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The Data Show Things Will Get Better in 2018

MICHAEL GREEN



The world is going to get better in 2018. As we watch the disasters and conflicts roll across our news screens, such a prediction might seem hopelessly reckless or equally hopelessly naïve. Yet, that is what the data suggests is going to happen.

The Social Progress Index has been tracking the real quality of life — measured in terms of health, education, rights and all the other stuff that really matters — of about 95 percent of the world's population since 2014. (We don't have enough data for the other 5 percent living in smaller countries or those in conflict.) And what we have found is, overall, steady progress. To be precise, from 2014 to 2017 world social progress rose by 2.6 percent from 63.19 out of 100 to 64.85. A small increase, but significant.

Yes, there are problems. The U.S. has flatlined on social progress during this period and its score on tolerance has plummeted. Authoritarian populism in Hungary has taken that country backwards. Life in the Central African Republic, the lowest ranked country, has continued to deteriorate.

But elsewhere, from Norway to Nigeria to Nepal, progress continues. We are beating diseases like malaria. We are connecting more people to sanitation and electricity. Mobile phone and Internet connectivity is booming. More kids are going to school and to university.

We just don't notice it because good news doesn't make headlines. Progress is, frankly, pretty boring. Indeed, as the late, great Swedish statistician Hans Rosling used to point out, even well informed people often have a view of the world that is 20 years out of date, oblivious to the huge leaps forward we have made in ending poverty and enhancing human wellbeing. There is no reason for this to stop. That's why I am confident to extrapolate from the trends of recent years and say that the world is going to get better in 2018.

That's the good news. The bad news is that we should be doing a lot better. A deeper analysis of Social Progress Index data shows that we could, if we used the resources already available, be doing a lot better. To do that we would need to increase flows of aid from richer to poorer countries and do a

better job of scaling the ideas that work at the expense of those that don't. We might be better at doing that if, as Rosling pointed out, we were guided by what the data say rather than our often out-of-date impressions.

The other piece of bad news, and therefore, a big challenge for the years ahead, is that we are not improving evenly across all aspects of social progress. Sustainability is, of course, a massive issue. Without decisive action on climate change the table could tilt decisively against social progress as the human costs of global warming rise.

Two other big areas of concern leap out from the data. First, the U.S. is not alone in seeing a big decline in scores on tolerance. Across countries rich and poor we seem to be struggling to build societies that can live with ethnic and religious diversity. This was already the lowest-scoring of 12 components of the Social Progress Index. Building tolerant and inclusive societies is a challenge for which we urgently need solutions.

Second, and probably related, is that human rights are under attack in many countries. This, too, is an aspect of social progress where we were struggling already, since countries like China have promoted economic development at the expense of human rights. Worse, this is the only one of 12 components of social progress where we have actually seen the world score go backwards since 2014. A lot of work is already going on to defend rights and promote inclusion. The data suggests that this is still not enough. Turning around these problem areas is going to take renewed effort, not just to defend against abuse and discrimination against groups and individuals but also to make the case for why these things matter.

This has to be about more than making the moral case. Some of the provisional analysis suggests that lack of rights is associated with social discontent and the risk of political upheaval. There also seems to be a link between tolerance and economic success: More inclusive societies are better at attracting the talent and investment needed for economic growth.

Michael Green is CEO of the Social Progress Imperative (<http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/>).

A Drumbeat is Building

SUSAN DREYFUS



As I look ahead to 2018, I am hopeful we will see the continuation of the slow but building drumbeat — from kitchen tables across America to the halls of Congress — calling for the expansion of quality primary care and behavioral health care coverage to all Americans regardless of age.

This drumbeat is building because, whether you are talking to business, government, or nonprofit leaders, there is a common knowledge we all share. Our nation's greatest asset is our people, and when people are doing well physically, economically, and socially, our country thrives.

I have spent my career working in health and human services and have seen the billions of dollars we spend on the deep end of our systems when people aren't healthy. We all have personally seen the tragic costs, both financial and in loss of human potential, when people do not have the foundational building blocks that are necessary for them to achieve their full potential.

Through research, we know these building blocks are the social determinants of health; furthermore, access to quality, affordable primary health and behavioral health care is the building block upon which all else stands.

We will fight to the death to protect universal Medicare healthcare coverage for my 91-year-old, well-deserving mother and soon for me, now age 60, but not for my four, young grandchildren? How could it be that, as I write this, Congress still hasn't funded the historically, bipartisan-supported Children's

Health Insurance Program (CHIP) even though there is clear research that shows the financial return on investment for taxpayers, the child and their family?

