Introduction

Challenged by uncertainty about the future but caught up in the urgent business of the present, it was a luxury but important to engage in some ‘scenario thinking’.

This story book collates visual harvesting from four online sessions involving an impressive number of participants from different organisations which considered the role of support organisations in resilience building in the philanthropy field.

It is presented in a format that allows you, the reader, to interrogate and interpret the images in a way that is relevant to your own context, helping you to develop your own thinking about how you can shape or prepare for the future.
Chapter 1: Scenario thinking

Scenario thinking stimulates the imagination and allows us to envision potential alternative futures.

This is not just about making predictions but looking at outcomes that are unlikely but possible.
In doing so, we increase our ability and our capacity to think of situations that might happen, to consider these uncertainties, and be better prepared to handle them in case they do.

This is fundamental to building resilience, and enable ourselves and our organisations to prepare for and adapt to needs in the field.
Chapter 2: Considering other perspectives

The role and value of philanthropy remains unknown however some positives have emerged from the pandemic.
Resources were raised and distributed, new ways of working were quickly established, and partnerships were created that had not previously existed, recognising the need for immediate response but also longer term recovery.
This is a moment to release social imagination and help bring about systemic change.
Chapter 3: What difference can support organisations make

Support organisations have the potential to lead and leverage change. Considering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, a number of specific areas of work were identified:
3.1 Increasing resources

Facilitate exchange between foundations
Build trust (and encourage participatory grantmaking)
Maintain momentum around flexible core funding
Better enabling environment and tax incentives for donors
Sharing specific sectoral expertise of foundations with other stakeholders
(philanthropy as an essential partner)

Actions being taken:
Philanthropy Advocacy

Actions to be realised:
Connecting with other stakeholders
Working Group focusing on EU funding
3.2 Connecting old and new actors

Engage other constituencies (bilateral / multilateral communication) and facilitate dialogue

Build commitment (emulating the COVID-19 common goal) & sustain

Broaden the understanding of what philanthropy is and address barriers to entry.

Lead by example regarding new ways of doing it

Actions being taken:
Unitus Europe Hub; PEXnews;

Actions to be realised:
Connecting with other stakeholders; PEXcommunity platform
3.3 Collaboration

Build on current momentum for collaboration
Use the passion of members/funders to work on an action (funding/ideas) in order to get others on board
Engage members in future planning and how to collaborate more effectively & note lessons from the crisis

Insights

Actions being taken:
Unitus Europe Hub; PEXcomms working group; PEX CEOs peer group; PEX Climate Coalition

Actions to be realised:
PEXcommunity platform
3.4 Leading members into future territory

Existing leaders: Provide space for confidence building to allow leaders to develop their leadership role and consider failure

Potential leaders: Create opportunities for colleagues to explore their own leadership capabilities

Support building skills on methodologies (foresight; scenario planning; ...)

Seek out examples and invite people to share them

Challenge leaders by bringing in new people and new ideas

Build and maintain trust: "Do what you say" & "say what you do"

Actions being taken:
PEX CEOs peer group; PEXnews

Actions to be realised:
PEXcommunity platform
3.5 Collective impact

Involve stakeholders beyond funders: grassroots NGOs, governments, multilateral organisations (e.g. EU, OECD), creative people, philanthropy in all its forms, social entrepreneurs.

Identify barriers and bridge silos between different stakeholders with creative methods.

Multi-stakeholders engagement in order to develop a common language for meaningful dialogue and to involve wider membership/constituency with progressive funders/thought leaders.

Build around specific issues e.g. Climate Crisis and use convening power as well as financial resources.

Actions being taken:
PEX Climate Coalition; Unitus Europe Hub

Actions to be realised:
Connecting with other stakeholders; Philanthropy Advocacy newsletter; PEXcommunity platform
3.6 Engaging more with Advocacy

Recognise the philanthropic sector as an actor at the same level as other sectors

Get out of ‘firefighter’ role: ‘we can help prevent fires’ Identify the spaces/targets that we could influence that others could not and be clear about the added value of philanthropy?

Build capacity for advocacy across philanthropy networks

Leverage networks to amplify voices: eg. tell their own stories, invite into spaces, rather than ‘just’ representing them

Insights

1. Engaging with advocacy maybe politicized by government:

2. Philanthropy must be voice of citizens it will provide legitimacy:

3. Focus on solutions/prevention. Keep independence in a collaborative mode.

Actions being taken:

Philanthropy Advocacy initiative (by DAFNE and EFC);

Actions to be realised:

Philanthropy Advocacy newsletter; Connecting with other stakeholders; PEXcommunity platform; increasing private resources for advocacy
Chapter 4: Working Together

Working together can enhance our respective organisation and collective effectiveness in relation to creating value, shaping the field, responding to needs, and amplifying the voice of philanthropic organisations.
Collaboration however requires an investment of time and resources, to build trusted relationships and to identify where synergy can be achieved.
Support organisation have a critical role in fostering collaboration and in practising it themselves in order to pave the way to achieve enhanced collective impact.
Acknowledgements

Global:
Edge Funders
Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors
WINGS

European:
Ariadne
Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe | DAFNE
European Community Foundation Initiative | ECFI
European Foundation Centre | EFC
European Venture Philanthropy Association | EVPA
Network of European Foundations | NEF

National:
Germany: German Association of Foundations
Italy: Assifero
Poland: Polish Donors Forum
Portugal: Portuguese Foundation Centre
Romania: ARC
Spain: AEF
Switzerland: SwissFoundations
Turkey: Tusev
UK: ACF, CAF

Facilitated by SenseTribe,
The images presented in this storybook were created by Marina Roa