

Speaker 1: [00:00:00] Blog Talk Radio.

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Speaker 2: Learn how to take your caring and giving further with the *Caring and Funding Podcast*, powered by CAF America. CAF America, America's leader in cross-border philanthropy, helps corporations, foundations, wealth advisors, and individuals who wish to give internationally and with enhanced due diligence in the United States. Through its industry-leading grants [00:00:30] management program and philanthropic advisory services, CAF America helps donors amplify their impact and ensure their gifts are made in a safe and effective manner.

This *Caring and Funding Podcast* is dedicated to these donors and the charities they support. Our guests are leaders in their field who join us to share tips for success and stories that inspire. Our host is Ted Hart, the CEO of CAF America. After the show, you can find all our podcasts at cafamerica.org, on [00:01:00] iTunes, and now just say, "Alexa, play C-A-F America on TuneIn." Now, welcome the host of CAF America's *Caring and Funding Podcast*, Ted Hart.

Ted Hart: Thank you for joining us for this latest edition of the *Caring and Funding Podcast*. Our topic today is impact and philanthropy. Philanthropy has always been focused on making a difference, but today transparency, technology, and [00:01:30] evolving society values has helped the focus on philanthropy become more results-oriented. It's with these important trends in mind that today we will share our insights and an easy-to-understand and manage strategic framework that will help you meet the challenge of generating more measurable impact for the funds you make available for philanthropic purposes.

At CAF America, we know impact is not a new topic for donors, but it is more pressing today than ever [00:02:00] before. Why is that? The world around us is increasingly complex. Even before COVID-19 began sweeping across the globe, this was true. Now, as the pandemic continues to wreak havoc, we see the dramatic social and economic challenges so many communities are faced with.

To be clear, there is no single approach to creating impact, measuring impact, or ensuring impact is sustainable or resilient. It [00:02:30] is however important to know that impact is a measure of how charities are implementing their strategy and advancing their mission. Measuring the philanthropic impact is a joint effort between funders and the charities they support. Measuring real impact allows charities to demonstrate the most accurate results possible for funders and stakeholders.

I hope all of you have listened to our earlier podcast, *30 Minutes Towards More Impactful Corporate Giving*. [00:03:00] If not, take a moment to go to cafamerica.org and have a listen. During that podcast, we provided tips on how you can be more sure that your philanthropic opportunities will make a difference. We discussed the definition of impact and the importance of maintaining a strong network of nonprofits to work with and driving that impact.

We shared highlights of some of the research that we've done at CAF America that **[00:03:30]** sheds light on donor and charity perspectives on these topics. Since that time, CAF America has published its latest in a series of COVID reports entitled *12 Months Later: The State of the World's Nonprofits*, which elevated the voices of charities continuing to battle on the frontlines of COVID-19. These charities, warriors who are engaged in the daunting task of leading philanthropic programs during these very strange times and have had to **[00:04:00]** pivot and adapt for the operating environments that they have constantly seen shift and are shining examples of tenacity and perseverance.

In that report, charities talked about the volatility in regions they're working in, their success in upskilling to meet the evolving needs of the communities worldwide, and the challenges that they faced as they strive to shift to a predominantly digital world, including digital fundraising. **[00:04:30]** These stories are at once inspiring and very sobering. If you're interested in learning more about what our reports have said, please go to cafamerica.org, and you'll find all of our COVID reports.

Today, we're going to build on our earlier discussion by providing insights based on specific guidance you can use, real-time, to plus-up your impact of the philanthropic investments that you are making. Based **[00:05:00]** on your positive responses following our March discussion, I've asked Sue Norton to join me again today. Sue is CAF America's adjunct global impact strategist, who brings a wealth of experience to the work here at CAF America.

She has worked in both the corporate philanthropic and nonprofit sectors, having spent 27 years at PepsiCo, most recently serving as Vice President of Global Citizenship and Sustainability. Sue ran the PepsiCo Foundation for nine years, during **[00:05:30]** which time she was responsible for leading the corporation's global social impact agenda. She has also worked on a range of nonprofit boards, chairing several of them, and brings that nonprofit leadership perspective to her discussion with us today.

