BETTER PREPAREDNESS CRISIS COORDINATION PLAYBOOK

2024

A how-to guide for foundations to act, coordinate, and move resources to civil society under threat from human rights crisis and entrenched civic space challenges

BETTER PREPAREDNESS

Hosted by:

HRFN Human Rights Funders Network

PSFG PEACE & SECURITY FUNDERS GROUP

BETTER PREPAREDNESS

FUNDING RESILIENCE

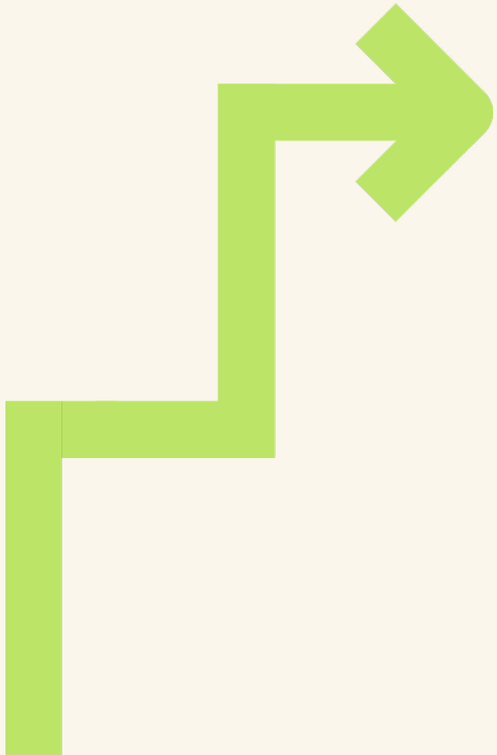
Billions of foundation dollars are failing to reach human rights groups in crisis or highly restricted civic space. Arguably billions more are needed to support civil society in meeting the rising tide of oppression and crisis.

There is an urgent need for new approaches to funding civil society and social movements where human rights are most under threat – from acute crisis to closing civic space.

If you are working within a human rights, humanitarian, or peace and security foundation, or in civil society, this document is your how-to guide and support, and your invitation to join the growing chorus of colleagues who believe in collaborating more closely to shape new approaches to meet the moment.

Wherever you sit, there is an entry point for you. From working with full institutional buy-in, to joining as a lone staff advocate, to coming from a legal or compliance team, there are tools for you.

- You may be working in a foundation in the human rights, humanitarian, or peace and security field, and want to strengthen collaboration with colleagues in these fields.
- You may be working in civil society, and want to use this Playbook as an example to engage foundation partners in changing their funding practices.
- You may be leading a program with foundation colleagues – from leadership through compliance and legal – who are on board and ready to adopt t he whole process.
- You may have existing strong relationships with a number of other foundations and be ready to test this out when the next crisis comes.
- You may be on your own internally for now, waiting with Blueprint in hand to bring to colleagues to change institutional practice now – and into the future.
- You may want to start using some of the tools and steps in the Blueprint to infuse into your existing strategy playbook and crisis preparedness portfolio.



MOST OF ALL, MAKE THIS YOUR OWN

Every approach presented here has been codesigned with dozens of foundations and with civil society advisors through HRFN's Better Preparedness: Funding Resilience Initiative.

It will continue to iterate and grow.

Try it, test it, and shape the future of philanthropy's response to crisis and closing civic space.

The time is now. Human rights movements and civil society can't wait.

Join us.

THE CRISIS COORDINATION PLAYBOOK:

COORDINATION BLUEPRINT

Follow a step-by-step Coordination Blueprint: a practical, hands-on blueprint for designing coordination entities when a crisis is on the horizon or underway.

SUITE OF TOOLS

Get tips and tools, including a taxonomy of crisis, risk assessment tools, and after-action review.

BETTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY

Join the Community to access Learning Labs on key crisis issues, and to exchange lessons and codesign the next funding solutions.

ABOUT BETTER PREPAREDNESS: FUNDING RESILIENCE

In 2023, a group of 20 philanthropic foundations came together with peace and security and human rights funders, as well as civil society, to codesign a strategy for better funder coordination, and to build the trust and political will to execute it.

STRATEGY

First, radically improve coordination around crises by creating a Better Preparedness Community of foundations, rolling out a Better Coordination Blueprint, creating change internally, and building trust and sparking action as a community anda sector.

Second, help create the political will in foundations to fund more human rights and civic space work, and to back deeper coordination across the human rights, humanitarian, and peace and security sectors.

Third, having created the conditions and trust in our community, build a multi-donor, major crisis, and civic space intermediary that is capable of acting at speed across geographies.

To learn more about the origins of Better Preparedness please go here.

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COORDINATION BLUEPRINT

COORDINATION START-UP WHEN A CRISIS IS ON THE NEAR HORIZON OR UNDERWAY

The Coordination Blueprint is a highly flexible framework with five planning steps to follow, accompanying tools, and three different coordination modes to choose from. It is adaptable for addressing a wide range of different contexts that colleagues and their civil society partners face.

THE FIVE STEPS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS ARE:

The Blueprint enables external and internal colleagues to rapidly plan and initiate coordinated responses to specific crises and entrenched civic space challenges.

Who is it for: The Blueprint has been codesigned by the people who need to use it first: program managers and legal and compliance teams in a core group of foundations addressing human rights, humanitarian response, and peace and security, alongside civil society.

