



PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES REPORT

May 2020 – May 2021

Abstract

This report builds on ICOS's Evaluation Strategy (created in 2020) and covers the period of between 01/05/2020 and 01/05/2021.

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ICOS Impact Report

May 2020 – May 2021

1. Introduction:

This report builds on ICOS's Evaluation Strategy (created in 2020) and covers the period of between 01/05/2020 and 01/05/2021.

2. What has been achieved as a result of ICOS work?

During the period covered, ICOS supported a total of 343 clients through individual interventions (some took part in more than 1 project- e.g. needed support with employability and then also benefits), including advice, guidance, advocacy and employability support, not counting those clients who did not benefit from intensive support (e.g. event attendees). In total:

- We supported a total of 118 people with employability (including support with CV's, job applications, registering with agencies, job searching websites, interview preparation) and 37 people have successfully found employment or self-employment. We have also supported a total of 49 people with accessing training and courses (including ESOL, food hygiene courses, digital courses and functional skills) and 17 accessed volunteering opportunities (internal and external opportunities).
- We supported a total of 88 people with benefit advice (including Universal Credit applications, Personal Independence Payment, ESA, council tax support, Maternity Allowance, Pension Credit and Child Benefit).
- 50 people received housing support, this figure includes applications with housing associations such as Gentoo, Bernicia and local councils, supporting people getting onto priority for properties due to their housing need and resolving issues linking to housing).
- We capture data from registration and evaluation forms for each project, we use a 1-10 scale to measure changes with regards to client's financial situation, from our evaluation we had found out that 96 people have reported an improved financial situation.
- We also used the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) on registration and end of project forms to capture any changes in our client's wellbeing, 90 beneficiaries had reported an improved mental health and wellbeing due to the support received.

As both- the regular/routine use of the Likert scale and the WEMWBS scale was being implemented during that period, not all clients who received one to one support were registered using the forms containing Likert scale financial situation questions or the WEMWBS.

- We supported 38 Eastern European victims of crime, including 12 victims of hate crime, 15 victims of antisocial behaviour and 11 victims of domestic violence with contacting the police, liaison with the solicitor, translations and other types of holistic support such as housing. 19 of the clients are reported they would be more confident in reporting crime in the future. During

the project we used The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale on our initial registration forms as well as on evaluations forms to measure any changes to clients wellbeing. From our analysis we have found out that due to support received 61% had reported an improved wellbeing.

- Through the Back in Control project, we supported 46 clients who exited within the period covered by this report. 37 reported improved financial situation (the situation of three clients decreased, while it did not change for two of the clients, there was not enough data for three clients) and 37 reported that they had gained more control over their life (the situation of three clients decreased, while it did not change for two of the clients, there was not enough data for four clients). This was measured using the Likert scale.
- Through the Back in Control project, we delivered modern day slavery awareness training to a total of 19 organisations based in the North East of England (including the Children's Society, the British Red Cross, counselling services and trade unions). The training was attended by a total of 64 people and was partly based on project client experience

Additionally:

- 45 people had received material support including food vouchers, fuel vouchers and data / mobile phone top-ups.
- We have delivered online English language classes as a response to COVID19 as many centres had to close temporarily and our beneficiaries needed English language support during this time but this also created an opportunity for them to improve their wellbeing and networks. We had 23 individuals (including refugees and asylum seekers attending our English classes).
- We have continued to focus on improving the wellbeing of women through delivering women's group activities which took place online (over zoom) during COVID19 pandemic including 'coffee and chat' meetings, wellbeing meetings, arts and crafts activities and we also delivered a 'STEPS into STEM' online workshop exploring opportunities for BME women within the Science, technology, engineering and maths sector at which we had 13 attendees (<https://icos.org.uk/2021/04/08/steps-into-stem-event-case-study/>).
- Through the East Rangers project (<https://icos.org.uk/past-projects/>), ICOS engaged with 175 volunteers, removed over 5000 kilograms of rubbish and engaged with 126 children. This was achieved through delivering 40 activity days, including 5 educational workshops. ICOS has helped the council to save £33960 in man-hours (valued at £12 per hour per volunteer multiplied by the number of hours), according to a calculation by Sunderland City Council.

