



RE-IMAGINING INGO

# INQUIRY PROCESS SYNTHESIS REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2021



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview of the inquiry process which sought to identify what is happening in the system, why it hasn't shifted ('stuckness'), and areas of possibility. These will form the grounding for prototyping work to follow. This paper identifies areas that were common across many clusters. For detailed analysis, see the accompanying document, [the annex](#).

## METHODOLOGY

Participants in the RINGO social lab worked on 7 core areas of investigation over three months, interviewing multiple stakeholders in each core area. This contributed to an analysis of areas that were 'stuck' in the system and areas of possibility to move in a more positive direction. The areas of inquiry were: Patriarchy and Feminist Leadership; Structural Racism; Collaboration and Solidarity; Resource flows; INGO Impact; Governance and Accountability and Incentives.

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## COMMON AREAS OF 'STUCKNESS' ACROSS SEVERAL CLUSTER INCLUDED:

- Stakeholders **hold conflicting objectives and cultures**. INGOs (generally) derived their culture from 'professionalism' achieving legitimacy through formal structures of management, command and control and with government; other actors in the system derived legitimacy directly from their constituents and networks. Cultures also clashed in terms of 'service delivery' vs. rights, and people-led change and formal vs. informal. English as a language of communication still predominates.
- **Impact measurement** was consistent across most cluster groups. Stuckness was seen in terms of how they were defined, and continue to be based on northern led measurement and outcome models, indicators, theories of change, etc...they don't fit lived-realities. Growth led indicators for organisations were also a driving factor and seen as a proxy to success.
- **Decision making structures** were noted as undemocratic and upward, failing to involve staff, beneficiaries or communities. Boards featured as being a barrier, with senior management teams being the next layer down. Those chosen to sit on Boards – including POC – replicate the existing system. The interconnection between funding, governance and perceptions about legitimacy was raised as being the most important systemic dimension.
- **Donors** were felt to be driving much of the existing models: large sums of money and the need for efficiency; risk management, etc. (see below); donor allocation also driven by geopolitics.
- **Risk aversion**: This was generally dictated by the regulatory environment, governing civil society which require undue control and accounting procedures. But some are a lower risk for public funding. This leads to heavy bureaucracies in INGOs.
- **Personal barriers**: such as risk of loss of livelihoods in the north (fear of losing jobs), influence and power, guided by ego; and lack of self-awareness around gender, race, privilege.
- **Vested interests**: International agreements, political or corporate capital were deeply embedded in the 'stuckness' of the system. Geopolitics maintains the status quo.
- Attitudinal, assumption and narrative barriers: These were multiple and assumed issues such as lack of 'capacity', weakness, or trust of partners; a belief in 'growth' as good. Views about western superiority also fits in here.
- **Knowledge production and extraction**: Comes from the West and extracts from the South and is controlled by western sources and institutions.

## COMMON AREAS OF 'POSSIBILITIES' WERE:

### 1. REDEFINE:

- move away from the **North/South Framing**, and ask what do southern actors offer the north? OR...what do national and local organisations need from international organisations?
- Redefine **risk** and proportionality.
- Construct **new KPIs for INGOs** and the wider system; hold the INGO to account by southern CSOs. Downwards accountability rather than upwards.
- **Redefine growth** – for example 100 stronger local independent CSOs vs. one INGO; decouple growth from impact.
- **Shift narratives** around capacity of the local and public perceptions of aid.

### 2. REDESIGN:

- Build collective leadership based on feminist models, and community governance; developing new recruitment models that prioritise these skills.
- Build **alternative governance structures** including board structures and indicators.
- Stakeholder governance models can be adopted (learning from other sectors), including diaspora.
- Redesign **organisations**: to include cultures of care, better linked to the public (movement building approaches), and space for reflection. Human resource strategies to be based on co-designed principles.
- Redesign the **roles of INGOs** to be supportive and demand focused to its partners.
- **Redesign success**: scale and spend to be questioned; and transformation and change measures prioritized.
- Redesign **funding models**: many examples, eg. more funds to smaller and local CSOs; endowments, participatory grant-making, funding collaboration rather than competition and brand. Also needed to unlock regional funding especially in philanthropic spaces.
- Redesign **HOW impact measurement is done**: to include communities and empower them to decide and evaluate.
- Redesign risk models.

### 3. REMOVE:

- **Regulatory and legal barriers to change**: Eliminate 'tied' aid – requirements to fund large national INGOs; anti-terrorism legislation that assumes mistrust of southern CSOs placing undue burdens; accounting regulations that impose undue burdens on smaller CSOs.
- Reduce or eliminate **reporting** requirements.
- remove focus on 'quick' results/outcomes.
- **Close** down some INGOS – create **exit strategies**.

