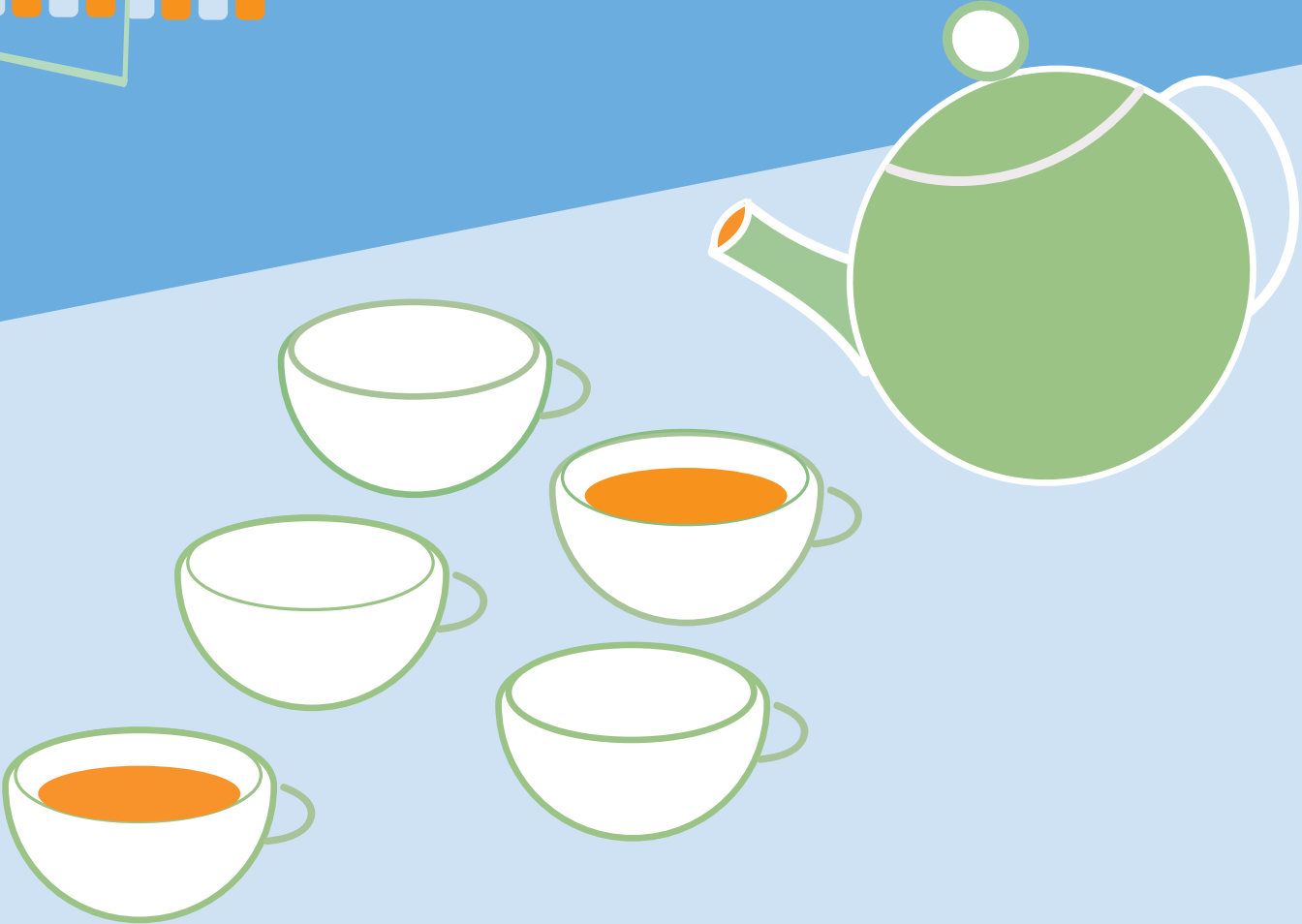
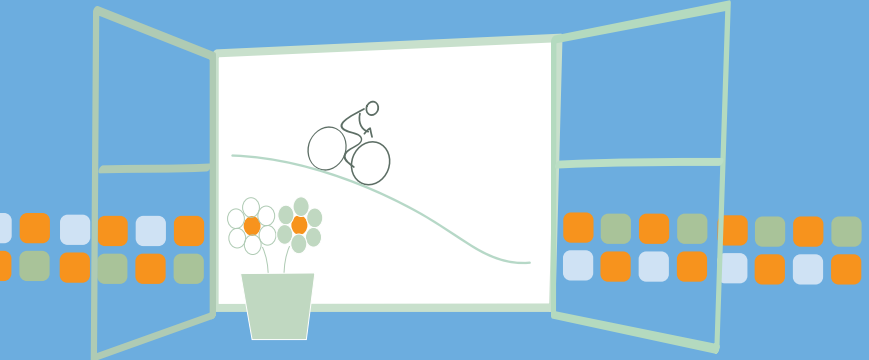
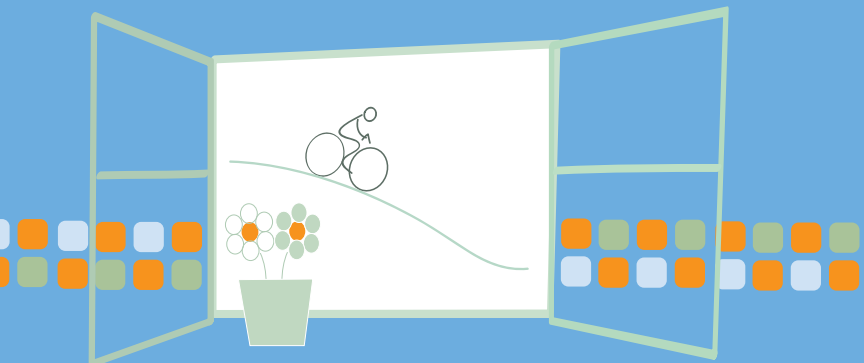




Institute for Philanthropy

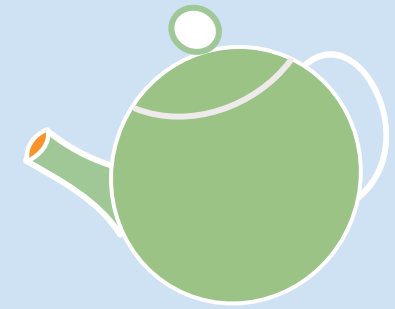


give together



Giving Circles - an introduction	1	The private model	21
The community model	2	Network for Social Change	22
Roots to Fruits	4	How to start and what you need	25
Oxford Giving Circle	6	A personal story: CING - Setting up a giving circle in Brazil	29
The public market place model	8	TFN programme for a day's events and application guide lines	32
The Funding Network	9	References	33
YTFN	13		
Regional TFNs	14		
Cross Pollinate	15		
The global model	17		
The Philanthropy Workshop	18		
Funders Collaborative			

table of contents



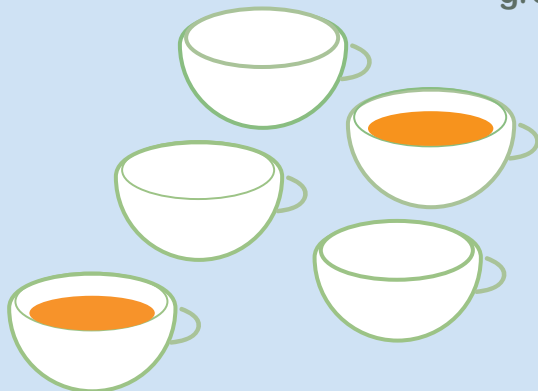
Giving circles are a way of combining talents, assets and knowledge to make giving enjoyable, more effective and much more rewarding.

