

# The Future of Foreign Aid in 2040

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**What is the future of foreign aid and what are the implications of these possible futures for Canadian non-profits engaged in international development work?**

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of these possible futures for  
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international development work?**

**25 years**

# Four Generic futures:

“...all of the many images of the future that exist in the world can be grouped into one of four generic piles — four alternative futures.”

– *Jim Dator*

# Growth

A future in which current trends and conditions are extrapolated forward.

# Collapse

A future in which systems are strained beyond the breaking point, causing social disarray.

# Discipline

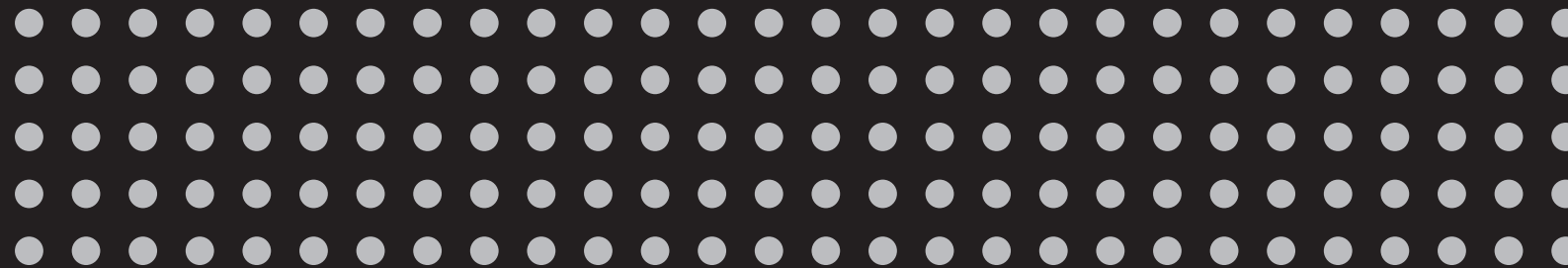
A future in which scarce resources force societies to contend with limitations.

# Transformation

A future in which fundamental change signals a break from the past.

# Methodology Map

SIGNALS



TRENDS





(group ranking exercise)

**D R I V E R S**

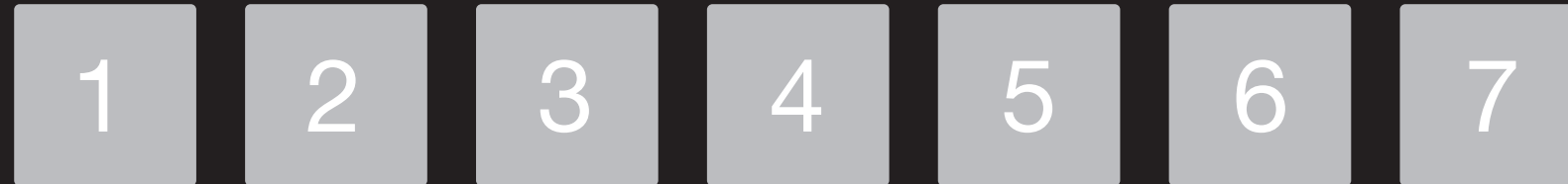
A 3x8 grid of 24 light gray circles, each containing a number from 1 to 24 in order from top-left to bottom-right. The circles are arranged in three rows of eight. A white curly brace is positioned below the entire grid, spanning all 24 circles.

(sorting exercise)

