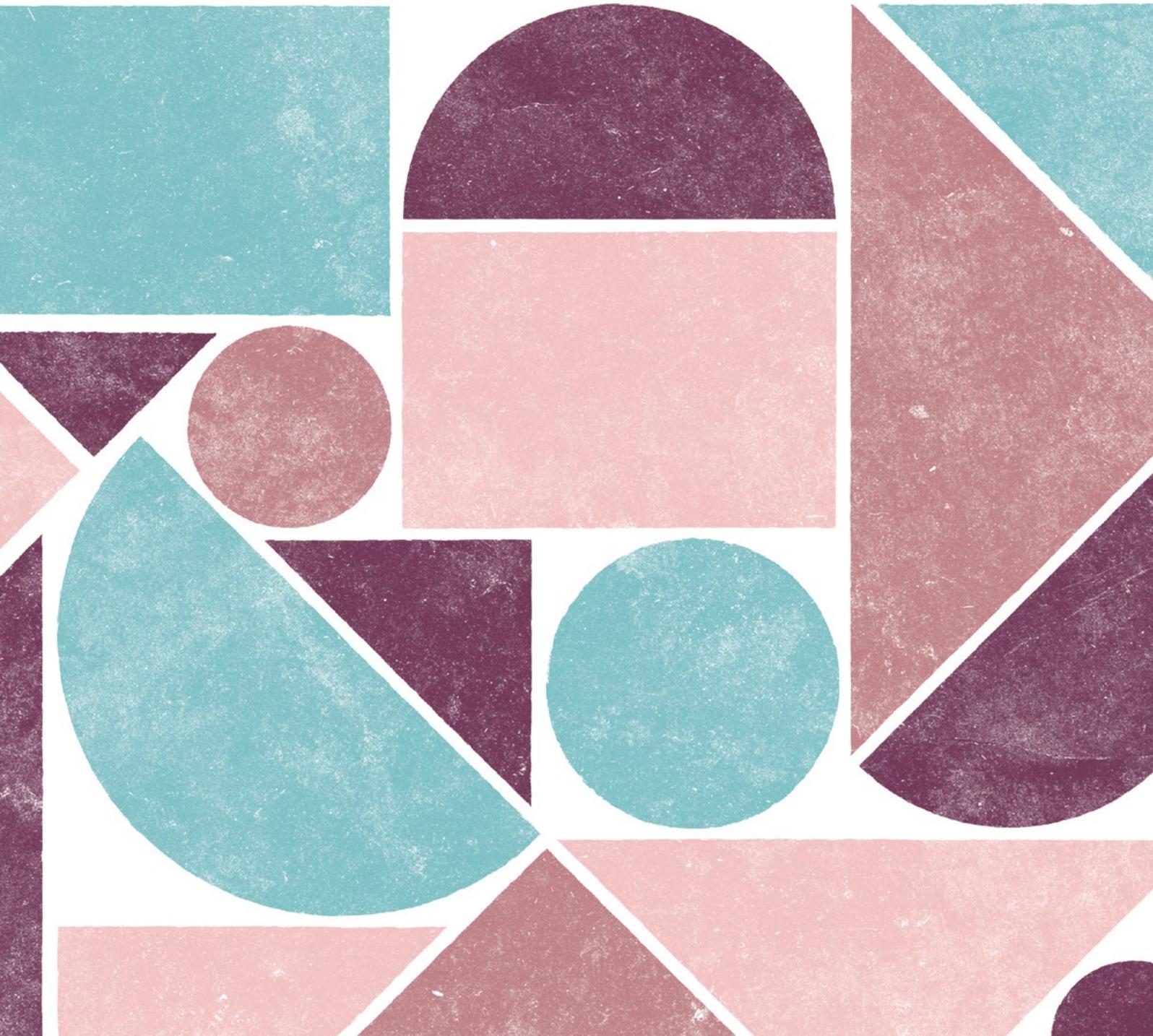
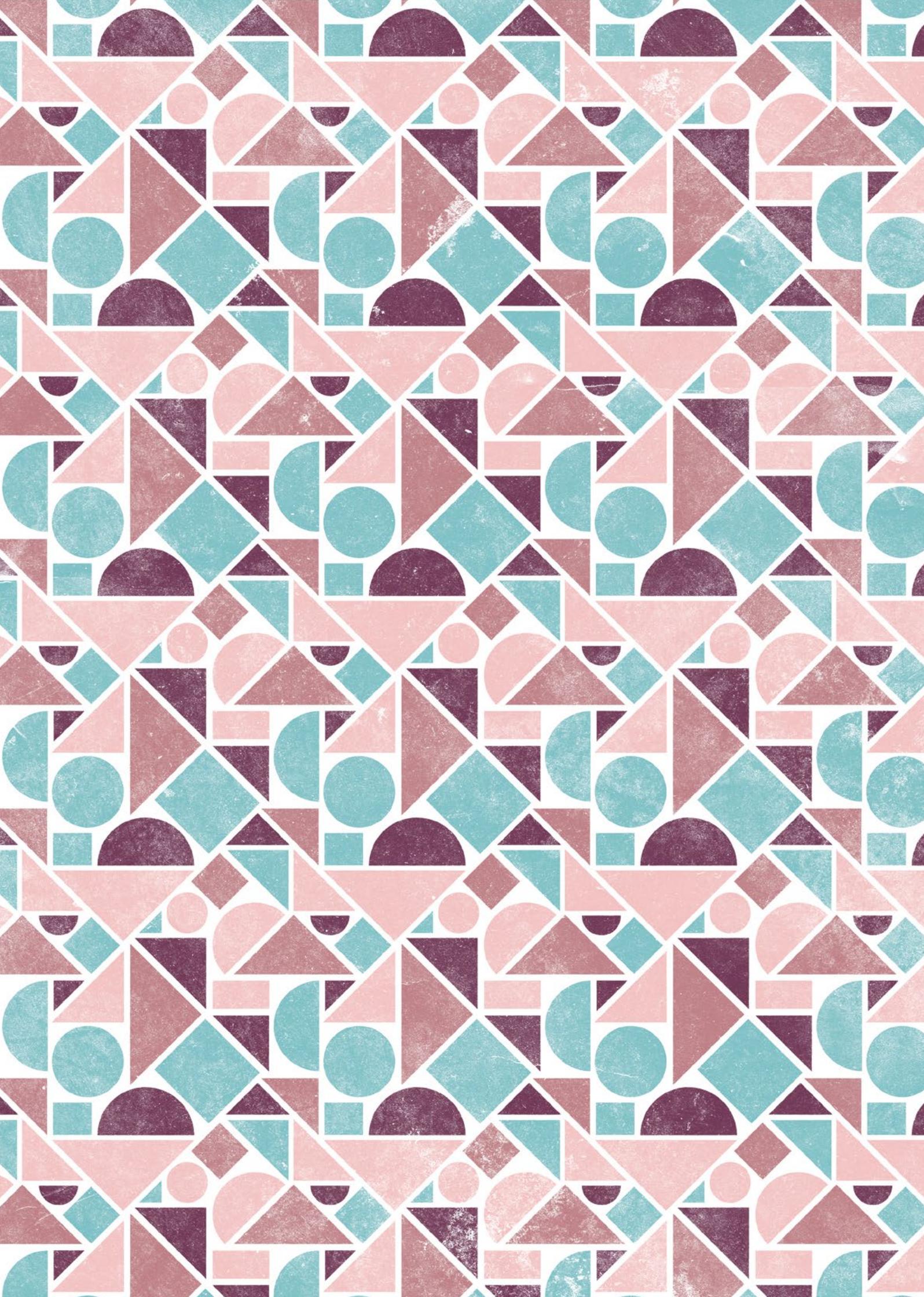




# 2022 Ariadne Forecast

For European Social Change  
and Human Rights Funders





# 2022 Ariadne Forecast:

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I hope that philanthropy will be courageous and that it will experiment and take risks, including by distributing power. Being a foundation is a privilege that also involves a dynamic of power. I hope more foundations will learn how to share a common path that in the end is a process of cultural change.

**Elena Casolari** | Managing Director/Board Member |  
Opes-Lcef Foundation

I hope that the trend towards combining resources and exchanging ideas around certain topics will result in foundations combining their expertise and resources to have a more systemic effect. I'd like to see real solidarity from foundations.

**Pia Gerber** | Executive Director | Freudenberg Foundation

I hope funders will become better at talking to other actors beyond the ones we are used to. We need to shift politicians, governments, banks, the private sector... otherwise the transition won't be inclusive enough. We talk a lot to each other so we should be able to enlarge our scope of interaction to these other actors now.

**Daniëlle Hirsch** | Director | Both ENDS

## 2022 Ariadne Forecast:

### ■ About Ariadne

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Ariadne is a European peer-to-peer network of more than 700 individuals from 140 grantmaking organisations in 22 countries which support social change and human rights. Ariadne helps those using private resources for public good achieve more together than they can alone by linking them to other funders and providing practical tools of support. Ariadne is a programme of Global Dialogue, a registered charity (1122052) and limited company (5775827) which promotes human rights and social change by supporting innovative and collaborative philanthropy.

### ▼ Methodology

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The Ariadne Forecast is a community created resource that draws on the Ariadne network. Ariadne participants and other friends of the network were asked six questions about trends in their field for 2022. We collected surveys and interviews from members across Europe and held online forecast meetings for funders in France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and the UK to discuss and add to the findings. In the end we estimate that around 187 people have had the chance to contribute to the Forecast. While the meetings and discussions at them were private, the final forecast is publicly available for all, as a reflection on the current direction of the sector.

The 2022 Ariadne Forecast report was written by Julie Broome, with support from Debora Guidetti, Hannah Stevens, Molly Mathews, and Martin Modlinger.

Frode Sørensen designed and laid out the report: [www.frodedesign.com](http://www.frodedesign.com)

Ariadne thanks its members for their financial support.

Copies are available for download at [www.ariadne-network.eu](http://www.ariadne-network.eu)

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## Introduction

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As we enter 2022, social change and human rights funders across Europe are anticipating a transition from the lockdown cycles of the past two years to a period of reconnection. There is a strong desire to meet with peers and partners again, to bring together communities, and to breathe new life into plans that were put on hold while funders addressed the immediate challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that sense, it feels like a year of possibilities, in which funders could push forward with bold new agendas.

However, funders and their partners alike are also struggling to come to terms with the impact of the pandemic on their work, with concerns about wellbeing and mental health coming very strongly to the fore. There are fears that the push to get back to 'business as usual' will mean that some of the transformations in funding practice over the past two year will be lost and that lessons learned will not be consolidated. Hope that the pandemic experience, coupled with stronger popular movements for racial and gender justice, are pushing towards a moment of greater structural change is waning for some funders, as old patterns and practices begin to reassert themselves.

In this context, the overriding hope for 2022 is that we, as a community of funders, take the lessons of the past two years and move forward into a new future informed by all we have learned. Rather than stepping back into the past and picking up exactly where we left off, let us step into the future with care for all of those who have worked so hard to keep their communities intact during a crisis and work alongside them to shape the next phase. We have collectively learned so much about what it takes to get resources where they are needed quickly and nimbly and how to give those on the ground the flexibility they need to respond to challenges as they arise. I hope we can maintain that ethos of service to the field as we look ahead.

As always, we appreciate the ideas and analysis generated by our members as part of the Forecast exercise, and we look forward to navigating 2022 with you.

Best wishes,  
Julie Broome  
Ariadne Director

## 2022 Ariadne Forecast:

# Global



COVID provided cover for authoritarian-leaning governments looking for ways to restrict association and assembly, especially protests, deepening and accelerating anti-democratic trends that have been developing for years. This shift comes at a time when social movements around issues such as racial and climate justice have gained significant momentum. The moment is ripe for robust and flexible support from human rights and social change funders, yet philanthropy seems to be heading in several directions at once. Many foundations are committing to more inclusive, participatory,

and responsive funding practices, while others are withdrawing support to certain fields due to changing priorities and strategies. The war in Ukraine has now put additional pressure on funders to respond rapidly to another crisis while simultaneously trying to pursue longer term social change goals. Funders' commitment to climate is also growing but is sometimes in tension with the desire to resume global travel after two years of virtual relationship-building. This will be a year of transition for philanthropy, as it navigates the 'new normal.'



## ◆ What do you expect to be the most pressing challenge facing your grantees in 2022?

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For funders working internationally, there is a sense that human rights work, which is challenging at the best of times, is getting even more difficult. The repression of civil society continues across many countries and is tightening in some of the most challenging contexts. The liquidation of the longstanding human rights group Memorial in Russia is emblematic of the threats facing civil society in 2022. While the situation in Russia has been difficult, and deteriorating, for some time, the action against Memorial dealt a demoralising blow to Russian groups who have been trying to sustain their work in challenging conditions. The war in Ukraine has now pushed this repression to new levels. And while the situation in Russia is illustrative, this trend is no way limited to Russia alone; restrictions on civil society are being felt in countries across all regions. Some organisations are having to operate more informally and sometimes more secretly, which poses particular challenges for the funders supporting them. Funders are questioning whether their due diligence processes are fit for purpose in these circumstances and grappling with how they can fulfil their own fiduciary responsibilities while also providing solidarity and support to groups in societies where the fight for human rights is critical.