Circles of friends or colleagues come together to make the most of their gifts by pooling contributions and sharing decisions on how best to allocate their funds.

Giving circles and networks exist all over the world, and in a surprising variety of forms. Many fund in countries other than that in which the circle is based; some are international themselves, with members spread out over different continents, others give to their own local communities or exist to support a special aim like promoting girls' education.

Giving circles are powerful engines of change, but they also give those taking part an enormous sense of satisfaction and achievement.

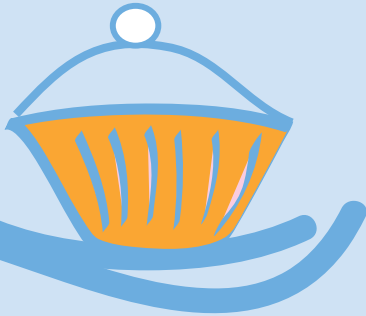
GiveTogether describes several well-tested versions and sets out the building blocks for creating or being part of a giving group yourself.



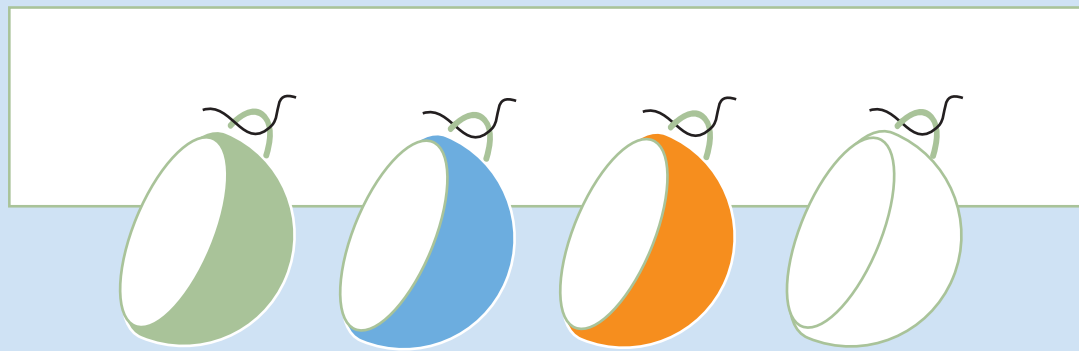


the community model

Giving Circles are just getting underway in Britain and Europe. In the US, the last few years has seen enormous growth. There are now more than 800 giving circles in the U.S, most of them of the community model variety. In the UK, Capital Community Foundation tells of one that is starting up in London, called Roots to Fruits. TalkinCompany, also based in London, highlighted giving circles at one of its meetings and hopes that members will set them up independently. The Oxford Givers' Circle has been in existence since 1988.



To have a community or kitchen-table giving circle, all it takes is a group of people with a shared passion for a cause who are prepared to pool their funds and a little of their time. Typically, a giving circle chooses an issue about which they all feel strongly; it could be a local community issue like increasing play facilities for children or supporting a region's cultural institutions. It could be the desire to reduce domestic violence in your area, or perhaps to tackle attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers. It might be pursuing different ways to tackle drug abuse or the provision of services for a group like the elderly. Your circle might care passionately about supporting girls through school in sub-Saharan Africa, or reducing child mortality in a specific country.



No two groups look exactly alike or act the same; aims and rules are set to suit the members, the shape evolves to suit their needs and the problems they aim to tackle. Gifts to giving circles by their members range from around £50 a year to more than £50,000.

All it needs is a desire for change and a willingness to share.

Groups can meet once a month, or more, or less often.

No formal procedures are needed but most groups come up with some guidelines about what they fund and why, what they want to achieve, selection criteria for the charities they'll give to, a system for decision-making and pooling and paying out the funds and for asking the charities to report back on what they have achieved with the giving circle's contribution.

Community giving circles might begin by supporting organisations that focus on solving a particular local issue, but, with experience, some broaden their scope. At the community level, research is easy to do; the members are part of and know what the issues are in their community. They also know who's doing a good job in tackling problems, and where the gaps are. By pooling their funds and expanding their expertise with practice they make a collective impact that goes far beyond what they could achieve as individuals.

Community giving circles also play a valuable role in building community, bringing people together who care about the same things and want to make a difference in their community. Some of the most inspired and inspiring giving circles in the US are in deprived communities, where local residents have resolved to make a change to help themselves.

The How to Start and What You Need sections tell you everything you need to know in order to start and maintain a giving circle.

In addition, if you want more help or have more questions, please send an email to givingcircles@instituteofphilanthropy.org and we will reply.

The community model: Roots to Fruits

Roots to Fruits, based in London, is a network of people set up to support learning, growth and prosperity within the black community. It consists of about 100 people, with an active core of 20, each of whom is inspired by the vision of what can be achieved by pooling efforts and resources. As part of the network, they are setting up an endowment fund at Capital Community Foundation, the income from which will be used to fund projects targeting those of African heritage. As well as contributing to the fund themselves, they will be raising funds from the wider community too. Capital Community Foundation is hosting and managing the fund as well as advising on criteria and finding projects to support.

“The purpose of the fund is to take ownership for the issues that are of priority to the community and to resolve them through self-help. We are doing this because many of us have waited years for someone else to do it, and it eventually dawned on us that that someone was us. We intend to demonstrate to ourselves and to others just how great we can be, when the community is empowered to act as an extension to the family. Priorities in early stages are centred on children and young people.” Jacqui McNish, one of the founding members of Roots to Fruits

Structure and administration:

Roots to Fruits is a constituted organisation with charitable aims and objectives. The Roots to Fruit fund is administered by the Capital Community Foundation. The foundation currently covers administration costs by top slicing a small percentage of the contributions made to the fund plus a 1.5% annual charge.

Selection process:

Capital Community Foundation is helping Roots to Fruits to find projects that work positively towards resolving the issues they care about; the decisions about which projects to fund will come from the criteria specified by the Roots to Fruits Board and Capital Community Foundation funding guidelines. The application process will be managed by Capital Community Foundation.

Due Diligence:

Capital Community Foundation will assess the organisations to ensure that they are financially stable, well-run and will use the money to do what they say they will.

Report Back:

The organisations will report back to Capital Community Foundation and the Roots to Fruits board.

Roots to Fruits

What was the biggest obstacle and how did you overcome it?

“I would say that the main obstacle to date has been developing the momentum to turn the vision into reality. This was overcome by sharing the dream, so now the momentum is driven by the enthusiasm of many others.”

What are the principal benefits?

“We are in danger of leaving behind a weaker and more fractured society than the one we inherited. The outcomes of what we support are intended to reverse this trend; therefore the principal benefits will be measured by how the funded projects turn around the lives of the people they impact and the change this has on the wider society.”

What is your best advice for success?

“Find something you truly enjoy or really believe in and research it.”

“Make a step in the right direction.”

“Learn from each step and don’t limit where you take your learning from.”

“If at first you don’t succeed, you may need to consider changing your angle of approach, but try, try again.”

The community model: The Oxford Giving Circle

Since 1988, Oxford has been home to a different model of giving circle. Its members are women (it will be open to everyone in the future) who meet for lunch once a year and pool their funds to one particular charity, Womankind.

Its inspiration was a newspaper article which noted that local voluntary groups had more chance of surviving if they had an international profile. The article was about a simple centre in Peru that gave milk to street children, in the face of opposition from Peru's Shining Path.