This thinking will only stop when we as citizens regardless of political party look at this issue through the lives and realities of our families, friends and neighbors who extend far beyond the neighborhoods in which we live.

This is not a Republican or Democrat thing. This is not about ideology. My family has been an active member of the Republican party, which intensified when at the age of 19, my father-in-law, a self-described "Republican," ran and won to be the Governor of Wisconsin in 1978. I have worked for both a great Republican governor, Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin and a great Democrat governor, Christine Gregoire of Washington state, and I just don't understand the partisanship in the issue of healthcare coverage for all people in our country.

In the end, they both wanted what was best for the people in their states. Time and time again, I watched them be masters at negotiation, always willing to come to the middle while staying true to their values. In healthcare, expanding access coverage to all is not just the right thing to do. We simply can't afford not to do it in a global economy. And the decades of indisputable research, science, and data consistently show us this truth.

Employer-sponsored healthcare is a 20th century concept that simply no longer fits with the 21st century world we live in. Why do we think, with the rapid mobility of our neighbors, that having quality and affordable coverage should be dependent on employers, the coverage they can offer, how much people earn, or what state people happen to live in?

Gone are the days when workers, like my grandfather, who painted washing machines at Maytag in Newton, Iowa, had living-wage jobs and stayed in their jobs for more than 40 years. With technology and machines, many of the jobs of today will no longer exist, which means our traditional experience with work will dramatically change.

But we also know that with people in good health we will see a reduction in many of the issues that continue to perplex us and cost our country greatly. For instance, as reported in the October 2017 issue of Health Affairs, research out of California shows that access to healthcare has a bigger impact on child poverty than all other means-tested benefits combined. All other industrialized countries in the world that have better health outcomes at lower cost ensure that all their citizens have access to quality, affordable and integrated health care, including much deeper investments than ours in the social determinants of health.

There is a clear and steady drumbeat I feel building across party lines, but it will only gain greater momentum if we as citizens lift our voices. We must stop using solutions of the past to solve the problems of today and of the future. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is meaningless without our health and well-being.

I cut my teeth in the Republican Party, not just through my father-in-law, but through Ronald Reagan, and I'm a big fan of Abraham Lincoln. I truly believe that if these men were sitting together today and they saw the research, science, and data, they too would conclude that the time has come to expand quality and affordable healthcare coverage to every American like how Medicare works for my 91-year-old mother.

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The Crisis In Foster Care Requires Better Solutions

PATRICK LAWLER



Sonja*, 15, was absent from school most days. When she did attend, there would be trouble — what her file called “physical aggression,” meaning fights with fists swinging, hair pulling, blood and bruises. She fought at school and with peers in her neighborhood. Her grandmother cared about her, but was ill and not capable of providing the kind of structure and supervision Sonja needed. The only problems Gary*, 5, and Glen*, 3, had were their parents. Dad did the trifecta — opioids, meth and marijuana; Mom, just the last two.

Both families came to the attention of child protective services. In most states, they would be taken into state custody, but working closely with our intensive in-home team, workers for the State of Tennessee decided all three children could be helped safely without being taken from their families. Specialists identified an extended family member who could provide a home for Sonja. Gary and Glen were allowed to stay in family custody as their parents completed drug treatment because of intensive in-home services and a strong support system of extended family and friends.

Today, there are more than 430,000 children in state foster care systems across the country — so many that child welfare systems are overwhelmed. The tipping point in today's foster care crisis is the opioid epidemic, which has thrust thousands of children into state care. We know that the very act of taking a child away from family creates life-altering trauma. The longer a child stays in foster care, the more likely he will have several placements and develop serious emotional and behavioral problems. So many children are coming into state care now that they must go to shelters, spend time in hotel rooms or sleep in state offices until more appropriate placements are found.

There's no hint of a letup in the epidemic for 2018, but there is a blueprint for change in state systems that could bring effective help for children and families.

Tennessee's child welfare system successfully ended its federal court supervision in July after 17 years of positive systemic change. It is one of the only states in the country to make the kind of sweeping reforms needed to change a large, governmental system.

Tennessee Department of Children's Services met 140 individual benchmarks and put plans and policies in place to sustain those improvements. In the course of reform, the state changed its practice model, bringing a focus on preventing children from entering foster care by providing intensive help to their families. If out-of-home placement is needed, family reunification or permanency planning begins immediately.