SROI analysis and social value (more information on SROI can be accessed here:

<http://www.socialvalueuk.org/resources/sroi-guide/>)

2.1. Health and wellbeing benefits of our work

- Between May 2020 and May 2021, 96 people improved their health and wellbeing through ICOS's work, as measured through the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. This means that ICOS contributed at least £18,400.32 to the NHS, based on an average of £191.67¹ per person.
- Between May 2020 and May 2021, 37 clients reported an increase in feeling of being in control. This means that ICOS contributed and equivalent of at least £601,530.09 to each individual client, based on £16,257.57² per person. The figure is likely even higher, given that some of the clients were victims of modern slavery- others, victims of workplace exploitation.
- Between May 2020 and May 2021, 15 clients improved their confidence

This means that:

- ICOS contributed at least £221317.5 to the individuals who improved their confidence, based on £14 754.50³ and 15 clients who reported an improvement in their confidence.
- Between May 2020 and May 2021, 37 people have found employment through ICOS's support. This means that:

a) ICOS has contributed at least £13,206.04 to individual clients, based on £356⁴ per person in healthcare costs' reduction of someone being into work

b) ICOS has contributed at least ICOS has contributed at least £13,206.04 to the exchequer (the NHS), based on £356⁵ per person in healthcare costs' reduction of someone being into work

The total social value of all health projects at ICOS is £2,867,659.99

Given that the total cost of ICOS's work was £293,979⁶, for every £1 spend, ICOS generated £9.75 in health benefits to the society.

¹ Average annual NHS expenditure on mental health per person (England) per year was £166 per person in 2013. (NHS England, 2013). After an inflation adjustment, this equals £191.67

² The feeling of being in control of life is valued at £14,080 per person per year for an individual between 25 – 49 (the vast majority of our clients), based on "Measuring the Social Impact of Community Investment: A Guide to using the Wellbeing Valuation Approach", HACT; 2014. After inflation adjustment, this equals £16257.57

³ High confidence is valued at £13080 per person, based on "Measuring the Social Impact of Community Investment: A Guide to using the Wellbeing Valuation Approach", HACT; 2014. After adjustment for inflation, this is £14,754.50

⁴ Reduction in healthcare costs of someone progressing into work from Future Jobs Fund – equals £300. Future Jobs Fund impact report (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/223120/impacts_costs_benefits_fjf.pdf). After adjustment for inflation, this equals £356.92

⁵ As above under "3"

⁶ Health improvement has been measured across a range of different projects, not just health and wellbeing projects per se. Hence, we have chosen to use a calculation which included the entirety of ICOS's annual turnover.

2.2. Employment and the economy benefits of our work

- ICOS has contributed at least £196100 to individual community members through helping them to find work, based on an average £5300⁷ per person (37 clients, the figure constitutes an average increase in individual income after entering work)
- ICOS has contributed £977022 to the economy through wages of 37 clients who found work, at an average wage of £26,406⁸ per person (North East of England average).
- ICOS has contributed at least £2974.8 to the local authority in saved council tax discount (based on £80.40⁹ per claimant and 37 people going into work)
- ICOS has contributed at least £425103.73 to the public purse, based on £11,489.29¹⁰ per person finding work and an extra £30418.6 for four disabled claimants, based on £7,604.65¹¹ per claimant finding work. A total of £455522.33
- Between May 2020 and April 2021, 49 individuals accessed basic vocational training (such as level 2 food hygiene). This means that ICOS contributed on average £60461.1 to individuals who have completed basic level 1 / level 2 training with our support, based on £1,233.90¹² per individual completing training and 49 clients completing within that period.

The total social value of ICOS's employability work is £1,661,661.63

Given that the total cost of ICOS's employability work was £86,627.99, for every £1 spend, ICOS generated £19.18 in economic and financial benefits to the society.

Disclaimer: At ICOS, we recognise that there is a need to measure the impact of our advocacy and advice work through SROI however this has proven challenging due to lack of available comparators and proxy measures. We hope to be able to progress this part of our work in the future.