When to use it: When facing a scale and/or longevity of crisis or civic space challenge that requires a wide range of programmatic interventions beyond the scope or reach of a small group of foundations, the Blueprint may be required.

The Blueprint can be used at various points in the cycle of a crisis, namely:

- Immediately before or during the early stage of an acute human rights crisis to choose an appropriate coordination approach, plan programmatic interventions, and solve funding problems together;
- During the later stages of an acute human rights crisis – to plan how to exit a crisis and ensure that civil society remains funded and is sustained; and/or
- During a long-term, restricted civic space context – to refresh collective strategy and, programmatic interventions, and to consider new funder partners.

THE BLUEPRINT OFFERS THREE MODES OF COORDINATION TO CHOOSE FROM

Philanthropy's coordination is, by and large, optional and opt-in. In the arena of crisis and closing civic space, some limited infrastructure exists, but sustained mechanisms to prepare, respond, and support long-term recovery are currently inadequate to meet the moment.

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Drawing on promising existing practices* and dreaming boldly, this section presents three modes for more effective coordination. Some are in place, others propositional.

The modes are designed to address a range (in scales and longevity) of crises, the needs of civil society and social justice movements, the programmatic interventions required, and the longer-term infrastructure needed to learn and iterate. Importantly, all modes enable foundations to opt in, and to play their different, complementary roles.

The **CONSULTATIVE** and **COLLECTIVE** modes are ready-to-go and currently deployed by foundations in similar forms. The third, **PERMANENT** mode has been strongly backed by colleagues during the codesign of this Crisis Playbook, but does not yet exist, and therefore requires further development.

In all modes, it is recommended that coordinating efforts are time-bound and reviewed every 3- 6 months to consider:

- Is the group advancing our identified goals, both individual and collective?
- How has the context shifted?
- Given these shifts, how should the strategy change?
- Which members need to onboard and offboard?

For all modes, we are inspired by the organizing approach of Crisis Action's Clever Coalitions, which includes principles like:

- Developing a shared analysis and alignment on
- what needs to happen;
- Seeking critical mass vs consensus;
- Organizations opting in to coordination and collective actions;
- Developing policy consistency across organizations in how actions are delivered; and
- Maintaining a focus on the crisis, as the political spotlight moves on.

Read on to select the Coordination Mode needed TODAY to address what brought you here.

This is a fundamental step in implementing the Crisis Coordination Blueprint.

** This section builds on learnings from our sector and effective coordination approaches from others sectors. For an analysis of coordination mechanisms and approaches, from feminist funding to humanitarian coordination to groups like InterAction, see our scoping report at: https://www.hrfn.org/resources/better-preparedness-report/. These approaches strongly inform the field-wide coordination modes.*

CONSULTATIVE

A light touch, rapid start-up coordination mode often used when early warnings foresee crisis or upon immediate onset of a crisis. A group of foundations meet to develop a shared analysis, coordinate some actions, and then share ongoing information.

This is the starting point for some limited joint action, typically closed, short-term, and reflective of where many crisis coordination efforts start. Goals typically include awareness of other actions and approaches among a subset of funders.

When to deploy
- When rapidly responding to a crisis, anywhere from a month to 24 hours out.
- During the first phase of a short-term crisis that lengthens and becomes more severe.
- When there are banking and legal restrictions that require cooperation between foundations and intermediary funds to move money.

Strategy
- Shared context analysis enables alignment 'behind closed doors' around 'what' needs to happen
- Foundations largely act bilaterally on delivering the programmatic 'how.'
- Operation takes place at the country level with regional and global aspects e.g. advocacy.

Planning approach - enables rapid start-up, run through step one of the Blueprint on initial coordination calls to:
- Verify need for coordination;
- Map the priority actors in the funding ecosystem;
- Assess the nature of the crisis and the likely interventions required; and
- Discuss risk appetites and which foundations could play roles.

Structure - strengthens current ad hoc, light touch approaches:
- Appoints and resources a coordinating person(s) and host organization(s).
- Conducts regular opt-in coordination calls and convenings.
- Reviews the crisis status and makes decisions about if and when to phase out, continue, or move to Collective coordination mode.

Requirements
Requires coordination and is usually hosted by an existing network, such as HRFN, PSFG, or FICS, or by a small group of organizing funders/partners.

Current status
- In place, but not yet formalized or with clear pathways to engage for those not already connected.
- Often closed, built on informal relationships, and not connected with larger ecosystem or parallel groups.

COLLECTIVE

A formal coordination entity is created to conduct analysis, and to create and deliver a shared group strategy with roles/responsibilities and pathways for collaboration.

When to deploy
- As a crisis develops, movement from Consultative to a more formal Collective Coordination mode is often required.
- Typically focused on a specific issue area or crisis, even if it may come out of an existing broader community.
- Beyond a certain scale of crisis and/or as it develops over a longer-term.
- When a wide range of coordinated interventions and reach will be required by the sector as a whole, achievable only by working together.
- When there are banking and legal restrictions that require cooperation between foundations and intermediary funds to move money.