The conflict in Ukraine, which emerged just as this Forecast was being finalised, is also going to have a significant impact on both civil society and foundations across Europe, as they mobilise to provide humanitarian assistance to those fleeing the war. Specific concerns about the treatment of ethnic minority and LGBTI refugees at borders and in recipient countries have galvanised advocacy groups, who are providing services for which they are not fully equipped. More capacity will be needed across many organisations in the region to cope with the influx of refugees and ensure that the most vulnerable are protected.

Funders are concerned that groups and movements themselves might need to develop new tactics in the current repressive environment in many countries.

*Direct actions and mass mobilisations have never been as common as in recent years (until the pandemic hit). As a result, governments and corporates adapted and learned how to repress, silence, or diminish such actions. Traditional forms of civil disobedience such as protest or demonstration might not be safe nor impactful enough to make a difference, and I think people will need to strategically look for new tactics to achieve their goals.*

**Project Coordinator | Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands**

COVID has exacerbated some of these trends, as even democratic countries have put in place emergency laws restricting freedom of assembly and association, and some of these restrictions appear set to continue.

COVID-19 is still being used as a pretext to criminalise and delegitimise dissent or any civil society activities, often through militarisation, heightened policing, intrusive surveillance technology and/or the disruption of democratic processes. The securitised responses from states to the global health crisis has expanded the legal authority of the military and emboldened police forces further infringing on the freedoms of civil society, but also communities of people who are simply trying to survive. Rolling back these extraordinary government measures will be a challenge moving forward for feminist activists and human rights defenders.

**Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands**

In this context, the digital resilience of civil society organisations has become more important, but the digital capacity and expertise of groups varies widely.

Human rights NGOs need to be able to cope with digital security, responsible use of data, safety of those who are attacked online, and DDoS (distributed denial-of-service) attacks. A lot of digital security tools have a higher threshold in terms of technical specifications, difficulty of use, or price. Grantees are struggling with issues of accessibility of tools for digital resilience. The context is exacerbating power imbalances.

**Programme Officer | Private Foundation | Netherlands**

COVID is also affecting the funding landscape for human rights organisations, with the diversion of funding to direct service provision. Advocacy organisations have had their budgets reduced as donors turn their attention to the health crisis, limiting their ability to respond to the political impacts of the pandemic. In Europe, the funding environment for regionally focused groups can also be a challenge, because funders tend to support national level work rather than work at the European level. The reorientation of several large foundations in the human rights and social change space is also concerning to some funders. This has created uncertainty for many human rights groups and has led to funding losses for some of them. There are also concerns about the longevity of funder interest in topics like racial justice and decolonisation, which is high on the agenda now but may not receive the real commitment it requires.

The pandemic has also impacted organisations' ability to connect with the communities they support and with their peers. Some funders are concerned that their partners, already fragile in some cases, may struggle without strong networks and more meaningful exchanges.

The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated global inequality, and funders working in the Global South are especially concerned about the economic impacts of the health crisis in countries with limited social security resources and the inequality of access to vaccines that will prolong the crisis in those countries.

The climate crisis will also be a challenge for many organisations and the communities with which they work. Many will be dealing with forced migration and the destruction of their homes and livelihoods, all of which will impact their ability to continue their work. Funders are concerned that growing corporate power could hinder progress in addressing the climate crisis.

A recent example of the rise of corporate power is COP26 where the fossil fuel industry had the largest delegation at the climate summit (503 representatives). This undue influence of the global corporate elite over domestic and international decision makers and public institutions is an attack on democracy, and at the same time structurally pushes out the participation and voices of those who are most impacted by the climate crisis: girls, women, trans and intersex poor and working-class people from the Global South.

**Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands**

Funders also worry that the momentum that has built around responding to the climate crisis could start to wane.

The consensus on climate action is likely not to last long. We have a taste of it now with the energy price crisis, which shows how easy it is to politically exploit legitimate social concerns and reduce the political space to take truly equitable measures in the short and long term, instead of indirectly continuing to support the use of fossil fuels.  
 Director | Private Foundation | Belgium

## What opportunities do you see in 2022 that might help your grantees advance their work?

There are some positive developments underway at the European level that could help organisations concerned with the future of democracy and civic space. Efforts to help strengthen democracy in the EU include the EU Democracy Action Plan, a new media programme, initiatives around the rule of law, the Conference on the Future of Europe, and better regulation of digital platforms and social media. These could be useful tools for advocacy organisations. There are also new funding opportunities in Europe for organisations advancing democracy, civic space, and public interest media, such as the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme.

New partnerships among organisations also offer new opportunities, as groups seek more openings to work with others in complementary ways. For example, there are now deep and effective working relationships between human rights organisations, investigative journalists, and media outlets, such as the collaboration that led to the Panama Papers. These partnerships can be intensive but hugely effective.

We're seeing lots more collaboration and inventive ways of documenting violations and disseminating information through these partnerships. It has to be the way forward. Human rights reports just don't have the necessary reach and audience.  
 Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK

Partnerships also offer opportunities as more organisations start to think about the climate crisis. Many groups are just starting to explore the intersections between climate and their own work, and partnerships with climate and environmental groups can help them advance work at these intersections.

New forms of activism are also emerging, including more use of the arts to raise awareness and more creative uses of technology to organise online campaigns. Protest movements around issues like climate and racial justice have also helped bring activism back into popular culture.

Activism has become more 'normalised' in the sense that people have more sympathy for and affinity with activism. There is a new generation of activists; quite radical, new groups coming up about climate, but also about women's rights and antiracism. People take to the streets because they realise that they can make a change themselves. Activism has gotten some new 'shine'.  
 Project Coordinator | Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands

As a result of this shift, some funders are optimistic that more people are starting to recognise the systemic change that is needed in our economic and political systems and that it may reach a tipping point that makes this change possible. However, there is also a call for funders to bring a more explicit power analysis to their work.

We need to be prepared to engage more directly with power: who holds it, how it's exercised, and how people connect to it.

Principal | Private Foundation | UK

The growing attention to the climate crisis provides opportunities for groups to discuss and address climate justice. Climate activists are finding more allies and partners, which can help them advance their work. And there is more emphasis on and funding available for bringing legal challenges around climate issues.

The digital transformation, which accelerated over the past two years, is also viewed as an opportunity, albeit one that comes with challenges. The digital infrastructure we now have has made it possible for organisations to continue their work during the pandemic and for individuals to maintain relationships. Online work is now critical, and as such funders need to be prepared to support it.

The reality of COVID has forced so much more of our work to happen online. In places where partners have access to stable internet and electricity, this has opened much more space for people to connect, collaborate, and partner with many more people as more and more of our work is happening online. This does place a particular onus on us as funders to be providing our partners with the resources they need to be able to do this: core funding to pay for access to stable internet and electricity, as well as cybersecurity so that more people can be online safely.

Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands

Online platforms also raise data privacy issues for users, and European groups are especially concerned about those that store data outside of the EU. For organisations that are less familiar with technology and digital rights issues, it can be a real challenge to find appropriate technical tools and not to simply rely on commercial solutions from big tech companies.

Some funders are heartened, though, by the growing engagement of funders in the digital rights sphere and by groups that are doing more to challenge state and big corporations on digital rights and data issues.

We've noticed more funders willing to step in the digital rights sector. My hope is that it's also offering an opportunity of more funding for grantees not officially doing digital rights work, but also doing human rights work with a digital rights dimension. It's the moment to educate; people are listening.

Programme Officer | Private Foundation | Netherlands

## How do you expect your practice as a funder to change in the next 12 months?

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When emergency funding became necessary in 2020, many donors moved to more flexible funding models, and some are trying to sustain this trend, even as the sector starts to shift out of emergency mode. There is a recognition that the dynamic and rapidly changing environment requires that organisations be able to move quickly and nimbly to address new challenges.

Events are unpredictable and we cannot predict what will be needed to effect positive change. Our future way of funding will be about finding the right partner and trusting them to find the right way to make change.

Senior Vice President | Private Foundation | Germany

Some funders plan to provide capacity-building support to their partners alongside core support to ensure that these organisations are resilient and able to meet future challenges, and there will be more attention to the well-being and mental health of staff within partner organisations as burnout is increasingly recognised as a problem. There are also more funders providing multi-year support to give partners more stability, though for some this may mean investing in fewer organisations. A few funders are planning to start providing financial support to individuals as part of their efforts to support a wider range of social change actors. Inclusive grantmaking also remains a trend among foundations, with some investing more in developing participatory grantmaking mechanisms and seeking ways to shift more power to local organisations.

This is a challenge with partners in the Global South, as there is a bigger power imbalance between funders and grantees and a history of colonialism. How can we listen to these partners better and involve them in decision making? Locally led initiatives should be at the centre of our engagement. Sometimes we have to bridge through a European NGO, especially if we are not able to travel and build these relationships based on trust, but that has to change as there is a growing sense of disapproval from our partners.

Senior Vice President | Private Foundation | Germany

While the trend towards more inclusive and flexible grantmaking is strong among Ariadne members, some funders are concerned about the role new individual philanthropists might play, especially those that have made their wealth in the technology sector.

One trend, which I hesitate to call new but is new in some respects, is the current wave of big tech billionaires engaging in philanthropy. Its scale and visibility are a step up from what we've seen before. Obviously, there's a lot of different actors with different approaches within that, but one concern I have is the focus within this group of philanthropists on defining impact in quite traditional, top-down terms. What impact will that have on the rest of the sector, in terms of how other foundations operate? It's a bit of a step backwards when, on the other side, we have this push towards foundations recognising their own role in perpetuating inequalities in the past and trying to address those inequalities in their own practices.

Director of Partnerships | Intermediary Foundation | UK

Travel is on the minds of many funders going into 2022. On the one hand, many people are eager to travel again to see peers and partners after two years of restrictions on movement. However, funders are also increasingly conscious of the impact of travel on the climate and environment and are hesitant to return to pre-pandemic levels of travel. This will be a year of people seeking to balance the need for in-person contact with environmental concerns and trying to find the best ways to stay connected for the longer term.

## ● What issue or field of practice do you think will become more important in 2022?

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The climate crisis, which has been a growing area of concern for social change and human rights funders over the past three years, remains a priority issue in 2022. With the launch of funder commitments on climate change in several European countries in recent years and an international commitment in 2021, there is a growing focus on the programmatic, operational, and investment changes foundations can make to help mitigate climate change and address the climate crisis. Funders are seeing more of their partners involved in other issue areas start to integrate a climate perspective into their work.

The issue of democratic space and an enabling environment for civil society will also continue to be high on the agenda for funders this year. While there are fears that oppressive governments will continue to have the upper hand, funders are hopeful that there is a growing sense of solidarity with the movements that are countering these authoritarian trends. Digital rights is an area of growing interest for funders, especially around the regulation of digital platforms.

The Digital Services Act (DSA) and Digital Markets Act (DMA) are coming at the EU level so there will be even more attention to digital platform regulation and their power, and how this shapes public discourse.

**Programme Officer | Private Foundation | Netherlands**

Funders are also doing more to understand the implications of technology for their work, whatever their area of interest may be.

The impact of technology on society, everything from the spread of disinformation to the bias of algorithmic decision-making systems, is something that needs to be grappled with and understood. Those groups dealing with the fallout of the harms of a technological system, for example, on someone whose immigration status or benefit allowance has been determined by an algorithm should be in touch and working with the groups with the knowledge and expertise about those systems and what needs to be done in terms of policy and regulation, and vice versa. There must continue to be a move away from thinking of technology in the abstract, divorced from society.

**Principal | Private Foundation | UK**

Concerns around social media and the way it has generated and disseminated disinformation is a growing concern for funders.

We cannot promote freedom of expression and information, and democracy, without taking into account the influence of social media and online platforms on public debate, social interactions and citizens' relations with politics.

**Director | Private Foundation | Belgium**

This trend, combined with the control governments are exercising over some media outlets, is leading more funders to consider funding independent journalism, and funders active in this space make the point that even those who do not identify as 'journalism funders' can have an important impact.

The EU has in the past been very cautious about providing public funding for media support, as if this would have hampered their independence. Now there is more awareness of the need to do something to ensure media pluralism, independence, and its role as a counter-power. They are discussing and exploring different approaches.

**Programme Manager | Donor Collaborative | Belgium**

Anti-racism and racial equity is an issue on the minds of many funders. Some are feeling that the past two years of racial justice protests have genuinely shifted cultural attitudes and that there is some momentum among funders that can be sustained. Others note that there has been more talk than action among funders on racial justice issues. All agree, however, that there is more the philanthropic community can do to resource the anti-racism movement and to get funding to more minority-led (and particularly Black-led) organisations.

The rise of the far-right remains a concern, and funders are worried that the anti-rights agenda continues to gather steam. Sexual and reproductive rights are especially under threat, and the debate around the rights of trans people has taken hold even in otherwise liberal societies. Funders fear that these issues are being instrumentalised by actors with a broader political agenda.

