



RE-IMAGINING INGO

# PROTOTYPE PORTFOLIO WORKSHOP: MOVING FROM IDEAS TO ACTION

DECEMBER 2021



## ABOUT THE RINGO PORTFOLIO WORKSHOP

The portfolio workshop marked a significant stage of the change process, translating the talking (inception and inquiry during the discovery phase) into doing (creating ideas and prototypes).

Throughout the inquiring, discovering and sense-making stages, RINGO has explored areas of stuckness and possibility, and identified design challenges that have produced the first set of sixteen prototyping ideas. During the workshop, the Lab members worked together to strengthen these exciting ideas into a set of tangible and testable form of prototypes.

### PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop sought to help Lab members to:

- To learn more about related initiatives in the ecosystem.
- To strengthen RINGO ideas for prototyping, including feedback from guests.
- To get clearer about creating an initial portfolio of ideas to prototype and who will be prototyping them.

### PROCESS / APPROACH

The workshop was held over two days (1st and 2nd December 2021) and attended by RINGO Lab members, plus over 20 guest speakers and allies in the global south and the global north who are implementing initiatives that actively seek to transform global civil society.

**Day 1:** Guest speakers presented various initiatives to give an overview of what transformative work is happening in the wider civil society ecosystem. The RINGO Lab idea carriers then shared their ideas for prototyping. This served to identify how the prototypes from the RINGO Lab could complement or add to the existing initiatives. It also provided a glimpse into the contribution of RINGO to global civil society transformation.

**Day 2:** Lab idea carriers for prototyping were channelled through a set of peer coaching sessions to prepare them for prototyping, including identifying the team and resources required to be a prototype.

## 1

## DAY 1: WIDER GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY TRANSFORMATION

### A. RINGO'S IDEAS FOR THE GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY TRANSFORMATION

At the workshop, sixteen idea carriers presented their ideas for prototyping with the Lab members. These include:

- A foundation to amplify the voices of small UK charities working internationally.
- A co-constructed set of recommendations for EU donors to make funding flows more locally responsive and risk assessments fairer.
- An advocacy campaign to end tied aid to DAC states by bilateral donors.
- A "fiscal sponsor" model for intermediating funding from bilateral donors to national human rights actors.
- A participatory grantmaking approach for INGOs to shift power.
- A funding platform and knowledge hub for UK-based diaspora associations.
- An international solidarity network for local organisations - a mission-driven human-rights cantered movement that combines impact and outreach to decision-makers with accountability before its constituency.
- A decolonising framework that applied to / for START Network.
- A new approach to accountability and risk-sharing between INGOs and local CSOs.
- A creative space for social justice innovators to dream, regenerate and organise outside of an organisation.
- An advisory service for organisations ready to decolonise.
- For and by the people: an alternative solidarity approach.
- A reframed mission/vision statement for INGOs.

These proposed ideas were grouped into a quadrant chart based on the inquiry process and its synthesis, and the ideas that emerged from the How Might We questions and process at the previous workshop. The four sections define the scope of where the areas of change for the prototype can be seen. Table 1 below provides an overview of the four main ideas quadrants.

<b>Solidarity and Partnership</b>  Empowered local grassroots role and voice Decolonised relationships and decision making Risk sharing	<b>Leadership and governance</b>  Empowered local / grassroots leadership Decolonise capacity, knowledge and expertise Justice and solidarity governance models Shifting purpose and role of INGOs
<b>Accountability impact and measurement</b>  Power-balanced accountability Grassroots-led impact measurement	<b>Resource flows</b>  International Community-based Diaspora

Table 1: Synthesis prototype ideas. Source: RINGO Portfolio Workshop.

## B. UNDERLYING STRUCTURAL ISSUES

One key concern that emerged from the RINGO Lab process was the need to commit to addressing the underlying structural issues of colonialism, racism and patriarchy. As RINGO moves into prototyping, the challenge for the Lab is to be as concrete as possible in their ideas AND to keep structural power dynamics at the heart of manifesting their intention for change.

