Navigating Uncertain Times

January 27, 2021

   [Note: This transcript begins about 17 minutes into
   the session. We apologize for the inconvenience.]

   >> -- functional kind of future scenarios. The
functional use of alternative outcomes that may exist in
form or another. Each scenario should be able to stand
alone as a coherent future, so we tried to make them
quite distinct. While also collectively they are
presenting a range of possibilities and share some common
trends across them.

   This development of scenarios offers an opportunity
to get creative as well. Each scenario is usually given
a catchy name and defined by some distinctive prevailing
patterns across analyzed areas of society, economy,
creative industries and art sector.

   In describing each scenario we also completed a SWOT
analysis and suggested some performance metrics against
which to measure how various distinct futures may evolve.

   As a third step in this process, we looked at how
the scenarios can be applied to planning for the near and
long term future of arts organizations by comparing
differences and noting commonalities between scenarios to

form a basis for planning future directions. And we also provided some recommendations for organizational preparedness for this mull my today of future scenarios. I will now go through each of the steps and what they involve in more detail. in our scan of major trends affecting the arts sector and our world more broadly we decided to structure those under the C framework so we edit creativity as a major kind of overarching sector or force to the traditional steep framework, which includes the dimensions of society, technology, economy, environment, and politics.

At AEA, just for our work being consultants in the cultural sector, we are regularly monitoring global trends that impact the sector and as you well know some of these have been accelerated by COVID, such as the proliferation of digital tools and content and also others were probably the cause of the pandemic itself such as the climate crisis and demographic shifts. So we have built a database of such data points across this C framework and in term encrypt these data points under major forces as we call them that are driving change in each area of human life such as for instance [indiscernible] and deployment under the economy or civic engagement on the politics. So this is kind of a snapshot of that database that we continue to build as we learn about new emerging data points and trends.

Then building on that, we started crafting the scenarios themselves, so we consider major trends and forces affecting arts organizations and discussed which of these forces will dominate the possible futures that we've been thinking of and agreed to chart the four scenarios, although of course they can be different number of the scenarios. Given that we have been developing this tool largely in response to the COVID outbreak, we decided to develop the scenarios across two main dimensions or access. One being the severity of the pandemic itself and the level of its containment, and the other being the social response to it and whether people would have lower or higher propensity to gather in the future.

This allowed us to draft four distinct scenarios placing them in different points of this coordinate system. Ranging from uncontained pandemic and low propensity to gather to a more coordinated response leading to contained -- pandemic being contained and higher propensity to gather.

We have agreed from the outset of this process that it would be very important to engage diverse perspectives in creating the scenarios and thinking about the future of the sector so in addition to this being a team effort on behalf of AEA and in consultation with the Wallace foundation, we have also invited experts and

practitioners from the field to serve on the advisory group on developing the set of scenarios and the tools. We have tried to get perspectives from different art forms and also kind of closely related fields to all the sector and the advisory group members that you can see on your screen here have reviewed a couple of iterations of the scenarios toolkit we were developing and we have also had several sessions and discussions with them to get kind of live inputs and any suggestions and reactions to our approach in resulting scenarios and tools. And for example one of the questions we debated is what key factors should be chosen tore what we call the scenario coordinate system. While we focused on the pandemic here and the societal response to the -- there are of course other major forces, you may choose to consider if you undergo this process, and especially in the future as we may emerge from the current plague and other factors will begin to dominate our lives.

So what is the toolkit? The toolkit we developed comprises an overview of scenarios and description of our approach then detailed descriptions of each scenario together with SWOT scenarios and metrics, and I will talk about this in a couple of minutes. And then a set of scenario planning worksheets that you may use in your teams or organizations. We have also supported that with the little review of scenario planning that evolved over

time and may be applicable to the cultural sector. And
all of this is available from the Wallace Foundation
website. So these are the actual planning worksheets
that are a part of the toolkit. They are intended to
help arts organizations and teams to collaborate in
thinking through their potential futures and imagining
possible scenarios and also in applying the scenarios
that AEA has developed and trying to look at
organizational mission and vision, the skill set you ever
across your teams, organizational culture and processes
and existing partnerships and core audiences and zero try
and project which of these may be most relevant if each
scenario, what are some commonalities between your
organizational setup and resources across all of these
scenarios and what might be the gaps that you'd want to
address when potentially faced with one of these
scenarios or some combination of all the four scenarios.

     So to look a bit closer at each of these four
scenarios that we developed, we tend to think about them
as kind of moving from the more optimistic one at the top
here to less optimistic. So going from the more
optimistic one in the top, the one that we called core
towards of living, this is at the top right here and also
in the right-hand corner of our coordinate system,
meaning that in this scenario we expect the pandemic to
be largely contained and that people will begin to gather

again in not so socially distanced manner.

The second to that optimistic scenario is the new means of gathering where the pandemic is not as well contained and still impacts our day to day life and social behaviors but at the same time people are finding new ways to gather and socialize and participate in the daily activities. The third one here, called digital connection, has a focus on us migrating into the digital space, largely driven by societal response in preferring to adhere to the public safety measures and moving more and more into digital realm in the social interactions and also in the ways they consume content and culture. And lastly, optimistic scenario is what we called social disintegration, where a combination of mutating viruses, uncoordinated response to pandemic and decline of social life may lead to the rather chaotic state of underlying support systems.

