



The Social Sector and Philanthropy in 2030

FOUR SCENARIOS

Co-Created by Participants in
GHC Conversation 2012
hosted by
Gary Hubbell Consulting



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An Appendix to this Monograph containing scenario story contributions by Conversation 2012 participants is available as a separate document.

INTRODUCTION

“ If we are to influence the future for the better, we need to have some idea of where we may be headed. We need to know how much maneuvering room we have. What are our options? What are the consequences of our choices? Who benefits and who loses? If the future were really predictable and inevitable, then human choice and freedom would be an illusion. Uncertainty and freedom go together. The indeterminacy of the future means that our choices actually might mean something. What we believe can happen influences what we do, and what we do actually influences the outcome of events. ”

(James A. Ogilvy, *Creating Better Futures: Scenario Planning as a Tool for a Better Tomorrow*, 2002)

Scenario thinking is not new. Shell Oil, Global Business Network, Institute for Alternative Futures, the United Nations, and hosts of others in every sector have long used this tool. Yet, its practice is less common in the social sector. Extending the fabric of three earlier *Conversations* (2009 – 2011), participants in *Conversation 2012* sought to imagine distinct images of possibility for the work of social change and philanthropy. As a result, we embraced the discipline of scenario thinking to explore multiple perspectives.

With few exceptions, most of us who gathered for *Conversation 2012* had limited experience with scenario thinking. But we more than compensated for that deficit by bringing a shared, earnest willingness to apply ourselves fully. With our collective thinking in late March 2012, we used scenarios to “render the abstract tangible.”¹

Our main focus question was this:

What will the social sector ecology in North America be like in 2030 and will philanthropy be innovative and sufficiently responsive to propel real and lasting change for all?

1 From A. Osterwalder & Y. Pigneur (2010), *Business Model Generation*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey, p. 182.

The resulting social sector and philanthropy 2030 scenario set is the co-creation of 16 leaders from organizations in the U.S. and Canada.

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HOW WE DEVELOPED THE SCENARIOS

Peter Schwartz reminds us to avoid thinking about scenarios as if they are predictions. “Rather, scenarios are vehicles for helping people learn. Unlike traditional business forecasting or market research, they present alternative images of the future; they do not merely extrapolate the trends of the present.”² So we set out to learn from the future.

SCENARIO QUADRANTS, DRIVING FORCES AND SIGNALS OF CHANGE

Prior to our gathering in late March, *Conversation* registrants collectively identified possible signals of change in the coming decades. They are listed below, with the first two representing those that participants deemed most important and most uncertain.

- Approaches to pressing public social issues and mandates (education, health, retirement, employment, immigration, hunger, borders, justice). [This became Driver 1]
- Society's orientation to philanthropy (institutions or informal networks and incentives or tight limits) [This became Driver 2]
- Local responses to global economic forces (competitive economic sectors, income levels, poverty, jobs-wages, family self-sufficiency)
- Response to environmental challenges (water, weather-related crises, loss of fisheries, drought, pollution, food safety, etc.)
- Rate and dispersion of technology in society
- Response to demographic and generational change
- Response to changing socio-cultural values, roles, traditions
- Levels of trust in public institutions, including governments
- Response to societal threats (illegal drugs-cartels, terrorism, identity-cyber security, human slavery, AIDS, viral contagion, rogue nations)
- Levels of hope, happiness, optimism

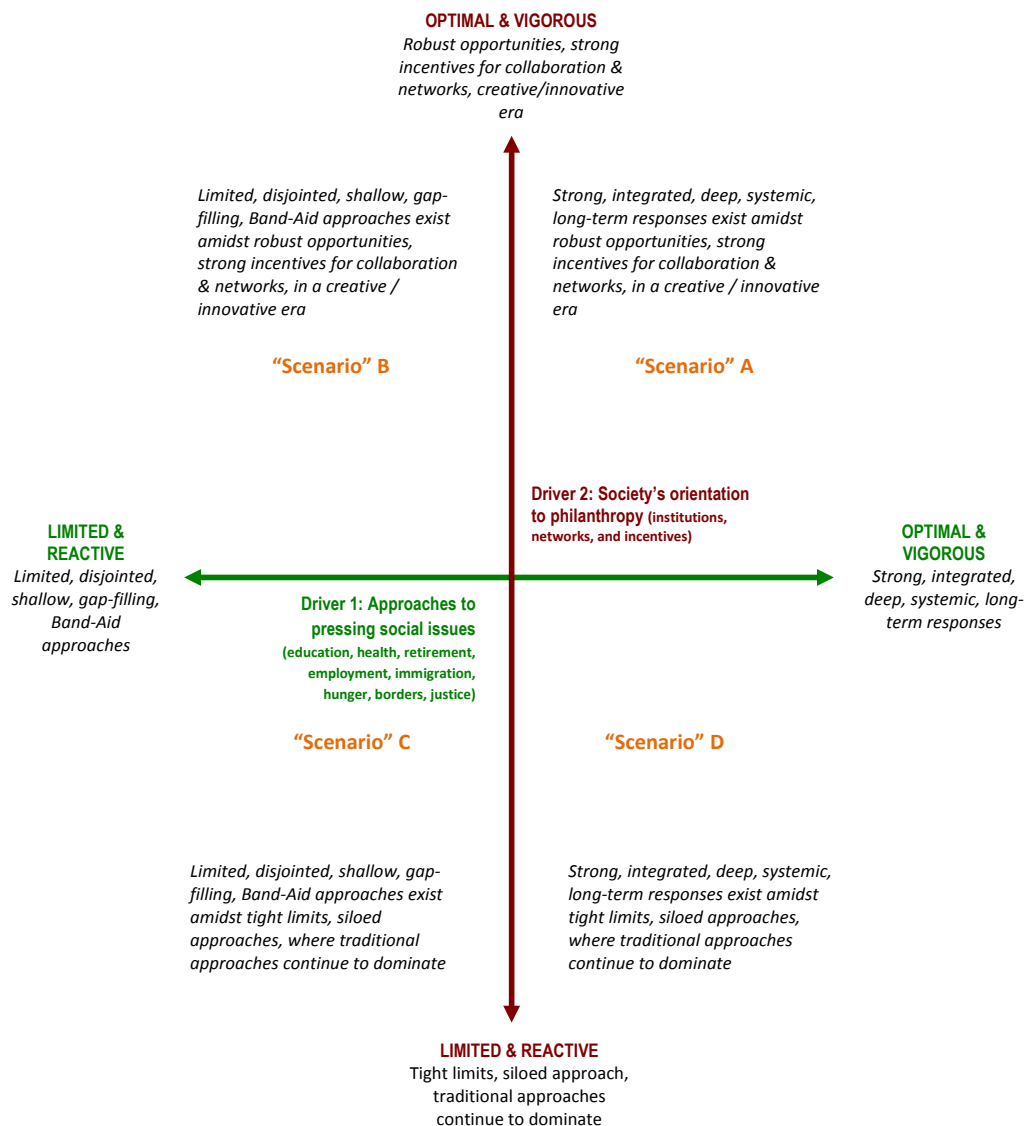
With input from the group prior to meeting, we selected two of these signals as simultaneously the most critical to shaping the social sector and philanthropy and also the most uncertain. These became our driving forces of the future (2030). We recognized that each force could have an optimal and a limited condition, which could be shown on a continuum representing the ways that people and institutions respond. To construct the quadrants formed by the intersection of these two forces, we needed to label the two possible extremes of each: Optimal and Vigorous at one end and Limited and Reactive at the other.

By showing their convergence on twin axes, we constructed the backbone or scaffolding for

² P. Schwartz (1996). *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World*, Doubleday, New York.

four structurally different and possible future scenario stories. This convergence created the possible dynamics and “plot lines” during our scenario thinking approach to *Conversation*. Following is a diagram that depicts this structural framework.

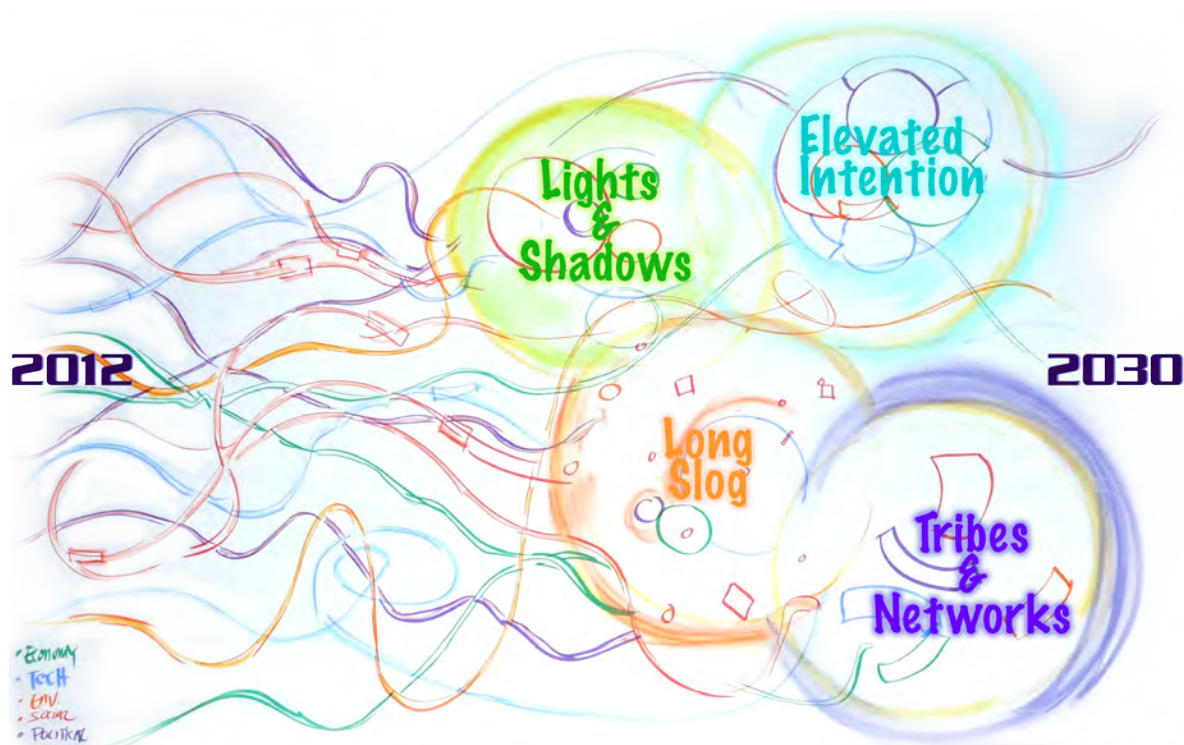
IMAGINING POSSIBLE FUTURES 2030 WHEN DRIVING FORCES INTERACT



STORY DEVELOPMENT AND SENSE MAKING

With the structural framework set, all 16 participants were assigned one quadrant which became the framework or lens for their own creative story contribution about the social sector, life, and philanthropy in the year 2030. Participants were encouraged to do as much trend analysis and research as they could before writing. Each brought insights around important dimensions of these imagined futures. The resulting collection of stories was distributed to participants prior to the *Conversation*, allowing each to fully digest these ideas and to lean into images of possibility for four very different futures.

The group then gathered on Hilton Head Island from March 28 to March 31 for real-time work on the emerging scenario set. Two full days were devoted to scenario story development and refinement in each of the four quadrants. Small group work teams brought depth and imagination; the entire group challenged, synthesized, and added new meaning. Ultimately, four scenarios of the social sector and philanthropy emerged from this work. Each is the unique combination of the perspectives of these 16 participants at this moment in time. The paths and possibilities are interesting indeed.



Graphic rendering by Ken Hubbell

SCENARIO A – *ELEVATED INTENTION*

Strong, integrated, deep, systemic, long-term responses to social issues exist amidst robust opportunities for philanthropy, strong incentives for collaboration & networks, in a creative/innovative era

Slice of Life in the Elevated Intentions Scenario

Ron (70 years old), Kate (50), Diego (25), and Felicia (three) are gathered in the garden of their multi-generational, multi-cultural community “pod.” Ron has been retired for five years; he benefits from government health care funded through significant reduction in military deployment and spending over the past decade. Kate founded “Shreds to Threads Inc.” a social enterprise which transforms old clothes into new quilts—exemplifying closed-loop manufacturing. Diego, 25, is a recent college graduate who designed his own degree in local sustainability. A management intern at Shreds to Threads, he’s receiving on-the-job training in social entrepreneurship; he is also fulfilling his corporate service requirement by teaching sustainability through virtual technology to a Guatemalan “sister community.” Felicia is Diego’s three-year-old daughter. As part of the local Cradle-to-Career initiative, she attends pre-school on weekday mornings and participates in nature-appreciation outings/activities several afternoons a week.