Strategy
- Foundations act both bilaterally and in coordination, following the agreed group strategy.
- Complementary roles are established that play to each member's strengths, enabling the group to deliver a range of programmatic interventions and overcome banking and legal restrictions.
- Operation takes place at country level with regional and global aspects e.g. advocacy.
- Multi-sectoral engagement is required as part of a wider funding strategy.

Planning approach - enables in-depth analysis and planning:
- Group strategy developed following the Blueprint's main steps.
- Potential for pooled funds to be developed.
- Potential for streamlining grant applications and grantee due diligence requirements between foundations.

Structure
- Appoints and resources a coordinating person(s) and host organization(s).
- Conducts regular calls and convenings.
- Reviews the crisis status and makes decisions about if and when to phase out or continue.

Requirements
- Similar to Consultative, but requires formalized coordination leadership role(s).
- Requires time and financial commitments, and the use of more formal mechanisms such as pooled funds, with the approval of foundation leadership.

Current status
- Some standing examples in place, such as Feminist Action for Ukraine or ongoing funders groups focusing on Afghanistan, Haiti, Palestine, Myanmar, etc.
- Sustained action and learning could be strengthened. Connection to other crises/contexts and institutional lessons are limited.

PERMANENT

A permanent, multi-stakeholder entity that provides standing capacity for funders to operate across geographies and in collaboration with other sectors.

Strategy
- Maintaining a global strategy and preparedness-to-act.
- Initiating national coordination efforts.
- Managing a global pooled fund to resource civil society.
- Conducting research and advocacy including: maintaining a sector-wide early warning system, conducting research, and leading global advocacy.

Planning approach
Group strategy developed with the support of HRFN Project Team.

Structure
- Formal coordination body required.
- Enables strategic decisions to be made collectively by core group and potentially enacted through a member roster system.
- Roster of roles. Core group roster roles may include:
  - Specific programmatic areas
  - Funding intermediary
  - Pooled fund host
  - Advocacy lead
- Two tiers of members:
  - Core members develop strategy, and may agree to: waive a degree of bilateral agency in favor of strengthening collective agency, and contribute to a global pooled fund where possible.
  - Multi-stakeholder members, other donors and actors, who are consulted on strategy and engaged in delivery.

Requirements
- Time and financial commitments, and the use of more formal mechanisms such as pooled funds, with the approval of foundation leadership
- Convenor role:
  - Maintaining strategy and tracking delivery.
  - Directing roster activities in accordance with core group agreements.
  - Maintaining early warning system and communicating regular threat updates.
  - Coordinating multi-stakeholder members.

Current status
Not yet established.

ENGAGING AND INFLUENCING WIDELY

To effectively support civil society facing acute human rights crises and/or long-term civic space challenges, the codesigners of this Blueprint emphatically recommend creating a 'big funding tent' by engaging and building trust with a wide group of sectors and actors.

The Playbook's engagement approaches recommend that we engage relevant existing, wider sectoral groups when creating a Consultative or Collective Coordination group for a specific crisis. They do not recommend duplicating existing coordination groups, but rather recommend introducing our community members to engage with existing groups directly.

The Blueprint highlights when and who to consider engaging, as part of ensuring that coordinated responses are shaped with:

- Affected communities and civil society partners;
- Existing crisis and thematic-specific human rights, humanitarian, and peace and security coordination groups;
- National governments and international institutions; and
- Other actors, including financial institutions, local governments, military institutions and peacekeeping forces, service providers, and technology companies.

CIVIL SOCIETY

In line with our Better Preparedness Community Principles –found on page 22 – and as passionately committed to by the foundation colleagues involved in the codesign of this Playbook, engagement approaches with communities and civil society are intended to help shift the power in grantmaking, informed by the needs of and the risks faced by our partners and by marginalized communities.

We want to engage early and at the right moments without being extractive, especially during times of crisis. To strike this balance, the Blueprint envisages a mix of shared civil society and foundation spaces on some occasions, with dedicated foundation spaces on other occasions.

Engagement moves from bilateral discussions between foundations and partners, to small group modes (during shorter-term Consultative Coordination), to standing Civil Society Advisory Groups (during medium and long-term Collective Coordination).

The Coordination Blueprint references modes for engagement with civil society throughout its outlined steps.

THE BLUEPRINT'S FIVE STEPS

The Blueprint is a flexible framework with up to five steps, enabling colleagues to follow the whole process, or to choose key steps and tools.

- The first step picks out elements of the whole process and condenses them into two 120-minute calls that enable the swift, initial design of a light-touch Consultative Coordination Group.
- The full five-step process enables the rigorous design of a formal, Collective Coordination Group.
- The steps can also be used individually, for example when needing to refresh the strategy of a long-standing coordination entity.
- The steps follow a staged approach, but are flexible to allow for steps to happen at the same time, as required.

1

RAPID COORDINATION START-UP

Purpose: For an initial group of foundations to gauge if, why, and how they should start up a Consultative Coordination Group in response to an acute crisis.

Context: Often needing to be conducted at speed in advance of or during the early stages of a crisis. An initial group of foundation colleagues may be speaking bilaterally, and wish to come together to understand more about its context and to decide if and how coordination might happen. At this stage, verify the need for a coordinated response by considering criteria including:

- Establishing that the crisis has crossed a threshold: based on the likely needs of civil society, and the nature and scale of the crisis, it will require a range of programmatic interventions that are beyond the capacity of a small group, and warranting a response by 5 or more philanthropic foundations;
- Establishing that this group can add value: that there is no existing coordination group or mechanisms and/or that this group of foundations may bring something else; and
- Confirming a commitment from the group members to meet the requirements of the Consultative Coordination mode, and to start it up.

