Fundraising Toolkit

An Essential Guide for Social Ventures to Make a Difference

Catalyst Now

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Welcome

Fundraising is a challenging endeavour, but various services can help organisations boost their impact by streamlining internal tasks. This comprehensive resource empowers chapters and members to engage in their own fundraising efforts. This toolkit provides essential information, practical resources, and valuable opportunities to guide you in effectively raising funds, with a step-by-step guide to help you get started on your fundraising journey.

Fundraising ensures the organisation's sustainability. Fundraising ensures the organization's long term success. The pillar of fundraising is developing long term relationships with donors which takes time. Building a fundraising strategy that is accountable to the donors and clients who support your work, will lead to greater trust and continued support. By integrating these fundraising strategies into your overall strategy, your social venture can ensure sustained growth and long-term impact.

Curated resources. To facilitate access, a list of resources has been curated available to members, to include templates, best practices, funding databases, and expert advice, all aimed at simplifying the fundraising process. Explore these resources and share them with your network. By leveraging this toolkit, you can enhance your fundraising strategies, build stronger donor relationships, and ultimately increase your organisation's impact.

This handbook is for you. This handbook is for you if you are a social entrepreneur or non government organisation leader, development professionals, board member of a social venture, staff or volunteers who are involved in the fundraising efforts of an organisation. Remember the mantra, everyone is a fundraiser.

Our Systems Learning and Enabling Environment teams developed this Fundraising Toolkit and would like to thank our Fundraising Masterclass co-chairs who helped design and develop the masterclasses. Their inspiration led to the creation of the Fundraising Toolkit with specific examples shared by Natalie Rekstad and her team at Black Fox Global, Lisa Cocoran and team from Co-Impact. We have drawn inspiration from a number of resources and have cited others' work.

Disclaimer. This publication provides information fundraising but is not a substitute for legal, financial, or professional fundraising advice. Laws and practices vary by country, so please consult with local experts. Our team compiled information from our partners and their resources and did our best to cite sources, please let us know if we made any errors in citations.

I.   Introduction to the Fundraising

What is Fundraising?

Fundraising is often defined as the process of soliciting financial support, but it goes beyond simply asking for money! Fundraising is a multifaceted approach that helps social ventures build lasting relationships with donors, mobilise resources, attract new donors, and create a community of supporters who believe in their mission.

Effective fundraising involves understanding donors' motivations, fostering connections, and aligning organisational goals with donor interests. It includes a wide range of strategies—from grant writing and corporate sponsorships to individual giving and events—that bring in financial backing while also raising awareness and engagement. By nurturing these connections, organisations not only secure immediate funding but also build a network of long-term supporters who can advocate, volunteer, and amplify their cause. Ultimately, fundraising is about creating a sustainable foundation of support, rooted in trust and shared values that enables organisations to achieve their goals and make a greater impact.

For Catalyst Now members, organisations are expected to follow the "honest broker" appraoch to fundraising. Ensuring that those who conduct the fundraising for a social venture and donors who are giving fundraising resources, are operating in a transparent and ethical manner.

Developing a Fundraising Strategy

Setting Priorities

The For Impact team highlights the Altitude Framework, a powerful approach that helps you develop and refine your messaging, communications, and storytelling. It helps to develop Engagement Tools and guide the flow of funder visits. This framework is used for everything from funder visits to strategy sessions to addressing donor concerns, but its primary strength lies in the simplifying and refining your message.

The Altitude Framework: Why, What, and How

The Altidue framework simplifies how you communicate your organization's story and has been shaped by insights from conversations with funders. Funders often focus on three fundamental questions:

1. **Why do you exist?** – This question is about your purpose. It's the "why" behind your mission.
2. **Where does the money go?** – This is about the impact and outcomes of your work.

3. **How can I help?** – This focuses on clear actions others can take to support your mission.

Whether you're speaking with a donor, writing an email, or crafting a grant proposal, ensure your communication answers these three questions effectively. By doing so, you create a powerful narrative that connects your purpose to actionable support.

The Altitude Framework is built around the idea of perspective—much like how you see the world from different heights in an airplane. It is a metaphor for understanding the different layers of your strategy. By organising your fundraising strategy into three altitudes, you can adjust your focus from the big picture down to the granular details.

The Why – The Vision
30,000 Feet

How many times have you found yourself in a conversation where someone asks, *"What do you do?"* Before you know it, you're diving into the details of your programs, growth plans, and funding needs. While these details are important, they often miss a critical element—the bigger picture.

The most pressing question on the minds of funders and partners is: *Toward what end? Why do you exist?* This is where we need to elevate the conversation.

Think of a plane cruising at 30,000 feet (10,000 meters). At this altitude, you see the big picture—the landscape, the interconnectedness, and the horizon. Similarly, the "30,000-foot view" of your work articulates your vision, aspirations, and reason for existing. This is the foundation of your story: the impact you want to create and the reason behind your efforts.

When creating your foundational statement, ensure it is concise and inspiring, capturing the essence of your mission in a few powerful words. Focus on outcomes by emphasizing the change you aim to create and the impact you strive to achieve. Align the statement with your organization's core purpose and values, ensuring it reflects your mission and resonates with your audience.

Once your guiding star is established, provide depth and richness to your story by addressing these elements:

1. **Your Founding Story**
   - Share the inspiration behind your organization.
   - Highlight the challenges or gaps you identified and what motivated you to act.
   - This humanizes your mission and emotionally connects your audience to your journey.

2. **The Problem and Scope**
   - Paint a vivid picture of the issue you're addressing.
   - Illustrate its scale: Who is affected, how, and where?
   - Highlight opportunities for impact, creating urgency and relevance.

3. **Your Partnerships and Reach**
   - ○ Demonstrate how collaboration drives your vision.
   - ○ Highlight the sectors, communities, or geographies you engage with.
   - ○ Showcase your networks and alliances to build credibility and demonstrate scalability.

Starting with your "why" at the 30,000-foot view is more than crafting a compelling narrative—it invites your audience to see the bigger picture. It connects them emotionally to your impact and positions your organization as a leader of meaningful change.

By structuring your story in this way, you create clarity, inspire action, and build trust. Whether engaging with funders, partners, or new supporters, this approach ensures they understand not just *what* you do, but *why it matters*—and why they should join you.

The What – The Strategy
14,000 Feet

At 14,000 feet, we zoom in from the big-picture "why" to the tangible "where the money goes." This perspective bridges your overarching vision with the priorities and initiatives that move your organization forward.

Think of it as standing on a mountaintop—close enough to see the details while still understanding how they fit into the broader landscape. This structured approach brings clarity and focus to how you communicate your work.

Example Priorities:

- Awareness, Prevention, and Emergency Response.
- People, Places, and Programs.
- Research, Advocacy, and Education.

These broad categories capture the essence of your work, breaking it into relatable, actionable areas. Under each category, you can further list specific projects, programs, or initiatives.

Keep your priorities simple and clear to ensure they are easy to understand. Avoid jargon and focus on the tangible impact of your work, using language that resonates with your audience. Provide enough detail to spark curiosity and invite questions, creating opportunities for deeper engagement. Ensure each priority aligns with your mission and long-term vision, reinforcing the connection between your work and its purpose.

By structuring your story at the 14,000-foot view, you make it easier for people to understand how their support drives your work.

The How – Execution Plan
3 Feet

At the 3-foot (or 1-meter) level, it's all about grounding your story and showing how action meets intention. After articulating your "why" (30,000 feet) and "where the money goes" (14,000 feet), the focus shifts to answering the question: *"How can I help?"*

This is where potential supporters see their role in your mission. The key is to provide clear, actionable ways for them to contribute, framed around the transformation their support can create.

Supporters are inspired when they understand the direct impact of their help. Compare these two approaches:

- "$10,000 can make sure my education program keeps operating this year."
- "To change the lives of 1,000 more children, we need $10,000 to grow the reach of our education program."

The second example ties the contribution to a specific, meaningful result, making it more engaging and impactful.

Effective messaging includes:

- **A clear timeline:** Define the timeframe for achieving your goal.
- **A concrete goal:** Highlight the specific outcome you're striving for.
- **The scale of impact:** Show how many lives will be affected.
- **A specific need:** Quantify the support required.
- **An invitation:** Open the door for dialogue and collaboration.

Pro-Tip: Some funders recommend that you forgo writing 10-20 page case for support and spend all your energy on reaching out and getting in front of the donors.

When you provide actionable steps for supporters, grounded in clear impact, you make it easier for them to see their role in your mission. By doing so, you turn intention into meaningful action.

Key Fundraising Steps

There are a number of steps that fundraisers should take to develop their fundraising strategy. Here we list the key steps with sections in the toolkit to explain each topic in more depth. Access Appendix A for Fundraising Resources

Here are some important things to consider before you start fundraising:

- **Step 1: Donor Research**

  Building authentic donor relationships is key to securing long term financial support and meaningful collaborations. Building strong relationships fosters trust and engagement, working with funders that mission aligns with the organizations, creating a true partnership that strengthens impact. See the [Donor Research](#) section.

- **Step 2: Building a Relationship with Donors**

  Building relationships requires strategic outreach, persistence, and alignment with funders values. Learn from Black Fox Global approach to balancing research, clear intention and respectful follow ups with donors. Building a Relationships section.

- **Step 3: Develop a Communications and Branding Plan**

  Develop a strategy to effectively communicate your campaign's message and goals. This includes defining your target audience, crafting compelling narratives, and designing visual materials that resonate with potential donors. See the [Communications and Branding](#) section for more information.

- **Step 4: Developing a Fundraising Strategy**

  Developing a fundraising strategy involves creating a structured plan to secure financial resources for an organization's mission and goals. A strong strategy aligns fundraising efforts with the organization's overall objectives, ensuring sustainability and growth. Below are the key sections to include in a fundraising strategy:

- **Step 5: Building a Fundraising Board**

  Building a fundraising board includes fostering a culture where fundraising is a shared responsibility among board members and full time team members. In this section we cover, recruiting board members with fundraising potential, setting clear expectations, and providing training to build confidence and, ensuring everyone contributes to the organization's fundraising efforts.

- **Step 6: Monitoring and Reporting on Fundraising Performance**

  Key strategies for tracking progress, evaluating impact, and ensuring accountability in fundraising efforts is covered From developing a theory of change, measurement evaluation and reporting and identifying key performance indicators, this section will ensure that fundraising efforts are data driven, transparent and aligned with organizational objectives.

- **Step 7: Legal and Ethical Considerations**

  This section covers key legal and ethical aspects of fundraising, including tax regulations, donor receipts, and compliance challenges specific to different regions. It also explores ethical fundraising practices and transparency issues to ensure accountability and trust. The majority of the section is based on the "Legal Reform as a Catalyst for Social Enterprise" report, which analyzes legal structures across 83 jurisdictions and highlights how policy reforms can support the growth of social enterprises globally.

- **Step 8: Writing Stella Grant Applications**

  A writing grant applications is an art and a science, this section covers strategies to create compelling, well-structured proposals. It covers key elements such as identifying the right funding opportunities, crafting clear objectives, aligning with funder priorities, and using data and storytelling for impact. By following these best practices, organizations can increase their chances of securing funding that achieves long-term success.

II. 7 Core Pillars of Fundraising

Fundraising is essential for any social venture's sustainability and growth, with seven primary categories of funding available to support diverse income streams. From traditional grants and donations to innovative coprorate partnerships and hosting special events, each pillar offers unique benefits and challenges, helping social ventures secure the resources needed to achieve social impact. By understanding and applying these fundraising opportunities, social ventures can achieve financial sustainability, that empowers their work and broadens their reach. There are 7 types of fundraising categories for a social venture to pursue.

7 Core Pillars of Fundraising

Earned Income: Bank loan (typically for assets), Revenue generating activities within the venture's expertise

Grants: Government, Corporate, Community Investment, Philanthropic, Foundations

Donations: Major Gifts, Bequests, Corporate (supporting sponsors) Individual Donors

Special events and peer to peer Host special events to raise money for the organisation

Community-Business Partnerships Private sector donations or support.

Membership/ Alumni, Friends and other supporters

Crowdfunding See the crowdfunding platforms

1. Earned Income

Social ventures typically have some form of "earned income" that provides a regular revenue stream for the organisation:

- **Selling Products or Services**: Transfer of money, goods, or services in exchange for goods and services. Examples: handmade products, artisan-crafted jewelry, educational workshops, consulting services etc.
- **Selling Merchandise**: Although selling branded goods online is fine, it should not serve as your main source of revenue. Examples: purchasing a t-shirt or subscribing to a newsletter for a donation.
- **Cause Marketing**: An NGO organisation and a for-profit company collaborate on cause marketing for both parties' mutual gain. Example: pledge made by a company that sells products to donate a portion of each sale to a charitable organisation.

- **Consulting / Training Services**: Offering consulting services or training to other organisations for a fee.

Organisations can use the funds from earned income as per their need. Almost every non-profit organisation has several items or services it can exchange for much-needed revenue.

2. Grants: Government, Corporate, Community Investment, Philanthropic Foundations

A grant is a financial award given to an individual, an organisation, or a business by one entity to facilitate a goal or encourage performance. Grants provide a significant source of funds for projects or programmes in most non-profit organisations, which can cover upcoming initiatives as well as a percentage of overhead costs (which can be included in project grant applications). Without establishing strong connections with funders, the likelihood of securing a grant is quite low. It is essential to find and cultivate relationships with potential funders.

There are different sources of grants:

- Philanthropic
- Government
- Corporates
- Community
- Investments
- Foundations

Grant writing involves a structured cycle beginning with identifying opportunities and progressing through internal consultation and engagement with funders. After preparing and submitting proposals, outcomes are received, leading to grant setup and ongoing progress monitoring. Final reporting concludes the cycle, ensuring accountability and completion of the project's objectives.

Grant Pipeline

1.Opportunity Identified	→	2. Internal consultation	→	3. Engage funder	→	4. Prepare Proposal	→	5. Submit Proposal

6. Receive Outcome	→	7. Grant set up	→	8. Monitor progress	→	9. Final reporting
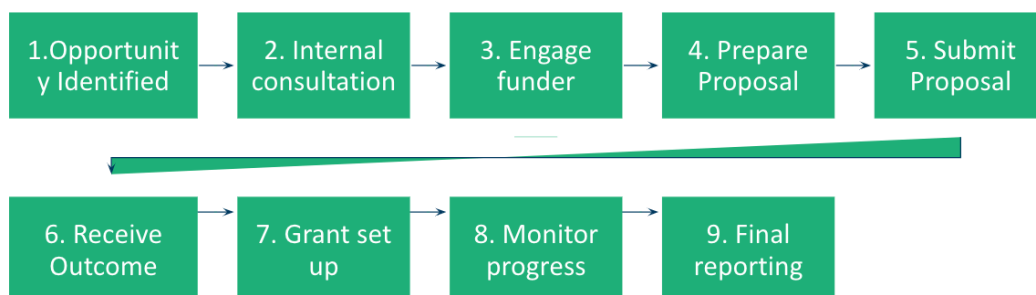
Regarding grants, it is essential to recognise that they follow a linear path, which may span from 2 to 12 months. They are ideally suited for strategic or pipeline projects

rather than as a quick solution for funding gaps. This understanding underscores the need for careful planning and alignment with long-term organisational goals when pursuing grant opportunities.

Navigating the grant application process can be challenging, but with the right guidance, securing funding becomes more achievable. The Landesa team, renowned for their expertise in land rights and development, has shared their Top 10 Tips for Grants for successful grant applications, see Appendix B. These insights will help you enhance your proposals, increase your chances of funding, and effectively communicate your project's impact.

3. Donations: Major Gifts, Bequests, Corporate, Individual Donors

Donations are gifts for charity, humanitarian aid, or to benefit a cause. There are different types of donations:

- **Major Gifts**: The largest donations an organisation receives from a single source in a single fiscal year.
- **Corporate Gifts**: This refers to both physical and non-physical gifts provided by corporations to strengthen their relationship with an organisation. Examples of corporate gifts include:
  - **Physical Gifts:** Technology (e.g., laptops, software), books, equipment, or supplies.
  - **Non-physical gifts:** Tickets to events, subscriptions (e.g., digital services, publications), or charitable donations. Additionally, corporate gifts can also encompass volunteer time, such as when employees are encouraged to offer their expertise or skills to nonprofits during company time.

  These contributions not only support the nonprofit but also help foster a stronger partnership between the company and the organisation.

- **Individual Donors**: Refers to a personal monetary or in-kind contribution pro-bono donations (e.g. services like consulting, volunteer time, event assistance, software licenses, etc.) an organisation.

To be successful at **obtaining donations** ensure that you:

Clarify your mission; what you would like to do?

State your vision; the expected result

Put the right administrative processes in place

Learn the right way to ask and use the right people in the ask
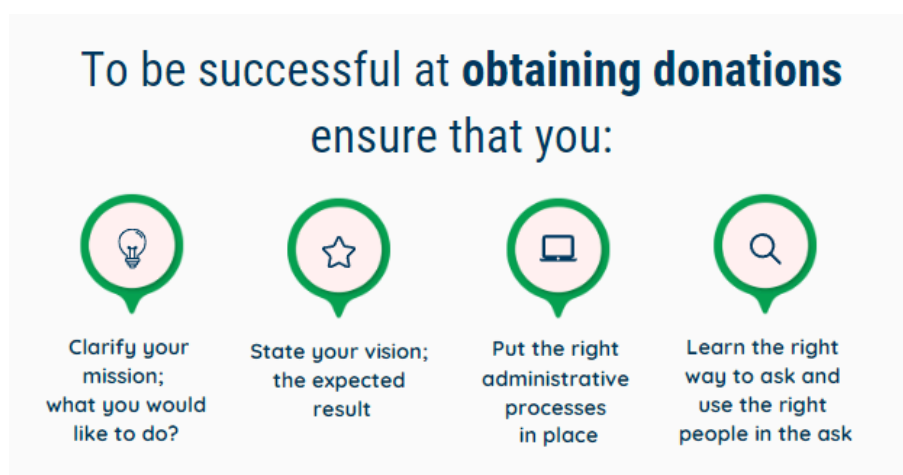
4. Events Fundraising

Event fundraising can be essential for many NGOs, but they can take a lot of time, energy, and upfront expense to be truly profitable. They can be categorised as:

- **Special events:** organised and run by the organisation (e.g Gala dinners, community events like the Susan G. Koman Race for the Cure that raises money for cancer research).
- **Peer-to-peer (Community fundraising):** happens through leveraging existing events. It's a great way to get new donors and reach new networks.

5. Community-Business Partnerships

A relationship between parties who agree to work collectively on a project over time to benefit the social venture and the business. The community-business partnership may increase the capacity of both partners and the community. The community-business partnership model may include:

The community-business partnership model may include:

Volunteering	Involving individual employees or groups, skilled or unskilled labour
Financial donations	As a one-off, or through ongoing employee donations
Sponsorship of a program	Sponsor a programme or activity of the organisation
Cause-related marketing	Mutually beneficial collaboration between an agency and a non-profit to promote sales and cause
In-kind donations	Involves the donation of goods or services
Pro-bono/	

6. Membership, Friends, and Other Supporters

Creating a membership programme can provide sustainable funding and foster a sense of belonging among supporters. For some organisations, implementing membership can involve developing tiers (e.g. Basic, Premium, and Lifetime), each offering exclusive benefits such as members-only content, VIP event access, and personalised updates.

Engaging members through online forums, local chapters, and regular communications helps maintain strong relationships, while recognition efforts and easy renewal processes show appreciation. Additionally, an annual friends giving programme can engage former members through annual campaigns, events, and legacy giving options, ensuring long-term support and strengthening the organisation's community.

It is important to remember that membership programmes are about fostering a sense of belonging among your supporters – you need people's enthusiasm more than you need their money.

Historically, giving circles have roots in practices like "susu" in West Africa and "tanda" in Mexico, where community members pool resources to support each other and/or the community. This form of participatory philanthropy brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds to share resources to distribute the funding to charitable organisations or community projects. The decision making of giving circles is made by the individuals in the circle.

7. Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is an online fundraising campaign for a specific project. Crowdfunding takes energy and creativity. Crowdfunding can bring in much-needed funding and attract a whole new audience of supporters! Just be aware that Crowdfunding is a specific type of funding opportunity and does not work for long term sustainability of the organisation.

Here are some crowdfunding tips:

- Identify a specific target
- Showcase your work with a video and testimonials pitch
- Set a realistic financial goal
- Offer a reward
- Make the donation process easy
- Create a strong marketing plan
- Keep the donors updated
- Appreciate your donors

Crowdfunding Benefits

- 'Crowd' funds the idea or project, through an online platform to help get the project off the ground.
- Provides validation that the idea is exciting and innovative.
- A "crowd" including family, friends, and colleagues to seek funding.
- Facilitates a connection with a large number of people.
- Innovative and thought-provoking ideas, able to be workable solution.

Traditional Funding Benefits

- Pitching to potential investors, banks for a larger sum
- Will lead to long term funding relationships and committed partners
- Difficult to identify investors
- Validation difficult
- Confidential with the funding individuals and organisations.
- Idea that has long term profit potential.

See Crafting Compelling Crowdfunding Stories: A Guide for Social Innovators in Appendix H and 7 Tips for Crafting a Powerful Crowfunding video shared by Backabuddy in South Africa Appendix I.

