



Stepping Stone House Social Impact Report

Improving the Wellbeing
of At-Risk Youth

April 2020

Prepared by





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Improving the **Wellbeing** of At-Risk Young People

Living in a home is not simply having a roof over your head. It means having a place where you feel a sense of safety, comfort and belonging. The security and stability of a home puts you in a position to reach your full potential, rather than simply trying to survive.

To support young people to achieve independence and Wellbeing, Stepping Stone House provides medium to long-term accommodation and personal development programs to homeless and at-risk youth who have slipped through the cracks of their community. Through a unique model of holistic care, Stepping Stone House develops the self-esteem, emotional resilience, self-confidence and good health of its residents. Development is achieved through a combination of outdoor adventure education, counselling, careers and employment coaching, education and over 450 life skills.

Stepping Stone House are differentiated from traditional youth homelessness services by supporting their youth beyond the age of 18, when government support for out of home care comes to an abrupt end. Recognising the years beyond age 18 as some of the most formative in a young person's life, Stepping Stone House is working to reverse the statistics that show 60% of young people who exit out of home care at 18 years old experience homelessness in the next year, and less than 2% complete tertiary education. Stepping Stone House's accommodation services extend to children and young people aged 12 to 24 years old, but support will often continue through the After Care program until the age of 30.

Stepping Stone House takes pride in measuring and demonstrating its social impact. In partnership with Huber Social, Stepping Stone House has embedded an active measurement system that breaks down exactly how participating in its program contributes to residents' overall Wellbeing, levels of capability and access to opportunity.

This report is the third in a series of annual Social Impact Reports, which track the social impact of the organisation and ensure that Stepping Stone House continues to maximise efficiency and have the greatest impact possible.



Stepping Stone House is a safe place for homeless and at-risk youth to become **the very best they can be.**



Why Measure Social Impact?

We measure the social impact of Stepping Stone House to both prove the impact of the program, and to be able to inform how service delivery may be improved.

1. Prove

The measurement framework measures shifts in the Wellbeing (impact) and target outcomes for the young people participating in the program each year.

It provides data and insights that allow Stepping Stone House to articulate its social value to internal and external stakeholders.

2. Improve

The measurement framework provides a data driven approach to understanding the needs of young people in the program. This informs targeted investment to maximise social outcomes going forward, and to facilitate effective collaboration with other service providers where appropriate.



**Stepping Stone House
supports children and
young people to
achieve independence
and wellbeing.**





Stepping Stone House

Program Summary

Stepping Stone House gives young people a safe environment, where the staff can interact and engage with them and work towards building a meaningful, therapeutic and non-judgmental relationship.

In addition to meeting the primary needs of food, water, shelter and safety, Stepping Stone House place a large emphasis on meeting each individual's secondary needs. By creating powerful relationships between youth and staff, Stepping Stone House are able to assist their residents to identify, understand and acknowledge these secondary needs such as acceptance, emotional support, understanding their behaviours, health, education, connectedness, social relationships, learning new skills, participating in new experiences and gaining access to resources in a supporting and nurturing holistic learning environment.

The service has 24-hour supervision and the staff of Stepping Stone House work as a team to provide award-winning levels of care to the young people. Each staff member is chosen because of their unique skill set and commitment to the aims and mission of Stepping Stone House.

Stepping Stone House is more than just a residential service. It is a "home away from home" environment where young people will be treated with respect and fairness, while living in a house where a quality of life is valued and promoted.



- **Seven 'Stepping Stones'** to guide young people towards responsible independence
- **After Care and Alumni program** for on-going support
- **Active program** of volunteering, skill-building, adventure activities and the arts
- **Extensive Life Skill program** tailored to each 'Stepping Stone'

Stepping Stone House provides support for homeless and at-risk youth with:

- Accommodation
- Therapeutic care
- Adventure education to build emotional resilience
- School and tertiary education support
- Practical employment and career development
- Restoration to their families or significant others
- Life skills workshops
- Confidence-building empowerment camps
- Cultural competence camps
- Mental health
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Volunteering
- Mentors
- Financial management



Stepping Stone House Social Impact Model

The Stepping Stone House Social Impact Model outlines how the organisation impacts those who participate in their programs. By measuring multiple levels of impact, Stepping Stone House uses a data driven approach to demonstrate what currently works and what may be required to maximise impact and outcomes.