Graphic rendering by Ken Hubbell

Kate: I read an interesting quote this morning. It was written more than 20 years ago by a woman named Sue Swyers Moncure. “Genuine understanding and acceptance,” she wrote, “come only when we work together, play together, grieve together, grow together, and form psychological kinships by sharing life’s uplifting, soul-bonding moments together.”

Ron: Sounds like she’s talking about us!

Kate: That’s what I thought. She would’ve been right at home here...

Ron: I couldn’t have imagined it 20 years ago. But here I am, living comfortably and securely with younger folks like you and Diego—who do what I can’t.

Kate: But you contribute, too—mentoring Diego on leadership and giving free piano lessons.

Ron: Sure—but I’m learning while I’m teaching! Diego keeps me up to speed on the latest technology and some of the more intriguing challenges he’s facing with the folks in Guatemala...

Diego: It’s a win-win. I mean, look at the four of us! Different sexualities, ethnicities, professional experience, personal interests—living much like a family would have 50 or 75 years ago...

Kate: Which I imagine you know from a prior life! Seriously, though—what we get from working together, growing together, and sharing those uplifting, soul-bonding moments has enabled us to reach beyond our pod to support others both here and abroad. I’m still amazed by what we’re doing at Shreds! Ten percent of the profits and nearly a quarter of the quilts go straight to disaster-torn regions around the globe. And because we’re able to offer part-time work *with* benefits to many of our employees, *they’re* actually able to support themselves *and* have time for their families. Not to mention the opportunity it gives me for my food justice work and fitness training!

Diego: I really like being able to spend some work time each week with the community in Guatemala. I get to apply what I’ve learned both on the job and in my mentoring sessions with Ron in a much different setting. I also appreciate being able to come home early on Thursdays for the spirituality classes my wife is teaching.

Felicia (tugging on Diego’s arm): I like it here, too!

Diego: What do you like best, Felicia?

Felicia: I like going to Ron’s after school—when Jeff takes care of me! We made bagels yesterday!

Ron: It’s pretty amazing, actually, I think back to when I was Diego’s age—it was hard to live openly. Here we are, half a century later, with the physical, social, emotional, and financial security everyone dreamed of back then in a setting I couldn’t conceive when I was Kate’s age—which wasn’t that long ago...

Kate: *How* we’ve managed to get here is just as fascinating. By recognizing our inherent virtues and focusing on similarities rather than differences, we’ve engaged in dialogue that’s nearly erased the lines between races, cultures, religions, sexes—*and* the public and private sectors. Moncure was right. Genuine understanding and acceptance were really possible—once enough people started to believe it. We’re living proof!

SCENARIO DETAILS

This is an emergent, highly connected, more opportunistic future, born of a widening, diverse collaboration in a community context. The resulting adaptation unleashes potential and connects people at more levels, producing a gestalt of shared understanding, shared commitment, and shared values across sectors. At a “macro” level, the great promise starting to emerge creates a groundswell of hope, with equally high levels of happiness and optimism. A “consciousness transformation” is occurring—paving the way to a new spiritual awareness of our inherent divinity.

On a broad societal level (politically, economically, socially), we’re finding ways to incentivize “what’s right.” Stakeholders are fueled by passion, consciousness, intention, and a broader perspective. Amid this diversity and difference, there is a growing psychological kinship and a deep connection among people and to the world. Considerably growing numbers of stakeholders are at the table and engaged in collective problem solving and strategizing around social issues. The world’s thorniest social issues are coming into a powerful inflection point. Collective impact is embraced.

Two potential “wild cards” may have coalesced and/or propelled the evolution of this scenario (which might catalyze more rapid change). The first is an economic collapse in the decade of the 2010s, which would have the benefit of expediting more “localized” economies. The second is a movement (such as “Occupy...”), which would more quickly stir greater engagement around problem solving.

Technology is perhaps the most critical driving force to realizing the potential inherent in this scenario. Near universal access to technology enhances awareness, promulgates engagement, and levels the playing field. What’s been out of sight can’t be kept from coming into sight. More people have better access to more knowledge; consequently, change occurs more quickly. Piggybacking on technology is providing new adaptations for lifelong learning, food and fuel supply, and community development. Expanding choice, intention, perspective, and passion is allowing businesses, communities, and others to embrace new solutions—in energy, ecology, and natural resources.

Scenario Highlights and Milestones

- A consciousness transformation occurs, possibly advanced by an economic disaster or pandemic that triggers mass recognition.
- Near universal access to technology enhances awareness, promulgates engagement, and levels the playing field
- Moving toward more engaged civil discourse and away from a “me” and “right now” mentality to “we” and “long term” thinking.
- Public/private/social sector partnerships have become increasingly common.
- Multiple X-Prize offerings appear.

As we approach/consider societal threats, we’re moving away from labeling and toward more engaged, civil discourse; away from a “me” and “right now” mentality to “we” and “long term” thinking. Imagination, collaboration and dialogue are being applied to problem solving. A “widely enhanced

consciousness” acts as catalyst for change. People value education, shared leadership, a sense of responsibility for the community, and the feelings of safety and security (financial/health/basic necessities). A considerably heightened sense of community is demonstrated through such efforts as community gardens, and a “cradle to career” approach to the educational process (which exemplifies the kind of public/private/social sector partnerships that have become increasingly common).

Education has been transformed and revolutionized, availing itself and applying technology and the “cradle to career” collaborative approach. Local communities embrace responsibility for educating all children. A primary goal of the educational process is to unlock and unleash learners’ passion. Students co-design their educational paths, making college degrees more diverse and less formally regimented.

Not surprisingly, levels of institutional trust are high. Government is a co-equal partner with public and private sectors in addressing not only education, but a wide range of social issues.

Demographically, “baby boomers” have “passed the torch” to “millennials” by grooming them for leadership—a critical development. “Family” continues to be redefined. A key manifestation is families and communities of choice. There is an enhanced level of intergenerational engagement, both within traditional families and between/

among unrelated individuals in extended families of choice. Social networks are created and extended through technology.

Economically, significant demilitarization frees substantial resources to address common global issues. Food justice awareness is common. Wealth is being re-concentrated—from the few to the many. Social businesses—which maximize purpose with profit—have grown exponentially. New markets with sustainable economic models are being created for, and giving rise to, more meaningful work. In addition to being more “locally” focused, North Americans are heavily engaged around the world in helping communities become self-sustaining.

Environmentally, society is generally considering both short and long-term consequences of behavioral choices. There exists a pervading culture of stewardship for nature and resources. Manufacturers embrace (or significantly aspire to) 100% closed-loop processes in which everything is ultimately recyclable.

Despite these flourishing openings, there are still marginalized clusters of people, including gangs, cartels, hackers, and other exclusive small affinity groups that quietly or demonstrably reject the diverse, collaborative, community context. Some potential “losers” are the uneducated or under-educated, those who are professionally displaced by new approaches to problem solving (such as teachers), and those with limited access to technology.

INTERPRETING IMPLICATIONS

1. *What is the central tension?* The envisioned transformed consciousness is amorphous and, therefore, feels like a fundamental realignment of human nature. Thus there is tension between the natural inclination toward this “higher” state and the daily choices and behaviors in opposite directions. Tension also exists between those holding old ways vs. those embracing a new, collaborative way. This tension plays out in daily relationships between our “natural” families and our “chosen” families (a product of a psychological kinship). The desire and ability to choose also brings intrinsic dangers of blocking the disparate voices most unlike our own.
2. *Who has advantage?* The educated and those with access to technology. Younger people—and those of any age who are adaptable and open to change. Middle and lower classes benefit from wealth transfer. Individuals historically categorized by their “generations” (baby boomer, X, millennial) and their “orientations” (economical, vocational, spiritual, familial) see beyond their respective “boxes” and lean/live into a more collaborative, thriving environment.
3. *Who is constrained?* Hackers. Gangs. Displaced persons (and institutions) who don’t adapt to new ways will feel constraint. Yet it won’t always be dramatic or traumatic for some facing constraints. There will be some enlightened catalyst organizations which reach a point where they realize they’re no longer needed. In effect, they embrace their own (organizational) de-prioritization and/or dissolution in the face of a very different environment.
4. *What key shifts/milestones must have happened for the scenario to emerge?* Consciousness transformation, possibly heightened by an economic disaster or a global pandemic, causes people to retract and live very differently from a position of choice. The resulting “100th Monkey” effect³ triggers mass recognition of the need for new behavior. Another key shift occurs with the significant generational transfer (or redistribution) of wealth.

3 The story of the hundredth monkey effect was published in Lyall Watson’s foreword to Lawrence Blair’s *Rhythms of Vision* in 1975, and spread with the appearance of Watson’s 1979 book *Lifetide*. The claim is that unidentified scientists were conducting a study of macaque monkeys on the Japanese island of Koshima in 1952. These scientists purportedly observed that some of these monkeys learned to wash sweet potatoes, and gradually this new behavior spread through the younger generation of monkeys—in the usual fashion, through observation and repetition. Watson then claimed that the researchers observed that once a critical number of monkeys was reached—the so-called hundredth monkey—this previously learned behavior instantly spread across the water to monkeys on nearby islands. This story was further popularized by Ken Keyes, Jr. with the publication of his book *The Hundredth Monkey*. Keyes’ book was about the devastating effects of nuclear war on the planet. Keyes presented the hundredth monkey effect story as an inspirational parable, applying it to human society and the effecting of positive change. [4] Since then, the story has become widely accepted as fact. (Source: Wikipedia, retrieved June 20, 2012, from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100th_monkey_effect)

5. *How will success be measured?* Better quality of life in general for most. More healthy environment. Progress toward these ideals may ebb and flow.
6. *What will be valued most?* Adaptation. Choice. The different other. Community.
- Engagement. High expectations. Goodwill.
7. *What will be the Holy Grail?* Living in balanced intention and attention. Focused passion. Learning to hold our differences respectfully. Kinship. Community by choice or community by family.

PHILANTHROPY IN THE ELEVATED INTENTIONS SCENARIO

Philanthropy is alive and well, but not in the traditional sense or form of the rich giving to the poor. Shared accountability is increasingly the norm. People contribute what they can, where they can, and how they can—in the form of time, money, volunteer service, expertise, etc. Philanthropy is understood more as aligning intention and attention than as giving away money. The cultivation of a prospect's assets shifts toward a cultivation of his/her consciousness. This era of elevated intentions is one of highly individual, personal, and deeply engaged philanthropy.

As evidence of this higher consciousness, more people look within, rather than to someone else for an opening. These tendencies, coupled with the mass dispersion of connection tools, tend to spur crowds and communities of service and resources. Society is characterized by shared understanding, increasing tolerance, and psychological kinship that influence behavior.

Money and power are different. Money is less consolidated and considerably minimized, without eroding philanthropy and generous spirit. The language and mindset of donating or contributing is replaced by compassionate investing. X Prize offerings may expand well beyond the few that existed in the early 2010s. Additionally, there is a redistribution (or flattening) of power relationships. Grant making foundations lose their earlier vaulted positions as high and mighty in the social sector, instead emerging as true and equal partners. This implies far better and more lasting results on pressing social issues. While some Band-Aid solutions and responses are still necessary, they are the exception rather than the norm.

SCENARIO B – *LIGHTS AND SHADOWS*

Limited, disjointed, shallow, gap-filling, Band-Aid approaches to social issues exist amidst robust opportunities for philanthropy, strong incentives for collaboration & networks, in a creative innovative era

Slice of Life in the Lights Scenario

Jack and Jenny are in their mid-40s, married 12 years, with two children. They live in an exclusive urban neighborhood. He's the regional vice president of a health insurance company; she cares for their two children and does part-time marketing for a non-profit dental clinic serving uninsured patients—many of whom are immigrants.

Jenny: I met a little girl at the Clinic today...

Jack: And?

Jenny: She was seven—same as Sarah.

