How can social enterprises benefit from better data?

1. Observations

- Need for a common language: 2 worlds colliding between data scientists vs 'ordinary' people. Data needs to be made meaningful to people.
- Lack of time and interest in data literacy, and lack of resources to pursue data work.
- Confusion regarding what data SEs need, and where this data is located.
- Organizations forget to plan data collection from the start.
- Need for quality data.
- Data is often not considered to be 'real' data until it becomes digital
- Who owns data? Owning data is power? What data do social enterprises own that can give them power?

2. References / Best Practices

- Scotland CAN B = framework for measuring social impact
- Angus' partnership with academia – 3rd sector mapping
- Inspiring examples: Karis at Social Stories Club, Alex at SHRUB Coop
- Big Social Capital
- PY at Codebase
- Online courses on Udacity, Udemy, Coursera, Edx
- Big Society Capital – inspiring impact

3. Key Insights

- Data science is not pure science. It requires diverse skillsets for the data to have meaning.
- Data Science for SE must be interdisciplinary in nature. It requires collaboration between: technology and data analytics + SE organisational experience + human insights.
- Our culture shapes the way we share our data in Scotland – Can we emulate the Scandinavians?
- Data can tell a story and demonstrate impact in a more effective manner.

4. Ideas to explore

- Harnessing the value of open data / public data, perhaps organized as a data library or data bank for SEs (Repeated many times)
- Platform to share data that SEs collect themselves. How might this be shared and used to the benefit of the sector, without compromising privacy and competitiveness?
- Tapping into uni student projects, dissertations, placement opportunities as a way to explore how we can use data more effectively (e.g. ESE Census Insights)
- How do we get customer data in a safe way?
- Importance of interdisciplinary teams to make data meaningful
- Blockchain technology -> How to use it for SEs in Scotland?
- Data integration with KPIs
- Education courses for data use – Business gateway, SE Academy
- Look for data sources in: universities, council
- Scot Gov Stats office - How do we access?
- Map the partnerships that would be needed

5. Key performance indicators

- Integrated data improves social impact measurement tools.
- Emergence of new SEs based on data analysis.
- Standard framework, SE return matrix.
- Sector (especially support organizations and intermediaries) has an in-depth understanding of data needs; a process for meeting them is developed.
- SEs have improved marketing; they access more customers with better data recording of their product/ service use and direct feedback.
- Data-driven SE / Local planning processes?

6. Warnings / Red Flags

- Different agendas affect the presentation and interpretation of data
- Need for continuity and quality control in an ever-changing sector
- All about data protection, what about data freedom?
- Lack of trust in who? The state? Why are we hesitant to share data?

7. Questions to dive into for research

- Everyday practice and needs: What data do SEs collect? What data would be useful for individual SEs? What kind of data does the sector need? What is 'good' data?
- Data access and skills: How do we make data meaningful for SEs? How do we create a supportive environment for SEs to harness tech & data? Who can help us read data and gain insights? How to move from accessibility to 'interpretability' and make data make sense to everyone? How do contextualize data?
- Data sharing: What could a data-sharing platform for SEs look like? Who do we include? What are the benefits of having sector-aggregated data? How can we collaborate to share data-driven insights and knowledge?
- Policy-making: How can good SE data feed into policy making? How can government access important data from SEs?
- Data to validate impact: What tools are out there to efficiently measure social impact + collect impact data?