KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING FOR SOCIAL PROJECTS AIMING TO GROW OR 'SCALE-UP'

Summary

This guide is about how 'Knowledge and Learning' might support social projects aiming to grow or 'scale-up'. It is based on NPC's experience of working with eight Accelerating Ideas projects in 2016-2017 supported by Nesta, and the Big Lottery Fund using National Lottery funding[1]. It focusses on three things:

- What is 'Knowledge and Learning'?
- What questions social projects can address through 'Knowledge and Learning', how to ask them and how to prioritise them.
- Creating a 'Knowledge and Learning culture.

1. What is 'Knowledge and Learning'?

Knowledge and Learning is a broad term, referring to all the information—and uses of information—which a social project may need to support its development.

It encompasses concepts like 'monitoring', 'evaluation', 'impact measurement', 'data collection', 'research', 'evidence' and 'knowledge management'.[2] And it concentrates on social impact more than other aspects of scale (eg business planning, financial modelling, fundraising or marketing).

The overall aim of 'Knowledge and Learning' is to maximise the quality, effectiveness and impact of projects. And—where projects have been shown to help or make a positive difference—to provide evidence to support their growth. Good Knowledge and Learning helps projects to achieve this by giving accurate, timely and useful information to all people who are involved in funding and running a project.

2. What questions social projects can address through knowledge and learning, how to ask them and how to prioritise them

We suggest that there are three broad areas or questions that Knowledge and Learning could cover for projects that are growing, and we cover each of these in-turn.

Does it work? Can it make a positive difference to people's lives?

For many of those scaling projects this the million-dollar question: teams see their projects working with their own eyes, but they need better evidence to confirm this and persuade others.

The first thing to do is ensure your project model or plans are robust, coherent and agreed across the team. The approach we suggest for this is to develop a logic model or theory of change.

[1] https://www.nesta.org.uk/project/accelerating-ideas

[2] An equivalent term used elsewhere is 'impact management': See: http://accessimpact.org/

Alongside this, projects may be able to draw on existing data or external research to show that the work is needed, and that your ideas are consistent with what is already known about the issue.

Ultimately, you may have to collect some evidence of the project 'working'. This is no easy task, but depending on how your project operates, there may be opportunities for getting data to help answer the question. If not, then projects might have to commission an impact evaluation - for which they will need extra funds and outside expertise.

How does it actually work?

The next of our three questions is a continuation of the first, and is about going into more detail, in two ways:

- To get a better understanding of *how* the project is working and learn how to maximise impact.
- To get a better understanding of whether the project is being effectively implemented.

In other words, the lens shifts from trying to *prove* the project 'works' towards *improving* the work and achieving more for service users.

To answer these questions, we suggest that projects try to collect data routinely, and in-house rather than outsourcing. Scaling projects will need to use a range of methodologies to collect the following types of data:

1. User Data: The characteristics of the people they are reaching.
2. Engagement data: The extent to which people use the project and how they use it.
3. Feedback data: What people think about the project
4. Outcomes data: The short-term changes or benefits people gain from the project

Ideally these data will be entered, analysed and reported in a single data system, and we recommend that all projects should consider off-the-shelf systems they could adapt for this purpose.

How can we make it work at scale?

The third question covers the Knowledge and Learning needs that are specific to a project's scaling plans. This be a project's 'market research' or 'business research' and can be broken down into; demand and supply questions; and questions to ask before and during the scaling process.

	Before you scale	As you scale
Supply	What capacity and capability do we need to successfully deliver at scale? (including staffing, infrastructure and capital) How much do we expect it cost? How will we monitor and minimise costs? What level of throughput / turnover do we need to deliver the project effectively, break even, demonstrate good value for money and grow further?	What do we actually deliver at scale? How much? Is it good quality? Does it fit the model? How does quality vary across sites? What level of adaptability is allowed at site level? How much does it cost? Overall and unit cost?

	Before you scale	As you scale
Demand	What do we know about our market, including people's needs and preferences? What is their willingness to take part? How do we reach and engage them? What else is out there? Who are our competitors?	Who do we reach at different sites? Are they in the target group? Who is coming back? Who is engaging? Are we engaging enough of the right sort of people to deliver the model?

How to prioritise from all the above?

We acknowledge that scaling projects will have to prioritise from what is a wide-range of possible questions. We suggest that the best way for them to do this is to consider:

- What—from all the above—do we know already? Or what do we know *with enough confidence?*
- What are the most important, or most urgent, things we need to know?

3. Creating a 'Knowledge and Learning' culture

We are keen to stress that Knowledge and Learning is as much about how projects operate day-to-day as it is about data collection. We refer to this as having a 'Knowledge and Learning culture'

What does a Knowledge and Learning culture look like?

In short, we think it is about <u>everyone</u> involved in a project working to collect data, thinking about results and trying to continuously improve what they do. Through this culture, we think projects can get a better understanding about what is working, adopt best practice, tailor services, become more efficient and celebrate success.

What can projects do to establish a Knowledge and Learning culture?

We make a series of suggestions for how projects can work towards a Knowledge and Learning culture, which are summarised below:

- Develop a 'Knowledge and Learning plan' covering; priorities; the data that will be needed; and how it will be used.
- Communicate your Knowledge and Learning plans as widely as possible.
- Define Knowledge and Learning roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in a project.
- Ensure people have the capacity to fulfil these roles.
- Put leadership in place to promote Knowledge and Learning.
- Involve people in developing systems and tools for Knowledge and Learning; to make sure you get it right and secure buy-in.
- Think about what incentives you can give people to get involved.
- Demonstrate the value of Knowledge and Learning by showing how it contributes to improvements and increases impact.
- Make data collection—and use—as easy as possible; it should become routine.
- Think about the systems and processes you need for people to share learning with each other.
- Recognise mistakes and failure as an opportunity for learning
- Give it time. All the above will take time to become part of your culture.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Jullie Tran Graham, Christina Cornwell, Annette Holman, Halima Khan and Katy Rutherford at Nesta, Nicola Clegg and Dawn Plimmer at the Big Lottery Fund and Anne Kazimirski at NPC for their input into this report.

Part 1: What is Knowledge and Learning and how is it relevant to scale?

Introduction

This guide is written for social projects aiming to grow or 'scale'. It follows previous guides on 'scale', which have looked at ways scale can be achieved and the challenges to overcome (see appendices). But, as far as we know, this is the first guide specifically about 'Knowledge and Learning' for scale[3].

It is based on NPC's experience of working with eight Accelerating Ideas projects in 2016-2017[i]. These are innovative projects supported by Nesta, and the Big Lottery Fund using National Lottery funding; and all broadly aimed at helping older people to maximise their wellbeing and connections to others.

As this is a short guide it avoids a lot of detail, but the appendices there are links to further resources. We have also included example questionnaires that projects could use with their volunteers and people who use the service. Overall, we hope the guide will help projects develop the right approach and get some useful tips.

What are social projects?

Put simply, social projects are any initiatives which are designed to have a positive impact on individuals, families or communities. For example, they might aim to improve people's health and happiness, raise educational attainment, reduce crime, improve community relations and so on.

Often social projects are delivered by the voluntary sector, but not always: they can be delivered by: social enterprises, government, the private sector, anyone. Social projects can be a whole organisation, or they can be a service provided by a larger organisation.

Social projects that people want to grow or 'scale up' tend to be innovative in some respect. Drawing examples from the Accelerating Ideas cohort, this might be a new idea, like GoodSam and Good Gym, a new way of organising and delivering an existing idea, like Carers UK, the Stroke Association and British Lung Foundation, or scaling an existing idea to new geographic areas or population groups, like Shared Lives Plus, North/South London Cares, British Red Cross (see case studies below).

What is 'Knowledge and Learning'?

