

# Lawnmowers Independent Theatre Company Theatre for Change

## A Social Return on Investment (SROI) Report Karl Leathem (Lodestar)

Jan 2006



**This is an SROI report which sets out some of the social impacts of the work of Lawnmowers. It demonstrates that not only is the work of Lawnmowers making a very real positive difference to the lives of Learning Disabled people, it is actually doing so in a way that benefits the economy.**

**Far from representing a net cost to public finance and other funders, Lawnmowers is making a positive financial contribution to the public purse.**

**This report demonstrates that for the period under review, for every £1 invested in the work, an amount of £4.25 will be returned to the economy over the next five years. Not only is the Lawnmowers approach innovative with highly successful outcomes for people with Learning Disability, it is also very cost effective.**

Introduction.....Page 3

Lawnmowers Activity.....Page 4

Strategic Positioning.....Page 7

Context of SROI.....Page 7

Lawnmowers Stakeholders.....Page 9

Lawnmowers key objectives.....Page 12

Scope of SROI analysis.....Page 12

Outcomes.....Page 13

Case studies.....Page 15

Placing a value on outcomes.....Page 18

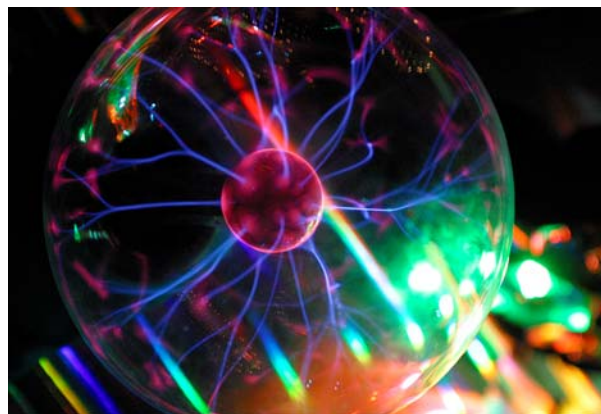
Deadweight, Additionality & values not sustained.....Page 22

The results.....Page 24

Summary result.....Page 27

Sensitivity.....Page 27

Conclusions.....Page 30



## Introduction

Lawnmowers (LM) is an exciting and innovative theatre project with a strong regional & national reputation. In the last few years the company has acquired a growing international reputation. Its innovation and uniqueness stems from the fact that it is a theatre company whose performers are largely people who are coping with a Learning Disability. Lawnmowers is about theatre for change and the goal of the company is to make life much better for people with Learning Disability. It styles itself as a movement for change, a company run by people with Learning Disability **for** people with Learning Disability (LD).

*“Lawnmowers aims to lay solid foundations for people with learning disabilities to participate fully in their own society, shaping their own environment and controlling their own futures”*

This report is a Social Return on Investment analysis (SROI). It is a study of the impact of the work of Lawnmowers with a very strong emphasis on the social benefits of the work. Often in the past it has been difficult for the organisation to prove the value of its work in monetary terms. This is common in an evaluative culture that tends to emphasise the impact of achievement in the voluntary sector in terms of a contribution to the Labour Market.

Lawnmowers is a community based project with a social mission. It is using SROI methodology in this case to demonstrate that the real value of its work is best characterised in terms of social outcomes. The end product is still largely an economic analysis; the difference in the SROI approach is that the methodology creates a process that monetises the social impact of the work of an organisation as far as possible. We will describe the process of SROI more fully in the body of the report.

This report is produced by Lodestar and is based on research undertaken with a range of stakeholders of the Lawnmowers project. It has been produced through close co-operation of the staff and members of the company. The report is the culmination of work that has also involved work with the staff team; developing a capacity internally to progress the application of SROI analysis in the future.

Now, for the first time, Lawnmowers is in the position to test a methodology that will show whether or not value, which would not have been accounted for before, is created through its work. We will describe a story of social relationships in its work for people with LD that is productive for the lives of those involved. The report will then show the process that has been used to place a monetary value on the change that is taking place as a result of the work. **In short, this report will set out to demonstrate a valuation of social impact that is directly attributable to the work of Lawnmowers and will test whether or not this value creation is cost effective compared to the status quo model of support that would be available to people with LD if Lawnmowers did not exist.**

## Lawnmowers Activity

The company is based in Gateshead, Tyne & Wear and originally grew out of a Community Arts initiative. The project was founded in 1986 & in 2001 became an independent Charitable Company. For many years now the project has devised and led hundreds of workshops and has toured the country staging performances that have raised issues relating to the learning disabled community and very specifically aimed at learning disabled audiences. The aim of this activity has been to support people with LD and empower participants to effect social change.

In its lifetime the project has produced a series of media that tell its story and push forward the debate on government & community policy in regard to people with disability. This has included managing residencies, providing summer schools and a range of social activities for the target group including nightclubs for people with LD. In the year under study for this SROI analysis the project provided services to 153 different organisations.

The current work of the organisation is arranged in three separate sections:

### **The Lawnmowers Actors**

**They offer theatre and drama for social change, create issue based performances and workshops, and develop their expertise in legislative theatre. The actors have toured their work both regionally and nationally and enjoy international recognition.**

*The LM theatre collective were the original learning members responsible for the creation of the company. Their work & methods have been used to identify needs and create new projects under the Lawnmowers umbrella. The experienced members many of whom are founder members undertake roles as peer educators & mentors for new people coming to the project.*

*The work of the actors grew out of a process of self help; they were a group of people who were aware of their exclusion both as people with a disability and also coming from households with very few resources. The group's motivation was strong because they understood better than anyone that they needed to make changes for themselves and for the immediate learning disabled community caught in the same traps. Consequently they developed the brand of a self advocacy group of learning disabled adults from Gateshead who offer theatre and drama for social change, create issue based performances and workshops, and also develop expertise in legislative theatre.*

*Over the past 18 years, the actors have led hundreds of workshops and have researched, devised and toured work reflecting concerns within the learning disabled community and particularly aimed at learning disabled audiences; produced videos, run residencies, summer schools and made several TV programmes. The group have developed their own style, which combines comedy and information and supports the rights of learning disabled people*

*through theatre and drama workshops. The actors have toured their work extensively throughout the region and sometimes nationally and even internationally. The actors tour day centres, community bases, theatres and attend many significant national conferences and policy making events. The company, as a result of the original actors work, has now developed and expanded to offer drama clubs, summer and winter training schools, night clubs and social events, a learning disabled apprenticeship scheme and a newsletter.*

### **The Lawnmowers Liberdade Apprenticeship Scheme**

**This is a project offering eight young adults with learning disabilities the opportunity to train on an apprenticeship, the main objective of which is to set up and run their own physical theatre company. The apprentices develop the skills they need to run their own company and use their facilitation skills to share with other like minded groups the positive aspects of the long term empowered employment provision that they are working towards.**



