

**25-26 June 2024**  
optional 27 June  
**Online**

# Leading Together

The peer event for directors of divisions HR,  
Policy/Advocacy, Programmes of international  
civil society organisations (ICSOs)



## What is Leading Together?

Are you your organisations' global lead for Human Resources, Programme or Policy/Advocacy? Then *Leading Together* is your unique sector space where you can come together with your peers to discuss the challenges you share, learn from each other, get out of the box inspiration, and find a friend or future collaborator.

Since 2016, the International Civil Society Centre has convened global directors of the above departments of international civil society organisations (ICSOs) annually. We alternate year to year between online and face-to-face meetings, in 2024 meeting online once again.

Leading Together 2024 offers two programmed half-days, each with two separate but interlinked convening elements:

- **Joint sessions:** All three groups – Human Resources, Programme and Policy/Advocacy – come together to explore, discuss and shape overarching sector, organisational and leadership issues.
- **Peer sessions:** All three groups meet separately for peer exchange. Session topics will be decided on by an advisory group of participants in the months prior to the meeting.

Each of the two programmed days will include both elements (outline agenda below). Based on previous feedback the third half-day is optional, for each peer group to meet more informally if they so decide. Formats of session will vary and prioritise discussion and exchange, whilst also showcasing expertise and experience from within the groups as well as externally.

### **Joint sessions:** **Diversity and Inclusion – the next level**

Over the past years ICSOs have committed increasingly to transforming themselves to mirror internally the societal changes they are working towards externally: becoming anti-racist, decolonising, i.e. changing internal power dynamics, fostering inclusion of underrepresented communities. Polarised societies and Artificial Intelligence offer new sets of challenges on ICSOs' journey to fostering and thriving on diversity and inclusion. In two joint sessions we want to dissect

these challenges and learn from each other as well as external experts, how to navigate and lead on these challenges.

**Diversity and Polarised Societies:** Our organisations are not immune to divisions in society. Especially as voices from around the world are represented more equally in an organisation, we may see increasing diversity of opinion over topics such as regional wars, gender and LGBT+ rights, conflict in the Middle East. How are organisations addressing such possible fractions and how do leaders maintain team cohesion, especially in situations of political turmoil as the year 2024 when almost half the world' population is heading to the polls? How does this affect internal dynamics as well as operational and advocacy strategy in an international organisation? We want to explore these questions, hear experiences and draw out learnings.

**Diversity and Artificial Intelligence:** A key concern for civil society organisations over the huge advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the last years is how it may further marginalise already underrepresented communities, for exclusion of language, viewpoints and other dimensions. As organisations trying to promote diversity and inclusion what are key precautions organisations are taking in their use of AI systems? And how are organisations pushing for the inclusion of more diverse data sets for e.g. large language models? Are we prepared for how AI and its likely impact on diversity will affect our missions? Do we see opportunities to improve inclusion with the help of AI systems? The Centre will strive to curate highly relevant expertise for this session to inform a constructive discussion.

## Parallel sessions:

### Peer exchange and exploring collaboration

In the second element, three groups will meet in parallel, for two substantive peer sessions (see outline agenda below). They will focus on different topics depending on their specific interest.

- **Human Resources (HR) Directors:**  
This group has convened annually since 2019; for 2024, the Centre facilitator is [Kathrin Kirste](#), Director of Business Development.

In 2024, some of the suggested topics are the role of Artificial

Intelligence in recruitment; staff in conflict and high volatility contexts, incl. concerns over staff with links to conflict parties; how Powershift impacts they ways of working in HR.

For illustration, past HR peer group topics included: digital workplace and engagement, cultivating culture in a crisis, staff resilience and mental health, challenges and chances of working abroad, talent acquisition and retention in globalised settings, racism and discrimination in our organisations.



Exchange between peer organisations [is]...highly relevant and helps a lot for further development.

*Past Participant*



- **Policy/Advocacy Directors:**

This group has convened annually since 2016; for 2024, the Centre facilitator is [Wolfgang Jamann](#), Executive Director.

In 2024, some of the suggested topics are preparing for the Summit of the Future; the Anti-CSO Movement at UN; disinformation, elections and impact on programmes/advocacy (possibility for joint session w Programme Directors); advocacy in controversial spaces.



The opportunity to discuss with policy directors from around the world is hugely inspiring; seeing how others deal with the crisis is very helpful and reassuring.

