



Fundraising for Change: A Practical Guide for Women's Rights Organizations

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INTRODUCTION

The Global Fund for Women has always understood the critical role that resource mobilization plays in strengthening and fueling movements for social change. From our inception in 1987 as an organization that raises money in support of women's rights around the world, the Global Fund believed that the process of fundraising could be used to build a diverse and globally connected community of individuals and organizations. We seek to shift the balance of power between those who have money to give and those who need access to funds by building these relationships on a foundation of equality, mutual respect and trust.

The Global Fund first formally shared its experience in raising funds by holding workshops on "Women, Money & Empowerment" at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. We put together a small "Fundraising Handbook" to offer colleagues and friends who joined us at these workshops. Since then, the Global Fund has shared this handbook with thousands of women's groups in every corner of the world. These groups have passed the handbook on to others in their communities, sometimes translating and adapting it into their local languages.

More than a decade after the Beijing conference, the world has changed in many ways. In terms of women's rights, we can certainly point to successes: more widespread recognition of the importance of women's rights to development; an increase in women's political participation; more awareness of and stronger laws on gender-based violence; and a greater commitment to girls' education. These achievements are due to the tireless efforts of women's movements – working at the grassroots level, advocating for policy change at the national level, and raising visibility at regional and international levels. Quietly, and sometimes not so quietly, but always steadily, activists for women's rights are

making the world a better place for future generations.

At the same time, new challenges have emerged that demand vigilance and creativity from women's groups determined to maintain the gains of the Beijing Platform for Action. Increased militarization, growing economic inequality, and religious extremism have taken a toll on women who still struggle for the basic financial resources to do their work. As more women's groups have stepped up to meet the needs of our time, their vision for social change has blossomed and expanded. The Global Fund for Women is committed to standing with a movement that is poised to transform our world. In the words of our founding president, Anne Firth Murray:

"There are resources out there – in every community, however small and however poor. We must empower ourselves to gain access to those resources for our causes."

On the occasion of our twentieth anniversary, we offer this updated and practical guide to fundraising as a small contribution to the global women's movement. Gandhi once said, "if the cause is right, the means will come." Money can be a powerful tool for advancing women's rights, social justice and change – we wish you fun and fundraising success!



Kavita N. Ramdas, President & CEO
Global Fund for Women

WOMEN, MONEY AND EMPOWERMENT

Money for Women's Rights

"Our conflicting relationship with money, which is influenced by our own personal relationship with it, affects the manner in which we relate to money in our work, in our organizations and in the spaces for coordination, spaces for movements.

Furthermore, our perception of scarcity undermines our creativity and increases competition and fragmentation, finally resulting in a significant weakening of the collective strength needed to bring about the major social change that we are proposing."

-Lydia Alpízar Durán, AWID, 2006

In every country, women are coming together to address some of the most urgent and challenging issues facing our world – from violence to environmental devastation to poverty. We are speaking out about issues that were once taboo such as sexual assault or reproductive rights. Yet even as activists for women's rights are increasingly empowered to speak out, when it comes to raising money we may still feel disempowered.

Money is a difficult subject and we and our organizations may have conflicting feelings about it. We may fear undue influence from donors or feel concerned about accepting funds from certain sources. Even as we welcome a donor's support, we may feel uncomfortable asking them to give again or to increase their gift. We may resent the role money has played in corrupting our government or the extreme gap it has caused between rich and poor in our country. All of these thoughts may be true and yet, money can also be an important tool for women's empowerment, enabling us to implement programs that improve the lives of women and girls everyday. How can we keep our

conflicting views about money from inhibiting our fundraising success?

About the Global Fund for Women

The Global Fund for Women was created because the resources available to women's groups, especially those in poorer countries, were extremely limited. When Anne Firth Murray, along with cofounders Laura Lederer and Frances Kissling, founded the Global Fund, new women's groups were emerging all over the world, but women continued to have the least access to money. By fundraising to give grants to women's groups, our founders wanted to amplify women's voices and increase the choices available to women and girls worldwide.