**M E G A - D R I V E R S**

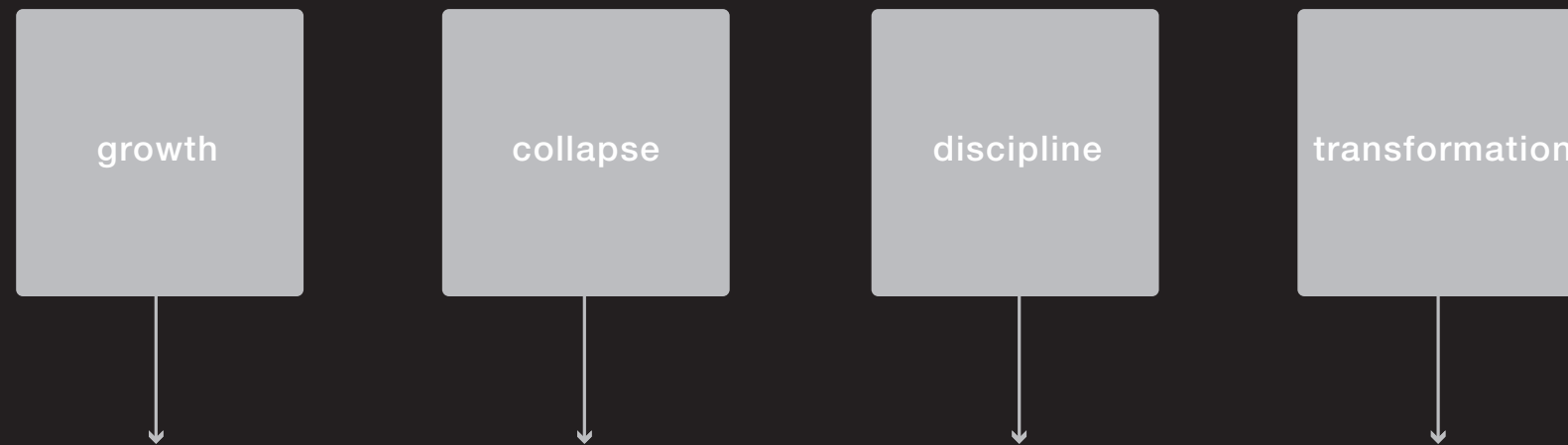
A single row of 7 light gray squares, each containing a number from 1 to 7 in order from left to right. A white curly brace is positioned below the entire row, spanning all 7 squares.

**M E G A - D R I V E R S**



(snow carding exercise for each mega-driver)

**7 M E G A - D R I V E R S M A T R I X**



(Backcast for each generic future)

**S C E N A R I O S**

**SIGNALS**

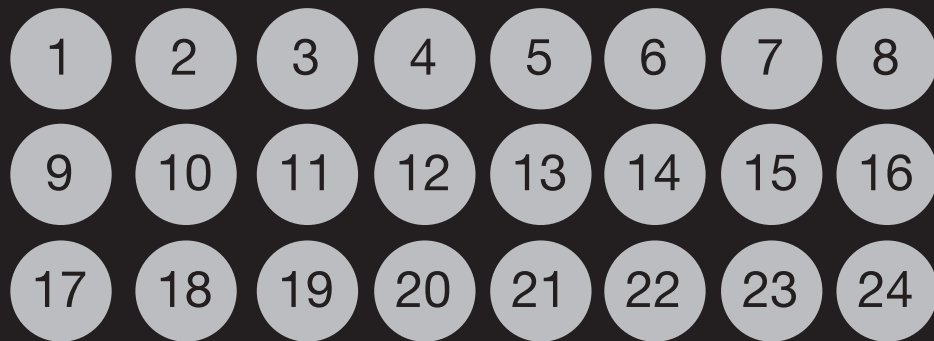


**TRENDS**



(group ranking exercise)

**DRIVERS**



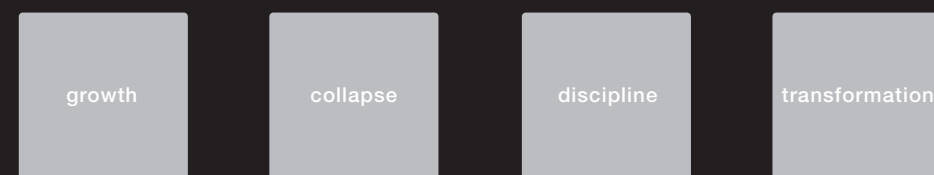
(sorting exercise)

**MEGA-DRIVERS**



(snow carding exercise for each mega-driver)

**7 MEGA-DRIVERS MATRIX**



(Backcast for each generic future)

