



**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Welcome to the Untapped Philanthropy podcast.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

We're your hosts, Fluxx's, co-founder Kerrin Mitchell, and Neon Ones', Tim Sarrantonio. We've spent our career learning how to leverage technology and data in the social sector to better connect and serve our collective causes, constituents, and communities.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

In this podcast series, we profile leaders, public figures, philanthropists, and industry experts to explore the fascinating intersection of funding, technology, and policy. We're here to analyze the most formative topics and trends that shape the present and future of philanthropy. Welcome to our 50th episode in celebration. When we started this podcast, Untapped Philanthropy, we actually set out to really empower folks in the social sector to open up the aperture of their viewpoints and start to understand what are the different things that are happening out in the community where meaningful change was occurring and starting to connect them closer to each other. And taking that journey into the next step, we brought on my friend Tim, in season two to bring perspective, of course, not just grantmaking...

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

All the apertures, all the apertures.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Opening that aperture further. But Tim brought a wonderful element of the fundraising side, the grantee side. So we have taken this journey across all practice areas, across all altitudes, all types of philanthropy, and today is our 50th. We're so excited, Tim, thank you for always being a part of this journey with me, you the jam.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Oh, I love these. These are so much fun. No, for real, because...

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

I do too. I like hanging out with you. It makes me happy.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

I do too. I do too. I know we always have interesting guests and we will be getting to our very interesting guest today, but the highlight, Kerrin is you. So it makes me happy to do these. And I think that that's important when you do a project like this and a collaborate is you got to vibe well, right?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

You got to vibe.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

So we vibe very well.



**Kerrin Mitchell:**

We do, and especially in the world of vibe, engineering, vibe, everything. I would say we vibe our podcast very well too.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah. Well look folks, it's weird out there, isn't it?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

2025?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

2025.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

2024 was weird. 2025 is getting weirder.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Oh yeah. Bingo cards. Throw 'em out the window because we don't know what's going to come next. But you know, you know what helps, Kerrin?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

What helps?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Deep thinking about infrastructure. That's why I'm excited for today's guest,

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Right? No matter what we have in the world, we're essentially the same structures can be repeated by thousands of agentic bots. The truth is that real innovation and real change, and the really important things are done by people who think differently about things that have always existed. So I agree. What better way to move into this milestone episode than bring on our friend Ori Carmel. He's one of the more brilliant minds, most brilliant in my mind of impact strategy. One of my favorite people to have a drink with, he is a driving force behind Sowen. So it's a data focused social impact consultancy who collaborates with a lot of the customers that we have over here in Fluxx, but really looking at how to take data and move it into actionable, measurable results. And I think that true ingenuity in changing the way we think has to start from conversations like this. So, Ori, what's up? Hi.

**Ori Carmel:**

How's it going guys? Congratulations. How does it feel?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Right? So young.

**Ori Carmel:**



Are guys going to go through your midlife crisis type of thing?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

I'm way too close to 50 as a human, so I'm just happy that I'm holding it together this long to be hip and cool and running a podcast that still holds.

**Ori Carmel:**

I was going to ask, is there a midlife crisis version for a podcast?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah, we're going to move to Austin.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Hang out in SX all the time year round.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

We're going to start pitching supplements in the middle, folks. So get ready because do I have something to recommend you?

**Ori Carmel:**

No, seriously. Congratulations guys, you guys do an awesome job.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

And thank you for joining us on this episode. We're going to go right on in and try to get to know you a bit. Obviously I'm familiar with you and Tim is too, but Tim, I'm going to let you kind of kick it off. I've been talking a lot so far.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Well, Ori, this is actually in a way, I would say we're more acquaintances in some ways, and this is going to be where we can get to know each other a little bit more, so we can kind of view it through that lens. So for, I'm familiar with the high level of your work, but for folks who are not, maybe let's start there. Tell us a little bit about you, your journey into the social goods sector and where you are at now before we start thinking about the future.

**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah, happy to and happy to get to know you as well, or I get to know you better as well. But a little bit about me. My background is super weird, to be perfectly honest. It's combination of decision science and game theory analytics on one hand. So you got that part of the brain. And then economics and behavioral economics and some marketing on the other hand, which basically means I can call BS in multiple languages, which comes in super handy in interesting conversations. In terms of my professional career, I've started with government and transitioned into the corporate world and held leadership positions at organizations like Twitter and American Express most recently where I had a data products, a couple of other in-between. But the most interesting transition in my career was really seven years ago when we started working with an organization called Bloomberg Philanthropies, and



that's how Soven was essentially created. Ora as a part of our work with Bloomberg Philanthropies and specifically a part of the organization called Bloomberg Associates.