1. Impact Stepping Stone House supports homeless and at-risk youth to achieve independence and Wellbeing.



2. Outcomes Stepping Stone House achieves this impact by targeting outcomes that not only address homelessness but also work to empower youth to achieve responsible independence. These outcomes include:

Building capacity in:

- Wellness
- Life Skills
- Resilience

Providing the opportunity to access:

- Resources
 - Services and structures
 - Relationships
 - Self-development
-



3. Outputs The service delivers the following outputs:

- Young people progressing through the Stepping Stones
- Young People graduating
- Completion of year 10 and year 12
- Completed tertiary education
- School attendance
- Accommodation at 19 years old
- Employment on graduation
- Transition foster care
- Restored to family



4. Activities The service involves the following activities:

- Accommodation
- Therapeutic care
- Adventure education to build emotional resilience
- School and tertiary education support
- Practical employment and career development programs
- Restoration to their families or significant others
- Life skills workshops
- Confidence-building empowerment camps
- Cultural competence camps
- Mental health
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Volunteering
- Mentors
- Financial management



5. Resources The above impact requires the following inputs:

- Accommodation
- Stepping Stone House Staff and volunteers
- Funding/ donations
- Community partners

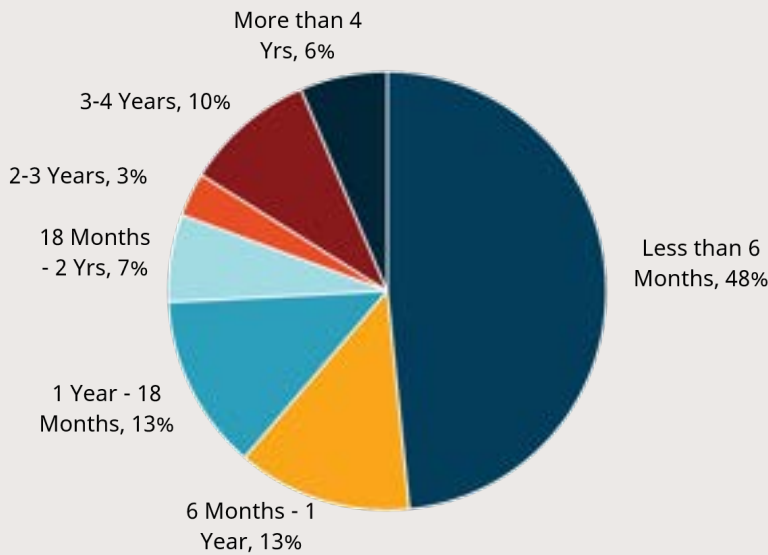


The Program

Participants

The participants of the program are young people aged 12 – 24 years and are generally referred to Stepping Stone House from all over Australia via Community Services, Juvenile Justice, and crisis accommodation services as well as self-referrals.

The various samples used in this report include survey responses from 33 young people while they were residents at Stepping Stone House.^ Many of them are current residents at Stepping Stone House.

