

WORLDS OF POTENTIAL: FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN NAIROBI, KENYA

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Abstract Despite a proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Kenya, conditions for residents remain bleak. CBOs are uniquely positioned to catalyze change by creating local initiatives for common problems. However, most Kibera CBOs routinely lack access to the kind of funding that could make their programs successful on a larger scale (i.e., in more than just one localized neighborhood of Kibera). This study examines how CBOs in Kibera gain access to funding, either through grants or individual donations, and what factors drive the likelihood of sustained funding for those CBOs.

This study finds that most organizations that have received foundation funding in the past have been trained in resource mobilization, and/or know a grant manager within a funding foundation. Similarly, most CBOs that have received individual donations in the past engage in at least some aspects of donor relationship cultivation. On the whole, however, most Kibera CBOs tend to take an impromptu and rather undisciplined approach to fundraising. This paper concludes with some suggestions for Kibera CBOs, noting that if CBOs are willing to dedicate time and energy to fundraising they are likely to be more successful.

Introduction

Less than 10 kilometers west of Kenyatta International Conference Center, the premier landmark of the Nairobi city skyline and a symbol of the country's capitalist ambitions, lies Kibera, the most densely packed informal settlement in East Africa. Kibera and its residents exist side-by-side with some of the most advanced communications infrastructure, sophisticated restaurants, and lucrative business deals on the eastern half of the continent. Figuratively, the settlement is worlds apart from the gated apartments and five-star hotels of cosmopolitan Nairobi.

Kibera residents are largely ignored by the Kenyan government and the city council of Nairobi. In the face of this neglect, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) step in to fill the gap left for service provision, health, and education. In 2000, over 200 NGOs were active in Kibera, a number that has most likely grown in the past decade (Barcott 2000, 13). At a more local level and on a smaller scale, community-based organizations (CBOs) form to address the problems NGOs will not, do not, or cannot tackle.

CBOs often initiate unsung acts of good in their communities. However, the author has observed through work and study in Kenya majority of CBOs suffer from a crippling lack of funding.

Run almost exclusively by locals who live in the settlements where they work, CBOs generally do not have access to the sorts of fundraising tips and techniques larger NGOs take for granted. Additionally, there is a staggering lack of simple, straightforward advice for CBOs looking to fundraise more effectively. Knowledge about fundraising, grant writing, and private donations exists, but far too often these articles, books, theses, and dissertations languish in university libraries – or are stuck in academic databases to which CBOs do not have access. All too often, CBOs flounder through the fundraising process with both private donations and grant-making institutions, using an unplanned and somewhat chaotic strategy that tends to waste time without raising substantial amounts of money.

Driven by this knowledge, I ask how successful CBOs attempt to gain access to funding – either through individual donations or through grants. I hypothesize that the most common strategy for CBOs to gain funding is knowing a grant officer or program manager within a grant-making institution. Five variables were studied: Adherence to donor relationship cultivation strategies, networking, relationship with a grant manager, resource mobilization training and capacity building, and fundraising frequency. After analyzing the results of the research, conducted via thirteen surveys and five interviews of CBOs working in Kibera, I find that, of the five variables examined, resource mobilization training and capacity building are the most commonly used strategies for fundraising success. Moreover, most Kibera CBOs take an ad hoc, rather improvised approach to fundraising, probably at least in part because of the largely informal nature of the work and environment in which most CBOs engage. I conclude by advocating that CBOs invest as much time and energy as possible in fundraising efforts, either by soliciting private donations or applying for foundation grants.

Why Kibera?

This study focuses solely on Kibera, one of the largest informal settlements in Africa. Despite Kibera's large size, relatively high-profile international media presence, proximity to Nairobi's central business district, and the proliferation of NGOs working within the settlement, Kibera residents still lack transportation infrastructure and access to healthcare, education, waste removal, and potable water. These types of living conditions are not unique to Kibera. However, the fact that so many NGOs – over 200 as of 2000 (Barcott 2000, 13) – are actively operating in Kibera to solve these problems, with only marginal success rates sets Kibera apart from other informal settlements like it, if only because of the fact that other informal settlements are not nearly as populated with NGOs.

