

Change and Opportunity Session 1: Exhaling and letting go

Padlet contributions from BOND / INTRAC call participants 10.7.25

1. What do you see or sense is changing?

- A sense of security in the modern world with worry about global events and personal impacts such as cost of living affecting capacity for change.
- Huge uncertainty in our line of work; whether that be funding, global events, political climate, climate change etc. It feels like there is much more competition for limited resources at the moment, which can be both positive and negative.
- That our sector in the UK and internationally will be profoundly different within the next 10 years, but it's not yet clear exactly how/in what ways, which is v unsettling.
- Collective hope that things can change
- Shifting trust in leadership, over reliance on middle management roles that are trusted
- Shift from principled (if sometimes overly-slow) change linked to things like localisation, to politically-driven fire-sales forcing rapid and not well-planned changes as income contracts.
- Public perception and the general donor profile
- The climate emergency
- Climate change and disaster risks

2. What are you acknowledging, honouring or grieving about what's gone before?

- I'm acknowledging that much of the change is entirely out of my control and decisions made by others, and that this doesn't mean I have failed as an individual person or team member. I, alone, cannot make all the changes that may be necessary and that's ok.
- Grieving confidence in a known and understood reality, loss of confidence is hard
- Grieving the sense that progressive values and commitments to solidarity and mutual interests that we kind of took for granted for most of the last 25+ years seem to be rapidly disappearing and we're regressing to a world of power/ realpolitik and self-interest
- Grieving the connections that seem to be vanishing in the current funding and structural shifts. Some for the better, but isolation is challenging
- Grieving lost opportunities through lack of change management best practice and risk aversion.
- Loss of previous generations' / ancestors' knowledge
- I think trust of the community members on feedback channels and not sure if their voice affects decisions.
- Everything is change, remain open and focused and change too
- That a lack of certainty about the future at both a macro and micro/personal level detrimentally affects my self-belief, self confidence and identity - I'm grieving my past blissful naivety and energy. It's hard not to feel disillusioned nowadays despite still believing that (most) change (forced or voluntary) opens up new beginnings.

3. What helps you stay grounded during times of change?

- Stop, inhale, exhale...
- Purpose and mission, knowing one persona can make a difference
- Recognising that everything is temporary, both the difficult and the good emotions, and that change can be positive even if it doesn't feel so in the moment.
- Trying to stay in the present moment as much as possible. There is much that may or may not happen that we won't have planned for and worrying about that is precious energy that can be spent on pausing and reflecting to leverage the opportunities that may present themselves with change that is here right in front of you now.
- Being in nature
- Expressing appreciation for others and receiving appreciation in return. Reminds you that what's happening isn't personal
- Connection with others about the challenges we face
- Disasters are affecting lives and assets, but we can connect different actors for a collective response.
- My family
- That there are many now openly discussing the need to reimagine and tapping into the power and potency of our imagination as social beings. This is energising and hopeful, but how to turn it into reality - to prefigure will require new ways of thinking and learning and that is my present focus.
- Reimagining - that there are many now openly discussing the need to reimagine and tapping into the power and potency of our imagination as social beings. This is energising and hopeful, but how to turn it into reality - to prefigure will require new ways of thinking and learning and that is my present focus.

4. Any practical tips for organisations during times of change?

- Scenario planning and in addition to the regular plans having contingency plans too.
- Capture and share learning
- Celebrate the wins
- Make sure you take time to pause, reflect and celebrate the wins, even the small ones.
- Taking to time self-reflect can be more productive/helpful.
- Communication... Sharing, coming together
- Over-communicate if in doubt whether you're communicating enough. People would rather have the silence acknowledged than experience repeated silence.
- Open communication, genuine empathy and active listening to all perspectives.
- We have had "listening exercises" with staff with a facilitator, to help people talk about stuff in a safe space. Whilst there is lots of moaning, that is important to give people that space to be heard
- Create space for staff to share freely and support each other
- Recognise the power of networking, sharing, supporting each other.
- Curiosity and compassion, actively listening and hearing the experience of others.
- Engage and empathise. Acknowledge the good stuff; don't shy away from the discomfort of how tough it feels for many. And - as others have said - err towards over-communication and engagement.
- Try not to focus too much on what others are doing - it can become very demoralising in times of change.
- I fear getting stuck in the past and not being in control of the future but I am confident that I can repackage for the future.