At the workshop, the Lab members were introduced to two key structural issues: gender and power; and structural racism.

Some of the concerns and questions raised are shared below:

### B.1 GENDER AND POWER

Originating from the HMW question: How might we revolutionise the mainstream way 'women's issues' are thought of within the INGO sector to make them the priority in investment?, Lab members Esther and Isabel raised some emerging concerns on gender and power within the INGO sector.

- Who is seen as a 'woman'?
- Who gets to decide what is a gender issue?
- Who is speaking for and about women?

Esther and Isabel shared additional areas of concern presented in Box 1. The structural concern on gender was picked up again in the Open Space sessions on Day 2 of the workshop for further strengthening.

It was agreed in the Lab that gender and power needs a clearer pathway ahead in our prototyping process.

#### Box 1: Emerging issues on Gender and Power

Given that we are all here to re-imagine the INGO and the development sector at large, how will we go about thinking about the subjects and objects of development itself?

What role will the powerful category of gender, that which constructs social differences between men and women, play?

If we agree that the differences between men and women are learnt, that they are structural factors in the organisation of social life,

and if we agree that gender is not a solitary category but that it exists in complex interrelationships with other systems of hierarchy (race, class, development, nation, sexuality, etc.),

and if we therefore agree that 'gender' is not equivalent to 'women', but rather a term that asks questions about power and how we shape, share and shift power -

how can we think about this for our RINGO process?

### B.2 DISMANTLE STRUCTURAL RACISM

Andrew from Reos Partners discussed ways to dismantle structural racism to the RINGO process.

Andrew emphasised that, in the last few years, many INGOs have identified racism as an underlying issue at the centre of many international organisational operations, leadership and

management, which has been generated from colonialism. Referring to his work with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Andrew explained how it helps to name this explicitly, rather than hide it within language about "local communities" or "global south".

Some inspirational questions were put to the Lab members to consider and reflect on while discussing the proposed ideas for prototyping:

- Are we touching on something structural that has a lot of leverage?
- Are we brave enough in what we are trying to do?
- Are we paying attention to the conjuration of power within the system?

Lab members were invited to be inspired by the work of MSF and not to miss the opportunity to be disruptive and clear about our intentions when strengthening the ideas for prototyping.

## C. CONNECTING WITH THE ECOSYSTEM OF CHANGE AROUND RINGO

Following the presentations from the Idea Carriers, 16 guests from global civil society were invited to share their innovative, transformational initiatives with the Lab. After a brief introduction to their work, each guest hosted a breakout session for smaller groups to go deeper into what their initiative is about, what is and what is not working, and discuss their learnings from the experience.

The purpose of this session was to inform the Lab members about other initiatives outside the RINGO to inspire, sharpen and strengthen their own ideas for prototyping.

Here are the links to all the organisations/initiatives that were presented:

- [Bond](#)
- [Casa Socio-Environmental Fund](#)
- [Civicus](#)
- [Conductive Space for Peace](#)
- [Family for Every Child](#)
- [Feedback Labs](#)
- [Global Giving](#)
- [Loop](#)
- [Luc Hoffmann Institute](#)
- [NEAR](#)
- [Partos](#)
- [Purposeful](#)
- [Start Network](#)

## CREATING SYNERGIES BETWEEN RINGO LAB IDEAS AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Participants embarked on a journey to reflect on the shared initiatives from the wider ecosystem against the RINGO Lab ideas to establish areas of synergy, identify what is missing and seek out opportunities to consolidate ideas. During a journaling exercise, Lab members were invited to consider four questions:

- What particular synergies are you noticing between these initiatives in the wider landscape and those starting to emerge now within RINGO?
- What is missing? What particular gaps are you aware of?
- Concretely, what does this mean for connecting our efforts?
- Please note specific opportunities for RINGO you see now, so that these can be shared in the ideas coaching session tomorrow

At the end of the exercise, the Lab members had recognised a lot of overlaps and the need to consolidate the ideas and fill emerging gaps. Participants shared the following insight at the end of the reflection session:

- Scale up what's been done and mainstream
- Not duplicate what others are doing already
- Create partnerships around the emerging prototypes to connect them to existing initiatives
- Find ways to compensate for people's time, especially in the phase of developing prototypes
- Fill the gap in technology and business models
- Include the voices of global south actors
- Include the donors in the process to commit to invest in prototypes and to stay the course beyond initial testing.