*The Liberdade Project (the Freedom Project) is innovative because it is designed to develop skills to enable young people with learning disabilities to create, shape and develop their own enterprise. The Project will also make all information relating to the scheme accessible and available to other groups wishing to follow the model.*

*The project addresses employment for people with learning disabilities and incorporates support, peer guidance and group autonomy to empower trainees. Apprentices are given the opportunity to manage skills training and develop their own style of working, thus to participate fully in the running of their scheme. As well as this, apprentices are trained to deliver physical theatre performances and community based workshops to schools, community centres, community bases, advocacy groups, statutory and voluntary organisations and act as peer educators for other learning disabled people, groups and organisations.*

*Primarily using physical theatre as a tool, the apprentices have received training in four key areas which are:*

- ◆ *exercise, diet and fitness;*
- ◆ *improvisation and devising;*
- ◆ *business skills;*
- ◆ *rehearsal, performance and physical theatre skills.*

*During this time they have performed and held workshops and training schools in the region and have produced training resources for other groups. They are also starting to deliver training to other groups in relation to employment issues and the necessary skills required to start up enterprises.*

### **The Lawnmowers Krocodile Krew**

**This is a specialist aspect of the work for six learning disabled adults who receive training to host nightclubs and social events in the learning disabled community. Our Krocodile Klubs and Big Snapper celebrations provide a much needed arena in which to celebrate learning disabled culture. Training and support includes DJ and performance skills, technical skills and administration and event organising skills.**

*The cabaret-style Klubs are well established and provide a platform for learning disabled people to honour their culture and showcase their talent. The nightclubs have proved to be extremely popular and attendance figures have consistently grown. The Krocodile Klubs are the only regular evening entertainment provision run by and for people with learning disabilities in Gateshead and give learning disabled people the chance to participate in a truly enjoyable night out! Before the Klubs were considered, learning disabled people took part in workshops asking What is a good night out? Other workshops focussed on personal safety and transportation problems and links with carers, day centres, colleges and advocacy groups were established.*

*The Krew have gained experience not only in organising the ever popular Klubs, but in the formalities and technical requirements of general event organising. To do this professionally, the Krew decided they must be trained in all aspects of the service they wished to provide. This included DJ work, technical equipment training, marketing, front of house training, administrative work, sound and lighting training and sensory room training. The Krocodile Klubs have become an important part of the Krew's training programme and provide "hands on" work experience. They are now passing their skills on to others, giving fresh input, energy and sustainability to the project.*

## Strategic Positioning

Like any other Voluntary Sector organisation, Lawnmowers is looking to its future and apart from anticipating the challenges that will need to be met to continue the work there will also be choices to be made about the most appropriate way forward. Lawnmowers is currently meeting this challenge by reviewing the work and by the development of a project that will test the potential of models for future sustainability. These will all involve the prioritisation of the work, ensuring resourcing for the development of the work and above all else managing a process of expansion and change which is appropriate to the aims of the organisation.

**Part of any strategic positioning exercise is the review of mission and the setting of operational priorities to achieve it in future. The development of a process to judge “value” created by the work of Lawnmowers has an important internal relevance to informing mission & aims as well as an external message to stakeholders, funders and the local community.**

## Context of SROI

Social Return on Investment was developed in the US around ten years ago as a tool for monetising the social benefit of a given activity. Developed initially for the wider business world, the main thrust of the work in SROI was taken forward through application to the social enterprise world in the US. Today it is applied equally in the Private, Public and Third sectors in cases where organisations wish to demonstrate the actual value of the fulfilment of their social aims. SROI does not invent new terms for the measurement of value. In fact considerable advantage has been gained from adopting accounting language and standards in the determination of “worth”.

Therefore SROI stays with the traditional accounting methods of measuring the value of an activity – in Return on Investment terms but in a much wider context which encompasses the measurement of social benefits.

Such a method is very appropriate to the measurement of the benefit of community development which is designed to lead to local economic development. Not only this; such a method would also resonate very closely with the growing requirement and tendency for funders to move from a position in which society grants funds on a “trust” only basis. We “know” a given organisation carries out good works and as a result of this knowledge relationships have been developed through networking with a good service provider. In the Social Economy, as funders move towards viewing their grants as investment – then the concept of the evaluation of the levels of return on that investment follows naturally.

Demonstration of value is key to SROI. It aims to quantify, in real monetary terms, the contributions of the project under study back to the local, regional or national economies – expressed as a ratio of the original investment. Thus an expression can be made of the ratio of return – for every **£1** invested in this project, it returned **£x** back to the economy in terms of social value.

The measurements determined by each project for arriving at social impact value will be different depending on the nature of activity and the type of the organisation to name just two. In any SROI analysis the measurement used to determine value creation is set out in the body of the report before financial analysis is shown. The method of SROI analysis follows a distinct pathway.

Currently, the European model of design and delivery of SROI analysis involves the following stages:

- ◆ **Boundaries** (defining the scope of the work)
- ◆ **Stakeholders** (identifying stakeholder objectives)
- ◆ **Impact mapping** (analysis of stakeholder inputs, outputs & outcomes)
- ◆ **Indicators** (deciding the evidence base for chosen impacts)
- ◆ **Data** (deciding on method & collecting required data)
- ◆ **Model & calculate** (the financial modelling of Social Return)
- ◆ **Present** (Consider, analyse and present results – narrative & financial tables)

This has translated into the following process with Lawnmowers:

1. Visiting the Project for initial introductions & discussions
2. Setting out the aims and goals of SROI approach
3. Discussing the boundaries of this particular analysis
4. Determining Stakeholder Objectives
5. Distilling the Core objectives of the organisation from Stakeholder Objectives
6. Determining Stakeholder Outputs and potential Outcomes
7. Impact Map to identify Indicators to test for actual Outcomes
8. Gathering Data
9. Developing Analysis system
10. Writing up Report



## Lawnmower's Stakeholders

After the scope of the social return study has been set, SROI analysis looks carefully at stakeholder analysis to determine the core objectives of the organisation from the point of view of the range of stakeholders. The LM stakeholders are as follows:

- ◆ The participant members of Lawnmowers
- ◆ The learning disabled community of Gateshead
- ◆ The staff & volunteers
- ◆ Parents, carers & family of participants
- ◆ Customers
- ◆ Trustees of Lawnmowers (governance)
- ◆ Statutory sector partners
- ◆ Voluntary sector partners
- ◆ Private sector partners
- ◆ Funders
- ◆ Regional government agencies (policy)

A considerable amount of time has gone into talking to stakeholders. This has been for the purpose of establishing the core activity of LM as understood by those who have a close interest in the development of the project. The following stakeholders have been interviewed:

1. Participant Lawnmowers actors
2. Lawnmowers Arts Director
3. Other staff members
4. A parent
5. Funder & voluntary sector partner (Community Foundation)
6. Funder & statutory sector partner (Gateshead Borough Council)
7. Chair of the Board of Trustees

The following is a snapshot of the objectives of stakeholders:

### Lawnmowers Stakeholder Objectives

Stakeholder	Description	Objectives
<b>Members</b>	Participants involved as members in the LM programme, either as actors, apprentices or part of the Krocodile Krew night club team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in a team</li> <li>• Getting out of Day Centre</li> <li>• Keeping me sane</li> <li>• Getting paid work for LM</li> <li>• Getting drama skills</li> <li>• Doing plays</li> <li>• Contact with audiences</li> <li>• Getting others with LD to help themselves</li> <li>• Getting enterprise skills</li> <li>• Providing entertainment</li> </ul>
<b>Staff</b>	The director and other staff who have roles in development & support. Two members of staff who were people with Learning Disability were employed at the time of the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobbying and campaigning for equality for people with learning disability</li> <li>• Creating theatre for change</li> <li>• Supporting people with LD to improve their own position</li> <li>• Providing an alternative to day centre provision</li> <li>• Providing training &amp; employment skills to people with LD</li> <li>• Influencing policy</li> <li>• Employment in a job with the purpose of supporting people in need</li> <li>• Making an impact in the field of disability</li> <li>• Contributing to the growth &amp; development of the project</li> <li>• Employment in a job that I could never have managed without LM</li> </ul>
<b>Parents &amp; Carers</b>	Families who have a member active in the Lawnmowers programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing progress for family member</li> <li>• Providing opportunities for activity that never thought possible</li> <li>• Skills for living, for managing better</li> <li>• Opportunities for travelling abroad for family member</li> <li>• Provision for peace of mind for myself – family member independent</li> <li>• Training skills for family member</li> <li>• Opportunity for paid work for family member</li> </ul>
<b>Funders</b>	Private, Statutory & Voluntary sector funders & partners in the progress of Lawnmowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing examples of good practise in work with people with Learning Disability</li> <li>• Influencing policy regionally through innovative work</li> <li>• Creating empowerment &amp; increased independence for people with LD</li> <li>• Benefiting an increasingly wider group of people with LD</li> <li>• Lawnmowers providing models for others to replicate</li> <li>• Demonstrating the difference that can be made in disadvantaged people's lives</li> <li>• Working with people with LD on social enterprise outcomes</li> <li>• Developing longer term economic benefits for disabled people</li> </ul>

<b>Trustees</b>	The Board of Directors responsible for overseeing the work of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing &amp; increasing innovation for people with Learning Disability</li> <li>• Building on the historical strength &amp; reputation of the work to date</li> <li>• Replicating models of good practise</li> <li>• Provision of skills training</li> <li>• Developing opportunities for artistic expression for personal development of people with LD</li> <li>• Influencing government policy with a local impact for people in Gateshead</li> </ul>
<b>Customers</b>	Did not interview	
<b>Volunteers</b>	Did not interview	
<b>Regional Govt. Body</b>	Did not interview	

The above table captures the objectives of the project from different perspectives. Some of this is sourced from interviews with individuals who had further comments to make:

*“Our theatre work is a toolbox for people to think about their own future – it leads to people thinking about their independence” – Lawnmowers Director.*

*“Tony Blair couldn’t do what we do....singing songs.....we couldn’t do his job....Wayne Rooney couldn’t do what we do....we are all good at something” – Member.*

*“Lawnmowers has taught us drama....the contact with the audience is really important” – Member.*

*“We have a show for 6 year olds....its education about people with learning disability” - Member*

*“They told me he would never be able to do anything” – Parent of member*

*“He’s got his keys for the building [work].....never thought he would work....he’s travelled to Canada, Poland, Spain, all over England...I’m very proud of him” – Parent of member.*

*“If it [Lawnmowers] has worked with nine people with Learning Disability for 15 years....then its an expensive service.....if members are progressing and new ones are coming through....and Lawnmowers has influence on policy over a wide range of people....then it’s a great service and very good value” - Funder*

## Lawnmowers Key Objectives

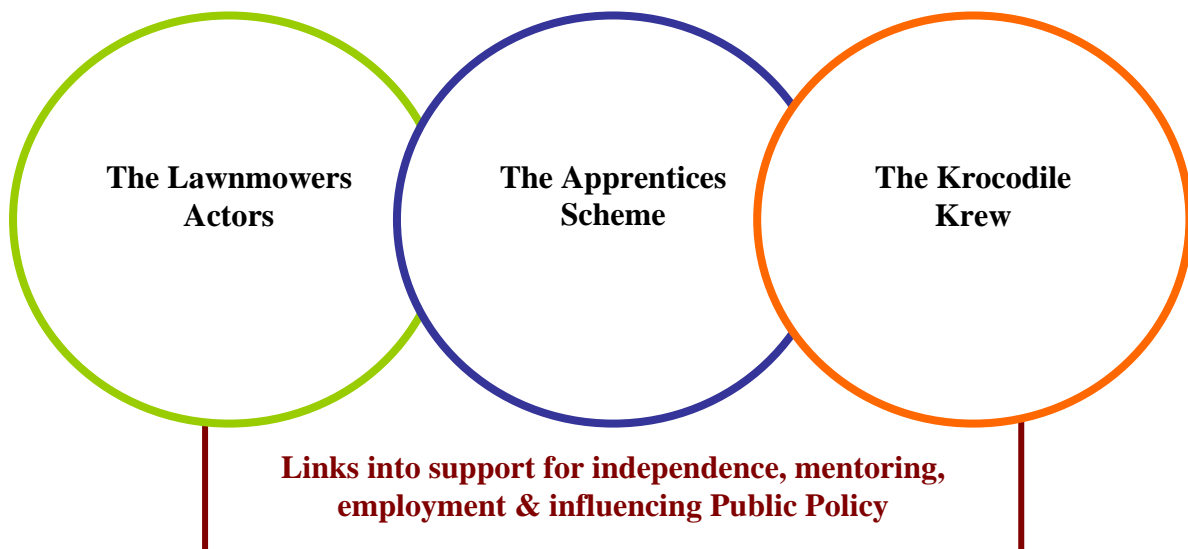
These have been distilled from our contact with stakeholders:

- ◆ Working with and for people with Learning Disability
- ◆ Development of Enterprise models and increasing Income from the performances, workshops & events of the various sections of Lawnmowers
- ◆ Provision of mentoring & advice to people with Learning Disability
- ◆ Support to Carers & Family
- ◆ Provision of skills training to people with Learning Disability
- ◆ Mentoring & support towards independent living for people with learning Disability
- ◆ Influencing public policy on disability
- ◆ Provision of employment within Lawnmowers to people with Learning Disability

## The scope of this SROI analysis

Lawnmowers is an independent theatre company specialising in theatre for change and working for people with Learning Disability. It has expansion plans for the future. These include the development of a music group, legal services for people with LD and the development of enterprises and business advice for people with LD.

