Building What Lasts

Stronger organisations, stronger communities, and systemic change

Pavel Hrica
CEO of
Cesta von (Way out)



OSF STRONGER ROOTS · BRATISLAVA 22.9.2026



Photo CFP, source: Global Times











Frustration… can act as a catalyst

What is your core belief?

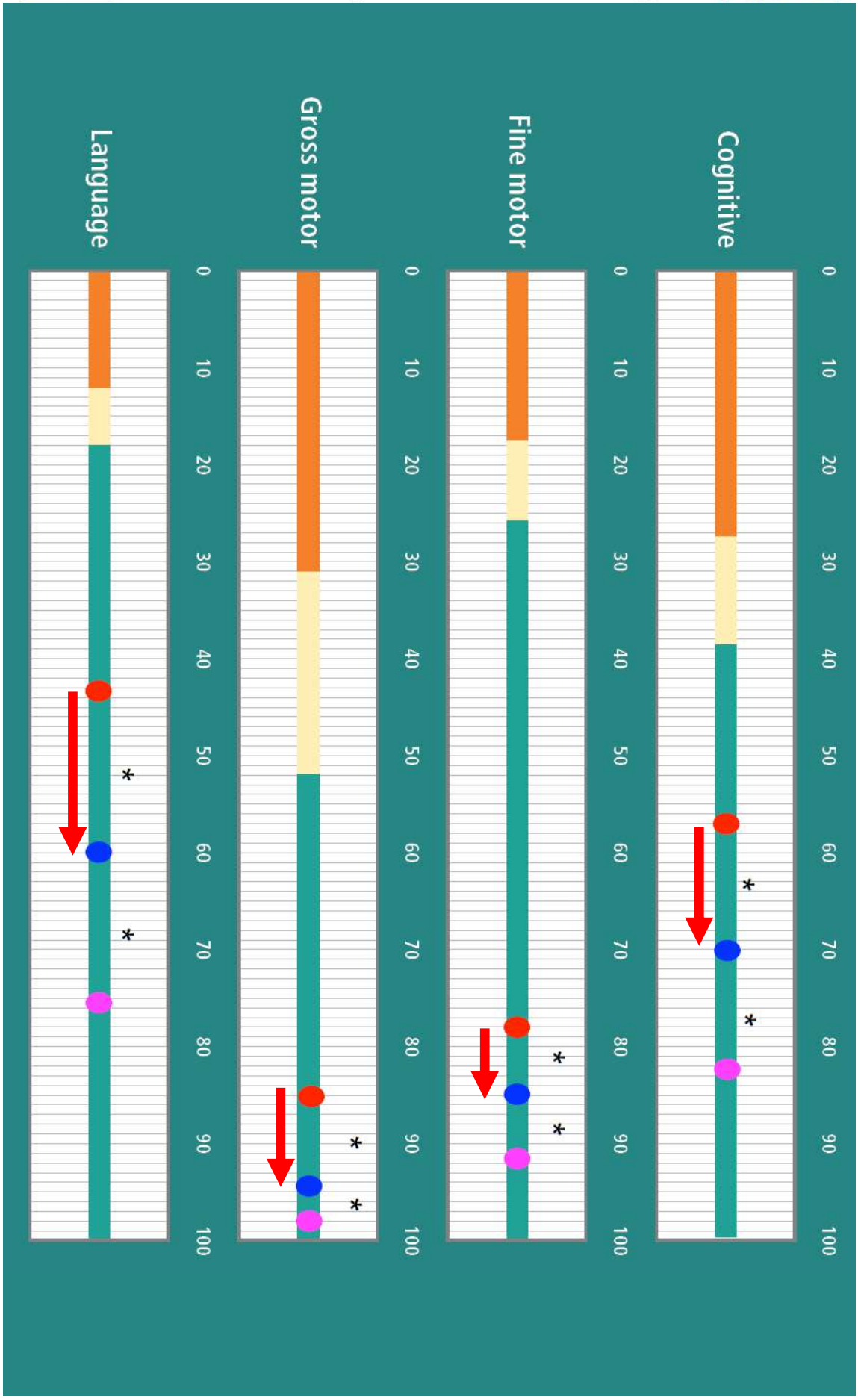





Strong organisations
do not only deliver
help. They grow
leaders.


Leadership today:
less authority, more engagement

The INTERGROWTH-21st Project
International INTER-NDA Standards
for Child Development at Two Years of Age



Home > European Journal of Pediatrics > Article

A community-based intervention (the Omama Project) improves neurodevelopment in impoverished 2-year-old Roma children: a quasi-experimental observational study

