ANDE members often identify fundraising as one of their biggest organizational challenges as they look to support the entrepreneurs they work with. In this Part 2 of the 2-part virtual workshop on "Fundraising Best Practices", our facilitators shared from their wealth of experience, practical strategies for fundraising in the development sector.

**Moderator**  
Olatunji, West Africa Manager, ANDE

**Facilitators**  
Flora Bracco, Senior Partnership Associate, ANDE  
Tenemba Anna Samake, Executive Director, Mobile Business Clinic (MBC) Africa

**Agenda**  
1. Introduction  
2. Hands-on approach to fundraising  
3. Breakout groups  
4. Full group discussion  
5. Closing remarks

**Opening Remarks**  
*Olatunji, West Africa Chapter Manager, ANDE*

Fundraising is a crucial part of the activities of development organizations. We had the first session on fundraising best practices where the facilitators gave an overview of the practice and process of fundraising. One key thing we learnt is that fundraising is like dating – and this means you have to be patient. The funders must see your that your organization fits their structure and focus, and you must be prepared for the due diligence process. It is important to keep key information handy, so you have them when the funders ask for them.

We decided to have these sessions because we have seen the need for intermediary organizations to get the fundraising process right and funders say they hardly get quality proposals that fit what they are looking for. We trust that these sessions will help bridge the fundraising gaps in knowledge and opportunity and get stakeholders to interact and share ideas.

**Hands-on Approach to Fundraising**  
*Flora Bracco, Senior Partnership Associate, Fund Raising Leader in Africa*

**A. Basics of Fundraising**  
1. Have a clear vision  
2. Build relationships  
3. Don’t waste your time

**1. Have a clear vision**  
- What’s your unique value proposition?  
- How do you fit into funders priorities?
• What do you (really) need?

Understand your unique value proposition. Sometimes intermediaries or non-profit organizations forget that they need to have a critical business mindset as this affects the perception of value by the funder. You need to see yourself through the eyes of the funders – understand their language and what they are looking to fund. This can happen at both an individual and an institutional level. At the institutional level, you try to see how to fit into the funder’s priorities – you can look up their website, their strategy, what they have previously funded, the news about them and what they say about themselves.

2. Build relationships

• Think in the long term
• Be open and honest about challenges
• Be a resource

As was highlighted in the previous session, fundraising is like dating and so you don’t want to rush things and you want to be open and honest. Donors appreciate when you admit that you don’t know the answer to certain questions or don’t know the approach to doing something and are requesting their help. Be open about what you don’t know and what you want to accomplish together.

Also, be a resource - this is about being generous. Instead of being transactional, particularly with funders with whom you have some form of relationship, be a resource and seek ways to help and support them too. Share knowledge. Be active on LinkedIn or whatever platform that you use to make connections.

3. Don’t waste your time

• Spend time evaluating opportunities
• Learn to say No

Spend time on projects and things that are worth your time. Also learn to say NO. Again, if you build a pipeline, you wouldn’t have to say YES to everything, and you really shouldn’t. So, don’t waste your time on opportunities that are not going to be worth it in the long run.

B. Work the Pipeline

In working the pipeline, the process is usually in this order:

• Identification
• Cultivation
• The concept note
• The full proposal
• The due diligence review
• Contracting

Identification
This includes basic desk research, meeting with someone at an event, gleaning information from the news, a newsletter or bulletin and you identify that pipeline.

**Cultivation**

At this stage, you’re building a relationship and trust. This includes having conversations and more importantly listening to the funders.

**The Concept Note**

The concept note is like a cold call and should be regarded as a means of building a relationship. You send some basic information about your organization and your proposal to get their reaction.

**The Full Proposal**

While the concept note is basically a document that has a very brief introduction like a four or five sentence introduction on what you are proposing, a background to your organization, who you are and other key information, the full proposal is more detailed.

**The due diligence review**

This is a lengthy process that becomes easy if important information (forms, financial statements, et cetera) about your organization is handy and easy to access.