For the purpose of this study we have focussed on the main elements of the Lawnmowers existing programme. The measurement of social impact will be based on the following:



## Outcomes

In the following pages we will set out the main outputs of the work of Lawnmowers from those sections under study and expand these to identify outcomes of the work. In SROI the **Outputs** of a project are the activities that form part of its mission & aims. **Outcomes** are the things that follow on from the **Outputs**. An **Outcome** is a change for the Stakeholder resulting to some extent from the activity but not necessarily under the control of the organisation or part of the core aims of the organisation's programme. SROI assigns a value where the **Outcome** is attributable to the activity of the project and determines what proportion of the value that can be properly attributed.

Stakeholder	Outputs	Outcomes
<p><b>Members</b></p> <p>People with a learning disability who are running the LM project. Outreach workers in Night Clubs, people involved in acting and music &amp; technical support as well as people undertaking the apprenticeship programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement in programme</li> <li>• Undertaking training</li> <li>• Developing skills</li> <li>• Creating performances</li> <li>• Involved in running organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained people</li> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• People ,more able to work</li> <li>• People more able to live independently</li> <li>• Income generation for project</li> <li>• People with capacity to support &amp; advise others with Learning Disability</li> <li>• People in a position to influence public policy</li> <li>• People able to develop new ways of communicating with others with LD</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff</b></p> <p>Team involved in the facilitation of the work of the project</p> <p><b>Trustees</b></p> <p>People involved in the governance of the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing the work</li> <li>• Facilitating input from members</li> <li>• Supporting members</li> <li>• Managing the project</li> <li>• Project development</li> <li>• Creative development</li> <li>• Defining LM Policy</li> <li>• Networking with people who can support LM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained people</li> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• Income for LM</li> <li>• Sustaining the project</li> <li>• Career progression</li> <li>• Contributing to public policy</li> <li>• People ,more able to work</li> <li>• People more able to live independently</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Purse</b></p> <p>This could relate to public finance &amp; ultimately to the community in general – stakeholders in Lawnmowers operating efficiently and in a way that creates value back to the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting provision of appropriate service to people with LD to promote independence</li> <li>• Supporting mentoring &amp; advice services</li> <li>• Supporting skills training for excluded people</li> <li>• Supporting the development of innovative models in the running of LM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People gaining qualifications</li> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• Income for LM</li> <li>• More people with LD living independently</li> <li>• Provision of employment</li> <li>• Provision of high quality service to people with LD at lower cost than if service was not provided by Lawnmowers</li> <li>• Supporting evening social provision for people with LD</li> <li>• Reduction in day-care support services</li> <li>• Reduction in supported living accommodation services</li> </ul>

<p><b>Parents &amp; Carers</b></p> <p>Family members directly &amp; indirectly supported by LM services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting family member to attend LM</li> <li>• Volunteering on the project</li> <li>• Communicating with the staff &amp; members of LM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress for family member</li> <li>• Family member gaining skills</li> <li>• People with LD more stable &amp; motivated in their day to day living</li> <li>• People with LD more integrated in the home &amp; local community</li> <li>• People with LD having increased self management &amp; living more independently</li> <li>• Increased peace of mind on future of family member with LD</li> </ul>
<p><b>Funders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inputting financial support</li> <li>• Inputting advice</li> <li>• Monitoring progress</li> <li>• Developing partnership with LM on policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replication elsewhere of high quality support model</li> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• Employed people</li> <li>• People with LD engaging in advising &amp; supporting others with LD</li> <li>• Productive changes in government policy on disability</li> <li>• Testing new methods of work with people with LD with view to increasing sustainability</li> </ul>



## Case studies

### Case study A

June is a founder member of Lawnmowers. Previously she had attended an adult training centre 5 days a week and undertook contract work counting out plastic bin liners or stamping prescription pads. She had left school with no qualifications and was not linked in to any further education. She travelled very little and lived at home where there were few opportunities to socialise. She had very few friends.

When Lawnmowers was established time was spent on devising the touring work and undertaking all the training that was required to produce and tour. Jane has devised and toured over a dozen national shows and is particularly known for her work in *The Big Sex Show*, *The Lawnmowers Strike Back* and *Walk the Walk*. Following this her training with Lawnmowers led to qualifications accredited by Tyneside open college and recognised by the Arts Council and the National Disability Arts Forum. The training included basic computing, financial management, office administration and fundraising, creative arts skills at an intermediate level in performance techniques, devising a show, technical aspects of theatre, planning and organizing and video. Now June is part of a vibrant team and she is now much more socially active; she has a range of friends through her contacts with Lawnmowers.

Since being a Lawnmower June has been the co-presenter for the BBC "Go For It" programme. She has completed training in basic office skills and has developed good telephone skills. Her work experience includes the following theatre residencies, North West Disability Arts, Prism/Cumbria, Carousel/Brighton, Wales, Fraserborough, and Galway. She has worked nationally including Ireland, Scotland, and internationally in Poland, Canada and Spain. June has appeared in the following TV and film work:

Link Programme (1990), Complaints Procedure Video (1993), Colour Me Loud [Ch. 4] (1994), Big Sex Show (1994), Polish TV (1995), Civil Rights Bill, Sian Vasey [Ch 4], The Right Wrong, In a City Arts (1993), Go for it - Life Skills, Look North (1999), Recipes for Success, Liverpool (2000), Finger on the Pulse (2000), Hancock Museum - Story Telling (2000), Walk the Walk (2004)

## Case Study B

Since joining the company some years ago now, George is much more confident and happily performs as a DJ at the Klubs. He says he feels supported and trusts his team members. George has gained qualifications NEOCN level 1 2 & 3 in music technology and DJing (course co-written by the Krew & Gateshead College designed specifically for people with learning difficulties). George now has a lot of experience visiting external groups and he gets totally involved in the publicity, marketing and financial planning for the Big Snapper events. George is a proficient fund raiser and organiser; he has been involved in organising over 80 events including club performances.

His training has included stage lighting and he has provided technical support for the Elvis show at the Sage Gateshead as well as front of house and stage management in other shows.



George also volunteers with the wild group supporting younger people with learning difficulties

"I've learnt all sorts being a member of the Krocodile Krew, been to college learning DJ work and scratching & mixing"

"It's a great team..... we all chip in doing stuff..... I do lighting sometimes for the shows and I've been in the Elvis show".

Currently George is actively planning the new programme in which he will take part; Klubs at the Library, four Klubs at the Sage and another Big Snapper.

He will commence a computing course early in the New Year.



