

2015 Ariadne Forecast

See the big picture
Discover important
trends for funders
Plan ahead

For European Social Change
and Human Rights Funders

THINKING AHEAD
ELECTIONS
IN EU NATIONS
INSTABILITY
WILDCARDS
CORPORATE
FUNDERS
ALTERNATIVE
FINANCE
EXTREMISM
XENOPHOBIA
FREEDOM OF
EXPRESSION
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS
SOLIDARITY
ISLAMOPHOBIA
RIGHT TO PROTEST
CROWD-
FUNDING
DISABLING
ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY
DISSOLVING
BOUNDARIES
TRENDS
REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS UNDER
ATTACK
COLLECTIVE
WISDOM
NEW
SKILLS
NEW
FUNDS

2015 Ariadne Forecast



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Ariadne thanks its members for their financial support.

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“The idea that you are asking people to look into a crystal ball and use their insight in a way to think about what’s next is extremely important. It is not about what predictions you get right, it’s like a temperature gradient: are people paying attention to the right areas? A forecast will really help us to develop that kind of lens.”

Gerry Salole, Chief Executive, European Foundation Centre

“The expertise gathered at this meeting is unprecedented and could be used to greater effect. Foundations should be clear about what they achieve. We should participate in social dialogue. With so much injustice in The Netherlands, this is not the time to be quiet.”

Marjan Sax, Co-founder, Mama Cash and Director, Sax Consultancy

“We must look at the whole arc of time, and look and think about the progress made. I find it reassuring that other funders are committed to that process. I am not under-playing the challenges we face, but I want to finish with optimism, and mention the courage that grantees show, they are the ones on the front-line.”

Adrian Arena, Director of Human Rights Programme, Oak Foundation

Why an Ariadne Forecast?



Jo Andrews – Ariadne Director

In Charles Dickens' book – *A Christmas Carol* – the misanthrope, Scrooge, is forced to witness ghostly enactments of past, present and future events, with the message that Scrooge, as an individual, has the opportunity to influence the future **if** he changes his behaviour.

Ariadne is a network of philanthropists, not misanthropists, and in the past few years, largely through the [Knowledge Tools](#) project, we have become better at perceiving the past clearly to help us plan a better future. The Ariadne Forecast is an attempt to create a new tool to add to that, a predictive tool that taps into the collective knowledge and wisdom of a diverse network to help prepare funders, who work in the field of social change and human rights grant-making, for what is to come.

The aim of a forecast is to help you as a funder see the big picture and discover new trends, both in issues and grant-making practice, so that you can plan ahead.

The 2015 Ariadne Forecast is a community-created resource that around 90 grant-makers have contributed to in different ways. Ariadne participants and other friends of the network were asked six questions about trends in their field for the year ahead. Some submitted written answers, but, in The Netherlands, Belgium, France and the UK, 16 grant-makers of differing seniority and interests were interviewed at greater length.

In January and early February we held forecast meetings for funders in The Hague, Brussels and London to discuss and add to the findings. At each meeting two senior meteorologists with deep experience of the sector were invited to assess the trends uncovered and add their judgement. These meetings and the discussion at them were private, but it was decided by those present in all 3 cities that the final forecast, which is in effect a summary of a summary, should be publicly available for all as a reflection on the state of the sector.

The Forecast can be used in different ways and looks at questions and trends using varying levels of resolution: globally, regionally on a European level and, much closer to the ground, at country level in the UK and the Netherlands. Please make use of this resource in a way in which most suits your work.

In 2015 this is a pilot project; any suggestions for improving this work in years to come are welcome.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Andrews'.

2015 Ariadne Forecast: Global

Overall, Ariadne forecasters picked out two principal trends for 2015: the first is the revolution that philanthropy and civil society are experiencing under the twin pressures of **lower public spending** and the growth of **alternative finance**. The impact is to **dissolve boundaries** between philanthropy and civil society. Foundations increasingly deploy additional methods of using their assets and influence; new forms of grant-making vehicles are being created; and, in civil society, groups are mutating into different entities to access these resources.

The second major trend is the **disabling environment for cross-border funding**. The global growth in obstacles and restrictions placed on civil society groups receiving cross-border funds, and increasingly on the funders themselves, is ubiquitous and having a baleful impact on the ability of groups and individuals to hold states to account and bring about change.



The most pressing challenges facing your grantees in 2015

TREND **Financial Sustainability:** There is a feeling amongst funders that this year will be seen as the tipping point for radical changes in the way in which civil society is funded, but also an understanding that in 2015, this is creating great pain for civil society groups that are being asked to adapt.

“The biggest problem for grantees is how to make their organisations financially sustainable.”