Structure and Administration:

The group has about 30 members with a constant nucleus of 15 or 16. As the group gives to just one charity, Womankind, the donations are made by direct debit from the members' bank accounts (on an annual basis) and there is no need for a central organisation. The suggested amount to give at the beginning was £50 a year and now some give less, or more.

Due diligence:

The group gives to one charity, Womankind, selected when the group began and targets its funds to Womankind's project to network tribal women across Tamil Nadu, so that they can support each in having a say in their family, community and country.

Due diligence:

The group is by now very familiar with Womankind's work and administration and staff from Womankind are supportive.

Report back:

Womankind provides regular reports and updates.

The Oxford Giving Circle

What was the biggest obstacle and how did you overcome it?

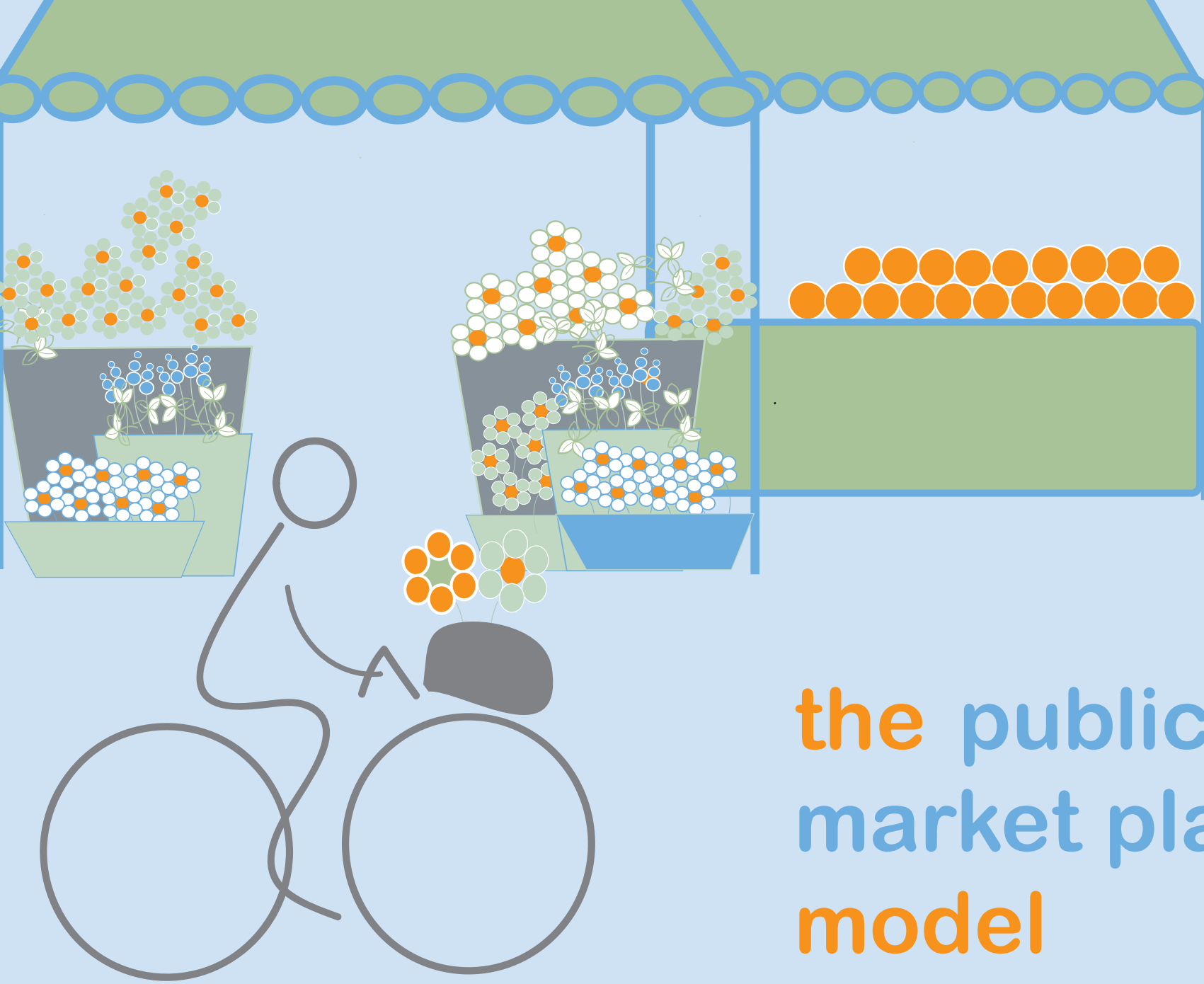
“Challenge is a better word than obstacle. The first challenge was that a giving circle was a completely new idea. We had to ask: what level of giving can be sustained? There were so many projects to choose from and we wanted something that would be sustainable. We wanted to keep it “ordinary” too.”

What are the principal benefits?

“Hearing from project workers that it has made a difference. Knowing that. The pride the group has in its support for the project. Learning about other parts of the world. Finding that it’s possible to make a difference by doing something small.”

What is your best advice for success?

“Keep it simple. You need the ability to be able to refresh the group. Work with supportive organisations, like Womankind.”



the public
market place
model

The public “marketplace” model: The Funding Network

The Funding Network (TFN) has about 200 members and meets in London at least four times a year, twice during the day and twice for an evening. In addition to its main London organisation, regional TFNs (as they are known) meet in Scotland, Leeds, the South West and Oxford. There are also TFNs in Toronto and Johannesburg and a young people’s version, YTFN.

Begun in 2002 by four founding members who were also members of Network for Social Change (see next section), TFN’s purpose, in its own words, is to bring people together to:

- act as a ‘marketplace’ to which individuals can bring projects which work towards a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable world.
- provide a mutually respectful setting, where those who might like to join with others in funding such projects get to meet, hear those doing the work, and promote a paradigm of social change giving: that those who have much can usefully share their wealth in creative and proactive ways, and that the process of giving can be enriching to the giver as well as to the receiver.

It operates as follows:

Anyone can come to the meetings but only members can sponsor a project. Non-members are normally charged £20 to attend the event to cover its costs. Members are charged £10. Membership is £75 a year for individuals and £200 a year for corporations, which includes trusts. Members propose organisations for funding by submitting an application, which contains required information, to a Selection Panel six weeks before each funding event. The Selection Panel is made up from members too, who volunteer for the role. The Selection Panel for each event is usually different from the previous ones, although some members may be constant.

"I was very impressed by the TFN meeting on Saturday. You did not frighten me as much as I was expecting! The punters seemed to enjoy themselves and your team has found the trick of making giving instructive and fun." Nicholas Merriman, QC

The Funding Network

The Selection Panel chooses eight or nine organisations for day events and five for evening events, and these are invited to address the people who come to the event. Presenters are given six minutes and are asked to describe the need, what their organisation does to address the need and the impact it has. After that, the audience has six minutes to ask questions of each organisation. The event is tightly scheduled and TFN prides itself on running on time. The presenting organisations are free to stay to hear each others' presentations – and usually do and report that they greatly enjoy that - but leave before the funding begins. TFN's system of funding is its defining characteristic. The people in the audience, identifying themselves by their first names or holding up a numbered card, call out the amount of money each wants to donate, minimum £100, to each organisation which is treated in turn. The donations are written up on flip charts or recorded electronically as they are made. The donations for each organisation are totalled after the first round and the audience is given a second chance to contribute more after seeing how much has already been raised.