Approach: A rapid coordination start-up approach that condenses the Blueprint steps and runs them in three, initial 120-minute planning calls, and includes early engagement with civil society. This approach requires an upfront decision on an initial convenor and facilitator to kick-start the process. If required, this role can be played either at the beginning or throughout the start-up phase by the HRFN Project Team through the Better Preparedness Rapid Coordination Start-up Service (details on page 23). The worksheet guiding Step 1 can be found here.

Time required: Up to 6 hours for each foundation participant; up to 3 hours for each civil society representative; up to 24 hours for a coordinator/facilitator.

SESSION 1

Understand the impacts on and needs of civil society

Approach: 6-8 national civil society representatives conduct an initial assessment of the nature of the crisis, using the CRISIS TIMELINE TOOL map the impacts on and needs of civil society on a secure, 120-minute group call hosted by the convener/facilitator. The initial convener will work with foundation colleagues when selecting representatives to ensure vulnerable groups and civil society networks are included. The call will enable sharing of latest intelligence to understand:

- What are the impacts of the crisis: for example, what kind and scale of violence has happened, how many people have moved into exile, and more;
- Which civil society actors are essential in responding to the crisis: mapping communities, civil society organizations, and networks, the risks faced by each, and their needs;
- What are interventions required, and from which foundations; and
- How would civil society prefer to be engaged during the crisis.

SESSION 2

Collective analysis of the crisis

Approach: Foundations, identified and coordinated by the initial convener, conduct a 120-minute group call to make an initial assessment of the nature of the crisis, mapping the priority actors and identifying the likely programmatic responses required to inform a coordinated response. Use the CRISIS TIMELINE TOOL session 1 to map and prioritize:

- Affected communities, and existing civil society organizations and networks;
- Better Preparedness foundations, existing country and thematic funder coordination groups, and allies in humanitarian and peace and security funder groups; and
- Governments, UN agencies, and international institutions.

Verify programmatic interventions required and which foundations will provide them. Confirm if ongoing coordination is required and, if so, create a Consultative Coordination Group that either: exists only to direct people to existing groups, or functions as a more engaged coordination group, convening regular update calls. In the second instance, complete rapid coordination start-up by conducting session 3.

SESSION 3

Establish coordination and goals

Approach: Foundations conduct a 120-minute group call to activate coordination.

Establish working goals as a baseline against which to track progress.

- Having established what the needs of civil society are, the programmatic interventions required, and the ideal group of initial funders, describe the 4-5 goals of the group.

Consider what needs to happen internally to make external coordination possible.

- Use the BETTER INTERNAL COORDINATION CHECKLIST a five-point checklist of internal actions to take to overcome internal coordination challenges.

Start-up Consultative Coordination Group.

- Establish coordination support required, where resources will come from, and who will act as coordinator;
- Agree on meeting schedule, security requirements, and communications channels; and
- Agree on engagement approach with civil society and other funder allies.

Discuss risk appetites and which foundations could play roles. Use the RISK AND ROLE ASSESSMENT TOOL

- Establish what needs to happen internally in each foundation

BLUEPRINT STEPS 2-5

The following steps enable analysis and planning to be conducted in greater depth, in the event a response must move from the lighter-touch Consultation Coordination mode to the more structured Collective Coordination mode. The Steps can also be used individually.

Engaging Civil Society: Before going into step 2, the convener may wish to establish a longer-term, crisis-specific Civil Society Advisory Group, which may be as simple as formalizing the national civil society group that met during Step 1, with a clear Terms of Reference (ToR)

The convener/facilitator can design steps 2-5 as civil society-only sessions, joint sessions with foundation colleagues, or foundation-only sessions, ensuring regular feedback loops between them.

2

ASSESS THE CRISIS OR ENTRENCHED CIVIC SPACE CONTEXT

Purpose: To assess and verify the nature of the crisis, including its likely duration and drivers; to develop a shared analysis to understand the needs of activists, social movements, and NGOs; and to identify likely foundation programmatic interventions required.

Context: Foundation colleagues identified the current lack of a taxonomy of human rights crises as affecting their ability to arrive at a shared analysis of an individual crisis, and therefore to act swiftly and in coordination, in supporting civil society.

Approach: Use the TAXONOMY OF CRISIS ANALYSIS TOOL Tool, ideally convening a session with participating foundations. The tool will help both individual researchers and collaborating groups:

- Assess the temporal nature of the crisis, its specific drivers, the resulting impacts on civil society, and the likely program interventions required; and
- Reference a series of historical case studies of similar crises to identify potentially applicable lessons.

The Taxonomy of Crisis Tool can be used at the outset of a crisis, and the analysis it produces can be updated throughout the lifecycle of the crisis or entrenched civic space context.

How to use it: The TAXONOMY OF CRISIS ANALYSIS TOOL provides a series of steps and questions to guide the analyst. The full tool can be found here.

Outputs:

- A visual map of the crisis; and
- A short initial report, designed to provide insights to enable good decision-making about philanthropic program interventions and resource allocations to civil society.

