

# Survey on Use and Understanding of SROI

This is a summary of the *Understanding and Use of SROI 2015* survey, conducted by Social Value UK (formerly the SROI Network). This survey was intended as a follow up to the [2011 impact survey](#), designed to measure the impact of the SROI Network and SROI framework over the intervening 4 years. It will be used to help inform Social Value UK (SVUK) of the challenges being faced by organisations and how we can best help further the use and understanding of SROI and the Seven Principles of Social Value.

## Profile of respondents

### Type of Organisation

The profile of respondents to the survey in 2011 and 2015 varied significantly. The charts below show a more detailed breakdown of the sectors of respondents:

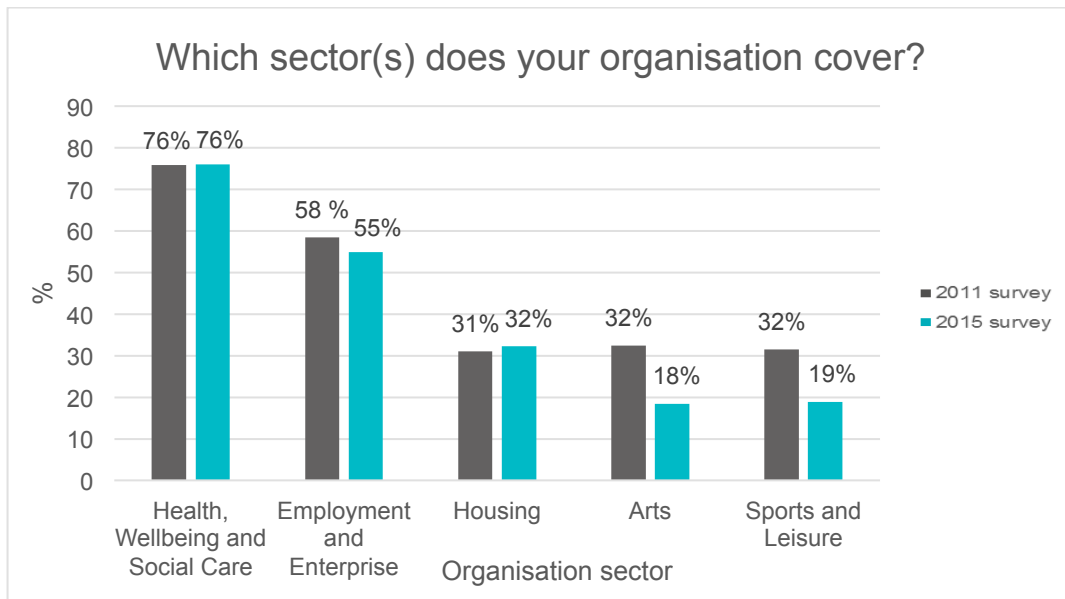


Types of organisations whose participation increased included community sector organisations, private sector organisations and social enterprises.

There was a sharp decrease in the proportion of respondents who were from third sector intermediary or umbrella organisations and voluntary sector organisations.

## Sector of organisations

In general, the profile of sectors that were covered by survey respondents remained fairly consistent:



The only change seen was a decrease in the proportion of respondents who considered their organisations as covering the Arts and Sports and Leisure sectors.

## Role of respondents

A shift occurred in the job roles of the survey respondents. The proportion of respondents who were consultants / researchers rose from 7% in 2011 to 48% in 2015, and those in a policy/strategy/advisory role rose from 5% to 16%. The proportion of respondents in a service delivery role fell from 56% to 12%. Less significant drops were observed in the roles of commissioner (5% to 2%), funder (5% to 4%) and infrastructure development (7% to 3%).

## Summary

There are some differences between the respondents of the 2011 survey and 2015 survey:

1. The 2015 survey had more responses from social enterprises and private sector organisations, and fewer responses from voluntary sector and third sector organisations.
2. Fewer organisations from the Arts and Sports and Leisure sectors are represented in the 2015 findings
3. The 2015 survey had more responses from consultant/researchers and people in a policy/strategy/advisory role, and fewer responses from service deliverers.

The following comparisons should be understood with these differences in mind.