Sue is president of Norton Impact Partners, a US-based consultancy group, and I can't think of a better partner to have this discussion with today. So, welcome back here to the *Caring and Funding Podcast*, Sue Norton.

Sue Norton: Thanks so much, Ted. **[00:06:00]** It's great to be with you again today.

Ted: Sue, I'm excited to have this discussion about the important topic of impact philanthropy, especially the strategic framework that you're going to share with us today. Given your experience managing a corporate foundation and working with a range of nonprofit boards, I know our listeners will be interested in hearing your perspective and insights. With that, I know that our audience is short on time and so is this podcast.

Sue, you and I have talked about impact philanthropy **[00:06:30]** and more recently about the many different ways that people can characterize impact. I know there's no shortage of opinions on this topic, but in your experience running PepsiCo's global foundation, how have

you defined impact, and what factors have influenced your point of view on this important topic, and the definition of impact that's changed over time?

Sue: Thanks, Ted. I would say, I don't think impact is just about one [00:07:00] thing. I see it as more of the collective result, if you will, of several forces working in concert. If we look back 20, 25 years, impact was really defined in terms of how much money you gave. If someone gave \$100 or \$100,000, they had the ability to say, "That's my impact. My impact is the money that I'm investing."

I think so much has changed since then; issues facing vulnerable communities are so much more complex, just like [00:07:30] you mentioned a moment ago, and with COVID exacerbating so many global challenges - whether they're food insecurity or unemployment and mental illness and so many others - and these conditions all continue to worsen, I don't think you can measure impact only in dollars.

I think impact's more about the degree to which you're really materially solving a humanitarian challenge, whatever challenge you choose. Are you getting at the core issues that cause it? Are you [00:08:00] making meaningful, material progress on it? Are you creating the kinds of solutions that can be sustained? Impact, really, to me, is an outcome, not an input. It's the result of so many key decisions you make in a philanthropic effort, and those decisions are much like building blocks - building blocks of impact. It's the aggregate, I think, of these that gives you the highest likelihood of truly impactful giving.

Ted: [00:08:30] You know what, I like the way you put that in terms of building blocks. I think it's easy, in this podcast format, to imagine building blocks. Impact is not just one thing, but it's made up of several factors, which each influence the outcome and success, to some extent. Let's share with our listeners today, can you talk about CAF America's strategic framework impact philanthropy?

Sue: Sure. So, think about it [00:09:00] like you're building a house. I mean this in a good way, so for those of you out there who have built houses before, I'm talking about the positive experience when you build it all the right way. You need a strong structure and a roof over your head if you want the house to stay standing, even through bad weather. Think of the building blocks as pillars that support that structure.

There are five of them that I've seen [00:09:30] consistently drive strong impact. The first pillar of those is specific and measurable goals - simply said, you need to have a clear understanding of what you want to achieve, specific objectives, and the timeframe for achieving them, agreeing on how you're going to measure success, and figuring out how you're going to track progress along the way.

Without clear goals and a nonprofit that you know is capable of measuring them, you won't know if you're on the right path to deliver the kinds of results [00:10:00] that you want. So, I think it is helpful to confirm that the charity has the plans in place to measure and track results, and if they don't, I think one option is you can invest with them and in them to build their

capability to do this work. Taking that kind of a step can be helpful not only for the immediate project that you might be engaging on with them, but also future ones.

Another option also, and I've [00:10:30] experienced this personally, is you can engage a third party because measurement is tricky, and sometimes you want an external expert to help you think about how to measure and track the progress, but what I would say is one way or another, you need a measurement process, and you need the capability to do it. Measurement is an area, frankly, that I think a lot of organizations struggle with.