Grant-maker, Hybrid Fund, NL

Low, or even negative interest rates, especially in Europe, means that some endowed foundations have less to give, reduced bilateral (state) funding is being more tightly focused on poorer countries. New sources of funding are growing, especially from entrepreneurial and other alternative finance mechanisms, but accessing them requires completely new skills, including communications and social media skills. Grantees will have to engage permanently with a much more diverse range of supporters. Those that can make the switch will flourish, those that cannot will weaken and die.

THINKING AHEAD



How can funders support civil society investing in social change and human rights to adapt effectively to these new conditions?

TREND **Disabling Environment:** This is a long-term trend, but in 2015 here are what funders think will be the major impacts on **civil society**:

“State sponsored disruptions and barriers seem to be emerging as the single most mechanical obtrusive barrier to the investment in the robust development of civil society.”

Board Member, Private Foundation, FR

- The increase in the sense of danger and risk for NGO staff: *“it creates such an environment of fear and restraint that it is difficult for some of them to do anything.”* (Board Member, Private Foundation, FR)
- The diversion from core goals: *“derailment of critical human resources meant for the movement, to administrative battles and organisational restructuring that debilitates strong leaders and exhausts finances.”* (Board Member, Private Foundation, FR)
- Civil society leaders need help, and gentle pressure, from grant-makers to implement safer practice and risk assessments.
- In some places, NGO leaders and staff will need practical help to move into exile with their families, and support to continue their work from outside.
- Emergency plans need to be put into place and funders should identify specific groups in their portfolios that are at risk, for instance LGBTI groups in the Caribbean or in sub-Saharan Africa.
- In the long run, this trend may herald a move to funders supporting individuals more than NGOs as it becomes too difficult to maintain institutional structures.
- NGOs re-registering as commercial companies.

THINKING AHEAD



How can funders help civil society keep this space open?

Developments expected to have the biggest impact on your practice as a grant-maker

TREND **Disabling Environment:** How do **funders** think this will impact on them in 2015?

- Many will review their commitments in the most restrictive areas and, if they decide to stay, will look for 'flexible and creative' responses, such as changing grant agreements, changing the way money is distributed and supporting groups to seek registration in different places.
- Funders are beginning to re-visit their approach to transparency and digital security. Transparency may no longer be in the best interests of grantees, and measures such as encrypted e-mails and websites are being put in place.
- Due to the dangers posed to grantees, field visits by grant-makers will be curtailed.
- Funders are themselves at risk, and need to re-assess their own safety and that of their colleagues.
- Funders will start to act collectively to advocate for civil society, and for their role in funding it, with government and international institutions. They will get better at this.

TREND **Alternative Finance:** It is worth briefly defining alternative finance, which includes: reward and donation-based crowd-funding, community shares, peer-to-peer lending, equity-based crowd-funding, pension-led funding, debt-based securities, and invoice trading. In the UK, data shows that by the end of 2014, alternative finance contributed more than £1.74 billion to civil society in the UK (for more details see [Understanding Alternative Finance](#) from NESTA & Cambridge University, or [Disruptive Technologies](#) from McKinsey).

"These mechanisms are a world away from classic grant-making mechanisms and relationships... if you do not adapt in these fields someone else will and you will be overtaken in your own field of expertise. This applies as much to funders as to grantees."

Board Member, several Foundations, NL

Here are some ways in which forecasters think alternative finance will change grant-making practice in 2015:

- Smaller funders see there is better value for money in switching to using these platforms (such as [Pifworld](#) and [Betterplace](#)) rather than a traditional, bureaucratic, grant application and review process.
- Pass-through and hybrid funders will need to re-think their niche and added value. In a world where an individual can build a relationship directly with a human rights group in Nepal, or a women's group in Morocco, why use a middleman?
- The organisational structures of groups seeking funding will change, partly to enable them to benefit from alternative finance streams, but also in response to the closing space for civil society, as human rights, women's rights and environmental groups under attack recast themselves as social businesses and cooperatives.
- The kinds of grant-making vehicles are changing. One forecaster pointed out that traditionally a philanthropist made his or her money and then started to give it away, to 'give back' or 'to do good', but new philanthropists tend to have different values, seeking 'to do good' or 'give back' at the same time as making money. So they 'live their values', whether that is in a sustainable labour chain, minimising environmental impact or with a business-related grant-giving or social investment vehicle

(of course, this isn't news in any way for Quaker funders). One forecaster estimated that 50% of new funders could be defined as 'entrepreneurial'.

THINKING AHEAD



How do we, as grant-makers, engage constructively with new funders and new funding streams?

Political development or sequence of events predicted to have a substantial effect

TREND ➤ **Instability:** Where do funders expect their work to be disrupted in 2015 ?

"Russia continues to deteriorate rapidly.... 140 million impoverished Russians coupled with the Russian political system will have an impact on the world given their ignored freedom of speech, torture and, more generally, their human rights, which are so severely violated."