For each of these scenarios, we developed a detailed description and also developed indicators and potential impacts on the sector for each of those. So in the actual scenarios set that you may find online, we begin with an overview, so we provide kind of an introductory story of which scenario and its key characteristics. And some critical implications that an arts organization may consider for the future. We then discuss macro forces, major trends that are making the largest impact within

the CSTEEP framework, and we also offer arts and culture sector indicators. So things that you may want to measure, like participation or any development of the creative workforce in the sector and how that differs from scenario to scenario. Then we also looked at SWOT analysis in each scenario, what opportunities may emerge and indeed what threats. And we also talk about arts and culture sectors, stakeholder impacts.

So we looked at the ten stakeholder groups in the sector from arts organizations to funders to artistic practitioners and how each scenario may impact them.

So to talk a little bit about each of the scenarios and how they differ, the cooperative living as I say, might have a more optimistic outlook and for the art sector as well as other sectors appropriately. In terms of the critical implications on the sector, it involves things like coming back to in-person participation and audience is seeking new and different opportunities to engage with the arts and also participatory events might proliferate. And generally society kind of coming back to a safe level of interactions where there will be deeper social engagement.

And we offer kind of some metrics here across the CSTEEP framework where we expect that arts economy or arts sector and arts participation would grow, you know, and things like travel might remain sort of on the same

level as it was right before the pandemic. And at the same time giving people will begin to come back to in-person participation that they use screen time, for instance, may decline.

The second scenario, the new means of gathering, is like a less optimistic outlook, and it would require relatively certain effort from arts organizations and artists to engage people who may for various reasons be -- have a less propensity to participate. And they will generally be different both across the economy and employment levels, kind of forcing arts organizations and artists to potentially be more creative and adventurous in how they stay relevant and how they reach their audiences, but also how they engage with artists and creators.

Digital connection, as I said, has a great focus on kind of moving our social and cultural life in the digital realm. And that may offer new opportunities and new challenges, so definitely kind of general digital literacy would be very important here and understanding how to engage with audiences online. But at the same time knowing the challenges of, for instance, audiences who may not have high-speed internet access and finding ways to connect with these audiences while also navigating new technology.

And lastly, our fourth scenario that we called

social disintegration implies that there wouldn't be a particularly coordinated response to these pandemics and that would cause kind of huge disruption to our social and economic life, which of course in turn puts on kind of some new pressures on the arts sector. So in this scenario we would expect a decline both kind of in arts activity altogether but also arts participation from the audiences. It's likely our social life would be highly localized and people would probably keep to smaller groups and local performance which may again offer some new opportunities, so new formats and spaces to engage audiences and to offer a kind of new synthesized art forms.

We also expect that this scenario would have a certainly disrupted civic life, so protests would continue as well as growing inequality. So that's -- might sound rather grim, but in same time we know that in grim times arts are often on the rise in the sense that people may look for escape and new opportunities to engage with arts and music.

So I think this kind of rounds out the description of various scenarios that we've developed so far in our tool and our process. And if there are any questions, we would be glad to take them now.

Before we move on to the next...

>> So if anyone has any questions, feel free to just

type those into the Q&A box. I'm not seeing -- I'm not seeing any questions specific about the content yet, but feel free to add those at any time.

     >> I will say just real quick, I noticed a couple of comments about the small font type, which apologies, some of those slides were sort of work in process slides, so hopefully you didn't have to -- you could have read the content on there if you wanted, but it was just sort of an example of the work that was behind what went into this. You can certainly download this toolkit from the Wallace Foundation site, I think David put the -- put the link into the chat box earlier. And then I know these slides themselves will be available after the presentation as well.

     >> We have a question: Daniel and Natalia, do you rank these scenarios, and if so, how? What is the greater likelihood should have a greater focus, it seems.

     >> So I think you don't necessarily rank the scenarios, at least initially. I mean, it might be something that you -- that you do eventually, but and we will talk a little bit more about this when we -- when we get into the conversation about doing this in practice, but the idea behind this is that you are really trying to think laterally across a number of these scenarios, and find the common areas that are like -- you know, that are likely no matter the future. And then use those as a

basis for planning.

And so even if something you might say oh, this has a 5% chance of happening or 3% chance of happening, it's still important to spend some time to think about that. Because that 5% or 3% chance, for example, if that was social disintegration, might have a huge impact on your organization and how you need to position yourself or your programs with your audiences and communities.

So I think to some extent, you know, you can get back around to that and say, okay, here are the ones we think are more likely and maybe want to place a little bit more intensive resource on, that's not necessarily wrong, but the -- but at least initially we -- it's valuable to spend time across all of the different scenarios.

>> Great, that's all the questions we have now. So if you want to dive into the actual toolkit, we'll look forward to seeing the contents.

>> DANIEL PAYNE: All right. We'll go back off screen so that hopefully the content is as big as possible.

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: Yes, I'll try to enlarge it, but as we say, you'll probably not unless you completely can't see it, you're not missing a lot from the slides.