And really that's what we've been doing for the past seven years, but really pushed into market significantly over the past two and a half, three years, where we started working with all kinds of organizations across the spectrum from philanthropic, academic, obviously philanthropy, private sector. The thing that we care about most is working on projects that drive some level of measurable, tangible social impact. We're completely agnostic in terms of what social impact component or area of work where we can help these organizations. We're not here to become subject matter experts in environmental carbon emission counting or community engagement. There are a lot of people who are smarter than me and do that really, really well. Where I can help them, where we can help them at Soven is bring in the data, tools, processes, thinking, expertise, governance, and help them do what they do a little better, a little more efficiently. That's all we do.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Well, I love it. And actually, obviously I've been fortunate enough to hang with you and your wife and your amazing family and all, and I got obviously connected with you guys through a lot of the work you're doing with Bloomberg. But ultimately what's cool about this is that I've seen it really translate into something that is picking up speed across the entire industry. And your work is starting to move into obviously partners and other members of the grant making community. And I know that you just recently published a paper on the State of Impact. So I am going to, at the risk of embarrassing you, make you talk through a couple of the big things about that paper that you think would be important for us to discuss today. And as we go through that, a lot of the conversation we're going to be driving today will be around some of those concepts, but we'll probably riff and completely lose focus at some point and just put up on interesting things too. So I did want you warn you.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

That's a good anchor though.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

The paper. Yeah.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Like three key takeaways and maybe we can use that and then we'll guiding some of our discussion.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Exactly.

**Ori Carmel:**

So I mean, I think it's important to understand why we created this paper to begin with first before we dive into what's in it and what might be valuable or less valuable or what will raise some conversations and hopefully some arguments and advance the conversation, right? Because what we're all trying to do. As you mentioned, again, my background is in systems thinking and design thinking and game theory. And when I was looking at, we have this hypothesis that social impact happens in silos. The private sector focuses on corporate philanthropy. That's what they do for the most part. And nonprofits focus on what they're doing and mostly raising funding. And foundations mostly focus on distribution of



funding. Very little actually happens in the in-betweens, right? And we know that's one of the achilles heels of our sector, if you want to call it that, right? But the truth is that innovation and good work happens all the time in all of those areas and happens constantly across those areas. But when we were sitting down to try and understand how it happens within those intersections, the beautiful dark corners of where innovation actually happens.

When we were looking to understand what happens in those areas, what are the things that people are worried about, what are the successes that people are seeing? What's scalable, where it's not scalable, what's working, what's not working? There was nothing. And there was nothing in terms of in three ways. One, there was nothing that accounted for the interactions as I described, between the sectors of which we know there are a ton of. Two, every piece of research and information that was out there, almost every piece of research and information that was out there was really heavily reliant on surveys. So we're asking people how they feel and what they think. Now, that's great, that's important. What people feel and think is great, it's super important, but it has to be a component of a whole.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Right? It's almost myopic to consider or it is myopic to consider that as the input that explains the landscape.

**Ori Carmel:**

Exactly. I mean, again, it's super important, but it doesn't encompass the entire thing because people have, well, first of all, people don't always say the truth for multiple reasons. And second, there are heuristics flaws, biases that we may or may not be aware of. And all the research that I've seen around impact in our space, almost all of it relied heavily on just surveys. And then the third thing that I noticed is everything is by executives and for executives. There's a real big gap there because if you're asking executives how their organizations are doing or what they're feeling or thinking or what they're seeing, they're going to paint a completely different picture than what you would get if you ask program people or the accountants or you're not getting a holistic and true sense of what's happening. And that's what we wanted to break. We wanted to create something that's not perfect, right? Nothing ever is when you're scanning this wide of an ecosystem, but that brings a more realistic representation of what's actually happening on the ground and what we should as a collective, whether you're an executive or whether you're a program manager or whether you're an IT person at a nonprofit, be aware of in terms of the big things that you need to think about that are happening right now or that might happen in the future.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

And this report came out in middle end of January. So in that sense, it's been sitting in people's minds now for a month and a half. What are the big things that you're like, wow, people have really gravitated towards X, Y, and Z? Because we have a million questions about the actual paper, and so the things that we want to dive into, but what's sort of at a high level, what you've been excited to see change as a result?

