Social Return on Investment

"Creation of equal opportunities for the education of visually impaired young people in New Technologies"

Equal Society
Κοινωνία Ίσων Ευκαιριών

1946
ΦΑΡΟΣ ΤΥΦΛΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ Ν.Π.Ι.Δ.
Σωματείο Ειδικής Αναγνωρισμένο

Με τη στήριξη της
Metlen
Energy & Metals

"Creation of equal opportunities for the education of visually impaired young people in New Technologies"

Metlen Energy and Metals gave equal access to new technologies and coverage of the demands of modern everyday life to 377 beneficiaries with visual impairments, in terms of effective inclusion and elimination of technical and social exclusion.

Introduction

This report aims to highlight the social impact of the educational program "Creation of equal opportunities for the education of visually impaired young people in New Technologies", implemented by the Lighthouse of the Blind of Greece in 2023 with exclusive funding from Metlen Energy and Metals.

Scope

The company Metlen Energy and Metals assigned Equal Society to evaluate the educational program "Creation of equal opportunities for the education of visually impaired young people in New Technologies" with the aim of collecting feedback and insights from stakeholders, further understanding the actual benefits of the activity, identifying directions for optimization, and maximizing the social impact of the initiative.

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- to identify the key stakeholders and their primary outcomes,
- to understand how the activities lead to outcomes for the stakeholders, in accordance with the logical model,
- to highlight the social value generated in relation to the investment cost.

The program

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Greece has traditionally developed initiatives and programs over the years to ensure equal access for visually impaired individuals in all fields of human activity, keeping pace with contemporary developments and demands. The field of IT and New Technologies constitutes a significant educational pillar for visually impaired individuals within the organization. In this context, it has developed a holistic program with a twofold approach:

Training in computer use

o Online lessons for beneficiaries at intermediate and advanced levels via Zoom on a regular basis.

o Provision of technical support through TeamViewer, AnyDesk, or by phone, some on a regular basis and others on an occasional basis.

Indicative subjects included text processing (Word), computer usage and file management in Windows, internet services (internet and emails), Excel spreadsheets, use of NVDA, NVDA settings and installation, Office and Windows settings and installation, among others.

Technical support services

o Online lessons (Zoom), online support (TeamViewer), or phone support, aimed at training and familiarizing with new technologies in various fields, as well as the use of smart devices and applications on smartphones (Android and iOS).

Indicative subjects included technical support and device upgrades, usage of smart devices and apps (Android, iOS, and iPhones), management of social media, facilitating access and browsing websites, the Lighthouse for the Blind's Talking Books platform, and more..

Stakeholders

The SROI guide emphasizes that the most important part of a social impact analysis is stakeholder engagement. Inclusion of stakeholders is the fundamental requirement of SROI.

"Stakeholders are defined as: people or organisations that experience change as a result of your activity, or those who affect the activity under analysis".

The participants involved in the analysis, and thus in the calculation of the SROI (Social Return on Investment) index, include:

Beneficiaries, individuals with visual impairments, partially sighted or totally blind, either congenital or newly blind, men and women of all ages who participated in both components of the program.

Instructors, individuals who implemented the program.

Management Team, staff of the organaztion who supported the administrative functioning of the program.

The Need

The rapid advancement of technology, combined with the objective difficulties faced by individuals with visual impairments in accessing information, knowledge, and social networking, creates the need to establish conditions that ensure their equal participation. The lack of such conditions leads to technological, educational, and social exclusion, exacerbating inequalities and limiting opportunities for growth and active participation in society.

The Goal

The program aims to bridge the access gap by developing innovative tools and resources, providing individuals with visual impairments with the necessary skills to harness technology. It seeks to eliminate exclusionary phenomena and create a foundation for equal and meaningful opportunities, allowing these individuals to pursue knowledge, employment, and social participation on equal terms.

Methodology

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an internationally recognized framework for measuring the value created by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs in society.

Metlen Energy and Metals has adopted the SROI methodology to understand the impacts of its investments, highlight the value created, manage it effectively, and demonstrate it according to internationally recognized principles.The SROI methodology is based on calculating a final social impact ratio, which expresses the benefits-to-cost ratio for the action being evaluated.

 The analysis is conducted according to the guidelines of the Social Return on Investment guide, which is an official document from The Social Value Network International.

Social value is the value that people place on the changes they experience in their lives through their involvement in an activity.

