



Social Economy Today

**In an increasingly uncertain world:
Social enterprises dealing with complexity - the unheard voices.**

Social Economy Today is a public lecture jointly hosted by the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health (Glasgow Caledonian University) and Social Enterprise Scotland. By working together, we recognise the value in sharing academic and sector expertise to support a social economy that can contribute to fair and inclusive economies, the reduction of inequalities and action on climate crisis.

This annual public lecture invites members of the Scotland's third sector to share their insight and perspective on current opportunities, challenges and future prospects of Scotland's social economy. The lecture aims to provoke discussion on these themes as part of GCU's ambition to be Glasgow's leading civic university and initiate productive debate on shared ambitions and how to achieve them.



As the sector continues to deliver social impact in an increasingly challenging landscape, this year's speaker will reflect on leadership within Scotland's social economy with a focus on equalities and diversity.

Our speaker: Dr Elizabeth (Liz) Gardiner is the founder and director of Fablevision, a cultural social enterprise of some 40 years standing:

experience which informed both her PhD research and her over two decades of service as a board member of SENS Scot.

As a Post Doctoral Researcher and Associate of the CCSE at the University of the West of Scotland, Liz teaches and researches grass roots cultural planning and is also currently undertaking research on Women in Leadership in Social Enterprise in Scotland. This work has identified the relational and collaborative leadership styles often at the forefront within and across the sector, as opposed to the more traditional heroic leadership practices within more corporate settings.

This year's lecture draws from this collaborative approach, incorporating research and engagement across equalities and diversity networks, including Women in Social Enterprise Collective, Social Enterprise Disability Network, Global Majority Social Enterprise Network, LGBTQ+ Network.

The title for the lecture is: In an increasingly uncertain world: Social enterprises dealing with complexity - the unheard voices

In mainstream conversations and media stories, social enterprise is often portrayed through the lens of the "heroic" model - led by a passionate individual entrepreneur, where the business activity and social benefit grow alongside each other. While inspiring, this is just one of many ways social good can take shape.

Census data shows us that the majority of SE's in Scotland are women led, place based, small (with average turnover less than £100k) but often essential for the social fabric of their communities. There are also a disproportionately high number of social enterprises in rural communities per head of population.

These social enterprises often responding to need, use a relational model rather than being focused on transactional business approaches and are usually inclusive and democratic in their approach.

In our increasingly uncertain world, with widening inequalities, the impacts of climate change, polarisation, and significant instability in the wider geopolitical context - what learning can we bring from the deep rooted, community led, collaborative and relational model of social enterprise?

Venue: CEE2 Date: Tuesday 16th September 2025

Tickets

In Person: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/social-economy-today-in-person-tickets

Online: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/social-economy-today-online-tickets

Programme:

5.30pm	Registration (Tea & Coffee)
6.00pm	Welcome by Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health and Social Enterprise Scotland
6.15pm	Dr Elizabeth Gardiner: In an increasingly uncertain world: Social enterprises dealing with complexity - the unheard voices
	Q&A
7.00pm	Reception
8.00pm	Close