**Ori Carmel:**

So there are 10 themes that we've identified. We're probably not going to go through all of them. I think that the two or three that we're most interesting, one was around time. We don't think a lot about time, but really it's one of the most important currencies that we have. We don't think of it as a currency, but it really is. And it's a finite, very, very finite currency. So we got a lot of response to findings like what



percentage of your time as an executive or a person at a nonprofit is spent on reactive tactical activities versus strategic thoughtful activities? We all want to think of ourselves as cognitive creatures and strategic creatures that make insight-driven decisions. The reality is that most nonprofit and philanthropic leaders spend 80, almost 80% of their time chasing their tail, putting out fires, completely tactical activities for a myriad of reasons. But just that realization was huge, right? A second component of time was around a big discrepancy that we have, and this is an issue in our space. I'm not saying anything new right now, around expectation of results. Funders have adopted a fairly private sector approach to wanting to see results quarter over quarter, if not month over month sometimes. And yet all the social impact that happens as a result of our activities rarely happens at the quarterly cycle level. So that creates a huge discrepancy. The concept of time...

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

The lens they bring in is affected, and that showing progress over time and also just getting feedback on that, let alone being able to track it, the metrics and all that oftentimes aren't aligned to a calendar.

**Ori Carmel:**

Exactly. So things like that time comes up. Our inability to actually measure impact or our gaps in actually measuring impact. We measure a ton of activities. We are terrible at measuring impact. So we measure how much money we distributed, we measure how many convenings we've created. We measure how many people we've reached. We oftentimes have no idea what happens afterwards.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Is it's the easier route because we can? We could say, count, count, count did this, or is it these people are, it's just they don't know what to measure? Or do you think it's just the easier route to say, this is a metric I have?

**Ori Carmel:**

I think it's a combination of things. I think it's the way that we've always dumped things and change is hard. I think it's sometimes intellectual laziness to be perfectly honest. And I think we've gotten really comfortable with that. But look, it came back to bite us in the ass major.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Right? Absolutely.

**Ori Carmel:**

So yeah, the inability to measure impact and the inability to implement systematic sustainable solutions that don't rely on somebody's goodwill. And the major one that we see right now is funding distribution of funding and reallocation of risk in your funding portfolio. I mean, I think probably a third of all nonprofits out there have a certain amount, a significant amount of their funding that's at serious risk right now.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Right? Absolutely. Yeah. There's a board I'm on where I was shocked to find out that 80% of our funding was on. I mean, it wasn't that it was from federal, but it was like, oh no, this is one of the ones that's potentially in a direct hit and there's an unrealistic percentage that they hadn't diversified well enough.



And they're like, well, we'll get this grant through. And I'm like, there's no certainties right now in the world. So it's interesting. I mean, Tim, this is your hood.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah, I know. It's just like I'm trying to organize my thoughts so I don't feel like I'm Charlie from, It's Always Sunny in front of a corkboard because there's so many things that I've been thinking about, worried about, ranting about in certain elements because let's break everything that you down. You said down.

**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah, there was a lot there. So please,

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

There's a lot. So let me kind of try to repeat some of the ways back, at least how I translate it into, look, we got about, let's just say at this point they took the 990 data off the government websites now, or at least the last time I checked, you can't download the most recent version. So that's fun. So let's assume that we're around just shy of 2 million nonprofits, right? But then those 2 million nonprofits, let's remove all the weirdo family foundations and the stuff like my sister-in-law's memorial charity, kind of a pass through type situation where it's like we're raising money, but we're ultimately going to give it to the hospital. You still cut that down. The vast majority of the sector, 92% according to National Council of Nonprofits data, it hasn't changed. It's just 990 data registration stuff. 92% of the sector is under 5 million in annual revenue, or 97%, 92 is under a million. 92% is under a million.

**Ori Carmel:**

It's a very long tail.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

It's a very long tail. And a lot of that is also, then you get kind of the weird part Ori because then you look at, okay, how do they make their money? And so that's a very important question that we both gloss over, but then focus on a lot in the wrong way. We focus a lot on the transactions, but not what the transactions mean. And I'll get there very quickly. But what's fascinating here is that especially smaller organizations in individual giving world, I've talked to fundraisers and they're saying, yeah, this is going to be weird for sure, but we get a lot of state funding, so we're not going to be really impacted outright by this. Or we've shifted in so far that we're focusing on individual giving. So this isn't, major gifts will cover things for us. So it's a mess right now. You can't exactly tell what's happening because the economics are so really badly organized for cross sector understanding. I can't take a Giving USA report and actually fully understand what's happening in the nonprofit sector. And that is a quant analysis and it's a very important one. I'm very proud to support that under the Giving Institute, but that's only a fraction of what's going on.

And then to make it worse in individual giving world, and I'm going to probably be blunt in grant management world, all the tech companies are putting out stuff that are either driven by surveys in order to get people to buy things. And so you have all these small nonprofits, especially, who are so confused as to where they should even focus their energy, that they keep forgetting the fact that only 20% of money if it's from individual givers is online. So we've just painted pies upon pies within pies, within pies. And everybody, when we talk about technology, is talking about AI and its application inside individual giving world online donations only, or prospecting rich people, which is only 3% of who give.