Knowledge and Learning is a broad term, referring to all the information—and uses of information—which a social project may need to support its improvement and growth. Two important points in this definition are:

- It encompasses concepts like 'monitoring', 'evaluation', 'impact measurement', 'data collection', 'research', 'evidence' and 'knowledge management'.[4]
- It focuses on social impact more than other aspects of scale (eg business planning, financial modelling, fundraising or marketing).
- The overall aim of 'Knowledge and Learning' is to maximise the quality, effectiveness and impact of projects. And—where projects have been shown to help or make a positive difference—to provide evidence that will

[3] Having said this, two recent reports have covered similar ground. Firstly, the *"Evidence is Confidence"* publication from Realising Ambition suggests a framework for thinking about evidence in relation to scale, and we make some explicit connections to this in the report. Secondly, Social Value International have written about evidence for scale from their perspective.

[4] An equivalent term used elsewhere is 'impact management': See: http://accessimpact.org/

support their growth. Good Knowledge and Learning helps projects to achieve this by giving accurate, timely and useful information to all people involved in funding and running a project, and by establishing a Knowledge and Learning culture. For example:

- Senior managers get a picture of what the service is achieving and where to focus resources. They also get information to help them engage other stakeholders about the project.
- Managers learn whether their services are meeting their objectives and what they could do to make things work better.
- Frontline staff/volunteers learn about what they are achieving, and about which approaches are most effective for their circumstances. They will also have an opportunity to share their own learning with others.
- Service users get the opportunity to share their views and contribute to making the project better.

What makes scaling social projects different to other charities and social enterprises?

In fact, not much is different. All managers of social projects should think about Knowledge and Learning. But with scaling projects, there may be a different emphasis and challenges:

- There is usually a more pressing need to test the credibility of the project; to show people it can work and to persuade people to invest, commission or use it.
- There is a greater risk of things going wrong or failing, or ideas evolving and changing quickly—so information needs are urgent. As an earlier Nesta report[ii] highlighted: '*Experience suggests that scaling is highly iterative, so you need good evidence to inform you of the changes you need to make.'*
- There is a need to learn which parts of the model are most effective; what needs to be consistent; and what should be adapted depending on local circumstances? Similarly, when a project is being delivered in different settings—and by different people—there are more opportunities to learn and test different ways of doing things.
- As projects get larger, we need to consider whether they can still be delivered effectively and achieve the same level of impact—as well as what resources and capabilities people need to do this.

Nesta's report *'What does it take to go big?'* has a more comprehensive list of these questions on page 50.

Quick checklist for Part 1

Key considerations		✓
Knowledge and Learning	Are you clear on what Knowledge and Learning means for your social project?	
	Have you engaged with stakeholders (senior managers, managers, frontline staff and volunteers, beneficiaries, etc.) to talk about knowledge and learning, and what it means for them?	
Scaling	Do you know what you need to focus on, as you scale? For example, is it: Establishing the credibility of the project, so that people see evidence of it 'working' and be willing to invest in or use it. Learning more about *how* the project works, to make improvements. Information about what's happening on-the-ground, to improve performance. To learn what parts of the project needs to be consistent vs. what can be changed to reflect the local context? To better understand cost-effectiveness and economies of scale.	

Part 2: The Knowledge and Learning questions you may need to answer and how to answer them

Introduction

Deciding what to prioritise is a difficult aspect of Knowledge and Learning. There are many questions you could ask about your project, but only a limited amount of resources to do this with.

In this section we suggest three broad questions that could be relevant to your project, and discuss how you might respond to each of them. As you read through we suggest thinking about what is most important for your project.

At the end of the section, we highlight one way in which you might be able to weigh-up these priorities.

There are three broad, and somewhat overlapping, questions you could address through Knowledge and Learning.

1) Does it work?	2) How is it actually working?	3) How can we make it work at scale?

We work through each of these in turn.

Question 1: Does the project you are looking to scale 'work'? Can it make a positive difference to people's lives?

This is a very blunt question—but it's one a lot of people will be interested in. We suggest a three-stage approach to addressing it.

1.1 Develop a theory of change

The first stage is to **be clear about what the project is and what it is trying to do**[5]. Approaches for this include theory of change or logic modelling. Both of which encourage you to articulate (in sequence):

1. What is the social problem being tackled—what causes it, what are the consequences?
2. Who will your project try to work with to address this problem? What are the characteristics of this group? Who—precisely—will be targeted or eligible? (Users)[6]
3. What long-term benefit do you want your targeted service users to achieve? (Impact)
4. What shorter-term changes could contribute to this? It helps to think about potential changes in your target groups' knowledge, attitudes and / or behaviours (Outcomes)[7]
5. How will you work with people to help them achieve these outcomes? (Activities / engagement)

[5] This is the first of the five components of Realising Ambition's *Evidence is Confidence* Framework.

[6] Please note the colour scheme—we use it again later.

[7] When thinking about both outcomes and impact it is a good idea to be succinct / brief. In the health context, the Realising the Value project has recently recommended focusing on a small set of outcomes (such as: independence; empowerment; and social connection) as a way to improve both practice and the evidence base (see page 27 of: http://www.health.org.uk/sites/health/files/RtVRealisingTheValue10KeyActions.pdf)

6. How will these activities *cause* the change? What will make your service particularly effective? What will good quality look like? (quality / feedback)

You could also consider:

7. What are the risks or possible negative consequences?
8. What factors outside your control might influence whether this will work in the real world?

Ideally you will involve lots of people in working out answers to these questions, including volunteers and beneficiaries. The more people involved the better the result the exercise will be, because different perspectives and challenges will be reflected. Also, if people are engaged in your Knowledge and Learning process from the beginning then it will help you to develop a 'Knowledge and Learning culture'—which we discuss in part 3.

Once you have answered the theory of change questions you might want to represent this in a diagram or chart to help you communicate your work. But this is not essential. The most important thing is just to spend some time thinking about the questions themselves.

1.2. Look at existing data and research

Alongside the theory of change it is a good idea to look at what research tells you about the model you are developing. For example:

- Is there data from official or other sources that can tell you about levels of need and which communities it might be best to target?
- What do you know about your target beneficiaries? What challenges do they face and what do *they* think will be most valuable? Ideally you would do your own consultation / research with potential beneficiary groups to help you consider this.
- Is there academic insight (eg, theories, hypothesis) to help you think about the relationship between outcomes and impact? Or what is more / less likely to be effective?
- Is there previous research—or evaluations of similar interventions—that can help you refine your project, and possibly provide evidence in support of your approach? This could include international research and evaluations of projects that are different but share some common elements.

Ideally you will look at the research at the same time you develop the theory of change—as it could help you think about the answers to the theory of change questions. How you go about this will depend on your resources; it could range from searching the internet to commissioning a formal literature review. It might also be influenced by how innovative your project is, because there may not be much research which is relevant.

At this point you could start to use the theory of change and associated research to estimate the potential financial benefits of your service and whether it is likely to exceed costs? There are formal methodologies for this, including Social Return on Investment (SROI) and in the appendix, we link to further resources that could help.

Example of a project developing a theory of change

The Stroke Association have been thinking carefully about their Hand in Hand peer support programme for people recovering from a stroke. They decided the long-term impact they wanted to help people achieve is quality of life and participation in the community, and that this would come through outcomes like reducing isolation, gaining reassurance and feeling motivated about the possibilities of life after a stroke. The two key ways that Hand in Hand helps people to achieve this were agreed as:

Having a space to be oneself: Feeling valued and understood

Being able to take part in activities outside the home: Being more socially active and learning new things that can help create a better life

This ‘theory of change’ was reviewed by staff members and volunteers. The Association also commissioned a short literature review to see how well the model was supported by academic research around strokes and other similar conditions. The Association has now a detailed Knowledge and Learning plan to test whether the model is effective across a range of different circumstances.

1.3 Impact evaluation

The third stage of establishing whether your project ‘works’ is to do an **impact evaluation**[8].

You will notice that the first two stages are about establishing the rational or ‘proof of concept’ for the project and don’t involve collecting much data yourself. They are equivalent to level 1 in Nesta’s Standards of Evidence[9]. Whereas impact evaluation is about testing these ideas in the real world; ie, whether reality matches your plans?