### 4. CREATE THE NEW:

- Use decolonizing and addressing structural racism as a **leverage point** for change.
- Underpin the entire system on **new values** eg: equity, justice and development.
- Change where knowledge production and dissemination happens and assumptions about what knowledge is.
- Change our approach to **language** – more space for translation and alternative languages.
- Embrace **technology** to enable diversity and amplify voices in decision making.
- Invest in innovation and disruption.

## INTRODUCTION

The journey to reimagining the INGOs (RINGO), which began on 8 September 2020, has progressed significantly from the inception and convening phase to discovery. As shown in Figure 1.

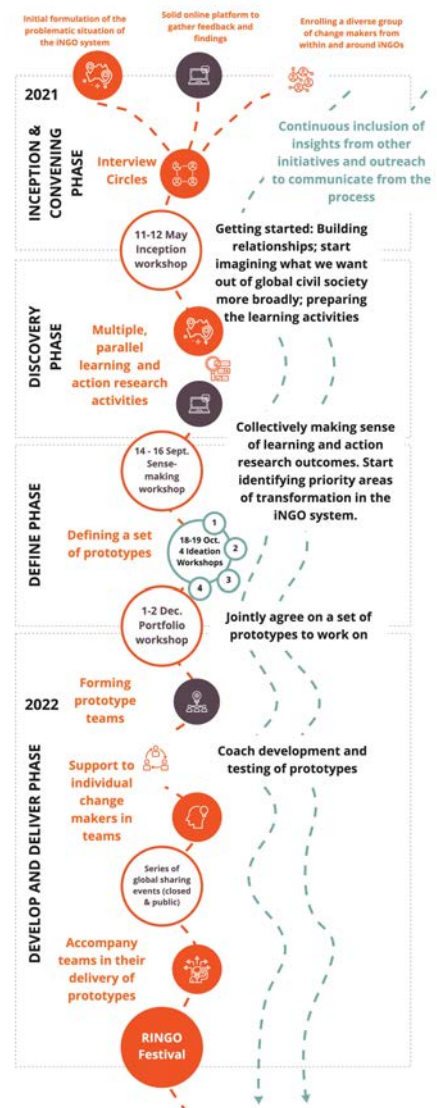
At the inception stage, inquiry clusters were formed to begin the discovering phase of the RINGO social lab process. The clusters from June to August 2021 identified and examined leverage points within the system towards sense-making through an inquiry process. After three months of discovery, each cluster collectively produced an analysis of the areas of stuckness and possibilities for change in the system.

The overall goal of this synthesis report is to present the inquiry clusters and identify the cross-cutting patterns emerging from discovery analysis. The report will serve as an abridged version of the discovery phase of the RINGO process. Sections in this report are presented in the following manner.

First, the report will;

- Give an overview of the inquiry process.
- Share the approach and method used at the inquiry stage.
- Present the areas of stuckness within the sector identified during the inquiry process.
- Present the areas of opportunities for change in the sector identified during the inquiry process.
- Share the commonalities and outliers from the inquiry phase.

This synthesised report will serve as an input to the sense-making workshop from 14 to 16 September 2021.



## OVERVIEW OF THE INQUIRY PROCESS

At the inception phase (find here the inception workshop report), themes for the inquiry were developed out of series of onboarding sessions and analysis using the iceberg model. Seven inquiry clusters were formed from the workshop to represent each theme at the end of the workshop. This session of the report presents the inquiry clusters and the objective of the inquiry clusters.

### WHY WERE THE CLUSTERS FORMED?

The objective of the inquiry process was to begin and continue the discovering phase of the RINGO process. The inquiry process sought to identify what is happening in the system, why it hasn't shifted ('stuckness'), and areas of possibility. Specifically, the inquiry phase aim was to;

- Create a collective base of knowing and understanding,
- Discover the current 'stuckness' & opportunity for the system, and
- Identify leverage points for change that will inform our hands-on innovation later on in the process.

### WHAT ARE THE INQUIRY CLUSTERS?

Below are the list and description of the seven inquiry clusters at the discovery phase of the RINGO process.

**Structural Racism:** This cluster investigated an inquiry on structural racism. The cluster identified and collated information on structural racism to help define the issues, where the gaps are and what can inform a useful definition of the challenge posed for which possible solutions can be prototyped.

**Patriarchy and Feminist Leadership:** This cluster explored existing power dynamics in the system through the lens of patriarchy and feminist leadership. The inquiry agenda centres around seeking practice in global civil society to help imagine what a truly feminist world should look.

**Resource Flows:** This cluster explored current funding flows within the global civil society ecosystem, analysed the limitations of these flows, the opportunities for change, and the seeds out there, in terms of new practices that enable (re)imagining new resource models that would give more power to local actors.

