



## DONOR FUNDING TO NETWORKS: NETWORK CASE STUDY B

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](http://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 B PROFILE

- **Network (secretariat) location:** Europe
- **Geographic scope (of activities, members):** Global; members in 140 countries and territories
- **Network functions undertaken by the network:** Information sharing, filtering, amplification, and diffusion; knowledge generation, exchange, and management; problem solving and innovation; advocacy and policy influence; learning and capacity building; community building
- **Number of members:** 167 members
- **Number of staff:** 12 staff, of which 1 is full-time and the rest part-time



## **NETWORK FUNDING NEEDS AND SOURCES**

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

Our 2021 budget was 1 million Euro.

### **WHAT DOES YOUR NETWORK NEED FUNDING FOR?**

We need funding for staffing (75%) and activities (25%).

### **WHAT TYPES OF DONORS DO YOU RECEIVE FUNDS FROM?**

We receive funds from UN bodies (global, regional, national), the European Commission, national governments, foundations, trusts, pooled funds, companies, and public gifts.

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

75% is project funding (restricted) and 25% is core funding (unrestricted).

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

Most of the donor contracts are multi-year-based (2 to 4 years).

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

We also generate funding from membership fees from full members (125 Euro per year per member).



## MEETING NETWORK FUNDING NEEDS

### HOW DO YOU FUNDRAISE/MOBILIZE RESOURCES?

- We have a fundraising strategy in place for 2021-2023 and a quarterly fundraising pipeline overview.
- We also have someone who is taking the lead on a donor mapping and opportunity screening.
- Each opportunity comes with an internal bid team and timeline including “GO/NO-GO” momentum.

### 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?

Fundraising is done on a constant and flexible basis. To secure core funding is more difficult than project funding. For 2021, we covered most (90%) of our funding needs.

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

- Calls for proposals from the European Commission are very demanding in terms of competition, thresholds, logframes, and contracting.
- Our submissions towards the UN and certain foundations and pooled funds are more flexible in terms of needs and timelines.
- Not many donors fund network activities or general overhead.



## REQUIREMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS

### WHY DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR DONORS FUND YOUR NETWORK?

They recognize our expertise in our issue area, scope (quality standards, data, advocacy), and impact (global, regional, national). Some donors see us as an isolated subcontractor for their own mission, while others believe in a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach.

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

Impact measurement and financial accountability.

### HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR FUNDS AND DONOR REQUIREMENTS?

- Assigned and designated project/program coordinators
- Project-based accounting system
- Overall monitoring, evaluation, and learning system (MEL)

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

We have a detailed logframe per project and an overall MEL system to monitor the outputs, outcomes and impact of each project/program.

### WHAT DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH IN MANAGING YOUR DONOR FUNDING?

Impact measurement of network activities is a challenge. Many things are in our scope of influence but not necessarily in our scope of control.

### DO DONORS PLAY OTHER ROLES IN THE NETWORK BESIDES FUNDING?

We see most of our donors as strategic partners. We exchange knowledge, expertise and develop joint strategies with them.



## NETWORK REFLECTIONS

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

#### **Main challenges:**

- Raising core/unrestricted funding
- Impact measurement
- Raising funds for network activities

#### **What would make it easier?**

- To have an exclusive and dedicated institutional fundraiser on the team
- To have a more advanced MEL system in place to monitor and measure our impact

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

Network activities are difficult to measure in terms of impact and most of the budget relates to salaries instead of tangible outputs.

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

A willingness and trust to give (semi-) unrestricted funding.

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

- Requirements around a cohort approach is helpful (peer-to-peer exchange between different grantees, learning labs, etc.).
- Impact measurement versus output and outcome measurement is sometimes problematic in our line of work.

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

Ideally, we would receive higher amounts for a longer period with fewer requirements.



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## WHAT INFLUENCE DO THE DONORS HAVE WITHIN THE NETWORK?

### **Positive:**

- Multi-stakeholder approach
- Peer-to-peer exchange
- Joint strategy development
- Joint advocacy

### **Less positive:**

- Subcontractor approach

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

- Allow more unrestricted funding (50-50)
- Allow less impact measurement (more focus on outcome level)
- Allow longer term donor agreements (5 years or more)

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