

L'Arche Calgary SROI Case Study



Fast Facts:

- L'Arche has been operating in Calgary since 1973.
- L'Arche is an international Federation comprised of 149 L'Arche communities in 38 countries on 5 continents.
- L'Arche Calgary had 27 Core Members and 34 Assistants in 2015/2016
- 64% of the Core Members are 55 years and older
- L'Arche Calgary has 5 homes in Calgary, a Supported Independent Living Program and a Day Program.
- Homes usually consist of 6 to 8 people, with and without developmental disabilities.
- 41 individuals volunteered at L'Arche in 2015/2016 in the Day Program and in Group Homes. Some volunteers were St. Mary's University Service Learning Students and some were U of C Students
- In Alberta, people with developmental disabilities have a lower employment rate (33.3%) than those with hearing, pain, and mobility disabilities.¹
- According to the L'Arche Charter, 'Everyone is of unique and sacred value, and everyone has the same dignity and the same rights'.

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"L'Arche is a wonderful example of an inclusive community and the power of mutually transforming relationships. The work of L'Arche reveals and enables an ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and praise it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a gift for me. This is a cause worth supporting. Peace.

-Bishop Frederick Henry, Past RC Bishop of Calgary

Context

There is much demand today for services for individuals with developmental disabilities as institutions close and family members are overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for their loved ones. In Alberta, Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD), a department within the Ministry of Community and Social Services, funds programs and services to help adult Albertans with developmental disabilities to be a part of their communities and to live as independently as they can. Services and programs funded by PDD range from community-based support and residential services, to specialized and clinical support. L'Arche Calgary is partially funded by PDD and also supplements PDD funding through various fundraising efforts.

Program Background

Jean Vanier founded L'Arche in 1964 because he was distressed by the institutionalization, isolation and loneliness of people with intellectual disabilities. He invited two men from an institution to live with him in a small house. He called the house "L'Arche", a French word for "the ark," from the biblical story about Noah and the flood.

L'Arche has grown to become an international federation of communities committed to elevating the role in society of

people with developmental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities (core members) live with people who help them (assistants) in a community living model. Everyone in the house is equally responsible for the life of the home and community, from preparing and sharing meals to doing chores and holding celebrations.

L'Arche creates a community which offers love and sharing of gifts. It recognizes that

people with developmental disabilities are able to welcome and accept others as they are, and views this as a gift that can help each of us become more fully human, and thus help humanize our entire society.

L'Arche Calgary welcomes core members with different levels of

disability, vulnerability, isolation, fear or anxiety. Many people live at L'Arche for much of their adult lives. Assistants come from a variety of backgrounds and help core members develop and achieve goals, encourage their gifts during day-to-day and social activities, as well as support those core members who may be employed.

How L'Arche Calgary Creates Value

As L'Arche Calgary embodies the ethos of L'Arche International and creates a community characterized by love and sharing of gifts, it creates value for core members as they begin to thrive, stop seeing themselves as disabled and start

**Theory of Change
Summary Statement:**
If individuals with developmental disabilities—at risk of isolation because their unique gifts go unrecognized—are offered a community where they can thrive in the company of others, they will gain a sense of belonging, realize their emotional, spiritual, physical talents and potential, and experience an improvement in their overall quality of life.

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expecting positive regard from people. They feel loved and valued and gain a sense of belonging.

Assistants care for, advocate for and encourage core members to participate in activities and events, helping them achieve goals related to well-being, independence and social participation. As a result, core members experience improved mental and physical health and increased self-esteem and resiliency.

Core members' preferences and needs are taken into consideration for every aspect of daily living. Assistants ensure that core members have options, know their rights and are encouraged to make choices. This leads core members to become more autonomous.

L'Arche creates value for family members as they enjoy seeing their loved one flourish and develop their own life, relationships and community. The family can begin to enjoy a relationship with their loved one that is not based solely on caregiving.

L'Arche creates value for assistants as they experience personal growth and develop a deep appreciation of human relationships. Volunteers discover a new way of seeing life and new areas to explore in their own lives.

Outcomes

The following examples are key outcomes that are experienced by people impacted by L'Arche:

Core Members

- Increased or sustained self-esteem
- Increased or sustained resiliency in the face of problems or challenges
- Increased or sustained autonomy
- Increased or sustained sense of belonging
- More or continued productive and rewarding relationships with close family members

Family Members

- Improved or sustained emotional well-being
- Increasing or sustaining a more normal social and economic life (interpersonal relations and employment such as fewer missed days from work and fewer distractions at work, or ability to pursue employment)
- Improved or sustained quality of relationships with core members

For Assistants

- Increased job related skills (typical of a disability support worker)
- Increased job satisfaction
- Personal growth (interpersonal skills in the context of diversity)

For Volunteers

- Personal growth (interpersonal skills in the context of diversity)
- Improved or sustained mental health

The changes experienced as a part of the L'Arche community typically occur over many years. For this reason, it is difficult to report on core member outcomes within a single 12-month span. Sustaining any portion of change already experienced is as valuable as progressing further. As a result, the sustainment and/or progress in experiencing key outcomes have been valued for core members of L'Arche Calgary.