**Incentives:** This cluster explored the current incentive systems present in INGOs and across the global civil society ecosystem that represent a barrier to change. The inquiry agenda analysed these barriers and sought out new incentives practices/options that enable change.

**Solidarity and Collaboration:** This cluster explored the conditions for fostering collaboration and solidarity and identified the barriers. The cluster discovered how decisions are made; the risks involve collaboration, incentives and disincentives, and how southern CSOs perceive solidarity.

**Governance and Accountability:** This cluster explored the current models of governance and accountability, identified new practices that could help (re)imagine mechanisms that could create a new governance system for global civil society, where power and control are restored to local communities.

**INGO Impact:** This cluster examined how we currently measure success and for whom. The cluster explored the 'what', 'why', 'how' and 'who' of impact, needed to unpack the barriers to redefine impact and success, and the opportunities to create new modes of measurement.

## APPROACH/METHOD FOR DISCOVERY

Throughout their three-month discovery journey, the seven inquiry clusters adopted the following approaches and ways of working.

From the Inception workshop, the clusters

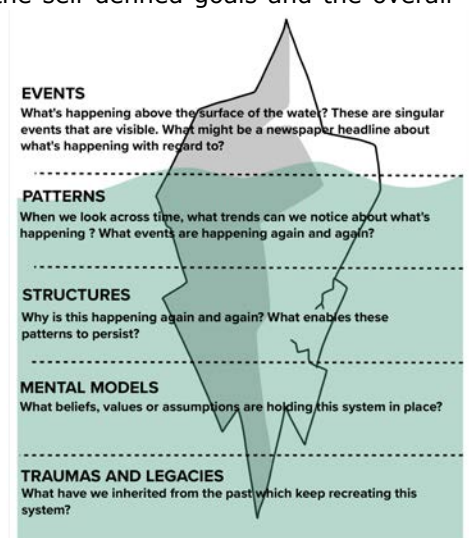
- Sought alternative/marginalised voices as well as other entities working on similar questions by interviewing multiple stakeholders in each core area.
- Processed the new information received from other stakeholders.
- Analysed the additional information using the iceberg model on Mural board and identified the areas of stuckness and potential leverage points for change. (see box 1 for the Iceberg model and link to mural boards.)
- Reviewed / Refined the inquiry outcomes for synthesis.

The inquiry clusters through the discovering phase engaged in dialogue interviews - to gather data in an effective and insight-focussed way, teamwork, shared experiences, stories, data and insights from the field and assessed progress based on their level of engagement, the process towards results and teamwork.

The clusters were provided coaches/facilitators & content sparring partners whose responsibility was to help build the team to convene towards achieving the self-defined goals and the overall vision of the inquiry process.

**Access the Mural board of the cluster:**

- [Structural Racism](#)
- [Patriarchy and Feminist Leadership](#)
- [Resource Flows](#)
- [Incentives](#)
- [Solidarity and Collaboration](#)
- [Governance and Accountability](#)
- [INGO Impact](#)



Box 1: The Iceberg model

## OUTCOMES (WHAT WAS FOUND)

The inquiry clusters over the period identified the following areas of stuckness and possibilities within the INGOs system. These areas have been categorised under the major commonalities and outliers. The commonalities are the issues that were shared in more than one inquiry cluster whereas the outliers were discussed in only one Inquiry cluster.

### MAJOR COMMONALITIES – SHARED IN MORE THAN ONE INQUIRY CLUSTER

#### I. AREAS OF STUCKNESS

Three key buckets of stuckness emerged from the process. These include; Nature of Resistance, Atmosphere that creates the stuckness, and Models & Practices that maintain the stuckness.

#### 1. NATURE OF RESISTANCE

##### I. HOW RESISTANCE TO CHANGE MANIFESTS IN THE SYSTEM

###### A. INTENTION WITHOUT OUTCOME

- Reinventing without transforming: INGO sector keeps reinventing itself to become nicer, but no seismic shifts.

###### B. RISK AVERSION

- Adversity / Low appetite for risk with (public) funds - everything has to be proven before it is even done.
- Risk appetite is low because investigations are painful and can ruin the NGO.

###### C. PATRIARCHY LEADERSHIP RESISTANCE

- Resistance to feminist's leadership: Patriarchy see leadership through its own reflections, makes it difficult for institutions to recognise and accept feminist leadership as legitimate and effective.
- Old boys club: is very powerful, handing each other jobs and making decisions behind the scenes. Evident too in the queer space. Difficult to call out.
- Undermining transformation: Patriarchy is persistent, seductive, demanding, and unconscious. This deeply undermine transformative efforts.