**SCENARIOS**

# 7 Mega-Drivers

# Wireless World

- Driver: Big data
- Driver: Mobile technology
- Driver: Information technology

# Climate Disaster

- Driver: Climate change
- Driver: Natural disasters

# Access to Resources

- Driver: Resource scarcity
- Driver: Global income disparity within countries
- Driver: Urbanization
- Driver: Demographic shifts

# Strategic Philanthropy

- Driver: Transparency and accountability
- Driver: Private philanthropy
- Driver: Learning and outcomes

# Changing Social Status

- Driver: Global quality of life
- Driver: Access to education
- Driver: Gender equity
- Driver: Health outcomes
- Driver: Self-sufficiency

## Individualism

- Driver: Individualism
- Driver: I want to make a difference

# Politico-Economic Order

- Driver: Rise of BRICs
- Driver: Political stability
- Driver: Regionalism not multilateralism
- Driver: Emerging markets in Africa
- Driver: Global economic shifts



# 7 Mega-Drivers Matrix

	<b>GROWTH</b>	<b>COLLAPSE</b>	<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	<b>TRANSFORMATION</b>
<b>wireless world</b>	pervasive but stratified	extremely limited	regulated	transformative
<b>climate disaster</b>	intensified	decreasing	flat-lining	recovered
<b>access to resources</b>	widening gap	strained	monitored	renewable
<b>changing social status</b>	income dependent	based on skills	even social status + access	women leading
<b>strategic philanthropy</b>	corporate & boutique	local relationships	targeted	responsive
<b>individualism</b>	central	fear based	declining	part of the system
<b>politico-economic order</b>	corporations lead	localized dependence	tied to resources	Africa leads

# Scenarios

Growth [exploitation]

**“Aid Incorporated”**

Growth [exploitation]

**“In the year 2040, we are living in a world that has enjoyed sustained and substantial economic growth. Although we had a scare with the economic crisis in 2008, by the time we entered 2020, North America and Europe had fully recovered...”**

Growth [exploitation]

# Scenario Dynamics:

## Wireless World

Technology is pervasive and serves the interest of private industry. Access is stratified along class lines.

## Climate Disaster

Climate change and the occurrence of natural disasters have intensified significantly as a result of the abandonment of multilateral environmental agreements in favor of economic expansion and resource exploitation.

## Access to Resources

There is more even distribution of wealth across countries than ever before but the gap between the rich and poor within countries continues to grow wider. Access to resources is determined on the basis of income.

## Changing Social Status

People are now “consumers”: status, education, health and quality of life depends on one’s income more than any other factor.

## Strategic Philanthropy

Philanthropy occurs primarily through CSR departments, aligning with corporate interests in particular regions. Boutique philanthropy for rich consumers ensures their legacy and status. Competition among poor consumers to be part of boutique aid projects is fierce.

## Individualism

Individualism, productivity, and materialism flourish.

## Politico-Economic Order

Global power relations remain stable. African markets and labour drive growth for corporations still largely based in historically higher income regions. Government power is eroded and trade barriers eliminated. Nationalist and anti-corporate political unrest exists, but is marginal and strictly controlled by corporate security.

Growth [exploitation]

# Key Values:

- **Individualism**
- **Consumption**
- **Competitiveness**
- **Material comfort**
- **Productivity**
- **Legacy**
- **Speed**
- **Personal responsibility**

Collapse [release]

**“Community Survives”**

Collapse [release]

**“In the year 2040, we are living in a world largely shaped by the economic collapse of the United States. In the year 2030, we experienced the most devastating economic collapse in history causing an international depression...”**



Collapse [release]

# Scenario Dynamics:

## **Wireless world**

Technology is limited and only used for necessity. Access is reserved for survival.

## **Climate Disaster**

Climate change and disasters are the catalyst for the lack of resources.

## **Access to Resources**

There is more dependence on individual communities. Access is based on relationships built on trust and face-to-face relationships.

## **Changing social status**

Status and roles are dependent on your value to the community. Rise is given to skills and trades that keep the community safe and healthy.

## **Strategic Philanthropy**

Exchange between countries is non-existent, between cities purely for necessity. Resources are shared at a hyper-local scale.

