



PARADIGM SHIFT

FUTURE

COMMUNITIES

Foreword

Community has been at the heart of our global fight against COVID-19. We've seen incredible acts of solidarity, practical action, generosity, support and heroism.

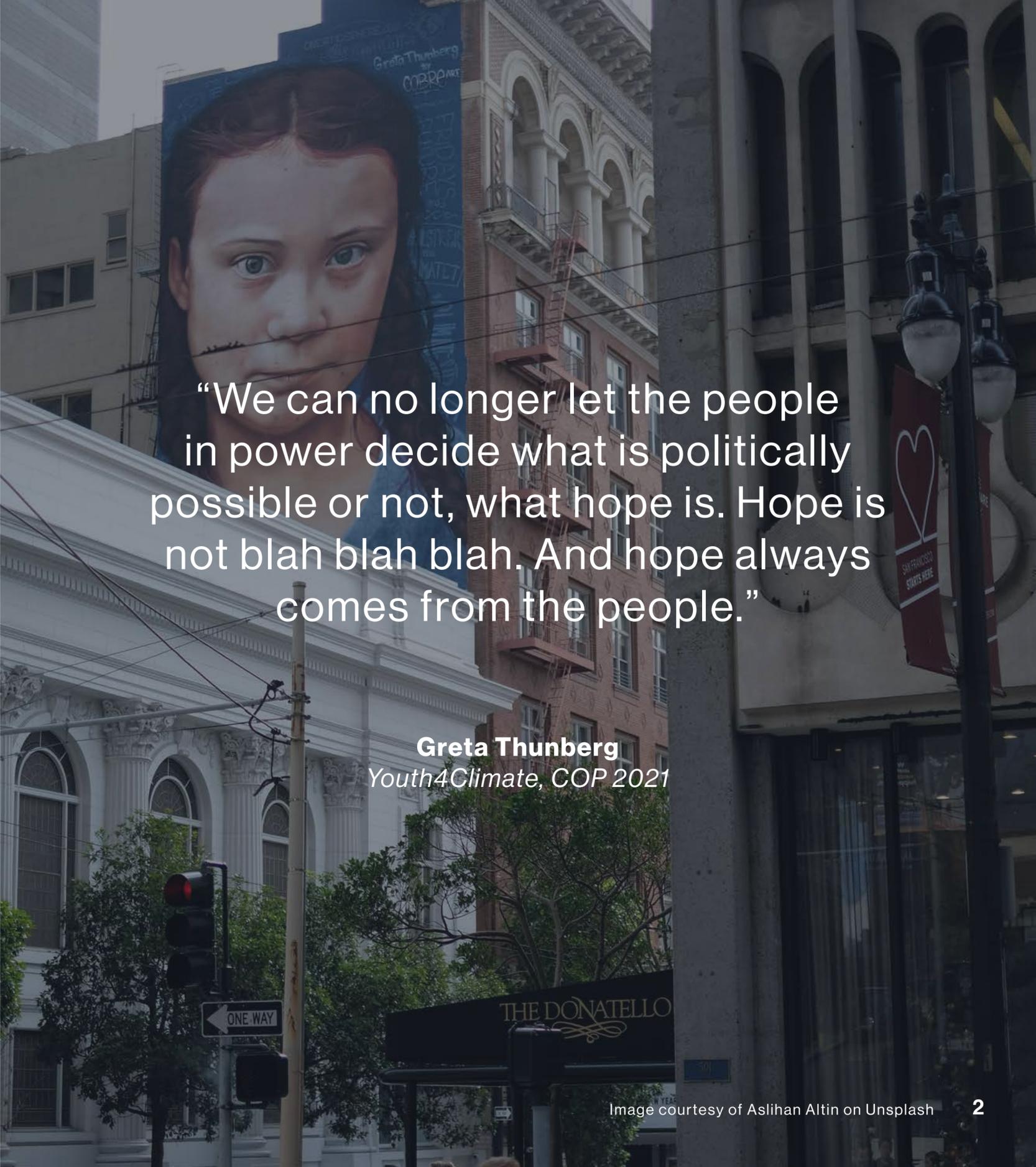
But the pandemic also exposed the loneliness that happens in the absence of community, and the yearning for the feelings of belonging and connection that community creates. In the wake of the pandemic we now face a declining giving market, a climate emergency, an empathy crisis, and debt tsunami.

People are searching for hope. They need beacons to gravitate towards, and communities that will support and empower them. They need platforms on which to stand and support to have their voices heard.

How charities build, grow and support communities will be integral to how society meets the challenges of our time. You have the power to connect, organise and galvanise the passion of people to create the change we need. **You have the power to offer hope in the wake of the crisis.**

We offer this report as inspiration and challenge on how you can leverage and invest in community as a core part of your mission, income and impact. **Welcome to Future Communities.**

Daisy O'Reilly-Weinstock
Director of Big Bets



“We can no longer let the people in power decide what is politically possible or not, what hope is. Hope is not blah blah blah. And hope always comes from the people.”

Greta Thunberg
Youth4Climate, COP 2021

Welcome to

PARADIGM SHIFT

The Paradigm Shift is an opportunity to travel deeper down the rabbit hole to focus on a **single macro trend**.

In each report we take a look back to look forward to see how the paradigm *might* change and **what that means for you and your organisation, and your supporters**. All framed within the lens of income and impact.

The **Paradigm Shift** Methodology

Combining rigorous analysis of a wealth of secondary data, deep client sector insight and imaginative thinking, we unpack the **macro trend** in detail, and develop a series of potential, plausible future scenarios. We then outline what these might mean for the third sector.

Evidence based

Built on evidence-based secondary research and available case studies.

Multiple lenses

Using a range of lenses to consider each piece of research and understand the potential implications, including STEEPLE (Societal, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal, and Ethical).

Imaginative but level-headed

Drawing on trend and foresight expertise to develop a series of hypotheses around future societal shifts and scenarios. We're imaginative but also pragmatic.

Bespoke for the sector

Developed for the sector, not from the sector - uniting an expert view on the world outside, and a firm grasp of the challenges faced within. Our team combines foresight and trends experts with charity sector specialists.

Gets to the 'so what'

Considers the implications and opportunities from each shift for the sector articulating a clear '**so what**' to get your thinking started.

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Introducing “Community”



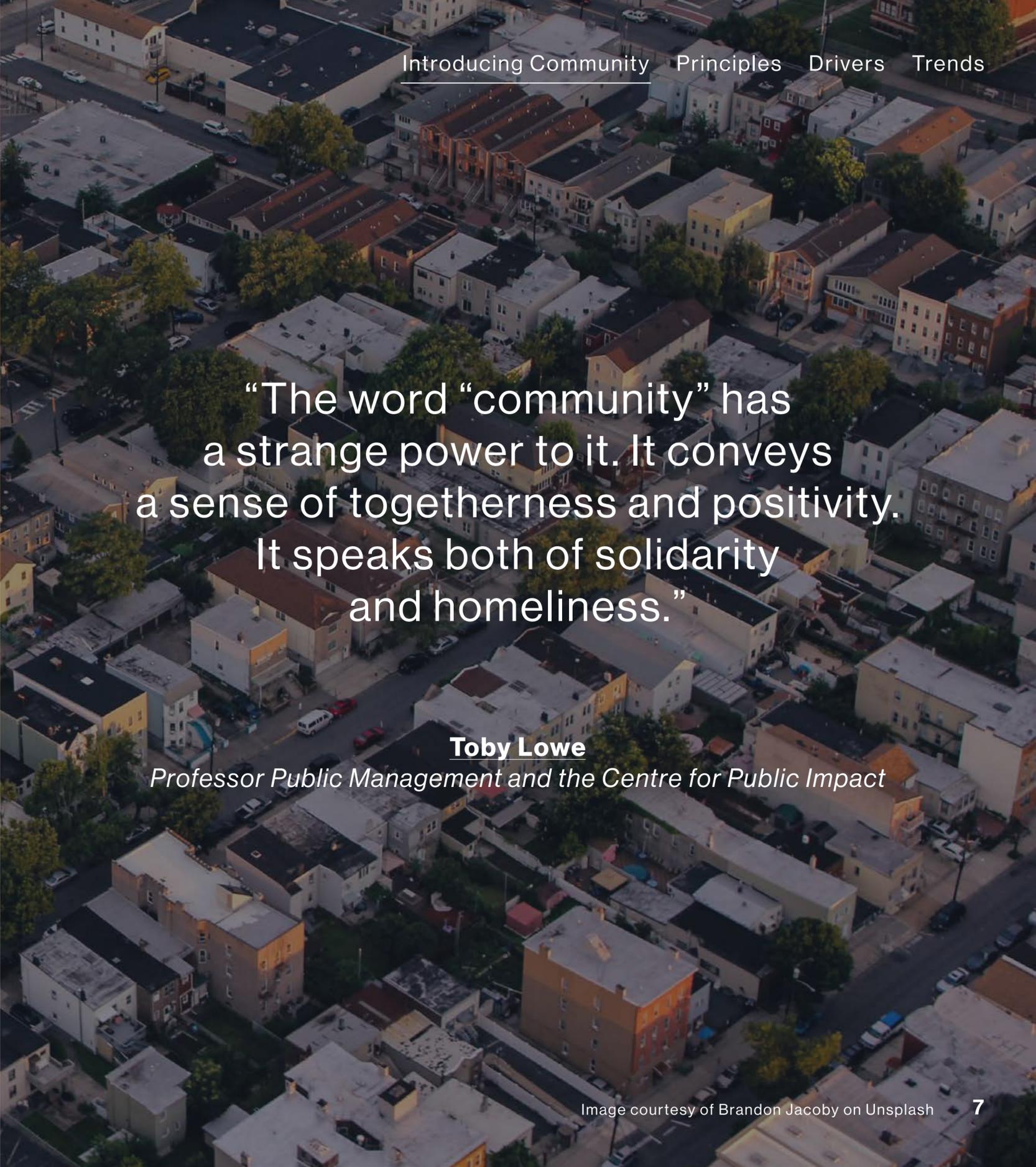
Community 101

What is community?

Community arises from our fundamental human need to connect with each other, to be together; **to belong**. An entity, collective, movement or tribe that inherently includes an in-group and an out-group as part of its identity. Not forgetting, people can be part of different communities simultaneously.

If we take community to mean a group of people with interests or characteristics in common, straight away we can see how the idea of community is bound up with sharing with each other, and our responsibility to each other. That's why community is so intimately connected with charity.

Even the definition of the word derives from the Latin *communitas* "community" or "public spirit". The history of the charity sector is founded in the purpose and support of community. Charities play an essential role in society by ensuring that our most vulnerable individuals and communities are supported and represented.



“The word “community” has a strange power to it. It conveys a sense of togetherness and positivity. It speaks both of solidarity and homeliness.”

Toby Lowe

Professor Public Management and the Centre for Public Impact

Community 101

How is community changing?

In the Middle Ages, when districts were governed by religious authorities, local churches served as community hubs, the vulnerable were supported by, and sometimes in, churches and monasteries. Over the years, as religion became less central in governing society, communities stayed connected to that neighbourly, charitable spirit of the work that churches once organised.

Until relatively recently, **place** was the most important factor in determining whether we belonged to a community. But globalisation and borderless digital access are bringing change at a deep level. The way we create and participate in community is evolving into something much **freer** and more **active**.