When I was running the PepsiCo Foundation, we launched a number of initiatives. One of our strategic priorities was safe access to water [00:11:00] for communities in scarce water geographies. We launched a number of initiatives to provide community with access to safe water: conservation efforts, distribution, purification, hygiene and sanitation - those kinds of efforts.

We wanted to track the results of our investments, but each of the charity partners that we were working with, they had different capability, and they had different approaches. We weren't measurement experts, so we got help from people who were: a gentlemen named Farron Levy and his team at True Impact. Some of you may be [00:11:30] familiar with them, they led us through this amazing process, and having a third party expert advise and guide us gave us great confidence in our financial commitments.

Truly, the best decision we could have made and the methodology that the PepsiCo Foundation uses today grew from there. It was pretty straightforward: our charity partners logged into a site to enter results with a frequency that we all agreed on together, and then at any point, we could pull down the [00:12:00] results from the data that they had inputted when we needed to see how the projects were progressing.

We also used those progress reports as tools for performance measurement of our grants, how to trigger new payment tranches when performance hurdles were met. It was a great process, and the team just learned a ton about measurement along the way.

Ted: I really love how you mentioned [00:12:30] investing together, investing in charities, back to the earlier report, our CAF America COVID report, where we really drew attention and are looking to draw the attention of funders on the resilience of the sector and the resilience of charities. I really appreciate you pointing that forward. It sounds like a critical part of this first pillar, if you will, is knowing, ahead of time, what you're trying to accomplish, how you'll measure success, and making sure that you or the [00:13:00] charities you are working with are accountable and capable to measure that progress.

I recall our work here at CAF American several years ago with a prominent social media company that was running a community-led program through which local employees selected charities to receive donations based on the greatest community needs that the employees saw. The corporation was proud of the significant investments that they were making - this was millions of dollars that they invested - but wasn't sure [00:13:30] how to assess their impact.

They came to us asking how we could help, and CAF America worked really creatively with them. Our team helped them narrow the scope of the program and clarify the timeframe for impact measurement. We developed an application to help them better describe their measurement methods and gauge partners' ability to complete the project. We created a user-friendly budget tool for submitting program budgets and even created a streamlined [00:14:00] reporting process that gave them the impact information that they needed without overburdening their charity partners and taking so much of the funds that they invested just to do the reporting.

Our teams really enjoyed working closely with our donor partners and help them solve these challenges and enable them to increase their impact and be able to measure that impact. We want to know about this second pillar that you've developed here that talks about expertise [00:14:30] and resources next. This is an important element of the model. Can you help us understand the significance of the second pillar?

Sue: Sure. Ted, what I would say is I'm familiar with the work that you just referenced, I know what a difference it made for that organization. I am familiar with that and kudos to you and the team on that work. [crosstalk]

The second pillar is expertise and resources [00:15:00] needed for success. This one really focuses on making sure your operational plans are sound and that the charity and the other resources you're working with, whoever they are, have the expertise and, not insignificantly, the budget needed to achieve the goals.

A project can sound terrific and have the right budget, but you want to know with confidence that it's going to work and that you're going to get the kind of results that you want. I think the more you understand yourself about the problems you want to solve [00:15:30] through the philanthropic work you're doing, the easier it becomes to gauge this. Asking questions of the charity partners can help bolster your knowledge significantly and open up a really constructive dialogue that I found to be so critical to successful philanthropy.

Also, I would say there are times when the budget feels tight, and maybe you worked on a project like this before and have seen all the things that can potentially go wrong and you're concerned. "Hey, I don't think there's going to be a [00:16:00] lot of wiggle room here with this budget if, inevitably, challenges emerge along the way." What I would say is, don't be afraid to invite other donors or charity partners to join you.

Often, other funders are also interested in the same kind of work that you're doing, they might be interested in providing additional support to augment your own, and they can share in the budgetary load when they do that. I think collaborative funding is a great way to co-invest [00:16:30] in capacity-building for the charity to sustain your impact.