Programme Director, Corporate Foundation, NL

"Right-wing extremists have already recognized that they can gain more public support by attacking Muslims than Roma, they will build on this."

Director, Private Foundation, CZ

- **Russia** is picked by many Ariadne members as the most likely source of instability, both internally and in exporting instability to neighbouring countries, especially Ukraine. One forecaster answered "Putin" to nearly every question in the survey. Collapsing oil and other commodity prices are adding to pressure on the government, the misery in Russian society increases the likelihood of a further rise in nationalism and violence. A rescue operation may have to be put into operation for members of civil society working in human rights and LGBTI rights.
- The growing arc of instability in the **Middle East**, affecting Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt and Libya, will continue to impoverish lives. Funders expect growing pressure on Turkey because of the refugee crisis. One participant is predicting a second intifada, others say that one of Syria's neighbours risks collapse.
- **Terrorism** will continue to exert its malign influence globally. It is hard to predict where, easier to describe the impact its presence has had, with a reinforced link between surveillance and national security. European human rights organisations will struggle to ensure that government efforts to keep citizens safe are effective, proportionate and legitimate, especially in the fields of arrest and detention, surveillance and communications.
- **Xenophobia and Intolerance** – specifically Islamophobia will spread further across Europe.

WATCH FOR ➤ **Impact of the Sustainable Development Goals:** The new SDGs, replacing the Millennium Development Goals, will be finalised this year. Forecasters say the new goals focus less on development and the individual, and more on systems and processes of sustaining change, so that the goals will begin to link development, human rights and environmental work. Forecasters are predicting some fundamental shifts for development agencies, which may be more open to using a human rights frame as a way of achieving their goals. The Post 15 agenda is predicted to have a substantial impact on women's rights, disability rights and children's rights.

WATCH FOR ➤ **Climate Change Talks: New legally binding targets?** No-one was brave enough to predict whether the Paris climate change talks in November and December 2015 will produce new legally binding emissions targets, or not, but there was recognition that this field has a dramatic impact on social change and human rights, influencing migration, the sustainability of agricultural practices and the stability of some countries.

Neglected issue or field of practice predicted to move centre stage

Freedom of Expression: It is thought that this is becoming a more technical field with a need for greater expertise to understand threats and how to counter them *“This requires a different kind of specialism and bringing together of two different kinds of fields, human rights activists and the digital security community.”* (Director of Programmes, Private Foundation, UK)

The Right to Protest: *“Infringements on these rights and the criminalisation of protestors are not limited to ‘fraught’ areas such as Israel/Palestine, it is also happening in...the USA, where protestors in Ferguson, Missouri were arrested.”* (Director of Programmes, Private Foundation, UK)

The Place of Religious Belief in Liberal Democracies: *“This has certainly been problematized and interrogated for several years but is showing every sign of coming to the forefront in terms of the relationship between religious groups and LGBTI, women’s rights groups, secularism, racism and xenophobia.”* (Senior Grant-maker, Private Foundation, UK)

A New Way to Talk about Feminism: *“My perception is that in 2014 feminism was discussed in an increasing number of mainstream forums, particularly via social media and among the 15-35 age group.”* (Director of Research, Funders’ Network, US)

“We are beginning to realise that for many people, human rights is not a very appealing or persuasive frame. Religion or nationalism is far more appealing, we need to think about how we are going to start to address this.”

Programme Director, Private Foundation, UK

Issues predicted to leave the stage or become less important

The Idea of Human Rights as a State Project: Incremental attacks on the European Court of Human Rights, the European Union and the International Criminal Court mean the universalism of human rights is losing its edge and is now in retreat.

A Simplistic Evaluation Culture: It was thought that traditional evaluation methods tempt funders only to do the things that are easy to evaluate. There was a strong suggestion from one senior forecaster that evaluation can be used in damaging ways, and that we need to move towards evaluating for strategic change, rather than demonstrating what a foundation has achieved.

Surveillance and the Right to Privacy: Sadly for a number of participants, this issue seems to be moving into the wings this year, post Snowden.

“Our board thinks about contribution not attribution. Metrics aren’t so important, it’s the counter-factuals that we must be aware of, the long slow burners about which it is hard to say what you are achieving at any given time.”

Chief Executive, Private Foundation, UK

Global 2015 wildcards



2015 Ariadne Forecast: Europe

The impact of the 2008 financial crash weighs heavily on much of Europe with many groups suffering the effect of sluggish economies, cuts in public spending and low employment, particularly of young people and women. This is combined with terrorism and the fear it engenders, a migration crisis in the south and the growing influence of Russia in the east.



