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European Association of Work  
and Organizational Psychology

Measuring the Impact of Interventions – Social Return on Investment

Nuala Whelan



**Biography:** Nuala Whelan is an Irish Research Council Employment based Scholar conducting research on the effectiveness of Ireland's labour market policy on the well-being and employability of long term unemployed job seekers. Nuala is the Assistant Manager at Ballymun Job Centre (BJC) and a Registered Work & Organisational Psychologist. She holds a BA (Honours) in Psychology from UCD and a MSc. in Industrial Psychology from the University of Hull, UK. With 18 years' experience working with clients who are disadvantaged in the labour market, Nuala's main areas of interest lie in exploring the varying levels of employment service effectiveness, the lack of consistency in approach and the underestimation of the potential impact of enhancing human capacity for development and organizational success. Nuala is currently an Irish Research Council employment based Scholar conducting research on the effectiveness of Ireland's labour market policy on the well-being and employability of long term unemployed job seekers. Since 2003 Nuala has been involved in securing significant EU funding through the Lifelong Learning Programme (Leonardo da Vinci strand), EQUAL (ESF) and more recently Erasmus+, and during this time, managed eight applied research projects, each with a two year duration. Her research interests include; psychological impact of labour market policy and its implementation, long term unemployment, Youth unemployment, Psychometrics and innovative assessment design, Social Investment, Social impact evaluation, Training and training evaluation, Effective career guidance for disadvantaged job seekers, Labour Market Activation models, Community impact, Well-being at work.

**Abstract:** As Psychologists working with individuals and organisations, it can be difficult to put a value on the impact our interventions have at an individual, organisational, and even societal level. Often, the impacts of our interventions are not immediately visible but may become more evident over time. Quantifying our practice and placing value on what we do can be difficult. Social impact assessment can help us understand the impact our interventions have on a range of stakeholders and can illuminate the process or the story of change arising from the interventions. Social impact can have both evaluative and forecasting purposes, enabling us to value the things which matter. It can help us pinpoint the outputs and outcomes emerging from our interventions for each stakeholder and consider the monetary value attributable to each outcome. Monetary value is a useful and widely accepted way of conveying value, and while social impact assessment is about value rather than money, this is often the type of evidence required or understood by those funding the interventions.

This workshop will introduce participants to the key principles underpinning social impact assessment and the Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology. Participants will be encouraged to think in terms of change, the creation of change, measuring outcomes and attributing value. Participants will also consider how social impact assessment could be integrated into their practice. The workshop will provide an opportunity to review case studies using social impact assessment and in small groups work through an example SROI evaluation in order to illustrate its real world application.