



Fundraising Scenarios

In 2009, the Global Fundraising Scenarios Project gathered together some of the world's leading experts on fundraising and asked them a simple question: What will fundraising look like in 2020? In this article, we summarise the key themes and share some example scenarios. Use these to sharpen your fundraising strategy!

Where in the world are we heading?

In 2009, The Global Fundraising Scenarios Project gathered together some of the world's leading experts on fundraising and asked them a simple question: What will fundraising look like in 2020? The Project was designed to help fundraisers and others interested in social change to develop innovative and flexible strategies. It is sponsored and supported by =mc, and complements our other research project, the [Global Fundraising Confidence Survey](#). Over 20 expert fundraisers from around the world were asked to suggest how they believed donors, markets and technologies might develop by 2020, and these 'scenarios' are shared on a wiki at www.fundraising-scenarios.com.

The diversity of answers surprised us. As many people thought social networking online will have died a death as thought it would take over the world. While many people predicted that donors would demand a greater depth of relationship with nonprofits, others thought that the donation act would increasingly become an "impulse buy." Some spoke of the rise of a "super-league" of charities able to leverage their greater resource base to become globally dominant, but others predicted that the number of organisations would substantially increase as philanthropy takes root in the global south.

Common themes

Despite a diversity of opinions, some common themes emerged from the experts scenarios.

- Technology will both help and hinder fundraisers. It will help to build relationships with donors through multiple channels, but it will also mean fundraisers will increasingly compete for space and recognition in a more competitive media landscape
- Donors will expect increasingly customized communications and relationships, not just with organisations but directly with beneficiaries. This could sound the death knell for organisations who are seen as hindering, rather than facilitating, this close communication.
- Responsible environmental stewardship will be a key factor by which not-for-profits are judged, regardless of whether they are an environmental organisation. Some people expected that donors, particularly institutional and foundation donors, would require audited environmental performance reports right alongside audited financials
- Philanthropy is poised to grow rapidly in developing countries. We will see the rise of more in-country fundraising, particularly in places like India, China, Brazil and Argentina

Below are excerpts from a selection of the scenarios. Use them to stimulate your own thinking about the future. How do you think the fundraising landscape will change, and how will you change with it?

Scenario: Accounting for the Environment

In ten years time, all charities and not-for-profits will be obliged by donors – institutional and individual – to account for their environmental impact and to have a strategy for reducing their carbon footprint. Having a sustainability account will become as necessary for fundraising as an audited set of account.

Bernard Ross, Director of =mc

Bernard is an expert in strategic thinking, organisational change, and personal effectiveness. He works internationally in Europe, USA, Africa, and South America. He is the author of the award winning Breakthrough Thinking (Wiley, 2004) and The Influential Fundraiser (Wiley, 2009).

Scenario: Tell me again, why do I need you?

In 2020, more and more of the rising entrepreneurial class, who did not inherit their wealth and are not happy with delegating what they are passionate about to anyone else, will be the donors 'giving while living'. They are going to cut the 'middle-man' off and negotiate directly with the source, be it in China, India or Indonesia. They will leverage their business and social networks and family contacts on the ground to ensure they have information and input required for addressing a need – be it education, health, sanitation, gender based support, the arts or the environment.

Non-profit organisations and their fundraisers who position themselves as the 'middle-man' will lose out on valuable support as these donors don't see the value in having the various INGO layers.

Usha Menon, Director of =mc I Asia

Usha is recognised as one of very few Asian non-profit management and fundraising experts with experience and expertise in both fundraising and training with multi-national and multi-cultural exposure.

Scenario: I support causes, not organisations

In 2020 people will give for a cause, not to a NGO – this is called "zapping". They will support a movement, not an institution.

Older donors will reject those of us that are not genuine! They will stick to a few preferred charities. For younger donors, zapping is their motto!!! They do not care who does the work. They want to be connected with the beneficiaries. They hate institutions.

Donors' questions for not-for-profits will not be any more difficult than they are already (on success, ethics, etc). Not if they genuinely feel part of a worthwhile movement that is making a real difference.

**Pierre-Bernard Le Bas
Vice President of Fundraising, CBM**

Pierre-Bernard has 25 years of fundraising and public relations experience, including head of private sector and public affairs at the The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Scenario: Stop bugging me

By 2020, the widespread availability of mobile phones for NGO communication (and the consequent avalanche of messages from the sector) will create a backlash, leading to a demand for more ways to give anonymously.

Richard McPherson, President and Creative Director of McPherson Associates

Richard McPherson is the author of several books on nonprofit communications and fundraising, including [Digital Giving: How technology is changing charity](#).

Scenario: It's bad to be in the middle

There will be a dramatic change in the voluntary sector over the next 15-20 years as a direct consequence of a dash for market share, mergers and acquisitions, and a significant contracting of the medium-sized charities. Small charities will continue to thrive and politicians will support them deferentially to the larger charities. Mid level charities, those between \$1-20 million will find it really difficult to compete. The larger charities will have reduced in number and mergers will have created super brands. International super league charities will have emerged from the States, China, India, with the UN organisations continuing to be dominant. High worth donors will have blossomed but they will be calling the shots. Mega donations may be more of the norm in developed economies than has been since the millennium but they will be highly demanding and expect a seat at the Board table.

Mark Astarita
Director of Fundraising, British Red Cross

Mark Astarita has been a Trustee of the Institute of Fundraising (the UK equivalent of the Association of Fundraising Professionals) since February 2008. Mark has over 17 years experience of fundraising in the voluntary sector.

Using fundraising scenarios

We hope these snippets of scenarios stimulated your thinking. We've just launched a new scenarios project, 'Scenarios for Change' which shares scenarios for 2020 from leading INGO thinkers. Visit the site for more scenarios and practical resources to help you use scenario planning in your strategy: www.scenariosforchange.com.

We hope you found this download useful and enjoyable.

If you want to access more downloads, visit www.managementcentre.co.uk/knowledgebase where you can search for a range of management and fundraising tools, ideas and case studies.

About =mc

The Management Centre (=mc) is an international management training and consultancy agency working exclusively for not-for-profit organisations worldwide. We provide help in management consultancy, fundraising consultancy and training.

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