



## The future NGO is agile

---

How we deliver impact in a disrupted world

**Do Good. Better!**

# TEAM



**Joseph Nelson**  
Consultant  
NGOs



**Christian Meyer  
zu Natrup**  
Managing Director  
EU & Germany

# TALKING POINTS TODAY

- ✓ Committed to deliver admits disruption
- ✓ Agile is buzzword. Here's what it comes down to
- ✓ Five lessons from agile transformations in 2020
- ✓ Action recommendations

*Presentation with 10 slides followed by Q&A and discussion.*

*Content is free to share.*



Do Good. Better!

International

# 1. Difficult times...

- ✓ Nearly half of all UK NGOs may go bankrupt by 2023 (Bond survey Oct 2020)
- ✓ Income to drop even further. 65% of UK NGOs expect income to fall in 2021-22. (Bond survey Oct 2020)
- ✓ Nearly 80% of European NGOs expect a “lost period of 2020-21”, with static income. (MzN survey Summer 2020)
- ✓ Staff redundancies, health related absences
- ✓ Disrupted operations during lockdowns
- ✓ Stress and frustration with workload, inept processes and outdated strategies

## 2. What it takes to deliver....

- ✓ Some NGOs do very well. Who and why?
- ✓ What do these have in common?
  - ✓ More used to change in recent years
  - ✓ Highly diversified income
  - ✓ More digital
  - ✓ Quicker in establishing new partnerships
  - ✓ Agile operating model



**Interpeace**

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION  
FOR PEACEBUILDING



**kiron**

**MzN**

Do Good. Better!

International

### 3. „Agility is not just a buzzword, it's how we work"

This is about how we respond and scale. How we organise ourselves, how we work either

**opens up strategic opportunities, or closes them.**

It has to be based on our values and understanding of the people we serve and problems we address.

# 3. What is agile?

- ✓ Strategy sets targets, but does not prescribe ways to achieve them
- ✓ Data obsession: Measure, report, learn → foresight
- ✓ Platform based: rapid new partnerships & project development capacity
- ✓ Trust based: Teams come together when and where needed, less formal structures, very flat hierarchy, open data
- ✓ Funding is increasingly diversified

# Strategy

# Structure

# Systems

We co-create  
Programmes with  
people at the centre

We fund our activities 75%  
from unrestricted and 25%  
restricted income

We will deliver  
programmes where  
they are needed,  
starting work within  
90 days

e.g. Prog Development  
is platform based,  
drawing in partners as  
needed (R&D,  
implementation,  
advocacy)

e.g. Finance checks mix  
and has power to stop grant  
development  
**or**  
Our fundraising and social  
businesses are separately  
organised

We deliver digitally  
first, delivering  
training, advocacy,  
behaviour change

Platform is digital, open  
& secured and follows  
clear, pre-defined  
Prog.Dev Steps

Finance automatically  
received real time data on  
financial performance of  
fundraising

Digital learning,  
behaviour change  
and influencing  
systems

# 4. Lessons learned from agile transformations

- ✓ **Structures & Systems** must actually support the Strategy, not just based on history
- ✓ **Trust requires data transparency:** Objectives, Indicators and other data points should be freely available to inspire trust
- ✓ **Funding must be diversified:** Government funding is not a viable path to impact
- ✓ **Data is the key to impact:** collection -> analysis -> insight -> foresight
- ✓ **Make work work for people:** Flexible work arrangements, platform based work allows people to work when they want/can



Fundamental restructure undergoing, to be ready for recurring migration waves



Diversified its funding in 2019, grew continuously in 2020



Puts data at its core in 2020, attracts substantial donor endorsements

# 5. How to lead change! (not be driven by it)

- ✓ Change can be instigated by shocks, trends & pressures (e.g. financial)
- ✓ That type of change is often **reactionary**
  - >> We are driven to change!
  - >> This is often out of necessity but is not always the best way!

- ✓ Driving Our Own **Change** – Prioritise what you can control! Accept the rest.
- ✓ **Change** that is enacted by an organisation because it is desirable to do so.
- ✓ **Change** that is designed to structure the organisation to support its strategy.
- ✓ **Change** that is driven towards the future not driven by events of the past.



Thank you

---

**Get in touch:**

[chris@mzninternational.com](mailto:chris@mzninternational.com)

**Do Good. Better!**