This shared feedback from the participants played a key role during the ideas coaching sessions the following day.

## DAY 2: GOING FROM WIDE TO DEEP

### SHARPENING IDEAS FOR PROTOTYPING

While day one of the workshop was about going wide, day two focussed on diving deep. After learning about some of the existing work going on across the sector, it was time to focus on each idea and sharpen our understanding of which ideas can be prototyped.

The Lab members were given a general overview of what prototyping means and the level of commitment required for the prototyping phase. The Lab then split into smaller groups for peer coaching sessions to help shape each idea and assess its readiness and viability for prototyping. Teams then started to form around each prototype, with Lab members taking on various roles to support the idea through the prototyping process.

The day began with prototyping.

### A. ABOUT PROTOTYPING: THE CONCEPT OF PROTOTYPING

Mariam gave a brief introduction to prototyping. Prototyping is when ideas start to manifest in more physical, experiential formats as concrete draft versions of a proposed solution. The role of prototypes is to test assumptions we have about an idea and express the intention, the essence behind the solution, or a specific feature of it in a tangible way.

A prototype's most important function is to allow users and other stakeholders to interact with the proposed solution: to try it and provide feedback on how to improve its features and offerings. The feedback cycle transforms the idea into being more innovative, transformative, impressive, unique, context-specific, user-centred, and user-friendly.

The RINGO prototyping process involves a series of co-creation and experiential learning, as shown in figure 1 below.

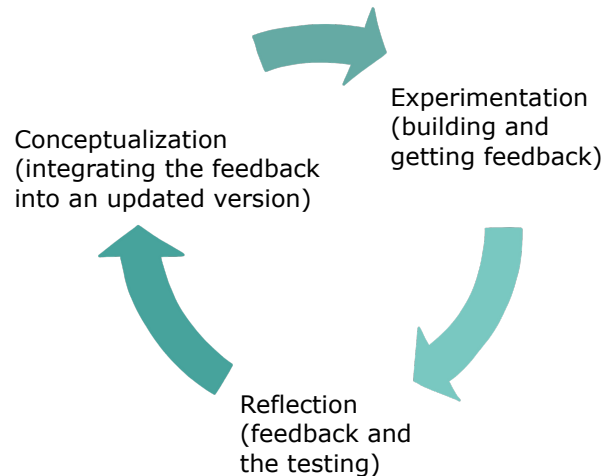


Figure 1, the RINGO prototyping process.

**Format for a prototype:** A prototype can be developed in any form. The prototype could be a physical artefact like a Lego construction explaining a new process. It could be the wireframes of a new digital product or a space designed to emphasise specific interactions between people. A prototype can also be a workshop designed to test some aspects of a solution.

**Criteria for prototyping:** The proposed ideas were assessed against a set of criteria and coaching questions:

**1. Relevant:** Does it address some of the structural stuckness identified in the inquiry process? This includes addressing structural racism, patriarchy, gender and power, and colonial legacies.

Coaching questions:

- Which specific areas of stuckness does this idea address?

- How does this idea address underlying structural issues of racism, patriarchy and /or colonial legacies?
- How to make this more explicit in the way we express this idea?

**2.Transformative:** Does it have the potential to help change the system? Together, is there potential for the set of ideas to have a multiplier effect?

Coaching questions:

- What specifically might be transformed?
- How might this happen?
- If this idea originates in a single organisation, how can other organisations join in to have more transformative potential?
- How might this idea influence the wider system?

**3.Right for RINGO:** Does the lab team have the necessary leverage to progress and test the idea? Can the RINGO/Reos core team support it with coaching?