RESEARCH | Open access | Published: 14 January 2025

Volume 184, article number 133, (2025) Cite this article

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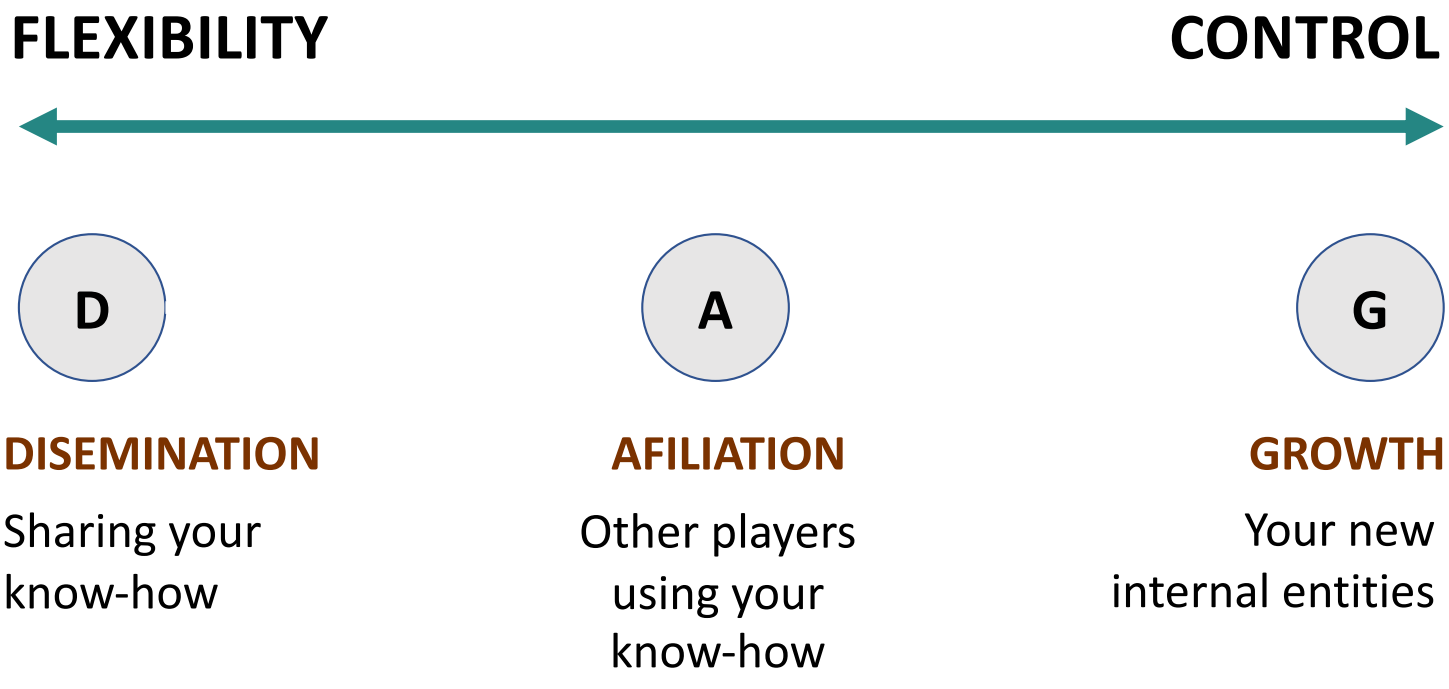


European Journal of Pediatrics

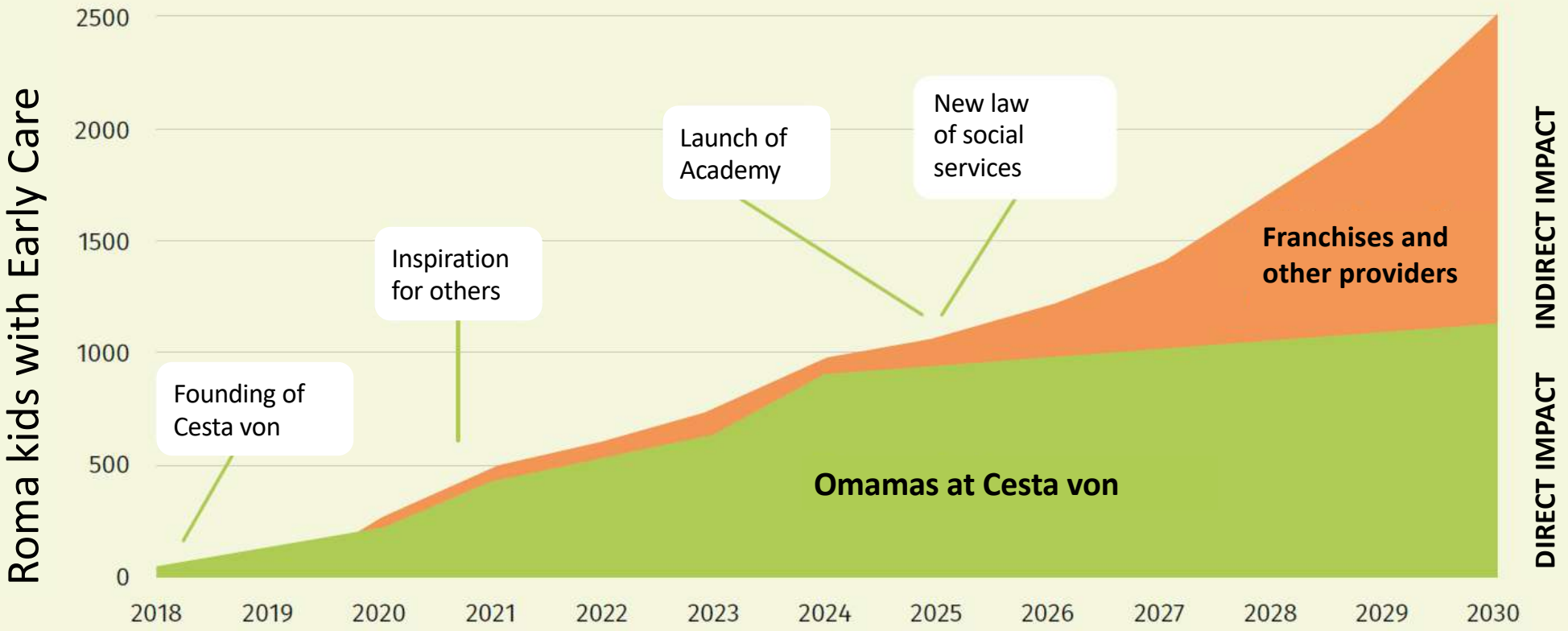
Aims and scope →

Submit manuscript →

A strategic choice: how to scale a model?