In his article “The Kibera Slum,” Carolina for Kibera founder Rye Barcott states that, “Although there are over 200 NGOs in Kibera, residents expressed deep-seated resentment and hostility toward NGOs,” and that “even though every informant held an opinion about NGOs, 78 of 126 informants could not name a single NGO that operated in Kibera” (Barcott 2000, 13). Whether real or imagined, Barcott blames the “general perception of exploitation” for most residents’ negative opinions of NGO services (Barcott 2000, 13).

In his indictment of why Kibera-focused NGOs fail – “poor management and leadership”; “short-term planning”; and “administrative and staff positions [filled] with outsiders,” which “elicits great resentment from Kibera residents who are jobless” – Barcott also provides strategies for CBO success (Barcott 2000, 13). Kibera NGOs fail because they become caught up in a vicious cycle of project-to-project planning and because residents view them as “outsiders.” CBOs, by their very nature,

solve the latter problem. To solve the former, and to remain viable and influential community change agents, they must gain access to consistent forms of funding. This study looks at how CBOs can most effectively and successfully do that.

State of the Field: Nonprofit Fundraising.

Community-Based Organizations & Donor Relations

Community-based organizations fill a distinctive niche in the development field. In informal settlements such as Kibera, CBOs have a unique and important role to play. Almost exclusively staffed and run by local community members, CBOs can provide the sort of knowledge and on-the-ground experience that NGOs, especially international ones, tend to lack. Moreover, their ability to enhance a sense of community and capability are unparalleled, for it is truly local leaders who stand the best chance of mobilizing a community to advocate for change. It is most frequently articulate and passionate local community leaders who display this type of influence along with the skills necessary to be heard and understood outside the immediate community. Indeed, CBOs often exhibit unique strengths (Kang 2011, 233).

- A “bottom-up” approach to development;
- A focus on “participatory development;”
- An emphasis on partnerships and capacity building;
- “People-centered development;”
- “Responsiveness and flexibility;”
- Empowerment;
- Sustainability
- The delivery of basic services

However, it is important to note that CBOs and their leaders are no “silver bullet” for the problems that plague Kibera, and most CBOs do fall victim to certain predictable problems (Kang 2011, 233).

- “Ideological orientation when receiving funding from political entities;”
- A tendency to choose “self-preservation over flexibility and responsiveness;”
- Weak efforts regarding accountability and evaluation of program success and efficacy

To counteract these pitfalls, nonprofit scholars have provided suggestions for maximizing the potential of CBOs while addressing weaknesses they commonly display (Kang 2011, 234).

- “Finding alternative funding sources” through social entrepreneurship and social innovation;
- “Strengthening networks” both inside and outside of the community;
- “Applying democracy in operation and evaluation;”

- “Respecting local diversity;”
- “Improving evaluation;”
- “Focusing on process rather than project”

If CBOs take these suggestions into consideration – and make the decision to honestly act on them – they can eliminate some common pitfalls, in addition to making their organization more attractive to potential funders, both individuals and institutions.

An Introduction to the Donor Relationship Cultivation Model

Despite their importance, there is a surprising lack of information about CBOs generally and, more specifically, and about how they fundraise. This lack of literature made formulating an informed hypothesis for this study difficult. However, a quick academic search of the term “fundraising” revealed that a large and thoroughly established body of literature does exist to address the cultivation of donor relationships, usually in the context of US- and UK-based nonprofits. Overall, the study of donor relationship cultivation can provide CBOs with a different way of thinking about where their donations are coming from. Though many CBOs are at least somewhat familiar with the grant-writing process, many CBOs also receive funds from individual donors, making this information quite topical. By learning more about the field of relationship cultivation, CBOs can utilize strategies to keep their donors satisfied and loyal.

For over a decade, nonprofit scholars have argued that organizations must conceptualize “organization-public relationships as multidimensional (professional, personal, and community relationship dimensions)” (Bruning & Ledingham 1999, 164). By thinking of relationships as multidimensional rather than flat, “the need arises for strategies that can be developed to manage” the different facets of donor relationships (Bruning & Ledingham 1999, 165). By understanding the interconnected dimensions of these models, CBOs can reach out to one-time donors, potentially turning them into lifetime patrons for their organizations.

