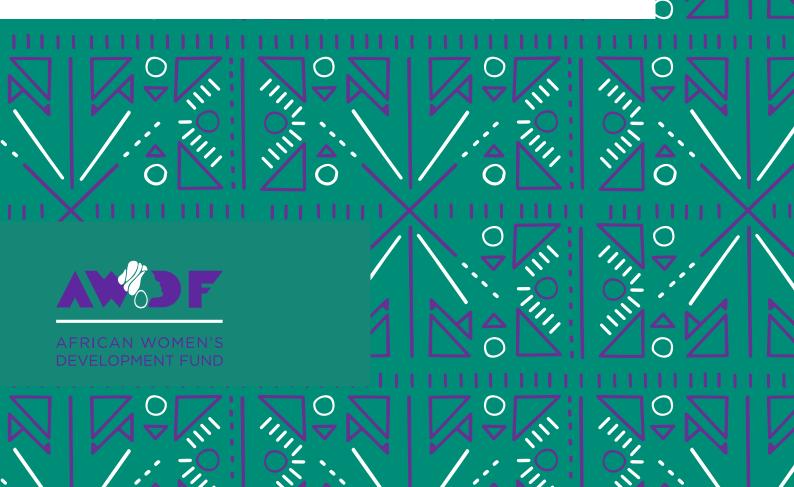
A Practical Handbook on TECHNIQUES FOR RESOURCE MOBILISATION

FOR COMMUNITY BASED AND SMALL WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN AFRICA



Credits

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Published by African Women's Development Fund in 2011

Revised version published by African Women's **Development Fund in 2017**

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Produced with support from the African Capacity **Building Foundation.**



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Foreword

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) was founded out of the need for African women to take greater leadership around the resources allocated to advancing rights and development on the African continent. In the almost two decades of our existence as a fund we aimed to provide the 'best quality' resourcing to African women's organisations, paying attention both to the important work they do to advance equality and justice, but also to address the needs that these organisations have in order to adapt, grow in scale and impact and manage the stresses created by political and economic crises and emergencies.

AWDF established the Capacity Building Unit in order to provide more holistic support for our grantee organisations. Through capacity building programming we make targeted investments in African women's organisations to allow them to reflect, scale up and build efficient systems as well as growing inspiring and accountable organisational cultures. As Hope Chigudu, feminist organisational development expert and long-time technical consultant to AWDF put it "we invest to help nurture organisations with a soul". This kind of core investment can be hard to find - particularly for smaller African women's organisations - as much of the funding available for women's rights focuses on project-based investments. At AWDF we believe that in order to achieve impacts towards our collective mission of advancing our women's rights we also need to dedicate resources to help build the capacity of changemaker organisations.

This 'Techniques for Resource Mobilisation' handbook is part of a rejuvenated series that AWDF has developed for the women's rights organisations we fund to strengthen their capacities around resources and finances. These tools are aimed at small and community based women's organisations working to build their systems and structures and find ways to sustain their critical work. The handbook outlines ways of thinking about resources beyond money, along with encouraging bold and practical approaches to developing a resourcing strategy.

We hope that this document will continue to be useful for women's rights organisations. We welcome feedback on how you are using it!

Jessica Horn Director of Programmes, AWDF

¹ Chigudu, H. and Chigudu, R., 2015. *Strategies for Building an Organisation with a Soul*. African Institute for Integrated Responses to Violence Against Women and HIV/AIDS (AIR).

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This handbook is a practical guide to 'Techniques for Resource Mobilisation' for grantees of the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF). This handbook was been developed at the request of community based women's organisations that are current and prospective AWDF grantees. As a grantmaker, AWDF provides support to African women's groups who are not likely to have access to a broad range of financial or capacity building support. A needs assessment exercise conducted by AWDF revealed that poor access to reader-friendly information on resource mobilisation among other subjects posed a challenge for the organisational capacity enhancement of grantees and women's groups. In response to these requests, this guide for grantees and other African women's organisations is meant for use in building knowledge, understanding and capacity towards organisational growth and sustenance, while enhancing individual standards of living. Using simplified (non-technical) language, this handbook unravels the myths around resource mobilisation and offers various practical ways to mobilise resources at an organisational level, along with sharing advice and research from a variety of sources. It is expected that this handbook will serve as a useful information tool that can be adapted to match the particular needs of women's groups in their search for resources.

Abbreviations/ Acronyms

AWDF	African Women's Development Fund
DFID	Department for International Development
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
SWOT	Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threats
UN Agencies	United Nations Agencies



Academic Institutions: Educational institutions dedicated to education and research, which grants academic degrees.

Bilateral Organisations: Organisations that receive funding from the countries they are based in, and who use that funding to support other countries.

Community-based Organisations: Nonprofit groups that work within communities, and seek to create change at the local level.

Corporate Institutions: For-profit organisations with the primary function of making money or accruing assets.

Decentralised Institutions: Authority is restructured in a way that distributes power and responsibility evenly between local, regional, and central authorities.

Enabling Environment: A set of conditions (organisational, fiscal, informational, legal, political, and cultural) that impact the extent to which an organisation can, in context of this manual, access and utilize resources.

Executive Summary: A section in a project or grant proposal which provides a snapshot of all that will be included in the proposal, summarising all subsequent sections.

General Objective/Goal: States the overall development or aim towards which your more specific project purpose should contribute.

International Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs): A non-profit citizens' group organized and working towards societal impact on a local, national or international level. **Letter of Interest (LOI):** A one-page document summarising what you hope to achieve and how. This is usually a preliminary step for donor funding, and is often used in deciding whether donors are interested in getting more information or not.

Mobilisation Mechanisms: A variety of techniques and approaches needed to mobilise resources to implement the organisation's work for achieving it's goals.

Multilateral Organisations: These are organizations formed between three or more nations to work on issues that relate to all of the countries in the organization.

Philanthropic Foundations: A nongovernment nonprofit organization with internally managed assets provided by donors and used towards social impact

Private Foundations: An independent organisation set up for solely charitable purposes. funding for private foundations usually come from a single individual, a family, or a corporation, which then receive tax deductions for donations.

Project Purpose or Specific Objective: A specific objective is usually something that your project should be able to achieve through its work.

Purpose of the Grant: Section in a project or grant proposal which describes the problem the writer is proposing to address and how it will be addressed.

Resources: What we, as women's organisations have, and can use to access or leverage other needed support in order to achieve our organisational goals / aims.

Road Map: A strategic plan of approaches, mechanisms and ways to generate and mobilise resources.

Introduction

What are Resources?

For our purpose, we describe resources as...

'What we, as women's organisations have, and can use to access or leverage other needed support, in order to achieve our organisational goals/ aims'.

Why do we Mobilise Resources?

Resources are mobilised for a cause.

This means that there is an identified need to be addressed or resolved and an issue which requires support.

Community-based women's organisations need to mobilise resources to start or continue activities that will help their organisations achieve the desired impact, outcomes, become sustainable and selfsustaining in order to achieve their mission.

Where can Resources be Found?

Every community is endowed with various resources and talents that can feed into the overall development of a community.

