Sustainable Funding

The Smart Sex Worker's Guide to Sustainable Funding

nswp **Global Network of Sex Work Projects**
Promoting Health and Human Rights

nswp

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Promoting Health and Human Rights

NSWP exists to uphold the voice of sex workers globally and connect regional networks advocating for the rights of female, male and transgender sex workers. It advocates for rights-based health and social services, freedom from abuse and discrimination and self-determination for sex workers.

SEX WORK IS WORK:

Only Rights Can Stop the Wrongs

Contents

Introduction

Around the world sex workers are organising to improve protection of their rights, end exploitation and violence, access appropriate and respectful health care and build movements for lasting change. They need resources to do this – money, time and people. Due to criminalisation, discrimination and stigma few governments are willing to fund sex worker-led organisations. In addition, sex workers are often from marginalised communities without much access to independent wealth and influence.

As a result, sex workers are highly skilled at getting things done with few resources and are increasingly experts at finding resources from within their own communities and from other donors.

Though there are more and more sex worker-led organisations globally[1], much of the funding for sex work programmes remains directed toward the criminalisation of sex work such as anti-trafficking 'raid and rescue' programmes, or toward services that stigmatise sex workers such as 'rescue and rehabilitation' programmes[2]. Sex workers are rarely involved in decision making about how government or donor funds should be allocated, even when the funds are for sex work programmes.[3] As a result, money is often not directed toward rights-based programmes that respond to the needs prioritised by sex workers. Social and economic justice for sex workers requires an equitable share of resources and meaningful engagement about the allocation of resources.

A smart and sustainable fundraising strategy for sex worker-led organisations involves both grants and community-based fundraising.

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1   NSWP has grown from 61 members in 27 countries in 2009 to 242 members in 72 countries in 2015

2   "Does rehabilitation work" http://www.nswp.org/resource/economic-empowerment-does-rehabilitation-have-role

3   The Red Umbrella Fund is an exception, being initiated by NSWP and donors jointly, and led by sex workers.

Developing a Funding Strategy

Vision

Before planning how to raise funds, an organisation's first step should be to develop a 'vision'. An organisation's vision should be ambitious and long-term, based on the shared goals within the organisation. For example, creating a health clinic or a legal centre, a sex worker-run business, a regional movement or sex worker-created media. Having defined goals is important for developing an appropriate funding strategy and for clearly communicating to donors in grant applications and in community-based fundraising efforts.

Goals and Benchmarks

A funding goal should be for a specific amount. This goal should be realistic about what can be raised through a combination of grants and community-based fundraising. Sometimes organisations set a very low goal, believing that there are no funds available. Others set goals that are too high for their current capacity, not realising the work involved.

Assess Capacity

Organisations should consider what their current capacity is, and how much additional time and resources may be required for completing grant applications or doing community-based fundraising. In deciding the right method for raising funds, organisations should consider the skills, knowledge and availability of staff and volunteers, and if needed, how additional capacity may be built.

Incorporate Vision, Goals and Capacity

An organisation's vision, goals and capacity can be incorporated into the development of a funding strategy. The strategy should define what percentage of funding will come from grants, and what percentage from community-based fundraising, and which activities will be used to raise money.

Grants

Grants are funds given to an organisation by a government or other donor to undertake specific activities and/or as core funding for running an organisation. Donors require organisations to report on how the funds are used through providing activity and financial reports on a regular basis. Grants can range in size from very small one-off grants to large multi-year grants. Donors that understand the needs of the sex worker community are particularly helpful and often more willing and able to make long-term commitments and provide core funding to organisations.

Many grants that sex worker-led organisations have access to will have public 'calls for applications', allowing any organisation to apply, while others invite organisations they select to submit proposals.

Due in large part to criminalisation, discrimination and stigma, there are a limited number of donors who actively provide grants to sex worker-led organisations. There may be a great deal of competition for the available grants. This section discusses the creation of high-quality grant applications, grant management, and strategies for obtaining on-going funding.

Core Funding and Project Funding

Core funding provides funds for running an organisation. This includes governance, management and administration staff salaries, property costs and utilities, communications and equipment. Core funding grants cover the day-to-day expenses of an organisation.

Project funding is for creating a specific project or programme. This includes all of the activities and programme staff and expenses. A project-based grant has specific deliverables, such as a report, a resource or series of workshops or trainings.

Most grants are project-based. Core funding is much less common, but is very beneficial for organisations in providing a stable foundation for planning programmes and activities.

Donors

Much of the funding that is available to sex worker-led organisations is provided by donors for HIV prevention and treatment programmes[4]. Meaningful involvement of sex workers is increasingly recognised as essential to addressing the HIV epidemic[5]. Other donors may provide funds to sex worker-led organisations for labour rights, human rights, sexual and reproductive health, anti-trafficking, harm reduction and LGBT issues. Some sex worker-led organisations will also decide to apply to donors who require then to endorse an 'anti-prostitution' policy, but which enables them to provide essential HIV prevention and treatment services to sex workers.

