



DONOR FUNDING TO NETWORKS: NETWORK CASE STUDY A

This case study is one of nine case studies capturing the experience and insights from a diverse set of networks about how they mobilize and manage funds. It is part of an in-depth research project undertaken by Collective Mind to help both donors and networks to improve funding to and fundraising for networks.

All case studies were developed by the respondents using a provided template and have been anonymized to allow us to share them publicly. Other research products – including nine case studies of donors and a "how to" guide for network funding and fundraising – are also available at www.collectivemindglobal.org.

Each network case study provides insights on:

- [The network's funding needs and sources](#)
- [How the network's funding needs are met](#)
- [The network's relationships with their donors](#)
- [The challenges and reflections of the network](#)

NETWORK A PROFILE

- **Network (secretariat) location:** U.S. with area offices in Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, and Europe
- **Geographic scope (of activities, members):** North America, Latin America, Brazil, Caribbean
- **Network functions undertaken by the network:** Information sharing, filtering, amplification, and diffusion; problem solving and innovation; learning and capacity building; community building; thought leadership
- **Number of members:** 50 formal organizational relationships; an additional 100 informal organizational relationships
- **Number of staff:** Staff across the areas totals 13



NETWORK FUNDING NEEDS AND SOURCES

WHAT'S YOUR YEARLY (OR OTHER REGULAR) BUDGET?

Our yearly budget is 150,000 USD.

WHAT DOES YOUR NETWORK NEED FUNDING FOR?

We need resources to build community and trust among leaders of organizations, seed money for testing collaborative models, and helping team members learn more about collaboration and how to build this into projects.

WHAT TYPES OF DONORS DO YOU RECEIVE FUNDS FROM?

We don't get funds to support network development, but have found that others have benefitted from our network. They meet people or we open doors for them.

Our funds mentioned above come from the organizations. Every year they contribute a percentage of their income or a minimum of 600 USD each year depending on their capacity.

DO YOU HAVE CORE FUNDING OR ONLY FUNDING EARMARKED FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS? HOW FLEXIBLE ARE THE FUNDS THAT YOU HAVE FROM DONORS?

Donors usually give us funds for some of our translation needs, salary, equipment, training, etc. When we need money for other needs such as building community, we need to write a project proposal and find a donor.

HOW LONG-TERM ARE THE FUNDS THAT YOU HAVE FROM DONORS?

They usually provide for a project for the duration of 3 years.

DO YOU HAVE OTHER MEANS TO GENERATE FUNDING FOR YOUR NETWORK BEYOND DONOR FUNDING?

No.



MEETING NETWORK FUNDING NEEDS

HOW DO YOU FUNDRAISE/MOBILIZE RESOURCES?

We have someone in our team that helps write project proposals.

The goal is to work alongside organizations that don't have resources or training on how to raise funds and understand the motivations and obstacles in creating a giving movement.

ARE YOU ABLE TO MOBILIZE ADEQUATE FUNDS BOTH OVERALL AND FOR THE SPECIFIC TYPES OF NEEDS YOU HAVE? WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR FUNDING NEEDS DID YOU COVER IN 2021?

With COVID, we haven't had too many face-to-face meetings. Now we will need to work hard to build trust and friendships with the network leaders, some of whom we haven't seen in three years.

WHAT ARE THE PROCESSES LIKE TO SECURE FUNDS FROM DONORS? WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF THE APPLICATION, SELECTION, AND/OR NEGOTIATION PROCESSES?

Writing a project can be tedious and sometimes we have to write it in English. If we don't have good skills in presenting the need, it won't be appealing. I'd rather have a live interview and have someone take notes so they can listen to our hearts.



REQUIREMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR DONORS FUND YOUR NETWORK?

We don't have donors funding our network the resources come from each participant non-profit organization.

WHAT REQUIREMENTS OR CONDITIONS DO YOUR DONORS PUT IN PLACE IN RETURN FOR THEIR FUNDING?

We are asked for quarterly reports and photos.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR FUNDS AND DONOR REQUIREMENTS?

We ask someone that knows how to write proposals. This person understands how to transmit what is happening in the region and is able to motivate.

HOW DO YOU TRACK ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES FROM YOUR FUNDING? ARE YOU ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE OUTCOMES AND/OR IMPACTS FROM YOUR DONOR FUNDING?

This is included in the template that the funder gives us.

WHAT DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH IN MANAGING YOUR DONOR FUNDING?

We struggle to keep track of stories, documentation, impact, and testimonies. Also, the administrative work of compiling reports.

Sometimes we need flexibility in the use of the funds and strict guidelines can be a struggle.

DO DONORS PLAY OTHER ROLES IN THE NETWORK BESIDES FUNDING?

This does not apply to our context.



NETWORK REFLECTIONS

WHAT ARE YOUR KEY CHALLENGES IN MOBILIZING ADEQUATE RESOURCES? WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO FIND AND MOBILIZE DONOR FUNDING?

Our options for funding have been limited to North American organization. Major donors that generally give to our issue area don't usually understand the context and importance of building collaborative approaches and foundations for building a local giving movement to support the work.

Challenges like this tend to arise because this is a long-term process and donors want quick results.

Building a local giving is key, to help the network build understanding of where local resources can be found. But this takes time, process, and training.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS MORE DIFFICULT ABOUT FUNDRAISING A NETWORK COMPARED TO AN ORGANIZATION?

One challenge is that it takes special skills to know how to lead a network. Leaders that have these skills need to be supported with spaces for learning, sharing, and documentation.

Building cohesion in the network requires investment of time and money. If this is sporadic, it affects the network. Consistency and not looking for quick results is key, as is a process approach with good oversight.

WHAT DISCONNECTS DO YOU SEE OR EXPERIENCE BETWEEN WHAT DONORS CAN/WILL FUND AND WHAT YOUR NETWORK NEEDS?

Foreign donors can be very naïve about local contexts and the importance of networks and collaborative approaches.

HOW ARE YOUR DONORS' REQUIREMENTS OR CONDITIONS EITHER HELPFUL OR PROBLEMATIC?

Writing reports is challenging when we have English donors and the work takes place (in our case) in non-English speaking region. We always need a bilingual expert that understands both contexts/cultures.



HOW WOULD YOU CHANGE THE WAYS IN WHICH YOU RECEIVE DONOR FUNDING? (E.G. AMOUNTS, SELECTION, DONOR ROLE, FUND MANAGEMENT, ETC.)

- Allow recorded testimonies/interviews through video
- Allow for inputting information into a user-friendly database instead of Word documents
- Receive help to develop and analyze qualitative data
- Receive help in measuring growth and impact and identifying key important factors

WHAT INFLUENCE DO THE DONORS HAVE WITHIN THE NETWORK?

Currently, donors are from North America and they don't play a lot of influence in the day-to-day. They can perpetuate paternalism or dependency. Instead, donors can give to intermediaries that are local participants to best show how funding is coming from different sources so that everyone feels they can give something. They can also invest in developing fundraising capacities locally.

HOW ARE YOUR DONORS MOST HELPFUL AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE NETWORK?

They can fund technical support for network builders, provide assistance in training with technical support, or even help develop new apps. Or they could help find graphic designers or help in communication. We have difficulty in finding people with these roles.

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