I say this humbly because I've been there myself, but sometimes we all get a little too focused on who's going to get the credit, so we may shy away from drawing others in because we want to be the heroes that go in and have this impact, but that approach really has pros and cons. I

found, usually, more funds means more impact, and there's always enough credit later to go around if the impact is [00:17:00] truly meaningful.

Ted: Yes, that's always been our approach as well, and you could look at it a slightly different way. There's always enough credit to go around if the impact is meaningful, but there's also enough problems around to be impactful on [crosstalk] that you can find. There's programs that you can get that credit, but you can make that difference. I think it's significant about the second pillar.

It certainly [00:17:30] sounds like it keeps a donor and charity from embarking on an effort without really having a clear picture of what's required for success and then making sure that the project, the plan, the budget, the resources can deliver on that plan. I think this is really about having a reality check in terms of, are we investing enough to really set the program up for success, as opposed to just investing a little and see how far they can get?

A lot of [00:18:00] us would want to do, and do do planning for our own organizations in that way. We don't underfund a program to see if maybe it will succeed, we make sure that we properly fund the project to ensure that it succeeds.

Sue: Great point.

Ted: That's really a big distinction there. Looking ahead here and moving forward to the third pillar, as many of us know, progress tracking is often undervalued and overlooked. Yes, it's a truly [00:18:30] critical part of driving impact. Help us understand and walk us through the third pillar in this platform.

Sue: You are so right. I think that's absolutely true, progress tracking is definitely underrated. This third pillar - progress tracking and a transparency mindset is what we call it - is grounded really in two pretty fundamental principles: first, that you need to track progress to know if you're having an impact; and then secondly, [00:19:00] your goal, really somewhat altruistically, should be to expand your reach so you can enhance your impact any way that you possibly can.

So progress tracking not only shows us status, but it prevents surprises, it allows charities and their donors to align on any course corrections that you need to make to keep things on track. It gives you great news when you're ahead of the game, which always feels terrific, but it also surfaces bumps in the [00:19:30] road if you're not, and it gives you a chance to react to them quickly with an informed perspective and the data you need to make the right decisions.

I think by sharing your progress or insights that you gain through the work that you're doing or best practices that you learn along the way with other donors, the transparency mindset parts, through that, you could really help other donors and other charities do better work as well. I think so [00:20:00] much of philanthropy is about sharing information so that all boats can rise because when you do this, it increases the total number of communities and individuals that benefit from the impact.

When learnings are in the public domain, you really build the collective knowledge and can become, I would say, a catalyst for broader impact. I'll give you a sense of just a quick personal example that highlights something I learned firsthand around progress tracking. **[00:20:30]**

I talked earlier about the PepsiCo Foundation's investments in water access when I was running the foundation, and a number of years ago we were working with a phenomenal organization some of you may be familiar with - Water.org - an incredible nonprofit that does pretty progressive, rather exceptional work in water distribution. They have a lot of expertise in Southeast Asia, and we were working with them there. Some of our listeners, again, may be familiar with their great work.

We were doing a microfinancing **[00:21:00]** project with them where women could borrow funds and use them to pay for the pumps and pipes that would bring water into the community for household water hookup. We had done all our homework and established our specific and measurable goals (of course, in keeping with our pillars) and were getting regular progress updates from Water.org's teams through the measurement tracking process and tools that I described earlier.

As we were **[00:21:30]** looking at it, what we noticed was the number of people who were gaining access to water was lagging what our target was. We weren't hitting the numbers as aggressively as we thought we would at that time. We brought our teams together, the Water.org team, the rest of the folks within our foundation team, some of our local country staff as well, reviewed the information, we asked a lot of questions: what do we think is causing it, is implementation on track, are we measuring it properly, or are there other factors? Anything we need to think about differently?

[00:22:00] Hilariously, delightfully, what we learned was, believe it or not, we were actually ahead of the game. The issue or challenge was that one of the regions in India wasn't reporting their data fully. Data was missing, and it just wasn't fully reflecting a lot of the great work that was being done. The learning was that we needed to remind the country teams about the reporting process, make sure they were familiar with how to use the site so that they could input their data, **[00:22:30]** logging in, providing the data with the right frequency, all of that.