The majority of donors funding sex worker-led organisations are in North America and Europe, although most of the money is spent in the Global South[6]. Donors have criteria to determine how they will distribute their grants. In many (but not all) cases, donors do not involve community members in making decisions about funding allocations.

The report from the Red Umbrella Fund, Mama Cash and the Open Society Foundations identified 56 foundations and NGOs that in total invested €8 million in sex workers' rights in 2013.[7] Over half of the money came from just five donors:

• Open Society Foundations

• Ford Foundation

• American Jewish World Service

• Red Umbrella Fund

• Mama Cash

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is also a major donor. Sex worker-led organisations in eligible countries, defined as lower and lower-middle income by the World Bank, may be able to access significant funding from The Global Fund, if they can advocate successfully for the inclusion of rights-based programming for sex workers in the national proposal. The Global Fund does not provide funding directly to organisations, but gives funds to one or two Principal Recipients in each country, who then distribute funds to Sub-Recipients. Accessing funding requires being involved in the country dialogue, for inclusion in the concept note. For information on accessing funding through The Global Fund, please refer to NSWP's Smart Sex Worker's Guide to The Global Fund[8].

4   Different kinds of funding that sex workers can access include multilateral sources like The Global Fund and UN agencies; bilateral sources like USAID, UK DFID, and Dutch MoFA; and national and local sources.

5   WHO: Implementing Comprehensive HIV/STI Programmes with Sex Workers: Practical Approaches from Collaborative Interventions; http://www.nswp.org/news/newly-published-who-tool-reaffirms-the-importance-sex-worker-led-hiv-programming

6   Funding for sex worker rights: report; http://www.redumbrellafund.org/report/

7   While €8 million were invested in sex workers rights, fewer than half of the organisations that received these funds were sex worker-led.

8   Smart Sex Worker's Guide to The Global Fund; http://www.nswp.org/resource/the-smart-sex-workers-guide-the-global-fund

Identifying Donors and Opportunities

Identifying potential donors and being aware of opportunities to apply for grants is essential to getting funded. Sex worker-led organisations in search of funding may:

• Review the *Funding for sex workers' rights report*, which includes a list of donors and provide details for organisations that provided €100,000 or more for sex workers' rights over two years (2012 and 2013)[9].

• Ask other organisations where they receive funding from.

• Ask donors that they are already in contact with.

• Check social media (for example Red Umbrella Fund regularly posts potential funding opportunities for sex worker groups on Facebook.)

• Watch for announcements on mailing lists and websites like fundsforngos.org

Some embassies in countries can be an unexpected source of support for sex worker-led organisations. To receive support from embassies, it is important that an organisation's work is visible. Relationships with embassies may be developed through invitations to public events, sharing reports of activities and initiating contact.

Educate Donors about the Intersections of Sex Work

One of the reasons that sex worker-led organisations are systematically underfunded is that many donors fail to see how deeply connected sex work is to almost every current social justice issue. Sex work intersects with issues of economic justice/anti-poverty, racial justice, anti-police brutality, migration, justice for transgender women, labour rights, harm reduction, feminism, disability justice and more. Most donors do not know enough about sex work to understand this and as a result often exclude sex worker-led organisations for not meeting their funding criteria. Sex worker-led organisations also do not always see these intersections and miss opportunities to pursue funds outside of sex workers' rights. As indicated in the research on the fundraising landscape, only a small number of donors in the world recognise sex workers' rights as a funding priority.

Many sex worker-led organisations which receive funding connect sex workers' rights with other human rights and social justice issues. This builds not only financial support, but it can also help build solidarity with other movements. It can reduce the ways that sex workers are seen as separate, different and inferior to other community members. Understanding sex work as intersectional can bring in new sources of support and strength while reducing stigma.

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9   Funding for sex worker rights: report; http://www.
     redumbrellafund.org/report/

There are many donors that could contribute toward sex worker-led organisations, if educated. One of the key jobs of the sex worker-led organisations is to educate and convince donors that their priorities are sex workers' priorities. For example, a sex worker-led organisations may be eligible for funds set aside for 'labour rights' if the donor is educated about how sex work is a labour rights issue. This connection may be obvious to sex worker-led organisations but not to all donors.

Shifting this dynamic happens largely through relationship building and education, which should be undertaken by global and regional networks. With advocacy, donors may be convinced to adjust their funding criteria to better support sex workers' rights.

Through existing relationships with sex worker-led organisations, donors can be invited to become stronger allies to sex workers by speaking out on sex work issues and reaching out to other donors to encourage them to financially support sex workers' rights and health as well.

"SANGRAM/VAMP has been quite successful in getting funding from a wide range of diverse donors who support core funding. These are two of the key principles that have helped us.

REPORTING: We are diligent with our financial and narrative reports ensuring that they are accurate and on time. Our narrative reports include achievable indicators and deliverables that showcase our work. We believe that donors often talk to each other and our good record has attracted new supporters who have sought us out.