Coaching questions:

- Are we the right people to move the idea forward?
- Is RINGO the right home for this idea?
- Would this idea benefit from coaching?

**4.Anchored:** Can it be tested among specific stakeholders or users in a specific place?

Coaching questions:

- In which place do you want to test this idea?
- With what stakeholders or users?
- In what specific part of the civil society system – that is CBO, local NGO, INGO etc.

**5.Energising:** Which concepts are so exciting that you absolutely have to test them in a real-life setting? And are there at least 2 or 3 RINGO lab participants who want to take this forward?

Coaching questions:

- Are there others in RINGO who have already expressed interest in prototyping this idea with you?
- Who else from RINGO would you like to invite?
- Who from outside RINGO could bring skills, leverage and enthusiasm to the prototyping team?

**6.Tangible:** Does it lend itself to creating a material prototype or models?

Coaching questions:

- Can you already imagine creating a physical model of this idea?
- What might this look like

The Lab members were encouraged to add additional coaching questions to help sharpen the idea.

## B. OPEN SPACE SESSION FOR PEER COACHING AROUND EACH IDEA

The peer coaching sessions were held in two rounds, giving each lab member the opportunity to work on two ideas, or stay with one idea for both rounds. Lab members decided which prototype ideas they felt passionate about, and would like to support and strengthen against the defined criteria and coaching questions. These sessions served to help make the ideas more relevant, transformative, anchored, and tangible, and for the prototype to be articulated more clearly.

The Lab members were reminded to consider the underlying structural issues of colonialism, racism and patriarchy during these sessions, while Esther and Isabel hosted a separate discussion examining: "Gender as an overarching, structural issue in the inequalities seen in the development sector".

These sessions also assessed the viability of the prototype, with the groups reflecting on whether an idea can be, or needs to be, prototyped. There might be a wonderful idea, but if it doesn't address a key area of stuckness or have transformative potential then they should not be carried forward, or if it's already a fully-formed mode of action then it may not need to go through a

prototyping phase. Such ideas could still be pursued within RINGO but without prototyping support. By the end of the session, the ideas were categorised according to their readiness:

- Ready for prototyping in early 2022
- Not yet ready for prototyping
- Remains an active idea to collaborate around in RINGO, but not for prototyping
- Is being let go

These coaching sessions resulted in the Lab members having a more coherent and coordinated understanding about which ideas will be ready to move into prototyping in 2022, which ideas need further support and who/which team would be taking the prototyping forward. Annexe 1 shows a summary of the prototype ideas and their current status.

### **Forming prototyping teams around an idea**

Following the coaching session, the Lab members formed teams around each idea. The various roles to support an Idea Carrier through the prototyping and embedding phases include:

- Ideas carriers: alone or with one or two others
- Prototyping team member
- Critical friends: to provide guidance to the process and supportively challenge from an alternative or wider perspective
- Host for a prototype

### **Hosting and resources for the prototypes**

RINGO is seeking organisational partners to help host each of these prototypes throughout the process.

Organisational partners could include any network or organisation in civil society or philanthropy and can be located anywhere in the world – as long as they have the capacity to support a prototype. The organisational host will be an important focal point for finding out more about the work of the prototype – and will also help to ensure the maximum influence of any prototypes beyond the work of the RINGO Lab.

Specifically, to host a prototype may involve:

- To help coordinate the prototyping team, a combination of lab members and other participants. This would include logistics and basic administration.
- To participate in prototyping meetings of the 'hosted' prototype and more general learning/sharing sessions of the RINGO Lab.
- Where appropriate to the prototype, bring in additional participants (eg. network members, relevant stakeholders) to participate in the prototyping process.
- To help track and share learnings from the prototyping team. We'll provide the framework for this.
- Where needed, help provide or secure additional funding (eg. joint funding application).
- To participate in any plan to move into piloting a prototype: (eg. scaling and replicating at the end of the prototyping phase).
- To support the dissemination of results and influence after any prototype outcomes with key stakeholder groups.