In the age of the individual ([as explored recently by filmmaker Adam Curtis](#)), community has come to be defined by a core question: do I share interests, beliefs, values or behaviours with others, irrespective of the places we come from?



Community 101

Why focus on future communities?

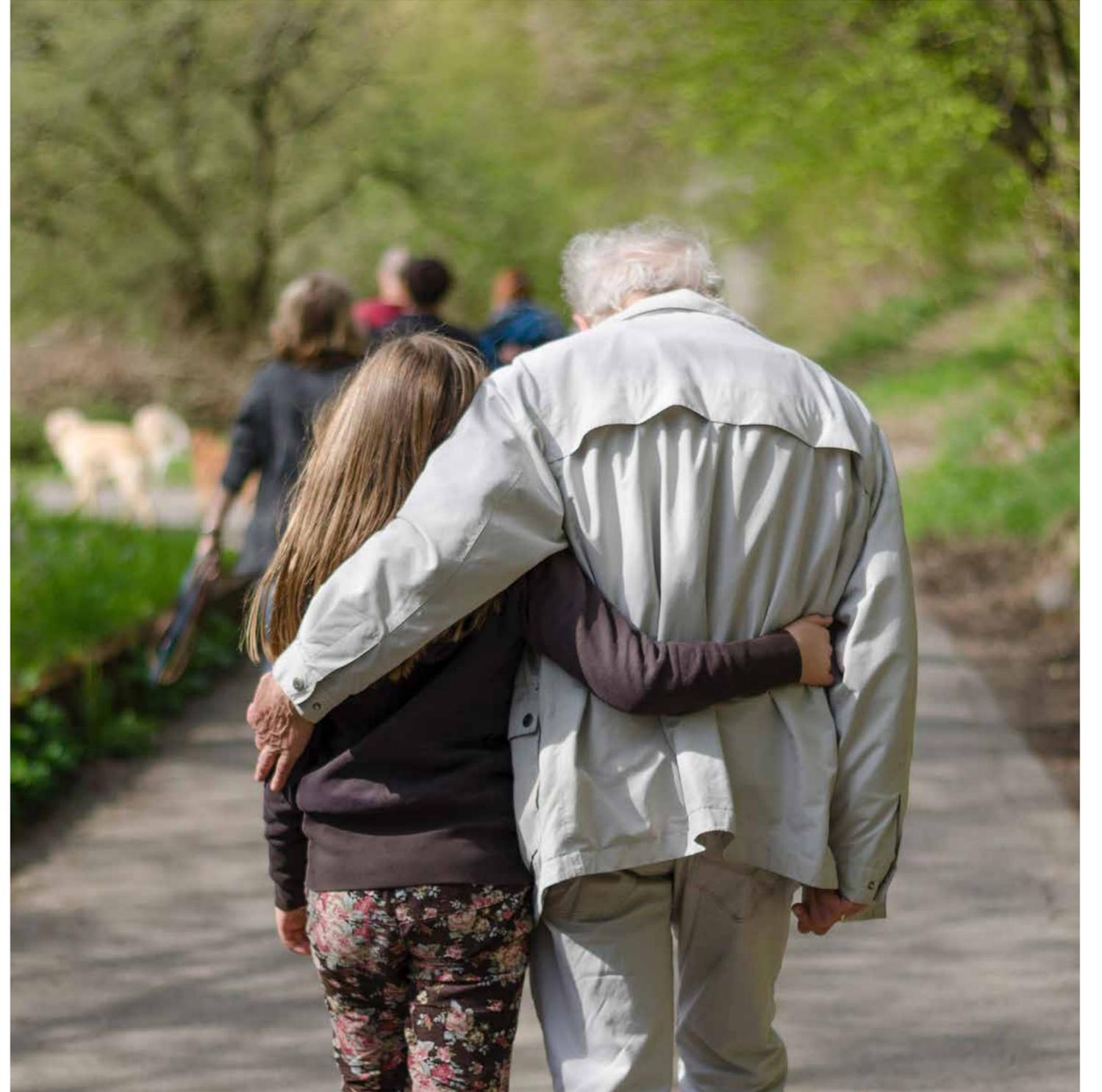
Community was at the heart of [our most recent collective effort](#): fighting the global pandemic. Our response to the COVID crisis was characterised by a remarkable spiritual solidarity and practical collaboration. But the pandemic also exposed the loneliness that happens in the absence of community, and the yearning for the feelings of belonging and connection that community creates.

As a global society, we're facing a new combination of conditions and pressures right now, in the form of our recovery from the pandemic, a climate emergency, a housing crisis forcing migration, and emerging technologies that will fundamentally change the way we interact. All of these things are impacting communities dramatically. In fact, our understanding and support of communities will be integral to how we meet the challenges of our time and leverage those communities to create change.

“Community helps us to understand what freedom means. It means being free to write your own story — and that is both an individual and collective process. It means being free to find the community that best suits you, and it means participating in the creation of narratives that enable others to be free.” ([Toby Lowe](#), Professor Public Management and the Centre for Public Impact)



Principles



The Principles of Community

How do we recognise it?

What defines it?

Here are five key principles that hold communities together

1



Image courtesy of Nina Strehl on Unsplash

Beliefs

From religious ones like the Church of England to political ones like Extinction Rebellion, communities tend to be united by their beliefs. But even when communities start off with shared overarching beliefs, a closer look at any kind of community will reveal the diversity of beliefs that exist within it. Open conversation and respect play a vital role in managing those differences.

2



Image courtesy of Remi Walle on Unsplash

Connection

The desire to connect is one of our most basic human needs. It's what drives us to form communities in the first place. Being part of a community then involves different kinds of connection, from engaging in ritual (Pride month, Sunday mass, the village fundraiser), to engaging in communication (Zoom town hall meetings, posting with a hashtag), to taking some kind of action (volunteering time, giving money, playing sports).

3



Image courtesy of Dan Meyers on Unsplash

Language

Our communities share points of reference which inform the languages we use to communicate with each other. Local areas may share regional accents or dialects, and communities may use jargon and abbreviations relating to the subjects they discuss most. Language may not always be verbal. Symbols and code play an important part in signalling the communities we belong to, whether that's through how we dress, the gestures we use, or what we display on our digital profiles.

4



Image courtesy of Bethany Newman on Unsplash

Spaces

Communities need spaces where they can gather and operate. In 2021, our communities are interacting across a growing variety of spaces: physical, geographical, virtual and hybrid. How we use these spaces is a complex, ever-evolving question. Online 'safe spaces' can provide sanctuary not only for vulnerable groups seeking companionship and acceptance, but also for anonymous individuals peddling conspiracy theories.

5



Image courtesy of Elaine Casap on Unsplash

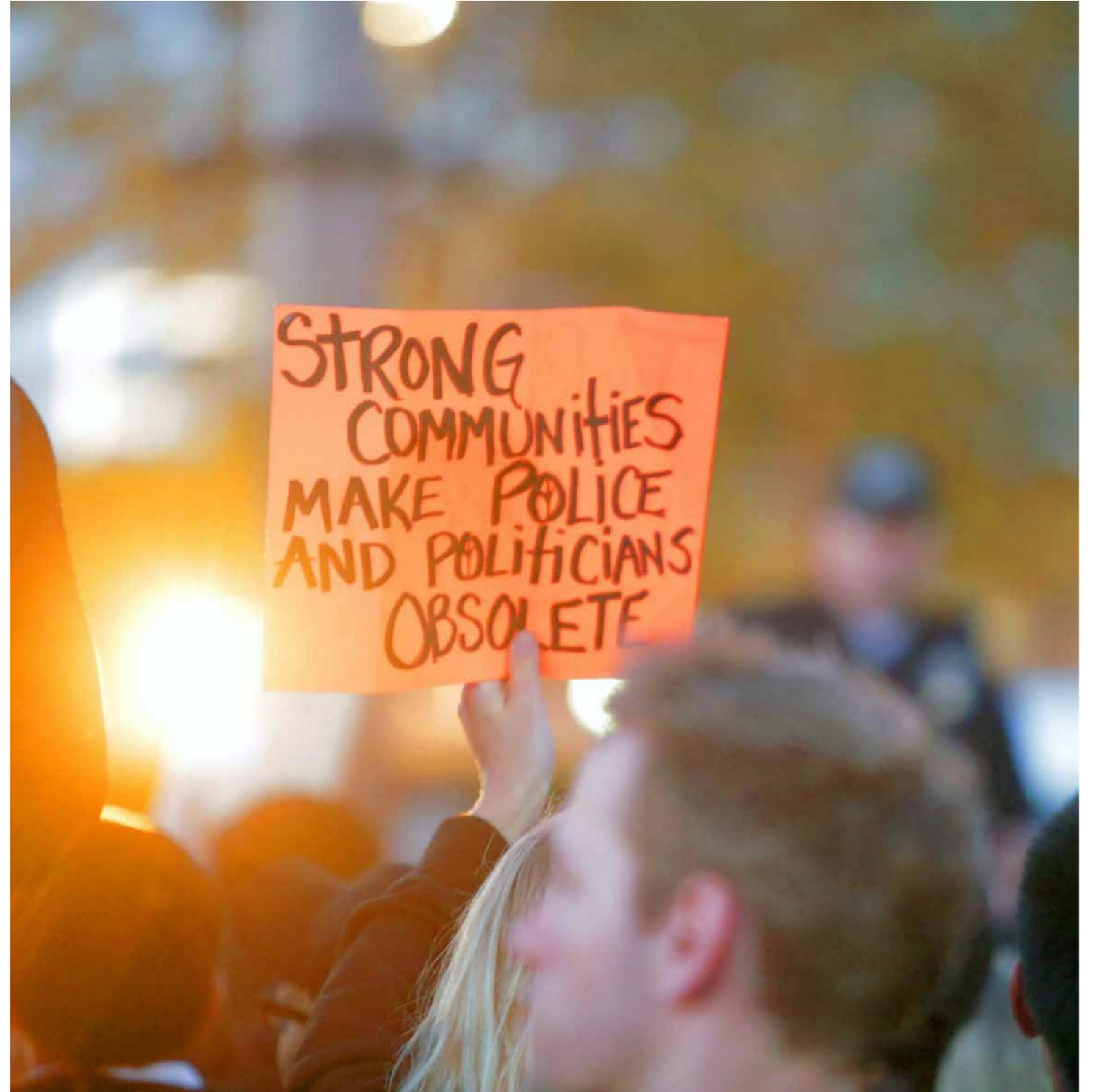
Action

When we belong to a community, we're normally asked to take some kind of action on its behalf, for the good of that community. The spectrum of participation is broad, and spans acting as a campaigner and spokesperson to making small changes in our daily lives. Increasingly, our younger generations are being proactive in their creation and support of communities, the internet making them less reliant on external organisers and better equipped to act on their own behalf.

“Community... is not merely something that one fits into; it is also something one chooses for oneself, through a process of self-discovery. It is based on shared circumstances, certainly, but offers a transcendent kind of togetherness. It is active rather than passive. The LGBTQ community. The Latino community. The intelligence community.”

Megan Garber
Writer, (The Atlantic)

3 Drivers



1 Giving is Stagnating

Fewer people are giving: The percentage of the population in England who gave to charity in 2013/14 to 2020/21 has declined from 83% to 63%.

Those who give are proportionally giving less: Between 2013 and 2019 the average donation given to charity grew by 10% but the UK's disposable income grew by 25%.