Stage 1: Establishing Scope and Identifying Stakeholders

Stage 2: Mapping Outcomes

Stage 3: Evidencing outcomes and Giving them a value

Stage 4: Establishing Impact

Stage 5: Calculating SROI

Stage 6: Reporting

Approach

The design of the SROI evaluation included a review of documents from international literature as well as the collection of primary data through research.
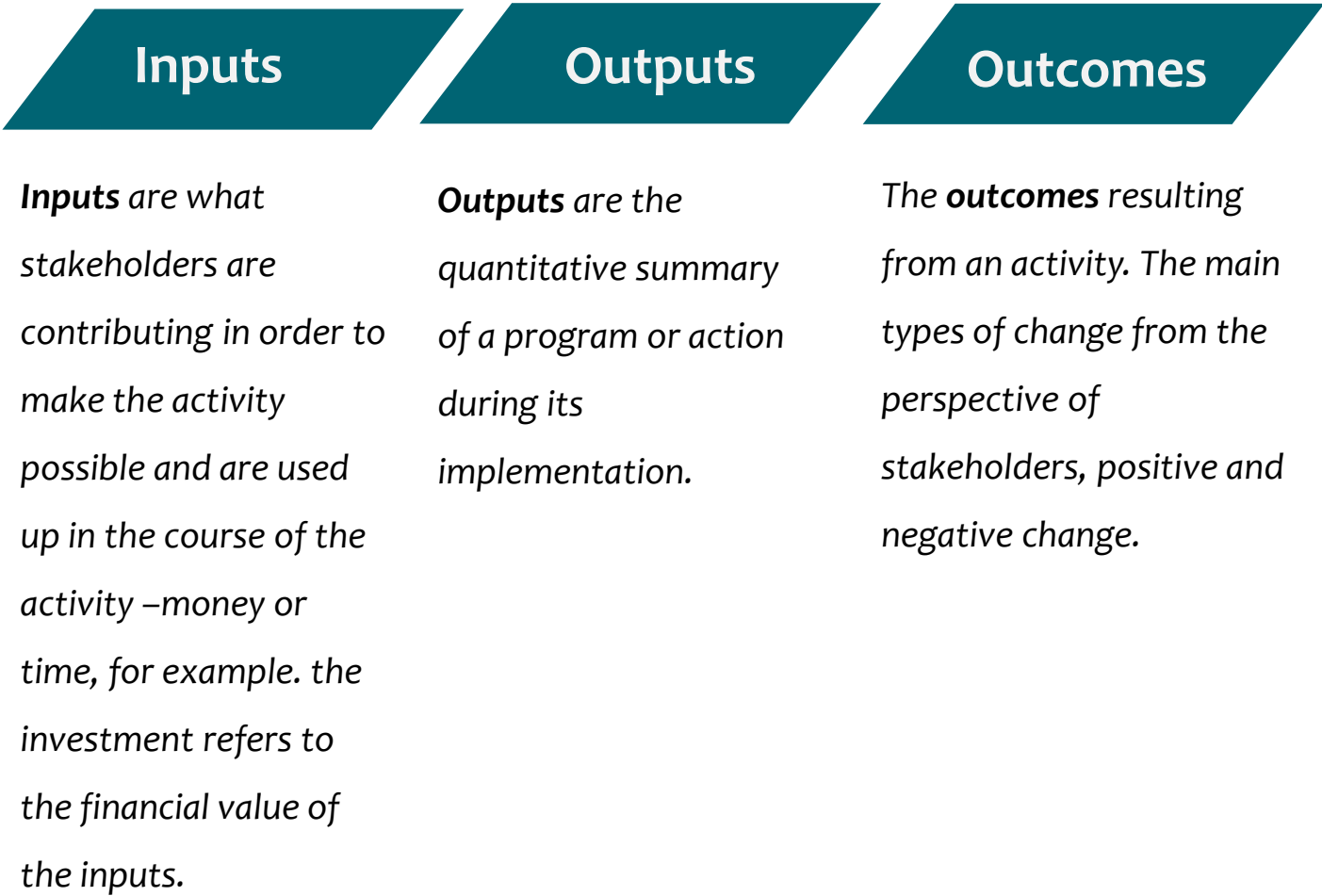
- **Consultation with association members:** In the initial stage, discussions were held with the staff of the association, aiming to define the scope of the analysis, the initial mapping of key stakeholders, and the determination of the ideal approach for engaging them.