CROSS-MOVEMENT BUILDING: We build relationships with allies in other movements, taking about 2–3 years of constant dialogue. This relationship building isn't without criticism – as part of our dialogue, we address the exclusion of sex workers in these movements. We work to make sex workers' rights on the agenda of all movements: for example LGBTQ, migrant, health, women's rights, environment, dalit movement; and to access funding within these movements. Cross movement building is good for fundraising as it allows us to access funding from highly diverse sources – but it is also strengthens our movement!"

Meena Seshu and Aarthi Pai, SANGRAM/VAMP

Applying for Funding

A grant application can also be known as a proposal, letter of interest or concept note. Each donor has their own process, priorities and criteria for grant applications. However, there are some common reasons why a grant application may be unsuccessful, and qualities that successful grant applications share.

There is no way to guarantee that a grant application will be successful. However, by following good practises, organisations can increased their chances of success.

Common reasons why grant applications fail include:

1   The work proposed does not match the donor's funding priorities, or is for a geographic location where the donor does not fund.

2   The grant being requested is too small or too large.

3   The donor has concerns that the project may cause harm, undermine advocacy goals or compromise safety.

4   The application was submitted after the deadline.

5   The quality of the proposal is poor, or important information is missing or incorrect.

6   The donor's budget for the period has already been allocated.

Making the Decision to Apply

When a donor has an open call for applications, it is important that sex worker-led organisations carefully review the requirements when deciding if they should apply. Completing an application is a time and labour-intensive process. Most sex worker-led organisations are working with limited staff and resources.

1   Does the organisation meet the donor's requirements?

   a   *Geographical area*: Some donors only fund organisations located or working in certain regions, countries and localities.

   b   *Registration*: Some donors require that organisations be legally registered, which can be a barrier for sex worker-led organisations.

   c   *Age*: Some donors only fund organisations that are new. Others only fund established organisations that have existed for a number of years.

   d   *Financial capacity and records*: Some donors require organisations to have a bank account that can receive international transfers. Some require audited accounts.

2 Does the work meet the donor's requirements?

   a *Theme*: Many donors have specific funding priorities – the application must fall within the donor's priorities.

   b *Type of work*: Some donors may only fund research or advocacy or services – the application must fit within the donor's criteria.

3 Does the organisation have the capacity to complete this application and manage the grant?

   a Is there enough staff and time to complete all the parts of the application?

   b If the application is successful, is there a system or plan for managing a grant that size?

   c Does the organisation have the resources to meet the donor's record keeping and reporting requirements?

4 Does the donor place limits on the organisation's activities? Some donors may restrict the types of activities they fund. For example, to receive money from USAID, non-US based organisations have to sign an 'anti-prostitution' clause in the contract[10], requiring them to endorse a policy of opposing sex work, which restricts the types of advocacy organisations can do.

Preparing a Plan

The first step in preparing a grant application is developing a plan that both fits the donor's requirements and meets the needs of the organisation and community.

When developing a plan, some questions to address are:

1 Does the donor provide core funding or just funding for projects? If they only provide project grants, how will this grant fit into the organisation's overall budget?

2 What key issues will the organisation address and what activities will address them?

3 What are the expected results?

4 Is the project or service needed and desired by the community? Does it fulfil a need that is not being met by another organisation?

5 How flexible or rigid are the terms of the grant? What can the money be spent on?

6 How does the plan fit with the donor's priorities?

If the plan does not fit perfectly with the donor's funding priorities, a clear explanation of how the work links to the donor's priorities should be included. It may have a positive impact on the donor's funding priorities, or may connect in ways that the donor might not think of without explanation.

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10 Analysing the Implementation of PEPFAR's anti-prostitution pledge; http://www.nswp.org/news/analysing-the-implementation-pepfars-anti-prostitution-pledge

Preparing a Budget

Every donor will require a budget. Different donors will require different levels of detail in budgets. If the donor does not have detailed guidelines, the budget should be detailed enough to demonstrate to the donor how the money will be spent.

Each line of the budget should be clear about what it is for and how it relates to the proposed activities. Provide detail on, for example:

- **Personnel costs** – will the proposed activities be done by staff or consultants? Will staff be full-time or part-time?
- **Overheads** – organisational running costs
- **Activity costs**, including
  - Number of participants that are expected for each activity.
  - Number of training events/meetings/workshops.
  - Number of publications/resources to be produced.

The budget should include an estimate of how much each activity will cost and how much staff time will be needed as well as any overheads/administrative costs involved in running the programme. Even rough estimates will show donors that the applicant has given thought to these aspects of the project.

A 'contingency line', to cover unexpected expenses, should be a part of the budget – but it should not be too big.

The numbers in the budget must match the rest of the application. If the proposal narrative says the organisation will provide a certain number of workshops or plan to work with a certain number of participants, these numbers should be the ones that are used to calculate the budget and be included in the budget.

Funding from other sources and in-kind donations should be included in the budget. In-kind donations can include staff time from another organisation, food donated for an event, free space for meetings – anything that is not money.

When applying for project funding, information should be included about how core costs for keeping the organisation running will be covered. If possible, include a contribution to the running costs of the organisation in the budget. Showing other sources of funding and support can demonstrate to a donor that the organisation has other resources to help it be successful and the experience and capacity to manage the grant well.