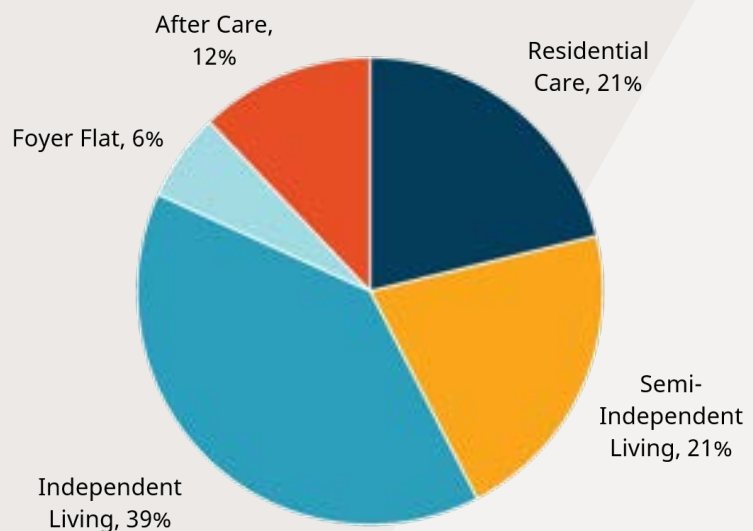


Time at Stepping Stone House

- Close to half of the sample have been at SSH for less than 6 months.
- About one-quarter have been at SSH for more than 18 months

Program at Stepping Stone House

- The majority of individuals at their most recent or final measurement were in Independent Living (close to 40%)



[^] These demographics exclude the 9 Alumni/After Care survey respondents referred to throughout this report.

Key Findings: The **Impact** of Stepping Stone House

1. Improves Overall Wellbeing

Stepping Stone House creates a positive shift in overall Wellbeing for the young people who participate in their program. This impact is realised not only at graduation, but is sustained well into their future lives.

2. Achieves Target Outcomes

To contribute to an overall positive shift in Wellbeing, and to put young people in a position of independence, Stepping Stone House achieves a range of outcomes for the young people in their care.

Aligned with the Stepping Stone House target outcomes, the biggest areas of improvement were achieved across a range of life skills and wellness factors.

3. Addresses Priority Needs

Stepping Stone House is effective at addressing needs that have a significant relationship with overall Wellbeing for the young people in their care.

4. Challenges that Remain

Graduates leaving the Stepping Stone House program face challenges relating to resilience, mental health and money management.





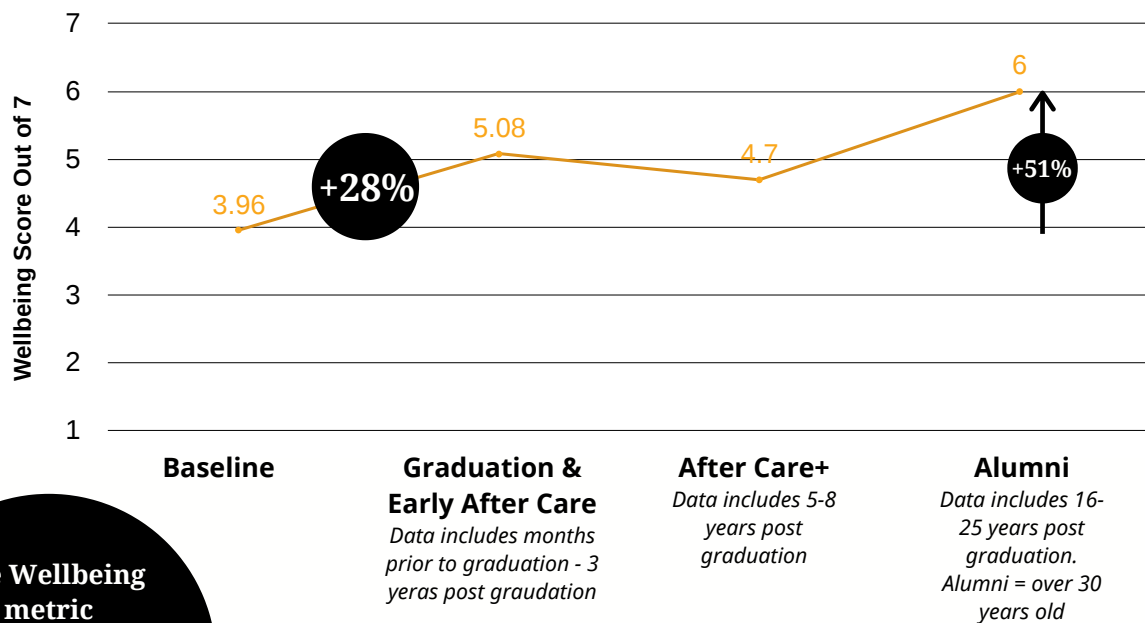
Stepping Stone House Improves the Wellbeing of At-Risk Youth

Through social impact measurement, Stepping Stone House aims to track the impact it has on young people from when they first engage with Stepping Stone House through to their graduation as a resident, and then life after Stepping Stone House in the After Care program or as an alumni.