The Global Fund was established in June 1987 with a few hundred dollars from Anne, Laura and Frances' own pockets. They were not wealthy, so to realize their dream they asked for help from others. Soon, thirty-one individuals had stepped forward, each contributing a \$5,000 donation. As with most new groups, there was no money to hire staff. Anne Firth Murray became the organization's first president and ran the Global Fund for the first 18 months as a volunteer.

Twenty years later, through persistent fundraising, we have grown our resources and activities. The Global Fund now houses the largest endowment for women's rights internationally and provides over \$8 million in grants to more than 600 organizations each year around the world.

The Global Fund's approach to fundraising is grounded in two principles:

1. Money is available for the work of women's organizations. While it can be challenging to get out there and find it, our collective fundraising activities bring new resources and new donors to women's movements.

2. Building strong global women's movements requires activists, donors, and allies working together.

Some donors are also activists. Many activists are also donors. It is working together as equal partners in this struggle that strengthens our movement. In our experience, the more we concentrate on building a broad network of donors, activists and allies based on mutual respect and trust, the more the power dynamics shift and our fears about fundraising begin to slip away.

PREPARATION FOR FUNDRAISING

Prepare yourself and your organization for successful fundraising by developing thorough fundraising plans and key messages about your work that you want to share with prospective donors. As you prepare your plans, you might also reflect on the following questions and overarching principles of fundraising.

- **Commit to your cause.** What motivates your organization's work for women's rights? What makes you passionate about creating change in your community? Successful fundraising requires that you convince funders that you have a compelling case for support. Knowing and being able to clearly articulate why you do the work you do is crucial.
- **Engage donors in your cause.** Successful fundraising goes beyond just raising money. While seeking funds, you are educating people about your cause and involving them in your mission. How can you share information about the issues you work on that will also educate your donors?
- **Ask.** If you want an individual or an agency to donate money, ask for it! Only rarely do donors give without being asked for their support first. If they give, remember to **thank** them

as soon as possible and to let them know what impact their gift will have.

Know your Environment

Researching and understanding the legal and tax structures and the culture of your community will help determine the types of fundraising activities that work best in your local environment. You may come across cases like this:

- The laws in your country may restrict certain types of fundraising for your organization. Be familiar with any special permission required for your activities.
- Tax relief for individual or corporate donations may be an incentive for giving. Be familiar with the tax laws in your country.
- Various information technologies may or may not be widely used in your country. For instance, the Internet can be a critical fundraising tool in certain countries, while in other countries raising money online can be difficult.

Once you have surveyed your fundraising environment, you will be better equipped to determine the most effective ways to raise funds.

Identify your Community Resources

Resources are available in every community, no matter how small or poor. Each community has a set of assets upon which to build its future.

While you prepare to raise funds, first identify and list the range of financial and non-financial resources of community members and local institutions. Non-financial or in-kind resources can include donations like office supplies, food for an event and volunteer staff. In particular, recognize the talents of groups that have been traditionally marginalized and disempowered, and include these groups in your work so that all community

members have the chance to contribute to your organization's work.

Develop a Fundraising Plan

A fundraising plan provides guidance for raising money and includes the following:

- An overall purpose and target amount;
- Potential sources of funds and goals for each source (membership, income producing activities, foundations, corporations, government);
- Specific fundraising activities (submit a proposal, send a letter of appeal, make a phone call, visit in person);
- Names of the people who will carry out the fundraising activities and the tasks they are each assigned;
- A timeline for completing each activity as well as a final deadline for the whole fundraising project.

Mobilize Volunteers

Members of your board of directors and your staff should participate in the planning and implementation of your fundraising efforts. Raising money takes time, creativity, persistence and collaboration, and should not be a task assigned to just one person. Make sure that all fundraising team members are as prepared and excited as you are about the fundraising project.

You can expand your fundraising team and maximize your gains by requesting the support of volunteers from your community. Volunteer candidates will not necessarily come to you. Actively seek out and train individuals who support your cause and can contribute their time.

Fundraising in Practice

Tewa, a Nepali women's fund that focuses on building democracy and peace, has been successful in training hundreds of local Nepali volunteers to raise funds from local donors. The volunteers received training and mentoring from Tewa, and have together raised over \$15,000 for the organization.

At this stage, you have already completed key preparatory steps in your quest for funding. Now, where is the money? The next chapter contains ideas about funding sources and the ways to ask for support.

FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES

Fundraising Basics

There are countless possibilities for fundraising activities. Your choice of activities will depend on your financial needs, your resources (number of people available, their skills, time constraints, your initial fundraising budget) and your fundraising experience. A start-up organization that is trying to raise \$1,000 will not use the same strategies as a well-established organization whose goal is to leverage \$1,000,000. As mentioned earlier, your specific context (tax and legal structures, culture, politics) influences your choice of fundraising activities as well.

Whichever fundraising activities you decide to pursue, remember that raising money involves building relationships with others, and that this takes time and perseverance. Engage your board members, staff, volunteers and friends to expand your network of contributors. If a prospective donor turns you down, try to find out why. Individual and institutional donors are frequently solicited, and they cannot respond to all requests. In other words, initial rejection should not end your fundraising efforts.

Fundraising in Practice

The HER Fund, a women's fund in Hong Kong, pursued a strategic partnership with the Volleyball Association of Hong Kong to promote women's rights at women's sporting events. Volunteers raised awareness of the HER Fund at a volleyball match and collected \$1,000 in donations from fans.

The activities presented below are meant to draw your attention to the variety of fundraising options, but the list is not exhaustive. The more different types of donors you have, the less you will feel dependant on any one source. Choose your sources wisely by selecting those activities that best fit your organization and your community. Pursue fundraising with determination and passion for your cause, and you will start raising money. Learn from peer groups that are successfully raising money, and do not be afraid to try out your own fundraising ideas.

Have I Given Money Myself?

As you get ready to ask others for money, start with the person you know best: you! You are already contributing time and expertise to your cause, but it is important that you give money yourself before asking others. That way, you can request money with greater confidence and credibility.

When we become givers ourselves, we understand how hard the choices about what to support can be, and we learn how powerful our gifts are when used to advance the causes we believe in.

Collect Membership Dues

Your organization may decide that it is important for all members to support the vision and activities of the group in some way. While membership dues will likely be just one part of your fundraising activities, they can represent a regular and secure source of income.

Just as donors may feel more motivated to continue giving when they are aware of the impact of their gift, members of your organization will be more likely to contribute dues if they are aware of the benefits that membership provides them and if they believe the organization to be well managed.

Solicit Money from Individuals

Before approaching individual donors, reflect on their interests and ability to give. Focus on those individuals most likely to be interested in your work. Devote sufficient time toward meeting these people and learning about their interests. Follow-up and share more information about the impact of your work, even with those who may initially seem reluctant to respond to your requests.

Involve your donors by educating them about your cause and informing them about the progress of your work. Depending on your environment and your resources, make a phone call, send an email, send a written report, share pictures of the project, organize a visit to the project location, have donors meet the people who are involved in the project or invite them to a tea party or reception to socialize and meet other donors.

Remember to treat your donors with respect and honor by using their donations appropriately and by acknowledging their contribution. For instance, you may want to announce new donors on your website, or in reports or newsletters. At the Global Fund, we believe that gifts of all sizes are important to our work. In our Annual Report, we list donors alphabetically, instead of by the amount they give.

People You Can Request Money From

- Yourself
- Friends
- Community members and leaders
- Family members
- Business people
- People you have served
- People who have given in the past
- Diaspora or expatriate populations (for example, people from your country who now live in the US or Europe but maintain a link with their home community)
- Visitors to your country who come to see your project site.

Tips for Fundraising from Individuals

- List all of your friends, family members and acquaintances who may be interested in your project.
- Ask for a specific amount of money from each prospective donor.
- Determine whether you should schedule a meeting, place a phone call or write to each person.
- Describe the project and stress the importance of the activity and their contribution.
- Ask for their support.
- Remember that gifts of all sizes are important.
- Thank them for their support.
- Follow up with those who have not responded.

Organizing Events

Events can be used to raise funds, but are often most successful at connecting donors and other individuals in the community to your organization. While not every event raises funds immediately, they can strengthen your organization by:

- Reaching potential new donors;
- Raising the visibility of your organization in its community;
- Deepening relationships with your current donors.

Events can take many different forms and are great opportunities to present your organization and programs, publicize your cause and mobilize your community. Fundraising events may be associated with local needs, driven by your organization's mission or built around creative initiatives, but they should incorporate an issue or activity that is particularly compelling to your target audience.