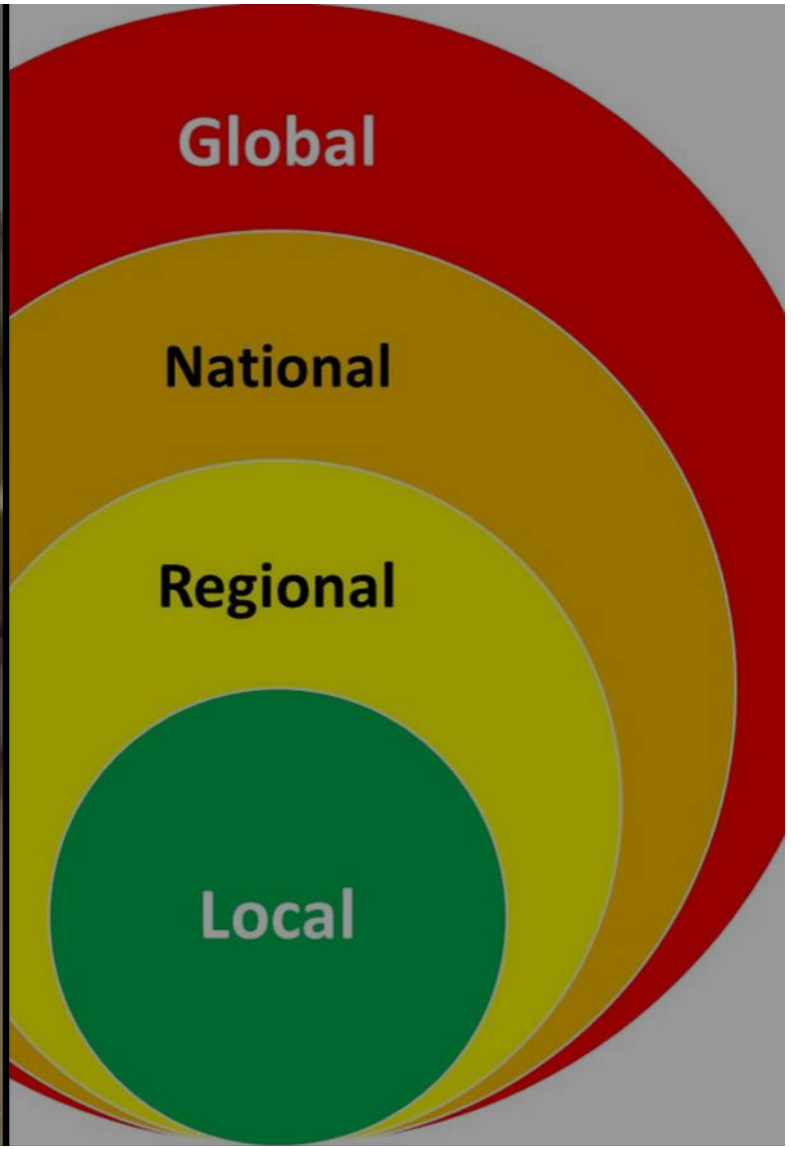


Vision of Scaling and Systemic Change





From 3 volunteers to system change and scaling abroad



Not a portfolio of projects. A system that carries a person from birth to independence.

AGES 0-4
OMAMA



YOUTH
ZEBRA



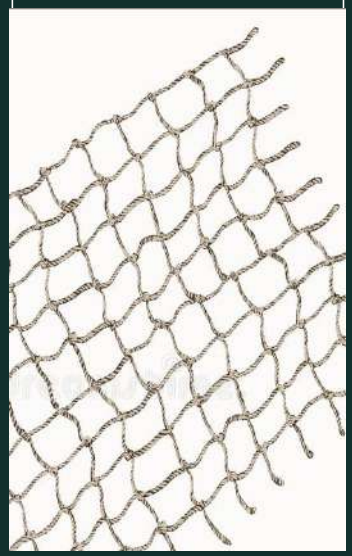
ADULTS
FILIP



CROSS-CUTTING
AMAL



BEYOND US
AKADEMIA





"There is September 2030. Our work has changed the system and has a lasting impact — and we are still a healthy organisation, and our colleagues are doing fine."

It's September 2030, our work is changing the system and having a sustainable impact, we're still a healthy organisation and our colleagues are cool

The evening is coming. The various clubs and activities gradually come to an end. The centre is closing. The cleaner is tidying up and preparing for tomorrow. There will be a concert for the children and parents of the OMAMA programme and the residents of the village.

For more than twelve years, CESTA VON has been one of the most active organisations helping to address generational poverty. In the OMAMA programme, **we have given thousands of children a better starting line from birth** and have impacted the entire early care system in the country. We are making a **comprehensive difference in 10 selected impoverished communities** along with other partners, empowering youth and adults in these communities. The common characteristics of our activities are showing respect and fostering dignity in all people, constantly innovating, striving for quality and maximising change and sustainability.

Although we have managed to improve a number of things where we operate, **the problem of generational poverty remains a huge challenge for our society.** Entrenched public prejudice, structural racism and persistent segregationist practices cannot be eradicated in a few years. That is why we are actively trying to **advocate** and influence the approaches of important institutions that come into contact with people from poor communities, as well as to **change the rules of the whole system** to make it as responsive as possible to the needs of people from socially excluded backgrounds. We employ our own policy officer to do this. Our excellent **analytics team** also collects data, measures, analyses and evaluates the outputs, outcomes and impact of our programmes. Thus, we can provide the state with honest analysis backed by data and experience on the ground. Alongside this, we are **sensitising the attitudes of the general public** and reducing the level of hatred and racism towards Roma people through the communication of stories.

We also help spread our solutions abroad. CESTA VON is an oft-mentioned inspiration from the point of view of the whole of Central Europe.

We are a healthy organisation. Although we are one of the largest Slovak non-profits, we are careful not to fall into corporate, bureaucratic functioning but to keep our energy, freedom and humility fresh. We still have a passion for our mission and joy in the work we see meaning in. We have structure and well-established processes, but even these encourage creativity and initiative. Our culture is free and egalitarian; we believe that everyone can express themselves, take initiative, and become a leader. Our focus remains on people in poverty and a personal approach to them. Even the staff from the headquarters have regular contact with the field to draw stimulus and energy from here.