> *"There are many groups that ask for a maximum amount, while they don't have any evidence of having a financial and decision-making structure in place (or clarifying that they will put that in place) to be able to properly handle that money. That is considered quite a risk, which not many donors out there will take. Ask for smaller amounts that seem to be more in line with the experience and capacity of the group. If your group has had some bad years in terms of fundraising but really you are sure you can handle larger amounts, make sure to clarify and argue that in your application. Or if you feel this is the right time for your group to expand rapidly, clarify how you will make sure that the right capacity and operational systems will be put in place using the grant."*
>
> *Nadia van der Linde, Red Umbrella Fund*

For international grants, there will be bank charges which should also be included in the budget. Exchange rates may also change (higher or lower) so the amount received may be more or less than expected.

Filling Out the Application

Every question on the application should be answered. For questions that are not applicable, or that the applicant does not have the information for, an explanation should be included for why that section is not completed. Questions that are left blank without explanation, or that are filled in with incorrect information will negatively impact the application.

Instructions for applying should be read and followed closely. It can be helpful to print out the instructions to be used as a checklist.

Contact information provided on the application should be accurate and up-to-date. Applicants may wish to provide multiple methods of contact. The application process can take several months, and individuals may leave the organisation or be unavailable to provide additional information when a donor requests it.

Writing the Narrative

The narrative is an explanation of the organisation's plan. It should be detailed enough to address questions that a donor may have, while being as concise as possible.

> *"Donors read a lot of applications so the more concise and engaging you can make yours the better. Share a little about your organisation's story, use examples to illustrate your relevance or past track record and impacts, be upfront about areas for growth or challenges, and let your voice come through."*
>
> *Rachel Thomas, Health and Human Rights Consultant* [11]

Elements of the narrative should include:

- Information about the organisation.
- Information about the needs of the community and the environment the organisation is working in.
- Information about the issues the organisation aims to address and the desired impact.[12]
- What the organisation is currently doing and what impacts that work has had.
- Proposed activities and how it builds on existing work.
- Why the project is important.
- If applying for core funding, what will happen after the grant is finished – how the organisation is sustainable.[13]
- How this project fits with the donor's funding priorities.
- Previous successes, challenges and areas for growth.

> *"Be upfront about your challenges and the areas where you may need technical assistance or capacity building. Funders appreciate knowing that you know your weaknesses, and are interested in addressing them. Sometimes they may even be able to offer funding or suggest resources to help."*
>
> *Rachel Thomas, Health and Human Rights Consultant*

A narrative should be written so that someone who does not know anything about the organisation, its work or its needs can understand it. It should be clear who is involved in implementing the work. Donors are often only in touch with one person in an organisation. If there is a strong team to implement the proposed activities that should be made clear in the narrative, as a sign of a healthy and sustainable programme.

When talking about previous successes, it is important to explain both the activities and results. For example, if 20 sex workers were trained, explain what they were trained on and how that benefited them as individuals or the community.

Narratives should use plain language as much as possible and avoid abbreviations or jargon that the donor may not understand.

An application should be compelling, to convince the donor that the organisation is worth funding. The donor should feel confident that the applicant has carefully considered what is needed to be successful.

Each application should be tailored to the donor. For example, Red Umbrella Fund has provided the following advice:

> *"Because we are a community-led donor, with applications being selected by community members, it is clear that groups that really write more from their heart, sharing their passion and energy and frustrations using their own wording and expression and their daily reality to explain it, get scored much higher than the perhaps more 'professional' applications, which seem more generic, general, and don't make it clear that it is really sex worker-led."*
>
> *Nadia van der Linde, Red Umbrella Fund*

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11 Rachel Thomas previously worked for the Open Society Foundations as a Senior Program Officer, and administered a grant portfolio on sex worker health and human rights.

12 Links to research, publications and best practices may be provided. This can help make the case of the importance and urgency of the issue, and provide evidence to support the relevance and effectiveness of the plan.

13 Donors do not want to invest in an organisation that will close after the grant is done. Responses can focus on capacity built, building additional funding opportunities, building volunteer and membership base, and strengthening processes that enable the organisation to function more effectively.

References

References are important, particularly for new or unknown organisations. References are provided by an individual or organisation that can confirm the legitimacy and quality of work of the organisation is doing. This should be an individual or group that has worked with the organisation, benefited from its work, or is familiar with its work. A donor who has had a positive experience funding an organisation can also be asked to provide a reference. A reference should not be the individual submitting the application or another person within the organisation applying for the grant.

Some donors have specific requirements for how many references are required, who they are, and what contact information to provide. Even if a donor does not ask for references, applicants should mention one or two organisations that can vouch for them.

Before including a reference in an application, it is important to:

1   **Ask for permission**. References are provided as a favour. If asked for permission, a referee can make sure they have up-to-date information about the organisation and application. They will also know to expect a call or email. Referees not responding is a common issue.

2   **Find out what a referee will say** about the organisation. A reference that that has negative things to say about the organisation or its work will hurt the chances of the application being successful. Applicants should ensure that referees are supportive of their organisation. Applicants should not assume that everyone they have worked with in the past will say good things about the organisation.