Fundraising in Practice:

Urgent Action Fund Africa, based in Kenya, hosted a successful fundraising event in Nairobi. The group invited businessmen to attend the event and make a donation to the group in honor of their daughters. This campaign was successful both in reaching locally based donors and in securing financial support for the group.

Examples of Events

- Community dinner event/Tea Party
- Celebration/festival incorporating cultural activities and traditions
- Auction/raffle
- Dance performance/dance party
- Music performance
- Sponsored walk, marathon or other sports activity
- Speaking engagement featuring celebrities or community leaders
- Gathering in someone's home featuring a discussion of your group's activities and the challenges that women face in your community

Income Generating Activities

Are there goods and services you could sell to generate income for your organization or a project? Selling goods and services is a creative way to mobilize resources. You might also make selling goods part of an event, for example, selling baked goods or other homemade food at a community event that your organization hosts.

Your organization might also be able to charge fees for a training workshop or consulting service that it provides. For example, if your organization provides HIV/AIDS education to the community for free, you might offer to provide HIV/AIDS education to the employees of a large company for a fee paid by the company.

Approaching Businesses

In some countries, businesses and corporations are increasing their support for community initiatives. By conducting thorough research in your own community, you may find local businesses and international corporations that make financial grants or offer in-kind gifts (non-cash items of value) to nonprofit organizations.

Researching companies you plan to approach is a must. You may want to maintain a file with their contact information, names of managers, and any other publicly available information.

Fundraising in practice:

Members of CAHPA, a small community group in the Ivory Coast, successfully negotiated a free spot in a supermarket to sell their crafts. They worked hard to arrange a meeting with the director of the supermarket. When they finally got the chance to talk to him, they presented their cause, their organization and reasons why selling the handicrafts would support their mission. The free spot saved them from having to cover high rental costs themselves.

Businesses sometimes give in-kind gifts instead of financial gifts. As in the example of CAHPA, in-kind donations can help cut expenses and, in some cases, even help generate income.

Tips for Approaching Businesses:

- Business managers will ask several questions before granting their support, both about your work and about how you might enhance the company's image. Reflect on what

kinds of partnerships your organization feels comfortable establishing with businesses before you meet with company representatives. Come prepared to articulate how the company will benefit from its association with your organization.

- Choose companies that you believe have good practices. Ask yourself: Is the company a good neighbor in your community? Do they pay fair wages? Are they environmentally responsible? Do they treat women employees equally? These are all questions you may want explore before establishing a partnership.
- Through their foundations, many international companies provide grants and in-kind support in the countries where they operate. Make a list of international corporations in your country, and visit their websites to see if they make grants locally.

Fundraising through Grant Proposals

Private foundations, multi-lateral institutions and government agencies are probably the main funding sources in your country. Most of these organizations require a formal *grant proposal* in order to consider a request. The first step before you contact these institutions is to learn about their specific criteria and grant proposal procedures. Understanding their unique funding processes will help you target your fundraising efforts.

Our sense at the Global Fund is that local funders are generally more open to supporting emerging or grassroots groups, while larger international funders tend to focus on well-established mid-sized or large organizations. Examples of local funders include religious organizations, foreign embassies or consulates, regional women's funds or local branches of government. Larger funders include donors like UNICEF, the European Union (EU) or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Securing grants from institutional donors can be challenging, especially for small organizations, but the task is not impossible. Here are some practical tips for preparing a grant application.

Possible sources of funding:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Community organizations<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Churches/temples and affiliate organizations• Local/national charities• Local service organizations❖ Governmental organizations<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your own federal/state/city government agencies• Local embassies (self-aid funds/small project assistance programs)❖ Women's funds❖ Private foundations❖ Bilateral development organizations❖ Multilateral organizations❖ United Nations and related agencies

*Proposal Writing Step 1:
Learn about the Funder*

Did you know that many funders are required to give away a certain amount of money each year? In fact, you help them do their job by providing an effective program in which they can invest. However, most funders are also required by their bylaws and boards to give their money only to the issues or causes specified by their founders. Funders will quickly turn down proposals that do not match their stated funding criteria.