We are always extremely committed to the **quality of our people** – from careful selection through training, support and regular mentoring. **The values of CESTA VON** – empowerment, trustworthiness, reliability, collaboration, friendliness, growth – are something we strive to remind ourselves of and translate into reality regularly. We build good relationships and mutual respect within and outside the organisation. **We laugh a lot** and enjoy being together. Along with the fresh energy, CESTA VON manages to maintain a **high bar** of accountability among its people. We don't let up in our pursuit of quality and honest work. We don't let problems fester but continuously solve them.

At the same time, CESTA VON tries to make sure that people do not fall too far behind in their work, that they live a **good private life,** that they do not burn out, that they are healthy and that they have joy and optimism. We are always on the side of sustainable functioning. Although we have usually grown during our existence, we have also taken breaks in selected regions or programmes to stabilise when necessary. We don't want to go crazy from constant chasing and expanding, but to grow commensurate with the quality and positive energy in the team.

We have **stable funding** built on a sophisticated fundraising system, but also on the state's strong support, which we have managed to set up. **The public and donors trust us** because of our visible results and changes, but also because of our honest approach and transparency.

The annual plans breaks the vision down into actionable details

Cesta von – Ciele a kľúčové výsledky 2026

SPLNENÉ ROZPRACOVANÉ ZATIAĽ SPIACE

#1: Program OMAMA

1.1 Posilňovať rodičov a deti zapojené v programe OMAMA		**Zodp. osoba**	**Termín**
	Pomenovať 3 hlavné rodičovské zručnosti, ktoré posilňujeme v rámci programu	Nura, supervízorky	Q2
	Vyhodnotiť pilotáž metodiky rodičovských klubov vo vybraných komunitách a zozbierať spätnú väzbu	Pauli H.	Q2
	Spustiť využívanie metodiky rodičovských klubov plošne vo všetkých komunitách	Pauli H.	Q1
	Vytvoriť inšpirujúci materiál pre realizáciu kvalitnejších rodičovských klubov, vrátane námetov, ako dosiahnuť len účasť rodičov (bez detí) a v prípade účasti detí, ako ich zorganizovať tak, aby mali rodičia možnosť sústrediť sa.	Pauli H.	Q3
	Hľadať inšpirácie a nadviazať aktívny kontakt aspoň s jednou organizáciou na tému rodičovské zručnosti	Pauli H.	Q4
	V každej komunite zrealizovať 1 rodičovský		


Lasting social change requires lasting organisations

Passion helped us start. Culture helps us last





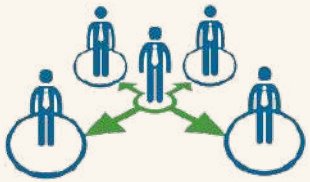
At some stage, activism is not enough



Startup

Energy starts movement – commitment, urgency and instinct

→



Growing

A team, clarity, defined roles and responsibilities

→



Developed

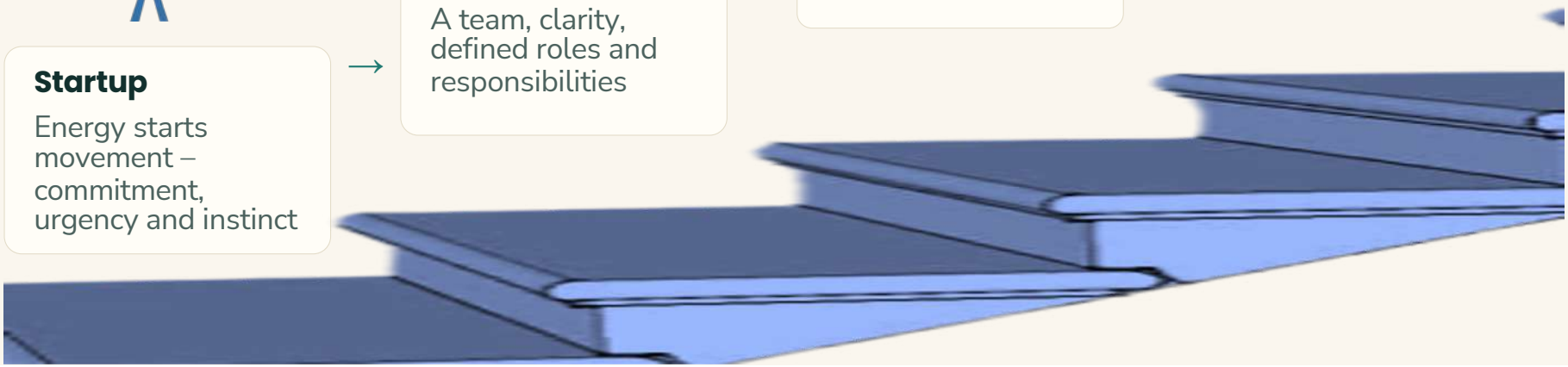
Governance, processes and accountability

