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CO-**CREATION**

A global coaching partnership delivers remarkable difference

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There are thousands of social enterprises, nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the world. They represent a multi-billion-dollar sector, responding to some of the world's most difficult human challenges. Common among them are highly creative, dedicated leaders at all levels, who typically have limited access to high-impact professional development opportunities in the form of a professional coach. This kind of professional support is the smallest budget item for social sector organizations and often the first to be cut.

So, what do you get when you combine a dynamic network of change-makers with a global network of enthusiastic, generous coaches, who are willing to volunteer their time? You get the emerging story of EthicalCoach and its multi-year partnership with the WILD Network.

This is the impact story of their collective commitment – to co-create a repeatable, scalable, systematic approach for measuring the return on the remarkable difference they are making for women at all stages of their careers in the global development sector.

MISSION ALIGNMENT

The partnership of these two transformative entities launched with Cohort #1 in May 2020 with 30 clients, and Cohort #2 in November 2020 with 35 clients, bringing together a global team of 37 coaches.

The program was designed to last six to seven months. It included an initial meeting to identify key issues and establish coaching guidelines and focus. This would include six months of individual coaching approximately twice per month; ending with a final wrap-up session to summarize accomplishments and agree on future growth strategies.

Clients came from 43 different global development organizations, ranging in size and location, across 22 countries.

MEASURING ROI

Return on Investment (ROI) is the for-profit sector's best way of measuring the efficiency of an investment. Simply put, ROI reveals how much value (quantified in dollars) came back from an investment made. To calculate it, subtract the cost from the benefit. The result is the net benefit. Next, divide the net benefit by the cost. Then, express the result as a percentage or ratio.

In the EthicalCoach/WILD Network partnership, a values-aligned approach was developed to calculate return on investment for the pro-bono leadership coaching program. The focus was on measurable change in leader behavior and expected a positive result.

Three individual indicators were measured for reducing burnout:

➤ **Emotional Regulation:** leaders' feelings about the challenges they experience.

➤ **Energy:** leaders' positive outlook and optimistic mindset.

➤ **Influence:** leaders' belief that they can attract needed resources and desired opportunities.

Before and after they participated in the coaching engagement, leaders' feelings were surveyed on a scale from 1-5 about their relationship to these measures. After the coaching engagement, every one point of behavior change was equated to two hours used more effectively. Then, the number of hours were multiplied by the hourly wage of the leader.

The initial ROI for the first two cohorts was 197 percent. When measuring the overall cost of the initiative, factors included estimated coaching fees, the time investment for clients and coaches, and the program administration cost. When the cost of coaching was removed because coaches contributed their time pro-bono, the ROI increased to 773 percent.
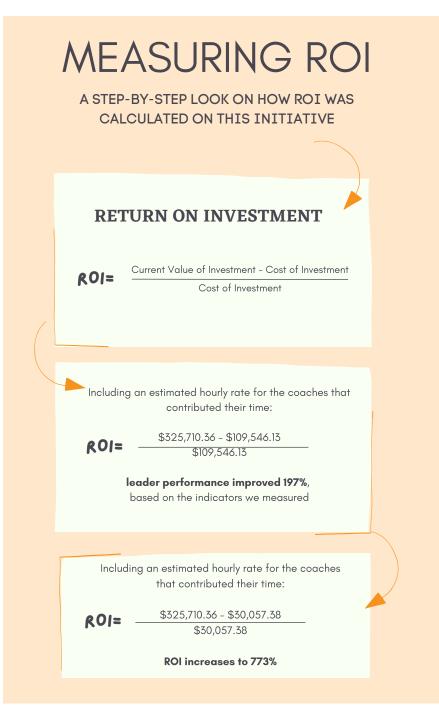
FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

The foundation for successful pro-bono coaching engagements:

1 **Co-creating with EthicalCoach coaches and WILD Network leadership**

EthicalCoach trusts that a core of similarly credentialed coaches has sufficient capacity to deliver the coaching required for impact. EthicalCoach gives coaches the freedom to bring their distinctive talents to the table and support each unique client's success. It also pays attention to the coach volunteers' unique skill sets and interests to fill emerging gaps in the strategy.