> **Pro Tip: Traditional funding is a better long term solution for a social venture.**

Differences Between Fundraising in Global North and Majority World

There are a number of challenge when fundraising in the global verses the global north including cultural challenges, resource constraints and power dynamics. Fundraising for social ventures in the "Majority World", (e.g., the majority of people in the world are located in majority world including Africa, Asia, South and Central America), often face significant challenges in accessing funding compared to their counterparts in the Global North. The Majority World philanthropic sector is emerging, with limited access to high-net-worth individuals, corporate foundations, and established donor networks. Global South reliance on international aid can create dependency and stifle local innovation. Furthermore, unique challenges within the Majority World, such as higher-risk environments, difficulties in conducting due diligence of NGOs, and rapidly changing contexts, further complicate fundraising efforts. Access to fundraising expertise and the ability to invest in professional fundraising staff can be uneven. Finally, power dynamics continues to be a challenge between donors and the funding organisation.

In contrast, the Global North boasts a more developed philanthropic sector with well-established foundations, high-net-worth individuals, corporate foundations, and a culture of giving. Factors like favorable tax incentives for donors significantly boost charitable contributions in the United States. However, even within the Global North, challenges exist., and power imbalances between donors and recipients can sometimes

hinder true collaboration and local ownership. Investing in professional fundraising staff is a challenge for many NGOs.

There is good news. There is a growing trend among global aid organizations and foundations to shift funding directly to organizations based in the Majority World. This shift aims to empower local leadership and increase the effectiveness of development programs. One notable example is the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which has set a goal of directing 25% of its funding directly to Majority World organizations, learn more in this Devex article. This move acknowledges the valuable expertise and deep understanding of local contexts that Majority World aid organizations possess. In the new local funding priority, USAID aims to enhance the impact and sustainability of development initiatives. See table for the Traditional Differences between Global North and Majority World Fundraising.

Traditional Differences Between Global North and Majority World Fundraising

	Global North	**Majority World (Global South)**
Philanthropy Sector	- Well established mature foundations, donor networks, infrastructure - High levels of individual and insituttional giving - Greater access to fundraising expertise and resources	- Emerging philanthropy secture, varying levels of maturity across countries. - Higher reliance on international donors and aid agencies. - Less access to professional fundraising expertise and resources.
Focus Areas	- Focus on data driven approaches, impact measurement - Emphasis on relationships, larger gifts - Varying funding focus areas based on the funding source.	- Often driven by immediate needs. - Focus on local fundraising and community based giving. - Challenges with access to data and impact measurement.
Funding Sources	- Diverse funding access including foundations, corporations, government grants. - Culture of individual giving with high net work individuals.	- Higher reliance on international donors and government aid agencies and grants. - Limited access to high net worth individuals and corporate philanthropy.
Infrastructure & Regulations	- Generally better access to technology, customer relationships systems and donor management. - Tends to be more robust legal and regulatory requirements for nonprofit/NGOs.	- Access to technology and infrastructure varies. - Tends to be less robust legal and regulatory environment for NGOs. - Some countries are challenged by corruption and transparency.

10 Tips for Naviaging the Complexities of Philanthropy

Fundraising efforts bridge the gap between the vision and reality of social ventures by connecting philanthropists with exciting opportunities to drive meaningful change. However, this process can be challenging, as it requires navigating the interests of various stakeholders, nurturing long-term relationships, and conducting rigorous research to ensure alignment between your organisation's mission and fundraising strategies. Additionally, showcasing your work effectively and managing expectations can be complex.

Therefore, the journey of securing philanthropic support is multifaceted and requires perseverance, strategy, and adaptability. Keeping this in mind, we invite you to benefit from the insights and detailed tips about effective fundraising shared in this article 10 Tips for Navigating the Complexities of Philanthropy.

These tips are based on the valuable insights from a Fundraising Masterclass led by Chitra Hanstad from Landesa, a non-profit working to secure land rights to alleviate poverty, and Tim Hanstad from the Chandler Foundation, working to build high-trust societies where all individuals can have the opportunity to flourish. You may visit the YouTube recording and slides of this exciting session for further learning.

In closing, Tim and Chitra reinforced their most important takeaway:

"Don't get disheartened. You will experience a lot of "no's", but there is a "yes" waiting. Keep in mind that you are offering people a chance to be part of something greater, and the world needs that now more than ever!"

Keep this message in mind as you go through the sections in the toolkit and prepare for your own fundraising journey.

CATALYST 2030

10 Fundraising
Lessons for success

1. Know your product, know your audience, know your niche

Having a deep understanding of your organization's mission, deliverables, and target audience is crucial for effective fundraising.

Fundraising strategies should align with your organisation's goal, values, and mission statement.

2. Center fundraising around an organisational strategy

3. Do not over-hype the donors in your fundraising

While donors are integral stakeholders, do not lose sight of the fundamental goals. Elevating donors is not part of your organisational mission.

Instead of making assumptions, it is more effective to conduct research, ask questions, show interest, and actively listen to understand donors' motivation fully.

4. Seek to understand before being understood

5. Relationships, relationships, relationships

Fundraising success depends on the relationships built with donors. Ask for letters of reference from current donors to reach out more effectively to prospective ones!

Cultivate strong relationships with current donors, and inspire them to support the organisation. Do not treat your donors as cash machines, focus on building trust.

6. Your best donor prospects are your existing donors

7. Fundraising is a team sport

Organisations flourish more with team members who are highly involved and passionate about the mission.

Donors can contribute valuable expertise, references, advocacy support, constructive feedback, and even discounts on professional services!

8. Donors can provide more than money

9. Find a champion for your work

The right champions can amplify fundraising efforts through their values, passion, and credibility, attracting greater support from diverse stakeholders.

While diversification is important, focus on sustainable sources of funding that align with the organisation's mission.

10. Diversifying funding sources is not the only answer

III. Donor Research

Identify Deeply Aligned Funders

We have drawn on the invaluable resources provided by the team at Black Fox Global to shape this section. Their expertise in identifying deeply aligned funders has been instrumental in highlighting the importance of finding the right funding partners. You can explore their insightful articles and resources through the links provided.

Uncovering and Engaging Deeply Aligned Funders

Effective communication and prospect research are not just buzzwords in the world of social impact fundraising; they are essential to securing funding for your mission.

We hear every day from clients that they find the process of uncovering and connecting with funders to be daunting. During a previous Skoll World Forum, Black Fox Global team members offered four steps – and an abundance of practical tips – for social impact and nonprofit organizations to think about when weaving prospect research and communications together to achieve impact.

Black Fox Global approaches the work of uncovering and communicating with potential funders in an integrated way with a multi-person team, but you do not need dedicated staff to find potential donors or create communications unique to your organization.

Strategic Guide to Funder Research

1. Know your WHY	2. Identity Deeply Aligned Funders	3. Plan your Outreach	4. Create Compelling Communications

Here are four steps to help you along the way. This section focuses on the second step which is Identifying Funders. Thorough research helps optimise and maximise all the next steps of your fundraising cycle, so be sure to set aside time for it. See the Uncovering and Engaging Deeply Aligned Funders article.

For a comprehensive list of fundraising documents and resources that can support your research and engagement efforts, see Appendix B: Fundraising Resources. These resources provide practical tools for accessing, organizing, and utilizing the materials needed to secure funding effectively.

Organizational Assessment

Prior to conducting research, the first step is to assess your organization's financial standing and legal status.

1. Organizational Budget

Funding often comes with specific budgetary requirements:

- ○ **Minimum Budget**: Some foundations prefer organizations with higher operating incomes, indicating a degree of stability and sustainability.
- ○ **Maximum Budget**: Other grant programs may be designed specifically for smaller organizations with limited budgets, excluding larger institutions.

2. Organizational Legal Status

- **Legal Structure**

  Legal structures for social ventures differ globally, shaped by national legal frameworks, cultural and social environment. There are two primary schools of thought regarding social entrepreneurship. First, the social innovation school of thought, where social ventures generate income through market activities, selling products or services to earn an income to sustain operations. The second is the social enterprise school of thought which includes cooperatives and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Examples include the UK's Community Interest Companies (CICs) for organizations with social missions. In India, Section 8 companies allow non-profit organizations with the primary goal to promote social, cultural, charitable, or educational causes and are required for profits to be reinvested into the organization. Finally, there are hybrid models balancing financial sustainability with the organizations mission-driven goals and social impact.

- **Understand your tax category**

  Familiarize yourself with the tax implications specific to your organisation's international social enterprise status. This ensures compliance with relevant laws and regulations, which vary by jurisdiction.

- **United States 501(c)(3) Status**

  In the US, the nonprofit 501(c)(3) status are critical for organizations to receive tax-deductible donations. Having your organization registered in the US can significantly impact the organizations ability to attract grant funding from US-registered organizations. Many of these funders only provide financial

support for organizations with 501(c)(3) status, however many funders are now accepting organizations with equivalency status for international entities.

- **Equivalency Status**

International organizations face challenges in accessing funding due to registration disparities. While many Global North organizations are well-positioned to secure funding, those in the Majority World often encounter hurdles in registration, cost, and complexity.

When operating internationally, having an Equivalency Status may be necessary to ensure tax-deductibility in certain countries. However, organizations in the "Majority World", often face significant challenges in accessing funding due to their registration status. This is because many funding opportunities are only available to registered organizations and not informal Community Based Organizations (CBO's) or other legal structures.

While many Global North organizations are well-positioned to secure funding, those in the Majority World often encounter hurdles in registration, cost, and complexity. This disparity in access to funding can make it difficult for organizations in the Majority World to achieve their goals. Therefore it is important to explore funding that can be accessible based on your organizational status and the resources you have available.

There are options that can be explored to access these funding. This includes using a fiscal sponsor who serve as an intermediary of the funds or another organization you can partner with who can channel the funds to your oganization. Some donors provide strategic and funding support to organisations in the Majority World to assist them with the organizational registration process.

NGOsource is an online service that streamlines the equivalency determination (ED) process for U.S. grantmakers. It offers a centralized ED repository of non-U.S. NGOs certified as equivalent to U.S. public charities. Access to the rapidly growing repository reduces costs, minimizes risk, and adds efficiency to the ED process, see NGOsource website.

Understand What Funders Are Looking For

Before launching a fundraising campaign, it is important to have a clear understanding of what attracts funders to your cause. Be prepared. Here are some important things that funders will seek from you:

- Clear alignment between your project, your mission and what the funder is hoping to achieve.
- Does the partnership achieve the foundations mission?

- Capacity to manage grants and deliver projects; adequate staffing and facilities.
- History of successfully managing other funding.
- Clear, articulate, and achievable outcomes.
- Opportunities for collaboration and partnerships in program delivery.
- Shared and collaborative funding opportunities, as many funders do not want to be the only donor to the organisation.
- Reach and impact of your project.

Identifying your Research Priorities

Once you have completed an organizational assessment, it is time to refine your focus with well-defined research priorities to streamline efforts and ensure resources are used effectively. Key areas to consider:

1. Geographic Focus

- **Local** – Concentrate on donors and funders within your immediate community.
- **Regional** –Target donors and funders within a specific region or state.
- **National** – Seek funding from sources across the country.
- **International** – Explore funding opportunities from global foundations and donors.

2. Funding Priorities & Needs

- **Program Funding** – Support for specific projects or initiatives.
- **General Operating Support** – Funding for core organizational functions, e.g. staff, office costs, etc..
- **Multi-Year Funding** – Long-term commitments that provide stability and predictability of available funds.
- **In-Kind Contributions** – Donations of goods or services.
- **Seed Funding** – Early-stage support for new programs or initiatives to cover the start up costs.

3. Preferred Grant Characteristics

- **Funder Types**
  - **Foundations** – Private, family, or corporate foundations.
  - **Government Donors** – Bilateral or Multilateral Agencies e.g. USAID or UN Agencies
  - **Corporate Foundations** – Philanthropic arms of corporations, providing support for social ventures.
- **Grant Types**
  - **General Operating Support** – Support for staffing, building rent and utilities, technology and other operating costs.
  - **Program-Specific** – Restricted funds to support specific projects or initiatives
  - **Capacity Building**– Designed to strengthen the orgnaizations overall effectiveness which may include staff training, upgrading technology or

sources before the grant is allocated
- **Minimum Grant Size**
  - Set a minimum grant amount that aligns with your organizational needs.

4. Donor Exclusions

- **Current Donors** – Avoid redundant research on current donors.
- **Lapsed Donors** – A lapsed donor is one that has not given to your orgnaizaiton in the last 12 months. Focus on re-engaging lapsed donors rather than researching new ones.
- **Potential Conflicts of Interest** – Exclude donors whose interests may conflict with your organization's mission or values.

5. Restrictions to Types of Funders/Industries

- **Ethical Considerations** – Avoid seeking funding from industries that may have a negative social or environmental impact (e.g., tobacco, fossil fuels).
- **Due Diligence** – Research funders' past activities and ensure they align with your organization's values and mission.

By carefully considering these priorities, you can create a focused and efficient prospect research strategy that maximizes your chances of securing the funding needed to achieve organizational goals.

Identify your Primary and Secondary Issue Areas

An essential step in identifying research priorities is to determine your primary and secondary issue areas. To guide this process, consider the following questions:

- What are your primary thematic priority areas?
- What other areas does your work impact (indirectly) but also achieves impact (secondary issue areas)?
- Who are your target groups (direct and indirectly)?
- What are the age ranges and demographics of your target groups?

This analysis can help you narrow your research scope while also expanding the potential pool of funders by showcasing the multifaceted impact of your work.

WASH Facilities Direct and Indirect Impact <Call out box>

For example, an organization focused on providing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in rural African clommunities, may also have broader impacts. Their interventions can increase school attendance particularly for girls who no longer need to miss school to fetch water from long distances, health outcomes in the community may improve due to a reduction in waterborne diseases, and access

to water can booster incomes by supporting livelihood development etc. In this primary focus area is WASH, its work also touches secondary focus areas such as education, health, livelihood development). Idenitifying both primary and secondary focus areas, allows the organization to highlight its broader impact and appeals to a more diverse range of funders.

The Research: Where to Start?

When identifying prospective funders, start exploring the funders of peer organisations' funders and stay on informed through sector news, articles, and insights. It is also valuable to mobilize your supporters and current donors and ask for introductions to new foundations. Thorough research helps optimise and maximise all the next steps of your fundraising cycle, so be sure to set aside time for it.

The first step in fundraising is knowing the funders, where they fund, what geographic regions, and the funding opportunity. To get started, leverage specialized resources and search tools to deeper your understanding of fundraising research on prospect donors. A few notable sites include Candid, that provides the most comprehensive data and insights about the social sector, the Foundation Directory helps organizations be strategic about funding requests. The Segal Family Foundation created an Afica Funder Directoy with links to corporations, foundations, governments, impact investors, and more funding in Sub-Saharan Africa. A searchable database on the Global Philanthropy & Impact allows you to search by industry and geographic region. Social innovators can access knowledge on the Funds4NGOs site or Fundraiso, to help streamline fundraising efforts. Below is a practical starting points for your research. To access am or access the full explanation that includes if the site has paid access and or free or low cost acces, see Appendix C: Prospect Research Tools & Resources.

- **Prospect Research**

  - Afica Funder
  - Blackbaud
  - Candid
  - Climate Funding Bulletin
  - Foundation Directory
  - Fundraiso
  - Funds4NGOs
  - Fundsforngos
  - Grantmakers.io
  - GrantNav
  - Inside Philanthropy
  - Instrumentl
  - Justice Funds
  - Terra Viva Grants
  - UK Government Charity Navigator

- **Funder Information**

  - Funder websites
  - Annual Reports
  - Nonprofit Status Reports in US 990s / Relevant grants
    - The 990 is a US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form that provides the public with information about nonprofits
  - Social media posts
  - News and articles

- ○ Founders and staff biographies
- ○ Relevant event attendance, webinars, etc.

- ● **Sector Trends and Insights**

  - ○ [Inside Philanthropy](#)
  - ○ [Alliance Magazine](#)
  - ○ [Black Fox Brief](#)
  - ○ [Philanthropy Women](#)

  - ○ [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#)

- ● **Peer Organizations Funders**

  - ○ Organisation [Global Philanthropy & Impact](#) website, provides a comprehensive listing of funders and the sector areas funded.

- ● **Convenings & Webinars**

  - ○ Social Capital Markets [SOCAP](#)
  - ○ [Skoll World Forum](#)
  - ○ [Catalyst Now Fundraising Masterclass Series](#)
  - ○ [Opportunity Collaboration](#)

Building a Donor Profile

Keeping your research organized is essential to progress to the next stage of meaningful connections. Developing Donor Profile can help quickly access potential funders. Creating a strong Donor Profiles allows you to quickly understand:

- ● **Eligibility** – Review areas of interest, grantee requirements, and geographic focus.
- ● **Vision, mission, values, and programs** – Understand the funders guiding principles and key initiatives.
- ● **Funding approach and priorities** – Access whether their focus is on systemic change, direct services, grassroots activism or other approaches)
- ● **Other relevant points** – Evaluate the grant size, if multi-year funding is avaialble, offering in-kind contributions, seed funding etc.)

Pro-Tip: Stay organized with your donor information to strengthen connections and boost results

Here is an example of a structured Donor Profile that Black Fox Global uses to capture essential information on the funder:

Catalyst N

Donor Profile

Information

- ✔ Mission:
- ✔ Area of Interest:
- ✔ Thingd We Do Not Fund:
- ✔ Geographic Focus:
- ✔ HQ Location:
- ✔ Average Grant Range:
- ✔ Total Assets:
- ✔ Annual Giving:
- ✔ Application Process:

- 🕿 Telephone:
- 🌐 Website:
- ✉ Email:
- 👤 Key Contact(s):
- 📰 News/Article/Insights:
- 📑 Recent Relevant Grants:

- Overview: mission, priorities, geographic focus, strategies
- Application process and deadlines
- Financial background
- Contact information and key contacts
- Insights from news, articles and other relevant info

Optimising your Donor Pipeline

Another way to effectively managing your current and prospective donors that are essential to the financial health of your organisation is explained in Optimizing your Donor Pipeline by Catalyst Now article, [Appendix D]. A systematic and up to date process for tracking where you are in the donor lifecycle is crucial for any successful fundraising strategy. This guide provides a clear framework to help you create and manage your donor pipeline.

Why is the Funder a Fit for Us?

Now that you know the funder priorities, access your alignment with their goals by asking: **Why is the Funder a Fit for us?** Identify the reason why you are aligned with the funder, by considering:

- What are the strongest points of connection?
- Can you mobilize the funder's own language to express that alignment?
- What evidence supports this connection? (e.g. past grants, funder specific program goals, news stories, etc.)?
- Can you highlight your points of entry?

The "ABC" of Donor Identification

To **aid with donor identification**, fundraising professionals utilise the acronym "ABC" to evaluate a donor prospect:

- **A**ccess: Do you have access to the person? Can one of your champions (e.g. board members or passionate partner), introduce you)? If they are a past donor to your organisation, do you have existing communications channels.
- **B**elief: Do they believe in the cause or mission of your organisation? In other words, do they care?
- **C**apacity: Do they have the financial resources to provide sufficient support?

Partnership Cycle

The partnership cycle is an ongoing process, driven by guiding principles: Accountable, Targeted, and Reliable. These principles work together to build meaningful, lasting donor relationships.

The Partnership Cycle
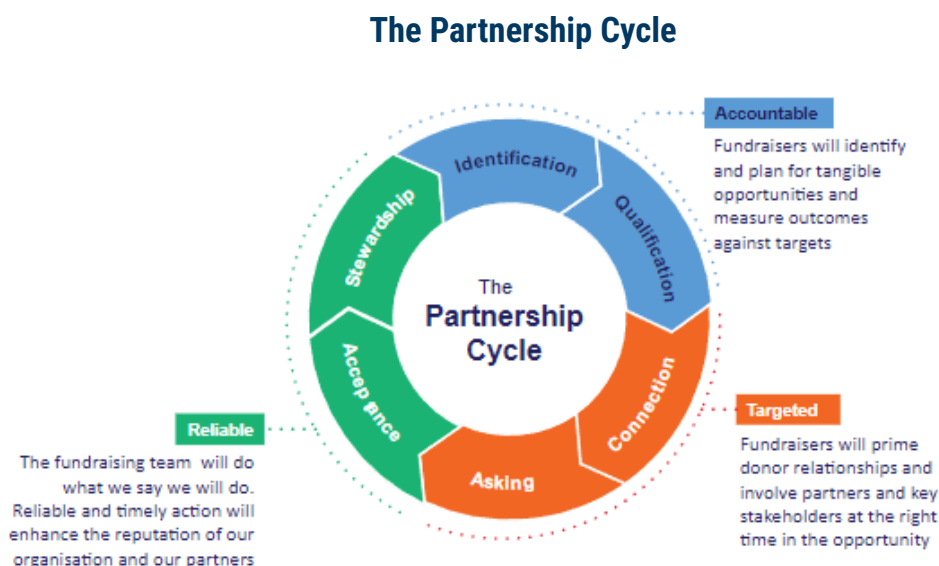
These key principles work together to build strong, lasting relationships. The **Accountable** principle encourages fundraisers to identify real opportunities, plan effectively, and measuring outcomes to ensure progress. With **Targeted**, the focus shifts to connecting with the right people and asking for support at the right time. Nurturing donor relationships and involve key stakeholders as needed. The **Reliable** principle is about following through on commitments to trust trust and strengthens your organisation's reputation. The cycle is not linear—it is ongoing. Each step feeds into the next, fostering continuous growth and improvement in your fundraising approach.