Donor Relationship Cultivation

There is also a vast and rich body of literature discussing donor relationship cultivation strategies. CBOs can adopt many of these strategies to make their fundraising more effective and to keep individual donors loyal. Nonprofit scholars have argued that eight key variables can lead to successful fundraising and donor relationships: access for donors, both to organizational information and to organization members themselves; positivity; openness “to engage actively and honestly in direct discussions”; sharing of tasks (letting donors know where their money is going); networking; assurances, “both verbal and behavioral,” made to donors; keeping of promises; and stewardship, which includes reciprocity, responsibility, reporting, and nurturing of the organization-donor relationship (Waters 2009, 345-6). Communications to donors such as newsletters, annual reports, and handwritten thank-you notes, in addition to events like open houses, can help donors feel appreciated and involved (Waters 2008, 84). While not all of these strategies are entirely feasible for CBOs, the overall argument – that donors should feel appreciated, respected, and knowledgeable about an organization’s projects and finances – is certainly one CBOs should take to heart.

Once CBOs have secured donors, how they cultivate the relationship is critical. Scholars have offered tips for how to effectively engage in relationship stewardship. Organizations can enhance

top donors' understanding of their work "if top donors are allowed to foster a relationship with top nonprofits officials" (Metrick 2005, 40). While this may seem like a time-consuming distraction from a CBO's programming work, getting to know donors on a personal level can deepen their commitment to an organization. Scholars further argue for "recognition [of donations] when appropriate"; "continued thanks and appreciation"; and "ongoing cultivation" as methods to continue growing the donor relationship (Metrick 2005, 40). Though they may seem costly at first, investing time and energy in these strategies will only help CBOs in the long run. Richard Waters sums it up nicely when he says, "If an organization wants to ensure its longevity, then it should be prepared to dedicate time to developing relationships with its donors" (Waters 2007, 44).

One of the most potentially effective fundraising tools CBOs have at their fingertips is the Internet, although online giving is not without its pitfalls. When people give online, they want to give quickly and conveniently; they want to feel like they are somehow making a difference; they want "to feel personally connected to something greater than themselves"; and they want to feel useful (Andresen 2011, 15). Donor recognition strategies like the ones listed above can ensure even online donors feel appreciated and part of the CBO's work. Indeed, gratitude is something nonprofit scholars have been advocating for since 2001 as an effective means of stewardship. By demonstrating thanks and appreciation to donors, whether online or on paper, "donors feel respected because they know the gift was appreciated and wisely managed" (Kelly 2001).

Ultimately, almost all nonprofit scholars conclude that the donor relationship must contain a concrete element of trust. Without it, donors can easily lapse or find other organizations to which they can give their money. CBOs can foster trust with donors by using their money wisely. Newsletters and annual reports containing detailed financial information are two ways to foster this kind of financial trust in the organization (Waters 2007, 47). Moreover, donors must trust that CBOs will follow their mission and engage in the programs they say they will. Donors want to know how their money is being spent. Transparency and accountability, then, are crucial (Waters 2007, 213).

The Grassroots Context

Thus there is a massive body of literature available that studies how organizations can most effectively manage their donor relations. Many of the findings from this literature are applicable to Kibera CBOs; but the information is often in a location and writing style inaccessible to them. If CBOs were able to easily, quickly, and conveniently access this information, and if it were boiled down to key suggestions rather than lengthy academic articles, CBO fundraising would probably be much more successful than it currently is. For example, most of the fundraising strategies discussed up to this point have been presented in a rather broad context. Here, these strategies will be discussed specifically in the context of Kibera.

One recurrent theme throughout nonprofit fundraising literature is the importance of direct, honest, and meaningful communication. This type of communication is especially important for Kibera CBOs if they rely on international donors. It is much more difficult for international donors to see the direct impact of their money on the community, making it critical for Kibera CBOs to use the tools at their disposal – namely, the Internet – to keep donors up-to-date on projects to which they have donated. Emails, Facebook updates, pictures, Tweets, blog posts, newsletters, and electronic reports, can serve as excellent digital stand-ins to allow donors to visualize the impact of their donation.

The Internet is one of the most valuable tools available to Kibera CBOs, for multiple reasons. Contrary to popular assumptions, Internet access is relatively easy to find, even within the boundaries of Kibera, and almost all Kibera residents are literate enough to take advantage of it. In addition to facilitating the donor relationship, the Internet can be used to accept donations, although CBOs must be wary of the online giving pitfalls listed previously: distance and donors' lack of hands-on interaction with the organization can make their donation feel less useful. Using many of the strategies listed in the paragraph above, Kibera CBOs can ensure they utilize the Internet to their advantage, using it as a tool both to attract new donors and to communicate with repeat donors. Moreover, CBOs can use the Internet to directly address donor concerns such as the ones listed in the 2003 Brookings report. For CBOs that rely on private donations, communication strategies such as newsletters and financial reports can assure accountability; social media updates and online program reports can also keep donors satisfied and loyal.