Time required: If run as a collective session: 1 hour preparation time for each participant; 2 hours collective session; and 4 hours preparation and convening by coordinator.

3

MAPPING THE FUNDING ECOSYSTEM

Purpose: To understand which foundations and other actors may coordinate together through this group.

Context: This is an essential step to avoid duplication of effort, and to keep track of what other coordination mechanisms and entities may already be in place or in-process among other funders.

Approach: Deepen the initial mapping of segments carried out at Step 1, adding any new information on:

- Civil society organizations and networks;
- Foundations who are active/likely to be/could be activated;
- Any existing funder coordination networks, in-country and international, humanitarian and peace building; and
- Bilateral and multilateral governments and institutions.

Focus on new segments, particularly wider ecosystem actors, including:

- Financial institutions, including identifying those that work for or against human rights and social justice;
- Social movements, whose resources, knowledge, and advocacy are central to identifying strategic entry points;
- Policy spaces, including at the global and national level, that play a role in either the regulation of civic space or financial support of civil society;
- Local and national governments, which are often the recipients of multilateral aid but less often considered either allies or targets in philanthropic strategies;
- Military institutions and peacekeeping forces, who are often on the forefront in crisis and whose practices –negative or supportive – significantly impact where and how coordination takes place;
- Service providers; and
- Technology companies and those supporting (or undermining) organizing, autonomous funding, and other forms of action.

Outputs:

- A map of the organizations, contacts, and who in the coordinating group holds the relationships; and
- A prioritization of those to be engaged, what we are proposing, and when the follow-up will be done.

Time required: If run as a collective session: 1 hour preparation time for each participant; 2 hours collective session; and 4 hours preparation and convening by coordinator.

4

ASSESS RISK APPETITES AND POTENTIAL COMPLEMENTARY ROLES

Purpose: To enable foundations coordinating in response to a specific crisis to understand their relative appetites to risk and potential coordination roles.

Context: Among coordinating foundations, there is often a spectrum of different risk appetites, from the risk-averse to high-risk. Understanding relative risk appetites enables different roles to be played within the coordinating group. It also may help in changing overly risk-averse decisions made internally, relative to what legal limits may allow for.

Approach: use a guided RISK AND ROLE ASSESSMENT TOOL convening a secure group discussion on a 120-minute call to:

- Share strategic priorities, programming, and approaches to funding;
- Discuss in detail as a group the risks posed by this crisis, and solutions;
- Assess the risk appetite of your organization in relation to this specific crisis;
- Conduct a group Role Assessment to determine what each member can do to enable collective delivery of programmatic activities, money, and advocacy; and
- Understand what needs to happen internally, and the key agenda needed to engage internal colleagues, to align around risk.

Outputs: a verbal understanding of:

- Foundations' strategic priorities, programming, and approaches to funding; and
- Foundations' risk appetites, and the roles that they may play in a coordinated response.

Time required:

- Participants - 2 hours to participate in the group discussion.
- Facilitator - 2 hours to convene and prepare for the call; 2 hours to facilitate the group discussion.

5

DEVELOP THE COORDINATING GROUP'S STRATEGY

Purpose: To consolidate an emerging strategy for the coordinating group.

Context: At this stage in the Blueprint flow, the coordinating group will have established many of the elements of a collective strategy. The convener will be required to consolidate this into a document and convene the group to refine it.

What is it: A short, high-level document setting out:

- Who is in the group
- Strategic objectives
- What are the programmatic interventions, which orgs will lead them, and what needs to happen internally to make this happen, using the Better Inte BETTER INTERNAL COORDINATION CHECKLIST
- What complementary roles will members play;
- How will civil society be engaged ongoingly;
- What funding mechanisms will be required, including pooled funding, and how they will operate;
- What is the exit strategy and how will civil society be sustained; and
- What is the wider funder ecosystem engagement strategy – where is there complementarity and strategic funding, and where is there a need for advocacy.

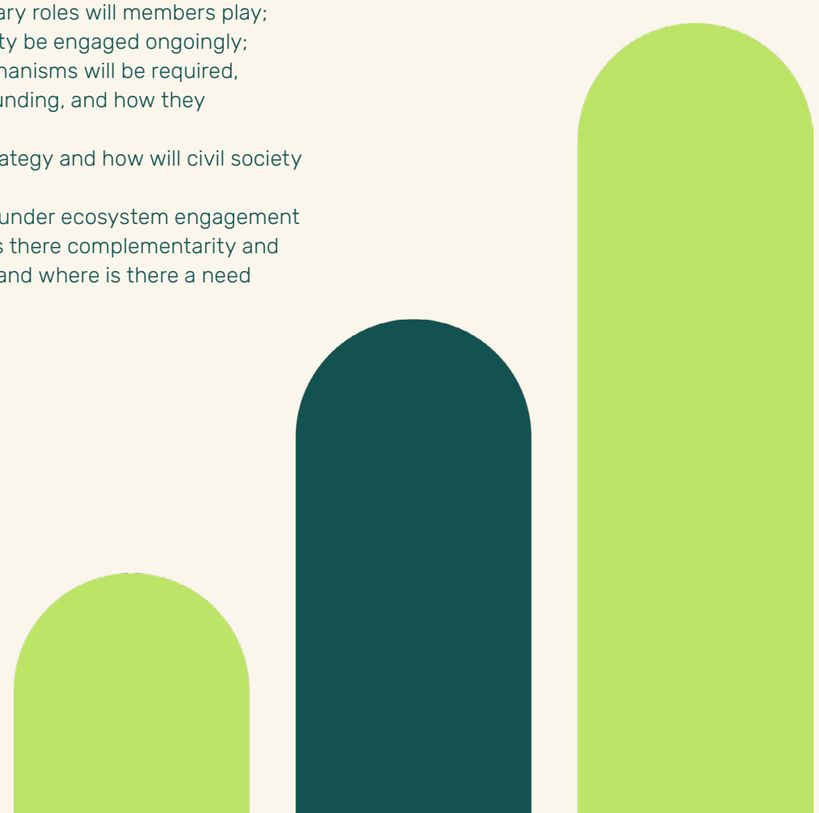
In addition, the strategy will describe the coordination function, specifically:

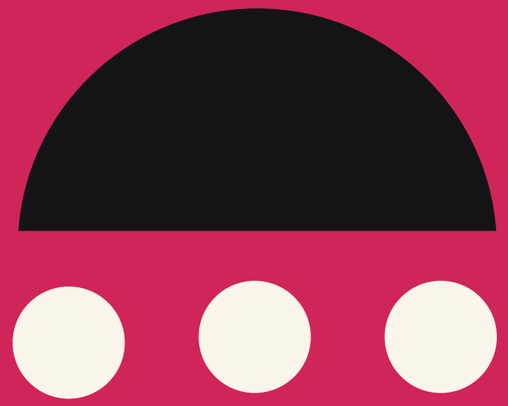
- The host organization(s) and coordinator(s);
- The allocated resources; and
- The cadence of meetings and information sharing.

Approach: Group coordinator develops a written strategy, circulates, then a 60-minute verification call is held.

Time required:

- Participants - 1 hour to participate in a group call.
- Facilitator - 8 hours to draft the strategy; 2 hours to convene and prepare for the call; 2 hours to facilitate.





BETTER PREPAREDNESS SUITE OF TOOLS

The creators of the Blueprint have codesigned a compendium of tools to support key steps in the Blueprint and the work of the Community. Throughout the Blueprint steps are color-coded references to these tools. This section presents tools that are open source and available for use regardless of community affiliation. We hope they will serve funders and partners well beyond a single institution or network and welcome feedback as we iterate and improve each tool.

TAXONOMY OF CRISIS ANALYSIS TOOL (TOC)

An in-depth analysis tool to help both individual researchers and collaborating groups develop a shared understanding of the nature of a crisis by assessing: its temporal nature; specific drivers; the resulting impacts on civil society; and the likely program interventions required. The Taxonomy of Crisis Analysis Tool is used at Step 2 of the Coordination Blueprint and can draw in any relevant analysis already conducted. There are five steps to follow:

- **Timeframe** - assess the arc of the crisis and plot key events, over Short-term, Long-term, or Future timeframes
- **Drivers** - plot and assess the key drivers of the crisis
- **Impacts and interventions** - assess the impacts on and needs of civil society
- **Review case studies and update the timeline** - look for precedents and ideas. See Crisis Case Studies
- **Create analysis report** - write up a short summary report and circulate to collaborating foundations.

CRISIS TIMELINE

A collective visual timelining tool enabling colleagues to plot characteristics and events of a crisis and develop a single timeline to aid shared analysis. This powerful tool can be used as part of the in-depth Taxonomy of Crisis Analysis Tool or as a stand-alone tool. To use the timeline, choose the most appropriate timeframe and plot out the key events so far, up to the present.

CRISIS CASE STUDIES

A growing archive of detailed retrospective analyses of specific crises, identifying the causes of the crisis and their nature. The Crisis Case Studies can be used as part of the Taxonomy of Crisis Analysis Tool to shed light on current crises. There are 5 initial case studies: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Nicaragua, and Ukraine.

CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE FULL TOOL

RISK AND ROLE ASSESSMENT

A guided Risk and Role Assessment group discussion, conducted in a secure, 90-minute call with a group of foundations to enable colleagues to understand and compare their relative appetites to risk and potential coordination roles.

This process is also designed to help colleagues understand their internal risk culture. The guided Risk and Role Assessment is conducted at Step 4 of the Coordination Blueprint and can draw on any relevant analysis already conducted.

There are five steps to follow:

- Consolidate and understand the needs of civil society and likely program interventions – either by drawing on prior conversations with partners or by conducting this step with civil society representatives;
- Foundations' strategic priorities, programming, and approaches to funding – colleagues share overviews of their thinking;
- Foundation risk appetites – use a risk profiling tool to enable foundations to make an initial assessment of their risk appetite in relation to a specific crisis and to understand their relative risk appetites;
- Discuss in-detail as a group the risks posed by this crisis and solutions – understand detailed aspects of risk and what solutions there may be in the group;
- Role assessment – determine what role each member of a coordinating group may play to enable the delivery of programmatic activities, money, and advocacy in support of civil society partners; and
- Internal alignment – identify what internal requirements will need to be met to enable the desired coordination approach.

