DONOR FUNDING TO NETWORKS: NETWORK CASE STUDY C

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 C PROFILE

- **Network (secretariat) location**: Europe
- **Geographic scope (of activities, members)**: Global, with over 2000 members worldwide and hubs in 7 countries: Bangladesh, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, Jordan and The Netherlands
- **Network functions undertaken by the network**: Information sharing, filtering, amplification, and diffusion; knowledge generation, exchange, and management; problem solving and innovation; learning and capacity building; community building; thought leadership and field-building; investing
- **Number of members**: 260 organizational and 1740 individual
- **Number of staff**: International secretariat has 4 full-time staff/roles and some additional hours support from the host organization; a similar set-up is present in the 7 country hubs

NETWORK FUNDING NEEDS AND SOURCES

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

Our budget is 2 million Euro per year and 10 million Euro for 5 years.

WHAT DOES YOUR NETWORK NEED FUNDING FOR?

We need funding for human resources and knowledge management activities, including communities of practice, grants, conferences, and learning trajectories as well as exchange visits.

WHAT TYPES OF DONORS DO YOU RECEIVE FUNDS FROM?

We receive funding from just one (government) donor.

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

We have earmarked funding but there is flexibility to make amendments based on emerging needs.

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

The funds are on 5-year cycles.

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

We also generate funding from membership fees and incidental donations/co-funding for specific activities.

MEETING NETWORK FUNDING NEEDS

HOW DO YOU FUNDRAISE/MOBILIZE RESOURCES?

We have 5 year strategy. Developing a sustainability strategy is important. Potential donors are identified as well as core partnerships to strengthen. Each donor and partner will have an account manager and engagement plan.

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?

We are currently fully funded but will need funding after 2024. We are preparing for that.

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

- 2 million Euro per year is a significant amount
- Network/knowledge management activities for our topical area are not the easiest to raise funds for
- Our members are also our competition

REQUIREMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR DONORS FUND YOUR NETWORK?

To forward our agenda and increase its reach and impact.

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

Our current donor has no specific conditions beyond regular reporting agreements.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR FUNDS AND DONOR REQUIREMENTS?

We are hosted at an organization with quality standard systems in place. They adhere to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) system.

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

Yes, we do. We have a well-developed theory of change with indicators and a monitoring and evaluation procedure. This is used for our annual reporting. Quantitative data and finances are reported in IATI.

WHAT DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH IN MANAGING YOUR DONOR FUNDING?

At the time of writing this, mostly with adapting to the changing world (pandemic).

DO DONORS PLAY OTHER ROLES IN THE NETWORK BESIDES FUNDING?

Yes, our main donor is also a member and provides us with knowledge questions. We do function as a knowledge broker to their other funded partnerships and organize thematic or network meetings on their request.

💡 NETWORK REFLECTIONS

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

Finding one big donor for the whole network/program again after 2024 seems hard. It would be easier and more sustainable to have different donors that support specific parts of it. However, it would then also become more challenging to manage.

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

Outcome, and impact (how we have contributed to the improvement of policy and practice) is difficult to showcase.

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

I feel donors are more interested in movement-building and advocacy on the one hand and innovation on the other hand. We need funds to equip movements and innovators, and bring people, knowledge, and ideas together.

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

They are quite helpful as there is flexibility to amend activities and shift budget between activities, e.g. funds for visits that could not happen due to the COVID-19 pandemic happen could be shifted to other activities.

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

I wish it would stay like this beyond 2024, but I would like to divide the funds within the network in a more transparent and equitable way. The donor could play a role in this 'decolonization' process.

WHAT INFLUENCE DO THE DONORS HAVE WITHIN THE NETWORK?

They could potentially influence much more, but they keep very much in the background when it comes to (thematic) direction.

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

- Inviting other donors and governments to join in
- Making use of the knowledge we manage in their own work
- Bringing our work to (high-level) places where we have less reach
- Being flexible and allow for adaptations in-line with mission and vision

COLLECTIVE+MIND

www.collectivemindglobal.org
team@collectivemindglobal.org