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Overview of the Data Fellowship

The Data Fellowship involved a comprehensive analysis for the Boosting Life Sciences Social Economy (BLSSE) project, led by several London boroughs and MedCity, with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Tasked to support inclusive growth in health and life sciences, the fellowship required meticulous data analysis and cleaning to evaluate social economy organisations in this sector. This analysis encompassed both supply-side data, detailing social economy organisations, and demand-side data, highlighting local authority spending. The project aimed to provide a clearer picture of local support for social enterprises and enhance the capacity of these organisations in the health sector.

Data Analysis

The data analysis involved systematically collating, cleaning, and evaluating information on social economy organisations in health and life sciences across London boroughs. Supply-side analysis integrated data from Companies House, the Charity Register, and DataCity, with R scripts used to merge and refine databases. Real-Time Industrial Classifications (RTICs) offered detailed categorisation, especially in fields like biotechnology. Demand-side analysis assessed borough and NHS Trust spending to quantify support for these organisations. Challenges, including differing trading and legal names, were managed by collaborating with data providers, ensuring dataset accuracy. This method enabled comprehensive cross-referencing by sector, legal form, and turnover for reliable conclusions.

Findings

- The analysis identified nearly 3,400 social economy organisations across eight London boroughs, with 89% comprising trading entities such as community interest companies and trading charities, while 11% were grant-dependent, non-trading foundations or trusts.

- Camden and Westminster had the highest concentration of these organisations, while Hammersmith and Fulham showed comparatively fewer, with many organisations located in economically deprived areas, highlighting their role in community support.
- Findings showed a strong presence of organisations in non-residential care and mental health support, with high densities in deprived areas and varied organisational types across boroughs. Graphs highlighted a predominance of small enterprises, providing valuable insights for local authorities to boost economic inclusivity

Key Skills Learnt

During the fellowship, I gained essential technical and professional skills that greatly enhanced my capacity for data analysis and collaboration. My proficiency in R developed significantly, particularly in data cleaning—a fundamental yet challenging aspect of analysis. Learning R through trial and error, I became adept at troubleshooting with minimal R-specific supervision, which developed my critical thinking and resilience. For instance, resolving discrepancies between Companies House and DataCity data taught me the importance of thorough validation and attention to detail when managing large datasets.

Working at CLES also refined my communication skills. Regular updates on weekly stand-up channels helped me clearly articulate my progress, while engaging with colleagues' insights across different projects enhanced my teamwork. Networking furthered my understanding of community wealth building and local economic development, as I engaged in one-on-one discussions with team members.

Additionally, exposure to projects like the Korean government water company consultation allowed me to apply cultural knowledge and language skills, broadening my perspective on international economic issues. Observing the impact of social enterprises through engagements like the Coalfields Regeneration Trust highlighted their role in local communities, collectively strengthening my adaptability, problem-solving, and communication skills in data-driven economic work.
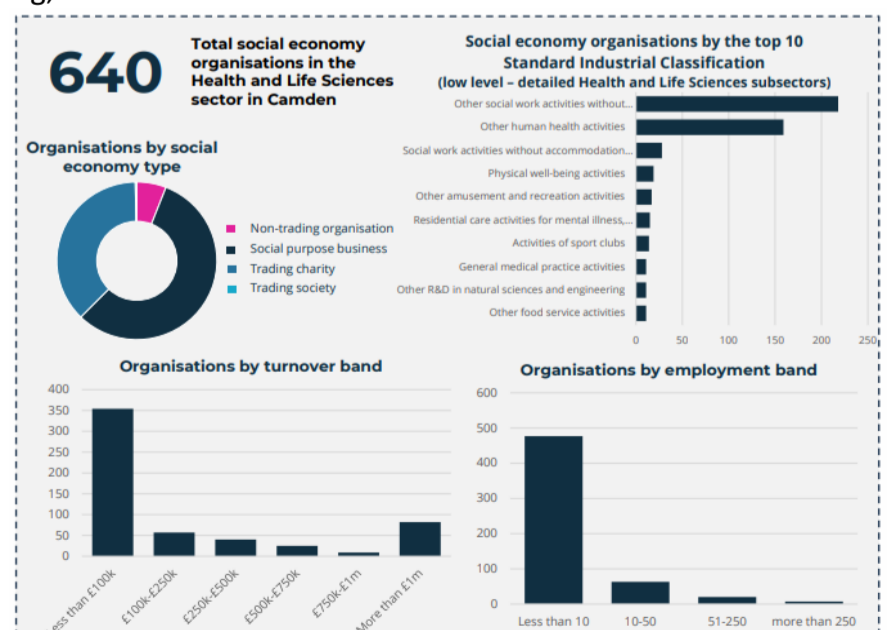
One section of the borough-by-borough analysis – a snapshot of the social economy in Camden