

OUR STORIES OF CHANGE

Introduction

One of SHOCC's strengths is that the charity remains small enough to work with partners in whom we have absolute trust. Our projects are usually the dream of someone other than our trustees and SHOCC will recognize its need, will agree to support it financially and will provide advice and encouragement. As a result, our projects illustrate what Paul Vallely (2020) has called 'reciprocal philanthropy'; where we have an ongoing relationship with our partners, treat them with respect and have a two-way, empathetic approach; helping them to help themselves. We believe this approach leads to projects that help to reduce disadvantage, are sustainable and effective.

How do we measure this effectiveness?

When we offer to support a project, we work with our partners to complete a Story of Change map. This begins with the inputs that we will provide. We then assess the activities, immediate outputs, and short-term outcomes that we want to achieve. Finally, we try to predict the longer-term impacts. These are the changes that we hope will result from our funding and other inputs.

Our impact assessments are both qualitative and, where possible and appropriate, quantitative. We make use of anecdotes about how SHOCC's activities have affected our project partners. Our quantitative assessments enable us to report using numerical data. We are, however, wary of "applying business logic to the provision of public goods". Vallely, P. (2020). We only calculate the Social Return on Investment (SROI) (impacts/inputs) where it is appropriate to measure impacts in monetary terms.

The rationale for assessing our impacts

SHOCC's trustees believe that using a theory of change approach to managing our projects will help us to achieve our aims better, will link our work more closely to our overall vision and mission, and will enable us to deliver our strategic aims, improve our operations and make them more efficient, will enhance our marketing, communications and stakeholder engagement, and will make us better able to attract funding and secure new contracts.

Our stories of change

SHOCC became a registered charity in March 2007. Since then, it has supported nearly 50 projects, in its local area and overseas raising nearly a million pounds to reduce disadvantage. Each current or completed project described has been considered in terms of its Story of Change. This begins with the project brief, background information and selected statistics including the amount awarded to date. These are followed by a description of the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts

Evidence of impact is provided in three ways; qualitatively in the form of stories and anecdotes from our partners; quantitative, where appropriate, by calculating the SROI and finally, by using photographs taken before, during, and after project completion. We believe that these help to provide an accurate record of our project achievements.