

Think your organisation is worth more than its weight in gold?

Want to better demonstrate the economic, social and environmental impacts of your work to commissioners, funders and others?

With the recession putting increasing pressures on public finances, and with funders looking for greater evidence of 'value for money', it is essential that women's organisations are able to demonstrate and communicate the economic, social and environmental value that they generate.

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) has received funding from the City Parochial Foundation to pilot the use of Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to evaluate and communicate the economic, social and environmental impacts of women's organisations in London and the work they do.

With competition for resources increasing, we want to make sure that women's organisations are able to make the best possible case when seeking funds.

WRC have commissioned nef consulting (the new economics foundation) to provide training and support for the project.

WRC is inviting applications from women's organisations and projects to participate in the project.

WRC will work with 5 London-based, organisations and projects, delivering different types of front-line services to women, to conduct an SROI analysis on the organisation and its activities. This is a unique pilot project that will combine research with capacity building, with benefits for both participating organisations and WRC.

Why is evaluating economic, social and environmental impacts important?

Having evidence about an organisation's economic, social and environmental impacts helps to maximise fundraising efforts, especially when other service providers may offer inferior services but at a lower price. Having this type of data will also help make the arguments about the value of women's organisations in general.

What is Social Return on Investment (SROI)?

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a powerful way of measuring and



demonstrating the value that has been created by an organisation or project. By translating the value of the social, economic and environmental outcomes for an organisation's stakeholders into monetised form, SROI presents a fuller picture of the financial and other benefits that flow from investments of time, money and other resources.

Ultimately, SROI can quantify the social value generated for each pound invested, for example, a ratio of 3:1 indicates that an investment of £1 in an organisation delivers £3 in social value.

What are the benefits of SROI to my organisation?

- SROI will provide an in-depth evaluation of your organisation, showing exactly where your service is generating value, enabling the project to prove and improve the benefits it creates for women, their families and the wider community. The research results will be verified by nef consultancy.
- Your organisation will develop new skills in research, stakeholder engagement and evaluation, and will gain valuable data specific to their organisation.
- SROI will reveal the 'value for money' that your organisation is creating and will communicate the social value that your project generates with its investments in *monetised form*, which is a language that commissioners and investors easily understand.
- There will be a small contribution of £1,500 to each of the 5 participating organisations in recognition of the time and energy needed to participate in the project, and as an acknowledgement of organisations' expertise. Any related travel expenses will also be paid.

How can I get involved?

Organisations that are interested in participating and meet the criteria are invited to complete our very brief application form. Most women's organisations based in London that deliver any front-line services to women are likely to be suitable.

How much work will it be?

In total, the project will take a maximum of two years – from the planning stages and recruitment of participants, to the launch of the final report of the findings from each of the participating organisations. Most of the work will be undertaken by WRC.

Participating organisations will need to attend the two day training, collect data about their services and users over a 12 month period and attend three project meetings (with other participating organisations). We are anticipating that organisations will need to commit to spending 2-4 hours per week on the project.

What are the criteria?

The application form is very brief. The main criteria are:

- A strong desire to be part of the project and learn new and challenging skills
- Experience of data collection and evaluation
- Ability to commit staff time to the project (including somebody with experience of using Microsoft Excel)
- Membership of WRC
- Capacity and willingness to:
 - Attend a two-day SROI training session run by nef consulting (*tentatively* scheduled for the week beginning 6 July 2009)
 - Set up meetings between WRC representatives and your organisation's staff members, service users and other key stakeholders
 - Set up and manage data collection systems for your organisation
 - Collect data on the difference your organisation makes to service users and other stakeholders over a 12 month period
 - Report on and send through data to WRC
 - Meet on a semi-regular basis with WRC and other participating organisations throughout the process

WRC, supported by nef consulting, will provide full support to participating organisations over the course of the project.

Application forms are available from www.wrc.org.uk and the deadline is **Monday 1 June 2009 at 12 noon**. Applicants can expect a decision by Monday 8 June. Please note that the two day training is *tentatively* scheduled for the week beginning 6 June 2009.

To submit an application, or if you want to know more about the project or application process, contact:

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WRC is a charity which supports women's organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women's not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding. For more information about WRC, visit www.wrc.org.uk.

For more information about the new economics foundation and SROI, visit www.neweconomics.org.