Tips on Researching Donors

Here are some tips:

- **Identify the Ecosystem** – Identify the ecosystem around you, who has funded other peer organisations in your ecosystem? Connect by introduction email, meet at events and conferences.
- **Referrals** – Ask grantees to refer your organisation to their funders (ask them to introduce you).
- **Value of a Relationship** – Focus on building long-term relationships. Encourage donors to see organisation as an institution rather than project-based funding.
- **Share the Wins** – Communicate achievements and exciting developments on the horizon for your organisation, creating a deeper connection with donors.

This toolkit is designed to equip you with actionable steps to identify, engage, and secure prospective donors effectively.

IV. Building Donor Relationships

Fostering Authentic & Lasting Funder Relationships

Too many nonprofit leaders feel frustrated and burned out, grappling with an unjust philanthropic system that seems closed off to people without access to insider information and connections. We get it, we have been there, and we work with clients everyday who strive to be 'seen' by funders for the uniqueness they bring to the table.

In a Black Fox Global Fundraising Masterclass, "Building Authentic Funder Relationships & Maximizing Opportunities for Funding", held during Catalyzing Change Week (see the Video), team members explored ways to build authentic funder relationships through professional persistence.

Building on this strategic fundraising approach and the parallel importance of funder outreach and messaging, the team also shared tried and true strategies to ensure how you can be 'grant ready' when you do secure invitations to submit proposals and Letters of Inquiry (LOI).

This blog post is the first in a two-part series following this Masterclass. The session recording can be accessed on Catalyst Now's YouTube channel, and a slide deck.

Building Authentic Funder Relationships

In fundraising, doors for funding opportunities often need to be respectfully opened by non profit leaders. At Black Fox Global, we deploy and advise our Advancement Outreach clients to use what we call 'professional persistence'.

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professional persistence
[pro·fes·sion·al per·sis·tence] verb

To pursue a funding prospect with clarity of purpose, strategic intention, authenticity, and finesse.

To us, professional persistence in fundraising is having a clearly defined and informed goal, while persisting with an outreach strategy that centers on clarity of purpose, strategic intention, authenticity, and finesse. It also means that we don't advocate persisting for the sake of it, but in a manner that embodies organizational and individual values, and tactfully so.

3 Stages of Professional Persistence

Stage 2 Engagement
How? When?

Stage 1 Pre Engagement
Why? What? Who?*

Stage 3 Maintaining Momentum

Stage 1: Pre Engagement

In this stage, we focus on the why, the what, and the who. We begin with Uncovering Deeply Aligned Funders, a research-focused exercise to find the right funding prospects, based on mission, geographical, and eligibility alignment. It is also important to choose funders based on evidence of alignment. Have they funded missions like yours in the past? Where have their recent resources been deployed? Once funder candidates have been identified, it is important to set eyes on the ideal outcomes. With the ultimate goal being to unlock resources, it is important to set intermediate milestone targets.

Once funding prospects have been identified, we can now look ahead to determining access points and gauging proximity. The warmer we can get an introduction, the more directly it will work in our favor. Can we find a connection through our board members or a current funder? Maybe a peer organization will be willing to make an introduction?

Pro-Tip: Warm introductions will work in your favor.

In the absence of a warm introduction, don't get disheartened, simply find ways to be in the rooms these identified funder prospects are occupying. Is there a convening you can attend that will create an opportunity for an in person meeting? Or, can you reach out for a learning conversation with an influencer or decision maker, to get more in-depth insights on how and what they fund? Do not underestimate the power of 'cold' emails or linkedin messages! When done effectively, built on known alignment and strong messaging, this direct outreach is strategic and intentional and can be effective in securing funder meetings and initially building funder relationships.

In tandem to this, it is also necessary to think about who in your organization will be the 'face of outreach'. Yes, it can be the CEO or Development Director, but based on your research on the funder, it could also be a Program Director or your Research Director. Consider, too, the intricacies of the program you're hoping to get funded. Who is going to be rolling up their sleeves to get the implementation work done? Is this person better placed to do the outreach with the funder than say, the CEO?

Stage 2: Engagement

Having now identified deeply aligned funders and an initial strategy for outreach, we now go into the heart of engaging donors and building authentic relationships. Determining details on how to engage, figuring out outreach tactics, and planning the cadence of outreach are all in focus now. Tactics should ideally leverage existing organizational infrastructure and assets.

It is also important to be in tune with the funder prospect's news and developments. Tactically, this could mean setting up Google alerts for the funding organization and/or key contacts, following them on LinkedIn, and/or signing up for their newsletter, among others. On a deeper level, this is being aware of what matters to them, in real time. What op-eds have they published? What grantees are they spotlighting? In what ways are they contributing to sector thought leadership?

Once initial outreach has happened, the cadence of follow up will be determined by you, what you know about the funder, and what you have to offer in your follow up outreach. We often recommend clients start with a two-week cycle, sending a check in email every couple of weeks, and then adjusting to every 2-3 months.

Each touchpoint should show an honest attempt at connecting with the funder as a human being. This can be done by aligning on similar passion areas or mission focuses, sharing learnings from the broader sector, or complementing their work with your own referrals and connections. It is worth your time to be intentional about each funder outreach when you know you are reaching out to deeply aligned funders who would be strong partners in your work.

At this stage, it is equally important to center on what you have to offer in the relationship. Funders and implementers go hand in hand; neither can exist without the other. You are presenting an opportunity to further their work and mission as a funder, just as much as they provide an opportunity to move your work forward. Own this and approach your outreach with this lens of mutual respect and authentic curiosity around where there may be opportunities to partner together for greater impact.

Stage 3: Maintaining Momentum

This stage occurs in parallel with the actual relationship advancement and outreach to funder prospects. Maintaining momentum is the central theme here. If you had a great first meeting with the funder, but they're being non-responsive when you follow up or inform you of a strategic pivot, it is essential to make decisions. Do you want to adopt a low-effort maintenance outreach, ramp up your outreach, or pivot to other prospects altogether?

There is often no one right answer, but this is informed by considering multiple information points you have collected in the course of your engagement. Additionally, in view of your own organization's funding priorities and time, does it still make sense to pursue the opportunity? Build in moments of reflection for gut checks at this stage.

Often a donor response is not their unwillingness to be direct and share a no. They also have competing priorities, an overflowing email inbox, and personal lives to balance with their professional lives. Give space for the timing to align, and ensure that as you maintain momentum, you are doing so in a way that honors both your bandwidth and the funder as a human who is also balancing other priorities in their daily schedule.

Conclusion

Having touched upon the three stages, some key principles that our team has found helpful in the journey of professional persistence are:

- Every interaction with the funder should be mutually beneficial, even if the end goal is securing funds.
- Building authentic relationships is key, to not just attracting funds, but to be a valuable sector player.
- Adopt a lens that prioritizes long-term foresight.
- Consider your own values and opportunity cost. It is not just the funder's time and preferences that matter, yours does too.
- Build a robust deeply aligned prospect pipeline; it improves organizational resilience and boosts your ability to deliver impact.

The team at Black Fox Global wishes you the greatest success in your fundraising efforts! Both in securing the funds needed for your impactful mission, but also in the growth of your network and the authentic connections you build with funders and peer leaders along the way. We encourage you to utilize the corresponding Professional Persistence worksheet here as you consider how to maximize your current and potential funding opportunities. Onward!

The recording from this Fundraising Masterclass is available on the Catalyst Now Youtube channel here, and the slide deck. Part two of this series, Maximizing Opportunities for Funding, is available here.

Set up your Systems

Before you can accept any payments, make sure you have the right administrative systems in place and keep track of how, when, and where the money is spent.

- Do you want an ethical fundraising policy?
- Do you want a gift acceptance policy?
- Do you have an industry funding/engagement policy?
- Do you have the right administrative systems in place?
- Are you able to record and receipt all of your income and ensure you can keep track of how, when, and by whom it is being spent?

In most cases, you are going to have to report back to funders not only on outcomes but also on budget.

V. Developing a Fundraising Strategy

Developing a fundraising strategy involves creating a structured plan to secure financial resources for an organization's mission and goals. A strong strategy aligns fundraising efforts with the organization's overall objectives, ensuring sustainability and growth. Below are the key sections to include in a fundraising strategy.

<This section is a work in progress until we plan the fundraising strategy session with experts in the field.:>

1. **Executive Summary**

An executive summary is a high-level overview, highlighting the purpose of the fundraising strategy, key goals, and expected outcomes. This allows readers to grasp the essence of the document without reading the full version. Executive summaries can range from 1-3 pages with the key highlights of the plan.

2. **Organizational Mission & Goals**

The mission and vision provide the "why," of the organization and the short-term and long-term goals provide the "how" and "what." the organization strives to achieve. When presenting to potential donors, share how the funders contributions will directly support the organization's mission and goals.

- **Mission Statement**– Clearly state the mission statement, the organization's core purpose, why the organization exists, and the impact.
- **Vision Statment** – Share the vision statement, the aspirational future that the orgnaization strives to achieve.
- **Short Term Goals** – Define short-term goals the organization aims to accomplish within the first year.
- **Long-term Goals** – Explain the long-term goals, the broader, more ambitious objectives that the organization aims to achieve over a longer period, typically within 3-5 years or longer.

3. **Fundraising Goals & Financial Targets**

The fundraising goals and financial targets demonstrate the social venture's financial needs and how fundraising efforts will contribute to the organizations overall sustainability.

- **SMART Goals** – Define the specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) fundraising targets including the total amount of funds the organization aims to raise within a specific timeframe.

- **Revenue Goals by Funding Sources** – Share the expected break down revenue goals by funding sources (e.g., grants, individual donors, corporate sponsorships, earned income, etc.).

4. **Fundraising Methods & Revenue Streams**

Identify and outline fundraising approaches, which ones the organization will use, maybe what percentage of funding will come from the the 7 pillars of ufndraising highlighted in this toolkit. See the 7 pillars of fundraising for additional methods.

- **Grants & Foundations** – Applying for institutional funding.
- **Individual Giving** – Donor cultivation, major gifts, recurring giving.
- **Corporate Partnerships** – Sponsorships, employee giving programs.
- **Events & Campaigns** – Fundraising events, peer-to-peer fundraising.
- **Earned Income** – Memberships, fee-for-service models.

5. **Donor Segmentation and Engagement Strategies**

This section focuses on the identification and understanding different types of donor groups and how to best engage them in the work of your social venture.

- **Define Key Donor Segments** – Define key donor profiles (e.g., major donors, recurring donors, foundations, corporations, and other relevant groups).
- **Tailored Engagment Strategies** – Develop specific strategies for each donor segment including how to build relationships and request donations.strategies for each group.

6. **Resource Needs & Capacity Building**

Understanding the resource needs from financial resources to staffing needs, physical infrastructure and technology needs are highlighted in this section. If these resources are not available at this time, not how the organization access these resources.

- **Staffing Needs** – Identify the roles and responsiblites for the fundraising team, develop job descriptions, and training and development needs for staff, board members, and volunteers on best practices in fundraising.
- **Technology Needs** – Specify the type of Customer Relationship Managmenet (CRM) system for the organization, fundraising software or other technology tools.
- **Financial Needs** – Address the financial needs to adequately support the work of the fundraising team.
- **Capacity Gaps and Solutions** – Address any gaps in the current skills and needs of the team, identify potential solutions to address these gaps.

7. **Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)**

This section will showcase how the social venture will measure the effectiveness of the fundraising efforts. In addition, a core part of measurement, evaluation, and learning (MEL) the team should address how they will learn from the MEL data.

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** – Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to track progress including the funds raised by each donor segment, donor retention rates, cost per dollar raised, website donation conversation rats, among other KPIs.
- **Reporting Structures** – Establish reporting structures to assess fundraising effectiveness, identify who is responsible for collecting nad analyzing the data, and how often will the fundraising strategy be reviewed and updated.

8. Legal & Ethical Considerations

This section ensures that all of the fundraising activities comply with tax regulations, donor restrictions, and ethical fundraising standards.

- **Tax Regulations** – Ensure that the organization is compliant with all of the tax laws and regulations including reporting requirements.
- **Donor Restrictions** – Establish clear policies for accepting and managing restricted donations to be compliant with donor wishes.
- **Ethical Fundraising Standards** – Adhere to ethical fundraising guidelines and best practices. Be sure to be transparent in all communications and respect the donors wishes.
- **Gift Acceptance Policies** – Create a written acceptance policy that aligns with the organizations values to avoid legal challenges and minimize risks to the orgnizations reputation (e.g. the organization will not accept gifts from organizations that mine previous metals, alcohol and cigarette companies that hurt the health of people in the community, etc.).

9. Implementation Plan & Timeline

- **Milestones and Timelines** – Develop a detailed timeline outlining all of the tasks to accomplish, who on the team will be responsible for these tasks and deadlines.
- **Donor Relationship Building** – Acknowledge that building relationships with donors takes a minimum of 12-24 months to cultivate the relationship. Take the time to track the donor relationship building steps and communications to ensure regular communications and engagement.

Pro-Tip: Remember: many experts in fundraising say it takes 12-24 months to build relationships with donors.

10. Risk Assessment & Contingency Planning

After the U.S. government canceled millions of dollars in USAID funding in early 2025, nonprofits that relied heavily on this revenue were suddenly forced to make critical

decisions about their financial sustainability. This situation underscores the importance of a comprehensive risk assessment and contingency plan in fundraising to identify potential funding vulnerabilities, diversify revenue streams, and develop emergency strategies to maintain operations during funding disruptions.

- **Scenario Planning** - Identify potential risks (e.g., economic downturns, donor fatigue, crazy American presidents who wipe out USAID in a matter of weeks, etc.) and develop multiple scenarios to prepare for fundraising challenges.
- **Donor Communications During Crisis** - Create backup plans for communicating with donors during a crisis including plans for communications and reassurance of the orgnizations mission during the crisis.
- **Diversification of Funding** – Develop a plan to diversify revenue sources beyond reliance on single funders (e.g. grants, individual donors, corporate sponsors, etc.). Include a contingency plan for if the fundraising goals are not met and how to communicate with donors if the goals are not met.

A robust fundraising strategy and implementation plan is essential for a social ventures long term sustainability and continued impact. By combining a structured implementation plan with proactive risk assessment and contingency planning, organizations can navigate financial uncertainties while strengthening donor relationships. A strong fundraising plan not only secures immediate resources but also builds a foundation for sustained growth and mission-driven success.

Set Fundraising Goals and Build a Fundraising Story

Set goals around how much you want to raise, and over what time, and be clear about what you need the money for – your purpose! These questions can help you identify your fundraising goals:

- What do you hope to achieve?
- Research past fundraising activities—what has worked? And just as importantly, what has not?
- What do you need/want money for? And how much do you need?
- Which of the projects/initiatives are the priority for fundraising?

Identify which pillar(s) you will use to achieve your fundraising goals. If you have multiple activities, a funding matrix may help.

Advice shared by the For Impact team, Do the Math

Do the Math to Simplify Your Funding Story

'Doing the math' means owning and internalizing an understanding of your numbers. It also means taking the time to simplify the numbers in a way that others (board, prospects, staff) can understand.

Pro-tip: Numbers tell stories

1. **Your gap. Then sell your gap.**

   Private schools have a simple gap between the tuition and the cost per student. Schools should ask funders to fund that gap. Example: $1016 per child. Sponsor one child for one year.

2. **The true cost of programmes.**

   This is a big one. Organizations frequently under-estimate the true cost to deliver a program. Worse, many don't know, they just pick a number out of the air. The cost to deliver the program (impact) is essential to your funding rationale. Knowing the real numbers boosts confidence in the ask and helps the funder buy into a funding rationale. You can ask someone to underwrite part or all of the program.

3. **A funding rationale around impact.**

   Along with the previous point, you can do the math to tie programming monies to impact. Clean and simple example to illustrate the concept: Let's say you have a program that impacts 4th-6th graders (80 classrooms @ 20 students per class) at 40 schools. You can do the math to create a simple funding rationale:

- ○ $80,000 to underwrite the program for one year
- ○ $2,000 per school
- ○ $1,000 per class
- ○ $50 per child

Funders will appreciate your creative packaging to communicate the impact value so long as you're simplifying (not changing) the math to tell your story.

4. **A funding plan (this assumes you have a funding goal)**

We are still amazed every time we walk into an organisation and no one can agree on a funding goal. Without a goal, how can you do the math to get to the goal?

Three simple action steps to get you there:

- Determine the dollar amount you need for both operations and projects. What is the lump sum? 80% of organizations can't answer this question.
- How many investments would you need and at what amounts to achieve this goal?
- When? (One year? Three years? Five years?)

The funding plan does a few things as it relates to your case:

- It makes it believable and achievable.
- It shows a potential investor how she/he would fit into the funding vision.
- It also illustrates that you're not just picking a number out of the air – there is logic – Which gives you and your investors confidence.

Pro-tip: There are times when you can actually ask the potential investor, "Where do you see yourself in this plan?" Then, you let them select a dollar level – Something For Impact calls "The Clueless Close."

When you are selling a vision, you can also sell 'the plan.' If it helps, think of a 'mega-project' that will require the participation and support of 33 funders. To get one funder on board, you will need intelligent and believable math illustrating the funding plan for all 33 funders.

IV. Building a Fundraising Board

The team at Black Fox Global has resources on engaging and building a fundraising board. The next three sections have links to their articles highlighting the role of building and engaging with your board.

Building a Fundraising Board

Social ventures often face a challenge with boards that are passionate about the mission but hesitant about fundraising. While fundraising is crucial for impact, many board members lack the skills, mindset, or comfort level to actively engage in it, leaving the organisations leadership overburdened with the majority of the fundraising efforts. To address this, social innovators should establish a culture where fundraising is a shared responsibility between the board of directors and the staff.

Our colleagues at Black Fox shared four roles of a board member to self-identify how they will make a positive impact on the organisation. This helps board members identify self-identification exercise to understand which of the three roles Asker, Connector, and Nurturer. identify with.

- **Askers** are confident and assertive, comfortable directly requesting support. They inspire others and lead with decisiveness.
- **Connectors** excel at introducing people and opening doors for the organization. Optimistic and versatile, they build valuable relationships.
- **Nurturer** prioritise building lasting relationships with supporters, making them feel valued.

Key strategies include recruiting board members with potential for fundraising, setting clear expectations, offering skills-building opportunities, and adopting the giver policy for contributions. Regularly updating board members' roles and providing an orientation to new board members and resources, helps reduce discomfort and builds confidence in supporting the organisations fundraising tasks. Learn more on Building a Fundraising Board: Recruiting and On-Boarding New Board Members, in the article by Black Fox.

Recruiting and Onboarding New Members

Boards are made up of volunteers and cares about the organisation. This provides a huge challenge with nonprofits and social ventures: the need for every board member to be willing to support the fundraising efforts of the organisation. Board members may lack the skills or comfort level to actively contribute. This often leaves the organisations leaders bearing most of the responsibility of fundraising, which can lead to burnout. To address this, nonprofits can foster a fundraising culture within the board, starting with clear expectations, support, and training. The article highlights the work of Penelope Burk with survey participants being asked after a thank you call to the board members; 93% said they would definitely or probably give again when they were next asked; 84% would give a larger gift; 74% would give indefinitely.

Potential strategies include setting fundraising as a core responsibility in board contracts and using what Black Fox Global calls, "give or get" policies to encourage contributions. This may include sharing with new board members how they can support the organisation's fundraising efforts. Assisting new board members in finding their way within the organisation and sharing opportunities to comprehensive orientation and support for Board members who may be uncomfortable with fundraising to assist with non-ask events, making thank-you calls, or acting as organisational ambassadors to increase their effectiveness. Ultimately, creating a culture where board members feel supported and aligned with fundraising goals enhances both individual confidence and organisational impact. Learn more in the Black Fox Global article in the Building a Fundraising Board: Recruiting and On-Boarding New Board Members *article*.

Board Self-Identification Exercise

A core ingredient in developing a successful fundraising culture is for each team member to identify, not if, but how they are a fundraiser: This exercise is designed to help board members and team members reflect on their unique gifts and contributions they can make to the fundraising for your organization. By identifying with one of these three three personality types – Asker, Connector, or Nuturer, board members can gain clarity of their natural leadership styles and how they best support the organizations mission/

Each board member should review the description and rank their top three roles in order of alignment with one being your most dominant type, three being your least dominant type. These roles are based on Enneagram and Myers Briggs personality and developed by Black Fox Global and adapted for a global audience. This exercise offers valuable insights into the diverse ways that board members can contribute to strategic growth of the orgnaization.

Asker - Making the Ask Personality

Self-assured, charming, success-oriented, resourceful, assertive, and decisive. May show preference for extroversion. At Your Best: Self-accepting, authentic, charitable, role models who inspire others. You believe in yourself and your own value. You have a resourceful, "can do" attitude and passionate inner drive. Examples: Madonna, Oprah Winfrey, Jeroo Billimoria, Martin Luther King, Jr. Angela Merkel, etc.