So we touched upon some of the trends that we looked

into that may impact our sector now and in the future. And some of the major forces. So we grouped those in the CSTEEP framework and for each of this kind of areas of human activity we looked at specific forces that might impact how we think about the future and the scenarios that we are considering. So for we added here specifically for our sector and that might be specifically relevant for music and orchestras, creativity and creative activity, and that mostly concerns artistic production and creative production. We then looked at kind of societal forces. So demographic changes, changes in social behavior and how people use their leisure time. Health and well-being. So various trends in how people are increasingly aware of health and well-being and how that impacts the sector and the priorities for individual arts organizations.

Trends and travel, whether it's long haul or local. Then the technology and digital in its various forms both in terms of the market forces but also from the point of consumer and how it's becoming increasingly personalized and kind of user oriented.

We looked at a larger economic forces. So everything that might have impact on the sustainability of arts organizations and business models from government spending and philanthropy to trends and employment and economy more appropriately. We then considered some

climate change impacts and, lastly, civic engagement and political trends that impact the sector.

So to give you some examples, and this is kind of just an extract of various trend that we looked at, I think Daniel counted about 70, we continue adding to those as things develop and as we become aware of emerging trends.

These are supported through data highlights that we tend to gather from other experts in the field and not just or sector but other people who are concerned with possible futures.

So thinking about arts organizations and orchestra specifically we kind of pulled some examples here and you may consider some other trends that may be of particular importance to your organization. So thinking of creativity and creative production, we find that arts organizations are and will be increasingly becoming media organizations. If we look at orchestras, introducing streaming subscription services, producing, presenting music online across different regions and countries. And as you probably well know just going on symphony.org you can find dozens if not hundreds of classes right now. So that of course changes the overall kind of landscape and access that audiences have to music and music education.

We then looked at various societal trends and some examples here include rural/urban disparity. So

increasingly in countries across the world and the U.S. as well, people are living in cities or urban areas and we might want to think how that impacts the access to the arts and who gets to participate. Then in terms of social behavior and leisure time, the focus perhaps in the last year or so and we think in the coming years is going to be on local activities. Largely as travel is banned and lockdowns extended, but also as people are finding that some of the local activities are more accessible for them.

The rise of kind of well-being, cautiousness and well-being apps specifically, and in travel we found a trend that nearly 60% of millennials travel alone. So if you think what that means for, for instance, for our concert attendees and how we reach these audiences.

In technology and digital, personalized technology's on the rise. Multiple experiences that people, again, can experience solo on the go or in their homes. And that also impacts how people may choose to consume, but also to produce music and culture. For instance, the recent device developed in Israel allows you to now sound beam music directly just to your ears from a device that resembles a laptop. So not requiring headphones or speakers.

Then we looked at some of the trends across economy. For instance, rent economy, so there are more renters

than homeowners across whole generation. There are
limited, you know, government and federal funding in the
U.S. New methods of driving individual giving, for
instance, the rise of crowdfunding that forms, and also
the kind of driven by specific causes rather than blanket
calls for support. And probably what's driven by
creative and arts sector larger than any other sector
potentially is the gig economy and the rise in the
percentage of workforce overall driven by that economy
and how it is becoming kind of the new normal and also
the new advocacy efforts that follow to advocate for
improved employment terms for freelance artists, makers
and creators.

Then if we look at various trends related to climate
change and climate emergency, there is what we call the
sustainability paradox. So the decreased long-haul
travel during and post-COVID-19 is already having an
impact on an environment, but also have impact on kind of
the norms of travel and social behavior and rationale
behind some of this now long-haul trips. And the
politics remain kind of unstable largely in the U.S. and
many other parts of the world, which manifest itself
across multiple dimensions but specific to the arts
sector, for instance, difficulties in obtaining visas for
an artist and talent and students.

And lastly, one trend from civic engagement is a

rise in volunteering and Americans, at least 30% of
Americans say that they volunteer at least once a year
and participate in kind of their social and civic causes
related to them.

So this is a brief overview of various trends, and
you might find more in the actual toolkit. And I'll now
turn it back to Daniel to talk us through some of the
practical application of scenario planning.

>> DANIEL PAYNE: Thanks, Natalia. So, you know,
got the background, you've got your toolkit, you've
thought about some of the trends and how they might
affect your organization and your work.

So how can all this sort of help you put scenario
planning into action? So, Natalia, if you want to go on
to the next slide. You know, we test this with a lot of
organizations bile we were doing this work with Wallace
and have continued to be doing this work. We wanted to
see what we were still putting the toolkit together how
organizations could pick these scenarios up and the tools
up and best use them.

What things would they need alongside, how could we
explain the thinking process so that somebody could come
along and pick this up and make this an actionable
process that really resulted in way better understanding
of the future direction that they wanted to take or that
they -- the organization needed to take.

So we tested these tools with eight different groups, with the Wallace Foundation, our thanks to them on giving us lots of great feedback. Some of which that we integrate neighborhood the toolkit itself. And as showing how we evolved some of those planning worksheets that Natalia put up earlier. But we also learned some further tips just in facilitating those conversations and limping to their feedback afterward on how you can get the most out of these.

So the first thing is a reminder that while scenario planning is in the name and the process creates these really interesting scenarios, it's actually not really about the development of the scenarios, it's about the thinking those scenarios can help lead you to.

