



RE-IMAGINING INGO

CROSS-TEAM FEEDBACK SESSION: PEER COACHING AND REFLECTIVE LEARNING

22 JUNE 2022



ABOUT THE RINGO PROJECT

The RINGO Project is a systems change initiative that seeks to transform global civil society to better respond to today's challenges. RINGO is the first globally-coordinated cross-sectoral effort to revolutionise the sector by interrogating the purpose, structures, power and positioning of INGOs. The RINGO core team and systems change experts Reos Partners have designed the RINGO Social Lab to create the conditions to reimagine and co-create a desirable and plausible future for INGOs.

The RINGO Project process involves three main segments: **discover; define; and develop and deliver**. The first two phases allowed RINGO to explore and understand how the project can contribute to systems change and identify key areas we would like to reimagine:

1. Accountability, Impact and Measurement;
2. Leadership and Governance;
3. Solidarity and Partnership; and
4. Resource Flows.

We are currently mid-way through our final phase. At our [Planting Workshop](#) in March 2022, the RINGO Social Lab endorsed a portfolio of seven prototypes, with a further one added in April, which together address these areas of opportunity. The prototyping teams from the RINGO Lab are working on their unique ideas, with the RINGO/Reos coaches providing support to drive the process and encourage the teams to be risk-taking and practical. The prototypes challenge some of the major structural barriers to change across the sectors and demonstrate new ways of working in order to strengthen our civil society ecosystem. You can read about the [RINGO prototypes here](#).

The RINGO Social Lab has agreed on a set of [Guiding Principles](#) to provide coherence to the work of the prototyping teams, ensuring their efforts are ambitious and truly transformational. The concepts identified are at the heart of reimagining INGOs, and serve as guide to ongoing work, within and outside of RINGO.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since March 2022, members of the RINGO Social Lab have been working in small prototyping teams; testing and iterating their ideas in practice, with a view for these new models to eventually be scaled and replicated across the sector. The RINGO Cross-Team Feedback Session in June 2022 provided the Lab with a valuable opportunity to meet mid-way through the prototyping process to take stock and learn from each other. During the highly participatory session involving peer coaching between prototyping teams and individual reflective learning, we explored questions such as:

- *How are the other prototypes progressing, and what useful connections could be made between what's emerging in the different teams?*
- *What are we all learning about working this way?*
- *What is most important to do next, as we move towards sharing these prototypes at the RINGO Learning Festival?*

The session sought to harness the collective wisdom of the RINGO Social Lab to bring new perspectives to support each of the prototyping teams through any challenges they are facing, as well as provide a greater understanding of the breadth of work taking place across the project.

INTRODUCTION

RINGO PROTOTYPES

A key component of any systems change process – and indeed the RINGO process – is not to pre-prescribe the solutions, but to co-design and collaborate as the process progresses. Therefore, our process is iterative and at each stage requires us to check in with members from across the RINGO Lab. Having collectively worked together and completed the 'discover' and 'define' phases of the RINGO process, the 'develop and deliver' phase focuses on eight prototypes within four areas of opportunity, which the Lab agreed could be transformative for global civil society. These prototypes are:

ACCOUNTABILITY, IMPACT AND MEASUREMENT

- **The Pledge For Change:** This prototype is to develop a Southern-led accountability mechanism that shifts the accountability equation and redresses power imbalances in the system.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