Homophobic patriarchal nationalism will continue be used for geopolitical gains to polarise societies and negate human rights and democratic values.

**Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands**

## ◀ What political event or sequence of events do you predict will have a substantial effect on your work?

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Within Europe, funders are watching what the change in German leadership and the results of the presidential election in France will mean for the direction of the EU and how it is likely to respond to challenges from Poland and Hungary, for example. The French presidency of the EU has helped put questions around the future of Europe on the agenda, including an emphasis on the Conference for the Future of Europe, which could be an opportunity to garner more public support for Europe and push back against anti-Europe sentiment in different countries.

In the United States, the midterm elections in November are likely to be significant. Funders active in the US note that the Biden Administration has found itself in a difficult place between centrist voters who simply wanted to replace Trump and the progressive arm of the Democratic party seeking much more radical change. These tensions could have an effect on voting patterns in the midterm election. Funders in Europe note that the change in government in the US has opened up better transatlantic cooperation on issues like migration and inequality and that there may be the possibility of strengthening these partnerships depending on the outcome of the elections.

Russia's relations with Ukraine and with its Central Asian neighbours are a priority for funders active in the region. Even at the end of 2021, funders were concerned that another invasion of Ukraine could have a significant impact for organisations on both sides of the border, as well as in migrant reception countries. In early 2022, this is proving to be the case. Space for Central Asian groups could tighten as Central Asian countries try to maintain relations with Russia without entering the war in Ukraine.

Political negotiations around the climate crisis are a top priority in 2022. COP27 will take place in November in Egypt, and this will be an opportunity for civil society to maintain pressure on governments. Some funders hope to take advantage of the German Presidency of the G7 to do more advocacy with the German leadership to encourage them to make the climate crisis their top priority for the presidency.

## ■ What is your greatest hope for 2022, in relation to your work or philanthropy in general?

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I hope philanthropy will take the time to build relationships and collaborations with grantees and their communities, learn from grantees, build the systems needed to be able to work meaningfully with groups, and change the ways of working that do not lead to grantees and communities being supported. I hope we intervene less and support more. We need to break power divisions between funders and grantee partners.

**Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands**

My hope is that there is a realisation that there is a card to be played by philanthropy in supporting independent journalism. You don't have to be a "journalism funder" to support the cause of independent journalism. Journalism is and can be seen as a means to support democracy by giving the opportunity to citizens to gather information based on facts on issues that really have an impact on our societies and thus enable citizens to vote for evidence-based policies and politicians advancing progressive agendas. I hope more foundations will realise that independent journalism and a pluralistic media scene are the backbones of democracy.

**Programme Manager | Donor Collaborative | Belgium**

I hope for more bravery in developing a progressive agenda for combating disinformation and the growth of the alt-right and extreme right-wing and countering the disempowerment people feel.

**Programme Officer | Private Foundation | Netherlands**

I'm hoping that we don't have another systemic crisis of any sort that paralyzes the world in the way we experienced over last 18 months. It would be good to actually build back, even if differently. It's not about going back to business as usual but moving forward.

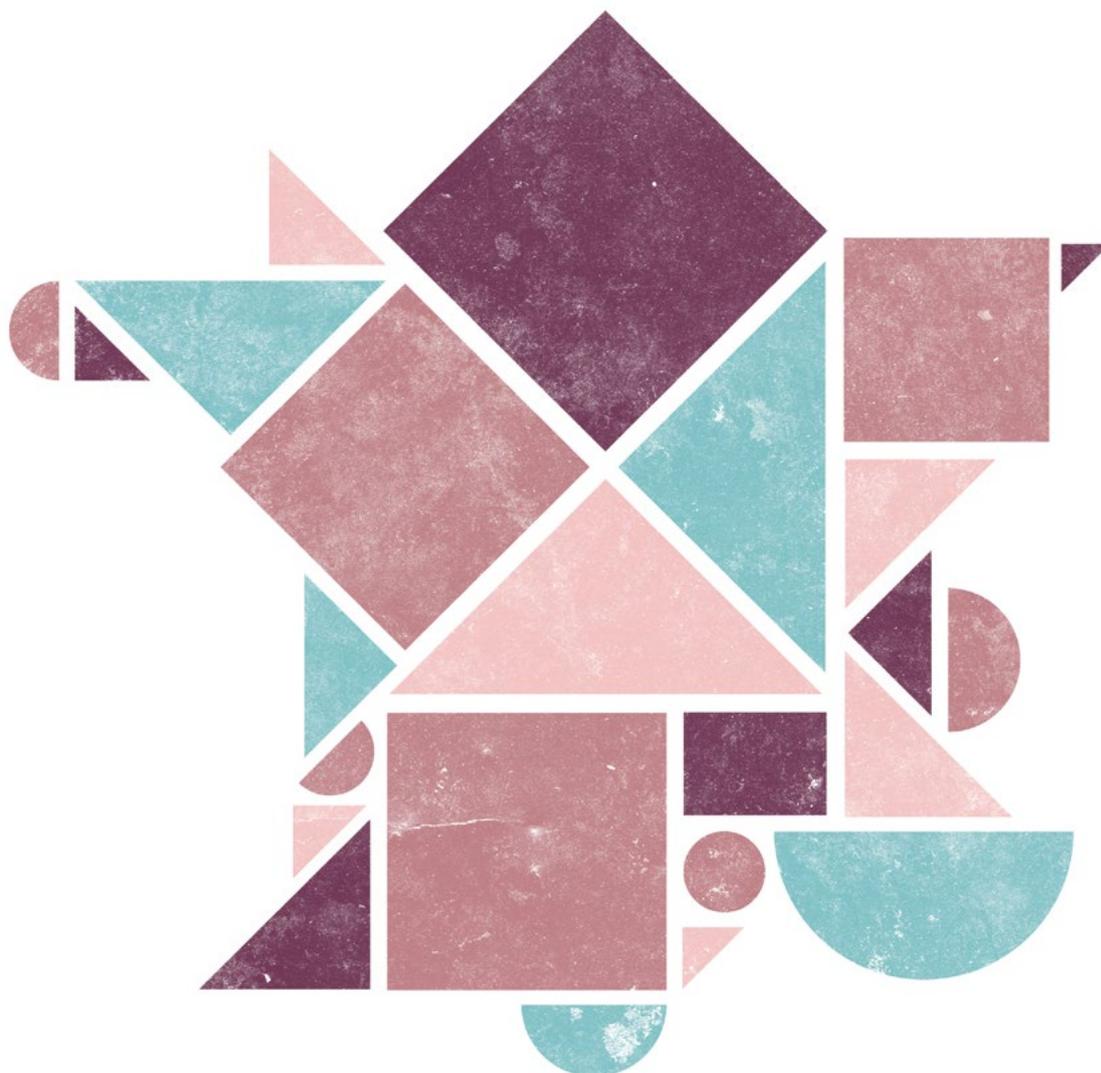
**Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK**

I hope to see an increasing number of funders taking risks with their approaches to funding grassroots-led rights work, to decentralise more and to begin challenging the internal power dynamics that limit their ability to do so.

**Anonymous | Intermediary Foundation | UK**

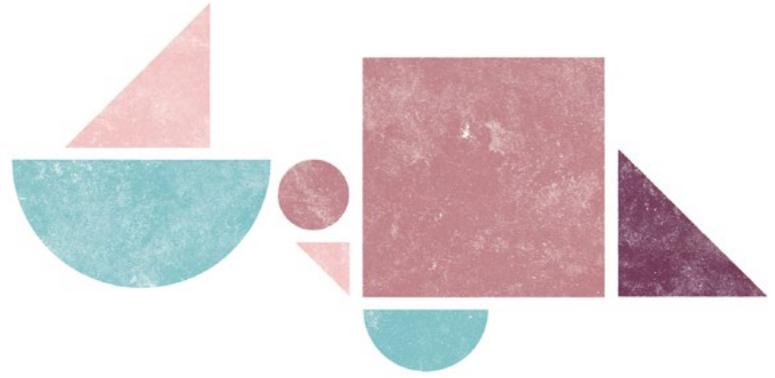
2022 Ariadne Forecast:

# France



As France enters a tense presidential election year, social change funders are bracing themselves for a difficult ride. With the far right likely to prey on voters' fears and biases, social divisions will only increase as the election nears. Meanwhile, organisations working to address longer term social change have found themselves with less support in recent years as the pandemic took

priority. This will therefore be a challenging year as groups mobilise to ensure that democracy is exercised and that the big challenges on the horizon, most notably the climate crisis, are not forgotten as voters head to the ballot boxes. Can French funders provide organisations the resources and flexibility they need to meet the demands of the moment?



## What do you expect to be the most pressing challenge facing your grantees in 2022?

The primary challenge identified by French funders is the upcoming presidential election. First is the challenge of uncertainty, as it is not clear what the government agenda will be or what sort of public funding will be available after the elections. This creates a planning challenge for some organisations. Secondly, there are concerns that the far right will mobilise sections of the public during the campaign period and could make gains in the election. This poses a particular challenge for groups working with migrants and religious minorities, as Islamophobia and anti-migrant sentiment are stirred up by far-right candidates. Feminist groups are also concerned about the impact of the election upon their work.

*For the first time we have a “masculinist” candidate who claims to be such, and anti-feminist. We already had a strong far right, but the tinge of anti-feminist and primary misogyny is new. Islamophobia was already there, and he is pushing that. It is a strong, organised, visible backlash. How can we be on the offensive as well, not just on the defence? How can we realise our vision in this context?*

**President | Intermediary Foundation | France**

There are also concerns about anti-democratic trends in France, as in other European countries, that are impacting the work of civil society organisations. Of particular concern is the Anti-Separatism Bill passed in 2021, which expands the grounds for dissolution of organisations and puts at particular risk organisations working on issues like migration or Islamophobia. The law is open to abuse and has been criticised by human rights groups for its restrictions on the freedom of association.

Alongside these political concerns, the COVID pandemic continues to have an impact, including in economic terms. Fundraising from individuals is challenging right now, especially for those who are not providing direct emergency services. Foundations have also shifted their support to address the immediate social needs created by the pandemic, and some have stopped or reduced their funding for longer-term social change efforts. Some funders also see a trend towards impact measurement that could be harmful for organisations in their efforts to seek funds.

*There is a worrying focus on the issue of impact measurement; everyone wants to develop impact measurement methods and tools. We try to go more on demonstrating value rather than measuring impact. Impact measurement focuses on the direct effects of the action rather than on the societal value, which goes beyond what is measurable.*

**Programme Manager | Private Foundation | France**

Funders working on climate are concerned that it will be difficult to attract climate-related funding, despite the urgency of the situation.

Our grantees are facing a wall of misunderstanding, or lack of will to understand, reflected in their access to financial support from public agencies. Groups engaging with the energy transition or housing issues should get a lot of support from the public today, yet they do not get it. On a global level the EU is in a progressive position, but that is still not enough compared to the challenges we are facing. The framework programme for research and innovation (Horizon Europe) still emphasises big tech solutions and provides limited funding to support transition, while it should be the other way around. There is a certain understanding of the situation, but not yet a common understanding of the solutions.

Programme Officer | Private Foundation | France

The ongoing economic and health crisis is also having a negative impact on mental health and is increasing the risk of violence against women and children. Some cities do not have the services to address the needs of vulnerable people, putting a strain on charities.

## What opportunities do you see in 2022 that might help your grantees advance their work?

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The presidential election campaign, in addition to being a challenge, is viewed as a potential opportunity to raise awareness of social issues and mobilise people. One foundation has organised a national tour with its grantees to promote issues of equality in different cities in France.

The growing public awareness of the climate crisis is an opportunity to engage a wider group of people and push for more robust policy change.

The ecological transition is a subject which is increasingly taken into account by the population, and a gap between political decision-makers and the population is emerging. There is more openness to change. There has also been a change in consumption practice, so manufacturers are changing their own practices to take this fundamental movement into account.

Director | Private Foundation | France

Some funders believe that an opportunity could be created by bringing together organisations and movements across different fields to support and be in solidarity with one another. Although the context is quite challenging, and it feels to some that there are few obvious openings or opportunities, bringing people together could strengthen the work of different organisations and give greater visibility to issues of common concern.

We have encouraged our partners to work with trade unions, with associations fighting against poverty and to open up more widely to address not only the ecological transition, but also democratic governance and social justice.

Director | Private Foundation | France

Funders working on women's rights and ending violence against women see an opportunity to build on awareness-raising work that has been done in recent years, resulting in greater public support for women's issues.

Donations in general have also increased over the past year in France as people responded to the needs brought on by the pandemic, which presents an opportunity for organisations raising funds. There is an opening to try to maintain higher giving levels.

## ◆ How do you expect your practice as a funder to change in the next 12 months?

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Some funders are preparing themselves for the possibility that the far right could win the election and anticipate that in such a scenario they would try to be as reactive to and supportive of the needs of their partners as possible to help them engage in campaigning and advocacy as needed.

Flexibility and taking a supportive, collaborative approach are key themes for some foundations, even outside of the context of the election.