Neon One just finished up an analysis of 99,522 people, but only who give under \$5,000. Why? Because we only ever hear about people who give above \$5,000, yet they represent 3%, 97.3 individual givers. Or I'm going to stop ranting because...

**Ori Carmel:**

No, no, no. It's great. It because here's what's happening, here's what's happening. We have a giant gash, let's be honest about it. Let's cut the BS. We just got a giant gash straight into our main artery and we're going through the medicine cabinet looking for aspirin. That's what we're doing. And even if we find whatever it is that's going to stop the immediate bleeding, even if we find an organization, take organization X, and they go and they work so hard and they get so lucky, and by the way, let's not forget the component of luck involved. They get so lucky and they find somewhere and some way to fill that gap that was just created for them. Okay, great. That's going to hold them up until 2026. And then what? Right? We are really bad at thinking about systematic sustainable solutions systems thinking and incorporating these kinds of solutions into our space.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

And systems thinking that is purpose built for the type of work that we're doing. Because a government, and this is what, in a practical example, I live in upstate New York, Schenectady, and we have both two main really important components. So upstate New York is actually a really good Petri dish for what is societally we're seeing at large, you have GE, big government subsidies and things that go on there, but generally they're like, you're a for-profit thing. But it's important enough that they have spies constantly trying to infiltrate them. So that's an interesting component. So then you also have a big nuclear facility here, and then there's a lot of nonprofits, healthcare and all this type of stuff. 90% of the capital regions like economy can be attributed in some way to the nonprofit sector because healthcare and so forth. So what's fascinating though is I've talked to different people because I have kids, and you go to these parties and you talk to the parents and you say, what do you do? And when you talk to somebody who works for the government versus a nonprofit versus a for-profit business, they ultimately, we all do labor. But we are asking about the same thing, which is ultimately resource allocation. We're asking different questions of what success looks like.

**Ori Carmel:**

Correct.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

The government doesn't care how much something costs until they do, but generally an inherent, when something is assigned, the usual drive is what will solve the problem. I don't care how much it costs. I need to solve the problem. We have a problem with this thing. We are going to figure out how we solve this thing. That's how they think. A nonprofit has to be like, but how do we make it better?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

I'll add though the government then, because it's tax dollars also say, and how do we show you that we're accountable to those dollars? There's an element of compliance...

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

I think it's the lever.





**Kerrin Mitchell:**

... in that structure lens they bring to that versus to your point, the nonprofit and foundation.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

You have time, you have talent, you have treasure, you have trust. Those are all different levers. I think that what happens in different elements is that the treasure element for the for-profit business is the primary one that they're looking at.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Right. Right, right.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

And all of us have to constantly be moving those levers around what's going to be different Ori. And you're right.

**Ori Carmel:**

I don't know about that.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Well, I think you're going to be right in so far that we've had that big gash and we've had that big situation. I've been worrying about the infrastructure, especially on the bottom part of the nonprofit sector for a long time now. You read papers from Professor Elizabeth Searing talking about the zombie nonprofit, right? It's just like these paperwork is just consistently getting pushed back into the government data. But it's like there's not a lot going on for certain foundations or there's just a lot of stuff that skews where the money is. So to kind of zero this in though, is that the government usually would bail it out.

**Ori Carmel:**

Yep.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

2008, right?

**Ori Carmel:**

That's not going to happen.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

2008. It's like there's the PPP program that happened during the pandemic. It's not happening this time.

**Ori Carmel:**

Okay. So we don't know is the truth, right? There is so much ambiguity and so much uncertainty with this current situation, let's call it, without getting, I'm not getting political. I promise I wouldn't get political, and I promised my wife I wouldn't. So we'll keep that promise because Kerrin knows her.



**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Fiona is setting up some rules for you on your podcast. I love Fi.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

The coverage is that life is a constant negotiation of how we work with each other. And so it is unavoidable, but constitutional politics are not of interest to me, personally.

**Ori Carmel:**

Okay. So we don't know what will happen. But the direction and where the winds are blowing is not positive for that ecosystem that you just described.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Yes, agreed.