Jack: Speaking of Sarah—where is she?

Jenny: She went home with a friend after gymnastics. I'll pick her up in half an hour.

Jack: And Pete?

Jenny: Still at soccer. I'll get him, too.

Jack: Oh, yeah. So, you were talking about some girl...

Jenny: She fell off a swing and knocked out two teeth. The few others she had were black. But her mouth was so infected we couldn't treat her. We had to send her to the hospital...

Jack: That reminds me—I upped our dental plan to cover Pete's braces...

Jenny: Jack, I felt so bad. Her mom could barely speak English. Luckily there was an older son who at least *seemed* to know his way around...



Graphic rendering by Ken Hubbell

Jack: Well, these days you can get directions to the hospital in just about *any* language on a cell phone. I'm sure he had a cell phone...

Jenny: Of course, he had a phone. That's not the point. Do you know how many kids get infections like this just because they can't afford routine dental care? This could've been *prevented* at about a fifth of what it'll cost for the emergency room...

Jack: Thank God for insurance companies—with decent coverage...

Jenny: *Jack!* Children are *dying* from stuff like this. Our kids have everything—schools, sports, doctors—and little girls like that, through no fault of their own—end up in the hospital with no teeth. That's if they're *lucky*. Who knows *what* happens if they're not...

Jack: What are we supposed to do? Isn't it enough that you're getting paid what amounts to less than minimum wage helping people like that—at a clinic, by the way, to which my company donates fifty grand a year? C'mon, Jen—we're doing *our* part. People have to help themselves. There must be churches or other community groups giving these people what they're not getting from Uncle Sam. Eventually, there's only so much to go around...

Jenny: *Your* company! That fifty grand isn't even peanuts—it's shells! And Uncle Sam? Geesus, Jack, the government hasn't done *anything* even remotely creative in our lifetime! I know the safety net's constrained—but our good old Uncle at least ought to be *connecting* places like the clinic with the kind of resources available *only* at companies like yours. And as long as companies like yours continue tossing *shells* at programs like this, they'll be fewer and fewer kids like ours and more and more little girls like the one I met today.

Jack: Whoa—what got into *you* today?

Jenny: What got *into* me is a seven-year-old girl—just like ours—who didn't have any teeth! It *shouldn't* be *like this*, Jack! The *answers* are out there. The resources are there, too—if we'd just start spreading them around. For whatever reason, we're just not smart enough or brave enough to get it done. And now I'm done—because it's time to get the kids. *Our* kids... You know, Jack—they're *all* our kids...

SCENARIO DETAILS

Recall the story of the frog, which, once placed in a pot of water set to a slow, eventual boil, acclimates to the point of never leaving the deadly boiling pot. The ideal that well-financed social institutions can maintain the social sector is showing fatigue. In the “Lights and Shadows” scenario, there is a continuing pervasive malaise and a widely shared notion that the societal situation is more complex than any institution can solve. These dynamics could be encountered inside both organizations and communities, potentially reflective of the broader societal experience. Due in large part to the increasing social service needs of the baby boomer generation, the stagnant economy persists until 2017, followed by a rebound overall but with a shrinking middle class. People band together to create their own economies as barter becomes a significant matter of course for a new, smaller middle class. Hard choices of where to put resources result in heavily supported compliant populations and communities with completely neglected sectors and geographies, often those that are most difficult to reach or engage.

Albeit largely unperceived and undesired, there is a distancing between those in the “spotlight” (organizations and individuals capable of attracting attention in social issue problem solving and philanthropic activities) and the rest. In 2012, North Americans currently reside in this space. A majority operates with the belief that if we continue doing what we’re doing, *someone* will figure it out and fix the big problems. Those in the spotlight largely subscribe to the view that, in fact, they *will* figure it out, which unwittingly reinforces their own hubris. They are required

to focus energy and resources in more obvious places as the number of materially poor increases and their visibility demands a response. This environment produces an imbalanced value of what it means to be in the shadows or what it means to be either in or casting the light. The resulting inequity and imbalance creates an opportunity gap. People have trouble getting past disconnects between well-entrenched power actors/gatekeepers and the “spotlights” – those with many resources. Those with few resources and fewer options operate in the shadows, asking, “Who will pay attention to us? How do we gain opportunity?” One of the signals of an underlying problem in this context is right-sounding messages and seemingly inclusive actions by the spotlights. They work to convene gatherings of grassroots people and organizations, and in so doing appear to bridge divides. These well-intentioned words and actions ultimately encourage a hidden but growing dependency across many sectors and geographies.

Scenario Highlights and Milestones

- The economic malaise persists until 2017, followed by a rebound overall but with a shrinking middle class.
- Frog in the slow boiling water.
- The “science” of best practice metrics has blinding adherence for the followers.
- Social solutions, despite their notoriety, provide little fundamental or systemic change.
- Grassroots and youth-led vanguard organizations emerge in the shadows.

In *Lights and Shadows*, we can't seem to move past or through our blinding disconnects. Small pockets of community-based actors remain focused on the things they can change—for example, reclaiming the educational system by local communities—in order to provide opportunities. Although promising, this approach is the exception. Clusters of people—in the middle, in the shadows, and even at the top—try to set the table and engage others in ways that *look* meaningful. But many of these clusters are confused about whether they are actually making a difference. While they may look engaged in social solutions, much of the engagement is intermittent—neither authentic nor sustainable. Pursuit of best practices in the sector may be genuine and authentic or merely superficial. It is easy for large institutions to simply adopt their default position—clinging to their niche—thereby producing a common feeling of being comfortably numb. Questions about authenticity and relevance abound. The minority senses the tension between real and perceived partnerships. Younger generations (aka, generation next) are quicker to recognize this disconnect due to their shared distrust of institutions and their impatience for real collaboration and new thinking.

Thus, the majority of work on pressing social issues may just be nibbling at the edges rather than fundamentally altering the conditions. Some of the world's greater social tensions won't be solved in this context and only a few

minor solutions gain traction. Environmental challenges, requiring an all-hands-on-deck approach, are hit-and-miss. The masses try to “just put gas in their tank.” Those in the spotlight fight an uphill battle to advance coordinated and collaborative efforts to get more people to care about longer-term energy and environmental issues, while at the same time pursuing sustainable solutions to energy needs. This situation is compounded by narrowing charitable contribution tax protections, thereby pitting government against charitable organizations in some circles for widespread recognition of who produces greater impact for the dollar.

Despite these constraints, technology has a convening effect for grassroots people and helps to overcome perceived service gaps through collaboration on a local basis. Greater transparency is created because of the widespread access to technology. Those in the spotlight recognize the importance of this trend and work in their preferred populations and geographies to equip and empower people with appropriate technology.

The current North American setting is firmly fixed in *Lights and Shadows*, with the “spotlight” organizations focusing on the major social challenges and resulting philanthropic opportunities. Despite their promise, the shadows cast by the bright lights are the locus of many of the most urgent social needs. Those in the shadows still have to find their own way to address significant, and sometimes catastrophic, needs.

INTERPRETING IMPLICATIONS

1. *What is the central tension?* The central tension affecting most actors in this scenario (consciously or unconsciously) is disconnection. There is a leadership void, as many simply hope for someone to bring the fix. People in this scenario want to be listened to and heard. Tension results from others' seeming inattention to "my needs."
2. *Who has advantage?* This is a rich get richer landscape. Resources flow to those in the spotlight. Larger institutions with strong networks are positioned to seize advantage. Mass media has an advantage, fueled by the continuous spotlight it can direct upon itself. Local communities acting at local levels gain some traction. Progressive political movements and newer philanthropists could emerge to seize opportunity. As is the case in every scenario, those with access to technology have a distinct advantage. Ironically, those in the shadows might also benefit—if they work creatively and collaboratively outside the glare of the spotlights. Some of the more dynamic change may occur almost invisibly there.
3. *Who is constrained?* The shrinking middle class and the traditionally disenfranchised IF they continue to look to the spotlight organizations, not fully realizing that those organizations are simply nibbling at the edges and not really working in a systemic way.
4. *What key shifts/milestones must have happened for the scenario to emerge?* Absence of widespread catastrophe would continue to foster the status quo expectation that "someone" in the spotlight will fix things. Otherwise, real wrenching and social calamities make much clearer the realization that "someone" else *can't* fix things. Those who could create the shift are likely newer philanthropists who question traditional practices, thereby channeling funding to non-traditional practices and technology enabled young people (who tend to work in the shadows).
5. *How will success be measured?* In power and resources. Those in the spotlight simply ask: have my interests been advanced? Have we achieved the spotlight ourselves? Measurement of success is selective – gauged in moments rather than systemic and lasting terms. Part of the sector's paralysis comes in the form of a willingness to declare victory well before true success can be known; simply feeling like we collaborated toward a good outcome; participation with a felt result. Success for some spotlight organizations is claiming the volume of money raised and the media attention garnered—notwithstanding that there isn't necessarily equal attention paid to the intended impact on society. The vanguard measures success by the growth of newer/younger donors giving in new ways and through the emergence of developing leaders.

6. *What will be valued most?* Whether in the shadows or the light, connectivity is prized. Technology adaptations symbolize this connectivity. Mass media is valued, especially by the spotlight organizations and emerging vanguard, as it represents respectively protecting my piece of the pie or extending a new opening. Success for the majority comes from maintaining the status quo and controlling outcomes. Some in both the light and shadows value the paths of least resistance, with many looking to a paternal leader to make the tough decisions.
7. *What will be the Holy Grail?* “Best practices” that are widely adopted (which, below the surface, can be a deflection of real responsibility). Preserving the status quo risks feeling comfortably numb—deluding ourselves into thinking that we’re doing the most relevant and important work simply *because* we’re pursuing “best practices.”

PHILANTHROPY IN THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS SCENARIO

Mainstream philanthropy may continue an emphasis of studying and sharing in networks, thus reinforcing the illusion that their work is reaping benefits. These responses are limited and disjointed, despite often gaining great notoriety. Government disproportionately rewards the spotlight “beacons,” and only minimally supports those deemed not to be “winners” (in the shadows). Active, large (spotlight) donors remain directive and desire high touch.

A two-tier philanthropy platform may emerge where spotlight organizations evoke constituent loyalty, while shadow organizations (and smaller and newer donors) garner interest but less organizational loyalty. The latter group proclaims, “It’s the result that matters, not the entry point.” As a result, Kiva-like and other grassroots giving approaches gain traction with this segment. Vanguard leaders among this segment find new meaningful ways for genuine collaboration among their organizations. For younger givers and activists (with minimal financial resources) philanthropy is thought