### Case study C

Lee comes from a low income one parent family. His normal day revolved around watching television. He was very bored and had no regular interaction with anyone outside of the direct family. He attended the Krocodile Klubs and was known to the Company, he was then invited to join the Liberdade Apprentices. Since joining the apprentices he has been involved in devising and extensively touring two successful pieces of physical theatre focused around giving advice and inspiration to other groups of people with learning disabilities.

These shows looked at the world of work. Lee has also co-led hundreds of workshops in the region to a broad cross section of people including students of Northumbria University, business professionals and organisational staff, as well as many groups of people with learning difficulties. He has also completed an educational DVD around enterprise for people with learning disabilities and this has been widely disseminated.

Lee has recently been awarded the opportunity, from a high profile funder, to run his own Cabaret evening, this award has been given because of his ongoing voluntary work and the positive image that he provides to others in his community.

*“Being a part of the Liberdade apprenticeship scheme is a great opportunity for me because I am making lots of new friends, it gives me a sense of achievement. People we deliver work to are inspired to set up groups like ours. It has given me lots of confidence”.*



## Placing a value on Outcomes

### Indicators

SROI places a value on achieved outcomes through testing the indicators that have been set for those outcomes. Below is the table which sets out the indicators that at this time were used as the test for whether or not an outcome was achieved. There will be outcomes that have not been tested for at this time; this will be due to unavailable data requiring further research. There could also be objectives and outcomes for stakeholders that were not considered to be within the boundary set for this SROI analysis. There will also be indicators that are common to the outcomes for different stakeholders.

### The Impact table

Stakeholder	Outcomes	Indicators
<p><b>Members</b> People with a learning disability who are running the LM project. Outreach workers in Night Clubs, people involved in acting and music &amp; technical support as well as people undertaking the apprenticeship programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained people</li> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• People ,more able to work</li> <li>• People more able to live independently</li> <li>• Income generation for project</li> <li>• People with capacity to support &amp; advise others with Learning Disability</li> <li>• People in a position to influence public policy</li> <li>• People able to develop new ways of communicating with others with LD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of members developing new skills</li> <li>• No of members delivering LM programmes</li> <li>• Members creating earned income for LM</li> <li>• No of sessions in which advice &amp; support is offered</li> <li>• Evidence of LM influencing changes in public policy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff</b> Team involved in the facilitation of the work of the project</p> <p><b>Trustees</b> People involved in the governance of the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained people</li> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• Income for LM</li> <li>• Sustaining the project</li> <li>• Career progression</li> <li>• Contributing to public policy on disability</li> <li>• People ,more able to work</li> <li>• People more able to live independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of members developing new skills</li> <li>• No of members delivering LM programmes</li> <li>• Members creating earned income for LM</li> <li>• People with learning disability employed</li> </ul>

<p><b>Public Purse</b></p> <p>This could relate to public finance &amp; ultimately to the community in general – stakeholders in Lawnmowers operating efficiently and in a way that creates value back to the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People gaining qualifications</li> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• Income for LM</li> <li>• More people with LD living independently</li> <li>• Provision of employment</li> <li>• Provision of high quality service to people with LD at lower cost than if service was not provided by Lawnmowers</li> <li>• Supporting evening social provision for people with LD</li> <li>• Reduction in day-care support services</li> <li>• Reduction in supported living accommodation services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of members demonstrating the application of new skills</li> <li>• People with LD earning income for LM through paid work</li> <li>• No of people achieving or maintaining independent living</li> <li>• No of people with LD accessing night time social activities not available before</li> <li>• Any resulting cost reduction in public provision of day-care services</li> <li>• Any resulting cost reduction in public provision of supported accommodation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parents &amp; Carers</b></p> <p>Family members directly &amp; indirectly supported by LM services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress for family member</li> <li>• Family member gaining skills</li> <li>• People with LD more stable &amp; motivated in their day to day living</li> <li>• People with LD more integrated in the home &amp; local community</li> <li>• People with LD having increased self management &amp; living more independently</li> <li>• Increased peace of mind on future of family member with LD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of members exercising control over their lives and living with family or independently</li> <li>• No of family members expressing something better than “satisfaction” with the services of LM</li> </ul>
<p><b>Funders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled people</li> <li>• Employed people</li> <li>• People with LD engaging in advising &amp; supporting others with LD</li> <li>• Replication elsewhere of high quality support model</li> <li>• Productive changes in government policy on disability</li> <li>• Testing new methods of work with people with LD with view to increasing sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of members developing new skills</li> <li>• Employment as direct result of LM support</li> <li>• No of members delivering LM programmes</li> <li>• Members creating earned income for LM</li> <li>• No of sessions in which advice &amp; support is offered</li> <li>• Evidence of LM influencing changes in public policy</li> <li>• Evidence of the replication of the LM model of service delivery</li> </ul>



The indicators upon which we have placed a monetary value are as follows:

	<b>LAWNMOWERS</b>	<b>SROI monetised indicators Nov. 2005</b>
	<b>Members</b>	
	<b>Apprentices</b>	
1	Income from mentoring & training	
	<b>Krocodile Krew</b>	
2	Income from workshops	
	<b>Krocodile Krew</b>	
3	Income from Night Clubs	
	<b>State Funds</b>	
	<b>Apprentices</b>	
4	Value created in provision of specialist advice to people with LD and Carers	
	<b>Krocodile Krew</b>	
5	Value created in provision of specialist advice & skills training to people with a Learning Disability and their carers	
	<b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	
6	Income from shows	
	<b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	
7	Income from workshops	
	<b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	
8	Value created in provision of specialist advice to people with LD and Carers	
	<b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	
9	Value created through percentage of people reached & influenced to seek increased independent living	
	<b>Actors Apprentices &amp; Krocodile Krew</b>	
10	Value created through participants maintaining independent living as result of programme with LM	
	<b>Funders</b>	
	<b>Actors Apprentices &amp; Krocodile Krew</b>	
11	Participants training programme cheaper with LM than if provided by external provider	
	<b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	
12	Value created through influence on policy direct result of LM work - saved cost of consultants expert in LD field	
	<b>Participant employee</b>	
13	Development Worker Earnings	
	<b>Public purse value of employee with Learning Disability</b>	
14	Development Worker - Contributions back to state	

These are the areas included in the study in which it has been possible to calculate the social impact in economic terms of the work of Lawnmowers.