Funding days are usually attended by 60-100 people and raise an average total of £50,000 for the eight or nine projects presenting.

Funding evenings are usually attended by 100-200 people and raise an average total of £40,000 for the five projects presenting.

Donations are handed in at the end of the event, or sometimes sent by post later. A donation form is provided by TFN. TFN claims the GiftAid, where appropriate, and distributes it to the presenting organisations with the amount raised for each. In the period from its founding in 2002 until 2008 TFN raised over £1.6 million for more than 300 local and international projects.

"The funding events offer an opportunity to stop awhile and engage with what giving is about. For me I get excited about bearing witness to so much potential for change. I get a simple buzz from being able to contribute a bit. I would be very happy to have 'philanthropic bon viveur' on my head stone." Greg Battle

The Funding Network

Structure and administration costs:

TFN is a company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity. As such it must conform to the legal requirement that its decisions are made by the trustees, but the trustees' decisions entirely reflect the funding decisions made by the participants at the event. A 5% fee is deducted from the funds raised to cover the costs of administration and one part time employee. TFN applied to be a registered charity so that it could claim the GiftAid on contributions and administer it centrally and accept donations from trusts and from people with CAF accounts, donations from both of which are made simpler if the organisation to which they are made is itself a charity.

Selection process:

Members propose projects by organisations working in human rights, environmental sustainability, health, education and conflict prevention and resolution. A Selection Committee meets to discuss and assess them. They are chosen for their impact and to bring a range of issues and geographies to each TFN meeting.

Due diligence:

Each member putting forward an organisation is responsible for performing due diligence on it, in other words vouchsafing to the other members that it is a trustworthy, well-run and responsible organisation doing what it says it does. Each successful sponsor must donate a minimum of £250 to the organisation he or she put forward.

Report back:

Project reports are sent to all those who have given to a particular project and a project is chosen to report back at each funding event.

The Funding Network

What was the biggest obstacle and how did you overcome it?

“We were fortunate to come along at a time when philanthropy began to be in the news and a new culture of philanthropy in the UK was being formed, so although at some events we struggle more to reach our targets than at others, we’ve been pushing at an open door, and our participants almost all leave enthusiastic about the model.”

What are the principal benefits?

“We provide a safe, unpressured, donor-led setting where any member of the public can come to hear short, snappy presentations on a variety of issues, based in various parts of the world, and then have the choice whether to take part in making each project happen. Participants value different aspects. Some say they are too busy to assess charities privately and value the fact that they can hear a variety of projects that have already been screened. Some like the aspect of giving together, and the fact that however little or much they have to give it becomes part of a much bigger pot. Some like the drama of it all, a bit like an auction; will we get there?”

What is your best advice for success?

“Give people a choice and no pressure. Make the process transparent, keep the written material and the presentations clear and precise, and (what people seem to value as much as anything) keep to time!”

*"I come because TFN is gripping - like good theatre. Am on the edge of my seat when the bidding begins. Moved sometimes to tears by what people are brave enough to undertake. Furious at the facts revealed. Delighted by people's spontaneous generosity."
Scilla Elworthy*

The public “marketplace” model: YTFN (Youth – The Funding Network).

YTFN is specially for those between the ages of 18 and 30 who may not have the resources to give at TFN; the minimum pledge is much lower and gifts of time and skills are given too.

YTFN is a spin-off of The Funding Network. Its first event was in June 2008 at Cafe 1001, Brick Lane, in London E1 and three charities bid for cash and time with a project each. 140 “young professionals” came and collectively the evening raised £6000 for each of the three projects, £3000 more than each project had pitched for. YTFN plans to hold another YTFN event (the first of many more) in October 2008

Structure and administration costs:

YTFN is part of TFN.

Selection process:

Same as TFN.

Due diligence:

Same as TFN except that each successful sponsor is asked to donate a minimum of £50 (rather than £250) to the organisation he or she has sponsored

Report back:

Same as TFN.

The public “marketplace” model: Regional TFNs

Scotland, the South West, Leeds, Oxford, Toronto, Johannesburg.

Although linked to TFN in spirit and in the way the process of each is conducted, the regional TFNs are in most cases run in co-operation with a Community Foundation so that donations are made to the community foundation, the GiftAid is claimed, and the pooled donations are paid out by the community foundation to the organisations that present.

Structure and administration costs:

Structure and administration: This differs from group to group, but most groups are run by a team composed of both local donors and staff of the local community foundation.

Selection process:

Who is allowed to sponsor a project differs from group to group, but all have a selection panel that considers all the applications submitted and assigns the slots.

Due diligence:

This differs from group to group, but the ruling principle is that the sponsor takes responsibility for the organisation he/she puts forward, and is therefore expected to do the due diligence.

Report back:

Groups normally ask organisations to send feedback on the grant within a certain period.

The public “marketplace” model: Cross Pollinate: A Christian funding forum

Cross Pollinate held its first event in July 2008 and raised over £100,000 for six charities. Its two objectives are, first, to encourage a new wave of communal and more engaged philanthropy, and secondly, to help smaller charities to access people and resources that they might not otherwise. Cross Pollinate, which has received TFN’s kind permission to use its giving network model, focuses upon smaller charities that have a Christian identity and ethos. Its first event was hosted at Coutts & Co, a private bank in London: this is consistent with Cross Pollinate’s aim that event should be hosted by a corporate partner.

Structure and Administration Costs:

Cross Pollinate is initially operating as a project of the Alvor Charitable Trust, with the plan to become its own registered charity once its network is established in due course.

Selection process:

Charities are invited to submit a one-page letter of request, outlining what they would do with a grant of £5,000. These requests are then considered by a six-member selection panel. The two criteria for assessment are (a) quality of the social change project and (b) the measurability of what would be achieved with further resources. Language of 'request' is used rather than 'application' because of the desire for there to be a bias towards smaller charities who may not have professional fundraisers on their staff.

Due diligence:

The primary criterion for qualification is that the request must be received from a registered charity. In addition, a member of the selection team will normally have direct knowledge of the charity and can vouch for its work.

Report back:

Following the event, all attendees are sent information about how much the event raised. Subsequently, email reports will be sent about each of the charities and what the resources that they have raised have helped them achieve.

Cross Pollinate: A Christian funding forum

What was the biggest obstacle and how did you overcome it?

“Establishing credibility for a start-up initiative was the hardest part. Our plan was always to have our events hosted by a corporate partner; however, we needed to find one that would both see the vision of what we wanted to achieve, and be generous enough to host us. In order to do this, we developed a written plan for Cross Pollinate and offered references from individuals from within the potential corporate partner that we were approaching. Cross Pollinate is so thankful to Coutts & Co for hosting our first event and for establishing our credibility by allowing us to associate our brand with theirs. Now finding hosts is easy!”

