

Scenarios and preparedness

This is a scenario planning tool for civil society organisations concerned about whether they have the right strategies in place given the rise of the authoritarian far right & the influence it is already having in this country.

For each theme, pick the column most relevant to your assessment of:

- (a) the context now,
- (b) what the context will likely be in five years' time.

In relation to (b), obviously we don't know the future, and you might choose to take a more optimistic or pessimistic position. Either way, the purpose of the exercise is to allow you to ensure that you have made sensible strategic provision for what is likely to be a difficult context, one that may require different strategic approaches to those that may have seemed optimum in the past.

The answers can provide intelligence to help explore potential implications for your work, and to use this thinking to inform your current strategy.

1/ DIAGNOSIS & PROGNOSIS

Theme	1	2	3	4
Conduciveness of the environment on specific issue(s) of concern to you	Healthy	Mixed	Poor but with some limited opportunity	Hostile, highly negative
Civil society space	Open, benign	Mixed, with some closing down of political space	Narrow	Closed, characterised by sustained attempts to delegitimise civil society and attack its funding and independence
Extent to which liberties and rights are protected	Good	Mixed	Highly bounded	Sustained curtailments, particularly for marginalised groups and centres of perceived opposition
Extent to which democratic institutions are functioning	Institutions of democracy are being radically renewed	Patchy, but seemingly stable	Trending towards authoritarianism	Dangerously low, quasi-fascism
Possibilities of open and fair public debate	Pluralistic marketplace of ideas	Uneven; biases (eg in ownership of means of communication) mean that certain perspectives dominate	Scope for reasoned and meaningful debate is very limited	Epistemic collapse, truth is everywhere contested
How most marginalised communities are being impacted	There are meaningful moves towards an equitable society	Some discriminatory cultures and practices, and a climate that facilitates them	Sustained discrimination	Targeted onslaughts

2/ IMPLICATIONS

To inform your strategy, given your answers to the above ...

PROGRAMMES

1. Do you need to be doing more to help ensure that the communities you work with, and your staff, are safe and secure?
2. Should you be speaking out (more) about prospective threats to your work?

INFLUENCING STRATEGIES

3. Do you have the right mix of influencing tactics, messages and targets? If not, how might this shift?
4. Do you have the right balance between critiquing the political and economic system and trying to work within it?
5. Should you be more focused on root causes – by addressing the power dynamics that are underpinning these trends, for example?

FOCUS

6. Should you be more oriented to cross issue work, rather than solely focusing on your own issue?
7. Should you be more involved in work that seeks to protect civil society space, and to protect and build resilient democratic institutions?

RESILIENCE AND SURVIVAL

8. Should you be doing more to prepare in terms of how you are set up organisationally, and what a resilient and sustainable organisation might look like in future?
9. Should you be doing more to invest in a legacy so that, as far as possible, communities you support can claim their rights and protect themselves if your organisation ceases to exist, or ceases to be able to meaningfully support them?