The most pressing challenges facing your grantees in 2015

TREND **Disabling Environment:** There is a clear sense amongst European funders that this is a difficult environment for many of their grantees to work in, and that 2015 is likely to see it deteriorate in Europe¹ for a number of reasons:

- Recent terrorist activity in France, Belgium and Denmark has induced a sense of fear, one that is almost bound at European and Trans-Atlantic levels to lead to new restrictions on the movement of money and further restrictions on human rights and civil society groups. Ariadne forecasters are predicting new regulations in 2015 making it harder to give and to receive cross-border funds and harder for activists of all kinds to move around freely, even in the EU.
- States will implement new surveillance techniques enabling them, in the name of security, to have greater control over minorities and other groups they dislike.
- The crackdown on independent civil society in Russia is likely to worsen; one forecaster has spoken of LGBT refugees needing to be extracted. Will 2015 be the year that a number of Russian activists seek asylum elsewhere?
- The Russian policy of trying to drive a wedge between old and new EU members; and the propaganda efforts to rally Eastern Europeans, particularly in Hungary, Poland and the Baltic states disenchanted with the EU.
- So far there has been almost no concrete response from EU institutions on the closing space; this is likely to embolden EU members, like Hungary, seeking to crack down on 'problematic' groups such as human rights leaders.

"The response of the EU institutions and political leaders towards some of the worrying trends when it comes to freedom of speech could imply a worsening of the funding environment."

Grant-maker, Donor Institution, BE

THINKING AHEAD



What plans do funders have in place to help grantees and their families exit countries at short notice, specifically Russia, but also Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan?

THINKING AHEAD



In 2015, how can European funders push European states and institutions to defend civil society space and human rights activists, both within and outside the EU?

¹ Ariadne defines 'Europe' as the Council of Europe countries, including Turkey and Russia.

TREND **Lack of Local Legitimacy:** This is a problem right across Europe where few funders feel that the connection between what NGOs are trying to do and the communities they serve were strong or open enough. One reason that moves against 'foreign funders' have generated so little opposition is that there is very little local support or respect for what many groups are trying to achieve.

"In the regions we work in, one of the most pressing challenges facing the organisations we support will be building constituencies for their work and deepening their connections to the communities they serve."

Programme Director, Private Foundation, UK

TREND **Backlash against LGBT and Reproductive Rights:** This is affecting funders and civil society across Europe. Driving the backlash appears to be a cocktail of religious opposition to gay marriage and reproductive rights, sometimes funded by US evangelical groups, with the growth of the 'family values' movement, and the increasingly widespread and effective propaganda coming out of Russia. It is hard to know where this will break out next, but in the past few years a number of EU countries, such as Slovakia and Croatia, have held referenda to get public support for marriage as a contract only between a man and a woman.

THINKING AHEAD



Can funders working together in 2015 make headway in helping groups in Europe collaborate, or assist them in setting up a rapid response unit?

TREND **Persistent Intolerance and Xenophobia:** This has been a growing problem for many years, but because of heightened fear around Islamic terrorism this is likely to get worse in 2015. In particular a number of funders think that Islamophobia in European societies would increase. There is also concern around the targeting of Jewish communities in terrorist attacks and more generally as victims of hate crimes.

TREND **Cross-community Solidarity:** A rare positive trend! Will the recent events in France, and the sense of solidarity that they generated, lead more funders to extend their grant-making to work on supporting tolerance, and building strong, inclusive societies?

Political development or sequence of events predicted to have a substantial effect

WATCH FOR ▶ **Elections:** In 2015 there are elections in Greece, the UK, Poland and Spain. This will give us an interesting barometer to see how the race is faring between the new anti-austerity left, in the form of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, and the anti-immigration right such as UKIP and United Poland. The EU could look very different at the end of this year as voters cast their ballots.

WATCH FOR ▶ **TTIP Trade Treaty:** On the EU agenda also is the completion of the negotiations over the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership or TTIP. Various provisions have already brought people in Germany and the UK onto the streets over worries that corporations will be able to sue European tax-payers for failing to make a profit, in particular in the area of health. Although this provision appears to have been dropped, the treaty's proposed grievance procedure has the capacity to flare up again and to be a source of tension, especially as the negotiations are held in secret.

Neglected issue or field of practice predicted to move centre stage

Increased Funds to Combat Extremism: To include “strategies for community resilience as a prevention against the recruitment of young men into insurgencies and criminal groups.” (Director, Family Foundation, CH)

Social Inequality: The gap continues to widen across Europe, driving migration and despair. Is this an issue that grant-makers will feel able to tackle in 2015?

Tax Justice: In particular, the continuing existence of tax havens across Europe. Past policies will come back to haunt today's politicians in more than one country.

Issues predicted to leave the stage or become less important

Europe's Dependence on Russian Gas: A declining issue as new renewables come on-line?

Europe 2015 wildcards



2015 Ariadne Forecast: UK

In this section on the UK, funders look more closely at how they see major themes playing out on a national level.