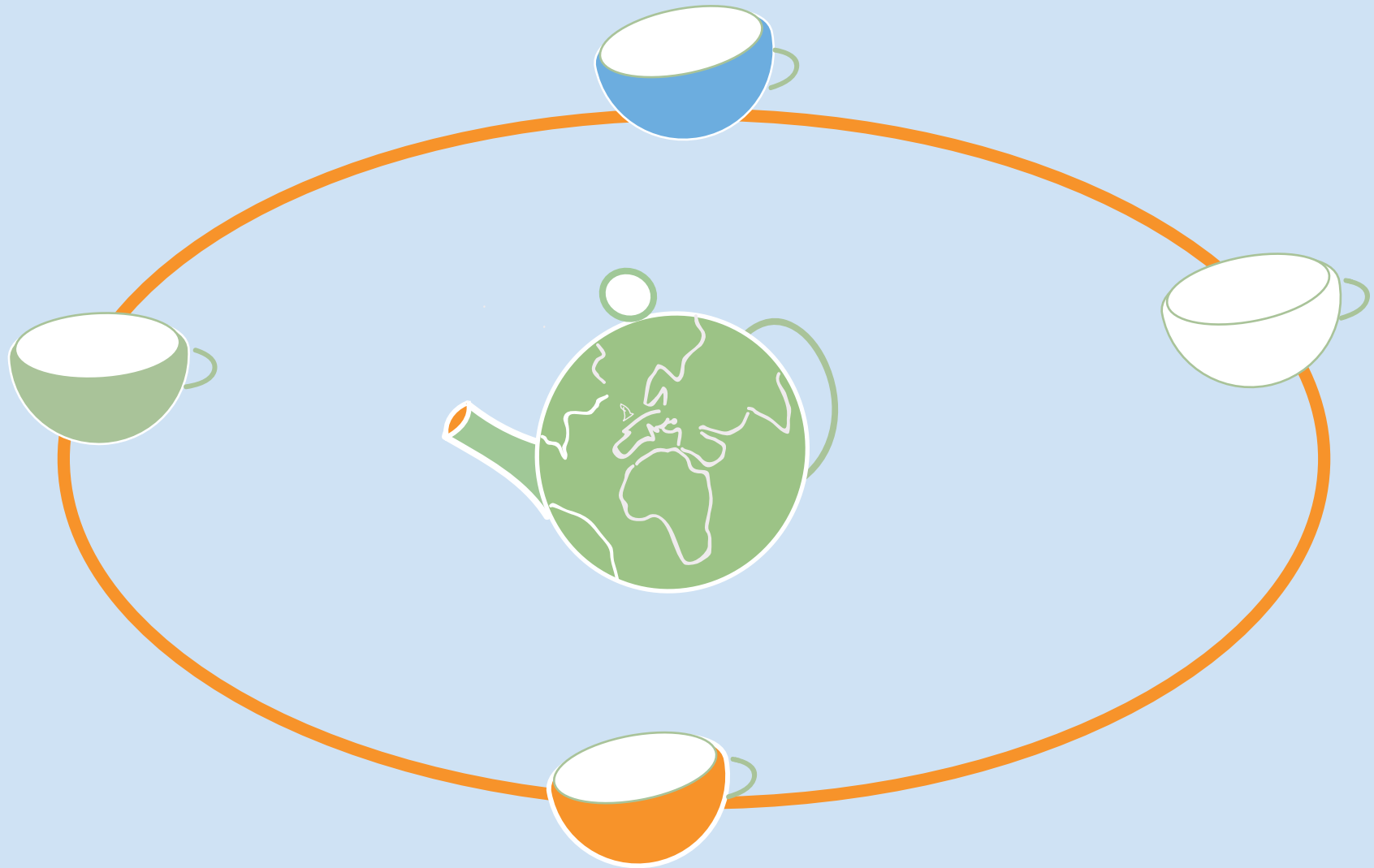
What are the principal benefits?

- “1. Encouraging people to do good with their money and other resources such as their time, experience and skills.”
- “2. Encouraging smaller charities who may not have fund raising departments to get access to people who are resource-rich.”

What is your best advice for success?

“Starting something new is always difficult and there will always be hurdles: we need to think creatively about how to get around, over and under obstacles. There's always a way especially when you are helping people contribute to society rather than simply consuming, the challenge is to find the way.”

the global model



The global philanthropy interest group model: The Philanthropy Workshop Funders Collaboratives

The Philanthropy Workshop (TPW), a programme at the Institute for Philanthropy, trains philanthropists intensively in how to give money away effectively. The Institute also supports and facilitates the funders collaboratives that have been started by the alumni of TPW and which now include the Youth Justice Funders Collaborative and the TPW Energy Collaborative.

They work like this:

A group forms with a focus on a broad interest, Energy or Youth Justice for instance. The group decides on a “learning process”, usually four day-long meetings over the course of a year at which they hear from outside speakers, experts, academics, activists, policy people, who paint a broad picture of the subject. The elements of this mapping exercise are a description of the issues, the problems and the solutions to the problems, and people working in the field. The group has a facilitated discussion at the end of each learning day, in which the participants are asked: “If you were backing a strategy in this area, what would it be?”

By doing this at the end of each of the four days, consensus is built and at the end of the process there’s broad agreement on where to start.

Energy and Youth Justice both developed “mission statements” to guide their work, and a funding strategy (a list of the steps necessary to achieve the first goals). Funds are pooled, organisations chosen and the first grants made.

The group continues to meet several times a year to learn more, update strategy and identify organisations in which to invest and to review progress.

In the Youth Justice group there are both activists and funders in the eight person group, all of whom contribute to the fund.

The Philanthropy Workshop Funders Collaboratives

Structure and administration:

A group of nine or ten, organised as a U.S. 501(c) (3), the equivalent of being a registered charity in the U.K. The Youth Justice collaborative has a full time, paid executive director

Selection process:

A programme committee and a nominating committee help locate organisations for consideration for funding. Decisions are made by the group, by consensus.

The Philanthropy Workshop Funders Collaboratives

What was the biggest obstacle and how did you overcome it?

“Being accepting of and properly hearing each other’s points of view took a long time. In the Youth Justice group there are eight of us, some of us activists and some of us funders. Everyone in the group contributes funds to the pool. It might be \$100 or \$20,000 but we all give.”

“Hearing each other, really listening, took a long time. We just had to keep on talking. It took about a year.”

“Deciding what to fund was a challenge too. We knew we wanted to work with youth, but what aspect of youth? The members of the collaborative lived all over [the U.S]. It took a year to figure out what we could do as a group, that we were all interested in. We’ve moved and it changes over time.”

“Making time to meet is a challenge too.”

“Recognising that we may disagree, respecting others’ opinions, trusting each other, that took time.”


What are the principal benefits?

“We’ve figured out our niche, where we can make a difference. We’re small but we fund community organisations, primarily in the South [of the U.S]. We only give general operating support, no programme support and only to organisations with an annual budget of under \$500,000. We’re attracting other funders, that takes time. None of the members is interested in fundraising so we have hired an executive director to do that and we have had to fundraise to support that position also.”

What is your best advice for success?

“As you learn from each other, be willing to make changes. We enjoy and respect each other. Don’t do it if you don’t enjoy it. Really listen to each other. Think about what your niche will be, keep conversations open, keep learning. We have regular “learning days” at which we hear from knowledgeable people working with youth and in our area of interest.”

the private model



do not disturb
people at work

The private model: Network for Social Change

The Network for Social Change was founded in 1985 by a group of people who wanted to use their money to promote social change and to encourage other people with money to look at the implications of having wealth in a world where the vast majority of people don't. Some inspiration and practical help came from people doing similar work in the US.

There are around 100 members of all ages, mostly UK-based, and including entrepreneurs as well as inheritors. Between 2004 and 2007 the Network distributed over £3.5million in grants to over 300 projects and now raises and distributes around £1 million each year.

Network operates by meeting twice a year at residential three-and four-day conferences held each time in different parts of the country and usually in quiet hotels where privacy for the group is possible. Privacy and confidentiality are an important part of Network's ethos.