3. Views and feedback from our clients

Feedback from clients was gathered between June and July 2021 over the phone, based on a randomly selected sample of 34 clients (10% of all the clients who received support during that period of time). A maximum of 3 attempts were made to contact each of the clients and we were able to reach a total of 21 out of the cohort of 34 clients.

⁷ DWP, 2013: Benefits for single individual working full-time: £4307 per person per year (needs inflation adjustment- 2007). Currently about £5300 when increased by inflation.

⁸ ONS- average wage in the North East, 2020

⁹ Cost per annum of Council Tax Discount- worth at least £6.67/peer month, equals £80.40 per annum. Sunderland City Council.

¹⁰ Fiscal benefits of JSA claimant entering work (annum): £8218.88 (DWP, 2007). Adjusted for inflation: £11,489.29 (savings in benefits otherwise paid to claimants).

¹¹ Fiscal benefits of disabled claimants entering work- £5440 per person per year (DWP, 2007). Adjusted for inflation: £7,604.65 (savings in benefits otherwise paid to claimants).

¹² £1123.86 per person accessing training) Individual value of vocational training (from HACT 0 Housing Associations' Charitable Trust; 2016) When adjusted by inflation, this is £1,233.90

We asked the following questions:

1. What support did you receive from ICOS?
2. Could you describe the impact ICOS's support has had on you in 2 – 3 sentences?
3. Can you rate the support you have received from ICOS on a rising 1 – 10 scale? (1 is "poor", 10 is "excellent")
4. How has ICOS's support impacted you?
5. What is the most valuable type of support you have received from ICOS?
6. In your opinion, what could ICOS improve / do better?
7. Have we helped you to become more independent?
8. Where would you go if you did not know about ICOS to receive that support?
9. Did you regularly volunteer for ICOS (that is, more than 3 times during the last 12 months)?
10. Would you like to volunteer for ICOS?
11. If so- what would you like to do?
12. What are your hopes for the next 12 months?
13. What are your fears and worries about the next 12 months?
14. Would you be prepared to take part in a case study?

3.1. Survey analysis

1. What support did you receive from ICOS?

The clients received support with various issues, from resolving problem with an energy provider, to attending English classes, reflecting the spectrum of problems ICOS supports clients with. Notably however, out of 21 clients, 8 received support with welfare issues, such as access to housing or benefits:

"I got a lot of help from ICOS, you provided me with financial advice, help with benefits, bus tickets to work, employment support, CV, food safety course and English language classes."

Other clients reported having been supported through referrals to the EU Settlement Scheme, as well as attending English classes (which ICOS run in absence of other courses as the COVID19 pandemic struck):

"ICOS has helped me a lot, I have got help with English language classes with Monika and she is an amazing teacher and helped to improve my language. I could not speak any English the first time I came to ICOS and now I can speak and I understand much more, I can communicate. ICOS has helped me with my CV and translation of certificates and a statement of comparability from NARIC."

2. Could you describe the impact ICOS's support has had on you in 2 – 3 sentences?

Out of 21 respondents, only one client felt that the main issue she presented herself with had not been resolved, however, this issue was not fully within ICOS's power to resolve:

"My daughter was getting help from ICOS but there was not much you did with our situation with my granddaughter*. The lady did help us both with getting status, we did not know we had to have it and she did give us information about it." (*who had been removed from the family by social services).

Most clients found ICOS's support valuable:

"ICOS have helped me so much in the past few months. I feel like I can always count on my project worker. I feel more comfortable knowing that there is someone there ready to help when I need it."

"Because of all this help I am now starting accounting Level 1 at Gateshead college and can continue to look at accounting jobs when I finish this course and go back to being an accountant. My English has improved and now I'm ready to study functional skills."

"Thanks to the organisation, I have improved my English language skills. I got help with everything and it really did have a very positive impact on me, really good help from your side."

"Thanks to the organisation, I have improved my English language skills. I got help with everything and it really did have a very positive impact on me, really good help from your side."

"Great work done.; My problem was solved."

3. Can you rate the support you have received from ICOS on a rising 1 – 10 scale? (1 is "poor", 10 is "excellent")

Out of 21 clients surveyed, 18 rated ICOS's support as 10 and 1 each as 6, 8 and 9 respectively.