For those CBOs that rely on grants more than private donations, one very real problem is that most smaller-scale organizations tend to apply piece-meal for grants and other funding sources whose goals may only marginally align with the organization's own. While this sort of ad hoc application strategy can certainly be appealing to CBOs in need of project funding, organizations risk wasting their time and energy applying to grant-making foundations whose priorities may only fit with their own to a small degree. This strategy is particularly tempting in the atmosphere of Kibera, where one initial "boost" of fundraising (through a seed grant or generous private donation) can easily provide the support an organization needs to start building up a track record of successful and effective programming. This track record of previous success and impact is needed if an organization wishes to receive more funding in the future, especially from grant-making foundations. However, CBOs in Kibera – where so many NGOs and other national and international organizations are already working – would use their time most productively by only applying for grants whose goals fit directly with projects the organization has the mission, vision, and capacity to implement. By fundraising in this kind of targeted manner and not allowing the siren sound of a generic call for proposals to lure them into a grant submission, organizations can more effectively and productively fundraise.

Methodology

This study hypothesizes that the most important factor for CBOs to gain funding is getting to know (and establishing a relationship with) a grant officer or program manager within a grant-making institution. To test this hypothesis, this study examines five independent variables: adherence to some or all of the donor relationship cultivation strategies discussed above; engagement in formal (i.e., foundation open houses and receptions, meet-and-greets) or informal networking; existing working or personal relationships with a grant manager; training, via workshops or classes, in resource mobilization and capacity building that provide CBOs with introductory knowledge to fundraising (i.e., how to write grants, how to properly engage in monitoring and evaluation, and other fundraising tricks); and frequency of fundraising attempts.

To understand the overall "landscape" of CBO funding in Kibera, this study involved the distribution of funding surveys to a small sample of Kibera CBOs (survey questions can be found in Appendix 1). Twenty surveys were distributed, and thirteen were returned (names of organizations

surveyed can be found in Appendix II). These surveys were purposely distributed randomly so as to elicit responses that were as accurate as possible. Though organizations surveyed were generally similar in size (most organizations were run by a team of five or fewer people), they varied in purpose and programmatic focus. Some were arts organizations, others were women’s or children’s centers, schools or after-school programs, and others were part of umbrella religious organizations operating in Kibera. Paper surveys were distributed and administered by a Kenyan research assistant, who was ultimately responsible for which organizations received surveys because of her knowledge of the area and the CBOs working in it.

From the surveys, five of the most successfully funded organizations were then interviewed via Skype phone calls (and email, when the organization was unable to be reached by phone) to follow up on their survey responses. Interviews generally focused on how CBOs initiated and shaped their relationship with their donors, in addition to delving into how they received training in resource mobilization; what types of networking (if any) they engaged in; how their relationships with program managers at grant-making institutions had initiated and evolved, if applicable; and how they communicated and interacted with donors.

Results

This study is divided between two different types of fundraising: private, individual donations versus grants from funding foundations. In general, the results of the surveys and interviews conducted adhered to this division; only two of the thirteen organizations surveyed had received both grants and individual donations. Tables 1 and 2, below, present these findings regarding the five independent variables studied along the donation-grant divide. All organizations listed in the tables have fundraised “successfully,” defined in this study as having received multiple donations or grants in the past five years.

Organization Identity Code	Network	Relationship with Grant Manager	RM/CB Training	Fundraising Frequency
E	Considering	Yes	Yes	3+ times/year
F	Local Partnering	Yes	Yes	Ad hoc
G	No	No	Yes	Ad hoc
H	No	Yes	Yes	Ad hoc
I	No	No	No	Ad hoc
K	Considering	No	Yes	Once/month
M	No	Yes	Yes	3+ times/year
Total percentage engaged in fundraising strategy	<i>14.3 percent network</i>	<i>57.1 percent know a grant manager</i>	<i>85.7 percent have RM training</i>	<i>42.8 percent fundraise at least 3+ times/year</i>