Network, in its own word, funds projects that aim to change things - tackling causes rather than symptoms. There is no formal set of funding criteria, but a list of objectives from a recent brainstorming session included:

- reducing the gap between rich and poor;
- preserving cultural diversity and tolerance;
- devolution of power;
- changing attitudes to money and consumerism;
- redressing human rights abuses;
- restoring reverence for the diversity of all forms of life

There are **three** funding processes - the Main Funding Cycle, Major Projects and Fast Track Funding. Funds are raised [from members] and allocated at the twice-yearly conferences.

Projects tend to favour structural change, rather than relief work, but the Network as a whole has no policy on the specific types of organisations it will fund.

All the applications are brought forward by the members, and represent their interests.

"Joining the Network for Social Change helped me stop feeling alone and overwhelmed with choices and demands. Then, membership speeded up my donations and made it possible to support so many more projects as part of a thoughtful group than as a named individual."

Network for Social Change

Main Funding Cycle:

Each year by the beginning of September funding applications are received from members and are allocated to one of six “pools” to which members volunteer to belong: Arts and Education for Change, Economic Justice, Green Planet, Health and Wholeness, Human Rights, and Peace and Security. Individual applications, with a £15K maximum per application, are then carefully assessed by the Network members who are part of these pools. Successful applications are then presented as a pooled group to the entirety of members for funding at the February conference. The amounts given by each member to each pool are confidential.

Major Projects:

Major Projects is a way of pro-actively funding strategic work in a particular area of social change over a number of years with larger amounts of money than are available through the Main Funding Cycle. Because of the scale of major projects, care is taken to limit the number running at any one time and to provide careful oversight of the project itself. The idea for a new major project is likely to be developed informally by a small number of Network members and may then be brought to the Network for consideration. Assuming it is accepted, the project will be worked up in more detail and brought to the group for funding at each Autumn conference. Individual members have the opportunity to pledge funds to the project for the current year and subsequent years. The amount pledged by individual members is confidential.

Fast Track Funding:

At both conferences there are opportunities for members to bring smaller projects for funding (maximum £5k per application). Information about these projects is circulated to members and the actual fundraising takes the form of an open session where the project sponsors give short presentations and interested members pledge donations of £100 or over. Typically some 15-20 projects are funded this way per conference. There are an additional two postal Fast Track funding opportunities per year. Members bringing projects are expected to contribute at least £500 personally to each project they propose.

Network for Social Change

Structure and administration costs:

The Network for Social Change operates through a charitable company, The Network for Social Change (registered charity no: 295237), and a non-charitable company, Funding for Change Limited (company no: 02045547), which funds non-charitable projects. An administrator provides resources to both these companies and is the only paid member of staff. Formal responsibility for these companies is undertaken by the directors, who are all members of the Network. Network's administrator claims the GiftAid and adds it to the amounts delivered to the organisations.

Selection process:

Members propose projects for the Main Funding Cycle by completing a form and submitting it to the administrator. The members of the "pools" allocate the funds to the projects between them. Proposals for Major Projects are considered by the members at the conference. Fast Track Funding proposals are circulated to the membership before the two conferences and twice more during the year for postal funding. There is no competitive selection filter.

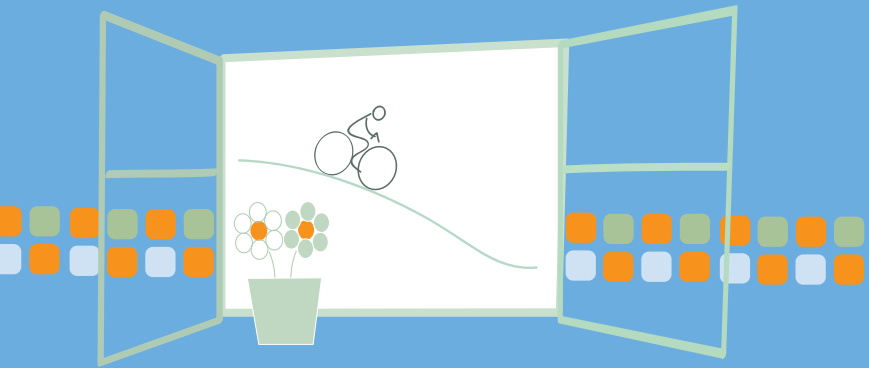
Due diligence:

Members are responsible for checking the organisations' standing, reports and efficiency and for vouchsafing that to other members. But in addition members of the funding pools visit and assess the projects they are asked to consider.

Report back:

Organisations are asked to report back on the use they have made of the grants. The reports are then assessed, summarised and circulated to members.

"It's been useful to explore how other people deal with personal issues around money: for instance, money and relationships, money and children, lending money, telling people about inherited wealth, and working for money when you don't need it. I feel so much less isolated now."



how to start
and what you need

First, test interest. Call a meeting of friends, neighbours or colleagues to find out whether there is a core of people who want to be the founding members and the basis of the group.



Decide whether you want to find and support groups in your local community (where you live or work); in another country or throughout the UK, or with an emphasis on a particular need. You might start small – homelessness in Leeds and expand to homelessness throughout the UK or internationally, or stay with Leeds but fund projects in other areas of need in Leeds.

Or you might focus on relieving poverty, which would include homelessness among the issues it treated, or choose an issue like climate change where urgent action is needed, locally, nationally and overseas.

There are some great on-line resources for identifying organisations or projects. GuidestarUK is one.

Some people join or start giving circles because they care about a particular issue. Others want to build a community and a giving circle can be an important element in that.

Decide how you will find the projects you want to consider for funding. For most giving circles it is important that finding projects is led by the members and it is usual for members to find and propose projects themselves, rather than accept applications.

Once projects are found ask yourself what the selection process will be.

Written proposals prepared by the sponsoring members have the advantage of ensuring that key questions are always raised and answered. You will want to know what the organisation does, and how and why, and whether it will contribute to solving the issue you care about. You will want to check its financial and organisational health and whether it is a charity or not, and the tax implications of that.

Decide what the criteria will be for selecting an organisation to fund.

Decide how often the giving circle will meet and for how long.

Will projects be asked to present to you or will you make your decisions on paper alone?

Decide whether members will all make a contribution of at least a stated amount, at each meeting, or annually. Will you have membership fees to cover overheads?

Will you ask people who are knowledgeable in your area of interest to address you as a group from time to time, to build your expertise?

How will you handle the donations? Will you all contribute individually to the projects you choose or, as is more typical, will you pool funds and, if that is the case, will you need to form yourself into a charitable entity or team up with a community foundation or other organisation that already has charitable status?

How will you collect GiftAid in the UK, or take advantage of other tax incentives that may exist in the country in which your giving circle is?

What kind of reports and follow up will you ask of the organisations you fund?

What you need (the building blocks)



1. A committed group of 4-6 to start with (or if you begin with more, a committed steering group of 4-6)
2. A joint passion to give to something
3. A process for identifying worthwhile projects you want to consider for funding
4. A process (“criteria”) for deciding which to fund – you may want to develop a form for this
5. A decision about the minimum amount members will give, or whether you will have a minimum
6. A decision about how often you will meet
7. A decision about how to cover any overhead costs you have, even if minimal

8. A decision about how the funding will be done and GiftAid or other tax benefits in other countries claimed
9. Reports of what the funds you gave have achieved, from the projects you fund
10. A decision about whether or not to become a registered charity and if so, when.

Building Consensus

Whether it is deciding on the area on which you’ll focus, or the organisations to support, being able to reach agreement is essential to a giving circle’s success.