Private providers became partners as the state moved to performance-based contracting, focusing on outcomes — getting children to permanency — rather than just paying for safe placements. The state also became the first in the nation to offer comprehensive support to youth who aged out of foster care at 18.

Through our work in Tennessee and 12 other states, we've come to believe that as many as half of the children in state custody across the country could stay with their families if intensive prevention and reunification services are provided to families. The first step is committing to the belief that children are raised best by their families. Even the most chaotic family does a better job of nurturing a child than a state system. Poverty should never be the reason a child is separated from his parents, and entry into foster care should be a last resort — not a quick, first solution.

I recently had the opportunity to talk to child welfare commissioners from five states, all searching for solutions that would bring more effective help to the children and families they serve. Here are a few things that I'm telling them are needed:

Stable, sustainable funding streams. Most federal funding that comes through to the states has been tied to out-of-home placements, not the more effective prevention and reunification programs.

Outcomes-based contracting that gives providers flexibility to help children and families in the most effective way with a focus on permanency.

Political will. The change in Tennessee came because of the commitment of a series of governors, commissioners and other child welfare leaders over 17 years.

Deep change in entrenched state systems often comes in the midst of crisis, rather than as part of a proactive strategy, but it doesn't have to be that way. Officials should become open to changing the way things have always been done, finally opening the door to innovative, effective solutions. Ultimately, this could ease the strain on foster care systems and build brighter futures for children throughout our country.

**Names were changed.*

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Digital Equity Must Be All of Our Mission

AMY WARD



Thinking about everything you've done since you woke up today (including how you woke up), how many interactions have you had with technology? How many times have you used the Internet — whether through an app on your phone, checking email on a tablet, editing documents in the cloud, or anything else. Was your answer 0? For roughly 30 percent of Americans it is a big goose egg.

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance defines digital equity as daily access to the Internet, at speeds, quality and capacity necessary to accomplish common tasks, with digital skills necessary to fully participate online, and whenever possible on a personal device and home network."

Digital equity is a critical issue in America today. We might take our access and use for granted on a daily scale. But for many Americans, not having access or the skills to confidently use the web means that they are missing out on opportunities for services, support, and basic activities — from finding and applying for jobs to signing up for health care and advocating for their wellbeing, from communicating with family and their children's teachers to engaging in civic and political life.

I say all this with the confidence that you understand and agree — digital equity is hugely important for a fully engaged community and country. But that's ultimately not the point of this column.

How much of your nonprofit's work depends on the Internet? Whether it is supporters or program participants visiting your website to learn or access services, donors contributing to your work from asks on email, engaging your community through social media channels, or communicating and coordinating with community members via email and project management tools. You need the Internet to do your work; and you need your community members and supporters to have the Internet to be part of your programs and advance your mission.

Digital inclusion programs aren't reserved for some other organization — your organization can and should be part of the path toward digital equity.

If equity is important to your community, and your programs are designed to provide a path towards improved lives, digital inclusion should be directly integrated into your work. And, 2018 is a great time to start.

Talk about the Internet with your constituents. Do not make assumptions about access, devices, or skills. Integrate conversations about your work with questions: Will you be able to access follow up materials from this program via email?

Do you think you will sign up for a future program on the website?

Better understanding the level of access and skill in your community will help you identify opportunities for better serving them. Bring other organizations into the conversation. Are you or your colleagues part of coalitions or networks, professional development circles, or another group? Put digital equity on the next agenda and start talking with other organizations about what they know of their community's access and skills, and how they are ready to be part of the mix of resources helping bring more folks online.

Connect digital equity to your mission and strategic plan. If community members aren't able to engage with you online, receive your communications, or benefit from your services, how will you accomplish your mission? Do you want to intentionally say that you are only going to serve those who already have the access and skills to find your website? Start making connections between digital equity and the vision you have for the world — with your staff, with your board, with your partners and funders — so that your planning at all levels reflects this perspective.

Integrate digital inclusion programs with your work. There is no single form of digital inclusion, digital literacy, or digital life skills programming. In order to work towards digital equity for all communities, we need you and your organization to identify the ways that your programs create opportunities for this work.

Offer a computer as a free-to-use access point for community members. Or, include a few minutes of training when you talk with clients on how to use the Internet to search for similar services in addition to providing a printed list of other providers. Move your classes into web-based formats so students learn to use a computer while learning your content.