**Ori Carmel:**

And it leaves an incredibly large cohort of that extremely vulnerable in one way, shape, or form. Now whether you get or don't get hurt, you don't want to be in a position where you are constantly vulnerable. You don't want to live on the sword as an organization. That is not a good place to be. Go back to what you mentioned, something that you said that really, really resonated with me. And again, going back to the study, it's one of our key things when we talk about system solution, each one of these entities, each one of these ecosystems that we know inherently know need to work together to drive significant sustainable impact. Eventually, at some point, philanthropy has got to meet private sectors, got to meet governments, got to meet academia, has got to meet the nonprofit, everybody's got to meet somewhere in the middle. But each one of them is coming in with its own set of practices, its own set of governance, and most importantly its own value of currency.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Expand on that. I think I know what you mean, but I think that's a really interesting point. I want you to drill into that.

**Ori Carmel:**

Alright. So the currency for private sector organizations is pretty obvious, right? It's profit it whether they're, some of them are public, some of them are private, but it's some version of profit. The really smart ones, not everybody, but the really smart ones will also look at things like employee engagement and talent attraction and retention and innovation because they're thinking ahead. And those are the usually bright, forward, forward-thinking organizations, but at the end of the day, it's profit, right? Okay, great. Academia, what's the currency of academia? It's knowledge.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah, it's knowledge.

**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah. Right. It's knowledge discovery. It's also discovery.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**



I hate to say it, but there is a knowledge, but there's also, I feel like academics also have this prestige. How did I publish? What did I do? What's my number or my policy?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Well, it's a social currency and I would put that under social currency. Knowledge is an adaptable currency depending on where it is, obviously. But a lot of it is social prestige and social currency of having access to that. So let's just bucket it under that.

**Ori Carmel:**

Fortunately, or unfortunately, whenever you involve men and usually rich, middle aged, fat white men, there's going to be a heavy component of egos involved, right? That's just reality.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

And tweed jackets.

**Ori Carmel:**

Lots and lots of tweed. So much tweed. Don't what to do with all the tweeds. Okay, so you move on to philanthropies for example. And by the way, it's all a mixture. It's not one currency, but it's the dominant currency.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

The waiting is demonstrably like it is their lead card on all this.

**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah, with philanthropy, it's legacy. That's what they want to create. That's what they care about. And that's great. So my point is each one of us comes to the playing table with our own currency. And unless we can create a system that rewards takes into account and then rewards, all of those currencies will always be limited. And one of the things that I noticed in the nonprofit and I think is really dangerous in the way that we have approached this, is our only currency has been benevolence. And benevolence is super, super important, but it's not an economic system that's sustainable over.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Walk us through that a little more.

**Ori Carmel:**

I talk to a lot of nonprofit employees and workers, and as soon as the conversation goes into data and finance and economics, they shut off.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Their eyes glaze over.

**Ori Carmel:**

They shut off. And some of it is because that's not their background, and I get that right? But a lot of it is because they see money and economics is a dirty thing. We're doing something pure. We're reaching



out to the community, we're encouraging the art in a specific city, whatever amazing cause you do. But behind that, there's got to be an economic sustainable system. And oftentimes I see a lot of nonprofit executives and people and workers who come from incredible backgrounds who are incredibly dedicated, good-hearted people who are subject matter experts within their world. Forget that you still operate within a larger economic ecosystem. And unless you can figure that out, well guess what? Your highest contribution may be the salaries that you're paying your employees rather than the actual social impact that you are making. And if you find yourself in that situation, guess what? You're very close to shutting off the lights and closing the doors.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

And that's a very real, I mean, bringing it to today, 2025, there is a very real going concern on a lot of these folks that haven't taken that seriously. And I think the call to action that or you've brought to me and to other leaders like Shahar and folks, I'd love to have you talk about that too. But there is sort of how do we look at that risk, that structure, that opportunity to create better hygiene around impact data, all that stuff. But there is sort of this risk component first that I know of.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

There's that there is also, we have to address the inequalities that exist within the systems default settings.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Literally, it's top of mind because I got off the call with the Community Centric Fundraising Global Council right before we did our podcast here. And so they're thinking about an event, and that's just one framework to say the money's dirty in a way. But where the evolution that's helped me on that was reading Edgar Villanueva's book for instance, where it's like money can be a medicine, right? Money existed before capitalism. And so money is just my favorite saying. And this comes from a very kind of old school tried and true fundraising approach too. This is not some radical thing.

Lot of ways, in some ways this is even rooted in religious tradition. A budget is a moral document. That is one of my favorite sayings. And I think that when you get to where we're putting our currencies, right? There's also time budgets, there's like energy budgets, things of that nature. So you're bringing up a super fascinating concept, and I have zero pushback on also the fact that there needs to be way better financial education. Ori I wish I was taught what the hell to do when I started in the sector about grant writing, the only thing I had armed was a post-colonial English literature degree, a history and education degree, or no history of education degree. That's very important distinction because I misread the prospectus in Columbia University and signed up for the wrong program and then \$90,000, oops.