However, hosting a prototype does not mean that the host organisation takes over or that a prototype can focus purely on that organisation. All RINGO prototypes are addressing systemic issues within global civil society and shall therefore involve more than one organisation.

RINGO has already secured some funding to support the prototyping phase, and will continue to fundraise as the process progresses.

Unfortunately RINGO is not able to actively support every prototype idea going forward. We will form a RINGO Committee made up of 2-3 members of the RINGO Lab, 2-3 members of the RINGO core team, 1-2 people from Reos and 1-2 people from the RINGO Advisory Board. This Committee will support the first stage of the assessment to produce a shortlist of prototypes, creating a balanced portfolio and taking into consideration available resources. During a Planting Workshop in March, the Lab will collectively select the final prototypes to take forward, based on whether the idea:

- Addresses RINGO's four quadrants,
- Can benefit from RINGO coaching
- Has a level of readiness (team, collaborators, resources, etc.)



## THE RINGO PORTFOLIO WORKSHOP: LESSONS LEARNED

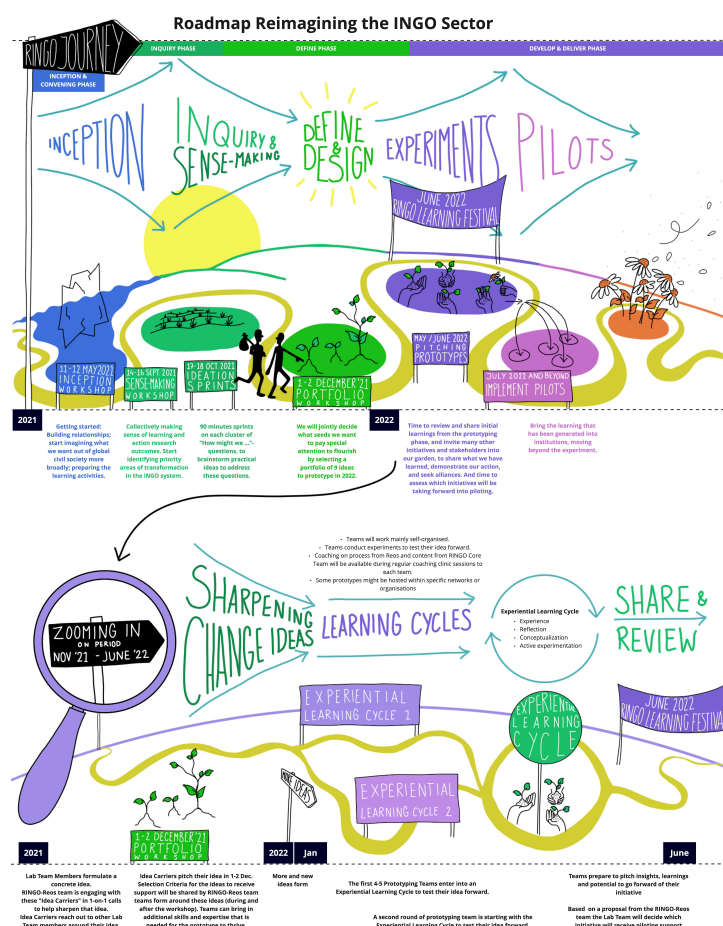
The following were some lessons learned from the process:

- Listening and learning from transformative initiatives happening outside of RINGO gives the Lab a wider understanding of the ecosystem in order to avoid duplications in ideas, identify potential areas for collaboration and gaps to be filled.
- The coaching sessions helps Lab members to sharpen their thinking and define (and redefine) the ideas for prototyping. A collective understanding of the prototyping process and what makes a viable prototype is built.
- Idea Carriers might in some cases the need to combine their ideas to form a more comprehensive prototype.
- More coaching support will be required to improve the readiness of ideas for prototyping in January and February 2022.

