

# Developing Effective Funding Proposals

## **ACTIVITY 1:**

Give small groups cards with the seven (7) steps on them and have them arrange them in order of how you would proceed if they were going to write a funding proposal.

## **Seven Steps to writing an effective funding proposal**

1. Finding the right fit with the funder
2. Designing your project
3. Rationale for the project
4. Making a Budget
5. Designing Monitoring Plan
6. Writing the Grant
7. Coming up with a catchy name for the project

## **1. FINDING THE RIGHT FIT WITH THE FUNDER**

- Good fit VS Loose Fit
- No point in applying for funding if the objectives and philosophy of the funder do not fit with your organization
- Developing personal relationships with funders is key to success
- **NEVER** apply for funding that would compromise your organizations objectives and would have you doing things that would pull you away from the organizations stated mandate.
- **BEST** to apply for funding for what you normally do, rather than some project that would be extra work or something that is a drain on resources.

## **What to look for in terms of FIT**

*Write on flip chart*

- What kinds of projects will the funder support and will not support?
- How long a period will they fund for?
- Will they accept unsolicited proposals (or do they want to talk to you before you apply)
- Are there funding deadlines/timelines?
- What is the range of grants? (min.\$1000 – max. 5000)
- Are there other conditions or restrictions?
- Will they consider co-funding?

## **2. DESIGNING YOUR PROJECT**

### **A. Outcomes Statement**

As good teachers, when we design a new course we always think in terms of learning outcomes. What is the point of the course? What will the student take away with them or be able to do after they complete the course?

When writing a proposal you need to ask the same kinds of **outcome** questions:

- What is the point of the project
- What will change (either for an individual involved or society as a whole) as a result of the activities proposed in the project
- What are the specific outcomes you hope to achieve
- How will you know whether or not you have achieved them (evidence)

### **Writing an OUTCOME statement**

**Example: On Flipchart**

### **Not-so-clear Outcome Statement**

The aim of the Girl's Inclusive Education project is to get girls into school and help them stay there

### **GROUP'S Clearer Outcomes Statement**

#### **MY Clearer Outcome Statement**

The goal of the Girl's Inclusive Education project is to increase the enrollment of girls in 10 primary schools in Kampot province by 20% and to provide both financial and tutoring support in order to increase the retention and completion rates of girls from the current 45 % to 75% by the end of the four year project.

#### **B. Project Objectives    *On Flipchart***

Objectives should also be specific, active and measurable:

#### **Not-so-clear Objectives**

1. Find out how many girls are currently in school
2. Get more girls to enroll in school
3. Offer tutoring to girls to help them do better
4. Pay school fees and buy uniforms for girls
5. Find out what is causing girls to drop out

#### **EXAMPLE:**

#### **Clearer Objectives**

1. Determine current enrolment of girls at the beginning of school year 2008 and the enrolment and promotion rates of girls by year end in 10 target schools in Kampot.

### **C. Activities** *(On flip chart)*

**What activities will you undertake to realize your objectives?**

2. **Objective 1** - Determine current enrolment of girls at the beginning of school year and the enrolment and promotion rates of girls by year end in 10 target schools in Kampot.

- Design baseline survey tool
- Train ten local community members to undertake data collection in each school at the beginning of year and again at the end of the year
- Compare findings in of two data sets and calculate retention and completion rates of girls

#### **BRAINSTORM ACTIVITY:**

What other activities might be involved?

Have group come up with 2 or 3 more.

### **3. RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT**

This is the part of the proposal where you justify the need for the project.

#### **Part 1 – Target Group**

Who is your target group and how will they benefit?

#### **Part 2 – Justifying the need for the project**

For a big proposal you may want to do a Needs Assessment, where you poll the target group or community and see if the project is something the group wants and or would benefit from.

For a smaller proposal you may just have anecdotal evidence, staff perceptions or obvious evidence for this project (i.e. no source of water within five miles of the community, thus justifying the need to dig a well)

You also need to say why your organization is best suited to undertake the project.

### **Questions to answer to rationalize your project:**

1. Why is the project, activity, event, purchase of this equipment necessary?
2. Who will benefit?
3. What will be the short-term and long-term effects (to the individual participants, community, the country)?
4. Why are you (or your organization) best suited to undertake this project?
5. Is anyone else doing something similar and how is your project unique?

### **4. MAKING A BUDGET**

- Consider all costs as if funds were unlimited. You can always cut costs later, but when you are formulating the Budget try to think of everything.
- Calculate reasonable local costs (do your homework don't guess) venue rental, catering for coffee break or lunch.
- If it is a training add travel and a per diem cost for participants ( the funder might not allow it but include it anyway)
- Include some salary or labour costs for project coordinator or facilitator. Even if that person is paid in their jobs you have to consider the use of their time as a project need. Consider that you might have to hire someone else to do the work even if you don't.
- Consider the cost of extra office costs. (supplies, paper, photocopying)
- Add 10- 15% administration costs (almost always allowable)  
Calculate the total cost for project expenses and then add 10% of that figure.

### **Budget Monitoring**

Include a paragraph explaining who will administer the funds, how expenditures will be tracked/accounted for and who is responsible for disbursements.

## **5. PROJECT MONITORING PLAN**

- a) How will you demonstrate that you achieved the stated Objectives?
- b) What **OUTPUTS** do you have to demonstrate you did what you said you would do. (Outputs are tangible evidence of completion of an Activity or Objectives)
- c) How will you measure realization of projected Outcomes?
- d) How will you evaluate projected Outcomes?
- e) Will you do follow-up activities? Short-term/long-term monitoring?

### **SMART Monitoring – used by UNICEF and many other donors**

*(Anyone know or want to speculate what SMART stands for?)*

**S**pecific

**M**easurable

**A**chievable

**R**ealistic

**T**imely (can you do it within time frame)

## **6. WRITING THE PROPOSAL**

**Keep it short – no one wants to read a thirty page proposal – Under ten pages**

### **Mirroring the language of the funder**

- **Current buzz words:** Capacity building; engagement in civil society; livelihoods; food security....
- **Funder Terminology:** Does the funder use the word monitoring or project evaluation

**Use good descriptive heading in Bold or underlined so the reader can easily skim the document**

**Use active verbs (*on a flip chart*)**

1. We hope to hold 4 workshops on the policy development process in Cambodia.
2. We plan to hold 4 workshops on the policy development process in Cambodia
3. We think it would be a good idea to hold 4 workshops on the policy development process in Cambodia

**QUESTION:**

Which is the best sentence for a proposal? It's a trick question

**ANSWER:** None of them.

We **will** hold 4 workshops on the policy development process Cambodia.

## **7. COMING UP WITH A CATCHY TITLE**

While this may sound a bit trite it really can make the difference between your project proposal being read or not. If you can make it an acronym all the better.