The need for impact evaluation is represented by levels 2 to 4 in Nesta’s Standards of Evidence[iii] and in an ideal world all projects would be able to ‘measure their impact’. But in reality, the *type* of impact evaluation to pursue—and how much should be invested in it—is a difficult question and depends on the circumstances of a project. This is because formal impact measurement is difficult and potentially costly; it must be done robustly, on a large enough scale and ideally with some kind of control group. Therefore, impact measurement might not be achievable during the early stages of a project and other Knowledge and Learning questions might be more relevant depending on the circumstances (see sections 2 and 3 below).

So, what are the options?

Option 1: Draw upon the existing research

You should have got some support for your project’s model though the review of the existing research above—particularly around the links between short-term outcomes and long-term impact. For example, there is already strong evidence that:

- Exercise improves health.
- Support and recognition for carers prevents emotional strain.
- Improving people’s social life has benefits for their health and wellbeing.

Essentially, projects should not feel compelled to demonstrate these links all over again.

[8] This is the fourth of the five components of Realising Ambition’s Evidence is Confidence Framework.

[9] https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/standards_of_evidence.pdf

Example of a project that needs to measure outcomes but not long-term impact

GoodSAM is a technology platform and a community of Life Savers. When the Ambulance Service receives a life threatening 999 call—or a member of the public triggers an alert via the GoodSAM Alerter app—nearby medically qualified responders are alerted (off duty emergency service staff, health professionals and first aid trained members of the public). GoodSAM Responders are asked to come to the scene to deliver basic first aid, eg Cardiopulmonary resuscitation or use of an automated external defibrillator. It means that those in need are connected to those in the community who have the skills to provide critical first aid in the minutes before statutory services arrive.

The impact of GoodSAM is to prevent further injury and improve survival rates—this is achieved through getting people emergency first aid more quickly. Because we already know that speed of response is important, particularly for cardiac arrests, GoodSAM only need to demonstrate that they are effective in delivering first aid before the arrival of the emergency services (and national response time data sets are also available for comparison). If this happens often enough, it can be assumed that lives have been saved because of the early intervention which the platform enables.

Option 2: Smaller-scale research

You will find smaller-scale quantitative or qualitative research[iv] easier and less costly to do than formal impact evaluation—and can help indicate that a project is on the right track. For example, you should be able to collect some evidence of people's journeys and the part the project has played in improving outcomes. This can be done for a sample of service users rather than everyone, but it is important not to only talk to those beneficiaries who engage or benefit the most—as this will create overly positive results that lack credibility. We suggest selecting people to take part randomly, and make efforts to keep in touch with those who do not engage as well.

Example of a project using a mixed-methods approach to get early evidence of effectiveness

North London Cares and South London Cares are community networks of young professionals and older neighbours hanging out and helping one another in our rapidly changing capital city. In 2014, the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund, a partnership between Nesta and the Cabinet Office, supported 52 organisations - including North and South London Cares - develop their model through a process evaluation and preliminary impact evaluation. North and South London Cares used a range of methodologies including surveys and follow-up surveys, in-depth qualitative research, interviews and workshops with staff, a literature review, and observations of their work in action. A summary of the results is available here: http://www.renaisi.com/north-south-london-cares-older-neighbours/

The research helped show that the model has potential for impact and they are now looking to commission an evaluation that will give them even more robust data. This includes plans to conduct short surveys of as many people as possible as they join their local Cares branches, and longer annual snapshot outcomes surveys conducted on a sample of participants.

Option 3: Accessing data from other sources

In some circumstances, there may already be data about your beneficiaries that you can use to study outcomes and impact. For example, institutions like social services and the NHS have data like hospital admissions data, length of stay, etc. which could tell you whether your service users have been able to make a positive change. Although this data can be hard to access, it is worth speaking with your partners or commissioners to see what they can share with you (see British Red Cross case study below). At a national level, NPC is working hard to establish better processes for all charities to access this kind of data[v].

Example of a project accessing statutory data to understand impact

The British Red Cross First Call service offers up to 12 weeks of support to those recovering from a crisis such as hospital discharge or bereavement. The service is commissioned by local NHS commissioners who have access to Health and Episode Statistics (HES) data. If the British Red Cross are able to access this data, it would be invaluable in helping them to understand the impact of their work, by comparing the outcomes of those individuals that use their service with those who do not. They are currently working with their commissioners to see what type of data can be accessed.

Option 4: Identifying opportunities to find control groups

A fourth option derives from the point that any project trying to scale is—by definition—not already delivering to everyone: There will be people in your target group who are not receiving your service, and they can be a kind of control group. There are three potential ways to approach this:

- There may be data about your wider target population that you can use as a benchmark. For example, nationally we know the average levels of wellbeing for different population groups[vi]. How does the group you are working with compare? Can you see change against this average as your project continues? (see Carers UK example below).
- If you have a waiting list for your project you could collect a small amount of data from those on it and look at how this data changes compared to those who do receive your service (this is known as a wait-list design). The analysis will be even better if you can select who gets the service first on a random basis (see GoodGym example below).
- Similarly, if you can't deliver to an area or community yet, you could collect data from this community and compare to a community where you do deliver (known as a 'natural experiment'). But it is difficult to collect data from non-users, so this is generally only an option when an organisation is already delivering some services to a population and the scaling project is an additional service (see Stroke Association example on page 11).

Examples of projects that are using creative ways to benchmark and find control groups:

Carers UK are working to support people with caring responsibilities—to maximise their personal well-being. They can use Office for National Statistics (ONS) well-being data[vii] to compare Carer's current levels of well-being to those in the population as-a-whole. Moreover, because the ONS collects a lot of data, Carers UK can compare the carers they support to a group who have a similar age and demographic profile. Carers UK can also monitor how well-being changes over time; to see if the support they provide is associated with any positive change.

GoodGym matches running enthusiasts with older people. The runners combine their exercise with visits to make friends with older people. Groups of runners also get together to do chores and community projects. GoodGym has a waiting list of older people who want the service but for whom a runner has not been found. By staying in touch with this group and asking them a couple of questions about their lives they can create an indicative control group; to see whether runners make a difference when they are found and start to make visits.

The Stroke Association is commissioned to deliver stroke recovery services by many NHS trusts and local authorities. In some areas they also provide an additional peer support option to people once they have recovered and want help to get on with their lives. The Association can look at how outcomes compare between those who have the peer support option and those who don't, to see if peer support makes a difference.

Option 5: Commission an impact evaluation

The fifth option is to commission an impact evaluation from independent researchers. Because this costs money it is usually only necessary or feasible when a project is reaching enough people and with sufficient budgets for robust research. When the time comes we strongly recommend getting expert help to do it properly.

Examples of a project commissioning more robust evaluations

Shared Lives is an approach to meeting the UK population's growing care needs. It works by linking an individual who needs care/support to an approved Shared Lives carer; with whom they live with for long term support or short breaks, or regularly visit for support during the day. The model is based on a couple of important premises that need to be tested:

That communities have the capacity, and the willingness, to support people in this way.

That outcomes for those who receive care through Shared Lives are as least as good, if not better, when compared to more established care options.

Shared Lives Plus is the UK network that supports the approach and they have taken on the challenge of addressing these questions. They have commissioned formal evaluations of the Shared Lives model for people with mental health problems and older people, as well as cost benefit analysis to test whether the Shared Lives option is financially viable in different circumstances.

Checklist for 'Does it work?'

We conclude this section with a checklist of things to consider

Key considerations		✓
Are you clear about what the project is and how you think it will work to improve peoples' lives?	Have you developed a theory of change or logic model? Have you involved a wide range of people in doing this?	
What does the existing research tell you about the model you are developing?	Is there data from official or other sources that can tell you about levels of need in project's target beneficiaries?	
	What do you know about your target beneficiaries? What do they tell you about what they need and what will help?	
	Is there relevant academic insight (eg, theories, hypothesis, assumptions)?	
	Are there previous evaluations of similar interventions?	
Do you need to do an impact evaluation of your project?	Have you determined which elements of your project are already well established by existing research?	
	Could a small-scale quantitative or qualitative research study help indicate that your project is on the right track?	
	Is there data about your beneficiaries available from referral partners or other secondary sources that you could access and use to study outcomes and impact?	
	Do you have any opportunities to create a control group and measure your impact more precisely?	
	Do you have any opportunities and the resources to commission a formal impact evaluation?	