*Past Participant*



For illustration, past Policy/Advocacy peer group topics included: advocacy in the digital era, COVID-19 and the implications for advocacy, how declining trust and empathy is affecting advocacy and communications, anti-rights groups in advocacy spaces, SDG advocacy and its shifts.

- **Programme Directors:**

This group has convened annually since 2018; for 2024, the Centre facilitator is [Miriam Niehaus](#), Director of Programmes.



There's always  
something you can  
learn from peers  
you've never met  
before!

*Past Participant*



In 2024, some of the suggested topics are civic space challenges and forecasting tools, especially use during election times; preparing for backlash on programmes following key elections, e.g. U.S.; locally-led programmes and next level insight over challenges and opportunities; disinformation, elections and impact on programmes/advocacy (possibility for joint session w Advocacy Directors)

For illustration, past Programmes peer group topics included: leading on operational challenges during the pandemic, ICSOs as donors: partnerships and power, and mis- and disinformation and its impact on programming; anti-rights groups' effects on ICSO programming.

**Want to make the most out of the meeting?**

Then join your peer group's advisory group to shape the agenda. Between April and May the advisory groups, along with two to three members will have 1-2 calls to decide on focus topics and formats.

Indicate in the registration whether you want to be part of the advisory group for your peer group or contact your peer group facilitator (see above) **by 21 March.**

# Agenda Outline

NB. All session times are in CEST, corresponding time zones [are here](#). Break times are tbc.

## Tuesday, 25 June

Time	Session Type	Facilitator
<b>12:00 - 14:00</b>	<b>Joint Session 1</b>	
<b>12:00 – 12:15</b>	Welcome / Introductions	<b>Wolfgang Jamann,</b> Centre Executive Director
<b>12:15 – 13:45</b>	Polarised societies and diverse global organisations – how are we managing?	<b>Miriam Niehaus,</b> Director of Programmes
<b>13:45 – 14:00</b>	What else to expect	<b>Miriam Niehaus</b>
<b>14:00 – 14:30</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>14:30 – 17:00</b>	<b>Peer Groups I</b>	
<b>Programme Directors</b> Topic(s) to be determined by Programme Directors Advisory Group*	<b>Policy / Advocacy Directors</b> Topic(s) to be determined by Policy & Advocacy Directors Advisory Group*	<b>HR Directors</b> Topic(s) to be determined by HR Directors Advisory Group*

## Wednesday, 26 June

<b>12:00 - 13:45</b>	<b>Peer Groups II</b>	
<b>Programme Directors</b> Topic(s) to be determined by Programme Directors Advisory Group*	<b>Policy / Advocacy Directors</b> Topic(s) to be determined by Policy & Advocacy Directors Advisory Group*	<b>HR Directors</b> Topic(s) to be determined by HR Directors Advisory Group*
<b>13:45 – 14.30</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>14:30 – 17:00</b>	<b>Joint Session II</b>	
<b>14:30 – 17:00</b>	<b>AI and diversity: Impact on and opportunity for our organisations</b> Next steps / future meetings	<b>Miriam Niehaus</b>

**Thursday, 27 June**

Optional per Peer Group (TBC by end of May)

Time	Session Type	Facilitator
<b>12:00 - 13:45</b>	<b>Peer Groups III optional TBC</b>	
<b>Programme Directors</b> Informal peer sub-group problem-solving, planning, strategising sessions	<b>Policy / Advocacy Directors</b> Informal peer sub-group problem-solving, planning, strategising sessions	<b>HR Directors</b> Informal peer sub-group problem-solving, planning, strategising sessions
<b>13:45 - 14.30</b>	<b>Break</b>	
<b>14:30 - 17:00</b>	<b>Peer Groups IV optional TBC</b>	
<b>Programme Directors</b> As above	<b>Policy / Advocacy Directors</b> As above	<b>HR Directors</b> As above

## Owners & Supporters



The Centre's work is also supported by ICSSOs who are our Core Supporters:





# International Civil Society Centre


## – The global action platform for ICSOs

The International Civil Society Centre was founded in 2007 to support international civil society organisations (ICSOs) to maximise their impact for a sustainable and more equitable world. Our mission is to strengthen the impact and resilience of these organisations to support people to change their world for the better. The Centre is owned and supported by 20 of the largest ICSOs working across environmental, human rights, social justice and humanitarian themes.

We work with CSO leaders, activists and frontrunners from other sectors in three pillars (Convening, Futures and Innovation, Platform for Collaboration) to build and develop a thriving civil society sector that improves people's lives worldwide.

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