Table 1: CBOs that have received grant funding

Organization Identity Code	Type of donation	Donor relationship cultivation strategies	Network	RM Training	Fundraising Frequency
A	Multiple individual donations	No response	No	No	Solicit donations when needed
B	Multiple individual donations	Yes	No	Yes	Solicit donations when needed
C	Multiple donations, same person	No response	No	No	Ad hoc
D	Single donations, same person	No response	No	Yes	Ad hoc
G	Multiple individual donations	Yes	No	Yes	Ad hoc
J	Multiple individual donations	Yes	No	No	Ad hoc
M	Multiple individual donations	Yes	No	Yes	3+ times/year
Total percentage engaged in fundraising strategy		<i>57.1 percent engage in DRC strategies</i>	<i>None network</i>	<i>57.1 percent have RM training</i>	<i>14.2 percent fundraise at least 3+ times/year</i>

Table 2: CBOs that have received private donations

Discussion: Variables that lead to Fundraising Success

Adherence to Donor Relationship Cultivation Strategies

Nonprofit scholars have been quite clear: for those nonprofits that rely on private donations, cultivation of the donor-nonprofit relationship is critical for fundraising success. This study defines success for CBO fundraising as having received multiple donations or grants over the past five years. Of Kibera CBOs that rely on donations, 57.1 percent are engaging in at least some of the techniques for which donor relationship scholars advocate. Of the five CBOs interviewed, two rely heavily (one exclusively) on private donations as a form of funding. Even from this small sample size, it is evident that there is a fairly equal divide between reliance on grants versus donors as a method of fundraising. Moreover, this relatively even split proves both that reliance on donations is a viable fundraising strategy for Kibera CBOs and that information about the donor relationship cultivation model can be just as useful as grant writing tips.

The first CBO interviewed (organization G) that relies on private donations organizes fundraising forums to attract individual donors, most of whom are Kenyan. Most individual donations are small, although they do have some repeat donors. According to the interview, organization G also relies heavily on informal networks of friends, either for donations or to attract more donors. CBO members also write thank-you notes to donors. They engage in social media (mainly Facebook) to

keep donors apprised of their organizational activities and help donors visualize the impact of their donation. Organization B, the second CBO interviewed that relies on private donations, also goes door-to-door asking for donations. In the past year, they have received repeat donations from multiple individual donors. They engage in cultivation strategies, like personal visits to thank donors, as well as ad hoc reports to donors when programs they have donated to with are completed. They are also contemplating starting a newsletter.

This admittedly small sample size reveals that 57.1 percent of Kibera CBOs that rely on donations already engage in donor relationship cultivation techniques as they pursue and attempt to keep individual donors. Strategies like showing appreciation (via thank-you notes and personal visits) for donations, as well as keeping donors up-to-date about their programs and the impact of the donations are already being implemented in organizations B and G. Access to CBO leadership does not seem to be a major issue. Because most CBOs operate on a local scale, and because most of their donors are local, it is easy for donors to see where their money is going and how it is making an impact in the community. When donors are not local, CBOs are using social media tools like Facebook to publicize how donor money is being spent.

These techniques can help CBOs keep donors once they have initially attracted them. CBOs seem less successful in that initial donor attraction, however. While most CBOs do have some individual donors, they admit that their donor lists are not as strong as they could be. While it is good that CBOs are relying on the informal networks they already have in place, and while it does not seem like CBOs are merely resting on their fundraising laurels, CBOs do not seem to be leveraging their considerable strengths (their local influence, relative lack of bureaucracy, and close relationship with the communities in which they operate) to their advantage with formal networking.

Networking

Networking is another key variable for CBOs trying to procure funding, especially from grant-making foundations. None of the CBOs that rely on donations are actively engaged in formal networking. 14.3 percent of CBOs that rely on grants are engaged in networking in the form of local partnerships, while 28.6 percent are considering pursuing formal networking channels.

It is possible that networking is less of a contributing factor to private fundraising, but from the surveys it appears that networking is necessary for CBOs pursuing foundation funds (if only to increase their likelihood of hearing about funding opportunities, an idea that will be discussed below in the “fundraising frequency” section). Though it would appear many CBOs are already relying on their informal networks of contacts, friends, and colleagues for donations (even if they do not actually call it networking), most foundation funding is quite competitive, and CBOs should seek to increase their networking presence as much as possible. The more their mission, objectives, and programs are known, especially by those in positions to allocate funds, the more successful CBOs will ultimately be at fundraising.