However, without access to these resources their real value cannot be realised and their impact cannot be felt by the community especially women and girls in Africa. Therefore, to be able to gain access to resources, women's organisations must be able to:

- Identify their needs;
- Locate the correct donors, and;
- Mobilise a variety of resources over time.

Resource Mobilisation is NOT Fundraising

Resource mobilisation is often considered to be an alternative for fundraising and in most cases is used interchangeably. Resource mobilisation however, is much more than just fundraising because it includes:

- Accessing a range of resources (rather than just money/financial);
- Building a network from a wide range of resourceproviders;
- Using a variety of mobilisation mechanisms.

Resources are the means by which organisations secure the cash and non-cash inputs required to accomplish desired and planned projects and objectives.

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What Type of Resources are Available?

Resources can be grouped into 4 main categories:

- Human
- Social
- Physical
- Economic/Financial

Human Resources

Human resources are central to women's rights work.

Without people there would be no activism, no community and no ideas and skills to design and implement interventions that support women's rights and gaining full equality. When your organisation maps your existing and desired resources, consider what human resources you already have available, along with those you currently do not, but could recruit to advance your organisation's mission. This includes existing staff, members of your board and advisors, volunteers, as well as members of the community that you are working with.

Individuals who live and work in a community are the human resources of that area, so, be curious, find out about people's talents, knowledge and passions and see if there are ways to bring these into your organisation's work. Mobilised effectively, human resources are the most valuable resource for any organisation. In addition to providing skills and services, individuals and groups can:

- Provide consultation on what can work and what cannot;
- Offer support and commitment to a cause;
- Encourage the involvement of others in the organisation's activities / projects;
- Support community fundraising efforts.

Volunteering is an important aspect of mobilisation for women's rights. When engaging support from volunteers make sure to define their roles clearly, acknowledge their work and capacity, and consider if they have needs such as around basic training, safety and security, transport and refreshments that your organisation could provide in order for volunteers to move safely and effectively contribute to your projects. You should aim to have some level of compensation - especially for African women - for any human resource they gift to your organisation.

Social Resources

Various social resources are also important and available to support the effort of women's organisations.

- Other social movement and community organisations
- Supportive traditional authorities;

² Crisis Action. 'Component 1: Clever Coalitions' in *Creative Coalitions: A Handbook for Change*. Available at <u>https://crisisaction.org/</u> handbook/clever-coalitions/



- Youth associations;
- Market women's associations;
- Progressive Religious organisations;
- Trade unions; and
- Alumnae associations

These various social groups can be mobilised effectively to support the work of women's organisations. Creating coalitions² with external social organisations could result in sharing of physical, financial and economic resources. It could also result in the identification of shared needs and joint application/strategy developed to access more resources, individually or as a coalition. In these times of intersectional practice and coalition building initiatives some donors are now seeing the benefit of resourcing cross sectoral work.

Physical Resources

Physical resources range in type and are often sources at a local level. They include:

- Water
- Forest
- Soil / land
- Rainfall, and
- Technological and Mechanical tools

Many communities will be facing increasing limitations and restrictions on their natural physical resources, and many communities do not yet have the infrastructure or economic wealth to overly rely on technological and mechanical resources. Organisations should be aware of the impact of their work on local physical resource supplies and endeavor to assess the sustainability of their programmes if relying on physical resources. Economic and financial resources may be needed in order to strengthen, grow or manage physical resources.

Economic and Financial Resources

Economic and financial resources should be mobilised from several sustainable sources using a wide range of mechanisms.

Tips on how to access and manage such funds can be found in AWDF's "<u>A Practical Handbook for</u> Financial Management for Community Based and Small Women's Rights Organisations in Africa" and "<u>A Practical Handbook for Proposal and Report</u> Writing Manual for Community Based and Small Women's Rights Organisations in Africa."

Economic and financial resources include:

- International non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Bilateral and Multilateral Organisations (E.g.: The World Bank, DFID, UN Agencies)
- National governments
- Decentralised institutions
- Private and philanthropic foundations
- Corporate and academic institutions



- Community-based Organisations
- Corporate sponsorship
- Subscriptions and Member donations

In summary, resource mobilisation is more comprehensive than simply fundraising. Fundraising relies solely on financial and economic resources and does not factor in additional resources available at a local/community level.

Reflection

- Resource mobilisation provides people with the opportunity to contribute their local/community knowledge and expertise to projects and programmes that impact their community.
- Non-financial resources are equally as important as financial ones; and
- Resources can be generated internally by the organisation and at a community level, rather than relying on what can be provided by external sources/donors.

Effective Resource Mobilisation

Effective resource mobilisation should be a lesson in power sharing, redistribution and collaboration.

Resources should be transferred to those in need from those who have and are able to give.

It is necessary to create an enabling environment to ensure that you:

- **Do not lose contributors** willing to make donations to your organisation.
- **Receive larger contributions** from existing contributors.
- Gain new contributors.
- Obtain short and long term, diversified resources that build your organisation sustainably

To create an enabling environment and mobilise resources you will need to:

- Set out a 'Road Map' from your organisation's current place to your desired resource mobilisation or fundraising needs
- List the resource needed for each of your organisation's projects or organisational priorities
- **Know how** the organisation is going to go about mobilising resources.
- **Build a team** of staff and volunteers who will be responsible for mobilising the needed resources

 Manage a diversified budget - incorporating how much needs to be spent in mobilising resources, including recognition and compensation for African women who are giving their intellectual property and time to your organisation.

There are three main components to effective resource mobilisation:

- Accessing Existing Wealth. You can tailor your 'Road Map' with different strategies to persuade groups who can provide a wide range of resources:
 - Indigenous / Local Organisations
 - Philanthropists
 - Grassroots Organisations
 - Government agencies
 - Businesses
 - Individual donors/membership subscription
- **Generating New Wealth**. Your organisation can create avenues for building resources including:
 - Selling services or products
 - Establishing and operating microcredit programmes
 - Tapping social investment resources
 - Building reserve funds with investment income
 - Membership and subscription packages
- **Expanding Non-financial Resources**. Don't underestimate the significance of non-direct financial contributions. These include:
 - Volunteer time and experience;



- Volunteer skilled labour, such as seconded professional staff;
- Member and subscriber action
- Goods and materials;
- Champions, who will promote your achievements, widen your circle and open doors;
- Training;
- Space to conduct your organisation's activities
- Locations to hold fundraising and resource mobilisation events.

Fundraising Methods

For the successful planning and implementation of a resource fundraising campaign, you will need to:

- Outline techniques for cultivating relationships and gaining financial and other resource contributions;
- Provide new ideas and/or direction to existing fundraising initiatives in your organisation plus building in coalition and collaboration with other organisations working in similar areas or for the same community who may also be mobilising resources that could impact your organisation;
- Estimate costs for all planned fundraising activities, in addition to those for which you need to mobilise resources;

- Plan strategically for the fundraising effort, being clear on your objectives, targets and potential sources of resources;
- Connect with one or more fundraising expert advisers who are committed to working with you to support in the mobilising of resources to match your road plan.