Here are some tips about group process that may help:

- Remember that it takes time and effort for people to build a shared framework of understanding.
- In most group discussions people usually begin by proposing obvious solutions to obvious problems. If an idea seems workable it usually leads to quick agreement.
- But if some people do not support the proposed solution – people may say things like: “I don’t agree but I don’t want to stand in the way of the group” – the group can move out of the narrow band of agreement and more interesting, less safe, ideas can be proposed.
- The trick to allowing this to happen is to suspend judgement. The chairperson or facilitator can do this by inviting people to throw out divergent ideas, emphasising that all judgement is suspended and the purpose of the exercise is to hear multiple points of view.
- Once a group has expressed several different points of view the members face a quandary. New and unfamiliar ideas may have been expressed. They may not understand the others’ points of view. And until they do they won’t be able to identify common ground.
- The experience of searching for an inclusive solution is stimulating and invigorating. It is what binds the group together and makes it emerge as a group rather than a collection of individuals.
- So if you possibly can, support the group in keeping this stage going until an inclusive solution is found. Don’t let someone who is impatient or dominating shut it down. Encourage everyone to listen carefully to every one else.
- The best ideas and solutions will emerge from the mix of everyone’s best thinking and that means drawing people out and making it safe for people to express minority views, or ideas that aren’t yet fully formed.

Listening for common ground

The facilitator or chairperson can help the group find common ground by announcing that s/he will summarise:

“Let me sum up now. I can hear lots of different points of view but also some common ground.”

Summarising: “Some people are sayingwhile others think ...”

Note the areas of common ground: “But everyone agrees that”

Check for accuracy: “ Is that right?”

Close: “ So let’s take that as the first area of agreement shall we? [State the agreed area]”

Open further discussion of remaining points: “OK so we’ve all agreed that...How do we build on that to resolve some of the still outstanding areas?”

Tolerate divergent views, again

Repeat summarising stages

Useful statements

“Does anyone have a different point of view?”

“Who else wants to say something?”

“Can we hear from someone who hasn’t said anything yet?”

“[name of person], is there anything you want to add or has your point of view been expressed?”

“Can you say more about that?”

Unhelpful statements (that encourage people to self censor)

“Haven’t we already covered that point?”

“Let’s keep it simple, shall we?”

“Hurry up, we’re running out of time.”

“That’s a red herring/off the point.”

“Impossible.That’ll never work. Believe me.”

Deflect these with:

Smile. “Thanks [name of person]. Has anyone got another point of view?”

CING - Setting up a giving circle in Brazil: A personal story

Jessica Sklair

“CING emerged out of the work of the Instituto Geração (Generation Institute), set up to promote the engagement of privileged young people with issues surrounding social change, and to support them in using their influence, expertise and resources to promote the sustainable development of Brazilian society. The Institute’s Programa Nova Geração (New Generation Programme or PNG) was piloted in 2006, with a group of 19 young Brazilians between the ages of 18 and 35.

“Although not Brazilian, I had lived for several years in Brazil, and was invited to take part in the programme. As I was carrying out research at the time for a Master’s project on philanthropy and urban segregation in São Paulo, and was also keen

to develop my own philanthropic activities, I happily accepted the invitation. Towards the end of the programme, discussions were initiated around what kinds of alumni activity participants might like to see in the future. After much conversation and debate, a number of participants interested in taking an active role in organising an alumni community decided to split into two ‘committees’, one in charge of the alumni’s continued learning, and the other in charge of creating a small giving circle through which alumni could begin to start investing in the work of Brazilian non-profits. Thus was born CING, the Comitê de Investimento Nova Geração (New Generation Investment Committee).

“Learning about collective funding initiatives through my mother’s participation in the UK’s Network for Social Change and The Funding Network (TFN), I had become very enthusiastic about the idea of developing some kind of group philanthropy project in Brazil among the young people I had met through PNG. This seemed like a great opportunity to turn this idea into reality, and I volunteered to lead the committee during its first funding cycle. Our first step was to examine the models developed by the Network for Social Change and TFN and to think about what elements we might want to incorporate into our own, a very valuable exercise as it helped us to go from a blank slate to the beginnings of our own initiative.

Our giving circle soon established itself as a core group of seven PNG alumni, with three other members who contributed more occasionally to our meetings. Small though this group was, it was still a feat to arrange regular meetings, as all of us had heavy work commitments, many were newly married and in the process of setting up new homes, and one had two children under five. Such complicating factors - probably inevitable in trying to set up a giving circle with people in this age group - were counterbalanced, however, by apparently limitless levels of energy and enthusiasm for what we were creating.

“At our first meeting in January 2007, we set ourselves the goal of making at least one collective social investment, with the wider participation of the rest of the PNG alumni, by June 30th. Over the next six months we met twelve times, and on May 19th we made two grants on our first funding day, exceeding our own objectives by a month and a grant!

“The process of deciding what kinds of projects to fund, how to go about selecting them, how to evaluate the use of our grants and how to maintain relationships with funded projects in the future would probably be best described as ‘organic’.

“We decided early on that although it would be necessary to define criteria and a system for our funding; we valued the diversity of ideas about

how to proceed that were present within our group, and wanted to preserve that. We also wanted to be open to learning from trial and error; after all, none of us had done anything like this before. We wanted to make sure that we appreciated the process as much as the results.

“Before starting our search, we decided that we would look for projects first through our own networks and contacts with NGOs. We set a deadline for each one of us to identify a possible project or non-profit and present it to the rest of the group. Some people decided to pair up and look for a project together. One of our members designed a simple evaluation and information sheet, based on a model borrowed from a grant-making foundation she had connections with. Each member of the group was responsible for filling out the sheet with the details of their chosen project or NGO (general information including name, location, age, names of directors and number of people employed by the NGO, activities, objectives, qualitative and quantitative impact of the work of the NGO, leadership profile and a short description and budget for the specific activity or project which our grant would fund), and an outline of the reasons why each member thought the committee should choose this project.

“We defined the following loose criteria for the selection of our projects: projects that provoke social transformation, whether this be on a small

or large scale; projects that reflect the personal interests of group members; innovative ideas; projects that might find it difficult to gain funding from bigger grant-making institutions; projects in which a small amount of money could make a big difference. We decided to be open to making grants for administration and running costs, as we knew that small NGOs often have difficulty finding funding in this area.

“We soon identified a total of five projects for consideration by the committee. Each member of CING was given two opportunities to make the case for selection of their project. On the first occasion, the committee member made an initial presentation, which was followed by discussion and questions from the rest of the committee. The member presenting the project then returned to the NGO to gather further information. At the next meeting, each project was discussed a second time, and two of the five projects were selected for funding.

“We were keen to involve the rest of the PNG alumni at the grant-making stage, as many had expressed interest in funding projects but had told us they didn’t have time to take part in the selection process and regular committee meetings.

“On our first funding day, two representatives from each project gave presentations of 30 minutes each, followed by questions, and we raised 20

thousand reals (around £6,000) for each of the two projects.

“In retrospect, the key element to making this small initiative a success was the openness of committee members to developing ways of working as a group, despite a diversity of ideas concerning what we were doing, why and how it should be done. It was also important to have some key individuals willing to put in the extra time to make sure the process kept on track, but who were also able to work with the group without imposing their own ideas.

“Several challenges presented themselves during this first cycle of funding. We had to learn how to solicit funding applications from organisations we were interested in without building up expectations or burdening them unnecessarily with requests for information and budgets. We overcame this by being as honest as possible about our objectives and our inexperience, and explaining that we saw this process not only as an opportunity for the NGOs to gain funding but also as an important learning experience for ourselves. This approach made our relations with project leaders feel more balanced and reciprocal.