###### D. PATRIARCHAL & COLONIAL RESISTANCE

- Funding models: Patriarchal and colonial funding models/constructs which prevents organisations from transforming in deep ways.
- Organisational models: Old hierarchical, inflexible, competitive, non-collective organisational models.
- We continue to believe that international treaties and agreements are in the best interest of everyone, but do not take into account vested interest of those holding more power.

###### E. RACIST & COLONIAL RESISTANCE

- Privileged unwillingness: White people unwilling to give up power/ privilege/wealth
- Board composition: Even where BIPOC people are invited in, they might not be people who are able/willing to rock the boat.

##### II. HOW EGO AND FEAR CONTRIBUTE THE RESISTANCE

###### A. EGO & POWER

- Wanting to be important is a big problem in the system.
- Fear of letting power go and taking less credit. Linked to individualistic, western, masculine model of leadership.
- Ego - Leader's conscious of their legacy & reputation.

###### B. FEAR & POWER

- Fear = vulnerability meets fragility. Vulnerability made visible (through BLM) is generating (white) fragility.
- fear of losing power / relevance.

### **C. FEAR & VULNERABILITY**

- fear of acknowledging my part in the problem.
- Fear of talking about personal experiences of racism because of past traumas.
- Fear of speaking out.

## **2. ATMOSPHERE THAT CREATES STUCKNESS**

### **I. WHAT ARE THE BELIEF SYSTEMS & MINDSET CHALLENGES?**

#### **A. INGOS**

- Mistaken assumption/narrative that southern NGOs lack capacity or effectiveness.
  - o Lost funding chance due to non-diverse profiles of board and directors.

#### **B. DONORS**

- Large sums impact collective action: Large sums of external financing can erode institutions and potentials for collective action.
- Smaller organisations with less social capital: 'Know Who' critical for accessing funding for smaller organisations.

#### **C. NGOS & DONORS**

- Outdated beliefs of 'development' as service-delivery oriented propagated by the ways in which donors and INGOS have reported their work. Donors and donor publics have to understand how development plays out locally.
- Growth and scale mentality still exists vs. quality and impact.
- Size and growth are seen as proxy of impact and relevance.

### **II. HOW DOES WESTERN SUPERIORITY IN THE SYSTEM CREATE STUCKNESS**

#### **A. GLOBAL NORTH & GLOBAL SOUTH**

- Global North the powerful usurper: Global North has stolen and continues to hoard power/ wealth/ resources.
- Global South the weaker losers: Global South / people of colour considered 'backward', traditional, primitive, less worldly, less knowledge, more subjective, more risky.

#### **B. RACISM**

- White people and white ways of doing things are considered more professional, more expert, more reliable/valid.
- All (most) dominating INGOS are present in the global North.

#### **C. SOCIAL CAPITAL & 'REAL' VALUE ADD**

- Social & cultural capital without co-creation experience: Social and cultural capital individuals gain through more powerful positions coupled with engrained mental models of western superiority and lack of co-creation experience stand in the way of solidarity.
- The value add of 'being global' is diminished by the distance (not just physical but in terms of experience, understanding and perspective) between those who provide the funding, those who lead/ control the design of systems and programs, and those whose lives are impacted - the people, partner and communities that we work with.
- Donor dominance has led to increasing professionalisation within the aid chain. (Linked to trust - rigid accountability and reporting requirements and no flexibility for NGOs in global South, value for money focus).

#### **D. BELIEF SYSTEM**

- Big is better: Belief that large and professionalised organisations are the best vehicle for development.
- Colonialism.
- 'West is best'.

### III. HOW DO POWER AND POLITICS PLAY OUT TO ADD TO THE STUCKNESS

#### A. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION & GEO-POLITICS

- Unequal capitalist economic system and International cooperation: International cooperation and the people working in it are embedded in and mirror the unequal capitalist economic system (with focus on growth and unequal economic transactions) it is a product of. International cooperation does not fundamentally challenge or change this system nor develop alternatives.
- Geo-politics maintains the status quo: INGOs do not operate in a vacuum, they are part of geopolitical systems, those systems exist to keep power, prioritise national interest, and as a result, INGOs pressurised to direct funds to certain partners/national associations, or for example, more funding allocating to research on funder's government interest vs. research interests of the Southern government.
- Political forces vying for power - impact is measured accordingly.

#### B. POWER RELATIONSHIPS & FUND ALLOCATION

- Power relationships in aid: The power and politics of bilateral donor and INGO relationships with NGOs in the global South hinder progress towards a more equitable aid system.
- Western money allocation based on vested interests: Western money and foreign funding being allocated for political, economic, national interests of donors.