Tips for Engaging Different Audiences:

- Private individuals may respond better to personal touch, one to one communication, personalised newsletters and incentives.
- Government agencies may require a more formal written approach or to adhere to a specific fund criteria.
- Small businesses or corporations may be more interested in a "business plan" or to show added value of your project/ programme.
- Members and Subscribers will want to see the benefit to their investment overtime, including assets and incentives.
- Philanthropic donors often draw from recommendations and existing relationships so maintain them and have champions who can speak on your behalf.



Before embarking on resource mobilisation and involving volunteers, potential and existing donors, you will also need to pay attention to ensuring that your organisation is seen as effective and dynamic in its approach, identity and impact.

Before Asking Donors, Ask Yourself Why...

The chief purpose of a funding proposal is persuasion, NOT description.

You will need to introduce your proposed project in a way that is unique for each donor. In order to do this, you must know yourself first.

Know Yourself

Knowing yourself describes not only having a deep understanding of what your organisation is and what it has to offer, but it also entails being familiar with yourself and the other representatives of your organisation as individuals.

On an individual level, it is important that you and the other representatives of your organisation are clear on why you are interested in seeing your work succeed. You should be able to describe why you have chosen to dedicate time and energy into this cause or work. These intentions will come through in every forum where you ask for support and resources.

On an organisational level, it is crucial that your organisation be presented as a "good risk" for a donor. A "good risk" is a project that is likely to make a difference for its cause, and to sustain changes and improvement.

Knowing yourself in such a way that you can project a credible picture to possible donors is not something that happens overnight. It is an ongoing part of building your organisational capacity.

Your persuasive pitch and donors are critical for the success of a project or an organisation, but there are many other parts of your organisation's identity that help to ensure the success of your project.

Shape your Identity

- Build an overall mission and goal for your organisation – know why you exist, who your work is intended to benefit, how you are linked to the intended beneficiary community and what you are committed to achieving through your work.
- Gather a council or board that provides the organisation with a credible governance structure. This means that you need to think carefully about individuals who can be most helpful in building a strong reputation and organisation and who can help with fundraising. Donors are interested in who is affiliated with your organisation and a short biography of each person, reflecting, for example, such factors as experience, proof of concept, community links, and diversity (gender, ethnic /racial, age, expertise) can provide that information.
- **Recruit key staff or volunteers**, who are in place to build and strengthen the organisation and, therefore, the project work. Here too you want to present brief biographies of the people who will



be central in the project, showing why they are appropriate and the impact of their work on other projects or for your organisation.

- Ways of conveying the impact of your work, through letters from beneficiaries or partners, evaluations (formal or informal, such as case studies), filmed testimonials, photographs or videos of your organisation at work or visits to the field. These may not be appropriate in every instance, but can be helpful when a potential donor wants to know more than what you have presented in your solicitation letter or proposal.
- Present clear, transparent financial information regarding your organisation, including an independent financial accounting or audit if you have one.
- **Promote a visible and recognisable identity** in the form of an organisational logo, tagline and branding (which is useful but not essential).

In summary, you need to present yourself as a sound, accountable organisation, with proof of concept and competent skills to achieve your objectives.

Reflection

Answers the following questions to guide your planning before fundraising begins:

- What is the mission or goal of your organisation?
- What will the fundraising achieve?
- What is/are the identified problem(s) that the organisation seeks to resolve?
- What is your organisation's special contribution?
- How will the money and resources mobilised have impact?
- How much will you need now and overtime?
- What are the overhead costs of your organisation
- Is there a cost of managing the funds and resources you are going to raise?



- What will your main resource mobilisation and fundraising staff and volunteers be responsible for? How will they be held accountable for managing of resources?
- What platforms and methods will you use to get information out to the community (local and global) about the project and the resources you have, including their human resource?
- Who do you need to help coordinate your fundraising initiative?
- What is the balance between financial and non financial contributions?
- Do you need a different resource mobilisation and fundraising technique to effect different audiences?

Once you have answered the relevant questions and chosen the right people to help coordinate and manage the fundraising effort you are on your way to accessing the resources and funding you need.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT Analysis is a key tool in the processes of knowing yourself and shaping your identity as an organisation by assisting in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation, as well as the opportunities and threats facing it.

Having done this, when you write your funding proposal you will be able to show how you will build on your strengths, address your weaknesses, use the opportunities and confront the threats, throughout the implementation of the proposed project. In this way, you will show the possible donor that you have a realistic and accurate picture of your organisation, and that you have the insight and determination to build your organisational capacity to ensure that the project will be sustainable and successful.

Remember that strengths and weaknesses refer to internal factors while opportunities and threats refer to external factors.

CASE STUDY: Constructing a SWOT Table

It can be helpful to construct a SWOT table that seeks answers to the following questions³:

INTERNAL

POSITIVE	STRENGTHS What do we do well? What are our advantages? What relevant resources do we have?	WEAKNESSES What are our shortcomings? What are the causes of these shortcomings? How can we improve our services? What do we do poorly or not at all? Is our communication up to date? Is our budget availability enough to cover all our needs?	NEGATIVE
	OPPORTUNITIES What are the best opportunities in the near future? What are the market trends? What is the best period of the year to offer our services?	THREATS What obstacles are we facing and going to face?	

DOCITIVE

EXTERNAL

Working through these points with your staff and advisors - before you build your resource mobilisation road map and apply for donor funds - will also give them the confidence in your organisation and project. It is also an excellent way to engage donors who are close to you, asking them to feedback on where they see your strengths or ways to improve or take on new types of work not previously identified.

³The SWOT analysis example was adapted from '<u>NGO Self-assessment through a SWOT exercise</u>'.



Knowing a Donor... And what they want...

To make an informed choice about the right donors to send your proposal to, you need to know two aspects about a donor:

- You need an understanding of what the donor wants in terms of goals, mission, concerns; and
- You need to know the practical details of format, timing etc.

Most donors fund for a range of reasons, including:

- Making an impact or a difference they want their money to count, they want the work they fund to be successful, they want to be seen to be successful;
- Acquiring knowledge, understanding, information;
- Sharing knowledge, understanding, information, and in so doing, adding value to their chosen interventions (they will "specialise" and will want to fund projects that fit within their specialisation);
- Increasing their influence in addressing what they consider to be the problems of the world, the region, the country, or a particular area;
- **Supporting their values** and seeing them flourish;
- Gaining recognition;
- Building their reputation.

Your proposal must convince the donor that supporting your project is likely to lead to a successful intervention, one they can be proud to claim involvement with, and one the donor, and those the donor wants to influence, can identify with. People identify with people. This means that, when you write your proposal, it should feel alive, full of energy and not be an overly technical document in a language nobody uses in their day to day lives.

The more you know about a donor, the more you will be able to choose the donors who are right for you, and the more you will be able to present your proposal in a way that makes the donor want to "buy" it, or buy into you.

Different types of donors

Individual Contributions

Individual contributions are a growing source for resource mobilisation.

There are a lot of individuals willing to contribute to a good cause, but they vary in means and the degree to which they can give. The challenge lies in reaching these individuals and engaging them in ways that tap into their values and aspirations for making a difference.