The following tables outline the sources of data that have been used in monetising the indicators:

No.	Indicator	Value	Data Source
1	Apprentices – income from external mentoring & training	£2097	LM records for financial year May 2004 to June 2005
2	Krocodile Krew – income from workshops	£1085	LM records for financial year May 2004 to June 2005
3	Krocodile Krew – income from night clubs	£1085	LM records as above
4	Apprentices - Value created in provision of specialist advice to people with LD and Carers	Cost difference in LM provision and estimate of external provision of same kind Apprentices cost/Unit Hr.=£82 Ext cost/Unit Hr=£100	LM records Unit cost of specialist FE enterprise training for people with disability in N Ireland
5	Krocodile Krew Value created in provision of specialist advice & skills training to people with a Learning Disability and their carers	Cost difference in LM provision and estimate of external provision of same kind Krocodile Krew cost/Unit Hr =£31 Ext cost/Unit Hr=£100	LM records Unit cost of specialist FE enterprise training for people with disability in N Ireland
6	Lawnmower Actors Income from shows	£6733	LM records
7	Lawnmower Actors Income from workshops	£6733	LM records
8	Lawnmower Actors Value created in provision of specialist advice to people with LD and Carers	Cost difference in LM provision and estimate of external provision of same kind LM actors cost/Unit Hr = £119 Ext cost/Unit Hr=£125	LM records Assumption if provision was made by external Theatre Co. that had to be trained in Learning Disability issues (Estimate)
9	Lawnmower Actors Value created through percentage of people reached & influenced to seek increased independent living	People reached through workshops in 1 year = 800 Assumed action following work =5% of workshop participants Day-care Hrs per week saved = 12 Day-care cost /Hr=£7 Supported accommodation Hrs/week saved = 20 Supported accommodation costs/Hr = £15.52	LM statistics for external workshops Day-care costs based on a Health & Social Services estimate (North & West Belfast) Residential (Unit Cost of health & Social Care 2004) home care cost £621 per week - assume 40 Hr. week

10	Actors Apprentices & Krok Krew Value created through participants maintaining independent living as result of programme with LM	LM participants on the 3 programmes = 22 Assumed % influenced by LM support = 60% Day-care Hrs per week saved = 12 Day-care cost /Hr=£7  Supported accommodation Hrs/week saved = 20 Supported accommodation costs/Hr = £15.52	LM data & long term experience with individuals concerned  Day-care costs based on a Health & Social Services estimate (North & West Belfast)  Residential (Unit Cost of health & Social Care 2004) home care cost £621 per week - assume 40 Hr. week
11	Actors, Apprentices & Krok Krew Participants training programme cheaper with LM than if provided by external provider?	Average of cost/Hr of three LM services = £77 Cost/Hr of external provider = £100 Training Hrs per week = 20 People receiving advice/week = 12	LM records  LM records Unit cost of comparable enterprise training for people with disability in N Ireland
12	Lawnmower Actors Value created through influence on policy direct result of LM work - saved cost of consultants expert in LD field	LM input on policy work = 80Hrs(11.5 days) in year under study  Consultant contract for same work involving research & consultation + report = £15000 (25 days) charged at £66/day	LM records  Consultants average costs on specialist work (outside London)
13	Participant employee Development Worker Earnings	Net monthly salary	Finance records
14	Development Worker Contributions back to state	Income tax paid N Insurance paid Benefits not claimed:	Staff & LM finance records

## Deadweight, Additionality & Values not sustained

The SROI method makes adjustments to the values claimed to be directly related to the work of Lawnmowers for Deadweight and for values that may not be sustained over the investment period (in this case 5 years).

Deadweight is a numerical adjustment to the value claimed for outcomes that would have been satisfied without the intervention of LM. For example a number of people may have been able to attain some economic activity or managed to gain more control over their lives and assert independence in life choices without the help of Lawnmowers.

“Not sustained” accounts for necessary adjustments to the value claimed for an outcome in the case that people may have not sustained the projected activity over the full term of the future SROI projection. In the case of people who gained paid work on behalf of LM for example as a result of their training, it may be the case that not all will sustain this economic activity over the full period of the SROI analysis. SROI reduces values claimed to account for this likelihood.

Additionality is where a number of agencies may have a hand in achieving the given outcome. An example might be that two agencies played a part in the achievement of an accredited qualification obtained by an individual or in the development of an individual's skills base that led to employment – in this case the value claimed by LM for this would be reduced to the percentage of its input.

The following table shows the assumptions included for Deadweight, Not Sustained and Additionality in the final SROI analysis. Where an indicator has not been included here denotes that the activity would not have happened at all without the existence of Lawnmowers – effectively 100% of the value achieved is directly attributed to the work of LM. This has been applied mainly where stakeholders have strongly stated that they would not have achieved outcomes without the provision and personal support provided by Lawnmowers.

No.	Indicator	Value subtracted	Assumption
9	<b>Lawnmower Actors</b> Value created through percentage of people reached & influenced to seek increased independent living	20% deadweight 50% additionality 20% not sustained  Total 90%	We have included only 10% of this value because LM members most of whom are with LM for many years are coming into contact with a number of providers and it is prudent to assume that a substantial proportion of outcomes may have been achieved without LM
No.	Indicator	Value subtracted	Assumption
10	<b>Actors Apprentices &amp; Krok Krew</b> Value created through participants maintaining independent living as result of programme with LM	50% deadweight 20% additionality  Total 70%	Not all outcomes may be attributable here, some may have happened anyway and other agencies may have contributed. However experience has shown that outcomes in this case are sustained long term. Consequently there is no reduction for “not sustained”

No.	Indicator	Value subtracted	Assumption
11	<b>Actors, Apprentices &amp; Krok Krew</b> Participants training programme cheaper with LM than if provided by external provider?	50% deadweight 20% additionality  Total 70%	LM members may have accessed training elsewhere and achieved some outcomes albeit at higher cost. Other agencies could have contributed in part to outcomes

## The Results

SROI will predict the end value of LM activities for a period into the future by taking a snapshot of the investment by funders of the organisation covering a period of 1 year and projecting the returns, in this case, over the next 5 years.

The results below are based on data relating to 12 months activity up to the end of June 2005. SROI conforms to normal accounting convention in the requirement that the end value of the investment in the organisation over the period of 5 years is adjusted for other events (as explained & detailed in the tables above).

The impact of Lawnmowers is judged by the accumulated end value of the outcomes less adjustments. A large proportion of the adjustment is to account for outcomes that would most likely have taken place without the existence of Lawnmowers. In other cases, outcomes would not have been achieved without the work of LM.

**Impact = the value of LM Outputs minus what would have happened anyway without the existence of LM**

The findings of this SROI analysis are that Lawnmowers returns very significant social value to the economy as a result of its activities. This is seen in returns to the public purse as well as individual participants who are able to maintain the personal management of their lives and are more economically active than would otherwise be the case. Lawnmowers is also returning value in its campaigning through the numbers it reaches in its outreach workshops and through its policy work.



