships are the most effective and transformative way forward. Thus, we must do all we can to facilitate their formation.

The long and arduous path towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals is still ahead for all of us and we must not lose hope when we face challenges. Together we are stronger and through collaborative and innovative solutions we can achieve real lasting impact.

Throughout this journey it is also important to celebrate our successes and that is also a reason we value qualitative reporting led by social impact organisations. We value the individual stories and the heartwarming successes that come out of the hard work we put into social value delivery.

Therefore ultimately the actual impact and the voices of those feeling the impact should be at the centre of our approach to pursue social value.

6. Moving towards the Sustainable Development Goals

It has become clear throughout our research and work that change is possible and there is great momentum from many fronts to ensure progress towards the UN SDGs. We are at a crucial point in time where the excitement and drive exist, but strategic and unified systems are still missing.

In order to have success in the long-term, a few important things need to be kept at the forefront. Therefore we believe it is more important than ever going forward to keep these key three things in mind:

1. No Cause Left Behind

We fear that the current direction of the social value space, with a focus on indicative numerical proxies, will lead to a dangerous shift in which only those organisations working on easily measurable causes will be able to receive support. Social value demonstrates itself in multiple direct and indirect outcomes which should be recognised.

If the trend continues, only the organisations that are able to claim the highest proxy-values for their cause will be the ones to receive support from companies.

This leaves many incredibly important organisations working on a variety of causes without support. This does not allow companies to achieve holistic impact. Therefore the actual impact needs to be known, which most crucially has to include and give priority to the evaluation of the social impact organisations themselves.

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We recognise that reporting can be overwhelming, time-consuming and all in all a taxing process and therefore our platform, **whatimpact.com** has a built-in social impact reporting tool that is easy to understand and use which facilitates the reporting for both sides.

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2. Social Value can not be a Box-ticking Exercise

Social value can not be treated as the 'fluffy stuff' or as an add-on. If social value delivery falls outside of a company's strategy, companies risk losing the opportunity to benefit from SROI and end up forming unproductive partnerships with organisations.

It is important that the approach adopted reflects the company's values and strategy so that meaningful social impact can be achieved.

It is no secret that companies invest in social value in order to gain more goodwill and economic value for their investments/inputs. The SVA and recent government efforts help UK companies to be more competitive in international markets and to be leaders in driving forward the UN SDGs. This in turn creates a positive feedback loop where investment into social value delivery leads to further investment and growth, allowing for more social value to be delivered.

This impact cycle can only be fulfilled as long as shared values and impact goals sit at the heart of organic and genuine connections between companies and social impact organisations.

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We know it is hard to find the right strategic partners to work and connect with that share your vision. That is why **whatimpact.com** was launched in the first place: to help companies and charities match and make an impact together!

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3. No Resource Should be Wasted

Based on our research, finding the best place for Supporters' available resources is difficult. Whether it be money or product donations, general volunteering time and especially skills-based volunteering, making sure the resources reach the best possible social impact organisations can be both time-consuming and tricky.

At the same time, a single grant or company donation may feel small, but in the correct place it has the potential for large-scale impact. Therefore it is important to make sure resources make their way to where they can be utilised to their fullest extent.

All resources are valuable and play a part in impact creation. Therefore, a focus on multiresource donations and combining different resources in a democratic and transparent way is crucial.

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We know it is hard to find partners who share your goals and visions for a better future and where the offered resources go to the best use. **whatimpact.com** focuses on all resources needed to make an impact - money, skills, products and services to make sure none are wasted!

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whatimpact.com: what we do

whatimpact.com is a matchmaking marketplace, connecting companies and grant-makers with charities and social enterprises efficiently and transparently. We use machine learning to connect organisations who have

resources to give with those delivering the social value on the ground based on shared values and impact goals. Our world class social impact reporting helps prove and communicate the impact to stakeholders.

whatimpact Service flow

SUPPORTERS

Companies and grant-makers

OPEN PLATFORM

Public profiles for transparency

RECIPIENTS

England, Wales, Scotland charities all UK Social enterprises

Resource offers

Social value activities



MATCH AI

Due diligence tool • Match videos • Social impact reporting • Volunteering HUB

Testimonials

EY has set an ambitious global target to positively impact one billion lives by 2030 through our Global Corporate Responsibility Programme, EY Ripples. By working with whatimpact, we hope our people across the UK will be able to use their professional skills to help more charities and social enterprises overcome some of the business challenges they face, enabling them to have an even greater impact on the people and communities they work with.

Gavin Jordan, EY

Member profiles created on whatimpact act as a hub of activity where users can highlight their aims, previous work and list co-funding opportunities to resource social value requests and offers. The application makes connecting with charitable partners easy and gives us handy reports to help standardise the process of evidencing our social value work. As we approach the launch of our third Build Back Better campaign, we have been trialling whatimpact as a way of gathering causes in need of our help. 90% of our application shortlist – 24 individual causes - for Q3 were via applicants applying directly through the platform.

Kevin Rhone, Novus