The most pressing challenges facing your grantees in 2015

TREND **Upheaval in Civil Society:** State provided services and funding have suffered dramatic cuts and civil society organisations are under pressure to adopt many of the principles of the private sector. Market-based concepts such as competition across sectors, outsourcing and large-scale contracting are becoming commonplace.

“The trend is for the individual to be monetised and problematized in their cost to society as a prisoner, a re-offender or a disabled person, then their needs are packaged into a financial instrument: a bond or a contract.”

Director, Family Foundation, UK

This can be seen in the Welfare-to-Work programme and the offender management reforms, ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’. These tend to go to large commercial groups that can underwrite the risks, while voluntary sector groups, with community assets, expert knowledge and proven track records, are asked to become part of the supply chain and sub-contract their services.

A worry is that skills and data, once freely shared, are becoming ‘commercially sensitive’, conflicting with the charitable sectors’ duty to provide public benefit. It is feared that in 2015 this could mean a shift in the sector’s ethos, away from its long held people-first approach, towards a more money-based response.

THINKING AHEAD



How can funders help UK charities and the voluntary sector maintain a distinct set of values?

TREND **Structural Change in Civil Society Organisations:** Grant-makers expect to see mergers and a growth in structures such as [Charitable Incorporated Organisations](#) and [Charitable Companies](#), in addition to, or instead of, charitable registration, so that NGOs can engage more closely with social investment opportunities and commercial contracts.

TREND **New Skills Needed:** Many believe that 2015 will also be the year that we see a substantial shift in third sector skill sets, with less focus on traditional core services and more on income generating activities such as fund-raising, communications, contract negotiation and impact measurement. One UK funder is already hiring skilled professionals to work with and develop grantees’ skills.

THINKING AHEAD



How will funders engage with these changes and what opportunities does it present?

Developments expected to have the biggest impact on your practice as a grant-maker

“Destitution does begin to force our hand, is it important to do ameliorative work at the same time as funding longer-term work? Some people will ask: why are you working with think tanks when people are hungry?”

Chief Executive, Private Foundation, UK

TREND **External Pressure Changing Funders’ Role:** There is a growing mood amongst politicians and institutions that sees philanthropy as the solution to the funding void created by reduced state support, say a number of UK funders. Some are preparing to cope with this, others feel it is not their role. This is a really difficult point for many funders, and not just in the UK:

THINKING AHEAD



Is it right for funders to fill the hole left by Government, can they or should they refuse this role?

TREND **New Ways of Working:** UK funders are re-assessing their roles with signs that some are becoming increasingly comfortable about being visible, challenging, and aiming to drive change, rather than ameliorate problems.

- Working together is becoming a more accepted part of funder practice in the UK: examples of this are the development of the Agenda: The Alliance for Women and Girls, and the [Early Action Funders Alliance](#), a group of funders looking to persuade other funders and the voluntary sector to focus on long-term systemic change rather than crisis management on issues such as criminal justice, education and health. Both of these have grown out of older collaborative models. However, we expect to see UK funders explore further collaboration in 2015 as well as gathering more information about the impact it can have.
- Others are changing the way in which they work:
“[making] decisions much more quickly, with less importance on the paperwork than the conversation.” (Deputy Director, Public Foundation, UK)
“Grant-makers are having more conversations, and not just relying on the written word from grantees.” (Grants Officer, Private Foundation, UK)

TREND **Closing Space for Civil Society Organisations:** Some spoke of NGOs and funders failing to connect the dots between what’s happening in the global south and what is also happening in the north. One felt there was a step change in the way in which government now regards civil society, manifested in the 2014 Lobbying Act which restricts what civil society can do and say in advance of an election. Another senior forecaster, however, felt the threat in the UK had, to some extent, been seen off for the moment.

Political development or sequence of events predicted to have a substantial effect

WATCH FOR **The General Election in May:** Funders believe that whichever major party wins power, the direction of travel will not change, with more cuts to come. But there is expected to be a marked difference in the UK’s stand on human rights if the Conservatives win a majority, or form an alliance with UKIP. Funders are predicting: attempts to repeal and re-place the Human Rights Act; moves to withdraw from the European Court of Human Rights; and a referendum on leaving the EU. If these events happen, they will punch a

hole in the pro-human rights consensus on which Western Europe and the US has operated since 1945. Expect to see a detrimental impact in Europe, across the (British) Commonwealth, in the US and the Global South. '[The Year of Uncertainty](#)' from British Future has an interesting look at where the UK electors stand on different issues.

WATCH FOR

The Rise of UKIP: Driving much of the Conservative's rhetoric on this is the rise of UKIP, in particular its ability to link control of immigration into the UK with a British exit from Europe (Brexit). This is having an influence on public attitudes toward migrants.