3   **Double check the contact information** for referees. Make sure that their email addresses and phone numbers are correct.

Gathering Requested Documents

Some donors will require additional documents with an application. These might include:

- Total income and expenditure the organisation expects for the year.
- Annual accounts.
- Annual report.
- Organisational reviews or assessments.
- Strategic plan.
- Theory of change.[14]

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14   A 'Theory of change' describes how the activities an organisation is planning will create the desired results. It explains how and why change happens and how the organisation fits in. http://www.happyfundraiser.com/the-happy-fundraiser/how-to-write-a-theory-of-change

Begin gathering or drafting these documents early in the application process. They can be time-consuming to prepare.

Organisations which are newer or have had limited support to date may not be able to submit all of these documents. If this is the case, applicants should reach out to the donor to explain the situation and find out if what they can provide will be enough to be eligible to submit an application.

Getting Help with the Application

Donors want to receive high-quality applications. Some donors are happy to answer questions in preparing the application and may be able to offer technical support.

Before asking for help, applicants should read the instructions carefully.

If parts of the application process are still unclear, applicants may ask the donor for clarification. This should be done in advance of the deadline – donors may have a cut-off date for answering questions.

Other organisations with experience applying for grants, or regional networks may also be able to offer technical support.

Submitting an Application

Applicants should try to have their application completed and ready to send well before the deadline. If there are any problems or technical issues it may take time to resolve them.

Donor's instructions for submitting should be followed. Applicants should make sure that:

- The application and any required documents are in the correct file format (if the donor does not specify file format, PDF can be opened on any system, without requiring special software).

- All the required files are included.

If the application is to be submitted by **email**, applicants should make sure:

- The email address they are sending it to is correct – copying and pasting the address is safer than typing the address.

- The subject line is descriptive or meets the donor's requirements, for example 'Application for 2016 grant'.

- The email system and internet provider are able to handle the size of the files to be sent. Attachments may need to be sent in separate emails.

Some donors require that applications be **uploaded** to a specific website. Applicants with unreliable internet connections should allow extra time for submitting their application. Before submitting:

- Register on the donor's website and have any codes required to send the application ready.

- If the donor has an online application form, draft the application offline and copy and paste into the online form. If possible, applicants should save their progress.

When submitting close to the deadline, it is important to be aware of time zone differences. The end of donor's day may not be the same as the end of the applicant's day. Missing the deadline even by a few hours may result in an application not being considered.

Follow Up

After submitting an application, most donors will send an email to confirm they received it. If no confirmation is sent, applicants can contact the donor to make sure they received it.

After confirming receipt of the application, applicants should wait and be available to answer any questions the donor has. Many donors will include a timeline in their instructions. If the donor's timeline passes without any response, applicants may reach out to enquire about the status of their application. Donors may be unable or unwilling to answer questions about the status of individual applications during the review process, which may take several months.

If an application is unsuccessful, the donor may be willing to provide feedback on how to improve the application. This can be an excellent opportunity for organisations to improve the quality of their grant applications in the future.

Grant Application Checklist

- Read the call for applications, the application form and instructions.
- Make a list of the information and documents that the donor requires.
- Prepare a budget.
- Write the project narrative.
- Collect references.
  - Get permission.
  - Find out what a reference will say.
  - Verify references' contact information.
- Gather requested documents.
- Review all the materials before submitting.
  - Check calculations.
  - Make sure the budget and narrative match.
  - Make sure all information is accurate and truthful.
  - Have someone outside the organisation review the materials for clarity.
- Submit the application.
  - Verify the donor's contact information, register an account or prepare required codes.
  - Attach all required documents.
  - Submit before the deadline (be aware of different time zones).
- Confirm the donor received the application.
- Wait to hear back.

Developing a Financial Management System

In order to properly manage a grant, it is vital that organisations have a transparent financial management system in place. The decision-making body of the organisation should agree who makes decisions about when and how the money is spent in line with the budget.

A donor is entitled to ask for an audit of income and expenditure. It is important to record all income and expenditure and have paperwork (receipts and invoices) to back up it up. Organisations will need someone to record their income and expenditure on a monthly basis. This should be a person with some experience in financial management and preparing accounts. A senior member of the organisation should check the organisation's financial records and accounts on a regular basis. Financial reports should be shared with and approved by the decision-making body of the organisation. If needed, plan for training.

An organisation should have its own bank account, to make it easier to track spending. Organisations should avoid using cash, whenever possible. Instead, cheques, money orders, money transfers, debit cards or credit cards are preferred when possible. These methods leave a paper trail which can make tracking spending much easier. Some donors may not allow cash transactions for accountability purposes.

Sex worker-led groups that are small or have not registered may not have much experience dealing with finances and budgets or be able to open a bank account. Organisations that are not able to do their own financial management may partner with an established organisation to act as their 'fiscal sponsor'. The 'fiscal sponsor' would receive the grant and ensure that it was managed in line with the budget and national regulations. There should be a written agreement with the 'fiscal sponsor' outlining responsibilities and process for authorising transactions, including how much the 'fiscal sponsor' will be paid. This might be a flat fee or a percentage of the grant.

