



**COVID-19 and  
the New Future  
for Nonprofits &  
Foundations**

**WORKBOOK**

By Trista Harris  
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President of FutureGood

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# A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

You are entering a moment of critical importance for the social sector and for the future of the world. This is a scary time for leaders that are guiding their communities through vast uncertainty with life or death consequences. This is a time that will stretch us as leaders and humans, but the good news is that you aren't alone.

For the last 12 years I have been studying the tools of futurism and how they can be applied to the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. I have experience as a fundraiser, social sector researcher, grantmaker, and running an association of grantmakers with a responsibility for bringing an equity frame and a public policy strategy to that work. I have also led grantmakers and nonprofits through a variety of crisis's including:

- The 35W bridge collapse
- Numerous floods and tornados
- 2008 Financial Crisis
- High visibility police shootings

This challenge that we are facing with Coronavirus is different, but it isn't new. Your organization has faced a variety of challenges already: financial challenges, disease outbreaks in your community, natural disasters, and times of community stress. This pandemic is all of those things rolled together.

This is a time for you to build on those previous learnings and to lean into the ideal future that your organization is working to build. The tools of futurism will help you better understand what the future may bring and will help you harness this current crisis to bring your organization closer to meeting its mission.

I have created this workbook to help your organization better understand the future and see how the decision that you make today will influence what that future looks like. Feel free to share this workbook with your staff, board, community partners, and grantees.

We are in this together,

Trista Harris  
President of FutureGood



# SECTION ONE

*Visioning*

# SECTION ONE

## VISIONING

### SECTION INTRODUCTION

Those who only look to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.

-John F. Kennedy

When Kennedy said this in Frankfurt in 1963, he had only been president for 2 years, in those 2 years, the Bay of Pigs happened, the next year was the Cuban missile crisis, he was in the midst of the Cold War, and the same month that he made this speech he declared civil rights struggle a "moral crisis" for America. You could argue that Kennedy had his hands full with the present and yet he asked the world to consider the future.

I know you have your hands full in this moment of challenge but if you don't take a longer view you will miss the opportunities and risks in the present that will shape the future.

I



# WORKSHEET 1

IDEAL FUTURE

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Imagine your ideal future after the Coronavirus crisis passes. What would you like the community you care about to look like after this is over? Remember to describe what you want to happen, not what you don't want.

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# WORKSHEET 2

OPPORTUNITIES

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Describe the opportunities that you see for your organization at this unique time.

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# WORKSHEET 3

RISKS

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Describe the risks that you see for your organization at this unique time.

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# SECTION TWO

## *Scenario Planning*

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# SECTION TWO

## SCENARIO PLANNING

### SECTION INTRODUCTION

A spider is wise because it hunts before its prey arrives.”

–Unknown

Scenario planning is a structured way for organizations to think about the future. Scenarios are just stories about how the future might unfold and how those future conditions could impact the organization.

Scenarios challenge your conventional assumptions and help you deal with times of uncertainty. Since they are written about the high-level forces for change, they remain a relevant planning tool for many years, and they can be customized for many different uses.

# SECTION TWO

## SCENARIO PLANNING

### How To

**Step 1:** Determine which driving forces won't change in your scenario. For example:

- Federal funding for our issue will remain flat
- City will continue to have an affordable housing shortage
- Coronavirus will continue to spread

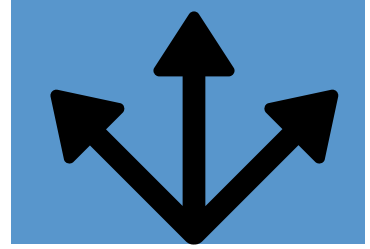
**Step 2:** Determine which conditions you are unsure of. For example:

- Society will get more collaborative or more selfish
- The economy will get better or get worse
- Giving will decrease or increase
- Local elected official will match federal government of policy or do the opposite

**Step 3:** Create a diagram that shows four possible scenarios. For example, one axis could be that more shelters open to house the homeless at this time or no more shelters open and the other axis could be that your organization receives more emergency funding or no emergency funding.

**Step 4:** Brainstorm your actions in each of those quadrants. What are the opportunities and challenges in that scenario? For example, if there are more shelters to house the homeless and you have received no more emergency funding, you might need to partner with another organization to provide programming or support. If you received emergency funding and no more shelters opened, you might work with hotels to temporarily provide housing at a discounted rate.

