

WEBINAR · 20 MAY 2026

Big Values. No Money.

Is purpose enough when the operating model is broken?

A candid conversation for NGO leaders, drawing on evidence and on the work of more than 300 partner organisations since 2015

PRESENTED BY

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MEET THE SPEAKER

Christian Meyer zu Natrup

Managing Director · MzN International



18+ years in the sector

Twenty years working with NGOs, governments and donors on funding, strategy and organisational change.

300+ partners

MzN has worked alongside more than 300 mission-driven organisations across Africa, Asia and Europe.

Finance and Practitioner first

Speaks from delivered work, not theory. Direct insight on what carries change and what blocks it.

What We Will Cover Today.

One hour. Six things you can take back to your team this week. Evidence, candid examples, and a practical view of how to adapt without losing the mission.

01

CONTEXT

How the sector has changed since 2023.

A clear view of donor retrenchment, the rise of private capital, and why legacy models no longer hold.

02

CONTEXT

Case evidence from organisations we know.

NGOs that adapted early and are now thriving, and those that tried to change but stalled or failed.

03

PRACTICE

Aligning the whole organisation behind change.

A practical discussion on bringing leadership, operations and finance into one direction, while protecting the mission.

04

PRACTICE

Adapting the operating and financial model.

How to redesign without diluting identity or purpose, and where values can guide the redesign rather than slow it.

05

FORWARD

More impact, more integrity, under harder conditions.

A forward-looking view of how NGOs can deliver more, with more integrity, in the environment we now operate in.

A Sector That Shifted Faster Than Most Were Ready For.

International aid is contracting at a pace and scale not seen since records began. The story is not a forecast. It is already on the balance sheet of every NGO that depends on traditional funding.

-23.1%

ODA in 2025

The largest annual contraction of official development assistance on record. Total ODA fell from USD 215 billion in 2024 to USD 174 billion in 2025.

2015

Aid is back to this level

In real terms, total ODA in 2025 sits at the same level as when the 2030 Agenda was adopted. A decade of growth has been wiped out in two years.

26 of 33

DAC donors cut aid

All five of the top providers, including the United States, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Japan, reduced their ODA in 2025, for the first time on record.

-26%

Sub-Saharan Africa

Bilateral aid to sub-Saharan Africa fell by 26 percent in 2025. Bilateral aid to least developed countries fell by a similar margin.

Further declines of around six percent are projected for 2026. The trend is structural, not cyclical.

Source: OECD, A Historic Decline in Foreign Aid, April 2026 (preliminary 2025 ODA data).

Three Shifts Reshaping the Funding Landscape.

It is not only that public money has retreated. Three structural shifts have been running underneath the surface for several years and are now visible in every funding conversation.

01

Donor behaviour has changed.

-USD 80B

Cumulative ODA decline, 2023 to 2025

Donors are concentrating on fewer themes, fewer geographies and fewer partners. Bilateral aid to programmes and projects fell by 26.3 percent in 2025 alone, the largest drop on record for this category.

02

Private capital is reshaping impact.

USD 1.57T

Global impact investing AUM

The impact investing market has grown at 21 percent compounded each year since 2019. Pension funds & Family Offices are now the single largest pool of impact capital. Capital is available, but it expects a different kind of conversation.

03

Traditional structures are too slow.

12 to 24

Months from concept to grant decision

Decision cycles, reporting cycles and grant architectures designed for a different decade now sit between many NGOs and the resources they need.

Source: OECD ODA 2025 data, April 2026; GIIN Sizing the Impact Investing Market 2024 and State of the Market 2025.

Is purpose enough when the business model no longer works?

And, if not, how do we change without compromising the very values that brought us into this work in the first place?

EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

What 300+ Partner Organisations Have Shown Us.

Across the partners we have worked with directly, three patterns appear again and again. The differences sit less in size or sector and more in how leadership treated the moment.

01 · ADAPTED EARLY

Now thriving.

Recognised the shift before the funding cliff arrived. Rebuilt income mix, opened earned revenue, took advice & partnership seriously, and gave the operating model the same attention as the mission.

02 · TRIED, STALLED

Stuck mid-change.

Saw the problem clearly. Started the work. Could not align leadership, board and operations on the same direction at the same time. Most are still functional, but exposed.

03 · RESISTED

Could not move.

Held the line on a model that no longer fit. Treated adaptation as a threat to identity. A meaningful share of these organisations have closed programmes, merged or scaled down significantly.

The difference between thriving and stalling sits less in resources and more in the willingness to redesign while still holding the mission steady.

Where Culture Carried Transformation. Where It Blocked It.

Culture is the single biggest predictor of whether transformation lands. Not strategy. Not funding. The same redesign succeeds in one organisation and fails in another, for reasons that sit inside the room.

WHERE CULTURE CARRIED IT

- Leadership named the problem in public, not only in private.
- The board and the executive carried one direction, in their own words.
- Programme teams were invited into the redesign.
- Advice was brought in fast
- Trade-offs were made visible. People knew what was being chosen, and what was being put down.