That was a great tactical benefit on the project itself, but that step of sitting down together to see what was happening was so crazy productive on so many levels. We learned so much about Water.org's amazing work on the ground, their capability, their measurement process. They learned from us through some of the dialogue that we were having. I would say **[00:23:00]** the biggest benefit, honestly, was the trust that we built in each other and the really constructive tone that we kept between donor (us) and charity (them).

This group knows, philanthropy is unpredictable. It's imperfect. Even when you start with the right detailed plan, stuff happens. What matters, I think more than anything, is how you handle when something happens, and these kinds of regular progress **[00:23:30]** check-ins provided

such a great forum for us. Staying connected and collaborative problem-solving became fairly routine through this process. It was just a great experience and a well-learned lesson.

Ted: Such a great point about the importance of collaborative dialogue between the donor and the charity to share status, discuss what's working, what's challenging, and to work together to agree on what adjustments or course corrections might be [00:24:00] needed. After all, donors and charities, they're in it together. We really saw that during COVID in terms of contributions that had already been made, reworking the agreements, just a lot more flexibility to meeting the needs of the moment.

Both sides having some skin in the game as they need to see any challenges as both have responsibilities to resolve, and to do that together because, [00:24:30] as you said, it's partly a learning process, but there are outcomes that we're looking to achieve for the communities that we're looking to support. I also really like what you say about the importance of that transparency mindset, not holding back but sharing information.

Sometimes that can be scary for charities because they need the funding, they want the funding, they want to meet the needs or the desires of the donor in the project, [00:25:00] and being honest and transparent about things that go wrong can sometimes be very risky or seem very risky. Creating a safe space where it really is about the learning and not about laying blame to something that went wrong or the pat on the back, as you said earlier, who gets the credit for something going right.

It's easy for donors to want to keep the insights and learning to themselves, but [00:25:30] the best way to accelerate impact for philanthropy is to share those learnings and to be able to build on others' successes or learn from the failures that maybe they had in their program [crosstalk] again, transparency but also education and learning.

Moving on to the fourth pillar, I think that CAF America's donors who always strive for the greatest impact possible and want that to last - and this is where we really push the notion of resilience - [00:26:00] some of our donors are thinking very progressively about this.

I'm thinking of Yum! Brands, for example, recently announced their *Unlocking Opportunity Initiative* with a \$100-million commitment to fight inequality over the next five years. Yum! isn't new to investments in inclusion and equality, but this initiative builds on their investments over the past two decades. They've stepped it up in a very big way in making this a multi-year investment, [00:26:30] recognizing the complexity of the issue of inequality that is not going to just be solved overnight.

Their desire is to have significant impact, measurable impact, which requires that they invest in the infrastructure of solutions, which requires a long-term commitment for their support. Yum! gets it. Their initiative is aimed at tackling inequality in three areas that can unlock opportunity for their employees, frontline restaurant teams, and communities [00:27:00] around the world.

The first, Sue, is equality and inclusion, the second being education, and third, entrepreneurship. These kinds of investments enable partners to ramp up their impact, starting slowly as they build their capacity and ultimately driving for greater lasting impact. Sue, that is a backdrop. Can you share your insights on the fourth pillar?

Sue: Sure. The fourth pillar focuses on the fact that, [00:27:30] and I think so many of our listeners know this firsthand, real impact takes time. Many of the causes we care about really center around deep-seated issues in communities, in countries, or with certain cohorts, food insecurity, girls not having access to education, farmers battling climate change, poverty, economic hardship.

These didn't develop overnight, and meaningful impact doesn't occur overnight either. It comes [00:28:00] really from changing the game, creating lasting change. To do that, you need a long-term focus for sustained results. Sometimes an effort requires infrastructure investments, particularly when it's something that's going to take an extended period of time or investment, or the charity might need to upskill their team to be able to sustain new processes over time, or technology, or tools.