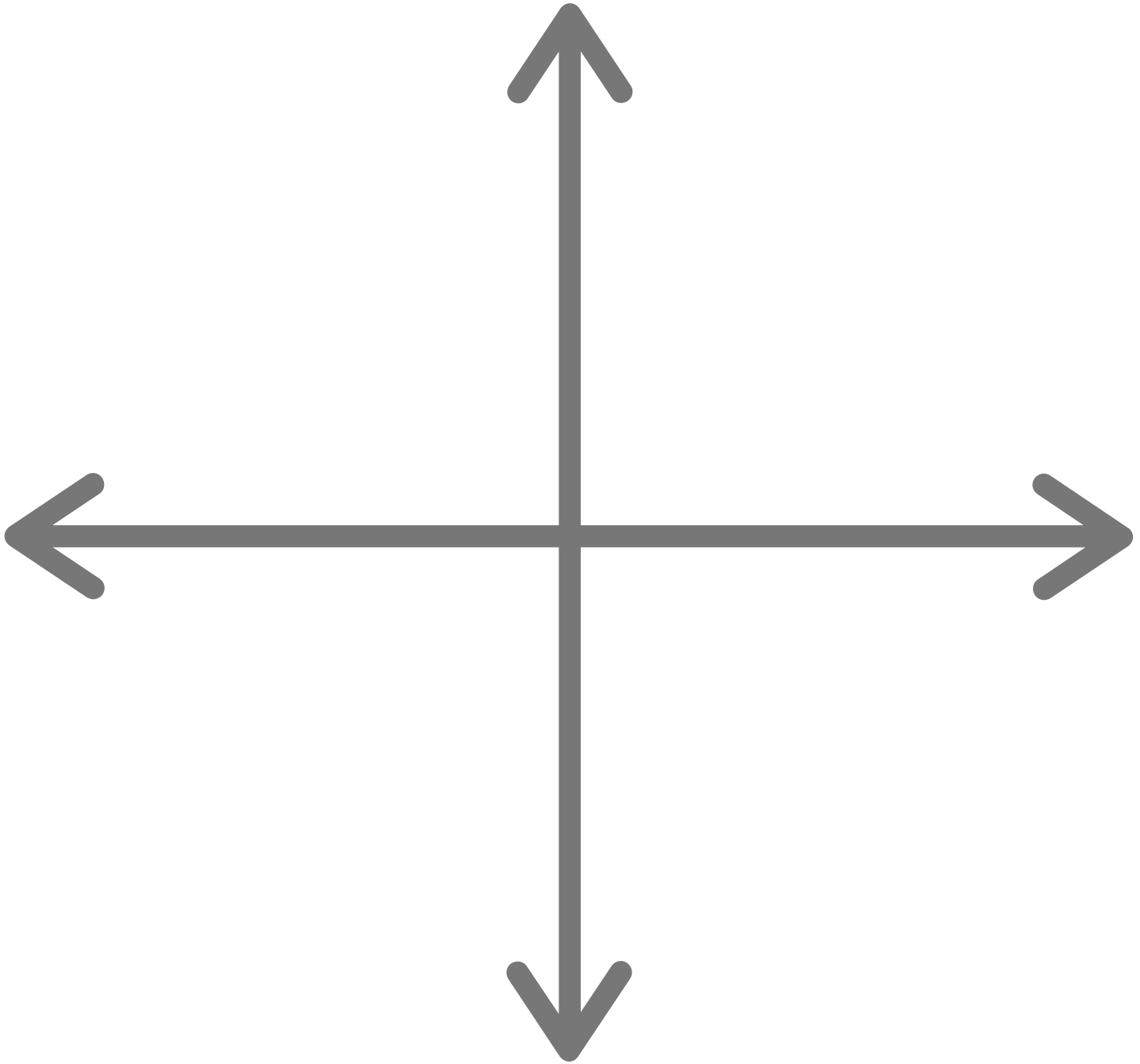
One of the four scenarios will come to pass, and you will be prepared with possible solutions.



# WORKSHEET 4

SCENARIO PLANNING

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Create your own scenario plan





# WORKSHEET 5

SUBTITLE GOES HERE

**QUESTION #1:** What challenges are you struggling with at the moment?

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**QUESTION #2:** Where will you be in five years from now if you change nothing at all?

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# SECTION THREE

*Additional  
Resources*



## Strategic Visioning

By bringing a futurist mindset and tools, we co-create a process where we can ask the question “what would the community look like if the problem you were working on was fully solved?”. This change in mindset and frame opens up a new world of possibilities.



## Building an Equitable Future

Based on the unique constraints and pace of change of nonprofits and foundations, the FutureGood Equity Systems Change model helps to align your full staff around the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Change Process so that it becomes a core part of how you do your work. This model builds shared buy-in and visioning, with a clear plan for implementation and ongoing accountability measures.



## Future Focused Leadership During a Disaster

The communities that we serve need our best thinking and support during times of disruption and crisis. But those are the times that our organizations have the least bandwidth to provide that support. FutureGood can quickly help you develop strategies, tactics, and operating procedures to support your staff and constituents during natural or man-made disasters in your community, all while keeping your long-term future at the forefront.



## MEET THE AUTHOR

TRISTA HARRIS

Trista Harris is a philanthropic futurist and nationally known as a passionate advocate for leaders in the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. Trista has been featured on CNN and her work has been covered by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, the New York Times, Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal, Forbes, and numerous social sector blogs. She is an international speaker on using the tools of futurism to solve society's biggest challenges. Trista is President of FutureGood, a consultancy focused on helping visionary leaders build a better future.

HAVE QUESTIONS?


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**THE FUTURE  
BELONGS TO  
THOSE WHO  
BELIEVE IN THE  
BEAUTY OF  
THEIR DREAMS.**

**ELEANOR ROOSEVELT**