**C. Proposal Writing**

- Start with a concept note

Have a clear vision of your organization, your strategy and ideas on the kinds of services and products for which you have a unique value proposition. This is helpful to filter what funding opportunities are worthwhile for your organization.

- Concept note as a relationship builder

Use the concept note as a relationship builder to give something for the funders to react to and be open and honest about any challenges.

- Detailed proposal

When you get a positive reaction to the concept note, you use whatever feedback you receive to determine whether or not you want to move to a full proposal.

- Ask about format and process

Seek to understand the funder’s format and process - when is the next board meeting? What is the approval process? Who would approve it? What is the format? You also want to measure and evaluate, so one key question that you must ask yourself is: what does success look like? what do I want to accomplish?

**D. Measure and Evaluate**

- What does success look like?
• Think about value for money
• Develop an effective pricing strategy

As you start to build a relationship, it’s very tempting to underestimate the level of efforts and hours from you and your team because you want to close that deal. It is important not to sell yourself cheaper than expected. Be very open and honest about your true cost.

E. Tools and Tricks

• (Customer Relationship Management) CRM software such as Bitrix24
• Networks
  ANDE global and regional conference
  Learning labs and webinars
  Membership Services + Member Map
• Due Diligence Review (DDR) Folder
• Newsletter and Google Alerts

A few Open Opportunities

Finally, it is helpful to mention a few open opportunities from the last ANDE fundraising bulletin.

• USAID: COVID-19 private sector engagement and partnership fund
• Open Roads Alliance: Grants for COVID-19
• UK Government: Energy catalyst fund round 8

Personal Fundraising Experiences
  - Tenemba Anna Samake, Executive Director, MBC Africa

Fundraising for grants is very different from fundraising for investment. Grant fundraising can be a lot more tedious. It requires you being visible and building relationships and oftentimes without building relationships with funders, the fundraising process is a waste of time.

It takes a lot of time to gather information, understand the psychology and philosophy of the funder and go through the due diligence process. As a business manager, you might not have that luxury. You would also need to determine the kind of funders you want to work with. You want to have people who are innovative, flexible, practical, pragmatic, willing to support you with different kinds of tools and very practical in terms of reporting. Also, some work is better with grant funding or hybrid funding.

Q & A Session

Seeing that there are different kinds of funders, how much time does it take to get from identification to closing a deal?

• It depends heavily on the level of connection and relationship that you already have with the funder. For cold calls with no previous contact, it could take from 5 – 8 months. When you have a relationship, or a chance to develop a relationship, it’s quicker. For instance, the ANDE team and the leadership have invested greatly in creating these relationships, bonds and rapport with funders and this makes the fundraising process easier.
• It might take a longer time to get local funding because there are not many local funders and, in some cases, the approval process is longer because the proposal needs to be approved by the global team. The terms, due diligence and alignment process too can be time consuming.

*(To Anna Samake, MBC Africa)* **At what point did you realize that you need to have a dedicated staff to seek and pursue funding opportunities?**

It took two years to figure this out but there are two ways you can do this as a small organization. You can either hire consultants/grant proposal writers or have a person internally - a business developer that is skilled in writing proposals. Since we restructured our business model, we now generate finances from our day-to-day work and so internal revenues cover our basic operations, and then we fundraise for specific projects. This way, we don't spend so much time writing proposals.

**Key Takeaways**

• Fundraising is work and be prepared for the amount of time it will take.
• Prioritize relationships and be valuable.

**Breakout Session**

There was a 15-minute group sharing session after which a representative from each group was assigned to give feedback on what was discussed.

**Group Discussion Questions**

1. What are your own fundraising process in your organization? What strategy are you using and how do you connect with funding opportunities?
2. What tools or techniques are you using to interact with funders?
3. What do you need to improve your fundraising process?

**Feedback from Group Discussion**

• Leverage new and existing networks as they can be a great source of funding opportunities.
• Always document and keep track of conversations with funders.
• Have a firm grasp of your organizational focus so that you are not wasting time bending to every funder’s whim.
• There are other benefits of the fundraising process such as clarification of an organization’s vision, technical assistance, networking, among others.
• Relationship building is important to the fundraising process.