The need to give is declining: Between 2008 and 2020 the percentage of the public who describe charities as 'essential' or 'very important' has decreased from 72% to 55%.

2 People are Powerless

Despite movements like Black Lives Matter going mainstream, vulnerable communities around the world are still suffering. You only need to look at the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on ethnic minorities to see the devastating impact of social inequality in the UK.

People have been left disillusioned with conventional politics, especially when they see politicians behaving in ways that seem detached from their struggles. At the same time, we've watched governments losing control to big tech companies that are now so influential they're in a position to act as a kind of global police force. Disturbingly, they are also rife with entrenched biases.



By 2050

it is expected that there will be

1.5 billion

people aged 65+ in the world

3

The Economy is Unstable

Austerity had already damaged our economic infrastructure, when COVID-19 came along to compound it. Our minority communities have been hardest hit.

Physical community spaces have been deteriorating for decades, through lack of funding. Around four million UK workers live in poverty and lack of affordable housing is forcing councils to leave people homeless. Meanwhile, there's a near-exponential gap between how much people work and how much they get paid – our pay is not rising in line with inflation and cost of living.

4

The Population is Ageing

We're entering an era when the bulk of society will be made up of people over 65. Concerns that there will be too few working adults to fund their retirement have been pushing the state pension age up and up, to the point where the concept of 'retirement' is disappearing. Unless, of course, you adopt a 'FIRE' approach.

Then there's the challenge of an ageing population's disproportionate political influence. How do we address the generational rift that causes? We've also been dealing with the rise of chronic conditions as more older people require longer-term, ongoing care.

5 Individualism Reigns

Self-reliance and personal independence still hold a lot of cultural sway. This tends to be concentrated in more economically developed countries, and in younger generations who have been spending a lot of time thinking about how their backgrounds and life experiences inform their differences and similarities.

All of this self-understanding has led to more [mainstream discussion of mental health](#), but it's also resulted in people [prioritising themselves over the collective](#). The [cult of self-optimisation](#) has created an intense pressure to strive for increased productivity, happiness, health, and intelligence.

6 Our Society is Atomised

As society has become more fragmented, and more defined by [demographic divides](#), [loneliness has been rising](#). With an [ageing UK population](#) living mostly in rural and coastal areas, there's potential for that isolation to grow.

The pandemic prompted a wave of [community-minded initiatives](#) that showed our collective desire for connection. Now we're facing the challenge of how to serve that desire, particularly as [generational differences are deepening](#).

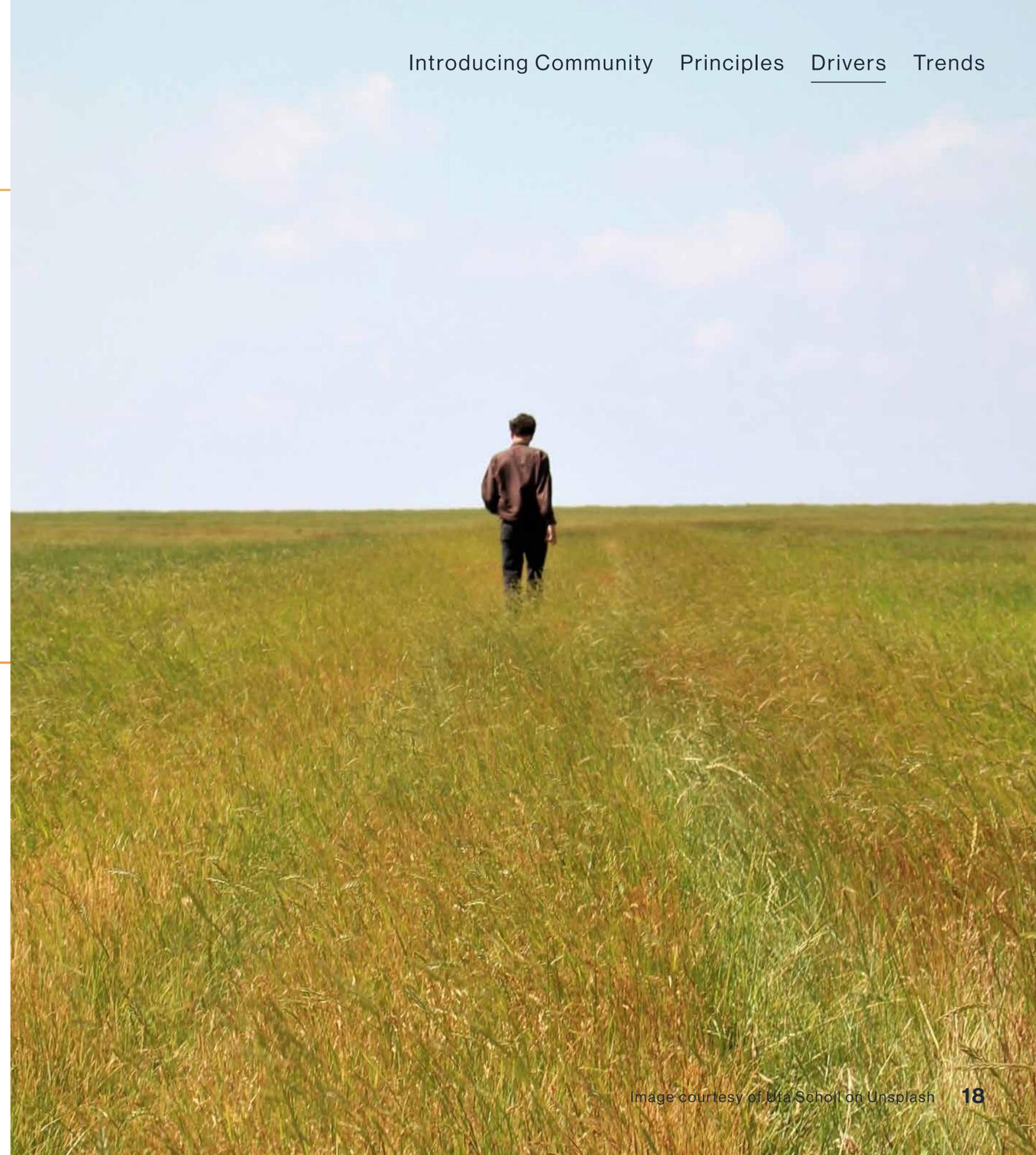




Image courtesy of Markus Spiske on Unsplash

7

Work Has Been Reimagined

Pre-pandemic, [digital nomads](#) were taking the lead in remote working, as calls for flexible working were increasing. COVID-19 demanded an immediate, collective reappraisal of the way we work, [normalising remote working](#), and raising questions about whether we can ever go back to the way things were before.

As AI keeps advancing, automating jobs and rendering swathes of employees redundant, we face some big questions about our [purpose and meaning](#) in the future. Perhaps unsurprisingly, [membership of UK trade unions keeps on rising](#).

8

The World is Borderless

Even with fewer people travelling in the past year, and despite the tide of pro-nationalism that has bolstered [post-Brexit efforts](#) and [power moves on Big Tech](#), the world is still as borderless as ever. [Global information flows surged during COVID](#) and business leaders have claimed economic recovery relies on stronger global connectedness.

In the UK, immigration flows have increased to [historically high levels](#) in the past 25 years. Our social fabric is increasingly now defined by [racial and ethnic diversity](#), raising awareness of the [differing experiences of ethnic communities](#), as well as the many other global communities now able to form.

9

Lives are Lived Online

We're living in a time when some of our deepest interactions are enabled and played out online, from relationships with friends and family, to work, dating, shopping and banking. Now we have digital tattoos: records of our online actions, and the digital identities we create to present ourselves to others, standing in for the way we size each other up IRL.

The digital world has also provided an unprecedented resource for creation and money-making, giving rise to the creator economy.

10

The Climate Crisis is Now

Our planet is reaching its temperature limit, the population is skyrocketing, and conventional agriculture is struggling to provide enough food. Our biodiversity is shrinking at an unprecedented rate, and threatening the communities depending on land at risk of destruction.

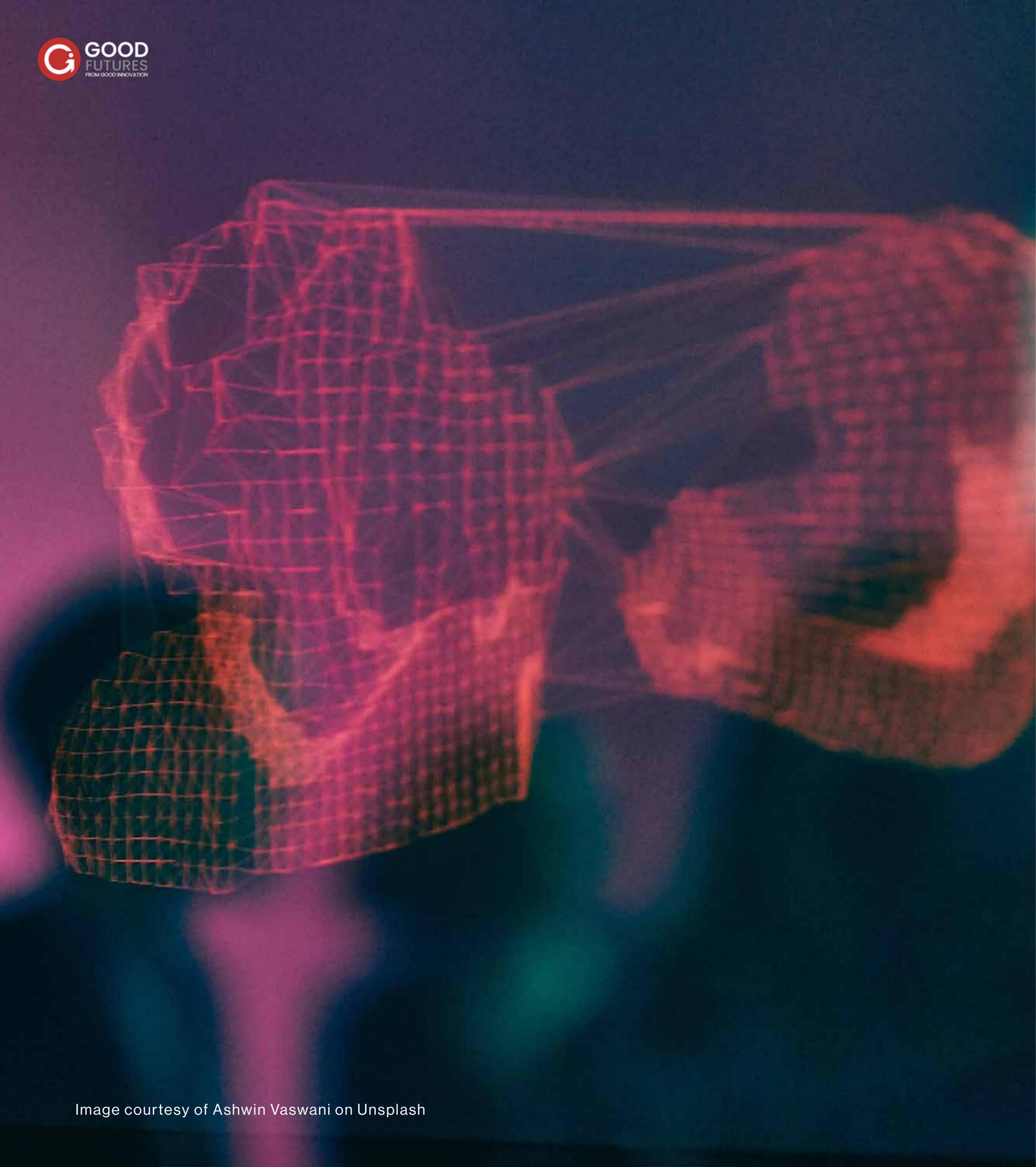
Communities are being forced to move, reorganise and reform. While we're sharing the planet with eight million nonhuman species, one technologist has advocated we "build the digital anew in a way that is rooted in nature". This would involve "a *digital currency that could allow several hundred billion dollars to be held by other beings simply on account of being themselves and no other and being alive in the world.*"

Nearly

40%

of opposite-sex couples

meet online



11

We Have Limitless Access

The growth and capability of the internet has made it our go-to resource for accessing and understanding the world. For billions of people, information that used to be difficult or impossible to access is now available any time and almost anywhere.

