

the DECELERATOR



Today will be about...

1. **Reflecting on endings**—what they are, why they matter, and their significance in different contexts.
2. **Making sense of the current context**—exploring the pressing needs around endings within civil society today.
3. **Sharing and exchanging practices**—offering your own experiences while learning from others' approaches to handling endings.



The Decelerator is here to ensure that every civil society organisation has access to the guidance, support, and funding they need to navigate endings — whether that's a **closure, merger, leadership transition, or the end of a project.**

We do this by providing **practical support, research, training, and advocacy.**



We imagine a civil society equipped with the resources, expertise, and confidence to approach endings not as failures, but as opportunities for:

- **Learning**
- **Sustainable growth and resilience**
- **Impact and legacy**
- **Transformation and renewal**

We believe better endings build more sustainable, impactful and just organisations and systems.





The free, confidential **Decelerator Hotline**



Tools for Deceleration (also free!)



Signposting to further help, growing the field



Sharing our learnings to increase engagement in this part of organisational life cycles



Sharing our model to catalyse more deceleration support



Better endings are those which...

...place an organisation's **purpose at the heart of decision making**

...take steps to **treat all the people involved or affected with respect**

...are **planned** well enough and **funded** adequately enough to secure a **lasting legacy**

...lay the foundations for the **renewal** of civil society



Too often, organisations do not have the **time, money or headspace** needed to do endings well.

This can result in the **loss of decades of expertise** and wisdom overnight...

...it can result in an unnecessary and unfair **emotional burden**,

...it can mean communities **miss priceless opportunities to reflect, learn and collaborate** to build back better, and make space for growth.



Solo reflection & discussion:

Take a moment to think about a good or better ending you've been part of or witnessed in civil society. **What do you think made it good?**





Making Sense Of The Landscape



Patterns from the past 6 years (2019-2025)

- Endings can mean **failure, giving up or letting go**
- **Survival-at-all-costs** and last-minute-itis prevails
- **Funding** shortfalls and **business model** insufficiencies
- **Conflict and resource scarcity** are often found together
- Funders and organisations play a game of '**don't blink first**'
- The default response is to create '**crisis services**'
- Endings can be **inequitable** both because of where they happen, who does 'the work' and their lasting impacts



From Q1 2025

- The hotline was **quieter than expected**.
- *"We're not at the point of failure yet, so we don't need The Decelerator".*
- **Funding anxiety** is driving sector-wide jitters. For grantee and grantmakers.
- Scarcity (and the fear of it) is **fueling conflict**.
- A **reappraisal is unfolding** — what are charities, nonprofits and philanthropy for in this era of turbulence and shifting roles of the state and private sector.
- **Women** seem to be leading the work of endings from where we stand.
- Civil society needs more than toolkits and crisis services — it needs **people and proactivity**.



50% of people who have contacted us about a possible closure go on to close. **50% don't.**

100% of people we have supported say they're satisfied with the support they received.

"Reboot, retract, or reimagine — The Decelerator showed me that slowing down isn't giving up. It is about giving yourself the chance to get clear, so you can move forward with purpose."



Discussion:

Where are **you** seeing the impact of the current 'state of endings' in your work - positive or less positive?





So Where Next From Here?





Deceleration in Practice



Notice Your Default Response: Do you tend to rescue, withdraw, or avoid the topic? Get clear on your instinctive reaction to endings.

Normalise Endings: Closures and transitions are part of organisational life, especially at this time — not simply failures. Signalling this is leadership.

Be Clear About Support, Offer Multiple Pathways: Say what you can offer (e.g. advice, bridge funding) — and what you can't. Clarity builds trust.

Frame Within Purpose: Connect endings to long-term mission. Sometimes stopping serves the goal better than continuing.

Be Aware Of The Power Dynamics: Acknowledge that talking about endings is vulnerable. Make it safe to explore.

Respect Autonomy: The decision is theirs. You're there to support reflection, not steer the outcome.

Discussion:

Reflecting on your trust or foundation, what are you getting **right** in managing endings, and where might you **improve** for greater impact?