In November 2017, Huber Social and Stepping Stone House reached out to a sample of former Stepping Stone House residents to measure how their Wellbeing is tracking since leaving the service. The results, combined with data collected from young people as they progress through the Stepping Stone House programs are shown below.

On average, the young people at Stepping Stone House experience a **+28%** positive shift in their Wellbeing between starting with Stepping Stone House and Graduating/First few years of After Care.

That improvement to Wellbeing is then sustained and grown over time, with a **+51%** shift in Wellbeing between first joining Stepping Stone House and the long-term Alumni.



The Wellbeing metric measures an individual's satisfaction with life

Stepping Stone House is committed to measuring impact throughout an individual's complete journey, which can span several years. As this longitudinal data is collected, the analysis and findings will be strengthened. The above analysis is based on 26 baseline measurements and 12 Graduation, After Care and Alumni measurements.



A Long-term Improvement to Wellbeing has Highs and Lows for Residents

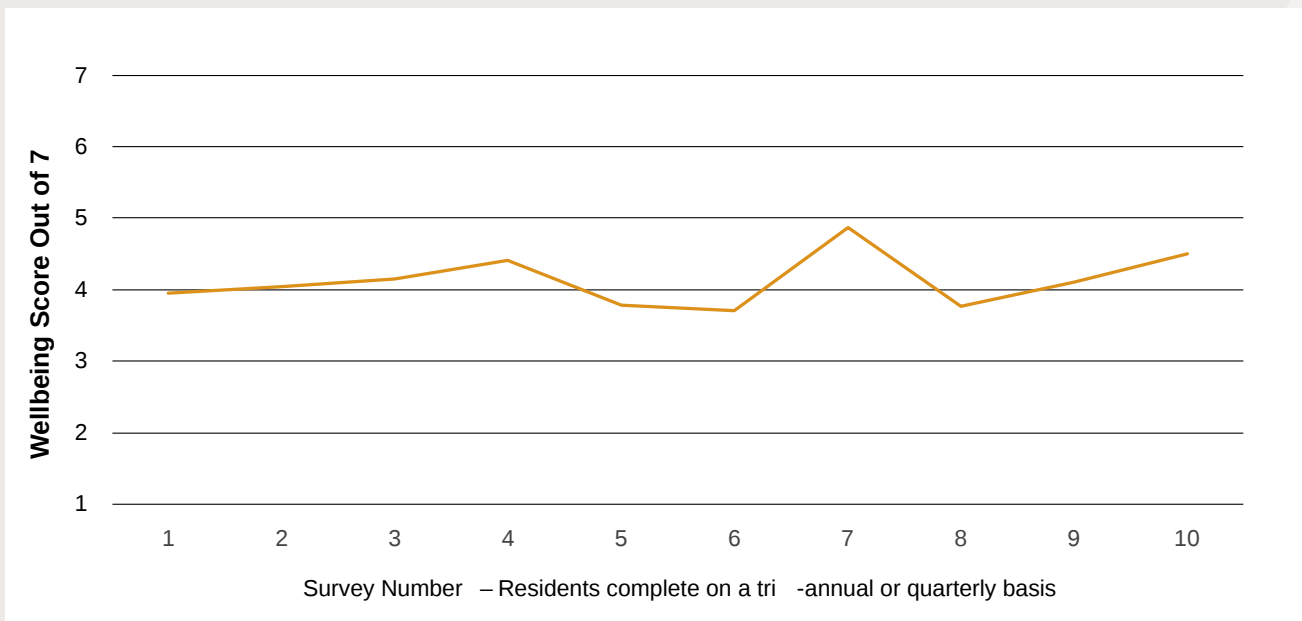
The social impact measurement plan at Stepping Stone House tracks the progress of young people over time as they journey with the program.