### IV. HOW DOES MISTRUST THRIVE TO MAINTAIN THE STUCKNESS

- North is mistrust in the SNGOs: Implicit in the structuring of the aid chain is a complete lack of trust in NGOs in the global South, despite decades of investment and partnership.
- Lack of trust exerts excessive control (log frames, monthly reports, bureaucracy).
- The narrative of weak local CSO is staying alive, though e.g. SIDA supporting Swedish CSO to capacitate local CSO is continuing. there should and is huge local capacity. But the narrative stays.

## 3. MODELS & PRACTICES THAT SUSTAIN THE STUCKNESS

### I. HOW HAVE THE ROLE & IDENTITY OF INGOS CONTRIBUTE TO THE STUCKNESS

- Distorted identity of the INGO: The role and identity of INGOs has become distorted, complex/complicated and confusing with hierarchical, top down and often donor driven relationships undermining and competing with the concepts of (locally-led) agility, solidarity and mutual accountability.
- INGOs are operating as donors within the system (passing on restrictions and lack of trust to NGOs in the global South).

### II. HOW HAS THE RACIST STRUCTURE WITH LOW DIVERSITY/ REPRESENTATION/ VISIBILITY MAINTAINED THE STUCKNESS

#### A. FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

- White feminism has excluded and harmed many - including Global South women/ nonbinary/ trans - An opportunity with intersectional feminism "coming back"!

#### B. RACISM & LEADERSHIP

- White people hold positions of leadership, power, decision-making and are deeply invested in holding them.
- The English language: you can't get an INGO job if you can't speak English.

#### C. RACISM & DONOR ATTITUDES

- Structural and overt racism a root cause of many donor attitudes.
- The aid chain has strong elements of structural racism within it.



## **D. SECTOR-WIDE ATTITUDES**

- Lack of recognition of embedded structural racism: The sector struggles to acknowledge how structural racism is embedded in its work and consistently shows up, e.g. in the 'I know better' attitude, structural racism as one of the root causes.
- Lack of visibility & accessibility affects SNGOs: visibility and accessibility is critical on both sides of the donor-NGO relationships.
- Racism.

## **III. HOW DO EXISTING MODELS & PRACTICES IN THE SYSTEM FEED THE STUCKNESS**

### **A. MODELS OF DECISION-MAKING**

- Decision-making distant from those impacted: Models of decision-making are not co-created with those impacted.
- Northern gatekeepers: The role of other key actors as 'gatekeepers' in the system does not give NGOs in the Global South sufficient voice, space or resources.
- Boards & misguided decision making: are making decisions about scale and budgets not about change and impact.
- Funder's demand for a traditional governance: a traditional governance structure is often a pre-requisite to funding.

### **B. APPROACHES OF THE SYSTEM**

- Charity approach vs Justice approach: Charity/ aid approach, not justice, solidarity, reparations.
- Service delivery approaches & value for money: Value for money a damaging principle when it comes to moving away from service delivery approaches.
- NGO as an idea/model itself.
- Unhelpful comms and fundraising narratives are facile/simplistic.

### **C. SYSTEMIC INERTIA**

- International development system: The current international development system has an own inertia, coupled with:
  - incentives (profiling, depoliticise),
  - rules (upwards accountability, implementers from own country),
  - structures and processes (board composition, risk mitigation), which make it work towards self-preservation not solidarity.

### **D. OBSTACLES**

- Structural obstacles: As CEO there are structural obstacles to introducing change (or they are not equipped to) - e.g. making staff redundant - support to CEOs.
- Heavy NGO Bureaucracies in the N&S: NGOs in the global North and South are constrained by heavy bureaucracies that govern the sector e.g. national rules & regulations, restrictions, funding requirements.
- Limiting donor-driven reporting/ accountability requirements: Donor-driven reporting/ accountability requirements limits the space for NGOs to define their own goals and impacts - some legal, some procedural.

## **IV. HOW WESTERN KNOWLEDGE SHAPE THE SYSTEM AND MAINTAINS THE STUCKNESS**

- Knowledge extraction: That knowledge/experience is extracted from women in Global South and repackaged for the benefit of the sector.
- Western knowledge is more important, western standards are more important. This fundamentally frames what we do and how we do it, what is funded, what we know, who leads and how we are.
- Knowledge is perceived as developed and controlled in the North, this is prevalent across sectors (not only civil society) which deepens power inequality, INGOs who do hire thought-leaders from the South do so to re-enforce their narrative, as opposed to embracing an alternative narrative.

## V. HOW LESS PRIORITY AND CARE IN THE SYSTEM ALLOWS THE STUCKNESS TO PERSIST

### A. CARE IN THE SYSTEM

- Results based system with little care for staff: Little attention to care for staff and work overload in part driven by pressures for results.

### B. SYSTEMIC PRIORITIES

- Technocracy prioritised over participation & process: Technocracy deemed more important than participation and process.
- Prioritising our own livelihoods over those of the people we serve.
- Misguided donor concerns: Donors concerned about political and public backlash in case of failure.