More and more people are interacting online, across multiple social media channels. Each new generation is now growing up with social media as an integral part of their friendships, relationships, and engagement with the world.

Trends



Empathy Crisis

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What *is* the **Empathy Crisis**?

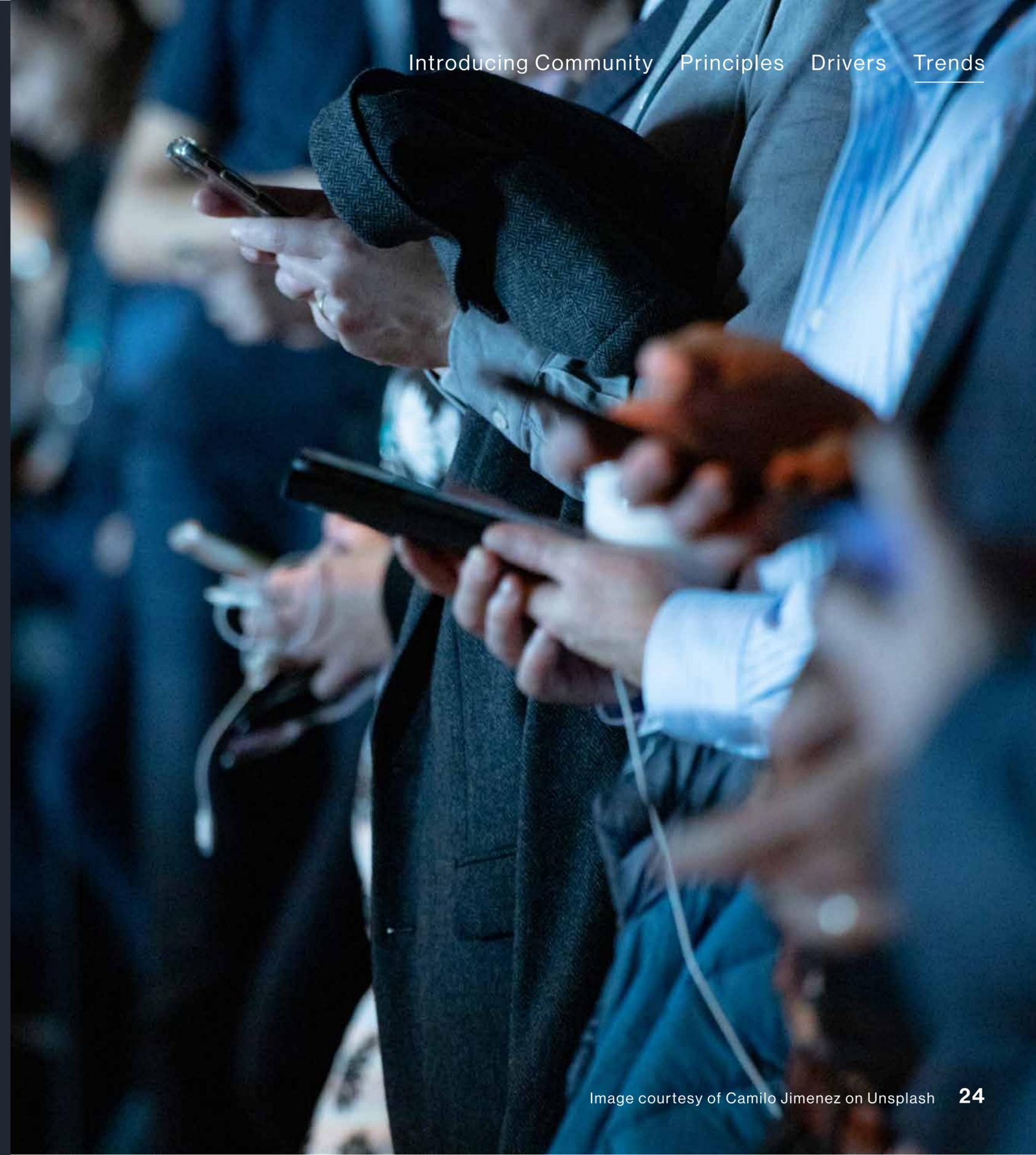
Technology offers increasing opportunities for people to connect, but recent polls show that the majority of adults feel that society is more broken and divided. Mental health issues and loneliness are on the rise.

Deep fractures are surfacing between communities and individuals, divided by politics, race, gender, finances and belief systems. From climate doubt to vaccine fears, we find it increasingly hard to show empathy, especially for those whose beliefs, experiences or identity is 'other'.

Why does it **matter**?

These are not new problems, but in the physical isolation of the last 18 months, our online echo chambers have only affirmed our own world views and deepened existing societal divides.

In the most extreme circumstances, some will be left without the will, need or ability to understand anything outside of what, or who, they already know and care about. Garnering support in this new and isolated world is going to be an uphill battle.
We need empathy now, more than ever.



1 Contextualising Crisis Through Experience

[Walk With Yeshi](#) incorporates AI and a conversational, multimedia interface to invite individuals to participate in a young Ethiopian woman's story. Built for Facebook Messenger, Walk With Yeshi takes individuals on a 2.5 hour journey, matching the length of the average walk for water. Yeshi represents millions of young African women who walk for hours each day to collect water - she shares the sound of her footsteps, the music of her village, the sights of her path, and the wisdom of her hardship.

Another example is [USC Shoah Foundation's Dimensions in Testimony](#), which uses AI to enable people to ask questions that prompt real-time responses from pre-recorded video interviews with Holocaust survivors and other witnesses to genocide. The goal is to ensure that now and far into the future, museum-goers, students and others can have real-time conversations with these eyewitnesses to history to learn from those who were there.

[We're here because we're here](#) was developed by conceptual artist Jeremy Deller to commemorate WW1. *"On 1 July 2016 more than 1,400 participants in First World War uniform appeared unannounced in locations across the UK. Each volunteer represented an individual soldier who was killed on July 1 in 1916."*

2 Bridging Divides

The [Red Line](#) podcast, hosted by a geopolitical think tank in Australia, brings together government officials, expert academics, geopolitical analysts, and journalists from around the world to produce quality, in-depth analysis of key global issues. In doing so, the Red Line purports to reveal 'the underreported angles', finding the in-depth human stories that mainstream media can't cover and prompting broader thought on all sides of these key issues.

[The Prison Within](#) - a documentary about restorative justice, which takes a look at the Victim Offender Education Group (VOEG) developed by the [Insight Prison Project](#). *"In an astonishing feat of empathy, the VOEG program pairs an offender with a 'surrogate victim', who is a person hurt by a similar crime, whether it be rape, robbery or murder. In tearful conversations, the offender and victim share their experiences and find common ground. In that way, restorative justice serves victims as well as the offenders, helping both heal from trauma to better reintegrate into society"*.

TikTok makes it clear in its [research](#) that the company believes that *"mindset matters more than age."* Platforms like [Aging2.0](#), [Gen2Gen](#) and [Cirkel](#) are also working towards building intergenerational communities, with Cirkel creating a *"community of professionals ages 20-70+ who connect for two-way career support and mentorship."*

3

Listen Listen Listen!

[CharitySoWhite](#) aims to open up conversations about racism in the charity sector, and tackle the image of the 'white saviour' that has triggered backlash in many charities. Their call to action is simple: *"have candid and critical conversations about racism, rooted in honesty, humility and hope; publicly acknowledge that institutional racism exists in their organisations; prioritise anti-racist work"*.

[Call-In Culture](#) has arisen as a response to [cancel culture](#). Rather than simply 'call out' people in order to *"publicly shame and humiliate people"*, Professor Loretta Ross teaches people to 'call in'. *"A call in is actually a callout done with love and respect. Because you're really seeking to hold people accountable for the potential harm that they cause, but you're not going to lose sight of the fact that you're talking to another human being."*

Earlier this year [London based drag queen Shayshay](#) schooled instagram on the benefits of calling in instead of calling out, and how to do it well. *"When we call in instead of call out we all have a better chance of learning and growing together."*



"We feel greater empathy, and an urge to help, in situations where tragedies are about a specific, identifiable individual, compared to situations where the victims are a larger, vaguer group of people."

[The Decision Lab](#)

So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

1 Experiment

Go Beyond the Numbers

Walk with Yeshi demonstrates just how powerful immersive storytelling can be when we harness art and science, and highlights the increasingly critical role technology plays in building connections.

How can you use these tools to elevate and focus your storytelling, and help people develop a far deeper human connection to your cause?

What would an immersive, multi-sensory world need to look like for people to experience first-hand the causes you support?

2 Innovate

Find the Intersections

How can you prompt the right conversations and share the right information in order to foster much greater empathy in groups of disconnected individuals?

How can you find the intersections between groups to create bridges for connection?

3 Explore

Deeper Insight

Authentic empathy means having good conversations: actively listening to who you're engaging with, and letting their concerns shape how you then respond.

As causes grow, and the communities you support / support you evolve and change, it becomes increasingly more important for you to listen with wide open ears and respond with action based in thought and empathy.

Post-Truth

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What *is* Post-Truth?

In the wake of Trump's legacy of misinformation, widespread disbelief in conventional politics and scientific evidence is now the norm. It's becoming increasingly difficult to declare what is "true", and what isn't. Fake news has affected elections, referendums, and our response to the pandemic. It continues to polarise people around the world. **Enter the era of post-truth.**

Opinions shared online can now carry potent and real influence - no matter how ill-informed, bizarre or incorrect. In fact, just 12 people are responsible for the bulk of the misleading claims and outright lies about COVID-19 vaccines that proliferate on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. According to the 2021 Ipsos Veracity Index, more people trust the 'ordinary person in the street' (58%), than they do charity chief executives (41%).

Why does it **matter**?

We have seen this laid bare in what some have labelled a 'misinfodemic' (where misinformation halts efforts to stop the spread of a pandemic - in this case, coronavirus - by causing confusion, mistrust, and disobedience). There's an obvious need here for the third sector to leverage its expert knowledge to fight misinformation. But equally, there is also opportunity to create new income generation and engage your supporter base in different ways.

“A study published in Nature last month showed that misinformation had a significant effect on vaccine uptake. The number of Brits who said they would 'definitely' accept the vaccine dropped by 6.2 percentage points after they were exposed to common conspiracies — that Bill Gates was plotting against his fellow-Americans, for instance.”