So with regard to the scenarios that are in the toolkit, you could of course take them as they're presented, and we think they're useful, but you can also pick them up and sort of toss them around and take components of it, pull out things, pull in other trends that you may be seeing that have a particular impact for you, and develop your own scenarios or modified scenarios that highlight areas that are really relevant to you and the context that you're working in.

So there may be some of those trends that Natalia just spoke about that are really relevant to you and you know you need to foreground. There may be others that

seem less relevant to your work and maybe don't make as much of a big impact in some of those future scenarios.

So we -- you know, we acknowledge that, you know, certainly there may be different little pieces of this that you want to pull out and highlight and -- in the process with your own organizations. And there are ways -- there are ways to modify these, we've included some blank sheets in the toolkit documents themselves that you can use to help do that. And I think the other piece is that while we created these in mid to late 2020, and we think they are still broadly relevant today, they aren't fully evergreen, and if you, you know, go a year or two years down the road, we -- you know, I don't think you'll just be able to pick up and use new means of gathering or hopefully you won't be able to pick up new social disintegration in the same way. So hopefully some of the tools from this discussion might allow you to take what's beneath these scenarios modified them slightly or make them more useful for what you're working on.

And then a last note here before we move on, it's important to make sure that these do represent somewhat divergent futures. So I noted in answer to the question earlier, this is about looking across. And so the scenarios do have to represent different outcomes. And even if you think that outcome is only 5% likely or whatever, it's really useful to test your thinking on how

you might respond. And understanding what still common on your response between that outcome and something you may think is 40% likely or 50% likely or even more, preparing you to be nimble in the case that, you know, your likely scenario doesn't actually happen. And that's especially important if the impact of it not happening could be really large on your organization.

So that should help you build from a stronger base and create the steps that you need to take to work and move forward across different futures that might be happening.

So four other points then about the process of engaging in scenario planning. The first: Clarifying who is at the table and the roles they may need to play.

So we get the question a lot about how many people do I need to have to work on this? And the answer is it can vary a little bit. I mean, I don't think you could do this with just one person or you wouldn't get the most value out of it if you just did it with one person, it might be possible as a individual thought exercise. And, you know, you could probably do this with 100 people involved in the process in some way but you couldn't have them all in the same room and you would need to devise a way to break them up into different subgroups to focus on different issues along the way.

Ultimately, you know, you need to be sure whatever

size group you have and we usually recommend for a core
group that you have probably between, you know, let's say
four and 12, and you can expand on that number a little
bit higher if needed if you're a larger organization, but
you want to be able to get those people around the table
in a room at the same time, around a virtual table in
this day and age, to make sure that they can all have a
say in what's being discussed there.

And then when you -- when you do that, you want them
to have a broad set of perspectives. You know, you don't
want to get stuck in group think or narrowing down just
to one preferred future and only discussing that one, you
know, doing this means you've got diversity in
backgrounds and experiences, but also bring voices to the
table that may be newer to your strategic process in an
organization.

So the building of that group is really a critical
component of working with scenarios and setting up people
around the table with different thinking or different
work styles involved and whether that's, you know,
different areas of the organization, you could get people
from programs or marketing department or finance or
obviously artists and musicians that you work with are
important to have at the table.

Different levels of professional experience are
vital. You think about not just engaging with senior

staff but more junior people. Thinking about different levels of ages who might be in the room to involve the perspectives of younger people in your team.

Diversity of life experience is important. You want people who might come from different family backgrounds or different educational levels or people who lived in different places, so on.

Ultimately it's not an exercise just for senior management or the board, but it's for the organization as a whole.

And you might even consider at times working with artists beyond your organization, although hopefully ones that you might still work with frequently and are familiar with your organization and what -- and the way that you work.

Or working with those from partner organizations in your community.

If you are doing this with a smaller group, you probably won't be able to get all the views represented at once, but you could also assign people different hats through the course of the exercise and say, you know, for the next 30 minutes think about this from the perspective of the marketing team. Or think about this from the perspective of a might be of our audience who's retired, something like that. So that you are structurally building in different views and different perspectives

into the process.

The second point then is to make sure that people have a clear context to work in and honestly a timeline to work to.

So one, providing a clean context for the work that we're doing here can really help eliminate bias as you engage these issues and those biases are things that can help prevent you from being prepared. Similar to the idea of avoiding group think, it's not just about being open-minded to new possibilities about what might happen or how you might respond, it's about pushing back against the forces within an organization and there are lots of these, that are trying to conform the discussion to one small area or like little box. This does need to be a little bit expansive with the questions that you're asking and understanding of the impact it might have.

The second thing in this sort of bullet is providing the context of the questions you're working on also allows the sorts of thought experiments that are ultimately at the heart of scenario planning to be more concrete. Which can help make the work more accessible. I think that's -- that is at times when we were doing the literature review back at the beginning of this that you find this can be a sort of a -- seen as a highly theoretical exercise. And you want people to be able to take the time to ask those what if questions or to

imagine everything that has the potential to change in whichever direction may be changing in, but you also want to bring that back to what does this mean for us and what -- how can we be open-minded to the steps we need to take forward, moving forward on this.

And then the third thing on this point is that you also need to be concrete about the amount of time that you're thinking about, the impact of a trend over five years could be totally different about the impact of a trend over 20 years.

