

 Social Value Aotearoa Network

## **SOCIAL VALUE AOTEAROA** —FINDING ITS PLACE IN THE GLOBAL SOCIAL VALUE COMMUNITY

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**Kristin Fanselow**—Fostering change for impact is one of Kristin Fanselow's roles within the Social Value Aotearoa Network team. She is also the Project Manager in the Change and Transformation work stream in Te Whānau o Waipareira which oversees a number of organisational projects, one of which is supporting the roll out of the outcomes framework across the organisation. She was also part of the internal team that recently completed Waipareira's first Social Return on Investment analysis.

Kristin has seven years' experience and involvement in community development projects, both locally and internationally.

## Abstract

This article discusses the emergence of Social Value Aotearoa in the context of international best practice and the desire to demonstrate the impact of programmes and to create more meaningful outcomes for *whānau*. The need to account for social value, how it is defined, and developing a common language is discussed as necessary to both understanding the world and to making decisions on where best to invest resources and to rebalance growth within communities.

Growing relationships internationally is seen as essential in the development of Social Value Aotearoa's confidence and voice as an organisation and in developing its own practice. The key principle for Social Value Aotearoa from the outset has been to involve stakeholders and to design services and products to meet their preferences. The diversity of members locally is acknowledged as a strength in sharing knowledge, building capacity and growing as a movement. The relationships through "connections and engagement"—or *whanaungatanga*—that have been forged to date, both nationally and internationally, are considered key to growing the movement towards social value and towards a world with more equality and a more sustainable environment.

**Key words:** whānau, social value, Social Return on Investment (SROI)

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*Whanaungatanga*—making meaningful connections as we seek to change the way we account for value and work towards a world with more equality and a more sustainable environment.

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*Unuhia te rito o te harakeke kei whea te kōmako e kō  
Whakatairangitia rere ki uta rere ki tai  
Ui mai koe ki ahau he aha te mea nui o te ao  
Māku e kī atu he tangata, he tangata, he tangata!*

Remove the heart of the flax bush and where will the kōmako sing?

Proclaim it to the land, proclaim it to the sea

Ask me “What is the greatest thing in the world?”

I will reply, “It is people, people, people!”

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## Introduction

“Connectivity and engagement” were the opening words from Hon. John Tamihere, CEO of Te Pou Matakana at the launch of Social Value Aotearoa Network in June 2015, backed up by the host of international and national speakers sending the message that the time is now to change the way society accounts for value.

While internationally the demand and importance for organisations to commit to social value measurement was growing and had been around for a while, in New Zealand it was still emerging. There were some examples of organisations who had committed to broadening the definition for value, such as NZ Post’s decision to report social outcome as well as financial<sup>1</sup>; and the partnership between the Bank of New Zealand and The Salvation Army<sup>2</sup> offering low and no interest loans to the financially vulnerable.

Te Whānau o Waipareira, in its journey to be at the forefront of understanding and knowledge on how to account for change, looked for a framework that could underpin its *whānau*-centric approach and allow it to demonstrate the impact of programmes and create more meaningful outcomes for whānau.

Hence it was timely for a New Zealand network to be established that was linked to a broader movement—where we could collaborate, learn, share knowledge and build a local context. Social Value International (SVI), with its established global networks and proven Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework in which stakeholder engagement was integral to its process, aligned with our vision. As a national member network of SVI, New Zealand would also have a voice in the global movement to value social outcomes, progressing the conversation from cost to value.

Challenged with establishing and growing the Social Value Aotearoa Network, whanaungatanga was the key to “connecting and engaging” with the people, communities, organisations and knowledge, both locally and internationally, that we needed.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nzpost.co.nz/about-us/sustainability/measuring-up>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/need-assistance/welfare/community-finance-low-income-loans/NILS>.

In this article we will reflect on how we connected and engaged with our international social value community, our wider New Zealand community and our members.