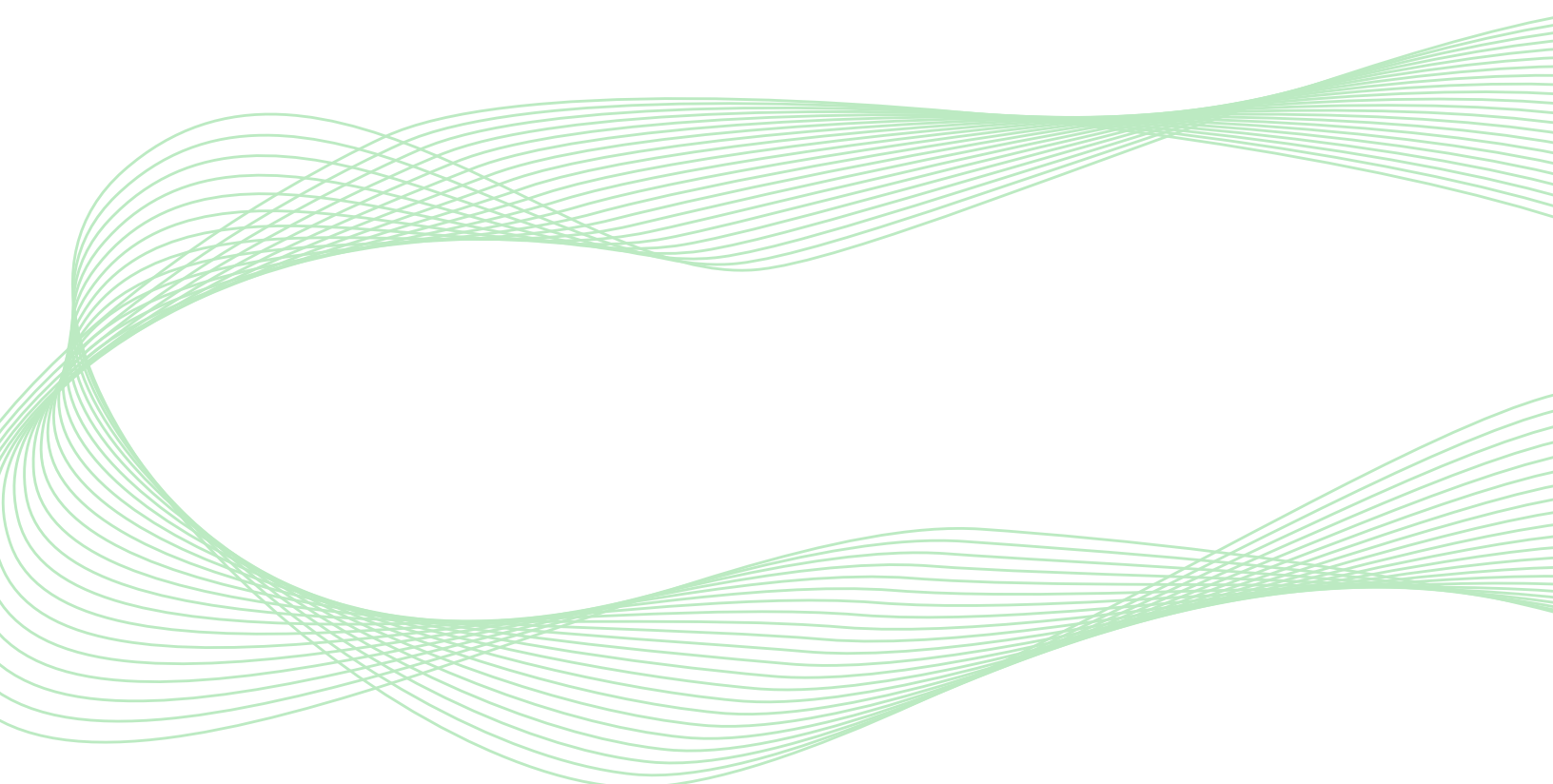
of as giving other than money.

An encouraging focus that may emerge: bold leaders step out of the shadows to innovate solutions and bring coalitions of community leaders together to address needs outside of the spotlight organizations. This environment breeds a new approach to philanthropy that could help resolve social tensions in ways not previously envisioned. The increased appetite and action of philanthropy’s *outsiders* would create the toehold for such a new way.

The dynamics could yield a slow diversifying momentum in philanthropic leadership. This could include a shift of resources into private hands, generating new wealth and new players and perspectives in regards to social benefit. Newer philanthropists question traditional practices. Affinity organizations operate in small cooperative clusters, but collaboration is not generally aimed at systemic solutions. These newer philanthropists exhibit peer-driven, largely unstructured impulses for targeted giving and fundraising.

Communication technology and social media play a catalytic role in the approach to philanthropy. Cycle times of messages and evidence of impact continue to shrink, as demands for complete transparency and

immediacy increase. Regardless of their size, nimble, knowledgeable organizations which understand and resource their networks create openings.

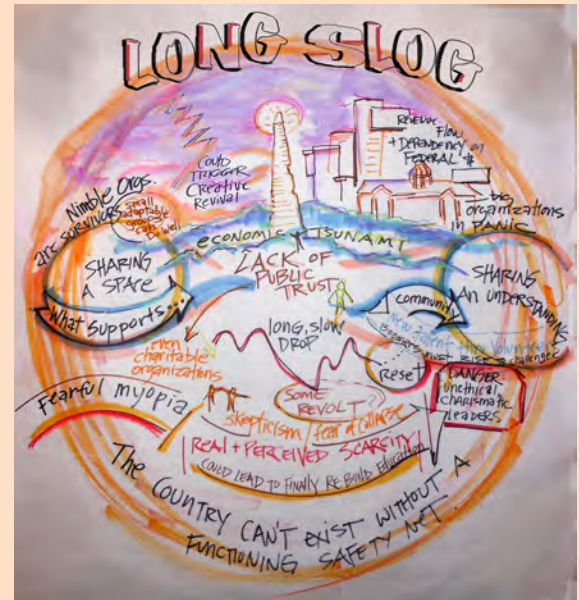


SCENARIO C - *Long Slog*

Limited, disjointed, shallow, gap-filling, Band-Aid approaches exist amidst tight limits, siloed approaches, where traditional approaches to philanthropy continue to dominate

Slice of Life in the Long Slog Scenario

Born in 2000, Erin, Emily, Ed, and Eli are quadruplets. Though they haven't been together in one place since graduating from college, they "see" and talk to each other periodically through Skype conferencing. Emily is an assistant prosecutor in Cook County, running for election to the County Council. Erin lives in Oregon, where she manages a cooperative of small farmers selling monthly "shares" of local organic fruits and vegetables to customers in Portland. Eli is an international commodities trader at Monsanto in Minneapolis. Ed is a US Marine who can't discuss his assignments; while part of a disaster relief unit, he likely serves in a counter-terror role. Their parents (Mike, a Wall Street broker, and Martha, a designer in L.A.) divorced ten years earlier. Ed is also divorced. Eli is married with one child and a second on the way. Erin's live-in boyfriend owns a small farm and participates in the cooperative. Emily doesn't have time for a partner.



Graphic rendering by Ken Hubbell

Emily: I think we should have a party. Let's *really* get together, here in Chicago, for our 30th birthday. The way we used to when we were kids...

Erin: I can't afford it, Em. You know how tight things are—not just here, but *everywhere*. Why don't we just have a “virtual” party? We can get dozens of people on these calls. That way mom and dad wouldn't have to be in the same room. I'm sure they'd prefer a “You Tube” party with their Test Tube kids anyway...

Eli: I'll pay for your plane, Erin. I got a nice bonus last year and the trading is going well these days. Even with all the environmental pressures, our mega-farms are generating nearly a quarter of the world's produce and crop derivatives. Though I think you're on to something with that co-op of yours. You'll never make a fortune, but at least you don't have to worry so much about water and contamination out there in paradise. How about you, Ed — any chance you can get away from wherever you are for a little "R&R" back home?

Ed: Actually, I was hoping for an excuse to get home. I need a break. You wouldn't believe it here. The infrastructure sucks. Food, housing, education, transportation, health care—I know those things are bad back home—but this place is *miserable*. And you never know who you can trust...

Emily: Then it's settled! Ed picks the date and Eli covers Emily's ticket. We'll let mom and dad decide whether they can stand being together for a few hours. I'll invite Grandpa, too—I'm sure he'd enjoy it! And you can all help me with the campaign...

Ed: Sorry—no politics for me, Em. But how *is* Gramps doing?

Emily: All right, I guess. Thank God he's healthy and mom's loaded! There's no way he could make it without the monthly allowance she sends. I worry what would happen if he got sick, though...

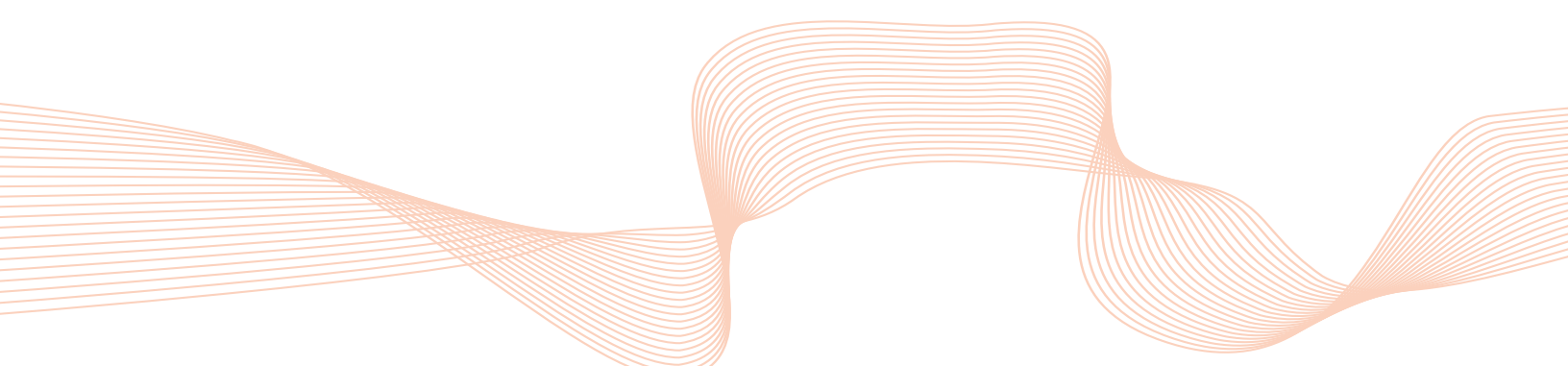
Erin: Is that why you're running for office? Do you actually think you can fix anything?

Emily: If I can't, I don't know who can. Somebody has to come up with a better way to balance the budget without selling out young kids and the elderly. We keep spending on crime—and you know how effective *that's* been. I'm seriously thinking about proposing that we legalize drugs. Then we could tax the profits and treat the addicts...

Erin: You'd think more people would start engaging...

Emily: The few who *do* haven't a clue how to talk with each other...

Eli: You, know, we're lucky. We've been able to stay in touch over the years, even though we're far away from each other. And we've managed to make decent livings—which is more than a lot of people can say. We definitely have reason to celebrate...



SCENARIO DETAILS

Looking back from 2030, we might characterize the past 20 years—both for people and the social sector—as a long march of survival and resolve amid a paradoxical mixed bag of great technical breakthroughs with limited sector growth/evolution. This period is influenced by a long turbulent phase that strains people and systems at nearly every level.

What might have happened to produce this long slog?

The decade of the 2010s is largely one of treading water in North America. The early teen years are marked by disappointment in official institutions and a reluctance to change at all levels. Through 2017, there are scratching attempts to “get back to the way it was.” The combination of a globalizing world, decades of rapid technological change, and ideological friction engender sluggishness. In the U.S., the decade is framed by a sobering confrontation on income inequality and the costs of securing the American Dream. Polarization is magnified by earlier bailouts to the financial system; the resulting popular fallout in the working class and on “Main Street” cause too many lost jobs, too many robots replacing trained, technical workers, and rising cost pressures for food, housing, education, transportation, and health care. Many seek to solve civic problems in a marketplace manner—s/he with the biggest and best idea “wins.” Collaboration, while viewed as practical, is often difficult.

Baby boomers—never big on saving—burn

through what they had tucked away yet still strive to maintain as much of their lifestyle as they can. Gen Xers, for the most part, withdraw further; holding on, content to let others figure out where the money will come from to fix the world’s troubles. Millennials, frustrated with all the “hunkering down” around them and used to a sense of immediacy with which they had grown up, get right back on the consumer bandwagon. This reaction is less common among late wave millennials (born 1997 to 2003), as they seem a bit more risk averse, studious, and less likely to party and spend.⁴ The next generation—the New Silents (birth years of roughly 2004 to 2026)—are adaptive, dutiful, a bit self-contained, and seemingly risk averse in their formative years.

Scenario Highlights and Milestones

- Long, sustained economic slowness and lack of traction throughout the 2010s and into the early 2020s
- Scarcity thinking prevails
- Increasingly shrill civic “discourse” all but paralyzes governments
- Quiet, slow gains by women; political leadership growth by women in mid-2020s in U.S., Canada, and Mexico (first U.S. woman president in 2024)
- Boomers are beginning to transition out of leadership; many baby boomer donors have had to reduce giving due to resource exhaustion during the period
- An economic and cultural “reset” begins to emerge in the mid-2020s

4 Mary Beth Marklein, *USA Today*, January 26, 2012, Today’s freshmen hit books harder, p. 3A

This long-stagnant, recessed economy resembles a perfect and lasting storm for western democracies in North America simply because of the constellations of generational personalities and their respective age locations during the period.

By 2020, years of fiscal austerity and wage stagnation reduce the hopefulness for two generations—baby boomers and gen Xers. The preponderance of temporary solutions to rents in the social safety net creates widespread distrust in the middle and working classes. In response, many turn toward ever-shrinking human social circles and viscerally protect them from disturbance whenever possible. The most adventurous still extend themselves virtually in careless confidence that technological gadgets will replace the sense of malaise and critical judgments they harbor—and to which they felt entitled.