And so we did a session actually with the youth orchestra division of the League last week, and we ended up talking about the Apple Newton, so if you remember Apple's original sort of PDA experiment in the 1990s, if you looked at that over the timeline of five years, it was a failure and pulled from the market. But if you think about some of the underlying technology and user experience that Apple continued to build out, that became the iPhone. And, you know, think about the impact that the iPhone or smartphones more generally have had, those trends might have actually had a huge impact on Apple as an organization or the world more broadly.

So it's important to think about some of those underlying trends and the duration that you're thinking about them in.

So for example, demographic trends might not mean

that much in the course of five years, but compounded over 15 years or 25 years it can mean that your future audience is changing quite dramatically. And if you -- you're thinking about your youth education programs, for example, might be quite different if you're thinking about them with the lens to create that future audience, you know, 25 years down the line.

Third point then, make it memorable so you can refer back to it regularly.

And this work is something that should have an impact on your organization for the long term. So you'll want to be able to refer back to it on a regular basis.

Why is it valuable to make it memorable? One, the work can take time, and hopefully this toolkit provides a boost and you can jump in relatively easily. But there are corporation who's have got all the resources that corporations can sometimes bring to bear that might do this work over 12-month or 18-month time frames that includes all the gathering of the trends and building the databases and building out different scenarios, things like that. You know, you may not need 12 or 18 months, but it still might be something you engage with over, you know, six weeks or two months or something like that. So in order to maximize the value of what you're getting out of it, you will want to keep a record what have you're learning and what the various impacts may be for you.

You say something in one session and you want to relate
back to it, you know, six week or two months later, a
good system of notetaking or recording of sessions, which
of course on platforms like Zoom, you know, is relatively
easy to do, that can be really helpful in that.

I guess another thing to this point, you know, one
thing that one of our advisory member -- advisory group
members talked about when we were speaking with him is
focus on coming up with interesting names for those
scenarios. You can debate whether we actually got there
or not, but it's a lot easier to use what happens in
cooperative living or what happens in new means of
gathering as a shorthand in a meeting you have a couple
months down the line than trying to take a few minutes to
stop down and tell people, so, what do we do in a
scenario where people have returned to venues but there
is a greater emphasis on social causes and the technology
is still important, but, you know, they're really
concerned about privacy or, you know, all of the details
of these scenarios can incorporate.

So coming up with these little shorthands and ways
that you can refer back to the process actually becomes
really helpful and make sure that this can enter into the
lifeblood of how the organization thinks about planning
for the future.

Then I guess the last thing about making it

memorable, which is important for the arts, is to not being afraid to tap into your creative backgrounds and storytelling, to make this work a bit fun and stand out from the day to day.

You know, it's -- it should be interesting and like a bit of a break to be able to pick one's eyes up and think about what are we doing five years or ten years from now. And that can take a creative practice to help imagine those futures and their impacts on you and your organization.

So then the last thought here around this is to make sure that there's some focus on practical outcomes from this. And as I said earlier, this can be an abstract process. So giving your co-workers or board members something to grab onto can be important in them really understanding why this is relevant and why we're all working together in this way.

So if you go to the next slide, you know, this is a slide that we have in the planning worksheets or it's very similar to a slide we have in the planning worksheets with a list of specific questions that might lead you toward some of the practical outcomes. And these hopefully are prompts for thinking. And they cover a relatively broad array of topics. So you might not want to use all of these, particularly depending on the amount of time that you have to engage with the process

like this. But they do aim to provide some helpful
starting points for integration into whatever existing
planning work you may have going on.

   So you see on here you've got questions you can
focus on around purpose, you know, communities,
programming and audiences, questions around markets,
business models, what may happen in your -- to your
physical assets or infrastructure that you may have.
What are strengths and weaknesses and opportunities,
threats. And so on. And then there are also some
questions that highlight specific sector-wide issues that
may be helpful to draw attention to. So for example, if
you look at questions 3, 4, and 5, what are the best
paths to remedy legacies of institutional racism and move
towards equity and inclusion? How do we respond to the
climate crisis and create a sustainable future? How can
we support the creation of new experiences? Or if you
put that another way, how can you support artists in
their roles of making new and exciting work or bringing
exciting arts experiences to your audiences? So these
are all really important contexts you can give people to
work to and can allow you to break up that work so it
doesn't feel like such a gigantic chunk that you have to
take on. This does not require necessarily a week-long
retreat that you have to break away from your day to day
for. You know, it might take you a half day to be able

to really focus in on the scenarios and their
implications the first time around, but then you might be
able to split up these questions into hour long
discussions or two-how long long Zoom meetings with the
people that you want to engage on these issues.

So with that, I'll stop there and turn it back over
to David, actually, to see if there are any questions
that we can answer on anything that we've talked about or
anything else that the group might want to know about
putting scenario planning into practice.

>> Thank you so much, Daniel and Natalia, for
walking through the toolkit with us. Again, if you have
any questions, please put them in the Q&A. One that's
come up is that orchestras have quite a diversity of
stakeholders, from the staff, the Board, volunteers,
musicians, audiences, community. How would you recommend
going about figuring out the prioritization of working
with the different stakeholders and engaging them into
these scenarios?