Anna Russell

Writer, The Fight Against Vaccine Misinformation

Coronavirus
Vaccine

1 Who's Spreading Misinformation?

From [Nigel Farage's false claims about the RNLI](#) to the endless trolling of cancer charities on social media, the charity sector is no stranger to fake news, misinformation and outright trolling.

[Fox News continues to face criticism](#) after [spreading misinformation](#) during the pandemic. In less than a month, "Fox News aired 129 segments about coronavirus vaccines", 57% of which "either undermined or downplayed immunization efforts." Also, Eamonn Holmes said that the media should not disregard claims that [coronavirus was impacted by 5G connectivity](#).

In the world of social media, there are claims that Facebook supercharged the [#StoptheSteal](#) campaign that spread misinformation surrounding the result of the US election. When [Parler](#) launched in 2018, [a wave of right-wing politicians](#) flocked to it for its purported focus on 'free speech' and commitment to fighting against 'deplatforming'. However, many on the left claimed that they were [removed from the network](#) for sharing views that the moderators found disagreeable. '[Aestheticised Activism](#)', whereby complex social issues are condensed into bullet points against a pastel background, can "oversimplify complex ideas in harmful or misleading ways or flat-out misstate facts," sociologist Eve Ewing [says](#).

2 What Are the Major Players Doing About It?

[Reddit](#) uses its own community and administrators to moderate posts and tackle misinformation, with users able to 'downvote' posts. Facebook has started to trial the same functionality in small user tests. Reddit also has specific community boards to help people climb out of the '[rabbit hole](#)' of misinformation, such as [QAnonCasualties](#) and [ReQovery](#).

Microsoft has developed [a tool to combat](#) 'deepfake technology'. "Microsoft's *Video Authenticator* tool works by trying to detect giveaway signs that an image has been artificially generated, which might be invisible to the human eye."

[WhatsApp](#) has changed the way users are able to forward messages, and partnered with the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#), in an effort to stop the spread of misinformation.

In 2020, The Guardian published a [comprehensive list](#) of all the notable measures that large social media corporations took to combat the spread of misinformation, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok.

3

Who Can I Trust?

[Novara Media](#) is an independent media platform that aims to share journalism which encourages positive political action. [Gal-dem](#) is “an award winning media company committed to sharing the perspectives of people of colour from marginalised genders”. [The Young Turks](#) is a popular online news show, which shares news from a young, progressive standpoint.

Founded by James Harding, the former Times editor and BBC News Director, [Tortoise](#) is a membership-based title specialising in ‘slow news’. It publishes long-form articles which offer deep explorations of social, political and scientific issues. [Byline Times](#) produces “fearless journalism not found in the mainstream media” by focussing on “what the papers don’t say”.

4

Who Else Is Taking Action?

[Finland](#) is taking the fight against fake news to primary schools and leading the in misinformation education. [The Citizens](#) use impact journalism to hold government and big tech to account.

[Sense about Science](#) is an independent charity that “promotes the public interest in sound science and evidence”, raising awareness of scientific claims based on poor or inaccurate evidence. [DeSmog](#) is a global media platform sharing fact-based information about climate change. [NewsGuard](#) is a rating system that employs journalists to score websites based on their transparency and reliability.

5

Who Are The Innovators?

‘[Astroscreen](#)’ - a new company that employs technology to actively search out bots sharing misinformation and [report them](#) to the individuals or companies that might be affected.

Founded by comedian/entrepreneur Nathan Fielder, ‘[Summit Ice](#)’ is an outdoor apparel brand that is committed to addressing Holocaust denial by sharing the truth about the Holocaust. All profits from the brand go to the Holocaust Education Centre, Vancouver.

‘[Filter vs Reality](#)’ is a new Instagram filter that highlights the difference between how people present themselves online and how they actually look in real life. ‘Filter vs Reality’ creator Faye Dickinson launched the filter in 2021 to raise awareness of the impact that filters can have on users’ [mental health](#).

[Bywire News](#) is the first blockchain news network. It publishes its content, not just the timestamp and/or hash of the content, directly to the blockchain. All content is time and author stamped for authenticity and accountability. This means each article contains a record on the blockchain detailing when it was created, by whom, and any revisions which are made and when. Their goal is to use the power of the blockchain to “usher in a new generation of content authorship which is attributable, verified, and trustworthy. We are helping to end fake news forever.”

So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

1 Explore

Leverage Your Expertise

You are the experts in your cause, your mission. You are the voice of your beneficiaries, members and service users. Leverage this expertise to innovate.

We've created a workshop toolkit, complete with session plan, templates and stimulus, to help you innovate around: income generation, supporter engagement and impact.

2 Innovate

Using Different Narratives

When combating misinformation we must find and tell stories of impact and change in ways that will make sense and appeal to different audiences - from the person scrolling on TikTok to the policy maker in Downing Street.

How can you explore different channels, narratives and types of evidence to engage in dialogue? What's the opportunity to engage the most controversial voices to gather insight?

We'll be covering online communities as part of Life Online in the coming weeks.

3 Consider

Building Trust

Challenging fake news and misinformation isn't just about presenting people with the facts. It's about building trust. Your first response to misinformation might be to try and tackle or conquer the false facts. But according to Robert Matney, *"Inserting truth in the face of misinformation may in fact spread visibility of the thing you are trying to correct."*

Instead, how can you leverage the trust people already have in your brand, your mission and your impact to position yourself as a trusted voice? How and where can you join forces with others to amplify your voice and your expertise?

Decentralised Power

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What *is* Decentralised Power?

In the past decade, institutions that traditionally shaped society - governments, political parties, big business, and mainstream media - have declined. Trust in these institutions has waned, as has their ability to determine how people think and behave.

In their place, new forces have begun to influence how we live, work and interact. New political movements, like [Extinction Rebellion](#) and Black Lives Matter, have harnessed decentralised organisation structures, online platforms and communication technologies to drive change globally. New business models have enabled small, agile disruptors to overtake multi-billion dollar market incumbents - or, in the case of Keith Gill's [GameStop campaign](#), to bring the ultra rich down a peg or two.

Why does it **matter**?

Technology has enabled previously disempowered groups to act and challenge the status quo. But crucially, [decentralised models](#) have also allowed older movements to **reach wider audiences, scale quicker, and build bigger movements.**

Decentralised power may allow charities to evade cumbersome institutions and structures, opening the potential for more radical work to be done. Why? Because it is outside government or corporate control and gives people power through autonomy.

A photograph of a person in a crowd, wearing a blue bandana over their mouth and a blue jacket, raising their right fist in a gesture of protest or solidarity. The background shows other people in a crowd, some wearing masks, and a sign that says "NO JUSTICE".

“Older movements had to build their organizing capacity first. Modern networked movements can scale up quickly and take care of all sorts of logistical tasks without building any substantial organizational capacity before the first protest or march.”

Zeynep Tufekci

1 Spreading the Message

Acknowledging that official government guidance often hadn't reached or resonated with young people, charities [London Youth](#) and [Partnership for Young London](#) collaborated on a [creative campaign](#) to get young Londoners to create posters for their peers to raise awareness on how to follow the rules in the coronavirus pandemic.

While the big gaming companies were being criticised for low-key and superficial responses to the Black Lives Matter protests last year, [a group of gamers](#) took it upon themselves to use popular gaming platforms like Fortnite and SIMs to galvanise a community of gamers who then held big tech to account.

2 Empowering the Marginalised

South London's [Rising Sun Collective](#) started a [crowdfunding campaign](#) to buy a pub that had become a cultural hub in the local community as a space for collaborative projects across art and music. In July 2021, the Collective raised £47,000 to take over the pub and save it from luxury housing developers.

[Unbound](#) is an alternative publishing company that runs crowdfunding campaigns for readers to select and back the projects they want to read that had previously been rejected by publishers. It has a community of 300,000 people from across the world and has funded over 600 projects.

3 Building, Organising and Mobilising Communities

[Library Of Things](#) is an online platform that allows local residents to borrow tools and equipment for one-off use from their neighbours. Neighbours can borrow or lend anything from lawn mowers to ukeles to gazebos. The platform makes previously expensive activities more accessible and affordable for local people, all while reducing waste and bringing members of the local community closer together.

As an antidote to the slow and analogue process of writing to local councils with little optimism of a proactive response, [CitizenLab](#) co-founders Wietse Van Ransbeeck, Aline Muylaert, and Koen Gremmelprez built a "community engagement platform" that allowed residents to share ideas about how to improve their local area with each other and then begin a dialogue with local governments to make it happen. CitizenLab is now used in over 300 communities in 18 countries, working on anything from clean energy planning to improving bike lanes.

Involve, the UK's public participation charity, launched the [Pop Up Democracy](#) programme, which provides training on how to create temporary installations that create new spaces for local political and civic participation.

4

Challenging the Status Quo

Among a [growing movement](#), [Open Access](#) ensure that academic articles are published in journals that are free to read, stopping companies like Elsevier (who own around 3000 journals, with nearly [£100m in year-on-year profit](#)) from charging extortionate fees for access and pricing people out.

[Ethical hackers](#), also known as ‘white hat hackers’, don’t break into computer networks and security systems with malicious intent as per their ‘black hat’ counterparts. Instead, they’re hired by companies to make sure their systems and data are kept as secure as possible, alerting the relevant parties when they have found weaknesses and fixing them.

A San Francisco-based non-profit has developed an app to help Iranians bypass surveillance and censorship by their government. [Nahoft](#), which is Farsi for ‘hidden’, converts a user’s text into a random string of words that can be sent through any messaging app, and then decrypted by the receiver using a unique code sent to them through the Nahoft app. The app is allowing activists to continue communicating securely when the government imposes internet shutdowns to crack down on protests.

5

Decentralised Finance (DeFi)

Decentralised finance (DeFi) is an “*umbrella term encompassing the vision of a financial system that functions without any intermediaries, such as banks, insurances or clearinghouses, and is operated just by the power of smart contracts.*” Basically, it seeks to operate like traditional financial systems but in a completely transparent, global and permission-less manner, all powered by the blockchain.

What does this mean? New models of peer to peer borrowing and lending that cut out the intermediary banking institution, and connect lenders and borrowers anytime, anywhere, with any amount. Interest rates are set by supply and demand, not by the bank’s profit requirements. [Forbes](#) has an excellent and in-depth article if you want to explore DeFi, including how DeFi is challenging traditional institutions, insurance and trading.

So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

1 Consider

Co-Leadership

How can you act as a platform for your communities and give them a voice? How can you empower marginalised communities to join the fight and lead from the front?

What would adopting a co-leadership approach look like? How would your governance and structure have to change?

2 Experiment

New Models for Funding

The sector is no stranger to emergency appeals, community fundraising and giving circles. But what would it look like to experiment with new models for funding and fundraising?

What would experiments with new DeFi insurance lending offers look like? Could this enable you to connect those in most need with those who can give, at the point of need?

3 Challenge

Supercharging Science

Platforms like [Experiment](#) and [Crowd.Science](#) are using the tried and tested models of crowdfunding to supercharge early stage research.

Whilst petitions to change the existing model of peer review pay walls that only benefit the journal publishers are gaining traction. Are the old hierarchical systems of science holding back breakthrough discoveries that could change the outcomes for your beneficiaries?

Spaces, Reimagined

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What are Spaces, Reimagined?

From the local church to the Reddit forum, the spaces we occupy have always played a fundamental role in building and mobilising communities. But in recent years, our idea of what constitutes a “community space” has changed. Austerity measures, new land use regulations, e-commerce, virtual working and escalating rent prices have all led to the loss of previously vibrant and essential public spaces.

