

Mobilizing Resources for Local Women's Groups in Africa

A workshop for grantees
Saturday, January 20, 2007

African Women's Development Fund (Accra, Ghana)
Global Fund for Women (San Francisco, USA)
New Field Foundation (San Francisco, USA)
Urgent Action Fund - Africa (Nairobi, Kenya)



Mobilizing Resources for Local Women's Groups in Africa

Facilitated by African Women's Development Fund
Saturday, January 20th, 2007 at the Panafric Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

Welcome, Introductions, Expectations – New Field Foundation

Welcome

The workshop began with welcome remarks from representatives of the organizations represented at the workshop. These were African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), New Field Foundation (NFF), Global Fund for Women (GFW) and Urgent Action Fund- Africa (UAF-Africa).

Objective

The objective of the workshop was to help women's organizations in Africa to identify new resources and new sources of raising funds. Most of these organizations depend exclusively on institutional funding and do not have other funding sources. The capacity-building workshop was designed to strengthen grassroots, women-led African women's organizations that support empowerment initiatives.

The workshop examined ways that groups could mobilize resources locally. Participants shared local fundraising experiences and explored the challenges, opportunities, and threats they face. The workshop also addressed issues of organizational sustainability and allowed the participants an opportunity for networking.

Introduction

Hamad's Wives

Bisi narrated a fictional story about Mr Hamad, a rich African man with 4 wives. Amongst his wives, there is the foolish wife, who depends entirely on Mr Hamad, and the wise wife, who receives money from him but also manages her own affairs. What will happen to the wives when Mr Hamad dies? The foolish wife suffers, while the wise wife continues life as usual.

The goal of all the organizations should be to become wise women!

Overview of Local Resource Mobilization

Plenary Session: Facilitator Bisi Adeleye–Fayemi, Executive Director, African Women’s Development Fund.

A Guinean woman shared her experiences

- Through a seed grant, she was able to leverage other resources for operational expenses.
- She raised her visibility among donors and corporate institutions through monthly Reflective Dialogues
- She also generate income by providing services for a nominal fee
- She stressed that communication and good presentation are key to accessing resources.

Participants then discussed the skills and attitudes needed for effective fundraising. These included:

- Patience
- Boldness
- Good communications skills
- Networking
- Setting goals
- Thinking outside the box
- Good public relations
- Good knowledge and understanding of donor criteria
- Good listening skills
- Good presentation
- Perseverance
- Diversified fundraising
- Courage
- Determination
- Staying informed on current issues
- Being strategic and conducting research

The participants listed the following as funding sources that they have been able to access.

- Corporate Social Responsibility programs
- Identifying other sources of funds
- Income-generating activities
- Local membership contributions
- Donations from prominent personalities of goodwill
- Hosting events (e.g. awards, pageants)
- ‘Friends’ of the organisation
- Working with volunteers
- Local donors within a certain area; for example, AMREF Maanisha program in Nyanza
- Individual contributions
- Sale of services/consultancies to government and Community Development Funds
- Interest-earning schemes
- Joint sale of products
- Sale of theatre tickets

- Micro-credit services
- Leasing of building space
- Facilitating conferences
- Special women's collections in church/mosques
- Church fundraisings
- Fundraising among Diaspora communities

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Participants then broke into four working groups to answer the following questions.

1. What challenges do we face now in mobilizing resources?
2. What opportunities exist in my community?
3. How can our efforts at local resource mobilisation be supported? How can the Global Fund for Women, Urgent Action Fund – Africa, New Field Foundation and the African Women Development Fund help?

Feedback from Groups

CHALLENGES

What challenges do we face now in mobilizing resources?

Group 1

- Lack of sufficient access to funders
- Not enough information on funders and their funding criteria
- Difficult and tedious application and reporting procedures

Group 2

- Prominent people do not want to identify themselves with small groups.
- Local donors do not fund operating costs
- Low economic status of women
- Competition for resources with larger NGO's

Group 3

- Poor relationships between NGOs and the surrounding community
- Lack of capacity on writing proposals for funding
- Literacy rates
- Stringent donor requirements
- Little money available for women's human rights
- Lack of access to education on women's human rights at the grassroots
- Pressure from donors
- Donor "cartels"
- Funding is not available in remote areas

Group 4

- Hostility towards women's human rights in the community
- Some women's groups are in alliance with governments
- Lower pay for women

- Lack of infrastructure in farming communities
- Insecurity

OPPORTUNITIES

What opportunities exist in my community?

Group 1

- Community Development Funds
- Corporate Social Responsibility Programs
- Funding from the Diaspora
- Politicians / prominent persons
- Sale of services to the government

Group 2

- Collaboration among women's organisations
- New innovative ideas
- Business opportunities

Group 3

- Women's education
- Employment generation
- Seed grants
- Voluntary community contributions
- Merry-go-rounds

Group 4

- Public education
- Reduced hostility towards women's human rights
- Networking at local, national and international levels
- Formation of pressure groups
- Engendering donor processes
- Building on strong selling points
- Sharing of skills, knowledge and information
- Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

How can AWDF, GFW, NFF and UAF-Africa support the work of the women's organisations present?

Group 1

- Training of trainers on strategic planning
- Funding for operational costs
- Partnerships through which information on funding is shared

Group 2

- Capacity building for local organisations to develop mission, vision and planning.
- Collaboration with organisations that are successful in resource mobilisation

- Mentoring approach through exchange programmes

Group 3

- Donors should invest in solidarity projects
- Donors should invest in proposal writing courses/ trainings for women
- Donors should provide seed grants to organizations that have never received funding
- Loans should be more available to women
- Poverty-reduction initiatives
- Investing in women's health facilities

Group 4

- Capacity building in forums such as this one
- Assisting groups to focus on sustainability (e.g. capital assets and endowment funds)
- Referrals/ recommendations to other funders and the private sector
- Providing 'safe spaces' for discussions and sharing of ideas between funders and women's organisations

Presentation by Esther Muwaru of GROOTS Kenya – Grassroots Women

Lessons Learned

- Find experts within the community (e.g. government and FIDA - Federation of Women Lawyers- to provide services)
- Link up with the spouses of the expatriate community to take up the cause
- 'Partner' with donors rather than 'beg' for funds – show the donors what contribution they are making towards the cause. Account for all the activities that the women are doing (i.e. assign value to and explain the contribution of women's efforts so that donors will establish partnerships with the women)
- Have a passion for the work you are doing – make it fashionable!
- Build coalitions across regional and international networks

The group consists of over 2500 women's organisations, including in inaccessible areas.

WAY FORWARD

- Translate the report into French and distribute it to participants.
- Invite participants to attend capacity building workshops
- Conduct advocacy to improve relationships among women's organisations and donors
- Collaborate so that resources can be used strategically.

Presentations by funds

Global Fund for Women (GFW) – Muadi Mukenge

Urgent Action Fund- Africa (UAF-Africa)- Betty Murungi

New Field Foundation (NFF) – Sarah Hobson

African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF) - Stella Kofie - Yariga