

Memphis Human Progress and Human Services 2035

Scenario Workshop Summary

January 13, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

What will human progress, human need and human services be in Memphis and Shelby County in 2035? What implications does it have for today's strategies for public and private human service providers and community partners? On January 13, 2017, 52 Human Service professionals were hosted by United Way of the Mid-South at the National Civil Rights Museum to discuss these questions and “step into” alternative futures presented as scenarios. These scenarios were developed by Institute for Alternative Futures, United Way of the Mid-South, a team of national advisors, and over 40 community partners across various government, religious, business and non-profit organizations in Memphis.

The Memphis Human Progress and Human Services 2035 Scenarios offer a tool for the Memphis human services community to explore opportunities and threats, to imagine preferred futures, and to assess the implications of these futures in the context of their city and work, and to consider the robustness of

the current directions and strategies. The Scenario Workshop was not intended to develop a shared vision or a strategic plan, but rather to enhance shared reflection on threats, opportunities, visionary possibilities, and implications for strategies and directions.

The scenarios and Scenario Workshop are a part of the Human Progress and Human Services 2035 project, supported by the Kresge Foundation. This report identifies highlights from the Scenario Workshop Session, including scenario implications, likelihood and preferability, robust directions, and feedback.

SCENARIO IMPLICATIONS

After reviewing the four scenarios, participants “stepped into” one of the four scenarios to explore implications for current directions. The scenarios and the groups working on them were:

- Scenario 1: Expectable: A Tale of Two Cities
- Scenario 2: Challenging; Challenges Shape Caring
- Scenario 3: Visionary: Rock and Roll Again
- Scenario 4: Visionary: Abundance, Good Work, Good Caring

Each group considered the biggest changes in their scenario, then the implications for current directions and strategies, and finally, what recommendations should be made, assuming this scenario will occur. These insights from each group are detailed below:

SCENARIO 1: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

What are the biggest changes in human services or specific areas of human services?

- More seniors living in smaller congregate settings and increased multi-generational homes
- Changes in how we use technology, which may threaten to disconnect elders and youths from person to person interaction
- Neighborhoods and communities get left behind as human service agencies reduce services and become more efficient
- More and better use of libraries
- Better behavioral health services. Electronic health care improves accessibility, but raises concerns about the quality of care and its limitations

Strategic Implications for Organizations -- Given your scenario, what are the implications for strategic directions for human service organizations (yours and others)? What strategies would be successful in this scenario? Which should be changed? Which new strategies added?

- Collective impact and accountability: Better collection and sharing of information between agencies for meaningful feedback and data collected from those impacted most by policies
- Data sharing requires affordable integrated systems, which must be evaluated and operated by trained front-line staff
- Improve accessibility to technology for seniors and other groups, and educate consumers on technology security and ethics

- Human interaction cannot be substituted by technology in certain cases (e.g. young children and socio-emotional learning)
- Identify and correct breakdowns in virtual care systems
- Need for human service agencies to understand and adapt to the needs of immigrant populations; new industries and a new level of enterprise can support knowledge and skills that immigrant communities possess
- Cultural shift to embrace people who are different
- Some organizations, systems will not be able to change quickly and adjust to immigrant needs. Must be flexible and meet community member's education and skill needs
- Invest in community cohesion, working together and advocacy.
- Need to focus more on policy interventions; think about larger investments in systems change work and infrastructure and education for individuals on how to engage with these larger systems
- More independent living skills training for foster care children
- Professional development for providers of services – better ways to gain skills and knowledge to help people
- Rethink how we set up our provider system and worker skills; e.g. a different level of human service worker

Recommendations for success in Human Services- What recommendations would you make, and, to whom would you direct them, to achieve success in this scenario?

- The federal government needs to be more flexible and able to accelerate change and innovation
- Need to be open to local systems of operation (e.g. CoactionNet) and less beholden to strict regulations
- The criminal justice system needs to be reformed; must acknowledge the role of criminal justice practices on perpetuating human service challenges and develop mitigation strategies
- Funding policies change to increase collaboration between funders
- Individuals needs to be cared for in the context of their family and community; funders, agencies and policymakers will need to rethink the way services are provided
- Find a different way to communicate effectively with different levels of government
- Develop talent in the immigrant community to grow the pipeline of educated, skilled workers and address barriers to higher education for immigrant students
- Change policy to facilitate better education and employment opportunities at local, state and federal level
- Look more creatively at the challenge to employ the undocumented, returning citizens, and those with special needs
- Establish accountability guidelines for virtual health systems and other advances in service delivery and communication

SCENARIO 2: CHALLENGING SHAPE CARING

What are the biggest changes in human services or specific areas of human services?

- Despair increases as viable options to lift people out of poverty are reduced
- Services diminish

- Interrelated nature of society is exposed and all are weakened
- Non-profits merge and neighborhood churches collaborate
- Education options diminish
- Stable communities remain relatively stable; under-resourced communities fall further into despair
- Leadership structures crumble

Strategic Implications for Organizations -- Given your scenario, what are the implications for strategic directions for human service organizations (yours and others)? What strategies would be successful in this scenario? Which should be changed? Which new strategies added?