“Another challenge was deciding what we could realistically offer the projects we had chosen. Although many in the group were keen to offer expertise and support beyond the financial, it soon

became clear that there were time constraints to this and that it would be irresponsible to promise anything we couldn't deliver. Equally, there was much discussion about evaluation and how we would go about measuring the impact of our grant making.

“In the end, we decided that evaluation should take place informally through continued e-mail contact with the organisations in the first months following receipt of grants. In this way, organisations were free to choose how and when they reported their activities to us, and we would have an opportunity to maintain contact with them and continue learning from their work.

“A final challenge was the awkwardness around talking about money and how much each committee member was able to contribute in funding for this initiative. This, coupled with uncertainty about how much we could expect to raise among alumni on the funding day, made it difficult to define exactly how much we could offer projects in funding during the selection process. We overcame this problem by asking organisations to develop two budgets, one showing what they could achieve with a smaller, more conservative amount (R\$10,000) and one outlining what they would do with double this figure.

In the end, however, we needn't have worried. After watching the two presentations, people openly began writing cheques in front of one another and we quickly and easily reached our upper funding targets.

I left Brazil shortly after this first funding cycle, but CING continues to operate. The committee has had a second funding day and is now in discussion about developing ways of supporting social business initiatives. Helping to set up this Brazilian giving circle was a huge and very enjoyable learning experience, where I learnt not only about grant making and working with NGOs, but also about how to work collaboratively in a small group in pursuit of a common aim.”

Jessica Sklair was born in the UK and has a degree in Social Anthropology from Cambridge University. She lived in Brazil from 1999 to 2007, where she worked with documentary film and video for NGOs and gained a Master's degree from the University of São Paulo. She is currently studying for a PhD in Anthropology at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Sample programme and application guidelines reproduced with TFN's permission

TFN programme for a day's event

FUNDING DAY in partnership with CAF
April 19th 2008



Venue: Royal Overseas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street, London SW1A 1LR

- 10:00-10:30 Registration and refreshments
- 10:30 **Welcome – Iona Joy, TFN Director**
- 10:35 **CAF Welcome – Sheila Hooper, Executive Director, Marketing & Private Clients, CAF**
- 10:40 **Update – P80 by Bryan Martel**
Managing Director and Founder of Environmental Capital Group
P80 raised £6,274.87 at the September 2007 Funding Day devoted to environmental projects. The aim of the P80 was to have 80 of the world's largest pension funds to use their influence to have public companies governed more environmentally sustainable, bring a further US\$10-20 billion into clean technology market, and help influence the regulatory agenda world-wide toward environmental sustainability.
- Update – The Anchor Project by Aida Diop**
The Anchor Project presented at the March 2007 Funding Day and raised £8,657.18. The Anchor Project works with London unaccompanied asylum applicants aged 10 to 18 years old who do not have any family member in the UK and offers a setting to enable social inclusion and to develop practical day to day skills.
- 10:50 **Morning Project presentations - chaired by Paul Spain**
The projects are each given 6 minutes to present and 6 minutes for questions.
Rock Hard Circus
Connect
HealthProm
LocalEyes
CARA - Council for Assisting Refugee Academics
- 12:10 Lunch
- 1:10 **'Perspective On Giving' slot – William Norris, TFN Member**
- 1:15 **Afternoon Project presentations – chaired by Joelle Mann**
Catch 22
The Haller Foundation
Airport Watch
Bike Recycle London
- 2:15 *Tea and coffee*
- 2:30 **Pledging session – Mike Dickson and Shuna Kennedy**
- 3:20 *Stretch*
- 3:25 **Announcement of totals raised**
- 3:30 **Review and Business session – chaired by Mike Storey**
- 3:50 **Close**

TFN application guidelines

F1, 23 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 4JL
tel: 0207 243 6667
email: info@thefundingnetwork.org.uk
website: www.thefundingnetwork.org.uk



Applying for a slot at a funding event

A two page summary of the project you are sponsoring should be e-mailed to info@thefundingnetwork.org.uk no later than 7 weeks before the event. Please email the summary in a form that will allow changes in the document since we may have to make slight revisions (and please save the document as the name of your project). The whole application should be not more than two sides of A4, type no less than 10 pt, and must be sent electronically. Please also ensure that we receive separately by post a copy of the organization's latest annual report and accounts by the same date. Please do not overcrowd your application, as we have to insert some text. The project may of course prepare the application, but please remember that it is the sponsor's responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and received on time. Sponsors, please look at the application before it is sent to TFN, ensuring that it presents a good case for the project and is grammatically correct. Please be sure to include information for each of the categories below. If you would like to see examples of applications that have received slots at a funding event, please click here.

With the significant competition for slots at funding events, applications that lack any of the information requested are likely to receive a less sympathetic hearing from the selection panel. TFN works on very slender resources and tight timings, so it is in your project's interest to ensure that your application is complete, as we will not be able to chase you for missing information

- Title of organization and/or project
- Who would present the project
- Summary (a 2-line summary of your project, please)
- A brief background and aims of the organisation

Then the important bits:

- What problem is your project addressing?
- What do you propose as a solution? Tell us why you think your project is important. If you have a "compelling sum" that shows how funding your project would save resources elsewhere (e.g. costs of keeping someone in prison vs. rehabilitation) please include this. Unless you are just starting, say something about what you have achieved in the last year; be specific if you can.
- What, specifically, would you do with a contribution from TFN? This should include an outline budget for the project, in particular how you would spend up to £5,000, and including how you plan to raise any money not raised at TFN
- How you plan to assess the impact of your work?

And at the end:

- Name and email of the sponsor
- Affiliation if any of the sponsor to the charity (e.g., trustee, founder, etc)
- Contact details of presenter and charity including name, address, tel number, e-mail, and web address if any
- Either: UK Charity registration number
Or Not registered as a UK charity but has charitable purposes
Or Applying for a non-charitable slot (TFN does occasionally offer a slot for a project that does not have charitable purposes; in these cases we do not route the pledges via TFN)
- Annual turnover of the organisation
- A brief (40-80 words max) "Note from the sponsor" saying why he/she thinks this particular organisation is worth supporting.

Please don't forget to post separately: Your latest Annual Report and your last year's accounts (if the organisation does not have these, please explain why and supply alternative records if possible).

References

The community model:

www.givingcircles.org gives examples of more than 230 of the estimated 800 giving circles based in the US (including virtual and online giving circles) most of which give largely to local communities but some of which give to communities overseas.

www.communityinvestment.org/about
for more about kitchen table giving circles in the US

Roots to Fruits c/o Capital Community Foundation
www.capitalcf.org.uk

Oxford Givers Circle c/o
anne@riverbank38.freereserve.co.uk

TalkinCompany www.talkincompany.com

The public “market place” model:

www.thefundingnetwork.org.uk which includes information about the regional TFNs and YTFN

www.crosspollinate.co.uk similar to and based on TFN but with a Christian focus

The global philanthropy model:

www.youthjusticefund.org

The private model:

www.thenetworkforsocialchange.org.uk

Generally useful:

www.guidestar.org.uk
www.charitycommission.org
www.communityfoundations.org.uk
www.cafonline.org
www.thebiggive.org.uk
www.intelligentgiving.com



Give Differently: a how to guide to philanthropy
Available from www.instituteforphilanthropy.org
for £5 plus p+p

For further information on anything in this book,
email givingcircles@instituteforphilanthropy.org