Organisations without a financial management system in place may talk to other organisations in their country or location about the systems they use and ask for support in setting up an appropriate system for the size of the organisation. Each country has its own regulations and legal requirements.

Developing a Monitoring and Evaluation System

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) provides information about the successes and challenges of the work being done. This information is not just important to donors, it will let the organisation know how it is doing and what areas need improvement.

Some donors will have very specific M&E requirements. Organisations should find out what the requirements are in advance, so that they can collect the necessary information from the beginning. Donors may require quantitative (numbers) results, or they may be more interested in qualitative impacts (narratives). Consider what information is possible and safe to track and share.

More generally, M&E should reflect on what has been learned or accomplished and what should be done differently in the future. While it is important to record what was done, the results and impacts of the work are more meaningful.

"The fact that 35 police officers participated in a training doesn't really mean much, but the fact that five of them have started to refer sex workers to a local drop-in centre for services does."

Rachel Thomas, Health and Human Rights Consultant

Organisations should collect stories that demonstrate how their work has had a positive impact. It may be difficult to quantify the impacts of some types of work, like advocacy or producing a report, but narrative stories from individuals or reflections from other organisations can be a powerful measure of success.

M&E also should record and reflect on challenges and things that could be done better. If a mistake is made or things do not go according to plan, it should be included in M&E as a learning experience. Organisations should be able to explain why things went wrong, what they would do differently next time, and how they can prevent the same mistake from happening again. Mistakes may not be a significant problem to donors if organisations are transparent and able to identify lessons learned.

While M&E can feel unimportant compared to the work sex worker-led organisations are doing every day, it's essential to ensuring organisations stay on-track with their goals and demonstrating to donors and the community long-term success for the organisation.

Reporting

Donors generally have reporting requirements, so they can understand how the money has been used and if the goals were met. Donors also need to report about the impact of their grants to their governing body. Donors want to fund organisations that will create positive and meaningful results with money that they give.

Understanding what the reporting requirements are will enable an organisation to prepare for reporting from the beginning of the grant period. If a donor requires periodic reports during the grant period, organisations should schedule time to create these reports. Meeting reporting deadlines is an important part of accountability and building a positive relationship with the donor.

When reporting on their work, organisations should be concise and share their successes.

> *"Many groups share very limited information about what they've done and do not clearly articulate their successes. For example, even if a law proposal didn't get accepted in parliament, the fact that the group led a campaign with 10 allied organisations, was interviewed for national media, and met with members of parliament to share their recommendations are already great achievements in many contexts. In some reports, I've seen groups write something like: did advocacy campaign for new law proposal, which was declined by the parliament. And that is it."*
>
> *Nadia van der Linde, Red Umbrella Fund*

Regular backups of all documentation should be made: financial records and monitoring and evaluation information. Without backups, there is a risk of losing data if a laptop is stolen or someone leaves the organisation. Some of these records are essential and recreating them may be impossible. Back up important documents on a USB or external hard drive or using a service that stores them in a secure place online. Sensitive information should be stored securely.

Reapplying: Next Funding Cycle

A donor that an organisation has established a positive relationship with can be its best source of on-going funding. By being transparent, accountable and producing informative donor reports on time, organisations can show donors that they are a good partner and will continue to use funds wisely.

Some donors may have a renewal process, while others have one process for all applications. When seeking to get funded for the next grant period, the application should be given the same care and attention that the first application received, and incorporate lessons the organisation has learned along the way. Organisations may also ask whether the donor is able to support a multi-year grant now that they have a proven track record.

> *"Don't be afraid to ask for a phone call with a current donor to talk about how the project has gone and your ideas for next steps. This is a good opportunity to get a sense of what they may be willing and able to fund as follow-up."*
>
> *Rachel Thomas, Health and Human Rights Consultant*

Even if an organisation has an excellent relationship with a donor, there are many factors that might cause it to not get funded again, such as the donor's priorities or budget changing. However, the donor may be able to provide the organisation with a strong reference, or even introduce other donors to the organisation.

Emergency Grants

If an organisation faces a serious threat to its work or the lives of its members, or has an immediate opportunity to make great gains, an emergency grant may be able to rapidly provide funds to deal with unexpected and critical situations. Project or core grants do not always have the same flexibility to respond to unexpected opportunities and threats.

The applications for emergency grants are typically shorter, but the same principles apply. Emergency grants are available through Urgent Action Fund and Frontline Defenders. Organisations which currently have a grant may be able to receive additional emergency funds from their donor.

Community-Based Fundraising

Community-based fundraising is when an organisation's members raise money from the communities who will benefit from the work they are doing or the locality they are operating in – rather than from governments or other donors. Typically community-based fundraisers use a variety of fundraising strategies which may include special events, selling T-shirts or charging for consulting services.

Few organisations can afford to hire a professional fundraiser, so an organisation's staff, volunteers and members become fundraisers. Community-based fundraisers welcome both small and large donations. Community-based fundraising is not only a way to raise funds, it is a form of organising and awareness raising in itself.