**Ori Carmel:**

\$90,000 later.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

I have a degree in how education came about, but I had no financial training, I had nothing. I had grant writing for dummies. And that is, I've analyzed and been, so this is a really interesting thing to go back to



what you were talking about in executives. We only speak to executives. Fundraising Effectiveness Project. We have been, I want to talk with you about that separately, but it was been so interesting as this large data initiative that's supposed to train fundraisers. The drumbeat forever has been dollars up donors, down retention's a struggle. But Woodrow Rosenbaum loves to frame, we have to stop treating it like it's a weather report. It is a report card. There's even something called the fitness test for benchmarking. Here's a problem that we found in our research because I even ask, I'll ask actually the two of you. I'm doing some market research right now. How many fundraisers, Ori, are in the United States? What is the market?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Oh good Lord. I don't even know if I can guess. Are you doing count dollars?

**Ori Carmel:**

Individuals?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yes. How many people? And I am not accepting the Bureau of Labor Statistics as a foundational number here.

**Ori Carmel:**

How many people? Let's see. We said two.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Can I pass? I have no idea what this answer is. I will be grossly under.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

If you're listening to this episode, put it in the comments because I'm going to check.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Oh look at you, calling our listeners.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah, look at this. See, I have an intersectional understanding of the medium here.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

I love the interactions.

**Ori Carmel:**

I would throw out somewhere between 12 to 15 million.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Is he right?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**



Then we're screwed. So I actually peg it more at 300,000 in terms of the dedicated fundraising market. And that's based on one dedicated fundraisers Bureau of Labor statistics only puts that at around 125,000 people. Now, that also might include...

**Ori Carmel:**

Really?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yes.

**Ori Carmel:**

Well, I'm thinking of fundraisers as anybody who will...Identify a source of revenue.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Exactly. Exactly.

**Ori Carmel:**

So you think about people who are doing biz dev for a Novartis foundation. I would include those as a part of that, right? And that's how I go from 300,000.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

See, and I thought I had 300,000 was like people were like, whoa. Right? That's some of the projections, some of what Association of Fundraising Professional has done. But you're thinking about it the right way. The problem that the issue is, we don't have an answer for that. So that's a problem. And when we started even exploring it, what we found is the executives who might actually be above those people, fundraisers might hide the benchmarks from their executives because it would make the numbers look bad for their job. Because why? They only think in a quarterly basis. And so even all of the work that we're doing at FEP will not matter if the mindset does not shift toward cathedral thinking.

**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah. So look, there's no magic bullet solution to any of these things. And there's another,

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Oh my God, we brought up so many things wrong.

**Ori Carmel:**

We're covering a lot.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

We don't have a whole five hour episode.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Can we spend the next 10 minutes winding the episode down.



**Ori Carmel:**

You guys know Bandsplain?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

What is it?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Bandsplain?

**Ori Carmel:**

Bandsplain. It's an amazing podcast. But music.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

You pitch another podcast on our podcast?

**Ori Carmel:**

I know. No, But it's about music. It's not a competitor. But they go into five hours and they deep dive into the history of Pixies or U2.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Okay.

**Ori Carmel:**

It's amazing. So we can do a five hour episode. If they can do it, we can do it. No, seriously. I think we also have a tendency to fall in love with the problem, right? Trista Harris talks about this a lot. She keynote it in your last event.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Yeah, the stop loving the problem.

**Ori Carmel:**

And that's another thing that we get really, really hung up on. We don't understand the scientific iterative process. We fall in love with the problem. We try to create some perfect solution rather than create a solution that's good enough or pretty good or just better than what we have.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Or someone's who avoids the problem avoids it all together instead of solving the problem, just avoid the damn thing.

**Ori Carmel:**

That's a possibility. But we don't allow ourselves to iterate where we don't move until we have the perfect solution, and that's silly as well. So I think that to me, the key, I don't have a perfect, bold solution. I really don't. But where I can help, where we spend a lot of time working with different organizations and bringing us back to that part of the conversation where we think we can help, or one