The following table shows the values achieved over the 5 years projection period:

	<b>LAWNMOWERS</b>	<b>Yr 1</b>	<b>5 years</b>	<b>5 Years adjusted</b>
	<b>Members</b>			
	<b>Apprentices</b>			
1	Income from mentoring & training <b>Krocodile Krew</b>	2097	11023	11023
2	Income from workshops <b>Krocodile Krew</b>	1086	5706	5706
3	Income from Night Clubs <b>State Funds</b>	1086	5706	5706
	<b>Apprentices</b>			
4	Value created in provision of specialist advice to people with LD and Carers <b>Krocodile Krew</b>	4968	26113	26113
5	Value created in provision of specialist advice & skills training to people with a Learning Disability and their carers <b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	12696	66734	66734
6	Income from shows <b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	6734	35393	35393
7	Income from workshops <b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	6734	35393	35393
8	Value created in provision of specialist advice to people with LD and Carers <b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	1518	7979	7979
9	Value created through percentage of people reached & influenced to seek increased independent living <b>Actors Apprentices &amp; Krocodile Krew</b>	820352	4101760	410176
10	Value created through participants maintaining independent living as result of programme with LM <b>Funders</b>	270716	1353581	406074
	<b>Actors Apprentices &amp; Krocodile Krew</b>			
11	Participants training programme cheaper with LM than if provided by external provider <b>Lawnmower Actors</b>	248400	1305672	391702
12	Value created through influence on policy direct result of LM work - saved cost of consultants expert in LD field <b>Participant employee</b>	8800	44000	44000
13	Development Worker Earnings <b>Public purse value of employee with Learning Disability</b>	9944	52267	52267
14	Development Worker - Contributions back to state	6282	33022	33022

## SROI overview

The total value created by LM over the 5 year period is £1,531,288. This is the 5 year total after deductions for Deadweight etc. In order to determine full SROI results this amount is reduced to a Net Present Value (NPV).

The NPV is arrived at by discounting the value of the Total Benefits over the period. This is to take account of the fact that the real value of the benefits will be less in future years and is discounted by a set amount which is itself derived from a number of financial risk factors. In this case we have used 3.5% as the discount rate. This amount can vary according to the sector of work involved from 3.5% - (Government Green Book guidance for project funding) to 10 or 15% if the value was being considered in a more commercial context. We have used sensitivity analysis to demonstrate the impact of using higher discount rates in a later section.

**The NPV of the 5 year total is £1,381,741**

	Total Yr1	Total Yr2	Total Yr3	Total Yr4	Total Yr5	Total SROI
	1,401,411	1,408,950	1,416,677	1,424,597	1,432,715	7,084,349
D,A, N out	299,713	302,905	306,176	309,529	312,966	1,531,288
<b>NPV</b>	<b>289,578</b>	<b>282,765</b>	<b>276,153</b>	<b>269,737</b>	<b>263,509</b>	<b>1,381,741</b>

## Investment to create end value

The investment required to generate these impacts is taken as the full expenditure as determined by LM Management Accounts as at July 2005. The total direct expenditure on the LM operations under study here is £263000.

**The End Value created by Lawnmowers Independent Theatre Co. is therefore £1,381,741 after 5 years for an initial investment of £263000.**

**The added value of the project – the value created less the cost of creating that value is £1,118,741**

The SROI ratio is arrived at by calculating the gains, subtracting the costs and dividing the result by the costs.

**This provides a ratio of 1: 4.25. That is to say that for each pound invested in the LM operation, the project returns an amount of £4.25 to the economy.**

Another way to view SROI is by calculating the payback period in order to determine how long it would take for the original investment in the project to be equalled by the value created through the LM project.

**In this case the payback period is a remarkable period of less than a year. That is to say that the staff & members involved in the delivery of the Lawnmowers programme between them return the value of the investment made in them by the funders of the project in a very short period indeed: 9 months. In accounting convention such a payback period would be considered a highly attractive investment.**

## Summary SROI Result

Initial Investment	End Value	Value added	NPV ratio	Payback period
263,000	1,381,741	1,118,741	1: 4.25	9 months

## Sensitivity

Sensitivity is a process used to test the assumptions that have been set out in the report previously and to see if changes in these assumptions would radically undermine the SROI result and therefore the basis of the assumptions in the first place. The tables below show the variance if assumptions are changed or in some cases are taken out completely.

**The analysis of sensitivity shows that if we reduce substantially already conservative assumptions in the measurements, the SROI ratio does not fall below £2.85 for every £1 invested. (see tables below)**

We have chosen the following main areas for sensitivity analysis as the areas with the most potential to effect the SROI result:

- ◆ The discount rate used for arriving at the NPV of the End Value
- ◆ Value created through all participants of LM schemes maintaining independent living through support from LM
- ◆ Value created through people reached & influenced by LM workshops
- ◆ Value of LM training if cheaper than external provider
- ◆ Value created through LM direct influence on Gov. policy on disability

## Discount Rate

Item	Base assumption	New assumption	SROI
Discount rate	3.5%		4.25
		5%	4.04
		10%	3.41

In SROI analysis the change in discount rate for certain risk factors linked to the investment of capital is widely thought to be critical. In this case the effect is not critical in that the final SROI result is not substantially changed. In any case, a discount factor of 10% would be used only if capital was borrowed from the open market to invest in the project. This is unlikely ever to be the case and the correct discount rate is 3.5% as determined by Government guidelines as the appropriate risk premium attached to public funds.

## Members managing independence

Item	Base assumption	New assumption	SROI
Value created through participants maintaining independent living as result of programme with LM	60% of members maintaining independent living & reducing Day-Care costs		4.25
		20% of members maintaining independent living & reducing Day-care/supported accommodation costs	3.32
		5% of members maintaining independent living & reducing Day-care/supported accommodation costs	2.98

## Workshops on Independent living

Item	Base assumption	New assumption	SROI
Value created through percentage of people reached & influenced to seek increased independent living	800 people reached – 5% take up leading to reduced supported accommodation costs and Day-Care costs		4.25
		1% take up leading to reduced supported accommodation costs and Day-Care costs	3.13
		0% take up leading to reduced supported accommodation costs and Day-Care costs	2.85

## Differential in LM training service delivery costs

Item	Base assumption	New assumption	SROI
Participants training programme cheaper with LM than if provided by external provider	Training delivered through LM saves £22.50 per hour 20 Hrs/week 12 people trained		4.25
		No cheaper	2.91

## Cost of LM Gov policy work

Item	Base assumption	New assumption	SROI
Value created through influence on policy direct result of LM work - saved cost of consultants expert in LD field	80 Hrs delivered costing £6200 Consultancy cost £15000		4.25
		Consultancy cost same as LM	4.10

## Conclusions

The SROI approach in this case demonstrates that Lawnmowers is creating a considerable amount of value through its work and as a direct return on the investment made in it by funders. **Over four times the value invested is returned to local, regional or national economies.**

A normal economic appraisal of the activity of Lawnmowers could potentially make the activity appear expensive; albeit justifiably so given the highly specialised nature of the support LM gives to people with Learning Disability. The members of lawnmowers are typically excluded from society; not once but twice. The double exclusion comes from the initial economic disadvantage of living in socially deprived areas before disability further impacts on this underlying disadvantage.