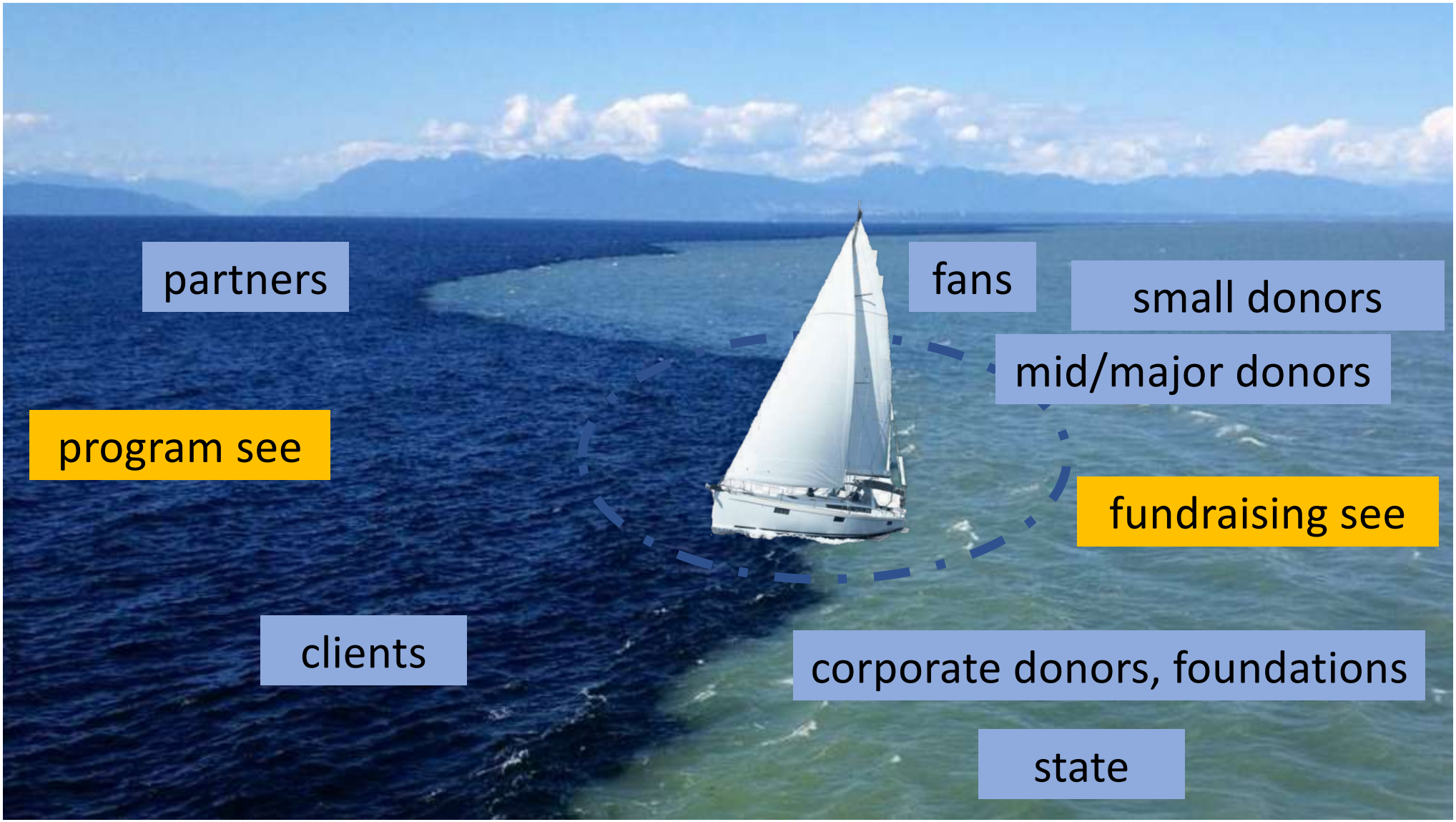
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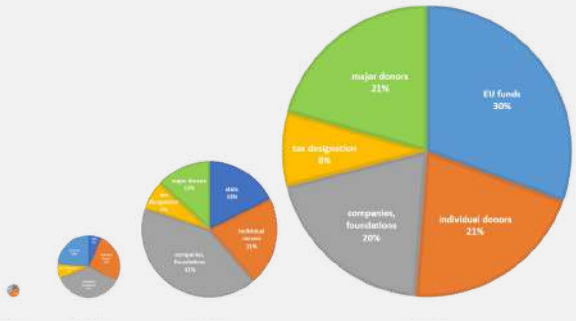