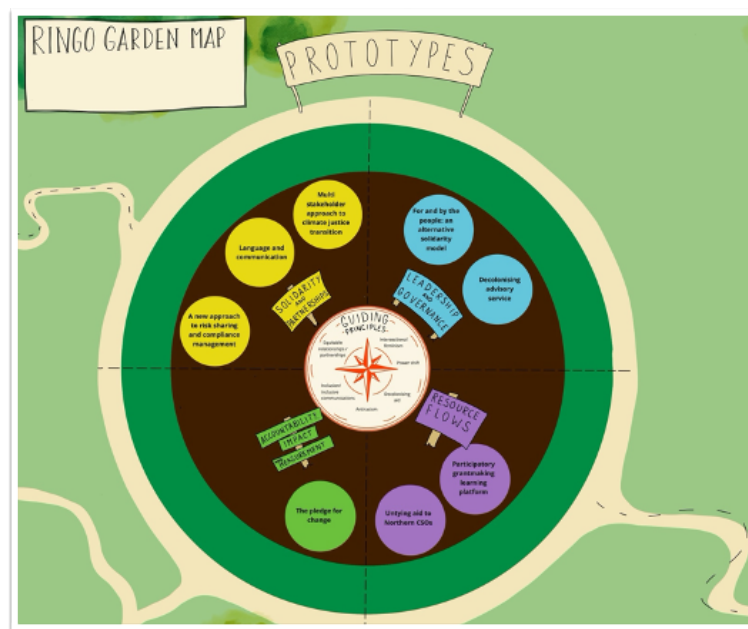
- **Decolonising Advisory Service:** This team will develop a platform of experts from the Global South to provide advice and support to organisations in the Global North who are committed to decolonising their thinking and practice.
- **For and By the People: An Alternative Solidarity Model:** The prototype seeks to challenge INGOs in their role and behaviours towards local actors through articulating a strong and coordinated "demand side" in the development /international solidarity chain, including testing a 'reverse call for proposals'.

RESOURCE FLOWS

- **South meets North in Power Shift: A Framework for Effective Participatory Grant-Making:** This prototype is testing how to disrupt power relations between Northern INGOs and Southern CSOs and communities so that participatory grant-making (PGM) processes between them can be transformative.
- **Untying Aid to Northern CSOs:** This prototype involves a high-level policy and advocacy campaign towards donors that contribute to the structural imbalance of CSO funding.

SOLIDARITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **A New Approach to Risk-Sharing and Compliance Management:** This team is identifying and testing different ways to share risks and organise compliance requirements through the entire value chain.
- **Language and Communication:** Using AI technology, this prototype addresses the barrier issues of Language and Communications, based on the understanding that without meaningful language change, systems change is likely to remain superficial, if at all.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Climate Justice Transition:** This prototype seeks to understand the most effective engagement model to build a solidaristic multi-stakeholder approach to climate justice transition rooted in local, grassroots power.



Several Lab members had other ideas for prototypes that are not being taken forward within RINGO for different reasons; including readiness, suitability, capacity, and access to resources elsewhere. These can be viewed as pollinators to the RINGO garden of prototypes:

- **Promoting Solidarity, Local Ownership and More Effective Giving:** A new social movement and digital platform, supported by University of Manchester and REASON Digital.
- **New Approach to Evaluation and Learning:** A working group discussing new approaches to MEAL and how we could integrate these practices into the RINGO prototypes. This idea is being taken forward as a community of practice rather than a prototype itself.
- **Reinvigorating Relationships:** Creating safe spaces of mutuality, cooperation and creativity within INGOs, whereby diverse colleagues can come together on an equal footing to explore and address challenging issues. This idea is being pursued with CHS Alliance's Culture Lab.

APPROACH

THE CROSS-TEAM FEEDBACK SESSION AT A GLANCE

The workshop was organised virtually and ran for a period of two and a half hours. The RINGO Social Lab and Advisory Board were taken through five main stages:

1. Engagement with RINGO

- The RINGO Lab were invited to reflect on their participation in the RINGO Project.

2. Prototypes

- Prototype updates from the RINGO Lab
- What is a prototype?