Our funding remains flexible, the monitoring light, and the approach collaborative, because we prefer our partners to spend time in the field rather than filling out application forms or reports. We try to be of service to them since they are the ones who carry out the work in the field, and we are there to support. We offer hand-in-hand support that is appreciated by the associations.

**President | Private Foundation | France**

Rather than supporting projects, we should be providing structural support for actors who have conviction and vision.

**Director of Programmes | Private Foundation | France**

There is a move towards providing more operational support for organisations and getting more involved at an operational level alongside partners.

Other funders are trying to shift to a focus on root causes and taking a systemic approach to change. This could fundamentally change the way that they approach their grantmaking.

We are going to have an assertive approach to the role of philanthropy as an engine of social change. We might do more advice, support, and network-creation beyond funding. It is about moving towards longer timeframes. We have to work differently with project leaders, with a logic of co-construction, but also to amplify the R&D function of philanthropy and to focus on less funded and more delicate issues.

**Programme Manager | Private Foundation | France**

For some funders this means shifting more to addressing the root causes of social issues rather than focusing only on the symptoms. Funders are also thinking more about how to work on the local level, including municipalities and regions.

## ▲ What issue or field of practice do you think will become more important in 2022?

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The climate crisis is at the forefront of funders' minds going into 2022 and is poised to continue to rise in importance. While some funders are focused on the impacts of specific industries, others emphasise that the focus should not just be on the technical solutions to climate change but that the crisis must be viewed and addressed in the context of social and economic justice issues.

We should ask ourselves: what can we really do as humanity, and who are we in relation to the planet and nature. We should move from a hero- to a gardener-mindset: we cannot do everything alone.

**Programme Officer | Private Foundation | France**

There are concerns that COP26 was disappointing for some activists and that it will be important to reinvigorate the climate movement in 2022 and to mobilise more people to join in the campaign for climate justice.

The increasing fragmentation and polarisation of society is a concern for French funders, heightened by the upcoming election but extending beyond that. They are concerned about rising inequalities, discrimination, and the resentment that is growing between different communities of people. Some funders are thinking more about how they can bring people together to build greater social solidarity.

We need to recognise what unites us, what brings us together. There is a new urge to participate on the part of people. We must seize it and promote commitments and the “let’s do it together” attitude (think about the solidarity shown during the pandemic) to move towards a model of society that is based on the ability to act and cooperate.

Programme Manager | Private Foundation | France

In this context, issues of democracy, independent media, and digital rights are also likely to increase in importance. Youth are also a target group likely to become more important, as the next generation will inherit all of the challenges brought on by the pandemic and the climate crisis. Around the election, one funder has noted that more needs to be done to ensure that people living with disabilities are able to effectively access and exercise their right to vote.

Migration could also rise even further in importance if the far right does well in the election.

## What political event or sequence of events do you predict will have a substantial effect on your work?

The biggest political event on the horizon for French funders in 2022 is the presidential election. Far right candidates have a high enough profile in this election that even if they do not win, they could have a strong impact on the public discourse. There is a risk that any future government will have to take their views into account and that other politicians could be pulled further to the right. Funders are watching the situation carefully, and should the far right make gains, at least one foundation is considering potential support for the independent press or even for civil disobedience. If the far right does perform well, it could create a very challenging situation for organisations promoting progressive social causes.

Some funders are also concerned about the regulatory framework for charitable donations in France and would like to see it evolve. At present, organisations are quite limited in the way that they can be structured and still receive tax exemption, but these structural models are not always conducive to financial sustainability. This could be the time to clarify some of these issues and reform the framework so that all forms of work in the public interest receive charitable status.

## ● What is your greatest hope for 2022, in relation to your work or philanthropy in general?

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I hope there will be philanthropic awareness of the urgency to act on the just transition. Among the several thousand foundations in France, it is a small minority that takes the just transition into account: everyone must take it into account and articulate it as part of their programmes.

**Director | Private Foundation | France**

Philanthropy in France is entering a phase of self-reflection: there is a desire to no longer limit philanthropy to a band-aid role, but to seek lasting solutions. It is a model that is spreading more and more. We are not going to stop supporting emergency needs, but if we do only that, it's just band-aids. So, this means much more work in partnership among foundations and with the grantees on an equal footing.

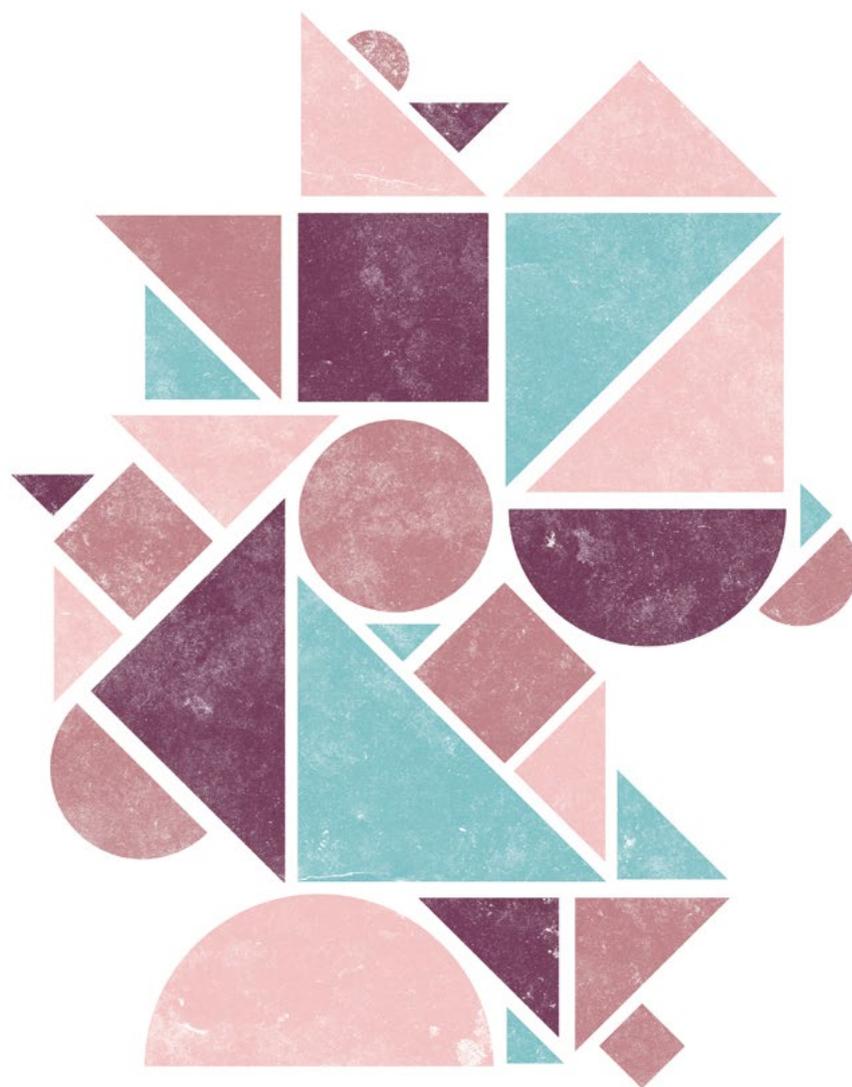
**Programme Manager | Private Foundation | France**

I hope for more transparency in the sector, more foundations that understand the importance of funding operating costs and salaries, at a fair and equitable level. Working in charity is not a reason to be paid at the poverty line level.

**Anonymous**

2022 Ariadne Forecast:

# Germany



After several years during which social divisions have grown, in part fuelled by responses to the COVID pandemic, German funders are searching for ways to bring communities back together and develop a common agenda. The change in political leadership in Germany is largely seen as an opportunity for civil society

but one which has to be shaped. It is not a moment to step back from advocacy. As the far right gains ground, this could be a year in which social change funders in Germany come together to coordinate and collaborate more strategically than ever before.



## ▼ What do you expect to be the most pressing challenge facing your grantees in 2022?

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Rising far-right extremism is a significant threat that German civil society will have to face in 2022. The far right is gaining ground, particularly in those communities where democratic leadership is not strong.

We are seeing a growing trend toward radicalism. Politicians are threatened, attacks on civil servants have been taken to a new dimension, and anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise. Fake news, disinformation campaigns, and the spread of conspiracy theories on social media all are fuelling this development. The right-wing populists and right-wing extremists are working hand-in-hand driving these campaigns and reinforcing the division of society.

**Board Member | Private Foundation | Germany**

Social restrictions put in place to combat COVID have helped fuel this rise. People are feeling the financial impacts of these restrictions and struggling, and extremists have exploited these feelings. This has been particularly successful in East Germany where scepticism of political institutions and the media remains higher as a result of the historical experience of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

The AfD exploits this scepticism and labels the protests against the corona measures as an act of resistance against oppression. With this "narrative of freedom," the right-wing populists mobilize more and more citizens for the protests.

**Board Member | Private Foundation | Germany**

Online groups that had formed around protests against COVID measures are being methodically taken over by far-right groups and narratives; while some protesters are leaving the associated Telegram groups, the majority have stayed and are now exposed to and being mobilised for other disinformation campaigns, as well as racist ideologies.

In this context, building more social cohesion will be a significant challenge this year, especially as some funders fear that the steps that will need to be taken to combat climate change, for example, could increase radicalisation. Gender issues are also politicised by extremists who claim to promote 'family values'.

Rising inequality is a challenge across most countries, including Germany. Funders are aware of the ways in which the pandemic has both exacerbated and exposed social inequalities, which are contributing to the growing social divisions. Some funders also point to the complexity and interconnected nature of inequalities, leading to frustration with limited progress. Similarly, funders feel they operate in constant "crisis-mode" and have little opportunity for strategic thinking and action.

Funding is expected to be a major challenge for German civil society in 2022, in part due to a reduction in public funds. The majority of funding, including that from private foundations, remains short-term and project-based, and organisations are stretched beyond capacity in many cases. There is a particular lack of support for issues such as social care, which are perennial needs but not 'trendy' for foundations. The funding situation is also related to the rise of far-right extremism, as where the far right makes advances it also tries to close down funding for progressive civil society. One major funder in Germany is also largely exiting human rights funding, leaving other funders with the question of how to fill this gap. Conversely, there is also a risk that mass movements in Germany, particularly around climate, will lose public support because people will perceive that the situation has improved. They may believe that COP26 was a success and that the new government in Germany will deliver results and no longer feel any sense of urgency around the activism that has built up in recent years.

## What opportunities do you see in 2022 that might help your grantees advance their work?

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The new coalition government in Germany is taking some steps to open up space for civil society following a period in which the space has been shrinking. The incoming government recognises the important role that civil society organisations have to play in the public discourse and is reversing the application of laws that saw some non-profit organisations stripped of their charitable status.

The political work of grantees should be possible again, and they will have the ability to raise a political voice outside their core work. It should widen what was the shrinking space and allow for more voices calling for changing the system. It makes the work of some organisations easier, including those working on migration or the environment, for example.

Director | Private Foundation | Germany

Funders also see opportunities originating from foreign policy changes brought by (or expected from) the new coalition government, such as supporting initiatives around feminist foreign policy.

Work on developing positive narratives provides opportunities for organisations to connect with a wider range of people. Funders note that sometimes, in their efforts to counter the messages of the far right, for example, organisations inadvertently help spread these messages. It may be more successful for organisations to promote their own positive vision than to respond to the far right directly, and there is a growing body of research in this area that funders and their partners can take advantage of.

Some funders also see opportunities for connecting more with those that have been most strongly affected by the pandemic and helping their voices to be heard. This could help counteract societal divisions. The pandemic has also helped spur organisations to develop new and creative approaches and build new networks and relationships, all of which can be built upon in 2022.

Funders also see opportunities in Germany originating from EU policies and programmes, for example in building on EU programmes for the rights of Roma people, or on EU initiatives around climate and sustainability.

## ■ How do you expect your practice as a funder to change in the next 12 months?

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Many funders emphasise the value and importance of collaboration and exchange in the coming period. For some, the focus is on aligning funding with other foundations in order to ensure that there is sufficient funding going to key issue areas. For others, the priority is funding collaboration among civil society organisations to promote more intersectional work and to foster cooperation rather than competition. Some funders are also placing a higher value on collaboration and co-design between funders and their partners; funders will be listening more to their partners and following their lead on what local needs are. The idea of “with us, not for us” is becoming more prominent.

There are gaps in funding that some funders think private foundations should be more willing to fill. For example, when EU funding leaves local communities out of the design of its programmes, private foundations with better roots in local communities can help bridge that gap. There is also more interest in working across sectors to ensure that the responses to systemic social problems are holistic.

Helping partner organisations establish financial stability and autonomy is a key priority after the past two years of financial uncertainty for many groups. Some funders will also remain focused on those most affected by the COVID pandemic.

German funders are also thinking about what they can learn from the crises of the past few years, whether it be the COVID pandemic, Afghanistan, or now the conflict in Ukraine. While they have had to be very reactive to each of these crises as they appeared, there is now a desire to consolidate learnings and develop more forward-looking approaches that will enable philanthropy to anticipate the next crisis and be more prepared to act.