We know that we can't solve the huge and pressing challenges of our time with collaboration and investment — whether it is poverty, hunger, homelessness, or unemployment. It's time that all nonprofits recognized digital equity as an equally cross-cutting issue that will take all of us to address. It's a matter of meeting your mission and of meeting our sector's collective mission of creating a better world.

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How To Deal With Unreasonable Charity Regulators In 2018

MARK FITZGIBBONS



Recent dealings with one state's unreasonable and lawless charity regulators reminded me of the cartoon character Eric Cartman, who in one episode dressed as a police officer and menaced residents of the town of South Park yelling, "Respect my authoritah!"

This also reminded me of some tips I wanted to share about dealing with state charity regulators who act unreasonably and even lawlessly. These tips hopefully provide charities a better understanding of what they might want from their lawyers when dealing with any investigations, but especially those conducted lawlessly by regulators.

One investigation by the Minnesota Attorney General's office provided plenty of examples for useful tips. That office sent me and one of our agency's charity clients a letter saying one state resident wished to be excluded from future mailings. No problem there, as suppressing unwanted mail is always the right thing to do.

The letter, however, and without citing any law or legal bases, made demands for written answers and documents. I wrote back asking: "Are you enforcing a law?" State charity investigation statutes generally require regulators to have some reasonable belief, or grounds, that a law of their state is being violated before they may commence an investigation.

Some lawless regulators bully charities? You bet. Charity leaders might wish to consider the following five tips when dealing with investigations by charity regulators during 2018, and especially the miscreant kind.

Tip One: Authority under statutes to investigate is not the same as grounds to make demands. Grounds require at least cursory facts that law was broken. While courts give regulators leeway, investigative demands must specify the nature of the alleged violation, and there needs to be a link between relevant conduct and the alleged violation, otherwise the investigation may be invalidated by a judge.

My favorite example of how some state regulators conflate their investigation authority as “grounds,” or reasonable cause, is one assistant attorney general sent me a demand for documents. I replied noting her demand did not state the reasonable cause she had. She replied, citing the investigation statute but no facts, as her grounds. I wrote back, copying her boss, to watch a few episodes of Law & Order to learn the meaning of reasonable cause. That ended that.

Unwanted mail is not grounds for an investigation. In *Bolger v. Youngs Drug Products Corp.* from 1983, the U.S. Supreme Court held that unwanted mail suppression laws are unconstitutional. Since unwanted mail does not violate the law, charity regulators may not lawfully use that as a basis to launch an investigation. In the Minnesota example, demands for documents could not lawfully proceed based on a complaint about unwanted mail.

Tip Two: Memorialize in writing outrageous behavior by charity regulators. After I informed a Minnesota assistant attorney general that her letter failed to cite any law, and that she also needed grounds under the investigation statute to make the demands for documents, she said I must have something to hide. After this very unprofessional comment, she threatened to issue a civil investigative demand, which is another term for administrative subpoena, some of which can cost tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees to answer.

The right of security in our papers against unreasonable searches is protected by the Fourth Amendment. Civil investigative demands are what the courts call “constructive searches.” They require neither probable cause nor authorization by a judge. Nevertheless, state statutes still require grounds and notice to the targets about the nature of the matters being investigated. Among other reasons, such notice gives the targets an opportunity to cure violations of the law.

In a letter to the attorney general, I documented not only the unlawful acts of that office, but the very unprofessional attempt to bully a target simply seeking assurances of Minnesota's compliance with the law. This memorialized the lawlessness and bad behavior of the charity regulator in case the matter ever gets before a judge. Judges typically give regulators leeway, but there is good precedent for courts to restrict and even invalidate regulator demands that violate investigation statutes, are too broad, or target First Amendment rights without proper cause, as Minnesota has done.

Tip Three: Avoid discussing legal matters in emails. Once the largest firm in the world, accounting powerhouse Arthur Andersen, is no longer in business because of one internal email. The firm provided services to Enron which was under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice. An internal email asking about document retention and destruction policies was used by the DOJ to prosecute as an attempt to destroy evidence. By the time the U. S. Supreme Court declared the firm and this email innocent, the firm was out of business. Charity regulators will want to see your emails.