This is only possible if they can rely on [00:28:30] a steady flow of contributions so they can plan their work. If they're living day-to-day and they're not sure they're going to have that long-term funding, that becomes far harder for them to do, and then these kinds of areas of investment that require a long-term focus falter. Multi-year funding commitments really enable charities to plan projects out over a longer time horizon.

They can add infrastructure and operational capacity when they need [00:29:00] to, to scale and sustain new community practices beyond the life of a single short-term grant. So often, many of us, we think in terms of a grant life or the duration of a particular grant. It helps, I think, to think in terms of the issues and the challenges. The grant itself is just a blink of an eye within that context.

I think another important role donors can play, that this pillar touches on, is to help a charity engage and [00:29:30] persuade other donors to contribute. I talked a little bit before about drawing other partners in, in collaborative funding. When other donors join us, the pool of funds grows, the charity can take a longer-term view, more systemic changes can be made, and it becomes much more likely that the impact will last, and it's not just going to be a flash in the pan.

If you're a corporate donor, there are so many avenues you can pursue that have this multifaceted benefit. You can join forces with other [00:30:00] business partners, whether they're customers, or vendors, or suppliers. Maybe you fund the cause you both care about together. Maybe your employees can join forces with their employees to volunteer and lock arms on something together. Whether it's in-person or these days, perhaps virtually, these collaborations can forge the kinds of strong bonds that not only drive greater impact, but they deepen corporations' business [00:30:30] relationships in ways that matter systemically and that can grow business potential for a win-win, or I should say a win-win-win.

Ted: Well. Yes, and you're bringing up an important point for our listeners to keep in mind here is that impact comes in lots of different viewpoints. Building those stronger bonds between all those players is, in fact, impact in and of itself in how that can [00:31:00] impact the community even if the program itself is not the biggest impact. Thinking in terms of those people that you're bringing together and the bonds that are created and what kind of infrastructure you're creating.

Hitting on a very critical point here, I know we so often think in terms of a contribution to a grant and yet many of the systemic challenges that we're passionate about are more complicated than just one grant can solve. While every little bit counts, if we're putting, [00:31:30] to use your words, a bandage on something that requires long-term physical therapy for lasting strength, we're not making that meaningful impact that we're looking for in a community or in a country.

We have one more pillar, and I'm guessing that our listeners can guess here that it's going to be talking about partners and thinking like partners. Let's make sure that we get that covered in the time that we have here. [00:32:00] Let's move on to pillar number five.

Sue: You bet. You guessed right, our last pillar is really, you know, I feel like it's one of the most critical to the framework, and this is having a partnership orientation or a partnership mindset in the way that we approach the work from the beginning. It's so important that this partnership orientation exists between a donor and whatever charity or charities that they're working with. In some respects, [00:32:30] it's the most essential because this one pillar, this partnership mindset, enables the other four.

The stronger the partnership, not surprisingly, the more stable your house, if you go back to the metaphor that we were talking about earlier. Like I said earlier, the roles of donor and charity are different now because the needs and the goals of each of them have evolved so much over the last several years. I really see [00:33:00] a new paradigm has emerged, and it's one that's much more focused on mutual benefit and interdependency and the embracing and welcoming of that between the donor and the charity, with each playing a really critical role for the collective benefit of both.

If you think about it, corporations are smart. They're smart to support the communities they operate in. It shows the public who they are beyond their [00:33:30] products and their services, it shows that they have a heart and a soul. By investing in the communities that they serve, guess what, they also help solve important problems that those communities are facing.

That keeps the communities growing and helps those communities become future consumers, customers, et cetera. The company gains reputational benefit from this, it reflects positively on their brand, makes customers view them more positively. It all puts winds in the sails of their business operations, [00:34:00] along the lines of triple bottom line that I know we're all familiar with, but most corporations can't run these kinds of programs themselves.