The political role of foundations remains a debate among German foundations. Some funders believe that foundations should be more willing to engage in political advocacy, for example around basic democratic principles or the laws governing non-profit organisations, while avoiding party politics. There could be learnings from the philanthropy sectors in other countries that could be applied in Germany.

## ▶ What issue or field of practice do you think will become more important in 2022?

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Dealing with polarisation and increasing social cohesion will be important issues for German funders in 2022. There are many cleavages in society, and people have to rediscover how to debate and disagree with one another in a way that does not tear communities apart. Some funders see the identification of core values, rooted in democracy, as an important element of finding the way through the polarisation that has grown during the pandemic. In this context, inequality and the different impacts of the pandemic on different groups of people will be a central topic of discussion and may help bring social justice back onto the agenda.

Addressing inequality is an important priority for some foundations, who are thinking about how to challenge it now only through their grantmaking but also through changes to the way their institutions operate.

In philanthropy, inequality has two implications. Our support should reduce inequality, regardless of the area in which support is provided. To do this, you don't need a topic of inequality that you explicitly promote. And the second implication, is that we need to address inequality in our own behaviour and in how we deal with the unequal structures that we are a part of, whether we like it or not. Foundations have enormous power. Through money, but also through decision-making powers, through brands, through symbolic capital. And all of us as foundation employees have enormous power in dealing with less powerful people and organisations to reduce this inequality in the structures in which we move.

**Programme Director | Private Foundation | Germany**

The climate crisis is an ongoing priority for German funders, with some taking an explicitly climate justice approach.

Understanding the impacts of digitisation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning is also of growing importance to funders.

## ☾ What political event or sequence of events do you predict will have a substantial effect on your work?

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There is some optimism among funders that the new coalition government taking over in Germany could be a positive development after 16 years of one party being in control. While the specific agenda of the incoming government is not yet completely clear, and hopes that inclusion and democracy might be priority issues are starting to fade, there is still a sense that there is potential in change. Funders are also watching to see how new leadership will affect Germany's role internationally.

As noted earlier, the new government is expected to have a positive effect on the operating space for civil society.

Positive political events include the Democracy Promotion Law announced by the new government and the National Engagement Strategy, which can substantially strengthen work of the philanthropic sector in Germany.

**Board Member | Private Foundation | Germany**

However, there is concern that now the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has been re-elected to parliament, it may be able to create its own foundation, following the example of the other political foundations in Germany. This would not only make funding available for far-right causes but also legitimise them.

The establishment of a new foundation would normalise a far-right foundation as one of many foundations and could shift public discourse in unknown ways. The enemies of progressives would be funded with many millions per year.

**Executive Director | Private Foundation | Germany**

An open question that will have a major impact on the philanthropic sector is whether the (AfD-affiliated) Desiderius Erasmus Foundation will receive government funding in 2022. To date, DES has not received any government support. However, it is possible that the German Federal Government will be forced to fund DES by court order. This would increase the AfD's influence and strategic dissemination of right-wing issues enormously. A reform of the allocation of funds for political foundations is urgently needed.

**Board member | Private Foundation | Germany**

Various European-level strategies may also be useful for German funders working on social change issues, such as the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030); the EU Parliament declaration of the European Union as an "LGBTIQ Freedom Zone"; and the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion, and participation.

## ◆ What is your greatest hope for 2022, in relation to your work or philanthropy in general?

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Seeing intersectional practices happening more gives me hope that in 30 years' time, we will be in a useful place. One of my greatest hopes lies with next generation funders who don't actually want to be funders. They're engage in reparations and giving large sums to groups that really need it, and they don't want to be in control. They really want to do things differently, and that gives me hope.

**Director | Private Foundation | Germany**

I hope that some of the gaps which have become visible with the pandemic will shrink when the acute phase of this challenge is over. The pandemic has been used by extremists to engage with other groups of society which are sceptical about vaccination, leading to violent demonstrations such as we hadn't seen for years. I hope that at the end of the pandemic we will be able to differentiate again between these groups of society and include those willing to engage and define what measures we need to fight extremism.

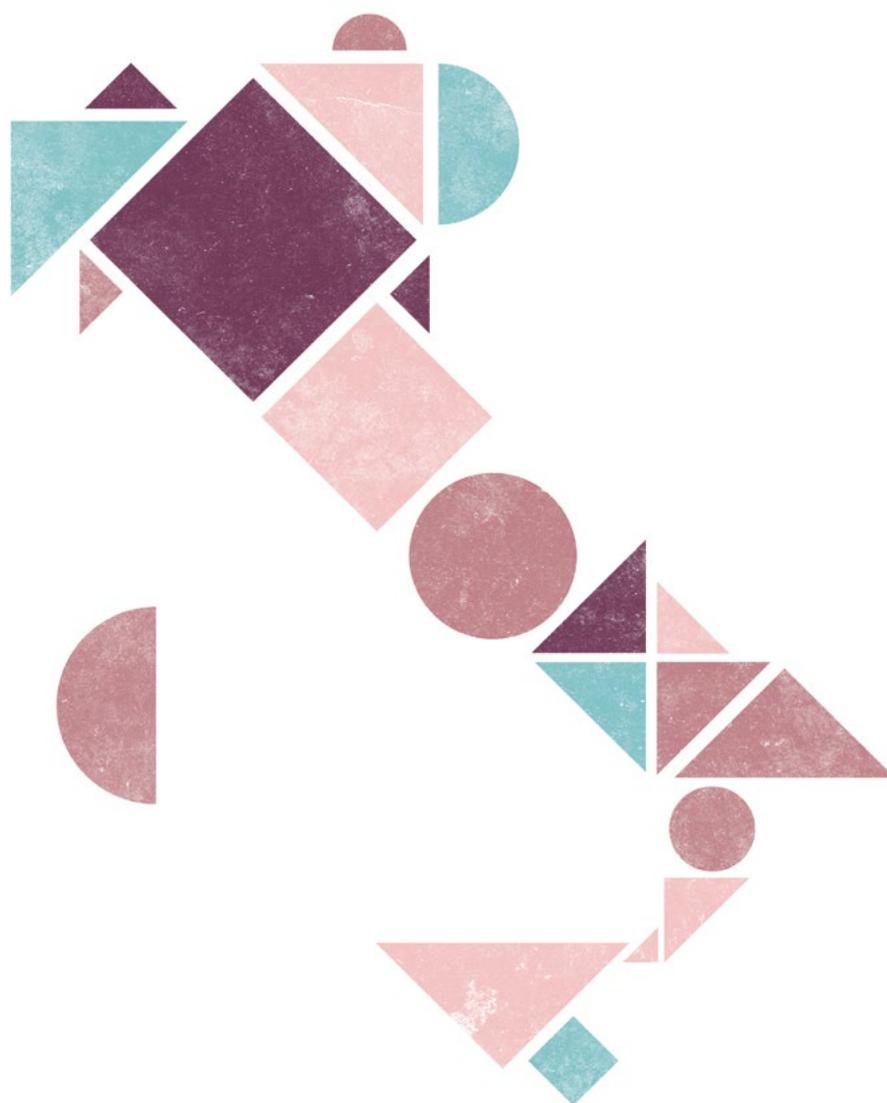
**Senior Vice President | Private Foundation | Germany**

I hope philanthropy is moving away from short-term project funding and towards strengthening core funding for a sustainable strong civil society, especially in regions where it is in danger.

**Research Assistant | Private Foundation | Germany**

## 2022 Ariadne Forecast:

# Italy



After a difficult two years in which they had to react rapidly to a health crisis, Italian foundations are now taking stock of the needs of society and reflecting on their role in building back after the pandemic. The moment is ripe for greater collaboration between private foundations and public bodies, and funders are trying to seize the moment. Will this year be one in which the

nonprofit sector is able to step forward and prove its value to society? There are many competing demands and urgent needs facing Italian foundations this year, but they are determined to take this opportunity to strengthen the civic culture that blossomed across the country during the pandemic.



## What do you expect to be the most pressing challenge facing your grantees in 2022?

Growing inequalities will be a particular challenge and focus in 2022. While these inequalities were present before the pandemic, the health crisis has exacerbated the gap between rich and poor. Foundations are now trying to tackle different aspects of inequality with more urgency, including child educational poverty and digital inclusion, both issues that have been brought to the fore during the past two years of lockdowns and social restrictions.

As the country starts to emerge from the pandemic, civil society will also be challenged to resist the push to return to the *status quo ante*. The crisis has provided an opening for social transformation and for an evolution in the role of civil society itself, which should not be allowed to slip away.

The last two crises (2008-09 and 2020-21) created a discontinuity in the last 30 years of the country's life. It was a slow transition, but the pandemic caesura (downtime) accelerated the process, setting a definitive step towards a new order. We should not waste this crisis in terms of enhancing the role of the third sector, which was previously perceived only as marginal or remedial, reserved for work on areas of great marginalisation or social degradation, where the state and the market had failed.

Director | Philanthropic Network | Italy

However, it will be a challenge for civil society to assert its role in a context where public social policies for the recovery plan do not prioritise support for the non-profit sector and where the corporate sector is increasingly using the language of social and environmental responsibility. The risk of the latter is that, with greater resources, businesses could displace some of the work of civil society organisations but without the needed expertise or long-term vision and commitment needed for social change.

There is a risk that new actors – organisations structured around private interests (as they must be accountable to their shareholders) – enter the field intending to carry out social action for the progress of the country but adopt a simplistic vision and favour short-term projects which are simpler, more easily measured, more easily achieved, and more visible, but therefore also less innovative.

Director | Philanthropic Network | Italy

Digital transformation is an important challenge for 2022. At the start of the pandemic in 2020, all types of services were moved online very quickly, in an emergency approach. Without a structural overhaul, however, some of these systems will not be sustainable. As the country starts to look towards the long term and move out of an emergency mindset, there are important questions to be addressed around digital infrastructure. The move to digital has been decisive for the future of individual civil society groups, too. Some were

able to move to remote work but others were not, and as a result some organisations have not survived.

As in many countries, funding for the charitable sector remains a challenge. Needs remain high while resources have been diverted to dealing with emergency services. Organisations are desperate for more flexible, longer-term funding in this context.

A lot of grantees are coping with critical conditions linked to their operations. There is widespread poverty (financial, cultural, educational), increased by COVID-19, but non-profit organisations are unable to support all the beneficiaries without additional funding and core support. Also, the political landscape doesn't create the circumstances for NGOs to prosper because it is concentrated on pandemic issues or polarised in matters of principle.

**Head of Programmes | Private Foundation | Italy**

Civil society also faces a problem with the attraction and retention of staff; because the sector is seen as riskier and more volatile as a result of the instability of funding, it can be difficult for organisations to hire the best talent. While there are some potential funding opportunities through the Next Generation EU fund, they will be difficult for Italian civil society to access, in part because there was little dialogue with civil society in the design of the fund. However, some funders stress that funding alone will not resolve the challenges facing civil society organisations.

The resources arriving in the regions of the South is not in itself the solution to the fragility and problems that characterize the territories of the South. The real challenge, and the real urgency, is that civil society organisations need to develop adequate technical skills and networks to be able to offer public administrations an adequate set of tools, policies and practices.

**Assistant | Private Foundation | Italy**

## What opportunities do you see in 2022 that might help your grantees advance their work?

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The pandemic has had at least one silver lining, in that it has emphasised the interconnectedness of communities and individuals and created, in the view of some funders, a greater commitment to civic culture. This new civic energy is an opportunity on which civil society can build.

The civic fabric is once again important. There is therefore a cultural background more favourable to philanthropy and the action of civil society, a greater sensitivity to giving and to planning together for the common good. It is a cultural change: the acknowledgement that the orientation of our destiny cannot be entirely delegated to the public authorities or to market mechanisms.

**Secretary General | Private Foundation | Italy**

There is also more communication and collaboration between the public, private, and civil society sectors that there was previously. They all espouse a commitment to the social wellbeing of the country and now need to find ways to cooperate effectively.

As the economy recovers from the contraction of 2020, there is the potential for foundations with invested assets to make up for some of their losses and be in a position to provide more support to civil society than they may have anticipated.

The Next Generation EU fund has divided the opinions of Italian funders. On the one hand, it is a potential opportunity for civil society organisations at the regional or local level to receive more funding. The funds will be distributed in the territories, and some foundations are working with the territories to help them prepare for the disbursement of these funds, offering partnerships or advice. If done well, these grantmaking efforts could be a real opportunity to strengthen local groups. On the other hand, some funders note that the funds will primarily be earmarked for research and infrastructure-building rather than for work on social issues. This could end up deprioritising social change issues.

Some funders also note that the centrality of the issue of sustainability in public policies provides an opportunity for organisations to use the Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of the 2030 agenda to advance their work.

## ● How do you expect your practice as a funder to change in the next 12 months?

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In 2020, a number of foundations responded to the crisis by providing core, institutional support for civil society organisations, in some cases for the first time. While there is agreement that this move was critical to the survival of the sector during a period of emergency, foundations are divided on whether the provision of core funding will remain central to their strategies moving forward.