- Prevention strategies will be strained
- Non-profits begin to hire clients as a strategy to leverage resources and expand impact
- Social and political leaders target citizens who readily recognize need to act and develop groups around specific actions
- “Lift as you climb” mentality must be incorporated into strategies and community focus

Recommendations for success in Human Services- What recommendations would you make, and, to whom would you direct them, to achieve success in this scenario?

- Invest in local innovation and local economy; expand tax incentives that aid small businesses
- Collaborative conversations among funds and social service industry
- Philanthropy has to increase local investments
- Empower families with the knowledge of how to navigate services for themselves
- Remind citizens of the power of the individual and civic engagement

SCENARIO 3: ROCK AND ROLL AGAIN

What are the biggest changes in human services or specific areas of human services?

- Transportation is accessible
- Isolation is reduced
- There are no more vacant houses; lots are being used for gardens and a variety of housing types, providing space for meetings and social services
- Guaranteed income, which generates effective financial accountability
- Automated case management and behavioral health care
- Info sharing between human service providers
- Involvement of elders with schools, children and businesses via computer technology – and being able to get where they want to get because of self-driving vehicles
- Greater understanding of mental health by human service providers; emphasis on the role of parish or community nurses
- Virtual tutoring by seniors to students through smart phones or other technology
- Delivery of social services by community members; neighbor-to-neighbor model

Strategic Implications for Organizations -- Given your scenario, what are the implications for strategic directions for human service organizations (yours and others)? What strategies would be successful in this scenario? Which should be changed? Which new strategies added?

- Ensure that systems do not generate new poverty levels or divide the ‘have’ and ‘have nots’

- Consider historical implications of how people and community got to the current point when considering future planning of how to move it forward
- City Council would have to review and possibly revise ordinances, such as criminal laws, zoning, etc., to align with this way of life
- Local and state policy makers would have to adopt laws and rules to help promote and move forward with change
- Must incorporate education with the transition to self-sufficiency through all human service components and other government institutions
- Mobility must be equitable and transportation must be available and affordable for all without creating a tax payer burden
- We must integrate all beliefs, cultures, races, differences into our work and conversations and consider perspectives of those being served
- Include the people being served in decision making; empower them to help make the changes for themselves
- Replace antiquated processes
- Include assessment of the community as part of strategic planning to see if there are any other issues not being met

Recommendations for success in Human Services- What recommendations would you make, and, to whom would you direct them, to achieve success in this scenario?

- Equip individuals with the ability to access and use technology
- Maintaining the person to person interaction
- Maintaining levels of quality education and information to ensure individuals are more able to adjust and respond to new opportunities
- Empower people to own their successes, and use their failures as a motivation
- Removal of barriers to employment
- Understanding who we are and who we want to be to those we serve; then perfecting it

SCENARIO 4: ABUNDANCE, GOOD WORK, GOOD CARING

What are the biggest changes in human services or specific areas of human services?

- Service providers believe change can happen
- Education increases around how to use technology
- Less substandard housing and more energy efficiency home; increased standard of living and quality of life
- Elders are aging in their homes and communities and teaching younger generations
- Community development grows from within
- Greater access to health care and other behavioral and community services
- Better transportation options
- More place-based social and community services; capacity to provide services in neighborhoods and navigate entry into other social service networks
- In some ways, Memphis looks more like it did decades ago— people are growing food together, sharing resources, looking after each other which reduces fear
- Culture of learning and working together

- Living wage and nearly full employment brings more economic stability
- Decreased burden of felony convictions
- Focus on enabling a better quality of life versus the recurrent crises of current situations
- Shift notions of productivity and meaningful employment
- High literacy rates

Strategic Implications for Organizations -- Given your scenario, what are the implications for strategic directions for human service organizations (yours and others)? What strategies would be successful in this scenario? Which should be changed? Which new strategies added?

- Design workforce development to address changes in economy—automation, technology, etc.
- Educate people about available opportunities
- Social workers and home health care workers must use technology to support human progress and need
- Restructure education and service training towards the new economy
- Shift to wellness versus reaction model
- Facilitate access to new possibilities
- Shift roles to coordination, data integration, shared ownership and responsibility
- Human touch is maintained for relationships and motivation
- Support engaged leadership

Recommendations for success in Human Services- What recommendations would you make, and, to whom would you direct them, to achieve success in this scenario?

- Education needed to maintain success
- Change curriculum for social workers towards a holistic, wellness focus
- Compensate healthcare providers for people staying well
- Tie funding to success and quality outcomes; pay for success model
- Incentivize use of volunteers
- Support collective impact organizations
- Make education affordable
- Mobilize around a shared theory of change which addresses interventions around policy and social processes across sectors

LIKELIHOOD AND PREFERABILITY OF THE SCENARIOS

The workshop participants considered both the likelihood and the preferability of each scenario. A poll was conducted after the scenarios were presented, and discussed in the afternoon. Each participant judged the four scenarios' likelihood and preferability with a value from 0 to 100; 0 represented not likely or not preferable at all, and 100 represented complete likelihood or preferability. The scenarios were not to be considered as mutually exclusive sets, so the sum of values in each column could exceed 100.