# Understanding and adoption of the Principles

The good news from this survey is that the proportion of respondents reporting that they are using the Principles, and that they have evidence of the value that this has brought to their organisation, has increased (Figure 1):

Principle	2011 respondents (%)	2015 respondents (%)
Principle 1: Involve stakeholders	27	52
Principle 2a: Understand what changes	21	38
Principle 2b:	24	
Principle 3: Value what matters	11	33
Principle 4: Only include what is material	11	25
Principle 5: Do not overclaim	12	30
Principle 6: Be transparent	14	41
Principle 7: Verify the result	11	29

*Figure 1 - Proportion of respondents who are using each Principle and have evidence of the value this has brought to their organisation*

Although the proportion of respondents implementing and evidencing the value of each Principle has increased, only Principle 1 (Involve stakeholders) reached above 50% in the 2015 results.

Significant variation exists in the adoption of the Principles, with the 52% of respondents using and having evidence of the value created by Principle 1 (Involve stakeholders) contrasting with 25% for Principle 4. Despite this variance, the consistent increases in adoption of the Principles (of around 20%) are promising, as are the reductions (of around 50%) in the numbers of respondents reporting they did not understand each Principle.

Corresponding with the increased adoption of Principles, noticeable changes in levels of SROI understanding are occurring amongst organisations. 61% of respondents reported that their organisation’s understanding and use of SROI has changed significantly during the previous 2 years, up from 54% in 2011. Of respondents from the 2015 round of surveys, 69% reported that their organisation’s view of the importance of non-financial value had been at least partly influenced by SVUK or through other members.

## Difficulty of each stage of the SROI process

Despite greater implementation of the Principles amongst organisations, respondents appear to be finding the process of applying the Principles increasingly difficult.

Of respondents who report having conducted an SROI, the proportion who found Stage 1 either “difficult” or “very difficult” increased from 16% in 2011 to 26% in 2015. The percentage who found Stage 2 “difficult” or “very difficult” increased from 29% to 43%. The trend of increasing difficulty was continued through Stage 3 and Stage 4, with the proportion of respondents finding this stage “difficult” or “very difficult” rising from 65% to 78% and 53% to 73% respectively. For Stage 5, the number finding it “difficult” or “very difficult” remained stable at around 51%, and for Stage 6 this increased from 46% to 51%.

### Six Stages of SROI

**Stage 1:** Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders

**Stage 2:** Mapping outcomes

**Stage 3:** Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value

**Stage 4:** Establishing impact

**Stage 5:** Calculating the SROI

**Stage 6:** Reporting, using and embedding

These figures show that respondents are finding the process of conducting an SROI report a challenging process. Stages 3 and 4 are found particularly difficult.

Taken together with the findings above, that respondents are generally using and applying the Principles more in their organisation, perhaps this increase in difficulty is to be expected; as the Principles are used and applied more, arising challenges will become more apparent.

These figures suggest that as increased numbers of respondents use SROI, they discover the process is not as straightforward as they originally anticipated. Difficulty could also have been influenced by changes in the methodology and assurance process since 2011.

A final point is that in recent years, SVUK's emphasis has shifted from promoting SROI as a 'method' towards applying set of Principles. This may go some way towards explaining the results of this questionnaire – that the Principles are being used and applied more, but respondents are finding that the process of the six stages of SROI is limited.

## Increased use of resources

Use of SVUK's resources is increasing; the percentage of respondents using the Guide to SROI has increased from 60% to 67%, use of the website 40% to 82% and training 35% to 43%. The increase in respondents using the Global Value Exchange (GVE) was slight, from 17% to 19%. The comparatively low proportion of respondents using GVE suggests more could be done to promote this resource.

## Conclusions

In summary, there are some key findings that SVUK can use to inform its work over the next year:

1. In general, understanding and application of the Principles of Social Value appears to be increasing. There is some variation between the Principles; respondents seem to find materiality, overclaiming and verification particularly difficult to use and find evidence of the value.
2. Stages 3 and 4 of the process of SROI are particularly problematic for many respondents. SVUK could produce more guidance or information about these stages of the process in order to assist people with the more challenging aspects of SROI.
3. Use of the resources that SVUK produces is encouraging (though may be due to a sample bias if more SVUK members and affiliates are responding to this survey). However, use of GVE remains low amongst this group. SVUK could therefore do more to promote GVE and its advantages to people using SROI.
4. SVUK will continue to take these surveys each year to monitor progress and uptake of the Principles, and how we are able to have a greater impact on understanding and use of the Principles. We will also develop the survey to include questions asking about other factors/attribution that affect understanding of SROI, and a question asking about the relative importance of each Principle. Finally, we will also ask for more detail about the exact way in which the Principles are being used in different organisations.