Although, this study presents value experienced over one fiscal period (2015-2016), value is created every year that a core member and/or an assistant live at L'Arche.

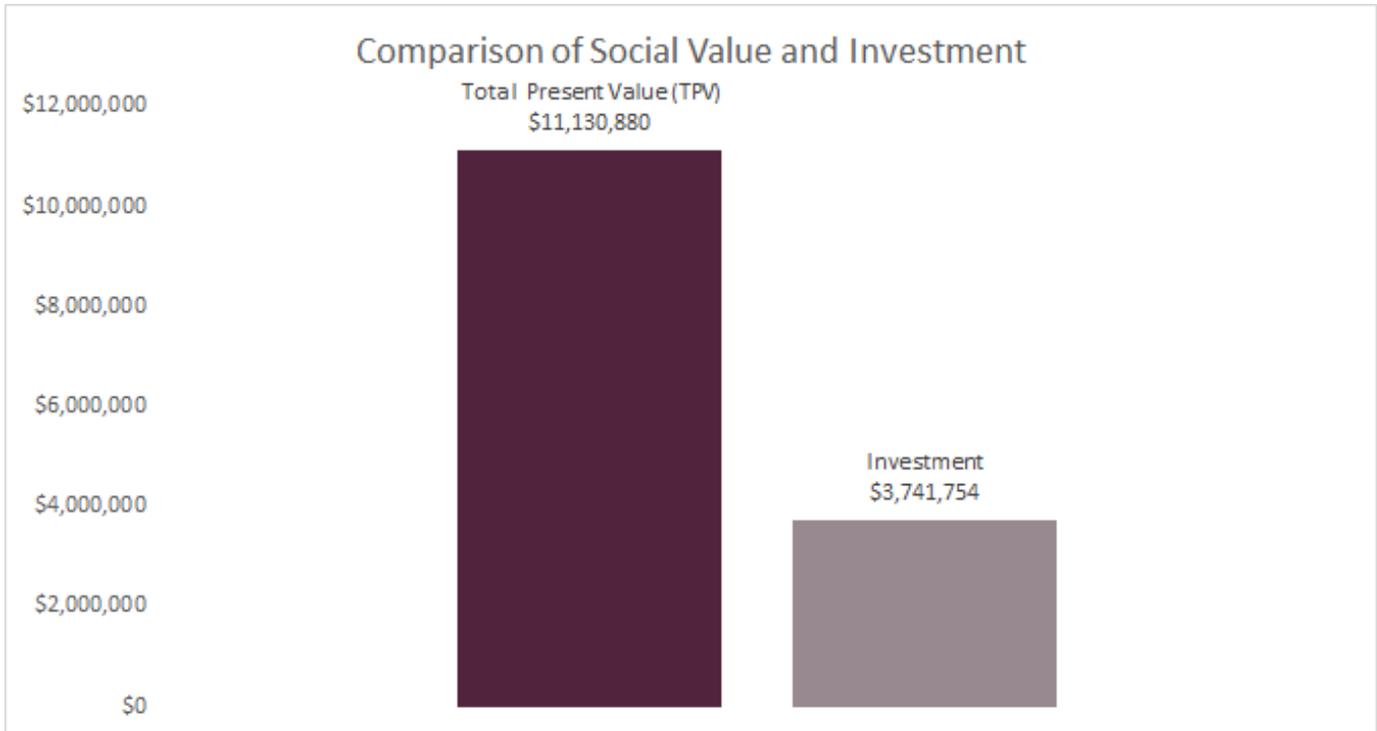
Knowledge from the L'Arche personnel who observe and engage daily with core members was used to express and quantify outcomes, hence value created.

Social Return on Investment

Through investment of **\$3,741,754** annually, L'Arche creates a social and economic return on investment with a total present value of **\$11,130,880**. **This means that for every dollar invested into L'Arche, a minimum of \$2.97 of social and economic value was created.**

The social return on investment (SROI) ratio demonstrates the value of change resulting from experiencing the acts of kindness, friendship and love towards others offered by core members. Family members' experience increased and/or a sustained sense of happiness for core members as they flourish within the L'Arche community. A transformational emotional connection is often experienced between volunteers and the core members. As these outcomes are invaluable, they are a challenge to value completely within the SROI process. For this reason, the ratio (\$2.97 : 1) represents the minimum value created through the L'Arche experience.

¹ <http://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/CNS/Documents/Social-research-policy-and-resources/Disability-population-profile.pdf>



Moving Forward

L'Arche generates value by creating a community where individuals who are otherwise marginalized in society thrive. L'Arche creates value for each member of the community—those who are disabled and those who recognize and encourage their unique gifts.

By putting the most fragile people at the heart of the community, and by nurturing growth in each person's humanity and capacity to love, L'Arche will continue to have a great impact on society. This impact will be strengthened by L'Arche's commitment to addressing the challenges of aging core members and by the implementation of L'Arche's Servant Leadership Model and outcome policy framework.

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