Connector - Opening the Door/Making an Introduction Personality

Optimistic, versatile, playful, and practical. You pursue what you want in life with a cheerful determination. You are frequently endowed with a quick, agile mind, and can be an exceptionally fast learner. May show preference for extroversion or adapted introversion. At Your Best: You focus your talents on worthwhile goals, cross-fertilizing areas of interest. Examples: The Dalai Lama, Benjamin Franklin, Amelia Earhart, Timothy Leary, Ratan Tata

Empathetic, sincere, warm-hearted, and friendly. You are encouraging, nurturing, appreciative, able to see the good in others ~ a truly loving person. You feel it is a privilege to be in the lives of others. May show preference for Introversion. At Your Best: Unselfish and altruistic, have unconditional love for others. You are deeply unselfish, humble, and altruistic. Examples: Guru Ammaji ("The Hugging Saint"), Bishop Desmond Tutu, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mother Teresa, Jane Goodall, Wangari Maathai.

Download the exercise to use in your own work at [BFG Self ID Exercise](#).

Connecting Deeply with Funders through Board Retreats

Shared by the team at Black Fox Global.

When we conduct board retreats, we do this exercise at the outset of the retreat, setting the stage for a meaningful day of connection and solidarity. Board members while sharing the same North Star, the organisation's vision — arrive at the work from different viewpoints. We ask that board members prepare a response from the "personal why" section. Enabling each other to be seen, felt, and heard on what brings them to the work and the boardroom table helps build stronger bonds and a deeper understanding around why working on behalf of your mission is theirs to do. It also helps in reaffirming their commitment to your organisation, the mission, and the vision. This is also effective in staff meetings/retreats. This is also effective in staff meetings/retreats.

I originally created this exercise a number of years ago for a client who was an intellectual giant and could talk about the technical side of the programs quite well but was not connecting with mission-aligned funders in a meaningful and resonant way, resulting in less funding for a vital mission. My goal in crafting this was to take this client from a "neck up" approach to more of an approach with vulnerability, authenticity, and emotional texture as a meaningful point of entry for discussion about the work. This approach also helps to create an invitation for the prospective funder to share why they care deeply about the mission - including what may be in their personal story that would lead them to care as deeply as you do about solving the issue.

The "nuggets" you craft are meant to be bite-sized openers to a deeper conversation about the work and inspire a funder to want to learn more. It is vital to respond to these questions in ways that truly make you come alive in the conversation. While they are great for settings such as galas or luncheons, your responses are also a good way to keep a sit-down meeting flowing with passion and connection.

Crafting Your Why

Shared by the team at For Impact. Engaging funders is about creating meaningful connections through clear, impactful communication. Here is a simple yet powerful approach to engaging funders by structuring your communication across three key levels –

why you exist, what do you do, and how can I help? This approach works for both written and verbal communication with funders.

- **The why:** This is where you share your big picture—your "why." By clearly articulating the ultimate impact you aim to achieve, you draw funders into a shared purpose and inspire them to see the broader change your organization is working toward.
- **The what:** This is the level where you explain how you're turning vision into reality. This is where you can share your programs and initiatives, demonstrating that you have a clear and thoughtful plan to make tangible progress toward your why.
- **The how:** Think of 'boots on the ground' and execution. This is your opportunity to tell the donor exactly what you need and ways they can help, including opportunities for funding support.

This framework helps you balance big-picture inspiration with concrete details. By engaging a prospective funder at all three levels, you create a comprehensive narrative that hooks funders emotionally while providing the practical information they need to make informed decisions.

> **Pro Tip:** The first essential step to successful funder matchmaking is to understand your organization's identity, or your WHY.

One of our core beliefs at Black Fox Global is that organizational storytelling is the driving force in building powerful connections with funders and motivating action.

Effective storytelling invites funders to be part of the solution, while inspiring empathy, and communicates shared values, ideals and truths. Your mission, values, profile and strategic goals are key to developing a successful fundraising strategy.

In developing your WHY and thinking about funder-specific communications, it helps to understand what funders want to know:

- **Your connection to the problem**. What originally drew you to this work? What was the most exciting for you in the early days of this work?
- **Your unique vision**. What's at stake if you don't solve these issues? What do you find most compelling about your mission?
- **Your approach**. Why are you the organization to solve the problem? Do you have the capacity to do this work?
- **Your impact**. If you have data, what story is it telling? What kind of data are you collecting now, or what would you like to collect in the future?

We recommend developing a set of Core Messages in three categories: Who You Are, What You Do, and How You Do It, to help refine your answers to these questions. (To explore Core Message development in depth).

VII. Develop your Communications and Branding Plan

Moving from a Perspective of Scarcity to Abundance

The team at Co-Impact shared a story about Earl Nightingale, author of [The Strangest Secret](), highlighting a powerful truth that transcends beliefs, sectors, and definitions of success.

Pro-Tip: We become what we think about.

If this is true, what happens when our thoughts revolve solely around being just a nonprofit or just relying on survival. Constantly worrying about:

- Shrinking budgets?
- Oh poor us, we are working so hard?
- Endless meetings with little progress?
- Another round of staff cuts?
- What if we can not pay our employees this month?
- Donors may not pay for our staff costs?
- Celebrating a 5% increase in our budget, incraese, knowing it will not truly drive change?

Instead, let's shift our focus to the positive—on how our work is changing the world. Let's center our thoughts on our vision, mission, and purpose: to make a meaningful impact on the lives of others. See the difference?

When we fixate on the challenges, there is no space left for the opportunities. By focusing on the 'good stuff,' we open the door to greater possibilities and success.

Some philanthropy consultants frame this as moving from a scarcity to abundance mindset - there is an abundance of resources out there to support our mission, we just need the tools to unlock them.

Crafting Convincing Funder-Centric Communications

The at Black Fox Global team shares their expertise in crafting convincing funder centric communications with additional resources throught this article.

For organizations seeking greater impact, the inability to communicate your work in a way that inspires significant funding can be a major pain point. One of our core beliefs as Black Fox Global is that organizational storytelling is the driving force in building powerful connections with funders and motivating action. Effective storytelling invites

funders to not only be part of the solution, but inspires empathy and communicates shared values, ideals, and truths.

Crafting your organization's messaging with funders in mind can feel like a daunting endeavor. At Black Fox Global, the approach we take to organization messaging can be distilled to a three step process, as experienced in our [Communications Toolkit](#). In this article we aim to summarize our message development process for you.

But before we dive into our process: let's first consider what funders are actually looking for in your communications.

What are funders seeking?

1. A personal connection to your mission

We talk about effective fundraising speaking to both the heart and mind, and developing your personal connection to the work really speaks to the heart. Some questions you can ask yourself or your team to help facilitate this narrative and personally connect you to your mission include:

- What originally drew you to this work?
- What was the most exciting for you in the early days of this work?
- What impact are you most proud of?

See ["Crafting Your Why"](#) for more guidance on connecting your personal story to your fundraising.

 2. Unique Identity: Why this work is uniquely yours to do

This leads into your organizational 'why' or why this work is uniquely yours to do. Some of these questions for you, for your team or for your board, can include

- What do you find most compelling about your mission?
- What's at stake if you don't solve these issues?
- What sets you apart from other organizations doing this work?

3. Credibility: Why you are the organization to solve the problem

While the previous points are really about speaking to the funder's heart, credibility speaks to your organization's capacity to do this work. This is the mind piece and is often factual and objective. Questions that will help you frame your credibility include:

- What are the tangible resources you have available to you?
- How about the unique expertise of your leadership, Board, and staff members?
- Where else have you received funding? Mention past grants from foundations and organizations, as this speaks volumes to your accountability and your credibility to do this work.

4. Impact, Impact, Impact!

Lastly, data, as to be expected, is overwhelmingly important to complement your storytelling. Surveys and reports throughout the social sector name impact as one of the top three, if not most important considerations for funding.

Many early stage organizations only track what they're accountable to their current donors for based on your current grants. If you are looking to engage new funding sources, it's important to be able to create a cohesive narrative around the data you have. Even if you're not at a stage to invest in robust data collection, begin to think through the metrics that can speak to your work. For both donor-facing communications as well as for your own measure of employee accountability and organizational progress, it is important to articulate what these metrics are.

The Black Fox Global Message Development Process

Now that you have answered some fundamental questions related to fleshing out your organization's narrative, we can move on to creating a funder centric engagement pitch.

Many of you will already know the traditional formula for nonprofit communications is centered around problem-solution-impact. But when we're thinking about funder-centric communications and setting our clients apart from the other wonderful organizations doing similar work, we find that building messaging around three categories – Who We Are, What We Do, and How We Do It, is more conducive to building an organizational story which we know goes further with funders.

Once these fundamentals of identity, work, and approach are articulated, we're then able to go back and tell the problem-solution-impact story with greater precision – as well as draw stronger connections to those universal themes that drive action and connection.

Pro Tip: Your messaging should be authentic, compelling, and clear.

Identity: Who We Are (IDENTITY)

This first bucket is really about your core philosophies, beliefs, and values – and possibly your origin story if you feel this is relevant to your work today. Within this section, we also push clients to be very clear about where they belong in the "ecosystem"- it's just as important to define who you are not as who you are. Are you a systems change organization, or do you purely exist to deliver programs or services? It's important to have clarity about your identity and what you're looking to achieve.

When developing your identity messaging, keep in mind:

- Make a clear distinction between identity and work: introduce yourself first, before going deeper into your vision.
- Demonstrate guiding philosophies, values, and core beliefs.

- Define where you belong in the "ecosystem."
- Start with a descriptor. Are you a network, ecosystem builder, convener, collaborator, or a social impact organization? Find a descriptor that feels unique and relevant to you.

Work: What We Do (WORK)

Next, we move into looking at What We do, or your organization's work. In this section, we focus on your organization's aspirations – not your programs or approach just yet! Your What We Do should be inclusive of the problem you are solving and the outcomes you will be creating.

In other words, think of this bucket as a mini, compressed theory of change, which shows how you expect outcomes to occur. When you are describing what you do, this is really focused on goals, outcomes and aspirations. We are not yet talking about the specifics of the nuts and bolts of your programming. Here, you are describing your work but not yet your approach.

The role of aspiration is really key in making this distinction. This is where mission and vision meet action " The 'what do we' piece helps a funder or supporter truly connect the dots between your vision and your programming.

Approach: How We Do It (APPROACH)

Lastly, this bucket outlines your unique approach to the work. While there are many organizations addressing your issue area (and who may even share the same vision as you!) you are the only one doing so in a particular way. This section should outline your real point of difference and distinguishing features as an organization.

Some key considerations to look out for when building out your approach include:

- Rules of threes: Can you summarize your work in three categories?
- Be very selective with industry or academic jargon.
- Focus on accessibility and readability. These should be clear, succinct, and even able to read out loud if needed.

While the problems that you are working on are nuanced and complex, by doing the difficult work of message development for your organization, you can define the problem in a way that the donor sees a direct line to you as the solution.

Once you're done crafting the primary messages, at Black Fox Global, we progress to secondary messages or talking points. These messages add color, dimension and detail to what you have already done with the primary messages. You can pick and choose these talking points depending on what funder you're in conversation with, or proposal you're working on.

With the primary messages and the talking points, the hardest part is over! At this point, you have what you need to tell a compelling organizational story.

The full elements of Black Fox Global's Communications Toolkit includes core messaging, talking points, a pitch deck, email templates, telephone talking points, an engagement letter, and a comprehensive Case for Support, for you to use as needed with funders.

Black Fox Global's Communications Lead Rosie Urbanovich is featured in a Masterclass produced by Catalyst 2030 discussing these concepts; the recording from the session is available on the [Catalyst 2030 Youtube channel](#).

A sample full [Fundraising Communications Toolkit](#) by Black Fox Global for Launch Girls. Learn more about our Fundraising Communications Toolkit offering [here](#).

Revisiting Messaging in Current Climate

In early 2025, the President of the United States implemented an Executive Order that essentially abliterated the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the single largest donor in the world. This resulted in the terminations of millions of dollars of grants and contracts that had a devastating impact on organizations that were reliant on USAID funding around the globe. To ensure that your organization is able to meet its mission, consider the following questions:

- Why is your work even more important/pressing right now?
- How are you making the world a better place?
- Is your messaging clear and concise for new potential funders and organizations who may not have familiarity with your speciality?

Formula for revisiting messaging in the current climate:

- **WHO: Theory of Change Formula**: ("By [action/intervention], we [organizational role] to [desired impact].")

  Example:: By [providing agricultural training and resources], we [work with smallholder farmers in Kenya] to strengthen food security and achieve economic stability.

- **WHAT**: **Vision, Theory of Change, Your work**
  <missing section>

- **HOW**: describing your model or approach using the Rule of Threes; expanding on your programs and initiatives; expand on your unique approaches within programs
  Example: We close the opportunity gap for underprivileged youth by running career support programs, advancing work opportunities through internship

placements with local corporations and advocating for the inclusion of interest-based career guidance within public school systems.

Incorporating Ethical Storytelling Into Your Communications

In the article, A Checklist for Ethical Storytelling: Stirring Hearts, Not Manipulating Minds, by the Donor Relations Group <conifrm permission first), the author shares that Storytelling is a powerful tool for nonprofits. Our stories can evoke laughter, tears, and deep thought. When told well, stories inspire action and drive change. In the world of nonprofits, the power of storytelling is invaluable. However, it cannot be said enough: storytelling must be persuasive and ethical. It can actually be a tricky tightrope to walk.

See Appendix F to read the article A Checklist for Ethical Storytelling: Stirring Hearts, Not Manipulating Minds.

VIII. Legal Considerations for Social Enterprises

Legal Reform as a Catalyst for Social Enterprise

In partnership with Morrison & Foerster LLP with support from Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation, Catalyst 2030, the [Legal Reform as a Catalyst for Social Enterprise](): an International Scial Enterprise Law & Policy report is highlighted in the following section.

This social enterprise law and policy report identifies legal structures and policies that nations can adopt to catalyse the advancement of social enterprises around the world. The recommendations and observations included in the report were derived from the review of laws and policies that help social enterprises flourish in 83 jurisdictions around the world, covering every inhabited continent and major legal structure.

This report is important reading because it reflects the fact that an "all hands on deck" approach is needed to achieve rapid, large-scale improvements in social, environmental, and economic outcomes for people and businesses globally. The hard work of tackling climate change, environmental degradation, and inequalities in health outcomes, education, and social welfare can't be left only to governments and non-profit organisations and the goodwill of business interests if economic systems are to be reformed to promote sustainable growth. Social enterprises have a vital role to play in bridging this gap as they can integrate social, environmental, and other impact objectives with traditional business practices to seek profitable and self-sustainable operations while serving the common good.

Social enterprises are found all over the world but most jurisdictions have a lack of laws and policies to support them, and in some cases, requirements hinder their growth. To review the Legal reform as a catalyst for social enterprise: an international social enterprise law & policy [report](). Explore the reviewed laws and policies of the 83 jurisdictions from Asia Pacific to Africa, from North America to Latin America and Caribbean are covered in the report through the [interactive appendix.]()

VIII . Monitoring and Reporting on Fundraising Performance

Future section

Key strategies for tracking progress, evaluating impact, and ensuring accountability in fundraising efforts is covered From developing a theory of change, measurement evaluation and reporting and identifying key performance indicators, this section will ensure that fundraising efforts are data driven, transparent and aligned with organizational objectives.

VIII. Develop Your Case for Support

What is a Case for Support?

A case for support is a document put together by a nonprofit for prospective donors. The purpose of this document is to communicate your theory of change, the impact of your work, and most importantly, why a potential donor should support you, differentiating your organisation from others.

According to For Impact, an effective Case for Support does three things:

- It succinctly addresses the 3 Questions of every Investor. See [Altitude Framework](#). This INCLUDES having a clear and compelling ask, or funding rationale.
- It wraps these answers in a context (or story) that maximizes the impact of the investment.
- It addresses success. More specifically it presents a credible plan that communicates that the project can be funded successfully. Broadly, this includes strong leadership and a strong funding plan. No funder wants to be 'the only one'. This is why leadership gifts are so important to campaign success. They validate the plan AND demonstrate leadership commitment to the project.

A case for support can also be referred to as a "case statement" or "donor prospectus," and the focus of your case statement can be centred on a specific campaign (such as securing funding for the launch of a new initiative), or to give a more general overview of your organisation and all of its programs. For example, see the Catalyst Now [Case for Support](#) site. See [Appendix G](#) for the Systems Change Development Tool.

6 Components to Include in a Compelling Case for Support

Component	Description
An emotional hook	Grab your reader's attention with a quote story or photo that is relevant to your nonprofit's work.
An introduction to your organisation	Give an overview of your nonprofit and all of its ongoing programs. You should be able to explain the impact of your work so far.
The problem your organisation is seeking to solve	Why does your nonprofit exist? Why should people care? What is your big, bold vision for the future? Use statistics to quantify the scope of the problem that's driving your organisation's work.

What you plan to do to solve it	What are you actually doing to meet that big picture vision for your non-profit? This is where you tell the reader about your organisation's programs – including the programs you are currently running, as well as those that you would like to run in the near future. Include a short explanation of each of your programs. Write in clear and easy-to-understand language.
An overview of your fundraising goals	Be as specific as possible about your fundraising goals; give a number a timeline and how the funds will be used. How much money does your organisation need to raise this year? How about over the next 3 years? Why does it need to raise that amount (what will it be used for?) Why do you need to raise it *now*? Be specific. Tell your donors what the money will be used for, and how it will impact your programs and those that you serve. If possible, try to include data visualisations of how funds have been allocated in the past and testimonials from former donors and members of the communities you serve.
A final call to action	To wrap up your case statement, include a final call for supporters to donate. Add instructions for how they can do this in multiple ways (such as online, via check, or over the phone). If you have any other resources you'd like to plug here, such as a donor communications group, include those as well.

In this section we provide resources to help you build your case and address common challenges.

Fundraising Tracking and Reporting

Here are some important organizational activities for the fundraising team to consider:

- **Create a donor-tracking database (or system)** – Implement a robust system to manage donor information effectively. This includes capturing donor details, tracking contributions, and maintaining communication to cultivate long-term relationships.
- **Establish an acknowledgement system** – Establish a system to quickly acknowledge donations and donors. Implement procedures to promptly acknowledge donations and express gratitude to donors. This enhances donor satisfaction and encourages continued support.
- **Prepare materials about the organisation** – Develop comprehensive materials that outline your organisation's mission, achievements, and impact. These serve as valuable resources to educate potential donors and stakeholders.

- **Clear plan and agreement of funds usage**: Clearly articulate how funds raised through crowdfunding will be utilised. Provide transparency and accountability to donors by outlining specific goals and expected outcomes.

Pro-Tip: Diversifying funding streams reduces dependency on any single source.

IX.   Writing a Stellar Grant Applications

Future Section

A writing grant applications is an art and a science, this section covers strategies to create compelling, well-structured proposals. It covers key elements such as identifying the right funding opportunities, crafting clear objectives, aligning with funder priorities, and using data and storytelling for impact. By following these best practices, organizations can increase their chances of securing funding that achieves long-term success.

Materials from Landesa from 2022 series

X. Shifting Funding Practices

Overview of Catalyst Now goal to shifting funding practices

We are Catalyst Now members and allies who are working to make the world a better and fairer place for everyone. We are calling on donors and funders to remodel their traditional practices to more effectively support grassroots organisations and sustainable social impact. We have co-written a letter that highlights the changes we are calling for. We invite all organisations working to improve the quality of people's lives to sign it and join us in our open call to donors and funders.

Our world faces a cascading, connected set of pressing problems. To have any hope of making the world a better place by working towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we must more effectively confront the root causes of problems through transformative systems change. An increasing number of funders and organisations have realised that now is the time to advance global progress and find new ways of supporting change by shifting current funding/ finance practices and norms in the social sector.

Our 10 Principles to Shift Funding Practices <new>

- Give multi-year, unrestricted funding
- Invest in capacity building
- Fund networks
- Create transformative rather than transactional relationships
- Build and share power
- Be transparent and responsive
- Simplify and streamline paperwork
- Offer support beyond the check
- Collaborate with other funders
- Embrace a systems mindset in your grantmaking

An Urgent Invitation to Shift Funding Practices
.
To achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and reversing the destructive trajectory facing people and the planet, we must more effectively address the root causes of complex problems rather than treating symptoms.

A key aspect of systems change is sustained collaboration. True systems change occurs when multiple players across sectors, disciplines, and social groups – including funders and movement leaders—work together towards common goals over extended time frames.

While we encourage funders to explore different opportunities to finance projects that can lead to social good, including those that offer some financial return to investors, achieving effective systems change, particularly the many aspects that need grant funding, will require a powerful shift from traditional philanthropic approaches where:

Funders tend to rely on sources of expertise to understand social impact that may not center the leadership and lived experience of those who are closest to the issues we seek to address.	Most funding goes toward alleviating symptoms of failing systems rather than towards the longer-term work of understanding, addressing, and mobilising change to address root causes.	Project-specific funding is given in short-term allotments, which also often involves excessive paperwork, transactional power dynamics, and an overreliance on short-term metrics to evaluate success.	Application processes and criteria can lead to unhelpful competition among organisations instead of incentivising the types of collaborations that are needed to change systems.