- Identify those individuals who are most likely to give because they are already involved with your organisation. From this core group of contributors you can then build upon their networks and gain other connections who may provide additional resources
- **Combine communication approaches** including - face-to-face by staff or volunteers, personal calls by phone or in person - especially in following up and building relationships. Radio adverts, television appearances, writing personal correspondence combined with a call and follow up, invitation to special events.
- Engage the interest of the individual for which you are mobilising resources. It is advisable to ask for specific contribution so that the potential donor understands clearly what is being asked and can make an informed decision about whether and how much to give.

Good news is that once you have "won over" a contributor, they will often bring along others!

Group Contributors

The benefits of group contributors lie in the "numbers concept".

Small contributions from individual members result in big contributions from the group to which they belong.

Most groups want recognition as donors/resource mobilisers so they must be assured that by giving resources they will become partners in the project and implementation. Offer incentives so they will want to 'buy in' to your organisation over an extended period of time. Again, before you select this means of mobilising resources, ask yourself if you have the mechanisms for acknowledging, accepting and managing group gifts.

Corporate Sponsors

Most businesses are willing to contribute to programs at a local and national level.

They also want to win publicity and improve their business prospects. Many businesses especially those located or deriving their inputs from rural communities remain untapped. Most of them are looking out for partnership with credible institutions with the track record in developing communities that could potentially be drawn into their business environment. The challenge is aligning the institution's values to those of the local community and your organisation.



Remember you do not have to take resources from those who do not meet your organisational objectives or resource mobilisation road map!

Resources that can be obtained from these institutions can include:

- Products such as timber, cement, printed materials
- Financial resources;
- Technical skills;
- Equiptment;
- Land/Space;
- Food;
- Transporation.

Events & Promotion

Events are a good fun way to fundraise.

They bring people together and provide a platform to raise awareness of the organisation's cause and can provide the opportunity to ask for contributions. They are also an opportunity to enlist institutional or corporate sponsorship. But organisations also need resources in order to organise and put on events, so these resource needs will have to be written into your road map and resource mobilisation strategy.

Event types can include:

- Your own organisations event for resource mobilisation purposes;
- An existing traditional or social event at the community, district, regional or national level that features your organisation;

• An event jointly organised with other interest/ coalition/community groups.

To increase interest and the potential to raise funds, effective use can be made of local celebrities and / or leaders such as:

- Politicians (e.g. The Member of Parliament for the area);
- Senior Clergy;
- Local Actors / Actresses;
- Musicians, Sportsmen and women, etc (especially if they come from the local).

An advantage of using celebrities/known leaders is that people identify with them and are likely to accept their endorsement of your cause. In partnering with them, it is very important that they are adequately informed of the reason for the fundraising activity, and also believe in the cause. You do not want this to turn into a PR headache. A media strategy and agreed upon narrative helps keep everybody on the same page - supporting the celebrity in preparing their speech is also a very good way to ensure that the right message is carried across to the audience and potential donor/resource pool and that they do not say anything that can damage your organisation or the work you are doing. An integrated social media strategy should also be developed to support and promote celebrity endorsement.

Resource mobilisation events have great potential over the long term – especially if your organisation establishes a schedule for them and initial events are successful. They do require intensive planning and careful budgeting. Think carefully about the human resources that you will need to dedicate to ensuring that you produce the results desired. Ask yourself if the event - in terms of resources and money - will cost more than the desired outcomes.



This is especially true in our African context. Just make sure that you have considered all sides of the equation and that you have enough time and resources to achieve a great outcome and not compromise the ability to do your other work.

Reflection Once you have a donor/ resource base ask yourself:

- Do you have a good resource mobilised record-keeping system?
- What feedback and updates will you provide individuals?
- Do you have the capacity to thank donors in a variety of ways in writing, by phone, face to face?
- Do you have guidelines in place for declining donations that do not match your road plan?

Publicising your organisation and what you do...

Promoting yourself is integral to fundraising and resource mobilisation.

Promoting efforts should clearly communicate the:

- Strengths and track record of your organisation;
- **Projects to be undertaken** on receipt of the resources mobilised;
- Estimated cost and timeframe of the projects;
- **Benefits of the project** to those donating resources, and the community who will receive them.

In addition to direct fundraising materials, public relations and promotional activities include: word of mouth, media coverage, flyers, events, websites, social media marketing, alumni meeting or events; concerts, sporting events, online or cell phone mobilisation and online outreach.

Consider whether it may be possible for corporations or others in your network to provide in kind printing, communications, food, transportation and/or distribution services.

Packaging for Ponors

Whatever the donor wants, it wants it well-packaged.

This means getting the presentation right. Once you have decided that your goals and needs fit those of the donor, you need to know what the donor wants in terms of packaging.

You will need to find out the following information:

- **Contact information**. Name, address, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address, name and title of the person you should make contact with. This is the preliminary information which you can get from the donor's web page, from a directory, or from your colleagues in other organisations.
- **Funding priorities**. The goals, mission and concern of the donor, including its areas of interest, the themes it funds, whether it funds in particular geographical areas only, what its general funding criteria are and what else it funds. You can get this kind of information from a web page, from a brochure or annual report, as well as from your colleagues in other organisations as well as other individuals who are familiar with fundraising.
- **Grant history**. What size of grant the donor usually gives, to what type of organisations and over what time periods.
- **Decision-making process**. What the donor's decision-making process is and how long it is likely to take for a decision to be made once you submit a written proposal.

- Formats. Whether the donor has a special proposal format you should use, or guidelines you should follow, or whether you can use your own process. Some donors may want a short concept paper or letter of interest (LOI) before asking you to complete a full proposal. This enables them to make an initial judgment about whether or not they want to get involved in more detailed negotiations with you. That may also have guidance on how to prepare a budget and require certain appendices (e.g. reference letters) to support your request.
- Deadlines and Delivery. The dates when proposals are considered, the dates/ deadlines for submission of proposals for consideration, and any rules regarding delivery of the proposal. Some prefer email only, others prefer a printed copy. Make sure that your plan allows for sufficient internal feedback and review before the deadline.

All this information is best obtained from the appropriate desk officer or project officer. You will need a name of a person you can speak directly to, either by telephone or in a preliminary meeting. This initial contact is very important. It can set the tone for the whole relationship. Be prepared to represent your project if asked.

You should be prepared to "sell" your idea or organisation - by drawing from your track record of successes and past project impact - from the very first encounter with a donor, so know yourself before asking for resources.



Track your Record

The following are common areas in which you should be able to present such evidence:

- Previous results and impact;
- Good management competence with regard to projects and people;
- Good financial management skills;
- Technical competence in your particular field.

An organisation's annual report is typically the first place that a donor will look. It need not be formally printed and sometimes is even only available electronically. Usually it will include details of projects that have been implemented during the preceding year, details of the board members and staff, and some feedback on impact in relation to plans. For the financial information, a copy of the most recent audited financial statements or a simple presentation of the revenue and expenses is useful. These documents can be included as appendices. More specific details can be included upon request.

If your organisation is new, it will be a bit more difficult to show that you are a good risk.

Nevertheless, you can do so by:

- Enlisting the written support of credible governance members, those known to donors and patrons.
- Getting a letter from credible accountants to say that you have set up a good financial management system, with appropriate checks and balances.