- **Primary data:** Data was collected through face-to-face and phone interviews, based on a structured interview guide for the main target group. Additionally, questionnaires were created for the other categories of involved stakeholders.
- **Secondary data:** This included a review of international literature, correlating findings from existing research, and processing data from available information databases.
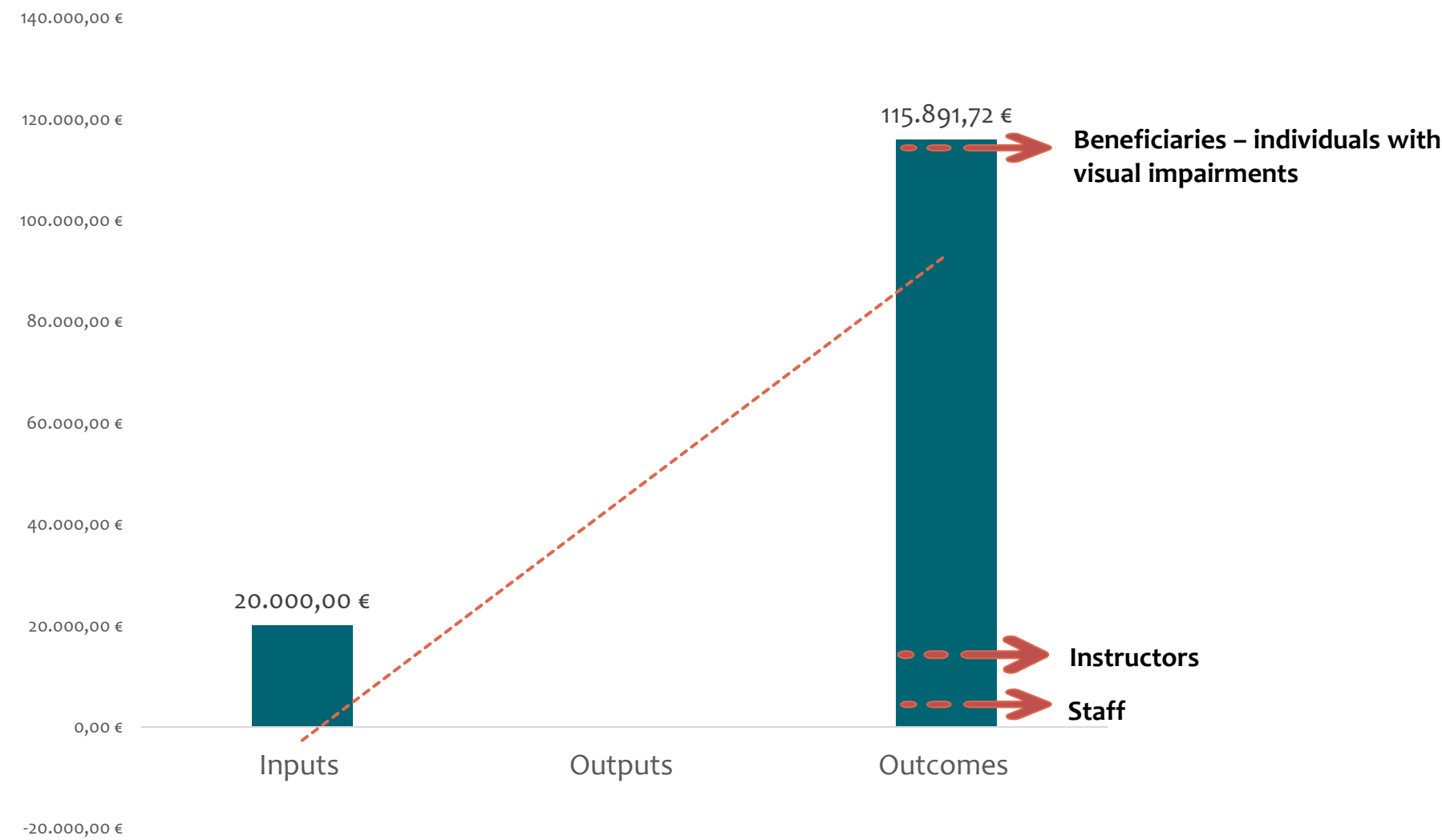
Social Impact

Social Impact Assessment

The SROI (Social Return on Investment) analysis is based on the logical model, connecting resources, activities, outcomes, and impacts in order to describe the theory of change and evaluate the social value generated.