"The link between the EU and nationalism has heightened the debate about immigration. This debate is set to continue and the more negative the debate gets, the greater the victimisation of minority groups will become."

Grants Officer, Private Foundation, UK

Another international human rights funder says that the rise of xenophobic and anti-human rights rhetoric in the UK is the single greatest challenge facing its UK grantees. Some collaborative work exists here, notably the [Thomas Paine Initiative](#), and Changing Minds, aimed at changing public attitudes on human rights and migration respectively. Forecasters expect more work in this field to emerge this year.

THINKING AHEAD



Is work commissioned so far by UK funders to change attitudes effective, and if so, over what kind of timescale?

Neglected issue or field of practice predicted to move centre stage

Inter-generational Fairness: This is not just about including young people in driving future change, but also recognizing that they have significantly impaired financial prospects compared to their elders. There needs to be new political settlements around inheritance, tax, pensions and state provision of care.

Bioethics: Including the debate about human dignity, eugenics and the relationship between science and biology.

Transgender: This group is beginning to develop a separate identity outside the LGBT label.

Children's Rights: Especially with regard to holding the UK Government accountable, following the review of the UK's performance by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Race Equality: This is in the context of the political conversations around immigration and identity, as well as the challenges faced by the Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector organisations.

Issues predicted to leave the stage or become less important

The Big Society: What did it ever mean? The sector has stopped trying to engage with it (NB this is just making its debut in *The Netherlands as The Participatory Society*).

Male, Pale and Stale leadership in the public-sector.

UK 2015 wildcards



2015 Ariadne Forecast: The Netherlands

This section on The Netherlands tracks a number of trends related to global and European pressures at a national level, and also reveals some dimensions specific to The Netherlands.



The most pressing challenges facing your grantees in 2015

TREND **Securing Adequate Finance:** Not surprisingly, almost all saw this as the biggest challenge for grantees in 2015: cuts in public spending, combined with lower spending by funders, has produced a crisis in The Netherlands. The growth of new corporate foundations and alternative finance isn't yet sufficient to compensate, meaning, to use a Dutch expression: it's a case of more fishing in the same pond.

TREND **Adoption of Commercial Ideology:** Forecasters felt strongly that civil society in The Netherlands is being pushed into the provision of direct services on a commercial model and away from advocacy.

"Grantees need to do a balancing act: they need to be able to pitch, be hip, be a marketer and have sophisticated digital skills. They need all these skills to succeed, but at the same time, there is less available to invest in the internal value of the NGO."

Project Advisor, Private Fund, NL

TREND **Funding at Risk for Marginalized Groups:** There is also concern that work with causes such as undocumented migrants and refugees is now at risk. Populism and political decision making means that these individuals are more likely to become destitute and cast out by society, and that the new culture will make it difficult to find finance for this work: *"In 2015 the climate makes it increasingly hard for them to make their case clear."* (Philanthropic Advisor, NL)

THINKING AHEAD



Do we watch grantees struggle or can we support them to gain new skills to survive and negotiate this new world?

Developments expected to have the biggest impact on your practice as a grant-maker

TREND **Less Money:** A particular set of pressures exists in The Netherlands which is putting a strain on grant-makers; expect big changes as a result. The Dutch funding landscape comprises of many, relatively small, private funders, and a relatively high number of hybrid funders (those with a mix of private and public money). In continental Europe, unlike the US and, to some extent, the UK, private funders are suffering a loss of income from low returns on their investments. This gives them some hard choices: spend their endowments and close, or redefine their mission with fewer resources.

"I think some will choose to spend-down, some to collect an annuity, and some to invest in both capital and revenue. In this light, I think we will see more trusts sharing back-offices and merging."

Board Member, Private Foundation, NL

“Grant-making is becoming a secondary act, it’s not our first-place tool for change, we will be more explicit about doing advocacy through three tools available: voice, knowledge and grants.”

Director, Private Foundation, NL

Here are some factors forecasters thought important:

- Digitalisation is having an impact as funders seek to cut costs. Smaller funders and individual donors can now use platforms such as [MAEXchange](#) and [FondsenZoeken.nl](#) to connect to applicants directly. It is becoming just as easy for, say, an Arnhem church to finance a centre for the homeless in their own community, as it is for them to fund a group, which combats child labour, on the other side of the world, without the need to go through an intermediary.
- Funders are looking for new ways in which to work: in 2015 some will decide that they can reach their goals more effectively by: acting as conveners; seeking influence and allies; and sharing knowledge in grant-making and advocacy.

TREND

Debate on the Role and Legitimacy of Private Foundations: There is a debate about the role of foundations in Dutch society, especially as the government withdraws funding. Foundations **are** willing to invest in public tasks and are proactively helping social initiatives develop at city or town level.² Dutch funders are also taking part in joint government and corporate initiatives, for instance the Global Partnership for Effective Development. But forecasters warn against being swallowed up by the government and insist that they must retain their independence.