An increasing number of funders and organisations are discovering there is a real-time opportunity to advance global progress and model new ways of supporting change by shifting current funding practices that finance the social sector. These needed shifts span across multiple types of funders, including funding from private philanthropy, governments, and multilateral bodies.

A large group of civil society organisations and systems change innovators, as well as many philanthropic thought leaders and funder allies, believe to be the most critical and effective practices funders need to adopt as we tackle the complex problems facing our world today. see the detailed Shifting the Funding Paradigm 10 principles in Appendix X.

If you are a donor, we invite you to consider adopting transformative grantmaking practices. Given the powerful role of funders and donors in influencing the work and scope of organisations working on systemic issues, these shifts will better enable and empower the social sector and will foster multi-sectoral collaborations that work towards the types of systems changes that are urgently needed.

Many funders can point to some of these principles where they are leading or making progress. However, partial progress, while worthwhile, won't be enough if we are to respond to the urgency of the complex needs facing us. We call upon philanthropic sector leaders and different types of funders to commit to adopting all of these principles in meaningful ways within their organisations, so that our shared commitment and ability to achieve lasting social change is accelerated.

Specifically, we ask for funders to commit to the following concrete, practical steps to show your support for these principles:

1. **Take the Funder Diagnostic on funding systems change**, found here. This is a comprehensive tool designed to support and inform the journey of shifting

towards more systems change philanthropy. Develop concrete actions you will take based on the recommendations in the tool, work to improve your score over the next year or two, and commit to re-taking the Funder Diagnostic again to assess your progress.

2. **Make shifts towards the key elements of funding systems change**, such as increasing funding given to groups that use systems change approaches, increasing the percentage of your grants that provide unrestricted core support, and increasing the percentage of your grants that are multi-year funding commitments.

3. **Revisit and streamline your grant-making processes**. Identify at least one way that you can incorporate more perspectives or information from proximate leaders to help you shape your grant decisions.

4. **Hold yourself accountable to these principles** by inviting feedback from your grantees on a regular basis, either through an anonymous grantee survey that you develop, a Grantee Perception Report, a staff survey, or other feedback mechanisms that you create to invite input.

To see a list of the over 1,300 signatories to the Shfting the Funding Paradim, visit the open letter.

XI. Trust Based Philanthropy

Overview of Trust Based Philatnrhopy Future Section

An approach to giving that addresses the inherent power imbalances that exist between funders, nonprofits, and the communities they serve. At its core, trust-based philanthropy is about redistributing power – systematically, organisationally and interpersonally – in service of a healthier and more equitable nonprofit ecosystem. On a practical level, this includes multi=year unrestricted giving, streamlined applications and reporting, and a commitment to building relationships based on transparency, dialogue, and mutual learning.

— Trust based philanthropy

Fundamentals and Misconceptions

In a session on trust based philanthropy, participants were asked to share their feelings on philanthropy and fundraising. Many individuals shared positive insights regarding philanthropy from inspiring to mission oriented, uplifting to growth. The majority of the participants provided negative comments about how fundraising is challenging, uncertainty, insecurity and one-sided.

In the session, the team shared their four myth's of trust based philanthropy.

Myth 1 : Trust-Based Philanthropy is grantmaking without accountability.

- **Reality**: Actually, trust-based philanthropy advocates for GREATER accountability between funders and grantees.
- When funders move from transactional giving to building trusting relationships, they become learning partners rather than auditors.
- The focus is on learning and allyship instead of compliance and control.
- This not only enables but demands dialogue, transparency and accountability that goes both ways.
- And ultimately that partnership is rooted in a shared accountability to the communities we aim to serve.

Myth 2: Trust-based philanthropy is not focused on evaluation or demonstrating results

- The reality is that: TBP and rigorous evaluation are not at odds with each other.
- The difference with traditional philanthropy and TBP is that rather than the donor imposing rigid, top-down metrics, trust-based philanthropy emphasizes collaboration, flexibility, and trusting grantees to define what success looks like.
- In a trust-based partnership the grantee drives the definition of the impact metrics. Funders and grantees will then engage in open dialogue about progress and challenges in reaching those metrics.

- In TBP, measurement is used as a tool for learning and shared accountability, rather than a justification of funding.

Myth 3: Trust-based philanthropy is funding organizations and people you trust

- Reality: While this statement may seem obvious and harmless enough, it represents an oversimplified perception of trust-based philanthropy.
- As humans, it is natural to be drawn to others who are like us - just picture a typical high school cafeteria and the various homogenous groups sitting together. While perhaps limiting in expanding one's perspective, it is relatively harmless.
- But in a philanthropic context, where the vast majority of foundation leaders and individual donors come from predominantly white, educated, and affluent backgrounds...well, as human nature goes, they inevitably trust leaders and organizations that align with their background and cultural expectations.
- Therefore perpetuating the inequities in the greater nonprofit ecosystem. Trust-based philanthropy encourages funders to confront their implicit biases, challenge the human pull to what is known and familiar, and to rigorously build relationships with leaders and organizations whose efforts are rooted in a deep sense of accountability toward the communities they serve.

Myth 4 - TBP is giving unrestricted funding with no restrictions or reporting attached

- While multi-year, unrestricted funding is a key aspect of Trust-Based Philanthropy, it involves much more than simply removing restrictions.
- At the heart of TBP is a deep, relational partnership built on mutual trust, communication, and accountability. It's not just about giving resources freely but about fostering ongoing dialogue and collaboration to achieve shared goals.
- Take, for example, there are a lof of Mega-donors out there, that are often labeled as "trust-based" due to their significant unrestricted giving.
- While this is incredibly impactful, her approach differs from TBP because it does not emphasize the sustained relationship and partnership that are central to TBP's philosophy.

Practices of Trust Based Philanthropy

These are the core practices of trust-based philanthropy as highlighted in the Trust-Based Philanthropy and Participatory Philanthropy, chapter 13 in the Stanford PACS Guide to Effective Philanthropy that describes and recommends the practices of trust-based philanthropy. The content is shared word for word from the chapter, used with permission.

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1. Listening to beneficiaries and grantees.

To quote the title of a seminal work on the topic, "listening to those who matter most, the beneficiaries"107 is a wise move for any donor pursuing any goal. It helps ensure that you are solving the "right" problem and can provide you with insights into solutions. While the Guide addresses the value of engaging beneficiaries in several places,108 it's worth elaborating on the importance of this practice. When trying to address social problems—particularly those that affect marginalized communities—learning about the nature of those problems from your intended beneficiaries can inform your approach and result in the development of a more successful strategy. If you have already identified potential grantee organizations that are close to the ground, they may provide this information for you. The Trust-Based Philanthropy Project recommends that donors actively solicit feedback from current, past, and declined grantees about

their strategies and funding practices. With similar goals in mind, the Center for Effective Philanthropy's (CEP) long-standing Grantee Perception Report surveys foundations' grantees to learn about these issues:

- Foundation's impact on grantees' fields, communities, and organizations
- Understanding grantees' intended beneficiaries and challenges
- Interactions and communications with grantees
- Application, reporting, and evaluation processes
- Assistance beyond the grant
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Although CEP's process is designed for staffed foundations, individual donors and small family foundations can use a consultant to gain this sort of information.

2. Reducing the burdens of the due diligence process

Some funders require grant applicants to submit lengthy and onerous proposals, which distracts from a nonprofit's substantive work. The Guide and The Trust-Based Philanthropy Project recommend that you lessen this burden by doing initial due diligence yourself. Beyond this, you should ensure that grantmaking decisions are informed by diverse perspectives; create an inclusive selection process; and check that your grant requirements don't give undue preference to more established and well-funded organizations. Your goal is to select organizations likely to effectively serve their beneficiaries, rather than those you feel most comfortable with. If you're not overly risk-averse, consider funding organizations whose strategies and leadership gives them significant potential of having positive impact even if they don't yet have much of a track record. To learn more, see chapter 8.

3. Providing multi-year unrestricted, or general operating support.

This is the most effective grantmaking strategy when the grantee organization's overall mission and activities are aligned with your goals. It reflects the reality that the

organization's management is better suited than the donor to decide how to allocate funds among its activities, including those categorized as overhead or indirect costs. When only a subset of the organization's activities are aligned with your goals, the Guide suggests that it's appropriate to make so-called "project grants" in support of those activities as long as you include adequate funding for overhead or indirect costs. In either event, longterm renewable support is most beneficial to the organization. Chapter 10 of the Guide (Making Gifts) addresses these issues in greater depth.

4. Imposing reasonable monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements.

In the words of a Russian proverb, adopted by President Ronald Reagan in the context of nuclear disarmament negotiations with the Soviet Union, "trust, but verify."110 Trust-based philanthropy does not call for less. Decisions concerning monitoring and evaluation should be mutually agreed upon early in the grant process. As mentioned above, paperwork can be grueling and time-consuming for nonprofits, and you seldom need to impose more requirements for monitoring and evaluation than would be useful for the organization itself regardless of funding (see Chapter 8). A funder who makes restricted grants for particular projects should ensure that the grant funds will cover the costs of M&E. It is worth noting that grants of general operating support (GOS) are no less subject to evaluation than project grants. "A donor who makes a GOS grant to an organization in effect accepts the grantee organization's mission as their own and evaluates the success of the grant essentially as the organization's CEO and board evaluate its own performance."

5. Being transparent and responsive.

Open communication can help build mutual respect and trust between donor and grantee that ultimately contribute to impact. Donors should be aware of the unequal power dynamics that affect their relationships with grantees. You should be clear about what you will and will not fund; say 'no' quickly if an organization is not a good fit; and respond quickly to communications from grantees.

6. . Providing assistance beyond the grant.

Non-monetary support can be very helpful to your grantees. In addition to providing funding for consultants on issues ranging from strategic planning to fundraising, you can support your grantees by making introductions to other funders, offering support during transitions, and providing meeting spaces and other resources. Assistance beyond the grant can also include the funder's and grantee's co-creation of strategies that support the organization's mission.

XII. Approaching Fundraising with a Systems and Ecosystems Approach

Catalyst Now members explore systems change approaches as a means of uniting in collective action to achieve the SDGs.

What is systems change?

Recognising there is no one set definition, Catalyst Now defines systems change below:

Systems Change

Confronting root causes of issues (rather than symptoms) by transforming structures, customs, mindsets, power dynamics and policies, by strengthening collective power through the active collaboration of diverse people and organisations. This collaboration is rooted in shared goals to achieve lasting improvement to solve social problems at a local, national and global level.

The iceberg illustration below shows different levels at which systemic change can take place: 'deeper' changes tend to result in greater impact but less dramatic shifts can pave the way towards these deeper changes.
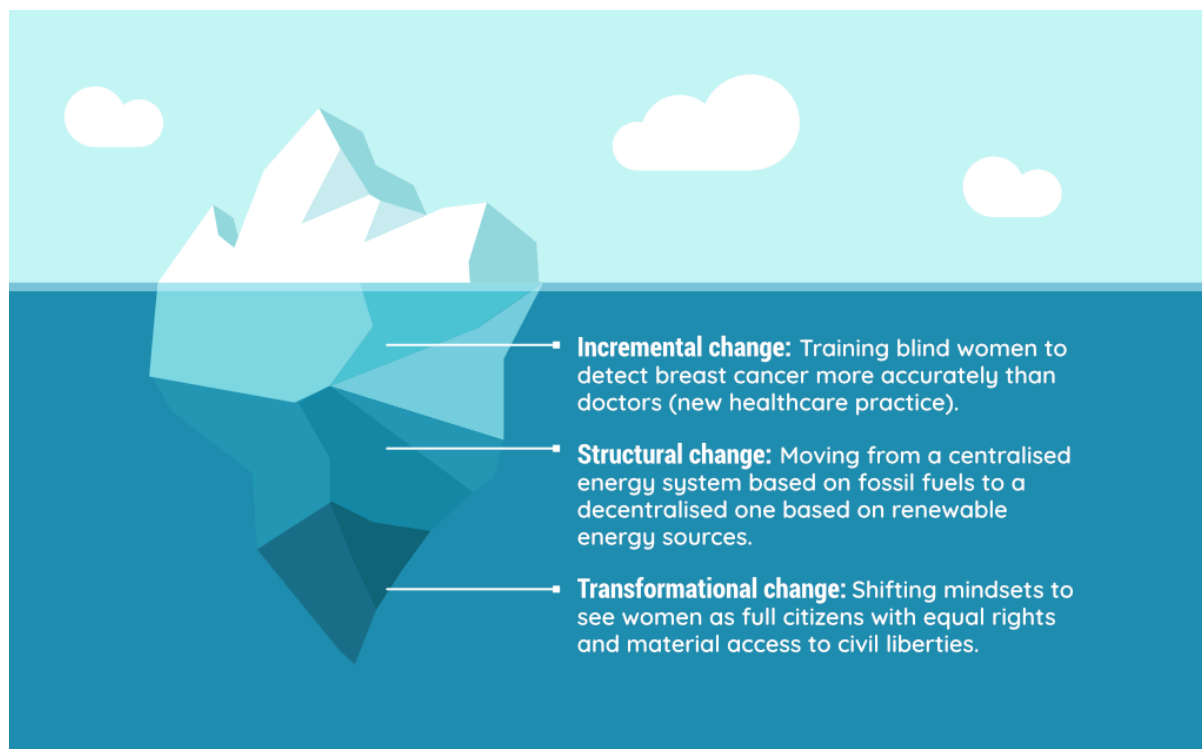
Incremental change: Training blind women to detect breast cancer more accurately than doctors (new healthcare practice).

Structural change: Moving from a centralised energy system based on fossil fuels to a decentralised one based on renewable energy sources.

Transformational change: Shifting mindsets to see women as full citizens with equal rights and material access to civil liberties.

Recommendations for Catalysing Systems Change

The Catalysing Systems Change framework provides four steps that will accelerate collaborative systems change, while changing the way we create change. To achieve systems change, local leaders in the communities where they have lived experiences with the problem, must ensure lasting impact.

Recommendations for catalysing systems change are highlighted in the boxes below. Scaling Solutions Toward Shifting Systems Initiative by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors has organised common systems change characteristics into a framework that is helpful to understand how to shift systems.

Catalysing Systems Change at Catalyst Now

There are five key shifts that will accelerate collaborative systems change in Catalyst Now which catalytic networks need to pursue:

- Support dominant culture shifts towards equity
- Strengthen political and community engagement
- Strengthen systems-level funding
- Fuel collaborative action
- Develop and use systems change tools

We understand that the process of systems change is often challenging to implement. Systems change is not for the faint-hearted, it requires everyone to think and act differently. It forces programme managers to focus on outcomes, not outputs and foundations and programme managers to be willing to shift funding practices to long-term unrestricted funding (see Shifting Funding Practices). A willingness to listen is essential, not only for the "experts" but for practitioner "experts", those local leaders solving the problem.

Creating systems change requires everyone to think and act differently.

A critical component of systems change is honouring the expertise of local leaders who are working closest to the problem. Those who design social impact programmes need to co-create solutions with local leaders to ensure the solution meets the needs of the community.

Principles and Practices of Systems Change

Systems Change is a comprehensive approach to social change that seeks to address the complex, large-scale and deep characteristics of social issues. It includes changing behaviour through mindset shifts and addressing underlying structural power dynamics in a given context (Raynor & Boccini, 2023). See the Systems Work for Social Change book for additional insights. According to the authors, there are three principles

including fostering connection, embracing context, and reconfiguring power. Along with four practices of systems change, including cultivate collectives like Catalyst Now, Disrepute policies and patterns, promote platforms, and equip problem solvers. .

Principles and Practices of Systems Change

PRINCIPLES	FOSTERING CONNECTION Building new collective identities that keep groups together while learning	EMBRACE CONTEXT Equipping primary stakeholders to respond to day-to-day complexity, adapting as the context requires	RECONFIGURE POWER Putting decision-making and resources in the hands of primary stakeholders, ensuring social systems fully represent the people who live in them
PRACTICES	CULTIVATE COLLECTIVES	DISRUPT POLICIES AND PATTERNS	PROMOTE PLATFORMS
			EQUIP PROBLEM - SOLVERS

While there are many approaches to systems change, we believe that entrepreneurs or organisations must assume the role of a systems orchestrator or "honest broker" and adopt a collaborative systems change approach to achieve effective and accelerated change.

Acting as an Honest Broker

Honest brokers conceptualise collaborative systems change initiatives and transparently convene and mobilise a diverse group of people on all levels to imagine and create long term, sustainable change. We use the term "broker" to indicate the intermediary function of the role. For example, the entrepreneur or organisation must be careful not to promote their own agenda but rather to mediate between all of the various players to move change forward. We use the term "honest" because the role must be undertaken with absolute integrity, ensuring that individual participants are not favoured but rather that all can make significant contributions.

Collaborative Systems Change

Collaborative systems change recognises that there is no one big answer to complex problems. Instead, many smaller efforts work in harmony to result in widespread adoption of new ways of thinking and doing.

The key principles of collaborative systems change are:
1. **Convene as an honest broke**r: Create shared spaces for collaboration and co-creation that democratise the engagement of all stakeholders in society without discrimination.

2. **Connect**: Use collaborative systems to change principles to connect social entrepreneurs, innovators and other stakeholders, across diverse communities, to generously share knowledge and resources to inspire the acceleration of progress towards attaining the SDGs.

3. **Co-create**: Community members, working in collaboration, co-create the overall strategy and direction, to provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to actively contribute to the future.

4. **Celebrate:** Consistent opportunities to celebrate the movement's accomplishments, from awards ceremonies to events that keep members engaged, are important to keep participants focused in light of the difficult work ahead.

5. **Calibrate:** Research and the measurement of outcomes will support the movement's impact as it expands. Necessary recalibration will take place to focus on the "North Star" or reaching your goal to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

6. **Cohere:** Member organisations and activities must be developed coherently to form a shared identity of fellow travellers who are learning about and activating systems change. This is important to achieve the goal of growing the movement's impact.

7. **Change Consciousness:** Shift norms away from a focus on individuality, to a belief that individual and community prosperity can be achieved with the same action.

Systems Change Resources and Readings

- [Catalyst Now: What is Systems Change](#)
- [Brokering Collaborative Systems Change](#)
- [Scaling Solutions Toward Shifting Systems: Approaches for Impact, Approaches for Learning](#)
- [The Systems Work of Social Change](#)
- [Ashoka's System Change Crash Course](#)

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- [New Allies: How governments can unlock the potential of social entrepreneurs for the common good.](#) (Led by McKinsey & Company)
- [Scaling Solutions Toward Shifting Systems Initiative](#) (led by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors), see the [Scaling Solutions report.](#)

About Catalyst Now

Catalyst Now is a fast-growing global movement of social entrepreneurs and innovators dedicated to addressing the challenges within the social innovation sector. By fostering collaboration among local entrepreneurs, established leaders, and global stakeholders, Catalyst Now seeks to nurture this ecosystem and engage policymakers to create a conducive environment for social innovators worldwide.

Launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2020, Catalyst Now is a social entrepreneur and innovator-led movement responding to this global call to action for people and the planet.

The movement was co-founded by a diverse group of social entrepreneurs, many as members of our ecosystem partners: **Ashoka, Echoing Green, the Schwab Foundation of the World Economic Forum and the Skoll Foundation**

Alongside **communities, governments, businesses, funders** and others, we are forming **inclusive and locally led collaborations**, creating connections across borders and cultures.

Together, we are implementing **bold new strategies and sustainable solutions to achieve for all.**

About our Members

Catalyst Now members are driven by the desire to make a **positive impact on the world** and to find lasting solutions to unsolved challenges. Our members have a **proven track record of systems change** approaches and our work complementing and often partnering with the large scale perspectives of governments.

More than **50%** of our members have implemented programmes on the **country level** and nearly **30%** of organisations have succeeded in driving the passage of new **government policies**.

Membership is open to all individuals and organisations who are working on **solutions to progress the SDGs**. Our members include for-profit and non-profit **social enterprises, civil society, funders, businesses, academics, intermediaries, media organisations, government departments** and technical assistance providers. Membership can be filled from an individual, organisational or system level.

If you are ready to engage, review the membership application guidelines and then fill out the **membership application form.** On the other hand, if you want to get more information about membership opportunities visit **Catalyst Now Membership**.

Appendix A: Fundraising Resources

Accessing and Utilising Fundraising Documents

Accessing and effectively utilising fundraising documents is crucial for securing the necessary funds to support and expand your initiatives. Whether you are applying for grants, reaching out to potential donors, or preparing for fundraising events, having the right resources at your disposal can make all the difference.

External Fundraising Resources

This section provides a guide to essential external resources that can support organisations in securing funding, improving grant proposal quality, and adopting equitable fundraising practices. By utilising these resources, members/organisations can enhance their capabilities, ensuring sustainability and equity in their efforts to drive impactful change.

- **Building a Roadmap** to Funding Results developed by For Impact

For Impact offers a refreshing and proven approach to fundraising. The For Impact Learning Library offers a comprehensive set of resources designed to help social impact leaders and fundraisers succeed by focusing on developing a fundraising message, incorporating the team into funding efforts, and creating funding strategies. It provides practical frameworks and processes that can be put into use immediately.

