Feedback Brief – Resourcing Youth Organisations*

Activists in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe shared some of their experiences on funding for LGBTIQ+ and/or SRHR related work.

- Emergency response donors do not see the withdrawal of funding as a human rights issue. Particularly with income country status, diminishing development funding and changing donor priorities.
- Some donors have advised that if one does not have an office space or cannot manage to keep space (despite acknowledging funding as a challenge); issues of credibility of managing funds and the ability to be sustainable emerge.
- The donor assumption that you have received some funding, assumes that overheads or funding needs have been met. Thus, further compromising possible maximization of impact and sustainability.
- Personal history influences donor relations; positively where donors have sexual relations with officers of established organisations and negatively where donors & grantees might have worked together or know of each other before.
- Networking and accessing enablers ensures that visibility can influence decision making. Particularly when visibility becomes sustained (i.e. meeting in global and regional spaces cements opportunities to cement relations, in turn might translate into advise or guidance for opportunities).
- Networking does not always translate into funding. At times, it translates into a brain drain (when talent leaves) and there is no adequate succession planning or institutional knowledge. In the same context, advocates/leaders find challenge as they cannot pay bills. It is a cycle.
- There is intellectual property shifts in resourcing issues when representation is an issue. For example; if an innovative project is presented for Trans issues, because the organization would not be Trans led, the idea is implemented by another partner/more established one in the same region. Despite participatory grant making and despite eligibility enabling of trans programming. The narrow eligibility, although emboldening for the most marginalized, polarizes the landscape and encourages splinters of organisations just to meet requirements for one grant cycle (which is not guaranteed or sustainable). Thus, impacting the entire ecosystem of youth organizing (changing skills, increased funding competition).
- Youth organisations that emerge from larger organisations have been far more successful than those independently established given the fiduciary responsibility, institutional resourcing to support and likelihood of funding options.
- Regional youth organizing is difficult. Particularly for it to emerge organically. It is only when a funding opportunity emerges that there are attempts, however the mix of skills might only been strength in advocacy (as a virtue of meeting in spaces such as ICSW) and not in grant writing etc.
- A newly discovered practice (our own specifically), is where donors shortlist and then hold interviews (even allow presentations) to better understand the organisations they might not be familiar with and also see if applicants have some interest in collaborating since some projects can be similar. This reflects a donor that operates on equity and not just equality in opportunity. Since some organisations prefer to work exclusively or as applied (given resource allocations & capacity, possible politics or even a longer history); one of them might lose.
- There should be independent avenues for a) whistleblowing, b) transparency in donors fielding questions from applicants once funding has been given & c) youth quota funding.

*Names of organisations, specific areas of work and events have been removed for protection of those who shared experiences.