### 2022: THE PROCESS

After reflecting on all of the learnings from the Portfolio Workshop, the next steps have been determined as follows:

- RINGO-Reos will offer Idea Carriers and prototype teams a further coaching session in January to improve their readiness ahead of prototyping.
- Lab members are invited to submit new ideas for prototyping in January
- A RINGO Committee will create a shortlist in February, with the RINGO Lab selecting the final portfolio of prototypes in March
- Prototype teams will be formed to begin the prototyping process, supported by coach from the RINGO-Reos team. There will be an open invitation for allies outside the RINGO Lab to contribute their expertise, and RINGO is seeking organisational partners to host each of these prototypes throughout the process.
- RINGO will continue to fundraise to support the prototyping phase
- The prototypes are expected to be presented during a learning festival midway through 2022.
- After this point, as each prototype evolves, some of them will move into the embedding phase.



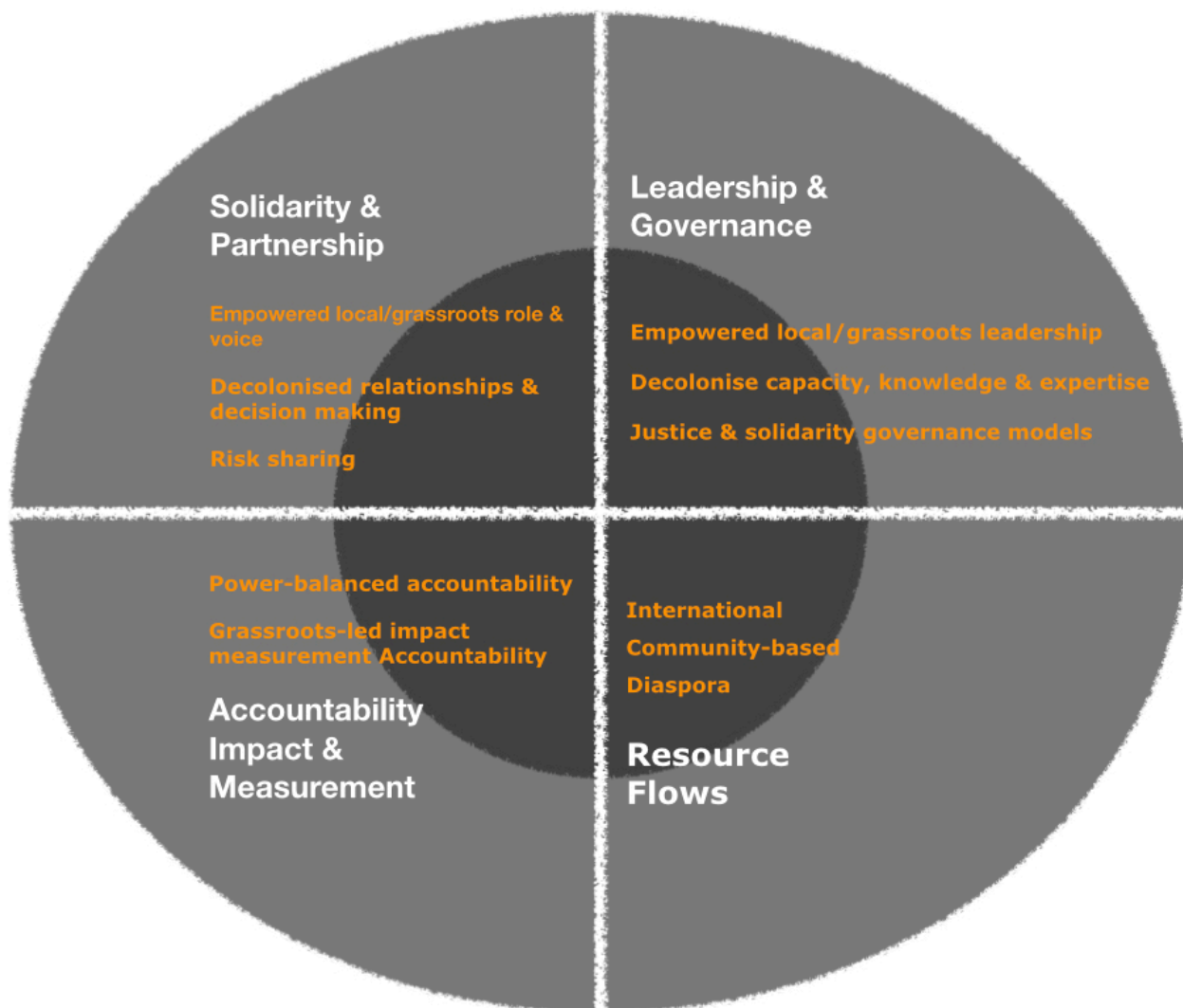


## ANNEXE 1: SUMMARY OF IDEAS

# Quadrants for prototyping

RINGO's scope of contribution to systems change  
*...taking stock post the December Lab session*





## Status

...based on the outcome from the Dec Lab session

Two categories of readiness for prototyping within the RINGO lab:

- Nearly there
- Not there yet

...ALSO

- **Scope for combining ideas for prototypes** will be discussed before the next lab session on the 2nd of March - the Planting Workshop
- **One more round of prototypes** have been invited to the March Lab session

## Solidarity & Partnership

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- To recast how we approach **accountabilities & risks** within the INGO-Local CSO relationship, a new approach to accountability, risk and compliance along the entire value chain)

- **New practice and performance standard around decolonisation** in INGOS. Process of making sure the preconditions are in place of making and holding to commitments to change, and of being held accountable to that **tbc**

- **A working model for an international mission-driven human rights movement** - building on cooperation among locally focused and international groups in a common search of solutions for human rights issues

- **To design & build a new type of MEAL practice, one that is centred on listening and values, one that asks whose knowledge counts** - unpicks standard MEAL tools and re-envisages them in different ways to be more responsible, more practical, more focussed on use. Then to have a number of INGOS adopting this new way of thinking and provide an evidence base for donors on how to do things differently