- **Fundraising Handbook** developed by Black Fox Global

The Fundraising Handbook is a detailed guide designed to assist organisations in creating and implementing effective fundraising strategies. This Fundraising Handbook is a collection of our best practices, strategies and insights, with a focus upon plug-and-play actionability. Embrace the awesome. And share it widely with others who seek success. Your mission is our mission.

- Africa **Funder Directory** developed by Segal Family Foundation

The Segal Family Foundation created an directory contains links to corporations, foundations, governments, impact investors, intermediaries, and x-laterals who are funding in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Catalyst Grantfunding** Opportunities and Fellowships developed by Catalyst Now

The Compiled Grant and Fellowship Opportunities is a crowdsourced document of potential granting organisations around the globe, feel free to share your own funders on this list.

- **Funds for NGOs** – Grants & Resources for Sustainability

Funds for NGOs is a comprehensive platform that offers an extensive database of grant opportunities, funding information, and practical resources for non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The platform is specifically designedunder to help NGOs identify and secure funding for projects aimed at sustainability and development.

- **Grant Writing Examples** developed by Strategic Grants

This resource provides a collection of real-world grant writing examples developed by Strategic Grants. These examples serve as practical templates and guides for organisations looking to improve their grant writing skills and increase their chances of securing funding.

Grant Resources

- [Advance Africa](#)
  - Focus: Primarily Africa
  - Types of Projects: Health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, economic development, and environmental conservation.
- [Grants Online](#)
  - Focus: Global
  - Types of projects: Arts and culture, community development, education, health, environment, and technology.

Donation Resources

- [Fundly](#)
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Personal causes, nonprofits, community projects

- [Kickstarter](#)
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Art, technology, design, film, music, publishing, creative projects

- [Experiment](#)
  - Focus: Scientific research projects
  - Types: Academic research, scientific exploration, innovation

Crowdfunding Resources

- [Crowdfunder UK](#)
  - Focus: UK-based projects
  - Types: Activism, charity, community projects, creative ideas, sports
  - Key Features: Zero platform fees for charities and not-for-profit campaigns
- [Chuffed](#)
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Social causes, nonprofits, community-driven projects
  - Key Features: No platform fees, strong community support
- [Gogetfunding](#)
  - Focus: Global, strong in North America and Europe
  - Types: Personal causes, medical expenses, education, creative projects
  - Key Features: 4% platform fee, flexible funding options, personalised support
- [Crowd2fund](#)
  - Focus: UK

- - Types: Business startups, growth projects, and UK entrepreneurship ventures
  - Key Features: Equity and debt-based crowdfunding
- **Crowdfundr**
  - Focus: Canada
  - Types: Personal causes, creative projects, community initiatives
  - Key Features: Customizable campaigns, support for Canadian projects
- **CauseMatch**
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Nonprofits, social causes, matching donation campaigns
  - Key Features: Uses smart technology that optimises the donor experience
- **Gofundme**
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Medical expenses, education, community support
  - Key Features: Easy setup, broad community reach, secure payments
- **Backabuddy**
  - Focus: Africa
  - Types: Medical bills, education fees, local community projects
  - Key Features: No platform fees for non-profits, dedicated South African support.
- **StartSomeGood**
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Social impact projects, nonprofit fundraising
  - Key Features: Crowdfunding coaching, nonprofit support
- **GlobalGiving**
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Nonprofits, community development projects
  - Key Features: Global donor network, project reporting, and training tools
- **GivingTuesday**
  - Focus: Global
  - Types: Charitable giving campaigns, nonprofit support
  - Key Features: Promotes radical generosity, global engagement

Appendix B: Top 10 Tips for Grants

Navigating the grant application process can be challenging, but with the right guidance, securing funding becomes more achievable. The Landesa team, renowned for their expertise in land rights and development, has shared their top ten tips for successful grant applications. These insights will help you enhance your proposals, increase your chances of funding, and effectively communicate your project's impact.

Tip 1: Everyone is a Prospector

Everyone in your organisation should be a prospector. Your CEO is one of your most important prospectors and you should leverage this position. Program staff are your ears on the ground Meet funders at conferences, events, and workshops

Tip 2: The Big "R": It's all about Relationships

Relationship building should be an integral part of your proposal development stage. Success in winning a grant depends on understanding what the funder is looking for in the proposal, knowing who is reviewing the proposal, whether they are experts in your field, and being aware of the funder's agenda. By being cooperative and helpful, you can align your goals with those of the funder, thereby increasing your chances of success.

Tip 3: Find (or Be) Good Partners

Bringing partners into a project adds significant value to a proposal, showcasing your ability to cooperate and be a team player. It demonstrates your commitment to delivering the best results and impact. Investing time in building partnerships with other organisations is crucial, as effective communication with these partners, including the funder, is essential. For smaller organisations, being a junior partner is an

01	Everyone is a prospector
	The Big "R": It's all about relationships **02**
03	Find (or be) good partners
	Find your innovative hook **04**
05	Smart phases can increase project appeal
	Treat proposal development as a project **06**
07	Make budget ene
	Be a good storyteller **08**
09	Build evaluation plan during project design
	Smart reporting can open pathways to renewal **10**

excellent path forward, providing opportunities to grow, gain experience, develop relationships, and secure valuable references.

Tip 4: Find your Innovative Hook

Innovative does not necessarily mean unique; funders are looking for creativity, while NGOs often seek the silver bullet. Winning proposals find a balance between the two. Highlight how your organisation is approaching a problem differently, leveraging years of experience and tried-and-true methods. Demonstrate how your project applies these approaches in new and innovative ways. Sometimes, innovation is about using best practices in a new context, showing adaptability and forward-thinking in addressing challenges.

Tip 5: Smart Phases Can Increase Project Appeal

Dividing a project into phases, such as pilot, pilot implementation, further implementation, and scaling, can significantly reduce long-term risk. Phasing projects can:

- Create sustainable pathways
- Show continuity (extend project)
- Show ambition and demonstrate growth opportunities
- Set price points
- Break project into more digestible and fundable pieces

Tip 6: Treat Proposal Development as a Project

Creating a timeline helps build accountability and prevents procrastination. Aim to finalise the proposal 1-2 days early to allow time for assembly. Assign specific tasks to team members for content expertise, finance expertise, and leadership sign-off. Regular check-ins and reminders ensure everyone stays on track and completes their responsibilities on time.

Tip 7: Make Budget ene

While proposal budgets never fully cover all costs, it is crucial to try your best to present an efficient and realistic budget. Demonstrating to the funder that your project can be completed efficiently shows the organisation's commitment.

Use a standard template with categories such as *Personnel/Fringe, Consultants, Travel, Other Direct Costs, and Indirect Costs* if one is not provided. Ensure that the budget aligns with the project narrative, accurately reflects proposed activities, and is clear and understandable.

Tip 8: Be a Good Storyteller

In crafting your pitch, a compelling story with a clear beginning, middle, and end can be a powerful tool. Stories not only illustrate potential impact effectively but also engage emotions, making your narrative more persuasive and the way you accomplish your work Quality writing and the skillful use of emotion are essential. Continuously learning and practising storytelling skills, attending conferences and workshops, and studying other successful proposals can enhance your ability to make a compelling case. Incorporating stories into your needs statement not only strengthens your argument but also captivates your audience, reinforcing the importance and urgency of your project.

Tip 9: Build Evaluation Plan during Project Design

When designing activities, it is crucial to integrate evaluation and outcomes/impact considerations from the outset. For instance, initiating baseline assessments in the initial activity provides a foundation for measuring progress. Subsequent midline assessments, where appropriate, and endline assessments further gauge the effectiveness and impact of the project over time. Be sure to budget and allow time for:

- Conducting evaluation
- Analysing data
- Writing report
- Sharing the learnings

Tip 10: Smart Reporting Can Open Pathways to Renewal

Reporting plays a critical role in securing renewal funding by highlighting the project's impact. It is essential for reports to focus on demonstrating impact and progress through data and evaluation results. Organising reports effectively and presenting them well ensures clarity and enhances their persuasive power. Including detailed information and telling the project's story, possibly with visual aids like photos, enriches the narrative and effectively communicates the project's achievements and ongoing relevance to funders and stakeholders.

Appendix C: Prospect Research Tools & Resources

Organization	Description
Africa Funder Directory (free)	Fundraising always begins with knowing who the funders are. This directory contains links to corporations, foundations, governments, impact investors, intermediaries, and x-laterals in our database who are funding in Sub-Saharan Africa. You can use this list to identify donors funding in your geographic area or sector.
Blackbaud (paid)	Blackbaud empowers the people and organizations driving global change. As the leading software provider focused exclusively on advancing social impact, Blackbaud expands the possibilities within the nonprofit and education sectors, as well as for companies dedicated to social responsibility and individual changemakers.
Candid (free and paid versions)	Candid is a nonprofit that provides the most comprehensive data and insights about the social sector.
Climate Funding Bulletin (free)	The Climate Finance Bulletin is a searchable repository of open, time-bound climate funding opportunities (typically calls for proposals) for countries and other implementing partners. Serves as a platform for connecting countries and institutions seeking funding opportunities with institutional, development and philanthropic partners who have posted or will post open calls for proposals for climate funding.
Foundation Directory Online (paid)	The Foundation Directory gives you access to the information you need to be smart and strategic with your funding requests. The tools available on Foundation Directory allow you to tap funding opportunities beyond open Requests for Proposals (RFPS) that make up less than 1% of total foundation funding. Digging deeper is critical to your fundraising success.
Fundraiso (free and paid versions; many EU countries)	Fundraiso is a platform designed to help nonprofits and other social organizations streamline their fundraising efforts. It connects organizations with donors, providing tools to manage campaigns, track donations, and enhance fundraising strategies.
Fundsforngos (free)	FundsforNGOs is a social enterprise offering knowledge and skills to NGOs, companies and individuals worldwide to improve their resource mobilisation processes and enable a sustainable environment.
Grantmakers.io (free)	Grantmakers.io serves as an example of the power of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). Anyone can access it without paying (free as in food), and anyone can leverage the code to continue innovating in however they please (free as in freedom).
GrantNav (free, UK focus)	GrantNav is 360Giving's search-engine for grants data. It is a free-to-use platform that brings together open, comparable grants data that is published by funders in the 360Giving Data Standard. GrantNav makes it easy to search, explore and download data about where funding goes and how much is given across billions of pounds of grants, for causes and locations across the UK.

[Inside Philanthropy](#) (free basic version and complete paid one)	Founded in 2013, Inside Philanthropy was established with a clear mission: to provide transparency into one of the most influential forces shaping society today. The team of editors, reporters, and researchers at Inside Philanthropy thoroughly investigates how foundations and major donors allocate their resources, and the motivations behind their giving.
[Instrumentl](#) (paid)	Founded in 2015, Instrumentl was created with the aim of helping fundraisers maximize their time and effort. The platform streamlines the grant process, making it faster, easier, and more efficient, allowing you to focus on what matters most: making a positive impact.
[Justice Funds](#) Newsletter ([free](#), Global South-focused)	Justice Funds, by and for the Global South, curates social justice-focused funding opportunities, builds a collaborative community rooted in power-sharing, and advances equitable access to resources and networks.
[Terra Viva Grants](#) (free)	The Terra Viva Grants Directory develops and manages information about grants for agriculture, energy, environment, and natural resources in the world's developing countries.
[UK Government Charity Navigator](#) (free)	The "Find Charity Information" service allows users to search for registered charities in England and Wales. It provides details such as the charity's name, address, trustees, goals, and financials. The platform also offers filters for searching by charity income, sector, or geographical area.

Appendix D: Optimising Your Donor Pipeline: Key Approaches

Effectively managing your current and prospective donors is essential to the financial health of your organisation. A systematic and up to date process for tracking where you are in the donor lifecycle is crucial for any successful fundraising strategy. This guide provides a clear framework to help you create and manage your donor pipeline.

What is a donor pipeline?

Your donor pipeline offers an organized overview of all prospective funders and current donors you are engaging to support your work. It helps you focus your limited time and resources and make sense of the overwhelming donor landscape. Properly managing your donor pipeline will strengthen relationships, build robust partnerships, and direct you toward funders that are most aligned with your mission.

For advanced fundraising teams donor pipelines are often stored in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database, such as Salesforce Nonprofit Cloud or Raiser's Edge.

- **Salesforce Nonprofit Cloud** – A flexible, cloud-based platform that assists in task automation, customer management, and donation tracking for companies.
- **Raiser's Edge** – Designed exclusively for organisations, focuses on donor management and fundraising campaigns.

Organisations with smaller budgets can effectively use simpler tools like Excel spreadsheet or Trella, which offers a free and paid version for organisations to manage prospects, track deadlines, and record donor notes. To get started, download the donor pipeline template created by the Catalyst Now team to organize donor information effectively.

What is the Difference Between a Donor and a Prospect?

Before diving intot he details, lets explain the difference between a donor and a prospect, as we will be using these terms repeatedly in this guide.

- **Donor** – A funder that is actively giving to, or has given to, your organisation.
- **Prospect** – A prospect is a funder who has not given to your organisation but your work is aligned with their organisation.

How to Use the Catalyst Now Donor Pipeline Template

The donor pipeline template is divided into four key sections, each designed to help you to track your donors and funding opportunities (proposals and grants). These four sections and their content are explained below.

Track Donor Information

This section captures descriptive details about the donor such as:

- Location
- Key contacts or points of connection
- Types of funders (e.g. foundation , corporation, government, individual, or impact fund)
- Relationship status categories

Relationship Status Categories

- **Cold prospect** – No prior connection to this prospect, but on your radar as someone you may wish to contact.
- **Warm prospect** – You have a connection to this prospect and have spoken with them about your work.
- **Donor** – Actively funding your organization, they are already funding your work.
- **Revisit Prospect** – Previous identified prospect but may not have been the appropriate time to pursue the relationship. Use this status to contact them at a later date.
- **Disqualified** – After further research or discussions, decided this prospect is not a viable prospect.

Tasks and Actions

This section highlights the steps and actions taken to progress your organisation's relationship with the donor. This may indicate whether you have to conduct 'prospect research' (research into the alignment of a prospect with your work), or if you need to schedule a meeting with the donor or prospect or when a report may be due.

- **Research** – This section provides high-level findings of your [prospect research](#) to support and guide your approach.
- **The Ask** – This section contains administrative information about funding asks. An 'ask' refers to a verbal ask, submitted proposal or a grant/donation that is pending or received. A key component of this section is the 'Status' column which tracks progress through these stages:
- **Identify** – Identified an opportunity (also known as an 'ask') with a prospect or donor. Log this information to be aware of all of the potential funding sources..
- **Research** – Conducting deeper research on the prospect or donor to better understand how you might collaborate.
- **Cultivate** – Engaging in conversation to cultivate a relationship and and prepare for a funding request.
- **Ask** – Submitted a formal funding request.
- **Close** – The funding request has been confirmed, or closed, and need to follow up or prompt if expecting to receive the funding.
- **Thank** – The funding has been received. It is now time to thank the donor for their partnership and write a receipt for the donation.
- **Steward** – This status indicates that you are in a current partnership with the donor and you are stewarding the relationship. When a donor is in this phase, think of ways to build your relationship and further collaborations, paving the way for future funding opportunities.

Next Steps

To access the information, follow these three steps:

1. **Download the [donor pipeline template](#)** – Use this as a starting point, to organize your donor information.
2. **Customize the Template** – Adjust it to fit the specific needs and priorities of your organisational needs.
3. **Start Tracking** – Start tracking your donor and prospects to the template and begin implementing a systematic approach to your donor management.

This toolkit provides a strong foundation to kickstart your donor pipeline and help guide your fundraising strategy. By maintaining an organized and strategic approach, your organization can build stronger partnerships to maximize your fundraising strategy.

Appendix E: How to Create and Deploy an Effective Social Media Strategy

The Black Fox Global team shared their resources on create and deploy effective social media strategy. To view the the [full article](#).

Recognizing that less-resourced NGOs can't afford to engage our fundraising services, one of the ways Black Fox Global serves the social sector is to be open-source on much of the content we've developed. We regularly release this content via our blog, and today is another one of those days!

Ironically, Black Fox Global does not engage in Social Media to speak of in large part due to our clients coming to us via referrals, or alliances with sector partners, but we have supported clients with social media initiatives that help drive funding to their missions. We are thrilled to be sharing some of these insights with our beloved sector.

Engage and Deepen Support via Social Media & E-Communications Strategy

In a technology-dependent world, a compelling and consistent digital footprint has become a vital instrument of success. Non-profit organizations have discovered that leveraging online initiatives — from [Giving Tuesday](#) to longer term fundraising drives — enables frictionless engagement with worldwide contributors and enormous potential for connecting with and growing their base of supporters.

Today, a triumphant year-end campaign requires not only a carefully drafted appeal letter, but also a thoughtful approach to all electronic communications, including (perhaps especially) through social media.

This memo will guide you through social media and e-communication plans that focus upon authentic and engaging social media content. By using the best approaches to specific social media platforms and newsletter strategies, this guide can help you build and deploy an effective engagement plan that focuses upon raising funds for your mission.

Section I: Overview

First things are first: It is crucial to understand social media etiquette to create successful content. The principles below will help you avoid serious missteps and apply equally across all social media platforms.

Social Media Begins with "Social"

Social media is all about building a virtual community. Your goal is to build a community around your organization and mission. You want your followers to feel themselves bonded to your organization and to one another. These relationships will be the key to your success. Understand also that interacting with you will be part of how users curate their own online

image, so your goal is to be the organization that they feel good publicly aligning themselves with.

Set Clear Goals and Expectations

Without clear goals and expectations, your social media communications will be confused and murky. Users will tune out. Any number of goals can be set: Do you wish to build brand awareness? Escalate website traffic? Improve donations? Answering these and similar questions can help you determine not only which platform would be best to use, but what kind of content you should be generating. For instance, an infographic on your organization is a fantastic way to explain your mission, but will not likely drive donations. Likewise, a donation-based campaign might be effective in the short run, but won't necessarily help establish a consistent core of followers. Therefore, it is essential to set clear goals and choose content focused on achieving them.

Quality over Quantity

While one might be tempted to share tons of valuable content, this can tire users and research shows that platforms such as Instagram penalize excessive posting and use of hashtags. Instead of maxing out your daily post number, begin by asking if your post is adding value to your company's mission or current social media goal. When platforms are "spammed" with an overbearing amount of information, unique, thorough and genuine content is a much more reliable way of building your image and growing the trust of your supporters.

Give Value

Social media makes self promotion easy and tempting. However, it should be done in tandem with, not instead of, offering valuable content. The 80/20 rule recommends that 80% of your posts should be useful to your audience (by means of education, entertainment, or problem-solving), and only 20% should explicitly promote your business. Ultimately, your posts will serve to boost both awareness of and donations to your organization, but they should do so by building a relationship with users by giving them value before simply asking for contributions.

Positive Tone

Inspiring a sense of urgency around a pertinent issue guarantees rapid involvement, but constantly conjuring negative emotions and guilt should not be your predominant strategy. Amusing, interesting, surprising or exciting content will both be more beneficial on a long-term basis and likely incite positive associations with your organization among social media followers. Highlighting fascinating statistics or stories of success and ways to get involved will encourage prolonged and candid engagement.

Diverse Visuals

Photos of the impact your organization has made are incredible ways to showcase tangible positive change, but can become repetitive and mundane. It is important to vary your posting template so you do not fatigue users. Consider employing a range of visuals, such as GIFs, photos, videos, infographics, quotes, spotlights and even collaborative cross posts with other organizations. Polls are particularly engaging because they are interactive. Offering numerous post formats will keep your content fresh and stimulating, providing new opportunities to propel engagement.

Start Conversations

A guaranteed way of gaining exposure is giving people a reason to talk about your organization. Social media platforms all prefer posts that generate this kind of engagement, and it is good for your organization as well. You can achieve this by reaching out to individuals or groups with a similar mission. Commenting on relevant posts, following certain accounts, reposting inspiring articles, offering valuable resources or asking your audience questions improves the visibility of your company and extends your impact over the bounds of your page. In addition to generating meaningful content, make sure you are constantly looking for ways to continue a discussion on topics relevant to your cause.

Keep on Trend

Experimenting with new trends is a fantastic way to diversify your content and become relevant to new audience groups. For each social media platform, keep an eye on the "Trending" page, seeking out particular news, hashtags, or initiatives which seem to attract a large audience. Moreover, taking a stance on an important trending issue and expressing solidarity can showcase your organization's value to your followers.

Know Your Audience

Your followers represent a cross-section of social media users who truly care about your cause. Who are they? Get to know them and vary your content to match their needs. Are they particularly young? Perhaps your content needs to be more trendy. Are they older? Perhaps they prefer more communication by email. Figuring this out can help you serve them better, and increase your impact.

View the following additional sections in the [full article](#).

Section II: LinkedIn and Facebook
Section III: Twitter, now X
Section IV: Instagram
Section V: Advertising
Section VI: Electronic Communications
Section VII: Content Calendar

Appendix F: A Checklist for Ethical Storytelling:
Stirring Hearts, Not Manipulating Minds

Storytelling is a powerful tool for nonprofits. Our stories can evoke laughter, tears, and deep thought. When told well, stories inspire action and drive change. In the world of nonprofits, the power of storytelling is invaluable.

At the Donor Relations Group (DRG), we are dedicated to providing you with a treasure trove of strategies to enhance your storytelling prowess (check out the valuable content we've shared at the bottom of this post).

