



# Building a feminist resource mobilization strategy

# Purpose of this session

- Share some guiding principles and helpful tips related to considering and implementing a resource mobilization strategy for the movement
- Better understand what are some of the major shifts related to funding in this area and why
- Peer learning to improve our resource mobilization efforts

## What is a strategy?

A plan, that has a mission, guiding principles, a set of short and long term objectives and a plan of action.

## So what is a feminist resource mobilization strategy?

In our view, a strategy that addresses financial sustainability for our organizations and our movements, where processes of resource mobilization are political acts and built upon feminist values.

## 7 points to consider in your strategy

1. Analyzing the landscape for resource mobilization: where's the money?
2. Planning for revenue growth and income diversification
3. Building long term assets or reserves
4. Leveraging resources for and with allies
5. How to engage and communicate with donors
6. Planning and evaluation
7. Building organizational capacities

# 1. Analyzing the landscape: where's the money?

- Be aware of many different sources of revenue, from different funding sectors to individual donations, membership fees and income generation.
- Be clear on who you WON'T take money from and why, i.e. spending conditionalities, unethical businesses, etc.
- Consult existing data on funding landscapes, such as AWID's research.

- Internet searches: look at funders listed on websites of like-minded organizations, women's funds, or *google* searches of foundations, trusts, bilaterals, etc.
- Ask your peers where their income comes from, who their contacts are, how they have had success. In the same way, share that information with others
- Ask your existing donors of other funding sources
- Be creative; Look beyond women's rights portfolios, such as community development, human rights, civil society, economic justice, etc

## 2. Planning for revenue growth and income diversification

- Consider growth projections for the next three years based on growth opportunities and organizational goals, e.g. your organizational revenue and expense budgets grows by 20% per year.
- Don't be fearful of asking for larger amounts. The more we ask for the more we get: think big and long term.
- Remember: there is money out there: It is a matter of getting it, of convincing others that without women's rights there can be no social justice, no development.

- Diversify! Seek the optimum balance of many sources of revenue to ensure your independence while taking into consideration the administrative burden of different reporting and spending requirements and income stream management.
- Autonomy from donor-driven agendas and conditionality is possible if income comes in through many channels.

### 3. Building long-term assets and reserves

- Long term sustainability of our organizations and our movements require us to consider investing in real estate, land, endowments
- Short term sustainability is strengthened by saving unrestricted income (e.g. membership fees, individual donations) for a reserve fund, ideally three months of basic operational expenses

- Cash flow management includes investing cash income to earn higher interest while keeping the money relatively accessible.
- If you are able to buy investments, apply ethical guidelines and check compliance with (global) social responsibility standards.

## 4. Leveraging resources for and with allies

- The more we work from a mentality of scarcity, the more we compete, therefore the more fragmented the movement.
- Think beyond the financial sustainability of your organization, think about the sustainability of the movement.
- How we talk about resource mobilization to each other, share key information and strategies is central to how we strengthen women's movements.

- More often, we need to consider ways of working together, flowing funds to our allies, and other ways that democratize access to funding
- Consider building into our budgets program components that will support movement building activities, partnerships, alliance building

## 5. Donor engagement & fundraising

- Our capacity to engage with donors is political, not only as it relates to our resources, but in relation to our capacity as political actors and change agents.
- In other words, how we talk to donors is a political exercise as we claim entitlements on one hand or influence their agendas on the other.
- Without compromising your mission, how is it that your goals can compliment the goals of the donor? Donors and grantees need something from each other.

- Think through the implications of a donor condition before accepting the funds
- Most of us need multi-year core funding to support our entire program and institutional costs: ask for that first, before asking for restricted project funding (that funding does exist!)

# Some tips: making first contact by mail:

(this can apply to bilateral agencies and embassies, INGOS, foundations, “wealthy” individuals)

- Best if you know the person by name
- Preferably as a follow up to earlier communications ... or else introduce yourself through a mutual contact
- Keep it short (and use short sentences), solicit interest (do NOT send full proposal)
- Try, if possible, to set up a time to meet
- In case of no response, send polite reminder
- Still no response? Ask mutual contact to drop a note

# Meeting with donors

- Face to face is always better, but be prepared!
- Research the individual you will meet
  - Google her/him, or ask others about the person
  - Assume they researched you as well
- Know the organization
  - History, policy areas, current issues
  - How they frame their goals and priorities
  - Find the right fit between them and your work

## The meeting:

- Find out how much time you have (so you don't run out of time)
- Both ask questions and answer questions
- Be passionate! People like to be inspired, to be part of a solution. Get them excited about your vision, the change you want to achieve
- Be real, share your worries, your successes and challenges

## The meeting continued...

- Never put down other organizations to make you look good, instead be prepared to talk about the complimentary, collaboration, unique contributions of other groups in the field/region, and the importance of movement building.
- Agree on and clarify next steps.
- If the answer is NO, be graceful (acknowledge why the donor can't fund you).
- Try turning NO into a MAYBE LATER.
- Ask for potential other donors.

# Put yourself “in the shoes” of the donor:

They will want to know:

- Who is writing/meeting with me?
- How much do they want?
- Why do they want it?
- Why should I care? What’s in it for me?
- What will they do with the money?
- How will it make a difference? What are they trying to transform?
- How capable are they to manage the funds?
- Who in my network knows them?

# Sustaining relationships

- Thank the donor within days after meeting (or receiving a grant).
- Create and keep good donor profiles and files.
- Stick to promises and financial report deadlines!
- Keep communications open and clear.
- Keep donor informed and ‘involved’ in your work (but be clear about your autonomy).
- Feature donors in publications, during events.

## 6. Planning and Evaluation

- Does your organization have a strategic plan? How does it relate to other actors in the movement, or in other movements?
- Be clear about your planned outcomes and ways in which you intend to have an impact.
- Develop your OWN means to measure your impact, be proactive: don't want to be left doing it according to how the donors say.
- Learn from the 'best' by talking to peers, studying different approaches and concepts.

- Build moments of reflection, monitoring and evaluation into regular organizational practices.
- Remember transforming power is extremely complex: don't simplify these processes into simple linear cause and effect models.
- Attribution versus contribution: We can only have an impact or make change happen as a movement and therefore we have to be careful about attributing success to our organization alone; we should see it instead as a contribution within a broader movement.

## 7. Organizational capacity

- Consider investment in your organization as a **key** responsibility to its longevity and an integral part of movement building.

- All aspects of a good resource mobilization strategy require investments in terms of time and money such as:
  - staff development,
  - information technology (especially as it relates to financial management),
  - financial expertise,
  - governance/board development,
  - communication strategies and materials,
  - fundraising skills,
  - travel budgets to meet donors,
  - peer learning and alliance building,
  - strategic planning and evaluation processes,
  - as well as investments in programming

**GOOD LUCK!**