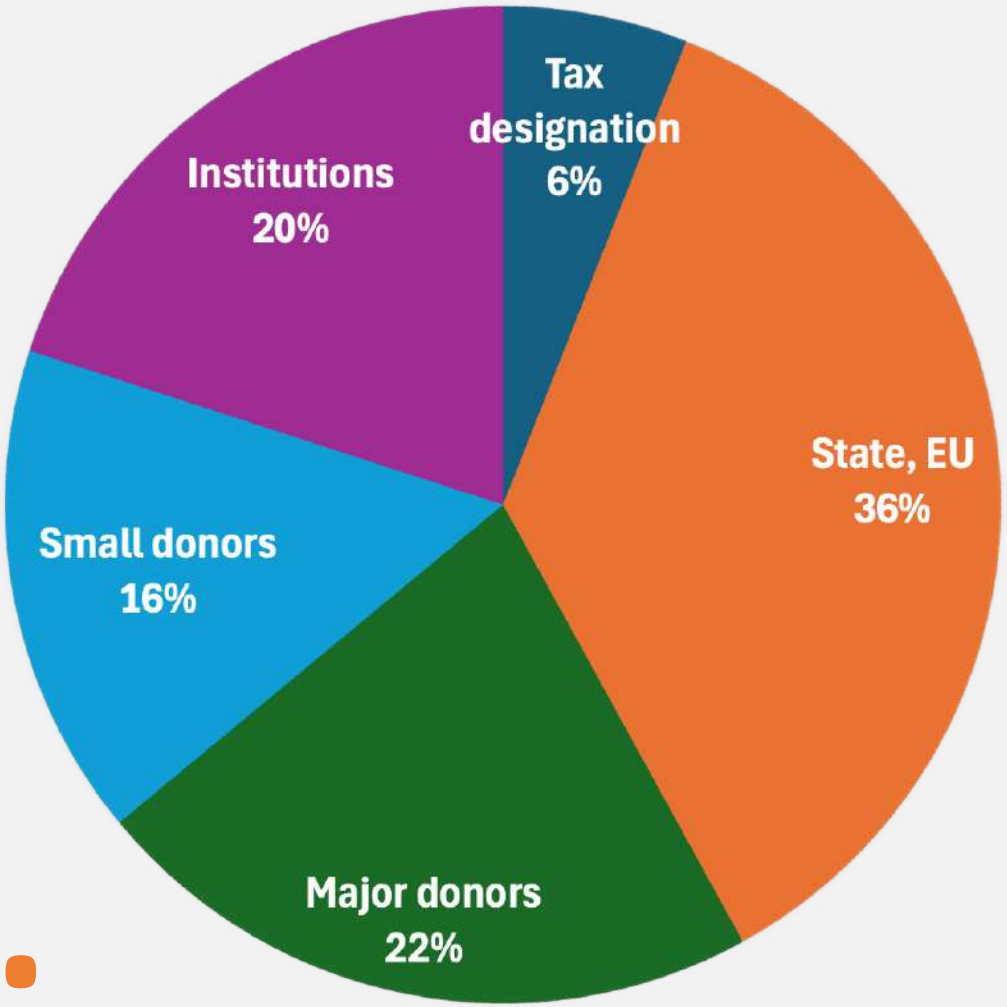
Transforming

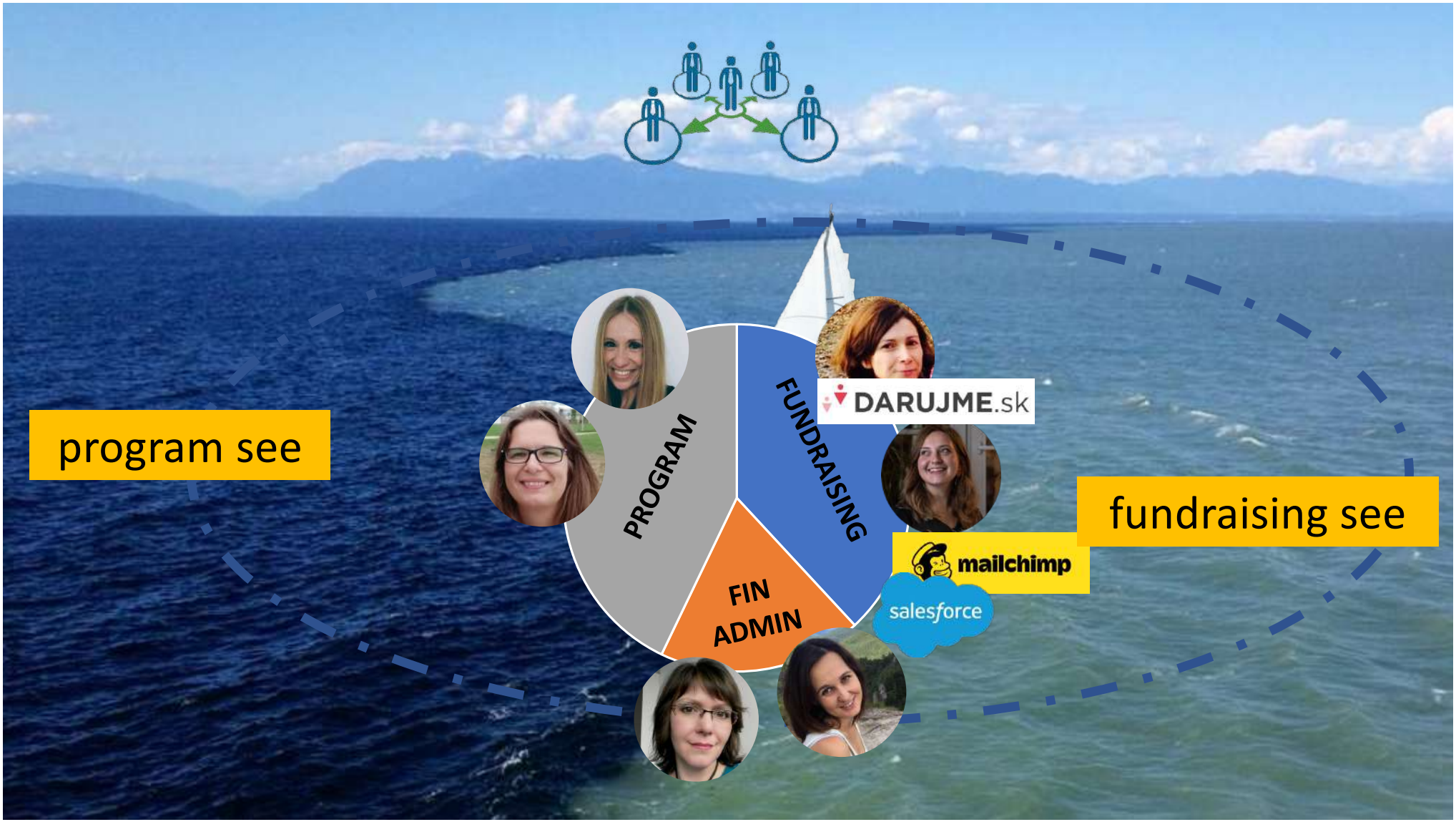
System change, go abroad, replications, renews itself