When researching prospective funders, these are the sorts of questions you will want to consider:

- What are the funder's programs and priorities?
- Do the interests of the funder align with your group's activities and goals?
- Has the funder previously awarded grants to projects similar to yours?
- Who should the application form be addressed to?
- When are the deadlines?

*Proposal Writing Step 2:
Prepare to Present your Work*

Applying for a grant goes far beyond writing a proposal. Your organization – its management and financial systems – must be in excellent order so that you can express clearly what you do, how you do it and why you do it. To make a strong case for why your organization is worthy of receiving support, consider the following questions when you write your proposal:

- Are your mission, goals, objectives and plans clear?
- How does your mission benefit the communities served?
- What is your governance structure, and what are each person's roles and responsibilities?
- Do you have a group of people that provide advice, support and strategic thinking (a board of directors or advisors)? Do these people have the skills and connections needed to advance your work?
- What are the relevant skills of your staff and key volunteers?
- Have you included in your organization people who themselves are affected by the work you do?
- Does your organization have sound financial and reporting procedures?
- What are your organization's most recent accomplishments?
- Is your organization linked to other like-minded local or international organizations?

*Proposal Writing Step 3:
Make a Strong Case for your Project*

A compelling project is one that has a strong link with the organization's mission. The program or project you are seeking funding for should be part of your overall strategy for addressing community issues. This will ensure that your project and your mission are consistent.

When funders evaluate a project, they are particularly interested in how the project

will benefit the community. As an organization seeking to meet the needs of your particular community, you are uniquely positioned to determine which strategies are most effective in that context. In your proposal, link the knowledge your organization has of particular challenges facing your community with the strategies your organization has developed to improve the situation.

The following questions can help you make the case for your project or for your organization as a whole:

- What do you want to achieve through your project?
- How and by whom will the project be implemented; what are their roles and responsibilities?
- Who are the people who will benefit from the project; how are they identified and selected; how will they be involved in the project?
- Where will the project activities take place?
- When will the project activities be completed?
- What is the context in which you work, and how is this unique?
- How can you highlight the special qualifications and accomplishments that your organization, its leadership and volunteers bring to the project?
- How will this funder's grant make a difference for your organization?

Sample Components of a Grant Proposal

Contact Information:

Responsible person's name, organization, address, email, telephone, fax, website.

Executive Summary:

Summary of proposal, including the purpose of the project and why funds are being requested.

Context:

Description of critical issues affecting your local community and why the project is necessary.

Project Description:

How the project will be implemented, including: measurable goals and activities, beneficiaries' involvement, timeframe, collaborating organizations, evaluation plans.

Organization Description

If you are applying for a general operating grant (not directed toward a specific project) describe your organization and its activities broadly, and explain how the grant will strengthen your organization as a whole.

Budget:

Amount requested, costs for project. Include your own and other sources of funding. Identify the currency you use in the budget.

Other Information:

History of your organization, governance structure and composition, staff qualifications, mission, past accomplishments, legal status.

Proposal Writing Step 4:

Preparing a Budget

A budget estimates the costs of running your project or organization and the income necessary to complete your work. Funders will sometimes request two types of budgets: **the organizational or operating budget, and the project budget** (see box below.)

A budget can be simple or complex depending on your activities. It helps funders understand how the project you are proposing will be implemented and

managed. When reviewing budgets, funders consider the following:

- Is your overall budget realistic?
- How are you planning to use their grant?
- Does the budget correspond to the project activities?
- What are the other sources of funds for the project?

When you report back at the end of the grant period, your funder compares the budget you submitted with the proposal and the amount of money you actually spent. You should highlight any differences between the proposed budget and the actual expenses and explain the changes.

Types of Budgets
<p>Organizational budgets reflect the income and expenses necessary for all of your organization's activities, including overhead and administration. Organizational budgets (also referred to as operational budgets) usually reflect a 12-month period, based on your financial year. They include items such as rent, utilities, salaries and travel expenditures.</p>
<p>Project budgets are calculated based on the costs related to a specific program or project. They cover the period of time from a project's beginning through its completion. If your project is a training program, sample costs might include: fees for trainers, supplies and printed materials, use of facilities and transportation costs.</p>

What if a Funder does not publish their Proposal Guidelines?