These regulators confuse and inflate their investigation power under what's called “visitation” authority. Visitation is a doctrine from the common law about the authority of the founders of an entity to investigate internal matters and ensure compliance with corporate charters, such as bylaws. When the attorney general, acting on behalf of the King, conducted visitation, it could only be done through the courts, where the watchful eye of a judge could prevent abuse of power. Visitation was never authority to investigate for purposes of enforcing the laws protecting the community.

Tip Four: Consider using common interest agreements. Charitable solicitation laws created a symbiotic regulatory scheme over charities and their outside fundraisers. In other words, the compliance obligations of one often affect the other. Common interest agreements allow lawyers for charities and their fundraisers to share legally privileged, confidential communications.

Lawyers have an obligation to their clients, and not to other parties in an investigation. In the symbiotic regulatory scheme of charitable solicitation laws, this can create blinders to the best interests of their clients. In dealing with unreasonable charity regulators, common interest agreements allow legal counsel to share information and strategy that may help both charities and their fundraisers.

Tip Five: Nothing beats compliance. Even though overzealous and unprofessional charity regulators sometimes seek to make you believe your legal and innocent actions are somehow unlawful, ultimately it's a judge and jury who might decide. When you comply with the law, and demonstrate good faith attempts to comply with laws that might be vague or complex, you will come across as better than the "bad cops" among state charity regulators.

Compliance, though, is not passivity. Even in complying with civil investigative demands, preserve objections. If regulators fail to abide by their investigation statute, expressly state objections that the constructive search violates state law and Fourth Amendment rights. If their demands are actually censorship, preserve objections on First Amendment grounds. If they want names of donors, object under the landmark case NAACP v. Alabama.

Charities can and should protect their rights, and can do so politely yet convincingly. Law-abiding charity regulators probably appreciate efforts to ensure legal compliance by their rogue colleagues.

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Nonprofits Must Adjust To A More Conservative Atmosphere

JATRICE GAITER



Looking into the crystal ball, my prognostication for 2018: The nonprofit sector will begin a nuanced veer to the right. Here are a few reasons why ...

Many nonprofits that provide services are funded by some form of government. Federal departments, such as Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Education, are pursuing activities rooted in a more conservative ideology — such as a draft strategic plan for HHS that includes language to “affirmatively accommodate” religious beliefs regulations that government funding should be allocated for private schools, and comments that public housing should be “less comfortable” to incentivize residents.

Many nonprofit leaders will adjust programs to meet new guidelines to stay in the federal funding pipeline. Some will contort themselves to stay on mission while accommodating new funding trends and cutbacks.

A large number of human service executives come from state, local or federal government. They bring a wealth of experience, legislative contacts and inside knowledge about these often byzantine funding structures. As 36 states have conservative governors and statehouses, many of these newly-minted nonprofit executives will bring the same conservative notions with them.

There is more political diversity in the nonprofit sector than most would assume. During the past few elections, it has become apparent that staff, board members and volunteers come more evenly from both sides of the aisle than commonly perceived.

The U.S. Supreme Court will become much more conservative. This administration will most likely appoint at least one more justice. The White House has already been filling lower court vacancies with conservative judges. These are lifetime appointments that will impact our country for the next 40 years. We are going into 2018 with more than 100 U.S. district and appeals courts with vacancies. According to Carole Levine's article *Nonprofits, Watch Out! Federal Court Appointments Could Endanger Gains*, nonprofits working on healthcare, education, environment, immigration and many other issues will find many lower federal courts making decisions about their sustainability, taxes and missions.

Corporate sponsors and funders will have influence on the direction of the nonprofit sector. Generation Z is now old enough to vote. There is international research that concludes this will be the most conservative generation since World War II. According to Time magazine, (*Young Americans Are Actually Not Becoming More Progressive*, Aug. 22, 2017), "It's crucial to understand why nearly two out of five GenZs and young Millennials voted for not just a Republican candidate, but a candidate affiliated with a white nationalism many thought had died out long before GenZ was born." As these young adults become staff, volunteers and board members of nonprofits, will they influence them with their young, fresh brand of conservatism?

The U.S. Census Bureau lost its director, a veteran of the bureau with 30 years of tenure. It is underfunded and cancelled several field tests. The census determines the distribution of hundreds of billions of dollars to state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses and individuals. It has substantial economic impact in every corner of the nation according to the Brookings Institute. If people are significantly undercounted, the federal government does not have to allocate sufficient funding for programs and services. Immigrants, people of color and others might not feel especially forthcoming during the 2020 Census because they fear repercussions. Congressional districts will be reapportioned to become more conservative if the census undercounts.