## II. AREAS OF POSSIBILITIES FOR CHANGE

The inquiry clusters identified the following areas of possibilities within the sector despite the stickiness. These areas of possibilities have been categorised into four main buckets; RE-Define, RE-Design, RE-Move and NEW.

### 1. RE - DEFINE

#### I. REDEFINE LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

##### A. LEADERSHIP

- Build collective leadership (see the feminist hiking collective and the JASS webinar series for example).
- Greater diversity in INGO senior leadership: through 'turnover' in INGO senior leadership roles.
- Learn in cooperation with feminist organisations doing this well.
- Develop recruitment criteria for leaders that include process dimension, not only outcomes.
- Frame proportionality issues: Leadership explicitly frames proportionality issues in a new way.

##### B. GOVERNANCE

- Community Governance: Community defines Impact and establishes main goals.
- Different INGO governance structures (competency based in relation to strategic priorities and those affected by it).
- Alternative Governance structures: Disaggregated responsibilities or roles in several "boards".
- Adopting different KPIs (financial vs. impact) that doesn't only drive financial growth.
- Changing the structure and governance of organisations.

#### II. REDEFINE SUCCESS AND MEASUREMENT OF IMPACT

##### A. SUCCESS

- Bigger is not better: Stop thinking INGOs need to get bigger to succeed. Frame success of an INGO: we are smaller now we have enabled our ecosystem.
- Charity rules (perception of) re: Risk, accountability & being 'political'.
- Hold INGOs to account - measurements, disclosure / transparency on shifting power.

##### B. IMPACT

- Community's definition of impact: Attention Model is designed to comply with Community's definition of impact.
- Develop impact measures that address crisis with a longer-term impact perspective.
- Impact instead of Growth: Can we start measuring impact and effectiveness instead of growth?

- Redefine growth? (eg. 100 stronger southern independent CSOs) vs. one strong one at the top.
- Decouple growth from Impact: Decouple growth from expression of perceived relevance and impact.
- Alternative measurement approaches are codified, normalised / celebrated.

### III. CHANGE NARRATIVES AND PERCEPTION

- Shifting the narrative on SNGOs: Shifting the narrative around the capacity of local CS / NGOs.
- Public perceptions of aid to influence donors: Public perceptions of aid and how it influences donor approaches.
- Growing momentum and movements to change as possibility.
- Challenge dominant narratives, values, norms and language in defining and assessing impact.

### IV. REPURPOSE ROLES OF INGOS

- Critical self-reflection and reshaping the role of INGOS.
- Reframe the purpose INGOS to be in service to national and local CSOs.
- Intersectional Feminism principles being applied (ii) Work with CEOs/Boards - equip them (iii) local/national actors demanding/not engagement anymore.

### V. RECONFIGURE ACCOUNTABILITY

- Accountability to real "owners" of the organisation: Downward accountability (DA).
- Legitimise SNGOs with greater downward accountability: downward accountability as central to more legitimate NGOs.
- Accountability with self-regulation: Incorporation of self-regulation and good practices.
- Risk mitigation measures instead of mandatory regulations.
- Identify regulatory/legal barriers to shifting resources: Tax, anti-terrorism, or mandatory support to nationally owned INGOS.

## 2. RE-DESIGN

### I. DESIGN ORGANISATIONS DIFFERENTLY

#### A. OVERALL

- Design our organisations differently – so that a difference way of doing things is embedded in the structure and people don't have to defend why they are doing what they do.
- Build a culture of care (and create time and space for that).
- Deeper conversations with the public: Deeper conversations and narratives of the complexity of change with public.
- Legitimise strong southern/local ecosystem: redefined as a legitimate outcome.

#### B. ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

- Organisational support to personal change / individual work done.
- Create more space for reflections (including critical self -reflection) and generative work instead of delivery-oriented workload.

#### C. ROLES & STRATEGIES

- Rebuilding supportive roles for INGOS...it's a supportive rather than a leadership one == a demand focussed mode.
- INGOS to take stronger roles in educating and influencing (international) trade policies, investments (those that extract, those that demand).
- Redesign human resource strategies based on new, co-designed principles.
- Redesigned MEAL approaches focused on change, transformation, impact not results or scale/spend.

## II. CHANGE FUNDING MODELS

### A. DONOR'S RE-STRATEGIES

- Power restoring philanthropy - where x% of funds must be granted to smaller local CSOs.
- Donors to fund collaborative efforts vs fostering competition and rewarding the loudest most dominant.
- Less 'requirements' tied to aid.
- Smaller & less tedious grant-making: Opportunity to have more smaller grants with fewer reporting requirements (as a way to manage perceived risk)- private or public.

