

The Thogomelo Project

Thogomelo Innovative Ways

Innovative ways to quantify the social impact of a national capacity building project for community caregivers of orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa

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Background

The Thogomelo Project is a South African national capacity development project that aims to build the psychosocial wellbeing and child protection skills of community caregivers (CCGs) of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). A social return on investment (SROI) study was conducted to measure in monetary terms the social, environmental and economic benefits to stakeholders. The results of the study answered the following research question: “What is the impact of the Thogomelo Psychosocial Support Training primarily on caregivers and other stakeholders?”

The Thogomelo Project was initiated by South Africa's National Department of Social Development (NDSD) with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) South Africa. The project is managed by a consortium comprised of Program for Appropriate Technologies in Health (PATH), Health and Development Africa (HDA)* and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (IHAA).

*Health and Development Africa (Pty) Limited is a member of the Mott MacDonald Group

Methods

- Data was collected through the generation of impact maps with primary and secondary stakeholders including beneficiaries, the Department of Social Development, Home and Community-Based Care Organisations, community caregivers and Training Service Providers. The maps described how resources (inputs) delivered activities (outputs) which resulted in various benefits (outcomes).
- This provided stakeholders' assessment of the quantitative social and economic value of the project.
- Key themes by stakeholder groups were identified. Indicators and financial proxies for each outcome were established.
- Data collection took place in Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces between June and July 2014 (four focus groups and 23 interviews, N = 93).

Findings

- A SROI ratio of R1:2.03 was raised, meaning that for every R1 invested in the project, a return of R2.03 was generated in terms of social, environmental and economic benefits to the programme's various stakeholders. This was a positive return on investment.
- Overall percentage share of value per stakeholder group were: CCGs – 32%, the Department of Social Development – 18%, Home and Community-Based Care Organisations – 20% and Training Service Providers – 30%.
- The highest social value was created for CCGs (improved community respect and acceptance, improved wellbeing, improved personal career growth, improved healthy lifestyle and higher self-esteem) suggesting that the intervention substantially benefited individual CCG capacity.
- This was closely followed by Training Service Providers (30% of value created) who are able to leverage funding by adapting the Thogomelo training to their own needs and create future enterprise and supplier development mechanisms.

Conclusions

- SROI can provide important quantitative information that allows comparison of benefits of social protection interventions.
- Findings suggest that the project benefits exceeded costs (as per the SROI ratio) at the governmental, organisational, community and individual levels. The greatest value was created for CCGs.
- Due to the possibility of the loss of translation of concepts such as psychological wellbeing into the local vernacular; it is recommended that further research explore outcomes such as psychological wellbeing and its implications for both beneficiaries and social protection systems strengthening.

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