Meanwhile, digital technology has created new virtual spaces. People with common interests can convene in online forums; video conferencing has allowed colleagues and peers to communicate remotely; and video games have evolved into “a space rather than a specific gaming experience.”

Why do they matter?

As we enter a post-pandemic world, we are all being forced to rethink how we use our spaces to make them fit for purpose. How can businesses and charities think differently about ‘space’ as a way to create, grow and mobilise their communities?

Consider how you could use and design space to support the needs and values of your communities. This could be through using your spaces to foster community-building, making them greener or more inclusive, or by championing the hyper-local.



1

New Solutions to Old Problems

John Lewis have plans to [convert their car parks into rented housing](#). In their potential 7,000 new homes, there will be the added possibility for tenants to rent John Lewis furniture. Similarly, The [City of London](#) plans to create at least 1,500 new homes by repurposing offices and other empty buildings, as it adapts the capital's financial district for the future following Covid-19.

Sikh temple [Guru Maneyo Granth Gurdwara](#) was awarded the Queen's Award after it reinvented itself during the pandemic as an [emergency food centre](#), delivering thousands of meals a day.

2

Making Spaces Greener & More Inclusive

The Natural History Museum has received a grant for its [Urban Nature Project](#) which will see their site transformed into a biologically diverse green space, with educational and creative programmes for schools and local community groups.

[The Kelsey](#) design buildings for “*mixed-income, mixed-ability residential communities*”. They are hoping to influence policy by forming corporate partnerships in the housing sector and advocating for new government design standards.

The [Hillwalking Hijabi](#), [Black Girls Hike](#) and the [Black Swimming Association](#) launched a collaborative initiative to encourage [more BAME women to participate in group outdoor activities](#).

3

Making Use of Forgotten Spaces

National Trust are [transforming a disused viaduct in Manchester](#) into an urban garden for public benefit. Locals have been encouraged to participate in its development through a drop-in event, [open access to the proposals](#) and a temporary garden to trial.

[The Croft](#) is a community garden built on abandoned tennis courts in Glasgow. Run by charitable organisations [South Seeds](#) and [Locavore](#), the space aims to develop a sustainable local food system. Locavore also have [plans for a large grocery store](#) which could operate as an alternative to supermarkets with local, environmentally friendly produce.

[UThink PDP](#) are a charity who specialise in turning vacant spaces into creative hubs for the community: their most recent project was an empty M&S shop which has been repurposed for a gallery space, studios and workshops.

4

Championing Hyper-Local

A number of multinationals have launched marketing campaigns to celebrate local communities. Tesco used advertising space to urge their shoppers to [‘give Tesco a miss’](#) and head down to their local pub instead, while Carling’s [Made Local campaign](#) focussed on its hometown of Burton-on-Trent, sharing stories of the local community.

Other organisations have focused on adapting their service delivery to support the local community. Start-ups such as [Weezy](#), [Gorillas](#), and [Getir](#) are providing [hyper local delivery](#) in London by using local storage units and supporting businesses in the area.

[Bee London and Sky Farmers](#) run rooftop gardens in Holborn, London. They produce herbs and vegetables for restaurants such as The Rosewood Hotel and Le Cordon Bleu cookery school. The gardens are maintained by volunteers who live and work in the buildings below. This gives chefs the chance to be connected to and learn more about the ingredients they are using.



So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

1 Explore

Hyperlocal

How can you understand your communities and impact at a hyperlocal level?

How can you use hyperlocal marketing to celebrate your local connections in unexpected ways?

How can you take your brand to new spaces that allow you to reach under-served, marginalised or vulnerable communities?

2 Innovate

On Space

From the likes of Getir and Gorilla taking over low rent, unused high street spaces, to zero carbon farms underneath Clapham High Street (see [Good Futures Future Farming](#)), businesses are finding innovative ways to reconsider and repurpose space.

What spaces do you currently own or access that deliver value or connect communities in entirely new and different ways?

3 Consider

Going to Your Supporters

Take a leaf from the BBC's session at the [Inspiration Safari](#) and consider going to where your potential supporters are already congregating.

Explore the possibility of new virtual worlds, hubs and spaces. From games like Fortnite to virtual worlds like Decentraland (which we touched on in [Redefining Ownership](#)) find those new spaces communities are already building and consider the potential for new engagement opportunities.

The Metaverse

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What *is* the Metaverse?

The metaverse, a term first coined in Neal Stephenson's 1992 sci-fi novel *Snow Crash*, is a blending of digital and physical existence. It's more than just life online - it's the convergence of interactions that boundary the physical and digital world. Our habits, beliefs, communities and tribes from the physical world now have an extension into the digital realm, creating the possibility for alternate, digital lives. **Welcome to the Metaverse.**

Why does it matter?

During lockdown physical contact was replaced with online presence. At its peak, Zoom had more than 300 million daily virtual meeting participants. Even as COVID-19 restrictions start to ease and many seek to return to old ways of working, our lives and our communities have been fundamentally altered.

Lil Nas X's Roblox concert in 2020 garnered a total of 33 million viewers. It's clear that the virtual domain has become an all-encompassing space hosting business, retail, education, entertainment, wellness, work and community. As we spend more time online, digital spaces are becoming the go-to spots.

"In 2020, one thing became very obvious, very quickly: as COVID-19 began to spread around the world, we leapfrogged five to seven years in the digital revolution."

Hans Vestberg
CEO of Verizon

1 New Spaces to Build Community

Games like Animal Crossing and Fortnite have become places for people to meet and socialise. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of UK adults played games with friends and family to stay in touch during lockdown, according to a May 2021 survey from Xbox.

When the doors of clubs were closed in March 2020, marginalised communities found [new ways to connect and thrive by creating online spaces](#). Events like [Queer House Party](#), initiated during lockdown, are now transitioning their events into new hybrid IRL parties whilst maintaining their mantra of “*accessible, radical, DIY and punk AF.*”

Nowhere is a new social networking platform which places people in 3D environments that range from forests to an island in the sky. [Jon Morris, CEO of Nowhere](#), describes the platform as “*the first online event space where you can truly be present, whether feeling the raw energy of a virtual performance or serendipitously vibing with a stranger you just met.*”

[Facebook Horizon](#), currently in beta mode, aims to be a ‘VR social experience’ where explorers play, build, and create together. And [Microsoft Mesh](#) uses mixed reality to create interconnected worlds allowing people in different physical locations to be together in real-time via holographic experiences.

2 Finding Your Tribe

Since their inception, forums have often provided a space to find like-minded people and share one’s deepest thoughts. Now, there is a forum for pretty much any and every shared concern or passion. From [collectively investigating unsolved crimes](#) to [sharing experiences of psychedelic drug use](#), there are a vast number of communities growing in these spaces for increasingly niche interests.

Social networks like TikTok (which reached two billion downloads worldwide in 2020) are giving creators a platform to connect. [TikTok Ballet](#) is a community of dancers on TikTok who are opening up the conversation around the harsh realities of ballet through ironic and dark humour.

3 Fuelling Radical Ideologies

In recent years we have seen a concerning rise in far-right extremism. Unregulated forums like 4chan have [famously birthed and fuelled radical ideologies](#); white nationalist groups have [recruited young Internet users](#); algorithms have [driven impressionable people towards radicalisation](#); the [cosmic right \(QAnon et al\)](#) has risen; and a single instagram post [sparked a far-right, anti-trans riot in LA](#).

4

Building Inclusive Communities

These streamers are building their own communities to make the world of gaming more accessible to all:

- DeafGamerTV speaks out on behalf of users who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Obstrattlehead, a high-level gamer who is blind, hosts streams which bring together less able-bodied and non-disabled gamers and runs a tournament for blind and low-vision players
- MiketheQuad focuses on 'adaptive gaming' and is encouraging more inclusive design in the gaming world

5

Liminal Spaces

Alongside the rise of fully virtual experiences, extended reality (XR) is creating a new category of events built around both digital and physical elements: liminal spaces.

The RSC's 2021 production Dream, was an interactive digital performance featuring live actors. Inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the immersive show became a game-like experience, where audience members could participate as the actors performed nonlinear storylines.

In the realm of politics, New York City Mayoral candidate Andrew Yang held a press conference for potential voters on ZEPETO, a platform whose audience is 90% Gen Z.

6

Social Good in the Metaverse

Club Quarantine, a free online club night had, alongside typical Zoom features, a donation system via the club's digital bar, supporting "*various organizations benefiting social, political, and environmental causes*".

Gamers have been speedrunning for charity and a Twitch streamer raised \$15,000 for LGBTQ+ charity by playing Sims 4.

Bliss partnered with the Trevor Project to run a TikTok campaign where for every positive comment made by a user, they donated \$1 as well as hosting online conversations opening up dialogue around mental health in the LGBTQ+ community.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder we saw a wave of (relatively short-lived and surface-level) online activism, but this was underpinned by a huge network of activists building a knowledge base and communicating through "*Google Drive, Signal, Messenger, Slack, or other combinations of software, for collaboration, information storage, resource access, and daily communications.*" wrote Rachel Kuo, an organiser and scholar of digital activism.

So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

1 Explore

Go to Your Supporters

Whether it's socialising, work or play, we're finding new ways and new spaces to connect and build relationships through the internet.

The rise of the metaverse (interactive spaces where users can connect with each other) is driving demand for immersion.

How and where are your supporters connecting and what would it look like to have a presence in these spaces?

2 Innovate

Online Income Generation

Consumers are replicating their physical daily habits in the virtual realm - assigning a growing value to digital assets. As we've mentioned before (in [Redefining Ownership](#)), as digital ownership rises, consider the opportunity for both fundraising & retail in the metaverse.

What would going direct to avatar mean for your retail and trading offer?

3 Consider

Liminal Spaces

As the technology to deliver hybrid events becomes increasingly affordable and accessible, how and where can you develop crossover opportunities to bring the IRL online and vice versa?

How can you create immersive experiences that bring your mission and cause to life?

Shared Signals

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What are Shared Signals?

Language is one of the five core principles of community; it creates shared points of reference, signals and codes to connect and communicate with others in your network.

From oppression to empowerment, shared signals have a rich and fascinating history. They can communicate hidden languages, function as propaganda or distinguish one person's preference from another's. From queer plants to the yellow Star of David, they are a way of imposing or expressing beliefs, identity or preference before we have even spoken.

Marginalised communities have often found innovative ways of using shared signals for resistance and preservation. However, signals and language can also have multiple meanings and interpretations, or shift from signifiers of unity to division.

Why do they matter?

Of course, the charity sector is no stranger to leveraging shared signals to unite communities, but there will also be times when we don't even realise that we are communicating in code. These cultural blindspots can sometimes mean that others are inadvertently excluded or oppressed by the language we use. However, when used respectfully and with intent, **shared signals can be a powerful tool for building community.**



1

Show, Don't Tell

During lockdown, the Canadian Women's Foundation promoted a [simple hand signal](#) for women suffering violence at home to use on video calls to show others they need help.

The NHS created the [LGBTQ+ NHS badge](#) for those who identify themselves within these communities to ensure that patients feel comfortable talking about their own sexuality and feel supported by staff members.

Annette Dore created [Badge for Life](#) as a means for people to express the desire to stay safe in the pandemic, whether that's through pointing to their role as a key worker or commemorating lost loved ones.