### B. MODELS

- Shift funding models (participatory grant-making; endowments).
- Unrestricted funding: Progress in some areas in terms of providing unrestricted funding to NGOs in Global South.
- Unlock regional funding, in particular region-centred philanthropy - still largely caters to INGOs.
- Strictly focusing local actors: funding to genuine local actors, not local INGO chapters.

## 3. REMOVE

- Disrupt decision-making structures: Disrupt or bypass existing power and decision-making structures.
- Get rid of focus on quick results (including donor demands).
- Close down some INGOs.
- No aid should have pre-defined impact ambitions.
- Legal requirements for donors to give through National INGOs only.
- Anti-terrorism legislation that assumes mistrust of southern CSOs imposing undue burdens on smaller CSO.

## 4. NEW

### I. DECOLONISE AID

#### A. STRUCTURAL CHANGE

- Decolonising and structural racism as a leverage for change: Decolonising and structural racism agenda a significant leverage point for systems change.
- Look at specific symptoms of racism: Look at the symptoms of racism to not use racism too broadly, let's look at the specificities.
- Locally held power models: Create new ways of holding power and control - such as locally held pooled funds.
- Demystify donors and INGOs for NGOs in global South.

#### B. SNGOS

- Increase visibility of a more diverse set of SNGOs (to these actors).
- SNGO-centric aid system: There is a need to reconstruct the entire foundations of the aid system in ways that centre NGOs in the global South and uphold key principles of equity, justice and development.

#### C. SHIFT KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION

- Change how knowledge is produced - where its sourced, what is defined as.
- Change assumptions of knowledge & capacity: what is acknowledged/valued as knowledge and capacity.
- Interpretation/translation: Simultaneous interpretation/ translation as the norm
- Reward effective knowledge and expertise sharing: Reward effective knowledge and expertise sharing not for media presence or budget size.

#### D. EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

- Technology amplifying voices: Take advantage of technology to amplify voices and enable new decision-making approaches.

## **E. INCLUSIVE, REPRESENTATIVE COLLABORATION**

- Promote mutuality across system/ organisational boundaries.
- Everyone is part of the solution.
- Get a critical mass of voices into decision-making: Get a critical mass of voices that want to shift power into the decision-making spaces.
  - Investing into enabling diasporas to step into a stronger role.
- Communities have to be part of design & evaluation.
- Stakeholder composition for better governance: Governance decision making by specific actors of interest.
- Diverse/Relevant board composition: Inclusion of beneficiaries, community, volunteers.

## **F. SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS**

- Support external disruptors (e.g.).
- Exit strategies in place: All agencies to be supported to develop exit strategies.
  - - what (if anything) would be missed?
- Support for adopting alternative organisational practices: Support for organisations to explore and adopt alternative organisational practices - TEAL, Holocracy etc.

## **G. RE-DO POWER ANALYSIS**

- Bilateral donors to make a power analysis of themselves.
- Upend power dynamics: Empower Communities to decide, donors to account.

# **MAJOR OUTLIERS – SHARED IN ONLY ONE INQUIRY CLUSTER.**

## **I. AREAS OF STUCKNESS**

The areas in the system that stood out as the main outliers from the inquiry clusters are as follows;

### **IN COLLABORATION AND SOLIDARITY CLUSTER**

#### **STAKEHOLDERS HOLD CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES**

- Conflicting objectives between different stakeholders.
- INGOs corporate organisational structure: INGOs predominantly derive their organisational culture from corporates (e.g. having CEOs etc.) whereas social movements have a complete different culture, but INGOs have more power and therefore their culture prevails and they tend to partner with other organisations that value similar models, limiting collaboration and solidarity with social movements and other types of social actors, who have other types of leadership models (e.g. social movements power comes from direct legitimacy, vs. network of power/command of management tools).
- Within the INGO sector, there are opposing directions of change. Some believe service delivery is the best approach, to grow as much as possible to reach as many people as possible vs other INGOs that want to be more southern, people led etc., therefore change motivated by different interests.

### **IN INGO IMPACT CLUSTER**

#### **BIASED & INEFFECTIVE MEASUREMENT OF IMPACT**

- Who gets to define the measures of success/impact: northern actor.
- Communities are not deciding measurement and outcomes.
- Measurement is based on logic models, theory of change, indicators, outcomes that are designed to be “adapted to context” but don’t fit lived realities, external changes, etc.

- Cookie-cutter approach: "This has worked in country A and B, so it should work in context C" And you should be able to account for it.
- Lack of alternative measurement models.
- Resourcing incentives drive what gets measured.