They need charities to do that while they focus on growing their businesses, and it's in their best interests to help sustain these charities so each can continue to play their role. I can't emphasize enough how important that is. Charities, on the other hand, are in the business of solving problems and removing obstacles [00:34:30] so that communities can thrive, but they're operating in this increasingly volatile environment, we're seeing it now more than ever with COVID, and have to pivot and adapt quickly, more quickly, I would say, than they've ever had to in the past.

Working with a donor who understands this and works as a true partner can really make an incredible fundamental difference to the charity that helps them accelerate their impact. [00:35:00] Understanding and flexibility is really important in this partnership when problems inevitably emerge, and we all know they will, impact rises or falls often based on how those two handle them.

Do they race to their corners and start pointing fingers and yelling at each other, or do they work together to calmly and rationally assess the issues, think about options, explore the validity of each option, and then decide together how they're going to move forward? [00:35:30] I think another way that donors can partner is by sharing expertise. This is something that I always enjoyed doing a great deal in, and charities and nonprofits were always very appreciative of it.

Many companies have employee engagement programs, and through those programs, employees can share expertise pro bono that helps nonprofits build capability in particular areas. Employees can provide marketing expertise or finance or logistics or production or social media [00:36:00] or digital or fundraising skills. It's such a wide range of different expertise often that employees and different donors, if they're companies, can share. It all depends on what the nonprofits need. They can scope it around what those nonprofits need.

While employees are helping, by the way, they build great teamwork skills, they build leadership skills, they build coaching skills, and then all of these things, I've seen, make them stronger contributors to the [00:36:30] company. There are so many benefits that surround these kinds of different nature of support that the companies can provide.

I think to build long-term resilience, progressive donors can invest to build the capacity of their charity partners to really be able to execute against the five building blocks that we're talking about. These kinds of donors really embrace that interdependency because they know it's the surest path to [00:37:00] true and real lasting impact.

Ted: That's so important. Again, I just want to draw attention. You're raising this important interplay between expertise and funding and that companies and charities serving their role in the partnership is really important, but there's so much more that companies and communities can provide to this, and it's that expertise. [00:37:30] That goes back to the CAF America's report, *12 Months Later: The State of World's Nonprofits* - Volume 7 in our Voice of Charities Facing COVID-19 reports. Those are, Sue, as you know, available at cafamerica.org.

In that, we do challenge funders to continue to provide financial support, which is so important to nonprofits, but to look at their other areas of expertise and to look at what charities need to build that **[00:38:00]** resilience and to be there when communities need them. You're just bringing that forward, as you say, to build that long-term resilience and forward-thinking that donors can bring.

This has just been really a great conversation, and I know that our audience really appreciates the clarity of the five pillars and the way that you can work through that impact programming. **[00:38:30]** We just have a little bit of time left, and if you don't mind, Sue, I've got just a couple extra questions that I'd like to ask you to just weigh in on and give us your thoughts on.

First, as we all know, the past 12-18 months have certainly shown us that crises and disasters can take many different forms, emerging very unexpectedly, and they can forever alter the world that we're living in. For a lot of communities, they are permanently changed because of **[00:39:00]** what we've experienced around the world. There are many other ways that we can think about how to learn this and time that you can share and what your thoughts are on how donors can think about supporting crises and disasters going forward.

That's one question, then second, how optimistic are you that philanthropic giving can continue to make a difference in this changing world? Can we meet the challenges that lie ahead? **[00:39:30]**

Sue: Yes, we can, is the short answer. But let me start first by, I really have to tip my hat to the generous donors out there. I have been truly inspired by how corporate donors and others have been supporting so many really critical causes, particularly since the pandemic began. Just my hat's off. **[00:40:00]** Kudos to all of the donors out there because they're really making a difference every day, and so many charities and so many communities wouldn't be in the position that they're in without that support.

As for the "ah-has," I would say, first, we need to assume that in the coming years, these crises are going to continue. We're not done, not by a long shot. It might not be another pandemic around the corner that we **[00:40:30]** experience, but frankly if we went back a couple of years, none of us would have thought that a pandemic was coming. We wouldn't have seen it coming.