The use of core support (in addition to our traditional line of institutional support) seems to be destined to remain an exception, an extraordinary measure that aimed to keep the primary support services and networks alive at the local level, while the evolution that will remain is the greater attention to capacity building and the institutional strengthening of our partners.

**Programme Officer | Private Foundation | Italy**

COVID has exerted a fundamental pressure in reacting to extraordinary conditions. We realised immediately all the limits of our work and the new path we needed to follow. We transformed our activity as has never been the case before, becoming more flexible, listening to the deep needs of grantees, funding core support, co-programming projects with grantees, setting up a new governance structure, and investing in capacity building and the creation of networks. We will continue this new strategic and operational paradigm.

**Head of Programmes | Private Foundation | Italy**

Accompaniment of civil society organisations, along the lines of a funder plus model, is also a growing practice among Italian foundations. Funders are providing training, institutional capacity-building, expertise, and contacts to help strengthen the work of organisations. The pandemic helped instil a recognition that funding approaches needed to evolve and become more flexible than they were in the past.

We need to be faster and more flexible in our interventions. We are now more trained to work together, and we have a larger toolbox that will remain at our disposal. We left our comfort zone because we needed to, but we have found that some new practices are useful in wider contexts. We are in a "new normal" in which flexibility must be structural.

**Director | Private Foundation | Italy**

The pandemic has also galvanised greater collaboration among foundations, and between foundations and other bodies, than was the case previously. New and different types of partnerships are emerging. Foundations of banking origin will be entering into a new

collective initiative in partnership with the Italian Government to support digital inclusion in the country. Foundations have a deep knowledge of the needs and actors in the territories, which will strengthen this intervention and make it more likely to succeed.

Some Italian funders are calling for more flexibility from the philanthropy sector. Recognising that the context can change very quickly, as has certainly been the case over the past two years, there is a sense that the usual procedures of foundations are not designed to respond to rapidly changing needs. Funders should find more ways to be reactive.

With the recent publication of the implementing decree, the main instrument of philanthropic lottery funding should come into operation in 2022. All proceeds from national lotteries will now go to national non-profit entities, creating a new funding mechanism.

Some funders are also seeing new fundraising models emerge or become more widely used, including crowdfunding activities, the use of video messages in fundraising for specific activities, and fundraising through the organisation of cultural events that bring communities together around shared themes.

## What issue or field of practice do you think will become more important in 2022?

Support for youth is a top priority for Italian funders going into 2022. After two years in a health and economic crisis, young people lack ample employment and education opportunities, affecting the future outlook for the country. Funders will be supporting the development of community business enterprises, for example, that give young people training and employment opportunities, especially in regions in serious economic decline. It is hoped that these types of initiatives will help the next generation as well as whole communities in disadvantaged areas. This ties in with a growing focus on inequalities across the sector.

The rise in domestic and interpersonal violence during the pandemic has emphasised the importance of gender justice; however, it is not clear that Italian funders are prioritising women's rights or gender justice as we enter 2022. There is a lack of data to help funders assess, for example, the impact of the pandemic on women and shape necessary responses. Some funders are eager to see these issues become a greater priority.

After the prolonged isolation induced by the pandemic and the resultant spike in levels of depression among all age groups, some funders stress that mental health could emerge as an issue deserving further attention.

Some foundations are shaping their work around the Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on both the social and environmental dimensions. This affects not only grantmaking programmes but also investment of their endowments. There is push for better recognition of the interconnectedness of the health of the environment and the health of people.

We must deal with both the human and the planet and have a more systemic reading of the dynamics at play.

Director | Private Foundation | Italy

In this vein, the climate crisis and protection of the environment will be important themes. In Europe the poorest communities are more vulnerable to environmental risks, and some funders are calling for more cooperation among foundations in addressing climate change. These concerns intersect with more attention to intergenerational justice. Foundations are heeding activists' calls: there will be "no jobs on a dead planet", no social justice without a habitable planet for future generations.

Migration remains a key issue for some Italian foundations, including rescue for migrants at sea and creating humanitarian corridors. This remains a politically fraught topic for which foundation funding is essential. Polarisation and social divisions are also concerns for funders working across different issue areas.

Discriminatory policies and the fomenting of hatred, social divisions, and the "scapegoat" to be fought outside of oneself, stigmatizing part of the population, will probably have substantial effects on our work.

Secretary General | Private Foundation | Italy

As the country emerges from the crisis of the past two years, some Italian funders are taking the opportunity to reflect on which issues have been neglected and not received funding and encouraging their peers to reconsider their priorities. There is also a recognition that many of the existing topics that funders are supporting are interconnected and that foundations could be more explicit about those interconnections when describing and designing their work. For example, inequality is an issue that connects to many different priorities that foundations may have.

Data and digitisation are also topics of growing importance for Italian funders. They are concerned with their own use of data and want to ensure they are protecting and sharing it responsibly. They also recognise that digital literacy in the country is low and needs to be better supported.

## ■ What political event or sequence of events do you predict will have a substantial effect on your work?

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Political instability is a recurring problem for Italian social change efforts, and funders are hoping to maintain as much stability as possible in 2022. Presidential elections will be held in January, but most funders view them as unlikely to have a significant impact on their work. The greater concern is whether parliament will decide to call early elections. Funders are hoping that, for the sake of economic and social stability, there will be no parliamentary elections until 2023. They are also closely watching how the pandemic is managed and whether the state of emergency is renewed, which could have an impact on issues like access to digital services and freedom of movement.

The constant change of governments over the past five years slowed down and interrupted efforts to reform the legal framework governing the third sector. Funders hope that this reform can be completed and fully clarified in 2022, given a period of sufficient stability. Some Italian funders feel positive about the trends at the European level, especially around the social economy, for which the Commission now has a strategy. In 2022, structural funds will be allocated, and funders are keen to see whether these will follow this new strategy and become an impetus for change.

For those funders working at the local level, elections of mayors and local councils will be significant developments in 2022. Local public authorities are responsible for designing strategies for economic and social development, which will be important for these funders' work. Some funders are also heartened by the growing openness of public authorities to collaboration and hope it will help advance foundations advance their own work.

## What is your greatest hope for 2022, in relation to your work or philanthropy in general?

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I hope that the government will equip itself with a strategy for the development of the social economy. With a real strategy, the third sector would be more supported to have a systemic vision, compared to the uniquely local and spontaneous dimension it has now. In 2022, Italy will hold the presidency of the Monitoring Committee of the Luxembourg Declaration; with the incoming presidency it has the opportunity to give itself a strategic vision. I also hope that the Italian philanthropic culture will grow and move towards a more active and responsible philanthropy.

**Secretary General | Private Foundation | Italy**

I hope that we manage to create and work as a system; there are many micro-projects that are driven more by the visibility needs of the providers than by the impact produced. There is a need to overturn the paradigm and prioritise impact.

**Director | Private Foundation | Italy**

I hope we can revive the potential of the third sector and philanthropy to be a pioneer of services that accompany people with confidence for a better future and experiment with new approaches that can then be adopted by the public sector.

**Programme Officer | Private Foundation | Italy**

I hope that solidarity becomes constant and systemic for our whole community, that we begin to think more as a community rather than as individuals.

**Secretary General | Community Foundation | Italy**

The hope is that the third sector will be able to see its role affirmed and recognised, for the benefit of the whole community. Third sector entities promote and enhance the common good – like the public administration, but according to a non-'statist' approach. To be able to do this at its best, it is necessary to integrate and share practices and resources between public bodies and the third sector.

**Assistant | Private Foundation | Italy**

2022 Ariadne Forecast:

# The Netherlands



After a year during which the Netherlands had no government, Dutch civil society and philanthropy are eager to develop new advocacy agendas and tackle some of the systemic issues that have been highlighted by the pandemic. There is a call for creativity and visionary leadership as the country looks ahead and considers challenges

such as the climate crisis, polarisation, and disinformation. Will funders rise to the challenge and continue the trend towards greater flexibility and more experimentation and risk-taking? Or will philanthropy play it safe and revert back to its old ways?



## What do you expect to be the most pressing challenge facing your grantees in 2022?

The ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic is expected to be one of the most significant challenges for organisations in the Netherlands in 2022. It has created a prolonged sense of insecurity for civil society organisations, and for those groups working with volunteers, it has been a challenge to maintain their volunteer base during the pandemic. Organisations have had to completely restructure how they work in order to cope with a shortage of human as well as financial resources.

Funding remains a big concern, particularly a lack of core and multi-year funding. Some funders are concerned about a trend towards narrower focus areas that could leave groups with limited access to funding.

Foundations are becoming more proactive, and they adopt theories of change that lead them to spend their money according to their own ideas, not necessarily based on needs in society.

**Philanthropy Consultant | Netherlands.**

The political context in the Netherlands, which was without a government from the last elections in March 2021 to mid-January 2022, when a coalition government was agreed, has been impacting organisations that conduct advocacy and campaigning: without a clear political agenda, it was difficult for them to know what to focus on and who to target.

Funders are also concerned about the shrinking democratic space in the Netherlands. Organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to challenge existing structures. COVID has provided an excuse for the government to avoid engaging with calls for reform, which some funders find problematic.

It's increasingly difficult for NGOs to push for change on the basis of facts and evidence – for example, the poor conditions in the asylum centres or the dysfunctional migration system. The long waiting lists for asylum seekers are worsening, but advocacy doesn't have the desired effect as COVID, arrivals from Belarus and Afghanistan, and other issues are used as excuses to say, "we're in crisis mode, it's good enough like this." As a result, structural problems remain unaddressed. COVID should not be used as an excuse for everything.

**Programme Manager | Private Foundation | Netherlands**

## ◆ What opportunities do you see in 2022 that might help your grantees advance their work?

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On the heels of COP26 in 2021, there is more public and political awareness of climate issues and more potential for climate action in 2022.

Some funders see an opportunity to reframe the debate around the welfare system and restructure it in a way that takes better account of people's vulnerabilities. This is in reaction to the work of investigative journalists, who showed that the tax authorities had incorrectly accused thousands of people of fraud. The information that was revealed undermined the political narrative, generated by the right-wing but adopted by centrists, that migrants were misusing the system. This revelation opens up opportunities for reflection both on the tax and welfare system itself but also on the vulnerabilities that many in society are facing.

In this situation of vulnerability, we see more clearly the intersections between the housing crisis and the working conditions of the gig economy that offers no security for employees. It creates a momentum for grantees now that it is more visible how these things are intertwined. It is a moment of awareness that could be seized.

Programme Manager | Private Foundation | Netherlands

As many young people are affected by the housing crisis and insecure working conditions, there is also an opportunity to engage them in activism and volunteering in a way that they have not been to date and to bring new energy and ideas to institutions like trade unions.

Technology, while it brings certain challenges, also offers opportunities for social change. The ability to gather and analyse social data on a large scale, for example around children at risk of school dropout, enables earlier and more effective intervention.

Some funders are hopeful that the philanthropic community are paying more attention to potential threats to democracy and that this could generate more pooled funding opportunities (for example, around journalism, digital rights, polarisation, or participatory democracy).

The upheaval of the past two years has also created an opportunity to rethink the way that foundations and organisations operate. Although it has been challenging, it can also generate innovation.

This is an opportunity for all of us to go back to our roots and be creative. You can't do certain things, or the same things in the same way; you need to be flexible, creative and find new ways to reach your goals. It is an opportunity to think differently about what you really want to achieve and whether there are different or better means. You are forced to experiment and think differently and even question your goals.

Director | Private Foundation | Netherlands

Foundations are also more aware of the fact that they do not necessarily hold all of the answers and that they need to engage more with those directly impacted by the issues that they care about. This opens up an opportunity for new voices to step in and new ideas to emerge.

## ◀ How do you expect your practice as a funder to change in the next 12 months?

There are conflicting trends among Dutch funders going into 2022. Some are concerned that their foundations are taking narrower and more bureaucratic approaches to their funding, while others are making a conscious effort to avoid becoming too siloed. One funder has agreed to set aside 25% of its grant budget specifically for projects at the intersections of its different programmes.

We see more and more the need to support the spaces in between programmes; we need more flexibility to be able to cope with the intersections.

Programme Manager | Private Foundation | Netherlands

Another foundation that launched a solidarity fund in 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic has decided to maintain the fund, as it has proved to be a very flexible mechanism for delivering funding outside of the foundation's set programme areas.

In 2019, we had already decided to create a "vision fund" in case of unforeseen events for anything which would contribute to our goals, and with the COVID pandemic we adapted that tool. We can now also use this flexible tool to pilot ideas for culture and the climate crisis. It is our most flexible and reactive tool.

Director | Private Foundation | Netherlands

Many Dutch funders have welcomed the move towards greater flexibility during the pandemic and are looking for ways to build flexibility into their practices going forward, though some are concerned that the temptation to return to 'normal' procedures will be strong for some foundations.

Grantmaking models are also shifting. Participatory grantmaking, which has been growing among funders in recent years, is taking a greater hold, and foundations are reaching out to institutional donors to encourage a shift in their practices.