Community-Based Fundraising Methods

THE DIRECT ASK

An effective form of community-based fundraising is the 'direct ask'. This is asking people that the organisation's members know, directly face-to-face, over the phone or email for a *specific* amount of money. Many people, when asked directly for a donation, say yes and make a donation. Nothing in community-based fundraising has a higher success rate than just asking for money.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events are effective for increasing visibility of an organisation and its programmes, to celebrate a success or anniversary, the release of a report, or for community building. Special events keep the organisation in people's minds and can attract media attention. Every event an organisation puts on, no matter how big or small, should include a fundraising component. People at these events are some of an organisation's biggest supporters.

If the sole purpose is to urgently raise money, events are often not the right choice. Production costs and ticket sales are unpredictable. Putting on an event can be labour-intensive and time-consuming, leaving staff or members burnt out and exhausted. Events are an important part of an overall fundraising strategy but they should not be relied on exclusively.

Example: EMPOWER (Thailand)

Mai Janta, Manager of Can Do Bar and member of Empower, Thailand. "We had been running workshops where sex workers described what ideal working conditions would be: safety, health, economics, labour benefits etc. A group of sex worker leaders thought that the things we learned could be put together to be a model for policy-makers and society. However no one wanted it to be just one more piece of paper to get moved around and lost. They decided that the government and other agencies had little idea what safe fair work meant for sex workers in Thailand. They said 'We have been calling for this for decades and we all work in the same old bad conditions. We cannot wait any longer, we will build it ourselves. We Can Do it!'"

Empower has a long tradition of raising money, for example holding a party with a cover charge, selling shirts, banners, books, movies, theatre shows and artworks etc. This time sex workers decided to pool their money as a collective. Each share cost 1,000 Baht (equal to the average monthly phone bill). Some sex workers took one share, some took 100 shares! In the end they raised 1 million baht.

They used their own labour to knock down walls, paint, decorate and build a working model of a just fair workplace – Can Do Bar which opened September 2006. In terms of money Empower break even every year with a little left over but they count their real profits as the community pride they have, the number of their customers who come from agencies and groups visiting to understand the working conditions sex workers need, and the fact that every night, when the lights of Can Do go on, they say again to the world that sex workers... "Can Do!"

MEMBERSHIPS

Some organisations ask for membership fees. This can be a small but reliable source of income for sex worker-led organisations. Membership fees should take into account the members' ability to pay. Organisations may have a sliding scale of membership for individuals who wish to support the organisation financially and those who have few financial resources. However, many sex worker-led organisations are run by volunteers, and asking for a fee, even if very small, could deter some sex workers from participating. Organisations should consider the impact of charging membership fees before introducing them.

Collecting membership fees can involve a lot of administrative work, so organisations should collect them once a year. Organisations might renew all memberships on the same day each year, or send a renewal to each member on the date that they joined.

DONATION BOX

At events, workshops or drop-in spaces, a box can be provided for participants to give a small, anonymous donation. Members who want to raise money for an organisation may place a donation box in their workplace to collect donations from clients.

RECURRING DONATIONS

Individual donors who give a set amount every month can be one of the most reliable and steady sources of income. While the amount might be insignificant to the individual donor, multiple recurring donations each month can add up quickly.

Organisations should make it easy for the individual donor to set up their donation, so that it happens each time without requiring any effort on their part. Depending on the capacity of an organisation and the financial structure of the country it is located in, pre-authorised bank payment forms, post-dated cheques, or an online billing system may be used.

FEE FOR SERVICE

Some sex worker-led organisations offer training and consultation to other organisations looking to improve their knowledge or skill at providing services for sex workers. Sex worker-led organisation should ensure that members who do this work get paid at a fair rate that respects their knowledge as experts. This does not require members publicly identify as sex workers; they just need to be recognised as experts in the sex worker community.

SELLING PRODUCTS

Malee of EMPOWER Thailand had this to say about selling their products: "We turn our ideas and understanding into products like t-shirts, banners, books, movies, theatre and artworks. People don't buy Empower products as charity, but rather they are sharing and supporting our ideas and the changes we are making". Costs of production can be high and if so, this fundraising method should be supplemented with other methods. Selling products may be less about profit and more about advertising an organisation by people who are proud to support it and are likely to give through other channels.

Members can also sell items such as cosmetics, clothing or crafts that do not have the organisation's name printed on it. The money from these sales goes to the organisation. Many organisations in Kenya use this method of fundraising.

CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGNS

A 'crowdfunding' campaign is community-based method of fundraising using the internet. Platforms such as Kickstarter and Thundafund take a percentage of any money raised. Some platforms will not release the money to the organiser unless the fundraising goal is met. Shamefully, some internet crowdfunding platforms such as Fundly and GiveForward discriminate against sex workers and some have even confiscated the funds collected by sex workers. Before choosing a crowdfunding platform, organisers should carefully read the terms of service for any platform. Platforms which sex workers are successfully using may be a safer choice. Some crowdfund campaigns involve offering 'perks' for donations. Unfortunately offering even legal sexual services (such as explicit images) will often violate a crowdfunding website's terms of service.