of the keys we can make the most impact, is if we can help an organization advance by one degree in what we call the data maturity model, the way in which they understand and integrate better data and technology processes, tools, talent, knowledge into both their strategic design and their tactical activities and decision-making. If we can amp that up by 5%, that will reap exponential benefits on their operational efficiency and on their ability to drive and then demonstrate the impact of what they do. Will it solve everything that you just described, the massive fundamental structural challenges that we spoke about for the last 20 minutes? It won't solve all of it. No. But it will better equip an organization to deal with some of them and start solving or identifying the ways in which their organization can find a better path in that very, very complicated ecosystem.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Well, and here, let's kind of bring it down into the grassroots level where I think about it, because Kerrin, you can maybe help pull it all the way, all the way to where it's seeing on the grant founding funding side would be interesting too. But in some of the research that we found for this upcoming report, we were able to identify, because we have a data set of about 31 million individual people who give, and we've been able to unify their activity across multiple clients. So if I donate to nonprofit A and B and C, we at least at Neon One world know we protected properly, yada, yada, yada, just for the people on the podcast. Now that's all cool. But what got interesting was when we looked at it not through the lens of the money, but the behavior of what they were giving to, how often they may have given to multiple organizations, the common thing that we always hear is like, oh, they give to four to five different charities, for instance. No. In our randomized sample of a hundred thousand people or so, there's about 30% of them were giving to multiple people. Usually it was two, and then they would focus usually on one cause. The absence of things also tells you stuff too though. And so in a positive world, even a random sample of 30,000 people basically are going to support multiple nonprofits. So at the atomic level, if one nonprofit starts doing things well, we're finding that it can also have an amplifying effect, a positive effect, obviously, for people generally going, oh, okay, that didn't suck. Maybe I'll give again, maybe I'll give again. Right? The more things repeated, that behavior repeated in a positive way, the higher and more accelerated the giving became. So I think if individuals think I'm not just helping myself, I'm making philanthropy stronger with these actions, that's at least a nice way to go into work every day.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

When we look, I mean, as we mentioned, we could talk for a long, long time. I do want to be cognizant of both our listeners and our dear friend.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Oh, right. Yeah, no, we should shift to...

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

But I'm looking at this and thinking I will probably have to keep chatting with Ori and this separately as well, so we can continue this conversation or have Ori back, but we should probably ask Ori because we have a bunch of questions. And I will be honest, there were six or seven of them, we didn't even get to them because we just keep talking. So my cute outline that I was thinking,

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

There's a whole section of questions that we didn't touch





**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Storyboard is irrelevant. So Ori, let me ask you then, is there something that you want to bring forward today that we haven't talked through yet that you think is a really critical thing, knowing that we had six or seven things that we had all prepped to talk about and we hit them all fluidly, but is there something specific you want to bring forward that we didn't touch upon yet?

**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah, I think one of the things that we are seeing a lot right now, and I actually want to get your take on this both of you, because I want to know if you guys are seeing the same, and if so, what could be possible paths forward? One of the things that we're seeing a lot of because of the current landscape is assessment of risk. We get a lot of questions from a lot of organizations around how do we get a better understanding in this really, really dynamic, really fast changing environment.

What is the risk? What is risk that we have in our portfolio of giving and where are there unique opportunities to optimize? And that's a really, really interesting question. And we've been talking about data collaboratives and our collective inability to bring together data in our space, like social impact data into a centralized place for a really long time. And some progress has been made here and there, but at the end of the day, we don't have a unified data set. That's the reality. And a lot of different things need to happen to do that. But kind of like what happened with Covid where it accelerated, I don't know if anybody remembers Covid. That was a thing that happened five years ago. It accelerated a lot of things that should have happened, for example, in the healthcare space, like aggregation of data around healthcare. So people don't have to go between doctors with sticky notes of their symptoms, things like that. And I wonder if there's an opportunity with every good crisis, there's an opportunity. I wonder if there's an opportunity to leverage the current state to actually accelerate some of the things that should have happened anyways around bringing together that data and helping organizations in a very acute and immediate way, understand the levels of risk, risk and opportunity in their portfolios right now. So the reality is, and I don't think anybody talks about it, and I know it's a very, very uncomfortable situation.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

I was going to say, it's the going concern of someone's business model is not something, it's almost like ostrich head in the sand kind of stuff. Some people don't want to know. Right? But to your point, if we're talking about impact structure, especially in the economy right now, where things are downsized, if there are real risks there, helping people to identify it now and rebrand that as risk mitigation instead of finding out a year from now, DOGE style.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

I mean this is how we addressed it. I mean, the Fundraising Effectiveness Project has shifted toward even that type of view. We gathered as data providers in Philadelphia earlier this year, and that was one of the main things that we were talking about is how can we get ahead of things? How can we understand things better to better serve our customers? And there were 10 different data providers that technically are competitors in many different ways.

**Ori Carmel:**

Were you able to bring them together to start playing nice with each other?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**



Yeah.