## Background

### *Social Value*

Social value is a subjective term, meaning different things to different people, hence there are a range of definitions available. As a member of the Social Value International community we explain it as:

An account of social value is a story about the changes experienced by people. It includes qualitative, quantitative and comparative information, and also includes environmental changes in relation to how they affect people's lives. Some, but not all of this value is captured in market prices. It is important to consider and measure this social value from the perspective of those affected by an organisation's work.

Examples of social value might be the value we experience from increasing our confidence, or from living next to a community park. These things are important to us, but are not commonly expressed or measured in the same way that financial value is.

We believe that social value has a huge potential to help us change the way we understand the world around us and make decisions about where to invest resources. By changing the way we account for value, we believe that we will end up with a world with more equality and a more sustainable environment.<sup>3</sup>

For us in practice this means creating an organisational culture of listening to stakeholders, using information to inform decisions and to design services or products to meet their preferences. The 7 Principles of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) are generally accepted social accounting principles and provide a framework for organisations wanting to adopt this approach:

1. **Involve stakeholders**—Inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued in an account of social value by involving stakeholders.
2. **Understand what changes**—Articulate how change is created and evaluate this through evidence gathered, recognising positive and negative changes as well as those that are intended and unintended.

<sup>3</sup> Social Value International Website <http://socialvalueint.org/what-is-social-value/>.

1. **Value the things that matter**—Making decisions about allocating resources between different options needs to recognise the values of stakeholders. Value refers to the relative importance of different outcomes. It is informed by stakeholders' preferences.
2. **Only include what is material**—Determine what information and evidence must be included in the accounts to give a true and fair picture, such that stakeholders can draw reasonable conclusions about impact.
3. **Do not over-claim**—Only claim the value that activities are responsible for creating.
4. **Be transparent**—Demonstrate the basis on which the analysis may be considered accurate and honest, and show that it will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders.
5. **Verify the result**—Ensure appropriate independent assurance.

### *Why is it important to measure Social Value?*

Globally, and within NZ, communities are experiencing deteriorating outcomes, so valuing social impact as well as economic outcomes is the way forward to rebalance growth within our communities. As the gap between rich and poor increases and the effects of climate change become more apparent, our work has never been more urgent.

With the increasing demand for funders, government officials and policy makers to account for their spending decisions and to direct resources to the most effective projects, the expectation on social organisations to measure and communicate their impact is growing.

Organisations that engage in measuring social value are not only able to make a stronger case for additional funding, they are able to focus their efforts on what really makes a difference. This assists them with strategic planning and more effective resource allocation. This is referred to this as “#MeasureWhatMatters”.

## **Social Value Aotearoa Network**

### *Connecting and Engaging with Our International Community*

Internationally, Social Value measurement had been around for a number of years, with many of our peer networks evolving from a merger of experienced Social Impact Analysts, academics and SROI practitioners. As Social Value Aotearoa was in its infancy our first priority was to build strong relationships with Social Value International's community and to learn and grow our understanding of their approach and depth of knowledge.

The formal launch of Social Value Aotearoa was the perfect opportunity to showcase international best practice and it was through our burgeoning relationships that

we were able to engage international organisations experienced in Social Value Measurement as keynote presenters. For those present, including government, NGOs, charities and consultants, seeing #MeasuringWhatMatters in action, its benefits and importance in the global scene, kick-started our membership drive.

To learn more about the Social Value International approach and to participate in the Social Value Members Exchange that followed we attended the Critical Mass Conference in London in October 2015. Along with giving us a snapshot of what the Social Value atmosphere was like around the world, it was an invaluable experience for us as a young network to put faces to names and build relationships with individuals and networks and, just as important, for them to get to know us. We were encouraged by the response to how our network had progressed in just four months and to learn about fellow networks from Hong Kong, Russia, Italy, the UK, USA, Hungary and the Netherlands. The relationships developed during this trip were pivotal in our developmental phase as it connected us with the experts who were prepared to share their knowledge and skills with our members through training, webinars, visits and blogs.

