



ACACIA UK

Social Value Report 2023



A case study commissioned by the Charity Retail
Association, January 2024

*ACACIA UK (company number 03320057) is the trading subsidiary of Rafiki Thabo Foundation
(charity number 1193124)*

Section 1 - Who are we?

ACACIA UK is the trading subsidiary of Rafiki Thabo Foundation (registered charity number 1193124). ACACIA's shops raise funds which are donated to Rafiki Thabo to support individuals and their communities in Africa through education that embraces their differing abilities.



Rafiki Thabo works through voluntary committees in Kenya, Lesotho and Uganda to identify those scholars who most need support to continue with their education, and to identify particular education projects that fill gaps in the communities in which the charity operates. Rafiki Thabo's work falls into four main areas: a scholarship programme, a school meals programme called 'Eat Well to Learn', school infrastructure development, and projects specifically aimed at reducing barriers to education faced by children living with disabilities.

ACACIA operates four shops in South Oxfordshire, in Abingdon, Faringdon, Grove and Wootton (near Abingdon). All sell donated goods and our Wootton shop also offers a small café and a household liquids refill station. ACACIA's shops could not operate without their amazing teams of volunteers. ACACIA also has online shops (eBay and Vinted shop).

To find out more about the ACACIA shops and the work they contribute to, please visit <https://rafiki-foundation.org.uk/>



Section 2 - Social value and social return on investment (SROI)

2.1 What is social value?

Every day our actions and activities create and destroy value. They change the world around us. Although the value we create goes far beyond what can be captured in financial terms, this is, for the most part, the only type of value that is measured and accounted for. As a result, things that can be bought and sold take on a greater significance and many important things get left out.

Social value is a broader definition of value that includes the worth or importance stakeholders place on changes to their wellbeing that are not captured through financial transactions. Within the context of a social value evaluation (like this SROI) we describe social value as the quantification of the relative importance people place on the changes they experience.

2.2 About SROI

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a framework for measuring and accounting for this much broader concept of value. It seeks to reduce inequality and environmental degradation and improve wellbeing by ensuring that any analysis of value centres the evaluation of social impact.

SROI measures change in ways that are relevant to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It tells the story of how change is being created by measuring a range of context-specific outcomes and uses monetary values to represent them. This enables a ratio of impacts to costs to be calculated. For example, a ratio of 3:1 indicates that an investment of £1 delivers £3 of social value.

SROI is about value rather than money. Money is simply a common unit and as such is a useful and widely accepted way of conveying value.

Section 3 - The social value of charity shops

In 2023 the Charity Retail Association (CRA) published a report called 'The Value of Giving Back – The Social Return of Charity Shops' (<https://www.charityretail.org.uk/social-value-and-social-return-on-investment-sroi-of-charity-shops/>). This was a social return on investment evaluation of charity shops in the UK that set out to describe the value generated by the sector beyond that which is captured in financial terms. The research determined that charity shops in the UK generated £75.3 billion of social value at a cost of £10.3 billion in January-December 2022. This means that for every pound invested in a charity shop there is a social return of £7.35.

3.1 The 'average' charity shop

To undertake the research the evaluators established the concept of an 'average' charity shop. Through desktop study a series of research reports and market analysis activities were analysed. Qualitative research gathered feedback from a sample of charity shops and shop chains that represented a range of different settings. An online survey gathered structured feedback from a representative sample of charity shop stakeholders. This combined data pool was used to estimate averages for data points like the average cost of running a charity shop.

3.2 SROI methodology

CRA's SROI evaluation of UK charity shops was conducted following the framework outlined in the publication 'A Guide to Social Return on Investment' (2012), produced by the Cabinet Office of the UK Government (<https://socialvalueuk.org/resources/a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment-2012/>). The CRA's SROI calculator used to produce the figures in this report for our organisation is based upon that methodology. Key points to note are:

- Outcomes are valued by stakeholder group. Representative samples of these stakeholder groups were used to establish common outcomes for individuals in each group. The outcomes reported and valued by these different stakeholder groups are the ones used to create the values in the calculator.
- The financial valuations used are based on a wellbeing valuation for the sense of 'giving back (to others)' (a detailed technical paper on this wellbeing valuation is available from the CRA website: <https://www.charityretail.org.uk/social-value-and-social-return-on-investment-sroi-of-charity-shops/>).
- Values have already been adjusted within the model to account for how much of each outcome was caused by the contribution of other organisations or people; and whether these could have happened anyway if there were no charity shops.

Section 4 - The social value of ACACIA UK

ACACIA UK is using SROI to enable us to report on the social value generated by our four charity shops located in Oxfordshire.

Using the CRA's SROI calculator we have calculated

- A total of £21,491,513 of social value was generated by our four charity shops in 2023.
- And a social return on investment ratio of £1: £11.23 – i.e., for every pound invested in ACACIA, £11.23 of social value is generated.

4.1 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people, organisations or entities (e.g. the environment) that are affected by or affect our activity. For the purposes of this SROI and in line with the findings from the primary research we have focussed on four groups of stakeholders: staff, volunteers, customers, and donors.

