

WHY THIS MANIFESTO EXISTS

Civil society is in flux. The systems designed to enable social change are struggling under rising inequality, shrinking civic space, political polarisation, and funding models that no longer match the scale or urgency of global challenges. At the same time, a new wave of leadership, imagination, and community power is reshaping what change can look like.

Born from the Big Topic sessions at the International Fundraising Congress in 2025, this manifesto offers a shared compass, giving us a way to name the shifts already underway, confront the practices holding us back, and collectively step into a braver, more equitable future. It captures the insights and direction that emerged across regions, organisations, and movements, where, despite pressure and fragmentation, new energy is rising: grassroots leadership, trust-based philanthropy, movement generosity, and community-led solutions grounded in dignity and agency.

The IFC Manifesto for Change is both a statement of where we stand and a guide to where we must go: a call to realign our work with our values, rebuild trust, and recognise that our greatest strength lies in what we create together.

We Refuse:

- Aid, philanthropy, and organisational cultures that replicate colonial and extractive power dynamics.
- Funding structures that reward control over trust, and measurable outputs over meaningful change.
- Competition that fragments movements and weakens collective power.
- Narratives that diminish dignity and reinforce dependency.

We Choose:

- Power shared, not held.
- Community-led leadership in design, decision-making, and delivery.
- Trust-based resourcing, including unrestricted and long-term funding.
- Collaboration as practice, grounded in empathy, accountability, and honesty.
- Narratives that centre agency, resilience, and imagination.
- Flexible, catalytic capital that unlocks larger restricted funds and rewards learning, not theatre.

OUR COMMITMENTS

As Individuals

- To lead with curiosity, courage, and humility.
- To build relationships rooted in care, not transaction.
- To make space for voices historically silenced or excluded.
- To retire extractive and outdated language.

As Organisations

- To diversify and decolonise resource flows.
- To align culture, governance, and incentives with stated values.
- To share learning, tools, and intelligence openly.
- To invest in frontline and community leadership, not just organisational expansion.
- To shift the donor journey from control to trust.
- To co-design with the communities we serve.

As a Global Sector

We commit to act as a movement, not a marketplace; a collective force grounded in collaboration, not competition. Our purpose is more important than our individual logos. We will strengthen cross-border and cross-movement solidarity, building shared infrastructure – narrative, digital, and financial – that advances collective power.

We envision a social impact sector with agency – autonomous, equitable, interconnected, and trusted – where:

- Power and decision-making sit closer to communities.
- Resources flow ethically and inclusively.
- Civil society stands as an equal pillar alongside market and state.
- Collaboration and purpose replace competition and profit as measures of success.
- Justice, dignity, and interdependence are at the centre of how we work.

A SHARED DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

We are moving:

From charity → to solidarity
From dependency → to agency
From isolation → to shared purpose
From scarcity → to collective abundance
From maintaining the system → to rewriting it together

Across the Big Topic conversations at IFC 2025, a common arc emerged:

- Reimagine what our sector can be when equity, collaboration, and courage lead.
- Reclaim the voice, trust, and agency of communities.
- Rebuild the systems and relationships that enable collective power.

This direction is already in motion.

Quietly. Consistently. Powerfully.

A momentum that, held together, becomes impossible to contain.

A momentum that becomes *unstoppable*.

THIS MANIFESTO IS A BEGINNING

It invites:

- Reflection and commitment at the personal level
- Alignment and action at the organisational level
- Collaboration and movement-building at the sector level

It asks each of us to play our part – deliberately, bravely, and together.

The future is ours to shape.

WHAT COMES NEXT

This manifesto is the foundation for the work ahead. Throughout 2026, it will guide the content, conversations, and community engagement of the Resource Alliance. It will influence the stories we tell, the ideas we elevate, the skills we build, and the partnerships we pursue. It will anchor our programming across the year, ensuring that everything we create reinforces the sector we are collectively imagining.

It will also carry us into IFC 2026, where we will revisit these commitments, explore how the landscape has shifted, and bring in new voices to deepen and challenge our thinking. IFC 2026 becomes the next chapter: a space to activate this manifesto, assess progress, and fuel the momentum needed to turn intention into transformation.

This is our shared starting point.

And together, we shape what comes next.

