

How data science is fueling social entrepreneurship

[Business](#), [Entrepreneurship](#)



Social entrepreneurship is making waves in the worlds of business and social justice. Over the last decade and a half, an ideal environment has been created, fostering an explosion of this (relatively) newfound way of doing business. As a result, a model has been hatched that focuses not only on creating sustainable revenue sources, but on aiding society in new ways.

The sphere of social entrepreneurship has truly taken hold. So what's the big driver pushing it through to the front? Data.

You can't begin to design a solution to a problem you know nothing about, a challenge that's especially true when it comes to social issues. To enact change, the details of the problem must be known, and as a general rule, the more specific the details of the problem presented, the better.

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Marcus Lemonis, a nationally known entrepreneur and small-business investor extraordinaire, is known to the importance of business owners "knowing their numbers." Data and statistics are everything when it comes to , especially those involved in social change.

Know your stats, grow your army.

Numbers don't lie. Vague ideas and obscure stories aren't very persuasive, but facts set in data paint a much clearer picture. This is huge when it comes to determining whether social entrepreneurs will be able to attract followers and gain the support they need from others.

As an example, telling someone that you're setting out to abolish global poverty may tug at the heartstrings and evoke sympathy. Following this by asking for a donation may not yield much funding, given the audacious nature of the goal. Alternatively, if you're knowledgeable about how much funding it'll take to improve the unimaginable lifestyle faced by the 2.2 billion people trapped in impoverished scenarios will swing things in your favor.

Being able to leverage data can make all the difference in whether a journey to eradicate a social problem, local or global, is able to move forward.

A true entrepreneur.

Many entrepreneurs don't set out to become one -- they simply can't find what they're looking for in the market, so they set out to create it themselves. did exactly that with.

The explosion of data science within the business sector excited Porway, though he noticed a few key failings. He was particularly interested in the large gap in data utilization that existed when it came to solving social and environmental problems around the world. Thanks to relatively recent advances in technology, there's no shortage of statistics on social problems affecting the world or on the number of humans affected by them.

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Despite this, organization leaders are often left scratching their heads trying to analyze the data and figure out what the numbers really mean. This is where DataKind steps in. The company's goal is the visualization and

understanding of a social organization's data, through the lens of a data science expert. In addition to experienced data analysis, Porway's company also consults with companies on how to build good data sources, as well as assisting them with quality data discovery.

One of many.

DataKind isn't the only company making strides in driving social change through data harvesting and analysis. All around the world, institutions and initiatives are beginning to unfold, allowing nonprofits and social entrepreneurs to move their humanitarian efforts forward.

The at the Qatar Computing Research Institute, for instance, has proven to be a valuable asset in making sense of data generated during major natural disasters, allowing organizations to better understand the needs of those affected. But it doesn't stop there. With more than 10 major projects underway, the Social Innovation Program is setting a standard for the rest of the world when it comes to the utilization of data science for social entrepreneurship efforts.

Though our modern society has been around for almost a century, social and environmental issues are still a major concern. Tragedies such as world hunger are beginning to see a significant decline, yet even in the U. S., have a hard time putting food on their table.

Thankfully, data science and companies such as DataKind and QCRI and convenient tools such as are changing the game. Being able to harness

these new data mining techniques to aid social entrepreneurs is an important step for future progress.

Do you know a social entrepreneur making great use of data science? Leave a comment with more information below.

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