Question 2: How is it actually working?

The next of our three questions are a continuation of the first and is about going into more detail in two ways:

- **Getting a better understanding of how the project is working and how to maximise impact.** In the real world, projects don't 'work' in the rather blunt sense that the first question implies. Rather they interact with people and communities in myriad ways, and we hope they make a positive contribution. This question is therefore about getting a better understanding of the patterns of that contribution—who benefits, how, when, under what circumstances, with what limitations? And is the key to making the most of the resources available.
- **Getting a better understanding of whether the project is being effectively implemented.** This question is about the quality of delivery; whether you are reaching and engaging the right people and what they think of the service? Again, it is about helping you to maximise impact.[10]

So, answering both these questions is less about trying to 'prove' the concept and more about helping you to 'improve' it. All the work you have done thinking about question 1 will help with question 2. It is about switching your lens towards learning, trying to make the project as good as it can be and helping it grow.

Ideally you will try to answer these questions through your own routine data collection: by getting feedback and working to create a 'learning culture' (discussed below)—as opposed to commissioning someone else to collect this data for you. In fact—as a rule—we think most Knowledge and Learning should be done in-house. In terms of frequency, you should be trying to answer aspects of these question all the time: for example, to ensure you are reaching the right people, delivering the right quality and getting peoples' feedback. You may also want to invest further effort at key times, such as when you are trying new things or delivering in new areas. This could entail 'formal' feedback exercises and attempts to measure outcomes (see table below for a description of what this means).

To equip you to address these questions we think it helps to think about four different types of data that your project could collect[11] —which reflect the different components of the theory of change (described above):

Types of data	Specific questions	Possible approaches
1. User Data: The characteristics of the people you are reaching.	Key question: *Is your project effective at reaching the intended target group?* For example, if your project aims to reduce loneliness you need to know that you are reaching people who are at risk of loneliness. Your theory of change should state clearly who you aim to work with and their characteristics. This can be translated directly into the information you collect from people when they first come to the project (either by asking the directly or—if applicable—from the organisation that has referred them to you).	Your approach to both user and engagement data should be closely linked. You should aim to collect both types of data *routinely* for *all* the people you work with. This should be part of your basic monitoring processes and entered into your data management system (see below). This is necessary because reach and engagement are such critical questions, essential to the success of the project and

[10] This is the second of the five components of Realising Ambition's *Evidence is Confidence* Framework.

[11] A fifth type of data is 'impact data', which we discussed in the previous section. See the following blog for a further discussion http://www.thinknpc.org/blog/5-types-of-data/

Types of data	Specific questions	Possible approaches
2. Engagement data: The extent to which people use the service and how they use it.	Key question: *How effective is your project at retaining and continuing to engage people?* Specific questions might include: • How often people come? • For how long? • How engaged are they? • What kinds of activities and • processes they engage in? • The quality of relationship you establish with them • Who engages and who doesn't (linking back to user data)?	the quickest and easiest thing to do something about. For example, by looking at reach and engagement you can start to understand the main ways which your service users differ, how that affects engagement and what strategies you can put in-place to retain those who will benefit the most.
3. Feedback data: What people think about the project Please see Appendix for sample questions	Key questions: *What do people think about the service? Do they experience it in the way you hoped?* By getting feedback from people you will really start to test the theory of change; to learn whether your project gets the reaction you want and whether it is beginning to work in the way intended. A good way to think about this is to consider 'what are people saying about the project *on the day' in order to differentiate feedback from outcomes.* Specific questions might include: • Do people enjoy the project? Rate it? Find it useful • Would they recommend it to someone else? • What aspects do people rate the best/least? • How it could be improved?	Feedback can be collected **informally,** by finding ways to encourage people to tell you what they think whenever they use the project. This could be done using 'suggestion boxes', or online and through social media. And, of course you can simply talk to people. Feedback can be collected **formally,** by using surveys / questionnaires or qualitative research. In fact, a lot of scaling projects have similar questions they want to ask, and we have suggested some standard questions in the appendices. In both cases it is important to remember that feedback does not come just from beneficiaries. It is also about engaging staff, volunteers and any other stakeholders. **Non-users**—or those who drop out of a service—are especially important, because they will help you learn about where things might be going wrong.

Types of data	Specific questions	Possible approaches
4. Outcomes data: Short term changes or benefits your users may get from the service NOTE: Capturing outcomes data will also help you answer your impact questions (see question 1 above). Please see Appendix for sample questions	Key question: *Is the service helping people to think, feel or do things differently?* Outcome data relates to whether the project is starting to have the kind of effect that you want. A good way to think about this is 'what, if anything, do people say about how they have been affected or helped by your project *in the short-term?'* Specific questions might include: • Whether people seemed to have benefited from the project? • Whether they make the positive changes you intend (or did not intend?) eg, changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. Were there any unexpected outcomes? • Which aspects of the project are working for which types of beneficiaries in which circumstances? And which are not?	Collecting outcomes data is harder than collecting user, engagement and feedback data because you will need to ask people more personal and difficult questions about how they have changed or been influenced by the project. Two key considerations are: Do you need try to measure *all* beneficiaries' outcomes? Ideally yes, but this is likely to require lots of time and money, including good case management software (see below) and a well organised team who are able to collect and enter the data. A good alternative is to conduct smaller scale studies and/or interviews or focus groups with samples of beneficiaries[viii] —especially if you can talk to people at a few different time points to better understand how things change. How do we measure outcomes? Questionnaires are the default method, particularly if you use them 'before-and -after' the project to measure change. If you are building relationships with people over time you could use approaches like the 'outcomes star'.[ix] But there may be other observable indicators of change that can act as proxies: for example, do people interact more with others, do they manage their health better, seem happier etc. Often the best way to measure outcomes is for staff or volunteers to make judgements about how people are progressing.

Linking data together

An important aim of all this data collection is to give you the raw material to study patterns and relationships between the different types of data. For example:

- Which types of [users] engage most with the service [engagement]?
- What [feedback] do we get from people who don't come as often [engagement]? Can we do anything to change that? Do the changes we make improve things?
- Do we get better [outcomes] from those [users] who seem to have the greatest needs? How much [engagement] do we need to have from different types of [users] to achieve the best [outcomes]?
- Are [outcomes] strongest for those [users] who give us the best [feedback]? If so, then we are starting to get good indicative evidence that the project is working.

You will note that a key feature of this is that data are ***linked*** at the individual level; hence the feedback you receive from an individual can be linked back to their needs, their engagement and their outcomes. This can be difficult to do because every bit of data needs to be effectively associated with individuals. It is the main reason why scaling projects need good electronic case management systems (see below).

Examples of a project linking data together to drive improvement

The British Lung Foundation are setting up peer support groups to help people with lung conditions to support one another. They begin with an 'information day', after which people can chose whether they want to keep on attending the groups.

The Foundation were interested in finding out what encourages people to attend or not attend the follow-up peer support groups. This meant that they had to be able to link user data on the types of people attending the information day with engagement data about who came along to the groups after the event. They looked closely at the data to see if there were any patterns or variations in attendance, for example by age and type of lung condition. They then conducted short telephone interviews with a sample of people to get feedback data from those who had attended information days but not gone onto the groups. They learned that they needed to provide clearer information in advance, so that people understood the information day was linked to groups, and then provide more follow-up information so people understood when groups are happening and what they would get out of them.

Data systems

Technology helps with collecting data and linking it together. For example; online data collection and surveys have made it easier and cheaper to get feedback; people can share feedback through social media or text messaging; volunteers working across sites can enter data into the same place, share learning and collaborate more easily.