Successful crowdfunding campaigns usually require lots of promotion on social media, and actively inviting people to support the project.

Sites such as CrowdMapped[15] list crowdfunding sites that serve different parts of the world.

BENEFITS

Other organisations or individuals may wish to hold an event to raise funds for a sex worker-led organisation. This can be an effective method of raising funds. However, before agreeing, the sex worker-led organisation should consider several factors:

- Is the event aligned with the organisation's missions and values?

- Will any of the organisation's resources, staff or volunteers be required?

- How will the host organisation collect information from individuals who donate?

- What is the fundraising goal for the event?

- Will members of the community be able to participate in the event?

Ask questions and consider whether the event will benefit the sex worker community or build alliances to strengthen advocacy.

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15   CrowdMapped; http://www.crowdmapped.com/

IN-KIND DONATIONS

In-kind donations are non-cash contributions. Organisations should keep an updated list of things they need. Many other organisations that might not have money to donate may offer support with things like printing, office space, postage, computers, food, and translation. Some professionals, like lawyers, professional trainers or bookkeepers may be willing to provide some of their time or train staff or members for free.

For example, the Tanzania Sex Workers Alliance has a safe space for meetings which is provided by an established community health organisation.

SPONSORSHIPS AND CORPORATE DONATIONS

Companies and businesses may support the work being done by sex worker-led organisations if asked. Some companies may have a policy of donating money to community organisations, as a way to give back and raise their profile. Organisations should prepare a concise fundraising letter, which explain the organisation's work and goals (similar to the narrative for grant applications). If someone at the organisation has a relationship with the company, reaching out in person can be an effective way to secure a sponsorship.

Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Programme in Nairobi received their first funding from a local brewery, rather than a grant from a donor or government.

Barriers to Fundraising and Solutions

Sex workers face unique challenges when raising money including the stigma and criminalisation of sex work. Here are some methods for dealing with stigma and criminalisation.

WRITE A STORY THAT CELEBRATES SEX WORKERS

In community-based fundraising efforts sex worker-led organisations have more freedom to use the language and culture that reflects and respects their community members. Community-based fundraising is a form of community organising – fundraising members must speak to many people about why they believe in the work they are doing and why they believe others should support them as well. This can achieve two goals: bringing in needed resources while also changing the culture around sex work. These messages should be incorporated into all of the organisation's fundraising work.

VISIBILITY

To effectively raise money, the community needs to know about the organisation and its work. The level of visibility an organisation aims for will depend on many factors, including safety. Having an active social media presence and visibility in the media will increase the number of people who may donate.

'Ambassadors' can be an effective way or increasing visibility and give an organisation credibility in the eyes of the public. An 'ambassador' can be a community member or may be someone with professional status, such as a lawyer, or a well-known public figure, such as an actor, who can get the organisation's message to a wider audience.

USE INTERMEDIARIES FOR RECEIVING MONEY AND ISSUING RECEIPTS

Some organisations partner with an established non-sex work-related organisation which acts as their 'fiscal sponsor'. Donations to the sex worker-led organisation are processed through the fiscal sponsor which also issues the receipts. Receipts do not have the name of the sex worker organisation on it. For example Desiree Alliance, a US sex worker-led organisation, has a fiscal sponsor which handles the finances of many organisations that are not sex work specific. Receipts issued for donations to Desiree Alliance do not show the organisation's name.

PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY OF SEX WORKERS

To minimise the risks of stigma and criminalisation arising, some organisations elect to be open to 'sex workers and allies'. Some organisations require that the majority of staff and board have sex work experience to ensure that the direction and decision-making remains in the hands of sex workers.

COLLABORATION

Sex worker-led organisations that are doing critical work within their communities are sometimes ineligible for grants, because they do not meet the donor's criteria or because they do not have the capacity for the reporting requirements of many donors At the same time, some organisations with non-profit or charity status may not have the capacity or connections to represent diverse sex worker communities. Collaboration between non-profits and unregistered sex worker-led organisations can be a way to build strength, share resources among organisations, and reach more members of the community.

The Malawi Sex Workers Alliance (MASWA) formed a partnership with the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA+). MANERELA+ provides MASWA with a safe place to meet, and together formed a team to provide sensitisation and map the organisations that work with sex workers. Via MANERELA+, MASWA has access to funds from the AIDS Rights Alliance of Southern Africa (ARASA), a sex worker-rights donor.

nswp

Global Network of Sex Work Projects
Promoting Health and Human Rights

SOLIDARITY IN ACTION

Even before the HIV epidemic, sex workers were organising themselves. NSWP, as a global network of sex worker-led organisatons, has strong regional and national networks across five regions: Africa; Asia-Pacific; Europe (including Eastern Europe and Central Asia); Latin America; and North America and the Caribbean.

NSWP has a global Secretariat in Scotland, UK, with staff to carry out a programme of advocacy, capacity building and communications. Its members are local, national or regional sex worker-led organisations and networks committed to amplifying the voices of sex workers.

SOAIDS