“We often believe that after three years we should be able to wrap it with a bow and send it to the government.”

Board Member, Private Foundation, NL

There are concerns that the current environment will prejudice funders against taking risks, and that they will be lured into supporting only attractive showcase projects and not “gritty institutional financing”.

“Societal change is characterized by organic growth rather than fast exits, simple fixes, detached strategic planning or big cheques.”

Board Member, Private Foundation, NL

TREND

Alternative Finance: Funders felt that new ways of funding will move to the forefront in 2015, especially for private foundations. But to enter this world successfully, conventional grant-makers need to bridge a gap and become better at using a different ‘language’ and acquiring other skills too. Corporate philanthropy is expected to increase as well as social impact investing, which provides donors with influence as well as a return on investment.

“A few years ago nobody expected sustainable investment to take off quite as fast. Now approximately half of the investors are seriously interested.”

Philanthropic Advisor, NL

² E.g. [Verslag Werkatelier ‘Veranderende rol Filantropie bij maatschappelijke initiatieven’ met L. Meijs, B. de Blij e.a.](#)

Sustainable savings and investment products are a fast growing market, expected to amount to more than 25 billion euros in The Netherlands in 2015. But there are also strong doubts about these new approaches and what is possible with them.

“My question is, can we handle the new financial flows in a sustainable manner? Can we still operate from our original organisational goal? Because you may as well exclude certain things. Sometimes we work with entrepreneurs, Dutch celebrities and companies to strengthen civil society. But then there is the danger of just supporting popular charitable projects.”

Senior Advisor, Private Fund, NL

THINKING AHEAD



Private funders can, when investing intelligently and successfully, use their financial means more than once. Are there lessons to share in achieving this?

WATCH FOR **Increased Transparency:** In 2015 new Dutch legislation comes into force, which compels funders to become somewhat more open and transparent, but this trend is still in its infancy. One forecaster says this transparency will lead to *“an acknowledgement of the role funders have in civil society, but it’s a two way street.”* (Board Member, several Foundations, NL)

Political development or sequence of events predicted to have a substantial effect

TREND **Polarisation:** Inequality within Dutch society will increase further in 2015. A number of funders are worried about the absence of public debate on this, while, at the same time, they feel the specific problems of vulnerable groups are becoming more complex. There is a feeling that those on the margins are ignored.

“Pressing problems are less visible due to the jargon and bureaucracy surrounding them.”

Project Advisor, Private Fund NL

Neglected issue or field of practice predicted to move centre stage

Future Generation Thinking: The importance of taking responsibility for future generations and including their future existence in decision making. At present there is an [Ombudsman of Future Generations](#) in Hungary, the [World Future Council](#) and the [Long Now Foundation](#) which are there to help us take a longer term view morally, ethically and even judicially. Forecasters thought this topic would gain ground in 2015, not just in the Netherlands, but more widely as well.

Being Heard: The right of marginalized groups to protest and to be heard is threatened by populist views and attitudes.

Issues predicted to leave the stage or become less important

Less emphasis on project funding, and more emphasis on core funding: partly as a consequence of research on impact in 2014 ([Liket et al](#))³ funders views will start to change slowly in 2015. The old is focus on cost effectiveness meant that everything had to go into the project, with no funds for a sound impact assessment and too little attention paid to the core needs of the organization itself.

“We need to stop thinking about *our* grantees, *our* programmes, *our* this or that; foundations need to share a whole lot more in order to achieve impact.”