This SROI analysis estimates that the program "Creation of equal opportunities for the education of visually impaired young people in New Technologies" creates a social value of **€115,891.72** from all involved stakeholders and calculates the SROI ratio at **1:5.37** for the year 2023.

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
Inputs are what stakeholders are contributing in order to make the activity possible and are used up in the course of the activity –money or time, for example. the investment refers to the financial value of the inputs.	*Outputs* are the quantitative summary of a program or action during its implementation.	The *outcomes* resulting from an activity. The main types of change from the perspective of stakeholders, positive and negative change.

The funding covered both direct and indirect costs of the project's implementation. Specifically, it covered costs related to the technical equipment for the programs, remote operation licenses, etc. It also included the salary costs for instructors and other personnel for technical support services.

2023

377
Beneficiaries

4
Instructors

1.020
Training hours

1.745
Service hours

Outputs

Training in computer use

○ **64** visually impaired people – beneficiaries, participated in computer training

- **17** through online courses (zoom)

- **47** through online (teamviewer-anydesk) /telephone sessions

Technical Support Services

○ **313** visually impaired people – beneficiaries, received technical support services

- **120** hours of online courses for Android software

- **780** hours of online service for devices for Android devices, platform navigation, program & application installations, etc.

- **195** hours via telephone or online training in IOS software

- **650** hours via telephone or online service (teamviewer) for registration routing, navigation-extraction of material from the Talking Books platform, familiarization with social media, etc.

Outcomes

The results were gathered from the responses of the involved parties, following a materiality assessment, as well as from a concurrent study of international literature.
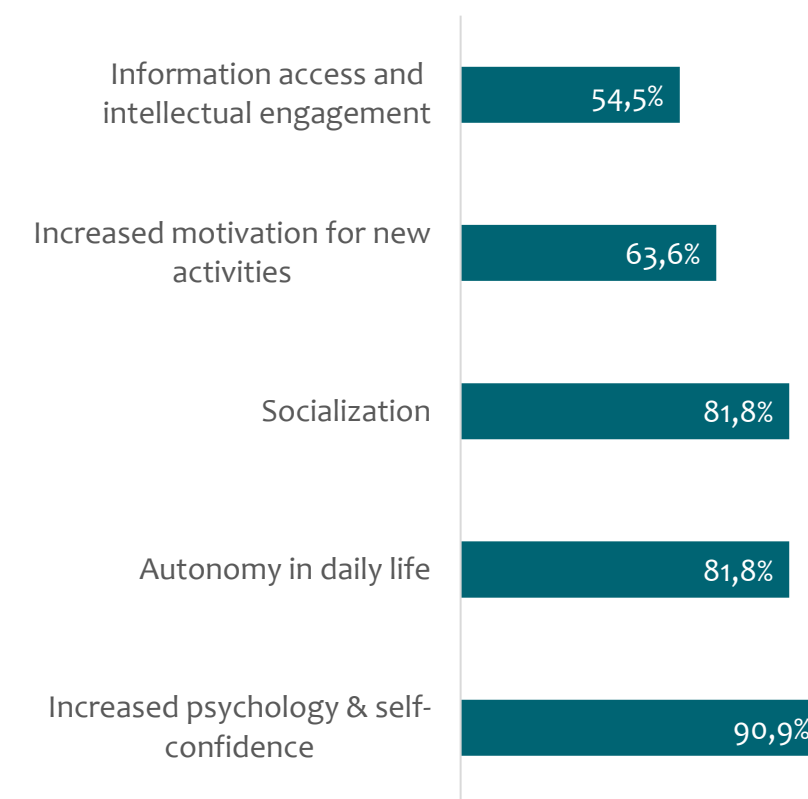
> **Through the research, the changes experienced by the stakeholders were understood, while the chain of events was analyzed to clarify the relationship between inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Based on this information, the Theory of Change (ToC) was developed.**

The total social value is primarily determined (92.07%) by the changes experienced by the main target group.

The improvement in psychology and the boost in self-confidence (90.9%) are highlighted as one of the main impacts of the program. Equally important is the increased socialization (81.8%), which reflects improvement in the networking and social integration of the beneficiaries. At the same time, the enhancement of autonomy in daily life, as a result of the education and support provided by the program, is a fundamental aspect of the intervention.