4. How has ICOS's support impacted on you?

Most clients reported positive changes, and used words such as "better", "improved", "relaxed" and grateful. Several participants felt that they had already answered this question in their response to question 2 and that their response would be the same.

5. What is the most valuable type of support you have received from ICOS?

All responses to this question were positive and the vast majority of responses could be divided into two broad categories:

- Responses highlighting staff attitude and the quality of work delivered by staff (e.g. communication, friendliness, openness). In total, 10 clients made such comments:

"Always friendly and ready to help. Always available."

"Frequent communication about the progress that was being made."

"Always friendly and ready to help. Always available. On time."

“Help from my support worker and the whole organisation – they provide a high quality work.”

“ICOS employees were very accommodating and they were helping me even when they didn’t have to (in their free time). They put all their effort into helping me and I am very grateful for their support.”

- Responses highlighting the result of ICOS’s work. In total, 5 clients talked about the practical results of the support:

“All the help I have got through Wise Steps and all the support with English classes with Monika, she is a very good teacher, help me improve my language.

“The [EU Settlement] status application, we both now have this.”

6. In your opinion, what could ICOS improve / do better?

12 clients could not think of any changes ICOS could make, however, several have suggested better organisational communication, including more information being available on social media:

“In my opinion, more social media engagement”.

2 clients have also suggested opening offices in other areas in the North East:

“To have an office in Newcastle”

Other comments were not repeat ones- e.g. one client wished ICOS to acquire a bigger venue.

7. Have we helped you to become more independent?

Out of the 21 respondents, 19 felt that we did help them to become more independent:

“Yes, definitely! I am a lot more independent than I was a year ago.”

“Yes, I am more financially independent now.”

However, some qualified their responses by highlighting that the improvement they had experienced was relative or limited:

“Yes but I am still working on that because of the language barrier.”

“Yes. I still have some issues but you have helped.”

“Yes but I am still working on that because of the language barrier.”

Two felt we had not helped them to become more independent, including one who felt the support they received was brief/one off, and therefore had no impact on their independence.

It is also worth stressing that the questionnaire did not distinguish between the different types of independence, or defined it, hence, each of the clients has to base their response on their own understanding of what independence meant.

8. Where would you go if you did not know about ICOS to receive that support?

13 out of 21 clients indicated that they would not know where they would go for help and support – including one who even suggested they would have to return to their country of origin if they did not get support from ICOS:

“I would struggle to go anywhere else. Maybe would go back to Poland.”

Other clients named a range of organisations, including Jobcentre Plus (three clients), Citizens Advice Bureau (two clients), Red Cross, McMillan or ACAS. One person mentioned they would talk to a trusted friend, and one did not believe anyone (including ICOS) could help them.

9. Did you regularly volunteer for ICOS (that is, more than 3 times during the last 12 months)?

None of the randomly selected clients confirmed that they had regularly volunteered for ICOS, although one confirmed volunteering on an ad-hoc basis. It is worth highlighting that the clients were supported during the period of the pandemic, when most volunteering at ICOS stopped.

10. Would you like to volunteer for ICOS?

Out of 21, 14 clients indicated they would be prepared to volunteer for ICOS. While most simply responded “yes”, some commented in more depth: “yes, if I have time. I like working with people.”. On the other hand, 6 said would or could not volunteer for ICOS at the moment for varying reasons, including age (“I am too old to volunteer”; “I would like to when my health improves”), or indicated that they would like to volunteer in the future but could not commit now. Two clients asked for more information about volunteering at ICOS: “I will think about. You can send me your newsletter and maybe I will join ICOS as a volunteer from time to time.”, “I would like to find out more”.

11. If so- what would you like to do?

There was a wide range of responses from potential volunteers, including that they would like to support ICOS with environmental projects (two responses), “anything” (four responses). Three clients mentioned skilled volunteering, including supporting clients with paperwork, accounting/finance and translations.