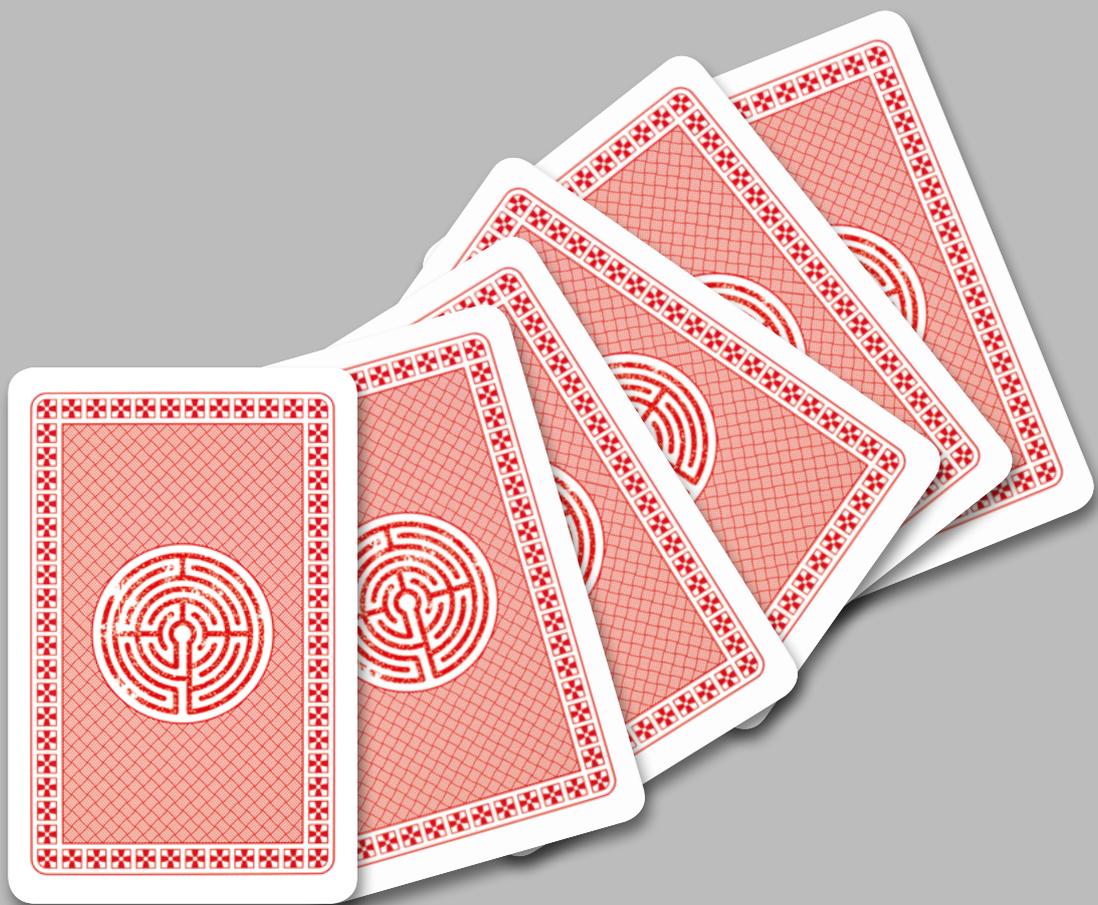
Grant-maker, Hybrid Fund, NL

Foundations taking the credit.

With modern networks, funders have no excuse for failing to find each other, for **keeping their shutters closed**, and for not sharing knowledge and information.

3 Liket, K. (2014, April 11). Why ‘Doing Good’ is not Good Enough: Essays on Social Impact Measurement (No. EPS-2014-307-STR). ERIM Ph.D. Series Research in Management. Erasmus University Rotterdam.

The Netherlands 2015 wildcards



2015 Ariadne Forecast at a Glance

Trends	Global	Europe	UK	The Netherlands
What are the most pressing challenges facing your grantees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial sustainability Disabling environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disabling environment Lack of local legitimacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upheaval in civil society Structural change in civil society organisations New skills needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securing adequate finance Adoption of commercial ideology Funding at risk for marginalized groups
What development do you expect to have the biggest impact on your practice as a grant-maker?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disabling environment Alternative finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Backlash against LGBT and reproductive rights Intolerance and xenophobia Cross-community solidarities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External pressures changing funders' role New ways of working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less money Debate on role of private foundations Alternative finance Increased transparency
What political development or sequence of events do you predict will have a substantial effect?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instability Sustainable Development Goals Climate change talks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elections TTIP Trade treaty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Election The rise of UKIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polarisation
What neglected issue or field of practice are you predicting to move centre stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of expression Right to protest Place of religious belief in Liberal democracies A new way to talk about feminism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased funds to combat extremism Social inequality Tax Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intergenerational fairness Bioethics Transgender rights Children's rights Race equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future generation thinking Being Heard
Which issue do you think is leaving the stage or moving into the wings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The idea of human rights as a state project A simplistic evaluation culture Surveillance and the right to privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europe's dependence on Russian gas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Big Society Male, pale and stale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed doors foundations Foundations taking the credit Emphasis on Project funding
What are your wildcard predictions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russia withdraws from the Council of Europe Successful challenges on LGBTI rights: Singapore, Jamaica, Belize A crowd funding scandal A regional Truth Commission for former Yugoslavia Potential collapse of the global economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another terrorist attack in Europe Increasing Islamophobia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some (private schools?) lose charitable status A Citizen's Income to replace benefits? Dementia Rights: a better voice for sufferers Civil unrest in the UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Dutch Government moves towards mandating private funds to spend 5% yearly to obtain tax advantages A new law proposed to set aside state money for social enterprises

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ARIADNE 
European Funders for Social Change and Human Rights

About Ariadne

Ariadne is a European peer-to-peer network of more than 400 funders and philanthropists who support social change and human rights.

Ariadne helps those using private resources for public good achieve more together than they can alone by linking them to other funders and providing practical tools of support.

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