It is quite possible that most CBOs simply do not know, or do not think they know, how to go about utilizing formal networking to their advantage. Clearly, CBOs are already building up informal networks, and this can only benefit them. By using social media to their benefit and attending open houses of potential funders – like grant-making foundations, national embassies, and multinational

companies with offices in Nairobi (like Coca-Cola) – CBOs might find more avenues of fundraising open to them. Like many of the other strategies recommended within this study, though, this type of commitment to networking takes both time and energy, and it is something CBOs should take seriously to truly make their organizations and their members more successful fundraisers.

Relationships with Grant Managers

I hypothesized that an existing relationship with a grant manager or program officer within a grant-making foundation was the most common factor for facilitating CBO funding. However, the evidence from the surveys conducted indicated that this does not seem to necessarily be the case: while a relationship with a grant manager may be slightly more common than networking, it is by no means imperative for CBOs. Of the CBOs that rely on donations, 28.6 percent know a grant manager; of CBOs that utilize grants as fundraising, 57.1 percent know or have a relationship with a grant manager. While this variable is common, it is not as widespread as this study had hypothesized. Of the five CBOs interviewed, two knew grant managers (and both had received grants), but only one thought that relationship had actually helped them procure funding they might not have been aware of otherwise.

In most cases, it appeared that CBOs had met the grant manager they knew through some form of networking, which is a positive sign. However, most of the CBOs surveyed did not seem to think this person had given them a substantial “edge” when applying for funding, or that this person had necessarily made them aware of a significant number of funding opportunities about which they might not otherwise have known. Additionally, none of the CBOs indicated that their relationship with the grant manager was anything other than strictly professional. Overall, the findings of this study point to the conclusion that, while knowing a professional in the grant-making industry can be helpful, the professional status of the relationship most CBOs have with these contacts does not actually lend itself to any significant boost in funding. Perhaps the relationship must extend to a deeper, more personal level for CBOs to receive significant benefit from the relationship, although this study cannot do more than speculate about that. Based on the success of other factors, like resource mobilization training and capacity building, it would appear relationships with grant managers can be beneficial for CBOs, although they are in no way a panacea for fundraising.

Resource Mobilization Training & Capacity Building

Of all the variables explored, training in resource mobilization and capacity building is the single most common factor that helps CBOs procure funding. Whether a team or an individual from the CBO has received training seems to matter little. What is important is that at least one member of the CBO has at least some familiarity with the basics of fundraising and what grant-making foundations expect from those to whom they give funds.

Of the CBOs that rely on grants, 85.7 percent have received resource training, while 57.1 percent of CBOs that rely on donations had some experience with resource mobilization training. Clearly, experience with mobilization techniques is important. For the most part, resource mobilization training took the form of seminars or workshops. Of the five CBOs interviewed, two of the four organizations that had received grants were trained in resource mobilization by the same organization that gave them the grant. Interestingly, these two organizations received training after they had already accepted the grant (Isabel Omondi & Ghetto Arts Promotion, pers. comm). The training focused more on how to monitor and evaluate programs and how to track and report how money was spent, rather

than focusing on key skills like grant writing. The other two CBOs who had received grants had also received mobilization training, and theirs took the form of one- or two-day workshops hosted by NGOs, not grant-making foundations.

Resource mobilization training can be a valuable tool for CBOs as they attempt to fundraise. Though most mobilization training tends to focus more on foundation grants rather than private donations, the skills (like grant writing) that CBOs can take away from these seminars can serve as an initial knowledge base that can make them more appealing to foundation funders. Knowing the basics of grant writing, monitoring and evaluation, and program management, can help a CBO stand out to grant-making foundations as serious, committed, and responsible organizations. Additionally, higher-level NGOs and INGOs frequently hold seminars or workshops to prove that they are committed to local participation and to helping the local population “own” their development projects. Mobilization training is often easily obtained, and it is something CBOs should absolutely take advantage of: The skills they gain can be quite valuable, especially if they continue to build on them with additional knowledge and practice.

Fundraising Frequency

Fundraising frequency, which I had not hypothesized to be a strategy for fundraising success, was important. 42.8 percent of CBOs that rely on grants fundraise at least 3 times a year, while 14.2 percent of CBOs that rely on donations fundraise at the same frequency. It is worth noting that three CBOs surveyed did not answer this question, either because they had never formally applied for funds or because they were currently relying on private donations.

