Using Big Data for Social Good
5 Steps to Keep in Mind

**STEP 1**
Problem Definition

Care must be taken not to pursue the flashiness of data and new methods and lose sight of the problem at hand, and the potential solution.

"Not everything is a data issue - we need to get better at defining the problem to be able to use data.” - Natalia Adler, UNICEF

**STEP 2**
Methodology Selection

The main methods being used for social good are predictive algorithms, data warehouses, AI, and real-time monitoring (or a combination).

Example: Global Emancipation Network is building a data warehouse and using AI to combat human trafficking.

**STEP 3**
Collaborate

This work is complex. Projects require tech experts, funding, research, issue experts, and decision & policy makers. Collaboration across sectors is key.

3 factors help new data partnerships succeed:
1. building trust, 2. a dedicated facilitator & 3. shared goals & long-term commitment.

**STEP 4**
Address Challenges

Challenges must be addressed before, during & after implementation, including privacy & ethics concerns, expenses & human resources, & data infrastructure.

Openness & co-creation can help avoid anxieties about potential harm & ensure concerns of beneficiaries are included.

**STEP 5**
Evaluate & Scale

“We need to become evidence-based about how to use data, as opposed to assuming all will be impactful.” - Stephen Verhulst, GovLab

Many data partnerships are ad-hoc and one-offs, there is a need to invest in long-term solutions in order to scale

Read the global scan here highlighting how data is being used for social good, the challenges in this field and how philanthropy is and can be engaging in this work.

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