Of course, there are a small number of winners in this decade. This group includes large corporations with a wide global reach, privileged institutions with sustainable endowments, lobbyists, and wealth management firms. The growing polarization of the “ninety-nine percent” from the perceived “one percent” of wealthy elite make for a decade where sacrifice and frugal behavior is the necessary new norm for most. Generally, elected leaders are still “kicking the can down the road” on issues of sustainability and social safety nets. Graying baby boomers and families of color are reshaping the developed world,⁵ but class, political, and ecological frictions are common.

A nasty convergence in the early 2020s leads to another prolonged economic and societal downturn. It is triggered by a crisis in natural resources depletion caused by society’s inability to balance economic growth and consumption levels with protection of water systems. This magnifies long-standing pressures among governments across North America to bring more economic opportunity to support the strained middle classes. By mid-decade, nagging assaults in major cities from underground cells produce a wave of fear and increased U.S. Special Forces strikes in countries across the Tropic of Cancer. The resulting new Pentagon and Homeland Security allocations in America rekindle concerns about balancing a federal budget that was just barely in the “black” as a result of vigorous cutbacks that are implemented to restore social security and maintain a lean national health care program.

State governments largely struggle financially through the 2010s. A few states, especially in the Deep South, are all but bankrupt, able to underwrite only a bare bones social fabric. In these cases, states willingly turn to private business to take over (and fund) services. Mail delivery, transportation, criminal registry and incarceration, and others are outsourced to private providers. Although this sparks a self-congratulatory zeal among state politicians, service quality is erratic, often without transparency or controls. Provider reshuffling is pervasive—driven more by price than quality. In short, this is a period of dwindling state government presence and reliability and a huge bifurcation of private businesses. Not surprisingly, many poor and

5 “State of Metropolitan America,” Brookings Institution, page 7; retrieved 12-30-11 from <http://brookings.edu/metro/StateOfMetroAmerica.aspx>

underserved populations fall victim to scams, neglect, and abuse, thereby exacerbating how disconnected the web of social services feels to those it is intended to assist.

The 2020s represent a wide range of push and pull that illustrates a “new normal” for the first third of the century. The economic slowdown amplifies an unfolding shift in the hemisphere toward an emphasis on regional commerce networks in a tightly interdependent global economy. The stronger and more highly integrated North American region is a part of a multi-polar economic world where several dominant countries and regions compete globally yet share commerce, workers, energy supplies, and communications within the region. Communities, firms, and people most adaptive to knowledge work remain viable and resilient.

The persistent weak economy results in reduced government funding of human services in the U.S. The biggest organizations remain dependent upon Federal Government contracts and, as a result of cutbacks, become more fragile. Some high profile health systems fail to adapt and, as a result, disappear. Because barriers to establishing nonprofit organizations remain low, human and social service organizations proliferate from 2011 to 2020. Repeated aftershocks of the Great Recession make issues of poverty, early childhood education, crime, incarceration, drug and alcohol abuse and treatment the near constant focus of “news.”

Energy-intensive global food production of specialized crops, organics, and rare spices is lucrative, but escalates water depletion

and competition for scarce resources. The intensifying globalism seems to spur more frequent public health challenges from food contamination, airborne viruses and contagions. Effective responses are stymied by a lack of coordination among key health and homeland security systems. Many communities are increasingly focused on shaping a more closely-knit and specialized local flavor. Buying local is the most popular reaction to the continued escalating costs for food and household goods. Farming is an ever more corporate undertaking, as food safety liability issues, climate change irregularities, and limited access to cheap labor combine to make it impossible for the proud independent farmers of bygone years to survive.

Mega-regions and larger cities grow, often at the expense of rural populations. Transportation infrastructure dollars are tight until the early 2020s, necessitating that people live close to work. This increases urban populations. Multi-family housing grows, but not like the big “dorm” Cabrini Green complexes of 1970s. The Great Recession makes it much more likely that multiple generations of family are living together—in owned and rented homes. It becomes more common for non-married couples to cohabit, in part fueled by the loosening of legal restrictions on what constitutes marriage. People reside close to bus routes, mass transit, and the high-speed trains within the mega-regions. Cities face enormous costs to adapt waste, infrastructure, and emergency systems for greater usage, more stringent regulation and the need for increased efficiency.

All three of North America's largest countries have aging populations and fewer younger workers to support the elders.⁶ Large cities are multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. They become home to increasing numbers of seniors, many of whom are active elders and entrepreneurs, living "Life 3.0"—traveling, consuming continuous education, producing stories, art, and communicating with dense social networks and families. These seniors take every advantage of the "longevity bonus."⁷ Boomers continue to play leadership roles, but in part-time, advisory, less authoritative ways. Some gen Xers and millennials continue to be self-absorbed and me-focused, leaving baby boomers to face the reality that they must be self- and co-dependent, as they have little support from younger generations.

Unfortunately, large numbers of sick and disabled seniors fall through the cracks, straining health and service systems. "Pay as you go" retirement and government-supported care systems in the U.S. and Canada limit treatments and special services for this sizeable "economic underclass." Social Security funding gaps mount, escalating calls for deeper cuts and shared sacrifices. Increasing income and educational polarization reinforces a "me-first" society. Some live longer—but only those with good health care coverage and the resources to access it. Otherwise, many have shorter life expectancies by 2030.

Urban cultural zones emerge in response to the incredible diversity of people and traditions. Computers and communication tools provide instantaneous language translation. America is retrofitted with Spanish language signage as it is now the world's second largest Spanish speaking country. The diversity supports hundreds of communication channels and entertainment portals, sparking creation of a large body of influential spokespeople, advertising firms, and artistic outlets. Despite a stated and shared commitment to gender equality, there is quiet resistance to white male leadership of senior management teams (including philanthropy professionals). The traditional family unit is weaker. Divorce rates increase, marriage rates decline, and the average age of those getting married for the first time increases—all contributing to fewer children per family.

Natural resource challenges also increase during this period. More frequent extreme levels of rains, flood, and disasters place added pressure on strained systems. Fresh water for a wide set of public and commercial use is a mounting problem.⁸ Ecological priorities continue to focus intensely on loss of wetlands, as well as land losses in some coastal areas of the Gulf and Atlantic. Environmental supporters successfully elevate the issues of habitat loss and the implications of reduced biodiversity. Meanwhile, numerous landscapes in the West are greatly altered by the large number of wind turbines, pipelines, and solar

6 "Outlook for Labor Mobility," B. Lindsay Lowell; Future of North America 2025: Outlook and Recommendations; Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 2008; page 145.

7 "How Baby Boomers Will Change Retirement,;" retrieved on 12-30-11 from <http://seniorliving.about.com/od/retirement/a/newboomerretire.htm?p=1>

8 "North American Environmental Outlook to 2030;" Commission for Environmental Cooperation, Montreal, 2010, pages 8-9.

reflector farms. There is mounting evidence of a necessity to shift public attitudes about nature in the hemisphere from a culture of abundance to a culture of stewardship of nature/resources (especially in Canada and the U.S.).⁹ In keeping with the discordant soundtrack of the 2020s, there are many encouraging responses to environmental and natural resource issues. Clean technologies are now mainstream in urban areas, though many rural and under-developed places remain behind the curve. Alternative fuel sources for improved transportation and power generation are widely dispersed and more affordable. Paradoxically, big business's lack of attention to the environment and recklessness with water, energy, and by-products routinely trigger severe fines.

By the 2020s, computing power and speed, coupled with vast amounts of data, accelerate improvements in health knowledge and decision-making, transportation, and logistics management. Science and technology continue to fundamentally change civilization. Access to knowledge is nearly universal—except to the poor, who lack the basic technological tools. The ability to incorporate this knowledge is also improving through “Web-based asynchronous highly motivational educational systems, adaptive learning models such as cellular automata, genetic algorithms, neural networks, and emerging capabilities of collective intelligence systems.”¹⁰ Technology is a primary driver throughout the decade; it reshapes commerce, travel, entertainment,

and the delivery of most critical services. While technological integration is required for competitive advantage in every industry and place, the dispersion of technology levels the playing field for many smaller and rural regions. Small organizations and underdeveloped or underfinanced groups/locales, while better connected to the world, remain at least one technological generation behind the more competitive areas.

People depend upon fully customized, optimized, and integrated mobile information across their daily lives. Each person can now shape and direct an individual information channel. Fully customized, location-specific, augmented reality tools link homes, vehicles, offices, and schools. This creates new options for education, health information-records, enterprise, and political activism, as well as instant philanthropy. Higher education is reinvented, as technology democratizes learning at a time when economic compression demands alternatives. Organizations host their own multi-tiered info channels (using advanced versions of YouTube). High-grade technology resources are important differentiators in a “have/have-not” view that mirrors the “me-first” mentality undergirding social life. Key work in the social sector is online and virtual. But the many benefits cannot mask the downside of mass collaboration and immediate information-sharing. Personal privacy is significantly compromised due to the fact that all our online data footprints are stored and, potentially, searchable by others. New luxuries emerge alongside new technologies

9 “Outlook for the Environment,” Jaisel Vadgama; *The Future of North America 2025: Outlook and Recommendations*; Washington, DC, Center for Strategic and International Studies, pages 37-38

10 Retrieved January 9, 2012 from: http://www.millennium-project.org/millennium/Global_Challenges/chall-14.html

for escaping the grid.¹¹ Communications technology is still the viral backbone for crime, terror, and mass information theft.¹²

Public trust in mainstream media outlets nearly disappears, replaced by infinite “channels/outlets” that align with personal points of view. Civil discourse to solve problems is supplanted by polarization and too-frequent mean-spirited behavior. People are more willing to challenge organizations/institutions, adding to the pressure on individuals and organizations to be perpetually authentic. Lazy language of “hate” and frustration signals behaviors that become worrisome. Power is diffused. Despite pockets of social protest and seeming rebellion, there is little staying power to these small outbursts.

A shared sense of our ethical compass is under pressure and attack at every turn. The hopes and happiness of some elders become an intra-generational group obligation, valued for its benefits as well as its practical necessity. People with resources who are self-motivated seek and sculpt their experiences, fed by a growing industry supplying outlets for individual happiness and optimism—for a price. For many, a widely-shared malaise and anxiety (perhaps encompassing an entire generation born into an era of high uncertainty) extends the need for human services to unprecedented levels. Mainline religions continue to lose members. Spiritualism, and all its permutations, becomes increasingly prominent, due largely

to an aging baby boomer generation which has historically seen everything differently. The majority sustains a nostalgic dependence on tradition. On many levels, people return to the importance of religion even in a post-denomination era. Revivals and new religions are increasingly popular.¹³

Despite some notably large mega-churches with onsite worship memberships, spiritualism and the experience industry seem to coalesce into smaller, more deeply personal “encounters” and “explorations.” A previously unimagined consequence of this trend is that international and religious social ministries shrink considerably, due to the loss of a membership base to fuel them with gifts and adherents. Rather than disappearing completely (despite measurable consolidation and reduction through 2020), many of these organizations go looking for other resource angels—thereby simply adding further bifurcation and competition in the resource-seeking disciplines.

From the perspective of 2030, we ultimately realize that our longing for quick fixes and willingness to gamble on the art of the deal simply and inevitably handcuffed us to a sustained economic crisis. Rather than admit we were contributing to our own malaise, we simply fell into a kind of grinding mode. This “new normal” became the not-so-new “normal,” which meant that we lived in economic crisis (or at least weakness) for about 18 years.

11 “The World in 2036,” in *The World in 2011*; *The Economist*, pages 111-114.

12 “The Evolving Internet: Driving Forces, Uncertainties and Scenarios to 2025,” Global Business Network; retrieved 12-21-11 from http://gbn.com/consulting/article_details.php?id=103&breadcrumb=ideas

13 “The World in 2036,” op cit.