Presented in the table below (Figure 1) are the results of the poll. The numbers represent the mean or average values of poll results.

	LIKELIHOOD	PREFERABILITY
Scenario 1: A Tale of Two Cities	64	28
Scenario 2: Challenges Shape Caring	50	8
Scenario 3: Rock and Roll Again	38	69
Scenario 4: Abundance, Good Work, Good Caring	29	83

Figure 1: Results of likelihood and preferability poll depicting the mean or average for each.

The participants found Scenario 1 to be the most likely. That makes sense, given that in IAF's construction of Scenarios, the first scenario should reflect the most likely future, given current trends. Scenario 1 is not very preferable. The challenging Scenario 2 is somewhat likely at 50% and very low in preferability - 8%. Scenario 3 and 4, the visionary scenarios are high in preferability 69% and 83% respectively, though less likely to occur. The scenarios provide complex, integrated alternative forecasts for the community and human services. Scenario 1 represents the type of forecasts that would be used in strategic planning – helping to focus strategies in the face of the most likely future. But that supports the possibility of creating or at least reinforcing a suboptimal future. Scenario 3 and 4 are both more aspirational and leave open the prospect of working to create those more visionary futures. This activity offers an opportunity to reflect on how the preferable can become more likely.

ROBUST IMPLICATION AND STRATEGIES

While not intended to develop a strategic plan the Scenario Workshop informs strategic directions but identifying strategies that are “robust”. After reviewing each of the four scenarios and their implications, workshop participants reconvened as a full group. Participants considered which implications, particularly strategies and recommendations, were “robust” - those that were effective in two or more scenarios. These “robust” implications and strategies identify high priorities for going forward.

1. Strengthening the ability to work across sectors and integrate services effectively.

2. Increasing education- both of service providers and recipients of services.
 - a. Understanding what resources are available and how these can best lead to success for providers and recipients of services.
3. Developing technology that facilitates human interaction and connection.
4. Pursuing strategies that make technology accessible to everyone, and providing training on how to use and benefit from technology.
5. Working directly with clients to develop a care plan that uses their individual strengths.
 - a. Clients understand their capabilities, how to expand their capabilities, and how to develop and carry out a plan of informed action.
6. Maintaining inter and multi-generational approaches to ending poverty.
 - a. Shift to reframing poverty, and understanding it as the extent to which one goes without resources.
7. Greater strategic collaboration within and across service providers.
8. Advocacy for human services -- Important to repeatedly reinstate the mission of human services, even as this may evolve over time, and repeatedly promote and realize strategies.
9. Policy Change – focus on systems change, cultural change, environmental shifts.
10. Strengthening pipeline for workforce development.

FEEDBACK: LEARNING AND INSIGHTS FROM THE HUMAN PROGRESS AND HUMAN SERVICES MEMPHIS 2035 SCENARIO EFFORT

To conclude the Memphis Scenario Workshop, participants were asked several questions to reflect on their experience and evaluate the Human Progress and Human Services 2035 effort. Presented below are highlights from the responses:

- 1. What were the most meaningful things you learned from the Memphis 2035 Scenarios or experienced at the workshop?**
 - Discussion about social disparity/inequality
 - Reminded me that we have work to do and many exciting possibilities are available
 - That better scenarios are possible if we dare to imagine them and are willing to work for them
 - Imagining and exploring different future scenarios might inspire and propel a different response
 - The importance of planning for what is most likely to occur, but also looking at what we can do to impact more positive change
 - The importance and benefits to visioning scenarios when developing strategies and working towards ideals in additions to expectation and deficits
 - I really benefited from the dialogues and small group discussions. We are all on the same page, but shared new and fresh ideas.
 - I really liked the concept of hearing the expectable, the challenging, and then the best of the scenarios. The wide range of participants really enhanced the conversation.
- 2. In what ways, may your learnings or insights from the scenario process affect:**
 - a. How you monitor the environment, the forces, shaping your organization?**

- The difference between most likely and desirable was striking
- Will orient more towards the future, thinking about implications of changes
- Futuristic jobs, entrepreneurship

b. The strategies or tactics you pursue?

- Thinking about the pursuit of my life and career as opportunity to help me achieve the most desirable scenario
- Will think more about collective impact and how to collaborate on strategies
- Motivation to pursue more collaboration

c. Your communications and relationships with partners in the community?

- Communicate and work in terms of desirable outcomes- have that first and foremost
- Connect with not usual partners
- More meaningful community engagement

3. From today's workshop, what did you like most?

- The scenarios really made me think
- Spending time with all of these great people
- Connections with the other leaders
- Good conversation about hard issues with a diverse group of people
- The spirit of "hopefulness" in the room

4. What improvements would you suggest?

- Go slower and use images for the visualization
- Facilitate post workshop connections
- More time for small group discussions
- People are not POOR; they are living in poverty
- We problem solvers need more direction less scenarios