 Providing information about staff members and / or volunteers which reflect their track records on similar projects.



Planning Before Fundraising

An organisation is created in response to a problem or an opportunity.

It is from this that the mission and strategy of the organisation grow. The projects you plan and request funding for should be part of your strategy, not just a way to raise money. They flow from your conviction that certain issues or problems need to be addressed and that you are in the best position to do so. Your plan must reflect:

- Your understanding of the context and how this is reflected in the organisation's mission and strategy.
- The specific circumstances in the context that create the problem the project is meant to address and what that problem is;
- The objectives of the project and your vision for success;
- The process intended to achieve the objectives.

Proposal Writing

With an understanding deepened on the differences between resource mobilisation and fundraising, it is now necessary to look at proposal writing as an integral part of mobilising resources.

For almost all the resource mobilisation techniques that your organisation decides to use in mobilising resources, it will be necessary to put together a document which will be used as a marketing tool to 'sell' your organisation, program or project to donors.

In this section we deal with the following:

- Contents page and summary;
- Writing the body of the proposal, including the detailed content;
- Writing the conclusions and budget;
- Deciding what appendices to attach.

How you write the proposal will depend, to some extent, on the requirements of the donor.

A variety of proposal types exist, including:

- A one-page concept document or letter of interest (LOI), summarising what you hope to achieve and how, as a preliminary step for the donor, to decide whether they are interested in getting more information or not.
- A standard format established by the donor.
 You would need to fit what you have to say under set headings.

- A standard form into which details need to be fitted. This is far more restricting than a standard format, but it is always possible to show your thinking and use this format to your advantage.
- Your own format. This will enable you to present your planning and thinking to the best advantage. Perhaps surprisingly, this is probably the most difficult kind of proposal to write. It is up to you to decide what to say, how long to take to say it and so on. In this section, we focus on this kind of proposal to help you think through a structure that will convey your ideas as persuasively as possible.

Before Writing

The main ingredient for a successful proposal is an investment in research, thinking and planning.

Don't start writing a funding proposal before you have committed the time to present a strong, informed case for why a donor should support your work.

The proposal forms the basis of your relationship with a donor. If the donor can see that it is hastily written, without careful thought and planning, your application could be refused. Rather, give the impression, based on fact, that you are thorough, careful and committed to doing a good job, right from the start.

If possible, you need to begin preparing at least a month before you want to submit a funding proposal. As you will see, there is a lot to do and you need time to do it properly.

Reflection

Before you begin writing, you need to have addressed the content we have shared in earlier sections and:

- Be clear about why and for whom you are writing the proposal.
- Understand the donor for whom you are preparing it.
- Know yourself, which means being clear about your identity, knowing your strengths and weaknesses, and being able to present a credible track record in areas such as financial management, delivering and monitoring project impact, technical competence and general management ability of your organisation.
- Plan the project, which means understanding the context, concept, setting objectives and designing a road map on which you can deliver within a reasonable budget and timeframe.

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Guide to Building a Proposal Structure

If you do not have much experience in writing funding proposals, it can also be useful to speak to other organisations and groups about their experiences with different kinds of donors and learn from their mistakes and successes. **You can also access a proposal writing guide in this series -** <u>A Practical</u> <u>Handbook on Proposal and Report Writing for</u> <u>Community Based and Small Women's Rights</u> <u>Organisations in Africa</u>.

If you have done all the preliminary work suggested above, this part of the proposal writing should go well. The structure of your proposal is very important, for several reasons.

Clearly, one of the reasons is that this document will form the basis of the decision by the donor about whether to fund the project or not. There is another reason to keep in mind. Once the proposal is written and has been accepted by the donor, it becomes the framework of the project. It is the document that defines the project cycle and activities and the basis on which the success or failure of the project will be assessed. Therefore, in writing the proposal, you commit yourself to building a structured plan with particular goals and objectives, and with a particular shape, outcomes and process. It is rare that you can change the objectives or structure of a project after being successful with your proposal.

The body of your proposal is where you do your main "selling job". It is here that you persuade the donor that your project is necessary and worthwhile. The key areas that you need to cover in writing a strong proposal can be remembered as C.R.O.P:

- Context
- Relevance
- Objectives
- Process

Context

It is important to locate the project in a local, regional, and if appropriate, international context.

The donor will be interested to know whether the project has any implications at these different levels. So, for example, a project aimed at creating community care for AIDS orphans in a slum area of a major city could generate important learning internationally. If the donor is supporting HIV/AIDS projects elsewhere, this might well be a "selling point". Here is one place where knowing something about the donor and what others in your field or community are doing may help you to decide what to emphasise.

Donors have very high demands on their resources. They have to decide where best to use them, in terms of geographical area, region, problem, issue, challenge.

Some of the more common things that you need to know about the context, depending on the project or proposal are;



- Country, region, area details (location in region, government, population, state of the economy, etc);
- Information about the population or problem you will address.
- Gender based inequities and issues;
- Overall social conditions, such as women's health and rights, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health, education, conflict, violence or crime.

If your organisation deals with a specific field, you may want to include some other information (for example the number of women with access to land or number of female headed households).

So, let's say your broad project aim is:

To improve the standard of living of women in XYZ by the year 2015 through the provision of microfinance for income generating activities.

You might want to include information comparing and contrasting the standard of living of women in urban and rural areas, or information about the most common economic activities they engage in currently and why their standard of living is not improving, or what kinds of other opportunities exist but cannot be accessed due to a lack of resources.

Remember that you are not writing a novel. Your intention is to give useful information that will be interesting background to the reader, but will not overwhelm them with unnecessary detail. Where necessary, you will need to quote the sources of your information so remember to note them down when you are doing your preparation and the necessary research. By the time you make your initial contact with a donor, you should be well-informed about the context of your project. This context page should be no longer than 1 page in length.

Relevance

It is not enough simply to state the context.

You need to make the links between the context, the focus and track record of your organisation, as well as to the mission of the donor. In other words, you need to answer the question: So what? Yes, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is higher in sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else; yes, the number of AIDS orphans has grown to crisis proportions; but why is that relevant to the organisation and why is it relevant to the donor? and why are the funds being requested going to be effective in meeting the needs identified?

You should also be clear about the objectives of your project.

Objectives

At this stage, you need to define the objectives of your project clearly so that you know exactly what you intend to achieve.

A good objective usually states:

- What you want to achieve (your ends);
- How you want to achieve it (your means); and
- Who the main beneficiaries will be.

By "main beneficiaries" we mean the "end beneficiaries". So, for example, in a project that aims to improve the situation of prisoners in a country's prisons by training wardens, the end beneficiaries are the prisoners and not the wardens.

The best objectives are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound.

It is useful to know what terminology is used by the donor for whom you are writing the proposal, so that you use the same terms that the donor uses. You can find out what terms the donor uses by knowing your donor (see "Knowing Your Donor" pg 17)

Donors who expect you to use a logical framework analysis in your application may have a special way in which they want the objectives expressed. These can be general or specific.

Reflection

Look at the two examples of objectives that follow:

- To improve the standard of living of all women in XYZ by the year 2015 through providing them with microfinance for income generating activities.
- 2. Women headed households living in the ABC region of XYZ improve their standard of living by the end of 2015 through the acquisition of appropriate economic empowerment skills to enable them engage in commercially viable income generating activities.