INTERPRETING IMPLICATIONS

1. *What is the central tension?* Shared space and understanding—two basic elements which, alone or combined, help define community—are under considerable pressure. Many actors have lost trust in the system and fear a total collapse. People hold on to the past and the way things used to be. One imagines a collective acceptance of “misery” and a corresponding attitude of defeat, characterized by the conclusion that “when people like me don’t feel so bad, I don’t feel so victimized.” Change is slow. The flow and redistribution of resources lead to some early and fast failures, especially for those at the bottom.
2. *Who has advantage?* Nimble and agile—sometimes smaller—organizations which benefit from the redirection of people’s trust and investment away from big/slow institutions. Fear-mongering politicians (e.g., the Tea Party in the U.S.) could win. The long slog is conducive to the dangers of people looking for Messiah figures to lead them to a better place, potentially producing charismatic leaders who are not ethical. Others with advantage are those with the resources and ability to act on a global stage.
3. *Who is constrained?* This is a time of mutual vulnerability. Everyone is transformed based upon their shared experience—but none to the degree of those who were already disadvantaged going in (people and organizations at the bottom of society’s ladder). Young people are losers because the pervasive longing for the past—widespread in The Long Slog—is a barrier to emerging young leaders with energy and creativity.
4. *What key shifts/milestones must have happened for the scenario to emerge?* While it is possible that a single cataclysmic event triggers this scenario, it is more likely that a convergence of a few big things and many smaller things causes the long slog. For instance, new or renewed wars, plus economic malaise, plus some other unrelated issues—such as an outbreak of Avian flu, some widespread water-borne illness, further ripple effects of the *Citizens United* decision, and/or the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on health care—could coalesce to bring about this scenario.
5. *How will success be measured?* Adaptability and sustainability are themselves success measures. Another is the growth of grassroots giving, as it represents the broad power and potential of a large constituency.
6. *What will be valued most?* Longing for the past. Security. Stability. Adaptability. Equality. Me (self-sufficient to self-absorbed).
7. *What will be the Holy Grail?* A quicker acceptance of the inevitable “reset”—that historical pattern of history where “economic crises inevitably give rise to critical periods in which an economy is remade in ways that allow it to recover and begin growing again.”¹⁴

14 Richard Florida, *Great Reset*, e-book page 4, location 106

PHILANTHROPY IN THE LONG SLOG SCENARIO

Philanthropy is in a state of flux. The number of active foundations drops dramatically—especially the smaller, independent foundations that had grown swiftly in preceding decades. A new appreciation of cross-sector alliances to support an authentic voice for a love of people in partnership with the planet is bubbling up. “Traditional visionaries” are unable or unwilling to look beyond the near term. New visionary social change activists (millennials) move into leadership positions in philanthropy. There is a new passion among these vanguard leaders for re-inventing the field—a feeling widely supported by a vocal minority of senior trustees who had been the mission caretakers during prior decades of austerity and cultural turmoil.

The prevailing plot in the social sector remains a “have vs. have less,” reactive, “me-first” mentality in a largely polarized society. No amount of well-intentioned innovation in the field is sufficient to replace the loss of government funding for social challenges. Generational wealth transfers of higher net worth older donors enhances the largest and most sophisticated institutions and community foundations but “grassroots philanthropy” fails to erase systemic societal problems. Philanthropy continues to react to economic limits and disturbances, forcing the collapse of each sub-sector to “the few” remaining organizations—largely for purposes of efficiency and practical survival. The resulting clash exacerbates the individual’s loss of trust in charitable organizations. Government’s grip further shrinks charitable tax-exempt status. Business decisions that result in the

creation/combination of non-profit mega-organizations unintentionally erode the case for big organization philanthropy. While the amount of funds given remains stable, the local, personally-known, smaller NGOs benefit from the redistributed giving. Grassroots giving grows, largely responding to a pervasive sense of urgency and Band-Aid approaches. Individual fundraising professionals constantly battle donor fatigue.

In many ways, North American philanthropy practices change little by 2030. While individuals and organizations in the vanguard practice new approaches, the sector as a whole changes little. For those with strong financial portfolios—wealthy individuals, large institutions, and foundations—this decade looks like business as usual. There are harbingers of disconcerting change on the horizon, but too few leaders are listening. Many organizations hunker down during the 2010s and 2020s. The surviving big organizations attract and retain the best talent. Subsequently, they are also most able to attract the mega-gifts and afford the technology and marketing platforms to remain visible and prominent among their constituencies. The most common responses in philanthropy at this time are social marketing, widening civic “voice” enabled by technology, a focus on impact investment along with narrowing funding targets, and increased program specialization.

Collaborative philanthropy is episodic and fragile much of the time. Within the context of this societal, demographic, and economic environment, only the vanguard is willing to transform organization-centric messages to

whole system/whole community messages of win/win. Large colleges and universities, multi-facility health systems, and nationally recognized “franchise” human service organizations continue to attract the most money and attention. The small, locally-focused organizations—despite having great mission integrity—struggle mightily for professional staff, governing board talent, and money. The elite and richest donors live longer and continue to partner with the same institutions for decades. But the majority of seniors, who have less wealth and little retirement income at the age of 70, reduce their donations. Coupled with corporate retrenching after the early/mid-2020s downturn and the continuing economic pressures on working families to save for health, education, and later life support, philanthropy and the social sector are still navigating the new era of precarious paradoxes and tantalizing promise.

Many of the larger hospitals/health systems roll out a wave of campaigns in the 2010s, only to find a reticent constituency with decreasing affinity and ability to distinguish one institution from another. For all but the elite schools, higher education fundraising among even the most loyal alums is seldom sufficient to continue the program and campus growth that occurred during the boom years. Campaigns are pervasive and support comes mainly from the usual suspects. They are also ubiquitous, seemingly for some barely discernible variation of the “global access, excellence, and distinctive” themes. Such efforts, which had grown to an average of seven years by 2010, average 10 years by 2020.

Community colleges and technical schools are the preferred approach for many, and their enrollments skyrocket throughout the 2010s. Even their fundraising efforts, which had previously been tepid, begin to flourish, as they now have increasing numbers of alumni, a longer track record, and solid, direct relationships with legislators and corporate/foundation leaders, whose eyes are now open to the impact and return on investment arguments these schools are making.

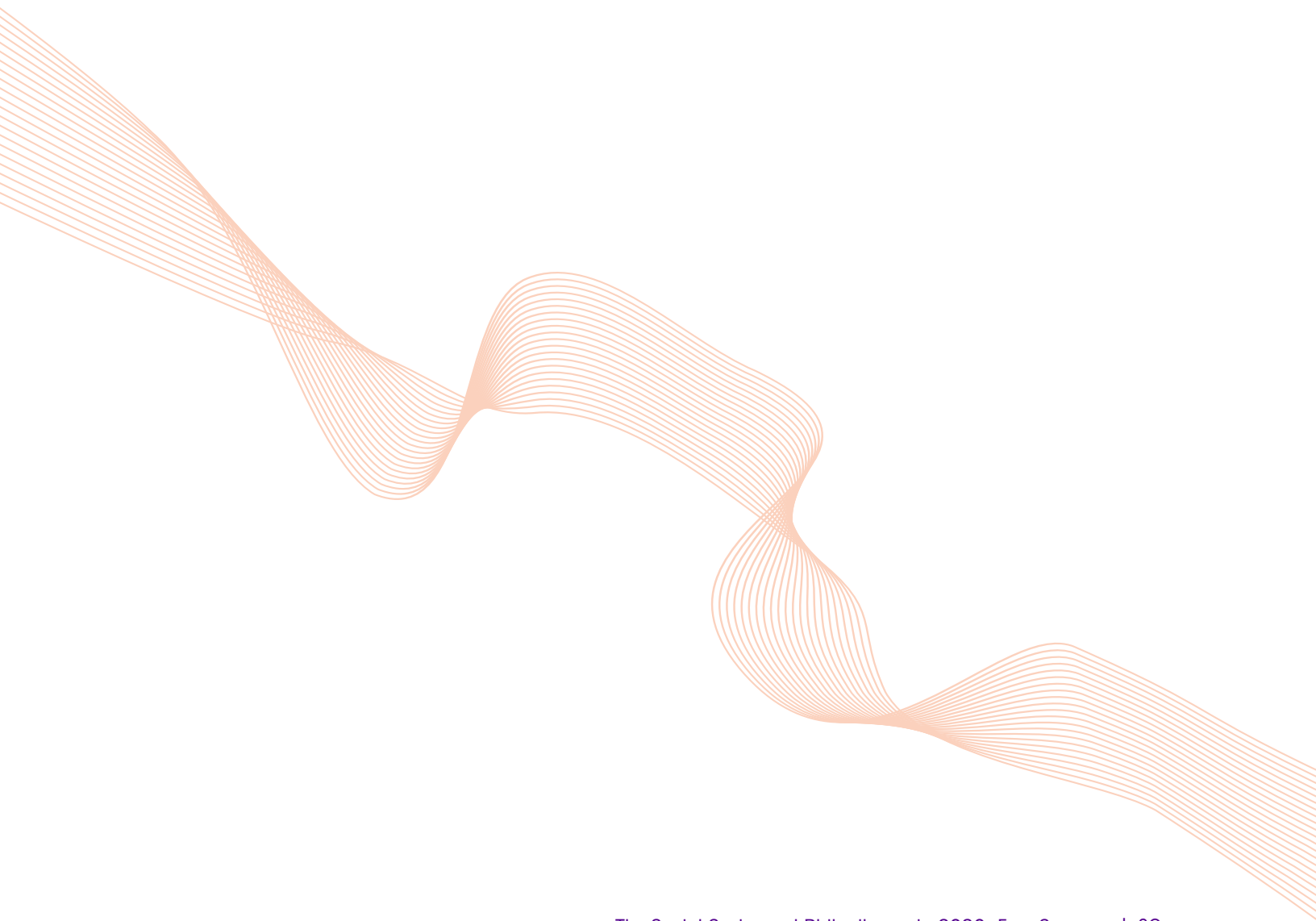
Social venture philanthropy and B-corporations maintain wide appeal, yet do little more than paint pictures of “cool things being done by ‘those’ people.” National media, conferences, nonprofit associations, The Foundation Center, and consulting groups jump on this bandwagon, seizing upon each new technology tool and vocabulary-busting phrase as the “new it” thing.

Direct mail fundraising all but ceases to exist. The cost of postage and comparatively slow delivery rates make this method untenable. The more sophisticated nonprofits move their resources into technology-assisted methods. Passive online giving portals persist, but the sector seems most enamored with the push technology of text and image messaging to the ever growing array of personal communication devices. While these technology tools are fun, efficient, and effective, they are pursued separately by organizations; eventually, most organizations start to look like all others in the eyes of stakeholders.

Nonprofit organizations have a tough time breaking their addiction to copy-cat practices and their zeal for metrics and performance measurement. During the 2010s, time and

attention on quantifying everything create a sector-wide immersion in the “science” of fundraising. This continuous drumbeat by professional staffs has the unintended consequence of numbing and boring the best board members and supporters who find no escape from metrics mania either at work or in community service. This reaction is a contributing factor during the 2020s when it becomes increasingly difficult for nonprofit organizations to attract quality board members. Prospective leaders want

something to uplift them and to feel a compelling pull toward community service. Instead, they are being offered board seats to play roles as business analysts, production overlords, and efficiency experts. Aging baby boomers want something with more heart; mid-life gen Xers are willing to provide the technocrat perspective but basically aren’t very interested in volunteering; and the oldest millennials are tired of “the old way” of doing things and want to be more expressive.



SCENARIO D – *TRIBES AND NETWORKS*

Strong, integrated, deep, systemic, long-term responses exist amidst tight limits, siloed approaches, where traditional approaches to philanthropy continue to dominate

Slice of Life in the Tribes and Networks Scenario

Ben, Heather, Nate, and Liz are all college seniors. They've spent two months working in sub-Saharan Africa as members of the Global Youth Corps, an experiential learning program funded by the Gates Foundation and focused on developing sustainable agriculture and water infrastructure. Ben is in the integrated environmental sciences program at M.I.T. Heather is studying international business at Phoenix University in Cincinnati; enrollment in the 58-nation Phoenix system recently surpassed two million. Nate is majoring in computer engineering at Apple University in Palo Alto (a company-sponsored school offering 5,000 pre-school to doctoral level students a high-tech oriented education). Liz, who was home-schooled until 17, is fluent in Farsi, Swahili, Mandarin, and Spanish. She has created her own interdisciplinary major in languages, communications, and computer application design; she takes all her classes online through a consortium that includes Stanford, Princeton, Harvard, and the University of Michigan. This is their final night together.