Who knows what it might be? I would say we need to be ready, and we should develop plans for what we want to do and priorities for what we want to do, but we need to do that with a healthy dose of flexibility because I think the world is increasingly unpredictable, and we're going to need to be able to respond quickly, and it's important that we're **[00:41:00]** agile and flexible and that when changes occur and we need to pivot, we don't view them as strange or unusual, but instead, we view them as expected, and we create flexibility in our plans.

I think, on your second question, I jumped the gun when I said "yes," but I'm very optimistic. I look at the shifts we've seen in the past 10 to 20 years. There's more information available on complex global issues in the **[00:41:30]** public domain than I've ever seen before, and it

continues. People and organizations can connect so much more easily because of social media.

It helps us share insights, it helps us share our best practices and other information that helps all of us be better. I think it also is really helpful that high-profile philanthropists or philanthropically-minded individuals and corporations are [00:42:00] bringing purpose into the everyday, some of our smartest and most strategic leaders, whether it's Darren Walker running the Ford Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates.

They're using their funds and their intellectual horsepower as forces for good. This is not a nerdy thing to do, this is a super-cool, fantastic thing to do! We're seeing it very much in [00:42:30] center of the everyday for us. I think this is great news for impact. It puts impact in center stage, and we do need to lean into this new paradigm of partnership. I think if we can leverage the building blocks of impact that we're talking about in our planning, maintain this flexibility, but with a strong focus on the five pillars that we've talked about, I really believe we'll be more and more examples of truly [00:43:00] meaningful, impactful philanthropy, and our donors out there, I believe will see a very strong ROI on their impact investments.

Ted: Sue, thank you so much for your time and for sharing your expertise today. Our listeners have very busy schedules. We've been able to walk through this discussion, informing and giving light to these strategies. We've covered a lot of ground [00:43:30] today, but we've done it in a way using the five pillars of impact and giving the listener the opportunity to see a pathway to boost their return on investment for the philanthropic dollars that they have to spend.

At CAF America, our mission is to help you achieve your impact goals. It's our honor to play this role, and the aim is to provide these types of conversations to help you receive the information, [00:44:00] find the information, insights, and perspective that you need to do your work. We hope that today's discussion has also helped you consider how to best prepare for the future.

We talked a lot about resilience, we talked a lot about what it takes to build communities today. While the COVID-19 pandemic took us by surprise and many are still reeling, we need you to be prepared and to help communities be prepared to help charities be resilient for future [00:44:30] crises, for future disasters, with the insights that we can bring to bring quick action, strategic action, impactful action to each of your strategies.

As I said earlier, we have released seven reports during this COVID crisis, and we are working on our next, and this will focus on critical lessons of disaster philanthropy, which will shine a light on some of the countries, who are battling severe [00:45:00] issues related to the pandemic, even this late into the pandemic, countries like India and Brazil and Nepal. The report will include examples of what donors and charities are doing to try to support these communities that are in great need.

You'll be able to visit that report as it's posted at cafamerica.org, and we will, of course, have a podcast and a webinar that will walk you through all of the learnings. We're just **[00:45:30]** going through the data right now, Sue. We can't tell you what those learnings are, but that's the nature of these COVID reports is to go out into the community and to gather that information and then to serve that data up to philanthropists, to donors, to corporations who want to be impactful and want to make a difference.

Many thanks again to Sue Norton for joining me here today and for all of our listeners who joined us. On behalf of CAF America, please stay safe, make the rest of your day impactful.

Sue: **[00:46:00]** Thanks so much, Ted.

Speaker 2: You've been listening to the *Caring and Funding Podcast*, powered by CAF America. Tell all your friends and colleagues to check out our archives, sign up for our free newsletter, and download our iPad and iPod-friendly podcasts at cafamerica.org. Thanks for listening to the *Caring and Funding Podcast*. **[00:46:29]**

[00:46:30] [END OF AUDIO]