WHERE CULTURE BLOCKED IT

- The problem was raised by one or two people, and never owned at the top.
- Senior leaders disagreed in private but stayed silent in front of the team.
- Change was framed as a finance problem, not a whole-organisation problem.
- Identity language hardened. Any redesign was read as a threat to values.
- Trade-offs were avoided. The organisation tried to keep doing everything, with less.

The pattern is consistent across sectors, sizes and geographies.

Aligning the Whole Organisation Behind Change.

Change that holds is rarely the work of one department. Four areas have to move together. When one of them lags, the redesign loses its grip within a quarter.

01

Leadership clarity

One direction, stated in plain language, repeated by every senior voice. The team should be able to repeat the sentence.

02

Does it change your Monday morning -test

A new strategy that is not operationalised is worthless.

03

Financial model

An income mix that reflects the strategy, with named owners for each stream and honest visibility of cost recovery.

04

Values stay

The key values and mandate of the organisation remains the same. The business model just changes

When all four move together, the redesign holds. When one lags, the rest unwind.

BUILT FOR THIS MOMENT

Grantwire.

The funding workspace for NGOs facing the new reality.

Grantwire is the platform MzN International built for the conversation we have just had. It supports NGO teams to find the right funding opportunities, build credible applications faster, and run their funding pipeline as a discipline rather than a scramble.

- **Funder intelligence** A curated view of active opportunities, mapped to your strategy and your eligibility.
- **Application support** Tools and structure that turn weeks of drafting into a focused, evidence-led submission.
- **Pipeline discipline** A live view of submissions, owners and deadlines, so the strategy lives in the operating rhythm.
- **Free forever**

Discover relevant funding opportunities



Hey **Jonathan**, in **balanced** mode we found **38 grants**, of which we think **10 match you closer** (medium or higher confidence). **Grants are published all the time.** Be sure to set up an **email notification (in the top right)** and we will notify you about new grants that match your search profile.

LEARN MORE

grantwire.org

*A funding pipeline you can run,
not chase.*

Demonstration available on request from your MzN contact. Email hello@mzninternational.com

More impact.

More integrity.

Under harder conditions.

- 01 Treat the operating model as part of the mission.**
How the organisation runs is no longer a back-office concern. It is what makes the mission deliverable.
- 02 Pick the partners and instruments that match the moment.**
Blended capital, earned revenue, coalition fundraising. Different tools for an environment the old ones were not built for.
- 03 Hold the values louder, not quieter.**
The organisations that adapted best did not become less themselves. They became more themselves, more clearly stated, in a new model.

Thank you.

Now over to you.

Questions, challenges, sceptical pushbacks. All welcome.

STAY IN TOUCH

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Slides and resources will circulate after the webinar. if you would like us to cover a specific topic, email jonathan@mzninternational.com

Upcoming Executive Courses

Innovative Finance for NGOs: A 5-Part Learning Journey **MzN International & Human Planet | 21 May – 18 June 2026**

Move beyond grants. This online series equips NGO professionals to navigate impact investing, blended finance, and innovative funding partnerships.

You will learn to:

- Understand blended finance instruments (impact bonds, concessional loans, guarantees)
- Navigate relationships between donors, DFIs, investors, and NGOs
- Use a decision-making tool to identify financing strategies
- Strengthen your organisation's investor readiness
- 5 live webinars · Recordings & resources included · Digital certificate of completion

Ideal for: NGO leaders, finance and programme managers, fundraising and partnership teams

AI-Powered Proposal Writing for NGOs **MzN International | Multiple cohorts: May, September, October 2026**

Write more competitive proposals using AI strategically and responsibly. Real donor case studies, collaborative exercises, and a dedicated AI module built specifically for NGOs.

AI helps you:

- Break down Terms of Reference and map scoring logic
- Strengthen log frames and narrative clarity
- Draft faster and stress test before submission
- 7 modules covering donor scoping, go/no-go decisions, budgeting, and practical AI tools · 4 live sessions · Semi self-paced · Digital certificate of completion

You will leave able to align proposals with donor criteria, build team writing processes, and negotiate confidently with donors.

Upcoming Webinars

LIVE WEBINAR

MzN International

2026

Speakers

Stephen
Analyst | MzN

Betigül
Consultant | MzN

Toni-Ann
Consultant | MzN

Second Quarterly Funding Briefing & Donor Update

Second Quarterly Funding Briefing & Donor Update

18 June @ 13:00 - 14:00 CEST

LIVE WEBINAR

MzN International

2026

Speakers

Christian
Managing Director

Betigül
Consultant

Toni-Ann
Consultant

How to Get Donor Mapping Right: Mastering Donor Mapping for Fundraising Success

How to Get Donor Mapping Right: Mastering Donor Mapping for Fundraising Success

30 July @ 14:00 - 15:00 CEST