Can you Identify which objective is broad and which one is specific?

Objective 1 is a general or overall objective (also sometimes called a "goal").

Objective 2 is a specific objective (also sometimes called a "project purpose"). All projects need both kinds of objectives.

General Objectives

The general objective states the overall development or aim towards which your more specific project purpose should contribute.

Important things to remember about the general objective or goals are:

- You cannot achieve the general objective or goal on your own as a project or organisation.
 Your project will make a contribution towards achieving it.
- Provide a benchmark against which the success of your project can be measured.
- Be compatible with your organisation's mission statement and with the mission of the donor to whom you are applying for funds.
- **Express an aspiration**, something that you foresee achieving by fulfilling the specific project purpose or objective.
- Note the timeframe to achieve objectives or goal than over achieving the specific project purpose or specific objectives.

Specific Objectives

The project purpose or specific objective is usually something that your project should be able to achieve through its work. It is a result that should be possible in the time specified. It is the strategy the organisation and the project believe will address a particular problem in a particular area, making a contribution to achieving the general objective or goal. A project may have more than one specific purpose but it is best to focus, in your proposal, on the most important one.

Some important things to remember about the project purpose or specific objective:

- The more specific the project purpose is, the easier it will be to design a process for achieving it.
- Try to include specific targets e.g. how many women heads of household will improve their standard of living and by how much? In doing this you are including indicators against which to measure your progress.
- The achievement of the project purpose is the result by which the project will be judged so it must be possible to achieve it.
 Be realistic and honest about your ability to deliver. Do not promise the impossible by over-estimating your skills or capacity.

Setting general and specific objectives tell the donor immediately;

- Whether or not the project fits within its priorities;
- How clear you are about what you are trying to achieve;
- Whether or not you are realistic and, if so, the likelihood that you will make an impact.



Reflection

Objectives help you to clarify your goal and your strategy for contributing to that goal, including:

- Providing a framework for the design of the project process.
- Presenting a "reality check" so that the donor is able to see how possible success is.
- Linking the project to the mission and goals of the organisation and to the mission of the donor.
- Provides a short term and longterm, immediate, accumulative, and inspirational goal.

With the objectives clarified, the next step is the **design of the project processes**.

process

Designing the project process means planning how you are going to achieve your project purpose.

This is the step-by-step journey that will take you to the achievement of your project purpose. Designing the process means answering questions such as:

- Actions What will you do?
- Place Where will you do this?
- Method How will you do it?
- **People** Who will be involved?
- **Results** What outputs will there be?
- **Timeline** When will the various activities and outputs happen?
- Indicators How will progress be monitored?
- Impact How will the project be evaluated; what will success look like?
- **Resources** What will be needed to carry out the activities?

The more you have thought through C.R.O.P - who you are writing for, who you are and what you want to achieve and do - the better your proposal will be. It is often helpful to assemble a team of key staff or volunteers to help think through this step. Your proposal is more likely to be coherent, logical, appropriate and successful.

CASE STUDY: Sample Concept Paper

It all begins with a concept paper

The purpose of a concept paper is to help the donor screen and select a sample of applicants to invite for submission of a full proposal, or the applicant, it serves as a 'teaser' – to capture the interest of the donor and demonstrate that the idea you are proposing is worthy of further consideration. The first few sentences of the concept paper are very important. You need to consider your opening statements very carefully to persuade the donor to carry on reading.

Introduction

The first section should include: information about your organisation, as well as the donor organisation. Demonstrate that you have done your research on the donor and that your organisation's mission, vision and values are aligned to that of the donor. You also have to mention if you will be working with other organisations to implement the project and describe how you will collaborate.

Problem Statement / Purpose

The next section should describe the problem you are proposing to address and, very briefly, how you will address it. This section can also be referred to as the 'Purpose of the Grant'. You must indicate why this problem needs to be addressed. Use figures (if you have them) to make your point. If other organisations have done some work on the issue in question, indicate this and state why you think there is more to be done and why you are the best / most qualified organisation to do what needs to be done.

Project Description

(Including goals and objectives, methodology, timelines benefits and anticipated outcomes)

The next section should outline what you want to do, how you intend to do it, what your goal/ objectives are, what impact or change you hope to achieve at the end of the project - it is better to focus on immediate changes resulting from your intervention rather than long-term impact.

Also provide an overview of your methodology – listing, how the project will be carried out – and any innovative approaches, techniques or

CASE STUDY contd

processes that will be used. Your goals, and objectives and methods should relate to each other.

Include a general timeline for what you hope to accomplish. Describe the anticipated benefits and who will benefit in the short, medium and long term.

Be brief, concise and clear. Concept papers should not be longer than five pages, but also avoid sounding vague or unsure of what you want to accomplish. As much as possible give specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound (SMART) objectives and activities.

Budget

You may or may not be requested to submit a budget at the concept paper stage. If the request does not specifically state that you should not include a budget, you can include budgetary information in the concept paper. Make sure you have included all conceivable costs and be specific. Try to avoid or minimise the use of line items like – overheads, contingency, miscellaneous.

You will need to present your process design in two ways:

- A summary, giving main types of activities (e.g. running workshops, sinking wells), significant outputs (e.g. drop-in shelters for AIDS orphans, posters on how to purify water), types of resources (e.g. additional staff trained in youth work, engineering consultants). This would be included in the body of the proposal.
- A detailed work plan, giving technical processes, specific activities, specific timeliness, outputs for each step, resources needed for each step. This could be included as an appendix.

The following page has a case study on how to build a work plan.



CASE STUDY: Sample Work Plan for Grant Making and Capacity Building Project

DESCRIPTION	PROJECT GOAL	OBJECTIVES/ RESULT	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	TIME FRAME
1.PROGRAMME COSTS Grant Making	To enhance grant making capacity	1.Between 100 and 120 small and medium scale women's organisations awarded grants between	Screening grant applications and selection of grantees for grant cycles	100 – 120 women's organisations awarded grants	Oct/Nov 2010 - Oct/ Nov 2013
Capacity Building For Grantees	Increased capacities of grantees to respond to the needs of women in their communities	2.Thematic convenings held to be held for grantees by 2013	Thematic convenings held	Convening report	September 2010 November 2013
Grants Management	Site visits, outreach and monitoring of grantee activities	Grantees in East, West, Southern and Central Africa provided with technical assistance to strengthen grantee organisations	Site visits to 5 countries each in East, West, Southern and Central Africa to monitor grantee activities and provide technical assistance	Site Visit reports	Ongoing throughout grant period



The way you round up your proposal is equally as important. The conclusion is a way to draw the thinking of the reader together in response to what you are saying and asking.

Conclusion

Your conclusion should draw your arguments together and summarise briefly and without repetition the following:

- Why the project is necessary;
- Why yours is the right organisation to undertake the project;
- Why the donor should consider the proposal;
- What will be achieved.

Budgeting

By including a budget summary, you give the reader a clear idea of the scale, financial management skills and substance of your request.