The average journey of a young person at Stepping Stone House based on the data collected between 2017 and 2020 is shown in the graph below. This shows that despite the +28% increase in overall Wellbeing from first joining to graduating (see previous page), improvement in Wellbeing is not linear. Wellbeing rises and falls as residents progress through the different Stepping Stones and become more independent - learning more about life and facing new challenges.



Stepping Stone House acknowledges this reality and uses the regular surveys to tailor and improve their services to best provide for the young people they work with.

The Wellbeing Journey for Residents



Note: This graph shows ongoing progress from a residents first measurement. As the journey from baseline through to graduation typically takes several years, we do not yet have sufficient data to show an average for the complete journey from baseline to graduation or to determine trends in the highs and lows. This data will be collected overtime. This graph includes measurements from 30 individuals.



Stepping Stone House Outcomes for Youth in their Care

Huber Social measured the impact of Stepping Stone House across a range of different capabilities to understand the effectiveness of the program. The six largest positive shifts that young people experienced between joining and graduating from Stepping Stone House are shown below.

These are aligned with the target outcomes outlined in the Stepping Stone House Social Impact Model, with the biggest areas of impact achieved across a range of life skills and wellness factors.



Wellness

+86%

Decrease in using alcohol, drugs and tobacco in a way that puts health at risk*



Housing Skills

+52%

Knowing where to go if forced out of current accommodation*



Housing Skills

+44%

Knowing how to secure stable and long-term accommodation



Employment Skills

+37%

The ability to find, apply for and secure employment



Personal Development

+36%

Decrease in regretting decisions*



Wellness

+35%

A decrease in mental, physical or emotional health prohibiting work, study or housework*



Faith in the Law

+31%

Believing the law if there to protect young people, and trusting the system*



Purpose

+29%

Increased sense of purpose and having meaning in life

* this factor was also one of the lowest scoring factors when young people first joined Stepping Stone House, indicating that Stepping Stone House has its largest impact in areas of need.

Data includes:

- 26 Baseline responses (just joined SSH)
- 8 Graduation or Early Year After Care responses (within a few months prior to graduation and up to 3 years post graduation)

"Created a sense of joy and memories"

For me I felt like I grew up there, I learnt how to be an individual and I started growing outside my circle. I'm a pretty-shy girl and I probably still am but I feel like to make up for my own traumatic childhood, Stepping Stone has abolished it and created a sense of joy and memories for me.

*Former Resident,
Stepping Stone House*





Stepping Stone House Addresses the **Priority Needs** for Youth in their Care

In order to inform how to best support at-risk youth, analysis was performed to understand their priority needs for Wellbeing. Priority needs are capability or opportunity factors that are found through statistical analysis to have a unique and significant relationship with overall Wellbeing.

The Stepping Stone House program had a positive impact against all three of the priority needs identified for their residents' Wellbeing.



More frequent feelings of happiness

The Stepping Stone House staff are able to ease the stress and burden that sit on the shoulders of many at-risk young people, allowing them time and freedom to enjoy their lives with new friends in the program or community.

Stepping Stone House graduates see a 22% increase in feeling happy, and that percentage is sustained through to the Alumni group. The ability to enjoy life and have fun also sees a positive and sustained increase of 25%.



Having pride in the things they have accomplished

Stepping Stone House residents are not only supported through their challenges, but are helped to develop capabilities and provided opportunities to become independent and achieve their potential, ranging from cooking, financial management, self care in stressful situations, adventure trips and part time jobs.

Stepping Stone House graduates and those in the first three years of After Care saw a 12% increase in self-pride, which grew to a 32% increase for the Alumni group compared to first joining Stepping Stone House.



Feeling safe

Swinburne University found that over half (56%) of young people experiencing homelessness had left home because of violence between parents or guardians on at least one occasion, and about one in six (15%) had run away from home more than ten times because of violence*. This helps to explain why feeling safe is so important to the Wellbeing of young people living at Stepping Stone House.