Stakeholders	Number of stakeholders
Staff (full-time equivalent)	9
Volunteers	62
Customers	6,172
Donors	7,146

4.2 How the figures have been calculated

- Reporting period: October 2022 – October 2023
- Where we had our own data about stakeholders, that data has been used. Where we did not have data on a stakeholder group then their population sizes have been estimated. These estimations are based on national averages calculated in the primary research conducted on behalf of CRA.

4.3 Outcomes

Outcomes are the changes experienced by those stakeholders due to engaging with our activity – in this case that engagement is working in, buying from, or donating to charity shops. A full list of outcomes experienced by each stakeholder group is detailed in the following subsections of the report.

4.3 (a) Quantity of outcomes

The following tables describe the number of people in each stakeholder group experiencing each of the outcomes.

Outcomes for staff	Number of people experiencing this outcome
More empathy	3
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others	5
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet	4
More self-confidence	3
Feeling adequately compensated financially for work	3
Feeling more distress (from H&S concerns)	2
Feeling part of a community	4
More financial choice and independence	2

Outcomes for volunteers	Number of people experiencing this outcome
More empathy	11
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others	40
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet	20
More self-confidence	18
Feeling adequately compensated financially for work	1
Feeling less distress (from H&S concerns)	4
Feeling part of a community	34
More financial choice and independence	3

Outcomes for customers	Number of people experiencing this outcome
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others	3,935
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet	3,838
Feeling part of a community	1,974
More financial choice and independence	1,961
Excitement from the shopping experience	2,858
Feeling that charity shop staff meet me with friendliness and compassion	2,126

Outcomes for donors	Number of people experiencing this outcome
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others	4,616
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet	3,677
Feeling part of a community	1,852
More financial choice and independence	704
Excitement from the shopping experience	861
Feeling that charity shop staff meet me with friendliness and compassion	1,591

4.3 (b) Causality of outcomes

Every SROI asks a series of questions about ‘causality’ that affect the valuation of any outcomes described by stakeholders. These questions include “what would have happened anyway?” and “who else contributed to the change?” In the SROI methodology these concepts are referred to as deadweight, attribution, displacement and drop off (in addition to duration). In the model for calculating the value described in this report all values have been discounted to take into account the answers to these questions. This is based on the research conducted in the CRA’s SROI evaluation and a full breakdown of the discounts applied can be viewed in the CRA’s report.

4.3 (c) Total value of outcomes

The CRA’s SROI evaluation, and therefore the model underpinning their calculator, used a valuation technique called ‘anchoring’. The relative importance of the outcomes as expressed by stakeholders themselves was anchored to a wellbeing valuation of the outcome ‘giving back (to others)’ (see SROI methodology). The benefit of using an anchoring technique is that the relative importance of the outcomes to stakeholders is given priority over separate valuations and valuation techniques for different outcomes. This eliminates the risk of not showing the value of the different outcomes relative to the other outcomes that were analysed.

The following tables describe the value of each outcome experienced by each stakeholder group.

Outcomes for staff	Value of each outcome
More empathy	£2,876
Feeling that I am ‘giving back’ to others	£6,834
Feeling that I am ‘giving back’ to the planet	£5,254
More self-confidence	£2,095
Feeling adequately compensated financially for work	£525
Feeling more distress (from H&S concerns)	-£560
Feeling part of a community	£6,131
More financial choice and independence	£823
TOTAL	£23,978

Outcomes for volunteers	Value of each outcome
More empathy	£13,484
Feeling that I am ‘giving back’ to others	£62,918
Feeling that I am ‘giving back’ to the planet	£26,152
More self-confidence	£30,576

Feeling adequately compensated financially for work	£931
Feeling less distress (from H&S concerns)	£4,666
Feeling part of a community	£55,769
More financial choice and independence	£2,498
TOTAL	£196,994

Outcomes for customers	Value of each outcome
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others	£3,355,212
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet	£2,474,193
Feeling part of a community	£1,185,291
More financial choice and independence	£1,176,845
Excitement from the shopping experience	£2,321,084
Feeling that charity shop staff meet me with friendliness and compassion	£2,490,174
TOTAL	£13,002,799

Outcomes for donors	Value of each outcome
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to others	£2,889,734
Feeling that I am 'giving back' to the planet	£1,757,704
Feeling part of a community	£785,957
More financial choice and independence	£311,370
Excitement from the shopping experience	£715,049
Feeling that charity shop staff meet me with friendliness and compassion	£1,808,298
TOTAL	£8,268,122

Aggregated results for all stakeholder groups	
Staff - Total value	£23,978
Volunteers - Total value	£196,994
Customers - Total value	£13,002,746
Donors - Total value	£8,267,795
TOTAL Value (Social Return)	£21,491,513
Investment	£1,914,363
SROI	£11.23

Section 5 - Conclusions

The social value principles close with Principle 8 which is 'Be Responsive'. In our preparation for and through the use of the CRA's calculator we have learned something that I think we all already knew but couldn't quantify, that our shops really are much more than just shops! Charity shops have a much greater impact than most could imagine, and we now have this evidence. Our shops provide a hub for our local communities by bringing companionship, joy, and a sense of giving and receiving.

The Principles of Social Value

(Source: [Social Value International](#))



ACACIA volunteer Claire (right) with ACACIA's Wootton Shop Manager. Volunteering has had an incredible impact on Claire – read more here: <https://rafiki-foundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Claire-Case-Study.pdf>