12. What are your hopes for the next 12 months?

While clients had many different hopes, 6 expressed their desire to learn new and improve current skills, including 5 who indicated that they would like to improve their English language skills. 6 mentioned the importance of work, either finding a new job, or keeping the current one (two clients), as well as progressing into a better job. Two clients mentioned hoping their health would improve, and other responses included getting a better accommodation, access to children’s activities, having more money and family reunion.

13. What are your fears and worries about the next 12 months?

Many of the fears client had corresponded to the hopes they had for the future and included aspirations in areas such as work, career progression, skills improvement (in particular, improving English language skills). Additionally, two clients said they hoped to finding accommodation. Many mentioned the coronavirus pandemic as a factor affecting their long – term prospects.

14. Would you be prepared to take part in a case study?

16 out of 21 respondents indicated that they would be happy to take part in a case study interview. Of those who did not explicitly want to take part, two said “no” (including one who indicated that the support they had received had been, in their opinion, too brief to warrant a case study) one was not sure if they would like to do that, and one had already been interviewed for a case study.

Conclusion: While at ICOS, we do recognise that, as the survey was undertaken by ICOS project staff and not by an external agency, there is likely to be bias, however, even taking any bias (e.g. clients might not have wanted to upset ICOS staff) into account, the overall results of the client survey appear extremely positive, and clients value the support they received, as well as how it was delivered. They would also struggle to identify alternative support if support from ICOS was not available. Clients appeared to be mostly very happy with the support they have received and where was a high degree of willingness to help/support ICOS in some way- including willingness to volunteer and take part in case studies. It is also clear that many of the clients want to improve their skills, in particular- English language skills and many are worried about keeping their job. ICOS also recognised that the sample of clients was relatively small, due to not all clients being available during the survey period and consideration will be given to increasing the sample to 15% in future years.

4. Case studies

4.1. Employability- Well Included (Community Led Local Development)

Gosia, (not her real name) is Polish and approached ICOS in February 2021, because she needed help in looking for a job. ICOS discussed with Gosia her needs and expectations as it was very important to empower and enable her. Monika, the Senior Project worker at ICOS helped Gosia prepare a CV and helped and supported her when applying for cleaning and warehousing jobs as Gosia required help in speaking English. ICOS offered 1-2-1 support and English classes were arranged by ICOS to help Gosia, with her English-speaking Gosia was offered ESOL classes twice a week online by ICOS, which she happily accepted and attended. In the meantime, Monika helped Gosia prepare a CV, and this was sent off to recruitment agencies. ICOS helped her apply for jobs by offering their support in completing job application forms and carrying out job searches. In March 2021 there was advert on a Polish website involving sorting and recycling out second-hand clothes. ICOS helped Gosia complete an application form and prepared her for the interview. She was successful in securing the position with the company and accepted the offer. She was happy in accepting the role and with help that was given from ICOS. In May 2021 Gosia was exited from the programme. She now works for both organisation's and works two days in Prudhoe and two in Washington Galleries. Without ICOS's help and support this would not have been possible.

4.2. Employability- Wise Steps

AT has joined Wise Steps in November 2020, he has come from Romania quite recently and needed to find employment in the UK fast as he had no income and was not eligible for benefits in the UK. His English language was communicative but he has struggled with speaking in English confidently so AT was referred to take part in English lessons with ICOS to help him improve on his speaking skills. At our first appointment we created a CV, registered on certain job searching websites and with various job recruitment agencies. AT had very limited job experience, his only work experience was

working on self-employment basis in Romania but he wanted to try applying for jobs within production and warehouse setting in the UK. Together, we have looked into courses and training which would be beneficial for the participant and which would improve his chances of finding employment within this sector. We have registered him onto Level 2 Food Safety course for manufacturing and the participant has completed it within a day. We have spent some time with applying for multiple jobs in food production sector, manufacturing and warehouse operative roles and sent off CV's to potential employers. AT had been invited to 2 job interviews, after trying his best at both interviews, AT finally got offered a position of a production operative within the food production sector. AT also received help with purchasing work safety boots for the start of his employment. AT was grateful for the help he had received and he was really pleased that he managed to find employment so fast with our support.