At the 2015 Members Exchange and Conference we were the newbies, in awe of the depth of knowledge around us, relying heavily on our international relationships for best practice and seeking our place in the global community.

In 2017 we travelled with Te Whānau o Waipareira as one of our members to present at the “Social Value Matters—Amplify Stakeholders Voices” Social Value International’s Conference and Members Exchange in Turkey. The mentoring and support of the Social Value International community and the relationships we developed has in part grown our confidence, a stronger sense of who and what we are as a network, and informed how we can contribute to the international conversation.

### *Connecting and Engaging our Membership*

From its launch, Social Value Aotearoa has naturally taken on and been guided strongly by the first social value principle— involve stakeholders.

As a member network this principle is vital—we are only as strong as our ability to understand and support our members. Such an understanding can only come from relationships founded on reciprocity. As a network we are not here to change, teach or guide our members—but to share knowledge, build capacity and grow together. Our members are a mix of individuals and organisations from a variety of sectors—non-profit social, health and *Whānau Ora* providers; local and national government to “fourth sector” social enterprises. Acknowledging the great diversity of experiences such a member base affords, there is great opportunity to build as a movement—amplifying the sum knowledge and strength across and within our membership.

In practice this has been drawn out through a number of approaches. At SVA's launch the focus was on having international speakers who could share their knowledge and tell the story of their own organisation's journey to measuring social impact. Now we have begun to profile our own members' journeys through newsletters and our website, building a central platform to showcase New Zealand best practice while assisting and motivating each other. Shared stories, shared struggles and shared aspirations create a stronger sense of commonality across diverse groups.

As a part of the Social Value International community we are able to further lift this to a common approach through internationally accredited Social Return on Investment (SROI) practitioner training. We have held a number of training sessions every year facilitated by international experts which we intend to continue as demand continues from members. SROI training not only provides a strong framework from which our members can measure their own impact, they also provide an internationally recognised way to communicate that impact in a way that can be understood from funders and evaluators through to frontline, management and accountants. As more organisations and public sector professionals learn and understand the language of social impact through SROI, the easier conversations will flow across our network community and beyond.

Recognising that completing the full SROI practitioner training is not feasible for all our members, we are introducing practical workshops built around each of the seven principles as an introduction to SROI. The relationships we have forged while in Turkey have re-energised our approach with our international community, with members of other networks agreeing to provide webinars and look at ways to share training with our NZ members.

### *Connecting and Engaging our Community*

It is also important that we build a common glossary across our members, affiliated networks and NZ community. From our training and networking events we know that many in the non-profit and public sector are interested in the same issues—they want to understand the effect of their work and they want to be effective in their work. Whether the language for that is social impact, outcomes, managing change, theories of change, logic models etc., our members and others we come in touch with need a way of communicating that draws from a shared understanding.

We see our network events as a first step towards this—we co-host as often as possible with other like-minded organisations and networks, sharing speakers as a means to share dialogue on common topics. The typical structure of these events so far has been centred on speakers being able to present ideas from their perspectives but with a focus on translating as much of the dialogue used by previous speakers as possible. This has proven successful in the way it manifests further dialogue about commonalities with the speakers, participants and across

networks. Recognising that our network will only be as strong as the relationships within and outside it, these member exchange events create the environment within which to develop a shared understanding around approaches, concepts and tools.

### **Conclusion**

As SVA continues to grow its membership and raise its profile within New Zealand and the international community, we continually look to refresh our approach to the way we support our members. Internationally, our participation in the Social Value International network and its conferences allows us to contribute to and draw on international experience to move forward. Our membership numbers may not be large, but through our ongoing work with like-minded networks and agencies our reach is broad. The relationships we have forged to date, both nationally and internationally, are key to progressing this movement towards social value and towards a world with more equality and a more sustainable environment.

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*Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi*

With your food basket and my food basket the people  
will thrive

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