Recent graduates had an 18% improvement in feeling safe between joining the program and graduation. This factor is yet to be measured longitudinally with Alumni.

Priority Needs: Factors found to have a significant relationship with overall Wellbeing in order of statistical significance.

FACTORS	Coefficient	P-Value
Happiness – Feeling happy more often in the past month	1.063	P = 0.037
Pride – Proud of accomplishments in life	0.296	P < 0.001
Safety – Feeling safe	0.363	P < 0.001

* *The Cost of Youth Homelessness in Australia, Research Briefing, 28 April 2016 a study undertaken by Swinburne University Institute for Social Research, the University of Western Australia and Charles Sturt University, in partnership with The Salvation Army, Mission Australia and Anglicare Canberra & Goulburn.*



Challenges that Remain

Despite the Impact and Outcomes achieved by Stepping Stone House, young people who graduate from their programs still have a number of challenges to overcome.

The following challenges have been identified by assessing the lowest scoring factors for graduates or those in the first few years of After Care and help to inform how Stepping Stone House can best support graduates as they leave the program.



Self Belief

Belief in self to help through difficult times



Money Management

The ability to save money or invest it for the future



Sadness

Feeling upset or sad



Persistence

Being able to persevere and overcome setbacks



Coping

Being able to handle many things at once





The Measurement Approach

Stepping Stone House has been working with Huber Social to embed a measurement system across all the Stepping Stone programs since 2017. This report summarises findings based on data collected between December 2016 and March 2020.

To measure the impact of the program Huber Social measures the shift in the subjective Wellbeing of the young people in the program, along with their levels of personal capability and access to opportunities. For further information on the Huber Social Wellbeing Measurement Framework see the following page.

To demonstrate this shift for Stepping Stone House House, Huber Social collects data from the young people in the program using surveys. These surveys are completed when a young person first joins Stepping Stone House, at intervals during their time in the program and at graduation (shown in Figure 1 below).

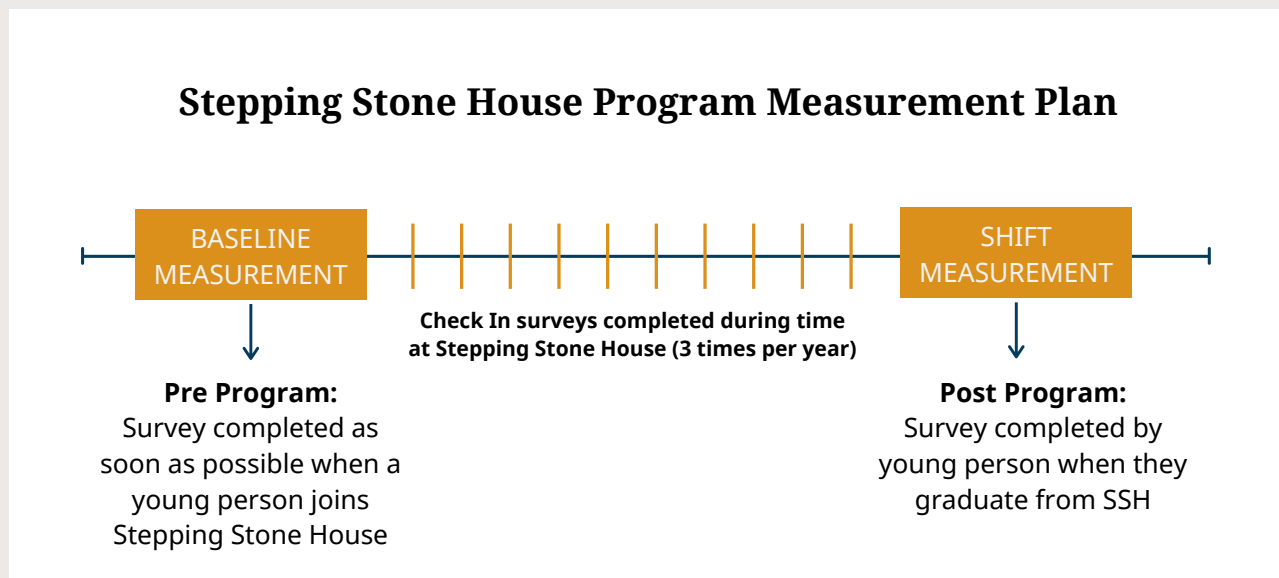


Figure 1. Stepping Stone House Program Social Impact Measurement Activities for 2019

Moving forward Stepping Stone House also aims to measure longitudinally through the After Care program and once graduates join the Stepping Stone House Alumni (once 30 years old). Until then one-off measurements will continue to be conducted with past residents.