Secondary, yet also significant, are changes such as the increased motivation to participate in new activities (63.6%), indicating the general activation of the beneficiaries.

The ability to utilize technology is not only limited to improving connection with the world and the psychological state of participants; it also contributes to strengthening continuous information access and intellectual activity for individuals with visual impairments.

Category	Percentage
Information access and intellectual engagement	54,5%
Increased motivation for new activities	63,6%
Socialization	81,8%
Autonomy in daily life	81,8%
Increased psychology & self-confidence	90,9%

Instructors

The instructors gain significant personal and professional development, cultivating skills such as communication, empathy, and creativity. Through collaboration with individuals facing challenges, they broaden their understanding of diverse needs and enhance their ability to adapt to various environments. At the same time, their familiarity with specialized technological tools enriches their expertise and strengthens their professional skills.

Moreover, their contribution to the empowerment process of the participants not only provides a sense of accomplishment and professional fulfillment but also deep personal satisfaction, making them active participants in creating a positive social impact.

Management team

The success and effectiveness of a program are often based on the team that designs, implements, and supports it. The analysis of the data shows that participation in the program leads to professional development for the employees, improvement of the services provided, and enhanced collaboration and adaptability. Continuous feedback and recognition of best practices strengthen employees' commitment and dedication to their work, while also contributing to more effectively meeting the needs of the beneficiaries.

Other Stakeholders

Families and caregivers

The use of technology facilitates daily care, as the visually impaired individual gains greater autonomy in their activities, reducing the need for continuous support. Additionally, by learning about the challenges faced by individuals with vision loss and the ways to address them through technology, caregivers gain a deeper understanding and strengthen their relationship with the person they care for.

Overall, the family members or caregivers of visually impaired individuals gain increased self-confidence, are empowered both psychologically and practically, and create a more supportive and sustainable environment for themselves and the person they care for.

The Lighthouse for the Blind of Greece

Positive impacts also emerge for the implementing organization in terms of developing and establishing best practices for the benefit of the blind community. By developing such programs, the organization enhances its knowledge, tools, and resources, allowing it to design new, more tailored actions and programs that better address the needs of the target population.The organization gains a more active and meaningful role in creating a more inclusive society, fulfilling its mission and increasing its social acceptance.

Theory of change

Goals — Access to all kinds of information, knowledge, and development for individuals with visual impairments, along with significantly reducing phenomena of technological and social exclusion, creates the foundation for equal and meaningful opportunities.

Inputs | **Stakeholders** | **Outputs** | **Outcomes** | **Impact**

Process | Impact

Inputs

The Lighthouse of the Blind of Greece association receives funding and allocates financial resources for the development and implementation of an educational program aimed at training individuals with disabilities in the use of technology.

Stakeholders

o **Beneficiaries**

Individuals with visual impairments, both men and women of all ages, who participated in training on computer use and those who received technical support services.

o **Instructors**

Individuals who implemented the online courses and provided services.

o **Management Team**

Employees from the association who handled the administrative support for the program.

Outputs

o **64** individuals with visual impairments – beneficiaries, who participated in computer training

o **313** individuals with visual impairments received technical support services.

o **4** instructors

o **1,020** hours of online education.

o **1,745** hours of technical support and training.

Outcomes

Beneficiaries - individuals with visual impairments

- Reduced feelings of loneliness
- Increased interaction with friends and family
- Autonomy and independence in daily activities
- Increased motivation for new activities & participation
- Increased self-confidence
- Improved psychology
- Increased joy
- Increased activity & knowledge
- Intellectual engagement

Instructors

- Emotional reward & positive reinforcement
- Increased empathy
- Personal development through professional experience
- Increased skills, such as the need for individualized approaches
- Professional satisfaction

Management Team

- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased experience
- Improved efficiency
- Increased skills