Overall, it appears most CBOs (close to 55 percent of the organizations surveyed) take a largely ad hoc approach to grant submission; that is, rather than applying for grants methodically, they submit applications only when they are made aware of a call for submissions. Interestingly, of the CBOs that applied for grants when made aware of them, 75 percent had received grants; of the CBOs that applied for funding more regularly, all of them had received some sort of foundation funding, even if they were not receiving foundation money at present. Much like networking and a relationships with grant managers, fundraising frequency is common but not ubiquitous to successful CBOs. Certainly, applying for grants and other funds more frequently cannot hurt, although writing and submitting grants does require taking time away from programming. Because frequent fundraising does not lead to astonishing results for CBOs, fundraising frequency is probably something each organization should consider on an individual basis. CBOs should realistically look at how much time they can devote to this one particular aspect of fundraising, especially in relation to other avenues like resource mobilization training or capacity building.

Implications & Suggestions for CBOs

Of the several factors that may lead CBOs to attain funding, resource mobilization or capacity building training are the most common ways for CBOs to effectively fundraise. While all the necessary fundraising information may be available for CBOs somewhere, it is rarely available all in one place or in a concise format. In the interest of both condensing the existing fundraising “wisdom” and making it more readily available to CBOs who seek it, this study will now present a concise list of suggestions

for CBOs who seek to fundraise, either through private donations or grant-making foundations. Ideally, these suggestions would be published through an accessible venue, such as the Internet, and made readily available to Kibera CBOs as they engage in fundraising. To that end, these results will be shared with the organizations surveyed in the hope that they will both take these suggestions to heart and share them with fellow CBO members seeking to fundraise. CBOs should note that these suggestions are not mutually exclusive. In other words, CBOs should not rely “just” on private donations or foundation funds, but rather should seek to fundraise whenever and by whatever means possible.

Recommendations for CBOs Relying on Private Donations

- Use donor relationship cultivation strategies to attract and keep donors. These can include the following:
 - oBe positive in organizational and donor communication,
 - o Engage in honest discussion with donors,
 - o Let donors know where their money is going, and
 - o Keep promises
 - o Write thank-you notes for donations (handwritten is best)
- Communicate with donors as much as possible: Use progress reports and newsletters to keep donors up-to-date on projects they have donated to
- Strive to cultivate a personal, not just a professional, relationship with donors
- Use the Internet as a tool to find donors and to keep them apprised of program impact
- Cultivate trust with donors: manage money wisely and be as transparent as possible with finances

Recommendations for CBOs Seeking Foundation Funds

- Network, both informally and formally. Use social media like Facebook and LinkedIn whenever possible
- Seek to build a relationship with a grant manager or project officer within a funding foundation
- Engage in resource mobilization training and capacity building whenever possible
- Fundraise as frequently as is feasible. Each call for proposals represents a chance to hone grant-writing skills, so take advantage of it
- Do not submit a proposal simply because a funding organization has issued a call for submission. Make sure the priorities of the funding organization to which the proposal is submitted mesh with the organization’s goals and programs.

Limitations & Suggestions for Further Research.

First and foremost, this is a case study of Kibera. While Kibera is similar in many ways to informal settlements around the world, it is also unique. Some of the strategies offered here may not be applicable to CBOs in other informal settlements, or even elsewhere in Nairobi. Moreover, the

suggestions offered here are guidelines. The more of these suggestions CBOs can engage the more likely it is they will procure funding, but each individual CBO must decide their limit on fundraising strategies. The underlying message, then, is “do what you can when you can.” CBOs should not become so caught up in fundraising that they neglect their programs or the communities in which they work.

At least in part because of the distance at which this research was conducted, some problems did arise during the course of the study. Though the surveys were distributed by a Kenyan research assistant, the fact that the surveys were being conducted for an American researcher meant that some organizations viewed the information gathering with mistrust, and some were unwilling to fill out all or parts of the survey because they viewed it as “spying” on the organization, especially its finances. This phenomenon was probably partly due to the overall mistrust Kibera residents tend to have for “outsiders” who engage in development work, and partly because it was impossible to conduct this research in person in Nairobi. This distance factor, in addition to the lack of direct access to key organization members, meant that the data received was not as comprehensive as was initially hoped. Ultimately, these two problems resulted in a lower rate of survey return and smaller sample size.