Graphic rendering by Ken Hubbell

Heather: I'm really gonna miss you guys. What do you think will happen when we go home?

Nate: For sure we'll stay in touch. That's easy enough on the web...

Liz: It's not the same. I know we can "see" each other any time we want. But before long we'll be back in the old routines and looking for jobs. What's neat about this is it's taken us out of our cocoons and enabled us to do something really *different* and *meaningful*...

Ben: I'm with Liz. We get home and it's right back to the same old crap—politicians you can't trust, businesses still pissing all over the planet, and people living with next-to-nothing in what used to be the most pristine place on earth. Even this program—while it's been great and everything—is just an amusement for some multi-trillionaire who needed to do something to justify all that money. I'm sick of the bullshit...

Liz: I've been thinking about something. I wonder if we could come up with our own

enterprise—some kind of business that would direct its profits toward community development back home? Maybe create a “seed fund” or “micro loan” program to incentivize new efforts or ideas that just can’t break through the status quo...

Ben: Like what? And like *how*?

Liz: Well, maybe a new gaming app? Something people could try for free on their computer or phone—but which they’d eventually have to subscribe to or pay to play?

Heather: It would have to be addictive—like *Words with Friends*...

Nate: You’re not gonna believe this—I’ve actually been working on something like that with a couple buddies. I wasn’t supposed to tell anyone. But it’s pretty cool. We’re close to beta testing—probably a month away. They’re good guys—and I’m pretty sure they’d be into your idea, Liz...

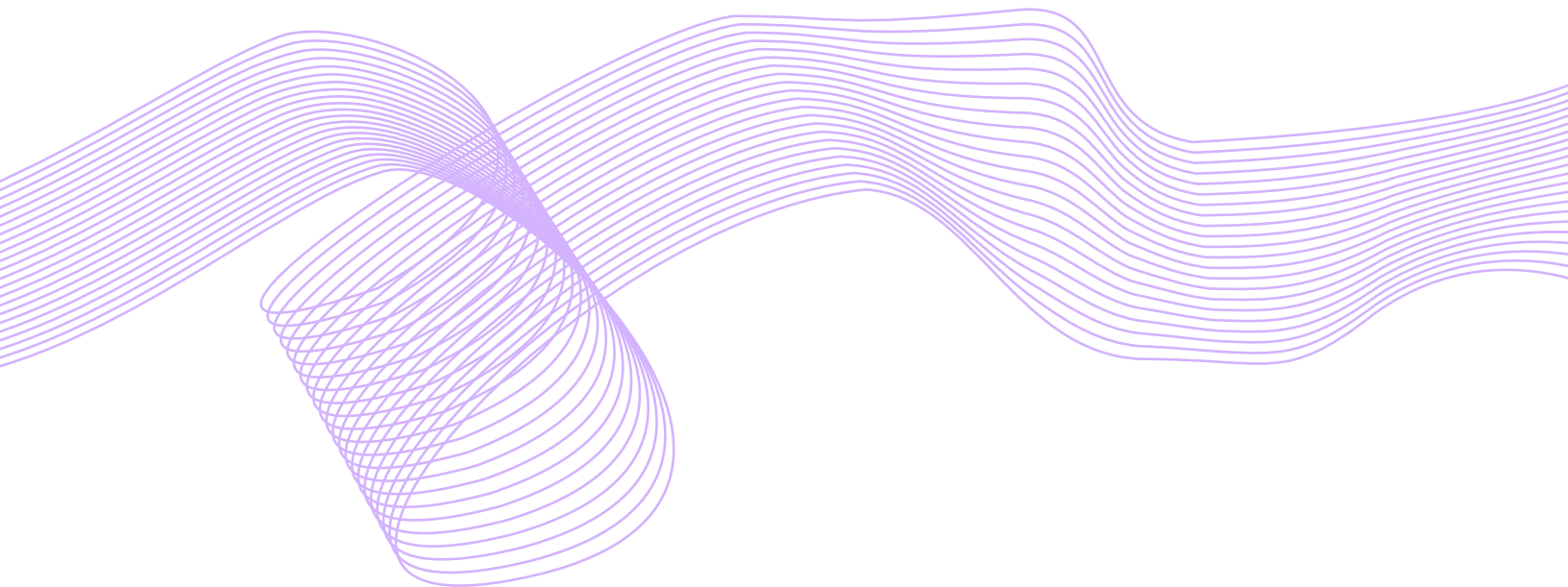
Heather: I could put together a business plan in a few days...

Ben: Now you’re talking! I *love* it! We pool our creativity and expertise—and do something that doesn’t depend on anyone else. We’ll *earn* the money ourselves—and direct it where we think it’ll do the most good.

Nate: Cool!

Liz: I’m in.

Heather: Me, too! Let’s just hope there’s not some major hurricane or earthquake between now and the time we get this thing off the ground...



SCENARIO DETAILS

The two decades between 2010 and 2030 are turbulent. European debt and Asian markets and competition contribute to continued economic volatility. While major wars have been averted, several natural catastrophes stunt stable economic growth. Emerging industrial countries have not adopted strong environmental regulations; consequently, they're improving quality of life at the expense of the environment and putting greater pressure on oil resources. American politics remain paralyzed by polarization, except in immigration and health care policy, where pragmatic approaches prevail, including mass amnesty for illegal aliens.

This scenario is characterized by mainstream polarity and retained silos in both government and large institutions or organizations. The silos are strong and well-resourced. The long drag of frustration with economic competition breeds growing fear and frustration with the status quo. The persistence of this polarity over time produces general passivity and a lack of impact. Aging and opinionated baby boomers are increasingly demanding in retirement, becoming high users of the social safety net. There are more women in the workplace.

In the U.S., education reform is driven by local and state government, and aided by business in its need for an educated workforce. Education is increasingly segmented, with multiple alternatives to public education proliferating, including home schooling, online education, charter schools, and their combinations. Large corporations set up their own education systems, starting with preschool, to develop a workforce that will meet their need for skilled workers. Students

remaining in public education systems face increasing challenges and have fewer resources. This situation reflects an increased gap between the haves and the have-nots. Yet an enabling technology is causing and fueling the emergence of something new and interesting—initially around the edges, before gaining real ground as the decades evolve. The response to persistent turbulence is a new kind of local initiative—“tribalism” in the best sense—not narrow, self-interested defensiveness, but a positive mobilization of local talents informed by international sources of knowledge, with technology as the fulcrum. Small alternative, informal, network-based, hands-on, do-it-ourselves-in-small-ways clusters begin to emerge in search of impactful solutions. This is a space of free-ranging innovation that may appear at times to be off the old social power grid, and at other times challenging the old grid.

Scenario Highlights and Milestones

- Social and economic turbulence continues for two decades
- Polarity and well-resourced silos have bred passivity and frustration with the status quo
- A new sense of “tribalism” brings innovation and effective solutions
- Traditional institutions can't keep pace with the changes in the marketplace
- Millennials follow in baby boomers' footsteps in philanthropy and advocacy

Tribalism becomes the source of the most creative, long-term solutions, a way to drive

responses to social challenges. It is embodied by local, sustainable food economies; local policies and technologies reducing demand on non-renewable energy sources; and multiple creative avenues for access to education, finance, and best practices serving local needs. For example, a farmer in the Midwest can compare crop practices with a farmer in China through translation-enabled technology. With the rise of near-universal web access, North American culture loses its reticence about invading personal privacy and few younger people consider it an issue.

Pressing social and economic needs are met by emerging localized and personalized strategies made possible by technology and new models of social benefit organizations. There are pockets of creativity and individual philanthropists who can mix this situation up through their own resources and their own choices, producing both free-ranging innovation and unpredictability. Unusual and elevated impact results from upstart innovators in these pockets and clusters. There is an emerging recognition that networks may provide a way through the polarity and lethargy of mainstream society and charitable institutions, but it's unusual to the status quo. Powerful information is producing opportunity that is full of potential but unstable.

Optimism and hope in philanthropy stem from an increasing number of very wealthy people signing onto the Giving Pledge, introduced

to the wealthiest donors in 2010 by Warren Buffett. Multi-billionaires are increasingly coming together to solve huge challenges using such informal, "off the grid" means as giving circles, personal (rather than institutional) philanthropy, or advised funds at community foundations and financial services companies. Individual philanthropists, not institutions, are the drivers of change. Nonprofit organizations are conduits, rather than sources of knowledge and drivers of what to do and how to do it.

Even people with modest resources feel empowered because technology gives them access to networks of like-minded people who can pool their resources to create impact. The millennial generation is following in the footsteps of the baby boomers with philanthropy marked by advocacy and active involvement. While some use traditional structures to carry out their own philanthropic purposes, the prevailing sense is distrust in institutions, including government, corporations, and large nonprofits that have remained siloed and slow to change.

By 2030, traditional institutions can no longer keep pace with changes in the marketplace. Creative individuals are sharing and exchanging information and action in networks outside institutions, thereby producing a growing movement of non-traditional, individual, community-based efforts offers efficient and effective responses to social challenges.

INTERPRETING IMPLICATIONS

1. *What is the central tension?* Increasing recognition that institutions aren't really being effective despite their attempts to justify their continuation and their value. The tension is one between fragmentation (driven by individuals and large communities, rather than organizations) and a systemic response. There is a shift toward tribalism and away from institutions. People seek the most progress with the least disruption. There remains an inclination to stay narrow. This is not a "system" in the traditional sense. This is a new type of systemic solution (unlike in Scenario B—Lights and Shadows)—networked rather than hierarchical. Deep systemic change is not apparent in this paradoxical scenario.
2. *Who has advantage?* Generally, individuals and organizations with resources. Self-motivated and self-funded actors who unplug from the mainstream organizations and go to network solutions. Winners will be the innovators first to market.
3. *Who is constrained?* Traditional nonprofits become marginalized, losing their influence and power. They become the implementers of other's strategy. Constraints are felt by organizations which place their primary value on finances rather than on networks and connectivity. Government loses, as do minority populations dependent upon government and organizations. Students who remain in public education are constrained, as are the unwired, the dependent, and late adopters. In an organizational context, those that depend on top-down hierarchy will move slowly and be disadvantaged. Other constrained actors could be professional fundraising staff in traditional organizations, especially those with fundraising and/or programming models dependent upon baby boomer volunteers who are retiring from volunteer service in large numbers by 2030.
4. *What key shifts/milestones must have happened for the scenario to emerge?* A dramatic shift to local networks addressing complex problems, responding to political instability and gridlock. Pockets of creativity drag institutions to keep up. Small, self-oriented people and organizations are part of a web of actors to make lasting change. A growing collective frustration with the institutional response, coupled with technology tools that enable individual response. Frustration and fear that fuel tribal instincts.
5. *How will success be measured?* Survival—no matter where one falls on the continuum. Preservation of wealth for the wealthy. Creatively continuing to get by for those on the fringe. The degree to which emerging tribal networks begin to earn a seat at the economic table, and become increasingly well-regarded.
6. *What will be valued most?* Technology is a driver because it enables individualism. Connection with purpose. Achieving positive responses. Self-determination. Partnerships. A sense of tribalism. Creating more distributed leadership versus an earlier reliance on "white

knight” leaders. In general, there is a broad awakening that people’s creativity and, thus, their ability to solve problems, is fueled not by resources but by a *lack* of resources. We collectively value the impact on the human psyche when resources are *not* plentiful and creativity rises.