However, it cannot be said enough: storytelling must be persuasive and ethical. It can actually be a tricky tightrope to walk.

On one hand, we are driven to craft a narrative that is emotion-provoking enough to compel someone to support a noble cause. But on the other hand, we cannot exploit beneficiaries or manipulate donors.

So how do we find that perfect balance?

Well first, I need a quick show of hands – who here has experienced that uneasy feeling after reading a certain solicitation letter or watching a Sarah McLachlan-scored commercial?

Chances are, in those instances, the storytellers leaned a bit (or perhaps a lot) more toward persuasion than ethics in their strategies.

In order to avoid falling into that same trap, here is a great checklist of Do's and Don'ts:

The DO's and Don'ts Checklist

(or what I like to call the Beatitudes of Storytelling)

Be respectful.

Ethical storytellers prioritize the privacy and agency of their protagonist(s) by obtaining permission to tell their story and use their name, images, and other personal information.

If a beneficiary's name cannot be used (but they agree to the story), be sure to change any identifying characteristics in the narrative.

Also, when writing someone else's story, always factor in time for approval and edits. When we value their personhood and input, they're able to ensure their story is told accurately and respectfully.

Remember, you are telling the story of a person, not just a "cause." It is absolutely possible to convey the gravity of a challenge someone faces without robbing them of their dignity.

Be inclusive.

Power dynamics often determine whose stories are heard and how they're told. When we are aware of and acknowledge this fact, we can take steps to be more inclusive.

Take a bird's eye view at the collective stories told across your organization. Is it a tapestry of experiences or a monochromatic blob? Ideally, we want that tapestry!

When we amplify the voices of marginalized or underrepresented groups, we (and our constituents) challenge harmful stereotypes and gain profound insights.

Be responsible.

Be accurate. Be aboveboard. Be authentic. Remember that you will be held accountable for your work, so transparency is key.

Consider the potential impact of this narrative on the people involved and those who will be touched by it. To prevent retraumatization, use trigger warnings where necessary.

Don't sensationalize the suffering of others.

Overhyping rarely leads to positive outcomes. Your 'enhanced' rendition of the account may be more captivating, but I can assure you that it is not worth losing the trust of your constituents and facing the wrath of "cancel culture."

Instead, prioritize empathy over sympathy to steer clear of condescension or exploitation– craft narratives grounded in compassion and understanding.

It's not about making your donor feel sorry for someone - it's about helping them understand and connect with someone else's struggles and experiences.

Don't perpetuate negative stereotypes or harmful tropes.

Instead, highlight individual experiences. This approach helps us see the nuance and complexity of people's lives and creates a deeper connection with them.

When storytelling through data, pay attention to how you present it. The experiences of marginalized groups may be hidden in aggregate data.

For example, the San Antonio Area Foundation combats this by using zip codes rather than race or ethnicity in their data representation. This allows them to put the spotlight on the communities and environments in which individuals live rather than reducing them to predefined traits.

When we place shared experiences before shared characteristics, we will elevate those we aim to support.

Don't Fear monger.

Fear mongering is the manipulative cousin of conveying what is at stake. Rather than aiming to be informative or helpful, it preys on people's emotions by evoking fear and panic.

Both approaches use the same psychological principle of Prospect Theory: the theory that people are more motivated to avoid losses than to acquire gains. This is why we are more likely to respond to messages that evoke fear or anxiety than to messages that evoke positive emotions (I explored this in more detail in #9 on our list of Clever Strategies to Boost Gift-Giving).

- However, fear mongering is a perversion of that principle. While there's a legitimate place for emphasizing the importance and urgency of a cause, pushing individuals to act solely out of fear can erode trust.

Key Takeaways

We can move hearts and minds without manipulating or exploiting people. The key questions to ask yourself are:

Am I putting the person first and the struggle second?

1. (Your answer should be "Yes.")

Am I being manipulative?

2. (Your answer should be "No.")

Persuasive Strategies

When you perfect persuasive and ethical storytelling, you will craft action-provoking communications that you can feel good about.

And now that you have an understanding of what it takes to be an ethical storyteller, I invite you to skim the following blog posts for specific strategies you can employ to become a more persuasive storyteller.

- The Anatomy of a Story: A Roadmap to Clear and Compelling Communications
- 8 Steps to Improving Your Development Storytelling
- Behavior Economics in Fundraising: 11 Strategies to Boost Gift-Giving in 2023 - Part 1
- Behavior Economics in Fundraising: 11 Strategies to Boost Gift-Giving in 2023 - Part 2
- Telling Your Story: 5 Steps to Develop Your Organization's Voice
- Marginal Gains for Strategic Donor Relations: Small Steps for Big Impact

- [4 Keys to Writing for Donor Relations Webinar Series](#)

By [Madelyn C. Jones](#). Madelyn is passionate about helping nonprofits create communications that cut through the clutter and capture the attention of donors.

Appendix G: Systems Change Development Tool

Section Objective:		Overview
Overview of Issue and Desired Change	**Entrepreneur Name**	List of collaborators in case of collaboration
	Organisation Name	Or Initiative Name
	Country(ies) of Operation	
	What are the "targeted" issues you wish to address?	
	Root of the Problem	Analysis of the issues – What are the root causes that lead to these issues and what are the opportunities that already exist in the system surrounding these issues?
	SDGs Targeted (Limit to Top 3)	
	What is the overarching objective of your initiative?	What is your "North Star" or overall goal/dream? What is the change you wish to see in the system? Collaborative systems change brokers should work to set an audacious goal (a "North Star") that rallies the group of people and organisations that they are bringing together.

Section Objective:	The Systems Change Journey		
Understand 1) If proposed solution is true systems change 2) Applicant's systems change mindset 3) Applicant's self awareness in terms of expertise and limitations	**Who are the different stakeholders you will be bringing together to bring about the desired change?**	**Why?**	**What do you perceive to be your role in this interaction?**
	What people and organisations will you be collaborating with to bring about your desired change (if possible, include levels - local, community, national, international)?	Why is it important to involve these stakeholders to achieve desired change? What will be their role? Please specify for each stakeholder listed.	Please specify for each stakeholder listed.
	How will you equip or build the capacity of local stakeholders to drive change in their local contexts?	Data sharing, learning exchanges, technical support, etc.	
	Do you perceive there to be a power dynamic in play? If yes, how do you plan to address it?		
	How will you ensure that your intended change will be sustainable and durable?		

Critical Milestones to Achieve Desired SC	Key Activities Associated with the Milestone	Current Status of Milestone and Projected Timeline	Practitioner Involvement Level? Or Milestone Lead
Milestones do not have to be in order, but list things that allow you to know that change is happening	List key activities associated with each milestone	Categorise as: not started, in progress or complete (along with a short description)	How involved will you be as the honest broker? Choose a level. OR In the case of a collaboration, please specify who will be the lead.
			Choose an item. (High; Medium; Low).
			Choose an item. (High; Medium; Low).
			Choose an item. (High; Medium; Low).
			Choose an item. (High; Medium; Low).
Time needed to achieve intended systems change. (number of years)	Choose an item. (1 - 4 yrs, 3 - 7 yrs, 6 - 10 yrs, 8 - 12 yrs, 10 yrs+) We understand a comprehensive systems change can take years or even decades to achieve. Please provide an estimate of the time needed to achieve your intended change.		

What additional, non-monetary resources / connections does your team need to achieve

				Medium; Low).
				Choose an item. (High; Medium; Low).
	Time needed to achieve intended systems change. (number of years)	Choose an item. (1 - 4 yrs, 3 - 7 yrs, 6 - 10 yrs, 8 - 12 yrs, 10 yrs+) We understand a comprehensive systems change can take years or even decades to achieve. Please provide an estimate of the time needed to achieve your intended change.		
	Support needed to achieve intended systems change	What additional, non-monetary resources / connections does your team need to achieve the intended change? Please be specific. We will do our best to facilitate resource matching from within the C2030 community. (For example, do you need a technology advisor, an introduction to specific government contacts or media partners, etc?)		
	Funding needed to achieve intended systems change	We understand that the budget will continue to evolve, but please provide a draft budget with estimates and a high-level description of your needs.		
	Has your "North Star" evolved since you started this work? If so, in what way?	Have you had to adapt / change the initial goal you set off with since you started? If yes, in what way and what were your learnings?		

Section Objective:		Other Information	
Evaluate applicant's ability to deliver on proposed SC	Referral Source	Choose an item. (From a Catalyst Member; Catalyst Partner - Ashoka, Echoing Green, Skoll, Schwab; Catalyst Issue Based Group; Catalyst Working Group; Catalyst Regional Chapter; Other)	Specify.
	How is the entrepreneur / organisation uniquely positioned to lead this intended systems change?		

Appendix H: Crafting Compelling Crowdfunding Stories: A Guide for Social Innovators

Crafting a compelling crowdfunding story is essential for social innovators aiming to gain support for their initiatives. Effective storytelling not only attracts donors but also builds a connection that inspires lasting engagement and impact. Here's a detailed guide drawing insights from BackaBuddy, leaders in donations-based crowdfunding across Africa.

1.   Drawing Inspiration from Successful Campaigns

Every successful crowdfunding journey begins with inspiration. Take a moment to explore impactful campaigns that have resonated deeply with their audiences and raised funds successfully. Look for stories that evoke emotion, showcase resilience, or highlight innovative solutions to pressing social challenges. These narratives not only capture hearts but also inspire action.

2.   Creating a Captivating Title

The title of your fundraiser is the first introduction to your campaign. It holds immense power as it draws attention to your plight and can encourage potential donors to visit your campaign page. Will you choose a lighthearted approach to grab attention or an emotive one to tug at heartstrings? Whatever you choose, make sure to include the name of your beneficiary and highlight their specific need for fundraising.

3.   Introducing Your Initiative

Imagine introducing your initiative as if sharing it with a friend over coffee. Start by painting a vivid picture of the problem or opportunity your campaign addresses. Provide context about why this cause matters deeply to you and your community. Sharing personal insights or experiences adds authenticity and invites others to connect with your mission on a personal level.

4.   Sharing Your Motivation

Behind every great initiative lies a compelling story of motivation. What inspired you to embark on this crowdfunding journey? Whether it was a personal experience, a community challenge, or a vision for a brighter future, articulate why this cause is worthy of support. Your passion and commitment will resonate with potential donors and encourage them to join you in making a difference.

5.   Defining Your Funding Needs

Transparency is key when outlining your campaign's financial needs. Break down costs and expenses clearly so donors understand how their contributions will be used. Whether it's funding educational programs, supporting healthcare initiatives, or advancing environmental projects, clarity instils confidence and encourages generous support.

Providing specific increments for donations can make contributing less intimidating. People often respond positively to bite-sized, manageable amounts, feeling they can be part of the solution without feeling overwhelmed. For example, explaining that a R10 donation can provide a meal for a family or that R50 can cover school supplies for a child helps donors see the direct impact of their contributions. By presenting funding needs in smaller, tangible amounts, you make it easier for people to connect with your cause and feel empowered to contribute.

6. Highlighting the Impact

Illustrate the tangible impact of donations on your initiative. Describe the positive outcomes or transformations your campaign aims to achieve. Whether it's improving lives, protecting the environment, or fostering community resilience, showcasing the potential ripple effects of contributions inspires donors to become catalysts for change.

7. A Call to Action

Empower your audience to take action. Invite them to donate, share your campaign with their networks, or volunteer their time and skills. Make it easy for them to get involved by providing clear instructions and direct links to your crowdfunding platform and social media channels. Together, we can amplify your impact and reach new heights of community support.

8. Editing and Refining Your Story

Crafting a compelling crowdfunding story requires careful editing and refinement. Ensure your narrative flows smoothly and resonates with your audience. Aim for a concise word count, ideally between 200-500 words, to maintain reader engagement. Use formatting techniques like bolding, underlining, or italicising key points to emphasise important information. Maintain a warm, engaging tone throughout your story. Remember, storytelling is about creating a connection that inspires meaningful action. Clear, well-structured, and visually appealing content can significantly enhance your campaign's effectiveness.

9. Using Visual Storytelling

Enhance your campaign with visual elements that bring your story to life. Incorporate impactful photos, videos, or infographics that complement your narrative and evoke emotions. Visual storytelling not only captivates attention but also deepens understanding and empathy among potential donors.

10. Providing Updates and Gratitude

Keep your supporters engaged with regular updates on your campaign's progress and impact. Celebrate milestones achieved and express heartfelt gratitude for their contributions. Transparency and appreciation foster trust and encourage continued support, ensuring your crowdfunding journey is a shared success.

For more insights on crafting effective crowdfunding stories, explore BackaBuddy's resources and tips here.

Appendix I: 6 Tips for Crafting a Powerful Crowdfunding Video

Crowdfunding has emerged as a powerful tool for social entrepreneurs, innovators, charities, and individuals aiming to drive change and support meaningful causes. Whether you opt for donation-based, rewards-based, or equity crowdfunding, understanding the essentials can significantly enhance your campaign's success.

Creating an emotive and visually engaging crowdfunding video is a critical component of a successful campaign. Videos help establish a connection with potential donors, adding credibility and authenticity to your cause. Research indicates that campaigns with a well-made video can raise up to four times more funds than those without one.

Crafting an Impactful Crowdfunding Campaign

1. Personal and Authentic Storytelling

Shoot a short, authentic video, even if it's just using your smartphone. A selfie-style video can be highly effective when you speak from the heart, share relevant background information, and convey your passion. Consider interviewing the beneficiary of your campaign to provide a personal touch and create an emotional connection with potential donors.

2. Visual and Sonic Elements

Enhance your video's impact by incorporating images, text, animations, and music. Tools like CapCut, Canva, and InShot are user-friendly apps that can help you create professional and creative videos. Using royalty-free music from sources like the YouTube Audio Library can further elevate the quality of your video.

3. Social Media Engagement

Sharing your crowdfunding video on social media platforms can significantly boost engagement. Videos are more engaging and preferred by social media algorithms, leading to greater visibility. Consider live streaming on platforms like TikTok, Facebook, or Instagram to connect with potential donors in real-time, answer their questions, and encourage donations.

4. Regular Updates and Milestones

Keeping your donors updated with milestone achievements and expressing gratitude through follow-up videos can build trust and encourage further donations. Showcasing the impact of the funds raised helps in building a lasting relationship with your supporters.

5. Learning from Successful Campaigns

Study successful crowdfunding campaigns to understand what worked for them. Analyse their strategies, messaging, and promotional tactics. Adapting these best practices to suit

your needs can significantly improve your campaign's chances of success.By integrating these tips and leveraging platforms like BackaBuddy, social entrepreneurs and innovators can enhance their fundraising efforts and drive meaningful change.

For more detailed guidance on creating compelling crowdfunding videos, check out BackaBuddy's tip .

6 Essential tips for crafting a powerful crowdfunding video

01 Optimise your website for mobile

02 Leverage social media advertising

03 Implement email marketing campaigns

04 Invest in search engine optimisation (SEO)

05 Utilise digital content marketing

Appendix J: Maximising Attendance at Sector Convenings

This section is provided by our colleagues at Black Fox Global. Sector convenings such as the Skoll World Forum provide a powerful platform to connect with like-minded peers, foster partnerships with funders, and accelerate social impact. Given the investment of time, energy, and resources, it's essential to approach these events strategically.

Click here for a massively expanded step-by-step guide to the Skoll World Forum and Oxford affectionately referred to as 'The Unofficial Guide to the Skoll World Forum'.

Below, we've outlined best practices for making the most of your experience before, during, and after the Forum.

Before the Convening | Begin with the End in Mind

1. **Clarify Your Goals**
   Before attending, take time to reflect on your objectives for the Forum. Are you aiming to build partnerships, gain insights, or advance your mission? Establish a clear "why" for attending. Steven Covey's advice, "Begin with the end in mind," is vital here. Understanding your purpose for being there will shape how you engage with others and identify key opportunities.

2. **Set Intentions**
   Set daily intentions before and during the event. For example, "May I go where I am needed most today," or "May my interactions be fruitful for all." This mindful approach allows you to align with your values and attract meaningful connections.

3. **Do Your Homework**
   - Review the delegate list and identify individuals or organizations aligned with your mission. Use your research to prepare in advance for conversations with potential partners and funders.
   - Reach out in advance to schedule one-on-one meetings. Use LinkedIn and the Skoll World Forum mobile app to explore mutual connections that can facilitate introductions.

4. **Craft Your Engagement Pitch**
   Prepare a succinct and compelling engagement pitch that communicates your mission. Focus on your passion for social impact, such as: "I help global nonprofits secure the funds they need to drive social change." This helps engage others in deeper conversations rooted in purpose.

5. **Embrace Serendipity**
   While pre-scheduling meetings is essential, be open to spontaneous

conversations. Some of the best connections happen during coffee breaks, walking to sessions, or in the informal spaces around Oxford.

During the Convening | Presence and Authenticity

1. **Show Up Fully**
   Bring your authentic self to the event. Approach each conversation with curiosity and genuine interest. Ask open-ended questions like, "What inspired you to pursue this work?" or "How did you develop your approach to addressing [specific issue]?" This encourages meaningful, reciprocal exchanges.

2. **Lead with Curiosity**
   Build relationships by learning about others. Focus on active listening instead of pitching your organization. This helps you make an informed ask when the time is right. Take notes during conversations to ensure follow-up is personalized and relevant to what you discussed.

3. **Be Generous with Your Time and Knowledge**
   Networking isn't just about what you can gain. By offering support, sharing resources, or providing introductions to others in your network, you demonstrate that you are genuinely invested in collaborative impact.

4. **Center Your Well-Being**
   Sector convenings can be overwhelming, especially when meeting new people and attending back-to-back sessions. Take time to step away for short breaks, stretch, or do a breathing exercise. This will help you stay present and manage your energy throughout the long days and nights.

5. **Leverage Your Environment**
   Use spaces like the 'Collaboration Cafe' at the Saïd Business School for informal networking opportunities and serendipity. Some of the most memorable conversations can happen during casual interactions like rideshares, hallway chats, and coffee breaks.

6. **Approach Funders as Partners**
   Funders are crucial collaborators in social change, so approach them with confidence as equals with a shared vision. Focus on showcasing the impact of your work together, rather than just seeking funds.

After the Convening | Nurture Your Connections

1. **Follow Up Promptly**
   As soon as possible after the event, send follow-up emails to the people you met. Thank them for their time and continue the conversation if appropriate. Personalize your follow-ups by referencing specific details from your interaction. This will keep the connection alive and relevant.

2. **Follow Through on Commitments**
    If you made promises to share resources, introduce someone to a potential partner, or schedule a follow-up call, make sure to deliver on those commitments in a timely manner. Reliability is key in building trust and long-term relationships.

3. **Reflect on Key Takeaways**
    After the event, take some time to reflect on the conversations you had and what you learned. Capture these insights in a journal or digital document. Consider how they can inform your work moving forward.

4. **Stay Engaged**
    Stay connected with people through platforms like LinkedIn and email. Share articles, resources, or thoughts that are relevant to your relationship and continue to nurture those connections over time.

5. **Refine Your Approach for Future Events**
    Reflect on how your approach to networking and engagement evolved throughout the event. This reflection will help you refine your strategy for future convenings, and allow you to engage even more purposefully in the future.

Final Thoughts | Approach the Forum with Authenticity and Generosity

The key to success lies in being present, listening actively, leading with curiosity and generosity, and nurturing relationships over time. Center your well-being and "protect the asset"—you. With thoughtful preparation and an open and generous heart, you can maximize the value of your investment and ensure that your participation has far reaching benefits for you and your mission.

Appendix K: Using Artificial Intelligence for Donor Research

Shared by Nick Fellers at For Impact

We use AI tools extensively in our prospect research – specifically to help identify prospects and to synthesize areas of alignment. This research can be hit or miss depending on the prompt, depending on the tool, and depending on the ever-changing limits around the tool – we really have to play around with various prompts.

Some specific prompt examples:

- "Identify 10 peer (nonprofit) organizations of XYZ organization."
  This gives us a great list to start to do prospect research. We can then dive through the websites, reports, etc. to see who is funding in this space. To be sure, the names are just leads. They all need some level of research and strategy to determine quality.

- "Who are top funders to XYZ cause?"

- Or, you can get more specific.
  "Make a list of the top 100 philanthropists in the US. Next, tell me the top funders to XYZ cause that are NOT on the top 100 list."

- "Help me identify 20 potential funders for xyz organization."

- "Help me identify 10 funders already supporting xyz organization."

You can access many tools for free and/or you can pay a monthly fee to access a premium version that is better and has more features (such as the ability to search the web in real time). AI platforms include: ChatGPT (from OpenAI), Claude.ai, and Google Gemini (and perplexity.ai, which is sort of a search engine that uses ChatGPT and Claude.ai). For additional ideas around how to utilise AI for fundraising efforts, watch this video produced by For Impact (with the disclaimer that it could be outdated as the field of AI is transforming so rapidly!).

Appendix L: Activating your Board

Provided by the team at For Impact

Social impact leaders often complain that they don't know how to get their boards involved in funding efforts. Often board members want to help, but they do not know how. Rather than make a request of the entire board at a board meeting, consider meeting with your board members one-on-one and exploring ways that they can help elevate the team's funding efforts.