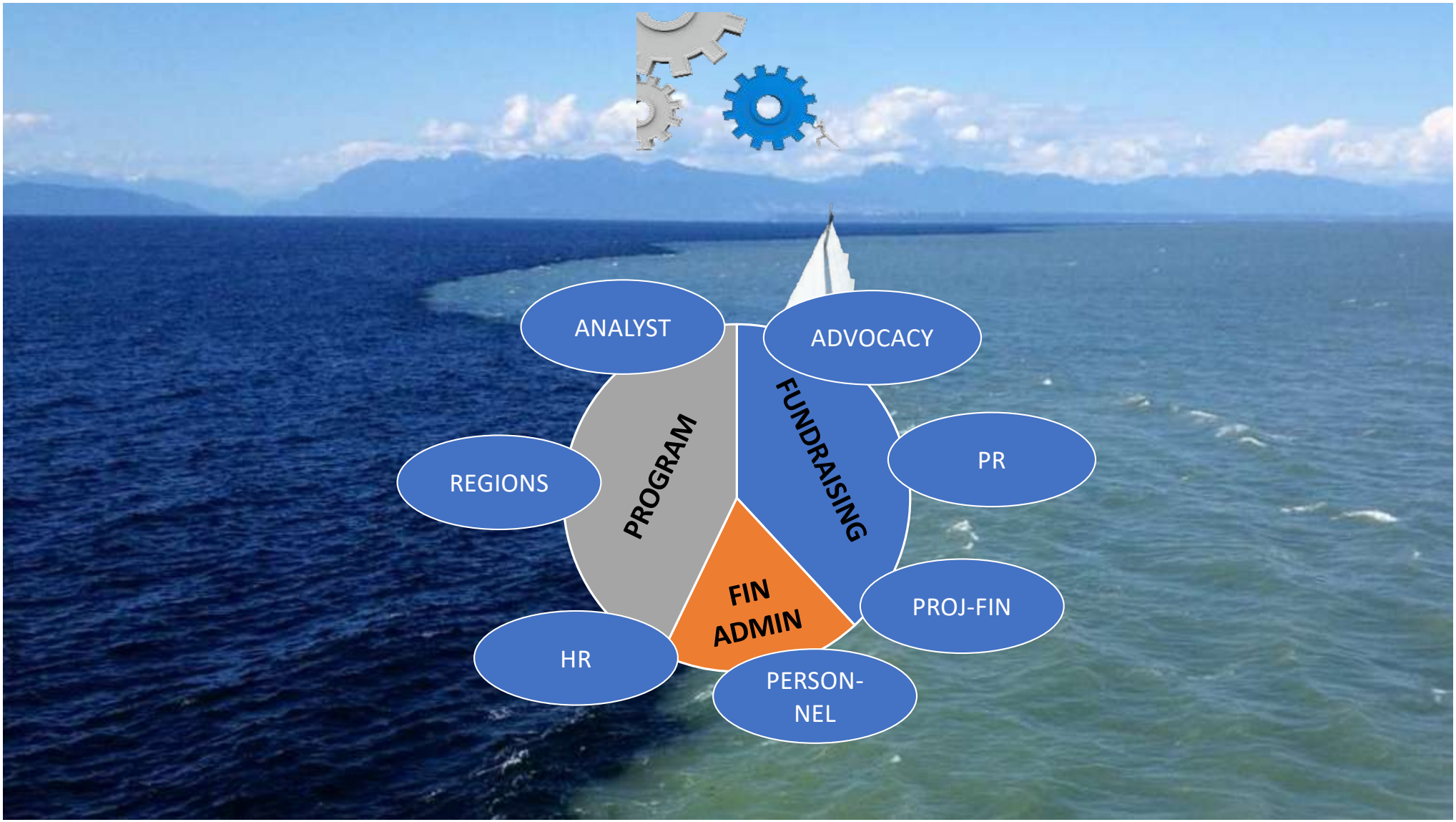



partners
fans
small donors
mid/major donors
program see
fundraising see
clients
corporate donors, foundations
state