THE FULL RISK AND ROLE ASSESSMENT GROUP GUIDED DISCUSSION SESSION PLAN CAN BE FOUND HERE

BETTER INTERNAL COORDINATION CHECKLIST

A five-point checklist of internal actions to take to overcome internal coordination challenges when responding to the needs of civil society, codesigned by foundation colleagues working in Program, Legal, Compliance, and Operations teams.

A five-point Better Internal Coordination checklist

Many foundation colleagues see a few common internal coordination challenges – internal alignment and closing the gap between program, legal, compliance, and operations teams, and being ready to coordinate externally with funding partners. To overcome these challenges, foundation colleagues identified five areas to focus on:

- Prepare, be ready to act, and be more proactive in addressing crises by maintaining a crisis plan, running internal preparedness drills, and systematically sharing early warning signals.
- Have a team engagement plan, knowing who the internal decision-makers are and when they need to be engaged, including setting up early and regular communication between operations and program teams as program plans are being developed.
- Understand your internal risk appetite and that of funding partners to speed up grantmaking.
- Work on internal due diligence blocks to streamline granting, accepting endorsements for first-time grantees, and fast-tracking renewals and grants to past partners.
- Understand approaches outside of normal processes to be ready to deploy additional reserve funding when released by leadership in crisis moments, and review calls outside of the general flow/off-cycle, to ensure faster approvals.

THE FULL BETTER INTERNAL COORDINATION CHECKLIST CAN BE FOUND HERE

AFTER ACTION REVIEW

CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE FULL TOOL

A simple and rapid tool to be used as soon as possible after an event or intervention (the action) that enables us to learn qualitatively what worked, what didn't, and what could be improved.

An After-Action Review can be conducted with all the funders, civil society organizations, and rights holders representatives available; or it could be conducted in smaller groups (e.g., by organization) then analyzed together.

TOOLS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT:

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Gathering and analyzing crisis early warning signals, and producing actionable insights to improve preparedness, coordination, and decision-making internally and field-wide between funders.

Our working definition of an early warning system is: an integrated system of hazard monitoring, forecasting and prediction, crisis risk assessment, and communication activities and processes, that together enables our field to reduce risks and take timely action in advance of hazardous events.

The Community has looked at relevant experiences with existing early warning systems from the human rights, humanitarian, peacebuilding, and other sectors, inside and outside of philanthropy.

There are three different types of gathering and analysis systems that could be developed, either individually or combined:

- Technology-enabled, community-powered networks;
- Regular research and analysis by experts; and
- AI-powered quantitative forecasting models and human analysis.

CRISIS PREPAREDNESS DRILL

Ensuring teams have rehearsed for the next crisis – an exercise designed to assess internal plans, policies, and procedures, and external coordination approaches, with the aim of ensuring teams know the crisis protocols and can respond to crises more quickly and effectively.

The Crisis Preparedness Drill is a tabletop exercise, involving key personnel discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting. The exercise is played out over 3 hours, around a simulated crisis or civic space scenario based on likely real-world events.

The scenario will play through phases, each phase consisting of a set of events to which the team(s) must respond, identifying required and viable courses of action:

- in accordance with organizational policy and procedure, and
- solutions that could be enacted working with other organizations.

The exercise can be configured to work with either:

- Internal teams of Program, Operations, Legal, and Compliance colleagues; or
- External groups of Program representatives from philanthropic foundations coordinating efforts around a given crisis/ longer-term restricted civic space.

READY FOR ACTION
BETTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY

Crisis and civic space contexts are dynamic, fast-paced, and unpredictable, requiring actors to constantly adapt. We need a strong community to enable learning and sharing, create regular context analysis, and to innovate new solutions.

HRFN's Better Preparedness initiative has created some of the infrastructure for our community already, bringing together a core group of approximately 30 foundations and intermediary funds committed to codesigning and implementing the Better Preparedness strategy.

The Better Preparedness Community also engages with parallel communities that exist around distinct crises, sectors, or areas such as feminist funding or humanitarian leadership. This includes communities such as Feminist Alchemy (hosted by Global Fund for Women), Localizing Humanitarian Leadership (hosted by Center for Disaster Philanthropy), and funder groups hosted by Peace and Security Funders Group (PSFG), Funders Initiative for Civil Society (FICS), and many more.

The intention is to cascade the best practices and the use of the Crisis Coordination Playbook beyond this Community by enabling new foundations to join, access, and use the tools, and by engaging wider funder ecosystem stakeholders.

Additional infrastructure and formalization, including the next iteration of the Better Preparedness community, and concrete lines of collaboration with peer communities are needed to sustain and implement the practices for long-term action.

LEARNING SPACES, SERVICES AND TOOLS TO ENSURE WE CAN CONNECT, PREPARE AND ARE READY TO ACT

The Better Preparedness Community is convened by HRFN's staff and project team, with Better by Codesign. Together they provide some of the supports described in this section, including community development and a program of community-centered learning and sharing.

TO JOIN HRFN'S BETTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY

COMPLETE THIS FORM

Eligible organizations will be invited to a community of practice, with many of the components detailed in this section. There are many entry points for community engagement.

We welcome:

- Institutions fully on board with the Better Preparedness initiative;
- Individual foundations working to learn with others;
- Individuals looking to bring these practices into their foundations; and
- Colleagues from across leadership, program, grantmaking, and legal and compliance teams.

BETTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY: COORDINATION PRINCIPLES

Members of the Better Preparedness Community adopt a set of principles and practices to improve coordination, when working internally, externally together, and with colleagues in civil society. They are based on HRFN's grantmaking principles of: power-sharing and shifting, accountability, collective care, being community driven, equity, and adaptability and learning.

AS A COMMUNITY WE WILL...

Recognise **traditional power relations** in our engagements and actively try to shift power towards movements, organizations, and rights holders we aim to support

Cultivate **a culture of collective learning** honestly through successes and failures

Balance transparency with safety and risk to communities we support;

Ensure movements, organizations, and rights holders **have a voice** in action and funding decisions we make;

Create spaces for open, candid dialogue with each other and the movements, organizations, and rights holders we aim to support.

Ensure our engagements with movements, organizations, and rights holders are **not extractive** by sharing information back

Value **different forms of knowledge** and experience (e.g. indigenous, verbal, lived)

Ensure civil society leads in **articulating their needs**, contexts, and possibilities for change;

Encourage innovation and creativity by engaging with (and funding) groups beyond our comfort zones

Be open and transparent about individual funders' goals, approaches, restrictions, and decision-making

Use an intersectional lens to understanding identities and contexts of the people we are trying to support

Be accountable to movements, organizations, and rights holders for our actions, including having mechanisms for complaint and redress;

Support each other, particularly rights holders at risk, to pursue safety, protection, and self-care

LEARNING SPACES AND SERVICES

The Better Preparedness Community has access to the range of spaces and services described in this section.

RAPID COORDINATION STARTUP SERVICE

Assisting foundations in rapidly starting up coordination efforts

To support foundations in rapidly starting up coordination entities and becoming familiar with applying the Better Preparedness Coordination Playbook, teams can request Rapid Coordination Start-up support.

The HRFN Project Team will act as convener, tailoring and facilitating an intensive coordination planning process using Step 1 of the Blueprint [jump link] to run up to three 120-minute codesign sessions, and providing the capacity to conduct selected mapping exercises, and then to develop and initiate a strategy.

Who is this for: Groups of 5 or more foundations who are committed to coordinating their efforts in supporting civil society facing an acute human rights crisis or longer-term civic space restrictions.

EXCHANGING EXPERT KNOWLEDGE ON VANGUARD ISSUES

Spaces for learning and sharing to address topics of interest to the community. Using the Learning Lab Week, 90-minute online session format, these are short conversations with expert contributors.

Examples of subjects:
- Banking and legal challenges
- AI and human rights

Who are they for: Anyone affected by the issue, subject experts from the sector and beyond.

SINGLE SOLUTION CODESIGN LAB

Innovating the next solutions

A codesign process of 3 Lab sessions, bringing together subject experts to shape prototype solutions to emerging challenges and opportunities. Initiated at the request of the Community and run by the HRFN Project Team.

Examples of challenges:
- Building crisis Early Warning Systems for the sector
- Streamlined approach for grantee applications

Who should take part: Anyone working on the issue, and subject experts from the sector and beyond.

CONTRIBUTORS

This work has been shepherded and written by Human Rights Funders Network (HRFN) with Better by Codesign through the initiative Better Preparedness: Funding Resilience. It has, from the start, been a work of collective imagination.

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Guiding Group:

- Jerusha Burnham, Freedom House
- Sally Chin, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
- Cecilia Garza, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
- Karen Karnicki, Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Abi Knipe, Funders Initiative for Civil Society
- Kate Kroeger, Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism
- Olive Moore, Front Line Defenders
- Otto Saki, Ford Foundation
- Bryan Sims, Humanity United
- Celia Turner, Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism
- Carol Werunga, Urgent Action Fund Africa

Sponsors:

- American Jewish World Service
- Humanity United
- Open Society Foundations
- Packard Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Freedom House
- David & Lucille Packard Foundation
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Wellspring Philanthropic Fund
- Urgent Action Fund Sister Funds
- Women's Fund Asia

ABOUT BETTER PREPAREDNESS FUNDING RESILIENCE

This Crisis Coordination Playbook is the outcome of a year of codesign through HRFN's Better Preparedness: Funding Resilience Initiative.

In 2023, a group of 20 philanthropic foundations set out to understand and address the challenges that arise when supporting civil society facing acute human rights crises and longer-term restricted civic space.

Over the last year, this group has brought together peace and security and human rights funders, as well as civil society, to codesign a strategy for better funder coordination, and to build the trust and political will to execute it.

The grounding and analysis for this work is reflected in this report and draws on public Learning Labs.

Our goal is to ensure that human rights defenders, social justice movements, and civil society have access to resources when and how they need them.

Why now? There is an urgent need for new approaches to funding civil society and social movements where human rights are most under threat – from acute crisis to closing civic space.

Over the last ten years, we have seen an increasing frequency of human rights crises often resulting from confluences of political, environmental, social, and technological drivers, as well as from a severe, continued deterioration in civic space conditions in many parts of the world. States relentlessly target activists, national civil society, and international philanthropy, while financial institutions continue to de-risk, driven by changing laws and regulations in a variety of jurisdictions, from the IRS in the United States of America to multiple countries' foreign agents laws.

BETTER PREPAREDNESS

Hosted by:

HRFN Human Rights Funders Network

PSFG PEACE & SECURITY FUNDERS GROUP