>> DANIEL PAYNE: Sure. So -- and Natalia, chime in
as well. I think one of the important things as we said
is that at some point you do need to get down to a core
group of people that you can have around the table at the
same time to talk about these issues. And really have
open and frank discussion. So I think you do need to go
out and involve those groups in some form or fashion in

that process, but you might want to see if you can find one or two representatives from each one of them to be able to contribute their thoughts and come to those -- come to those meetings or attend -- attend some subset of those meetings. But you might also be able to form subgroups. So if you've got your musicians who want to have input into this, it would be great to have them think about, okay, what are the trends that are most impactful from a creativity perspective? Or take a look at these scenarios and tell us how you think we need to better engage our audiences.

You know, give them, again, some specific, concrete set of questions that they can respond to.

And then pull those answers back into the main group discussion that might be thinking more broadly across a number of different spectrums.

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: Exactly. You might want to have a core group that offers diverse enough kind of sector of opinions and experiences to actually help craft the scenarios and look to get at those questions and how they relate to your organizations' mission and vision and general position in the world. And then maybe take those to your larger group of stakeholders, you know, sometimes these could be your students or young artists and ask them what their views and thoughts on these possible futures.

>> Great, and do you -- do you think a retreat format is more helpful to achieve these results, these conversations? You mentioned maybe hosting retreats and -- it's a little bit difficult in person right now, but what's your thought about retreats.

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: Who doesn't like a retreat?

>> DANIEL PAYNE: So I think -- I think you have to find a context for people to be able to engage with these over a decent amount of time that doesn't have to be a retreat. And I think we've seen different ways to be able to do this here during COVIDian times. So a what that we've done it that's actually been successful is you will have maybe a two-hour meeting that orients everybody to the scenarios, allows them to ask questions kind of live in each of those worlds for 30 minutes each, and then give them, you know, a week, approximately, you know, and then reconvene for another session to start going in and responding to some of the specific questions.

And then those -- you know, those second sessions, once everybody's oriented and engaged in the discussion what we've found is that you don't need to then spend another two hours, you don't need to spend eight hours or whatever you consider a typical retreat, you can take them as bite size parts of the conversation and for some people that's actually really helpful because they may

not be the people who are naturally super vocal in a room. But giving them time to go off and react and respond and then come back prepared for the next session has gotten more engagement from them.

   >> And who do you think should take the lead or would it potentially vary from orchestra to orchestra, but do you have any registration recommendations of is this a board driven process, is this a staff driven process, is it a joint driven process? What have you seen most effective in making sure that the process actually happens?

   >> DANIEL PAYNE: So I think it's -- you know, classic consulting answer. It depends. It depends on your organization and the context of who's there and who's working. I think we've -- I think staff certainly have to be deeply involved and parts of this to take the lead. I don't think you can do it without some significant staff involvement. And I'll -- you probably couldn't do it without some reasonable board involvement as well. That doesn't mean that I think you need to convene a full board meeting to accomplish this. I think there could be a subset of board members that could be identified to pull in that do represent a diversity of a backgrounds and perspectives. And that might be -- that might be one way to get people engaged. I think new people engaged, I guess is the right way to say that. So

it's not just -- everybody loves their board chair and
members of the executive committee, and I'm sure they
have great perspectives, but it's also been a useful
means to engage people who just joined -- just joined
boards as well.

>> Great. And another question that has come in, is
it better to conduct this as a Greenfield process with a
curiosity and open mindset or should you begin with the
orchestra's even core hypotheses for its future and then
stress test these ideas against each other or macro
trends as presented in the scenarios?

>> DANIEL PAYNE: Natalia, what do you think?

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: I would say it's a
combination somewhat. We've sign this process being
used -- seen this process being used in organizations
starting with some assumptions and then placing them
within this wide context of macro trends. So in a way
you're doing that in general, so you are not thinking
about your future and your hypothesis in isolation from
this macro trends that in turn have great impact on some
of your hypothesis. So we probably would suggest doing
both, but if you need like the very early starting point
maybe you are thinking about where your own organization
is situated now and where it might be in five years. And
then placing that within kind of your macro environment
and thinking about all these different macro forces that

we talked about briefly.

>> DANIEL PAYNE: I will say I think just to tag onto that, you can't just ignore your own hypotheses. Particularly if they're hypotheses of influential voices within your organization.

So I do think, and that's when we go back to -- I was talking about how do you build out these scenarios or how would you tweak these scenarios maybe that we have as starting point to better reflect the need of your organization. You know, if the -- you know, if the conductor has a really strong perspective on where audiences are headed or if the managing director or the board chair has got a real perspective on digital initiatives, then you've got to find a way to incorporate that into at least one of the scenarios. So that people are talking about that and that it is reflected in the ongoing conversation as a part of that scenario. As we've seen, it shouldn't be the only thing that you talk about as a part of one of these processes. But if it's just totally left out, then that hypothesis is going to sit there stirring in that person's head time and time again and just say why aren't we talking about this, why aren't we talking about this? So it's important -- it's important to at least acknowledge that there may be some preexisting hypotheses that you want to get in there.

>> Great. And another question around sort of

similar terminology that can get confusing, how do you
square scenario planning with what also may be a
strategic planning process that is happening
simultaneously, particularly as people may have to throw
out their strategic plan in the past nine months, and
potentially start over from scratch or do major
revisions, and we know strategic plans should be somewhat
flexible and not written in stone, how do you potentially
marry or live side by side whatever strategic planning
you have versus this scenario planning process?