Hence getting the right **data system** is an important question. We have noticed that projects broadly fall into three categories, which is linked to the stage in the scaling process they are at:

Stage	Typical approach
Stage 1: Basic, paper-based	The very smallest projects can sometimes get by with limited paper based systems. For example, referral forms will be kept on file, the register is written in a book and case notes are on paper. If more than one site is operating then local sites keep their own files, and little is centralised or analysed together. But this type of system is inefficient, and projects will soon find their Knowledge and Learning needs outgrow it. A project looking to scale should try to move to stages 2 and 3.
Stage 2: Basic, electronic	In this system, standard electronic and online tools are used (like Word and Excel), but data and information are in different files. For example, attendance might be recorded in a spreadsheet, referral forms and case notes are stored in Word documents, an online survey tool might be used for some data collection. Local sites will still store their own data, but they might send some information by email for analysis at head office. This is a better approach but is still inefficient because someone will need to put a lot of work into pulling all the information together, and data quality is likely to be poor because the system is hard to supervise. This type of system will quickly prove inadequate for any kind of detailed analysis of project effectiveness.
Stage 3: Integrated system	In this approach there is one electronic system in which all information is recorded and stored. This means attendance and engagement by individuals is entered, along with any progress they make. If possible, feedback received is entered against individuals—for

Stage	Typical approach
	example surveys they complete. All local sites have access to the system and data entry is monitored to ensure everyone is doing it properly. Automatic reports are set up so that staff and managers can get updates, as-and-when they are needed. We would suggest that any project delivering to more than about 100 beneficiaries per year should be thinking about this kind of system.

If you think Stage 3 is right for your project, then an increasing number of off-the-shelf systems are available, some of which are quite inexpensive. The challenge is knowing which system to buy, and how to adapt it. Nevertheless, the prize is a system in which everyone's roles are clear, data is collected and stored as efficiently and safely as possible, and which facilitates the most advanced analysis. For more information about choosing the right system go to: www.thinknpc.org/publications/choosing-an-electronic-case-management-system-for-your-organisation/.

What to use this information for

The data collection we have suggested in this section is not primarily about giving you information to put in a report to make your case. Rather it is about improving your own understanding of what is going on; whether the project is working as planned, what changes you need to make and—ultimately—whether to continue? To help with this you might want to set targets or expectations and develop approaches for ensuring the data is shared and used within your project (we discuss this further below in the section on culture).

Finally, it is worth noting that it is important that projects do not overlook their **capability** to use the data they collect; leading to the oft-heard complaint that data is underused. The skill that seems to be most often missing within scaling projects is knowing how to:

- Clean and manipulate data.
- Extract insight from data through analysis: Understanding the data they are analysing, asking the right questions, and interpreting results.

Checklist for "How is it actually working?"

Key considerations		✓
Data collection	Do you have plans for routine collection of data about users and their engagement with the project?	
	How will you collect feedback from service users? Which formal and informal methods will you use?	
	Do you know what outcome data you need to collect? Who will you try to collect if from? What methods will you use to collect outcome data?	
Data analysis	Are you able to link all your data to explore the relationships between different elements?	
Data systems	Have you considered what level of data collection system you need, given the stage of development of your project?	
Data use	Do you know how you will use the data you collect to inform your work and make decisions?	

Question 3: How can we make it work? (at scale)

Question 3 follows on closely from question 2 but focusses more on the practical matters of scaling; whether the market is there for the project and what your project needs to do to make scale work. One way to think about it is the ‘business research’ for your project (because there are similarities to the questions that a business would ask itself if it wanted to grow). Also, notice that we are not talking as much about social impact here; all these questions assume that the project is effective/has impact, this is more about how to get the project to as many people who need it.

The table below highlights some more specific questions you might want to ask, and we think it makes sense to set them out in a four-way grid, reflecting the dimensions of what your project needs to do (supply) and the market (demand), and the questions that are most important *before* scale and *during* scale.

	Before you scale	As you scale
Supply	What capacity and capability do we need to successfully deliver at scale? (including staffing, infrastructure, capital) What manuals, support or training is needed? Are systems and processes fit for purpose? (fit-for-scale)? How much do we expect it cost? How do we monitor and minimise costs? What level of throughput / turnover do we need to deliver the project effectively, break even, demonstrate good value for money and grow further?	What do we actually deliver at scale? How much? Is it good quality? Does it fit the model? How does quality vary across sites? (sometimes referred to as fidelity) What level of adaptability is allowed at site level? As Realising Ambition have put it; what is ‘core’ and what is ‘surface’?[12] How much does it cost? What is the overall cost? What is the unit cost? What makes this cost vary? Can we sustain it?[13]
Demand	What do we know about our market? • Volunteers • Beneficiaries • Potential customers / funders / referrers • What are their needs / preferences? • What is their willingness to take part? • How do we reach / engage them? How effective is our branding / communications / outreach? • What else is out there? Who are our competitors?	• Who are we reaching at different sites? Are they in the target group? • Who is coming back? Who is engaging? • How much take-up is there of different elements of the project? • Are we engaging enough of the right sort of people to deliver the model?

[12] The ‘the things that make it work’ vs ‘the things that make it fit into a new context and make people want to use it’ https://dartington.org.uk/inc/uploads/Realising-Ambition-Programme-Insight-The-Secret-Life-of-Innovation.pdf. See also: ICSF’s work on ‘core elements’ and ‘contextual factors’ https://www.the-icsf.org/2017/09/18/social-franchising-right/

[13] This is the fifth of the five components of Realising Ambition’s Evidence is Confidence Framework.

You can choose from the full range of methodologies available to address these questions. Including:

- The four types of data listed under question 2 above.
- Organisational analysis like skills audits and studies of how staff/volunteers use their time.
- Informal and formal feedback from staff, volunteers, stakeholders.
- Market research in communities you are looking to start working in.
- Competitor analysis and stakeholder mapping.
- Financial analysis and business modelling.

This may seem daunting, but the standard or rigour of evidence you need for this question is lower - it just needs to be sufficiently accurate to help you make the right decisions.

How to weigh-up all these questions?

Throughout this part of the guide we have reviewed three broad questions a scaling project might look to answer. It shows that there are lot of *potential* questions, and it is important to think about where to focus, because you won’t be able to answer them all. To do this we suggest considering the following:

- What—from all the above—do we know already? Or what do we know *with enough confidence?*
- What are the most important, or most urgent, things we need to know?

The answers to these questions could come from any of the sections above. For example, if your intended commissioners are eager for evidence of impact then you will need to focus on question 1, if you are failing to engage a particular target group then question 2 is more relevant, and if you are wondering whether a new area is a suitable market for the next stage of project expansion then it’s question 3.

Once you have agreed on your priorities, your Knowledge and Learning plans should be easier to develop.

Checklist for How can we make it work? (at scale) and weighing-up priorities

Key considerations		✓
Data for scaling	Are you clear on where you are on the scaling journey and which questions are most relevant for you to consider?	
	Have you checked whether there is any additional research you need to do to support your scaling journey?	
Priorities	Have you considered all the questions above and your immediate priorities? Do you know what are the four or five things your project most needs to know?	