Additionally, more research is needed in informal settlements outside Kibera to strengthen, corroborate, or disprove these findings. If it all possible, in-person research is recommended, as is taking the time to get to know the CBOs interviewed and building a working relationship with them; this could encourage the kind of trust and openness that this study seemed to lack.

Moreover, more research is needed overall about informal settlements. There is a shocking lack of academic information, beyond medical studies about HIV/AIDS or malaria, about residents of informal settlements. Research of all styles – ethnographic, discourse analysis, and scientific – is needed to build up a solid knowledge base about the lives of those who inhabit the world’s informal settlements. Increasingly, informality is becoming a hallmark of life in low-income countries, and more information about every aspect of informality, as well as its effects on the people who live, work, and learn in the informal sector, is needed.

Finally, more research is needed about CBOs – about how they operate, the environments in which they operate, what makes them successful, how they can become more successful, and how they can fundraise successfully. As the prevalence of informality increases, so, too, does the incidence of CBOs whose goals are to better the communities in which they work. CBOs represent a significant portion of the “development” work occurring throughout informal settlements, but often they are simply not receiving money to support their initiatives. Information must be disseminated through popular channels like the Internet to make the vast wealth of fundraising knowledge available to CBOs who could put it to good use. This study is a start, but there is still much work to be done.

Conclusion

After initially hypothesizing that a relationship with a grant manager was the most critical factor for CBO fundraising success, this case study of Kibera examined five variables for funding success: adherence to donor relationship cultivation strategies; networking; relationship with a grant manager; resource mobilization training and capacity building; and frequency of fundraising efforts. This study has found that of these five variables, the only predictable indicator of receiving grants or donations is whether or not members of a Kibera CBO have received any type of resource mobilization

training or capacity building. Moreover, this study has found that most CBOs in Kibera tend to take an ad hoc approach to fundraising efforts, and predictably enough the results of this type of approach are not spectacular. While presenting fundraising tips for organizations, both those that rely on private donations and foundation funds, this study urges Kibera CBOs to take a more systematic approach to fundraising, if it is at all feasible for the organization. This study concludes by recommending the necessity of much more research to corroborate, or perhaps disprove, the findings of this study, especially as they apply to informal settlements outside of Nairobi. As the world's cities continue to grow, informality is becoming an entrenched aspect of life for many urban residents. More research is needed at every level to understand these phenomena of urbanization and informality, for they are surely here to stay. ✕

Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Part I: Funding History

1. In the past five years, have you ever received grants or any other type of funding from an organization or person?
If yes, please describe.
Please include how much money you received, who it was from, when you received it, and any other important information about the grant or donation. (For example, if it was a grant, for what period of time did the grant last? If it was from a person, had this person donated before?)
2. How often do you apply for grants or other types of funding? (If other, please describe).
3. If you have received funding in the past five years, what do you think were the most important factors that allowed you to receive it? Please list at least three.
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)

Part II: Organizational Structure

1. Please describe how your organization fundraises or receives money.
2. Is there a single person or team of people in your organization responsible for raising funds?
If yes, has this person or team been trained in fundraising techniques?
What experience does this person or team have?
3. Do you at present know a grant officer or program manager within a larger funding organization?
If yes, how did you meet this person? For how long have you know them?
Please describe your relationship with this person. Has this person ever helped you receive a grant or outside funding before?
4. Does your organization belong to any type of fundraising or professional network?

Part III: Funding Timing

1. Please describe the “timeline” of typical grants you receive or a grant you have received in the past five years. Please include the following parts: 1) when you heard about the grant or funding source, 2) when you applied for it, 3) when you were notified about whether you would or would not receive the money, 4) when the funds were given to you (if applicable), 5) when the project started (if applicable)..

Appendix 2: Organizations Surveyed & Organizational Identity Code

1. Kibera Wasanii Mtaani Initiative (organizational code A)
2. Orphir Gold Initiatives (organizational code B)
3. St. Martin's Care Centre Women Project (organizational code C)
4. Know Kibera (organizational code D)
5. Ghetto Light Youth (organizational code E)
6. St. Martin's School and Care Centre (organizational code F)
7. Kids Empowering Ability Centre (organizational code G)
8. Ghetto Arts Promotion (organizational code H)
9. Vision Mothers (organizational code I)
10. Siloam Childrens' Centre (organizational code J)
11. Africa Health & Community Programme (organizational code K)
12. St. Catherine's Educational Centre (organizational code L)
13. The Initiative for Community Action (ICA) (organizational code M)

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