We need to shape an alternative narrative to show that funding can be done differently and present that to institutional donors so that they are pushed to pick it up.

Director | Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands

Intermediary funders are also trying to capacitate regional groups to build participatory practices into their own grantmaking so that decisions are being made as close to the ground as possible. One funder is also considering direct, unconditional cash provision in its work to alleviate poverty.

The question of impact remains an active debate among Dutch funders, who continue to be divided on how much importance to give impact measurement and how to best achieve it. Some funders worry that a focus on impact impedes funders from being able to act quickly and provide the sort of flexible, nimble support that organisations need when a crisis or opportunity arises. Others feel that impact is important but that funders have typically been using the wrong tools to measure the impact of social change work.

I think it's super important that we develop social solidarity measurement tools like density of association, like network theory, which is a different kind of impact measurement. Those are the kinds of measurements that I think are more important in defending democracy.

Director | Private Foundation | Netherlands

We focused too much on the quantitative measuring of impact. Now we are moving more to a story telling, qualitative measurement and we are encouraging our grantees to share more openly how the real impact differs from what they originally planned.

Programme Manager | Private Foundation | Netherlands

Another funder is planning to conduct a survey of current and past grantees to help understand the needs of the field better and how the foundation could meet those needs better. They are trying to shift the learning and evaluation process from a focus only on what the supported organisations achieved to thinking about what the foundation has done and could do differently. There is also a growing interest among funders to share their learnings across different foundations.

Funders are also changing their policies and practices with regards to climate. More foundations are putting a climate lens on all of their operations as well as considering the impact of their investments and investments across the sector. Some are also engaged in discussions with public institutions to encourage them in the move away from fossil fuels.

Funders also note that they expect to pay more attention to diversity and inclusiveness and devote more to safeguarding, in particular when working with vulnerable groups.

## What issue or field of practice do think will become more important in 2022?

Climate change and climate related issues are expected to continue to grow in importance, as more funders take the issue seriously. Funders who have been engaged in climate work for a longer time are glad to see awareness is growing but are now focused on making sure the climate solutions that are put forward are the right ones.

In the EU, the Green New Deal is all about policies inside the EU, and it doesn't look at the international trade system. We need to put the international dimension on the table; we're still exporting pollution.

Director | Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands

Systems change and a just economic transition are on the agenda for more funders as a result of the COVID pandemic and the weaknesses it revealed in the current economic system. Some are thinking more about circular economic models, for instance, while others are exploring tools to help with poverty and debt alleviation. Close to 15% of the population in the Netherlands is now living in poverty, making it an issue of growing concern for the government and some foundations.

Polarisation is a growing concern in the Netherlands, as it is in other countries. The debate around vaccines has only fuelled that polarisation, which already existed but was focused on issues such as migration. Now that vaccinations have become the focal point, it is undermining the sense of solidarity that was present during the early days of the pandemic.

The longer the pandemic lasts the longer it will take to heal. At the beginning there was a lot of solidarity, and now in this phase people are tired, angry, and frustrated, and we don't see a lot of solidarity anymore.

Programme Manager | Private Foundation | Netherlands

In this context, some funders plan to give more attention to disinformation in the coming year, while others are intending to fund more in-depth journalism that helps construct a more hopeful and constructive narrative rather than just pitting two viewpoints against each other.

## ● What political event or sequence of events do you predict will have a substantial effect on your work?

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The continued absence of a functioning government in the Netherlands has been a challenge, especially for organisations seeking policy change. However, a coalition government was formed in early 2022. Depending on the priorities of the coalition government, it is possible that international development aid could be significantly cut or redirected. Local elections are slated to take place in the spring, and the outcomes could vary widely between different municipalities. In some cases, there could be a tension between the local and the national level, a dynamic that can sometimes be helpful for policy and advocacy organisations.

At the European level, the shaping of the Green New Deal and work on the new pact on migration could have an important impact for organisations working in the Netherlands as well as regionally.

Extreme weather events, which have become more common in recent years, could also have an important political impact. They raise awareness of climate change but can also wreak devastation on communities.

## What is your greatest hope for 2022, in relation to your work or philanthropy in general?

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I hope that we are moving gradually out of the zone of uncertainty. A long period of uncertainty can be paralysing or tiring, and some people give up, or become angry and slip into conspiracy theories. I hope we're moving out of the extreme uncertainty.

**Director | Private Foundation | Netherlands**

I think the challenge now, especially when working with the grassroots and social movements, is to let go and have trust – trust that the local communities know better what their real problems are, what's causing them, and, most importantly, what are the right strategies to solve them. So, I hope for more trust and less quantitative impact measuring. Let's move towards trust-based philanthropy. It has been good to professionalise, but it is also good to stay humble, particularly when working with local groups and activists who know their context best.

**Project Coordinator | Intermediary Foundation | Netherlands**

My hope would be that we reach out more to others, also seeking to connect and listen to those with different perspectives, as I am confident that if we spoke to each other, we would find common ground. And we desperately need to do this, as on our own or in our own little bubble we will not solve any of the pressing issues that society faces today.

**Director | Private Foundation | Netherlands**

I hope that the lessons of COVID-19 and rising authoritarianism will lead to common sense practice changes that have been proven to be more effective in achieving transformative change, such as multiyear, general operating support.

**Anonymous**

I hope that there will be a sense of togetherness and building towards a better society for all - one that is more equal, just and sustainable in the broadest sense. Not "going back to normal" as it was but seeing real change to address the most pressing issues we're facing today.

**Programme Manager | Private Foundation | Netherlands.**

# 2022 Ariadne Forecast:

# UK



After a year that included Brexit, several waves of high numbers of COVID-19 cases, and spiralling living costs, UK funders are bracing themselves for what will come next. The government are determined to get back to business as usual while also pursuing a raft of new legislation that will have serious implications for the protection of human rights and civil liberties. Civil society

is exhausted but also desperate to reconnect with communities after a long hiatus. In response, UK funders are trying to be more flexible and responsive and devoting more attention to the wellbeing of those they support. Will they be able to deliver and bolster civil society to face another year of challenges?



## What do you expect to be the most pressing challenge facing your grantees in 2022?

Almost two years in to the COVID-19 pandemic, the fallout from the global health crisis remains the most pressing challenge for UK civil society. With the spread of the Omicron variant at the beginning of 2022, and the knowledge that there could be further variants on the horizon, some funders are concerned that the situation will take civil society organisations back to the edge of their capacity, putting additional stress on groups that are already exhausted and at risk of burnout. Not only are service demands high, but also groups are struggling with planning activities that are then cancelled or for which no one turns up. Organisations are having to think about the mental health of their staff and others that they work with, even if that is not a focus area of their work. Funders are recognising that the wellbeing and resilience of those working in the sector has to be centred in order for the work to be sustainable.

Even though organisations are now more equipped than they were at the start of the pandemic to work remotely and to provide services online, they are now dealing with the cumulative effects of having worked in these stressful conditions for two years and feeling the impacts of all the knock-on effects from the pandemic.

*We're experiencing ongoing protracted crises, compounding crises – economic, climate, pandemic – and it feels that it's compounding what people are having to navigate. Groups are trying to retain the focus of their work while navigating all of these crises.*

**Manager | Private Foundation | UK**

At this stage in the pandemic, civil society groups are also trying to find the balance between the ongoing demands to meet the immediate needs of communities (including the basics such as food and energy, given the rising costs of household bills and the collapse of a number of energy providers) and looking ahead and planning for the future.

*Groups need to reflect on their role and reassess. What is their core work, and how do they need to adapt going forward? This includes thinking with communities about what has changed and what is different now. What are the shifting needs?*

**Funding Officer | Public Foundation | UK**

Some funders emphasise, though, that while the pandemic has exacerbated issues such as inequality or discrimination, none of these issues is new and that part of the role of funders is to help organisations remain focused on their longer term aims.

*We are trying to focus on the longer-term social change agenda. It's important to recognise that for most grant-holders there has not been a change in longer term trends.*

**Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK**

It remains a challenge for many groups to effectively engage constituents in reflections about the future under the current circumstances. And some funders point out that having the space to reflect on the future is itself a privilege.

Having spent quite a lot of the pandemic burying my head in questions of how we think about the future, what it looks like, and who gets to decide what it will be, I realise that people that have the ability, like myself, to sit around and think about what the future could be are probably all from a certain background. As funders, if we aren't thinking about what the future could be and engaging and enabling communities to be at the forefront of that design – and giving them the space, power, ability, skills, knowledge, resources, and guidance to have those thoughts – we trap people in perpetual cycles of dealing with crisis, because we never allow them to think about solutions that can be different.

Senior Portfolio Manager | Public Foundation | UK

Some funders note that their partners have been struggling to transition their grassroots community work into a virtual environment, in part because of the technology divide that exists within communities. While working virtually can be more inclusive for some, it excludes others. These groups have a keen desire to resume face-to-face work, and funders are trying to support them to find ways to revive some of their previous work.

Services haven't really been taking place to the extent they used to, and we are trying to see how we can support communities to get back to that. There is a desperation among communities to return to connecting and socialising; they want to be creating community solidarity and reengaging people.

Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK

The gap between the needs and the availability of funding has also widened over the past year, and funders are concerned about how civil society will cope. Social change organisations are more in demand than ever, yet some foundations are anticipating that their available resources will continue to shrink. Much of the government support that has been provided to civil society organisations during this period has been restricted, at a time when groups are desperate for core, flexible funding. This puts the demand on private philanthropy to fill the gap in flexible resources. However, given the volatility of the stock market, some private foundations are also cautious about the levels of funding that they will be able to make available. For UK-based organisations working internationally, they will be particularly impacted by cuts in overseas development assistance, and some funders worry that these cuts could be catastrophic for the international development sector. There are also significant political challenges on the horizon. Funders point to eroding democracy in the UK as protest rights look set to be curtailed and the government sets out to reform human rights legislation. They are concerned that the checks and balances that protect government transparency and accountability are being weakened. Some funders believe civil society is being put in a challenging situation of deciding how and how closely to work with a government whose values are very much not aligned with those working for social change. There is a concern that some groups could end up compromising themselves in an effort to work collaboratively with government to get things done.

While the pool of UK funders engaging directly with the state of democracy in the country remains relatively small, some of these funders point out that democratic institutions underlie the pursuit of all human rights or social justice issues.

These are long-term trends that need to be addressed, and it matters massively for all of us as funders, because essentially democracy is the system by which we sort out our conflicts, in which we come together and decide which policies go through and which ones don't. It's quite fundamental to whether we can address climate change or tackle the major inequality issues that are key challenges for us all. We are going to have to find a way of giving a bit more attention not just to our social change objectives, but to the process that either puts up barriers or gives us a system that's more open and responsive to people power and to all the things that we're trying to put on to that agenda.

Chief Executive | Private Foundation | UK

The repercussions of Brexit also continue to pose a challenge, particularly in Northern Ireland, where the EU and UK governments have failed to reach an agreement on the protocol governing the movement of goods between Britain and Northern Ireland. Communities are deeply polarised, which has an impact on all work. Funders and their partners in Northern Ireland are struggling to create the space to build back from the pandemic in a strong, cohesive way because of the fractures that the political situation has created within communities.

## ■ What opportunities do you see in 2022 that might help your grantees advance in their work?

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Although there is less optimism this year about the COVID pandemic as a catalyst for positive change than there was at this time last year, some funders still see a chance for it to galvanize transformation. There is a sense that the experience of the past two years has forced society as a whole, and the philanthropy sector specifically, to reflect on how things could be done differently.

The pandemic may still be a portal for change. We've seen things change, seen more activity around progressive and collaborative working. People are taking time to stop and think about how society and the sector could look. There's been more democratising of grantmaking. Movements need moments that create conditions for change, and the pandemic is that. There is a certain optimism and momentum to do things differently and actually make structural change, not just small changes.  
Programme Officer | Public Foundation | UK

The collective experience of COVID has connected people globally in an unprecedented way, which helps create a basis for addressing other global challenges such as climate change. It has also brought a starker focus on inequalities, which funders see as an opportunity for potential political change.

COVID has put issues on the agenda that we haven't been focused on before. It's surfacing where the problems lie around inequality. This must be an opportunity for addressing the long-term inequalities that people experience. It's an opportunity for grantees to push harder on that.  
Manager | Private Foundation | UK

Over the last 18 months there's been more momentum on racial justice than we've ever seen, as well as on LGBTI+ issues. There has been progress and momentum within philanthropy and the wider sector; now how do we bring in communities and not let up on pressure to centre discussions on race and justice?  
Programme Officer | Public Foundation | UK

Funders also acknowledge, however, that there is still scope to bring in a more intersectional approach to the work on equalities issues. They note that the discourse around Black Lives Matter and other racial justice movements has at times been appropriated by more privileged groups. A focus on workplace practices and self care, for example, will not necessarily lead to improvements for all affected communities. There is also more reflection needed on how inequalities play out within organisations, including within foundations. There are also now more spaces available for that self-reflection, though, which provides an opportunity for the sector to become a bit braver and to really practice the values it espouses.