## IN GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY CLUSTER

### UNDEMOCRATIC, INEFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES

#### ORGANISATIONAL

- Lack of democratic procedures - lack of internal democratic procedures for the decision-making process, including staff, beneficiaries, communities, etc.
- Resilience of the INGO system is based on an attitude of 'let the big boys make the decisions' (people with resources).
- Controlled decision making: is done on the basis of a particular flow of information, information created by certain parts of the system - that contribute to the stuckness.
- Interconnection between funding, governance, and perceptions about legitimacy (professionalism).

#### BOARDS

- a misunderstanding regarding "traditional boards" viewed as the Best structure for Good governance.
- Boards make a certain set of decisions. Senior Management team makes decisions.
- Undemocratic processes - lack of internal include staff, beneficiaries, communities, democratic procedures for the decision-making process to.
- Board laws governing civil associations can dictate who is on the board.
- Boards are chosen for their experience on how to do things - risk-averse.

#### FUNDERS

- Donors are part of deciding and influencing decision making through what they are willing to give their money for.

### UNHEALTHY REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

- Regulators - requiring control on accounting, control on anti-terrorism, etc. re: southern partners.
- Regulation bias: Regulations that obliges to certain board structure (in some countries).

### BIAS

- Favour formal/structured and institutionalised over "informal" and embedded.

### RISK AVERSION

- Adversity to risk.
- Low appetite for risk with (public) funds - everything has to be proven before it is even done.

## IN INCENTIVES CLUSTER

### PERVERSE INCENTIVES

- Perverse incentives around careers, e.g. X years experience in 'field' to be senior - goes against localisation agenda.
- Personal disincentives (livelihoods).
- Career paths: EOs will be measured in future jobs by how much the previous org GREW.

## IN PATRIARCHY AND FEMINIST LEADERSHIP CLUSTER

### THERE IS A LACK OF SELF AWARENESS

- Reluctance to be self-critical (as an individual or NGO) because of good intentions.
- People with power often exercise it without awareness. This includes power in the form of money, knowledge, gender and geography.

## II. AREAS OF POSSIBILITIES

The following areas of possibilities stood from the incentive cluster as the main outliers for the areas of possible change within the INGOs system.

### IN INCENTIVE CLUSTER

#### INVEST IN INNOVATION

- Establish disruptive investment/innovation windows.

#### RECONFIGURE RISK

- New articulation of 'risk' and 'accountability, and how to manage it.

#### EDUCATION & CAMPAIGN TO SPARK THINKING

- Education campaigns to spark thinking about coloniality/racism.

## 7

## CONCLUSIONS

The inquiry processes from the RINGO social Lab, which started from June to August 2021, helped identify the main areas of stuckness within the INGOs system. Along this stuckness, the seven inquiry clusters could identify possible areas and avenues for change towards the INGOs system we imagine. The output from this synthesis report will be the foundation for the sense-making workshop geared towards prototyping the INGO systems we want.

### ANNEX: MURAL LINKS TO ALL INQUIRY CLUSTERS

If you want to check out the Mural boards of the respective inquiry clusters, to see their findings and reflections in more detail, please do so:

- Resource Flows [https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812401335/d\\_18bfea8d5c34e3be2c956803fc238d0e82e1ec4?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276](https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812401335/d_18bfea8d5c34e3be2c956803fc238d0e82e1ec4?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276)
- Patriarchy and Feminist leadership [https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812155914/9\\_1ae00b6d1dc419e674f2d3610eb67a2e3822ea2?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276](https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812155914/9_1ae00b6d1dc419e674f2d3610eb67a2e3822ea2?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276)
- Solidarity and Collaboration [https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812491989/1\\_bba8aedf248b3f2437ef3ef5ab7e256db2de5a1?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276](https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812491989/1_bba8aedf248b3f2437ef3ef5ab7e256db2de5a1?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276)
- INGO Impact [https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812593935/3\\_0bcc8e3db6b5fa00fb3a4d40f1bde98dce6c970?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276](https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812593935/3_0bcc8e3db6b5fa00fb3a4d40f1bde98dce6c970?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276)
- Structural Racism [https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620810495045/6\\_580b80346a6865c88245bac4f7dc3c3cb244eef?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276](https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620810495045/6_580b80346a6865c88245bac4f7dc3c3cb244eef?sender=u00e916ba67dda7b4c32e3276)
- Incentives [https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812457618/2\\_431eaec6c5b652e61de1527a15d3dd646b69a29?sender=winter8262](https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812457618/2_431eaec6c5b652e61de1527a15d3dd646b69a29?sender=winter8262)
- Governance and Accountability [https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812545672/b\\_0696da92a591c17ac6cb8c3242b3570937cf96e?sender=winter8262](https://app.mural.co/t/reospartnerseurope8517/m/reospartnerseurope8517/1620812545672/b_0696da92a591c17ac6cb8c3242b3570937cf96e?sender=winter8262)