Often, the website or published application guidelines of a particular funding organization will be a great source of information on their proposal process. However, if no information is available, consider writing a simple **letter of inquiry** (1-3 pages) to the prospective funder. This letter should briefly present the purpose of your request and inquire about the funding criteria and application

guidelines. It will save time over preparing an entire proposal to a funder who may not be a good candidate for support.

In-kind Contributions

Soliciting in-kind gifts can be valuable for your organization or project. For instance, you might obtain technical assistance from an embassy instead of money. A business might donate a computer, prizes for raffles or office furniture. An individual might offer free drinks and meals for your event.

Assign a monetary value to non-cash donations that you receive, and record them in your budget as a source of support. This shows the funder that, although you may not be receiving large cash donations, your community supports your organization in other ways.

Additional Fundraising Ideas

At the beginning of this section, we stressed that a wide range of fundraising strategies exists. We have shared examples of several of these strategies, some of which are used by the Global Fund and by our grantees. Below is a list of additional ways to secure funds for your organization or to maximize the funds you already have.

- **Collaborate with other organizations.** Through partnerships with other organizations, you may be able to develop joint projects that attract greater funds than you could secure on your own.
- **Request a general support grant.** General support grants (flexible funds for operating or program expenses) can help you respond to unforeseen challenges or meet costs associated with running your office or fundraising that are not covered by project grants.
- **Request a multi-year grant.** Requesting a larger grant paid out over two to three years can increase

your financial autonomy and reduce grantseeking work. If a donor has funded you previously, they may be more likely to consider a multi-year commitment.

- **Build an endowment.** More mature organizations may want to explore the possibilities of raising funds that can be invested to earn interest and build long-term security. Prepare for this more challenging fundraising strategy by first talking with your current funders and with peer organizations that have successfully raised an endowment.

A Final Word

At the Global Fund for Women, we have never doubted the capacity of women to lead and change their societies, in spite of the challenges they face in their private lives and in the public arena. This belief has been the driving force behind our work over the past twenty years.

As an organization that also raises money, we feel privileged to share our fundraising experience with other groups that are engaged in similar work. We understand the need for more financial resources to advance women's rights around the world, the challenges of tapping into new funding sources and the rewards that come from perseverance and hard work.

We hope this fundraising guide is helpful to you, and we encourage you to share stories of your fundraising successes and challenges. We look forward to continuing to learn from your experiences.



Fundraising Resources on the Internet

LINKS TO COMPILED LISTS OF POTENTIAL FUNDERS & OTHER RESOURCES:

Africa Grantmakers' Affinity Group (AGAG):

<http://www.africagrantmakers.org/index.asp?PageURL=24>

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID):

http://www.awid.org/forum/fundraising_information.htm

In 2006 AWID released a comprehensive report that examines the funding landscape regarding gender equality work and support for women's rights organizations. The report contains useful insights about fundraising sources and ideas and is available from AWID:

http://www.awid.org/go.php?pg=where_is_money

The Foundation Center

<http://foundationcenter.org/>

International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG) – Funders Directory.

<http://www.hrfunders.org/funders/funder.php?op=list>

The International Network of Women's Funds (links to 17+ regional women's funds):

<http://www.inwf.org/links.html>

OTHER POTENTIAL INTERNATIONAL FUNDING SOURCES:

Not all donors will be a good match for all organizations. Remember to review each funder's criteria before submitting a letter of inquiry or a proposal.

American India Foundation: <http://www.aifoundation.org/>

American Jewish World Service: <http://www.ajws.org/index.cfm>

The Asia Foundation: <http://www.asiafoundation.org/>

Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice: <http://www.astraeafoundation.org/Main.php4>

The Firelight Foundation: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/>

The Ford Foundation: www.fordfound.org/

Fund for Global Human Rights: <http://www.globalhumanrights.org/>

Global Greengrants Fund: www.greengrants.org

Oak Foundation: <http://www.oakfnd.org/>

Open Society Institute: <http://www.soros.org/>

The Sigrid Rausing Trust: <http://www.sigrid-rausing-trust.org/>

The Urgent Action Fund: <http://www.urgentactionfund.org/>