UK funders are hopeful that funding practices are becoming more democratised, transparent, and accountable.

We started doing more participatory models but also more meaningful inclusion of communities in design and decision-making. There's still a long way to go, but the more we can involve communities, the better served they will be.

Programme Officer | Public Foundation | UK

There is also a sense that funders are working better together and being more collaborative. They are engaging in joint grantmaking around issues such as racial justice, which has sometimes led to new forms of grantmaking and more innovation. In England, this closer collaboration has helped wake up funders to the closing context and threats to human rights, while in Scotland philanthropy has actually come together to build infrastructure for greater momentum on human rights.

The Scottish government is planning for a broader incorporation of economic, social, and cultural rights in Scots law. Civil society has been engaged in the development process and civil society organisations are setting up the infrastructure to use those rights. This is positive because it's shifting the landscape for funders as well as civil society. Human rights haven't been a frame through which Scottish funders have worked previously.

Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK

Funders note that this greater collaboration extends to civil society organisations, as well. There has been such a surge in demand for services that organisations are more focused on finding the best service for an individual and less on promoting their own services. There are more partnerships and a greater willingness to work together.

Finally, despite its limitations and the digital divide, technology continues to provide opportunities to enable hybrid working and access on a scale that was not possible before.

There was a presumption before the pandemic that some people would not be able to cope with the technology, but we've seen that it can work. Tech is helping organisations reach far more people than they would normally (for example, because they have childcare issues). Hopefully we can continue to support this aspect of work and not think it's just about this period of time.

Funding Officer | Public Foundation | UK

## ▲ How do you expect your practice as a funder to change in the next 12 months?

Some funders are deliberately not planning to make changes to their practice in the upcoming period, emphasising the importance of consistency during this tumultuous time. They will, of course, remain sensitive to the changes their partners are experiencing but also think it is important to maintain their overall strategic frameworks and not subject organisations to significant changes in direction at this time.

Participatory grantmaking and inclusive grantmaking continue to be practices that UK funders are investing in developing. There is a strong focus on including affected communities (whether that be people of colour, LGBT+ communities, or people living with disabilities, for example) into the design of programmes in meaningful ways. While participatory grantmaking is one aspect of this, funders are also pushing beyond participatory grantmaking to explore different models and learn from them. At least one funder is consciously setting up infrastructure to enable learning from these different models to be shared across programmes within the foundation.

Funders are also thinking about how they can continue to make their funding more accessible to communities in need and how they can provide the flexibility needed to address current challenges.

We need to keep remembering that we can be flexible and work differently. We can go outside of our comfort zones. What do groups really need? What can we do to make access to funding easier? In 2020, we turned things around much quicker than normal, which is not sustainable but shows you can change how you work from one week to the next. How can we make our partners' journeys better and easier? We need to reflect and take stock about what we've learned. What worked and didn't work? What do we need to do to help people to get money in the easiest way we can?

Funding Officer | Public Foundation | UK

Other funders are thinking about their role in supporting their partners to focus on collective care and to nurture their own leadership. Because so many people are facing burnout right now, there is a need and desire for spaces to reflect on leadership practices and resilience. These funders are trying to help activists find ways to sustain their work and using their convening power to create support networks of activists working in different contexts.

This convening role also extends to bringing those most excluded into discussions that affect them and building bridges in divided communities.

In Northern Ireland, we're seeing communities that have spent many years working together now being riven by politics. It's going to be important for us to consciously bring people together to unearth and unpack the challenges and problems and to rebuild historic relationships that are being contaminated by a very difficult political process. We feel we need to focus efforts on local leaders that have history and support them to think about solutions over and above the politics.

Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK

Recognising the political challenges, and the threats to democracy itself, at least one funder is reaching out to peers to try to build more confidence in the philanthropy sector to engage on democracy issues. This is an area that could be ripe for funder collaboration.

Finally, foundations are looking at their own internal practices and thinking about how they can improve their own internal culture. This includes issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion, but also home working. Foundations are looking at ways that they can accommodate the needs of a wider range of workers and recognising that some older working practices need to change.

## What issue or field of practice do you think will become more important in 2022?

Climate change is expected to become more important, as COP26 helped mainstream climate conversations in the UK and encouraged people to take the issue more seriously. Climate activists will be focusing on keeping the momentum going now that the COP is over.

Racial justice will also continue to be a growing area of focus, with some funders emphasising that it is important that foundations move beyond DEI to engaging with a rights and justice framework. If funders are serious about promoting racial justice, they will need to tackle underlying systemic issues as well as funding more minority-led organisations. Some funders point out that as foundations engage more on racial justice issues it will also be important to maintain an intersectional lens so as not to lose momentum on issues such as gender justice or disability rights.

The practice of collective care and wellbeing is likely to become more mainstream. Some funders hope to see the practice embraced as a political act that challenges the status quo of our working culture.

Disinformation and the perception of a culture war in divided societies are growing concerns for a number of funders, and several funders pointed out that there are powerful people who are stoking social divisions for their own gain, making it all the more important to reach out across these divides.

There's an idea that we can't come together if we don't agree. Extreme thinking used to be relegated to extreme right or left, but now I hear it from more moderate people around things like vaccinations. There are people who are benefiting from creating those divisions between groups and individuals. Narrative becomes more important in this context.

Manager | Private Foundation | UK

When we think of disinformation and social media, we tend to think of Trump in the US, but what we're seeing now is that those issues are very real and live in communities at a level and in a way we hadn't anticipated. When it comes to issues like anti-vaxxers, we're seeing much more of that on localised levels. It's surfacing for local community leaders who are seeing the damaging effects.

Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK

The role of the media in this context is also going to become more important for some funders and activists.

Mental health is going to be a significant concern for many funders going forward, especially as most groups do not have any expertise in mental health. Organisations are going to need to find ways of addressing mental health issues among their staff and within their communities, and they will need the support of their funders as they navigate this challenge.

## ◆ What political event or sequence of events do you predict will have a substantial effect on your work?

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The potential repeal of the Human Rights Act and the reform of the UK's human rights framework is going to be significant for UK human rights and social change funders. The government looks poised to move quite quickly on a process of consultation and reform, and there are concerns that the funding community is unprepared.

As funding sector, we haven't been funding enough on this and haven't prepared for this. Now there are going to have to be some quite urgent discussions. What's the chilling effect of these changes going to be, and what action can be taken to ameliorate it? It's pulling the rug out from under organisations in knowing how to use law, but the need isn't going away.

Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK

New legislation coming down the pike in 2022, including the draft Elections Bill, Online Safety Bill, and Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, could also have a significant impact on human rights issues and on the state of democracy in the UK. Funders supporting advocacy groups are watching these developments closely.

The pandemic itself also remains an important political question for many funders. Some funders point to the importance of the steps that will lead us out of the pandemic and what political impact those future decisions may have, while others are concerned with the question of when and how the crisis is deemed over.

Who gets to be the decider of what phase of the pandemic we're in? Are we doing crisis or longer-term funding? It's slightly disconcerting when I hear framing of us no longer being in crisis. We're not post-crisis if half the world is still dealing with variants and have vaccination rates of less than 10%.

Programme Officer | Public Foundation | UK

In Northern Ireland and Scotland, constitutional questions loom large going into 2022, and there are concerns around the shift towards centralisation of power and what that will mean for devolved settlements. In Northern Ireland, the negotiations around the protocol could be decisive, and there are already increased calls for a border poll. With elections to the Northern Ireland assembly taking place in May, some funders expect that nationalists will become the largest bloc. In Scotland, where the majority of the voters voted neither for the current UK government nor for Brexit, there is a chance that the Scottish government could try to seek independence. There are clear divisions between the Scottish government and Westminster on certain policy issues, and most social change groups align more closely with the Scottish government, though they may not want to be drawn into independence debates.

## What is your greatest hope for 2022, either in relation to your work or philanthropy in general?

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My biggest hope for the funding sector is that we become a lot more serious about becoming transparent and accountable. As custodians of money and where money goes, we have a responsibility to be transparent and accountable, and until we make that shift, change will be slow.

**Programme Officer | Public Foundation | UK**

I hope for a deep practice of empathy. Racism not just a problem for people affected by it but for everyone. If you really understand the issue, you understand that it's built into the structures that affect you as well. I also hope to see more rule-breaking out of the love for humanity. The system is not working for everyone, and while we may not be able to deconstruct it all at once, we can break some of the rules for the better good.

**Manager | Private Foundation | UK**

Philanthropy at these moments can really make a difference by being bold, providing analysis, and putting forward and getting out perspectives that aren't ordinarily heard. We should never lose hope in that.

**Deputy Director | Private Foundation | UK**

My hope is that funders start to respond proactively to a long period of eroding civil society space by engaging more actively on the state of democracy, protecting campaigning, protest rights and freedom of information - and recognising how charitable organisations can engage legitimately in a non-partisan way.

**Chief Executive | Private Foundation | UK**

I hope to get out and about in communities again. The last year has not been great, but I see organisations starting to thrive, and it would be nice to continue to see them do that. I want to see them have hope again, to remember all the good things they've done and celebrate them.

**Funding Officer | Public Foundation | UK**

I hope to see an increasing number of funders taking risks with their approaches to funding grassroots-led rights work, to decentralise more and to begin challenging the internal power dynamics that limit their ability to do so.

**Anonymous**

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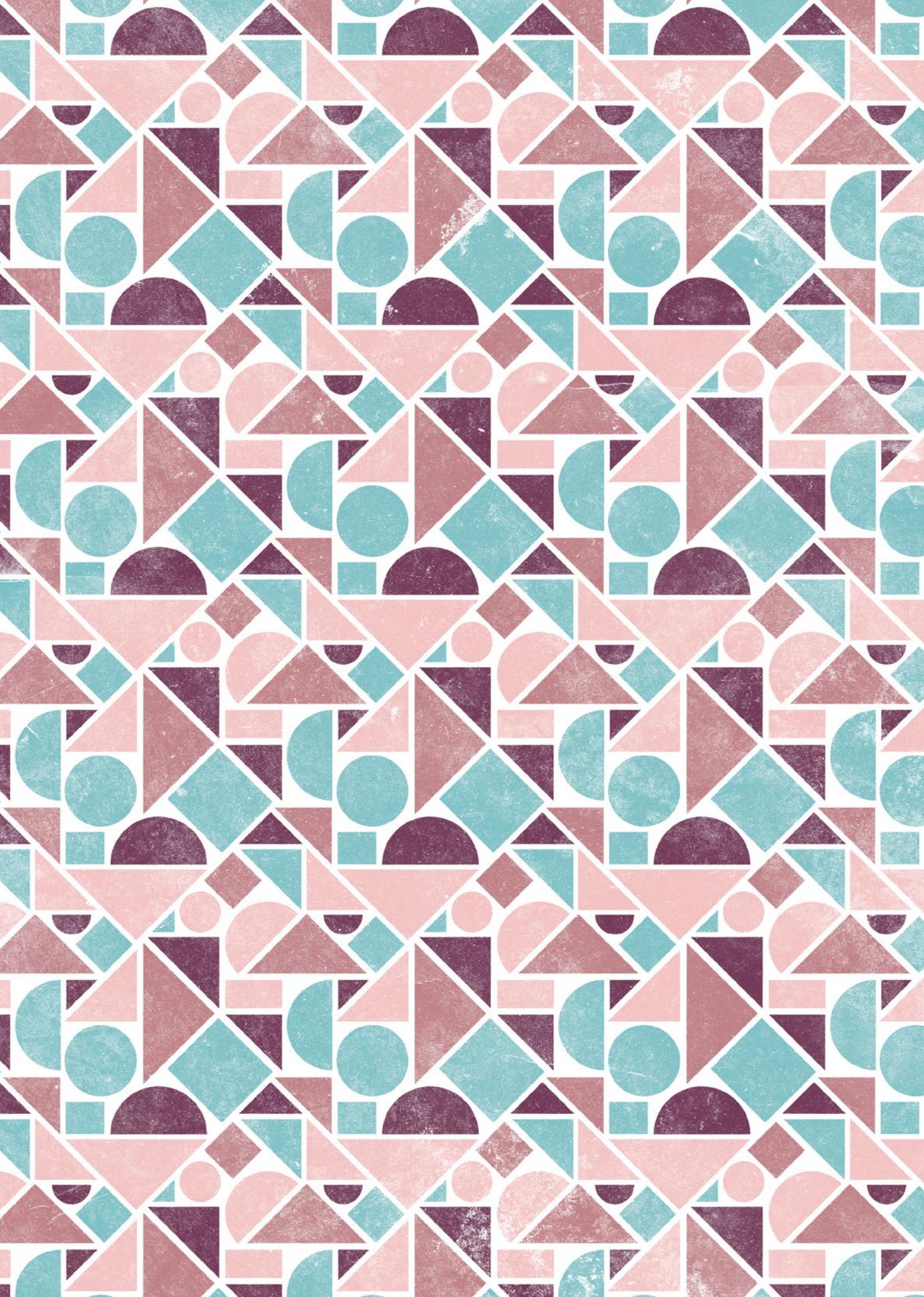
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