## **Individualism**

Individualism is abandoned for survival purposes. Communities are based on proximity, relationships and shared resources.

## **Politico-Economic Order**

Globally, governments priorities are focused on reserves and communities are mostly self-governed and policed from location to location.

Collapse [release]

# Key Values:

- **Community**
- **Reserve**
- **Relationships**
- **Hyper-local**
- **Simplified**
- **Survival**
- **Tribal**

Discipline [conservation]

**“State of Sustainability”**

Discipline [conservation]

**“Although researchers and environmentalists in 2013 warned of the earth’s inability to continue to meet the demands of a growing world population, it wasn’t until the global blackout of 2023 that governments in the U.S., Canada and Europe began to re-evaluate consumption levels of natural resources...”**

Discipline [conservation]

# Scenario Dynamics:

## Wireless World

Technology is open and ubiquitous and facilitates the continual monitoring of environmental information by all citizens and governments.

## Climate Disaster

Climate change is showing signs of stabilization and natural disasters have flat-lined.

## Access to Resources

All resources are limited and highly regulated by the government which mandates equal access for all citizens resulting in the neutralization of the class divide.

## Changing Social Status

Status in society is defined by compliance to the resource mandate for sustainability, conservation and renewal.

## Strategic Philanthropy

Philanthropy is transparent, accountable and monitored by the government. Initiatives are focused and target based on extensive data and predictive outcomes.

## Individualism

Not just declining but frowned upon as all citizens must follow the collective agreement of the Global Conservation Accord (GCA).

## Politico-Economic Order

Resource-rich countries hold the power but innovation and growing sustainable practices in low status countries are slowing balancing global power structures.

Discipline [conservation]

# Key Values:

- **Transparency**
- **Accountability**
- **Resourcefulness**
- **Focus**
- **Practicality**
- **Strategic**
- **Compliance**
- **Cooperation**

Transformation [re-organization]

**“African Innovation”**

Transformation [re-organization]

**“At a time when youth, 18-35 represented 60% of Africa’s population, the surge of interest and activity in research and development reached a fever pitch in academic and private sector institutions. The discovery of a cure for HIV/AIDS led to dramatic improvement in health outcomes on the continent and indeed around the world...”**



Transformation [re-organization]

# Scenario Dynamics:

## Wireless World

Technological innovation in the environmental and health sectors has transformed Africa into an economic and political leader.

## Climate Change

Sustainable lifestyles and technological innovations have reduced our impact on the planet and begun to reverse the effects of climate change.

## Access to Resources

Resources are used efficiently and have been decoupled from economic growth.

## Changing Social Status

Women are leading public and private sector organizations, prioritizing the status of girls and women and access to education as economic priorities.

## Philanthropy

Philanthropy targets the growing poor in formerly developed countries and is focused on outcomes.

## Individualism

Individuals serve their communities and understand their place within a wider system.

## Politico-economic Order

African nations are world leaders in both economic and political contexts.

Transformation [re-organization]

# Key Values:

- **Equity**
- **Environmental Sustainability**
- **Leadership**
- **Stability**
- **Diversity**
- **Dynamism**

# 4 futures of foreign aid



Growth

“Aid Incorporated”



Collapse

“Community Survives”



Discipline

“State of Sustainability”



Transformation

“African Innovation”

# 4 futures of foreign aid



**Growth**

**“Aid Incorporated”**



Aid is...  
**commercial**



**Collapse**

**“Community Survives”**



Aid is...  
**local**



**Discipline**

**“State of Sustainability”**



Aid is...  
**regulated**



**Transformation**

**“African Innovation”**



Aid is...  
**reversed**

# 4 futures of foreign aid



**Growth**

“Aid Incorporated”



Aid is...

**commercial**



Development is...

**for some**



**Collapse**

“Community Survives”



Aid is...

**local**



Development is...

**relationships**



**Discipline**

“State of Sustainability”



Aid is...

**regulated**



Development is...

**targeted**



**Transformation**

“African Innovation”



Aid is...

**reversed**



Development is...

**responsive**

**Thank you.**

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