**Ori Carmel:**

Amazing.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah. FEP has class and Donor Perfect. And we have a governance committee just to data providers. And then we have a shared governance model that we started rolling out that then also has an education research group, a government relations group. So they're going to come back and say, we need this data from the initiative. I think it's a model in all honesty, that should be looked at. I'm proud of it. I'm just going to say Ori, because I think that it is hard. And so I've lived through it. It's hard to get those people in a room, but it's possible.

**Ori Carmel:**

So that's exactly, no, go ahead, Kerrin.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Oh no, I was going to say, when you look at that, when you built FEP, were you like, I mean, I get that you're like, these are our objectives, but I mean, in light of everything that's changing, how often are you meeting to reassess that landscape? And I mean, that's such an interesting model. I love that. And Ori and I are very keen to help bring something forward on that grant maker front.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah, I mean, let's maybe do a separate deep dive call by way, folks. Folks, we're not going to record that. Be behind the scenes exclusive for subscribers. Remember, if you buy your metabolism powder from us at the following url... see callback. So just real quick, I want to be cognizant of the time, but a lot of it was just, there was a few people who trusted each other early on, but it was just a lot of conversations for trust. We do meet monthly as a steering committee now, and a lot of it was also, it's going to be very boring. You got to write good governance document. It's a standards of procedure. That's literally what I'm assigning out is I'm like, by the end of the year, we're going to revise our standards of procedure. And here's the amazing thing. Now if you put this into Google Docs and it's really long you hit that Gemini button and you ask, summarize this for me.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Oh yeah. I mean, this is the thing I was going to say is AI is the thing that helps us to get to a place where there are ways to look at information.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Because I would've had to hire a consultant to do that report.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

But also think about the analysis. I mean, exactly. And that idea of the risk matrix and all that, where you can take it, what are the weightings and values in the infinite Doctor Strange sphere of possibilities that exist? How do we bring the top three forward in the Trista Harris kind of way of what do we do and how to live into those things.



**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Well, Kerrin.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

The Avengers don't die. We want that one...

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Given that my children have just come into the house and they're loud. Ori, I know we could talk a lot. This is one that we knew was going to run the whole time, but we have a new game.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

It's true.

**Ori Carmel:**

Oh, there's a new one?

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

We have a new one.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

It's a new game.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

We have a new one this year.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

It's two truths and a lie.

**Ori Carmel:**

Oh God.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

So tell us two truths and a lie, and we have to guess.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

This is our wrap up.

**Ori Carmel:**

Two truths and a lie.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

It used to be like word associations, but now we're playing the collegiate game.



**Ori Carmel:**

I remember the last one. Two truths and a lie. I met my wife on a boat in Laos in Southeast Asia, so that's one I used to play a division one hockey. That's two. And my favorite place to go hiking is probably the Southwestern United States where I can just get thrown in the desert with no map, no compass, and just find my way. And that to me is my idea of fantastic fun.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

I'm going to let you guess, Tim. I think I know this one. This is what happens when you hang out with someone.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah. I don't know.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Over drinks as I know. I think I know it, but Tim, I'll let you go.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

I'm honestly, trying to gauge your physique from the video.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

No, he's giving you incredible detail on all three, so.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

I know. I know. No, this is terrifying. I'm going to go with the hockey.

**Ori Carmel:**

As the lie?

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah, it's a lie. You didn't play hockey.

**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah. Yeah. Middle Easterns don't do well on ice.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah. The passion that you had come through at the end

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

And the description of being like Laos would be very, very specific.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

If you played hockey, I'd see your medals behind you because you would put them up.



**Ori Carmel:**

Yeah, there you go. You got it. Spot on.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Well, what a fun episode. Especially for our 50th.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Ori I just love you to pieces. You're the coolest.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Yeah. This is awesome.

**Ori Carmel:**

Well, it's been a pleasure. I really appreciate it. I know we covered some massive, massive topics of conversation. Hopefully helped advance the conversation.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Fantastic. Well, Ori, thank you to all of our listeners who want to learn more about Ori, actually. Ori, where would you like them to go?

**Ori Carmel:**

You can just go to our website at [sowen.co](http://sowen.co), [www.sowen.co](http://www.sowen.co) or reach out to me directly, and I'm happy to chat and talk and debate and argue civilly. I know that's a faux pas these days. You can't argue civilly anymore, but we try to hold onto those values. So happy to do all those things.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Awesome.

**Ori Carmel:**

And always lovely to meet smart, kind people who are trying to do good things in the world.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

Thanks, dear.

**Tim Sarrantonio:**

Thank you.

**Kerrin Mitchell:**

We'll catch you all later. You can listen and download our episodes at Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, and of course directly from our website [fluxx.io](http://fluxx.io). That's [fluxx.io](http://fluxx.io).