Bedale AFC have [sported a see-through kit](#), for a campaign in conjunction with HECK, which raises awareness and money for prostate and testicular cancer. Called the 'Let's Be Clear' campaign, the new kit swaps HECK for CHECK to encourage men to check themselves regularly and see their GP if they spot a problem.

[Moodbeam](#) is a wristband which allows employees to tell update their boss on their emotional state to help companies monitor wellbeing.

2

Defying the Norm

SwaG Design won the Centre for Ageing Better's [competition to create positive icons which challenge stereotypes](#) around ageing, theirs was a dancing older couple intended to replace road signs.

[Apple's updated emojis](#) include a pregnant man and a multi-racial handshake.

TfL introduced [Green Woman traffic light signals](#) to celebrate International Women's Day with a diverse range of female representations.

The [accessible icon project](#) is an ongoing work of activism aimed at changing perceptions around disability.

Despite the EU ruling which could [allow workplaces to ban the hijab](#), defiant hijab-wearers are finding different ways to resist. [Les Hijabeuses](#) are a [collective of young female footballers](#) campaigning against this type of ban in France as well as promoting a more inclusive society.

3

Showing Solidarity

Athletes have adopted the Pride rainbow in support of LGBTQ+ groups including German hockey captain [Nike Lorenz](#) and England football captain [Harry Kane](#).

The Bristol statue of [Edward Colston](#) has been replaced with a statue of a BLM protestor Jen Reid.

After winning silver in the shot put in this year's Olympics Games in Tokyo, Raven Saunders [formed an 'X'](#) above her head on the podium. Saunders, who is a gay woman of colour, made the symbol to represent *"the intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet"*.

Skittles removed the rainbow from their packaging and *"offered it up"* to [recolour images from historic moments in pride](#).

Jason Sudeikis, who plays an American coach for English football in the show [Ted Lasso](#), [wore a shirt in support of the three footballers](#) to the premiere of its second season.

Various pins have been created in support of those who helped us through the pandemic, namely key workers and NHS staff, including the celebrity-designed [People's Medal](#).

4

What Not to Do!

[Anti-vaxxers appropriated the yellow Star of David](#) as a means to borrow *"the pain of others to lend credence to their own."*

[BBC faced backlash](#) after co-opting the red ribbon usually associated with HIV/AIDs as a means to commemorate lives lost to Covid and on World AIDs Day, no less.

We've [previously touched on rainbow washing](#) in Good Futures. Read a bit more here about 25 corporations marking Pride who also [donated over \\$10m to anti-LGBTQ+ politicians](#).

'[Therapy-speak](#)' is being co-opted and diluted by the general public, who use terms without knowledge of their 'proper' meaning.

Students are calling out white people for [appropriating Patois language](#) and co-opting Black culture for cultural capital.

So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

1 Explore

Leveraging Visual Identifiers

We've created a workshop toolkit, complete with session plan, templates and stimulus, to help you dive deeper into shared signals and explore the opportunity to leverage visual identifiers to build community.

2 Innovate

Flag Days 2.0

Shared signals and visual identifiers have a big role in building community around flag days. They can act as ways to show participation, communicate preference, connect with others or invite action.

How can you use your existing assets to reinvent flag days? How could these visual assets or language translate into new online spaces and what could you do differently?

We'll be covering online communities as part of Life Online in the coming weeks.

3 Consider

Activism

Part of what makes shared signals interesting is how they evolve and change through use. By giving agency to community members to build shared language and connection in community you can invite creative activism into your cause. But consider where the boundaries are for inviting action and co-creation?

We recommend running a rope of scope exercise to explore cross-organisation boundaries and challenges to activism. How could people get involved? How could this differ between staff and supporters? What stops collection activism currently in your organisation?

Resilience & Covid Fatigue

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What are Resilience & Covid Fatigue?

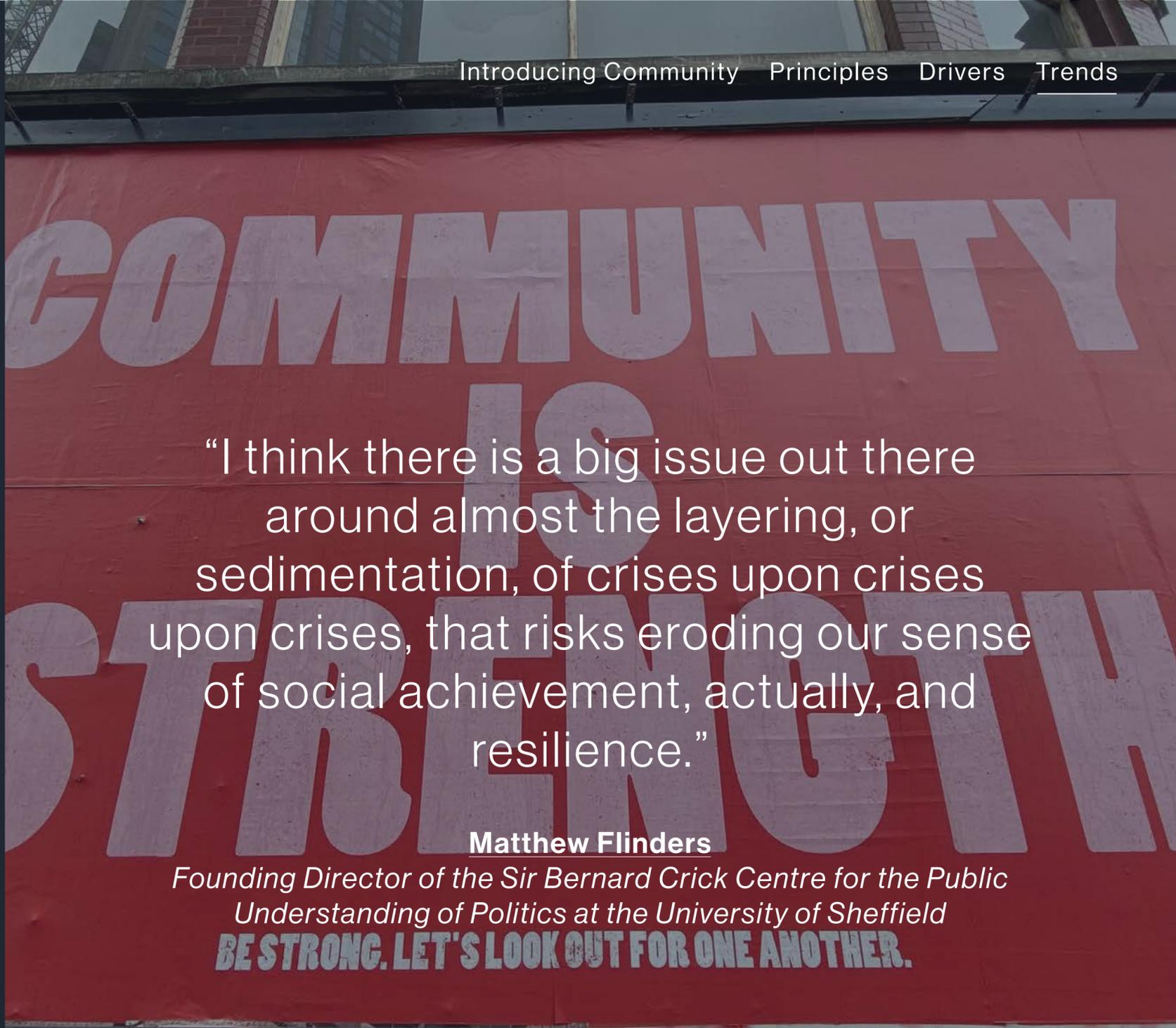
Resilience, in its simplest form, is the ability to adapt to situations or events that don't go to plan. Instead of allowing events to negatively impact you, or your organisation, learning to be resilient allows you to see things objectively and move forwards with a positive growth mindset.

We're looking at the trend of resilience not just through the lens of individual mental health and emotional self-care, but also considering how the right tools and mindsets can help organisations and communities weather the storm.

Why do they matter?

As the world changes in unpredictable ways, building resilience should be a fundamental part of your work, regardless of whether your mission is supporting vulnerable individuals, preserving the environment, or protecting wildlife.

The longitudinal effects of COVID are more than financial and physical. We're collectively scarred and suffering from crisis fatigue. This is where charities have a pivotal role to play. People are searching for something to focus on that offers a respite. Community can be a shield and a buffer, offering support and understanding; it can help people to heal from past trauma and be better prepared for whatever comes next.



“I think there is a big issue out there around almost the layering, or sedimentation, of crises upon crises upon crises, that risks eroding our sense of social achievement, actually, and resilience.”

Matthew Flinders

Founding Director of the Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics at the University of Sheffield

BE STRONG. LET'S LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

1

Pivoting Your Approach, Channel or Proposition

Faith communities had to adapt to COVID restrictions: Finchley Reform Synagogue offered a “[‘drive-in’ service](#)” for Rosh Hashanah. Museums are continuing to innovate in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. From [virtual tours](#) to [at-home art projects](#) inspired by the paintings on the walls of their galleries.

Turning unemployment into an opportunity to be creative, Broadway dancer Robbie Fairchild [opened a floristry business](#) called [boo.kay](#) after failing to pay his rent and being landed with a \$900 health insurance bill.

2

Helping Others Build Individual Resilience

After losing several members of her close family to Covid, artist [Annie Nicholson](#) took an [ice-cream van out to talk to others](#) about mental health and grief during covid over a Mr Whippy.

[Folx Health](#) is a digital healthcare service providing customised medical plans for the LGBTQ+ community. It offers tailored hormone therapy, ED, PreP, STI testing, a medical database, and video calls with queer-affirming medical professionals.

Building resilience isn’t just about health and wellbeing, it’s also about being better prepared for future setbacks. [Even](#), for example, provides an automated savings model to help individuals gain financial independence.

3

Building Community Resilience

British Red Cross [partnered with Yinka Ilori MBE](#) to create a mural as part of their “Kindness Will Keep Us Together” campaign to create an atmosphere of positivity in the local area throughout the pandemic.

[Arli](#) is an app that connects users with drug and alcohol addiction with others working towards their recovery. The app offers coaching resources and builds small groups of up to 25 people to share their experiences. This community of support helps individuals to feel less alone and isolated as they go through the recovery process. The app [secured a \\$1.9m seed fund](#) investment earlier this year.

London caterers [Karma Cans](#) went from catering to corporate businesses to shifting their focus and providing low-cost food for the NHS and the Tower Hamlets community during the pandemic

[Sad Grads](#) is an online platform that provided a sense of community for the UK final year art students that had their degree shows cancelled due to the pandemic.

[Redemption Roasters](#) is the first ever prison-based coffee company, who train those behind bars the art of roastery, giving them professional barista experience. The aim of the company is to encourage reintegration into society and reduce the likelihood of reoffending, by partnering with businesses but mostly through hiring their own trainees.

So what?

(This isn't a definitive list, but some starters for thinking)

1 Innovate

Diversified Income Generation

Coming out of the crisis, have you taken the time to reflect on what you learned, what you tried, what worked, and what didn't?

In 2020 Good Innovation ran a series of 11 workshops with charity boards to help them reflect on how they responded to the pandemic, where they are now, and where they want to go next. Every single one of those organisations prioritised future-proofing income generation as fundamental.

As we head into even more uncertain economic times, and giving continues to stagnate, how and where can you innovate and diversify your portfolio?