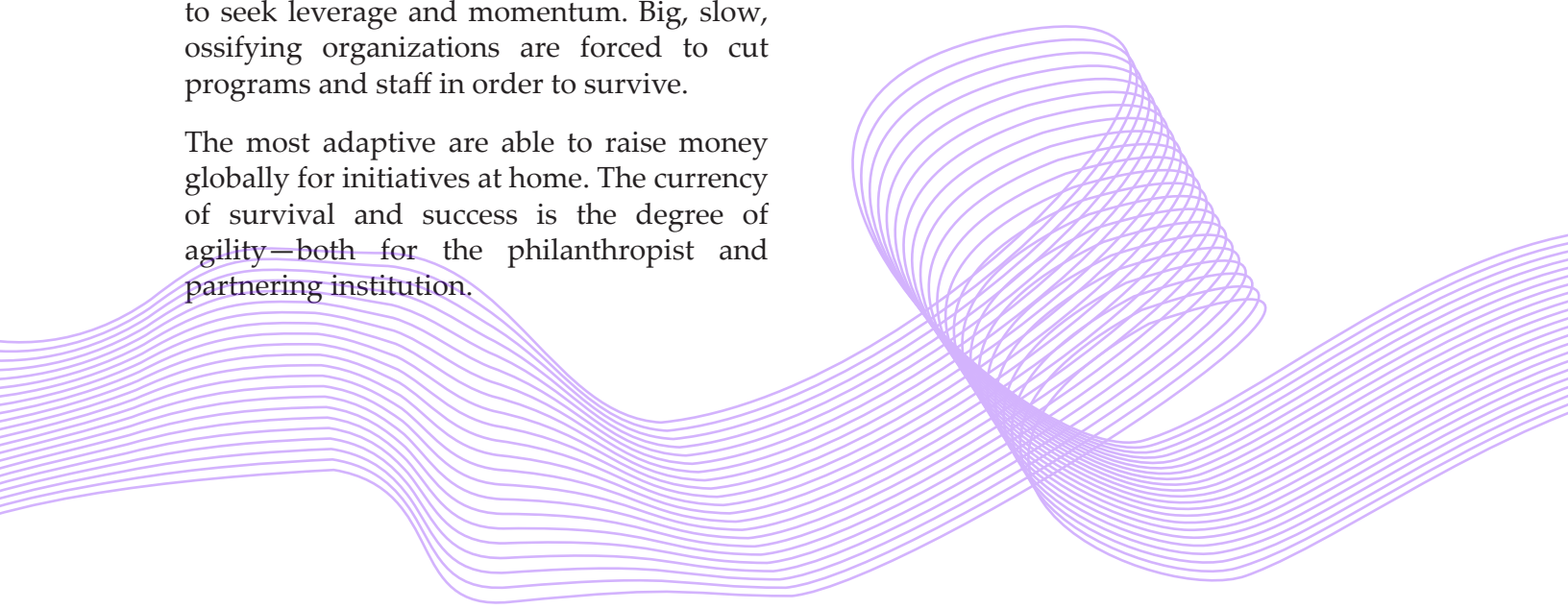
7. *What will be the Holy Grail?* First-mover knowledge with financial resources to act. Large powerful organizations look to these emerging networks with admiration, yet without embrace. Many actors believe that the grail is the stability and preservation of “my organization.” Community and collaboration feel like the Holy Grail to some.

PHILANTHROPY IN THE TRIBES & NETWORKS SCENARIO

Individual philanthropists, not institutions, are the locus of change. The millennial generation follows its baby boomer parents and grandparents into active involvement and philanthropy advocacy. Nonprofit organizations are conduits rather than sources of knowledge and drivers of what to do and how to do it. Small groups and networks are positioned to make big changes. While most institutions lose their traditional power platform, a few heavily resourced, large organizations remain. These organizations try to control the agenda (as they have long been accustomed) in order to seek leverage and momentum. Big, slow, ossifying organizations are forced to cut programs and staff in order to survive.

The most adaptive are able to raise money globally for initiatives at home. The currency of survival and success is the degree of agility—both for the philanthropist and partnering institution.

These innovative, networked donors line up to make gifts/give grants to the best institutions. However, unlike in scenario B (Lights and Shadows), impact investment money is evident, producing competition among a long line of organizational strategy implementers. These “spotlight” projects (referencing Scenario B language) still exist, but are characterized by more individual donor initiative and responsibility.



USING THESE SCENARIOS TO GUIDE DECISION MAKING

Scenario work is complex. Such an approach to the examination of innovation and congruence has no shortcut. Scenario thinking requires the discipline and commitment of leaders who are willing to go deep. It demands a willingness to relinquish the myth of control long enough to live into the ambiguity and paradox of multiple possibilities. It is not for the impatient. Those who seek to plant their flag on a precise horizon—their “preferred future”—inevitably risk disappointment (or worse!).

For the creative and courageous, however, scenario thinking can be liberating—opening entirely new strategy conversations. Kees Van Der Heijden reminds us of the power of scenarios to shape such compelling conversations:

“(S)cenarios are a set of reasonably plausible, but structurally different futures. These are conceived through a process of causal, rather than probabilistic thinking, reflecting different interpretations of the phenomena that drive the underlying structure of the business environment. Scenarios are used as a means of thinking through strategy against a number of structurally quite different, but plausible future models of the world. Once the set of scenarios has been decided upon they will be treated as equally likely. All must be given equal weight whenever strategic decisions are being made” (emphasis added).¹⁵

There is nothing formulaic about using scenarios to discern organizational direction and strategy or business model construction. However, no matter what potential scenarios organizations might consider, the following set of reflection and application questions are a good starting point for strategic conversation:

1. Is the organization equipped to survive and flourish in this scenario?
2. What’s taking shape here? What are we sensing among contrasting scenarios? What’s in the center of all our discerning?
3. Are existing business strategies viable, considering the environment we might encounter?
4. Who will we be serving in the future and what will they expect?
5. What will our core competencies need to be in order to thrive in any/all of these scenarios?

¹⁵ Kees Van Der Heijden (1996). *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversation*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., West Sussex, England, p. 29.

6. What kind of language, knowledge, data, resources, and leadership training will make the most sense?
7. What are the greatest challenges in these futures? What do I need to do today to get ahead of (or simply respond to) the possibilities and challenges of tomorrow?
8. What will we do to feed our vision in each scenario?
9. What will we do to accelerate our vision?
10. How do I feed my own purpose and protect my heart in each of the scenarios?

Note that the real value of such reflective questions is not simply in the occasional futuring exercise or planning retreat. Scenario work on the social sector and philanthropy can become a lens through which to examine your business model, key processes and systems, strategy reviews, human resource posture, communications, governance model, board composition, brand positioning, and financial modeling.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY LEADERS

Intentionally trying to imagine and learn from so distant a future as 2030 is both exhilarating and daunting. Certainly, each of the four scenarios we produced contains elements already at play in the world of 2012. Yet, one cannot participate in this type of experience without feeling at least a bit disturbed—pushed beyond the comfortable and the familiar. There is considerable value to be gained by the challenge. But the scenarios themselves are not primary; rather, participants benefit most by the engaged discernment and dialogue about what to do in any number of possible situations—and what might happen as a consequence.

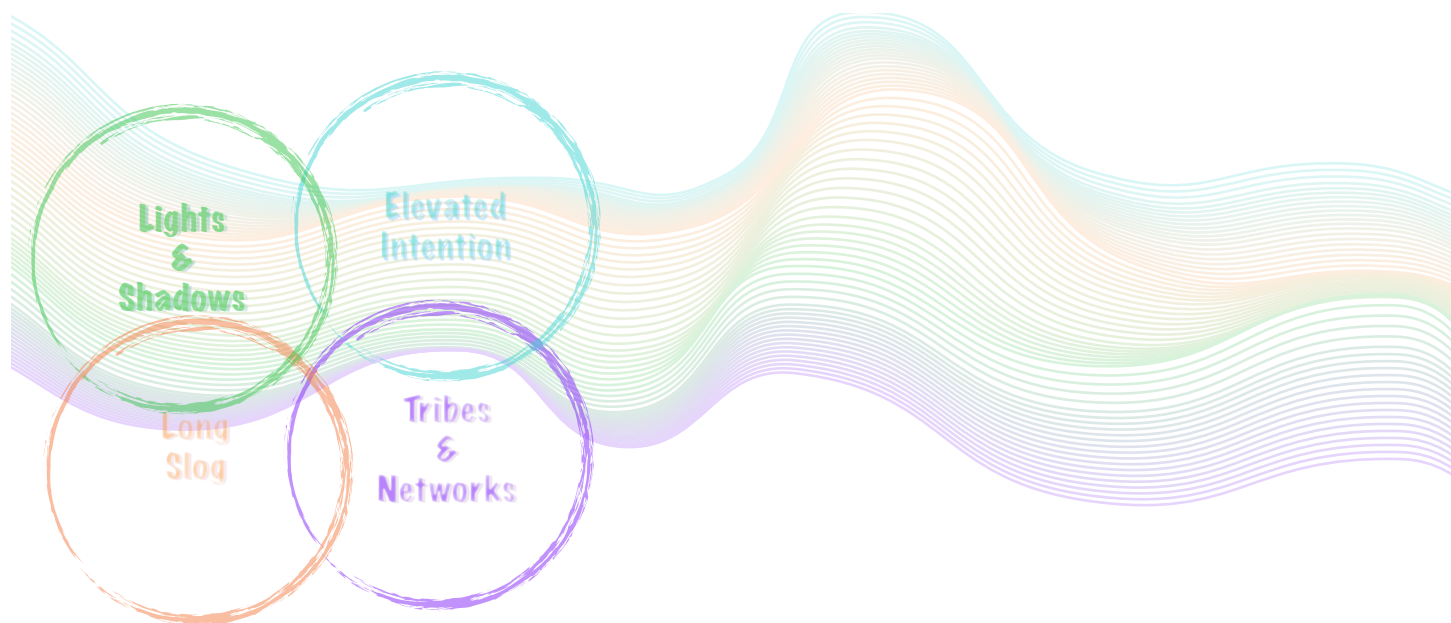
Once one has ventured down such a path, it's hard to approach "planning" in the same old way.

If anything becomes painfully obvious through scenario planning, it is this: In every imaginable scenario, there are clear winners and losers. Even in the most optimistic scenario (which, ironically, proved the most difficult for us to envision), the fates of some individuals and organizations remain stark.

Clearly, those who benefit in every scenario are the educated, nimble, adaptable, and technologically-savvy. And it logically follows that the uneducated, inflexible, and those wedded to the past and unwilling to embrace technology stand to lose or be left behind. Those who seek to monopolize anything—wealth, information, access, control—also put themselves at risk.

What might these understandings entail for today's leaders? If they aspire to continued relevance and effectiveness, contemporary leaders would do well to cultivate within themselves the qualities of compassion, collegiality, open-mindedness, humility, and a willingness/ability to *ask* good questions and explore them in depth—with teams that include not only their own subordinates, but “outsiders” who can help them see beyond their own mission and scope. The problems and challenges of the future are best addressed and solved *collectively*. Consequently, the most effective leaders will seek connection and collaboration—both inside and outside their respective organizations—and embrace a sense of shared responsibility for the future. Wealth—whether it takes the form of resources or ideas—is something that, paradoxically, will increase (both for individuals and society) *only when shared*.

If anything could be collectively affirmed by the 16 of us at the conclusion of *Conversation 2012*, it is that embracing the mantle of leadership requires us to lead in these new ways. One approach—whatever the setting—is hinted at in this concluding piece—which is a collection of participant observations harvested over the course of our four days together, and given poetic form by Tom Soma.



Leading forward

Scenario planning into the future

(A poetic crystallization of GHC *Conversation* 2012)

From *every* vantage,
the sands are shifting.

Spotlights illumine promise—
but they also cast shadows
and sometimes blind...

From so many possibilities
(both hopeful and unsettling),
how do we discern
a best path?

*

If we were to unplug ourselves—
come out from behind our walls
and welcome things
we've yet to see or imagine
with curiosity
with delight,
with gratitude—

what might we discover?

*

To *distill*,
we must *be* still.

Our fundamental task,
like that of the Master Carver,
is "Spirit work."

How do we open
to the working of spirit
within us?

This, at least, we know:

The best leaders
begin by cultivating
their own consciousness.

Comfortable with ambiguity,
they're willing to see
both from and toward
a different place
(externally and *internally*).

Likewise,
they're willing to ask,
What if...?
What then...?
What might be...?

*

Elusive, perhaps, in the immediate,
Spirit is ultimately
irrepressible.

We can change the world
by how we observe it.

We can move the world
by how we meet it.

We can bring the future into view
through attention,
intention,
and imagination.

If we ask good questions,
embrace our differences,
and embody compassion and respect—
we can create a world
where *anything* is possible.

Will you join us?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest thanks to my *Conversation 2012* colleagues for investing great energy and insight in the creation of these scenarios.

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Additionally, Tom's contributed "slice of life" vignettes add a much needed human "voice" to each of the scenarios.

Gary Hubbell

SOCIAL SECTOR AND PHILANTHROPY 2030 — SCENARIO SET SUMMARY©

Co-Created by Participants in *GHC Conversation 2012* hosted by Gary Hubbell Consulting

