

Round Table - Social Enterprises in Slovenia – Measuring Impact in practice:

Measuring Social Impact in Rural Social Enterprises: From Models to Lived Practice

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Abstract

For Mozaik, a social enterprise working in rural Pomurje for over 21 years, measuring social impact is not a bureaucratic exercise — it is central to how we build credibility and communicate our story. Our work targets groups whose lives change in ways that numbers rarely capture. Supporting ten families in a rural village may appear modest on paper; yet the long-term ripple effects on the local community and the wider Pomurje region tell a very different story. This is why, alongside quantitative indicators, we actively collect and communicate individual stories, deliberately brought to different audiences.

Over the years, we have engaged with multiple structured frameworks. We participated in the test group for the IER Social Impact Model (Institute for Economic Research, Ljubljana) and subsequently completed the full model. While the framework is comprehensive and theoretically sound, consistent implementation demands considerable ongoing effort — particularly challenging given the breadth of Mozaik's programmes. We also completed the impact assessment questionnaire as part of our nomination for the European Social Economy Award (2023), which we found more accessible in everyday practice.

Based on this experience, we are developing our own hybrid model — combining narrative with selected quantitative indicators — and exploring how artificial intelligence can support real-time data collection and analysis. This paper shares our practical lessons and argues for proportionate, context-sensitive impact measurement that genuinely works for small rural social enterprises.

Keywords: social impact measurement, social enterprise, rural development, storytelling, hybrid model, Pomurje