Impact
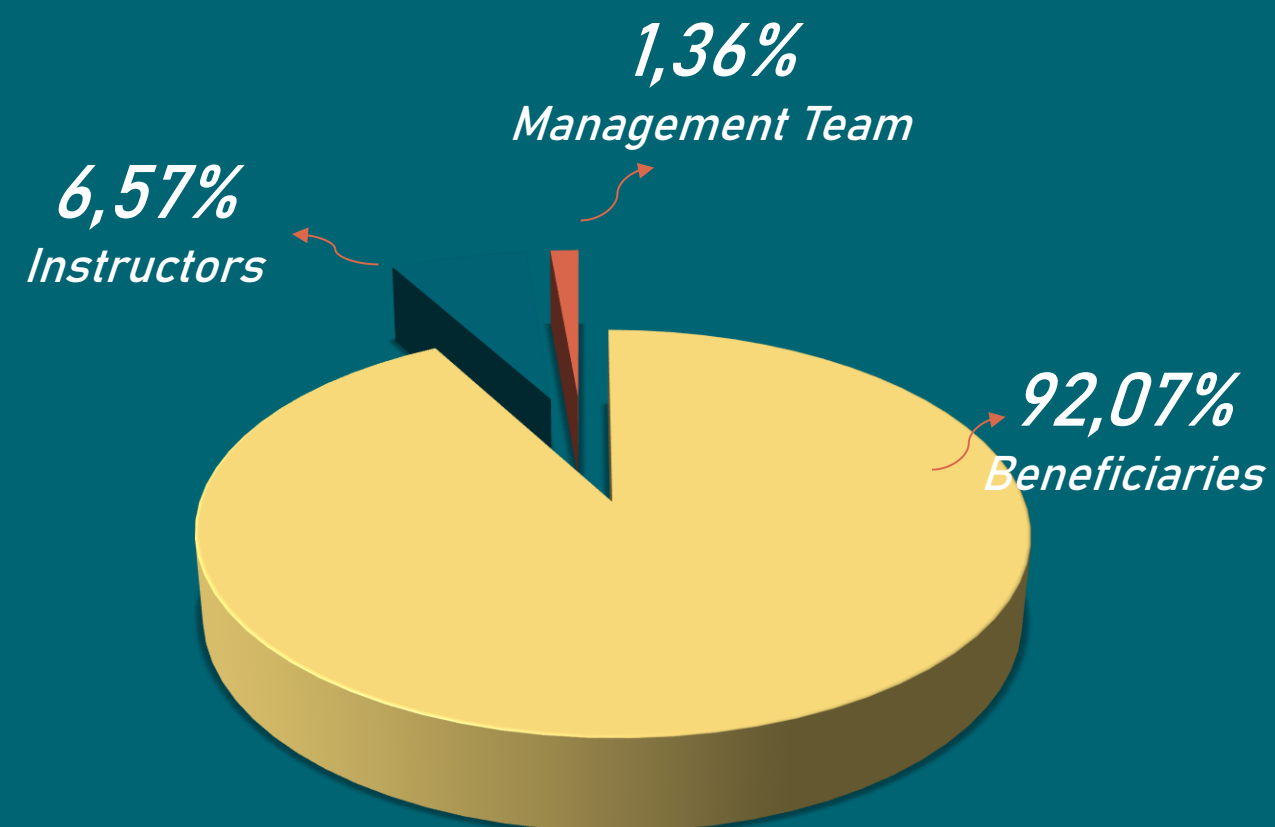
- *Increased socialization*
- *Improved mental well-being & boosted self-confidence*
- *Autonomy and independence in daily activities*
- *Enhanced information access and intellectual engagement*
- *Increased skills*
- *Heightened sense of satisfaction & validation*
- *Professional development & experience*

SROI

"For every €1 invested in the educational program, €5.37 in social value is generated."

SROI Calculation

1,36%
Management Team

6,57%
Instructors

92,07%
Beneficiaries

Social value distribution

For every €1 invested in the "Creation of equal opportunities for the education of visually impaired young people in New Technologies" program, €5.37 in social value is generated

SROI Calculation

Stakeholders	Social Value	
Beneficiaries (Individuals with Visual Impairments)	106.703,13 €	92,07%
Instructors	7.613,87 €	6,57%
Management Team	1.574,72 €	1,36%
	115.891,72 €	

Discount rate	3,5%
Present Value (PV)	107.464,81 €
Total Investment Cost	20.000,00 €
SROI	5,373

Central Office - Equal Society
1 Santaroza - P.C. 10564 - Athens,
Tel.: (+30) 2117051841
Email: info@equalsociety.gr
Web address: www.equalsociety.gr

The evaluation was prepared by the Social Value Greece team of Equal Society.

Social Value Greece
Olga Drellia
Director of Impact at Social Value Greece