3. Peer-coaching between prototyping teams

- Pairs of prototyping teams shared challenges and offered coaching responses

4. Paired reflections: Distilling lessons

- An opportunity for the RINGO Lab to integrate what they have heard from their peers, and plot next steps

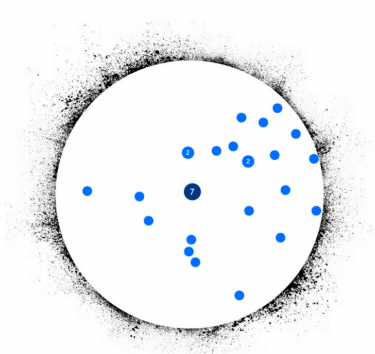
5. Preparing for the Learning Festival in early November

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ENGAGEMENT WITH RINGO

The original cohort of 55 RINGO Social Lab members joined the project in April 2021, and have been part of the RINGO journey throughout the first two phases. We welcomed a further 40 participants to the Lab as members of prototyping teams in early 2022. The RINGO Project has been designed as a collaborative process and we wanted to check in with the Lab about their engagement with RINGO at this stage of the project. It should be noted that not everyone in the Lab chose to be part of a prototyping team, and whilst some have taken on leadership roles as ideas carriers, others have been less active in teams. We therefore invited the 35 Lab members who attended the workshop to indicate how central or peripheral they feel in relation to the prototyping process:

How central or peripheral do you feel in relation to the prototyping process?



Lab members were then split into pairs to consider: What are the enablers or the obstacles to participation? When the group came back together, participants shared and responded to some of their reflections:

Enablers:

- **Meaningful Collaboration:** a big motivator is the very diverse and high calibre of the participants in the RINGO Lab - these are people who, together, can do amazing things
- **Coaching:** RINGO and Reos provide content and process coaches to each prototype team to help support and drive the ideas forward
- **Communication:** RINGO sends out monthly newsletters with project updates and calls to action

Obstacles:

- **Capacity:** most people are participating in RINGO in addition to their regular jobs, which can lead to challenges around prioritisation
- **Time:** teams are feeling the pressure to be rapid in their prototyping to fit with the timeframe of the project. RINGO was originally conceptualised as a two-year project because people's situations change (career moves, personal circumstances etc), plus participants can lose interest in innovation during a long process. Finding funding is also challenging for an extended project.
- **Resources:** those who are freelancers or not on a fixed income can find lack of resources to be an obstacle. People are volunteering a lot of time to RINGO and we are hugely appreciative of how generously you give your energy to the project.
- **Engagement:** Lab members who are not part of prototype teams can feel disengaged with the process
- **Time zones:** we have RINGO Lab members across many different time zones and coordinating a time that is convenient for everyone is difficult
- **Communication:** engagement can wane between meetings and workshops
- **Language:** jargon and acronyms can limit accessibility to the work

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PROTOTYPES

PROTOTYPE UPDATES FROM THE RINGO LAB

Representatives from each prototype team provided a short video update, considering the following questions:

- *The idea: What is the latest articulation of the central idea?*
- *The prototype: What aspect of (or assumptions behind) this idea do we want to test?*
- *Current status: What stage are we in currently? Framing, building or testing?*

Watch the video updates [here](#).

What is a prototype?

Prototyping involves giving shape to ideas that are only on paper or in our minds. A prototype is a more tangible, concrete version of a solution. The process of prototyping allows those who will most benefit from the solution to interact with the idea throughout its development, test it and give the design team feedback on its effectiveness, novelty or usability.

Often those solutions build on existing ideas, models or framework, with the intent that an innovative update or adaptation of one crucial aspect of them will shift an entire system.

The purpose of prototyping is to bring more clarity, understanding and crispness to the new aspects of our idea that we might be unsure of: something that we think is a game changer, but that has not been tested before. It is not about designing the entire solution but just the aspect where there is most uncertainty.

Practically, a prototype could be anything: a physical artefact like a Lego construction attempting to visualise the impact of a new process; the wireframes of a new digital product for users to test; a space designed in a way to provoke specific interactions between people; or it could be an activity that is designed in a novel way to bring people together. If you already know exactly how the idea will work, then it is not a prototype. Monitoring and testing the impact of the idea, and refining it and learning from it until it is ready to be deployed on a bigger scale, is the point of the prototype.

Tackling systemic challenges does not mean finding a solution for the whole system. It involves addressing those areas of stuckness that have a systemic impact and designing specific, targeted interventions that would create ripple effects throughout the sector. In combination with other interventions elsewhere in the system, these new ideas would collectively bring about systemic change.