This SROI analysis has explored some of the connections between the social aims of the project's work and the economic advantage of organising support to people with Learning Disability in this particular way (through organisations like LM). In many ways therefore, a standard economic appraisal used in normal business analysis is not appropriate here and certainly will not capture the value of the real aims of the work of Lawnmowers.

**SROI has achieved a major step towards an appropriate analysis for organisations with a social aim. Lawnmowers has applied it to track how support is built up through the development of co-operation & trust and then how that relationship becomes productive in creating value that is returned for the benefit of the community.**

**In a real sense then, the work of Lawnmowers is constantly exploring the links between the development of Social Capital and economic inclusion by accounting for the economic advantage of supporting people with a learning disability in a particular way. It is that "particular way" that creates the value demonstrated in this analysis and is down to the vast store of experience and unique skills that are resident among the staff and members of the organisation. In the process of using SROI, Lawnmowers has begun tracking the progress of people with Learning Disability and charting pathways into productive activity.**

This activity is seen as productive because it develops the individual in terms of skills & abilities and has an economic outcome either for people directly or in terms of efficiency (savings in the public cost of support). The latter is of major importance to the tax payer. The work of LM will inform provision in the future. In its use of SROI, Lawnmowers is leading the field in identifying the value of its work in new ways and is developing this system to monitor the impacts of its provision. This is real value that has not been accounted for before in any other kind of evaluative system.

Lawnmowers is currently exploring models of social enterprise as a means of development for its own future and for the future of LD support. It sees its future sustainability in economic terms as well as in social mission terms but the initial work on SROI is indicating that LM is producing very real economic returns because of the way that it works:

LM effectively provides a mode of employment for members. Members conceive, devise, create, produce and perform shows & workshops, all of which are themed in ways to challenge and support people with Learning Disabilities as well as directing tough questions at public providers of services for disabled people and policy makers. Lawnmowers earns income towards its running costs from this work which tours nationally and in the future could become a wider base of enterprise activity for the Company.

Lawnmowers also creates value through its training and advice giving sessions. Highly specialised advice is more economically channelled through the project than through other providers without specialist expertise. We have also looked at some of the economic impacts of this advice when people are empowered to act for themselves. Through the work of Lawnmowers people have acted for themselves, have taken more control of their own lives and one of the results has been a positive economic impact because of savings in the cost of statutory provision.

The project is also creating savings through its method of influencing public policy. Government policy has changed as a result of LM influence, for example on “person centred planning.” Input to future policy from groups like LM who are constantly at the leading edge of issues affecting the client group is often more efficient and better value for money. This can develop into more value creation in the future – for example Lawnmowers would be much more skilled around the range of techniques needed to communicate effectively with people with Learning Disability and so in short would do it much better for less.

LM as a project is also creating employment directly for people with Learning Disability. During the time of the SROI analysis two members of staff fell into this category. At the end of the study this had dropped to one so only these figures are included.

The individual concerned is better off in employment with LM in terms of personal earnings over five years in the amount of over £50K. This amounts to emotional, social & economic independence for that individual who is absolutely adamant that he would still be sitting in a day centre watching television if he had not gone to a presentation by Lawnmowers. These days LM members don't sit in a day centre & watch TV – they are on TV.

Additionally the community is better off financially with this individual in employment. Since being in employment, he is no longer claiming financial support through the benefits system and SROI has projected this to be worth just over £33k to the state over the projected five year period. This is based on a monthly saving of £347.31 which includes £46.20 per week Severe Disablement Benefit and £80.15 per week Income Support. This is in fact a conservative projection because other financial support such as Council Tax Benefit and help with prescriptions have not yet been included in the calculations. This is real money returned as savings to the state over the projected period as is the case with the majority of measurements used in this SROI.

## **Monetisation**

SROI can't measure everything in financial terms. We cannot always put a sum on personal development, for example on the gaining of confidence by an individual. However, in the case of Lawnmowers value has been placed on what individuals do with new confidence, new skills & abilities by tracking their journey towards inclusion in more productive social & economic activity.

We have arrived at a ratio of return of £4.25 for every £1 invested in the work of Lawnmowers. In fact the final sum will be a better ratio than this because we have all the qualitative evidence that is not yet valued in monetary terms. We have people with Learning Disability saying they feel better, they enjoy life more, saying they would go crazy if lawn-mowers didn't exist, they have better life & work opportunities, they feel included and that LM gave them opportunities to travel & to appear on stage and on Television.

## **Future challenges**

Lawnmowers is facing difficult choices for the future. The project must balance future sustainability with maintaining its central social mission. Funding is very hard to achieve for some areas of its operation, for example its night time social activities for people with LD – a service that is not yet comfortably resourced and yet still desperately needed. This is currently being addressed. LM wants to replicate good practise and will look at ways to create satellite provision that will enable other individuals and organisations to do this.

Finally, LM has a core activity with members who have been attending for a long number of years but also has new activity in its apprenticeship scheme which is designed to provide people with experience and skills along with an exit strategy of running their own enterprise. Allied to this are plans to run social enterprises currently under study in a feasibility exercise and to provide business & legal advice to people with Learning Disability.



SROI has identified a value of social return for now. LM will continue to embed this analysis in its monitoring & evaluation system so that the creation of social value can be continually assessed. Ultimately this process alone will be able to inform future strategic direction by indicating what organisational changes need to take place to lead to higher value creation.

**Not that financial analysis alone will always tell us the whole LM story:**

*“We get paid at Lawnmowers – we get paid for the work we do”*



*“If there was no Lawnmowers, I would go crazy”*



*“I like to get out of the day centre. . . .learns us more. . . .when I first started. . . .I didn't know what to do. . . .I would be bored at the centre”*



*“Gets me out and about and I learn more. By doing different shows I’ve learned how the shows go on, I’ve learned about different centres and have met lots of different people – people that I didn’t know. Me as an actor, this makes me grow stronger. When I first started I was a bit nervous but I’ve settled down quite a lot. With an audience it makes me feel I’m on a proper stage with people watching me. . . . it makes me feel important, it makes me feel I’m doing something, I like it because I’ve got friends ..It’s exciting for me. I want to keep doing it as long as I can”.*



*“The Lawnmowers offers me friendship and the opportunity to meet new people. It helps you to realise your ambitions and gives us the chance to learn new skills from others. It lets me meet interesting people who can train us to improve our techniques. It makes me feel great and also gives me lots of confidence. It is due to Lawnmowers that I was able to go the Graceland to research for The Elvis Experience show, this was my life’s ambition”.*

Karl Leathem Lodestar January 2006