4.3. Employability (self-employment)- Wise Steps

Resmiye started her journey on Wise Steps back in December 2019 when came to ICOS for support as she wanted to open up her own business but needed help with developing her idea further. Resmiye was a marbling artist back in Turkey but in the UK she wanted to peruse a career in baking and dessert creation as it is something she really enjoyed doing and she felt very inspired by developing her baking skills. Resmiye has completed a level 2 food safety certificate for catering in February and received help from ABC in creating a business plan, she has decided that before opening her own business, she would like to learn English language to a better standard, she has been attending English lessons with ICOS, JET and studying ESOL at college, her English language skills have already improved a lot along with her confidence. The next step for Resmiye will be doing functional skills and when she feels confident enough she will be opening her baking business as planned. You can have a look at Resmiye's amazing cakes and desserts on her Instagram page @marbling_cakes_uk

4.4. Holistic assistance 1

Anna (name changed) came to ICOS for support as she needed help with finding employment and housing, she had recently lost her job and could not afford her private rent where she lived with a friend. Anna did not speak English well and she felt that her confidence was low which was impacting her finding employment. We supported Anna with applying for Universal Credit and helped her with translation and representation at the Jobcentre Plus appointments. We worked with her and a new CV and a covering letter and we have spent some time on one-to-one basis with job applications and registering with agencies. Additionally, she started to attend English language classes to improve her speaking, writing and reading skills (ICOS helped her to enrol) which would improve her employment opportunities and with our support, managed to apply for and get two part-time jobs working in hospitality. We supported her with an application and registration for Gentoo housing and in May 2019 Anna moved into a two-bedroom council property near her place of employment which was very beneficial to her. Anna has also started to get involved with ICOS women's group where she had opportunities to meet new people and get involved with volunteering. In November, we supported her with a new job opportunity working as a baking assistant; since she has finished baking school back in her home country it was a job opportunity which has sounded very appealing to her. Anna felt that due to support she received from ICOS, her English language and communication skills have improved enormously. Anna now feels that her opportunities have improved, she is more independent, and her financial situation has improved. Length of support: February 2019–January 2020

4.5. Holistic assistance 2

Susan arrived in the UK in late 2020. In her home country, she worked as a flight attendant, but as an asylum seeker, she cannot work in the UK. She loved her job and would like to work again, but due to her current situation (claiming asylum) she is unable to enter paid employment at present. Susan joined ICOS as a volunteer in March 2021. Since that time, she has regularly taken part in clean ups in Backhouse Park, Sunderland, organised by ICOS. She is involved in the East Rangers project, which helps to keep the East part of Sunderland clean and help the environment. Volunteering helped Susan to meet new people from a range of countries and cultures and to organise her day- and having a daily routine, which helps her mental health. Moreover, she feels useful and is satisfied that she can make a difference in her community. While working with Susan, ICOS staff members have been able to find out about her future plans and aspirations, and found out that Susan was preparing for the IELTS (English) exam (<https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/take-ielts/what-ielts>), which would enable her to study in the UK, as she would like to settle down in the UK and would like to increase her chances of getting a good job. ICOS has been able to secure English language study books and a laptop computer for Susan to hear help on that journey. Moreover, ICOS have also supplied her with a used bicycle to help her to travel around the local area.

4.6. Volunteering

Karolina (quote): “Since I lost my job I have been struggling with problems such as lack of employment as well as access to information about benefits and entitlements. I also needed UK qualifications and wanted to progress into further education but I did not know any organisations which could help me. Coming to ICOS for help was a good call. I got support in many areas of life including education, money matters, job searching and made new friends. I wanted to pay back for the support and advice I had received, so in January 2020, I started volunteering for ICOS. I found charity work very motivating - being useful helps me to feel better. While helping with clerical tasks, I’m constantly improving my IT and English skills. As socialising has never been my strength, meeting new people and involving myself in events, meetings and courses gave me a lot of self-confidence and joy. I’m glad to be a new part of this amazing team and looking forward to learning even more new things. ICOS is an organization with which I am associated almost from the beginning of living outside my country. Thanks to ICOS, I have met many interesting people from all over the world, I have broadened my level of English. I also had the opportunity to help take care of beautiful British parks and organize interesting, cultural events for children and adults. Volunteering also helped me gain practical knowledge in finance and administration.”