- **A new approach to accountability & risk sharing between INGOs & local CSOs** to recast how we approach accountabilities & risks within the INGO-local CSO relationship, incl how risks, compliance & accountability are shared.

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## Accountability Impact & Measurement

## Leadership & Governance

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- **Prototyping forms of collective activism in minimal organised ways:** Building ways of collaborating for social justice at an international level (being international) that enable action that are more fluid and less institutionalised

- **A high-level policy advocacy campaign** to implement the new DAC-recommendations to end tied aid - INGOS commit to re-imagine their lobbying practice

- **Prototype the idea of "collective funding"** and create a model that would ensure the entire process, from convening to decision making, is based on transparency, agency, collaboration and visibility **tbc**

- **Rebuilding models of solidarity and trust** that allows unrestricted funds to flow from the public to the Global South on their terms

- **A diaspora funding platform & knowledge hub** for UK-based diaspora associations
- **Testing out accountability and risk models** to make EU grant-making easier to the global south and influencing EU policy

## Resource Flows

## Solidarity & Partnership

A reframed mission / vision for INGOs: Articulate a fresh vision & added value of INGOs in relation to national/local actors to disrupt & reimagine international solidarity - launching a reverse call for proposals; for use in partnership agreements; - tailored in sector-specific and context-specific ways e.g. an international human rights, humanitarian or development NGO

For and by the people: an alternative solidarity approach to a) develop an alternative model to INGO for delivering support, solidarity, resources & expertise b) provide impetus for INGO's to change their approaches & models

Gender as a structural issue

Gender as a structural issue

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## Accountability Impact & Measurement

## Leadership & Governance

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- 1) Design an 'advisory service' for orgs who are ready to decolonise / shift power. OR 2) Support an organisation ready to do it in real time, and extract learnings for others. OR 3) A peer circle of INGOs support each other (and hosted by one credible INGO which has gone far already)

Gender as a structural issue

Gender as a structural issue

- 5 year period, co-operative model, governance system that welcomes in other CSOs, prototyping of accountability system, the contract between the fiscal sponsor and the sponsored orgs/ projects, accompaniment/ shadowing role

## Resource Flows