Last but not least, the repeal of the Johnson Amendment has the power to push nonprofits to more overt political involvement. House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady (R-Texas) added an amendment to his bill that would expand Section 5201 to all nonprofits and foundations, not just churches. The full-range implications of this will become clear in the immediate future.

All of these factors together create an environment likely to nudge more nonprofits to become increasingly conservative. While you might not agree, I hope these points will provoke you to consider the wide range of implications they will have on our sector for years to come. Nonprofit leaders should begin to engage their boards and staff in more aggressive advocacy to preserve programs and services, stop the repeal of the Johnson Amendment and lead the clarion call about the importance of an accurate census count. A strategy of building more targeted public policy coalitions such as the "Burrito Coalition" that was conceived by the American Heart Association to contend with attempts to obliterate the Affordable Care Act, is an example of nonprofits brought together by exigent circumstances that were effective and successful.

Through vigilance and more attention to public policy through better messaging, op-eds, visits to state capitals and Capitol Hill the nonprofit sector can become less vulnerable to the political pendulum swinging from left to right.

Jatrice Martel Gaiter is executive vice president of external affairs at Volunteers of America (<https://www.voa.org/>).

The Nonprofit Battle of 2018: Global Engagement Furthers America's Interest

SCOTT BEALE

The U.S. retreated from traditional global engagement during 2017 — pursuing partnerships that advance the U.S. and the world together — toward a path of nativism that puts U.S. short-term interest first. Many organizations and leaders have spoken out and rallied against the rise of nativism and



isolationism and have shown us that we can legally and effectively engage in critical policy debates, without violating 501(c)(3) restrictions on political campaign activity.

In 2018, the sector must organize against policies that are counter to American values and show the country why global engagement makes the U.S. and the world safer and more prosperous.

During the past year, the U.S. government proposed a ban on visas from predominantly Muslim countries, called for a wall on the border with Mexico, and announced a plan to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. These are among many policies that separate the United States from the world. We should expect that the America First agenda will only intensify as we enter another election year.

However, America First should not mean “never engage” with the world. For 70 years the United States has been the architect of the world’s governing institutions and norms and we have benefited tremendously from writing the rules.

We can take lessons from 2017 to frame our strategy for 2018. For example, after the U.S. government announced its plan to abandon the Paris Climate Agreement, a coalition of nonprofits, advocacy organizations and policy groups pressured corporations, state governments and cities to step in to fill the void of the federal government’s commitments. According to The New York Times, the efforts of 14 U.S. governors will collectively achieve the reduction in emissions that the U.S. government had promised under President Barack Obama.

Another example is the coalition of organizations that mobilized to put public pressure on the White House and Congress to fight against building a wall and against repealing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Neither of these issues is settled, but action against 700,000 young people has been punted from the White House to Congress to act on in 2018.

A third example is the fight over the travel ban for citizens from some Muslim majority countries. In 2017, two Executive Orders blocked citizens of some primarily Muslim countries and the nonprofit and corporate sector organized to fight these actions. In this case a coalition including the Silicon Valley tech giants, universities and nonprofits provided legal challenges and media pressure to block and discredit multiple versions of the “Muslim Travel Ban.”

However, many of the battles never make the headlines. So even when there are dozens of larger public wins, there are hundreds of smaller defeats. For every court case that puts a hold on part of the Muslim Travel Ban policies, there are simultaneously thousands of Muslim high school students around the world who are choosing not to study in American universities because they feel the U.S. is not welcoming to Muslims. We, the sector, must fight against the policies while fighting for those students to choose the U.S. We must fight against nativism and for globalism.

The sector must do more than resist policy changes that run counter to our values and the missions of our organizations. We must also outline a positive agenda. While the battles rage in 2018, we must also do a better job of persuading and educating our own elected officials and fellow citizens about why global engagement and diversity are worth the fight. We must make the business case about how diversity strengthens our national economy and engagement with the world makes the U.S. safer. This is not a partisan issue so we must work with leaders of both parties who share these values.

We must persuade the public that it is shortsighted to strengthen our military while weakening our State Department. We must show how when people are connected, then economies are connected; and when countries’ economies are connected, then governments rarely choose war. This past year taught the nonprofit sector not to take for granted past victories nor to assume progress is achieved in a straight and consistent line. Just because our grandparents defeated fascism overseas and our parents fought for civil rights, we must never assume our children will continue to benefit from the lessons and results of those battles. We must not sit on the sidelines trying to run our organizations as if the world around us is not changing.