Part 3: Developing a Knowledge and Learning culture

Introduction

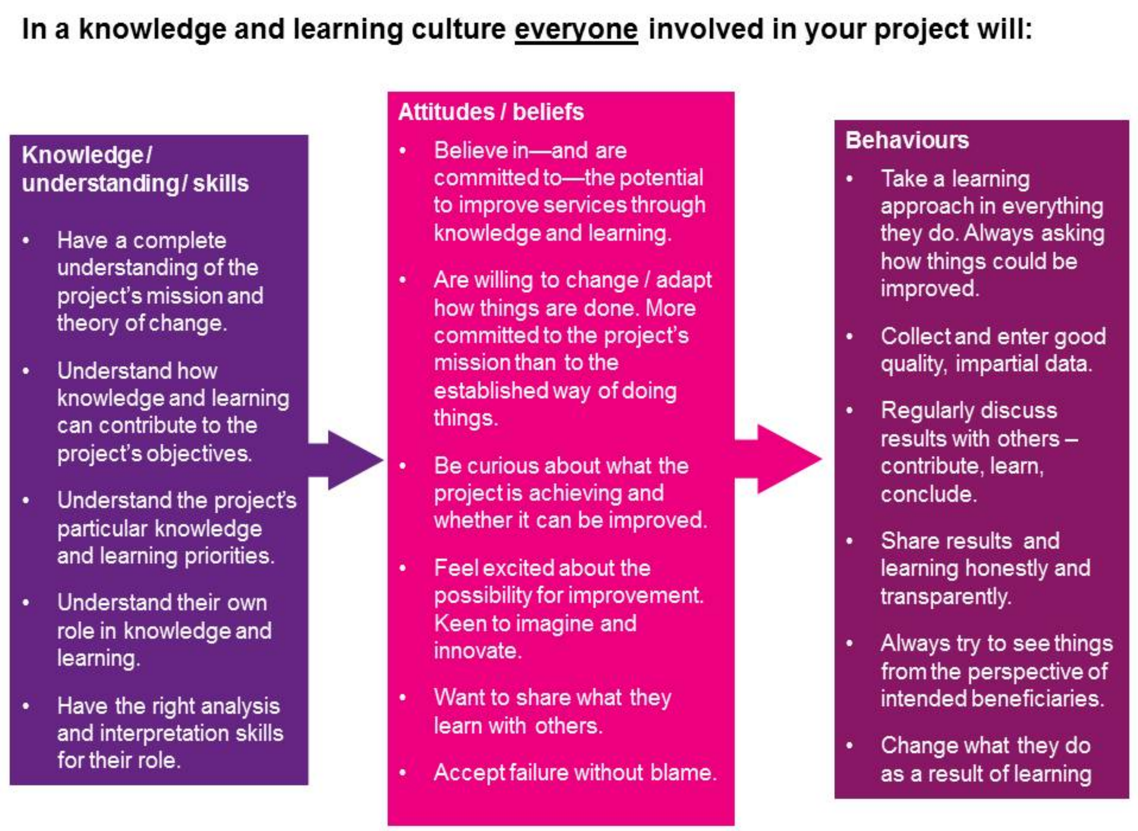
We are keen to stress that Knowledge and Learning is as much about how projects operate day-to-day as it is about data collection. We refer to this as having a 'Knowledge and Learning culture' which is about everyone involved in the project working to collect data, thinking about results and trying to continuously improve. Through this type of culture your project can get a better understanding of what is working, adopt best practice, learn from mistakes, tailor services, become more efficient and celebrate success.

Knowledge and Learning becomes more difficult as projects grow. In the early days a small team will be keen to test, share experiences and refine. But at a larger scale, the work itself is more complex and remote; there is a delivery focus and there are more people involved. With all this can come fewer opportunities to take stock. So growing projects need to work harder to ensure they keep learning and improving.

This section suggests what a Knowledge and Learning culture could look like and some practical steps you could take to achieve it.

What is a Knowledge and Learning culture?[14]

Firstly, we need to articulate what a Knowledge and Learning culture looks like, and to do this we use the knowledge/attitudes / behaviour framework discussed in the theory of change section above.



[14] This is covered in the third of the five components of Realising Ambition's Evidence is Confidence Framework.

Tips for achieving this

People generally understand and accept the rationale that looking at results and learning is the way to improve. But making this work in practice is a challenge; particularly on the front line; where ‘evaluation’ has a reputation for taking up people’s time while offering little in return. Hence, we have tried to make this section practical, with ideas what you might do to take this forward. There are twelve separate suggestions in total:

1. Developing a ‘Knowledge and Learning plan’. All eight Accelerating Ideas projects funded by the National Lottery (Big Lottery Fund) and Nesta have developed ‘plans’ that bring together and summarise how they will go about Knowledge and Learning. There has been no one format to these, and they have varied in length and detail. But they broadly all cover:

- Knowledge and Learning priorities.
- Methodologies to be used
- Who is responsible and accountable for collecting, analysing and learning from data
- Timing / milestones for when things will happen
- When and how often the plan will be reviewed and updated

2. Communication: You can begin by communicating your commitment to Knowledge and Learning and the approaches you plan to take. Certainly, everyone working on the project should be familiar with your Knowledge and Learning Plan—but you may decide to go further and communicate to beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Communication will be more tangible if you can **talk about your specific learning questions**. This shouldn’t be too difficult, because by now you should have already agreed what information your project needs. It is just a matter of ensuring everyone understands these goals and cares about trying to answer them. For instance, in a project that has challenges engaging people from certain ethnic backgrounds, do all staff and volunteers know this is an issue and want to help you address it?

You may also need to address **misapprehensions** about Knowledge and Learning. For example, by demonstrating that it is being used to support staff to improve and maximise impact for beneficiaries - rather than as a way of judging performance.

3. Define roles and responsibilities: Everyone involved in a service should be aware of their role in Knowledge and Learning and it is important to define them. For example:

- **Senior staff** set the tone and promote Knowledge and Learning as an essential part of the project(as important as finance and risk). They will work to set up Knowledge and Learning systems, allocate resources and recruit the right people. They will also communicate what the project learns from Knowledge and Learning and how they are acting on it.
- **Managers** play a crucial role in building a Knowledge and Learning culture. They are the interface between more senior staff / trustees and the front line. They should try to *sell* Knowledge and Learning to both groups, and connect people who could learn from one another. They also need to take time to understand the results, and think about what can be done to improve.
- **Frontline staff and volunteers** deliver the project and are often responsible for collecting data. They are in the best position to offer useful feedback and insights around what is happening.
- **Service users** should feel free to share their views and have opportunities for greater involvement if they chose. They should also understand that the project is looking to learn and improve.

4. Capacity: It’s an obvious point, but you will need to ensure that people have the time to fulfil these roles. Knowledge and Learning will inevitably take a backseat to delivery, so this is a major pitfall unless it is tackled head-on.

5. Leadership: Some individuals will need to have overall responsibility for Knowledge and Learning. Projects that are starting-out tend to give this responsibility to one person, who often has other responsibilities, which is not surprising given how stretched resources can be. But we also encounter larger projects that have not invested enough resources into it, nor have the right skills, and whose Knowledge and Learning is consequently behind where it should be.

One ways to promote Knowledge and Learning is getting people to act as **'champions'**. This can help bridge gaps between different people in the hierarchy or across different sites. Champions can promote Knowledge and Learning generally, or take on roles like answering specific learning questions.

6. Involve people. Try to get staff/volunteers and beneficiaries involved in the design of Knowledge and Learning processes like your theory of change, questionnaires and data systems. This will undoubtedly improve the quality of this work, and it will help to raise awareness and commitment to Knowledge and Learning generally.

Another tip here is to **take out any jargon from your communications** and use the most accessible language possible. Equally, it might be useful to spend time shadowing or talking to staff, to understand the challenges they face in collecting, reviewing and sharing data.

7. Incentives. It may be worth thinking about what further **incentives** you can offer to promote Knowledge and Learning. For example; it can be written into job descriptions and staff performance can be judged on people's contribution to Knowledge and Learning. Volunteers might be motivated by prizes and other forms of recognition.

8. Demonstrate the value. Perhaps the most important incentive is to demonstrate how Knowledge and Learning is being used to improve the project's work and increase impact. Above all, we suggest making the results from Knowledge and Learning a regular focus of internal communications and ensure people *always* get the results from the data they have been involved in collecting.

9. Make data collection and use as easy as possible. To secure support from the front line it helps to make data collection and use **integral to day-to-day work**, not an "add-on". This is easier said than done, but it means ensuring processes that are as light-touch as possible—preferably part of the work itself (i.e. data entered there and then) and provides immediate information and feedback which staff themselves can use to support their work.

The same applies to collecting 'informal feedback' from beneficiaries and stakeholders (for example verbally or through social media). This will disappear into thin air unless there is a process for capturing and storing it. A 'comments' book is the tradition way to do this while establishing a social media hashtag might work if your staff/volunteers prefer to work this way.

10. Systems/processes for learning. So much learning stays in people's' heads, so you need to find ways to encourage people to share their thoughts. A common approach is to cover learning in team meetings or occasional conferences (better still if there are processes for sharing and disseminating between teams). You could introduce more structure to this, for example always having learning meetings at the start and end of projects, or at regular intervals.

Modern technology also gives us new possibilities for sharing learning; you can set up intranets and forums, and there are online tools like Slack, Medium and others for sharing information between teams. Larger projects might want to consider more sophisticated Knowledge Management Systems (KMS). For example, at NPC we use Salesforce[x] to store and share information about all our contacts, the things we read about and the conferences we go to. The software also enables us to group things by theme, tag issues and individuals who might find content interesting. This guide is not the place to go into more detail about the merits of different systems, but it could be worth exploring what is best suited to your project as it grows.