    >> DANIEL PAYNE: Yeah, I mean, I think we think
that they fit together relatively nicely. And
particularly like if you're about to undertake a
strategic planning process, there might be no better way
to kick it off than get people to take a real broad
perspective on the future of the organization than by
doing some scenario planning at the outset of that. And
provide some of the -- some of that context for those
conversations and looking forward in an imaginative way.

    So I think -- that we've talked about the outcome of
scenario planning being something that is actionable and
that might tie well into the end of a lot of strategic
plans where you do really need to make it realistic and
understand the implications for an organization from the
financial, HR, you know, physical capacity perspectives,
whatever it may be, and you eventually have to ties

though strategic goals back down to a real plan.

So I think it's valuable from that perspective.
It's obviously a slightly different question if
you -- let's say you finish your strategic plan in
January 2020, what do I do now? Well, I mean, I still
think scenario planning is useful and might be useful as
a way to sort of stress test some of the conclusions you
came to in your strategic planning. And David as you
said, no strategic plan can ever be completely written in
stone, you don't know what's going to come down the line
six months or 12 months from now, like nobody knew COVID
was going to happen, so a perfect example of that. But
pick up that strategic plan or pick up whatever remains
of that strategic plan after ten months out of COVID and
say, okay, what of this still seems relevant in these
scenarios? And maybe those things that do continue to be
there are -- they're a really useful foundation to build
forward from.

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: At the same time, you might
find that as you are going through scenario planning
process or just workshopping possible futures, you may
have to just throw out certain strategic decisions you've
made ten months ago and come up with new ones. And
that's -- that is not to kind of contradict maybe the
overall mission and vision for the organization but
that's part of like this adjustment to this possible

futures and especially some common trends across them.

>> Great, we have about ten more minutes left, so if anyone else had any questions feel free again to put them in the Q&A.

I would just love from your perspectives, what have been the things you have seen that has made scenario planning and using a tool like this most successful for an organization and what are some pitfalls you would warn organizations not to do that could hijack or derail a scenario planning work?

>> DANIEL PAYNE: So the things that I think are most successful or have led to the most interesting use of these processes I think really do go back to who you have around the table and the way that they can approach these issues imaginatively, and see it as an opportunity, not something that's going to constrain them in that. I think to a couple of the times that we've done this an organizations have had artists sit in, and not necessarily like their artistic director or somebody like that, but just an artist that they collaborate with a lot. And sort of the new perspective in the way that the artist can sort of twist what may be the common assumption on its head and come up with something entirely new I think has been really productive in those processes.

And I think if you see the literature on how

corporations even use these processes, it's about being able to pick one's self up out of the day to day and like, you know, dislocate -- dislocate that and say we're on down the road, whether it's five years or 20 years, we're living in potentially a very different future as we are now from five years ago and as we are now from, you know, from certainly from 20 years ago. Twenty years ago was still pre9/11 here, I live in New York City, so that's a foremost in my mind. And it's just a -- you know, you could walk into an airport, this is maybe a small thing today, because you can't walk into an airport today at all hardly. And there was minimal security and I could walk up and greet somebody at the gate. That's not a reality, small though that it may be that hasn't existed for a long time. So thing can change pretty dramatically in that timeframe. And being able to be imaginative and really think through all those implications and finding people who can be thought partners that that is really helpful in these situations.

So that's a benefit. Pitfalls, I don't know, Natalia, if you have any thoughts on pitfalls or things that have gotten in the way. One that we highlighted through the presentation is certainly this idea of group think. Or centering in too fast on one scenario and just spending all your time on that. And you do want -- you do want to look laterally across a number of those

possible futures.

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: Yeah, I think getting an outside specific as well, you know, we said how this can be driven by staff and board but also try and get some critical friends around the table and similar to that you may think that certain trends across from like economy and the worlds of digital or climate crisis do not affect you immediately but we would still encourage thinking about those macro forces because they may manifest themselves very rapidly in a way we think about how we produce and consume art and what our buildings look like and things like that.

>> And speaking of people sitting around the table, another stakeholder group that may or may not be of impact in this is funders. How would you potentially engage funders either as potential financial supporters to do the scenario planning process but also as part of the conversation as well?

>> DANIEL PAYNE: So, I mean, as far as funders of the process, I think it would depend on the perspective of the funder and how interested they are in something like this. I mean, we do find it a good use of resources and obviously the Wallace Foundation has supported this work that I think they hope can be used by lots of different arts organizations and different -- in different contexts. This is -- it's not created

exclusively for orchestras, it was not created
exclusively for museums or anything like that, I mean,
they said, well, let's try to do something that U.S. arts
organizations was sort of the official mandate of this
project. And so I'm suspect there may be other funders
working on a -- facilitating some workshops in south
Florida coming up because local arts organization got a
grant to help support their doing some scenario planning.
So there's definitely funders out there who are
interested. I think involving them in the process is
interesting but could bring some challenges because I
know a lot of -- you know, funders don't really want to
be coercive a lot of times, at least they don't want to
be seen as being coercive. And so they might be more
interested in letting the process play itself out and
seeing what comes out of it rather than trying to inject
their opinions into that set of futures that you're
working with and developing.