We must not use the excuse of restrictions on “political campaign activity” to limit our ability to educate and speak up for issues and values that are fundamental to who we are, as a sector, and as a country.

This year we must double down on American values and traditions such as diversity and global engagement. Our sector, and our country, depends on our willingness to fight for these values.

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International Development's Changing Landscape

MICHELLE NUNN



Climate, conflict and extreme poverty have shaped the largest humanitarian challenges of our lifetime — from a record number of displaced people (65.6 million) to famine conditions in an unprecedented four countries to entrenched poverty that limits people around the world, particularly women and girls.

To meet — and overcome — these challenges, the nonprofit sector in many ways is reimagining itself. We still want to place solutions squarely in the hands of those who need them most, but we're also redefining how we go about doing that. Partnership, collaboration and innovation are the touchstones that will drive transformative impact in the most vulnerable communities on the planet. In fact, we can't keep pace with the changes in the world without changing the ways we do business.

It's already happening. Increasingly, people and organizations supporting emergency response work and the fight against severe poverty want to see collaborative effort, not taking a go-it-alone approach. That's one reason why, last summer, CARE and seven of our peer organizations — International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children and World Vision — came together for the first time to form the Global Emergency Response Coalition.

We did so because of a hunger crisis that has threatened the lives of 20 million people in Nigeria, Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and neighboring countries. This crisis has received little media attention in the United States and, therefore, has failed to register with the American public or generate the requisite resources. The coalition aimed to change that, not only by raising resources and awareness to fight the problem, but by leveraging more than 500 years of combined humanitarian experience among coalition members.

We now have a sound infrastructure in place that will allow for greater agility when launching future appeals that require unprecedented levels of cooperation. This effort and future partnerships require planning, extensive collaboration and a shared commitment to doing things differently.

These principles can lead nonprofits toward collective efforts like the Global Emergency Response Coalition, or to forge new paths, such as adapting for-profit models for nonprofit purposes.

Accelerators have emerged as a promising means of identifying and scaling the best programs in international development by connecting them with mentors, workshops and funding. They are designed to incubate ideas and are nothing new, at least not in the corporate world.

Popular companies such as Airbnb, a marketplace for travel accommodations, and the file-sharing service Dropbox started out in accelerators as they polished their business plans and attracted investors who brought those plans to life. But an accelerator for the development world is new. Nonprofit organizations already are employing them as a vital, innovative tool to alleviate poverty.

World Vision, has developed an accelerator called the Social Innovation Challenge. Mercy Corps administers its Gaza Sky Geeks. Both help local ventures get off the ground.

My organization, CARE, last year launched Scale X Design, which invests in the most promising NGO programs and, in its second cohort, includes projects from Habitat for Humanity International and World Wildlife Fund. Our chief innovation officer, Dar Vanderbeck says Scale X Design is, “fundamentally about disrupting and redesigning how development is done and conceptualized.”

In a panel discussion, Stephanie Turpin, whose organization FHI 360 sponsors its own Catalyst Fund accelerator, pinpointed the “growing intersection” between for-profit and nonprofit efforts. “We’re in a period of experimentation where we’re seeing more NGOs adopting commercial approaches, and for-profit businesses thinking more seriously about sustainability and social impact,” she said. Accelerators generate funding for new ideas with promise, but also for long-standing programs with potential to do much more. Some of those resources support the world’s deep-rooted social movements, too.

In Latin America, a movement has taken root to protect and assert legal rights for domestic workers who regularly work long days in exploitative conditions. We’ve set a multi-million fundraising goal to help these workers amplify their collective voice, assert their rights and protect themselves from the violence and other abuses so many routinely suffer from their employers. Through our Dignified Work initiative, we want to sow new associations of women domestic workers, even as we bolster existing groups throughout Latin America. And we are looking at uniting Northern and Southern movements around domestic work to learn from one another. Building and connecting those networks across nations and regions will accelerate and amplify these vital voices.

The global community has made great strides in the fight against extreme poverty, but immense challenges remain. They are endlessly complex, and no single solution will satisfy them. That’s why it’s necessary to continue thinking creatively about how we “do” our missions, in whatever form that work takes — embracing solutions across organizations and sectors.

Michelle Nunn is president and CEO of CARE (<http://www.care.org/>).



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