• **Be specific.** State up-front what you would like the donor to fund, whether the whole project or just a part of it.

- **Be realistic.** If you have done your homework properly you will have some idea of the usual size of grants from this donor for this kind of work.
- **Do not itemise line details.** Rather focus on totals per year, and per broader category e.g. capacity building rather than each training workshop.
- **Provide a picture of your financing strategy** e.g. who else you are approaching, whether any money or support has already been offered and if so, how much and in what form. If the intention is to raise any of the money from the intended beneficiaries, explain the reasoning behind this, and the mechanisms that will be put in place to facilitate it.
- Address the cost-benefit. Justify the cost in terms of the benefits. For example: The Women's Collective asks the Big Foundation to consider a grant of X to enable needed services to reach the people of Y over the next six months.

Make sure that you know how the donor expects budget information to be presented. The detailed budget could be included as one of the appendices.

Appendices

The appendices enable you to keep the body of the proposal to a reasonable length.

They also ensure that the interested and questioning reader can get more details if they need. It is also where you can include additional documents which provide necessary information without having to rewrite large parts of such documents.

Some ideas for useful appendices include:

- Annual Reports
- Log Frame Analysis (LFA) matrix
- Detailed budget
- Most recent audited statements
- Annotated Photographs illustrating context and / or the project
- Detailed technical description of the project eg. Building plan, permits etc.
- A detailed timeline and work plan
- Relevant evaluation reports
- Additional information about the people involved where there is not enough in the Annual Report.

Number your appendices so that they are easy to access. When appropriate, you can then refer to them by number in the body of your proposal. List them on the contents page.

Finally, include a brief section on bibliography / references. This is dealt with in the next section.

Bibliography / References

This should be a very short section.

Keep in mind that you are not writing a thesis or a book.

The main reason of providing references is to make sure that facts you have provided are shown to be credible sources. Do not worry about whether the format you use for your references meets academic requirements or not.

You should focus on being;

- Clear
- Consistent

And Including:

- Name of author(s) and / or name of organisation producing the publication;
- Name of the publication;
- Date of the publication;
- Publisher

Your intention should enable the donor to make use of the reference if necessary and that you can find it if you are asked to provide documentation when the project is funded.

In summary, then, the proposal consists of the following parts:

- Table of Contents for easy access to specific sections
- **Summary** to let the donor representative know what to expect
- **Body** content of the proposal, structured as CROP
- Conclusion draws your arguments together and summarises
- Budget summary provides a clear idea of the scale, financial management skills and substance of your request
- Appendices provide necessary but additional detail
- Bibliography / References backs up facts

CASE STUPY: Good Practice Sample Proposal

Executive Summary

This should come before the introduction (after the title, content, and list of abbreviations page). The Executive Summary should give a snapshot of all that will be contained in the proposal. It should not be longer than 2 pages in length and should summarise all the subsequent sections.

Contextual Information

This section contains all the information on the global, regional and country context within which the issue you intend to resolve is situated in. It should also have background information about the specific location the project is to be implemented in, statistical data relating to the issue to be addressed, any previous work which has been done on the issue, what the outcomes of that work done was, why you feel the need to implement your specific project and how implementing this project will feed into the country, regional and / or global context. You can also mention any issues which have the potential to impact either positively or negatively on your project. Often this section is made up of a lot of facts and figures. You need to have empirical, verifiable data with source documents.

Introduction

This could include 3 things:

- PROBLEM STATEMENT
- PROJECT DESCRIPTION
- WORK PLAN (This may or may not be required depending on the donor's requirements).

This section should detail how you intend to carry out the activities related to implementing your project on a day to day or monthly basis. This is very important because the donor will hold you to whatever you put down in the work plan. The activities you detail in the work plan should give the donor a good idea of what you intend to accomplish at each step of the implementation cycle. You should ensure that it is realistic and achievable. You should also be sure to write down any assumptions or factors that you may foresee which could impact on the project.

Budget

You will need to provide a detailed budget. In some cases, you will be required to provide information not only of the project you are requesting funding for, but also on the entire organisation's budget for that year the previous or subsequent years. This is where you may need the support of financial management specialists (see our guide on Financial Management)⁴.

Conclusion

This section draws the proposal together and summarises all the information you have provided in the document. Just as you started with a strong executive summary, so must you end with a strong conclusion to reaffirm in the reader's mind the need to support your project.

⁴Guides can be found on the AWDF Resource page.

Summary of Proposal Writing

- **Communicate professionally with the donors.** Do so with purpose and do not waste their time.
- **Be honest and open when you communicate.** Be prepared to listen and to share information and ideas.
- **Demonstrate the human side of your work** so that the donor is able to identify with people on a human level.
- **Don't bluff** If asked for information that you do not have, be prepared to provide answers and information in a timely manner.
- Make some general inquiries about appropriate donors.
- Follow up by making contact with a project or desk officer.
- Begin work on the planning stage of your proposal.
- Use font size 12 unless donor specifies. Choose standard fonts such as Arial, Times New Roman or Garamond. Use the same font style throughout and use different font sizes sparingly.
- Check for spelling errors, align the margins of your document to standard size, number all pages. Provide contact information where you can be reached with telephone and email details if you have them.
- Consider using subheads to convey an idea in addition to describing the section (e.g. The Need – Political Action on Violence Against Women).
- Proofread the document to make sure there are no mistakes. Remember, this concept paper represents you / your organisation. There may not be a second chance to make a good first impression!
- Use organisational letterhead and white paper.

Do's and Don'ts

In this section we reflect on some of the do's and don'ts of how to write your funding proposal.

 Grants Management should make contact with a "real" person and then address the proposal to them. Plan ahead so that your proposal isn't rushed Show that you know who else is working in the field and what they are doing. Involve others in planning the project and editing the proposal. Explain acronyms. Keep it short Show that you care about the work - show passion. Pitch the tone correctly - be human rather than academic, let the human story come through, but don't go overboard on emotion. Take a "one proposal fits all" approach - if you have done your homework on the funding agency, use what you know to make the proposal fit the agency. Take a "one proposal fits all" approach - if you have done your homework on the funding agency, use what you know to make the proposal fit the agency. "Pad" your budget to include things that are not relevant to the project. Hide information the donor is entitled to. Send so much documentation that the reader gives up before they begins. Assume that the donor knows all about you so you don't need to bother to present yourself well. Use unnecessary jargon. 	Do	Don't
	 with a "real" person and then address the proposal to them. Plan ahead so that your proposal isn't rushed Show that you know who else is working in the field and what they are doing. Involve others in planning the project and editing the proposal. Explain acronyms. Keep it short Show that you care about the work – show passion. Pitch the tone correctly – be human rather than academic, let the human story come 	 if you have done your homework on the funding agency, use what you know to make the proposal fit the agency. "Pad" your budget to include things that are not relevant to the project. Hide information the donor is entitled to. Send so much documentation that the reader gives up before they begins. Assume that the donor knows all about you so you don't need to bother to present yourself well.

Follow Up

There are two kinds of followup related to the writing of funding proposals.

First, there is the "what's happening?" kind of followup, when you have submitted a proposal and waited some time for a response. Secondly, if you are fortunate enough to be successful in your application, there is the follow-up that helps to build strong and supportive ties between project / organisation and donor.