11. Learn from mistakes/failure. It's important to promote a mindset that focuses on improvement. Any disappointing results should be acknowledged and examined, and staff should be encouraged to do this. Some organisations even throw failure parties where people can get together and share what *hasn't* worked.

12. Give it time. Finally, it is worth saying that you probably need to allow time for all this to take shape. It may be a few years before the right culture and supporting systems are in place. Although it is always worth looking for 'quick wins' so that people see the value of Knowledge and Learning.

Checklist for Part 3

Key considerations		✓
Knowledge and learning	Does your organisation and/or team have the 'right' knowledge / attitudes / behaviour about Knowledge and Learning? Where are the biggest gaps?	
	Have you developed a Knowledge and Learning plan? Is it written in an accessible language that anyone could understand? Do you have a strategy to keep the plan 'live', and at the front of mind across the organisation and/or team?	
	Have you communicated your Knowledge and Learning ambitions and plan widely? Have you addressed any misapprehensions?	
	Have you defined roles and responsibilities to help you achieve your Knowledge and Learning plans?	
	Do you have the capacity to implement your Knowledge and Learning plan? If not, are more resources available or do you need to have more modest plans?	
	Do you have leaders and champions who will lead your Knowledge and Learning work?	
	Have you consulted all relevant people about Knowledge and Learning plans and processes (eg, volunteers, beneficiaries, staff).	
	Have you considered what incentives might help people in Knowledge and Learning? Have you considered how you will communicate learning as the project develops?	
	Are your data collection processes simple, and not too demanding?	
	Do you have systems and processes in place for stakeholders to share their learning?	
	Does your organisation engage with failure as an opportunity for learning rather than blame?	

A final word

Undoubtedly all this is a challenge. Not least because scaling projects must deal with all sorts of other issues like funding, business modelling, marketing, staff recruitment and volunteer management. There is a risk that with these competing pressures Knowledge and Learning can get lost or neglected. But ultimately, if you do not know whether your project is working, or achieving the best possible results for beneficiaries, then scale by itself is pointless.

This is why we think Knowledge and Learning is important, and hopefully this guide has given you some useful suggestions on how to approach it.

Further reading

Other reports on 'scaling-up' social projects

This Nesta report aims to help social innovators consider the best options for scaling up their innovations.

This Nesta report shares lessons and practical insights from the 52 projects supported by the Centre for Social Action Innovation Fund, on what it takes to scale a social innovation.

This Nesta report covers how private and third sector organisations innovate to respond to social needs.

This report from Realising Ambition looks specifically at replicating effective services for children and young people: https://cdn.catch-22.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Realising-Ambition-Programme-Insight-The-Secret-Life-of-Innovation.pdf.

They have also written on the strengths that organisations need to grow: https://cdn.catch-22.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Programme-Insight-5.pdf.

This NPC paper explores systemic and attitudinal barriers to scale and considers what practical action can be taken by charities, funders and their partners to expand the reach of successful approaches.

Frameworks

Nesta's Standards of Evidence is an influential report that proposes a hierarchy of evidence to apply to projects.

The Realising Ambition Evidence Confidence Framework covers some of the same ground as this guide. In particular, by discussing how the evidence needs of scaling projects go beyond just testing whether something 'works' or not. It includes a useful framework against which projects can assess their progress.

Data Evolution's Social Sector Data Maturity Framework is designed to help projects understand their relative progress in terms of their use of data and where they could get to. It covers elements of both data collection and culture.

Developing your project's theory of change/logic model

Nesta's Problem Definition template is an exercise to help teams create a mutual understanding of the social problem they are trying to solve, test approaches and consider how to improve how you work. For best results, involve service-users as well as staff: http://www.nesta.org.uk/resources/test-and-learn-my-work.

Tips for involving beneficiaries in the development of your strategy and theory of change.

An NPC introduction to theory of change, and a more practical guide. And a guide for scaling projects working in education/schools.

Nesta's guide to theory of change.

Approaches to cost-benefit analysis and economic evaluation

A range of documents introducing the Social Return on Investment approach.

NPC's guide on whether and how to conduct economic evaluation.

Another guide from Realising Ambition summarises key learning on cost estimation and implications for both delivery organisations and commissioners of services.

Data collection

The Centre for Ageing Better Approach to Evidence is a nice summary of why evidence matters and how best to approach it.

This is a helpful introduction to why Knowledge and Learning is important and how to think about your approach.

This is a guide to determining data priorities when resources are stretched.

An introduction to 'impact measurement' from Nesta.

Websites with a range of guidance around evaluation and data collection:

http://www.betterevaluation.org/

http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/

https://www.clinks.org/support/evaluation-and-effectiveness

Ten considerations for charities on safe use of personal data

Using Knowledge and Learning data

Practical guides to how organisations can turn their raw data into wisdom and informed action:

http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/data-with-destiny/

http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/using-research-evidence-practice-guide

Developing a Knowledge and Learning culture

A useful paper from the Stanford Social Innovation Review discussing the different things you need to put in place to encourage organisational learning:

Case studies and tips on how managers can promote and Knowledge and Learning culture in their organisation:

Further tips on developing a Knowledge and Learning culture:

http://www.misalondon.ca/PDF/BIP/Leadership/30_Ideas_For_A_Culture_Of_Evaluation.pdf

https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-build-an-impact-culture

http://qaspire.com/2011/01/27/creating-a-learning-organization-10-actions-for-a-leader/

https://crisisaction.org/handbook/culture-thats-hungry-for-impact/

https://medium.com/@jcoffman/facetime-open-workspace-and-electronic-calendars-are-a-few-of-my-least favorite-things-learning-4cfd689c559e

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40meQNZl3KU

Tools for assessing your Knowledge and Learning culture:

http://inspiringimpact.org/measuringup

http://www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/making_it_stick_embedding_evaluation_wheel_with_explanation.pdf

Appendices

Archetypal questionnaires

These are some suggestions for questions you could ask - if surveys are part of your Knowledge and Learning plans. Some questions are from official sources so come with some comparison data.

The idea here is not that projects would adopt these questionnaires wholesale, rather use whichever elements of it that are relevant.

Service users / beneficiaries/customers feedback data

A1	How likely are you to recommend [this service/support/activity/etc] to friends and family?	
Option 1	Scale from 0 (‘Not at all likely’) to 10 (‘Very likely’)	Net promoter score
Option 2	Extremely likely, likely, neither likely or unlikely, unlikely, extremely unlikely	

A2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	
	Services are about me and what I need The service makes sense to me and the situation I am in I have sometimes felt let down by the service I feel like I belong I feel like the people here really want to help me I do not feel judged They always seem to have time for me It is warm and welcoming I really feel like I can talk to them The support / advice they give me seems right They know what they are talking about I always feel it is up to me to decide what to do Scale = Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree	

A3	In your own words, in what ways, if any, have you benefited from using [project]	
	Free text	

A4	Are there any ways in which the service could be improved, how? Please tell us as much as you can.	
	Free text	

A5	Please use this box to tell us anything about anything else you have not mentioned above.	
	Free text	

Service users beneficiaries/customers: Outcomes data

Measuring outcomes can be important. Below we list some common tools that are used widely to measure the outcomes that are common across the AI portfolio.

Strictly speaking, validated scales like these should not be shortened or altered (unless the researchers themselves have developed and tested a shorter version, such as with WEMWBS). Doing this is supposed to invalidate the scale. However, if you feel that a scale is too long, you could consider picking out particular questions as you may feel they still give valuable information.