When EthicalCoach has a question, it goes to its volunteers to seek perspectives on possible answers. The diversity of perspectives leads to decisions that people feel comfortable getting behind.

For example, EthicalCoach found a volunteer coach with an extensive background in nonprofit management and

MEASURING ROI

A STEP-BY-STEP LOOK ON HOW ROI WAS CALCULATED ON THIS INITIATIVE

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Current Value of Investment} - \text{Cost of Investment}}{\text{Cost of Investment}}$$

Including an estimated hourly rate for the coaches that contributed their time:

$$ROI = \frac{\$325,710.36 - \$109,546.13}{\$109,546.13}$$

leader performance improved 197%, based on the indicators we measured

Including an estimated hourly rate for the coaches that contributed their time:

$$ROI = \frac{\$325,710.36 - \$30,057.38}{\$30,057.38}$$

ROI increases to 773%

measuring return on investment and several volunteers with similar interests.

After co-creating with the WILD Network and feedback from the first WILD Network Cohort, EthicalCoach experimented with a live coaching demonstration during the program orientation for the second cohort.

In this way, participating leaders would observe a mini-coaching session and talk with the coaches about the experience to answer questions and reinforce their learning.

The aim was to remove the mystery of coaching, support confidentiality in a coaching relationship, and differentiate coaching from other professional development strategies.

2 Developing a distinct approach with each partner

EthicalCoach has a discovery and design period for each WILD Network cohort. There have been four. This time is used to look back on learnings from previous cohorts, decide which area of leader impact to measure, and what custom approaches would support the next cohort.

This kind of co-creation supports agile structures that keep the partnership learning and evolving.

3 Selecting partners thoughtfully

EthicalCoach focuses on alliances, coalitions, or single organizations, with a global mission addressing the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

It also looks for organizations with a large enough professional staff or volunteers to form cohorts with at least 20 clients committed to professional development, who can engage virtually.

4 Identifying ROI indicators strategically

While there are many ways to measure a change in leadership behavior, creating an effective ROI methodology requires being clear about the behavior change that coaching is influencing.

The WILD Network
Cohort Timeline

Cohort #1	Cohort #2	Cohort #3	Cohort #4
May 2020	Oct 2020	May 2021	Nov 2021
30 clients	35 clients	55 clients	20 clients
21 coaches	26 coaches	37 coaches	19 coaches
24 organizations	23 organizations	44 organizations	14 organizations
10 countries	15 countries	20+ countries	3 countries

Bringing together a global team of 70 coaches to coach 140 clients from 83 different global development organizations, ranging in size and location, across 36 countries
AND GROWING

After the first two WILD Network cohorts measured leader burnout, EthicalCoach shifted to measuring leadership effectiveness and taking leadership skills to the next level, with the following three indicators:

➤ **Confidence:** having a learner's mindset – the self-awareness, presence, and emotional safety to challenge assumptions, make decisions, and establish new norms and behaviors.

➤ **Conflict Ventilation:** cultivating genuine curiosity, building skillfulness for engaging in difficult conversations – including delivering feedback and developing effectiveness in communication.

➤ **Contribution:** being intrinsically motivated; having a tangible impact, and developing legacy objectives.

STRATEGIES FOR MEASURING COACHING ROI

The consensus among coaches that emerged from the cohorts for measuring impact in their coaching practice:

➤ Find a partner to co-create a measurement pilot. It's more enjoyable for people to work together.

➤ Think about your aspirations for the remarkable difference you want to make. What could be measurable indicators of that difference?

➤ Think creatively about how you monetize those indicators (i.e., hours of work and salaries, measurable behavioral change, job retention and promotion, attracting new funding, etc.).

➤ Design ways to gather the essential information from clients in the fewest number of questions.

➤ Do it, learn, share your results, and repeat the process.

There is value for coaches in documenting coaching engagement results beyond a client's anecdotal reflections. It builds credibility. It strengthens coaching practice. It bolsters clients' confidence in understanding the remarkable growth they experience. There is much room for creativity with ROI methodology for measuring coaching impact.

Working with partners is an exciting way to nurture new ideas. It's a new model in the global development sector, but there is one very encouraging sign: we did it, and it worked. •

RESOURCES:
Ethicalcoach.org
thewildnetwork.org
ethicalcoach.org/WILD-cohort-1