But again, it depends a lot on the relationship that
you may have with each individual funder.

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: And I think another idea
that we floated around with our advisory group is that
some organizations may benefit from actually teaming up
with their neighbors. So anyone in your region in doing
that as a group and then again involving funders as well,
local funders so that becomes more of a localized effort

as probably a lot of these futures you will be sharing
with your peers.

     >> That's a great idea, and I love the opportunity
to maybe go to a community foundation as a consortium of
arts organizations in an area to work on the scenario
planning together, I love that concept.

     Any other final words of wisdom that you would give
to our audience to help give them the courage to do the
scenario planning and realize the value of taking the
time and energy to undertake this work and utilize the
toolkit?

     >> DANIEL PAYNE: So two things popped into my head
when you said that. So one is just around the nature of
what is scenario planning. And I know we've had these
conversations a lot over the last few months since this
toolkit has rolled out about there's long-term scenario
planning which is what we're talking about, but then
there's also short-term scenario planning and we're still
in a world of real uncertainty about when lots of
organizations are going to be able to get back on stage
or bring people back into their concert halls or whatever
other venues they may have. And I don't
think -- we're -- we haven't really talked about that
sort of short-term scenario planning, it's much more a
function of financial planning in here, but they're not
incompatible. I mean, I think this is about looking back

at that longer planning horizon and saying what's going to happen over five years or longer that of course isn't what's going to happen over three months or six months or whatever it may be, but I think you do need to think about that long term as you're thinking about the short term. So as you're making plans for when can we get our audiences back and when can we be making music again or doing programs again in a way that we once knew it, you know, continue to position yourself on that long term path and maybe use this as a bit of an opportunity to reorient yourselves down that path, I guess. So that's -- that's something that popped into my mind. And of course the danger of saying I've got two things that popped in my find, you begin to talk about the first one, you forget good about the second one. So I'm going to let Natalia talk about something.

>> NATALIE VARTAPETOVA: The danger. So I would say maybe if the challenge is how do we begin, where do we begin, and how do we incorporate that in our overall planning processes and organizational culture is maybe, yeah, the first thing is to just sit down and commit a group of people and treat it as a creative brainstorm and then make sure you log your most important outcomes and maybe come back to them three months after and just have this check-in points and see how you're thinking about your own futures develop over time and help inform your

own planning and financial strategies as well.

   >> DANIEL PAYNE: And that ties in great to what was the second thing that I was going to say, which is, David, you mentioned how do people sort of not be scared of picking this up and sort of doing it, and I think the best way to do that is you can start small, like we in the toolkit there's the overview document, it's like 13 pages, it's got a page about each of the scenarios and sort of the story of that scenario. And some pages about why you might do this work and talk about the questions that can help frame up useful responses.
If -- admittedly the 40-page details scenarios document could be daunting to sit down and find the time in a busy arts leaders day to go all the way through. So maybe start with the short version. And cut an hour or two out of a day one time and spend 20 minutes with each of those scenarios. Ands that note of course the idealized form of how you would do this, but it might be a starting point that can help you see some of the value of doing this work and how this structured thinking about the long term can be fruitful. Because we've had people even on the advisory group that we convened who said they weren't quite sure what they were getting into and they were happy to help, but didn't know what to make of it. But by the time they had kind of gone through it all and read it all they actually emerged more hopeful about the

future and it felt like a time they -- first time in a while that they really had some agency or some direction about what they wanted to push on and move forward as a part of their own agendas in their organizations.

So we've seen it work well for a lot of people as part of doing this work. And so and hopefully the tools that we've given people are that sort of kick start to get you going and you don't need a lot of assistance, but if there are questions that pop up, our contact information is in the -- is in the back of the toolkit and you shouldn't hesitate to reach out and we try to answer questions quickly. I mean, I guess we're consultants, so, sure, if you want us to spend three months on it, we'll probably try to find an engagement out of it, but if there's a question that we can answer via email that helps get people moving, we -- or via phone, we're certainly happy to spend some time doing that to make this as useful as possible for people.

>> Well, great. Thank you so much Daniel and Natalia for your time today and the generosity of time in the future as people may have questions. And again, this is a great new toolkit on scenario planning specifically devised for arts organizations.

So if you haven't had a chance to look through it, please do so. I know we had a lot of information to digest today. But I hope you will be able to take

advantage of this new tool to help you deal with the pandemic world we're living in now and especially your post-pandemic orchestra future will look like. So again, thank you so much Daniel and Natalia for your time. Before we depart, I just want to give a reminder again to everyone who registered for today's event, you will receive an email with the recording, the PowerPoint, and the transcript of this webinar soon. And also we would appreciate your completing the evaluation form at the link in the description just below your screen. And we would love to see you again in two weeks for our next webinar where we'll be featuring the resiliency of orchestras during this season and particularly featuring the Toronto and Virginia symphony orchestras and TRG will be facilitating that session. And if any of you do use the scenario planning toolkit over the next several months, let us know and we would maybe love to feature you in a future webinar of how you used this in your own organization and what you've learned from using it.

So again, thank you all for joining us again today and then we will look forward to seeing you here very soon. And have a great rest of your day.

(End: 4:32 PM ET.)

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