2 Consider

New Models of Risk and Governance

When the UK locked down in March 2020, some charities chose to adopt a 'command and control' approach to governance and decision, whilst others broke the mould and delegated down.

They confronted their risk aversion and empowered staff to make appropriate decisions. And in most cases, this approach led to more innovation, more experimentation and greater resilience in teams.

3 Listen

To Your Communities

Now is the time to listen to your supporters, beneficiaries and communities. How have they been impacted by the pandemic? What do they need to build resilience, and what role could you play in supporting them to heal and recover?

What assets and skills do you already have that might help them? What services do you offer that could be pivoted to a new audience?

So what?



But really, so what?

GIVE THEM HOPE

Coming out of the crisis people are looking for hope, for connection and for a sense of belonging. Now is the time to invest in community and connect with those audiences closest to you, and reach out to those who have yet to engage.



Image courtesy of Carlos Roso on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Florian Olivo on Unsplash

MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE

Despite what Field of Dreams promised, they won't come to you. You need to meet them where they are, in the spaces they're already connecting and collaborating. These spaces are going to look and feel different, particularly as we start to explore the Metaverse.

EMBRACE DISCOMFORT

In these new spaces you're going to feel uncomfortable. And that's ok. Invest in learning and understanding the language and signals of these new audiences. You're not going to get it right all of the time, but build for inclusion now and you'll reap the rewards down the line.



Image courtesy of Bethany Newman on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Jon Tyson on Unsplash

ALIGN ON PURPOSE AND VALUE

Community will deliver much greater long term value and engagement, but too frequently is tasked to deliver short term income. Community might be in your strategy, but are you really aligned on what it means and what it's delivering? What are you going to stop doing in order to prioritise building and supporting community?

But really, so what?

CREATE A SAFE SPACE TO INNOVATE

Create a safe space to explore community, away from the controls and governance of risk averse organisations. Take an entrepreneurial approach - small pockets of innovation that deliver iterative tests to learn and fail fast, with minimal risk or commitment for the wider organisation.



Image courtesy of Priscilla du Preez on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Ehimetalor Akhere on Unsplash

EXPLORE CO-LEADERSHIP

Reminder: you do not own your communities. It can be hard to pivot away from this directive approach, but there's value in embracing co-leadership. This encourages communities to grow from the ground up, requiring a reduced effort on your part. You provide the platform, the mission and product, but share control and creation. However, communities do still need leadership, guidance and a goal to galvanise around.

BUILD A UNIVERSE

In these new spaces you're going to Leverage your existing products and offers by creating a universe for supporters to explore and engage. Same product, different channels. Byline have a newspaper, tv channel, festival, community organisations, radio station and membership offer - different channels, same product and mission.



Image courtesy of Lucrezia Carnelos on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Gary Butterfield on Unsplash

ENGAGEMENT FIRST

Coming out of the pandemic, people are looking to belong. They want to connect. But most importantly, they need hope. But too frequently fundraising is about need. Consider an engagement first strategy. Connect, organise and galvanise supporters together to offer a sense of belonging and open door to your mission. Trust that the funds will follow.

But really, so what?

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE INTERSECTIONS

Break out of your segmentation stereotypes. Challenge your assumptions. Look for the intersections and speak to what unites, rather than what divides. Where do you need to invest in order to genuinely listen, and then how can you share those insights back internally?



Image courtesy of Gemma Chua Tran on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Florian Olivo on Unsplash

REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

Co-creation is more than just a focus group with your warmest supporters. It isn't about engaging the same people in an online community for feedback. This is an echo chamber that leads to an empathy crisis. Step outside your comfort zone and go to your audiences. How and where can you reach and connect with under-represented audiences who currently don't engage with you?

BREAK DOWN SILOS

Community needs to be owned and embraced by everyone. But it still needs management and direction. Micro-communities sit in pockets around organisations, each with an internal gatekeeper. How can you challenge and break down silos, in order to look for the intersections?



Image courtesy of Giorgio Trovato on Unsplash



Image courtesy of Antenna on Unsplash

COMMUNITY IS A SKILL

Managing community is a skill. It needs to be prioritised and invested. Where are your capability gaps and how can you plug them? But it also needs ownership and direction. Who at board level is leading and advocating for the value of community on both your impact and your income?

What

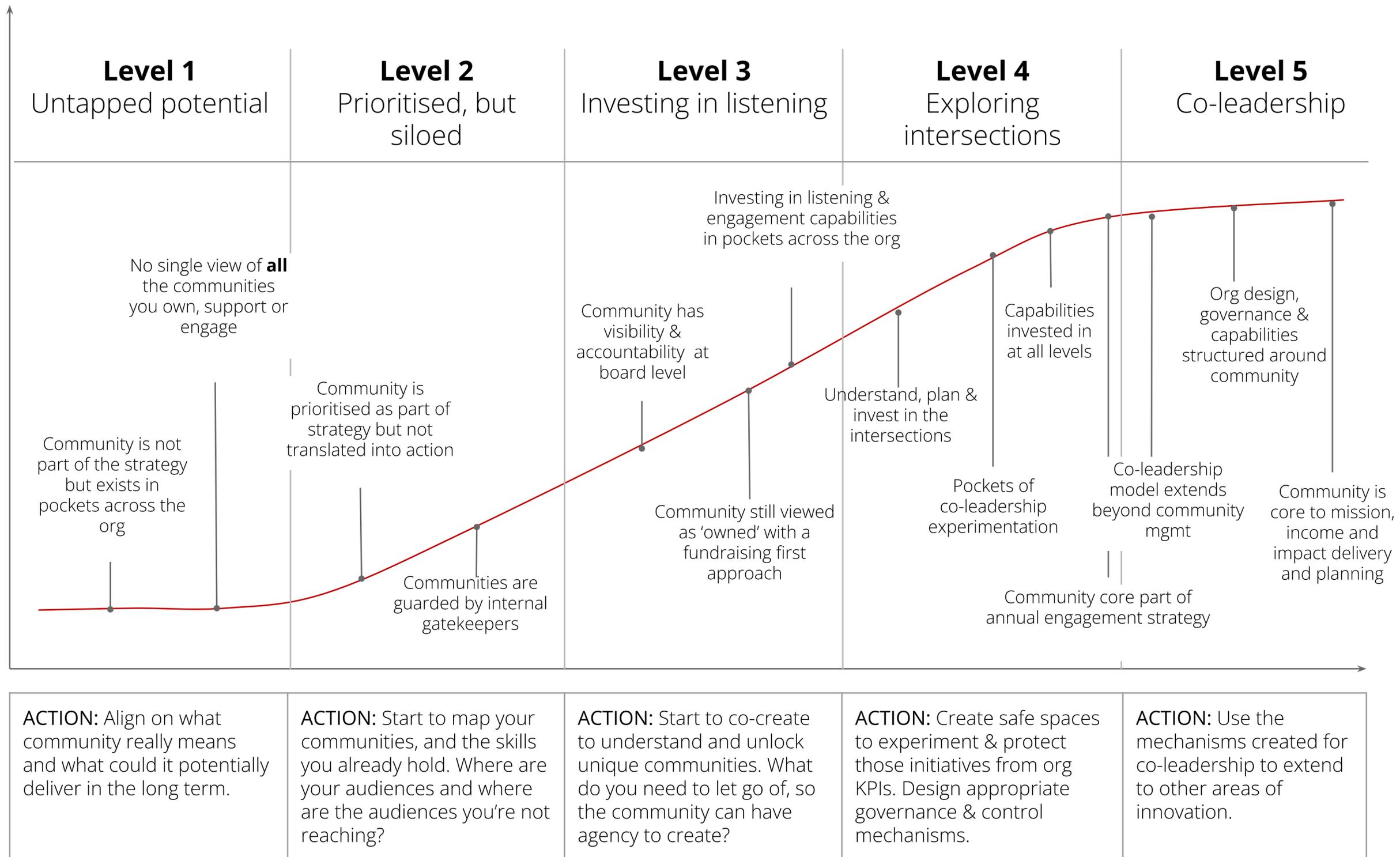
NEXT?

Investing **now** in community is core to future proofing your organisation.

As giving continues to decline and people question the role of charities in society, you need to pivot to listen, engage and co-create with your supporters, beneficiaries and challengers.

We've created a **Community Maturity Curve** to help you map where you are as an organisation now, and where you want to get to, along with a **Future Community Canvas** to help you align and agree on a definition of community, why it's important and where you want to get in the next 5 years.

Community Maturity Curve



Future Communities Canvas

1. WHAT DOES COMMUNITY MEAN TO YOU?

What is your personal definition of community?
 How would you define community in the context of your current mission, impact and income?
 How do you want this to be different in the future?

2. SHARED DEFINITION

Find the intersections between your definitions. Discuss the difference.
 Create a shared definition of what community means in your organisation.

3. IMPACT OF NOT TAKING ACTIONS

What does the future look like if you don't invest in community now?
 How will it impact your impact and your income?

6. BARRIERS

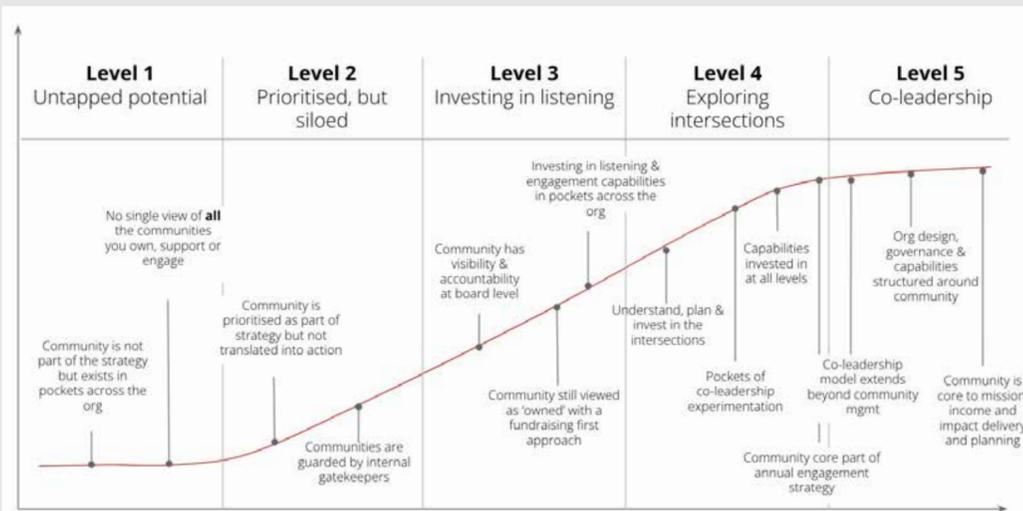
What might stop you reaching your desired outcomes?
 What challenges are you facing, and why?
 What can you do to overcome these barriers?

5. ASSETS, SKILLS & START POINTS

What communities do you already support or access?
 Where are the pockets of skills?
 Who are the audiences you want to target, and where are they gathering?

7. SHORT TERM VISION (6 months)

What do you commit to do in the next 6 months?
 How will your organisation be different?



4. Where are you now and where do you want to be in 3 years?

8. IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Based on your short-term vision, what are the tangible first steps?
 Who will be responsible for which action? Who is accountable for Community at Board level?

Want to discuss the implications of the shift and how you can use it as an opportunity to innovate?

Need some help exploring the potential?

We're here to help.

Get in touch.

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