Nesta has identified some common outcomes across the Accelerating Ideas portfolio: reduce isolation, increased wellbeing and increased confidence. Not everyone is working towards all of these, but these are the outcomes that are most common. See table 1 for these outcomes and associated measurement tools

Outcome	Tool
Reduced isolation/ increased opportunities for social contact	Social provisions scale. Measures degree to which respondents feel social relationships provide various dimensions of social support. 24 questions, 4 each for the themes of attachment, social integration, reassurance of worth, reliable alliance, guidance, and opportunity for nurturance. You could consider selecting relevant themes only (but note this will invalidate the scale). The Campaign to End Loneliness gives guidance on different tools available to measure loneliness. They focus on 4 scales. Each has different advantages and disadvantages, which are detailed in the paper. Some are quite negatively worded, other positively. The scales are: UCLA loneliness scale. Measures 3 dimensions of loneliness: relational connectedness, social connectedness and self-perceived isolation. 3 item scale, has been tested with older people, and used in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), giving the opportunity to benchmark against a national dataset. The Campaign to End Loneliness measurement tool. This is a 3 item positively worded scale. However, it is newly developed, so it is unclear whether it picks up change over time. De Jong Gierveld emotional and social loneliness scale- 6 items, mixes positive and negative wording. Designed for use with older people, extensively tested. There is also a single item, negatively worded scale.
Increased confidence	Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. 10-item validated scale measuring global self-worth. Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). Widely validated and used with older people. 14 or 7 item scale.

Outcome	Tool
Increased wellbeing	Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). Widely validated and used with older people. 14 or 7 item scale. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) includes 4 questions about personal well-being in the Annual Population Survey, rated from 0 to 10: 'Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?' Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? (Though 'yesterday' may not be a typical day for the respondent, the large sample size of the APS 'averages out' this difference—note that this may not be the case for smaller samples of clients) 'Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?' 'Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?' PHQ-9 and GAD-7 are alternatives, however they are more clinical than the tools above, focusing on assessing depression and anxiety, rather than levels of wellbeing. Rosenberg's scale measure self-esteem, a component of wellbeing.

There are other outcomes that you might be working towards. The next table lists some of these, and associated measurement tools you may wish to adopt.

Outcome	Tool
Richer lives	ICECAP-O (ICEpop CAPability measure for Older people). 6 areas (love and friendship, thinking about the future, doing things that make you feel valued, enjoyment and pleasure, and independence) each measured on a 4-point scale. Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). Widely validated and used with older people. 14 or 7 item scale.
Increased independence	Lawton-Brody instrumental activities of daily living scale (IADL). Completed by carer or other professional. Includes items on ability to do light housekeeping, food preparation, shopping, using transport, managing medication, managing finances.

Outcome	Tool
Increased resilience	The Centre for Policy on Ageing published a review into the definition of resilience, the evidence around it and measurement tools. The three leading measurement tools were the 25-item Resilience Scale (Wagnild and Young, 1993) the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), a 25, 10 and 2- item scale, and Psychological Resilience, a scale with 3 dimensions and 19 items developed by Windle, Markland and Woods in2008 for use with older adults.7 Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC). None are easily assessable (eg behind a paywall) so we have been unable to review them.
Increased sense of security	Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. 10-item validated scale measuring global self-worth.
Increased sense of purpose	Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. 10-item validated scale measuring global self-worth.
Feeling valued and respected	ICECAP-O (ICEpop CAPability measure for Older people). 6 areas (love and friendship, thinking about the future, doing things that make you feel valued, enjoyment and pleasure, and independence) each measured on a 4-point scale. Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). Widely validated and used with older people. 14 or 7 item scale.
Improved quality of life	Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). Widely validated and used with older people. 14 or 7 item scale.
Reduced social and intergenerational divides	Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2008, Attitudes to older people module.
Better control of (own) health / self-management	PAM (Patient Activation Measure). 10 item validated questionnaire, being trialled in NHS. PAM is licensed by the US company Insignia Health LLC. The company does charge a fee for licensing the PAM, but the price is intentionally low to encourage adoption.
Improved medicine management and compliance	Extract from Lawton-Brody instrumental activities of daily living scale (IADL). Completed by carer or other professional. Includes items on managing medication.

Outcome	Tool
Increased likelihood seek external support	PAM (Patient Activation Measure). 10 item validated questionnaire, being trialled in NHS.
Reduced cost of care	The NHS publishes reference costs for all its services and this can be used to show how your costs compare to the average. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-reference-costs-2015-to-2016
Reduced call on GP services	PAM (Patient Activation Measure). 10 item validated questionnaire, being trialled in NHS.
Reduced risk of (unnecessary) hospital admittance	PAM (Patient Activation Measure). 10 item validated questionnaire, being trialled in NHS.

Survey for questions for volunteers

Ideally volunteers will be an important part of your Knowledge and Learning plans and they should have a range of opportunities to reflect and share on what they learn. If you have a large number of volunteers, then you might also wish to conduct occasional surveys and the sections below suggest some possible questions to use.

Levels of volunteering

The first set of questions are designed to help you estimate how much volunteering or social action is generated by your programme.

This is actually one way to derive an economic ratio for the benefit of a programme: By multiplying your estimate of the total amount of volunteer by average wages you can calculate how much 'free' support a programme creates.

A1	Just thinking about the last 4 weeks. Approximately how many hours have you spent helping [project] in the last 4 weeks? If you are not sure please provide your best estimate.	DCMS Community Life Survey[xi]
	Free text	

A2	When did you start volunteering with [project]?	
	Free text	

The following questions are designed to enable you to estimate how much *__new__* social action/volunteering a programme *creates*.

A3	When did you start volunteering with [project] were you already volunteering for another [project]	
	Yes – a little Yes – a lot No Don't know/can't remember	

A4	If you were not volunteering with [project] what do you think you would be doing? Please just give us your best guess	
	I would be doing a similar amount of volunteering for another project I would probably be volunteering somewhere else, but I would not be spending as much time I would probably not be volunteering anywhere else Don't know	

A4	Do you think that volunteering with [project] has made you more or less likely to volunteer in future (either with is or with different projects)?	
	More likely Less likely Made no difference Don't know	

A5	Is there anything that prevents you from volunteering more time with us?	
	Free text	

The quality of volunteer experience

This is a set of standard questions you might use to measure and compare volunteer experiences.

B1	How likely is it that you would recommend volunteering with [project] to a friend or colleague?	
	Scale from 0 (‘Not at all likely’) to 10 (‘Very likely’)	

B2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	
	[project] makes it clear what I need to achieve in this role [project] has given me the training I need to do my role [project] gives me the support I need to do my role [project] has effective systems and processes to support me in my role I am familiar with the theory of change for [your project / programme] [project] listens to my views I feel that [project] appreciates my efforts I enjoy volunteering with [project] Scale = Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree	

B3	Are there any areas where you believe the volunteer experience could be improved? If so, how?	
	Free text	

Service improvements

This is a set of standard questions you might use to collect volunteers' views on how services themselves could be changed or improved

C1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	Net promoter score
	The service we provide to people is good quality The service we provide reaches and engages the people who need it the most The service we provide makes a positive difference to peoples' lives Scale = Strongly agree, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree, strongly disagree	

C2	In your view how, if at all, could the service be improved?	
	Free text	

C3	In your view what should [project] a) Stop doing? b) Start doing? c) Continue to do?	
	Free text	

Volunteer impact

Here are a small number of suggested questions aimed at learning whether volunteers themselves have benefiting from their engagement with you.

D1	In your own words, in what ways do you personally benefit by volunteering with [project]	
	Free text	

D2	Which if any of the following ways do you feel you have benefited from volunteering with [project]? Please tick as many boxes as apply	
	I have made new friends I have gained personal satisfaction I feel I have helped people I have met people with different backgrounds / experiences to my own I have gained new skills / knowledge It have talked about the experience on my CV / in job interviews I feel I am doing something useful with my time I feel a stronger connection to my community It has changed my attitudes / opinions Other (please write in) Don’t know	

i https://www.nesta.org.uk/project/accelerating-ideas

ii http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/what-does-it-take-go-big-insights-scaling-social-innovation

iii https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/standards_of_evidence.pdf

iv http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/listen-and-learn-qualitative-research/

v http://www.thinknpc.org/our-work/projects/data-labs/

vi https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing

vii https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-09-23

viii See http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/IntroductionToSampling_0.pdf

ix http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/about-the-star/what-is-the-outcomes-star/

x https://www.salesforce.com/uk/

xi https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/567536/CL1617_Web_questionnaire_v3.pdf