So, you have submitted a proposal that meets all the donor criteria and in good time. You might get a quick response. You might not. Time drags on and you are not sure where you stand.

The first step is to confirm that your proposal has arrived and been received by the donor. You do that very soon after submission. Then you wait.

After a reasonable period of time - this should be determined either by when the donor representative told you to expect a response, or, if you are not sure about when to expect an answer, after about a month or six weeks, you should follow-up the proposal.

You could do this either:

- **Telephone the donor representative** to ask how your application is doing, and by when you should expect a response; or
- Follow up in writing to ask how your application is doing, and by when you should expect a response.

Follow-ups should be:

- Politely worded and pleasant.
- Persuasive rather than aggressive.

Who Will Read Your Proposal?

Usually, there are three categories of people who could read your proposal, so prepare for each:

- The decision-maker who will make the final decision, based on your proposal. Sometimes there may be more than one decision-maker, with someone at a project officer level making the initial decision to support the proposal and someone at a more senior level, or a committee, making the final decision.
- A technical expert who will assess the technical competence of the proposal and write a report to the decision-maker(s) but not make the decision.
- **Advisors** who may help you shape an idea or introduce your work to potential donors.

Remember that your proposal is not the only one that a donor will read. Not only will you want to capture their attention, if they have a format for presenting the information, you must follow that format exactly. This will allow the reader to review your proposal quickly and find answers to any questions that may arise in the review, depending on their internal systems.

Remember that the donor does not owe you anything. You may hope that donor representatives will be helpful and treat you with respect, but there is no guarantee. Nevertheless, you cannot afford to get a reputation for being demanding or for treating donor grants as your "right". Such a reputation travels quickly in donor circles and may make future applications less likely to be successful. You do not want to alienate the donor community.

What if They Say No?

In the event that the answer is "no" at the end of the process, this does not mean that you have reached the end of your relationship with the donor.

There are often good reasons for a "no" answer and they may have nothing to do with the strength of your project or proposal. You are entitled to ask for a reason for rejection, if one is not offered.

Some possible reasons for refusal include:

- The donor's criteria are not met;
- The proposal is not seen as being a priority area (geographical or issue priority);
- The proposal does not impress the donor
- The donor does not have sufficient funds available at this time to support the proposal;
- You have made some mistake in following the format or guidelines.

The more you know about the reasons for refusal, the more likely you are to succeed with the next donor or even with the donor who has initially rejected your proposal. Remember to do your homework and that rejections are rarely personal.

Reflection: Building Relationships

Here are some of the things you can do to build a strong relationship with a new donor:

- Thank the donor for the favorable response. By approving your proposal, the donor has shown that your work is valued. You need to respond in a way that shows that you value the donor's commitment and support.
- Meet the reporting requirements of the donor. This means providing the right information (narrative and financial), in the right format, at the right time. As soon as you sign a contract with a donor, diarise when reports are due. Make a note in your diary for a month before the reports are due so that you have them ready on time. Set mechanisms in place for collecting the information that will be required. You need a monitoring and evaluation system to keep the documentation that is required.

- Keep the donor up-to-date on what

 is going on in the project and / or the
 organisation between formal reporting.
 They may also appreciate reports when
 something happens that may be of use
 or interest to the donor. If you have done
 your homework properly, you should be
 able to personalise this process of keeping
 the donor up-to-date. For example: "As
 we know you are involved in supporting
 similar work in other developing countries,
 we thought you would be interested in this
 case study on our AIDS orphans project."
- Invite donors to your events even if you think they may not be able to come.
- Be available for meetings with representatives of the donor. Be ready to answer questions, organise field trips, and / or explain details. Wherever possible, persuade donor representatives to visit the field where they can meet the people for whom the donor contribution is actually making a difference.

- Keep communication open at all times.
 Do not be afraid to let the donor know when there are delays or when things have gone wrong. It is better to inform the donor the moment there is a setback and to seek their input in finding solutions than to keep quiet and allow the donor to find out through their own investigations, or at the end of the project. Be open and transparent at all times, this will ensure that the relationship with your donor is characterised by trust.
- Know what the donor is hoping to gain from the relationship, and then provide it. If you have done your homework well, you will know what the donor is interested in. You can also ask: "What can we do or provide that will help you in your work?" It may be information, it may be participation in conferences, it may just be the sharing of experiences. In this way, the donor/project relationship becomes a real partnership.

Success!

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You have just heard the good news that your proposal has been successful. The donor is happy with your proposal. It was clearly a job well done. Congratulations! But this is not the end of the process. The most important thing is to customise your communication with your donor and their preferences. Keep your ears open to make sure that you are communicating appropriately.

From now on you need to maintain and build a trusting relationship with the donor so that when the time comes, you have a good chance of having future successful proposals and forming an ongoing relationship that is beneficial to both parties and enables the sustainability of your work and organisation.

Techniques for Resource Mobilisation requires detailed and relevant knowledge and careful planning to be able to produce a winning proposal.

It is therefore very important for women rights organisations to build and strengthen these requisite skills that will enable you in your quest for funds. This guide covers the essential knowledge, goes deep in examples and structure and recommends steps to be taken to writing a winning proposal, knowing your donor and building sustainable relationships.

AWDF is seeking to shape Africa's future through grant making and relevant capacity building support to Women Rights Organisations. For more updates and information on AWDF grant making and capacity building support, go to the AWDF website and visit our online resources and other practical guides at **awdflibrary.org**

Our work as feminists has been made difficult by skewed international, national, community and household resource mobilisation and utilisation strategies which are limited in prioritising the needs of women and men, girls and boys. The many efforts by individual feminists and organisations need to be linked together to bring forth the needed formidable voice. To do this we also need innovative resource mobilisation strategies for sustainability"⁵.

Usu Ndeanasia Mallya | Tanzania

⁵ Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi and Jessica Horn (eds). 2009. Voice Power and Soul: Portraits of African Feminists. Accra: African Women's Development Fund. Available at <u>http://awdf.org/wp-content/uploads/Voice-Power-and-Soul.pdf</u>.

Recommended Reading

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. *Promoting Your Organisation*. Available at <u>http://www.civicus.org/documents/</u> <u>toolkits/Promoting%20your%20organisation.pdf</u>, accessed on 30 October 2017.

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. *Writing a Funding Proposal: Toolki*t. Available at <u>http://www.civicus.org/documents/</u> toolkits/Writing%20a%20funding%20proposal. pdf, accessed on 30 October 2017.

Crisis Action.

Creative Coalitions: A Handbook for Change. Available at <u>https://crisisaction.org/handbook/</u> clever-coalitions, accessed 30 October 2017.

Network Learning. 2006.

NGO Self-assessment through a SWOT exercise. Avaialble at http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/ document/0808/ID38066.pdf, accessed 15 October 2017.

Women Thrive Worldwide.

Women Thrive Worldwide: Fundraising Guide for Women's Community-Based Organizations. Washington, DC: Women Thrive Worldwide. Available at https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/ Women%20Thrive%20Fundraising%20Guide.pdf, accessed 4 October 2017.

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