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PEER-COACHING BETWEEN PROTOTYPING TEAMS

This was an opportunity for two prototyping teams and interested Lab members to meet, take turns to listen to the challenges the other team is facing and offer some coaching responses. Reos provided light facilitation and reminded the teams that the role of a coach is not to be a teacher, a therapist or a problem-solver. The coaching team were invited to respond by asking questions that can enable the members of the other prototyping team to perhaps see something new, or from a different perspective.

The process went as follows:

Round 1: Team A receives coaching from Team B

- Team A presents a particular challenge they're facing
- Team B provides a coaching response in the form of questions, eg:
 - One thing that is unclear about this idea / prototype
 - One way to address the challenge they're dealing with
 - One thing they could think about generally in their next iteration
- Team A listens and does not respond, they simply take careful notes and then say thank you!

Round 2: Team B receives coaching from Team A, following the same steps as above

Following the peer-coaching workshop, each prototyping team met separately to integrate the feedback they had received and discuss practical next steps:

- *What did we hear that was useful to us?*
- *How will we follow up to integrate it? Who will do this?*

We discussed the need to make the time to innovate: One of the reasons we get stuck in these patterns is that we don't allow the time to try things differently. How can this experimentation become more integrated in our work, rather than an add-on?

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PAIRED REFLECTIONS: DISTILLING LESSONS

This session invited the participants to take some time for personal reflection and consider: What am I seeing now about my role and contribution to the prototyping work?

The Lab members were split into pairs, and took turns to speak for five minutes while the other person listened, without responding.

"THE QUALITY OF YOUR LISTENING IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF MY THINKING."

Reos offered some prompt questions to guide the reflections:

- *What is at risk for me as I contribute to this prototype? And how can I work creatively with this risk?*
- *How can I help this prototype achieve lift-off? What is required of me?*

After this exercise, the pairs returned to the main meeting and shared some thoughts, including:

- Acknowledge that I might be an impediment to [the prototype's] success
- Recognise how deeply held the instinct is to self-protect your organisation, and to be transparent and challenge it
- Reach out to unlikely allies to avoid being an enclave
- Think about how we could be more intentional about roles in the prototyping team, based on the expertise/offer of each person
- Look at opportunities to collaborate with other prototypes
- Pay more attention to language in social media
- Allow contributors from outside the Lab

PREPARING FOR THE RINGO LEARNING FESTIVAL

The RINGO Learning Festival is scheduled for October 31 - November 3rd, 2022. During the festival, we will share learnings from the RINGO Lab and welcome participation from across sectors to collectively discuss how our work can be leveraged to influence wider transformation across global civil society.

As the workshop drew to a close, the Lab responded to a final check out question: *What am I committing to as we work towards the Learning Festival? Responses included:*

- Progressing our prototype so that we have something tangible to share
- Providing advice and support to the team
- Focussing on actions
- Helping to resource the prototypes
- Connecting with allies and networks
- Keeping going and trusting the process
- Supporting the teams to be courageous and experiment
- Producing something that has been tested within and by organisations
- Sharing stories of actual brave encounters
- Generating substantial qualitative information
- Engaging my organisation into the challenges, benefits and outputs of what RINGO is doing
- Keeping the passion

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The RINGO Cross-Team Feedback Session provided an opportunity for rich engagement between the prototyping teams and across the RINGO Lab. As individuals and as part of prototyping teams, Lab members will reflect on the responses and ideas of their peers as they move forward with this transformational work for the duration of the RINGO Project, and beyond.

TIMELINE FOR REMAINING RINGO ACTIVITIES:

Jun - Oct 2022: Prototyping cycle; coaching clinics; learning harvest; influencing

5 Oct 2022: RINGO Lab workshop to mark the transition from prototyping to embedding and prepare for the Learning Festival

31 Oct – 3 Nov 2022: RINGO Learning Festival; learning harvest; influencing

Nov - Dec 2022: Embed the prototypes with different stakeholders and test the embedding approach; influencing

Jan - Mar 2023: Phase out stage for RINGO