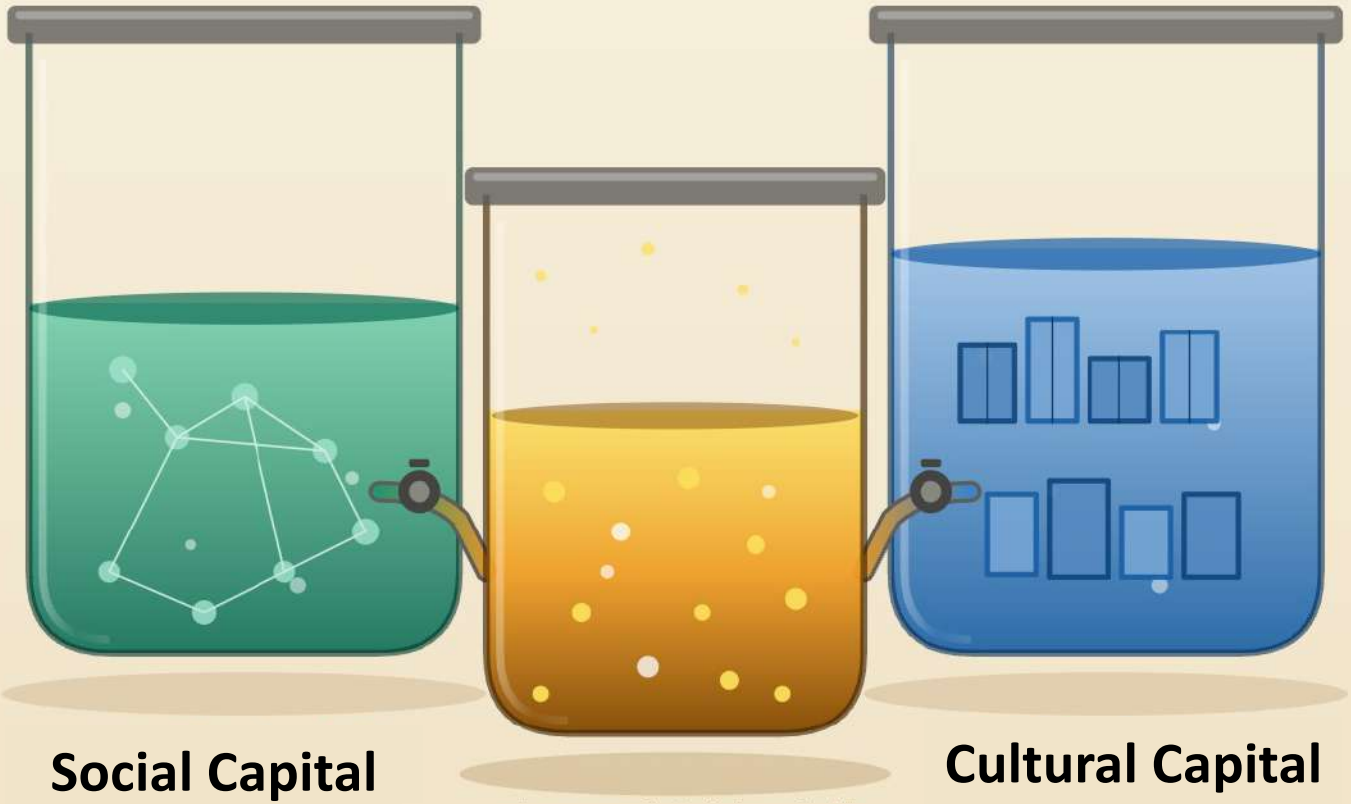

major donors
21%
EU funds
30%
tax designation
6%
companies, foundations
20%
individual donors
21%


Tax designation
6%
Institutions
20%
State, EU
36%
Small donors
16%
Major donors
22%


program see
PROGRAM
FUNDRAISING
FIN
ADMIN
DARUJME.sk
mailchimp
salesforce
fundraising see


ANALYST
ADVOCACY
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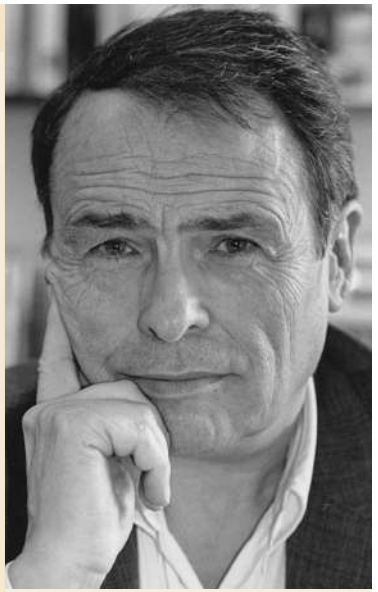

Scarcity makes organisations fragile
Reserve makes them resilient

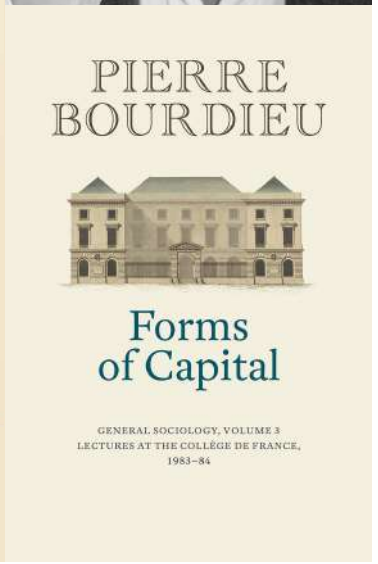


Social Capital

Economical Capital / Impact

Cultural Capital





Change comes through relationships



MINISTERSTVO PRÁCE, SOCIÁLNYCH VECÍ A RODINY SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

NADÁCIA NÁRODNEJ BANKY SLOVENSKA

VÝSKUMNÝ ÚSTAV DETSKEJ PSYCHOLÓGIE A PATOPSYCHOLÓGIE

aha! Process, Inc. A Ruby Payne Company

Projekt DOM.ov

ASHOKA

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

OdPerinky

STRONGER OTS

PlayWisely

accenture

GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM

Expertise and social proofs increase attractiveness





SozialMarie
Prize Winner
2019



SDGs
Award Winner
2020



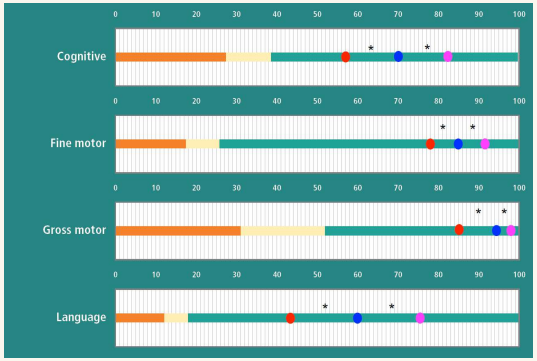
ROMA SPIRIT
Award Winner
2022



INOVATO
Grand Prix
2025



GLOBAL PLURALISM
AWARD
2025



BRIDGES
out of POVERTY

MINISTERSTVO
PRÁCE, SOCIÁLNYCH
VECÍ A RODINY
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

NIVAM
NÁRODNÝ INŠTITÚT VZDELÁVANIA A MLÁDEŽE

Credit from others





PaedDr. OĽGA MATUŠKOVÁ

Národný ústav detských chorôb, Oddelenie včasnej diagnostiky a terapie psychomotorického vývinu detí, DFNsP Kramáre, odborná garantka programu Omama

„Program Omama je



PaeDr. MARTINA RZYMANOVÁ

riaditeľka Centra včasnej intervencie, zriaďovateľka špecializovaného Centra



Mgr. JAROSLAVA CHMUROVIČOVÁ

sociálna pedagogička MŠ Zborov

„Môžem s istotou pove-dať, že deti, ktoré absolvovali program Omama, sú na tom ve-



ĽUDOVÍT ÓDOR

bývalý predseda vlády SR a viceguvernér NBS

„Vo svete hospodárskej politiky je len málo takých opatrení, kde má každé jedno vynaložené euro nielen vysokú návratnosť pre spo-ločnosť, ale zároveň znižuje


DEFENSIVE
PESSIMISM
OPTIMISM



Pavel Hrica · pavel.hrica@cestavon.sk · www.cestavon.sk