For Impact uses the following framing device to guide conversations around how board members can help:

1. **Champion... the cause and case.** The power of the word 'champion' lies in its versatility. Asking a board member to be a champion for an organisation should be an easy ask and can be used in many ways. Examples include:

    a. Host or speak at an event for the organisation
    b. Conduct outreach- write a thank you letter to a funder
    c. Share external communications with donors

2. **Invite... others to get involved and engaged.** Your board members and champions need the opportunity to invite others to become involved and engaged in your organisation. Just imagine if you went to your board and with the message "We do not want you asking people for money! We'd like you to invite someone to a tour or a virtual event." This is many times more effective than asking them for names.

3. **Invest... with a commensurate commitment.** The word commensurate changes everything. In an ideal world, every single board member can make an investment that is commensurate with their capacity, relationship, and involvement with your organisation. This allows an executive director or development director to share that they have financial support from the board and it gives board members credibility when they serve as connectors. As a board member, it can be more compelling to share, "I'd like to tell you about an organisation that I support and serve on the board."
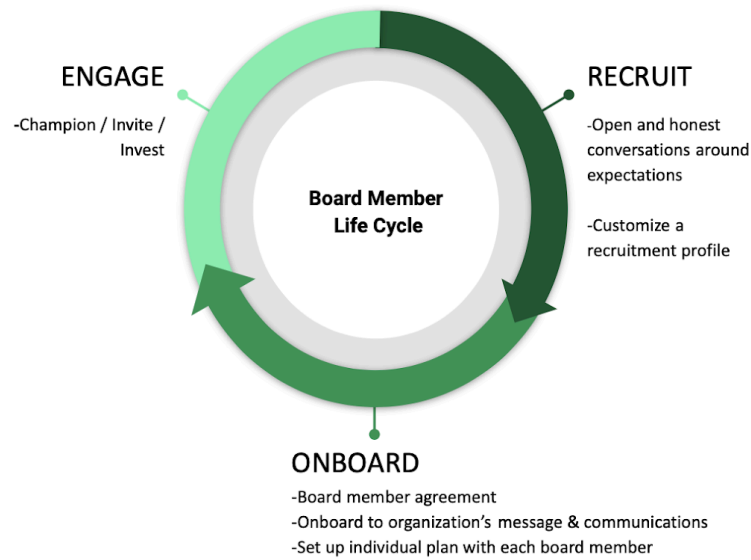
Specific board members can be a critical part of your fundraising team! They might help get the visit, prepare for the visit (to include preparing the prospect for the visit with predisposition), possibly join you on the visit, and follow-up after the visit.

To maximise our efforts around engaging board members around funding efforts, it's recommended that leaders have open and honest conversations with board members at every stage of their board service. In the recruitment phase, leaders should be upfront and clear around their fundraising expectations from board members and in the

onboarding phase, leaders may wish to consider developing a board member agreement that lays out expectations around board service (both around fundraising and otherwise).

Board Member Fundraising Role: Define and Align Early & Often

ENGAGE
-Champion / Invite / Invest

RECRUIT
-Open and honest conversations around expectations

-Customize a recruitment profile

Board Member Life Cycle

ONBOARD
-Board member agreement
-Onboard to organization's message & communications
-Set up individual plan with each board member

Appendix M: A Tool to Use for Engaging with Donors on a Visit

Provided by the team at For Impact

One option for engaging funders in a meaningful way is to use an engagement tool. An engagement tool serves as a visual roadmap for a meeting with a potential funder and is meant to increase engagement with the funder. Think of it as the opposite of a pitch deck. An engagement tool can capture an organization's message, answering questions like why an organization exists, what an organization does, and how a funder can help. Sample engagement tools can be found here and you can see a silly example of an engagement tool in action here.

Engagement Overview [Video]

Most people (not 'nonprofit people' – just people in general) don't know HOW to engage. Yet, we always hear that you want more engaged customers, staff, funders, and board members!

This section will examine how to create engagement and how to be deliberate in communication so that the other person in the relationship is engaged.

First, let's define **Engagement**: a dynamic within a relationship which holds attention, heightens interest and motivates action.

Attention! Interest! Action!

How do we maximize Attention, Interest and Action? How do we Maximize Engagement?

1. **Ask Questions.** Then Listen. Or, Just Listen. No better way to engage than to listen. Also, when a person speaks it engages his or her brain fully.

2. **Be 1:1.** It's tough to listen to a room of 200. Heck, it's hard to listen to 12 board members at a meeting!

3. **Use Visuals!** They are several studies, but all conclude that visual learners make up more than half of our population!

4. **Better than Visuals,** Create a Memorable Experience. If a picture is worth a 1000 words than a tour or an experience with your impact is worth many more.

5. **DRAW! Create a visual experience with the prospect**. We love using 2'x3' ENGAGEMENT TOOLS – these make the case for support visual and they offer plenty of white space in which to draw while you're visiting with someone. Picture two people standing over a blue-print – Pointing, Talking, Moving – giving your case meaning. This is Engagement.

6. **Predispose**. Predisposing someone to your visit or your conversation provides clarity ahead of the visit – making it easier to hold attention and create interest.

7. **Be Simple.** We need order. We need simplicity. If things are complex, you've lost attention because the other person is trying to figure out what you're saying.

8. **Be Specific with an Ask.** If the stated goal is to create action then you need to let the other person know what the action looks like. Being specific in an ask directs attention and let's me know what action to contemplate. In the funding sense, you must ASK in order for me do something.

If we focused on ENGAGING in this way:

- We would worry much less about 'what to say' and instead think about what questions to ask.
- We would probably burn Powerpoints in effigy and stand around flip charts with markers instead.
- We would ditch 'special events' in favor of one-on-one, engaging visits.

Appendix N: 10 Principles of Shifting Funding Paradigm

1. **Give Multi-Year, Unrestricted Funding**
   Addressing root causes of inter-connected systemic problems requires continuous adaptation and learning over the long-term. Trusting organisations with general operating funds for multiple years (at least three to five years, and preferably longer) allows them the flexibility to take the necessary long-term, iterative approach to tackling big, complex, systemic problems. This type of flexible investment frees up organisations to adapt to changing conditions and enables nonprofits to focus on their mission-critical work rather than focusing on where next year's grants may be coming from. If a funder can only offer restricted project grants, make them multi-year and ensure they cover the actual direct (including staff salaries) and indirect costs of delivering impact (such as office rent and equipment). Consider providing more than enough for these costs to enable nonprofits to grow a surplus and reserves.

2. **Invest in Capacity Building**
   Good ideas are not enough. Help your programme partners to build core organisational capacity and be responsive to what they say they need most. Nonprofits need to build a diverse set of capacities, either in their organisation or through their partners, to bring collective strength and sustainability to their work over time. Funders who put restrictions on overhead costs constrain organisations ability to achieve optimal social impact.

3. **Fund Networks**
   Networks are tools in our social change toolboxes that support stakeholders to take collaborative action and to develop strategic initiatives that include multiple players who are part of the solution. Networks are also an excellent source for capacity building for those participating, incentivising collaboration, experimenting with new approaches, and allowing course corrections to happen quicker and more efficiently. Invest in infrastructure and coordination capacity for organisations to collaborate, build networks, and work together more efficiently and effectively.

4. **Create Transformative Rather than Transactional Relationships**
   We need to evolve from the corrosive power relationships that have characterised many interactions between funders and grantees to date. To achieve transformational change, we need to practice a partnership model where we all bring assets and gifts to the change at hand. Money is one of those assets, as is community knowledge, people power, relationships, expertise, economic power, and political clout. Effective systems change work relies on all of these assets. It also requires shared sensibility for listening, learning, humility, and collaboration. Funders can give up some of their power to build our collective power for impact.

5. **Build and Share Power**
    Non-profits and movement leaders have traditionally not been present in rooms where governments and corporations make big structural decisions. This is especially true for black-, indigenous-, and people of color-led organisations, as well as those led by women, young people, and people with disabilities. Funders can help rebalance these inequities. They can achieve this by sharing power with and building power for the social sector, giving more resources directly at the local level to organisations with local leadership and local ownership, and making more robust investments in organizations led by proximate leaders of color. More inclusive decision-making structures and spaces need to be designed. These spaces should encourage general operating and capacity building support to help leaders win policies and practices that advance the SDGs in their arena of influence. It is also important that funders are open to funding newer, early-stage social entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs.

6. **Be Transparent and Responsive**
    Bring humility to your grantmaking and recognise the power imbalances in your relationships with programme partners. Communicate your equity journey with your grantees. Be crystal clear about your priorities and expectations. Be swift to say no if it's not a good fit, and respond in a timely manner. The urgency of our challenges requires no less of us all.

7. **Simplify and Streamline Paperwork**
    Nonprofits spend too much time writing grant proposals and reports to satisfy funders' requirements, while doing the difficult work of systems change and meeting regulatory conditions. Funders can help give time back by streamlining application processes, coordinating with other donors on due diligence and reporting, and aligning reporting with a systems change mindset. Reporting on systems change work is often more complex and nuanced than listing short-term outputs tied to individual projects. As additional methods of evaluating impact, funders can be more open to stories as examples of progress. They can ask grantees what shifts in the system they are seeing over time, and they can talk to grantees about what's working in their efforts and what is not.

8. **Offer Support Beyond the Check**
    Funders have more to offer than money alone. Be a connector. Make helpful connections for grantee partners to other possible funders and peer organisations, be curious and responsive to their needs, and create opportunities to showcase them and their work in channels to which you have access. Support networks that build strong connections and provide platforms for collaboration rather than competition.

9. **Collaborate With Other Funders**
    Just as non-profits need to weave together networks to achieve scale, funders need to build ecosystems of investors in systems change work. Share knowledge, connections and expertise with other donors; enhance efficiencies

through coordinated action; open doors for your grantees and walk through them together as partners. Connect with funders that are investing in similar areas and hold one another accountable for thinking broadly about your funding ecosystem and being intentional to include leaders and organisations that have historically and systemically had a hard time accessing funds from donors.

10. **Embrace a Systems Mindset in Your Grantmaking**
Funders should embrace a systems change mindset with their grantees to address their chosen priority problem(s). The overall goal is to meaningfully shift the conditions that hold the problem in place. This involves identifying, understanding, and addressing root causes of the problem(s) you are tackling. This mindset also extends to thinking differently about evaluating and understanding impact over a longer-term horizon.

Appendix O: Systems Change Business Case Development Tool

Access the Systems Change Business Case Development Tool available [here](#).

Overview

The C2030 Systems Change Business Case Development tool is a resource to guide you as you set off on your systems change journey. The questions are intentionally designed to be thought-provoking and will help you identify areas within your organisational strategy that might need additional idea creation. Our aim is for the tool to serve as a useful reference in your conversation with other industry stakeholders. It will help you to quickly showcase your systems change mindset while also highlighting the key elements of your complex systems change undertaking. See Appendix D for the Systems Change Business Case Development Tool or access a copy to fill out for your organisation here.

Recommended steps:

Step 1: Give yourself a systems change refresher

On the following pages, we have put together a brief summary of our thoughts around systems change. We have cited guiding principles (sourced from the industry) that helped us when we set off on our Catalyst Now journey. Links to additional reading are also supplied if you are interested in learning more.

Step 2: Read through the questions and start framing your thoughts around how you might want to answer them

While some of the questions are brief, a more detailed explanation of the intent behind each question is provided in the right column. Feel free to reach out to us if you have any difficulty understanding any question. We would also appreciate feedback if you think it needs to be reworded.

Step 3: Answer the questions to the best of your ability

Try to answer them as succinctly as possible. The answer fields are capped to a max of 150 words. We understand that all of your team's work cannot be captured in a limited space. By intentionally limiting the length of the answer field, the tool aims to help you identify and extract the key aspects of your systems change efforts.

Step 4: Identify the gaps and work with your team to crystallise your strategy

- Use the list of unanswered questions, if relevant, to guide your team's next strategy session.

- Reach out to the Secretariat if you need additional help with strategy refinement / development.

Step 5: Use the completed tool to help frame your fundraising discussions

- This tool is not a proposal, however, it can serve as a foundation for one. By identifying the elements most critical to your initiative, the tool will help you craft a more effective proposal.

- Please share your completed tool with the Catalyst Secretariat. We will do our best to help match your needs with resources from the C2030 community.

Step 6: Provide feedback and help make the tool better

The Business Case Development Tool is based on extensive input and feedback from practitioners and donors in the Catalyst community. It will always be a "work in progress". With continued feedback it will evolve to meet the needs of all the stakeholders involved.

Let us know your thoughts on whether the tool allows you to accurately convey the complex nature of your team's work, or if you have any recommendations on how to improve it. Questions, language – anything at all – we would appreciate your candid feedback.

Appendix P: Legal Reform Questions to Consider

The enterprise Legal reform as a catalyst for social enterprise: an international social enterprise law and policy, summary of questions to consider. This listing comes from the [Legal Reform as a Catalyst for Social Enterprise](#) report.

I. Enterprise Form (select all)

☐ What jurisdiction(s) do you practice in?

☐ What are the most commonly used types of for-profit corporate organizational forms in your jurisdiction (e.g., corporation, limited liability company, benefit corporation, social purpose corporation, etc.) used by Enterprises operating a trade or business (rather than for investment or holding company purposes)? Please briefly describe these forms. a. Of these, which are the most common for-profit organizational forms used by Enterprises seeking financing from investors and that will have multiple owners? b. Other than organizational forms specifically designed for Social Enterprises (and discussed below under Question 4), which, if any, are the most common for-profit organizational forms used by Social Enterprises?

☐ Do any of your jurisdiction's traditional organizational forms require or permit the board or managers to consider, balance or prioritize interests other than shareholder value in decision making? What other interests, if any, are they required to or allowed to consider (e.g., interests of employees, customers, the environment, etc.)?

☐ Does your jurisdiction have organizational forms specifically designed for Social Enterprises? If so: a. What type(s) of organizational forms are they? b. How do they materially differ from the most closely analogous traditional organizational form? c. What are the main benefits for founders and funders of such organizational forms? d. Are there any restrictions on the use of these organizational forms (such as profit-caps, stakeholder involvement and impact reporting)? If there are, what are they? e. Are there any material differences in timing or costs for forming a Social Enterprise versus a traditional Enterprise? f. How prevalent and well known are Social Enterprise forms?

☐ Are Social Enterprises permitted to be formed and operated as Nonprofits? If so: a. Are Nonprofits that are Social Enterprises treated differently under the law as compared to Nonprofits that are not Social Enterprises, whether from a corporate, tax or other perspective? b. Are there any material benefits of, and/or restrictions on, using a Nonprofit form for Social Enterprises that does not apply to Nonprofits that are not Social Enterprises? c. Is there any type of "hybrid" Nonprofit form that requires less reporting and/or allows for faster formation? If so, please describe the drawbacks of utilizing this form (i.e. fewer tax benefits). d. How prevalent is the use of Nonprofits for Social Enterprises?

☐ Does your jurisdiction allow for worker-owned Enterprises, such as cooperatives? If so, please describe any material benefits of, and/or restrictions on, using such forms.

☐ Are there unique reporting requirements for Social Enterprises? If there are, please describe them. Please also discuss what government bodies Social Enterprises are required to report to.

- [ ] In your jurisdiction, has case law and jurisprudence evolved to address Social Enterprises? If there is meaningful jurisprudence around Social Enterprises, please provide some brief examples.
- [ ] Does your jurisdiction have any ESG requirements for Enterprises generally? If it does, please describe.
- [ ] Does your jurisdiction have any ESG requirements specifically for Social Enterprises? If it does, please describe.
- [ ] Does your jurisdiction have any ESG requirements for investors? If it does, please describe.

II. Funding (select all)

- [ ] Are any major investor classes (e.g., pension funds, mutual funds, etc.) required to look at ESG issues when making investment decisions in your jurisdiction? a. If they are, please describe the requirements. b. If they are not, are they permitted to consider such factors? c. What other relevant factors do investors tend to consider (aside from profit motive).
- [ ] What kinds of philanthropic funding do Social Enterprises in your jurisdiction commonly receive (e.g., grants, charitable investment, traditional investment)?
- [ ] How prevalent, if at all, are new for-profit impact investments in your jurisdiction (e.g. traditional instruments with impact terms, new investment instruments, aggregation with philanthropic capital, community based funding, etc.)?
- [ ] What are the types of government funding and support available to Social Enterprises, if any, available in your jurisdiction (e.g., grants, investments, bonds, and guarantees)? a. How difficult is it for Social Enterprises to obtain government funding? b. Is any government funding limited to Enterprises incorporated using Social Enterprise forms?
- [ ] Are there any companies that are formed as a Social Enterprise listed on your jurisdiction's leading securities exchange(s)?
- [ ] To what extent are publicly traded Enterprises required to disclose ESG related factors in annual reports/public filings in your jurisdiction.
- [ ] How prevalent, if at all, are impact bonds in your jurisdiction?
- [ ] In your jurisdiction, are there any restrictions on foreign investments or donations that are unique to Social Enterprises (whether incorporated as for profit entities or as Nonprofits)?
- [ ] Is "crowdfunding" legal in your jurisdiction? Are there rules under applicable securities laws that make it easier for smaller businesses or Social Enterprises to take money from investors that are not sophisticated/accredited/qualified under applicable statutes?

III. Tax (select all)

- [ ] Are there any tax exemptions that are uniquely available for Social Enterprises? a. Please describe any tax exemptions that are available and whether they are partial or full. b. Are they dependent on the Social Enterprise utilized using a specific organizational form (e.g., for profit vs. Nonprofit form)? c. Please describe any other key requirements of the available tax exemptions (e.g., restrictions on sources or uses of funds, restrictions on commercial activities, etc.).

- [ ] Are individuals or other organizations able to provide tax deductible donations to for-profit Social Enterprises? If they are, please describe any restrictions applicable to tax deductible donations?
- [ ] Are there any other tax benefits uniquely available for Social Enterprises? (e.g. deferrals, favorable tax rates, business deductions, etc.)
- [ ] Does your jurisdiction provide for reciprocal recognition of tax-exempt status that has been granted under the law of any other jurisdictions?

IV. Governmental Infrastructure (select all)

- [ ] Does your jurisdiction have Regulatory Sandboxes or similar policy frameworks for Social Enterprises? If it does, please describe.
- [ ] What government operational support, resources, training or services, are available for small businesses or Social Enterprises?
- [ ] Are there different compliance requirements for different types of Social Enterprises than for traditional Enterprises? Please provide examples if there are.
- [ ] Is there a dedicated government agency or department that oversees Social Enterprises? If there is, please describe its mandate and effectiveness.
- [ ] Is there a different bankruptcy system available for Social Enterprises?

VI. Miscellaneous (select all)

- [ ] What are the average time and filing fees to form an Enterprise in your jurisdiction?
- [ ] What government or third-party certifications or accreditations, if any, are available for Social Enterprises that allow for access to benefits e.g. funding, beneficial tax status, etc.? Please provide examples and briefly describe them as well as the standards there are to maintain them.
- [ ] Please describe whether, in your opinion, startups and other entrepreneurial Enterprises generally can easily form and flourish in your jurisdiction.
- [ ] Please describe whether, in your opinion, Social Enterprises, in particular, can easily form and flourish in your jurisdiction.
- [ ] Please describe whether in your opinion there are any laws that are obstructive to the formation of Social Enterprises (i.e. that actively disfavor or penalize, or otherwise discourage their formation) in your jurisdiction (for example, are Social Enterprises subject to legislation prohibiting inclusion of Social Enterprises in government contract procurement)?
- [ ] In your jurisdiction, are there any major fraud concerns or defects due to corruption or fraud that should be addressed? If there are, please briefly discuss the concerns or defects.
- [ ] What changes to the law do you think would be most beneficial to enabling Social Enterprises to flourish in your jurisdiction?
- [ ] What changes to the law do you think would be most beneficial to enhancing the social and environmental responsibility of Enterprises generally (whether or not Social Enterprises)?
- [ ] Is there anything else you would like to add or guidance you would like to provide? Are there any questions we should have asked but did not?

Appendix Q: Trust Based Philanthropy Resources

- Trust Based Philanthropy Project: https://www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org/
- Trust-Based Philanthropy Self-Reflection Tool
- Aligning values to practices:
  https://www.peakgrantmaking.org/principles-for-peak-grantmaking/tie-practices-to-values
- "In the Right Hands": Documentary on trust-based philanthropy from the organization Trees, Water, People: https://treeswaterpeople.org/trust
- Articles/Publications:
  - /www.proximate.press/latest-stories/philanthropy-needs-to-trust-the-real-experts
  - www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org/blog-1/what-critics-are-getting-wrong-about-trust-based-philanthropy
  - www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org/blog-1/are-you-trustwashing
  - www.philanthropy.com/blogs/letters-to-the-editor/end-donor-dominance-readers-respond-to-op-ed-criticizing-trust-based-philanthropy
  - www.trustbasedphilanthropy.org/blog-1/tbp-or-not-tbp-a-reflection-on-mackenzie-scotts-giving

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Suggestions and Errors

We strive to ensure the accuracy and quality of the content in this toolkit. As of 31 March 2025, the toolkit has not been finalized. However, if any errors have made their way into the text, the responsibility is entirely ours and will make the revisions. We deeply value your feedback and welcome the opportunity to correct any mistakes, please reach out to systemsconnections@catalyst2030.net