Be Part of the Solution

DONATE

Rather than giving money and in the hope it has the impact an organisation pledges, donating to Stepping Stone House means you can track the difference your dollar makes to the lives of the young people they serve.

This is the third Annual Social Impact Report that tracks the progress of Stepping Stone House as it contributes to the Wellbeing of all the young people they work with, providing evidence that your resources are directed to have the greatest impact.

VOLUNTEER

Stepping Stone House also welcomes volunteers to help change the lives of young people. They offer four types of volunteer roles:

1. Skill-based volunteers
2. Fundraising Ambassadors
3. Weekday office administration volunteers
4. Youth mentors



Get in **Touch**



Stepping Stone House

+61 2 9558 3529
info@steppingstonehouse.com.au
www.steppingstonehouse.com.au



**HUBER
SOCIAL**

Huber Social

Huber Social is an independent third party and expert in social impact measurement. Recognising the goal of all social impact is the Wellbeing of people, Huber Social has developed a universally applicable framework that measures not only overall Wellbeing but also the driving factors to maximise it.

info@hubersocial.com.au
www.hubersocial.com.au





Data Transparency Page

To ensure the integrity of findings always, Huber Social includes a Transparency Page for every project. This ensures both the rigour of evidence and rigour of analysis is clear for each project, across every stage of the data lifecycle.



Phase	Questions on the Treatment of the Data	Points allocated	Yes or No	
Design	SAMPLE	Everyone in the program included in the measurement	2	Y
		OR Survey sample population designed to be representative of group	1	-
	BASELINE	Control group (independent of the intervention)	3	-
		Group baseline measured (pre -intervention)	2	-
		Baseline inferred from time in program (e.g. 1 vs. 3 years)	1	Y
EXCLUSIONS	Details of people specifically excluded from the measurement: <i>Residents may decline to participate, but all are encouraged to complete a survey. Alumni group – participation requested through social media and SSH alumni database so may exclude those no longer in contact with SSH/have changed contact details.</i>	N/A	N/A	
Data Collection	DISTRIBUTION	Online surveys		Y
		OR hardcopy surveys		-
	DATA SOURCES	Data collection supervised by Huber Social consultant	1	-
		Translation or guidance provided		Y
		Details on translation or guidance if provided: <i>Guidance/support provided by SSH staff if requested.</i>	N/A	N/A
Cleaning	CLEANING	Data Mining of other sources	1	-
		Data included from previous years/measurements	1	Y
		Partial responses removed or no partial responses	1	Y
Analysis	SHIFT MEASUREMENT	Details of any responses removed: <i>One individual survey removed as data identified as unreliable/not accurate.</i>	N/A	N/A
		Calculated on time in program		-
		Calculated on group average	1	Y
	TEST APPLIED	Calculated based on individual scores	2	-
		Basic analysis		Y
Reporting	REPORTING	Statistical Correlation Test	2	-
		Multiple Regression or Lasso Regression Test	3	Y
		Details on statistical analysis: <i>The main modelling approach was linear mixed models, to adjust for the repeated observations within the same individuals</i>	N/A	N/A
		Client published Outcomes Report (prove)	1	
Reporting	REPORTING	Client received Social Performance Report (improve)	2	Y
		Client published full Social Impact Report	3	Y
RIGUOUR SCORE : LOW: 1-9; MED 10-14; HIGH 15-19		14	MED	

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info@hubersocial.com.au
www.hubersocial.com.au